

A study on barriers in learning the English subject faced by students of public sector secondary schools of Quetta city

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Abstract

The present study was designed to investigate the barriers in learning the English subject by students of public sector secondary schools of Quetta city. The study was limited to secondary level. This study was carried out in Quetta city Baluchistan, Pakistan. It was observed that the secondary school students have been facing several barriers in learning English subject. It was also observed that in recent times the government tries to equip teachers with the best possible training, but the situation is still not up to the mark. The participants of the study were 140 students, including 70 girls and 70 boys and 60 English teachers (n=30) were male and (n= 30) were females, Students and teachers were administered through two different questionnaire, the collected data were analyzed through SPSS by applying ANOVA and T-test; it was revealed that students still felt difficulties in

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speaking, listening, reading and writing English because teachers are not applying appropriate methods for teaching English subject.

Key words: Barrier, secondary school students, second language.

INTRODUCTION

Ministry of Education (2006) introduced the English as a compulsory subject from grade one to tenth grade in all government schools in Pakistan. As this step opens up the new avenues to the Pakistani students to go for a higher studies with its, but it brings new challenges for the teachers to teach English and students faced barriers to comprehend this subject in a proper way because of the insufficient prior knowledge of this subject.

As the secondary level is an important level for the secondary school students, which prepares students to enter into a higher institution for better learning or to be a member of the family through joining the different jobs. As Jimenez and Rose (2010) affirms, “without a sustained and systematic effort students in the process of learning English have almost no hope of acquiring the kinds and amounts of cultural, social and academic capital that they need to move into higher education or meaningful work” (p.411). English is not only a subject to teach in the classroom, but also the medium for social practical use (Foley, 2005). “English is not a subject which can be taught; it is a subject which must be learnt.” (Michel West). For most of the academicians and practitioners teaching English is the integral concerns because through right teaching teachers facilitate the acquisition easy for the students. (Patil, 2008). Amongst the many barriers faced by the Pakistani students, the most prominent factor in research are Grammar Translation method and old methods of teaching(Akram &Mahmood,2007)other factors include the transfer English language skills through obsolete book, endorsement of rote learning, untrained English language teachers, short period of class in the week, overcrowded classrooms, deficiency of language aids. Thus it becomes compulsory to distinguish among the barrier of English faced by students and ascertain the pedagogical factors which have been practicing in the public sector secondary schools of Quetta city. English is using as a second language is a problem both for students and teachers. In this study, we will identify the barriers which affect

learning in English subject, as English is occupied its place in every circle of life, business, commerce, technology, science, trade or education.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English language has been introduced as a compulsory subject in our school system by our government from primary to higher secondary level, as acquisition of second language is a difficult task for most of the secondary school students they face barriers in learning English subject particularly when they enter into higher secondary school because they bear the same barriers in the other science subjects which are in English if this problem is address in a reasonable way it will facilitates learning in a more understandable and productive way. This research study attempts to elucidate the barriers faced by students in learning English at the secondary level in Quetta city.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To identify the barriers in learning English subject at secondary level.
2. To find out the pedagogical factors affecting learning English subject at secondary level.
3. To suggest the strategies to overcome the barriers affecting the effective learning of English subject.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the problems faced by students in learning English at secondary level?
2. What are the main factors responsible for creating problems in learning English at Secondary level?
3. What could be the possible strategies to overcome the barriers in learning English?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, a survey was conducted to identify and analyzed the factors creating barriers in learning the English subject by students of secondary school of Quetta city. This study will be quantitative in nature and statistical methods have been applied to analyze data. A survey questionnaire will be constructed on a five point Likert scale.

The collected data are based upon the questionnaire responses of 140 students of the secondary schools and 60 secondary school English teachers.

Population

The sample size for this research study will be two hundred. (N#200).The researcher collected data from different twenty secondary schools of Quetta district, ten government Girls and ten Government Boys secondary schools of Quetta district were included in this research study.

Sample size

The sample size consists of total 140 students of secondary level. Sample was further divided into (n=70) girls students and (n=70) boys students and 60 English teachers (n=30) male and (n=30) female.

