

Analysis Of Curriculum-2006 Efficacy In English Learning Skills: A Case Study Of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

The study focuses on an analysis of National Curriculum for English Learning (NCEL) 2006 at Secondary Level in K.P Pakistan. It explores the efficacy of the NCEL 2006 in English learning skills for Secondary grades in KP and elements which are helpful in better learning. Mixed approach was adopted to investigate this research. A sample of 08 research officers working in BISE, 02 subject specialists from Textbook Board Peshawar, 02 senior instructors from Provincial Institute of Education (PITE) and 08 subject specialists from DCTE were selected as curriculum experts from KP. The data of both questionnaires' and interviews was analyzed using SPSS (Special Package for Social Sciences). The major findings of the study reflect that the various elements of NCEL are helpful in acquisition of English language skills and also provide roadmap in development of new curriculum in future.

Introduction

Pakistan is linguistically and culturally a diverse country. According to Rehman (2003) more than 59 languages are being spoken by different ethnic groups. He further adds that 7.57% speakers of Urdu and only 4.66% speakers of other languages, including English are here. According to Baumgardner (1993) only 3% of the Pakistani uses English language. Despite having very small numbers of speakers, English is considered as most prestigious and job oriented language. Besides, due to globalization, it holds its importance as lingua-franca. Most of the books, knowledge of science and technology, information etc., are easily available in English. So keeping the needs of the day Pakistan is focusing on identifying the objective and role of

teaching English language in our country. Our National Educational Policy 2009, states that; "English shall be employed as the medium of instruction for sciences and mathematics from class IV onwards" (GOP NEP, 2009). The scheme further elaborating the time frame for implementation of the policy asserts that: "For 5 years provinces shall have the option to teach mathematics and science in English or Urdu/official regional language, but after five years the teaching of these subjects shall be in English only" (GOP, NEP 2009). Shah (2008) pointed out that the success rate of students of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was less, particularly in English language. Memon, et al. (2010) also figured that the instructional medium is one reason for the decrease in the progress of

the school, particularly dual medium of instruction, which directly affects the students' performance.

Taking up this challenge, in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the medium of instruction has shifted from Urdu to English and all subjects from grade I-XII are being taught in English. Textbooks have been thoroughly revised in accordance with the National Curriculum 2006 and National Education Policy 2009. After taking up the measures for better journey toward English learning, the analysis of curriculum 2006 to know its efficacy was its crucial demand. To analyze all the aspects and elements in single study was not easy. Besides, to investigate the efficacy of complete curriculum 2006 from grade 1-XII was difficult task. So keeping the validity and accuracy of result, this study is limited to the analysis of Curriculum 2006 at secondary level only. This research also provides gaps for researchers to investigate other domains of Curriculum 2006 at different grade level.

Research Questions

Followings were the research questions to investigate the research:

1. Do the different elements of the NCEL 2006 develop the English language acquisition skills?
2. What are the primary strengths of NCEL 2006?

Literature View

Curriculum

The term 'curriculum' has different interpretations for different educationalist. Every scholar looks at the term through the lens of his own interest. The various definitions of Curriculum reflect different schools of thought, pedagogies, political and cultural experiences. Curriculum is the foundation stone on which the whole organization of education is based. Curriculum provides bases for the whole study

program. It paves the way for achieving the desired outcomes of education. It reflects a deliberate and organized selection of knowledge, skills and values. It is a set of content that guides the teaching, learning and assessment processes and at the same time addresses questions such as what, why, when and how students should learn. Kelly (2004) further elaborates the nature of curriculum recognizing three kinds i.e. planned curriculum, received curriculum and hidden curriculum. According to him planned curriculum means what are expected learning objectives in the form of course outline. Received curriculum refers to the implementation level depicting the reality of students' experiences they encounter in classroom and school. However, accepting this definition of syllabus as organized and guided document ignores an important characteristic called 'hidden curriculum'. The "hidden curriculum" means those behaviors which learners acquire at institute without any conscious effort and planning. Hidden curriculum is that unplanned and unspoken knowledge that the students learn in school voluntarily.

Difference between Curriculum and Syllabus

A syllabus is the concrete and specific shape of what is conceived in the curriculum while a curriculum reflects the holistic framework of the content to be taught, activities to be carried out to realize goals of an educational system. The syllabus only outlines the content or subject matter of a single subject. It is relatively a smaller portion of the total school program and a calendar break up for conducting the activities suggested in the curriculum that can be divided into weeks, months, semesters or terms. Breen (2001) explained syllabus as a working plan i.e. what will be worked upon by the teacher and students in terms of content. It is not an end itself but the means by which the goals of the curriculum are carried out. In conclusion, syllabus serves a single purpose. It reflects only a list of the subject

matter or content to be learned with in stipulated time period. On other hands, curriculum portrays the totality of the activities to be in progress to gain the pre-defined aims of education. It is a multi-purpose document serving the purpose of a reference document to be used by the teachers, textbook writers, reviewers, assessment experts and parents.

