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Exploring Students' Perceptions of the teaching pedagogies: in developing Communication Skills among Multilingual Undergraduates

Shabana Zafar*

Muhammad Amir Hashmi†

Madiha Shafiq ‡

Corresponding Author: Shabana Zafar (Senior Lecturer, University of Management & Technology, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: Shabana.z2011@gmail.com)

Abstract: *The focus of the research work is to report on research from the curriculum interventions that explored whether undergraduate university students are proficient enough in communication skills for social and academic purposes, moreover, the perception of students about their communication skills is studied and factors are identified that may have contributed towards their strong or poor communications skills in the English language. The study includes 300 undergraduate students, from four different programs and institutes. A survey having a questionnaire of 52 items is used and information obtained is sorted out with the help of SPSS in order to get a full and detailed picture of various patterns and themes. The findings of the survey establish that students having a better language learning experience at the school level perform better in their communication skills course at the university level.*

Key Words: ESL, Communication Skills, Students' Perception, Translingual Pedagogies Curriculum design

Introduction

In the practical life of a student, the ability to communicate is the core of his or her success. Language courses at the university level are designed to improve students' different language skills, however, it is the communication skill that helps the student to rise from the rest of the professionals. The purpose of this study is to find out the factors responsible for the weak communication skills of university students representing diverse backgrounds regarding educational

institutions. Moreover, the research will be focused on the students' perceptions regarding their own ability to communicate successfully in the English language and also identify factors that may or may not be helpful in the development of communication skills.

Therefore, this research provides information about the gaps between the actual planning of skills-based syllabus and the practical implementation of these skills and to support the future planning of curriculum at the university level. The research relies on

* Senior Lecturer, University of Management & Technology, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

† Associate professor, Institute of Education & Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

‡ M.Phil. Scholar, Superior University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

students' own perceptions and opinions regarding their ability that is required to communicate themselves better academically and socially. For this purpose, the researcher has gathered information about students' educational background- their competency in the use of English for communication purposes, their language needs, their aims for professional development and linguistic requirements, and their preferences for the medium of instruction and the reasons for these preferences.

The research has looked into the problem from the student's point of view, so the responses by the students have pointed to a number of reasons for the lack of competencies in students during the interactions. The response to questionnaire items provided insight into students' language learning problems and their proficiency in using English as a second language. The factors responsible for the weak language skills of the students and their implications on students' performance would be discussed which would be helpful in the future implication of Communication skills curriculum design.

According to Crawford et al. (2011), employers are very keen on the following list for the types of communication skills: which means they should be not only smart in listening and speaking but also be pleasantly communicative with professional ethics. Communication is one of the main skills which has been emphasized by most professional documents (Schneider, 2015), moreover; Bronson (2007) in his study claims that communication is a skill that the majority of students lack.

The findings of the survey demonstrate that the previous learning experience of the students and their exposure to the English language at the primary, secondary, and high school levels significantly affected their skills to communicate in the English language at the undergraduate level. Years of study and program (business, engineering, accounting, and computer science) do not influence their communication skills in English. The practical implications of these findings suggest that

universities should integrate speaking assignments regarding students' employability skill-set and writing about their preparedness for future professions in the English language should be compulsory assignments for all graduating students.

The study is novel because it combines a large number of participants representing different courses of study and from different institutions. The study is contributing quantitative evidence to the communication skills ability discussion. Surveying students' perception, of the ability of the factors responsible for the communication skills, gives a better idea to the educators about what should they include or exclude from their syllabus according to the responses of the students. Moreover, this study can lead to a training course for the faculty to implement a well-structured program for the students where their language competences can be honed according to the demands of their careers.

Literature Review

There are many issues that are still to be resolved in the Pakistani educational system although the claims are very high in the current English Language curriculum²²'National Curriculum for English Language Grades I-XII, 2009, which is currently followed in the state and private schools. It claims the teaching (page 2) is skill-based where emphasis is given to all four skills: reading, thinking, writing and oral communication skills.

In actual practice when the students enter the university, they lack proficiency in all those skills. This situation has raised many questions. Is it in the planning of the English language curriculum or in implementation? So, the issue is that Pakistani students are not better equipped with desired communication skills required at the University level. This research paper will focus on students' perceptions of their own communication skills and the responsible factors. It is believed that there are so many issues that may contribute towards the weak communication skills of our students at the university level. These major issues are the medium of instruction, unavailability of

resources and trained teachers, and evaluation of the communication skills curriculum. Communication skills including oral and written communication capacities are basic practices in the global world (Krajcik and Sutherland, [2010](#)). Correspondence preparation has a vital effect on how specialized information is flowed and gotten (Longnecker, 2009). Moreover, studies have proved that this skill is pertinent when the link needs to establish with the business world (Gray, Emerson, and MacKay, [2005](#), Dest, 2002; Longnecker, 2009).

