



Educational Research (ISSN: 2141-5161) Vol. 4(5) pp. 387-402, May, 2013  
Available online@ <http://www.interestjournals.org/ER>  
Copyright © 2013 International Research Journals

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Aligning objectives, content, learning experiences, and evaluation in teaching/learning of English at primary and elementary levels: A case study in Pakistan

<sup>\*1</sup>Muhammad Khan, Ph.D, <sup>2</sup>Hazrat Umar, Ph.D, <sup>3</sup>Sherry L. Steeley, Ph.D.

<sup>1</sup>Department of English Language and Linguistics, Jazan University Jazan, Saudi Arabia

<sup>2</sup>Department of English GS, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad

<sup>3</sup>Center for Language Education and Development, Georgetown University, Washington, DC

\*Corresponding Author E-mail: [dr.muhammadkhan786@gmail.com](mailto:dr.muhammadkhan786@gmail.com)

Abstract

This article investigates the causes of the poor results of teaching/ learning of English at primary and elementary levels in Pakistan. Such a weak foundation of English language of young learners directly affects the subsequent levels of teaching/learning of English. The hypothesis is that objectives, content, learning experiences (methodology) and evaluation are not integrated. . In fact this study is an epitome of the real situation occurring throughout the third world countries. Consequently, teaching/learning of English as Second Language in Public sector schools at Primary and elementary levels are ineffective. This is the case in spite of extensive efforts over the past decade, including increasing basic English education from 7 years to 12, revising the English syllabus for those grades, and implementing various in-service teacher training programs. Our research through teacher interviews, observations, and test score results shows that Pakistani English teachers at the primary level lack motivation, language competence, and are fundamentally unfamiliar with basic curriculum and instructional planning. We believe that both pre-service and in-service training should focus on fundamentals of English teaching and learning, including alignment of objectives, content, learning experiences and evaluation in the instructional process, as well as improving communicative skills of teachers is critical to improving learning outcomes. Thus, a major effort to continue teacher education reform, both in content knowledge – i.e. English skills – and pedagogy of public sector English teachers in Pakistan is critically important to outcomes in this important subject area, which itself has implications for Pakistan’s population both nationally and internationally.

**Keywords:** Objectives, content, teaching and learning experiences, alignment, third world countries, epitome.

## INTRODUCTION

Investment in education has long constituted a critical area of development. Currently, the UN Millennium Development Goals seek to ensure universal primary education by 2015 (United Nations, 2006). In many developing countries, there has been great progress in teacher training and improvement of access to schools,

due both to local reform efforts as well as to infusions of World Bank, regional development finance, and bilateral assistance from traditional donors. Similarly, Pakistan has received a generous infusion of educational investment, shoring up its erstwhile low spending on the sector, with dramatic increases in donor involvement in

the sector since 2001.

As in many post-colonial nations, in Pakistan, the teaching of the colonial language is the subject of debate and controversy. However, what remains inarguable is the fact that proficiency in English is necessary for Pakistani citizens seeking to gain access to middle income career paths as well as participation in the national and international economy. As a result, the Government of Pakistan has embarked on ambitious plans for improving the teaching of English language in primary and secondary schools. However, research on teacher education shows that further investment in this sector is necessary to improve the teaching of English.

Thus, purposes of this investigation are numerous. First, on a practical and professional level, it contributes to understanding the complexities of educational reform and modernization within a context of a post-colonial educational system with a hierarchical management model. Next, on a theoretical level, it examines the personality of the individual teacher within such a system and the resultant limits of perceived teacher professional capacity as critical variables in the reform process. Further, it addresses issues relevant to the alignment of language policy and practice.

### Objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

- Explore to what extent English teaching objectives, content, learning experiences, teaching methods, and evaluation are integrated.
- Interrogate policies alignment with teacher education practices.
- Assess the implications for policy and teacher education based on the current educational environment.
- Give suggestions to improve overall teaching of English as L2.

### Conceptual Framework: Education, English, and Teacher Education in Pakistan

Pakistan has long suffered low levels of literacy, school attendance, and investment in education relative to its neighbors, although in the past decade, there have been serious attempts at reform (Hussein, 2003; International Crisis Group, 2004; Jalal, 2004; UNDP, 2004; Warwick and Reimers, 1995; World Bank, 2003). Following the colonial period, during which education was restricted to a small minority elite, education has gradually expanded, although the quality of that education remains low (Kanu, 2005; Rahman, 2005). The Asian Development Bank,

which conducted an Education Sector project concluding in 2000, reports that in spite of impressive economic growth in the previous two decades, Pakistan in the early 1990s had some of the world's lowest social indicators (Asian Development Bank, 2002). Although literacy rates and school enrollment have been improving, the overall school enrollment of 62 percent is lower than South Asian neighbors India and Sri Lanka, partially due to lower government investment in the education sector (Hussein, 2003). While there have been significant increases in literacy rates over the past decade (SAHE, 2002; United States Agency for International Development, 2005), a vast discrepancy remains between urban literacy rates (63 percent) and rural (34 percent) (International Crisis Group, 2004, p.8).

### Teacher Education

Because the education sector overall has historically been plagued by the dual problems of nepotism and a lack of resources (International Crisis Group, 2004; Warwick and Reimers, 1995), reform of teacher education is critical to educational reform overall (Asian Development Bank, 2002; Ministry of Education, 2002a). In its National Education Policy, the Ministry of Education (2002a) outlines numerous problems in teacher training programs. These include training in the absence of a larger policy framework, lack of follow up in-service training, and poor teacher supervision (Academy for Educational Development, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2002a). Overall teacher training programs are dominated by the 9-month primary teacher certificate (PTC) training course – following 10<sup>th</sup> grade and required for primary school teachers – and the 12-month certificate of teaching (CT) course – following 12<sup>th</sup> grade and required for middle school teachers (Academy for Educational Development, 2005; Asian Development Bank, 2002; Ministry of Education, 2002b). Historically, many programs in rural areas fall short even of these low guidelines (Warwick and Reimers, 1995).

