A Study of the Perception of Teachers Regarding Suitable Method of Teaching English at Secondary Level

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Abstract

The aim of the study was to investigate the perception of the teachers regarding use of suitable method of teaching English at secondary level. The sample was consisted of male and female schools of Layyah district. By using cluster sampling technique, a sample of one hundred and twenty seven teachers was selected. The questionnaire was administered personally by the researchers. To reach certain conclusion, arithmetic mean, percentage and z-test were calculated to analyze the perception of teachers regarding suitable teaching method. Data were analyzed statement-wise, percentage-wise and mean performance-wise.

Key Words: Perceptions of Teacher, Teaching Methods, Secondary Level

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Introduction

English language teaching has been and still is a great topic of discussion among policy makers, language teachers and psychologists in Pakistan. In this regard Norton (2000) cited by Powell (2005, p. 41), "Language learners bring with them an imagined community in which they want to invest part of their identity. Ability to learn and willingness to use a language may depend on what kind of community they associate with it."

In the present scene of the world, English is not the language of the English. It is now spoken and understood throughout the world. As in the words of Brumfit and Christopher (2000, p.131), "Barriers of race, color and creed are no hindrance to the continuing spread of the use of English from its position 400 years ago as a dialect, little known beyond the Southern counties of England; English has grown to its present status as the major world language."

In Pakistan the learners of English are increasing enormously. There is a large number of institutions those provide better facilities in the process of teaching and learning English. The knowledge of English is essential as stated by Shahid (2000, p: 9), "Whatever the future of English may be in Pakistan, it will maintain the immense usefulness as a library language."

The failure rates in English in Pakistan at every level are very alarming. At all levels many students give up their studies because of English. As Gillani (2004, p: 5) pointed out towards this situation, "The high failure rates at matriculation, intermediate and degree level show that our students fail to achieve desired objectives as well as the desired level of proficiency in English."

In teaching learning process, teaching methodology plays a key role. There are different teaching methods for teaching different subjects. According to the nature of a language different teaching methods and approaches are used to teach about language and to clarify the concept. In the words of Malik (2005, p.11), following are the important methods as well as the approaches of teaching English.

- a. Direct Method
- b. Grammar Translation Method
- c. Audio-lingual Method
- d. Humanistic Approach
- e. Structural Method
- f. Reading Method
- g. Eclectic Approach

The Direct Method is a method of teaching English, in English, without the use of mother tongue. In Grammar Translation Method, English classes are taught by giving the translation equivalents of the target language in mother tongue. Audio-lingual Method stresses on drill and practice. Humanistic Approach gives importance to activity based learning and it focuses on communication skills. Structural Method views language as role acquisition and not habit formation. Reading Method concentrates on only reading. Natural Approach appreciates speaking as a natural way to learn a language. Eclectic Approach is a combination of various methods, no one particular method is followed.

Every method or approach works in some specific learning environment. The use of any new method is, in fact, not the rejection of the old one. From the list mentioned above, any method can be selected according to the nature of the topic.

Furthermore, selection of any particular teaching method depends upon many factors such as the age and sociolinguistic background of the learners, classroom environment, teachers' competencies, and availability of the audiovisual aids and so on. Therefore the language teachers should have a clear concept and knowledge about the teaching method.

In the past Grammar Translation Method was the dominant figure in the domain of language teaching/learning. As stated by Sharma (2005, p: 242), "Towards the end of the nineteenth century 'Grammar-cum translation method' had become the popular method of teaching of foreign language. Forger Ascham and William Bath in the sixteenth century, and Comenius and John Locke in the seventeenth century advocated the use of translation as means to teach Latin which by the time had become a dead language. Thus from the formal teaching of Latin and Greek, till the beginning of twentieth century, 'Grammar-cum translation method' was developed was in vogue throughout the world to teach a foreign language."

The Direct Method works on the way of learning second language according to the mother tongue. A child learns the mother tongue without using any other language.

Binod (2004) explains the direct method, according to Webster's New International Dictionary, "Direct Method is a method of teaching a foreign language, especially a modern language through conversation, discussion and reading in the language itself without use of the pupil's language, without translation and without the study of formal grammar. The first words are taught by pointing to objects or pictures or by performing actions (p.180)."

