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**University of Southampton**

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Modern Languages and Linguistics

**Exploring English Language Teachers' Agency in  
Resource-poor Secondary State Schools of Pakistan:  
A Critical Realist Perspective**

by

**Mahrukh Shakir**

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

January, 2019







**University of Southampton**

**Abstract**

Faculty of Humanities

Modern Languages

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**Exploring English Language Teachers' Agency in  
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The main aim of this study was to understand how (English) language teachers operate in resource-poor secondary state school English language teaching (ELT) contexts. To achieve this aim, Archer's (1995, 1996, 1998a) critical realist theory: structural conditioning, reflexivity (concerns, values and beliefs), and structural elaboration / social change was adopted for the case analysis and interpretation of the data of the four English language teachers. Employing a qualitative case-study approach, the data was obtained through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and field notes from (initially) eight participant teachers. Although looking through the data from all eight participant-teachers helped a great deal in understanding the phenomenon under consideration, the final report of this study only presents data from four of these participants for the reasons mentioned in the relevant chapters.

The findings revealed that the institutional structures (teaching context), where the participant-teachers' work, conditioned the teacher' work by constituting an environment of contemporary action and creating certain modes of action when the teachers' attempted to respond to them in the light of their pedagogical beliefs, values and concerns. During this

process, the participant teachers underwent internal conversations / reflexive deliberations, where they weighed different options available to them in the given circumstances. Although, the participant-teachers differed from each other in their reflexive deliberation, such deliberations served as a mediator between the given material structures and the teachers' actual behaviour (pedagogical responses). On account of operating in similar teaching contexts (institutional structures), and having strong social (collegial) support, the participant-teachers shared many similarities in their response to these structures. Nevertheless, some differing responses are also apparent from the research.

The findings also revealed that the structural conditioning occurred in four ways: constraining influences, enabling influences, neither constraining nor enabling and/or both constraining and enabling factors or influences. The constraining factors which appeared were broadly: large classes and associated factors, students and teacher's related factors, exam paper expectations, classroom facilities, in-service and specialized professional development courses. The social factors mainly included networking with colleagues / teachers forming collegial relationships in their respective schools, while the cultural factors mainly included the teachers' own positive and negative educational experiences (generally referred to as 'apprenticeship of observation'), general preservice courses, institutional guidelines / textbooks as well as teachers' experiences of teaching. All these influences resulted in the teachers' behavior (or agency) as seemingly compliant but at the same time showing creativity and problem solving, hence demonstrating agentic tendencies of transformation, though not yet fully matured. Although not within the scope of this study to further explore and possibly a next step, such a tendency to innovative/creative moves might be representative of that space where prior structures are gradually transformed and new ones slowly elaborated, that is phase T2 and T3 in Archer's morphogenetic model (Archer, 1995). Implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research are addressed in the light of the findings.





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**Declaration of Authorship**

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Title of thesis:	Exploring English Language Teachers' Agency in Resource-Poor Secondary State Schools of Pakistan: A Critical Realist Perspective
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I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission or Parts of this work have been published as:

Signature:	MS	Date:	16/01/2020
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**List of Abbreviations**

AOO	Apprenticeship of Observation
BISE	Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education
CD	Classroom Discourse
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CR	Critical Realism
DESE	Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
ELT	English Language Teaching
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
KPK	Khyber Pukhtunkhwa
MI	Medium of Instruction
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PK	Pedagogical Knowledge



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

We teach in a context. We work within a programme or department which is a part of a community, country, political system and a culture. The decisions that we make about our teaching need to be conscious and consciously related to the context within we work.

Cranton and Carusetta (2002: 168)

We can always say that the individual makes choices, as long as we do not forget that they do not choose the principle of their choices.