The curriculum is arranged by the language policymakers for the accomplishment of the destinations to get ready for learning and instructing: goals must be accomplished to gauge the common sense of the educational program. The language approach is relevant in teaching and learning understudies. The educational program is totally arranged to learn for which the school is dependable.' Planned leanings' can have a place composed of reports where the importance of contents and learning results are focused (Collin [2004](#)). The syllabus is planned and designed in the language policy, according to Kaplan and Baidauf (1997), the usage of language is to communicate one's thoughts and ideas in an organized manner. The educational plan ought to be structured on a reason dependent on a belief system as Walker (1990) believes on a number of requirements for the achievement of the educational design: content, reason, and association. Young (2003) remarks that the focus needs to be on understudies as directors of their realizing who needs input to give a premise to improving their learning procedures.

Significance of Teacher Training

Teachers' effective strategies can play a key role in improving skills among students: the requirement for teachers training for skill teaching is imperative. Teaching can be assessed in a number of ways as students are rightful in this need, evaluation by school and surveys about students' feedback can play an important role (Stronge, 2006 and Follman,

1996). As the students are the main effective and main stakeholders in this situation so their feedback is very important as they are in an interactive environment with the teachers and are trustworthy sources (Peterson, 2000).

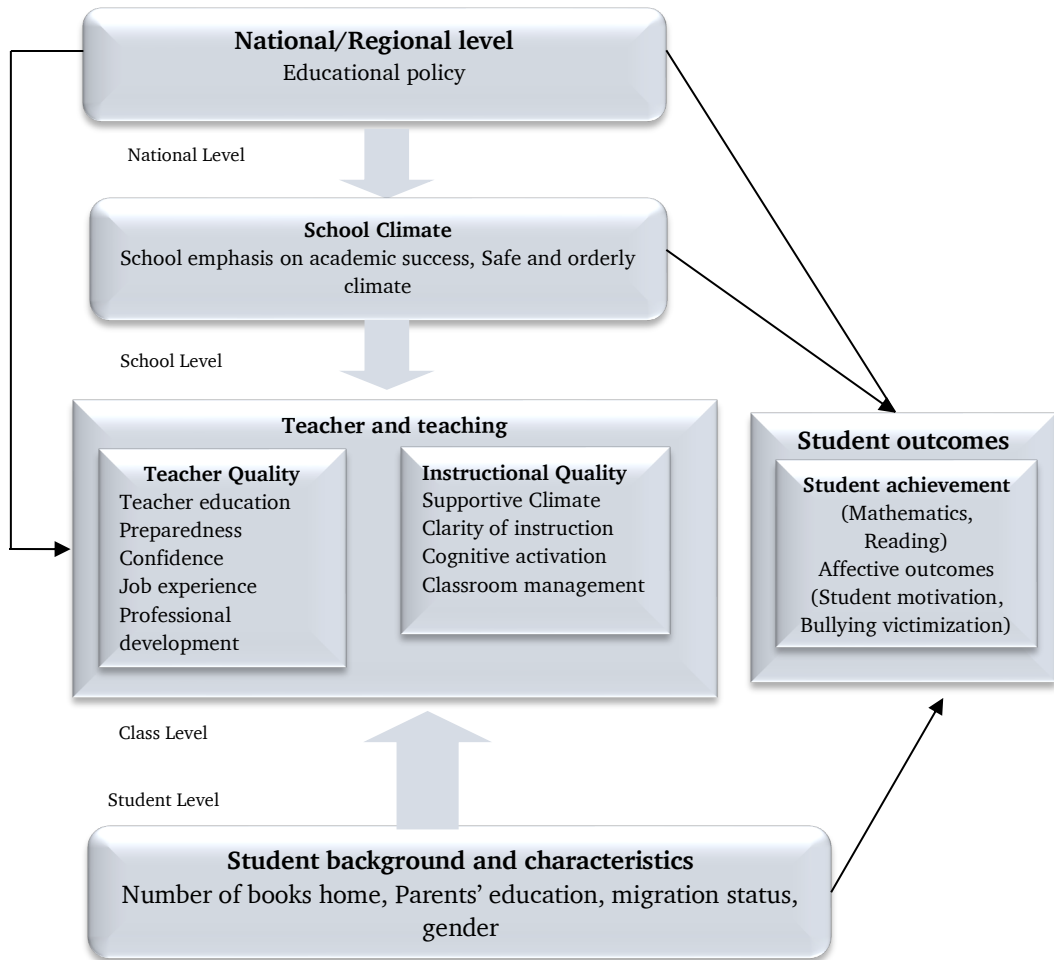
Communication abilities in educational programs must be a piece of the English educator's turn of events so they should be clear-disapproved about the destinations and philosophies associated with the procedure; in any case, there is a wide hole in planning the educational plan and actualizing it by the educators. As per Print (1993), relational abilities are a territory of imperative significance to the expert instructor. In the course of recent decades, the investigation of educational plans and it's structuring for explicit purposes has become a set up some portion of educator instruction programs. In this manner, instructors should be learned about the educational programs and comprehend the procedures by which educational plans might be created: what are the effects of teaching (Learning outcomes).

