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Students' Perceptions about Teaching English as Compulsory Subject at Secondary Level in Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

English language gained importance with the rise of English imperialism. English was adopted as official language in English colonies e.g., Indian sub-continent, Middle East, Africa, Australia, USA etc. As the Europeans especially English people made progress in science and technology, it became the language of science and technology and no one can make progress in fields of modern knowledge without having mastery over English language. English language has been the common language of the world for decades. In the light of the statistical analysis and findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn. It was concluded that students of the secondary school levels in Haveli Lakha. Like and give very much importance to English as a compulsory subject at secondary level because they thought it very compulsory for them to compete the modern age.

Keywords: English language, students, science, school

1-Introduction

English language gained importance with the rise of English imperialism. English was adopted as official language in English colonies e.g., Indian sub-continent, Middle East, Africa, Australia, USA etc. As the Europeans especially English people made progress in science and technology, it became the language of science and technology and no one can make progress in fields of modern knowledge without having mastery over English language. English language has been the common language of the world for decades. While there are some people who would like to stick with their native language and who would prefer not to learn English, the benefits of learning and mastering English goes beyond the four corners of one's own country.

Whenever you wish to travel someplace, you have to communicate. If you don't know the language of the country where you intend to go, just try speaking English and you would be understood right away. Now imagine yourself traveling to a country, and you don't know how to speak English. The encounter with a foreigner would be a disaster if you don't know how to explain or ask questions in English. In effect, if you have already learned English, talking to a foreigner would prove to be an easy time.

The majority of international media publications including newspapers and magazines are in English. In order to be acquainting with world affairs it is also required to learn English. If you are hungry for information with regards to what is happening at the other side of the world, you can always acquire a newspaper and start reading. But when you started to read the first sentences, there were already some words which you didn't understand, and instead of reading further, you just set aside the material and chose some other activity. Now, if you have learned English continuously and have become familiar with most English words, you could have finished the whole reading material and have gotten the information that you wanted.

Immigrants also need to learn English especially if they will be working at firms or other companies where English is the medium of communication. Instructions would be clearly understood, and therefore the room for error is minimized. At the same time, an immigrant who would try to explain himself to his boss and co-employees would be clearly

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understood if he could construct his ideas into a single coherent thought. This can only be achieved by learning English seriously.

For those immigrants who are in the process of looking for a job, a mastery of the English language would put them at a higher leverage compared to those who don't. Considering that communication is an essential component in a workplace, persons who are able to communicate well using the English language would always have an advantage over others.

English language is the language of science, technology and trade. There are allots of fields in science which are in English language so without reading English language nobody can able to understand science in depth. When we talk about technology it is also in English language. English is trade language people from all over the world who are traders use this language as a tool for trade in other countries.

English language becomes a language of international communication so learning English enables one to connect with international community. English enables peoples from different countries, nations, and races to exchange their ideas, views, sentiments and emotions with others.

In Pakistan Punjabi language is use as mother tongue; Urdu language is use as national language. On the other hand English language is use an official language. All official correspondence of Govt. institutions is in English language. Higher education is also in English language. The Government of the Pakistan has introduced English as compulsory subject at Secondary level .Now it is being taught right from the class one, there is divided opinions regarding teaching of English as compulsory subject at primary classes. Some are vibrant supporters of teaching English in primary classes where as some other are opposing it strongly.

If Pakistan wants to compete with contrary world in field of science, technology, trade, commerce and economic development. It shows emphasize on promotion of English language among masses.

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Keeping in view this contentious situation it is badly needed to investigate the situation regarding likings and importance of teaching of English at secondary level. Students are in the central position because it all is being done for them.

The English language plays an important role in all aspects of society, and therefore learning and mastering it would greatly give advantage to the person concerned. The researcher thought that student's opinions in this regard are very much important that's why researcher has selected this specific area.

