

# English Language Teachers' Perceptions About Outcomes-Based Approach For Developing English Language Competencies

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## ABSTRACT

Experts in English language teaching have, of late, been recommending the development of requisite language competencies through an outcomes-based education (OBE). Following this spirit, the government of Punjab in Pakistan outlined the desired core competencies for secondary school students in the National Curriculum for English Language (NCEL) in 2006. Foregrounding Biggs' (2014) theory of Constructive Alignment, this study attempted to explore the extent of alignment of these core competencies with the classroom practices. For this purpose, 5 focus group discussions of two-hour duration, each consists of 7 members, were held with 35 teachers, who teach English to grade 10 in the government secondary schools of district Jhelum. The data was transcribed and analyzed thematically following interpretative analysis approach. The findings show a lack of alignment of teachers' self-reported classroom practices with the learning outcomes presented in NCEL. Lack of awareness of the teachers regarding OBE, absence of professional qualification and training, a traditional assessment system, and lack of expertise of the teachers and students in English language were found to be some of the main reasons for this lack of alignment. The study has implications for policymakers who devise and implement policies without taking sufficient actions on the ground at the micro-level. It recommends an overhaul of the teaching and assessment system to make the OBE work.

**Keywords:** English Language Teaching, Outcome-Based Education (OBE), Constructive Alignment (CA), Teachers' Perceptions, Assessment Practices

## INTRODUCTION

The growing needs of the 21st century demand the high school education system to focus on developing life skills (Care et al., 2018). English, being the international lingua franca, should be in focus as one of the life skills in academic settings where English is the language of education (Haidar & Fang, 2019). Since English language teaching attempts to equip students with the most important life skill of effective communication, research suggests that the teachers' focus should remain on activity-based learning. This lead to functional knowledge and application of that knowledge for effective learning. Studies conducted in

various contexts, however, have shown that teachers usually follow a traditional approach to teaching the English language, spending most of their time reading the text and focusing on traditional, grammar-focused language activities (Biggs, 2014; Irshad, 2022; Khan, 2020; Noblitt, Vance, & Smith, 2010). The purpose of teaching English is not to equip the students with effective communication in real life, but merely to get through the final examination at the secondary school level of Pakistan (Anwar, 2011; Nawab, 2012; Shah, 2010). Therefore, we consider that the teacher's awareness about the intended learning outcomes results in effective teaching of the English language. The learners may achieve

intended competencies effectively only if the teachers devise teaching activities according to the desired learning outcomes (Biggs, 2014; Lebrun, 2011). This concept of Outcomes-based Education (OBE) was first introduced by Spady in 1988 (cited in Bruno, 1994) and later developed by Biggs (2014), outcome-based approach to teaching involves the students in meaningful activities, and is linked to what students expect to know after the completion of the course. Biggs advocated the outcome-based approach in his theory of Constructive Alignment. The theory proposes that there needs to be pedagogical alignment among learning outcomes, classroom practices, and assessment practices.

Following the model of OBE, the government of Pakistan launched the National Curriculum for the English Language (NCEL) in the year 2006. Emphasizing an outcomes-based approach, the document clearly states that the major focus of teaching should be on the development of English language “skills rather than content” (NCEL, 2006, p. 2). Previous research studies corroborate this claim by finding that NCEL is based on outcome-based language teaching and focuses on learning outcomes (Aamer, Muhammad, & Masood, 2020). NCEL outlines five key learning areas called the English language learning competencies. They defined each competency through specific standards of knowledge and skills. Standard is further associated with individual benchmarks that students will accomplish at the end of an academic year. Finally, intended student learning outcomes (SLOs) are incorporated based on these benchmarks and used to select the relevant topics and content of the teaching material. The current study focuses on four out of the five core competencies and their related SLOs designed for the secondary level students of the government schools in the province of Punjab.

Reading and critical thinking skills: the first competency that the NCEL (2006) designates target development of language skills with the

reading activities, and NCEL recommends the use of text to teach reading, not reading to teach text (p. 7). The document further recommends that the students must develop the critical ability to judge and evaluate a text to find the hidden meaning of the author. Learning outcomes related to reading and thinking skills mentioned in NCEL include, but are not limited to, analysis of the pattern of text organization; writing the main idea of a text and supporting details; cause-and-effect relationship between text; temporal meaning of words; the difference between facts and opinion in text; interpersonal and transactional text, etc.