Teacher education suffers from a lack of facilities, especially in rural areas and particularly for female teachers (Warwick and Reimers, 1995; YesPakistan.org, 2002). Another problem is program quality and oversight (Academy for Educational Development, 2005). Although the PTC course is for only one year, in reality it is often even shorter (Ministry of Education, 2002a; Warwick and Reimers, 1995; YesPakistan.org, 2002). An additional problem is that the curriculum for pre-service training is overloaded, and there is no balance between content and methods classes (Ministry of Education, 2002a). In general, the courses do not significantly improve a

teacher's knowledge of a particular subject matter or teaching skills (Warwick and Reimers, 1995; YesPakistan.org, 2002). A study conducted in the province of NWFP found that entrants to a training program had poor proficiency in math and science, but that there was little difference in teachers' performance after completing the course (YesPakistan.org, 2002). Similar studies in other regions document the same (Halai, 2006), and still others reveal no major difference in the teaching practices of PTC teachers and untrained teachers, or between graduates of the PTC course from different systems (Warwick and Reimer, 1995; YesPakistan.org, 2002). The lack of quality teacher training leads to both pre- and in-service training issues (Halai, 2006; Warwick and Reimers, 1995).

### Teacher education and the curriculum

The English teachers in Public Sector at Primary and Elementary levels in Pakistan are under-qualified for teaching English. "The overall educational qualifications of English teachers need improvement and suggest that teachers meet minimum teaching criteria and attend yearly training sessions to reach these standards". (Asian Journal)

In South Asian countries like Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, English teachers have a similar background in education. Here are some quotations pertaining to SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) countries that depict a true picture of the problem:

(a) Bangladesh: "Many primary school teachers in Bangladesh receive no teacher training prior to entering the classroom. They also have in many cases very little English language understanding" (Clare Woodward)

(b) India: "The basic fact is that teachers with little English knowledge themselves and who has lesser inclination to teach it are coerced into teaching the subject" (The Hindu...)

(c) Nepal: "One of the critical issues for quality education has been teacher development. Most of the Public schools have untrained and unqualified (more than 60%) teachers" (Nepal Teacher Development...)

(d) Sri Lanka: "The British Council was invited by the Honourable C. Nanda Mathew, Governor of Uva Province to work in partnership with the province to improve the level of English language skills and Primary teaching methodology of up to 250 new graduates, recently appointed as English teacher in order to address the acute shortage of Primary English teachers in the province" (Uva Province Primary Teachers Training).

(e) A Global Study of Primary Teachers' qualifications, training and career development: The study was carried out in 9 countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cuba, Egypt, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and United Arab Emirates. "In respect of qualifications, 38% of teachers reported that they held a degree, and 25% that they held a Master degree; 35 % said that they did not have a qualification to teach Primary levels, and 21% reported that they were not qualified specifically to teach English" (Helen Emery)

The problem of teachers low proficiency level in English or their lack of confidence in their English ability is almost universally identified in the literature (see for example, Baker, 2008; Butler, 2004; Ghatage, 2009; Hoque, 2009; Kuchah, 2009; Li, 1998; Littlewood, 2007; Numan, 2003).

### Significance of this research and International Donors

The significance of the study lies in the fact proved globally that teaching/learning of English at primary and elementary levels is problematic that needs a thorough interrogation and exploration. English is important at all levels of education and in practical life. The present study provides the data about the existing situation in primary and elementary schools in Pakistan but approximately all third world countries are experiencing similar problems. This research will help the planners, educationists and administrators to develop future planning in the area of teaching English at basic stages. Further research, based on the findings of this study is also suggested for an overall improvement. Another significant aspect of the study is that it revealed a wide range of factors concerning the teaching of English to young learners globally from the perspective of teachers involved in the job.

International Donors: "International donor agencies including bilateral and multi-lateral agencies substantially raised their support for basic education in Pakistan. The donors include: World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, ILO, USAID, Netherland, Britain mainly through ODA, Germany through GTZ, Japan through substantial material and financial support, Canada through CIDA, France, OECD and the Scandinavian countries. Major portion of assistance goes to Primary education" (UNESCO org.)

According to Halai, (2006), both pre- and in-service teachers suffer from inadequate professional training and limited knowledge (p. 704), and many have had no opportunity to observe educators in practice other than

during their own education. In a research study analyzing the impact of mentorship between students in her M.Ed. program at the Aga Khan Institute for Educational Development and in-service teachers in Karachi area schools, Halai found that the majority of the teacher participants did not have the ability or skills to question their own or others' practice, or even to evaluate their own areas of strength. This was largely due to a lack of any experience outside of their own classrooms as well as an orientation toward authority that created a sense of passivity among teachers working in a large system (Halai, 2006). In a study of Karachi women teachers, Kirk (2004) points out that the majority of educational policy and decision making occurs in the absence of input from teachers, objectifying their role in the educational reform process.

### English Language Policy

The Education Policy 1998-2010 has emphasized teaching and learning of English from grade 1 but unfortunately that policy has not yet been fully successful or matched by the requisite training (Waqar, 1999, pp.381-82). A decade ago English was a compulsory subject in sixth grade, beginning with English alphabet. At the same time there was a requirement to pass an English exam at the end of that year. In the Education Policy 1998-2010, a revolutionary step was taken, introducing teaching and learning of English from grade-1. Ministry of Education syllabus designers and curriculum writers produced the best possible content/subject matter suitable for the learners in public sector primary schools.