Overview of the Curriculum for English Language 2006

The National curriculum is planned, mainly, to address the employment language and academic needs of the learners who either want to continue their further studies, or might end up studies after intermediate. Hence, its goal is to impart both practical skills and academic skills that students can bring in use to pursue their education or start their practical life by establishing their own business or hunting for employment. The main objective is to promote the communicative and practical aspect of the language. However, it does not ignore the development of the nomadic values among the learners which are important for flourishing peace and harmony in the society. The National curriculum also keeps insight to impart teaching experiences and language learning skills in accordance to cultural limits and national limits for the promotion of nationalism and love for their cultural heritage.

The curriculum document is divided into the following main sections:

- i. Competencies, Standards, Benchmarks and Student Learning Outcomes
- ii. Text types / Themes and Sub-Themes
- iii. Classroom Methodology
- iv. Assessment
- v. Guidelines for Selection and Development of Textbook / Materials Writing

Focus of English Curriculum 2006

Outcome Focused

Earlier curricula focused on broad objectives while the English curriculum 2006 can be rightly called an outcome based curriculum. It has vividly set the benchmarks and standards for inculcation of the desired language learning skills which further help in the selection of student learning outcomes (SLOs). These SLOs are developed grade-wise for primary, elementary, secondary and higher secondary levels. Some of the student learning outcomes included in the curriculum might not be accessed through paper pencil test due to certain limitations, but seeing their importance these have been included and need to be addressed through continuous classroom assessment.

Student-centred

Curriculum 2006 recommends that learning language will be much influential and result oriented if educators speak less and involves the students more in communicative situation where they are provided with a purpose to speak, read, write and listen and gives them more time despite of utilizing by speaking by their selves. To achieve this objective, a number of instructional strategies can be exploited by the teachers. These instructional strategies need to involve students as active learners because learning happens when interaction takes place. It shows that educators should plan and select carefully by having background, interests and experiences of students in mind.

Problem Solving

NCEL 2006 offer challenging tasks for students to deal with problem solving situations in real life. Teachers should put learners' critical thinking into practice in a functional way. It also asks that teacher must ease learner to commune and to teach through intellectually stimulating and satisfactory tasks and activities. English curriculum recommended a number of tasks and activities which cultivate inquiry-based learning, critical thinking and problem solving by

suggesting instructional strategies like discussion, role play and inquiry skills.

Communicative Approach

The main objective of teaching a language is to increase students' ability to communicate in actual life so that they can make usage of that language functional. Previously, the focus of English teaching was on the adoption of grammar and rules despite of the functional aspect of the language, and for this reason it was common practice in English teaching classrooms to "use grammar translation method in Pakistan. As an up-shot, students learned the rules of grammar and were unable to utter few words in English" (Hafeez, 2004).

Development of Social and Moral Attributes

A distinctive feature of this curriculum is that its objective is to impart the whole aspects of language and also the social and moral development of the learners as well. It fully devotes to ensure religious and social harmony. Subsequently, developed textbooks accommodate norms and acceptable standards of the society at large. This curriculum is in line with the pre-set level that "all students will develop ethical and social attributes and values relevant in a multicultural, civilized society" (GOP, NCEL, 2006).

Skill-based Assessment

Skill-based tests cite to the vast activities of techniques or tools that a teacher uses to analyze, document, and measure the academic progress, studying achievements, adoption of skill or learning requirements of students. Ideally, the student's assessment should be based on the mentioned content of the curriculum and what teachers taught them as well. It aims at inculcation of critical thinking instead of memorization of textbook's content. The curriculum aims to improve learners' capability

to commune in actual and real life conditions and make influential use of communicative skills for various purposes.

METHODOLOGY

To investigate the study, the methodology has been organized into three sections: participants, research procedure, data collection and data analysis. The mixed research design has been adopted to investigate the efficacy of Curriculum 2006 at secondary level in KP. For quantitative data, questionnaire was developed and feedback collected from curriculum experts. In quantitative, semi-structured interviews conducted to get the feedback of respondents.

Participants

The participants consist of 15 curriculum experts from Textbook, DCTE (Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education) and Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Educations KP. In these fifteen Curriculum experts 05 from Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education Abbottabad, 02 from Provincial Institute of Teacher Education Peshawar, 01 from KP Textbook Board Peshawar, 08 from Boards of Intermediate & Secondary Education and 05 educationalist from Elementary & Secondary Education Department of KP.