The NCEL document mentions writing skills as the second desired competency. It recommends that they should practice writing activities in three steps. First is the use of prewriting strategies; for example, a topic is selected, then various generated ideas are generated and organized through brainstorming, mind mapping and outlining, etc. The second stage is drafting, in which they transformed these generated ideas into sentences and paragraphs. Finally, in the revising stage, these ideas are finally edited and improved in form and content. The learning outcomes included in writing skills are precis writing, essay writing on general subjects, argumentative essays, a summary of poems, summarizing a paragraph, paragraph writing, formal letter and applications, character sketch, book reviews, descriptive writing, and email writing.

Oral communication skill is the third competency that NCEL recommends. This policy document recommends training of students about making appropriate use of language according to formality of a situation, the content of the message being communicated, and the nature of the communicators’ relationship. The document further recommends that teachers must sensitize the students to “the correct conventions of expression in different settings so that they use language appropriately, according to the occasion and audience”

(NCEL, 2006, p. 8). The SLOs refer to activities like group discussions, interviews, knowledge of expressions to show appreciation, apology, regret, agreement and disagreement, use of stress and intonation, use of phrases for asking and responding to questions of social matters.

Fourth competency that the NCEL targets is the formal and lexical aspects of language. The document emphasizes the importance of sufficient lexical knowledge for the students to be able to employ such vocabulary in formal aspects of communication. The document states: "Correct grammar, appropriate vocabulary, speech, and cohesive and coherent written composition are integral parts of a whole; hence, equally important" (NCEL, 2006, p. 8). The SLOs for the purpose include translation from English to Urdu and vice versa, use of prefixes and suffixes, synonyms and antonym, connotation and denotation, parts of speech, use of dictionary skills, use of tenses, the correct form of verbs, active and passive voice, direct and indirect tenses, and use of pronunciation key.

As is evident, the core competencies and the related SLOs seem quite relevant to English language teaching, and also appear to be achievable. Teachers are the actual and crucial implementers of this policy to develop English language competencies in the students. However, a considerable number of problems, ranging from administrative issues (Aftab, 2012; Ghani, Mahmood, & Akram, 2008) to teaching materials (Asghar, 2013; Ashraf, 2006; Warsi, 2004), to teacher training and involvement (Aslam et al., 2010). While flaws in NCEL, the textbooks used for achieving SLO, and the assessment techniques have been the focus of several studies (e.g., Aftab, 2012; Asghar, 2013; Ghani, 2008), there is a dearth of research focusing on the extent of implementation of these core competencies and SLOs in actual classroom teaching, and the reasons for the (non)implementation of the NCEL standards. Further, the implementation

of an outcome-based approach has been mainly studied at the tertiary level of education (see, e.g. Alfauzan, 2017; Biggs, 2014; Lebrun, 2011; Maher, 2004), while this study focuses on secondary level in government schools in Pakistan. This study is therefore an attempt to explore the teachers' perceptions for developing English language competencies in classroom practices. Specifically, the study aimed to know about the perceptions of the teacher about what they think, know, believe, and do regarding the outcome-based approach: their extent of awareness of and familiarity with OBE and SLOs; whether they focus on content or competencies during class; whether they focus on all the four competencies; the extent to which they engage learners in meaningful learning activities; and the extent to which they align the examination system with the NCEL defined SLOs. To find the answer to these queries, the study followed an interpretive research design, as elaborated in the next section.