This paper researches the impact of this policy in the lives of teachers in Punjab province and its impact on students in order to identify the causes of poor teaching/learning of English as L2 at primary and elementary levels.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The *methodology* used for the present research includes:

- (i) Testing of 5<sup>th</sup> class students (sample population 50 students at random) from different Primary schools to see their achievement in response to objectives: i, ii, iii, v, viii, xi and xv, set for classes I-V, by the Curriculum Wing, (for objectives, see appendix 'A');
- (ii) 8<sup>th</sup> class students (sample population 50 students at random) from different Elementary schools were given an achievement test, in response to objective: iii, iv, v, vii,

viii, ix and x (for objectives, set for classes VI-VIII, see appendix 'B');

(iii) Observing a school day: English classroom organization, lesson planning for that very day, presentation of the lesson, kind of activities, how lesson is finished or summarized, and other elements of instruction. (Researcher observed 10 classes (five from primary and 5 from elementary) (for observation sheet, see appendix 'C');

(iv) Interviews of English teachers serving in the same schools (sample population 10 English teachers).

### FINDINGS

The tests and interviews have been analyzed through the tables with necessary comments and explanation for the expected queries as follows: Table 1

The analysis of the test displayed in the table above indicates that as the test items get a bit difficult, the %age of the correct responses decreases. Results on pronunciation of words with one syllable are not too discouraging but on the other hand, the %ages of other test items like 'social courtesies', 'following and responding to instructions', 'asking for things to meet immediate needs', 'talking about likes and dislikes' even 'simple statements' and 'hobbies', are quite discouraging and reveal that teaching/learning of English at Primary level is quite ineffective. Only five students could write a few sentences on their own description with certain errors whereas others could not attempt this item of the test Table 2.

The percentage reveal that the students at the final stage of class 8<sup>th</sup> could not achieve what they were expected to do. Apparently the only reason is that their foundation of English language is weak Table 3.

The pupils are learning and inculcating the mispronunciation of the words as given above right from class I through V. These are only a few examples. But this learning cannot be unlearned so easily at some later stages. A common observation is that teacher's mispronunciation has often marred the correct pronunciation of our students. It is aptly said that students learn what teacher knows Table 4.

Based on interviews and observation, it seems that the overall weaknesses in teaching/learning of English at primary and elementary levels are that teachers are not interested in teaching of English at primary and elementary levels because of a lack of training and the fact that passing the 5<sup>th</sup> grade English examination is not compulsory. Moreover, there is a lack of support by the head teacher and managerial staff and the syllabus is not well aligned with student grade-level ability.

**Table 1.** Achievement Test (Class V) (2009).

Test item	Correct response	Percentage	Incorrect Response	Percentage
Pronunciation of simple words	20	40%	30	60%
Social courtesies	15	30%	35	70%
Response to instructions	05	10%	45	90%
Asking for things to meet immediate needs	03	06%	47	94%
Talk about likes and dislikes	02	04%	48	96%
Simple statements	02	14%	48	96%
Description	05	10%	45	90%
Hobbies	00	0%	50	100

**Table 2.** Achievement Test (Class VIII) (2009).

Test item	Correct Response	Percentage	Incorrect Response	Percentage
Reading	05	10%	45	90%
Use of new vocabulary	03	06%	47	94%
Dictation	04	08%	46	92%
Writing simple sentences	02	04%	48	96%
Short paragraph	03	06%	47	94%
Communicative writing	06	12%	44	88%

**Table 3.** English Class III, IV & V Teachers' Pronunciation Results

Word	Teachers' pronunciation	Correct pronunciation
Telephone	/teli:fu:n/	/telɪfəʊn/
Pen	/pɪn/	/pen/
Blue	/blju:/	/blu:/
Little	/litl/	/lɪtl/
Cat	/kæt/ without aspiration	/kæt/ with aspiration
Bicycle	/baɪsaɪk^l/	/baɪsaɪkl/
Ball	/bɑ:l/	/bɔ:l/
Student	/stu:dent/	/stju:dnt/
School	/sʌku:l/	/sku:l/
Table	/teɪbʌl/	/teɪbl/
Tea	/ti:/ without aspiration	/ti:/ with aspiration
Onion	/əʊnjʌn/	/ˈʌnjən/
Giraffe	/dʒera:fi/	/dʒərə:f/
Rhinoceros	/rɪnɒsɪrə:z/	/raɪˈnɒsərəs/
Leopard	/ljupɑ:rd/	/lepəd/
Salad	/sʌlə:d/	/sæləd/
Kettle	/kætʌl/	/kætl/
Coolie	/kuli:/	/ˈku:li/

Table 3. Continued

Carefully	/kærfuli/	/keəfəli/
Cotton	/kɑ:tʌn/	/kɒtn/
Pretty	/preti:/	/prɪti/
Cricket	/kɪrki:t/	/krɪkɪt/
Minutes	/mɪnɪts/	/mɪnɪts/
Collection	/kulekʃʌn/	/k əlekʃn/
Jewellery	/dʒju:ləri:/	/ dʒu:ələri/
Butter	/bʌtər/	/bʌtə(r)/
Resemble	/ri:sɛmbl/	/rɪzɛmbl/
Hoisted	/hɒstɛd/	/hɒɪstɛd/
Memory	/meməri:/	/meməri/
Pleasure	/pleʒr/	/pleʒə(r)/
Healthy	/helði:/	/'helθi/
Autumn	/ɑ:tʌm/	/ɔ:təm/
Blossom	/blɒzʌm/	/blɒsəm/
Strong	/strɑ:ŋ/	/strɒŋ/
Today	/tu:də/	/tə'deɪ/
Courtesy	/kɔrtəsi:/	/kɜ:təsi/
Through	/θru:/	/θru:/
Women	/wumɪn/	/wɪmɪn/

Table 4. Interviews of English Teachers (2009).

