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Cultural Factors in ELT: An Examination of Teaching Approaches and Their Impact on SLOs of Diverse Undergraduate Classrooms in Karachi

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the importance of cultural factors in English Language Teaching (ELT) and its impact on student learning outcomes of diverse undergraduate classrooms in Karachi. The objective is to assess how teaching strategies that reflect cultural implications on students' engagement and their proficiency in English language learning. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the researcher collected data through semi-structured individual interviews with eight English language teachers from Karachi. The researcher focused on observations about cultural reflections, particularly Mother Tongue Influences (MTIs) during teaching practices. The findings highlight the positive effects of MTIs during professional development programs, which affect teachers' learning competence while using various teaching strategies. Additionally, the teaching strategies such as task-based learning and collaborative activities were found to improve students' participation and language skills. Challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and lack of resources hinder the effective implementation of teaching methods and strategies due to cultural limitations. The study recommends Continuous Professional

Development (CPD) in view of cultural factors for language competence incorporating strategies to address the diverse teaching methods for diverse cultural classrooms fostering an inclusive classroom environment to enhance Students' Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and communicative competence.

Keywords: Teachers Professional Development, Pedagogical Strategies, Classroom Environment, Communicative Competence,

INTRODUCTION

Cultural factors in English Language Teaching (ELT) have garnered increasing attention in recent years as the need to accommodate diverse student populations in the classroom becomes more apparent. In multicultural multilingual learning environments, where students are of varied cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds, culturally responsive teaching as part of ELT would be very crucial (Kolachi et al, 2024). Nonetheless, the few studies on the topic fail to pay specific attention to the role of cultural responsiveness in ELT in the learning achievements of the students in the heterogeneous undergraduate classroom. Linguistically, the students speaking in the city are various, and they include Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto, and Punjabi, and several speak English with various degrees of proficiency (Sarwat et al, 2024; Shah, Ali, & Ahmad, 2024).

Such heterogeneous environment demands an educational strategy that would not just be sensitive to linguistic diversity, but also to the cultural values and attitudes that the students bring along with them in their classrooms. As Gay (2018) notes, culturally responsive teaching forms a pedagogical approach that includes focus on cultural backgrounds of students, their understanding and thus respect and exploitation of their backgrounds in the learning process to improve learning experiences and achievement in the educational process. It is the consideration of the cultural differences in teaching methodology and material used, in classroom interaction so that the students feel they are valued and understood. The cultural responsiveness may appear in a myriad of forms in ELT. Likewise, providing culturally appropriate content in the curriculum can make it more appealing and motivating in terms of relating to students (Magee & Willey, 2024). Moreover, recognizing the linguistic diversity of students can help a teacher introduce methods to facilitate learning the English language, including code switching, bilingual resources, and the possibility of an inclusive environment that will decrease the lingual barrier (Gandara & Contreras, 2017). Responsive cultural behaviour is also associated with fostering the acquisition of intercultural competences that are a vital attribute in contemporary and highly globalized society, a condition that has led to cross-cultural communication becoming a norm in the society (Klein, 1986).

The issue when using culturally responsive teaching practices in the Karachi classrooms is not that challenging. Common barriers include classrooms with too many students to comfortably sustain, limited resources, and failure to provide teachers in Pakistani institutions professional growth in the cultural competence field (Siddiqui, Asad, & Rind, 2024). Moreover, the findings of what happens in

reality when diverse students are educated might be unreflective of the actual educational policy, which poses another issue to applying culturally responsive methods to ELT (Baqai, 2022). In addition, a teacher might appreciate the value of cultural responsiveness but not necessarily be capable to incorporate it through training or experience into his/her lesson delivery process (Ashraf, Turner, & Laar, 2021; Williams, 2022).

