

Exploring the Pedagogical Strategies for Supporting English Competencies among Public Secondary School Learners

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Abstract

This study explores teachers' perceptions, challenges, and approaches for supporting English competencies in public secondary school learners with communication anxiety in secondary study rooms. Eight educators from various schools participated in qualitative research through semi-structured interviews to express their ideas and techniques. The findings indicate that English competencies, such as reading and writing, are often modelled and homogeneous in task challenges, whereas listening and speaking are frequently overlooked due to the critical backwards learning environment of public schools, which persists in the 21st century, as public school learners' communicative skills are being compromised. Some teachers support learners' communicative skills at their own pace to alleviate learners' communication anxiety, which is a significant problem among students stemming from a lack of a solid study foundation. Other issues, such as interest, confidence, lack of motivation, or lack of practice, also arise. Fear of embarrassment and time restrictions make educating in English learning situations challenging. Furthermore, the results indicate that implementing a free anxiety environment facilitates feedback and reflection. It helps students raise confidence in foreign language acquisition, an important strategy to alleviate communication anxiety. Results are used to discuss the various techniques, as well as the pedagogical implications that could potentially follow. Only a teacher who creates an environment with excellent motivation and practice, and less anxiety, can help learners, regardless of their background, improve their communicative skills effectively and succeed in achieving proficiency at an international level. Furthermore, the research demonstrates that the pedagogical environment requires teachers to gain more knowledge, and contemporary technological accessories to support communicative skills and reduce communication anxiety among students in public secondary schools.

Keywords: Pedagogy, English Competencies, Secondary School Teachers.

Introduction

Teaching is not a profession; it is a responsibility. It is the responsibility to adopt a specific pedagogical approach that moulds an individual's character and future. Pedagogy refers to the teacher's initial impression of the classroom setting (Friesen, 2022).

It is the real processing, developed in a special and practical environment. Although a didactic purpose can be articulated in written form, the unique interactive characteristics of an educational

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experience make it challenging. Reflection and action show that there are core concepts that support actual classroom experiences and the teacher's teaching style (Murphy, 2009). Friesen (2022) define it as teachers' self-portraiture as a pedagogical mirror. This specifies an unbreakable, purely interpersonal, single-sided expertise mirror readily available to educators.

Similarly, pedagogy is the expertise of educating and shaping young minds, as well as inspiring learners of all ages, when children and teachers come together under one roof. It encompasses the methods, strategies, and philosophies that educators employ to facilitate the teaching and learning setting (Ahmed et al., 2023). It is in quality education that a pivotal role is played in moulding the future citizen. It believes that everyone has the right to a quality education that incorporates lifelong learning (Samad & Lashari, 2022). This implies that education must be pursued throughout life, not just in school. It is critical that everyone has access to opportunities for self-improvement and learning, and that this process be democratic, ensuring everyone has an equal chance to take advantage of these possibilities (Chalaune, 2021; Grassini, 2023; Holst, 2023).

The teacher is reputed as a benchmark in creating an intellectual and responsible generation. The teacher is the foundation on which the student depends, and the presence of the teacher is influenced by the student's life at school (Buriro et al., 2023; Fayaz et al., 2023). Learning has been at the heart of the education process, as learners gain knowledge of any subject and absorb it for long-term achievement. The planning of any subject learning is one of the goals to acquire sound knowledge, completeness, and awareness of subject competencies areas (Lashari et al., 2023a; Rehman et al., 2023). The transformation of education requires educators to move beyond traditional roles and become mentors of active learning. This necessitates comprehensive training and support in their interpersonal competencies (Salman et al., 2023). Teachers are expected to foster curiosity, thinking, and problem-solving skills in their students. They need improved working conditions, continuous professional development, and equitable recognition. At the same time, the digital revolution offers opportunities, ensuring access and enhancing teachers' digital proficiency are crucial to prevent exacerbating inequalities, collaboration among policymakers, educators, and technology providers is essential to ensure equitable access to quality education (Guerriero, 2014; Ali, 2019; Craig, 2023; Channa, 2022; Sullivan, 2020).

English is the global language; its current status is based on its origin and the causes of its international success, which have led to its widespread recognition and reputation on every continent, in education, profession, technology, and society (Lashari et al., 2018; Lashari, Umrani, & Buriro, 2021). The English language holds a special status in seventy-five countries, with one-third of the world's manuals being published in English and two-thirds of all textbooks being written in English (Kapur, 2019).

They accepted that English is imparted as a subject. The English Medium of Instruction (EMI) is often not highly valued because many educators lack the proficiency to use it effectively. For many students, language becomes a barrier to learning content subjects (Lashari & Umrani, 2023; Lashari et al., 2021). Challenges related to teachers' preparation, teaching methodologies, language competencies, resources, and assessment are generally more pressing and require greater readiness. Issues concerning teachers' proficiency and methodological competency, teaching resources, and assessment are usually more prepared. There are few opportunities for language practice and interaction in the classroom. The lack of exposure to English is one of the most significant issues faced by educators (Abbasi et al., 2025; Simming et al., 2015).

