Original Article

Identifying the Challenges Encountered by Teachers While Using Intermediate English Textbooks – Sindh Board

Sahira Bano[a*], [ID] Abdullah Laghari[b], Jam Muhammad Khan Sahito[c] & Shane Zehra[d]

[a] Govt. Shah Latif College Girls College Hyderabad

[b] Department of English, Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science & Technology, Nawabshah

[c] Centre of English Language & Linguistics, Mehran University of Engineering & Technology, Jamshoro

[d] Institute of English Language & Literature, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan

Abstract

The present study investigates the challenges encountered by teachers in utilizing English language textbooks of the intermediate level, specifically within the context of the Sindh Board education system. English language textbooks play a pivotal role in language instruction, offering structured content, exercises, and pedagogical support to enhance students' language proficiency. Despite their significance, there exists a dearth of research exploring the problems experienced by teachers while employing these textbooks in the classroom. The research design follows a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. The qualitative phase encompasses semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of intermediate-level English language teachers from various schools and colleges under the Sindh Board. These interviews will delve into the teachers' perspectives, experiences, and insights regarding the challenges faced during textbook utilization. On the other hand, the quantitative phase employs surveys distributed among a representative sample of teachers to gather statistical data on the most prevalent difficulties encountered. The study aims to identify and analyze the various issues that hinder effective textbook implementation in the Sindh Board's English language classrooms. These issues may encompass concerns related to content appropriateness, linguistic complexity, cultural relevance, alignment with curriculum objectives, and overall teacher preparedness. Additionally, factors influencing teachers' attitudes towards textbooks, such as training and support, will be explored. The findings of this research will contribute to the existing literature on language education and curriculum development, particularly in the context of the Sindh Board's English language program. The results will aid educational policymakers and curriculum designers in recognizing the areas that require improvement and in formulating more effective strategies to enhance teacher proficiency and student learning outcomes. Ultimately, this study explores the suggestion which may improve the use of textbooks and it aspires to promote the optimal use of English language textbooks, fostering a more conducive learning environment for intermediate-level students in the Sindh Board education system.

Keywords: Challenges, Textbook, Curriculum development, Learning outcomes, Pedagogy

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of education, textbooks play a crucial role in shaping the learning experience and academic outcomes of students. Textbooks play a pivotal role in English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms as they serve as essential resources that guide and structure the teaching and learning process. A well-designed textbook provides a structured framework for language instruction, offering a systematic progression of language skills, grammatical concepts, vocabulary, and cultural insights (Tomlinson, 2003). Textbooks offer a sense of continuity and coherence, ensuring that language learning is scaffolding and builds upon previously acquired knowledge. They also contribute to standardization and consistency in instruction, especially in large-scale educational settings (Richards, 2001).

*Corresponding Author: Sahira Bano, Govt. Shah Latif College Girls College Hyderabad
✉ sahirabano79@gmail.com

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Moreover, textbooks often incorporate a variety of authentic materials, such as reading passages, dialogues, and audiovisual content, which expose learners to diverse language forms and contexts, enhancing their language proficiency (Cunningsworth, 1995). Despite potential criticisms related to the limitations of textbooks in meeting individual learner needs, they remain a valuable resource for both teachers and students, providing a solid foundation for ELT programs and facilitating effective language learning experiences.

For teachers, textbooks serve as essential instructional resources, guiding the delivery of content and facilitating the learning process. However, the effective utilization of textbooks is contingent upon various factors, including their design, relevance, and alignment with the curriculum, as well as the proficiency of teachers in implementing them in the classroom. This study aims to investigate the challenges encountered by teachers while using English language textbooks at the intermediate level, with a specific focus on the Sindh Board curriculum in Pakistan.

The province of Sindh in Pakistan follows a standardized curriculum, and English language textbooks form a central component of the educational framework at the intermediate level. These textbooks are designed to enhance students' language proficiency, communication skills, and overall understanding of the subject matter. Despite their significance, it is essential to understand the issues faced by teachers in utilizing these textbooks effectively to address potential impediments to the teaching and learning process.

Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study were as follows

- To assess the problems faced by teachers while using the English Language Textbooks for the intermediate level (Sindh Board).
- To find out the strategies teachers offer to overcome those problems while using the English Language Textbooks for the intermediate level (Sindh Board)

Research Questions

The following were the research questions

- What are the problems faced by teachers while using the English Language Textbooks for the intermediate level (Sindh Board)?
- What strategies do teachers offer to overcome those problems while using the English Language Textbooks for the intermediate level (Sindh Board)?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

English language textbooks play a crucial role in the language learning process, particularly at the intermediate level, where students are expected to achieve a higher level of proficiency. Teachers, as key facilitators, rely heavily on these textbooks to structure their lessons effectively and impart language skills to students. However, the success of this approach depends on the quality and suitability of the textbooks. This literature review examines the problems faced by teachers in using English language textbooks of the intermediate level under the Sindh Board in Pakistan. By identifying these challenges, educators and policymakers can develop strategies to enhance the effectiveness of English language instruction and improve overall student outcomes.

English Language Textbooks

English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks continue to be a significant component of language education, shaping classroom instruction and influencing language learning outcomes. These textbooks serve as comprehensive resources that provide structured content, activities, and exercises to facilitate language acquisition (Harwood, 2021). They offer carefully sequenced lessons that cater to different language proficiency levels and learning objectives, helping learners develop their language skills progressively (McGrath, 2020). Furthermore, modern ELT textbooks increasingly incorporate authentic materials, multimedia resources, and technology-enhanced components, contributing to a more engaging and dynamic learning experience (Chen, 2020). Despite the rise of digital resources and online materials, printed textbooks remain prevalent in many educational contexts due to their accessibility, pedagogical guidance, and familiarity for both teachers and students (Sheldon, 2021). While debates persist about

the ideal balance between textbook-guided instruction and learner-centred approaches, ELT textbooks undeniably play a vital role in structuring language curricula and providing valuable support to educators and learners.

The Role of Textbooks in Language Teaching

Textbooks are fundamental resources in language education, providing structure and guidance to teachers in lesson planning and curriculum implementation. McGrath (2006) argues that textbooks act as a bridge between the curriculum and the classroom, helping teachers make informed decisions about content selection and instructional strategies. However, Crittenden (2017) highlights that textbooks should not be treated as rigid scripts but rather as flexible tools that can be adapted to meet the diverse needs of students. As teachers in Sindh rely on English language textbooks for intermediate-level instruction, understanding the potential challenges they face in utilizing these materials is essential for enhancing language teaching practices.

Challenges in Textbook Content & Relevance

The content and relevance of English language textbooks pose significant challenges for teachers in Sindh. Ali and Ahmed (2018) find that textbooks may not adequately represent the linguistic and cultural diversity of the region, leading to a disconnection between students' real-life experiences and the textbook content. Additionally, outdated or stereotypical representations in textbooks may hinder students' motivation and engagement (Kumar & Mahboob, 2019). Teachers may struggle to relate textbook content to local contexts and address the needs of their specific student populations, thereby affecting the overall effectiveness of instruction.

Language Proficiency & Complexity of Textbooks

Teachers' proficiency in English plays a critical role in utilizing textbooks effectively. Kaur and Rana (2020) observe that some teachers in Sindh may face challenges comprehending and delivering complex language structures and vocabulary present in intermediate-level textbooks. Inadequate language proficiency may hinder teachers' ability to explain concepts clearly and provide appropriate language input to students. Moreover, teachers' lack of confidence in their English language skills can negatively impact their instructional practices and limit the students' language development (Hussain & Anwar, 2017). Addressing teachers' language proficiency gaps is crucial for enhancing the quality of English language instruction in the region.

Limitations in Textbook Design & Pedagogy

The design and pedagogy of English language textbooks may not always align with effective language teaching methodologies. Research by Aslam et al. (2019) indicates that textbooks used in Sindh may overemphasize rote learning and grammar rules while neglecting opportunities for authentic communication and language practice. This discrepancy between textbook design and contemporary language teaching approaches may leave teachers unsure about how to deliver engaging and communicative language lessons. Addressing the limitations in textbook design and pedagogy is vital to ensure that English language instruction fosters practical language skills and communicative competence.

Inadequate Teacher Training and Professional Development

Teachers' proficiency in using English language textbooks is intricately linked to their training and professional development. Kusuma (2018) asserts that inadequate teacher preparation programs may not equip educators with the necessary skills to maximize the potential of textbooks in language teaching. Teachers in Sindh may not receive sufficient training on how to adapt textbook content, design supplementary materials, or implement learner-centred instructional strategies. Therefore, investing in comprehensive teacher training and ongoing professional development programs that address the specific challenges faced by teachers in using English language textbooks is essential for improving language instruction.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The research aims to assess the problems faced by English language teachers in using textbooks at the Intermediate level, specifically those published by the Sindh Board of Education. The study will focus on understanding the challenges teachers encounter while implementing these textbooks in their

classrooms. The research is significant as it will shed light on the efficacy of current English language textbooks in facilitating effective teaching and learning processes. By identifying the obstacles faced by teachers, the study will offer valuable insights into potential improvements in textbook design and support material to enhance the quality of English language education.

