



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Teachers' Perception of English Language Teaching at Tertiary Level Education in Pakistan**

Ishtiaq Ahmad <sup>1</sup> Dr. Muhammad Shahbaz Arif <sup>2</sup>

1. Ph. D Scholar, Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan
2. Former Dean, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan

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**Corresponding Author:**

ishtiaqahmaad@gmail.com

**ABSTRACT**

This study has investigated English Language Teaching (ELT) in Pakistan from the perspective of both male and female ELT teachers at a 4-year BS English program of public and private sector universities of Pakistan. Simple random sampling procedure was adopted for the selection of the sample of universities and teachers. Survey questionnaires on dichotomous scale were used to collect the data from 80 ELT teachers of both genders from 10 universities of Pakistan to investigate their perceptions. The survey responses were analyzed quantitatively by using the descriptive statistics. The results showed that the ELT teachers considered that Activity-based Interactive Method best suits English language pedagogic process and communicative competence is the most important outcome of ELT at tertiary level education in Pakistan. Based on the findings of the study, it has been recommended that capacity of in-service ELT teachers may be built and policy reforms in English language curricula and pedagogical practices should be introduced to synchronize the perceptions of ELT teachers

**Introduction**

Pakistan is a multilingual society (Mansoor, 2005) in which English language pedagogy is considered to be an integral component of educational discourse due to its colonial background. Accordingly, English language is being taught and learnt from primary to tertiary education as a compulsory subject. The instructional regime is reported to be teacher-centric and learners barely find any chance of communicating their perspectives and desires as to the viability of any instructional method in a classroom environment. As indicated by Siddiqui (2002), Grammar Translation Method is utilized by the instructors in most schools without any formal training of teachers in ELT. Thus, most students rely absolutely on the

memorization of substance and stay unequipped for performing the language tasks of speaking and writing even at college level. Coleman (2010) has stipulated that the significant objective of ELT in Pakistan relates to learners' future objectives of accomplishing a higher degree and exploring better career opportunities instead of learning the language in use. As per Alam and Uddin (2013), assessment driven teaching design has resulted in the development of writing skills only in most institutions of higher learning in Pakistan.

On the other hand, enormous change spanning over centuries has been witnessed in the methods and approaches in ELT that has also influenced the classroom practices across the globe. Accordingly, teachers' perspective of ELT needs to be explored afresh to underscore their teaching effectiveness *viz-a-viz* new trends and techniques of ELT. Given the above, this survey study aims to document the perceptions of male and female teachers of ELT on English language pedagogy in the context of a 4-year BS English classroom of public and private sector universities of Pakistan.

### **Overview of the Development in Methods and Approaches to ELT**

ELT tradition carves out a long history (Ahmad, 2018) which has been touched upon briefly as follows:

<b>Methods and Approaches</b>	<b>Key Features</b>
Grammar Translation Method (GTM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduced in seventeenth century</li> <li>• used for the learning of classical languages, that is, Latin and Greek</li> <li>• focused on grammatical rules, translation of texts and built vocabulary items through memorization (Richards &amp; Rodgers, 2014)</li> </ul>
Direct Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed by Francois Gouin in 1860</li> <li>• avoided the first language and translation as a method</li> <li>• used the target language as a tool of instructional methodology in classroom environment (Stern et al., 1983)</li> </ul>
Audio Lingual Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduced during World War-II (1950s) as 'Army Method'</li> <li>• founded in the behaviorist school of thought</li> <li>• discouraged the utilization of first language as instructional technique</li> <li>• focused on oral proficiency (Brown, 2000)</li> </ul>
Communicative Language Learning Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed by Curran (1972)</li> <li>• considered teacher-student relationship as a</li> </ul>

	counselor-client relationship
Problem Solving Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed by Gattegno (1972)</li> <li>• based on the cognitive development of language</li> <li>• considered to be non-helpful for the learning</li> </ul>
Total Physical Response Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed by Asher (1977)</li> <li>• based on the interaction between language and physical movements in the language learning procedure of a youngster</li> <li>• The second language was utilized to give the directions and the learners used to respond through the whole-body activities</li> </ul>
Suggestopedia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed by Lozanov (1978)</li> <li>• claimed that memorization and integration are the major linguistic issues in a language classroom which should be supplanted by the acts of communication</li> </ul>
Communicative Language Teaching Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed by Michael Halliday in 1970s</li> <li>• envisaged to break down the learning tasks into "portions or units, each of which corresponds to a component of a learner's needs and is systematically related to all the other portions"</li> <li>• focused on developing communicative competence amongst learners for the acquisition of language through integration of language skills (Ek &amp; Alexander, 1980)</li> </ul>
Natural Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• developed by Krashen &amp; Terrell (1983)</li> <li>• focused on developing natural language learning in classroom environment</li> <li>• Emphasized on communication with learners without requiring cognizant linguistic standards and inordinate drills</li> </ul>