Question	Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
(1) Is English taught at primary level?	03	30%	07	70%
(2) Are English teachers at primary and elementary levels trained?	04	40%	06	60%
(3) Is teaching of English compulsory at Primary level?	04	40%	06	60%
(4) Is 5 <sup>th</sup> class English compulsory to pass in annual examination?	00	00%	10	100%
(5) Does your head teacher ask you to teach English?	02	20%	08	80%
(6) Did your DEO/EDO (Education) ever point out the problem of English teaching?	00	00%	10	100%
(7) Do the pupils take interest in learning of English?	03	30%	07	70%
(8) Do English teachers take interest in teaching of English at primary and elementary levels?	02	20%	08	80%
(9) Is English syllabus at primary level well-graded?	06	60%	04	40%
(10) Do you think that the students who are weak in English at primary level may experience frustration at elementary and secondary levels?	09	90%	01	10%

### Observation Report on the practices in teaching/learning of English in Primary and Elementary Classes

In boys primary and elementary schools in Tehsil Attock, (Punjab, Pakistan) 10 classes/teachers were observed.

Although we cannot generalize this study because the population observed is limited, further research in this area may lead to generalization. Comments in response to the observation sheet are:

(i) In primary classes a majority of the pupils were attentive but the teachers' routines were dull. On the

other hand in elementary classes a few students were found confident and cheerful while getting their queries clear and responding to teachers' questions but all in Urdu language. All other students were sitting with blank or worried expressions.

(ii) Teachers in primary and elementary classes were teaching in traditional ways without any regard of learners' moods or needs.

(iii) Only textbook contents were being focused in GTM. The problem was that the students except a few, could not attempt quite simple activities.

(iv) The young learners were confident to do their assignments independently but majority of teachers did not appreciate that trend.

(v) Pair/group work was totally ignored by all teachers.

(vi) When the students failed to do simple activities assigned by the teachers, the more demanding activities were avoided.

(vii) It was found that personalization of activities (learning) does not exist in primary and elementary classes.

(viii) Dominance of course content was common. However, a few teachers used some pictures and charts to make the lesson interesting.

(ix) Only two teachers in elementary classes used some selected texts from English magazines and newspapers: one on social evils, and the other 'letters to editor', to highlight the status of everyday English.

(x) Nothing was in practice except the prescribed contents of English syllabus.

(xi) There was neither interaction nor use of communicative approach.

(xii) Visual aids were found in classes but the teachers under observation rarely used them.

(xiii) Classroom environment was pleasant but only for those who were a bit good in English. For the weak students, English classes were horrible.

(xiv) Grammar translation method was commonly used.

(xv) Four skills of English language were not integrated in any class, however, reading and writing were often integrated.

(xvi) Reading and writing were in practice with no chance of listening and speaking particularly in primary classes.

(xvii) Generally listening and speaking were ignored.

(xviii) Even simple activities proved problematic for young learners both in primary and elementary classes.

(xix) Feedback from both ends, i.e. teacher-student and student-teacher was rare.

(xx) In some cases, teachers' attitude was friendly but generally the class environment was quite magisterial.

(xxi) A few teachers were no doubt coercive and aggressive but others exhibited quite friendly attitude.

(xxii) Some students were using simple courtesies and that too on asking and encouraging by the teachers.

(xxiii) Sometimes they got the instructions and responded accordingly but often there was misinterpretation.

(xxiv) A few pupils could ask for the things they needed only if the teacher urged them to interact in the target language.

(xxv) Some students at elementary level could express their feelings in bits being unable to say that in complete sentences, only when the teachers encouraged them to use the target language.

(xxvi) All students' pronunciation except a few was horrible.

(xxvii) A few students in elementary classes could talk in bits, about their likes and dislikes.

(xxviii) Student-student and student-teacher interaction in the target language was rare.

(xxix) Reading comprehension skill was found poor both at primary and elementary classes.

(xxx) Only controlled and guided writing activities were given to the students both in primary and elementary classes.

(xxxi) The teachers neither used the dictionary themselves in classes nor made the students learn the use of dictionary.

### **Teaching/learning Problems of English at primary and elementary levels**

The problems in teaching and learning of English as L2 are: (i) lack of bilingualism, (ii) inappropriate and inadequate study material, (iii) minimum exposure to English in class and outside the class/school, (iv) extensive social and cultural differences among students, (v) traditional/conventional pedagogy, (vi) untrained and incompetent English teachers. These problems multiply in rural areas where there may be only one teacher who is unprepared to teach English from grades 1-5.

Planning of time and subject matter is another problem. Chastain (1976) is of the view that: "In general, although trying to finish the book for the sake of finishing is frowned upon by some practitioners in the field, such a practice is adopted in many cases (usually, the teacher is frustrated in the attempt)". Such a confused situation results in a confused teaching/learning of English which definitely affects secondary and higher secondary levels.

### **Impact on future learning**

The product of primary and elementary schools directly influences the teaching/learning of English as L2 at secondary and higher secondary levels. Evidence? Interview question 10 reveals the teacher view that the students with weak foundation of English make the classes problematic for an English teacher who also sometimes appears dreadful for such students. The English teacher expects these students to be on a par with the level of secondary and then higher secondary stage but in fact they still lack the knowledge of even basics of English language that they should have experienced at primary and elementary levels. Moreover, at this level the subject-matter becomes comparatively more difficult and passing of English exams is also compulsory. All this proves challenging both for teacher and students.

### **Teacher's attitude**

The teacher is regarded as change agent and it is teacher who has to play a vital role in the implementation of curriculum in its true spirit. But unfortunately in the present world of teachers, criticizing and shifting of responsibility for poor teaching/learning of English at lower level has become a common phenomenon. In the present prevailing situation, no doubt it is the teacher's attitude at primary level that is deeply influencing the teaching/learning of English. What about their training? Unfortunately in Pakistani situation teachers who teach English at primary and elementary level are not trained in teaching of English. The existing practice is that any teacher whether capable or not is assigned the task of teaching English. Hence the results are discouraging. Firstly, the teacher thinks that passing the English exam at the primary level is not compulsory so there should be no compulsion to teach English at this level. In response to question 3 of the interview, 60% teachers point out that teaching of English at the primary level is not compulsory. At the same time 100% teachers responded to question 4 of the interview that it is not compulsory to pass English at the primary level.