Research Design

The research will adopt a mixed-methods approach to collect and analyze data comprehensively. The design of the study will be the explanatory sequential design which is a robust approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies to provide a comprehensive understanding of research phenomena by exploring relationships, causality, and contextual intricacies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This method involves a sequential or concurrent design, wherein the researcher first collects and analyzes quantitative data to establish patterns and trends, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data to provide deeper insights and explanations for the observed quantitative results (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2020). Explanatory mixed methods research is particularly valuable when seeking to validate or elaborate on quantitative findings through qualitative exploration, enhancing the overall rigour and validity of research conclusions (Fetters, Curry, & Creswell, 2013). By integrating diverse data sources and research perspectives, this approach offers a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of complex research phenomena, making it a powerful tool for advancing knowledge and informing evidence-based decision-making.

Research Method

Initially, a quantitative survey will be administered to a representative sample of English language teachers in Intermediate level schools affiliated with the Sindh Board. The survey will include closed-ended questions to gather numerical data on the specific problems faced by teachers while using English language textbooks. Furthermore, open-ended questions will be included to capture the qualitative aspects of the challenges faced. Semi-interviews will be used to gather qualitative data from the teachers who use English textbooks for more than ten years.

Data Collection

For the quantitative phase, a structured questionnaire will be developed based on a thorough literature review of similar studies and the expertise of education professionals. The survey will be conducted by administrating the questionnaire to ten female teachers teaching English at the Intermediate level in Sindh. Additionally, for the qualitative aspect, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with five senior teachers to gather in-depth insights into their experiences and perspectives regarding the problems faced while using the English language textbooks.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from the survey will be analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques, such as descriptive statistics, to identify the most prevalent issues faced by teachers. Additionally, thematic analysis will be employed to examine the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses will be triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by English language teachers in using Intermediate-level English textbooks.

4. RESULTS & FINDINGDS

The research findings are stated as follows:

- what problems/ challanges do teachers face while using Intermediate English Textbook (Sindh Board)?

The problems were asked in the questionnaire through multiple choice questions. The problems were enlisted in the questionnaire and the participants were asked to mark the problems they face when they use the textbook which are analyzed by frequency count in SPSS version 21.0. Following problems were enlisted to serve as probe for the participants:

- Lengthy and boring chapters
- Students' lack of interest
- Time constraint

- Heavy syllabus
- Large classrooms
- Erroneous examination system
- Students' competence level
- Outdated information
- Inexperienced teachers
- Copy culture
- None of the above
- All of the above

Table

Showing frequency count of "Yes" for the enlisted problems

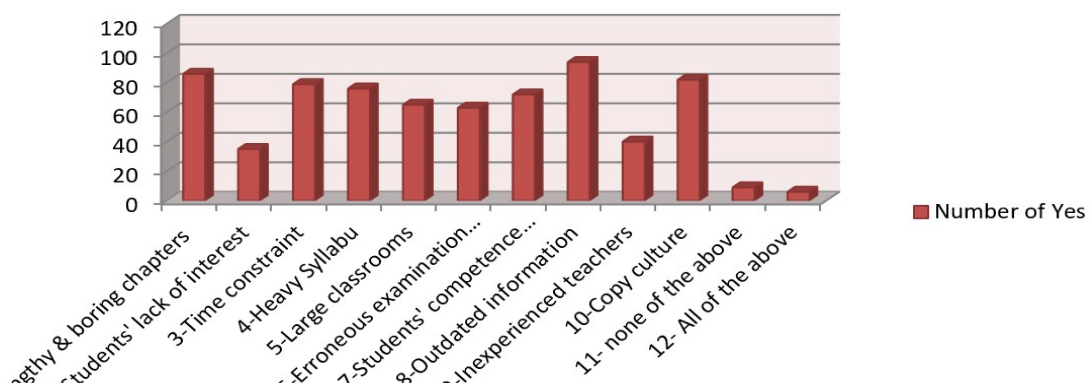| Serial No:	Problems	"Yes" Responses	Percentage
1	Lengthy & boring chapters	86	77.4 %
2	Students' lack of interest	35	32 %
3	Time constraint	79	71 %
4	Heavy syllabus	76	68 %
5	Large classroom	65	59 %
6	Erroneous examination system	63	57 %
7	Students' competence level	72	65 %
8	Outdated information	94	85 %
9	Inexperienced teachers	40	36 %
10	Copy culture	82	74 %
11	None of the above	9	8 %
12	All of the above	6	5 %