## METHOD

This study follows Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) which aims at understanding lived experience of participants and the ways in which the participants perceive their experiences (Reid et al., 2005). We have employed the basic interpretive research design with the major tool: focus group discussions, to explore the perceptions of the Secondary School English teachers about the implementation of the outcome-based approach to teaching for developing English language competencies in the students. Theoretically, the current study is influenced by Biggs' (2014) theory of 'Constructive Alignment' (CA), which is one of the most influential theories in education, and gives us space to explore the existence of alignment among curriculum, teaching and assessment practices. Biggs' CA advocates "an outcome-based approach to teaching in which desired learning outcomes are well defined by teachers before teaching takes place, then

teaching and they should devise assessment methods for the successful achievement of those outcomes" (Biggs, p.5). In developing English language competencies in the students with the help of CA, a question should be in the mind of teachers as to "what do we want the students to be able to do as a result of learning?" (Biggs, 2002, p.1). This study views constructive alignment as a pedagogical alignment, which can only be achieved, in view of Biggs, when the element of coherence will be present among learning objectives, pedagogical activities, and evaluation strategies.

In order to select participants for focus-group discussions (FGDs), a purposive sampling technique was used to select only those teachers who taught English to classes nine and ten in the government schools of the Punjab province. We also ensured that the teachers had a minimum of five and a maximum of ten years' service. This helped us ensure the currency of the teachers in relation to OBE. 35 teachers teaching the English language to secondary classes in five different schools of district Jhelum were selected. Each group of the FGDs had 7 participants. The FGDs included open-ended questions, and were aimed at gathering the teachers' perceptions about the extent of knowledge, information, and experience they had in relation to OBE, whether they believed it was the right approach, and whether they implemented it in their classroom teaching. Each FGD lasted for 150 minutes on average. Ethical issues were considered and catered for to ensure that the participants remain willing as well as anonymous. The data gathered from FGDs was transcribed and tested for inter-rater reliability through the participants corroborating the transcripts. Thematic analysis was then applied, wherein the dominant themes emerging out of the data were identified through coding in the first phase. We discussed the dominant themes emerging from the data below.

## RESULTS

Thematic analysis of focus group discussion reveals that the intended objectives of NCEL for developing English language competencies in the students do not align with the teachers' self-stated teaching practices in the classrooms. Results from the data analysis reveal the concerns of the participants regarding a lack of alignment of instructions with the learning outcomes presented in the NCEL. The results also show that, because of lack of awareness, unavailability of resources, absence of quality training, and the traditional assessment system, which is centrally controlled, teachers carry out traditional classroom activities, with a focus on the terminal examination. Non-implementation of SLOs was also linked to lack of in-service teacher training and the pressures from board exams. All the participants showed incognizance regarding the outcome-based approach to teaching, except three participants, who held higher degrees. We discussed all these in detail below.

### Lack of knowledge about OBE

In response to questions about the outcome-based approach to teaching, the NCEL developed by the ministry of education, the related policy documents, most of the participants showed their incognizance. Teacher 7, for instance, stated: "I am hearing the name of this teaching approach for the first time. I have no idea about the policy documents or a teacher guide developed for this purpose." It is pertinent to mention here that the provincial directorate of education had prepared a teacher guide that was to be given to all the teachers of the province. However, none of the interviewed teachers had received a copy of the document. Similarly, Teacher 24 informed that even during trainings, the concept was not exclusively focused. He stated:

I remember, if I am not wrong, during the induction training I was just told about the teaching methodology in general like drill-method and lecture-

method...not specifically how to teach the English language for developing English language competencies in the student.

Although the NCEL document clearly states that teachers should focus on “language skills rather than content” (NCEL, 2006, p. 2), most of the participants hold the view that they teach English as a subject and focus on specific content since they are unaware of the concept. Although the Intended Learning Objectives (ILOs) for each lesson are given the English-language textbooks, as evident in Figure 1, the teachers did not have a clear idea about what these were and what actions they needed to take in terms of teaching. Teacher 13, for instance, said:

I teach based on the content of the lesson. I have hardly ever noticed what is written in those ILOs. I believe they are a waste of time. I have to finish the syllabus and prepare students for the board exams. And following these ILOs will not enable me to finish a lesson even in one week.

The teachers informed that they neither define the objectives of a lesson before teaching nor plan any lesson based on intended objectives that should be achieved at the end of teaching. The findings demonstrate a lack of awareness of the teachers about OBE; it also indicates the ineffectiveness of some of the trainings that are provided to the teachers. It transpired that no specific and exclusive training on OBE was not imparted to the teachers before or during the introduction of the concept. Lack of professional and in-service training thus leads the teachers towards the specific traditional approach of teaching. Data analysis also shows that out of the 35 participants, only three participants received professional training only once in their whole teaching career, and that too at the time of their induction in the education department.