Moreover, the increased prominence of English in the globalized economy shows how the students in Karachi will need to have a solid command of the English language. Nevertheless, more traditional approaches to ELT that tend to be based on rote learning and emphasis on grammar might not be effective enough to fit the varying needs of the learners (Abdullayeva, 2024; Malik, Amin, & Lodhi, 2024). The study seeks to move in the gap in the literature by examining how culturally responsive approaches in ELT help shape learning outcomes in ethnically diverse undergraduate classrooms in Karachi. This is intended to evaluate the impact of the application of teaching strategies that integrate cultural awareness on the level of interest and English abilities of students at the college level.

Related Literature Review

Teachers' Professional Development

The issue of professional development (PD) in teaching has turned out to be a field of concern in the sphere of education because an increasing number of researchers begin to realize the significance of professional development to enhance the teaching quality, improve the outcomes of students and their overall experience in the educational process (Ahmad, Rashid, & Ali, 2023). Professional development involves actions contributing to growing the knowledge, skills, and routines of teachers that will increase their efficacy in the classroom (Syzdykbayeva et al., 2025). There has been a lot of discussion on the effectiveness of PD programs and research reveals that the quality, content, and delivery of PD programs are important factors in influencing their effectiveness in influencing the teachers and students (Arifin, Suryaningsih, & Arifudin, 2024; Ahmad, Sewani, & Fatima, 2025).

The successful PD programs are the ones that can be characterized as long-term and content-based as well as having options of active involvement of the teacher and reflection (Sadeghi & Richards, 2021; Ahmad et al., 2023). The type of PD that seems to be most effective in bringing this change to the teachers relates to the content-based programs or the ones that focus on the same subjects that the teacher teaches and manages. Active learning, which includes teachers in hands-on activities like discussion, simulation, and classroom observation further, provides an improvement in the learning outcome as it enables teachers to approach new concepts in the real-life scenario (Ahmad, Sewani, & Channa, 2025). Individual workshops or sessions do not bring about numerous alterations when it comes to teaching practice or the student teaching method (Ahmad, Ali, & Sewani, 2021). The sustained PD (a months-long or years-long process) will allow the educators time to initiate and master new strategies and will allow them to bring permanent changes to their practice (Ali, et al., 2023). The group involvement (teachers in the same

school or in the same district undergoing PD) has been mentioned to facilitate the creation of the collaboration and community of practice that can encourage collective learning and the solving of issues (Melesse, & Belay, 2022; Ahmad, Noorani & Sewani, 2025).

Teacher reflection is also important in regard to professional development. It has been found out that PD programs, which allow teachers to critically reflect on the teaching method, deepen learning and result in more effective adoption of new strategies (Khan, Razak, & Kenayathulla, 2021). Using the reflective practices by teachers enables them to analyze the effectiveness of their teaching as well as correct their strategies and help them in formulating a better understanding of the student needs which in the end helps in enhancing the student achievement. The professional development of teachers plays a fundamental role in enhancements in the teaching practices and student outcomes (Dilshad, Shah, & Ahmad, 2023). PD needs to be content-based, sustained, and offer some reflection and active learning opportunities to work. The role of school leadership and school culture also plays a crucial in supporting the success of PD programs.

Pedagogical Strategies in English Language Teaching

The use of pedagogical approaches in English Language Teaching (ELT) is crucial when it comes to presetting the effectiveness of the language learning process, as well as encouraging the growth of communicative competence. The scenario of ELT has changed drastically over the last few years with new ways being tried out to promote language learning and also equip the students with armor to communicate in the real world (Alshuraiaan, & Alme fleh, 2023). The most popular pedagogical approaches include task-based language teaching (TBLT) also known as communicative language teaching (CLT), content-based instruction (CBI), and classroom use of technology. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is one of the powerful strategies of teaching the language in ELT. In this approach, the focus relies more on applying the tasks of everyday context with the students as a way to have them involved in using the language meaningfully and leads to development of linguistic and cognitive development among the students (Beckett, 2024; Ahmad, Sewani, & Ali, 2024). TBLT promotes active engagement and problem-solving skills, offering learners a chance to practice the target language in the situations reflecting real-life scenarios. It has been found that TBLT is known to enhance the fluency of language and promote independence among the learners since it has replaced the teaching of grammatical rules by focusing on contextual practice of the language (Umar, 2023; Zhang, 2023). An example is that in activities like role-plays, simulation and projects, students learn to think critically and interact, which is the mode of learning that brings out communicative competence (Alvarado, Solórzano, & Arroyo, 2023).

