
Pakistani University Teachers' Perceptions of English Language Competence and its Impact on their Research Publication Endeavors

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Abstract

English enjoys the status of the language of research communication across all disciplines in the world. It has earned this reputation through its widespread adoption in higher education and research communication. Hence, English language competence plays a significant role in a non-native English speaking researcher's career success. For this reason, this study examined how Pakistani university teachers perceive English competence and its impact on their research publication efforts. The study used interviews to collect data from the faculty members at an HEC recognized university in Karachi as their promotion and career growth is tied to their publications which depends on their English language proficiency. As per the results, the faculty fully acknowledged the importance and necessity of good English language competence for a successful research career. However, they also reported that they felt that they lacked the required competence in English academic writing which sometimes discouraged them from undertaking research activities. The findings of this study highlight the need for immediate and effective interventions to train faculty in research writing and academic English to improve the overall research output of the country.

Keywords: Academic English, Research Writing, English Language competence, Research Publication

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

English has become the most important language in the 21st century owing to the roles it plays as the lingua franca of the world and the language of science, technology, trade, and international commerce. Its status as the lingua franca makes it the most convenient medium

for communication among research communities of a great majority of the disciplines all across the globe (Hassan, 2016; Agai-Lochi, 2015). Therefore, English is termed as the language of science, technology, and research, and all research in most of the fields of study is communicated in English. Access to modern and state of the art knowledge in every discipline today requires English language competence. English is vital for exchange of information and knowledge in research communities in both academic and professional domains everywhere in the world.

Due to the above stated importance of English, it is also the most widely used medium of instruction in higher education. The Bologna process requires all European universities to teach English as it is essential to access knowledge in science and technology (Kovaci et al., 2009). Since English is a must for scholarly communication in all disciplines, students are required to master academic English and subject-specific English to become a part of their professional community. Hence, English is the medium of instruction in the universities of many non-English speaking countries.

1.2. Statement of Problem

The Pakistani National Educational Policy (NEP) 2019 fully acknowledges the importance of English and declares it to be the medium of instruction for higher education. It also mandates schools to start teaching science and math in English from the secondary level to prepare students for future English language instruction in higher education.

Even though the National Education Policy 2019 favors English medium instruction and recommends that it be used at all levels of education, little to no governmental efforts have been made to implement the policy. Numerous studies reveal that Pakistani schools and colleges fail to develop enough English language competence in the students to enable them to undertake advanced study of their respective fields in English at the university level (Warsi, 2004; Karim & Shaikh, 2012; Gulzar & Qadir, 2010; Hussain, 2017). A more alarming issue brought to light by many studies is that a great majority of the teachers in Pakistani higher education are not proficient enough in English for a successful implementation of English as a medium of instruction (Hassan, 2016; Razzaq & Hamza, 2024).

The role of higher education is twofold: first, to create quality human capital for every field of activity and second is to forward a field of study through research and contribute to the building of a knowledge based economy. Considering the importance of English in research, exploring university teachers' English language competence and command on academic writing is crucial. The research output of Pakistani universities has increased by 2019, but the quality of the research produced remains unsatisfactory (Talal, 2019). Many factors may be responsible for average to poor research output; however, English language competence is one of the key issues which need to be explored in detail for relevant remedial measures (Ahmad, 2017; Hassan, 2016).

In the light of the above discussion, this paper aims to investigate Pakistani university teachers' perceptions of English language competence and its impact on their research publication endeavors. The research questions that this study seeks to investigate are as follows: how do Pakistani university teachers perceive English language competence and its impact on their research publication endeavors? This study aims to accomplish the following purposes: to investigate the perceptions of Pakistani university teachers regarding English language competence and its impact on their research publication endeavors.