Bourdieu and Wacquants (1989: 45)

The above mentioned quotes clearly point to the relationship between agents and context, respectively structures. They can also be applied to English language teachers (agents) and their teaching context (institutional structures): the *relationship* between which is the focus of this study, expressed more clearly in the next section (1.1). The rationale for undertaking this study is provided in section 1.3 preceded by a brief contextualisation of the study (section 1.2). However, to better understand the above *relationship*, Archer's (1995, 1996, 1998a) social / critical realist theory seemed to be the most appropriate framework, and is briefly introduced in section 1.4 below and in detail in chapter 3. Informed mainly by Wedell and Malderezs' (2013) points for reflection for English language teachers, Archer's theory helped in further refining my research questions in the light of the overarching aim of the study as explained in sections 1.5 below. Section 1.5 provides a summary of the methodology employed to answer these research questions, which is explained in detail in chapter 4. This leads to the study's significance in relation to the existing literature (section 1.6), and the organizational outline of the thesis (section 1.7). It is important to note that I will be referring to non-native English speaking teachers (NNEST) as 'English language teachers' throughout the text due to it being a relatively simple term.

### 1.1 The present study

As stated above, the present research study aims to understand and gains insights into the *relationship* between English language teachers' agency and their teaching context by examining/exploring/investigating the *interplay* between these teachers' agency and the social reality which surrounds their work. This project seeks to understand why they do

what they do in their particular ‘resource-poor’ teaching contexts of secondary level state schools in Pakistan (which are seen as representative of wider ELT contexts both nationally and internationally). More specifically, the study aims to explore the relationships that exist between agency and the capacity to act in a given teaching context and teachers’ beliefs, practices, concerns, values and projects. The said focus and other related aspects are further elaborated in the subsequent chapters. However, in the following section, I, first, provide a brief contextualisation for the current study.

## 1.2 **Background**

With regard to explaining the behaviours of human beings - English language teachers in this study - academic discussions have evolved into two main strands: sociocultural theories (hereafter - SCT), and social science theories. Despite the diversity that exists among their different perspectives, both set of theories link the individual with the social. However, research, employing the former and having roots in psychology (through the works of Vygotsky), mainly revolves around the discourses that teachers employ and/or the narratives that they construct, whereas in the case of the latter, research draws our attention to the agent’s (in the current study, teachers’) capacity to exercise influence on / within their respective structures (the teachers’ professional context(s)). To elaborate further, SCT, based on a social constructivist perspective (Sawyer, 2002), employed mainly by teacher ‘beliefs’ and ‘identity’ research in language education studies, focuses our research endeavours on individuals and their narratives and understanding, giving primacy to the individual, implying that all things are possible for the individual simply through the exercise of their will. On the contrary, social science theories (having different perspectives – see section 3.3 below for details) are mainly founded on the belief that human beings and their behaviour influence as well as are being influenced by the social factors or structures they work or live within (Elder-Vass, 2010), thus focusing our attention equally on both agents *and* structures and the *interplay* between their powers. Here, as the term ‘agency’ implies, we see some kind of a struggle on the part of the agents to achieve what they want (though they might not necessarily succeed). As a result, and as this study did, the phenomenon of *interplay* necessitates looking at both the *agents* (teachers) and *structures* (teaching context) *concurrently* to better understand the phenomenon of interplay between them (a procedure undertaken in this study). Such a stance neither suggests an altogether alternative approach to understanding language teachers’ agency and their contexts nor put up a claim that one is better than the other, but instead offer a complementary set of theoretical tools / position (a

different approach) - to understand the process of '*interplay*' - as I have adopted in this study. This point is explained in great detail in chapter 3. Now, it is important to first outline the rationale for looking at this phenomenon of *interplay* as I do next.

### 1.3 **Rationale of the study**

The rationale for conducting this study are: 1) my personal motivation, 2) English language teaching-learning situation in state schools in Pakistan, and 3) the gap in the current relevant literature with regard to it. These are explained in detail, in turns, below.