2-Review of Literature

Akram and Yasmin (2011) researched on attitudes towards English & Punjabi Language Learning in Faisalabad Pakistan which was linguistically diglossic situation in which two or more distinct languages are used by the same speech population. However, these languages differ in status, prestige and function, which entitled them highly high-status (H)language and less prestigious language (L) languages. We have English as highly prestigious and Punjabi local dialect informal language. So, present study aims to discover attitudes towards English which is a complicated, official, formal, as well as language of education, science, and heritage and towards Punjabi which is local, dialect, broken, language as well as language of uneducated community. This situation is surprising that English which has no native speaker has marginalized all local languages whereas; Punjabi with a large no of native speakers is socially neglected and sidelined language. This study was based on the hypothesis that there are different attitudes towards English and Punjabi language learning. In order to know the attitudes towards English and Punjabi languages close ended questionnaire has been used as a tool to collect the data collected, from 42 students of 8 different educational institutes: government, private, madrasa of Faisalabad. The whole data was statistically analyzed and frequencies were calculated for each item. This study concludes that people of Faisalabad have more positive attitudes towards English than Punjabi language because they differ in status, structure, function, and prestige. This study is significant because it highlights the economical, educational, social status of Punjabi and English languages in Faisalabad.

Ahmad et al. (2011) researched on the Nature of Difficulties in learning English by the

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students at secondary level in Pakistan. This study was a comparative survey into the nature of difficulties in learning English by the secondary school students of Provincial and Federal government schools in N.W.F.P (Khyber Pukhtunkhwa). The objectives of the study were (1)To find out the level of difficulties of secondary school students of Provincial and Federal government schools of N.W.F.P (Khyber Pukhtunkhwa) in tenses, active and passives voices, direct and indirect narrations, conjunctions, prepositions, articles, construction of sentences and reading with comprehension and (2)To compare the level of difficulties in learning English as a second language at secondary level of Provincial and Federal government schools in N.W.F.P (Khyber Pukhtunkhwa). The sample of the study was consisted of 654 randomly selected students from twenty four Provincial government schools and twenty two Federal government schools located in twenty four districts of N.W.F.P. (Khyber Pukhtunkhwa). An English language attainment test for secondary classes was administered to the sample students of the study. The data obtained were tabulated and analyzed through SPSS 17.0 software to compute mean, standard deviation, t-value and p-value (significance) level. The main findings of the study were; the students of Provincial government schools faced more difficulties in learning of verb forms, narration, conjunctions, prepositions, articles, sentence arrangements and reading comprehension. The students of both types of schools systems faced same difficulties in learning voices.

Bilal et al. (2013) researched on the topic of Problems in speaking English with L2 Learners of Rural Area Schools of Pakistan (Punjabi) is used as a mode of communication in most of the rural areas schools in Punjab. The students face a lot of problems in speaking English as L2. This study investigates the problems (fears/hindrances) in using L2 as a speaking tool. The questionnaire as a tool for data collection has been used. The data has been analysed statistically and graphically. The population comprises of the students of SSC and HSSC levels from age group of 12 to 18 years. Sample of two different gender 30 male and female students belonging to rural areas of Sargodha were chosen randomly. In this paper, a variety of problems that affect the speaking English as L2 are discussed. Moreover, this paper also suggested some remedies that may help to overcome these problems, can also be helpful to the researchers who intend to investigate the same issue.

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Jilani, P. (2009) researched on the topic Problematizing High School Certificate Exam in Pakistan: A Wash back Perspective. This paper describes and evaluates the Higher-Secondary School Certificate (HSC) exam in Pakistan that has been in place in its present form for more than thirty years. The author recounts her experience as a teacher of English in a representative high school in Pakistan and, reflecting on the impact of high school public exam, she argues that the exam has a negative wash back effect. She then presents a detailed survey of wash back literature, provides a description of the context and the test, and analyzes the current testing situation in Pakistan. It is concluded that the exam has had a widespread wash back both at the individual and societal level needing serious attention in view of its broader educational and social implications.

Farooq et al. (2012) researched on Opinion of Second Language Learners about Writing Difficulties in English Language. English language enjoys a important role in Pakistan as an useful communication medium at local and international circles. It is used as a medium of instruction not only in schools but also in colleges and universities. The aim of this study was to investigate writing difficulties in the English language faced by second language learners. A survey was made for this purpose. Data were collected from four boys and girls public sector colleges. Two hundred and forty five 12th graders studying English as a compulsory subject were randomly selected out of five hundred and twenty. Results of the study showed that students were facing a lot of difficulties in writing English language due to lack of vocabulary, poor spelling, L1 interference and a poor understanding of grammatical structure. The girls face more writing difficulties than the male students in English language. The method based on identification, investigation, and solutions to language related real life problems should be used for teaching of English from primary school level to higher levels of education.

