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# Teaching Spaces in Pakistan: A Case of English Language Learning Skills at Tertiary Level

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Abstract: This study examines English language learning skills among students at the tertiary level, specifically in teaching spaces. A quantitative approach has been used in this study. The students of the BS (4 Years) program constitute the population of the study. Cross-sectional research was undertaken, and a structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. The measuring tool consists of different variables, including identification, socio-demographic characteristics, teaching spaces, and English language learning skills. A pilot test was done on 25 randomly selected students, and the value of Alpha was reported as above .721. A statistics analysis includes the Chi-Square test and Independent Sample T-test. The findings of the study revealed that the teaching spaces have a favourable effect on English language learning skills among students at the tertiary level. The results of Chi-Square confirm an association between variables (teaching spaces and English language learning skills). Similarly, the independent sample T-test asserts that there is a significant difference in physical infrastructure, presentation assignment activity, and study support material among male and female students for English language learning in higher education in Pakistan.

Key Words: Teaching Space, Language Learning, Tertiary Education, Gender Inequality, Study Support

### Introduction

The teaching space is essential and influential generally for language learning skills, especially in the English language. It is not all about the physical entity having tables, chairs, peers, charts, and teachers (Cutler et al., 2022). The teaching space is the representation of social interaction, which contains social elements like interaction with teachers and discussion with peers. As it is the first formal place of learning for students, its environment is important for learning four skills of the English language (Goodrich, Mudrick, & Robinson, 2015). While learning the English language in a classroom, there are different elements in the teaching spaces, which include teacher-student interaction, classroom discussion, study support material, and physical infrastructure (Anwar, Shoaib, & Shahid, 2024; Guardino & Fullerton, 2010). These elements make the teaching space more influential for learning a language, especially the English language (Quadir, Yang, & Wang, 2022). The classroom may also affect the learning process due to its constraints, such as space, infrastructure, electronic devices, and established rules in the classroom (Shadiev, Hwang, & Huang, 2017; Showstack, 2017; Sun, 2014). The classroom must be decorated with study charts. It must have proper arrangements, be properly cleaned, and have a multimedia facility, whiteboard, and soundproof. All these things make the classroom better for the learning process (Yang, Zhou, & Hu, 2022; Zano, 2023). Teacher-student interaction plays a vital role in developing a friendly teaching space (Yang, Zimmermann, Bartholomew, Purtell, & Ansari, 2023). Because of this, the students focus on their interactions with teachers and discuss problems with them. In return, teachers boost their motivation for learning, and ultimately, the parental relationship is developed in the classroom (Shoaib, Rasool, Anwar, & Ali, 2023; Yakob, Jawawi, Shahrill, & Jaidin, 2023).

Similarly, classroom discussion is an important part of the teaching spaces. Through this, students are actively engaged in the classroom. They explore different ideas during the discussion, and they don't

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hesitate to ask questions during the lecture. In the end, they can discuss their favourite topics in the classroom (Wong et al., 2006). At the university level, the students spend most of their time there and go through learning. They experience many different social behaviours, which serve as the basis for their confident personality (Zedan, 2010). The teaching spaces also include study material that is used in the learning process, as well as time management (Shoaib, Anwar, & Rasool, 2022; Yang et al., 2023). For academic achievement, the teachers provide handouts to the students. They also provide online material and lecture notes and guide them to find study support material (Vurdien, 2013). In developed and some developing countries, students have access to digital resources, multimedia facilities, and other smart technology devices in their classrooms (Thu, 2020; Tian & Wang, 2010). Time management or punctuality is another important aspect of the teaching spaces. It makes both students and teachers selfdisciplined and motivated at the same time (Shoba, 2017). In the teaching spaces, time management makes the students and teachers punctual, follows the classroom schedule, practice classroom time, and attend classes regularly (Safari, 2021). With the assistance of time management, the students can meet the classroom deadlines and also submit their assignments and quizzes well on time (Qutob, 2018; Shoaib, Anwar, & Mustafa, 2022). This study examined English language learning skills among students at the tertiary level, specifically in terms of the teaching space.