Conceptual Framework

The research has followed the conceptual framework as it helps in methodically organising perceptions, assumptions and theoretical support in the research. Researchers believe that a conceptual framework provides an elaborate relationship between research objectives and theoretical base as commented by Kinight, Hlkatt, and Cross (2010). This study has followed the theoretical frame of Kyriakides (2006), this model has been tested and researched for educational effectiveness. This model includes a number of variables involved in educational effectiveness: educational policy, teachers' training, learning outcomes, and students' achievement and motivation. This framework is contextualized in a local educational environment. The research tries to find the relation between educational policy, teachers' training, students learning outcomes and the relations the school teaching to improve students' success in communication skills, as the curriculum claims.

Figure 1

Conceptual framework of determinants of student's outcomes



Academic Environment in Relation to Students' Achievement

One of the main factors in student achievement is the environment provided by the institution: where the priority is given to learning outcomes (Nilsen and Gustafsson 2014; Wang and Degol 2015). Further research has proved that school motivation in improving students' success. These variables are related to student learning in a number of other researches, security and a disciplined environment have been proven to improve learning outcomes (Wang and Degol 2015).

Cognitive Outcomes and Reading Literacy

Reading is regarded as an ability to interpret written language and develop a cognitive skill to apply written knowledge to speaking and understanding the given tasks. This skill impact achievement in all subject and affects learning outcomes (Mullins et al. 2009).

Quantifiable Goals for the Correspondence Skills

Objectives help educators and understudies to focus on the outcomes. The environment for the assessment of the goals should be congenial for the students. The link between goals and assessments is commented on by Willis and Kissane (1997) as the study provided a detailed link between skills and the previous learning experience'

The results of an educational program influence the presentation of the understudies in any event when they leave school so it must not be disregarded. According to Spady (1993) 'Result-based training' signifies centring and sorting out a whole program offered by the department and teaching methodologies around the characterized results as the focus is on the students as they will exhibit the skills after graduation.

Students are required to give a coming full circle showing – the center is upon fitness just as a substance however not on the time expected to arrive at this norm. In particular, a result is a real exhibit in a bona fide setting (Spady, 1993).

The link between objectives and students' achievements is established by the focus on skills. The result will reflect on the outcomes of the assessments do give solid direction to teachers about the standard required in a particular area (Ellis and Fouts, 1993).

Task-based Language Instructing in an Educational Program and its Pertinence to the Correspondence Skills

Language teaching gets great impacts when designed on a task-based approach to learning especially in advanced levels of language development as indicated by Richards and Rodgers (2001) Task-based language instructing suggests this is because the students can think and participate in the process of practical experimentation second language. Another study conducted on the state schools pointed out that English was taken as a subject and not as a language so the methodologies

were not applied based on a communicative approach (Serwat and Khurshid, 1994, Kendall, 1996).

Importance of Various Learning Styles in an Educational Plan for Communication Abilities

An educational plan of a school or a college is inadequate if diverse learning styles of understudies are disregarded; adaptability in instructing is required. Gardner (1993) proposes, there are a few sorts of insight, not a couple of knowledge. Gardner (1993) recommended eight sorts of knowledge in his hypothesis of numerous insights. His theory focused on different learning styles and proposed that teachers should include all learning styles in their teaching. The teaching of language is consistently beneficial whenever instructed practically as Vygotsky (in Williams and Burden, 1997) and his supporters of the socio-social hypothesis accept perception to be social personnel which emerges from human connection with the material, the social, social and authentic setting in which the learning takes place.

The Mode of Instruction in Education:

The medium of instruction is also one of the important factors in weak language skills. As the issue of the mode of directions is as yet uncertain so by what method can relational abilities be tended to as remarked by Mansoor (2004) on the current circumstance of our language in a training approach? She worked on the usage of language and found out that language used depends on a few stakeholders: policymakers, educators and parents.

The Methodology

The study will focus on its objective to locate factors for the weak communication skills of students at the undergraduate level. The paper is assessing the perceptions of students about their proficiency in communication skills in the English language and identifies causes that may have contributed to their strong or poor communication skills. The study is contributing

quantitative evidence to the communication skills ability discussion. Surveying students' perception of their ability of communication skills gives a better idea to the educators what should they include or exclude from their syllabus to cater to the demand of the market and undergraduates. The results of the study might help educationists and policymakers to plan curricula based on skill development and change the assessment methodology at the school and college levels so that students face difficulty at the university level.

Research Objectives

The research is based on the following research objectives

1. Highlighting the demographics of undergraduates studying in different universities in various programs.
2. Analyzing students' past experiences which contributed to the acquisition of their communication skills.
3. Identifying their current practices and course content may result in a change in their communication skills.
4. Trying to deduce some recommendations for strengthening communication skills for future students.

The quantitative research methodology is used for this study, therefore; a questionnaire is developed and utilized for data collection. There are 56 questions based on the research objective, they will help in analyzing the perception of the students. SPSS will be used to analyze the responses to find out the research questions.