Audio Lingual Method also known as 'Army Method' was originated 1940's. Timurei (1999, P.59) describes its origination, "When the World War II broke out the US began feeling the need for Americans to become orally proficient in the languages both of the allies and the enemies. The US military provided them (language institutions) with funding for a special, intensive language course that focused on the aural oral skill; these courses came to be known as the 'Army Method'. Later in 1950's this Army method came to be known as the Audio-lingual Method."

The perceptions of the teachers play a vital role in the teaching learning process. What they perceive, gives rise to their concepts, knowledge and beliefs and these concepts direct them in their teaching methods. Perception is defined variously by different scholars as Chee (2002, p. 2) has stated, "The reception of stimuli that can be influenced by an individual's mental awareness, past experience, knowledge, motivation and social interactions. The perceptions of an individual eventually give rise to an individual's attitudes." Millikan (2004, p.113) also states that: "Perception is a way of understanding natural signs or, better of translating natural signs into intentional signs."

In the educational system of Pakistan secondary stage has dual importance. This stage is a foundation for the higher education as well as the stage of termination. Up to the secondary level our educational system is divided into two mediums of instruction. In one category are the ordinary government schools which are Urdu medium and on the other hand are private schools which are English medium. In government schools teachers use grammar translation method while in private schools direct method is used. When students enter in higher secondary level the medium is same, which is English for science students and urdu medium for arts students.

Results show that the majority of the students at secondary level fail generally in the subject of English. In addition to other factors of teaching / learning process, teaching methodology is also of a great importance. Teachers use that method which they perceive best to teach for a specific subject. So keeping in view the above situation the present study was designed to analyze the perceptions of school teachers about the teaching methods of English at secondary level. The present study was to explore the perception of English teachers regarding suitable method of teaching English at secondary level.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

a. To find the perception of teachers about suitable method of teaching English.

b. To compare the difference of perceptions between male and female teachers about the methods of teaching English at secondary level.

c. To compare the difference of perceptions between high and low qualified teachers.

d. To know about the most popular teaching method of English.

e. To suggest some measures to improve the methodology of English teaching.

Research Questions

a. Do government secondary school teachers have clear perception about suitable method of teaching English?

b. Is there any difference of perception among male and female teachers of Government secondary school teachers?

c. Is there any difference of perceptions between high and low qualified teachers?

d. Is there any difference of perceptions between high and low qualified teachers?

e. Which is the most preferred method of English?

f. Do suggest some measures to improve the methodology of English teaching?

Significance of the Study

The present study was found to be significant as no such study has yet been conducted so for at the Department of Education, This study may be useful for the teachers to adopt the best method of teaching English at secondary level. The students of secondary level will be benefited indirectly to learn English in a better way by the improvement of teaching method. This study will also be helpful in determining the current teaching practices in the subject of English in educational institutions.

Method

The study has been delimited to only Southern Punjab; The Government secondary schools of Southern Punjab; The teachers who teach English at secondary level; and District Layyah. All the teachers who teach English at secondary level in government schools of district Layyah were taken as population.The sample was comprised of Government Secondary School English teachers; they were selected by using cluster sampling technique and table of random numbers used to select the clusters according to the requirement of the research work. The details of the sample were as under:

a. 30 secondary schools for boys out of 57 and 13 secondary schools for girls out of 39 were selected from the list issued by District Education Officer (SE).

b. In view of the availability and proportion of the respondents 83 male and 44 female teachers were selected.

c. The total sample comprised 127 teachers which was the 40% of the total population.

As the study was descriptive in nature, so survey method was adopted and in this regard a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire comprised twenty seven (23) restricted response items and one (1) open-ended item. All the twenty seven (23) restricted response items were developed on the basis of five point rating scale, to analyze the perception of teachers regarding teaching methods. The open-ended item was designed to collect teachers' opinion about best/ suitable teaching method of English. The tool was validated by showing it to the senior faculty who was expert in developing questionnaire.

The researcher himself went to different schools and distributed questionnaires. The ratio of returning questionnaires was 100%. The data were analyzed by using statistical technique of arithmetic mean, percentage and CR (z) test.

