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BARRIERS IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL IN DISTRICT BUNER

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ABSTRACT

The English language has certainly become the most influential language in the world. It has gained a significant role in technological, business, economic or political areas and has been a part of educational policies in different countries. It is enjoying a status of the medium of instruction as well as a compulsory subject in Pakistan. However, many learners of English have difficulties in learning and using this language effectively due to several reasons. Accordingly, a descriptive study is conducted to investigate what kind of problems are being faced by the learner. Many factors have been indicated that are responsible for creating obstacles in learning English. Results point out that students of the context desire to learn English but numerous factors stand in their way of progress that need to be eradicated for a better future of this language. The ambiguous educational policies, the behaviour of the teachers, the shortage of English teachers, the flawed syllabus and many more are the major factors that are arising obstacles in learning English.

Keywords: English language, barriers, English Language Learning.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyze and understand the barriers in learning English among male intermediate students in the public sector institution of district Buner, Pakistan. It examines the interferences and consequences of mother tongue, Pashto, with English (L2) as a second language. Buner is the district in the North of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where students from different social backgrounds study in public sector institutions and face challenges in the subject of English as a second language. In their educational institutions, they learn English as a second and foreign language, in addition to using their local and national languages in their surroundings. This paper aims to examine all of these trends in order to identify the barriers to learning English for intermediate students at public sector colleges.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The goal of this paper is to investigate the factors that impede students' ability to learn English at the Intermediate level in the district of Buner. This research examines how students experience challenges in learning English as a second language, in addition to the interference and implication of their mother tongue, during their intermediate level academic course in various colleges throughout the region.

In their educational institutions, students learn English as a foreign and second language, in addition to using their regional and national languages in their backgrounds. This study wishes to Investigate all of these tendencies in order to identify the barriers in learning English for Intermediate students in Pakistan's public sector colleges.

1.3 Significance of the Study

Since the partition, English, as an international and community language, has held a powerful position as

a medium of instruction in Pakistan. It also has a place on many curriculums in the country's institutions as a compulsory subject. Many efforts have been made to give it a highly acceptable and due place in Pakistani society in light of the world's new modern challenge.

It is the language that facilitates in the development of our trade and relations with the rest of the world. It is also agreed and acknowledged that the native people of this language, with the help of it, have ruled the entire world; and this effect can truly be traced out in our country's past history. English as a language takes root in this vast land of Muslims and Hindus. With the passage of time, English has pushed its way so deeply into the heart of our national life that it has become a matter of survival. This is because the modern world has shrunk to the size of a global village as it has broken down all obstacles.

Many people inhibit and use different languages in this global village, but English is a language that allows them to cross and break all geographical and linguistic obstacles. It enables them to communicate with one another, and as a result, they have become one citizen of the same world, regardless of racial and national biases. However, it continues to be used as a second and foreign language in the countries, so even after the formation of two separate states, English retains its status in our country.

The purpose of this research is to look into the difficulties and barriers that impede learning and development. This attempt not only identifies these obstacles, but also offers solution. it is more important than ever to engage students in taking full responsibility for their language learning. There is also a demand for teachers who are not only language experts but also trained in the use of technology and who can use modern technology to help foreign language learners learn more effectively.

1.4 Problem of the study

Learners of English at the intermediate education level face numerous challenges when it comes to learning English as a second and mandatory subject. They want to master the language, so they work hard to do so; however, they are unable to overcome the obstacles that stand in their way. Despite all of their efforts, the outcome of learning this subject is disappointment. Failure in this subject means failure in the entire Intermediate level, including all subjects. Despite the significant and enormous efforts made to teach English, the results are dismal. A high rate of failure has two effects on students: it reduces their chances of finding white-collar jobs in the country and it lowers their morale. Our students' issues are numerous and require attention in order to be resolved. Many studies have mentioned these multifaceted issues, but they have not been addressed comprehensively.

The goal of this research is to look into the challenges that people face when learning English. There have been numerous attempts to demonstrate the difficulties of learning English as a second language. Many factors that cause difficulties in learning English have been identified. However, there hasn't been much attention paid to the learning difficulties of Intermediate college students.