Data Collection Procedure

It took round about four months in collecting research data. The researcher obtained information about teachers' training schedule from Provincial Institute of Teachers Education (PITE), Peshawar and personally visited the training venues in Southern districts and some other districts of KP during training session with prior permission of the Director PITE. All the questionnaires were received back but a few were found incomplete. Researcher faced difficulty in getting interview appointment from Curriculum experts because of their busy schedule. However, nine Curriculum experts made agreed to be interviews using departmental contacts.

Interviews were recorded on cell phone with the consent of the interviewees. It took 40-45 minutes an average in interviewing each of the Curriculum experts. At the same time questionnaire was also get filled by them. Eleven questionnaires were mailed to the curriculum experts, out of which three were received back.

Data Analysis

In data analysis, data has been divided into two frames, quantitative and qualitative data. In quantitative, close-ended questionnaires taken

from curriculum experts regarding SLOs have been properly analyzed and tabulated through the following procedure. The quantitative data was analyzed by using descriptive particulars, and for having this purpose frequencies and percentages have been counted. The percentages/frequencies have highlighted the distribution of responses along the scale. Inferential statistics (independent sample t-test, and ANOVA) using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 19.0) was used to gain insight into the numerical data.

Table 1 Responses of Curriculum Experts Regarding Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

S. No	Statements	SDA f (%)	DA f (%)	A f (%)	SA f (%)	SA f (%)
1.	The Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) of NCEL2006 for secondary classes are explicit and clearly stated	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (33.3)	8 (66.7)	12 (100)
2.	The SLOs of NELC emphasize the development of Knowledge and information Skills	EWQ 0 (0)	Kx 3 (25.0)	8 (66.7)	4 (33.3)	12 (100)
	values and attitudes	0 (0)	1 8.3	6 50.0	5 41.7	12 (100)
3.	The SLOs of NELC emphasize to foster the ability of:	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 50.0	6 50.0	12 (100)
	Reading and Thinking skills	2 (16.7)	4 (33.3)	6 (50.0)	0 (0)	12 (100)
	Writing skills	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (41.7)	7 (58.3)	12 (100)
	Oral Communication skills	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (66.7)	1 (8.3)	12 (100)
	Formal and Lexical Aspects of Language	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (66.7)	1 (8.3)	12 (100)
	Appropriate Ethical and Social Development	2 (16.7)	9 (75.0)	1 (8.3)	0 (0)	12 (100)
4.	The SLOs of NELC are not ambitious and difficult to realize	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (41.7)	7 (58.3)	12 (100)
5.	The SLOs of NELC are in agreement with the given standards and benchmarks of the curriculum	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (33.3)	8 (66.7)	12 (100)

6.	Text types/themes suggested in NCEL are helpful in acquisition of basic English language learning skills	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (58.3)	5 41.7	12 (100)
7.	Text types/themes suggested in NCEL are clear and easily addressable	0 (0)	1 8.3	9 (75.0)	2 (16.7)	12 (100)
8.	Themes suggested in NCEL promote:	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (75.0)	3 (25.0)	12 (100)
	Ethical and social attitude	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (75.0)	3 (25.0)	12 (100)
	peaceful co-existence	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (75.0)	3 (25.0)	12 (100)
	patriotism	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (75.0)	3 (25.0)	12 (100)
	gender equality	0 (0)	4 (33.3)	6 (50.0)	2 (16.7)	12 (100)
	crises awareness	0 (0)	5 (41.7)	4 (33.3)	3 (25.0)	12 (100)
	health , safety and prevention of drug addiction	0 (0)	5 (41.7)	3 (25.0)	4 (33.3)	12 (100)
	Environment	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (66.7)	1 (8.3)	12 (100)
9.	Themes suggested in NCEL can be enriched by adding themes related to:	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (66.7)	4 (33.3)	12 (100)
	Human Rights	0 (0)	2 (16.7)	7 (58.3)	3 (25.0)	12 (100)
	Interfaith harmony	0 (0)	2 (16.7)	7 (58.3)	3 (25.0)	12 (100)
	Water preservation	0 (0)	2 (16.7)	7 (58.3)	3 (25.0)	12 (100)
10.	The NCEL instructional strategies reflect:	0 (0)	5 (41.7)	7 (58.3)	0 (0)	12 (100)
	Task-Based Language Teaching	0 (0)	8 (66.7)	4 (33.3)	0 (0)	12 (100)
	Audio-Lingual Method	0 (0)	8 (66.7)	4 (33.3)	0 (0)	12 (100)
	Total physical response	0 (0)	8 (66.7)	4 (33.3)	0 (0)	12 (100)
	Communicative language teaching	0 (0)	3 (25.0)	9 (75.0)	0 (0)	12 (100)
	The Naturalistic approach	1 (8.3)	7 (58.3)	4 (33.3)	0 (0)	12 (100)
	Eclectic (Mixed) approach	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (75.0)	3 (25.0)	12 (100)
	Do not reflect any specific strategy	1 (8.3)	10 (83.3)	1 (8.3)	0 (0)	12 (100)
11.	The NCEL instructional strategies provide support in achieving the curriculum SLOs	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (66.7)	4 (33.3)	12 (100)