Population Description:

Students belonging to different programs are selected from different institutes enrolled in the communication skill course. The students of engineering, students of accounting, students of computer science and students of business are selected for the study. A Survey is employed to collect information about students' opinions because there are very few studies that employ quantitative data methodology to gather information about the student's perception of

their learning of communication skills. The study includes 300 students from four different institutes located in Lahore- a metropolitan city in Pakistan. Two institutes belong to the government sector and the other two are from the private sector. The government sector universities are two, the private sector universities included in this research are: the University of Management and Technology (UMT) and the School of Accounting popularly known as SKANS. Students who participated in the research were studying Engineering, Accounting, Computer Science, and Business in the above-mentioned public and private institutes.

Sampling Technique

Since the purpose is to collect quantitative data, a purposive sampling plan is prepared for the purpose as the aim is to find factors for the weak communication skills of the majority of university students so the data of high achievers were rejected as the population under research is the students who attain low grades in the communication skills. All the participants are enrolled in the advanced level language courses for communication skills at the undergraduate level in different universities in Lahore, Pakistan.

While selecting universities a random sampling is utilized for the even representation of both sectors so the data from two public and two private universities is collected. The data is gathered from the students of four major programs – these programs are offered by almost every university. The plight of communication skills among students is almost the same in every university. Students studying in these programs are usually considered academically sound and hardworking students. The limitation of the study is that no student representing a medical program could be included in the study. After engineering, medicine is also one of the major programs that represent a great number of student bodies.

- A 56-item customized questionnaire based on the communication skills curriculum was prepared.

- The items of the questionnaire covered the major competency domain of communication skills.
- In the second stage, consulting the contents with the subject experts checked the face and content validity of the questionnaire.
- The hard copies of the questionnaire were sent to 300 students from four different institutes and universities.
- Empirical findings were converted into percentages for statistical manipulation.
- The survey drew upon the quantitative style of collecting data that helped in yielding information, which was factual and useful for the purpose of this research.
- To analyze the data SPSS was applied to find out the frequencies of the

responses to see the results of the set objectives about different factors for communication skills.

Analysis and Results

Interpretation of the SPSS data

The Frequency column shows the number of students' answers assessed in the form of frequency by the software. The valid Percentage column excludes the missing cases or unattempted remarks. But in our case, it was analyzed that the per cent and valid per cent columns are the same which shows that every respondent marked almost all the given questions. So the Valid percentage is the completed answers or correct data. Accumulative per cent means that in the given data set, it would be accurate, as the Valid and Cumulative responses are the same, provided for the given set of data in the tables.

Facilities for English

Table 1

Primary Level

	F	P	V P	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very little	127	56.7	56.7
	somewhat	81	36.2	92.9
	A lot	16	7.1	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0

Table 1 indicates that the facilities for English at the primary level were available to 7% of students only, 36.2% had few facilities and 56.7 had very few facilities. From the data, it is

evident that fewer facilities for English at the primary level could be one of the factors for weak communication skills.

Table 2

Middle Level

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very little	156	69.6	69.6
	Somewhat	53	23.7	93.3
	A lot	15	6.7	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0

Table 2 indicates 69.6% of students had very little facilities for English, 23% had somewhat facilities for English and 6.7% had a lot of

facilities at middle level as the majority had very little facilities for English so it could be a factor for weak communication skills.

Table 3

Secondary Level

		F	P	V P	C P
V	Very little	144	64.3	64.3	64.3
	Somewhat	59	26.3	26.3	90.6
	A lot	21	9.4	9.4	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 indicates that 64.3% of students had very little facilities for English, 26.3% had somewhat facilities for English and 9.4% had a

lot of facilities at middle level as the majority had very little facilities for English so it could be a factor for weak communication skills.

Table 4

Intermediate Level

		F	P	V P	C P
V	Very little	161	71.9	71.9	71.9
	Somewhat	50	22.3	22.3	94.2
	A lot	13	5.8	5.8	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 indicates that 71.9% of students had very little facilities for English, 22.3% had somewhat facilities for English and 5.8% had a

lot of facilities at middle level as the majority had very little facilities for English so it could be a factor for weak communication skills.

Table 5

Graduate Level

		F	P	V	C P
V	Very little	86	38.4	38.4	38.4
	Somewhat	76	33.9	33.9	72.3
	A lot	60	26.8	26.8	99.1
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5 indicates that 38.4% of students had very little facilities for English, 33.9% had somewhat facilities for English and 26.8% had

a lot of facilities at middle level as the majority had very little facilities for English so it could be a factor for weak communication skills.

Medium of Instructions

Table 6

Primary Level

		F	P	V P	C P
V	Punjabi	10	4.5	4.5	4.5
	Urdu	183	81.7	82.1	86.5
	English	30	13.4	13.5	100.0
	Total	223	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
Total	224	100.0	Total		

Table 6 indicates that 4.5 % of students had Punjabi as a medium of instruction, 82.1 % of students had Urdu as a medium of instruction and 13.4% had English as a medium of

instruction. From the data, it is evident that the medium of instruction could be a factor in weak language skills.

