

# English Language: A Language of Academic domains in Pakistan

Illahi Baksh, Rafique. A. Memon, Shakeela Shah & Afifa Khanam

**ABSTRACT:** This review article indicates the importance of English Language (EL) at tertiary levels in Pakistani institutes with the purpose of highlighting its use in teaching and research. The English language has played a very important role in the socio-cultural development of any country. It has achieved a high status and power over other languages because it has a powerful economy in the world. In Pakistan, English language is an official landmark in academic domains. This review suggests some models of English language which are used internationally. Since, English language has achieved a global status that showcases a great contribution convincingly in professional development of English language instructors. Similarly, this scenario of EL reveals some language programs initiated for professional growth of Pakistani teachers. In this regard, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan has left no stone unturned in funding and supporting professional programs at universities. In this review paper, we have also highlighted changes made for a better English syllabi that is in line with international standards for students in Pakistan.

**Keywords:** *English language, international and global status, professional development, English language teaching in Pakistan*

## 1. Introduction

English language has high status and exclusive use in the academic world. It is used as an international language. Many researchers have talked about its international use and have divided it into different circles it operates. While the rise of World Englishes as a field of scholarly review realizes the enhanced acknowledgment of numerous variants, it neglects to completely represent the truth of English use as a worldwide language (D'Angelo, 2010; Seargeant, 2005). Since English is being formed and reinforced extensively by its local speakers, but rather by those talking it in non-local settings (Mehrotra, 2000). Honna (1998a) contends that, the spread of English in Asia is not synonymous with transplanting American or British English into the district; rather, it involves a progressive de-Anglo-Americanization that would empower the foundation of new assortments of English that reflect Asian lifestyles.

The use of English language has been divided into three circles, and the focus was laid on historical, regional functions and status of the language (Kachru, 1997, 2006). Further, he names the Inner circle that includes the native English speaking countries; the Outer circle includes former colonies like India, Pakistan and last but not least, the Expanding circle consists of China, Japan and Turkey like countries (Kachru, 2006). These countries in expanding circle are strongly affected by the West and now English has become the important language of almost all disciplines in general, education, business and technology in particular. The model of world

Englises presented by Kachru was a focus of discussion. There is another point of view about the international use of English language. However, another model is known as multi-dialectical (Crystal, 1995). Kachru's concentric circle model doesn't suffice the reality of internationally use of the English language. Kachru' model is critiqued and interpreted as "norm producing, norm developing and third norm dependent'. The reality is not clearly described in the concentric circles of Kachru. On the other hand, Crystal's (1995) idea that there is not yet a common, standard worldwide variety of English and this is aligned with Kachru' argument. More importantly, an integrated opinion of international use of English language wherein varieties are not excluded into distinct circles. Further, (Crystal, 1995) claimed that:

We are already multi-dialectical and that some form of standard, international spoken English is inevitable as a supplement to the dialects we make use of now: an informal local dialect, a formal intranational dialect and an educated international written dialect. (p. 3)

The multi-dialectical model of Crystal acknowledges changes and developments of innovative variations of English language. Another view of international use of English is suggested in the Modiano's (1999a) modified concentric circles. In other words, this model is referred as a centripetal circles of international English. The circles include; (1) proficient speakers of English as an International Language (EIL), (2) speakers with native or foreign language proficiency, (3) Learners of English /people who do not know English (Burt, 2005). In this model, Modiano (1999a) claimed that the native English speakers are not necessarily "proficient non-native speakers of EIL, rather than the native speakers who are not proficient in EIL, are better equipped to define and develop English as a tool in cross-cultural communication"(p. 25). In contrast, this notion is contradictory to Kachru' model wherein L1 speakers are proficient. English as globally functioned language can longer be limited to any particular place (Modiano, 1999). These models of internationally use of English language indicate that the importance of English stays prominent and its use is considered worldwide in sciences, business and trade. In the light of discussion, Kilickaya (2009) has described a status of English as an international language and as a lingua franca. It is mentioned that the use of English is not only associated with expanding Circle, rather it also involves native speakers and people form Outer Circle English. Currently, English is acknowledged as the best option for communication. People from

different backgrounds communicate in English. It may be understood that a focus has been globally given to it.