Figure 1: Problems faced by teachers in using the textbook

The above graph indicates that the outdated information in the content of the textbook is the most serious problem as perceived by teachers. It has been marked by85% of the participants, which shows that this is a problem, which majorities of teachers perceive a serious problem while using this textbook. The second highest number of "Yes" appeared 86in frequency for the problem Lengthy and boring chapter's which77% of the participants thought the most serious issue related to the textbook. Similarly Copy culture was marked by 74% teachers who opined that it is a highly serious issue. However, Lengthy and boring chapters and the students' low competence level, heavy syllabus and time constraint are the other highest problems marked by the teachers.

More Problems Faced by Teachers

The results of multiple choice questions in the questionnaire served to identify the problems teachers may be facing while using the textbook. In addition, interviews also gave further in-depth information about more problems. More mentioned problems by teachers as expressed in interviews are as follows:

Unattractive Physical Appearance of the Textbook

Teachers perceive that the textbook is quite unattractive and unpleasant in its appearance. Though there is no direct connection between its appearance with teaching or learning process but it would appeal to young students with its attractive appearance and may increase their motivation to read it. A teacher while interviewing said:

I cannot understand what idea they want to convey to the students by giving a picture of two balls hanging and a butterfly on its outer cover, it neither looks a book of literature nor language by its appearance rather it is a boring look in complete white and black color.

Lack of Physical Facilities in Classroom

This is another problem faced by teachers, especially in Public colleges and Higher Secondary Schools where sufficient furniture, blackboard and chalk etc. are not properly provided and according to teachers, it affects the usefulness of the textbook. A teacher complained:

Actually the textbook can be used in a good way but you see, there is no facility in the classroom in our colleges. Sometimes even we run short of chalks....

Lack of Supporting Material

Unavailability of modern teaching aids is also one of the main problems which teachers face while using the textbook. A teacher said:

The textbook cannot produce desired results as it is very boring itself and nothing like modern technology or teaching and supporting aids are provided to support it.

According to teachers, the textbook itself is boring and it lacks supporting material which causes a great trouble for them to use it in the classroom.

Vague Teaching Objectives and Unclear/Unstated Teaching Goals

These are mentioned by teachers as great challenges for them as there is no clarity of teaching objectives stated in the textbook. Moreover, teachers are unaware of the teaching objectives given in the National Curriculum for what this textbook is taught at this level.

They say a traveler must know his destination but here what is the problem that we do not know the final goal for what the textbook is being taught.

Unavailability of Teachers Guide or Training to Use the textbook

No teachers' guide is provided with the textbook. Further teachers expressed that insufficient teachers' training is also one of the main problems for using the textbook.

A senior teacher said:

I do remember fifteen years ago when I was appointed as a lecturer I used to take guidance rather complete classes for teaching this textbook by one of the most senior English teacher in our city.

Along with the textbook, there is no teachers' guide and no teachers' training which makes sometimes it the worst experience for a novice teacher to use this textbook. There is no proper training, no workshop and no guideline provided with which teachers could use this textbook the best.

Either Literature or Language Should Bb Focused at This Level

Teachers opine that although the main objective or agenda of teaching the textbook is to improve students' language and skills in the English language the reality is in most of the Public colleges and schools that students' immediate need is to improve their English language. Whereas the textbook they are using consists of almost all chapters from English literature and exercises given at the end do not support in any way to improve students' language with the help of this textbook. Hence, it creates a great challenge for them as they can neither teach them literature properly nor can improve the students' English language. They just have to rush towards the completion of the course in a given time. In the

whole class, hardly two to three students can appreciate English literature and take an interest in reading them; the rest of the class has to just finish the course in a given time without understanding it. The main agenda that is left with the teachers is just to complete the course in the given time and nothing else.