12.	The NCEL instructional strategies encourage active participation of learners	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (58.3)	5 (41.7)	12 (100)
13.	The NCEL instructional strategies are structured and selected in accordance to the academic level of the learners	0 (0)	2 (16.7)	10 (83.3)	0 (0)	12 (100)
14.	The NCEL allows teachers to choose and adapt the instructional strategies according to learner's needs	1 (8.3)	7 (58.3)	3 (25.0)	1 (8.3)	12 (100)
15.	The NCEL instructional strategies are based on making connections between what learners know and what is new	1 (8.3)	4 (33.3)	7 (58.3)	0 (0)	12 (100)
16.	The NCEL assessment mechanism is consistent with the SLOs and instructional strategies of the curriculum	2 (16.7)	2 (16.7)	6 (50.0)	2 (16.7)	12 (100)
17.	NCEL assessment mechanism promotes acquisition of language skills and discourage memorization	0 (0)	1 (8.3)	11 (91.7)	0 (0)	12 (100)
18.	NCEL assessment mechanism engages students in higher order thinking, with open-ended tasks	0 (0)	2 (16.7)	8 (66.7)	2 (16.7)	12 (100)
19.	NCEL assessment table of specifications assigns sufficient weighting to the four basic English language skills	0 (0)	4 (33.3)	8 (66.7)	0 (0)	12 (100)
20.	Alignment exists between NCEL assessment mechanism and board exams at secondary school	1 (8.3)	6 (50.0)	4 (33.3)	1 (8.3)	12 (100)

Table 1 manifests that most of the Curriculum Experts agreed that Students Learning Outcomes (SLOs) of NCEL emphasize the development of knowledge & skills, **Item No. 2 (a) & (c)** and writing skills and Formal & lexical aspect of language **Item No. 3 (b) & (d)**. Similarly, all experts affirm that the SLOs are fully in agreement with the standards and benchmarks of NCEL. However, **Item No 3 (c)** indicates divided responses of the experts about development of oral communication skills. Half of the Curriculum Experts (50%) were in disagreement and other half in agreement regarding development of oral communication skills in learners through SLOs mentioned in the National English Language Curriculum. Similarly, **Item No. 1** reflects that some experts (41.7%) had concerns about the

understanding and clarity of SLOs given in NCEL while others (59.3%) were satisfied with the clarity of SLOs and agreed that the SLOs of NCEL are understandable and plainly stated. In response to a statement regarding the nature of SLOs (item no: 4) majority of curriculum experts (91.7%) had of the view that the SLOs are ambitiously stated and difficult to realize with the available resources.

In response to **Item No. 6** shows that all of the curriculum eexperts agreed that NCEL suggested text types are helpful in acquisition of Basic English language learning skills. Similarly, most of the experts (58.3) affirmed that the NCEL suggested text themes promote Ethical and social attitude, peaceful co-existence, patriotism and environmental education. However, some of the experts (41.7) expressed disagreement regarding

inclusion of content for the promotion of gender equality, crises management and health, safety and prevention of drug addiction. **Item No: 7** reflected that the suggested text types in NCEL are quite clear and easily addressable as majority of the respondents (91.9%) agreed with the statement. **Item No. 9** indicated that majority of the Curriculum Experts (83.7) felt the need for enriching the NCEL existing text themes by adding more themes related to Human Rights, interfaith harmony and the burning issue of water preservation. Curriculum Experts' view regarding instructional strategies reflected in the NCEL. **Item No. 10** predicts that most of the Curriculum Experts (75%) agreed that NCEL recommends Communicative language teaching and Eclectic (Mixed) approach for teaching of English language. However, the respondents showed spilt response about Task- Based Language Teaching as a recommended method of teaching in NCEL. About half of the Curriculum Experts (58.3%) agreed to it as a preferred method of teaching while the remaining half (51.7%) were in disagreement. While most of the respondents (66.7%) disagreed to Total Physical Response (TPI) and Audio-lingual method as a preferred teaching approach reflected in NCEL. Similarly, **Item No. 11** reflects that all of the Curriculum Experts agreed that the NCEL recommended instructional strategies provide support in achieving the curriculum SLOs, encourage active participation of learners and are designed / selected keeping in view students' academic level.