Ali, A. & Ghani, M.(2014) researched on The Status of Language in Pakistan. The present study takes a survey of the status of English in Pakistan. It starts with the general explanation of status of education in the country, moving towards a discussion about the condition of language in the country in general, leading to the place of English language in the education system of Pakistan with special reference to the government education policy regarding English. In the end, the historical roots of English language in Pakistan and its significance has been highlighted with its relevance to the current circumstances of

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English in the country. The conclusion reached is that due to linguistic diversity and lack of political will, it is difficult to minimize the role of English language in the country.

Adeyemi, B. & Adeyemi, B. (2013) researched on A Comparative study of secondary school students' performance in English and Social Studies in Junior Secondary Schools in Osun State, Nigeria. The study sought to determine the relationship between the performance of students in English language and Social Studies. This was with a view of ensuring better performance in the two subjects. The study employed the survey research design. The population for the study consisted of all the Junior Senior Secondary School Students in Osun State, Nigeria. Stratified sampling technique was employed in selecting 800 students that were purposively selected in five local governments in Osun State using school types i.e. public and private schools, school locations i.e. rural and urban and gender i.e. male and female as stratum. Two instruments were used to collect data for the study. They are: English Achievement Test (EAT) and Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT). The reliability of the instruments yielded 0.74 and 0.86 correspondingly using Cronbach alpha. The instruments were analyzed using descriptive and t-test statistics. The results showed that there is a important difference in students' performance in English and Social Studies ($t=13.809$, $P<0.05$). Also, there is a significant difference in the performance in English and Social Studies across the 10 schools. (English $X = 25.36$, $SD= 10.699$; Social Studies $X = 32.21$, $SD= 9.969$).

However, other variables in the study were found not to be significant. It is therefore recommended among others that there should be consistent training and retraining of teachers for functional educational system in Nigeria. Opportunities should be given to teachers for professional training on their subject disciplines, teaching techniques and organizational techniques which could be achieved through workshops, seminars, internet browsing and extensive reading for personal development.

Hamad Ali Khan (2006) researched on A Needs Analysis of Pakistani State Boarding Schools Secondary Level Students for Adoption of Communicative Language Teaching. English language teaching has become very important because of the worldwide status of English and people all over the world are learning this language. Communicative Language Teaching methods, being a modern and effective method of language teaching, has been implemented in

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many contexts of ESL/EFL teaching. This implementation has not been without problems in many Asian countries as CLT has been in clash with local cultures of learning. Pakistan is still following a traditional approach to English language teaching.

This study was an effort to discover the learning needs of Pakistani state boarding schools students to assess the implementation of CLT in these schools at secondary level. Questionnaire and informal telephonic conversation were used as an instrument of data collection. The data discovered that those students' learning needs and styles supported the adoption of Communicative Language Teaching Method. Teachers' attitude towards CLT was also investigated and the presence of a positive attitude was established. Subsequently, certain factors which do not allow the practice of CLT in classes are recognized and recommendations are made which can help in initiating a shift towards CLT.

3-STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study was designed to survey students' opinions about teaching of English as a compulsory subject at Secondary level. Study included students' own perception about their likings and importance for English as compulsory subject at secondary level.

4-Objectives of the Study

This study was conducted to explore perception of students regarding:

1. To explore the Students' likings about English as a compulsory subject at secondary level.
2. To find out the Importance of English as a compulsory subject at secondary level.

5-Methods and Procedure

The nature of the present research is descriptive and the present study was under taken to assess the "Survey of Student's Opinions about English as a Compulsory Subject at Secondary Level". This section includes a description of population, sample, sampling techniques, sampling procedure, and tool of the research, data collection and data analysis.

POPULATION

Students of Govt. Elementary Schools for boys situated in Haveli Lakha constituted for the population of the research. After specifying the population the next step was to draw a

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sample. The sample of the study was hundred male students were selected by using random sampling technique. Five Secondary schools were selected randomly from the list of all elementary situated in Haveli Lakha city .Twenty students from each selected schools were selected randomly.

DATA COLLECTION

For the purpose of collection data, a close ended questionnaire was administered to the students. Data was collected from class nine students after getting permission from the headmasters of the institutions.

7-Analysis and interpretation of data

The study was conducted to high light the study about “Survey of Student’s Opinions about English as a Compulsory Subject at Secondary Level”. For this purpose the opinions of the Govt. Secondary School Students about themselves were taken. Data was collected from the sample of 100 male students of Govt. Secondary Schools of Haveli Lakha city through questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed in multiple choices and last part of the questionnaire was developed in four point scale (i.e. Yes, To Some Extent, No and Don’t Know). Following tables show the analysis of data calculated which is followed by the interpretation of data analysis. The tables comprise the percentage of opinions of the students of secondary schools.