### **Lack of English proficiency**

Another theme that developed from focus group discussion is the weak state of the existing English proficiency of the teachers as well as students, which forces the teachers to employ teacher-centered and grammar-translation based language teaching methodology. The discussion further shows that the students listen to teachers but cannot improve their listening skills because teachers do not speak in English except when reading the text. In this regard, Teacher 23 stated:

I always speak in Urdu during my conversation with students in the classroom while teaching English, even though I switch to the Punjabi language and use English language only at the time of reading the text.

Similarly, Teacher 31 stated that since he struggles to speak fluently himself, “it is “impossible to continuously talk in English and involve students in discussions”. Another teacher, who was reasonably proficient in English since held a master’s degree in the language, believed that the students are too weak to understand English or interaction in it. Teacher 9, referring to the same phenomenon, stated:

The students we get in class nine and ten belong to poor families from rural areas. They do not know any English at all. Talking to them continuously in English, or making them talk in English is next to impossible. Therefore, I teach through the translation method.

Most of the participants hold the view that they incorporate local languages during teaching English in the classroom because of three reasons; first, they have no command over the English language; second, the students lack sufficient English proficiency; and third, oral communication skills are not assessed in annual exams. All the participants showed their

concerns that lack of the activities of dialogues, interviews, group discussions and critical thinking lead the learners toward rote learning. However, they expressed their inability to do something about this on the ground of lack of expertise.

### **Influence of Final Assessment**

Assessment practices appear in the data analysis as another factor that confines the teachers in adopting the specific traditional practices in English language teaching. The directorate of education centrally controlled the annual examinations of secondary school certificate. All the participants hold the view that they teach only what they would assess in the annual exams. Formative assessments (classroom assessments conducted by teachers on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis) are also tailored according to the summative assessment (exam conducted at the end of an academic year) criteria. The teachers believe that this is the only way to ensure that the students get a passing grade in the final exam. Teacher 3 informed: “frankly speaking, I follow the papers of the last 5 years to get the result of more than 90% for my class.”

It was also reported that teachers' efficiency is gauged on the basis of the final results. The teachers are bound to follow the board pattern and government policies instead of the objectives of NCEL, since teachers' annual performance reports and promotions are connected to the number of students that passed or failed in the annual examinations. In relation to the reading competency, for instance, Teacher 12 pointed out:

I focus only on translation from English to Urdu and short-answer questions, which improve vocabulary and reading skills. I do not focus on the rest because we do not assess these in the annual exam.

Similarly, for the competency of writing skills, the teachers reported teaching pre-prepared texts for essays, letters, stories, etc. They believed that the students were unable to do composition or creative writing on their own, and that the annual exams keep repeating some questions. Teacher 14 therefore stated: “I get the students to prepare 7 letters and 9 essays, which are repeatedly assessed in the annual exams.”

All the participants have the view that they do not focus on language skills but on content because the exam does not assess the competencies. They teach the English language by repetition and memorization techniques. Students are taught with readymade notes, key books, dictated text, hence, they do not provide students the opportunity to practice English language competencies in the classroom. Teacher 12 adds:

The major hindrance to developing English language competencies in the students is the examination system because the outdated exam criteria do not meet the instruction of NCEL to develop English language competence in the students.

It is thus clear from the analysis of data that the teachers believe the centrally controlled annual examination to be the deciding factor in classroom teaching. The washback effect of the final assessment is clearly visible on the perceptions of teachers, since they believe that it is a waste of time to focus on competencies that are not directly assessed in the annual examination.

It is further revealed that among various outcomes of reading skills, only short-answer questions are always asked in the annual exam, therefore, activities regarding other outcomes are not practiced in the classroom. Similarly, writing skills include precis and essay writing based on mind-mapping activity, email writing, book review and summary writing are present

at the end of most of the units of the textbook, while contrary to this, the reading skills in annual exams are assessed only on summary writing, letter writing of 6-8 repeated letters and 8-10 essays on specific topics which are always asked in the annual exam for previous 15 to 20 years. They ignored all the other learning outcomes of English language competencies. Resultantly, all these relevant activities are not practiced in the classroom.