Communicative language teaching (CLT) has always been regarded as being one of the most powerful pedagogical developments in the field of ELT. Based on the assumption that language learning has to be a reflection of a real life communication context, CLT focuses on interaction in learning, meaning-based language learning

and acquisition of functional language skills. CLT promotes the use of authentic materials, including interviews, videos, and news articles, in a bid to expose students to authentic language (Alharbi, 2024). It is accuracy vs fluency and is aimed at equipping students to engage in conversation in a range of social situations. It has been revealed that CLT increases the motivation and confidence of students in using the language because it lays stress on the functional use of language like communication rather than rote memorization of grammar rules (Sevarakhon, 2024).

Another pedagogical approach is content-based instruction (CBI) which accommodates content of subjects to the teaching of language. Students acquire the target language in CBI by means of dealing with academic subjects, including history, science (Sariani, Yaningsih, & Rozi, 2022), or literature. CBI boosts acquisition of language because it exposes learners to interesting and intellectually stimulating content. This will enable students to learn language in a realistic manner that may result in the enhancement of acquisition of language skills and its applications. There is evidence that CBI stimulates more enthusiasm and involvement of students since CBI links language study with practical facts (Sharizan et al., 2024). Technology is finding its way into the ELT classroom as evidenced by the emergence of online learning platforms. Technologies, including language apps, interactive websites, and virtual classrooms, where language learning is enhanced, are individualized forms of language learning: they respond to each student in the unique needs that they pose (Procel et al., 2024; Aslam, Iqbal, & Ahmed, 2022). With the use of multimedia materials, technology can provide authentic language input so students can interact with a variety of accents and dialects as well as cultural experience. Moreover, it helps to cooperate and communicate between students beyond geographic barriers, develops their intercultural competence, global communication (Ali et al., 2023).

Classroom Environment

The design of the classroom is very critical in determining the process and outcome of learning especially in the language context. A positive environment where everyone is included and well organized prevents any disorder in the classroom that can affect student attendance, which is crucial to good language learning behavior (Arifin, Suryaningsih, & Arifudin, 2024). The focus on classroom environment in research and its role in student learning motivation has always been emphasized by researchers and educators institutionalizing different factors such as the physical environment, the emotional atmosphere, the teacher-student relations and classroom management interventions. Classroom physical layout is one of the important features of the classroom environment. Studies have indicated that layout of furniture and utilization of space is very influential in terms of student interaction and engagement. An example is that flexible seating arrangements that encourage group work and collaboration would help achieve better communication among the students and collaborative effort which is important in language teaching (Goldstein, 2024). Moreover, using multimedia and interactive materials in the physical classroom environment is known to facilitate the process of language acquisition since it offers real-life, rich-context input (Lu, Xie, & Liu, 2022; Akram, Ahmad, &

Sewani2024).

Another important issue that determines learning results is the emotional atmosphere that prevails in the classroom. The moment of having good emotional climate with students feeling respected, valued, and safe to express inside a classroom makes it easier to get a sense of belonging and feel inclined to engage in active communication. Experiences have shown that the establishment of such an emotionally constructive classroom environment is paramount to minimize anxiety especially in language learning where the learners may develop a fear of making errors or having a bad judgment in the perceptions of peers (Wang & Wang, 2024). Students develop a sense of confidence and motivation by the presence of teachers who are warm and welcoming and help develop a positive relationship and wellbeing with them, which can lead to improved language proficiency (Knaus, 2023; Akram, Fatima, & Ahmad, 2024).