Table 1 shows the results about the likings of English as compulsory subject

Statements	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	
English is liked by all in Pakistan.	100	1.67	.095	.954
People respect English speakers.	100	1.68	.087	.875
English is helpful while seeking/getting job.	100	1.54	.056	.558
English speaking creates confidence in students.	100	1.68	.069	.695
Students learn English language eagerly.	100	1.75	.093	.925
Science subjects are not approachable without English.	100	2.37	.100	1.002
Students easily learn English language.	100	2.29	.106	1.057
Environment of our school is appropriate while learning English.	100	2.31	.104	1.042

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The above table shows the statistical analysis about the likings of English as compulsory subject in Punjab, Pakistan. Maximum mean is 2.37 while minimum mean score is 1.54 with std. Error maximum .106 and std. deviation is 1.057. The results provide evidence that students at secondary in Pakistan like English language as compulsory subject in Pakistan.

Table 2 showing the results of the importance of English as compulsory subject

Statements	N	Mean		STD. Deviation
		statistic	Std. Error	
We should learn English because it is an International language.	100	1.71	.088	.880
Science language is attained only the help of English.	100	2.21	.092	.924
English speaking is necessary for International trade.	100	1.61	.078	.777
In developing countries English is essential as a compulsory subject.	100	1.92	.081	.813
English is necessary for creating the mental/logical and practical environment among students.	100	1.72	.084	.842
For diplomatic and political concerns English is compulsory.	100	1.91	.079	.793
English is necessary to become a master of English for English teaching.	100	1.83	.049	.493
Is it necessary to adopt English medium curriculum.	100	1.79	.073	.729

The above table shows the statistical analysis about the importance of English as compulsory subject in Punjab, Pakistan. Maximum mean is 2.21 while minimum mean score is 1.61 with std. Error maximum .092 and Std. deviation is .924. The results provide evidence that students at secondary level in Pakistan give importance English language as compulsory subject in Pakistan.

8-Discussion

This study was conducted to examine the likings and importance of English as a compulsory subject at secondary level schools in Haveli Lakha. The main findings of the study were; the students of government secondary schools Haveli Lakha liked English as compulsory subject and they gave it importance as a compulsory subject at secondary

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level. There is strong evidence from the findings of the study that the students of government secondary schools in Haveli Lakha like very much English as a compulsory subject and also give much importance it as a compulsory subject at secondary level.

The findings of the study show that students of government secondary school show very much likings about English as a compulsory subject. The students of secondary schools level say that English as a second language is liked by many people. People feel proud to speak English which become them a modern personality. The majority (2.37%) of the students at secondary level say that English speaker is respected by the people so that is why they like English as a compulsory subject at secondary level in Haveli Lakha. The students at secondary level say that they like English because it is helpful for them in the matter of getting job. The findings of the research told that students like English because this language makes them feel confident. The majority (2.37%) of students like English as a compulsory subject to get approach to the science subjects. The majority (2.37%) of the students say that the environment of their school is very appropriate for learning English therefore they feel ease to learn English.

The findings of the study show that students of government secondary schools give very much importance to English as a compulsory subject. The majority (2.21%) of the students at secondary level give it importance because it is an international language which is spoken everywhere in the world. The findings say that they give it importance because without this language it is not easy to understand the science subjects which are very important for this modern age. The findings say that majority(2.21%) of the students of secondary level in Haveli Lakha give it importance as a compulsory subject after acquiring this they can use it as a business language. The findings show that the majority (2.21%) of students of secondary level give it importance because it is necessary language of many countries so to get opportunities in those countries it is essential. The majority(2.21%) of the students give importance to English as a compulsory language at secondary level because it cause to create mental and logical environment among students, the command on English is necessary for political and diplomatic concerns. The importance is given to the English as a compulsory subject because it is useful for teaching English subject and adopting English medium curriculum.

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9-Conclusion

In the light of the statistical analysis and findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn. It was concluded that students of the secondary school levels in Haveli Lakha like and give very much importance to English as a compulsory subject at secondary level because they thought it very compulsory for them to compete the modern age. The students of the secondary level in Haveli Lakha like and give more importance to English because this is an international language, official language, the language of science, business and politics. The students of the secondary schools like and give it importance as a compulsory subject at secondary level because this is necessary for them because it builds confidence among them and is useful for the purpose of teaching and English medium curriculum.

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