Table 7

Secondary Level

		F	P	V P	C P
V	Punjabi	41	18.3	18.3	18.3
	Urdu	158	70.5	70.5	88.8
	English	25	11.2	11.2	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 7 indicates that 18.1 % of students had Punjabi as a medium of instruction, 70.5 % of students had Urdu as a medium of instruction and 11.2 % had English as a medium of

instruction at the secondary level. From the data, it is evident that the medium of instruction could be a factor in weak language skills.

Table 8

Inter Level

		F	P	V P	C P
V	Punjabi	25	11.2	11.2	11.2
	Urdu	156	69.6	69.6	80.8
	English	42	18.8	18.8	99.6
	Any other(Specify)	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 8 indicates that 11.2 % of students had Punjabi as a medium of instruction, 69.6 % of students had Urdu as a medium of instruction and 18.8% had English as a medium of

instruction at the intermediate level. From the data, it is obvious that the medium of instruction at the intermediate level could be a factor in weak language skills.

Table 9

Advanced Level

		F	P	V P	C P
V	Punjabi	7	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Urdu	107	47.8	47.8	50.9
	English	103	46.0	46.0	96.9
	Any other (Specify)	7	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 2.4 indicates that 3.1 % of students had Punjabi as a medium of instruction, 47.1 % of students had Urdu as a medium of instruction and 46 % had English as a medium of

instruction. From the data, it is marked that the medium of instruction at the graduate level could be a factor in language skills.

Table 10

Indicate Your Spoken Competency in English

		F	P	VP	CP
V	Full competency	10	4.5	4.5	4.5
	Moderate competency	54	24.1	24.1	28.6
	Mild competency	114	50.9	50.9	79.5
	Not at all	46	20.5	20.5	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 10 presents that 4.5% of pupils mentioned that they had full competency in spoken English, 24.1% indicated they had moderate competency, 50.9% were of the view that they had mild competency while 20.5% mentioned they had no competency at all.

Figure 2

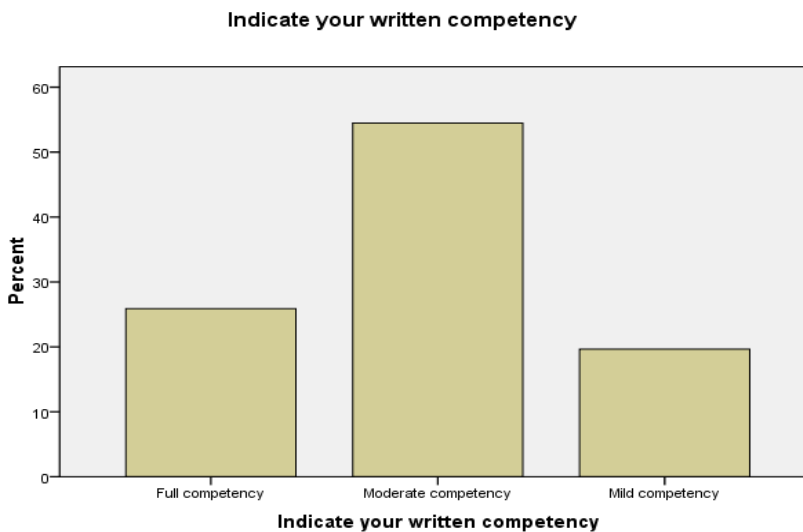


Table 11

Indicate Your Written Competency in English

		F	P	VP	CP
V	Full competency	11	4.9	4.9	4.9
	Moderate competency	78	34.8	34.8	39.7
	Mild competency	120	53.6	53.6	93.3
	Not at all	15	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 11 indicates that 4.9% of students mentioned that they had full competency in written English, 34.8 % indicated they had moderate competency, 53.6% were of the view that they had mild competency while 6.7% mentioned they had no competency at all.