Kramsch & Sullivan (1996) holds that a suitable instructional technique largely depends upon ELT experts' thinking internationally yet acting locally. Wei (2017) contends that in numerous countries around the globe where ESL learners start learning English, coaching techniques are extremely conventional and inflexible. Teacher-based and material-centered practices are the essential ingredients of most instructional methods; therefore, participation and ingenuity of the learners are completely disregarded.

As opposed to this instructional model, the learning model holds that the objective of teaching is to yield learning. This student-centered view considers active participation of the learners in classroom activities to enhance their abilities and polish their language skills. In this model, an instructor's job turns into that of a facilitator in learners' pursuit of knowledge. Cornelius-White & Harbaugh (2010) differentiate the student focused methodology and the conventional instructing approach. As indicated by them, student focused methodology centers the learners while customary methodology is curriculum centered. Previously, the focus of teaching was to cover the subject matter in a content-based manner with lecturing style and memorizing approach; however, the focus has now been shifted to develop the comprehension of students by utilizing the experiential techniques with emphasis on the inquiry-based approach.

Lee (2011) explored the Chinese teachers' view of ELT. An aggregate of 214 respondents who happened to be the primary English language educators recorded their perspective through a survey questionnaire. Observations of the demonstrated lessons by the local teachers were also recorded. The results indicated that the instructors were very much aware of the significance of the student-centered approach to enhance the communicative competence of the Chinese learners; however, their teaching was heavily dependent upon the course books and that too without any use of authentic teaching materials. Ahmadi (2017) considers that a strategy that a teacher utilizes in his class to anchor the language learning process is one of the significant components of learning. The choice of an appropriate teaching method or strategy has a significant relationship with the desired outcomes of the teaching process, that is, focus on learners' vocabulary development, communicative competence and reading and writing abilities etc. Accordingly, teachers' decision for the selection of a teaching method holds prime importance in English language pedagogy.

Foregoing in view, this study attempted to find the answer to the following research question:

*How do teachers perceive English language pedagogy at tertiary level education in Pakistan?*

## **Hypothesis**

*ELT teachers perceive that Lecture Method best suits English language pedagogic process at tertiary level education in Pakistan.*

## **Research Methodology**

An aggregate of 62 (41 public and 21 private) universities were offering 4-year BS English program in Pakistan at the time of the study. Accordingly, these universities as well as all the male and female teachers teaching English language to the learners of 4-year BS English program in those (62) universities constituted the population. For the descriptive study, A total of 10

universities from both public and private sector were selected as sample of the universities by employing simple random sampling technique. Subsequently, 80 teachers (40 male and 40 female) from the 10 sample universities were selected randomly as the sample of ELT teachers.

The descriptive data were gathered from the teachers on dichotomous scale using a structured questionnaire containing 15 items. The data were analyzed by using the descriptive statistics, that is, percentage, to calculate the responses of the respondents on the selected items.

**Results and Discussion**

The data of the responses to the items of the questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed as follows:

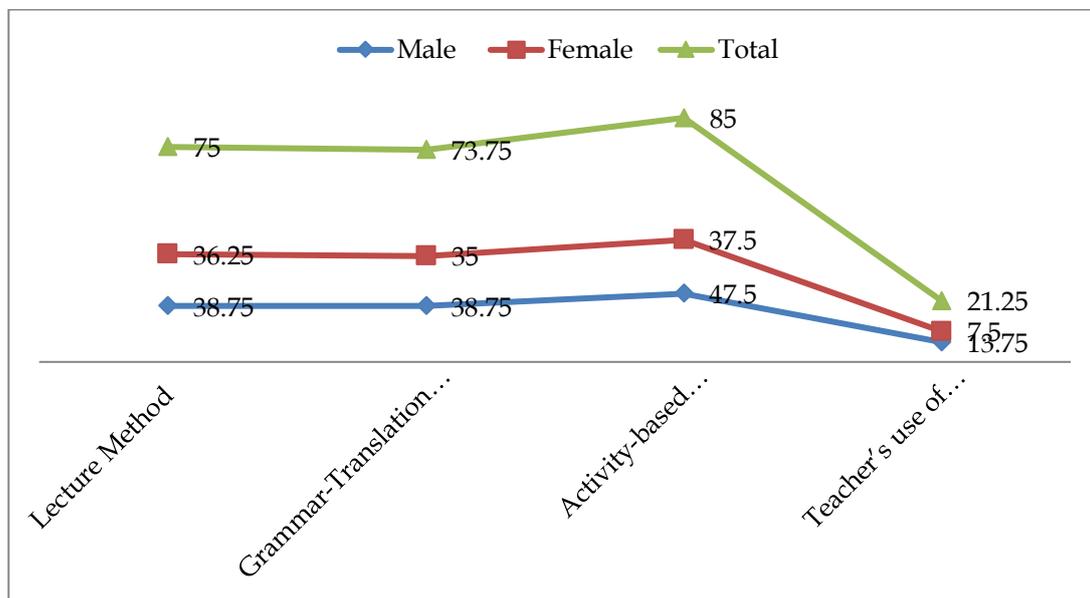


Figure 1. Method that best suits ELT at tertiary level education in Pakistan

**Table 1**  
**Method That Best Suits English Language Teaching Process at Tertiary Level Education in Pakistan**

Overall Percentage of the Response from Male and Female Teachers								
Category	Q.1 Lecture Method		Q.2 Grammar-Translation Method		Q.3 Activity-based Interactive Method		Q.4 Teacher's use of variety of Teaching Methods	
	Y %	N %	Y %	N %	Y %	N %	Y %	N %
Male Teachers	38.75	11.25	38.75	11.25	47.50	2.50	13.75	36.25

Female Teachers	36.25	13.75	35.00	15.00	37.50	12.50	7.50	42.50
Total	75.00	25.00	73.75	26.25	85.00	15.00	21.25	78.75

N Teachers= 80

Table 1 shows the percentage of responses from the teachers on the method that best suits ELT at tertiary level education in Pakistan. Overall, 85 percent teachers preferred Activity-based Interactive Method, 75 percent teachers preferred Lecture Method, 73.75 percent teachers preferred Grammar Translation Method and 21.25 percent teachers preferred Teacher's use of variety of Teaching Methods.

The male teachers favoured the Activity-based Interactive Method with 95 percent, Grammar Translation Method and Lecture Method with 77.50 percent each and Teacher's use of variety of Teaching Methods with 27.50 percent respectively. On the other hand, the female teachers favoured Activity-based Interactive Method with 75 percent, Lecture Method with 72.50 percent, Grammar Translation Method with 70 percent and Teacher's use of variety of Teaching Methods with 15 percent respectively. Approving the present results, the findings stipulated in the study of Murphy et al. (2018) had also showed that the male teachers found the Activity-based Teaching Method more comprehensive in foreign language classroom settings as compared to the female teachers who were equally comfortable with Lecture Method in foreign language teaching.

The results of the study rejected the hypothesis, that is, ELT teachers perceive that Lecture Method best suits ELT process at tertiary level education in Pakistan. The results did not support the hypothesis as 85 percent of the respondent teachers considered Activity-based Interactive Method as the most suitable Method for ELT at tertiary level education in Pakistan. The teachers' inclination for the learner-centered Activity-based Interactive Method was unexpected due to the established practice of teacher-centric Lecture Method in Pakistan (Ahmad, 2018).