In addition, more than half (58.3%) Curriculum Experts agreed (**Item No. 15**) that the NCEL instructional strategies establish connections

between new and previous knowledge of the learners but the other half (51.7%) were in disagreement to the statement. **Item No. 14** indicates that most of the experts (66.6%) showed their concern about teachers' role to choose and adapt the instructional strategies according to learner's needs and disagreed with it. **Item No. 16** reflects that most of the Curriculum Experts (66.7) agreed that NCEL assessment mechanism is consistent with the SLOs and instructional strategies while the rest (33%) disagreed. In the same way, a large number of experts (67%) agreed that NCEL assessment table of specifications assigns sufficient weighting to the four Basic English language skills however; a few experts (33%) disagreed to the statement. They also affirmed that NCEL assessment mechanism engages students in higher order thinking, by recommending open-ended tasks. **Item No. 20** indicates mixed responses of the experts regarding alignment of the NCEL assessment mechanism with the S.S.C board exams. About half of the Curriculum Experts (58%) were in disagreement and other half (42%) in agreement to the statement. Similarly, (**Item No. 17**) investigating if the NCEL assessment mechanism promotes acquisition of language skills instead of memorization was agreed by majority of the respondents (91%).

Qualitative Data Analysis

To collect qualitative data interviews was conducted. The interviews were recorded and transformed into text. Relevant themes were identified within the text and coding was done for further elaboration. Following codes and themes were dealt with in the transcribed text.

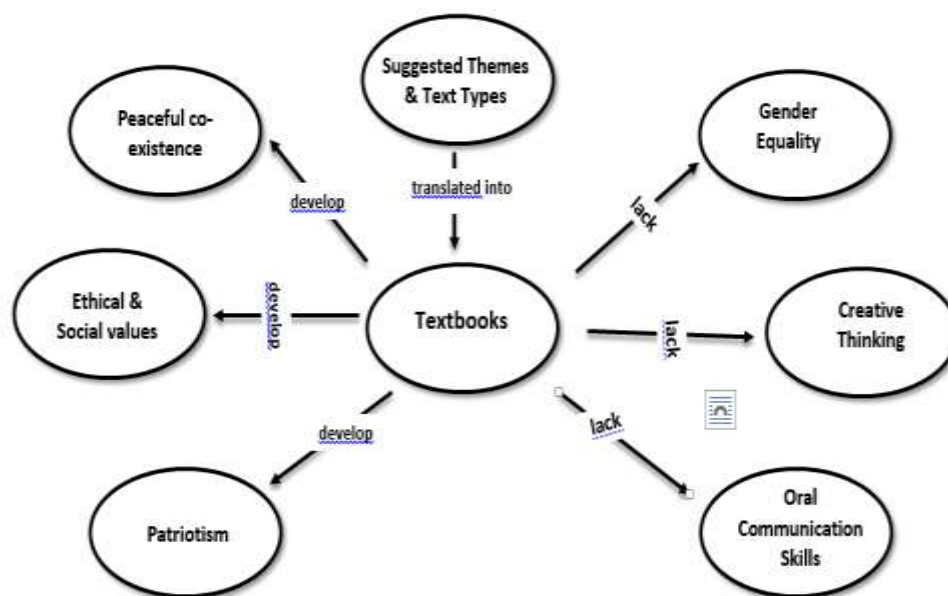
Table 2 Breakups of Themes and Codes

Themes	Codes
Student Learning Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to understand and clearly stated • Emphasize knowledge, skills and values • Difficult to achieve • Align with benchmarks and standards

Text Types/Themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful in acquisition of language skills • Promote ethical and social attitude • Promote tolerance and peaceful co-existence • Ensure gender equality • Develop crises awareness
Instructional Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows teachers to choose and adapt the activities • practical in overcrowded classes • Ensure active participation of learners • Focus on functional aspect not grammar rules
Assessment Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourage rote learning and memorization • Engages students in higher order thinking • Focus on formative/classroom assessment • Alignment with BISE exams
Strengths and Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect social needs and national aspiration • Focus on language acquisition • Responsive to global changes

National Curriculum 2006 specifies standards for the acquisition of English language skills. The benchmarks further breakup the standards, targeting that the students will be capable of what to do to achieve their selected standard. The curriculum standards and the benchmarks lead to the choice of student learning outcomes (SLOs). SLOs depicting what learners will achieve after accomplishing each standard i.e. what learners are required to have successfully achieved at the end of each grade. Hence, formulation and phrasing of these SLOs is of utmost importance to address the overall objectives of English language teaching. The educationist agreed that the Students Learning Outcomes (SLOs) of NCEL emphasize the development of knowledge, skills, and values. Similarly, they affirm that the SLOs are fully in agreement with the NCEL standards and benchmarks. However, few educationists had concerns about the understanding and clarity of SLOs. When asked about the understanding of SLOs, one of the experts commented that: "Honestly speaking, most of our