## **2. A global status**

English has emerged as a global language. It has achieved a genuinely global status because it has played a special role that is recognized in the world. There are some views with this emergence of English. If English is used as second or foreign language, people feel motivated to learn it because they know that it will help them to keep in touch with other people. To achieve proficiency in the target language, people should make efforts. When language achieves the global status it has to be spoken by other countries around the world. These countries decide to give special place to that language in their communities. Crystal (2003, p. 4) mentions two reasons for English as a global language. Firstly, language can be made; (a) official language of the country, (b) medium of communication, (c) mastery of language as early as possible, (d) description as a second language, (e) complement to L1.

The role of English as an official language is best highlighted because over seventy countries, such as India, Singapore, Nigeria etc. It has a special kind of status. Secondly, language can be made, (1) priority in teaching without official status (2) children are taught in schools (3) English is widely taught as foreign language over 100 countries such as China, Russia, and Germany. Some reasons discussed above guarantee that English enjoys the status of a language of globalization. Giving favour to one language over other, there may be other reasons such as “historical tradition, political expediency, and the desire for commercial, cultural or technological contact” (Crystal, 2003, p. 5). In language supporting environment, the resources to learn it are devoted to learners who can have access through media, libraries, schools and institutes of higher education. Crystal (2003) has written that what makes language global or of international status is that of its associations between dominating language, powerful economy, cultural influence and technological progress. There is an intimacy between language, economy, culture and technology. This link seems transparent when the historical perspective of English is reported. In the light of same thought, Crystal (2003) also argues that no language can ever be internationally used as a medium of instruction until its dominance or power base. Additionally, no language exists independently without its people who use it socially. It is present in human brains, mouths ears etc. The people who speak that language succeed, as a result language

succeeds and if they fail then language falls (p.07). Moreover, Crystal (2003) explores that inherent structure or grammar of any language doesn't make it of international standard such as he explained:

A language does not become a global language because of its intrinsic structural properties, or because of the size of its vocabulary, or because it has been a vehicle of a great literature in the past, or because it was once associated with a great culture or religion. These are all sources which can motivate someone to learn a language, of course, but none of them alone, or in combination, can ensure a language's world spread. (p. 9)

A language has traditionally become an international language for one chief reason: 'the power of its people' – especially their political and military power. The explanation is the same throughout history. English has the prestige of being a global because of two reasons; "geographical-historical and socio-cultural respectively.

### **3. English Language in Pakistan**

English language has achieved its status and importance in the world in general. It is known worldwide spoken language to some extent. It is also considered a lingua franca. In Pakistan, English was used as an official language and source of communication among the elite class (Shamim, 2008, Gopang, 2016). Before independence, official status of English was associated with the part of colonized subcontinent. Afterwards, it also held the same status. English language was the part of ruling class. And it was also deemed as the language of power and dominance (Shamim, 2008). In contrast, today the use of English language is not limited to only the elite class people, rather it is also used by all literate people and working class in Pakistan. The importance and status of English has some strong background. In this regard, Bughio (2012) has mentioned that a great importance has been given to English language because of some developments it has made. For example, it has an official status in the country and as a result it ensures standard jobs and brightening future. However, the existing literature also indicates that English has not prevailed in Pakistan without any resistance. Such resistance has been done to check an importance of English in Pakistan. Despite the fact, it has contributed a lot in development of academic institutes of Pakistan. Thus, people from all fields give importance to

English as the contributing factor in country's development (Mahboob, 2009). With these researchers, English was introduced to novice people and researchers as a language in demand for academic life and professional growth in the world in general, in Pakistan in particular.

Pakistani students and parents prefer to use English language in their academic and professional life. There is a great need of English in the country. For example, some survey studies on Pakistani students' attitudes towards English were conducted and the results confirmed a demand of English (Mansoor 2005; Rahman, 2002; Mahboob, 2002). The research surveys have provided rich data confirming that English language is in demand in Pakistan. However, some studies suggested that the mother-tongue of any child should be used for basic schooling and English at higher levels (Coleman, 2010). Even so students' parents welcome the use of English as a medium of instruction at all levels. Coleman (2010) suggests that L1 for early schooling of a child is essential. Apart from this, in the opinion of Rahman (2007), it is not surprising to consider English as the marker of elitist social status and the most desired skill for lucrative employment in the country.