1.3. Benefits of the Study

This study has three key beneficiaries. First, it aims to bring to light the challenges faced by the university teachers in research production. University teachers are responsible for broadening the knowledge base in their discipline through rigorous and active research work. In addition, university teachers are also required to provide effective research based local solutions for problems related to their fields. Thus, the research in both cases here requires sound English language competence as English is not only the language of sciences and research; it is also used for all official research communication within Pakistan. If university teachers have insufficient proficiency in English, they will fail to fulfill their duties and responsibilities towards their nation. As many studies reveal that Pakistani university teachers lack the required English language competence to participate in research activity, it is extremely vital that the reality of the matter be investigated. This study will secondly provide the concerned policy makers and HEC with useful insight to take needed remedial action to resolve the problems of the university teachers pertaining to English language proficiency.

1.4.Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is limited to exploring university teachers' English language ability related to research only. The study does not intent to examine teachers' readiness or competence for English medium instruction. The study will be a small scale research which needs to be completed within a certain time period and so it will cover a small portion of the target population only. This study views English language competence with reference to research writing and research paper publications. Thus, English language competence, within the scope of this study, defined as a command on general English grammar, academic English, and research/academic writing skills.

2. Literature Review

English is considered to be the most important language in today's globalized world. It is the language of business, trade, commerce, science, and technology. English is particularly important from the standpoint of research and knowledge production and dissemination. David Crystal rightly points out that English is crucial for research and higher education because a huge amount of world's knowledge particularly in areas such as science and technology exists in English (Kovacic, et al., 2009).

Owing to the role of English as the language of science, technology, and research, it has become the mostly commonly used medium of instruction in higher education all over the world. European universities specifically develop their university students' advanced English communication skills so that the graduates can efficiently participate in the research activities of their respective fields (Agai-Lochi, 2015). Universities in Japan and Africa also focus on developing English academic writing and reading skills to enable their graduates to contribute to research and the advancement of the nation (Sawaki, 2017). However, numerous studies indicate that non-native English researchers find English academic writing challenging (Chang & Strauss, 2010; Jeyaraj, 2018). Research writing requires advanced level competence in English, critical reading skills, and knowledge of both academic and subject-specific English ((Lowe & Zemliansky, 2011; Kruse, 2003). For non-native English writers, acquiring advanced level proficiency in English has always been a daunting task. Therefore, many studies are regularly conducted in most of the universities to investigate the research writing challenges encountered by university teachers and postgraduate students to take effective remedial action.

Makati and Sibanda (2026) used a socio-cultural lens to investigate the academic writing problems encountered by non-native English speaking doctoral students at a South African university. They collected data through focus groups. One of the key challenges reported by the students was incompetency in academic English and research writing. The students relied on thinking in their first language and then translated the sentences into English which resulted in grammatically ill-formed sentences. Academic writing abilities are equated with research success and thus the students felt inadequate due to poor English language proficiency.

Ural qizi (2025) reviewed the literature on academic writing and non-native English speaking researchers at universities. The author reported that student's researches faced numerous linguistic issues including lack of academic and discipline-specific vocabulary, insufficient knowledge of cohesive devices, poor grammar, and lack of training in academic writing. The student researchers were also found to be unaware of the key characteristics of English academic discourse and rhetorical practices. All these issues resulted in poor academic writing which impacted students' future research careers. The author recommended the use of institutionally organized workshops and courses to address student researchers' poor academic writing skills.

Prakash et al. (2025) analyzed over one million social sciences abstracts and found that non-native English speaking researchers had inadequate academic writing skills; however, with the emergence of AI tools such as Grammar and Large Language Models, the writing quality of non-native English researchers has significantly improved. The authors considered such AI tools to greatly help researchers polish their drafts and use proper academic writing conventions. However, these tools must be used ethically for editing purposes only.