Traditional teaching methods rely on English pedagogies, rather than direct teaching methods in public schools. South Asian countries like Pakistan and India, which rely heavily on agriculture and have limited income, often admit their children to public schools where English is not taught

as a skill, but rather as a subject (Abbasi et al., 2025). Teachers and students often focus more on the native language than on English as a second language. This approach makes English classes feel more like native language lessons rather than another English lessons (Lashari et al., 2023). Unfortunately, this technique is still prevalent in many public schools. Many students, particularly first-generation learners, find English to be a challenging subject and require guidance from an expert. Despite studying English, students often struggle to construct even a single grammatically correct sentence. This is mainly due to an examination-focused approach, where the system emphasises rote memorisation over analytical and creative skills. As a result, students memorise lessons and reproduce them in the exam hall, only to forget them shortly after (Roy, 2017).

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate the pedagogical mechanisms and teaching techniques that enhance learners' communicative abilities. Students feel difficulty and hesitation in speaking English, even at a high secondary level; however, they know the vocabulary used in sentences. The main problem is that students lack fluency and confidence in speaking skills due to ignorance of listening exposure in public secondary school learners (Moats, 2020). Students' exposure to the English language is limited. Many studies have been conducted on closely related issues, such as the conditions under which English is taught in Pakistan Channa, 2017). English language teaching in Public Secondary Schools faces challenges related to communicative exposure (Thomas, 2000). Modern pedagogy is hardly finding favour. Some researchers conclude in their study that pedagogy patterns and practices at the SSC level in Sindh are rigidly homogeneous. This study aims to investigate teachers' creativity, pedagogical competencies, and professional success as English language facilitators in public secondary-level schools, addressing existing gaps in research.

Research Objectives

- To identify the challenges faced by teachers in improving English competencies, Listening and Speaking, among public secondary school learners.
- To identify the effective pedagogical practices used by teachers to support English competencies, Listening and Speaking, in public secondary school learners.

Research Questions

- Q 1: What challenges do teachers face in imparting adequate English competency, listening, and speaking enhancement in public secondary schools?
- Q 2: What do the teachers use the current pedagogical practices to support English competency, listening and speaking learning in public secondary schools?

Scope of the Study

The study to identify pedagogical strategies and approaches would be beneficial for teachers to enhance English competencies in four areas: documents, textbooks, and lesson plans, incorporating technology, as listening and speaking are not adequately accommodated in the classroom. Several organisations have expressed concern about the quality of the education system, and its instructional medium (Arif et al., 2021).

It may be possible to enhance the proposal for listening and speaking competencies and integrate digital technology facilities into classrooms, including those outlined in the national curriculum of Pakistan, specifically in Sindh.

Literature Review

The term pedagogy is closely related to teachers' interpersonal skills in utilising them at the right time in the classroom setting, applying educational theory, classroom management, selecting the proper assessment, teachers' reflective practice, and teacher responsiveness to students' needs. It is appropriate to use in situations that are part of pedagogy.

Social Pedagogy

It is concerned with students' social development, aiming to improve their social skills, enrich their living standards, and find better opportunities to communicate and interact with others politely, fostering generosity throughout the course. However, students do experience problems and challenges (Bhatti, 2021).

Critical Pedagogy

The primary goal is to challenge students regularly to post questions, feel free to think critically, and clearly express their thoughts, ideas, beliefs, strategies, and practices. Learners can gain a deep-rooted understanding of concepts, such as Pakistan's struggle for independent thinking, critically analysed in the movie *Dead Poets Society*, or English literature (Broad, 2020).

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Institutional, personal, and instructional are the basic directions for implementing culturally responsive pedagogy. It is not a teacher-centred approach to teaching; for example, it involves sharing different ethnicities, races, and beliefs. Thus, a political course is best taught through debates and analysis of various political topics (Coyle et al., 2010).

Socratic Pedagogy

It involves meaningful dialogues where students develop their social and intellectual skills. The students boost their self to face challenges to traditional views in terms of knowledge, opportunities, and alternatives and expand their knowledge and understanding through participating in meaningful conversations with others (Fayyaz et al., 2023).

English Competencies

Competency refers to the ability to perform a task effectively. As English is the global language, its current situation is based on its origin and the causes of its international success, which has led to its widespread recognition and high respect on every continent, in education, profession, technology, and society. The English language holds a special status in seventy-five countries, with one-third of the world's books published in English and two-thirds of all scientific texts written in English (Kapur, 2019).