Clash Between Students' Background Knowledge and Pithy Ideas Given in the Textbook

Teachers believe that many pithy and philosophical ideas are given in the textbook which students cannot grasp due to their weak background knowledge. A teacher, in this regard, stated:

It is very difficult to understand that in part I (prose I) small chapters with quite simple and easy ideas are included. But the very next year when students start part II and pick the textbook (Prose II), they are bombarded with pithy ideas in pompous and hard language. Do designers think that students have improved that much and have acquired ability of understanding these difficult ideas and philosophies of life within one year?

Conclusively, they said that students' level of interest is lowered when they are unable to grasp what is being taught in the classroom and it happens due to clash between their background knowledge and pithy ideas conveyed through the content of the textbook.

Local Culture Unfocused, Unfamiliar Context

Many teachers perceive that textbook focuses on foreign culture and the local culture of the students is unfocused which make all the students feel alien in the classroom while reading the given content and chapters given in the textbook. There is only one poem included in their textbook written by their national poet. Consequently, the students are neither interested nor attracted to reading this textbook which causes Absenteeism and de motivation for students. And it again leads to the other main issues teachers raised related to Intermediate English textbook.

Heavy Syllabus and Time Constraint

Teachers discussed that there are three textbooks prescribed for Intermediate or grade twelve which they have to cover in a year. All of the textbooks have lengthy poems, novels, chapters and lessons. They need a lot of time to complete those all course books. A teacher said:

You see there are three course books that we teach them in part II, I mean grade twelve. The students are very weak in English, I have to explain them everything in their mother tongue and side by side I use English. It takes a lot of time, you can say that it takes around two weeks to complete one chapter along with exercise and there are many holidays due to strikes or other problems. So, I personally feel that course is very heavy and time is insufficient to complete it.

Besides, there are many strikes and holidays, thus, it becomes very difficult for them to complete such a heavy syllabus in given time.

Outdated Information

Outdated information given in the content of the textbook is another problem reported by teachers. It is also noticed that the majority of teachers agree on this issue. The essays, chapters and lessons given in the textbook are very old. All information and knowledge given in the textbook are very old. Thus, the teachers find it difficult to involve and motivate their students for teaching that stuff. A teacher reported:

I agree there is a variety of topics in the textbook many chapters are from science and history but you see they are all the way talking about things from more than two centuries ago. They are telling the "Space ship one" and "Life in universe." Students make fun of such information being shared with them in this age and at this stage.

Inefficiency of the Textbook for Teaching English Language

Teachers said that generally students' background knowledge of and English language is very poor, they cannot understand a simple sentence in the English language and it is a great challenge to teach them pithy, lofty and philosophical thoughts given in the textbook. The textbook itself does not suffice to teach or improve students' English language. It creates a problem to teach them difficult literature who cannot grasp it easily and the textbook itself does not help them to improve students' language. Teachers narrated that they feel troubled when the majority in the classroom have blank faces and minds while they teach them Albert Einstein's essays and Bertrand Russell's philosophical thoughts in the chapters of the textbook. There is nothing in the textbook that can improve students' English language. A teacher

said in this regard:

I am surprised that the students are with us for the whole year or say two years and we are unable to teach them language to the extent where they can express themselves in simple English while teaching this textbook. These same students join language centers and are well equipped with English language within six months. This is because the textbook we are teaching them is very outdated and useless for them who need to improve English.

Useless Items Included in Exercises

Teachers tend to agree that the exercise items are irrelevant and not helpful in any way for students. The starting ten questions given in the exercises teach students comprehension skills but the rest of the items given in the exercises are some phrasal verbs, and grammatical structures that are useless to teach them. Teachers have to devote a lot of time to teaching them these items which are not at all helpful in any way for their students.

Clash between Teaching Goals and Final Assessment

According to teachers, since there is no stated goal and there remains only one goal to complete the chapters given in the textbook, so, teachers try to complete the textbook and the course of Intermediate in a given time. Finally, assessments are carried out by the examination board, which treats it differently and the taught elements or skills are not assessed properly. A teacher said:

I believe improving students' English language is a remedy for many problems in college grades so I try to improve students' language and prepare them for university entrance exams for which they will be appearing the following year but they do not take lessons and material seriously which I bring for them to teach them English language because our examination system promotes rote learning hence students cram question answers and reproduce them in the final papers.

To sum up, this is another problem faced by teachers that the examination system and paper pattern do not involve teachers and there is no coordination between teachers and examination bodies.

Teachers' Suggestions to Bring About Betterment in the Textbook

The Second Research Question was Answered from the Interviews Analyzed Qualitatively

- What are teachers' suggestions to bring about betterment in Intermediate English textbook (Sindh Board)?