#### 1.3.1 **Personal experiences as a source of motivation**

Initially my interest for this research arose from my role as an English language teacher at different educational levels in Pakistan. I have taught English in secondary schools, postgraduate colleges, and currently, both at an undergraduate and postgraduate levels in a university. Without any general or context-appropriate TESL (teaching of English as a second language) training, my colleagues and I have always been struggling with how to teach English to students in the given conditions (limited resources) which would result in significant, positive English language learning outcomes. For example, once, while teaching English language to undergraduate students at a university where I work, I was asked to teach English to a class of 500 students over the course of a year, without any form of context-specific training. While attempting to apply communicative language teaching (hereafter - CLT) / student-centred learning approaches (that I got familiarised with during my M.A in Applied Linguistics from a UK university the preceding year - as a golden standard of education) in such a huge class, I ran into considerable difficulty specifically in terms of classroom management. It was an extreme challenge to balance the disciplinary issues as well as to create a student-centred English language teaching-learning environment. I have also observed some of my colleagues in almost similar situations. This fuelled my interest to explore these issues in greater depth via a research study. I wanted to investigate how teachers without context appropriate TESL training, and having little use of English in daily life, can teach English language in a way which could ensure students improve their language proficiency? How do they cope with the ensuing difficulties, particularly when the ELT context is characterised by limited and insufficient economic and cultural resources to draw upon? What resources, skills or techniques do they resort to in such situations? For example, Pakistan's state schools' non-native English language teachers. Is there any

alternative professional trajectory which enables these teachers to develop their ELT skills to facilitate the development of their students' language proficiency or do they just adapt their teaching (with or without changing the accompanying beliefs) to the prevalent circumstances to the detriment of effective teaching? Thus, my personal experiences drove the selection of the current research topic. They persuaded me to explore what goals are set for students by the government, and whether or not teachers are able to achieve the desired outcomes and what barriers stand in the way of such achievement.

### 1.3.2 **Statement of the problem**

Due to globalization and the need for a language of communication, many countries have become eager to train their citizens in English, in order to access and to compete in the global market (Richards, 2008; Richards & Rogers, 2014; Kuchah, 2016). As a result, the English language has become the world's most widely studied foreign / second language and its learning (and teaching) are receiving great importance in most countries around the world (ibid). This has further resulted in English being seen as a key skill in almost every state education core curriculum globally (Wedell & Malderez, 2013; Wedell, 2013; Kiely, 2014), including many developing countries (Kiely, 2014; Kuchah, 2016). As a result, the contexts of English language teaching and learning have expanded (Kiely, 2014). Pakistan, the (developing) country in which the present study has taken place, is not an exception to this trend.

However, despite the evident role of English as a global language, as well as a language of trade, technology and science, research, communication, and offices/business in Pakistan, the conditions for ELT and learning in Pakistan are not favourable, particularly in state schools (Ali, 2011; Panhwar, Baloch & Khan, 2017). Although, English has been taught as a compulsory subject from class 1 since 2006 and class 6 prior to that (see chapter 2, section 2.5 for details), students studying in the state schools, cannot communicate easily in English and even after at least eight years of ELT to them, the skills acquired in English by students at the secondary level are far from satisfactory (Coleman, 2010; Aftab, 2011; Shah, 2012; Panhwar, Baloch & Khan, 2017). They feel quite deficient in all the four language skills that is, in speaking, reading, writing and listening (ibid). In other words, the students lack English language proficiency and generally fail in the subject (Sarwat & Khursheed, 1994; Rahman, 2001; Chowdhury, 2003). This has been reported by research such as Andrabi et al. (2007) and Annual Status of Educational Report (ASER-hereafter) Pakistan (2012). The education quality imparted by state schools in Pakistan has been criticized widely and deeply (for

example, Agha Khan University<sup>1</sup>, 2002; Government of Pakistan, 2002, 2005; Ahmed, 2009). According to Andrabi et al., (2009 as cited in Coleman, 2010), in Pakistan, a state school student requires a further 2.5 years to attain the same level of proficiency in English as a year 3 student in a private school. Coleman and Capstick (2012) further confirms it that achievement in state schools is ‘two years behind’ that of children in English - medium private schools. Even more recently, ASER (2017) has reported that those attending private schools perform better than their state-educated counterparts. Shah (2012) reported that the pupils who passed the secondary school certificate (hereafter - SSC) board examination had not acquired essential skills in the English language. The students found it quite difficult to communicate successfully in English (ibid). Most of what has been reported so far about educational quality and students’ achievement level in English language in state schools in Pakistan, coupled with my own observation and experience of working as an English language teacher in Pakistan, also suggests the same. The general impression about quality of education in general and the English language in particular, can be best gathered from one of the comments of my participant-teachers during his interview who quoted his school’s head teacher as saying, “...this is a government school and it is a universal truth that the kids will be weak here. Nothing can be done about it” (Int-1, lines 518-519).