Figure 3

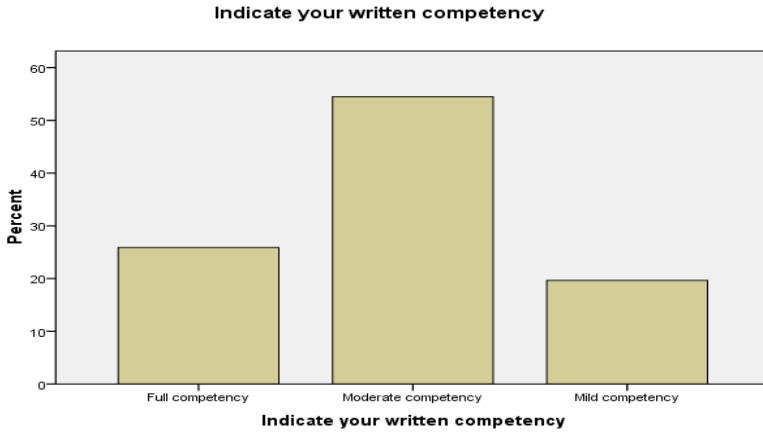


Figure 4

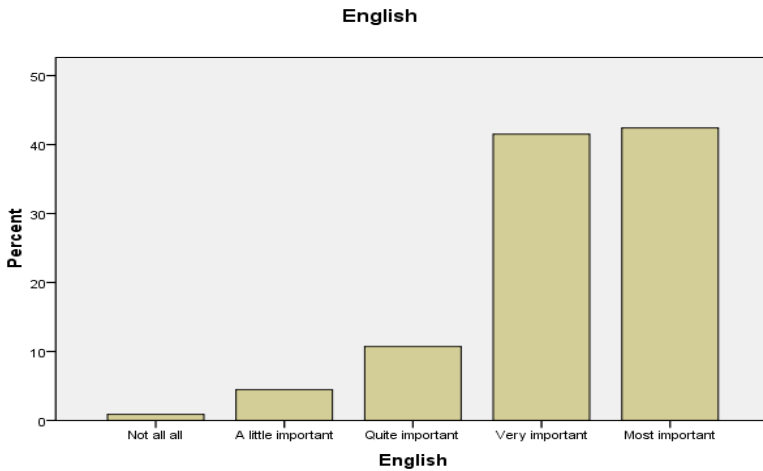


Table 12

Listed Below are Reasons for Learning English

M	S	F	P
		224	100.0

Table 13

Getting a Good Job

		F	P	VP	CP
V	Slightly disagree	23	10.3	10.3	10.3
	Neither agree nor disagree	2	.9	.9	11.2
	Slightly agree	34	15.2	15.2	26.3
	Agree	165	73.7	73.7	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

In Table 13, 73.7 % of students agree that they were learning the English language for getting

a good job so this factor could be a motivation for learning the English language.

Table 14

Coping With Colleges/University Classes

		F	P	VP	CP
V	Disagree	6	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Slightly disagree	18	8.0	8.0	10.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	38	17.0	17.0	27.7
	Slightly agree	72	32.1	32.1	59.8
	Agree	90	40.2	40.2	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 14 indicates that 40.2 % of students agree that they were learning the English language for coping with university classes, so

this factor could be a motivation for learning the English language.

English language

Table 15

Acquire New Ideas and Broaden One's Outlook

			P	VP	CP
V	Disagree	6	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Slightly disagree	25	11.2	11.2	13.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	35	15.6	15.6	29.5
	Slightly agree	69	30.8	30.8	60.3
	Agree	89	39.7	39.7	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 15 indicates that 39.7 % of students agree that they were learning the English language for acquiring new ideas and broaden

their outlook so this factor could be a motivation for learning.

Table 16

Access to Information Technology

		F	P	V	CP
V	Disagree	5	2.2	2.2	2.2
	Neither agree nor disagree	14	6.3	6.3	8.5
	Slightly agree	78	34.8	34.8	43.3
	Agree	127	56.7	56.7	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

In Table 16, 56.7 % of students agree that they were learning the English language for getting access to information technology so this factor

could be a motivation for learning the English language

Table 17*Getting Access to International Books*

		F	P	VP	CP
V	Disagree	2	.9	.9	.9
	Slightly disagree	6	2.7	2.7	3.6
	Neither agree nor disagree	17	7.6	7.6	11.2
	Slightly agree	52	23.2	23.2	34.4
	Agree	147	65.6	65.6	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 17 indicates that 65.6 % of students agree that they were learning the English language for getting access to international

books so this factor could be an incentive for learning the English language.

Table 18*Improve My Social Status*

		F	P	VP	CP
V	Disagree	2	.9	.9	.9
	Slightly disagree	37	16.5	16.5	17.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	53	23.7	23.7	41.1
	Slightly agree	71	31.7	31.7	72.8
	Agree	61	27.2	27.2	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 18 indicates that 16.5% of students slightly disagree that they were learning the English language for improving social status.

23.7% did not give their opinion, 31.75 slightly agree with the idea and 27.2 agreed with the statement.

Table 19*It is The Working Language*

		F	P	VP	CP
V	Disagree	6	2.7	2.7	2.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	2	.9	.9	3.6
	Slightly agree	51	22.8	22.8	26.3
	Agree	165	73.7	73.7	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 19 indicates that 2.7 % of students slightly disagree that they were learning the English language for improving social status.

0.9 % did not give their opinion, 22.8% slightly agree with the idea and 73.7% agreed with the statement.

Table 20*Medium of Instructions and Classroom Practice*

		Frequency	Percent
Missing	System	224	100.0

Table 21

What is a Medium of Instruction in the Institution You are Studying at?

		F	P	V P	C P
V	Regional languages	15	6.7	6.7	6.7
	English	39	17.4	17.4	24.1
	Urdu	170	75.9	75.9	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 21 indicates that 6.7% of students said they had regional languages as a medium of instruction, 17.4% mentioned that they had

English as a medium of instruction while 75.9 % were of the point of view that they had Urdu as a medium of instruction.

Table 22

Proficiency of English Language Teachers

		Frequency	Percent
Missing	System	224	100.0

Table 23

What is the Language Used by Your Teacher for Writing in the Classes?

		F	P	V P	C P
V	English	202	90.2	90.2	90.2
	Urdu	20	8.9	8.9	99.1
	Other(please specify)	2	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

In Table 23 most of the students indicated that the teachers used English for writing, 90.2%

said English, 8.9% mentioned Urdu, and 0.9 mentioned other languages.