The success of teaching is associated with the ability of classroom management strategies to bring most benefits in achieving an effective learning environment. Classroom management makes students stay focused on their work, interact in a civilized way and take part in the valuable learning processes. Studies have indicated that when behaviour in classrooms is controlled and students know what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and are intentionally engaged in learning, classrooms have a greater rate of academic and language outcomes (Li, et al., 2025; Akram, Khan, & Ahmad, 2022). The teachers in language classrooms have to juggle between the necessity of structure and flexibility, which requires leaving room to communicate with students as well as controlling the dynamics of the classroom (Clanton Harpine, 2024).

Communicative Competence

Communicative competence which is a concept proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) is the core component of language education since it requires an individual to be able to use language in a communicative situation in an effective and appropriate manner. The notion has itself grown and matured over the years and expanded the understanding beyond a focus on the linguistic proficiency only to include sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence each is vital in the actual use of language in the real world (Heggernes, 2021). It can be observed that the communicative competence development has been considered as the requisite developing the students towards meaningful interaction and ability to send and receive messages in various social and cultural contexts, work life and situations (Akram, Sewani, & Ahmad, 2024). The goal of teaching grammatical structures may be simplistic because the mission of English Language Teaching (ELT) is to have learners interact socially well, communicate coherently and comprehend the views of others.

The linguistic competence part of the communicative competence is one of the most important ones because it can be defined as knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. Linguistic competence forms the basis of communication but baseline studies reveal that linguistic competence is not enough

in communication (Hymes, 1972; Ali, Shah, & Ahmad, 2023). It is also important to adapt language to various conditions, or sociolinguistic competence, which should be as good because it is not sufficient to know the language. Sociolinguistic competence knows the social rules that are used in the use of language, such as being polite, register and culture (Canale & Swain, 1980; Ali et al., 2020). Research indicates that language learners might not be able to engage in substantive dialogue regardless of a good knowledge of grammar without knowledge of sociocultural conventions. Communicative competence also incorporates discourse competence that entails capability to generate and comprehend discourse either in written or oratory form. The studies have stressed that language learners should be in a position to present ideas in a logical manner, reveal coherence, and sensible reasoning by link information across sentences and paragraphs (Van Dijk, 2015). The most important thing is that the discourse competence assists learners to formulate and make sense of long extended conversations, narratives, and arguments, which are vital to academic and professional communication (Ali, Ahmad, & Rozina, 2022). Also, the cohesive devices like connectors and pronouns play a crucial role to make messages very clear and coherent, a factor that augurs well in the comprehension process (Nunan, 2003).

Through the ELT classrooms, the combination of these competencies is vital in building the communicative competence of learners. Teaching methods, including Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Content-Based Instruction (CBI) are more focused on the practical skills of communicative competence through giving the learners chances to learn language in real situations (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Material and Methods

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to explore the importance of cultural factors in English Language Teaching (ELT) and its impact on student learning outcomes of diverse undergraduate classrooms in Karachi. The research focused on understanding the perceptions of participants regarding the importance of cultural factors in ELT and its influence on student learning outcomes. In line with Creswell et al. (2014) and Walsham (1995), the study employed in-depth semi-structured individual interviews as the primary data collection method, which is widely considered the best approach for qualitative phenomenology research in nature. Maxwell (2013) emphasized the importance of using open-ended questions in interviews to guide and refine the data collection process, ensuring it aligns with the study's focus. These open-ended questions allowed the participants to share their views in detail, providing rich insights into their perceptions. Probes and prompts were used during the interviews to encourage more thorough responses and deeper reflection on the subject matter. The researcher carefully attended to their responses to ensure that each interview provided comprehensive insights. Following the interviews, the transcripts were shared with the participants to ensure the accuracy of the data and allow them to verify or amend the content if needed. According to Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012), Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), and

Creswell (2014), interviews in qualitative research typically last between 20 and 40 minutes. In this study, the interviews ranged from 20 to 35 minutes, which was adequate to delve into the teachers' understanding of cultural factors in ELT and its impact on students' learning outcomes. Fraenkel et al. (2012), Cohen et al. (2007), and Creswell (2014) suggest that a qualitative study sample should include between 1 and 20 participants, which was adhered to in this research. The study employed convenience sampling, a strategy recommended by Creswell & Creswell (2017) for qualitative research. A total of ten participants were selected, including two for a pilot study and eight for the main study. Permission was obtained from all participants through informed consent forms, which authorized the researcher to conduct interviews, record, and interpret the data.