Though poor communication skills in English and low exam pass rates are not uncommon in many contexts, as noted recently by Wedell and Malderez (2013) and Kiely (2014), it is specifically the case with most of the developing countries, in addition to Pakistan, especially in state schools (Wedell, 2011). Reports from different sources across the world indicate that results are not as successful as have been hoped (for example, Matear, 2008; Obaidul Hamid, 2010; de Segovia & Hardison, 2009; Zappa-Hollman, 2007). For example, other than Pakistan, resource-poor countries such as Uganda (Nakabugo et al., 2008) and Nigeria (Hyacinth & Mann, 2014) have also reported low standards of education. Similarly, Kuchah and Smith (2011) noticed in their schools in Cameroon, where Kuchah was teaching English language, that his students were unable to pass their English language examination as well as to communicate sensibly and coherently in English and to be able to understand, read, and talk about texts and daily events in English. Ample evidence exists that many schools in developing countries are not very effective, in terms of students’

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<sup>1</sup> Academy of Educational Development

learning outcomes (Glewwe, 2002; Harbison & Hanushek, 1992; Hanushek, 1995; Kuchah & Smith, 2011; Lockheed & Verspoor, 1991; Levin & Lockheed, 2012). Such schools share similar contextual constraints, in terms of educational resources, with state schools in Pakistan. Kuchah (2016), in very explicit terms pointed out the shortcomings of the learning environment for English language teaching in resource-poor contexts. According to them, in many developing countries (having 80% of the world's children)<sup>2</sup>, more and more children experience formal education in a language different to their home language in learning environments which might not fulfil the minimum requirements for effective language learning.

In view of the above argument, it seems important to investigate this problematic situation and the reasons thereof with regard to the resource-poor / developing nations context ('resource-poor' – hereafter, see section 2.2 and 2.3 for explanations), which is still a current broad ELT realities (Wedell & Malderez, 2013). One of the main reasons for the deficiency reflected in students' English language learning in state schools, in Pakistan, is being attributed to the way these students are *taught* (emphasising teachers) the English language (Warsi, 2004; Ali, 2011). Also, the World Bank's Primary Education Policy Paper (1990) (Lockheed et al., 1990), based largely upon a comprehensive review of research until that time, identified classroom teaching as one of the five principal contributors to the effectiveness of the primary education. Thus, teachers influence the curriculum, the engagement and motivation of learners, and change and innovate learning practices (Kiely, 2014). In this regard, teachers are a key source of information for identifying the problems as mentioned above, particularly in relation to the contextual factors which strongly influences teachers and their classroom behaviour and conversely, how their behaviours impact their working environment. Such factors (contextual/institutional) and their relationship to educational contexts (resource-poor) have rarely been the focus of academic discussion, and hence merit investigation. This is further explained below.

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<sup>2</sup> Glewwe, P. and Kremer, M. (2006). Schools, Teachers, and Education Outcomes in Developing Countries. *Handbook of the Economics of Education*, 2, 945-1017.

### 1.3.3 Gap in the existing research

Both contextual and theoretical have been identified in the current academic work. Regarding the contextual gap, the scarcity of, and the need for research regarding under-resourced and socioeconomically marginalized ELT contexts (Varghese, 2008; Bigelow, 2010; Tin, 2014) is evidenced from recurring calls for further research by Burns (1996) and recently by Dadvand (2015) and Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015). Sonaiya (2005) noticed this research gap around a decade ago when she remarked that, “Resource-poor countries [. . .] do not have easy access to the global forum; their voices are often not represented” (p. 222), and this problem still exists to this day. According to Burns (1996), greater attention to the social and institutional contexts of classrooms is required in studies of what language teachers actually ‘do’ in their classrooms. More specifically, Shamim has recently draw our attention (in Shamim and Kuchah (2016)) to the fact that despite the increasing demand for English language education (and the resultant ever rising number of pupils in classrooms across the developing world), research into ELT in ‘resource-poor’ contexts is still very sparse. Shamim and Kuchah (2016) further suggest that developing a research agenda that looks at the constraints posed by such contexts and which takes into account the classroom practices and experiences of teachers therein, might provide insights into the social dynamics of classes in such contexts. Likewise, Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) stressed that there must be a greater recognition in language teacher research that socioeconomic circumstances play a decisive role in materialising the teacher’s unobservable dimensions (such as teacher’s thinking/beliefs) at a particular instant and over an extended period of time (Varghese, 2008; Razfar, 2012; Scarino, 2014). Similarly, Smith (2011) also argues that most ELT around the world takes place in large classes having limited resources, still, paradoxically, such context(s) remains under-represented in ‘mainstream’ ELT discourse. Indeed, studies regarding the process of educational change in ELT are based mostly on ‘developed countries’ (Wedell, 2011).