Stratified sampling technique was used in the present study. The sample was directly collected.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The data were collected by conducting a survey method, the tool for conducting this survey was five point Likert scale questionnaire, one for secondary school students and one for secondary school teachers. The five point Likert scale were formulated after extensive study of the literature review and the present classroom practices for teaching English subject. After formulating the questionnaire, the questionnaire used for pilot testing after some minor changes the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were calculated and further disseminated for collecting data.

Data Analysis

Data obtained from the students and teacher's questionnaire will be analyzed through SPSS while applying ANOVA and Independent sample t -test. The data of 160 students were analyzed and then the data of 60 teachers were analyzed simultaneously.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characters of the students has been shown in the table 1 (N=140)70% were boys students and 70% were girls students

were randomly selected from 7 boys and 7 girls secondary schools. 80% students from 9th class and 60% students from 10th class. Majority numbers of students were from Pashtu language (n=85). The secondary school students were mostly from the sub urban primary school, 83.6%were from chiltan town and 61.4% were from zarghoon town.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic	Of	Frequency N=140	Percentage%
Gender wise			
Girls		70	70
Boys		70	70
Class wise			
9 th -class		80	57.1
10 th -class		60	42.9
Mother Tongue			
Urdu		20	20.7
Pushtu		85	60.7
Bharavi		17	12.1
Sindhi		5	3.6
Punjabi		4	2.9
Schools			
7 girls Schools		7	5.0
7 Boys Schools		7	5.0
Location of primary school			
Chiltan town		54	83.6
Zarghoon town		86	61.4

Reponses of Students regarding speaking, listening, reading and writing barriers

Through ANOVA test following results came forward as for gender (male and female) has a significant relationship with listening barrier (p<.039) and with speaking barrier (p<.031) while for reading and writing barrier it shows insignificant value. While secondary classes have and mother shown insignificant relationship with each barriers. For institution, listening barrier (p=.047), speaking barrier (p=.035) and reading barrier (p=.000) shows significant value. While for primary location of schools shows significant relationship with listening barrier (p=.001) and speaking barrier (p=.001).

Table 2
**Student's Responses Regarding Listening, Speaking, Reading and
Writing Barriers.**

Gender(Male and Female)	Significance level(p<0.05)
Listening Barrier	.039
Speaking Barrier	.031
Reading Barrier	.681
Writing Barrier	.515
9th & 10th Class	Significance level(p<0.05)
Listening Barrier	.430
Speaking Barrier	.403
Reading Barrier	.976
Writing Barrier	.301
Mother Tongue	Significance level(p<0.05)
Listening Barrier	.566
Speaking Barrier	.677
Reading Barrier	.007
Writing Barrier	.619
Institutions	Significance level(p<0.05)
Listening Barrier	.047
Speaking Barrier	.035
Reading Barrier	.000
Writing Barrier	.180
Primary School	Significance level(p<0.05)
Listening Barrier	.001
Speaking Barrier	.001
Reading Barrier	.099
Writing Barrier	.193

Independent Sample t-test

Respondent's responses regarding listening, speaking, Reading and Writing Barriers in terms of gender

The table 3 below has shown that after applying Independent sample t test with the variables of gender the 2-tailed significance difference has been shown in listening ($p=0.039$) and speaking barrier ($p=0.031 > 0.05$) as it has shown the lower value than ($p < 0.05$) while reading and writing barrier has shown insignificant difference.

Table 3 Independent Sample T test on gender basis

		Levene's Test for Equality			t-test for Equality of Mean		
		of Variances					
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
L-B	Equal Variances assumed	12.580	.001	-2.085	138	.039	-.17143
S-B	Equal Variances assumed	4.936	.028	-2.178	138	.031	-.24286
R-B	Equal Variances assumed	2.326	.130	.412	138	.681	.05714
W-B	Equal Variances assumed	2.055	.154	.653	138	.515	.20000

Table 4 Demographic Characteristics of Teachers (N=60)

In the present study 30 male and 30 female teachers taken part from the institutions (N=7) majority of the teachers having 1 to 10 years (N=34) majority of the teachers were 30 years age. General qualification having 91.7% and mostly around 81.7% did their professional degree and around 88.3% were having no training in how the teacher English to secondary school students.