As a result, this study not only identifies major barriers but also makes recommendations for potential solutions. It not only examines the matter but also provides guidelines. This study will assist learners in examining their odds and obstacles to learning, and they will be motivated to study English with zeal and enthusiasm as a result. They would feel at ease using it as a means of communication with the outside world.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The following are the study's objectives.

1. To investigate the barriers to learning English as a second language among Intermediate students in the district of Pakistan, Buner KP.
2. To present solutions to the deteriorating state of learning English as a second language.
3. To provide future direction to students in the Pakistani background.

1.6 Research Questions

This research aims to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are the challenges that Intermediate students in Pakistan's district of Buner face when learning English as a second language?
2. How can these barriers be removed among Pakistani intermediate students learning English as a second language?
3. How can the findings of this study be applied to parents, teachers, and students to overcome the barriers to learning English as a second language in the country?

Literature Review

The concept of "barrier" or "difficulty" has both objective and subjective value. It is described as a task that requires a significant amount of effort or labour to perform. An obstacle can be measured in a variety of methods, according to Newell and Simon (1972), as cited in ITS (nd) [7]. This study will look into the difficulties of learning English for academic purposes. However, as [8] points out, this study does not attempt to look into the matter. As noted by [8,] such hurdles and issues in language learning arise when there is no organism between accessible facts and grammar.

The problems that a learner has while reading and writing English in order to pass his public examination are the exclusive focus of Intermediate English learning. Because the learners in our study environment speak Pashto as their native language, and their home cultures are important in the creation of written language models for reading and writing in English as a second language and obligatory subject. Learners are at a disadvantage for success because they confront several hurdles, as Gay (1988) and Snow (1992) point out in [10].

In the context, English is taught as a compulsory subject at the intermediate level. Problems, barriers, and challenges encountered while learning English at this level are referred to as obstacles. Major issues in English learning are the examination system, students' weak position and foundation in English, large classes, passive learning, uninteresting, lengthy, difficult literature-based curriculums, poor performance of English teachers, and old methods and techniques [4]. Our country's students' annual results show a significant increase in failure, which is entirely due to failure in the subject of English. Failure in English is synonymous with failure in all subjects. According to Abbas [1] [3], despite all efforts, the English result remains low, owing to "flawed teaching and material design.

"The four skills that each language possesses in terms of function are listening, speaking, reading, and writing." Language disability or proficiency varies as widely as the world's socio-linguistic divisions. According to Morley (1972), as cited by [11], listening becomes complex and difficult in situations where it is used as a second language. As a result, the importance of the Speaking skill cannot be overstated (Bailey and Savage 1994, cited by Lazaraton in [11]). Brown (1994) is cited in [11] by Lazaraton. Celce-Murcia (2001) identified a number of factors that contribute to English language proficiency being difficult. Reading is a socio-interaction process involving "text," "reader," and "social context." In [11], Ediger cites Bernhardt (1991). However, as cited by Ediger in [11], Grabe (1991) mentions the difficulties in learning this.

Urdu is the official language of Pakistan, however a variety of regional languages are also used to communicate. These languages have a greater influence. Pakistan was originally part of a subcontinent ruled by numerous nations, and it was ruled by the British before partition; as a result, Pakistanis appear to be affected by a variety of languages and cultures [12]. People in this situation choose to utilize their original speech in their daily lives rather than shun it. It is a well-known fact that they are attached to their own language. These groups are then subdivided into a plethora of other groups, each of which differs from the others in terms of social, linguistic, and traditional characteristics. Each region has its own language. Urdu is the national language, and English is used as a medium of instruction in these areas as well [13]. Intermediate students are the students in our context of study. It implies that they are fluent in their mother tongue and national language. Learning English at their colleges, on the other hand, presents a challenge. According to [8] (nd) as stated in [8, children and adults experience similar obstacles, but the logical difficulty that adult learners face at this level differs. When studying a second language, many scholars agree that there is a distinction between native speakers and non-native speakers. Our pupils come from a range of language origins, and they experience the same obstacles in learning English as immigrant children from various linguistic backgrounds in Australian schools. Pauline Gibbons is a British actress who has appeared in a number of films (1993). As advanced by [14], these pupils experience issues referred to as "comprehensible input. When there is a mismatch between a learner's context and the complexity of a language assignment offered to them, challenges occur [15]. The majority of the challenges emerge as a result of mistakenly interacting with and utilising L1. Because the students are accustomed to conversing in their original language, learning English as a second language presents several problems throughout their academic careers. According to Banathy, Trager, and Waddle (1966), cited by Gumperz [17] and S. Dill, "syntactic errors in adult performance" emerge as a