### **Review of Literature**

The study depicted that teachers faced many challenges in dealing with English language learners in a middle school environment due to complex conceptual theories of SLA (Yoon, 2021). Likewise, the crux of the study revealed that the English-speaking skills of Thai students who want to learn English as a foreign language are motivated by Facebook and drama-based activities (Wongsa & Son, 2020). Wong et al. (2006) found that the students and teachers in Singapore preferred a computer-supportive learning environment in the classroom. In the same way, the study findings asserted that language learning and language development can also be done outside of the classroom (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Abdullah, 2022; Waring & Yu, 2018). The study summarizes that in the USA, the preferences of international students towards English as a second language vary in terms of language learning skills and classroom activities (Weger, 2013). Wang and Chen (2009) found that a synchronous learning management system is a guiding tool for evaluating distance language learning. Moreover, the study findings depicted that in Hong Kong, the critical thinking and achievement of secondary school graduates are affected by the classroom learning environment (Wan & Cheng, 2019). Furthermore, the data analysis reflected that students in different countries are interconnected and use more language skills in a physical teaching space (Mariam, Anwar, & Shoaib, 2022; Vick, Crosby, & Ashworth, 2000). However, several studies have found that teaching spaces affect the English language learning skills of students. A study conducted by (Ploeg, Willemsen, Richter, Keijzer, & Koole, 2022) showed that third-age language learners required help in learning language. In addition, a study finding revealed that a self-regulated environment in the classroom and out of class helps to improve speaking skills in English as a foreign language (Uztosun, 2017). Another study indicated that intercultural competence is developed in appropriate foreign language teaching spaces (Toyoda, 2016). Hence, based on the above literature, the different variables have been extracted.

Quvanch and Na (2022) investigated the anxiety of EFL during writing in English class at one of the Afghanistan universities. Several studies analyzed the impact of social learning platforms such as Edmodo on the writing skills of Iranian learners of English as a foreign language (Anwar, Shoaib, & Mustafa, 2022; Ma'azi & Janfeshan, 2018). In addition, a study investigated (SLE) Sri Lankan English and linguistic ideologies used by teachers differently in the classroom of the English language (Schreiber & Jansz, 2023). Similarly, the study outlined that there are different factors which influence English language skills by using English rain classrooms (Quadir, Yang, & Wang, 2024). Likewise, the crux of the study revealed that students of Jordanian universities improve their English language proficiency through an online chat with a native speaker of the English language (Mahfouz & Ihmeideh, 2009). Correspondingly, the conclusion of the study suggested that it was important to develop a measuring scale to analyse the motivation of self-regulation for enhancing speaking skills in English as a foreign language (Uztosun, 2017). Further, the conclusion of the study showed that anxiety is specific to four

skills of the English language, specifically the communication skill of English as a second language in the Turkish background (Uztosun & Kök, 2024).

Bekele Sime, Gencha, and Olamo (2024) observed the paragraph writing skills of first-year college students at Pharma College Hawassa in the English language. The data analysis reflected that the writing experience of English language learners fronted many issues towards English as an Additional Language (Abongdia & Mpiti, 2015; Shoaib, Rasool, & Anwar, 2021). Furthermore, the data analysis reflected the perception of English language learners towards English language teaching classrooms to learn global English (Jindapitak, Teo, & Savski, 2022; Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Shaukat, 2021).

Fathi and Rahimi (2022) investigated the flipped classroom effect on writing skills such as fluency, accuracy, and complexity of English foreign language learners. In addition, some anxieties were associated with learning. For example, reading anxiety and classroom anxiety to learn a foreign language in a virtual flipped classroom increased reading and classroom anxiety (Gok, Bozoglan, & Bozoglan, 2021). Another study examined the development and achievement of English language learning among children who speak Spanish and English in the classroom (Jiménez-Castellanos, Blanchard, Atwill, & Jiménez-Silva, 2014). Similarly, the study outlines that creative writing in the English language was a very recent technique to translate different literary works (Fang, 2023). Likewise, the crux of the study revealed that English language classrooms and graphic novels might increase the skill of creative writing among students (Manning-Lewis, 2019; Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, Rasool, et al., 2021).