Secondly, the English teacher has a lukewarm attitude towards updating his knowledge of the subject and pedagogy. A general observation is that the teachers, who are not interested in teaching of English, do not make efforts to update their knowledge in teaching methodology. However, the fact is that no standardized training is available to these teachers. Sharma, (1992) is also apt in suggesting that: "in order to remain up-to-date, the teachers have to be on their toes. The content right

from prep through higher secondary level has proved a failure as far as intended objectives are concerned. This is due to lack of integrated planning towards implementation.

### **Policy Implications**

This study reveals numerous problems which can be remedied at the policy level. These include a mismatch between evaluation and curricular goals and materials, content textbooks ill-suited to the teachers and students they are intended for, poorly developed poor teacher preparation, a lack of in-service training, and limited evaluation.

### **Curricular Objectives**

*Objectives* of the curriculum provide: (i) a planned direction to teacher, students and administrator, (ii) a basis for rationale and logical curriculum planning, employing appropriate content, learning activities/experiences and evaluation strategies, (iii) students' assessment. The first sifting layer that curriculum developers must pass learning activities through, is to determine if they can achieve the stated objectives. In response to certain objectives a few appropriate activities may facilitate the curriculum intention. It is important for the curriculum designers to determine exactly what the stated objectives seek to achieve when deciding the most suitable learning experiences and activities. In this way the whole teaching/learning process revolves around the achievement of objectives. An important aspect that is often neglected while setting objectives of English language course, particularly for primary and elementary schools in public sector, is sequencing and grading the intended outcomes. This may be the result of over-estimation and over-expectation from young learners at such an early stage.

### **Content**

Selection of *content* is not something independent instead it is dependent upon the objectives of the plan of studies. Waqar, (1999) quotes Hymen who defined content as "consisting of knowledge (facts, explanation, principles, and definitions), skills and processes (reading, writing, calculating, critical thinking, communication, decision making) and values (the belief, right and wrong, beautiful and ugly). Hymen's definition of content



highlights knowledge of facts and principles, pre-determined skills, processes, cultural and social values. Waqar, (1999.) further quotes Print who suggests criteria for content selection that includes 'needs, significance, validity, relevance, utility, learner ability and interest'. Print's suggestion seems more realistic and accurate wherein he emphasized significance, validity, relevance and utility of content. At the same time he focused on learner's ability (level of learning) and his interest that ever proves crucial towards teaching/learning. Content is regarded as the subject matter of the teaching/learning processes and it includes the knowledge, processes or skills and values associated with that knowledge. Print, (1993) concluded that: "The content of the subject in terms of knowledge, skills and values, has been clearly laid out over years kindergarten to year 10 and has stood the test of time very well". Though the contents of English syllabus at primary level are really appreciable that go on the principle of succession i.e. from easy to difficult and from known to unknown yet these contents have proved ineffective/unproductive as they have been designed without determining some clear objectives and other related problems. Print, (1993) further says that: "it is like driving a car before one has integrated the constituent skills of driving effectively, curriculum developers can end up in a crash if they begin with content without taking cognizance of other curriculum elements". Here is an analogy that may further clarify the problem. One dreams on some beautiful palace with the possession of building material only, how funny it will be when one does not know about the architectural shape/design (objective) of the palace and particularly how this material will be used in absence of an efficient engineer and other expertise in the field of construction. Similarly, what will content do if there is no competent teacher, no supervision and no evaluation? But here content designers/developers are not at fault. It is the state that determines some aims, institutions plan suitable goals to achieve those aims and a teacher sets objectives to meet the demand of the goals and finally the aims. There are beautiful content preserved in shining coloured books but unfortunately are not being imparted to the innocent pupils as desired at primary level due to some if(s), not(s) and but(s): (i) the content for class IV and V are not well graded, (ii) teacher is not available, (iii) available teacher is not teaching properly, (iv) supervisors are not supervising, (v) passing of English paper at Grade-5 is not compulsory. To put it in a nutshell Weeler comments that: "content is important only in so far as it helps to bring about intended outcomes". In our situation the content right from prep through higher secondary

level has proved a failure as far as intended objectives are concerned. This is due to lack of integrated planning towards implementation.

The government of the Punjab planned and prepared syllabi and textbooks of English at primary and elementary levels without realizing the varying situations in rural areas, particularly staffing/teaching of English, the general environment, supervision and ultimately evaluation. The ground realities are totally different and the result is dichotomy between theory and practice.

### Teacher preparation

There are multifarious problems in teaching/learning of English as second language, particularly at primary and elementary levels in public sector schools. There is a yawning gap between *objectives, content, learning experiences (methodology) and evaluation*. The 'objectives' have become something subjective. Teaching methodology is often a bitter pill that pupils have to devour even when they detest it. In the prevailing situation 'objectives', 'content', 'method' and 'evaluation', are not being evaluated instead it is merely a process, having gone through, confers the certification of admission in class VI or class IX even if the elementary school graduate is quite unfamiliar with the basic concept of mathematics and alphabet of Urdu and English. The fact is that actual practices do not meet the demand of different components of the curriculum in the least.

This theory-practice dichotomy about teaching/learning of English generally includes certain problems such as: (i) the objectives (if exist in teacher's mind in our situation) are non-communicative, (ii) the approach does not appeal the young learners' emotions, (iii) dominance of prescribed syllabus/content over communicative content, (iv) traditional methodology, (v) ineffective use of material, (vi) insecure classroom environment, (vii) improper activities, (viii) ignoring individual differences, (ix) inadequate feedback and (x) improper evaluation. Moreover, "The English teacher is to make sure that the instruction the learners receive is developmentally appropriate, pedagogically sound as well as culturally responsive" (Koller, 2006).