result of a learner's usage of mother language, and this impact lasts for a long time in the learner's mind (1971). As a result, such mistakes or roadblocks are difficult to spot because they have become ingrained in the learner's life. Such errors or impediments, according to Krashen (1981) [14], differ depending on the learners' respective linguistic backgrounds, using Richards (1971) and Buteau (1970) as examples.

Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

The researcher has used qualitative research design for conducting his scholarly study on language barrier in English as a second language learning at intermediate level in district Buner. This design was chosen due to the convenience of researcher.

3.2 Population

The population of this study is the students of intermediate level in district Buner. More specifically the range of this population is the inter students of Salarzai region, in District Buner.

3.3 Sample size

The sample size is based on Three Colleges there. The total respondents were 60 but only 40 students were considered randomly for the collection of data.

3.4 Sampling technique

The convenience simple random sampling was chosen for the data collection. The one and only reason for this type was the easily availability and accessibility of data and respondents. Furthermore it was less time consuming.

3.5 Instrumentation

The open ended questionnaire was used as tool of data collection. A survey base questionnaire of seven question was carried out.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

A seven question open ended questionnaire was carried out among the 40 students of intermediate level at Salarzai in district Buner . The respondents were chosen from different Colleges randomly . Every difficult question was explained in front of students for clarification of any confusion. It was prescribed at the top of the questionnaire that this study has no impacts on your academics grades and marks. Finally the students responded each and every question positively.

3.7 Data Analysis

After indepth analysis and observation of all the variables were highlighted and then these variables were brought under further description in order to analyze properly .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULTS

The study is an attempt to investigate the barriers to learning English, and it has been discovered that such barriers exist. According to the data gathered, the students are having difficulties in learning English. According to the study's findings, all students claimed to be having difficulties in learning English. These are detailed below.

4.1.2 Large and Overcrowded Classes

According to the findings of the study, the difficulties occur as a result of the huge size of the classes. The majority of professors have classes with more than 60 students. It also demonstrates that a large majority of the students are dissatisfied with the class size in which they learn. Large and overcrowded classes are a distinguishing feature of public sector colloges, yet they lack teaching and other facilities. According to the results of the study, the majority of respondents learn in big classes with more than 80 students. There are several issues with large classrooms. For instance, most of the students do not get enough chance to participate in the class. The teacher is not able to reach everyone in class and as a result it halt their process of learning. When Gibbs and Jenkins (1992) [22] note out, as the number of students increase in big classrooms, various challenges in teaching and learning arise. However, as Xu (2001) [23] points out, class size has no impact, although most studies believe that a small class gives better results for a variety of factors.

4.1.3 Role of Motivation

The researcher found that the majority of students are inspired to learn English, but many respondents are not motivated owing to a variety of causes. According to Trawinski (2005) there are number of factors involve which sometimes accelerate, slow down or stop the route of learning English language i.e. Age, Attitude, Motivation, Learning Strategies, General Intelligence etc. (Motivation) being one of

these factors facilitate learning English language. It indicates that the students are focused. They have keen interest to learn English as they are aware of the importance and requirements of English language in their education system. They know that it is vitally important to have command over this language in their educational context and some of them were of the view that if they learn English, half of their education is done. But if they do not appear to be motivated, then it is owing to a lack of several useful learning demands. It highlights the need of creating desire in students.