Pakistan is the country in which six major languages are spoken and over 59 minor languages exist (Rahman, 2002) indicating a multilingual and a multicultural perspective of the country. According to Mahboob (2004), 6 million people speak English and this may be the reason that it has emerged with a new variety known as SAVE. In South Asia, Muslims' attitude towards English has been classified into three conducts; (1) reject and resist (2) accept and assimilate (3) practical use (Rahman, 2005). Another point of view is incorporated is that of nativization. Now it is the true picture of muslims responses to English (Mahboob, 2004, 2016). The use of English language in Pakistan has been frequently discussed in research (Pathan, 2012). Some motivational sources; interpersonal, instrumental, integrative, regulative and creative have been highlighted. English has become a pattern of life, and its cultural influence continues to be strong (Haque, 1983, as cited in Channa, 2014). This influence of English was acknowledged three decades ago, in Pakistan, a significance and status of English has increased strongly (Memon, 2012; Mahboob, 2002; Norton, 2010, Pathan, 2012). In 1993s, Abbas (1993) discussed five major functions of English language in Pakistan. It is exclusively used in (1) Civil Administration and the bureaucracy, (2) Legal system of federal and provincial governments, (3) Defence forces (i.e., the Army, Air Force, and Navy), (4) Print and electronic media, (5) In the

domain of education following bilingual or trilingual pattern. (p. 148-149). In the same vein, Manan, David and Dumanig (2016) labelled English as a passport to success in professional and personal walks of life in Pakistan. The society is divided into class systems. There has been acute consciousness even in lower class parents who want their children to enrol in English medium schools. A rapid growth and spread of English language has attracted all the strata of society in Pakistan. It is believed that if a child is exposed at early age to English, he/she will learn it quickly. The importance of English language is known through its use in academic and professional walks of life.

English language as a compulsory course in all disciplines is taught at tertiary level in Pakistan. In universities, English is a medium of instruction. Pathan (2012) argues that students who do not master over English or have poor language skills, their survival at the course is not possible. In this context, the importance of English is undeniable because of compulsory subject at undergraduate/ graduate levels (Mansoor, 2005; Malik, 1996). Moreover, according to Mansoor (2005), there is a sad scenario that students who first time get entrance to universities lack English skills and she claimed that their weakness stays same because we recruit untrained and inexperienced language teachers. Mostly teachers have degrees in English literature that basically is problematic with students learning English skills. In the same vein, Bughio and Gopang (2014) have stated that teachers use the same traditional approaches for teaching English language in classroom. The existing knowledge of literature indicates that teachers at tertiary levels are not trained professionally. However, keeping it into account, in 2007, HEC of Pakistan took initiatives to introduce English language teaching reforms (ELTR) for teachers. The purpose of the projects is to train teachers freely in colleges and universities. With these language programs, a hope was created for change in teaching approaches. Bughio and Gopang (2014) also suggested that long term programs should be introduced to ensure better results for quality of language teaching in Pakistan.

In Panjab, Mansoor (2005) has written that curriculum is followed and designed on the bases of literature (e.g. fiction and non –fiction). Her study reports an example from the University of Punjab wherein the course at graduate level is comprised of two sections; firstly, the paper is designed from book of fiction and non-fiction; while another paper consists of grammatical composition. In contrast, Pathan (2012) has stated that teaching of functional English and

communication skills using communicative methods is encouraged in the professional universities such as; Engineering, medical and Business schools in Pakistan. It is understood from different views of teaching English at tertiary level in the country. With controversial views of teaching English at university level, The British Council of Pakistan in collaboration with HEC initiated some courses for undergraduates and graduates of Pakistani universities in 2013. The courses are not designed in the view of traditional way of incorporation of fiction and non-fiction material in assessment of English language. The language books are entitled as:

1. English for Academic Purpose
2. English for Employment
3. English for Specific Purpose

The main purpose of language courses is to develop language skills among the students who enter universities and lack language skills for communication.