### Teachers' qualification

A majority of the participants believe that they possess inadequate knowledge of teaching the English language. 24 out of the 35 participant teachers hold master's degrees in subjects other than English. Therefore, it is highly difficult for them to practice oral communication skills as they cannot speak English properly. Usage of English as a language of instruction for developing English language competencies in an academic setup is too challenging for them. They teach English classes through translation and use the English language at the time of just reading the English textbook. Teacher 9 states:

Based on my teaching experience....I observed that the development of English language competencies in students demands the teachers to be highly experienced, skilled and qualified in the related field. I have a Master's degree in Pakistan Studies and do not know even the basics of the English language.

Teacher 14 agreed with the above statement and added:

....without any hesitation...I speak the truth that I teach the students with the help of a book guide and prepared notes of past ten years repeated questions. What they say in ILOs, I don't understand.

Teacher 15 further adds

....in fact this is an embarrassing situation...um..I have a Master's degree in Urdu while I have been teaching English to secondary classes since I was appointed. I focus on the content of the book because that is what the students need to memorize.

It is very clear from the views of the teachers that they are neither qualified in English, nor have sufficient knowledge of how English language teaching works. They therefore teach through the traditional grammar-translation approach; through which they were taught when they themselves were students.

### DISCUSSION

The analysis of the Focus group discussion reveals that at the secondary level, most of the teachers are unaware of the application of the outcome-based approach to teaching, hence they do not align their teaching instructions with the learning outcomes prescribed in NCEL. Biggs (2014) theory of constructive alignment (CA), banking upon outcome-based approach, centralizes the definition of desired learning outcomes before teaching, and their alignment with classroom and assessment practices. The analysis of focus group discussion, however, shows that the majority of the participants have no cognizance of the outcome-based approach to teaching; furthermore, almost all the participants have no awareness about policy documents which also act as "a teachers' guidance". (NCEL, 2006, p. 1).

The teachers reported that they do not define the learning outcomes of a lesson before teaching; therefore, they fail to get the students engaged in language learning activities. The outcome-based approach in teaching is actually an activity-based approach in which teachers define the learning outcomes of a lesson before teaching then devise the learning activities following the already stated outcomes of a lesson. This approach is student-centered and

closely linked to what students are expected to know or understand after the completion of teaching (Canado, 2012) but, unfortunately, teachers perceive that they practice no such classroom activities. These findings do not support Biggs (2014) who believes that they may achieve the best academic learning outcomes when classroom practices are based on student activities. In this study, the participants report that they do not design activities to practice all language competencies and students are not informed about intended learning outcomes before teaching. As teachers do not get the students involved in language activities, they teach passively applying a teacher-centered approach in which teachers just deliver declarative knowledge instead of functional knowledge. The previous studies reveal that student-centered classroom activities are not practiced in the classroom (Masood, Siddiqui & Yasmin, 2020; Mehmood, 2012; Nawab, 2012; Patil, 2008), while this study revealed that the teachers themselves report they do not incorporate classroom practices to develop English language competencies in the perspective of an outcome-based approach.

The findings of the study reveal that among all the English language competencies, only two competencies – reading skill and lexical aspects of language – are focused in the classroom. However, these two competencies are not focused in terms of all their respective learning outcomes because they do not assess all SLOs in the summative exam, i.e. the annual board examination that is centrally controlled. We consider reading skills the basic resource for learning the English language. When English is taught as a second language, reading aloud is given more importance. Teachers do not give pre-reading activities to students. The reading comprehension activities like skimming and scanning activities are never conducted. Based on participants' teaching experience, it is found that among all the outcomes of reading skills present at the end of each unit of a textbook, only short-answer questions are always asked