Undoubtedly English teachers at primary levels influence students' attitude and the quality of future teaching/learning of English but at the same time the absence of curriculum development proves more harmful. Taba (1962, P 425) is of the view that the process of cycling and recycling of curriculum development needs go on and on as follows:

### **In-service Development and Teaching Methodology**

There is a close relationship between objectives, content and teaching method and evaluation. The desired learning may take place, maintaining relationship among all elements of curriculum. An important point to note is that methods are always and more influenced by objectives, content, pupils, schools and class environment as compared to any other element of curriculum. Different teaching/learning activities in English language classroom may include, questioning, discussion, viewing, listening, instructions, inquiry, practice, drill, role-playing, simulation, experiences in community activities/assignments, and so on. An alternative way to facilitate effective communication within the learners while teaching/learning of English language, is to put them in real life like situations.

### **Evaluation Systems**

Evaluation is not to be restricted to students' evaluation only instead it encompasses the whole of the curriculum. Weeler, (1974) comments: "Evaluation of any educational sequence rests upon the difference between initial behaviour and actual outcomes and the relation that these (differences) bear to intended outcomes. Measures of how far the student has come and how far he still has to go are fundamental to curriculum decisions". Here evaluation must not be misinterpreted as evaluation once for all and once forever, instead this is unceasing process of cycling and recycling for improvement of curriculum. All this may provide the reader a deeper insight into the most important aspect of teaching English, i.e. assessment and testing. Teaching without assessing is meaningless and is just wandering about in a blind alley. In educational evaluation two major approaches are used for a just judgement, i.e., (i) product evaluation and (ii) process evaluation (in a specific learning context, e.g., (a) learning experiences and activities' (b) judgement about school effectiveness, (c) classroom interaction, (d) the effectiveness of curriculum, (e) crash programmes). For example, different programmes have been launched in response to the Education Policy 1998-2010 but without any positive results. Generally examinations are regarded only students' evaluation whereas it indirectly examines effectiveness of curriculum, pedagogy, school management and overall supervision. A dreadful experience is, as there is no condition to pass the paper of English in Grade-5 examination, the teachers do not teach English as the content demands. This results in production of poor stuff but with a so called right of

admission in class VI. This badly affects the developmental process of teaching/learning of English at subsequent levels. Ultimately the baseless edifice of English language crumbles.

### **Suggestions**

For a successful process of teaching/learning of English language intended by curriculum developers, students' motivation, teachers attitudes, his competency and performance, in the classroom, are the most vital and crucial aspects of language teaching. If the learners are not well motivated, they will get but the least. At the same time if the teacher is not competent and/or cannot perform well, the end results are bound to be hopeless. All the three aspects have been further elaborated as follows:

- (i) Different phases of curriculum (particularly the syllabus of English) i.e., objectives, content, learning experiences, methodology (organization and integration of learning experiences and content) and evaluation of all this process of teaching/learning of English, are not aligned. All this seems to exist in the form of scattered and isolated pieces of the curriculum. All planning in response to the determined objectives remains only planning in papers. There is no implementation, no check and balance and the result is frustration both for teacher and learners at succeeding stages.
- (ii) The lack of integration of different components of curriculum has resulted in: (i) the teachers ignore the aims, goals and objectives. The drama of teaching/learning of English is going on but with no objectives in mind. Teachers and students are wandering like passengers en route to an unknown destination. (ii) Students' mind operation/activities are absent and ultimately exercise only rote learning. (iii) There is partial/poor imparting of content just enabling the students to put something on the paper during annual examinations by dint of rote learning whereas behaviour is learnt as a result of experiences with content. (iv) There is no evaluation and accountability for poor teaching/learning of English particularly at primary level. Presently English is not compulsory to pass in the primary examination hence neither it gets due attention from the teacher and taught, nor evaluated properly. This is just to show maximum pass %age in annual results (except English at primary and elementary levels). A strange thing is that the department and supervisory staff seem quite satisfied in the present situation. This is nothing but their complacency.
- (iii) The attitude of English teachers deeply affects students' motivation/interest and overall teaching/learning

process of the subject. Attitude itself is simply an intention and behaviour, which is influenced negatively or positively to the extent of importance that is given to English. The teachers' attitudes towards teaching/learning of English at primary and elementary levels totally differ from the treatment of English at secondary and higher secondary levels.

(iv) The actual practices in terms of teaching English to pupils, are generally not consistent with the theory and curriculum and all this results in a theory-practice dichotomy which needs to be addressed. Although to some extent, there were optimistic output but these results cannot be generalized.

(v) The findings show that the specified goals and objectives of the curriculum are not achieved at the desired level. This failure can be attributed to the actualization of curriculum ends, especially the communicative ones, teacher's use of traditional language teaching methods, lack of time, sources and large classes in particular.

(vi) The curriculum itself has some inherent problems so it needs modifications based on teachers views.

(vii) Teachers' poor performance in terms of teaching English to young learners can be a result of the fact that most teachers have not been offered a special training about teaching English to young learners at the primary level.

Presently teaching/learning of English as L2 at primary level is not a defect or priority that matches the national policy. Moreover, the shortage of competent English diminishes the promotion of English language. The system overall lacks coordination and integration of different elements, i.e., objectives, content, learning experiences, and evaluation which is ineluctable for better teaching/learning of English. The Education Policy 1998-2010 has not been translated into practice.

### Recommendations for Reform

(i) Proper teaching of English should start at grade III or IV. However, only listening and speaking/copying like L1, needs to be appreciated from grade-I to grade-II or III.

(ii) Content of English textbooks for classes IV – V and VI – X is not well graded. That is to say junior classes have difficult subject matter and vice versa. The contents need to be developed keeping in view the social environment and the age group of students.

(iii) Only designing of syllabus/content is not sufficient. The trained English teachers are inevitably required.

(iv) Passing of English in each class/grade should be

made compulsory.

(v) The components of teaching/learning of English should be integrated and dovetailed to achieve the desired objectives/outcomes.

(vi) Teachers' attitude towards teaching/learning of English needs to be positive.

(vii) A teacher good in English should be assigned the duty to teach English right from class I – V and similarly VI – VIII.

(viii) Generally English teacher at primary and elementary levels are not trained and competent. In-service teacher training is quite necessary.