Findings of the Study

The findings of the study have been described based on themes which were emerged in interviews:

Teachers Professional Development

Cultural factors are the area where English Language Teaching (ELT) educators need professional development. Cultural and language diversity poses special problems to the teachers who have to contend with different modes of showing, different ways of learning, and cultural requirements. The cultural responsiveness professional development programs give teachers the resources to identify and meet these various needs and are able to adjust their teaching to more inclusive and respectful learning environments. Teachers should be able to involve culturally relevant materials and examples to make lessons more interesting to students contributing to their increased motivation and work. Moreover, these programs make the educators aware of the influence of cultural diversity on language acquisition and communication, and therefore, the educators can contribute to language acquisition easier. According to Participant 4, the viewpoint is as follows:

“The issue of cultural values and their impact on learning style has been understood to a great extent through professional development. In particular, at the level of my students, there are students who have grown up in a society where respect towards authority is a key aspect, thus I have had to modify my approach to teaching in order to have a more respectful and cooperative atmosphere. I am also the one who utilizes culturally diverse materials and that enables students to identify themselves with what they are being taught and in addition, being able to share their experiences”.

Participant 8 discussed in the following ways:

“By attending professional development sessions, I now understand that I need to respect the individual developmental requirements when it comes to students of diverse cultures. As an illustration, the students belonging to various regions might feel more or less comfortable to express themselves using English. Therefore, I give more chances to these students to train in small-size groups, which will build less anxiety and enhance their confidence before performing in front of

the entire group”.

Pedagogical Strategies

Essential pedagogical methods play a crucial role in effective teaching and learning in the culturally, linguistically and socially diverse classrooms, in which students present in the class possess different cultural, lingual and social backgrounds. These strategies make teachers allow these different styles, preferences, and proficiency levels among a learner, which makes the environment very inclusive and interesting. Instructional methods, e.g., collaborative learning, task-oriented instruction, and differentiated instructions, support engagement, thinking, and self-assurance in language use. The strategies would achieve this by including real life experiences of the students into the lessons as well as the desire to learn more about the content. When students are valued through culture responsive teaching practices we see increased motivation and engagement in the student. Participant 3 told in the following words:

“The lesson I have learned is that I should modify my teaching methodology by using examples, and scenarios pertaining to the various cultural backgrounds of my students. As an example, I employ local culturally related references in my teaching which can be identified by my students. This does not only make them comprehend the material easier but also makes them feel that their culture is appreciated in the classroom. I also ensure that I do not use culturally specific idioms or references that can be confusing also”.

Participant no 6 replied:

“Knowing that my students are from different cultural backgrounds, I attempt to utilize multiple resources in the classroom such as video clips, written articles and stories from a variety of cultures. This shows the students' language in various ways. It does not only help them hold the material but life faced more than this and retain that their culture reflects in the classroom”.

Classroom Environment

The classroom setting plays an important role in the experiences of the students, particularly those that take place in culturally diverse classes. Inclusion in a positive environment instills a spirit of safety and belonging and therefore in addition to other students not feeling left out, they all feel respected and valued regardless of their culture. Students who feel comfortable have a higher chance of participating in the discussion, raising questions, and taking part in the activities, and it will result in the better results. Cultural diversity with learning and appreciation as a norm of the framework cultivates mutual understanding, thus, providing them with better insight on different perspective and helps the students embrace the other perspectives and create a mutual respect between them. Physical and emotional support by teachers will enhance confidence of students, encourage them to improve their performance, and provide efficient methods of interaction which can be used by the students to develop in academic and personal life. Finally, the inclusion and productive learning process is determined by a positive classroom environment. Participant 5 stated this as under:

“My teaching philosophy employs diversity in teaching to ensure that the teaching accommodates every student in a manner that best affects them. As an illustration, I employ multimedia, practical projects and narration, which enables the learners of various backgrounds to reach the material in various ways. It facilitates a situation of bringing all people to succeed irrespective of what they had previously known or grew up with”.