Samiullah and Haidar (2023) concluded that social factors like environment, culture, family, and educational institutions highly affect the English writing skills of the students in Pakistan. Further, the conclusion of the study showed that teaching science to English language learners within three themes and three classroom structures was very significant (Ardasheva, Norton-Meier, & Hand, 2015). Moreover, the study findings depicted that Iran created a liberating environment for learning English writing as an educational tool in English classrooms (Safari, 2021). Furthermore, the data analysis reflected the attitude of second language learners towards varying accents of the English language in the classroom (Sung, 2014). In the same way, the study findings asserted that native speakers of Hebrew had language anxiety in English writing and reading tasks (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002). A study found that social networking or social platforms are highly beneficial in improving young learners' speaking skills in the English language (Sun et al., 2017). There was a difference between English language speakers and English language learners in preschool (Luchtel, Hughes, Luze, Bruna, & Peterson, 2010). In addition, speaking English is difficult for learners, so there is a need to acknowledge the speaking difficulties and suggest remedies (Gan, 2013; Mariam, Anwar, Shoaib, & Rasool, 2021). The learning of non-native speakers of English could be improved through an online learning environment, and the medium of instruction must be English (Min, Wang, & Liu, 2019).

# The Data and Method

This study is based on the quantitative approach. It is worth mentioning that students enrolled in the BS (4 Years) program at the university were the population of this study. However, students of the different departments of the Faculty of Arts constitute the target population of this study. The element of the present study was the students of the Spring 2024 semester from the Faculty of Arts, University of Gujrat. A proportionate random sampling technique was used to draw the sample from the target population. The researchers calculated the sample size by using the sample size determination formula (Yamane, 1967);

$$n = N / 1 + N (e)^2$$

After the calculation of the sample, a sample of 238 students was selected, and only 176 students participated. The present study was quantitative, and a cross-sectional survey was used as a data collection technique. The rationale for opting for this technique has been based on the objectives, sample, and nature of the study. A well-structured questionnaire was administered and used to collect information. The questionnaire consisted of an attitudinal scale of (dis)agreement. The response of the students was scored as strongly agree to strongly disagree. Before the collection of the actual data, the measurement tool was tested on 30 randomly selected students from the target population. The data has



been analyzed and presented, as well as interpretations. The profile of the students presents frequency distribution. Chi-Square test and Independent Sample T-test have been employed to present results and conclusions.

# **Results and Findings**

This section provides the social demographic characteristics of the students. It consisted of the frequency distribution of the social demographic distribution, including gender, age, family occupation, family income, number of siblings, family type, and residential area. The details and interpretation of the data have been provided in the table.

**Table 1**Profile of the student

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Semester of the Student		
6th Semester	108	61.4
8th Semester	68	38.6
Total	176	100.0
Age of the Student (Years)		
20	34	19.3
21	59	33.5
22	53	30.1
23	23	13.1
24	07	04.0
Total	176	100.0
Family Income of the Student (PKR)		
Up to 30000	07	04.0
30001 – 40000	11	06.3
40001 – 50000	41	23.3
50001 – 60000	21	11.9
60001 & Above	96	54.5
Total	176	100.0

Table 1 points out that 61.4 per cent of the students belong to the 6<sup>th</sup> semester, and 38.6 per cent of the students belong to the 8<sup>th</sup> semester. It has been revealed that 33.5 per cent of the students were 21 years of age, including both males and females. Similarly, the data also analyzed that 04.0 per cent of the students were 24 years old. The study revealed that 54.5 per cent of the students have family income in the range of 60001 and above. Similarly, 04.0 per cent of the students have a family income of up to 30000.

**Table 2**Pearson chi-square test (dependent variable= English language learning skills)

S. No	Independent Variables	Chi-Square Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
I	Physical Infrastructure	1190.545°	882	.000
Ii	Teacher-student Interaction	1212.116 <sup>a</sup>	1127	.039
iii	Classroom Discussion	1249.138ª	1078	.000
Iv	Presentation and Assignment Activity	1322.925ª	931	.000
V	Study Support Material	1543.378ª	1029	.000

S. No	Independent Variables	Chi-Square Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)		
vi	Time Management	1341.571 <sup>a</sup>	931	.000		
vii	Reading Skill	1808.432 <sup>a</sup>	931	.000		
viii	Writing Skill	1249.251 <sup>a</sup>	833	.000		
ix	Speaking Skill	1408.693ª	882	.000		
X	Listening Skill	1558.198ª	980	.000		
xi	Teaching Spaces	3619.892ª	3087	.000		