Theoretical Background

The five main mechanisms proposed by Stephen Krashen's theory of second language acquisition are acquisition and learning. Without conscious effort, acquisition happens unconsciously as a result of exposure to intelligible material, such as reading or listening. According to the input hypothesis, language learning occurs when students are exposed to input that is above their current competency level. Furthermore, according to the affective filter theory, learners' receptivity to input can be influenced by emotional factors such as motivation and anxiety, which can either facilitate or hinder language acquisition. According to Krashen's view, significant input comes

first, conscious learning is not as necessary, and a supportive emotional context is crucial for language learning.

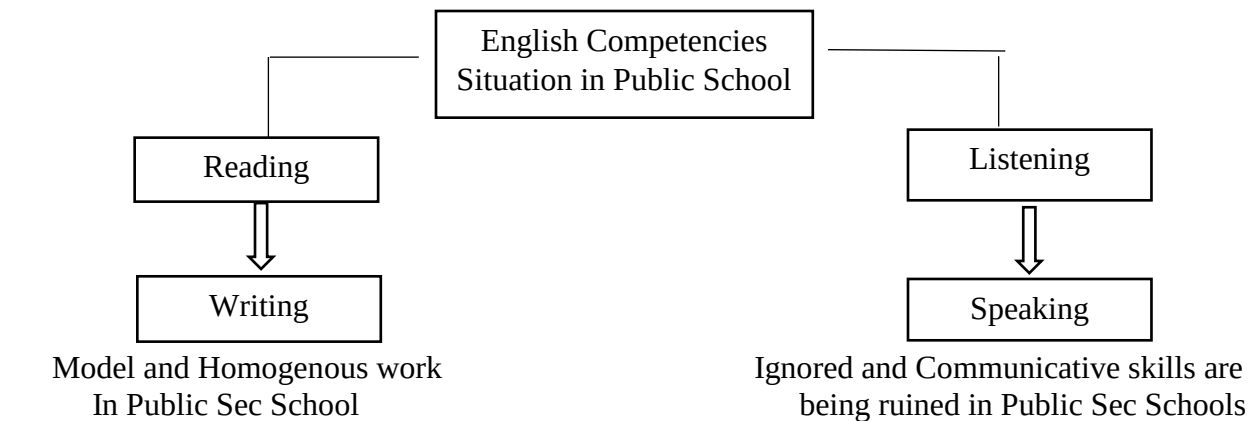
To select Stephen Krashen's second language acquisition theory for exploring pedagogical strategies to support English competencies among Public Secondary Learners due to its solid theoretical framework, practical application in language education, empirical research support, and relevance to the diverse needs of the target audience. Krashen's emphasis on meaningful and comprehensible input creates a supportive, low-anxiety, high self-confidence, and teacher-high motivational environment, offering valuable insights for educators seeking practical approaches to teaching English to secondary school learners. Teachers can foster a positive attitude toward learning English by participating, providing constructive feedback, presenting, debating, discussing, and celebrating their progress (Krashen, 2019).

Stephen Krashen's second language acquisition theory is highly relevant to the research topic, as it is the primary component that will relate to the study

- 1. The Acquisition–Learning Hypothesis
- 2. The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Will cover practical applications for classroom instruction. Educators can apply Krashen's theory by providing a language-rich environment.

Table 1: Professional standard for an English language teacher in a global context
Professional Standard for Linguistic Competencies
• Thorough understanding of English grammar rules and a rich vocabulary across different aspects (formal, informal, academic).
• Accurate pronunciation and the ability to teach pronunciation effectively to learners with diverse language backgrounds.
• Ability to communicate confidently and fluently in spoken and written English.
• Tailoring teaching methods to meet the needs and learning styles of diverse learners.
• Employing interactive activities, collaborative learning, and student-centred approaches to engage learners.
• Designing and implementing appropriate assessments to monitor students' progress and inform instruction.
• Avoiding stereotypes and promoting inclusivity in the classroom.
• Utilising technology effectively enhances the learning experience.
Source: The office of National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education. www.necte.org.pk (2009).

Figure 1: Current Situation of ELT in Public Schools

Methodology

This study is exploratory. Therefore, the methodology used for this study is the qualitative methodology. It defines or explores the particular social phenomena by keeping its context in the background and using different source of data collection (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2003). The present study is conducted by the phenomenology method. Phenomenology is the qualitative research methodology that emphasizes the cohesion of a life experience within a particular group.

Population and Sampling of the Study

All teachers in public secondary schools comprised the population of this research study. The purposive sampling technique of this study consisted of 03 Public Secondary Schools out of 06 Public Secondary Schools, and 08 English subject teachers experience range of 5 years as under.