Participant 8 said in the following ways:

“I pay attention to the balanced structure classroom in which no one voice will be disregarded. I also ensure that I encourage students who are quiet, particularly those ones whose culture dictates that one might not be allowed to speak in a group. I establish small-group learning dynamics and employ pair work in case it is possible, as students can be less shy and participate in conversations. This is done to enable them to grow their confidence over time in a non-threatening setting”.

Communicative Competence

The most important component of language learning is the communicative competence as it does not deal only with grammar and vocabulary but rather with the effectiveness of using language in various socially accommodating situations. When teaching in diverse classrooms, it is imperative to develop communicative competence that would allow learners to manage variations of diverse cultural standards and norms in communicating. It assists students not only in conveying their thoughts, but it also makes them correctly adapt to different situations and respond to them accordingly. This competence does encompass the linguistic competence but also pragmatic competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence that will enable students to hold meaningful conversations, develop good relationships as well as collaborate with other students of foreign backgrounds. Describing communicative competence, in the context of the English Language Teaching (ELT), can offer a student the means to learn to speak and communicate in an effective, respectful manner in both formal and informal situations, and thus, gain a better command of the language.

Participant 1 discussed in the following ways:

“Among the challenges that I encounter is the fact that students with diverse cultural backgrounds are usually of different natures as to the ease with which they speak in English. An instance would be a few students of a more conservative culture, who would not be keen on raising their voices during classroom discussions. In order to overcome this I am adopting a supportive environment where I will ensure that smaller group activities and pair work are encouraged and students are allowed to practice speaking in a less threatening environment”.

Respondent no 7 discussed in the following:

“One of the challenges that I frequently come across concerns the fact that various students of diverse cultures may not be able to keep up with speed or accent of English speakers, and may therefore feel unable to participate actively in conversations. To counter this situation, I ensure that I moderate my voice when I

need to and the audio used has a number of accents and that the students also have an opportunity to listen to a variety of speakers of English through videos or other recordings in order to overcome listening comprehension barriers”.

Suggestions to Improve Students' Learning Outcomes

The gains in learning outcome are raising the academic performance of students and making them successful in future. In multicultural classrooms, students have varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds, which is why it is necessary to implement strategies that would address the needs of each of the learners specifically. Culturally relevant examples and materials can make content more relevant, interesting and easy to comprehend. Individual learning can also be encouraged since the students come to communicate and interact with the group given the group learning activities or group discussion with peers; the students are able to learn through varied points of view. Moreover, it is important to offer individual assistance, e.g., additional tutoring hours or opinion feedback to those students who can also experience some difficulties related to cultural diversity or language barrier. Yet another aspect that teachers should consider is to develop a growth mindset, as students should get encouraged to accept the challenges and learn out of their failures. Respondent no 4 replied:

“The second method of enhancing learning is enabling the student to use his background culture in learning English. The negotiability in activities that enable students to talk about themselves, their experiences and traditions in English has the capacity to strengthen the sense of identity as well as their linguistic abilities. Students with increased confidence and incentive to learn can be achieved when English is used to elicit the information which students already possess regarding their culture”.

Participant no 2 highlighted:

“In my opinion, it is vital to expand the possibility of peer communications. By working jointly on projects or discussing groups, the students with diverse cultural background will be able to learn the others points of view. This does not only improve their knowledge of language; it also expands their knowledge about various cultures. One should establish a classroom environment where students will be encouraged to share their cultural backgrounds and allow their peers to learn”.