Table 2 shows the Pearson Chi-Square test, which refers to English language learning skills as a dependent variable. The analysis presents that there is an association between physical infrastructure and English language learning skills among university students (value = 1190.545, df = 882, p = .000). Similarly, the study outlines that there is an association between teacher-student interaction and English language learning skills among university students (value = 1212.116, df = 1127, p = .039). In the similar fashion, the study findings asserted that there is an association between classroom discussion and English language learning skills among university students (value =1249.138, df = 1078, p = .000). Likewise, the study revealed that there is an association between presentation and assignment activity and English language learning skills among university students (value = 1322.925, df = 931, p = .000). Further, the data showed that there is an association between study support material and English language learning skills among university students (value = 1543.378, df = 1029, p = .000). Moreover, the study findings depicted that there is an association between time management and English language learning skills among university students (value = 1341.571, df = 931, p = .000). Furthermore, the data analysis reflected that there is an association between reading skill and English language learning skills among university students (value = 1808.432, df = 931, p = .000). Correspondingly, the conclusion of the data commissioned that there is an association between writing skill and English language learning skills among university students (value = 1249.251, df = 833, p = .000). Similarly, the study outlines that there is an association between speaking skill and English language learning skills among university students (value = 1408.693, df = 882, p = .000). The study findings depicted that there is an association between listening skill and English language learning skills among university students (value = 1558.198, df = 980, p = .000). However, the study reported that there is an association between teaching spaces and English language learning skills among university students (value = 3619.892, df = 3087, p = .000).

**Table 3**Chi-square test between teaching spaces and English language learning

Chi-Square Tests								
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)			
Pearson Chi-Square				, b				
Likelihood Ratio	540.514	980	1.000	, b				
Fisher's Exact Test	, b			, b				
Linear-by-Linear Association	108.621	1	.000	, b	b			
N of Valid Cases	176							

a. 1050 cells (100.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Table 3 presents the Chi-Square statistical test between teaching spaces and English language learning skills among university students. The calculated value of the Pearson Chi-Square statistical test indicates that there is an association (value= 540.514, df = 980, p = .000) between teaching spaces and English language learning skills among students at the tertiary level.

b. Cannot be computed because there is insufficient memory.



**Table 4** *Independent sample t-test (reference variable=gender)* 

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means					
Variables		F Sig.		Т	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differ.	Std. Error Differ.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Physical Infrastructure	Equal variances assumed	.696	.405	2.480	174	.014	1.840	.742	.375	3.304
	Equal variances are not assumed.			2.630	32.154	.013	1.840	.700	.415	3.265
Presentation Assignment Activity	Equal variances assumed	.117	.732	1.852	174	.066	1.601	.864	105	3.307
	Equal variances are not assumed.			2.011	32.80 4	.053	1.601	.796	019	3.221
Study Support Material	Equal variances assumed	.003	.954	2.867	174	.005	2.500	.872	.779	4.221
	Equal variances are not assumed.			3.173	33.36 9	.003	2.500	.788	.897	4.103

Table 4 describes the results of the independent sample T-test based on the gender of the students at the tertiary level. The analysis revealed that there is a remarkable difference in physical infrastructure among male and female students in the university. Similarly, the study outlines that there is a notable difference in presentation and assignment activity among male and female students in the university. Likewise, the study revealed that there is a significant difference in study support material among male and female students at the university.

### Conclusion

The study findings conclude that the teaching spaces have a favourable effect on English language learning skills among students at the tertiary level. The results of Chi-Square confirm an association between variables (teaching spaces and English language learning skills). The physical infrastructure, along with teacher-student interaction, has an association with the English language learning skills of the students. Similarly, the study also concludes that classroom discussion presentations and assignment activities enhance the confidence of the students and also result in improving speaking and reading skills among students at the tertiary level. Likewise, the analysis of the primary data also concludes that study support material and time management during the study have an association with listening and writing skills among students at the tertiary level. However, the results of primary data analysis revealed that there is a significant difference in physical infrastructure, presentation and assignment activity, and study support material among male and female students at the tertiary level in Pakistan.

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