In addition to the scarcity of studies from developing contexts, with regard to the theoretical gap in the field of applied linguistics and/or ELT (on account of close association of applied linguistics with ELT (Corson, 1997)), despite the importance of the teaching context as a strong influencing factor on language teachers, its role has not been adequately addressed in academic discussions as explicitly pointed out by Bax (2003), Borg (2003, 2009, 2015), and more recently by Barnard and Burns (2012) and Jamalzadeh and Shahsavari (2015). For example, in earlier studies (such as Spada & Massey, 1992; Burns, 1996; Johnson, 1996;

Richards & Pennington, 1998; Crookes & Arakaki; 1999), little reference has been made to the contextual factors which may have facilitated or hindered the kinds of decisions teachers were able to make. The focus of these studies has been mainly cognition based and thus has primarily investigated teachers' awareness of their decisions and their related actions (Jamalzadeh & Shahsavari, 2015).

In the subsequent years, in the yet relatively limited 'ET [English teaching] context literature' (Wedell & Malderez, 2013), employing sociocultural orientations (for example, Borg, 1998a, 1998b; Farrell, 1999; Johnson, 2006, 2009; Suwannasom, 2010; Wedell & Malderez, 2013), and which have taken the contextual factors into consideration, the role of context, in terms of social structures, which constrains or enable teacher's agency, has largely remained under-theorised and more primacy has been given to the teacher's agency (Block, 2015) through concepts and notions such as 'mediation', 'internalisation' and 'appropriation'. Although, socioculturalists argue that individuals must be studied in their social context, they approach the interrelation between structure and agency, from a social constructivist perspective (Sawyer, 2002) where the general tone, in Block's (2015: 22) term, is "over-agentive", as is the case, for example, of language teacher's identity research (for example, Kiely 2014; Barkhuizen, 2017). Such literature, though it may greatly enrich our understanding in several ways, utilises an empirical emphasis on individual social constructions, and tends to neglect the broader, large-scale influences in favour of a focus on individual action (Sawyer, 2002). This has led to an ignorance of the *interplay* between teachers' agency and the social reality of their professional teaching context: who the teachers present themselves to be in case of *individual* oriented research, versus what they do, and why they do what they do. In short, to my knowledge, there does not exist any study in the field of applied linguistics or ELT which has investigated the *interplay/interaction* between social (institutional) structures and teachers' agency (where both the agency and the structures equally exercise powers on each other), a point also noted by Connors (2015). Such a perspective leads us to view agency as strongly connected to contextual conditions (Priestley et al., 2012: 197). It is, therefore, possible to see the same individual exercising more agency in one context and less in another (Kayi-Aydar, 2015). This argument is further developed in chapter 3.

Having established the importance of and need for investigating the notion of *interplay*, as above, the next question is how we can we better investigate this phenomenon. For this purpose, Margaret Archer's (1995, 1996) social / critical realist theory (hereafter – CR), with its focus on ontological theory and its interest in causality (to illuminate teacher agency in

relation to social structures) (Zotzmann, 2018), seems to be the most suitable explanatory framework. This is because, I am interested in investigating how the different factors of the teaching context/social structures impact English language teachers' agency and how these teachers make sense of them, overcome difficulties, respond to contextual limitations, network and collaborate. While I will explain the CR theory and the concept of interplay in detail in chapter 3, I will provide a brief account of them in the following section.