In addition to the questionnaire, interviews were conducted to clarify and complement the data to gain detailed insight into teachers' suggestions which they have about Intermediate English textbooks. Teachers' given suggestions are stated as follows:

Improvement in Physical Appearance of the Textbook

The teachers who use the textbook suggest that the textbook can be bettered at first by bringing improvement in its appearance. It can be made attractive by a colorful title page, the inclusion of some images, colours and adequate pictures. At present it is completely black and white, devoid of any picture which neither raises teachers' interest nor appeals to students to read. A teacher said:

Well……. as they say that don't judge a book by its cover, but I think that this doesn't apply for this book, so far as it is not applied for this book, and! The physical appearance or the general appearance of this book is not that much appealing.

Teachers said the printing style, layout and publishing quality is very old and outdated and they found it very difficult to teach the student with such an unattractive book. Some senior teachers said that the font size used in the textbook is so small and there is not much white space provided between the lines it is therefore very difficult for them to use this textbook. They suggested that the title page of the textbook should be attractive and convey some message of literature or language in pictorial form. Moreover, teachers opine that the font size used in the textbook may be increased, the size of the textbook may be increased and the physical characteristics of the textbook should be bettered by providing adequate pictures images and illustrations in the textbook. Teachers suggested that although this textbook is taught to adults yet it will bring a good impact on students if the textbook is physically appealing and colorful.

Provision of Physical Facilities in Classrooms

Teachers suggest that the usefulness of the textbook can be increased by providing proper physical facilities. This problem is faced by teachers, especially in Public colleges and Higher Secondary Schools where sufficient furniture, blackboard and chalk etc. are not properly provided and according to teachers it affects the usefulness of the textbook so teachers suggest overcoming this problem which hinders them to use the textbook properly in the classroom.

Providing Supporting Material

Teachers argue that they find it very difficult with this textbook due to the unavailability of modern teaching aids and it would be better if this textbook is supplemented by supporting teaching and learning material. A teacher stated:

Since English is not our or students' native language and at times we find it difficult to know right pronunciation of some word. At that time the text is helpless to provide any guidance.

It is, therefore, imperative according to teachers that the textbook should be provided with CDs, workbooks, activity books or any other teaching material which could be used for students' drills and practice and polishing language skills and to assist teachers.

Clearly Stated Goals and Objectives for Teaching the Textbook

These are mentioned by teachers as great challenges for them as there is no clarity of teaching objectives stated in the textbook. Moreover, teachers are unaware of the teaching objectives given in the national curriculum for what this textbook is taught at this level. They said that there must be proper guidance for them about the teaching goals and teaching objectives. A teacher said:

At first we have to set our goals, there is a gap between those who design the book and those who teach the textbook. We are not given any clearly stated goals so we are not goal oriented.

Teacher Education & Training

No teachers' guide is provided with the textbook. Further teachers expressed that insufficient teachers' training is also one of the main problems for using the textbook. They said in the light of the teaching objectives they may be provided guidance for teaching methodology in the current trends. Proper teachers' training would result in teaching teachers to best use the textbook and even some other teaching material could be used if required for their students so teachers suggest that proper teacher education and training on a regular basis or workshops must be arranged. It would not only train teachers about recent trends in teaching methodologies but also create coordination among all the teachers.

The Textbook Should be Redesigned

Teachers suggested that the textbook must be redesigned in light of currently used English language textbooks published by Cambridge and Oxford publishers. Teachers think that the Intermediate English textbook (Prose II) needs to be revised, updated, modernized and modified in the following ways:

Split it Into Two Books i.e. Literature & Language

Teachers opine that the urgent need for students is to improve their English language but the textbook consists of almost all chapters from English literature therefore creating a great challenge for teachers. According to them, this textbook should be split into two books; each of them must have a clear focus on language teaching. Else, in place of having two or three textbooks, they must design a healthy textbook having small and interesting compositions from literature and helpful exercises for language teaching. By providing one complete book having all components of literature and language; students would be acquainted with literary forms and learn the English language easily. Again students' needs must be focused and prioritized that is learning the English language.

Lessons Need to be Modified

Teachers suggested that the lessons given in the textbook must be modified. The lessons given are very lengthy and boring, time taking. In place these lessons should be short, informative and related to religion, country, culture and current technology. A teacher said:

It takes two weeks to complete one lesson and all lessons are boring except one or two. My students do not take interest. I think short, informative and interesting lessons will motivate students for reading. The language used in the lessons is

very hard and old.