(ix) An alert supervision and then accountability may add to the betterment in teaching/learning of English as L2.

(x) Natural process involved in learning L1 and L2 is the same if there is suitable environment and exposure of L2. In either case, the listening and speaking precede reading and writing. Students' oral practice with realia from nursery to class III, by a competent teacher is suggested. A sound pre-existing knowledge and recycled language can be provided to the students by establishing routines (Cameron, 2001). Routine classroom language such as 'Good morning!', 'Sit down', 'May I go', 'Who is fond of playing', 'The teacher wants a volunteer' and so on. Similarly routine classroom activities, e.g. 'Play time', 'Break time', 'Story time' etc. can build up a core language in the beginning of the year which students can handle and use themselves. The use of L1 should be integrated and balanced carefully. L1 culture can be exploited by involving stories and contexts that the students have previously experienced in their L1. This will help the young learners connect a completely new language with the background knowledge they already have.

(xi) English alphabet should be introduced in class III or IV inculcating graded vocabulary, preferably words with one/two syllable(s). In class IV and V, simple expression and linguistic structures should be added. In class VI onward, pupils with the prior knowledge of simple grammatical structures of Urdu (L1) and introductory concepts of English language will hopefully learn English in a better way as learning of different languages becomes a bit more easy because of their universal features. Moreover, whatever the activity is, the young learners should be supported by creating certain situations where lexical and syntactic structures can be contextualized.

(xii) Teachers should not forget the importance of peripheral learning, enriching classroom with audio/visual aids.

(xiii) Communicative continuum will be at stake if textbooks dominate the lesson and controls teaching/lea-

ring of English. However, it is better to use the very content as a framework in which teacher innovates different items depending on students' needs and interests. It is always teacher who is responsible for scaffolding the students.

(xiv) The formal evaluation of young learners' achievement in English language in the very early stages of learning should be avoided as they threaten the students. Instead a process-oriented formative evaluation including observing, detecting and reporting the weaknesses and strengths of learners should be preferred.

(xv) To be more effective, the teachers of young learners of English language should be aware about the varying needs and interests of that age group.

(xvi) Teaching young learners is not an easy job and the teachers need to be more active and creative in finding different ways to involve them in the lesson.

(xvii) Aptitude and suitability of prospective English teachers for primary and elementary levels should be ensured.

(xviii) In English language classroom, let the young learners do different activities independently for better learning. An axiom for learning by doing is that: when I listen, I forget; when I see, I remember but when I do, I learn.

## CONCLUSION

While these issues indicate serious operational weaknesses, they are not beyond redress as the education reform process continues. In fact, as the policymakers debate important areas for educational improvement, teacher education presents itself as the foremost area, in close conjunction with alignment of policy, curriculum, materials, and training. While English has been heretofore neglected, continuing to build upon the foundations of the national economy and political system requires close attention to these matters. It is our hope that real reform in these areas can be addressed.

## REFERENCES

- Cameron L (2001). *Teaching Language to Young Learners*. UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Chastain K (1976). *Developing Second Language Skills: Theory to Practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Rand McNally College Pub. Company, p.3, p. 254, p.440
- Kanu Y (2005). Tensions and dilemmas of cross-cultural transfer of knowledge: post-structural/postcolonial reflections on an innovative teacher education in Pakistan. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 25, 493-513.
- Print M (1993). *Curriculum Development and Design* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) St. Leonards, Allen and Unwin, p. 118, p.140.
- Rahman T (2005). *Reasons for Rage: Reflections on the Education System of Pakistan With Special Reference To English*. In R.M. Hathaway (ed.) *Education Reform in Pakistan: Building for the Future* (pp. 87-106). Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.
- Sharma SR (1992). *Teacher Education in India*. 2. Anmol Pub. p.525.
- Taba H (1962) *Curriculum Development: Theory & Practice*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., , P 425.
- The United Nations (2006). *The Millennium Development Goals Report*. New York: Author.
- United States Agency for International Development (2005). Report for Congress on Education Reform in Pakistan. In R.M. Hathaway (ed.) *Education Reform In Pakistan: Building For The Future* (pp. 123-138). Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.
- Waqar S (1999). *Elementary Education. : Course Code 826*. Islamabad: AIOU, p. 83,p.84, pp. 77-85 pp.381-82.
- Warwick D, Reimers F (1995). *Hope or despair? Learning in Pakistan's primary schools*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Weeler DK (1974). *Curriculum Process*. London: University of London Press. PP 31-34, p.39, p.50.
- Clare W. (2013). <https://edutechdebate.../english-in-action-across-bangladesh/> dated 09<sup>th</sup> Feb.
- Hussein A (2003). *Pakistan National Human Development Report 2003: Poverty, growth, governance*. UNDP Pakistan: Retrieved October 3, 2003, from <http://www.un.org.pk/nhdr/> dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2010.
- Helen E (2013). [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org) dated 04<sup>th</sup>, Feb., 2013
- International Crisis Group (2004). *Pakistan: Reforming The Education Sector. ICG Asia Report No. 84. Islamabad/Brussels*: Author. Retrieved January 2005 from <http://www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=3055&l=1> dated 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2013.
- Jalal Z (2004). *Education and Economic Growth. Presentation at the Pakistan Development Forum 2004*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank. Retrieved June 3, 2004 at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/PAKISTANEXTN/Resources/Pakistan-Development-Forum2004/EducationAndEconomicGrowth.pdf> dated 10 April, 2010.
- Koller M (2006). *Editor's notes. English Teaching Forum, 44 (2)* Retrieved August 1, 2011, from U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website: <http://exchanges.state.gov/englishteaching/forum/archives/docs/06-44-2-a.pdf> dated 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2010.
- Koller MK (2006). *Editor's notes. English Teaching Forum, 44 (2)* Retrieved August 1, 2011, from U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs website: <http://exchanges.state.gov/englishteaching/forum/archives/docs/06-44-2-a.pdf> dated 25 April, 2010.
- Nepal Teacher Development, [www.volunteeringnepal.org/programme/details.php?pid=87](http://www.volunteeringnepal.org/programme/details.php?pid=87) dated 08<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2013
- Uva Province Primary Teachers Training, [www.britishcouncil.org/srilanka-project-elt-Uva-pttp.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/srilanka-project-elt-Uva-pttp.htm) dated 05<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2013
- The Hindu, [www.hindu.com/thehindu/edu/2003/05/...htm](http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/edu/2003/05/...htm) dated 09<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2013
- The Asian EFL Journal, <[asian-efl-journal.com](http://asian-efl-journal.com)> dated 08<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2013
- UNESCO Org., [www.unesco.org/education/.../pakistan/report\\_1.htm](http://www.unesco.org/education/.../pakistan/report_1.htm) france dated 07<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2013
- Uva Province Primary Teachers Training, [www.britishcouncil.org/srilanka-project-elt-Uva-pttp.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/srilanka-project-elt-Uva-pttp.htm) dated 05<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2013
- UNESCO Org., [www.unesco.org/education/.../pakistan/report\\_1.htm](http://www.unesco.org/education/.../pakistan/report_1.htm) france dated 07<sup>th</sup> Feb., 2013
- World Bank Group (2003). *2003 Pakistan Country Update*. Washington, D.C.: Author. Retrieved June 3, 2004 from