teachers love to read newspapers but I had never come across a teacher reading an English newspaper which reflects that our teachers have limited exposure to English and felt difficulty in understanding so technically written document." However, educationalist does not take a clear position regarding achievement of Curriculum SLOs with available resources. While sharing his views about nature of SLOs, one of the interviewee asserts: "SLO becomes ambitiously stated and if not properly addressed in lower grades, the sequential order breaks which results in increasingly difficulty level of the SLO in the higher grades." While another interviewee disagreed with this view declaring: The number of SLOs which could be termed as ambitious is not more than 10%. On the other hand 90% of the SLOs are easily achievable and even the remaining 10% could also be addressed in favourable conditions. They seemed ambitious at the time of the introductionn English curriculum 2006 but now teachers/learners are used to them.



Artius

Fig 1: Thematic Map of SLOs

Similarly, experts agreed that the themes and text types suggested in NCEL are helpful in acquisition of basic English language learning skills but lose their spirit when translated into textbooks. Further explaining the issue one of the interviewee comments: “In most cases, textbooks serve as a surrogate curriculum, as majority of the teachers are not familiar with the original curriculum document and the students who interact with these textbooks do not develop the desired proficiency in English language. This is the result of teaching with an examination point of view. Teachers and students both aim at going through the examination. They least care for the acquisition of expected language skills but only learn to reproduce the content of the textbooks in the Board examinations. Hence, the cognitive abilities expected in the curriculum are least reflected in the textbooks and more often ignored by the teachers.” Educationalist also agreed that the recommended themes/text types in NCEL

promote Ethical and social attitude, peaceful co-existence, patriotism, environmental education, crises awareness, health, safety, and prevention of drug addiction. However, some of the experts expressed their dissatisfaction regarding inclusion of material for the promotion of gender equality and one of the interviewee showing his concern asserts: “At the secondary level the English textbooks do not promote gender equity but are promoting the hidden curriculum that is the domination of males. More than half of Pakistan’s population is comprised of women, but their contribution in the national stream of progress has been ignored completely and the female role models in the textbooks are, in one way or another, related to the religion of Islam. Keeping gender bias out of the textbook should be the conscious effort of the expert and the writer.”

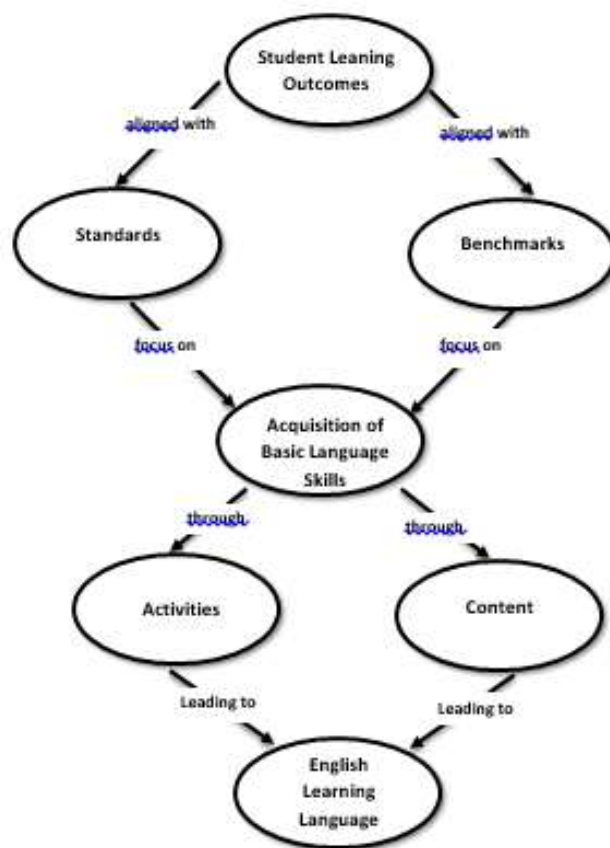


Fig 2: Thematic Map of Suggested Themes/Text Types

A good curriculum not only lay down what should be taught and learned, but also suggests how that curriculum should be taught and implemented. Motivated students learn best and take active part in their learning, framing their own learning targets and taking responsibility for their learning. Most of the experts showed their concern about teachers' role to choose and adapt the learning activities according to the students' needs. One of the interviewee expresses his apprehension as "The curriculum for English in Pakistan also gives comprehensive guidelines for teachers to use different types of activities which do not allow teachers to work flexibly. Besides, different activities are suggested in the textbooks as

footnotes. In such situation, teachers did not feel themselves comfortable to customize the recommended activities in the curriculum and textbooks." Educationalist agreed that the instructional strategies recommended in NCEL encourage active participation of learners and are designed keeping in view students' academic level but it seem difficult to carry out these activities in overcrowded classes. One of the expert portraying a typical Pakistani classroom, remarks: "Curriculum instructional strategies demand for activity based learning while in the context of Pakistan the number of students in the class is more than the set standards, causing disciplinary issues while teachers are not well trained to engage

overcrowded classes; even in some cases teachers have to do multi grade teaching, so, its

implementation is difficult in most of the public schools.