Table 24

Knowledge of Teachers in English and Their Spoken Competence

		F	P	V P	C P
V	Poor	14	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Low	154	68.8	68.8	75.0
	Average	37	16.5	16.5	91.5
	High	11	4.9	4.9	96.4
	Excellent	8	3.6	3.6	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

In Table 24 most of the students indicated that the teachers had low proficiency in speaking English, 6.3% mentioned poor, 68.8% mentioned low,16.5%mentioned as average

proficiency in speaking English,4.9 % were of the view that teachers had high proficiency and 3.6 % mentioned excellent proficiency of teachers.

Table 25

Written Competence of the Teachers in English

		F	P	V P	C P
Valid	Poor	6	2.7	2.7	2.7

Low	29	12.9	12.9	15.6
Average	96	42.9	42.9	58.5
High	77	34.4	34.4	92.9
Excellent	16	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 25 indicated that most of the students indicated that the teachers had low proficiency in writing English, 2.7% mentioned poor, 12.9% mentioned low, 42.9% mentioned as

average proficiency in the writing of English, 34.4 % were of the view that teachers had high proficiency and 7.1% mentioned excellent proficiency of teachers.

How far is the quality of English taught at the inter-level prepare you for higher education?

Table 26

Syllabus

		F	P	V P	C P
V	Poor	94	42.0	42.0	42.0
	Low	36	16.1	16.1	58.0
	Average	62	27.7	27.7	85.7
	High	22	9.8	9.8	95.5
	Excellent	10	4.5	4.5	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 26 points out the relevance of intermediate-level language teaching with the university English, 42% refers to poor quality, 16.1% refers to low relevance, 27.2% were of

the opinion that the syllabus was average, 9.8% gave a high ranking and 4.5% mentioned that syllabus was excellent.

Table 27

Texts/Material

		F	P	V P	C P
V	Poor	78	34.8	34.8	34.8
	Low	86	38.4	38.4	73.2
	Average	41	18.3	18.3	91.5
	High	13	5.8	5.8	97.3
	Excellent	6	2.7	2.7	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 27 indicates the relevance of intermediate-level language teaching with the university English, 34.8 % refers to poor quality of texts, 38.4% refers to low relevance, 18.3%

were of the opinion that text was average, 5.8% gave high ranking and 2.7% mentioned that text/material was excellent.

Table 28

Teaching Methods

		F	p	V P	C P
V	Poor	82	36.6	36.6	36.6
	Low	84	37.5	37.5	74.1

Average	36	16.1	16.1	90.2
High	17	7.6	7.6	97.8
Excellent	5	2.2	2.2	100.0

Table 28 points out the relevance of intermediate-level language teaching with the university English, 36.6 % refers to poor quality of teaching methods, 37.5% refers to low

relevance, 16.1% were of the opinion that teaching methods were average, 7.6% gave high ranking and 2.2% mentioned that teaching methods as excellent.

Table 29

Quality of Tests/Examination

	F	P	VP	CP
V	Poor	82	36.6	36.6
	Low	84	37.5	74.1
	Average	43	19.2	93.3
	High	13	5.8	99.1
	Excellent	2	.9	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0

Table 29 shows the relevance of intermediate-level language teaching with the university English, 36.6% refers to poor quality, 37.5% refers to low relevance, 19.2 % were of the

opinion that tests were of average quality, 5.8% gave high ranking and 0.9% mentioned that tests/examinations were excellent.

Table 30

How far Does English as a Subject Help You Prepare for Higher Studies

	F	P	VP	CP
V	Poor	94	42.0	42.0
	Low	88	39.3	81.3
	Average	21	9.4	90.6
	High	11	4.9	95.5
	Excellent	10	4.5	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0

Table 30 points out the relevance of intermediate-level language teaching with the university English, 42% refers to poor quality, 16.1% refers to low relevance, 27.2% were of

the opinion that the syllabus was average, 9.8% gave a high ranking and 4.5% mentioned that syllabus was excellent.

Table 31

How Far is English Taught at Intermediate Successful in Preparing Communication in This Language

	F	P	VP	CP
V	Poor	87	38.8	38.8
	Low	93	41.5	80.4
	Average	28	12.5	92.9
	High	10	4.5	97.3
	Excellent	6	2.7	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0

Table 31 points out the relevance of intermediate-level language teaching with the university English, 42% refers to poor quality, 16.1% refers to low relevance, 27.2% were of

the opinion that the syllabus was average, 9.8% gave a high ranking and 4.5% mentioned that syllabus was excellent.

Table 32

Indicate Your Language Needs for Information Technology

		Fr	P
M	System	224	100.0

Table 33

English

		F	P	V P	C P
V	Not at all	4	1.8	1.8	1.8
	A little important	5	2.2	2.2	4.0
	Quite important	25	11.2	11.2	15.2
	Very important	90	40.2	40.2	55.4
	Most important	100	44.6	44.6	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

In Table 33 diversified data is shown about the language needs of the students; for 44.6% English as the most important for information technology, 40.2% mentioned it as very

important, 11.2 % mentioned it as quite important, 2.2% mentioned it as a little important while 1.8% mentioned as not at all.