DISCUSSION

The idea of cultural factors in English Language Teaching (ELT) has become more and more popular especially in multicultural and multilingual scenarios. The inclusivity of students of different linguistic, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds creates diversity in the educational environment of the city; that is why integrating culturally responsive teaching forms becomes especially important.

Gay (2018) has identified culturally responsive teaching (CRT) as an instruction strategy that strives to include the cultural heritage of students in teaching strategies. Inclusion in ELT can be of particular value in enhancing the engagement of the students, their motivation, and academic achievements.

According to research held in various regions of the world, including New York and London, this type of approach can allow marginalized students to have a robust language level and self-esteem (Williams, 2022; Abdullayeva, 2024)? Therefore, it is postulated that there would be similar payoffs in Karachi, as the city has a multicultural composition, and the students speak many different languages, which include Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto, and Punjabi but also English (Cruz et al., 2020; Haider, Ahmad & Ali, 2024).

The findings of the study underline the importance of using culturally relevant materials and taking into consideration the linguistic diversity in order to increase engagement and language proficiency. As an illustration, Participant 4 described how creating their own professional development (PD) programs gave them the opportunity to see how cultural values impact learning styles and even change their teaching methods accordingly. This culturally relevant content does not only render learning more relatable but it also draws the students into the learning process (Davis, 2016; Jabeen, Ali & Ahmad, 2023). Such a fit in the background of cultural background with classroom materials would create a feeling of belonging, and it is essential that the students feel that they are valuable and inspired (Schachner et al., 2019).

Although the advantages of cultural factors teaching are obvious, the research refers to multiple issues of its implementation as well. The main challenge hindering progress is the insufficient teacher training in cultural competence because teachers in Karachi deal with both the challenges of the system (such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of resources, and professional development) (Siddiqui, 2021; Khoso, Oad & Ahmad, 2023). Moreover, the discrepancies in educational policies and real life of the multifaceted student body contribute to this problem.

In addition, this study has emphasized that the old practices of ELT in Karachi which commonly address the subject of rote learning and grammar exercises might not be adequate to fulfill the requirements of the culturally diverse classrooms. The importance of this cannot be lost on the fact that as the world is becoming increasingly globalized, proficiency in the English language is becoming increasingly important (Malik, Amin, & Lodhi, 2024; Ahmad, Mankash, & Sewani, 2024). These results indicate that decision-making by teachers who engage a more interactive and student-focused method, including task-based language teaching (TBLT) and communicative language teaching (CLT), will be able to develop a more inclusive learning environment. According to Nunan (2003) and Richards and Rodgers (2014), these approaches enable students to apply the language to real-life situations thereby making it possible to develop communicative competence (Naeem, Ali, & Ahmed, 2022).

The other important factor that has been brought out in the study is how the classroom environment helps to support cultural responsiveness. The results imply that an inclusive classroom environment, which is positive and with recognition and celebration of diversity including cultural diversity, can be very constructive in improving the language learning experiences of the students (Arifin, Suryaningsih, &

Arifudin, 2024; Ahmad, Noorani, & Ali, 2024). In one instance, Participant 5 spoke of how the use of multimedia and practical learning should be used in order to ensure that the students of a different cultural background found reliability in the information provided (Oad et al., 2024; Pirzada, Tabassum & Ahmad, 2024).

On the same notes, communicative competence that is more than just a grammatical knowledge forms part of the importance of ELT as it is highlighted in this paper. As Swain, and Canale (1982) suggested, communicative competence is comprised of not only linguistic but also sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence. The paper reveals that Karachi education teachers are now opening to understand the value of instilling these abilities in their students. According to the participants, they promote small group works and peer work to help students develop confidence, especially those belonging to more reserved cultures. The method corresponds to the study conducted by Goh and Burns (2012) that reports that student interactive discourse and communicative activity are the central factors to developing proficiency. Participant 7 observed that students with English accents have difficulty to comprehend foreign people with English accents, an aspect, which may impact negatively on their performance during classroom discussions. Such a challenge points at a desire to have more thorough training in intercultural communication, counseling and language variation (Thorne & Payne, 2005; Ahmad, Sewani, & Khoso, 2024).