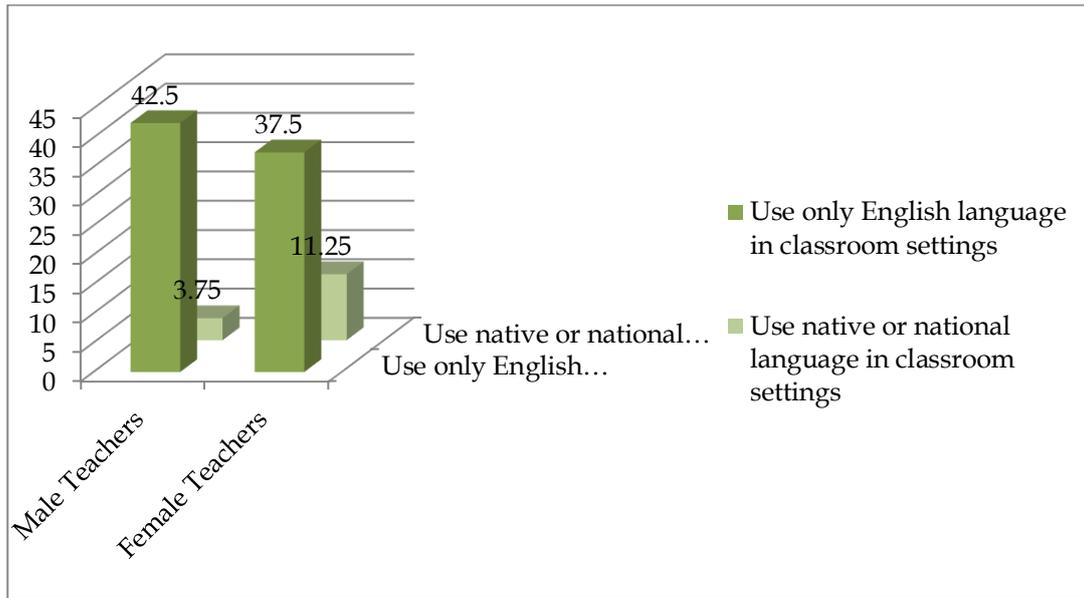


Figure 2. Teachers' choices on the use of only English language or native or native language in classroom settings at tertiary level education in Pakistan

**Table 2**  
**In English Language Teaching process, it is essential to**

Category	Q.5 Use only English language in classroom settings		Q.6 Use native or national language in classroom settings to facilitate learning	
	Y %	N %	Y %	N %
Male Teachers	42.50	7.50	3.75	46.25
Female Teachers	37.50	12.50	11.25	38.75
Total	80.00	20.00	15.00	85.00

N Teachers= 80

Table 2 shows that overall, 80 percent of the respondent teachers considered it essential to use only English language in ELT classroom settings. 42.50 percent of the male teachers and 37.50 percent of the female teachers decided on this choice. Likewise, just 15 percent of the respondent teachers decided in favour of the use of native or national language in ELT classroom settings. Overall, 85 percent of the teachers with 46.25 percent of the male teachers and 38.75 percent of the female teachers did not endorse the use of native or national language in classroom settings at tertiary level education in Pakistan.