Gender	Frequency(N=60)	Percentage%
Male	30	50.0
Female	30	50.0
Institution	7	5.0
Designation		
SST(Science)	36	60.0
SST(General)	24	40.0
Experience		
1-10 years	34	56.7
10-20 years	18	30.0
20-30 years	8	13.3
Age of teachers		
28-38 years	30	50.0
38-48 years	22	36.7
48-58 years	8	13.3
General Qualification		
M.A	55	91.7
M.Sc.	5	8.3
Professional Qualification		
B.Ed.	11	18.3
M.Ed.	49	81.7
Training in English teaching		
No training	53	88.3
Training	7	11.7

Table5. Results of ANOVA test regarding gender, institutions, designation, and experience of the teachers, age of teachers, genera and professional qualification, English teaching training. Through analysis of second questionnaire which was filled by 60 secondary English school teachers. ANOVA test shows the following significant difference at the 5%level of significance. Gender shows the significant relationship with listening pedagogy (p=.032) speaking pedagogy (p=.000) reading pedagogy (p=.000).While institution shows significant relationship with listening pedagogy(p=.001) Speaking pedagogy(p=.000) reading pedagogy(p=.000)Designation shows listening pedagogy(p=.005)speaking pedagogy(.000)reading pedagogy(p=.003)Experience of the teachers shows significant relationship with listening pedagogy(p=.023),General qualification shows significance with writing pedagogy(p=.043)While age of teacher, professional qualification and English teaching training shows insignificant difference.

Gender	Significance Level(p<0.05)
Listening Pedagogy	.032
Speaking Pedagogy	.000
Reading Pedagogy	.000
Writing Pedagogy	.101
Institutions	
Listening Pedagogy	.001
Speaking Pedagogy	.000
Reading Pedagogy	.000
Writing Pedagogy	.388
Designation	
Listening Pedagogy	.005
Speaking Pedagogy	.000
Reading Pedagogy	.003
Writing Pedagogy	.021
Experience of the teachers	
Listening Pedagogy	.023
Speaking Pedagogy	.464
Reading Pedagogy	.173
Writing Pedagogy	.538
Age of teachers	
Listening Pedagogy	.121
Speaking Pedagogy	.385
Reading Pedagogy	.746
Writing Pedagogy	.616
General Qualification	
Listening Pedagogy	.525
Speaking Pedagogy	.416
Reading Pedagogy	.181
Writing Pedagogy	.043
Professional Qualification	
Listening Pedagogy	.209
Speaking Pedagogy	.465
Reading Pedagogy	.850
Writing Pedagogy	.505
English Teaching Training	
Listening Pedagogy	.272
Speaking Pedagogy	.522
Reading Pedagogy	.758
Writing Pedagogy	.617

Table 6 has shown that listening pedagogy having a strong association with gender ($p=.032$) at 5% level of significance. While speaking and reading pedagogies have shown the highest relationship with ($p=.000$) significance. Whereas writing pedagogy has shown the insignificant value ($p=.101$) in relation to the gender.

Independent Sample T test Teacher's Pedagogy

Levene's Test for Equality				t-test for Equality of Mean			
of Variances							
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference
L-P	Equal Variances assumed	6.126	.016	2.201	58	.032	.53333
S-P	Equal Variances assumed	2.968	.090	-6.240	58	.000	-1.66667
R-P	Equal Variances assumed	11.54	.001	-4.160	58	.000	-1.26667
W-P	Equal Variances assumed	.779	.381	1.665	58	.101	.50000

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study is to identify the different barriers faced by the secondary school students in learning English subject in government schools of Quetta city. The barriers in listening, speaking, reading and writing were all identified collectively. The survey method was used to obtain the results. The analysis conducted through one way ANOVA test reveals that the listening barrier has shown the significant difference for gender and primary school location while insignificant difference for classes, mother tongue and institutions. Despite of gender, school location, and mother tongue all the students facing similar problems in learning English subject because the way they taught English by their teachers is not appropriate.

The analysis for speaking barrier through ANOVA test has shown that for gender, institutions and primary school location it has significant difference while for classes and mother tongue it has shown the insignificant difference.

The analysis for reading barrier through ANOVA test has shown the insignificant difference in gender, classes and primary school location while for institutions and mother tongue shown the significant difference.

The analysis of writing barrier through ANOVA test has shown the insignificant difference for gender, classes, mother tongue institutions and primary school location.