Thus, the lessons with variety of topics and updated information must be included in the textbook.

Focus On Local Culture & Local Writers

Teachers believe in the textbook, local culture with works of local writers must be included. This will give promotion of local culture and literature besides students will feel easy and interesting to read it.

Various Interesting Topics & Fun Elements to be Included

Teachers believe that lessons with variety of topics and in simple language must be included. Religion, science, technology, moral values, patriotism, humanism and modern stories must be included. Moreover, they suggest that inclusion of fun elements is also very essential in order to capture students' interest. Biographies of important and famous personalities may be included.

Exercises with Focus on Practical Skills & Balance of all Language Skills

Teachers already discussed in the problem that the given exercises items are in no way useful for the students. Further they suggest that these exercises items should be replaced with some useful, activity based exercises for polishing students' practical skills. Task based activities which could promote students for speaking, discussing and expressing their oral and written expressions must be the part of these exercises. A teacher expressed:

I feel it very difficult to teach them right pronunciation of some words when there are no supporting aids plus there is no activity where they can be engaged in speaking or discussions.

Thus, the exercise items which could best serve for improving students' all essential skills in language must be included in place of structure-based exercises. Another suggestion regarding exercises given by the teachers is that the composition topics should be interesting and should be provided with some information or guideline so that free writing opportunities could be provided to all students.

Secondly, teachers suggest that skill must be given importance over knowledge in the exercises. At present the composition topics are quite irrelevant from the chapters and no information is given about the topic to start students for writing. In this situation, students cannot write more than two or three lines. By providing them with some interesting exercises like story writing, completing the story, suggesting a title for a given story, an unforgettable event in their life or anything about which they are interested they can be given a chance for improving their writing skill. Besides the students must be taught writing for practical purposes such as writing emails, reports, CVs or minutes of important meetings.

Vocabulary

Teachers opine that simple language should be used in lessons in the textbook. Moreover, vocabulary is an important sub-skill that must be promoted through the content of the textbook. They suggest that current vocabulary must appear in every lesson and there must be some glossary or vocabulary lists tagged at the end of every chapter or end of the textbook. Exercise items must include activities to strengthen their vocabulary. A teacher said:

The language used in the lessons is very hard and the words are very old. Sometimes even students do not get the meaning in dictionary.

The teachers argue that there are many terminologies of science and technology which students learn and memorize after class. But these students are not interested in learning words meaning from textbooks. The reason is that these are old words and these words are not given to use in any exercises. Thus they think it is essential to tag vocabulary lists and exercise items to use these new words.

Teaching Methodology

Teachers are of the view that the textbook does not support any other teaching methodology except the traditional lecture method. They suggest that the textbook should be redesigned in such a way that it could be used in various methods of teaching. A teacher in this connection said:

I only enter my class, read out the stuff given in all lengthy, boring, monotonous and outdated chapters and explain the chapters in traditional way. Because the textbook cannot be taught in any other way except traditional lecture method. But I am sure if textbook allows us many of us would like to go for interactive or communicative method.

Updated Information

One of a senior teacher said:

There is a quote from Imam Jaffar Saddiq, he said, "Do not teach your children lessons which you were taught to you and you see we are teaching them lessons of three centuries ago." Our students are youth and nothing in the textbook interests them.

Here teachers suggest that recent information may essentially be shared in the textbook.

Secondly, they believe that the textbook for grade twelve is taught to young girls and boys so it is important to provide them with the topics which interest them. Thus it is important to include current, modern, thrilling and adventurous stories. Additionally for their character building, it is again important to include moral values and nationhood. Another teacher argued:

I love music of the times when I was young whereas my kids and students do not like that music, they like today's music. Well! I am shocked while teaching them, how they can be interested in reading "The Day the dam broke." I am sure that they would only take interest if we teach them new stories and lessons like songs of their age.

Similarly another young teacher said:

This is for intermediate level where from the students start their career, so I think teaching them practical use of English language is more helpful for them rather than teaching them such boring and outdated things. I believe they will be motivated if updated and modern information are the part of their textbooks.