#### **4. Teaching of English Language**

In Pakistan, English language teaching scenario indicates that the degree awarding institutes are categorized into (1) English-medium schools (2) Vernacular-medium schools (3) Madrasah (4) English language teaching institutes. In addition, Bughio (2014) has included another institute known as (5) Other English Language Teaching Institutes. The Society of Pakistani English Language Teachers (SPELT) conducted a survey to check an importance of English language. Results of survey showed that a consensus was developed generally in the country that English is mandatory. Furthermore, majority of teachers preferred the use of English from class 1; while a few teachers showed consent for the use of it from class.

In Pakistan, the translation method is generally used to teach English in government schools. L2 is translated into L1 in schools. To students, grammatical rules are introduced while the oral use of English language is discouraged (Rehman, 2001; Bughio & Gopang, 2014). An effect of such teaching supports the rote learning rather than a creative use of English. As a result, learning is only focused on reading and writing skills while listening and speaking are ignored in Vernacular medium schools. Hardly any focus is given to oral communication skills in so called English medium schools. A scenario of government schools is highlighted as:

The teacher tells the students to open their text books on page 64 and take out their copies (notebooks) to write words meaning. She writes the title of the lesson (a fairly long reading passage in the text book followed by comprehension questions and unrelated grammar exercise questions) on the blackboard. First, a few students are nominated to read the part of the text aloud. Then the teacher reads it out loud, stopping occasionally to explain and/or write the meaning of a difficult word on the blackboard in Urdu (Shamim, 2008, p.240).

Further, she has mentioned that the similar process is carried out till end of a specified period of time. Students stay passive and they note what a teacher has written on the blackboard. No learning takes place in such teaching. Students only focus on noting things throughout. It doesn't end here but the same procedure continues the next day (Shamim, 2008). She also highlights saying that the scenario in the private schools is not different. Classrooms are teacher centred. Teachers invest most of their time in giving lectures and as a result students keep listening to. A passivity on their part makes them weak academically and isolates them from peers in classroom. In such learning environment, they develop cramming and memorizing skills and they badly communicate in English. A real learning should engage them in discussion in which a creative thinking is created. They feel confident and learn communicative skills with zeal (Shamim, (2008). She has claimed that their creative ability is discouraged and muddled (Shamim, 20008; Bughio & Gopang, 2014).

#### **4. Language policy issue**

However, much has been discussed on the issue of language policy (medium of instruction in schools). Recently, Channa (2014) researched on primary school teachers attitudes towards language policy introduced by the government of Pakistan. This study has revealed positive attitude of teachers about the existing role and impact of English. Dissatisfaction was also found among teachers who believed that they lacked English proficiency skills and they need to be trained for that purpose so that they can better service the purpose. Some teachers believe that when they teach in English as a result they become able to be proficient in it. Channa's study (2014) indicated that teachers associate English language skills with trainings. The teachers acknowledged that the language policy might have worked well if they were trained in

professional skills. There is a great need of proficient and trained teachers who have mastery over English and can effectively transfer to their students. At primary level if government wants English language policy work effectively, it may take serious steps to appoint skilful teachers. In this research, teachers showed a very positive attitude towards English medium teaching in case the teachers are appointed trained and professional in English. Similarly, Manan, David and Dumanig (2016) analysed the English medium policy in Pakistani schools. The findings revealed that “early English-medium policy appears counterproductive as most students demonstrate poor English language proficiency. Sources such as unavailability of qualified English teachers, poor pedagogies, sociocultural dynamics, and overall institutional weaknesses contribute to the failure of the policy” (p. 219). It concludes that maximum exposure and greater learning beliefs associated with earlier English teaching are delusional as those beliefs are underpinned neither by theories of bilingual/multilingual education nor by schools and social environment of children. Furthermore, Manan et al., (2016) have acknowledged that the importance of English language cannot be denied, so it is suggested that early English policy should be revised and it has to be replaced with the mother tongue. Across all strata of society, the democratization of English and its equitable distribution is encouraged and advocated (Manan et al., 2016). It is additionally evaluated an advancement of English language, and the language status arrangement as it influences the tertiary level of direction. While the Educational institutes recognize an importance of language as it needs the country in connection to its worldwide impact through its strategies on enrolment. For example, it neglects to establish a suitable framework that could guarantee that learners are outfitted with the oral abilities they need to impart at national, local, and global levels with different clients of English. This disappointment is somewhat owing to an absence of political will to update language instructional method from the grassroots upwards. In addition, there are additionally unpretentious social issues verging on ethno-culturalism which affect the execution of English language instruction approaches. Ethno-culturalism keeps learners from building up a great disposition to L2, and subsequently, they may not talk such language. It is by testing the social generalizations and offering learners elective worldwide points of view that etymological and social ethnocentrism can be separated. The well-meaning exertion of language policy at internationalizing the learners will stay explanatory until what goes ahead in the L2 classroom mirrors the strategy outlines.