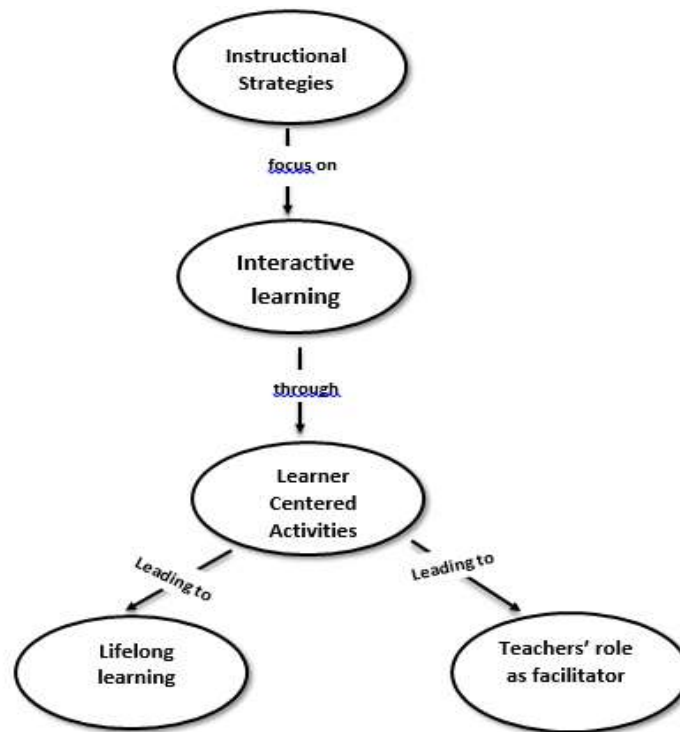


Fig 3: Thematic Map of Instructional Strategies

Assessment section of National English curriculum acknowledges the development of language learning skills instead of reproduction of factual information. The main purpose of the curricula is to make learners ready for an evaluation of their acquisition and bring the skills about language in use despite of cramming the index of the text book. The students only will be enabled to address various texts at their own when cramming and rotting will be discouraged. The strong recommendation for assessing student's ability in speaking and written communication is use unseen text and materials to judge the capability of students (GOP, NCEL 2006). Assessment mechanism suggested in NCEL addresses almost all the language skills but the problem lies at the implementation level.

Textbooks and summative examinations are not in harmony with the spirit of assessment mechanism recommended in NCEL. One of the experts while addressing this issue, comments: "NCEL discourages 'rote learning' and promotes deep understanding; recommends activity-based assessment and learning activities which encourage learners to understand experiences they come across. But getting higher grades in summative examination encourages learners towards cramming and rote memorization rather than critical thinking and creative abilities." Another expert added: "The students prefer selected studies and focus on the questions which are likely to be in the examinations and the rest is ignored. Students understand English less and cram up more, so they

have poor vocabulary, a little understanding of rules of grammar and unclear idea of the text given in the textbooks. The writing activities too, do not encourage learner's practice creative writing and the students, even after graduation, cannot write essays on their own." NCEL also addresses this issue in the coming statement: "Such activities are to be incorporated at each grade that cater for progressive cognitive development from lower level intellectual skills of simple knowledge and comprehension to higher order skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation" (GOP, NCEL, 2006). NCEL considers classroom assessment activities as central tools for measuring language acquisition skills focusing on development of ethical and social values and oral communication skills. These skills need to be judged in the classrooms in the process of formative assessments because these skills cannot be measured through paper; pencil tests. Teachers should know the importance of continually providing feedback to their students through continuous assessment so that learners know their current level of understanding, their weaknesses and strengths. This is the primary aim of valuable formative assessment. It tries to mend the rift between the objectives of teaching and learning. Similarly, summative assessment is conducted by BISE.

Answering to the question regarding alignment between the curriculum and BISE exam papers one of the expert comments: "Papers prepared by various BISE of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, reflect discrepancy in distribution of marks and weight age assigned to various English language learning skills in both papers for grade IX-X. There is overlapping of assessment areas. For example, reading comprehension is required to be assessed in Paper 'A' (IX) only but it is assessed in both papers for grade IX-X. Similarly writing composition needs to be assessed in paper 'B' but it is assessed in both papers for grade IX-X while an important writing skill 'Interpretation of visual organizers' and Mechanics of punctuation' are ignored altogether in both papers for grade IX-X which is of utmost important for assessing creative writing and proof reading skills." Addressing to the same issue another expert asserts: "The content of the question papers has shown that the most of the test items have been chosen from the textbooks and previous board papers with no novelty. Majority of the question ask for reproduction of textbook content. Such paper setting shows that testing is based on the textbook content and not the curriculum SLOs, and therefore alignment between BISE examination and NCEL recommended assessment mechanism could not be established."