#### 1.4 **Structure and agency: CR and the notion of interplay**

Margaret Archer stresses the equal importance of both structure and agency, and insists that the two must be understood as analytically distinct, and exerting equal influence upon each other (Archer, 1995, 1996; Elder-Vass, 2010). That is, structure exists outside individuals and not merged in them as implicitly assumed in social constructive approaches. Social events (in this context - teachers' pedagogical behaviour) are produced by the *interaction* of both structural and agential causal powers (ibid). It is the *interplay* between these two intrinsically coupled entities which results in certain outcomes. Such a stance, as I argue in this study, may enable us to capture how institutional structures enable and constrain English language teachers when these individual teachers attempt to align their own values, concerns, beliefs and practices to such institutional structures in order to develop a workable professional 'modus vivendi' (Archer, 2003, 2007). In the present study, this means the extent to which the participant-teachers mediate, through their reflexivity or internal conversations, the institutional structure(s) they encounter (Wheelahon, 2007). For instance, how do they respond to the (limited) resources they have access to within their own classrooms and weighing up any available options to conduct classes according to their desires. It is this stance that I intend to adopt in this study.

The notion of *interplay* in the CR (analytical dualism) framework rejects any of the reductionist accounts which either claim that human beings are society's gift (totally shaped by it) or, conversely, that all society can be/is derived from what we are (Archer, 1995, 2000; Elder-Vass, 2010) (see the following section 3.3 for explanation on these different theoretical perspectives). Briefly speaking, the former claim emphasizes structures as being predominant, and therefore overriding agency, while the latter downplays structures and emphasizes agency. Instead, the concept of *interplay* promotes the view that both human beings and society (in this study, the teaching context) have their own unique powers and properties which are not reducible to each other but are relational, that is, exercised in

relation to each other (Archer, 2003). Such a perspective informed the study's research questions as follows.

## 1.5 Aim, research questions and methodology

As mentioned above, the overarching aim of this research is to examine *how* English language teachers operate in the resource-poor, state school context of Pakistan. In line with this overarching aim, the research questions, in simple words<sup>3</sup>, are:

Q-1) What are the (visible and invisible) elements of the classrooms in which teachers work affect how they teach?

Q-2) How these elements can and does affect what teachers (can) do and how they think?

Q-3) How the teachers make use of these elements?

(adapted from Wedell & Malderez, 2013)

Based on his interest as shown in the research questions above, Wedell and Malderez<sup>4</sup> call for the development of framework(s) which can help us to systematically study the contexts in which English is being taught and learned. To respond to this call, I believe CR to be a suitable framework to study the ELT context for the reasons I mentioned in section 1.4. Therefore, the above points/questions have been identified as suitable research questions for this study, in as much as they correspond to the theory's three stages (explained briefly below and in detail in chapter 3):

**R.Q1)** How do the factors, as revealed from the data, *condition* the context of action for the participant-teachers in the secondary state schools of Pakistan?

According to Archer (1995, 1996), at any given stage, structure(s) pre-dates and conditions actions, so the first research question will explore how structural conditioning takes place in the given context based on teachers' interview data and enriched further by classroom

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<sup>3</sup> See further below the same questions as theoretically informed for this study and the actual/main ones

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.education.leeds.ac.uk/people/academic/wedell/>

observation data (see chapter 4 and 5 for details on this point). However, it is important to note that I am interested in those influences at institutional and classroom level, which mainly involve students, teachers, collegial relationships, and input resources such as, instructional materials, textbooks, and possibly some other factors. This is because, firstly, these are considered to be the immediate and most direct influence on classroom processes (Wedell & Malderez, 2013) (see chapter 2 for more details). Secondly, covering all the contextual factors which impact teachers and their work is an unrealistic target for the current study. Therefore, factors such as the role played by parents, and wider regional and national educational policies are beyond the scope of this study. Also, they are considered to be an indirect influence (*ibid*) on actual classroom interactions/processes.

**R.Q2)** How, in pursuit of their interests/concerns/values, do the participant-teachers *respond to* (encounter, negotiate, receive) such institutional structural conditioning/influences in their given context?

Corresponding to the second stage of interplay / interaction, this research question will examine the process by which teachers receive, reflect upon and react to the context conditioned by the given institutional structures (as revealed from research question 1). Though influence and reception overlap and are in operation at the same time, here they will be split for the purpose of analysis.