Another observation in the study relates to the issue of professional development (PD) that will help to prepare the teachers with the skills and techniques to implement culturally responsive teaching. The respondents to this study highlighted the beneficial contribution of the PD programs when it comes to their skills in interacting with culturally diverse classes. It echoes the views of Borko, Jacobs, & Koellner (2010) who state that specific teaching practices-oriented PD programs with the possibility to actively explore new disciplines by the teachers are the crucial aspects of the enhancement of the classroom outcomes. The implementation of culturally responsive pedagogies in the multicultural undergraduate classrooms of Karachi has ample ways of enhancing the engagement activities and language mastery of the students (Phulpoto, Oad, & Imran, 2024; Thomas, Khan, & Ahmad, 2022).

CONCLUSION

In this study focused on cultural factors in English Language Teaching (ELT), the conclusion presents why it is important to use teaching methods that are responsive towards cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds of students, especially in the culturally diverse classrooms in Karachi. Considering that Karachi is a multicultural and multilingual city, special consideration of culturally responsive teaching methods in the ELT process proves to be of paramount importance in enhancing the end results with respect to students. Taking into account the backgrounds of students the teachers will be able to design an inclusive classroom atmosphere that promotes participation, inspiration, and appropriate education.

Task-based language teaching, communicative language teaching and content-based instruction are also key pedagogical strategies that can be instrumental in the development of a student in terms of language skills and communicative competence. Such techniques promote practical communication, intercultural sensitivity, and learning together, all of which leads to enhancing the language skills of students.

The environment of a classroom that helps students to feel appreciated and respected is equally important to better learning. Being informed about the emotional and physical needs of their students, teachers can establish the atmosphere, which stimulates risk-taking, communication with peers, and the openness, which are the prerequisites to developing communicative competence. This feeling of security results in more participation and higher educational attainments. The professional development of cultural responsiveness is also important as such qualification provides the teacher with the skill needed to enact the strategies. Professionally trained teachers in cultural awareness and inclusion pedagogy have a better chance to address individual needs of students and to establish more inclusive (in nature), supporting, and efficient ELT environment. The study emphasizes that responsiveness to culture in ELT has a potential of impacting positively on the performance of students by dealing with the challenges which are raised by diverse classrooms.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance English Language Teaching (ELT) outcomes, with a focus on cultural responsiveness:

- Continuous professional development programs should be implemented to enhance teachers' cultural responsiveness, enabling them to adapt their methods to diverse cultural needs. Such training helps educators understand the impact of cultural diversity on learning styles and equips them with strategies to create inclusive and engaging classroom environments.
- Teachers should integrate culturally diverse examples and scenarios into lessons to make the content more relatable to students from various cultural backgrounds, thereby fostering a deeper connection with the material and enhancing student engagement.
- It is essential to cultivate a classroom environment where all students feel respected, valued, and safe to express themselves. Teachers should encourage collaboration, particularly for students from cultures where speaking up in class is uncommon, through small group discussions or pair works to build their confidence.
- Teaching should focus not only on linguistic skills but also on developing sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies. This prepares students to use English effectively in real-life contexts, boosting their confidence and communication skills.
- Increasing opportunities for peer interactions, such as group discussions or

collaborative projects, allows students from diverse cultural backgrounds to learn from each other, improving language skills and promoting cross-cultural understanding and empathy.

- Integrating technology and multimedia resources into the classroom can enhance language learning by providing authentic language input and varied learning experiences. Digital tools also cater to individual learning needs, making language acquisition more accessible and engaging.
- In addition to afore discussed cultural factors, the future study on the subject may include Mother Tongue Influences (MTIs) and Lack of Phonological Awareness (LPA) among the diverse undergraduate classrooms for better Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

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