in the annual exam (checking rote-learning), therefore, learning activities related to the rest of the outcomes are never practiced in the classroom because these are not assessed in the summative exam. No activity is conducted for developing critical thinking skills, no unseen reading passage followed by comprehension is asked and this leads towards rote learning only. Parallel to this study, Abd Kadir et al. (2014) conducted a study on Teaching Critical Reading Skills and found that teachers should enable students to employ critical thinking to find cause-and-effect relations, comparison relationships in a text and to develop critical stances as to be a critical thinker. Learners should be competent to read critically between the lines and think beyond the written text (Asilioglu, 2008, as cited in Karadag, 2014). According to Akyol (2011) readers should focus their attention on the reading text to judge whether the information carried by text is reliable or not. Most of the participants of this study consider that they do not get any opportunity to develop critical thinking in the learners. This result is similar to the finding of Karadag (2014).

The participants believe that there is no practice of oral skills in the classrooms. According to Khan & Wette (2013) English language learners need to develop communication skills to face the challenges in real life. Learners should get involved in communicative practices to enhance communication skills (Simmenroth-Nayda, 2012). Similar to my study, the previous studies also show that Oral communication skills are mostly ignored (Nawab, 2012; Patil, 2008). Recent studies conducted in various countries, e.g. China (Li, 2016); Indonesia (Mahmud, 2017); Bangladesh (Kirkwood, 2013); Saudi Arabia (Alhaysony, 2016); Tiwan (Wang, 2017); Pakistan (Alam & Badhiruddin, 2013) shows that oral communication skills in Asian ESL and EFL context are highly challenging. Activities related to this competency, present in various units of English textbooks, like group discussion among students and interviews, are not conducted.



Similarly, it is also found that they performed no activity regarding listening and speaking skills except loud reading on the part of teachers while reading a text for translation (Nawab, 2012). Teachers have no command of oral skills, as they described in focus group discussions that the majority of English teachers talked in Urdu. Teachers consider loud reading as a helpful exercise to improve pronunciation, while they connected pronunciation to speaking, not reading skills (Peter, 2007). We found it in the discussion that learners with poor lexical knowledge cannot convey what they want to say. According to Manchon et al. (2007) second language learners pay much heed towards the lexical aspects of language because they construct the text and make a bond between both receptive and productive knowledge (Guo et al., 2013).

It is also revealed during a group discussion that the lack of activity-based teaching is due to two factors, (a) the incognizance of teachers about outcome-based approach to teaching and (b) lack of proper qualification of teachers in English language teaching and in-service English language teaching courses. Annual assessment by BISE is the main factor for the failure of the implementation of outcome-based approach to teaching. Participants of group discussion declare that teachers have to follow the outdated examination criteria instead of focusing on the practice of students' EL skills in the classroom otherwise, teachers face adverse situations from the higher authorities. Participants claim that they do not measure learning competencies defined through SLOs in NCEL in the outdated examination system. Therefore, students are not taught for competency-based performance, they totally focused teaching on textbooks to prepare students for the expected questions in the exam.

This memory-driven exam system binds the teachers towards rote-learning practices. The formative assessment system is based on summative criteria. The boards' results gauge

teachers' efficiency; therefore, teachers follow the board paper pattern instead of the stated outcomes of the NCEL. The examination system is not supportive of developing ELCs in the students. Similar to this study, Kausar & Ahkter (2012) and Saleem & Shah (2010) conducted their studies on the Examination system and found that similar questions become part of the paper year after year which drive the students towards rote learning instead of developing the English language Competencies. Teachers teach for testing rather than learning (Rehmani, 2003). It assessed no learning competencies in exams rather the content of the textbook is assessed. Similarly, overcrowded classrooms and the unavailability of audio-visual aids for oral communication skills and the required number of English language teachers also cause the failure in the development of English language competencies in the learners. The nature of effective teaching depends upon the academic and professional background of teachers, as the relevant qualification of a teacher matters a lot for developing English language competencies in the learner. It is noted that the majority of teachers have no relevant proper qualification for developing English language competencies in the learners.