The importance of acquiring knowledge through English as, “the role of education in school is now seen as to provide the generic skills needed to acquire new knowledge and specialist skills in the future: learning how to learn. Literacy in the national language and perhaps the mother tongue where that is different, remains a basic skill, so does numeracy. But information technology – how to use computers and applications such as word processors, spreadsheets and internet browsers – has become just as important in basic education. In globalized economies, English seems to have joined this list of basic skills. Quite simply, its function and place in the curriculum is no longer that of ‘foreign language’ and this is bringing about profound changes in who is learning English, their motives for learning it and their needs as learners. In Pakistan, Bughio and Gopang (2014) have stated that English has been a language of social and educational development. It plays a pivotal role in the social spheres of life in the country. The educational policies discussed and critiqued show the importance of English as a lingua franca.

## **5. English language teaching approaches**

English language teaching approaches have been a centre of discussion in second language learning (Gopang et al., 2016). A teaching approach is considered as complex phenomenon because it varies in nature to learning and teaching practices. Linguists and researchers have focused issues related with approach in teaching second/ foreign language. Many approaches and methods have been discussed and suggested for teaching. By approach we mean a “set of correlative assumptions” contrasts with method as an “overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material (Keith & Helen, 1999). So an approach to language teaching and learning represents an outline conception of the way in which it should proceed. In summing up, within one approach there can be many methods. In terms of language teaching in classroom, three perspectives as Keith and Helen (1999) have suggested such as (1) interactional perspective between teacher and learner; (2) instructional effects on language development; (3) different methods may have different effects on language development. This actually suggests that classroom research refers to a range of different practices which are employed for teaching language in the class.

A great concern has been shown to identify the best method for teaching second/foreign language in the world. Interestingly, there has been series of changes and developments in teaching methods, yet no consensus is developed for labelling a particular method as the best one

in SLA (Gopang et al., 2016). A term methodology is associated with teaching language proficiency. It includes various methods used in language practices from primary to higher levels of education. Various methods were introduced for the purpose of teaching language including (1) Grammar Translation method, (2) Direct Method, (3) Audio- Lingual Method (4) The Silent Method, (5) Communicative Language Teaching Method. In the context of Pakistan, the case is not different. In schools and colleges, a prime focus is on grammar translation method (GTM). However, a scenario in tertiary level is bit different because a focus is shifted to communicative language teaching method (Pathan 2012; Gopang, 2015).

In case of teaching methods, Gopang (2016) referred Rowlinson (1994) who discussed as:

What is taught and how it is taught is a product of the ideas of the time, as well as of the conditions in which it is to be taught. It is society that determines the content of education, in the light of the dominant philosophy and more recently scientific concept. Many, perhaps most, new approaches are rediscoveries of old methods neglected and left in the shade, now re-illuminated by the light of social need. Language teaching, like all other teaching, reflects the temper of the times. (p.07)

It refers to ideas showing the needs of the time. As it is cited that an overlap of methods continued. Teaching methods have continuously been replaced because one method could not succeed appropriately. In support of a change in instructive approach, Matsuda (2009) requires the re-imagining of instructing practices to mirror a universal way of English, particularly where learners are figuring out how to speak with individuals from various national, dialect and social foundations. Enlisting 99.2% of the AETs from the inward circle nations (Miyagi et al., 2009) simply offers learners just the local speaker point of view of L2, though, a more illustrative catchment region stretching out to the external and growing circles would give L2 variants that are fundamental for worldwide correspondence. The main purpose of teaching methods is either accuracy/fluency, memorization, vocabulary building or grammar rules that students are supposed to have mastery over them. Gopang (2016) suggests that teaching methods applied in Pakistani context are more teacher centered and less learner centered. This factor could create less motivation and high level of anxiety in learners. Furthermore, he recommends that learner autonomy in learning might be prime part of teaching methods used in teaching second/foreign languages in Pakistan.