Results

The results were interpreted by using percentage of the respondents on the statements. The following statements are given below:

Table 1

Knowledge of Teaching Methods of English

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
I have the knowledge of various teaching methods of English.	Strongly Agree	20	16%	
	Agree	99	78%	4.08
	Undecided	07	5%	
	Disagree	00	0%	
	Strongly Disagree	01	1%	

Table 1 shows that 94% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 1% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 5% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows that the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement. The majority of teachers were in favour of possessing knowledge of various methods.

Table 2

Suitability of ALM for Younger Children

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
ALM is suitable for younger children only.	Strongly Agree	77	61%	
	Agree	39	31%	
	Undecided	04	3%	4.45
	Disagree	05	4%	
	Strongly Disagree	02	1%	

Table 2 shows that 92% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 5% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 3% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows that the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement. The majority of the teachers were in the favour that ALM is suitable for young children only.

Table 3

D.M. and Improvement of Pronunciation

Statement	Levels	F	%	Mean
Direct method (DM) of teaching English improves the pronunciation of the students.	Strongly Agree	22	17%	
	Agree	95	75%	
	Undecided	04	3%	4.05
	Disagree	06	5%	
	Strongly Disagree	00	0%	

Table 3 shows that 92% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 5% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 3% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher

level of agreement of teachers on the statement that direct method of teaching English improves the pronunciation of the students.

Table 4

Audio Lingual Method (ALM) and Spoken Fluency

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
ALM develops fluency in speaking the target language.	Strongly Agree	23	18%	
	Agree	90	71%	
	Undecided	07	5%	4.02
	Disagree	07	6%	
	Strongly Disagree	00	0%	

Table 4 shows that 89% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 6% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 5% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher level of magnitude of agreement of teachers on the statement that ALM develops fluency in speaking the target language.

Table 5

Abstract Ideas and GTM

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
Abstract ideas can easily be taught by using Grammar Translation Method (GTM).	Strongly Agree	70	55%	
	Agree	47	37%	
	Undecided	03	2%	4.40
	Disagree	05	4%	
	Strongly Disagree	02	2%	

Table 5 shows that 92% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 6% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 2% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that abstract ideas can easily be taught by using GTM.

Table 6

DM and Activeness of Students

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
Students remain active in direct method of teaching English.	Strongly Agree	24	19%	
	Agree	84	66%	
	Undecided	08	6%	3.94
	Disagree	10	8%	
	Strongly Disagree	01	1%	

Table 6 shows that 85% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 9 % of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 6% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that students remain active in direct method of teaching English.

Table 7

ALM and Cramming

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
ALM develops the habit of cramming without understanding.	Strongly Agree	72	57%	
	Agree	34	27%	
	Undecided	12	9%	4.32
	Disagree	08	6%	
	Strongly Disagree	01	1%	

Table 7 shows that 84% of the teachers were in favour of the statemen. On the other hand only7 % of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 9% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that ALM develops the habit of cramming without understanding.

Table 8

Explanation of Concepts by DM

Statement	Levels	f	%age	Mean score
All the concepts can easily be explained to the students by using DM.	Strongly Agree	14	11%	
	Agree	50	39%	
	Undecided	24	19%	3.29
	Disagree	37	29%	
	Strongly Disagree	02	2%	

Table 8 shows that 50% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand 31% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 19% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that all the concepts can easily be explained to the students by using DM.

Table 9
GTM an Easy Method

Statement	Levels	F	%age	Mean score
GTM is easy to use.	Strongly Agree	50	39%	
	Agree	68	54%	
	Undecided	05	4%	4.28
	Disagree	03	2%	
	Strongly Disagree	01	1%	

Table 9 shows that 93% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 3 % of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 4% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that GTM is easy to use.

Table 10
DM and Spoken Fluency

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
DM develops spoken fluency.	Strongly Agree	29	23%	
	Agree	95	75%	
	Undecided	01	1%	4.19
	Disagree	02	1%	
	Strongly Disagree	00	0%	

Table 10 shows that 98% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 1 % of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while only 1% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that DM develops spoken fluency.