We found that most of the teachers held Master's degrees in subjects other than English, but they were teaching the English language for many years. It is very clearly stated in NCEL that teaching should focus on the development of "English language skills rather than content" (NCEL, 2006, p. 2). In this regard, teachers teaching the English language should themselves be competent and have a good command of English language skills. Therefore, it seems most difficult for those teachers, having Master's degrees in subjects other than English, to develop English language competencies in students at the secondary level. This is why the majority of teachers do not manage the practice of English language activities. English language teachers have no in-service training related to English language

teaching, which apprise the teachers with fresh ideas for teaching English language skills. Various NGOs and institutions like the Directorate of Staff Development (DSD), Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (QAED), Punjab Education and English Language Initiative (PEELI) and British Council conduct professional training courses regarding teaching English but at the primary and elementary level while the secondary level is neglected. Unfortunately, the Pakistani education system faces a big challenge in teaching the English language due to the lack of properly trained teachers (Aslam et al., 2010; Behlol & Anwar, 2011; Shamim, 2008). It is also revealed that from among all the participants, only three teachers have got a pre-service training session only at the time of their induction in the job. Similarly, Siddique (2007) finds that pre-service outdated courses only focus on theory instead of practical teaching skills. Moreover, teachers do not have the habit of self-development and preparation for teaching, they do not bring in any creative learning activity to the classrooms, which could show that the teachers are creative and self-directed. Teachers enter the classroom without lesson plans and intended learning objectives because they blindly follow the specific topics of a textbook to keep in view the assessment criteria.

Lastly, various factors revealed while conducting the interviews with heads of the institutions, which is hardly ever explored in the previous research (e.g. Aslam et al., 2010; Behlol & Anwar, 2011; Kausar & Ahktar, 2012; Shamim, 2008) that basic stakeholders are bound in flawed policies which have a negative impact on the classroom level because policymakers do not involve the stakeholders; especially teachers in the policy-making process and remain ignorant of the ground realities. In 2011, the post of an English teacher for secondary classes named SSE(English) was created on which those applicants were appointed who had Master degrees in English and the induction of these teachers in the

education department brought a progressive change in teaching the English language to secondary classes, but after a short period, in 2016, the policy was withdrawn and this post was abolished. The posts were divided into only two categories: science and arts. After 2016, the applicants having a Master's degree in any subject of Arts and Humanities like Islamic studies, Pakistan studies or Urdu are appointed as SSE and assigned to teach the English language to secondary classes. Moreover, it is noted that from grade 6th to 8th students are promoted without the concept of failure. 8th standard exam is also conducted by PEC which has the intention to produce above 90% pass percentage to show off a high literacy rate. Teachers fail to deliver what they should actually deliver. Teachers also face the penalty of deduction in their annual increments if the result of a teacher is below the average result of the board.

## CONCLUSION

Based on teaching experience shared by the participants in the focus group discussion and interviews, we can conclude that teaching approaches for developing English language competencies are not satisfactory and do not meet the desired learning outcomes stated in NCEL. Teachers' understanding regarding the need for an outcome-based approach to developing English language competencies seems skimpy. Teachers have no cognizance of the teacher's guide and policy document, which acts as a "teachers' guidance". If the CA model is implemented by the school education authorities, the outcome-based approach in teaching will be automatically followed in the classrooms owing to the backwash effect, i.e., students learn what they think they will be tested on, which will have a beneficial effect on terms of focusing the teaching on SLOs. However, teachers may not be blamed in this respect, as various flaws exist in the prevailing system. Properly qualified teachers having relevant qualifications to teach the English language should be appointed. The trainers and

training sessions should create awareness among teachers about the access to NCEL and teacher books/manual compiled by DSD regarding classroom instruction for developing English language competencies through activity-based teaching and should get in-service training frequently. The content of the pre-service training program should be constituted to enhance the English language skills of the teachers. The monitoring system should not penalize teachers based on the result's percentage of their students. The previous policy for the specific post of an English teacher having a Master's degree in English should be reinstated and Teachers should be involved in policymaking. Restructuring of the examination system is inevitable for developing English language competencies in learners to get the beneficial backwash effect because learners learn what it will assess. If the exam system follows the English language competencies stated in NCEL, it will automatically develop ELCs in class due to backwash effects. A standardized inspection system is required not only at the administrative level but at the school level also that would monitor the classroom activities and implementation of the outcome-based approach for developing English language competencies.

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