4.1.4 Obstacles in Language Skills

The English curricula at the Intermediate level is solely centered on reading and writing. According to the responses, the majority of students are struggling with both language skills, which is due to the curricula emphasis on literature. Teachers read and explain the concepts, but no reading or writing activities are assigned to students as exercise work at college or at home. Speaking ability serves no practical purpose in the curriculum, and it is clear that neither teachers nor students value this talent. All of the students have stated that they have difficulty with their public speaking skills.

4.1.5 Lack of Teachers' Training

The majority of the students claim that there is no proper planning or platform for teachers to train, familiarize and acquaint them with modern techniques and requirements which are necessary for English teaching at intermediate level. They were of the view that their teachers have to be trained so as to equip them with the modern techniques and methods. The old method of GTM is of no use, Henceforth, it must be abolished and new methods like DM has to be implemented in order to revamp the process of learning. It demonstrates that the majority of instructors do not have the chance to train themselves for the new difficulties of teaching and learning. How can we expect them to bring about a revolution in English teaching and learning when they are the same as they were many years ago?

4.1.6 Shortage of College Teachers

It was very pathetic after revealing the fact there is not enough teachers for regular and usual base in order to teach English in a far-flung region like government collage jowar Buner.

It has been brought to our attention that no English teacher has been assigned to this college in many years. According to the responses, English is taught here by fixed pay teacher who only fulfill the criteria of attending the class. The researcher found after profound analysis of the responses that the lack of teachers has numerous impacts on their learning. It creates a sense of vacuity in their understanding of English. Lack of English teachers degrades the value of English as a subject. Scarcity of literary events which incite the creative realm of the students and being ignorant to aesthetic values regarding literature is considered the main cause of vacant situation of English teacher here.

4.1.7 Discouraging Behavior of Teachers

The respondents were questioned about general opinions and things that cause hurdles in the fifth section of the questionnaire; the majority of them stated that their professors are unsupportive and uncooperative, and as a result, they have been facing difficulties in understanding and learning English. However, Goodland's research on educationists and teacher standards, on the other hand, states that "teachers have always been expected to set a positive example for learners, to provide a model of behavior."Then, many of the respondents stated that their professors have a negative attitude toward their learning. A student from Govt college jowar Buner has not disclosed the identity of his class instructor, but he has stated that his teacher's attitude is unpleasant in this respect. Fear of unfavorable evaluation, is a barrier to learning. It is important noting that English students have not been given any recognition and encouragement which they need from their concern teachers. Students are in dire need of encouragement and a single word of encouragement can push their process of English learning to a next level. Encouragement is the thing that can even compel a dull minded student to work hard and break the shackles.

4.1.8 English Curriculum

After many decades, the English curriculum for intermediate, part-1 (first year) was changed a few years ago after much severe and harsh criticism, particularly from all involved stakeholders, however the new amended syllabus is still getting varied complaints from various sectors. The need to revise its part-2 (second year) is also a requirement of students in order to address the changing challenges

of the period. All of these developments have been reflected in the results of the survey. According to Memon [25], Pakistan's education system is struggling owing to "defective curriculum." The criticism leveled at earlier and current English curricula is that they are built on concepts that encourage students to return to the same old and fantasy land rather than preparing them to confront the new changes of the interconnected globe. In other words, it is a curriculum focused on literature. Most of them have applauded Urdu or other classical English translations, claiming that attempts have been done to link English and our ancient languages for better comprehension of students. Apart from the existing works of local and national think tanks there is still a huge number of great literary figures which are left virgin. Whose thoughts and intellectual faculty have not been included in the curricula as yet. Therefore, the majority of the students claim that to revamp the syllabus of English again adding to this they demand that to include the short stories of Manto, the poetry of Ghalib and Faiz ahmad faiz. The legendry works of Ghani khan. The works of these writers have been translated into English but still it is no go area for them to aware the students from their wit and sagacity. Their curricula must be compiled to add modern, postmodern and post-colonial literature in their courses the students added.