Table 11
GTM-Most Commonly Used Method in Pakistan

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
GTM is the most commonly used method at secondary level in Pakistan.	Strongly Agree	60	47%	
	Agree	53	42%	
	Undecided	10	8%	4.33
	Disagree	04	3%	
	Strongly Disagree	00	0%	

Table 11 shows that 89% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 3 % of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 8% of the teachers were undecided about the statement. This shows the higher

level of agreement of teachers on the statement that GTM is the most commonly used method at secondary level in Pakistan.

Table 12
 ALM is Teacher Directed

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
ALM is teacher directed method.	Strongly Agree	22	17%	3.88
	Agree	73	58%	
	Undecided	27	21%	
	Disagree	05	4%	
	Strongly Disagree	00	0%	

        Table 12 shows that 75% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 4 % of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 21% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that ALM is teacher directed method.

Table 13
 Accuracy is Emphasized in GTM

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
Accuracy is emphasized in GTM	Strongly Agree	19	15%	4.02
	Agree	97	76%	
	Undecided	07	6%	
	Disagree	03	2%	
	Strongly Disagree	01	1%	

        Table 13 shows that 91% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 3% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 6% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that accuracy is emphasized in GTM.

Table 14
GTM Facilitates Correct Writing

Statement	Levels	F	%	Mean
GTM facilitates correct writing in English.	Strongly Agree	26	20%	4.03
	Agree	85	67%	
	Undecided	10	8%	
	Disagree	06	5%	
	Strongly Disagree	00	0%	

Table 14 shows that 87% of the teachers were in the favour of the statement. On the other hand only 5% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 8% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that GTM facilitates correct writing in English.

Table 15
Our Social Environment and GTM

Statement	Levels	F	%	Mean
Our social environment is supportive for GTM.	Strongly Agree	73	58%	
	Agree	39	31%	
	Undecided	03	2%	4.34
	Disagree	09	7%	
	Strongly Disagree	03	2%	

Table 15 shows that 89% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 9% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 2% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. Mean score was 4.34(greater than 3.00), which shows the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that our social environment is supportive for GTM.

Table 16
Large Classes and GTM

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
GTM is suitable for large classes.	Strongly Agree	69	54%	
	Agree	43	34%	
	Undecided	4	3%	4.34
	Disagree	11	9%	
	Strongly Disagree	00	0%	

Table 16 shows that 88% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 9% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 3% 0f the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that GTM is suitable for large classes.

Table 17
Abstract Concepts and ALM

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
	Strongly Agree	12	9%	
Translation of abstract concepts is essential in ALM.	Agree	73	58%	
	Undecided	30	24%	3.66
	Disagree	12	9%	
	Strongly Disagree	00	0%	

Table 17 shows that 85% of the teachers were in favour of statement. On the other hand only 9% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 24% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows the higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that translation of abstract concepts is essential in ALM.

Table 18
Teachers' Training and DM

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
	Strongly Agree	08	6%	
Teachers are trained to use direct method of teaching English.	Agree	66	52%	3.33
	Undecided	16	13%	
	Disagree	34	27%	
	Strongly Disagree	03	2%	

Table 18 shows that 58% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 13% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while 13% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows a bit higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that Teachers are trained to use direct method of teaching English.

Table 19
DM and Comprehension of the Students

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
	Strongly Agree	32	25%	
Direct method of teaching English improves comprehension of the students.	Agree	81	64%	
	Undecided	04	3%	4.06
	Disagree	10	8%	
	Strongly Disagree	00	0%	

Table 19 shows that 89% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 8% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 3% of the teachers were undecided about the statement. This shows higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that Direct method of teaching English improves comprehension of the students.

Table 20
GTM-Time Saving Method

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
GTM is time saving.	Strongly Agree	38	30%	
	Agree	72	57%	
	Undecided	07	5%	4.09
	Disagree	10	8%	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0%	

Table 20 shows that 87% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 8% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 5% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement GTM is time saving.

Table 21
Easy and Interesting Teaching by DM

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
Teaching English through direct method is easy and interesting.	Strongly Agree	22	17%	
	Agree	84	66%	
	Undecided	16	13%	3.96
	Disagree	04	3%	
	Strongly Disagree	1	1%	

Table 21 shows that 83% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 4% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 13% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that Teaching English through direct method is easy and interesting.