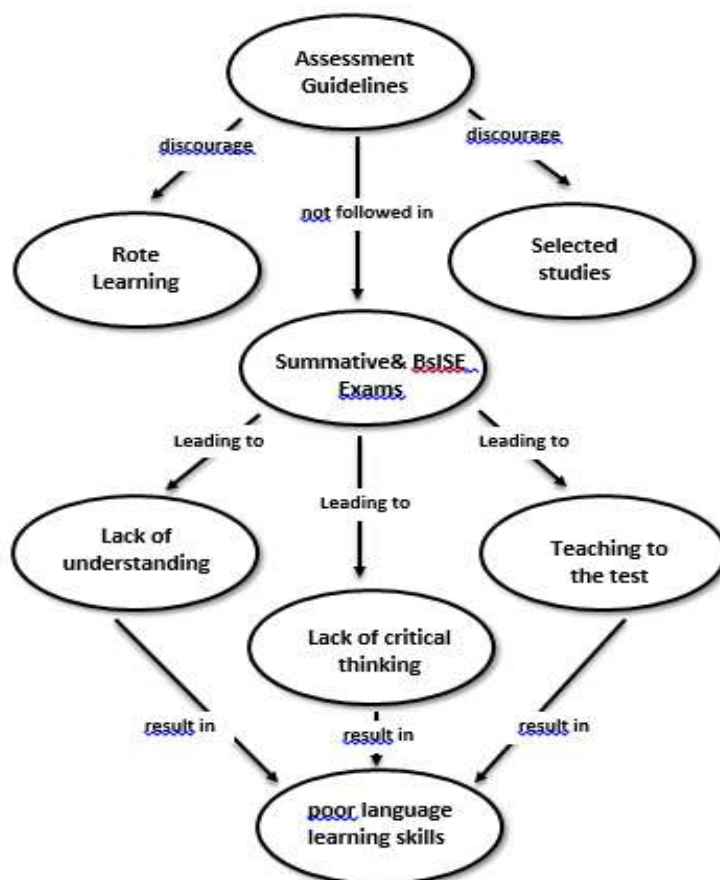


Fig 4: Thematic Map of Assessment Mechanism

While representing the pros and cons of the current English language curriculum 2006 for grade IX-X the experts also mentioned that during curriculum development working teachers were not involved and the ministry of education largely relied on subject specialists instead of teachers with sufficient field experience. They also pointed that there is lack of good textbooks of English language in public schools. The textbooks taught at secondary level do not have the crisp of language. There has been redundancy of ideas and the text is purposefully written to address the SLOs in a novice fashion.

Conclusion

In conclusion the analysed quantitative and qualitative data of questionnaire and interviews provided the following insightful reflection on the efficacy of curriculum 2006 in English learning skills. The data states that Students Learning Outcomes (SLOs) of NCEL emphasize the development of language acquisition skill. It is thematic oriented and promote eethical and social attitude, peaceful co-existence, patriotism and environmental educationn. In order to achieve the targeted SLOs proper instructions have been provided in curriculum document. The focus of the curriculum and Textbooks circles around grammar and the exercises included in English textbooks (IX-X) fully support development of formal and lexical aspect of English language. It was evident

from the interview that the curriculum language (Standards, benchmarks, SLOs etc.) seems simple but most of the directives are so technically phrased that teachers could not understand them and often fail to achieve the required outcomes. In addition, data from interviews reflects that the instructional strategies recommended in NCEL encourage active participation of learners and are designed keeping in view students' academic level. Furthermore, it is concluded from the interview that besides annual exams, NCEL emphasize the need of classroom assessment as central tool for measuring language acquisition skills to inculcate and social values and development of oral communication skills. In light of calculated findings, research study recommends followings recommendations for further improvement in curriculum.

Firstly, NCEL largely dwells upon development of communicative skills in students which is not possible without availability of modern gadgets for teaching English, hence, well equipped English Language labs should be established in each school for the teaching of phonics, and functional aspects of English language. Secondly, curriculum themes should be revised and enriched by adding themes like conflict resolution and religious tolerance etc. Subsequently, textbooks are reviewed adding emerging trends and listening activities. Finally, findings showed that Board examinations specifically forced English teachers to pivot their teaching on training students to get high marks in annual exams. It is therefore recommended that SLO based assessment should be introduced by BISE to discourage cramming and the race for getting high marks may end up.

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