In Pakistani higher education, the impact of English language competency on university teachers' research output is an unexplored area. Pakistani higher education is relatively newer when compared with its neighbors such as India and China (Irshad & Rashid, 2015). However, Pakistani higher education grew at a rapid pace after the establishment of HEC in 2002. Both higher education institutions and enrollment in higher education have increased significantly after 2002. UNESCO Institute for Statistics reports that enrollment in education has risen from 6.8% in 2009 to 9.08% in 2018. However, considering the role of higher education as agencies for research and development both locally and internationally, Pakistani higher education has still been unable to make any significant contributions (Mahesar, 2019). The overall quality of Pakistani universities' research output also happens to be unsatisfactory (Talal, 2019).

Hassan (2016) investigated the reasons behind unsatisfactory research quality of Pakistani scholars' work. He reports that many factors are responsible for this crisis such as corruption in institutions, untrained teachers, plagiaristic practices, weak English academic writing and research skills. The role of English language competence in insufficient research output in terms of both quality and quantity is an area that demands more investigation. Many studies have reported that English language teaching practices in Pakistan are outdated, inefficient, and fully fail to prepare the students to engage in research activity for the advancement of the country (Haider, 2012; Irfan, 2017).

More recent studies also do not indicate a very positive scenario. Sadiq and Khanam (2022) studied the problems faced by post-graduate university students in research writing. They conducted a survey to gather data. The study found that students had insufficient command on formal English and lacked good writing skills. According to the study, the major causes of these issues were poor English language teaching practices.

Khan et al. (2023) explored the key pre-requisite English language skills Pakistani university student require for success at post-graduate education. Through structured interviews, students were asked about their linguistic readiness to undertake post-graduate education. According to the findings, students complained of low academic vocabulary, poor grammar, and inability to construct clear and well-formed sentences. Razzaq and Hamza (2024) reported that English writing skills are highly emphasized in schools and colleges; however, Pakistani students were found to possess an alarmingly weak command on English grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, and hence encounter great difficulties in academic writing.

Fareed, Jamal, and Zia (2021) reported that literature clearly indicates that Pakistani university students possess an insufficient command on English grammar, academic vocabulary, and syntax. They suggested that the use of peer feedback could play a positive role in enhancing students' research writing skills.

Mahmood (2020) investigated the academic writing challenges faced by Pakistani university students. The study employed quantitative methodologies. The findings brought to

light numerous issues in students' academic writing including poor grammar and vocabulary, lack of knowledge of citation and referencing, and inability to compose coherent and clear prose.

Hence, a significant majority of Pakistani university students and teachers who will become the future researchers for the country have weak English language skills. Karim and Shaikh (2012) revealed that HEC's efforts to enhance English teachers' skills have remained insufficient. Sajid and Siddiqui (2015) investigated the quality of university students' English language skills and concluded that most of the Pakistani graduates lack good academic writing skills as the traditional English language courses fail to cater to the needs of university students for research writing. Academic and research writing require the application of critical thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation of content and synthesis of ideas (Sajid & Siddiqui, 2015). University level English courses do not focus on these areas.

Considering these studies, it can be concluded that no governmental efforts have been made to facilitate the concerned stakeholder in higher education as well as other levels education to successfully implement English medium instruction. The National Education Policy 2019 categorically states that English should be the medium of instruction in higher education and both university teachers and graduates must be well-versed in English to play their parts effectively for realizing the constitutional vision of building a knowledge-based economy. The National Education Policy also mandates that English be used for the teaching of maths and science subjects from the secondary level. However, the university teachers and graduates still do not have the sufficient English language proficiency to make significant contributions to research. The consequence of this unfortunate scenario is poor research output from Pakistani universities.

In the light of the above discussion, it is crucial that university teachers' viewpoint be sought regarding the role of English language competence in their research publication endeavors. The study will bring to light university teachers' opinions about how their research activities are impacted by English language skills and enlighten the concerned stakeholders to intervene and invest in building teachers' capacity for research and teaching in English.