The analysis of independent t test in terms of gender has shown the significant difference in listening and speaking barrier while insignificant differences in reading and writing barrier. One of the most important thing which the curriculum board is ignoring is this to minimize the number of units while including other relevant activities so that the teacher should not have a particular pressure of finish the course rather take plenty of time to make students understand and practice this foreign language for better understanding.

The analysis of second questionnaire revealed that all selected secondary school teachers whether male or female do not teach English in a way in which it has to be taught because they teach it as other teachers teach Urdu Without using appropriate teaching strategies in the class .they are of the views that Speaking, listening and reading are not a part of the examination so they are not important to teacher, the teachers of all selected secondary school just follow the English Urdu translation and emphasized on cramming without teaching grammar ,sentence structure and vocabulary to the students. The pedagogies for speaking, listening, and reading are totally neglected in all the selected secondary government schools. Teachers are not taking English classes as they are of the view that it's hard for them to teach English because they do not have proper training in teaching this foreign language and on the teacher's part they themselves fail to understand certain things.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings revealed that the listening barrier in learning English has a significance difference with gender and primary school location while insignificant difference for classes, mother tongue and institutions. In case of speaking barrier in learning English, gender, institutions and primary school location have a significant difference while for classes and mother tongue it has an insignificant difference. After analysis, it has been found that for reading barrier, in learning English has an insignificant difference in gender, classes and primary

school location while in institutions and mother tongue it has shown the significant difference. As far as the writing barrier is concerned in learning English it has an insignificant difference in gender, classes, mother tongue institutions and primary school location.

In general, students do not pay attention and concentration that will create barriers in attaining knowledge of English. The English subject basically consists of four sub skill as listening, speaking, reading and writing while students faced barriers in comprehending pronunciation, they do not get the meaning of the text, when teacher reading for them, they are unable to understand difficult grammatical structure, while they do not get the opportunity to practice listening skill because there is no Audio visual facilities are present in the classroom. Students do not have enough confidence to speak English while they feel shy to use even a word in the class. The students like to adhere with their mother tongues during their classes while they show less interest in learning English because teachers fail to motivate their students to use English in their class because the teachers themselves using Urdu or other local languages with the students. Most of the students have a view that they do not get the opportunity to use English in their daily lives. In case of reading students do not recognize words and do not like to do reading in front of the whole class, because reading English is a difficult task for them and they start stammering during their reading due to nervousness the students do not comprehend what they read until their teachers explain them in Urdu.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Teachers should encourage students to communicate in English not only in the classroom, but with their peers and at home so that they do practice to speak English and it will build their confidence. Student centered activities should be used by the teachers in the classroom.

Teachers should try to promote all four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) in the class.

Activity based learning will help students to improve their learning in English subject. Teachers should encourage students to read English newspaper and school should provide interesting reading materials to the students.

For teaching English, teachers should prepare lesson plans and according to the planned lesson deliver their lessons in a more effective way with the help of audio visual aids which will create realistic environments for students to learn in a better way.

The government should provide the in training service to train the teachers to use English in the classroom. With the cooperation policy makers the teachers must try to bring the reforms in the pattern of examination, for test the spoken language of the students, they must allot separate marks for them.

The government should facilitate or train local teachers to establish a language laboratory.

Managements should insist teachers to assess student's proficiency in English at regular interval of time. The teachers should encourage students to read English material which students find interesting. The management must insist English teachers to speak English within the classroom, in school campus or even outside the school.

English teachers must encourage students to speak English and they should also allot the separate period for spoken English once/twice in a week.

Group discussion should be conducted by the teachers in the classrooms right from the beginning, so the students learn how to speak and listen purposefully to each other in the classroom.

To enhance the basic knowledge of composition and grammar, adequate written practice is required.

Co-curricular activities should be organized in the class through word games such as quizzes and puzzles, to improve their word-power and vocabulary.

Students must be involved in English language activities such as role play, extempore, storytelling, essay-writing, debate through interesting way. (Like using power point)

Listening and speaking are the two neglected skills which should be practiced and improved with correct pronunciation and accent under the supervision of the teacher.

Through Audio-visual Aids, the practice of predicting and summarizing should be taught preferably in the classroom.

The teacher's community must arrange seminars in which they can discuss challenges of teaching English subject so they must

be address in a proper ways, in which they suggest the teaching strategies to overcome the barriers of the students through right pedagogical techniques.

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