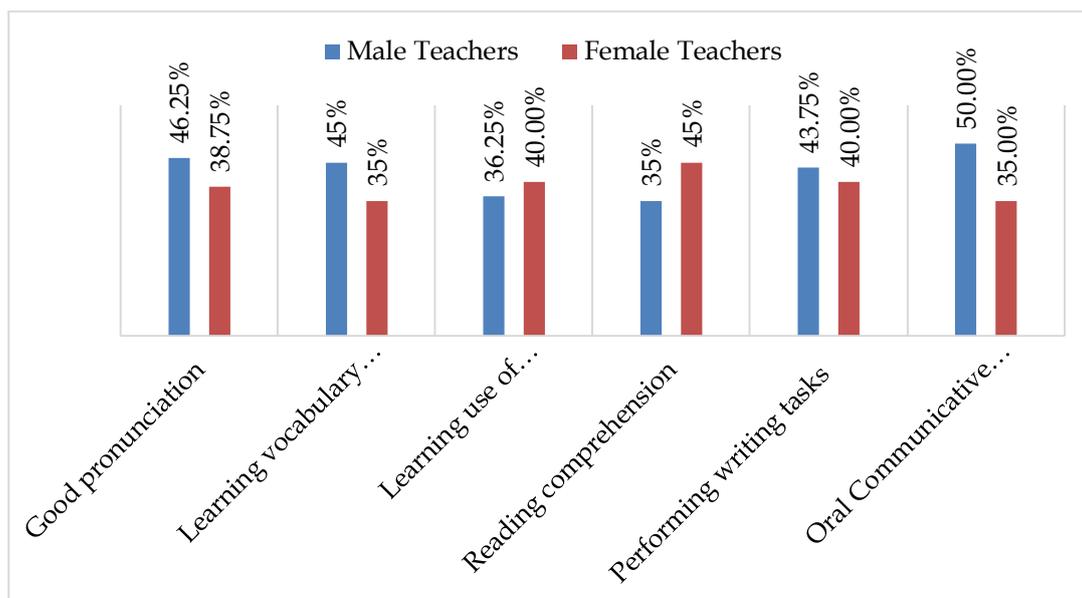


Figure 3. Teachers' perception on ELT outcomes

**Table 3**  
**English Language Teaching results in**

Category	Q.7 Good pronunciation		Q.8 Learning vocabulary Items		Q.9 Learning use of grammatical rule		Q.10 Reading comprehension		Q.11 Performing writing tasks		Q.12 Oral communicative competence	
	Y %	N %	Y %	N %	Y %	N %	Y %	N %	Y %	N %	Y %	N %
Male Teachers	46.25	3.75	45.00	5.00	36.25	13.75	35.00	15.00	43.75	6.25	50.00	0.00
Female Teachers	38.75	11.25	35.00	15.00	40.00	10.00	45.00	5.00	40.00	10.00	35.00	15.00
Total	85.00	15.00	80.00	20.00	76.25	23.75	80.00	20.00	83.75	16.25	85.00	15.00

N Teachers= 80

Table 3 shows that 85 percent of the respondent teachers with 46.25 percent of the male teachers and 38.75 percent of the female teachers opined that ELT results in good pronunciation. Likewise, 80 percent of the teachers with 45 percent of the male teachers and 35 percent of the female teachers considered that ELT entails learning of vocabulary items. Overall, 76.25 percent of the respondent teachers with 36.25 percent of the male teachers and 40 percent of the female teachers opined that ELT results in learning the use of grammatical rules.

Table 3 further shows that 80 percent of the teachers with 35 percent of the male teachers and 45 percent of the female teachers opined that ELT entails reading comprehension. Overall, 83.75 percent of the respondent teachers with 43.75 percent of the male teachers and 40 percent of the female teachers opined that ELT results in performing writing tasks. Similarly, 85 percent of the teachers with 50 percent of the male teachers and 35 percent of the female teachers opined that ELT results in oral communicative competence.

The results indicate that the teachers preferred good pronunciation and oral communicative competence with 85 percent each, performing writing tasks with 83.75 percent, learning vocabulary items and reading comprehension with 80 percent each and learning use of grammatical rules with 76.25 percent respectively in the sequence of the outcomes of ELT process. However, both male and female teachers exhibited almost entirely a different trend towards various outcomes of ELT process at the tertiary level education in Pakistan.

The male teachers preferred the oral communicative competence with 100 percent, good pronunciation with 92.50 percent, learning vocabulary items with 90 percent, performing writing tasks with 87.50 percent, learning use of grammatical rules with 72.50 percent and reading comprehension with 70 percent respectively. Contrary to this, female teachers preferred reading comprehension with 90 percent, learning use of grammatical rules and performing writing tasks with 80 percent each, good pronunciation with 77.50 percent and learning vocabulary items and oral communicative competence with 70 percent each respectively in the sequence of the outcomes of ELT process.