Table 22
Examination at Secondary Level and GTM

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
Our examination system at secondary level demands GTM.	Strongly Agree	66	52%	
	Agree	56	44%	
	Undecided	03	2%	4.46
	Disagree	02	2%	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0%	

Table 22 shows that 96% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 2% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 2% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that our examination system at secondary level demands GTM.

Table 23
Eclectic Approach and Teaching of English

Statement	Levels	f	%	Mean
Eclectic approach is the best to teach English at secondary level.	Strongly Agree	40	32%	
	Agree	59	46%	
	Undecided	18	1 4%	4.02
	Disagree	10	8 %	
	Strongly Disagree	0	0%	

Table 23 shows that 78% of the teachers were in favour of the statement. On the other hand only 8% of the teachers showed disagreement on the statement, while the 14% of the teachers were un-decided about the statement. This shows higher level of agreement of teachers on the statement that Eclectic approach is the best to teach English at secondary level.

Percentage-Wise Analysis

Table 24
Percentage-Wise Analysis of the Teachers about Teaching Methods

% of the teachers who showed positive perception towards GTM	% of the teachers who showed positive perception towards DM	% of the teachers who showed positive perception towards ALM	% of the teachers who showed positive perception towards Eclectic Approach
37%	28%	3%	32%

Table 24 shows the percentage-wise analysis of the perception of teachers about suitable teaching method of English which taken from respondents' responses on the

questions asked through questionnaire. According to the table, 37% of teachers were in favour of GTM. 28% teachers showed agreement about DM. 3% were in favour of ALM, and 32% of teachers were in favour of Eclectic Approach. The detail of percentages is also shown graphically which is given below.
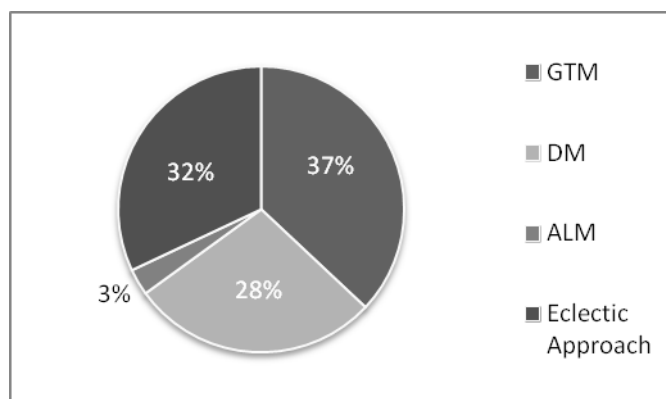

Table 25

Comparison of the Perception of Teachers on the Basis of Qualifications

Qualification	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	C.V(z)
B.A/B.Sc. /B.Ed.	29	103.14	6.08	
M.A/MSc. /M.Ed.	98	102.44	6.70	0.53

Table 25 indicates that calculated value (0.53) is less than critical value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance, it means that the difference between the perception of high qualified and low qualified teachers is statistically insignificant. However the difference of mean indicates the better perception of low qualified teachers than the high qualified teachers.

Table 26

Comparison of the Perception of Male and Female Teachers

Sex	N	$\bar{X}$	S.D	C.V(z)
Female	44	104.27	4.18	
Male	83	101.51	7.58	2.64

Table 26 indicates that calculated value (2.64) is greater than the table value (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. It means that the difference between the perception of male and female teachers is statistically significant. Moreover the difference of mean indicates the better perception of female teachers than the male teachers.

Conclusion

Major conclusion drawn from the findings of the study indicate that 37% Government secondary school teachers were in the favour of Grammar Translation Method (GTM) which depicts that it is very common method to teach English Grammars to secondary school student to prepare them for higher classes, 32% Government secondary school teachers were in the favour of Eclectic Approach, it can be infer that this method were adopted as secondary method to teach students, 28% Government secondary school teachers were in the favour of Direct Method, while 3% were in the favour of Audio Lingual Method (ALM). This low percentage (3%) showed that the ALM method is very less popular in our Government Secondary schools to teach the students. The results of the study also revealed that there was insignificant difference between the perceptions of higher qualified and lower qualified teachers. There was significant difference between the perception of male and female teachers about the use of different teaching methods.

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