Table 2: Government Secondary School (Boys & Girls) in Ayoub Goth

S. No.	Category	Total Secondary Schools & Teachers
1	Public Secondary Schools	03 schools
2	English Subject Teachers	08 teachers

Research Instrument and Tools

The interview technique is the research instrument of this study. A semi-structured, face-to-face interview was used as the research instrument.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The method of testing the data Collection tool or instruments for trustworthiness was used in this study to verify the validity of the collected data. This research achieved trustworthiness by adhering to the methodological norms of semi-structured interviews and ensuring that they satisfied the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Furthermore, before administering the interview question, it is essential for a semi-structured instrument to determine whether respondents understand the question and how much time it will take to respond. For this purpose, the two subject experts reviewed the semi-structured interview instrument to verify the accuracy of the data collected through the open-ended questions.

For this process, data were collected through conducting semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the English subject teacher of Ayoub Goth Public Secondary School, individually.

The data analysis began with transcription details of the data, followed by Creswell's (2009) six steps of thematic analysis. Themes, sub-themes, and codes are generated from the collected raw data. This is referred to as a splitting procedure in data analysis. Through this method, the researcher can separate the work systematically and assess each level.

Results

Theme One: Challenges Faced by Teachers for Improving English Competencies

English subject teachers are thoroughly aware of the importance of the English language academically, professionally, and technically for learners' prospects. According to them, learners require a free-anxiety environment and technology-based accessories for improving English competencies as a language, compared to subject model teaching.

Moreover, it is found that teachers know and understand the pedagogical strategies. They realise that the backwards learning environment of home and school raises other challenges that are adhesively connected, as low-income backgrounds often spoil the learner's interest, internal driving force, and their practice in the majority of students, regardless of exceptional learners. Therefore, learners need a free-anxiety environment with a technological-based lab to improve their English competencies.

Theme Two: Pedagogical Practice Used by Teachers for Supporting English Competencies

The practice of English subject teachers was linked with pedagogical strategies. Primarily, teachers strive to create a conducive and engaging learning environment through various activities related to English competencies. They are entirely engaged in improving their listening and speaking skills through three main pedagogical practices: scaffolding strategy, dialogue strategy, and task-based learning at their own pace.

Teachers of Public Secondary Schools in Ayoub Goth, Sindh, Karachi, have a positive attitude towards modern pedagogical strategies for English, but face problems with communication skills. Despite their effort, they struggle with second language teaching and lack parental support.

Conclusion

The conclusion from these findings suggests that it is necessary to develop an anxiety-free environment through a curriculum range and a community-based approach. This could include establishing audio-visual labs, enabling teachers to enhance their communication skills. These skills are crucial for their jobs, further education, and producing competent citizens who can contribute to the country's progress. If education is not improved, especially in terms of the importance of language in our modern era, it will be challenging to cultivate good citizens who can contribute both domestically and internationally.

The study explored teachers' attitudes toward pedagogical strategies in Pakistan, identifying challenges in teaching English in public secondary schools. Teachers highlighted issues such as low student confidence, anxiety, and insufficient language competency, leading to limited English use in classrooms. The main pedagogical strategies used were dialogue, scaffolding, and task-based approaches. Teachers reported a lack of audio-visual aids and adequate resources for large classes, which hindered effective English teaching. They suggested improvements, such as listening materials and audio-visual labs, to enhance communicative skills. The recommendations include initiating a pilot program for second language acquisition in public schools, providing

comprehensive training in English teaching strategies for regular teachers, incorporating Second Language Acquisition into teacher training programs, introducing flexible evaluation methods for pedagogical strategies, equipping teachers with essential information for effective English teaching, supplementing their English content knowledge, enhancing pedagogical practices to improve student literacy, and building teacher quality to enhance overall education quality ultimately.

Recommendations

Through Pedagogical strategies, English competencies are being improved in public secondary schools. Although English teaching educators have been facing challenges, the following recommendations are provided for stakeholders to support second language acquisition and learners' lifelong achievement.

The recommendations are made based on conclusions.

- Based on the second language acquisition environment, basic facilities, and English language teaching material or resources may be provided to teachers.
- The school curriculum development wing should arrange professional development and vigorous, comprehensive training in English teaching strategies.
- The concept of a Second Language Acquisition environment, such as a visual lab, for enhancing communicative skills should be incorporated into the syllabus of all teachers' training programs in the province.
- Contemporary assessment techniques should be introduced for pedagogical strategies to support English competencies among English subject teachers.
- Need to provide a contemporary, anxiety-free environment with technological accessories to teachers in public secondary schools.
- This study focused solely on secondary schools, so this research recommends that a similar study be conducted for primary and higher educational institutions.
- A qualitative approach was employed in this study. In mixed-methods research, researchers may conduct studies to gain a clear understanding of respondents' beliefs, practices, and teaching strategies.
- In this study, the population is limited to the secondary school of Ayub Goth. Research can be conducted in other Rural and urban areas, and the findings can be compared and contrasted.
- This study was conducted in Government Schools, but a similar study may also be conducted in semi-private schools and Madrasas.

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