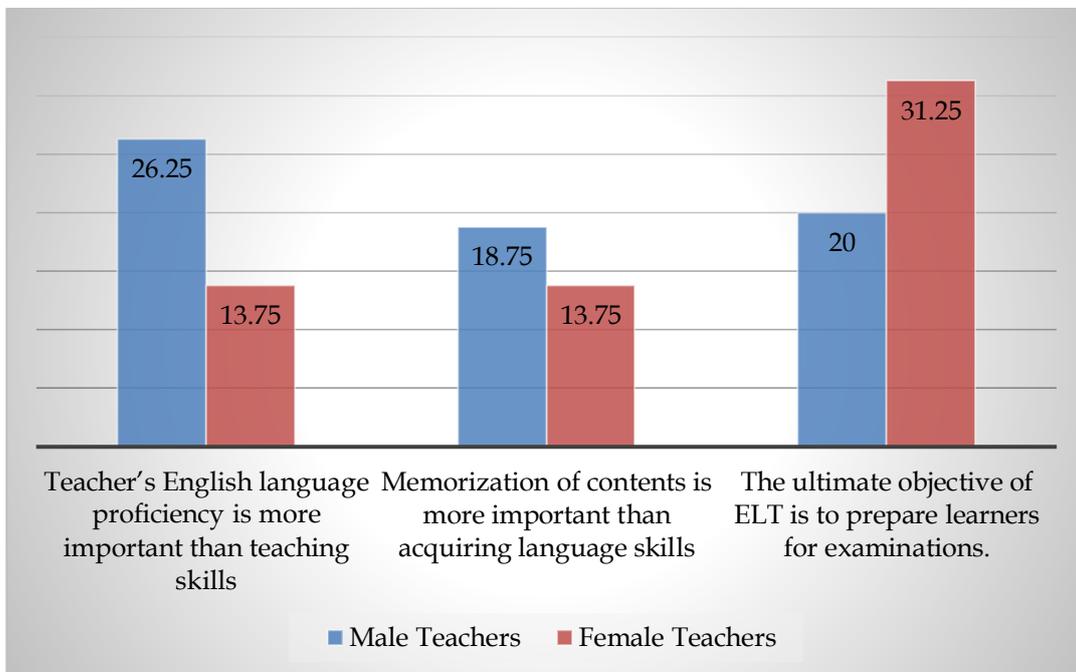


Figure 4. Teachers' choices on language proficiency, memorization and objective of ELT at tertiary level education in Pakistan

**Table 4**  
**In English Language Teaching process**

Category	Q. 13 Teacher's English language proficiency is more important than Teaching skills		Q.14 Memorization of contents is more important than acquiring language skills		Q.15 The ultimate objective of ELT is to prepare learners for examinations	
	Y %	N %	Y %	N %	Y %	N %
Male Teachers	26.25	23.75	18.75	31.25	20.00	30.00
Female Teachers	13.75	36.25	13.75	36.25	31.25	18.75
Total	40.00	60.00	32.50	67.50	51.25	48.75

Table 4 shows that 40 percent of the respondent teachers with 26.25 percent of the male teachers and 13.75 percent of the female teachers considered teachers' English language proficiency more important than their teaching skills. As such, 60 percent of the teachers with 23.75 percent of the male teachers and 36.26 percent of the female teachers preferred teaching skills over language proficiency. Among the male teachers, 52.50 percent of the respondents opined that language proficiency is more important than teaching skills whereas among the female teachers, 72.50 percent of the respondents favoured teaching skills over language proficiency.

Table 4 further exhibits that 32.50 percent of the respondent teachers considered memorization of contents more important than acquisition of language skills. Overall, 67.50 percent of the teachers with 31.25 percent of the male teachers and 36.25 percent of the female teachers opined that acquisition of language skills is more important than memorization of contents in ELT process.

Table 4 also shows that overall, 51.25 percent of the teachers with 20 percent of the male teachers and 31.25 percent of the female teachers opined that the ultimate objective of ELT is to prepare the learners for examinations. From the male teachers, 60 percent of the respondents did not opt for this option whereas from the female teachers, 62.50 percent of the respondents decided in favour of this option. This intently contesting opinion within the teachers on the ultimate objective of English language teaching indicates the need for a thorough review of the objectives of ELT in Pakistan for the informed participation of the teachers in English language pedagogic process.

### **Key Findings and Implications**

The study has expounded the teachers' preference for communicative language teaching methods at tertiary level education in Pakistan. The results have indicated the disparity of perception that exists within the teachers (male and female) on the matter of English language proficiency and teaching skills of an ELT

teacher as well as exhibited almost entirely a different perception of the male and the female teachers on the intended outcomes of the ELT process. The results have also showed the paradox of memory-driven foreign language curricula at the tertiary level education in Pakistan that operates beyond the objective of fostering foreign language proficiency among the learners.

The results of the study commensurate to the needs-analysis for the researchers as well as policy makers. Accordingly, the findings of the study are expected to contribute to the informed participation of the teachers in the teaching process of English language in Pakistan. Results of the study may also be applied for the designing of professional development programs for both male and female ELT practitioners with a view to update their knowledge of English language pedagogy and its practical application in the educational context of Pakistan.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of results and conclusions of the study, following recommendations are made:

1. Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and Universities of Pakistan should arrange short-term and long-term indigenous and overseas English education programs, trainings, workshops, symposiums and seminars for the capacity building of in-service English faculty towards effective teaching and learning outcomes of ELT programs.
2. The Higher Education Commission of Pakistan should introduce curriculum and pedagogical reforms in English education programs at tertiary level education in Pakistan to do away with the memory-driven curricula; with the focus on holistic development of language skills of the learners.

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