3. Method

The study is a qualitative enquiry. The research design of any study consists of three main components: the philosophical worldview, the strategy of inquiry, and the data collection and analysis methods (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research is based on constructivism and interpretivism (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2009). Both interpretivism and constructivism view social reality as a relative and dynamic concept. Human beings construct their own realities in the light of their experience and cultural ideologies. Thus, qualitative research aims to study participants in their natural contexts and endeavors to obtain an in-

depth insight into the perceptions, thoughts, and views of participants regarding the phenomenon under study. Within the qualitative paradigm, phenomenology is a widely used strategy of inquiry. Phenomenology is concerned with identifying the essence of human experience about the phenomenon under study (Cohen, et al., 2007; Creswell, 2009). The study employed the phenomenology as the strategy of inquiry as the researcher aims to uncover the essence of the participants' views and perceptions about the research phenomenon. Following are the details about the participants and data collection and analysis methods used:

3.1. Participants

The research was conducted at a prestigious university in Karachi. This university is a private sector university with campuses in Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Faisalabad, and Peshawar. It is an HEC recognized university and offers bachelors, masters, and PhD programs in Computer Science, Electrical Engineering, and Business Administration. The university enjoys a great reputation and its Computer Science program is awarded the "W" category by HEC.

Therefore, the department of Computer Science was selected for data collection. The rationale for selecting the Computer Science department for this study was that it is a highly successful department and considered reputed all across the country. The department has a total of 38 faculty members. 8 teachers were chosen based on convenient sampling for data collection. Convenient sampling was used as most of the teachers are very busy and whoever was willing to cooperate with the researcher was approached to finish the study within the stipulated time.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher aimed to obtain in-depth data for deeper understanding of the research questions. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were chosen for data collection. Semi-structured interviews have tremendous potential to provide accurate and detailed information on the research phenomenon (Yin, 2003). For data analysis, thematic analysis was used. Thematic analysis is a widely used data analysis techniques for the study of large quantities of qualitative data (Cohen, et al., 2007). Thematic analysis consists of a stepwise procedure which entails a preliminary analysis of the data to identify specific categories. These categories are then grouped together to identify key themes which are further analyzed to extract the major themes which can explain the data in a comprehensive manner (Cohen, et al., 2007).

4. Findings

Semi-structured interviews were conducted and 8 teachers participated in the study. All the teachers had obtained their masters degree in Computer Science from different renowned and HEC recognized universities. 2 male teachers and 6 female teachers participated in the

study. Three teachers were enrolled in the PhD program whereas all others also desired to do the same as soon as it was feasible for them. Thematic analysis of the interviews revealed a total of six key themes which are elaborated below. The code S1 is used for teacher 1, S2 for teacher 2, and so on to conceal the identity of the teachers as per their request.

4.1. Medium of Instruction in Higher Education

The medium of instruction in both the bachelors and masters program was primarily Urdu according to seven teachers. One teacher, however, reported that English was the dominant medium of instruction at the masters level in her university. The teachers delivered their lectures in Urdu and occasionally switched to English, but the course books and all other reading material was always in English. All kinds of assessments were also conducted in English and it was compulsory for the students to use English to answer the questions and complete assignments. One teacher stated that Urdu was a more convenient medium of instruction because advanced technical concepts were easier to understand in Urdu and the students felt more comfortable with Urdu medium instruction.

4.2. Importance of English in General and in Research

All the teachers fully acknowledged the importance of English. S1 stated that English is an important language as it allows “you to communicate abroad”. English is necessary for foreign communication. English is mandatory for research as all the research papers are written in English and without a command on English, one cannot access research on the subject. S1 further commented that expertise in technical English is required to be able to comprehend research papers and to publish research papers in good journals, the research must be able to explain his/her “point of view” in English effectively and clearly. S2 stated that English is the language of “education” and a necessary asset for research. S3 also acknowledged that access to research and communication of one’s research requires excellent command on English. S3 also stated that research papers with strong technical research work are often rejected by journals due to poor quality of English. Other speakers held similar views. S7 pointed out that a good command on English is not only necessary to access and communicate research but also required to be able to collaborate with foreign researchers abroad. He particularly stated that good email writing skills are also necessary to interact with foreign researchers. He stressed that email writing, letters of request must also be taught to the researchers. S8 shared that he was unable to publish paper in a journal having an impact factor of 6.8. He stated that the reviewer informed him that apart from few technical issues, the quality of English and academic writing are the reason for the rejection of the paper.