Another finding from the study is that it has been a habit in our nation to develop curricula without taking into account the requirements of the students. The current curriculum was created without considering the requirements of the students.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

The study found that the majority of persons in the context are ignorant of their learning requirements. It is imperative that students understand the significance of studying English. It is a well-known truth that the sun will never set on the English language. English is a language that will be necessary in all aspect of life in the future. Countries that are capable to connect with other countries throughout the world will survive. FeritKilickaya cites Demircan [27] and observes that Turkey is currently a rich country in the globe. She began realizing the English language in 1950, at a period when the world's economic and military capabilities were growing. Turkey understood that English, as a required subject, was merely a way to connect with other industrialized nations across the world. If we want to see our country and nation develop, we must likewise work along the same lines.

According to the findings of the current study, the great majority of students learn in public sector institutions rather than private. This paints a picture of the great majority of intermediate-level pupils coming from the country's most distant and rural locations. The majority of pupils are educated at public sector institutions. It also implies that the majority of the inhabitants are enrolled in public sector colleges. As a result, the current study endorses that the public sector be prioritized in order to bridge the gap between the private and public sectors. The study's major stakeholders are students, who said in questionnaire responses that our English teachers lack access to current teaching technology. When Abbas (1998), as stated in [21], says that "failure in English is linked to poor pedagogy," he is referring to a "lack of suitably prepared master trainers, minimal emphasis on teaching exercise and the absence of a proper support/monitoring structure for teacher. According to recent research, only five out of every ten English teachers obtained teaching training after starting their careers as teachers several years ago. This type of training is completely unknown to the newcomers. They were directly hired to teach English after completing their Master's degree in English. They are totally unaware about current teaching methods. . Taking into account all previous research, this study also suggests that English teachers be trained to handle with new challenges at times.

Curricula should not be a stagnant pond for learning; rather, it should be adaptable. To meet the new difficulties of context and time, it must be reshaped, reformed, amended, and even remobilized. It must be contextualized such that the students can enjoys themselves while learning.

The study discovered that, while there are challenges and barriers to students learning English, as evidenced by their reservations and as previously mentioned in related chapters, the majority of students are interested in learning it. They wished to overcome all obstacles, and the majority of respondents stated that they want to learn and are aware of the status and importance of English. It is true that learning a language implies gaining "empowerment," and that students might gain power through employment. This was discovered during a question and answer session with students who said

that they are studying and learning English in order to find work in the future. In our country, English is employed as a second language and as a mode of instruction. If this is the case, and the study supports this claim, English should be promoted as a medium of instruction in our educational institutions. It is the reality that English is also employed in our classrooms as a medium of instruction. In our country, it is also commonly spoken as a second language. Although it is not our first language, it performs "particular communicative tasks" in our situation. The research even suggests that it be given the attention it deserves. Although the importance of English varies by location, it is commonly agreed that as an international language, it plays a key role in cross-national communication.

The majority of the respondents have expressed dissatisfaction due to the existing barriers and hurdles which interrupt and create difficulties in their pace of smooth learning such as: large and overcrowded classes, lack of rewards and encouragement from teachers side, lack of modern and necessary equipment in order to empower students with modern technique of learning and education, lack of language lab in their concern college, rot learning and the application of traditional model of learning English which are of no use such as GTM etc, lack of DM which enhances the listening and speaking skills therefore the students are unconscious and unaware about the distinction regarding the standard usage of some syllables like /f/ and /p/ similarly /v/ and /w/, consequently the majority mispronounce these sounds, presence of insufficient English teachers is also a hindrance in learning English.

5.2 Conclusion

The researcher meets with some genuine findings after the profound and in-depth exploration of the students learning English at intermediate level. The study concluded that the students are ambitious, motivated, eager, and curious towards English learning. Furthermore it says that English performs key role in their empowerment and availing job opportunities. Although the students face some difficulties in English learning such barriers are: curricula, overcrowded class, lack of modern equipment for English learning, lack of motivation, lack of proper teacher trainings, etc.

Henceforth, the research wishes to recommend that in order to improve second language acquisition at intermediate level so there is a dire need to provide flexible environment for provoking creativity regarding English learning. In addition to meet these requirement, it is the need of an hour to introduce new methods and techniques, to internalize all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

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