Paper Pattern In Accordance with Teaching Goals

Many teachers expressed that since they feel students' language should be improved and they work for that but the textbook is insufficient so they bring some other material to use for that purpose. Again they are troubled when paper patterns do not support them. It is therefore suggested by teachers to review the examination paper pattern. They think the paper promotes rote learning and only students' cramming skill is assessed through this paper. Paper may be skillfully designed to assess students' critical and creative skills. A young teacher said:

I think we are teaching students something else and final paper is assessing them in some other areas. The textbook itself, teachers and students cannot produce desired results till they find a homogenous approach among these all.

Teachers' participation & Involvement in Course Design

Many teachers perceive that teachers' participation and involvement in course design will bring positive results and betterment in the textbooks used for college grades. Teachers opine that being immediate implanters of textbooks they know the ground realities and students' needs so they are in a better position to discuss course design and course books. Thus they may be involved and participated in textbooks at every stage specifically for college grades.

Discussions

Through this study, the Intermediate English textbook (Sindh board) was assessed from the teachers' perspective. The problems which teachers encounter while using the textbooks were Investigated. The problems teachers show in quantitative data were outdated information, lengthy and boring chapters and copying culture with the majority. Some other potential problems and teachers' suggestions were also discussed exhaustively by teachers in qualitative data. Finally, teachers' suggestions and expectations summarized are also the same to a great extent revealed in both of the data. Teachers find that the textbook is outdated, has not been revised, and many exercise items are useless, lengthy and boring chapters are great challenges for them to complete this heavy syllabus in a given time.

Moreover, they argue that the topics, subjects and content of the English textbook do not match the student's needs, requirements and appropriacy. Thus, they suggest that the textbook needs revision and it may be modified in light of students' requirements. They further suggested that some useful exercise items may be included in the Intermediate English textbook (Sindh board) with the help of other English textbooks used by Oxford and Cambridge for "O" and "A" levels. Teachers suggested that in the study context, students' immediate need is to improve their English language, so, it would be better if the textbook is redesigned while keeping this into consideration and the efficacy of English textbooks for teaching the English language may be improved.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study was targeted to two main purposes; (1) to assess the problems teachers encounter while using the Intermediate English textbook published by the Sindh Textbook Board, Jamshoro. (2) To find out the suggestion of teachers for the betterment of the textbook under examination. To achieve set research objectives, two research tools; a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used. This sequential explanatory study involved two phases. In Phase I a questionnaire adapted from previous studies, consisting of two main sections was administered to 160 randomly selected English teachers working in three different set up in Hyderabad where Intermediate English textbook is taught. The obtained data through the questionnaire was analyzed descriptively in SPSS version 21.0 in phase I of the study. Phase I was followed by Phase II in which individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten senior female teachers selected following convenient sampling. The interview questions were prepared in the light of the first research tool and analysis. Data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed by measuring mean scores, standard deviation and frequency counts while interviews were analyzed using qualitative techniques. Based on data analysis the results are presented.

The results revealed that teachers identify some problems while using the textbook. They were asked to mark any of the problems they face from the given list of problems. The identified problems by teachers were outdated information in the content, lengthy and boring chapters and copy culture as the most serious issues related to the textbook in the results of quantitative data in the study. Interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data about the research questions. The results reveal that teachers face several problems other than those discussed in quantitative results. Teachers asserted that due to many serious issues the textbook fails to provide desired results. They find the textbook unattractive in appearance, load shedding in electricity supply, vague teaching objectives, lack of physical facilities in the classrooms, and a dearth of teachers' education and training. Moreover, students' poor background knowledge, teaching more emphatically literature than the English language, the pattern of the examination system and copy culture may hinder the usefulness of Intermediate English textbooks.

Regarding teachers 'suggestions to bring about improvement in the standard of Intermediate English textbooks, qualitative data were collected. Its analysis revealed that teachers' suggestions are to revise and redesign this textbook while keeping all the problems and students' requirements into serious consideration. They assert that the presently prescribed Intermediate English textbook neither meets teachers' expectations nor matches students' needs. It, therefore, needs revision and modification on an urgent basis. Teachers suggested that the textbook can be improved with some changes. Creating attraction in the appearance of the textbook, inclusions of fun elements and current information in the chapters, reducing the length of chapters, providing a variety of topics, including activity-based exercises items, introducing new vocabulary words in the textbook and supplying supporting material with the textbook will provide improvement in Intermediate English textbook. Furthermore, they expected that by providing good teachers' training some positive results might be brought in using available material for teaching English. Teachers lay emphasis on their involvement and active participation in course designing and selection thereby the standard of the teaching material may be improved.

Competing Interests

The authors did not declare any competing interest.

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