4.3. First Experience of Research Writing

For all the teachers, the first real experience of research writing was their masters’ thesis. All the teachers reported that they found thesis writing particularly challenging due to the lack of training in academic writing and unfamiliarity with formal and academic English. S1 said that she had no idea about how to write “literature review, method, etc.” and found the

format of the research report difficult and challenging. S3 revealed that she was confused about the subject verb agreement ruled of English. S4 found academic English new and challenging to learn and use. She found sentence structures, the use of proper conjunctions to join ideas difficult. S6 admitted that she did not have “good writing skills and vocabulary”. S7 reported that formatting, vocabulary, and paragraphing were the main challenges for him.

4.4. Current Research Writing Expertise

Most of the teachers reported that they do not feel confident about their research writing skills. Research is challenging for them not due to the technical procedure or lack of resources, but owing to English academic writing abilities. S1 felt that she had good reading skills, but her writing skills were still not satisfactory. She faced problems in “paragraphing, word order, and clear writing”. She felt that vocabulary was not an issue for her; one can get the vocabulary from the internet and also take the help of English to Urdu and Urdu to English dictionaries, but writing clearly to avoid unintended meanings was challenging for her. S2 gave herself 6.5-7 marks out of 10 for her drafting ability. S3 stated that she learnt a lot from writing the masters thesis, but she still felt that a senior teacher must guide her in research and academic writing. She thought that she needed training to be able to write for A-list journals. S4 also stated that she was satisfied with her reading and speaking skills, but writing happened to be her weakest area. S6 stated that she still struggled with vocabulary. She did not have sufficient academic English and formal English vocabulary even after reading so many research papers. S7 and S8 also admitted that they found vocabulary challenging. S8 also pointed out that he struggled with “how to put down my thoughts in English”.

4.5. The Most Difficult Section of a Research Paper

All the teachers found different sections/parts of the research paper challenging. S1 stated that she found explanation of “mathematical models difficult”. It was always difficult to explain the mathematical models in simpler terms and write a convincing “Proposed Solution” section. S2 found the “Literature Review” section difficult. She elaborated that literature review required massive reading and synthesis of information and this made it more challenging than the other sections. According to S3, the “Introduction” and “Literature Review” were the most demanding sections to write. She stated that paraphrasing makes these sections challenging. S4 also found “introduction” to be more challenging as one has to grab the reader’s attention and generate interest in this section and thus more effort is required to write it. S5 stated that all the sections were challenging in their own way, but the “Abstract” is the most difficult to write as it is a “precis” of one’s entire work. S6 shared that she found “Method” to be the most difficult section as in this section, the researcher has to present his/her solution in a clear and convincing manner. Due to her insufficient command on academic English, she found this section difficult. S7 found “Abstract” to be the most difficult section to write that his supervisor write it for him. S8 also felt that the “Abstract”

was the most demanding section as he found summarizing challenging and he also reported that the “Results” section is difficult as one has to evaluate one’s work in this section.