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPAKISTAN/Country%20Home/20187182/CountryUpdate.pdf> dated 05th Sep, 2010.  
YesPakistan.org (Staff writer) (2002). *The challenge of teacher training in Pakistan*. Schaumburg, IL: Human Development Foundation.

Retrieved December 2003 from  
[http://www.yespakistan.com/education/teacher\\_training.asp](http://www.yespakistan.com/education/teacher_training.asp) dated  
07th Feb, 2011.

## Appendix 'A'

### General Aims and Objectives of English Teaching at Primary Level

After completion of the course students should be able to:

- (i) recognize alphabet, vowel sounds and words,
- (ii) exchange social courtesies,
- (iii) follow and respond to instructions/directions both verbal and non-verbal,
- (iv) use of social courtesy expression in observance of social-culture norms,
- (v) ask for things to meet immediate needs,
- (vi) talk about feelings/physical conditions,
- (vii) report about on-going activities in the classroom or immediate environment,
- (viii) talk about preferences/likes and dislikes, giving reasons,
- (ix) talk about possessions/belongings and introduce family members,
- (x) ask questions and give answers related to the present and past,
- (xi) make simple statements about numbers, weather, time, dates and colours,
- (xii) describe objects in terms of physical features,
- (xiii) count money,
- (xiv) seek or give personal information,
- (xv) describe people and traits of their personality,
- (xvi) talk about future action,
- (xvii) talk about height and length,
- (xviii) talk about age,
- (xix) talk about hobbies,
- (xx) inculcate matter where possible, pertaining to Islamic civilization,
- (xxi) inculcate the sense of gratitude to Allah Almighty for His blessings,
- (xxii) inculcate the sense of national cohesion and integration.

## Appendix 'B'

### General Aims and Objectives of English Teaching at Elementary Level

After completion of the course the students should be able to:

- (i) listen and speak with understanding,
- (ii) speak clearly with correct pronunciation, proper stress and intonation,
- (iii) read with understanding,
- (iv) recognize and use new vocabulary effectively,
- (v) read effectively with speed,
- (vi) use basic dictionary skills,
- (vii) write simple two clause sentences,
- (viii) take dictation accurately,
- (ix) express simple ideas in writing, in short paragraphs and short stories,
- (x) communicate and write effectively,
- (xi) read to promote unity and observance of Islamic moral standard, where possible,
- (xii) read to form ethical and social values and precepts (humanism, tolerance, patience, etc.)

## Appendix C

### OBSERVATION SHEET

S/No	Classroom practices in teaching/learning of English	Yes	No	Some degree
1	Teacher makes students feel safe and have pleasure in learning			
2	Teacher regards students moods and needs			
3	Range/variety of activities go on in class			
4	Teacher gives students responsibility to work independently.			
5	Pair/group work is in practice			
6	More demanding activities			
7	Individual difference are regarded to personalize learning experiences.			
8	Dominance of course content			
9	Use of realia			
10	Grammar content are favoured by the teacher.			
11	Communicative content are appreciated by the teacher.			
12	Use of audio/visual aids			
13	Classroom environment appeals students emotionally.			
14	Teaching is through communicative approach.			
15	Language skills are integrated.			
16	Reading and writing dominate listening/speaking.			
17	Listening and speaking are ignored.			
18	Games/activities are problematic.			
19	Feedback from teacher			
20	Teacher's attitude is friendly.			
21	Teacher's attitude is magisterial, coercive and aggressive.			
22	Social courtesies are exchanged/practised.			
23	Students can follow instructions.			
24	Students can ask for things to meet their immediate needs.			
25	Students can talk about their personal feelings.			
26	Students' pronunciation is good.			
27	Students can talk about their likes and dislikes.			
28	Student-student and teacher-student interaction is common in classroom.			
29	Reading comprehension is satisfactory.			
30	Writing activities are given by the teacher.			
31	Teacher makes the students learn the use dictionary.			

**Appendix 'D'**

**INTERVIEWS OF ENGLISH TEACHERS**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
(1) Is English taught at primary level?				
(2) Are English teachers at primary and elementary levels trained?				
(3) Is teaching of English compulsory at Primary level?				
(4) Is 5 <sup>th</sup> class English compulsory to pass in annual examination?				
(5) Does your head teacher ask you to teach English?				
(6) Did your DEO/EDO (Education) ever point out the problem of English teaching?				
(7) Do the pupils take interest in learning of English?				
(8) Do English teachers take interest in teaching of English at primary and elementary levels?				
(9) Is English syllabus at primary level well-graded?				
(10) Do you think that the students who are weak in English at primary level may experience frustration at elementary and secondary levels?				