## **6. English Language programs**

The British Council of Pakistan in collaboration with HEC has initiated language programs known as Transforming English language Skills (TELS) for teachers. HEC basically supports and funds universities to organize such workshops on suggested title “Professional development for teaching through the medium of English. Many researchers have discussed that English needs to be common language of each individual in society not only elitist in Pakistan. In Pakistani universities, teachers who graduate in English literature are recruited as English language teachers. It shows that appointed teachers who are teaching English are not certified language teachers. As a result, students lack language proficiency and skills for learning English because of teaching offered from non-qualified tutors in universities. Pathan (2012) has claimed that English language teaching scenario is somewhat different in professional institutes compared to general universities in Pakistan. Recruitment of English teachers is on the basis of their degrees in linguistics and language teaching. At engineering university, a focus is mainly laid on developing communication skills among engineering graduates who contribute to the international community wherein English is frequently spoken.

For educational development, teacher training is mandatory. For developing countries like Pakistan, a demand for teacher trainers was acknowledged by the World Bank (1999) and UNESCO (1998). And a focus was laid in-service training. Farooq (1995), Bughio & Gopang (2014) strongly recommended that teachers’ training should be made common because the quality of education depends on trained and professional teachers. Researchers also support such programs for promoting quality education. Without trainings, teachers are faced with some difficulties that might hinder them in designing curriculum, planning syllabi, teaching courses, organizing classrooms and analysing learners’ specific needs. In addition, to promote students learning, there is a need to adapt instruction which is likely developed through teacher education programs/ trainings (Hammond, 1999a).

In his study on teacher training in Pakistan, Gopang (2016) interviewed participants and one of the interviewee stated in response to questions ‘How do you view teacher training in Pakistan?’

The true teachers are developed through such trainings. And these programs can increase knowledge of teachers regarding subject matter and general

teaching skills. Teachers should be facilitated with these programs not only in Pakistan but also in abroad. Since, HEC has taken steps to promote teacher education. Many short programs are organized jointly by HEC and other countries in order to familiar teachers with global systematized programs. The purpose is to cascade the effects of such program locally in own context. (p.9)

It is now observed that the focus on quality of English language teaching is seriously taken into consideration in Pakistan. This seriousness on the part of government shows that new graduates have to be successful and get good jobs. Higher Education Commission Pakistan has initiated ELTR projects to facilitate language teachers in university. The objectives of this project are professionally train teachers, develop communications skills and introduce standard teaching strategies to the learners. More importantly, under the project of ELTR, language experts are hired from U.S.A and U.K to render their services and transfer language skills to the teachers in Pakistan. SPELT and TELS programs help learners and teachers to have mastery over it. The proficiency in English language is basic requirement of academic life. Mahboob (2009) states that people from almost all disciplines prefer English to other languages for the development of the country. Furthermore, there is a consensus among researchers that still English needs to be promoted in Pakistani academic institutes. As Bughio (2014) maintains that English can be improved through effective means and he suggests more research on the effectiveness of language teaching. Students from different geographically located areas come to learn English at tertiary levels. They share different experiences from their early life and this study also focus on demographic information of students who are the part of the research (Bughio & Gopang, 2014).

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## **7. Conclusion**

English language as a compulsory subject has been an integral part of syllabi in higher educational institutes of Pakistan. It has achieved a great importance in academic and professional life of people in the country. The use of English language internally and globally stays high. A brief overview of functions of English in Pakistan is also mentioned. In addition to it, teaching approaches are also critically stated. Importantly, the training programs organized by HEC and LID are showcased in order to show that language teachers are supposed to be

professionally sound. The quality of teaching is focused introducing innovative approaches for learning and teaching practices. English language as narrated by Bughio and Gopang (2014), enjoys high status in Pakistan; it is considered as a lingua franca, a common language for communication in the different classes of the society but particularly it is officially used in all walks of professional and academic spheres of life.

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