4.6. Impact of English on Research Publication Endeavors

All the teachers believed that excellent English writing skills are essential to publish in A-list journals and a lack of competence in academic writing can impact a researcher’s future prospects negatively. They stated that insufficient command on research writing and academic English either demotivates a researcher from engaging in research or makes the entire research activity frustrating and depressing. S1 felt that Pakistani researchers are unable to express their point of view effectively. She stated that she would require the assistance of an English teacher in research writing. She may feel frustrated and demotivated due to insufficient competence in writing skills. She said that she had to invest double effort in writing research papers due to the technical aspect of research and the academic writing challenge. S2 also acknowledged that lack of sufficient command on academic English and good writing skills demotivated researchers. S3 also stated that firstly research is in itself a daunting task, and the lack of competence in research writing makes it a more challenging activity and thus leads to less publications by capable researchers. S4 commented that research writing was more challenging in the past and discouraged teachers from research, but today many online support tools are available to learn and edit one’s writing. She elaborated that online tutorials and grammar checking tools are very useful. She also stated that one can “hire a writer” these days as well. S5 held similar views. S6 admitted that she would refrain from writing because she did not know “how to express” her ideas and since English is not our “first language”, research writing is too challenging.

S7 stated that English language competence and writing skills have a very strong impact on one’s research publication efforts. He elaborated that whenever a researcher submits a paper for publication, “the first point highlighted by the editor is that grammar should be improved” if it is not correct. He claimed that this happened “97%” of the time. He said that as per his experience, grammar improvement was always suggested. He further said that teachers with weak English faced a lot of problems in research publication endeavors. S8 shared his personal experience and stated that his paper was rejected due to the language quality and grammar issues even though the editor acknowledged that their research was useful.

4.7. Overcoming Research Writing Challenges

All the teachers stressed that the university should organize workshops on different aspects of research writing to develop their writing skills. S1 stated that through reading she tried to learn how to write and also discussed her writing problems with superiors to get ideas or advice. S2 also said that she asked her colleagues for feedback on her writing to improve the clarity of her work. S3 also felt that superiors and senior teachers can be of great help in overcoming writing challenges. S4 stated that she used different online tools to overcome her

writing challenges. She watched online tutorials on writing, and used the website “Grammarly” to identify and correct the grammar mistakes in her write up. However, all of them felt that Large Language Models such as ChatGPT are very useful but when it comes to composition, they face difficulties. Using ChatGPT for composition and writing will amount to plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

S6 also used online help such as blogs, tutorials, and different grammar checking applications. She stated that she had “self-taught” herself how to write a research paper. S8 also used online help such as “Grammarly” and any other tool he found useful.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study clearly indicate that English language competence and academic writing skills have a strong relationship with the research output of a university. If the faculty and the researchers of a university lack proper training and expertise in research communication, the research output of the university and its number of publications will be affected negatively. The teachers in this study reported that they were taught primarily in Urdu in their bachelors and masters programs and this may be one of the reasons for their complaints concerning lack of the desired academic and subject specific vocabulary required to write a research paper. The recommended reading material for each course was always in English, but the teachers explained the concepts in Urdu and occasionally switched to English. Other Pakistani studies have also shown that the major medium of instruction in a great majority of the Pakistani higher education institutions is Urdu while the reading materials are provided in English. Both Pakistani teachers and students in higher education are not trained or ready for English medium instruction (Hussain, 2017). This study confirms the findings of Hassan other Pakistani studies, emphasizing that the teachers in Pakistani higher education are not proficient in English to implement EMI successfully (Sadiq & Khanam, 2022; Khan et al., 2023; Razzaq & Hamza, 2024; Fareed et al., 2021)

However, an alarming finding of this study is that academic English and research writing skills if underdeveloped can lead researchers to refrain from engaging in research altogether. The already challenging nature of research is further intensified due to lack of proper command on English and research writing skills. This deficiency can demotivate and discourage capable researchers from engaging in research and exploring their ideas.

This study also confirms the results of another Pakistani study which pointed out that the English language courses in higher education fail to prepare students for research writing (Khan et al., 2023). The participants of this study clearly indicated that their first research writing experience was their masters’ thesis and that they were not trained in research and academic writing. All the teachers also demanded that the university conduct workshops on academic writing to facilitate them in their research endeavors. The English language courses in both higher education and college fail to prepare students for both professional and scholarly communication in English.

Even though the Pakistani National Education Policy instructs that English be used for the teaching of maths and science subjects in schools, colleges, and for all subjects in higher education, the educational institutes are unable to do so. Lack of training in writing since the school level and poor language teaching practices result in future researchers failing to realize their potential and serve the country.