Table 34

What Type of English Courses Should be Offered?

		F	P	V P	C P
V	General English	20	8.9	8.9	8.9
	English for a specific purpose	59	26.3	26.3	35.3
	Both	138	61.6	61.6	96.9
	Other (Please specify)	7	3.1	3.1	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 34 indicates students' preferences about the type of courses to be offered at the graduate level. 8.9% mentioned General English, 26.3%

mentioned ESP, 61.6% mentioned both, and 3.1% mentioned others.

Table 35

To What Extent do You Agree With These Recommendations

		F	P
M S		224	100.0

Table 36

English Syllabus/Courses Should Emphasize the Communicative Use of English.

		F	P	VP	CP
V	Strongly disagree	15	6.7	6.7	6.7
	Slightly disagree	14	6.3	6.3	12.9
	Neither agree nor disagree	9	4.0	4.0	17.0
	Slightly agree	68	30.4	30.4	47.3
	Strongly agree	118	52.7	52.7	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 36 specifies data about the emphasis on the communicative use of English. 6.7% strongly disagreed, 6.3% slightly disagree, 4%

did not give any opinion, 30.4% slightly agreed and 52.7% strongly agreed about the communicative use of English

Table 37

Do You Think Language Teachers Need Pieces of Training for Communicative Language Teaching?

		F	P	VP	CP
V	Slightly disagree	22	9.8	9.8	9.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	8	3.6	3.6	13.4
	Slightly agree	33	14.7	14.7	28.1
	Strongly agree	161	71.9	71.9	100.0
	Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 37 specifies data about the importance of the latest methods of teaching English.9.8% slightly disagree, 3.6% did not give any

opinion, 14.7% slightly agreed and 71.9% strongly agreed that teachers of English should be trained in the latest methods of ELT.

Table 38

Literature Should be a Component of The English Course

		F	P	VP	CP
V	Strongly disagree	15	6.7	6.8	6.8
	Slightly disagree	9	4.0	4.1	10.8
	Neither agree nor disagree	72	32.1	32.4	43.2
	Slightly agree	73	32.6	32.9	76.1
	Strongly agree	53	23.7	23.9	100.0
	Total	222	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	2	.9		
Total		224	100.0		

Table 38 specifies data about literature to be a component of English courses. 6.8% strongly disagreed, 4.1% slightly disagree, 32.4% did

not give any opinion, 32.6% slightly agreed and 23.9% strongly agreed for English literature to be part of the course.

Table 39

Achievement of The Learners in Communication Skills

		F	P	V	CP
V	Low Achievers	74	33.0	33.0	33.0

Average Achievers	129	57.6	57.6	90.6
High Achievers	21	9.4	9.4	100.0
Total	224	100.0	100.0	

Table 39 highlights the grades achieved by the students in communication skills.

33% achieved low grades, 57.6% got average grades and 9.4% got high grades.

Findings

The objective of the research study was to assess and evaluate the aspects of weak communication skills among university undergraduates from the perspective of the students. This research work has focused on the students' perspectives only. In another study, the focus might be on the teachers' strategies and their perspectives. The study explored a number of factors as per students' perception: language learning facilities, medium of instruction, students' own competencies in language, use of a language by the teachers in a classroom, and teachers' language competencies both written and oral. The study also found that there are a number of more factors for this situation such as the syllabus designed for the language needs of the Matric and inter-level which may not prepare them for university requirements, testing and assessments, and teaching methods. It was further found that the subject of English does not prepare students for higher education and for communication skills. Students' responses also offer a few suggestions: the curriculum should emphasis more on skill teaching rather than rote memorization, language teachers should be trained in the latest methods of teaching, and teaching material should be interactive.

Discussion

The study found a considerable relation between weak communication skills and students' perception of the different factors for this situation. The study also found that

teaching material and teachers' competencies impact students' achievements, the same applies to skill teaching. A number of other researchers also found comparable findings in their research (Chen & Hoshower, 2003; Cohen, 1981; Darling-Hammond, AmreinBeardsley, Haertel, & Rothstein, 2012; Harris & Twiname, 2012).

The study also found that a number of factors, in students' perception, if improved may result in improving the achievement in skill development regarding communications. The importance of a teaching environment can have a strong impact on students' learning language skills which may help improve communication skills thus preparing them better for future education. Stronge (2006) proposed that language skills can be cultivated in a congenial, productive, and friendly environment provided by the teacher.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the study indicated critical factors in weak communication skills in students' perceptions. As the majority of the students believe the lack of facilities for language learning at the school and college level, medium of instruction, teacher's competence, and environment are a few of the reasons for their weak performance in communication skills. Students' responses provide important data to take this issue seriously as communication is not a part of university education its essential for the job market. The research in this area has found that employers are very keen on the following list of types of communication skills, Crawford et al. (2011) Communication is one of the main skills, most employers would like to have a confident and communicative employee (Schneider, 2015), moreover; Bronson (2007) in his study claims that communication is a skill that the majority of students lack.

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