The results of this study are also aligned with the results of other international studies which reveal that research writing is always challenging for non-native speakers due to advanced English language proficiency cited in the literature review

The National Education Policy of Pakistan (2019) aims to create a knowledge based economy. A knowledge based economy is built through constant and intensive research to improve and enhance the performance of the country in every domain of activity. Thus, higher education has a significant role to play to create and sustain a knowledge based economy. Without continuous research, a knowledge based economy cannot be constructed. The lack of English language competence and good academic writing skills has become a barrier in achieving this aim of the Pakistani educational policy. The teachers in this study also do not feel comfortable in corresponding with foreign researchers due to insufficient English writing skills. One teacher has also commented that one can hire a writer to write the research paper which is unfortunate as the teachers seemed unaware of true meaning of plagiarism. Even though teacher did make efforts to overcome academic challenges by using online tools or peer support, it must be noted that these resources are not sufficient to learn and master academic writing. One could check the grammar of one's document, but research writing requires mastery of academic and subject specific discourse to be able to contribute to the research literature in one's field. These tools cannot teach the rhetorical patterns and conventions of research communication especially with respect to specific disciplines. For example, "Grammarly" and most of the online tutorials focus on general English and not subject specific scholarly communication rules and practices. Even if the teachers did take the help of these tools and published their papers, publishing high impact factor or A-list journals will be challenging.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explored how Pakistani university teachers perceived English language competence and its impact on their research publication endeavors. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. 8 teachers belonging to a renowned HEC recognized university participated in the study. The results of the study revealed that the teachers considered the knowledge of English and research writing skills to be a crucial factor behind their research publication success and failure. The faculty admitted that they were not trained in research writing and were not capable of publishing in A-list journals. They stated that expertise in academic English and research writing are a must for a successful career as a researcher and lack of these skills discouraged a skillful researcher from engaging in research activities. The teachers used peer feedback, online tutorials, and grammar checking websites

to overcome their academic writing challenges; however, these tools cannot develop the research writing skills required to publish in prestigious journals. It can hence be concluded that insufficient command on academic English and under-developed research writing skills are a the most critical factor responsible for unsatisfactory research output of Pakistan.

European universities and other universities in the developed countries such as China and Japan have a clear language policy. English is seen as the language of science, technology, business, and research. Therefore, higher education in these countries is tasked with preparing students to be researchers and knowledge creators and English is seen as a necessary skill in the toolkit of the researcher (Kovacic, et al., 2009; Agai-Lochi, 2015). Hence, such a clarity of vision and purpose behind English language teaching allows the educators to develop students' competence in the right type of English and language skills. For instance, English for Science and Technology, English for Specific Purposes, academic writing, and research writing are taught to accomplish a specifically laid down target which is to be a researcher. In addition, modern teaching methodologies are employed for ELT. However, such clarity of vision behind ELT lacks in Pakistan. Contrarily, the objectives behind ELT in schools and colleges all across Pakistan are vague and unclear. The teachers are themselves untrained and do not understand why English should be taught and what will the students through their English language skills accomplish for the nation.

It is, therefore, strongly recommended that Pakistani educationists and language policy makers outline a clear purpose behind the teaching and learning of English for all the levels of education. Scholarly communication should be made a key objective behind ELT and students should be prepared for research communication from the secondary level. English for Science and Technology and English for academic purposes must be made an integral part of the English language curriculum right from the secondary school to higher education. The students must be taught academic English and the rhetorical patterns for academic discourse. Research writing skills courses must be introduced in higher education. These courses must focus on the linguistic aspect of research communication and teach the function and purpose of every section of the research report along with the general academic vocabulary used in these sections. For the current teachers in higher education, a more detailed and large scale study must be conducted and HEC must collaborate with the universities to organize training sessions for the faculty to improve their research writing skills.

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