**R.Q3)** What is the *behavioural outcome* (current pedagogy, and whether showing morphogenetic tendency or morphostatic tendency) of the interaction between participant-teachers and the structural influences:

This research question will explore what happens as a result of the way the participant teachers' interact with the institutional structural influences of their teaching context. It will identify how the encounters and negotiations, as found through the above two research questions, generate emergent phenomena which may influence, in some way, the current social environment (teaching context) and will be encountered by subsequent actors and agents (teachers).

Although in reality, agency and structure(s) are continuously at work in society, the analytical element involves breaking up such flows into intervals as determined by the given problem and accompanying periodization (Archer, 1995). Projection of the three phases (mentioned above) backwards and forwards would connect with posterior (phase before interaction) and anterior (phase after interaction) analytical cycles (*ibid*).

In order to answer the above research questions, I decided to adopt a qualitative multi-case study research design where I carried out a research study with eight ESL teachers (eight cases) at four Pakistani secondary state schools. This whole research design and the rationale for it is presented in detail in chapter 4. Since the main focus of the study was structural possibilities/affordances and constraints and how teachers reflected upon and responded to them, I used semi-structured interviews, as well as non-participant classroom observations (video recordings) with accompanying field-notes for in-depth insights. Such research methods seemed to be the most appropriate for discovering what the participant teachers wanted to achieve, what they actually could achieve, and what they ultimately did achieve in their specific institutional and professional teaching context. The collected data was analysed both thematically as well as through classroom discourse analysis (which focuses on the classroom talk), the understanding of which lies at the very heart of understanding the teaching process, the teachers' agency and their internalised beliefs and thoughts (Van Lier, 2008; Li & Walsh, 2011).

Next, I will present in what ways this research study can be beneficial.

## 1.6 **Significance of the study and critical realist perspective**

I believe that a view of language teachers' ability or capacity to make decisions can be reduced to several limited structural and material conditions, which may constrain or enable them. As stated above, in this research project, I want to find out whether this is indeed the case. My study is based on the idea that "actions have to be understood within the contexts which are constitutive of their meaning" (Sayer, 1992: 120). Wedell and Malderez (2013) also endorse that any attempt by practitioners to inform their reasoning by systematically investigating their own context, indeed, have potential. They believe that locally focused investigations seem to provide answers to why effective implementation of planned changes do/do not occur in a specific context (ibid). Therefore, *understanding* is the first crucial step in assessing any possible contextually appropriate solutions and the reader should explore their own context through undertaking investigative tasks (ibid).

Putting Wedell and Malderez's viewpoint in the context of this study, the English language teacher-participants must have gained many insights into, and much experience of, the pedagogical possibilities of the unique (resource-poor) conditions which constitute the context of this research. These insights need to be brought to the fore as they provide us with a window into the struggles of these teachers when coping with the given constraints specific

to teaching contexts in which they work. Within their given circumstances, the processes by which these teachers have confronted the structural constraints and enablements, and the resultant changes to their teaching/pedagogical practices can become a source of knowledge. Such understanding might equip relevant stakeholders to evaluate their own aspirations as to what is achievable in terms of developing their students' learning and teachers' effective teaching in their given constraints and enablements (factors which facilitate/support/help in teachers' achieving what they desire and intend to achieve in their classroom teaching). See chapter 10 for the implications of this study.

In reference to the specific focus on structures and agency, (their interplay, and the resultant emerging nature of both that this research explores), Corson (1997) argues that if CR becomes a guiding philosophy for applied linguistics, then the ethically appropriate epistemology of this field will be a more inclusive theory of knowledge than those currently expounded. Corson (1997) further argues that as applied linguistics steps into the real world of human interaction and relates theories to practice, its concerns reach into the question(s) of 'being' itself (an ontological matter). Such concern is similar to the philosophy currently influential in the human sciences, that is, critical realism, which also begins with the questions of 'being'. CR views the non-human properties of the social world – such as, the accounts and reasons which people provide to interpret the different aspects of their worlds – as real entities. Such human accounts and reasons, presented in natural language exchanges, in turn, become the data and area of investigation of applied linguistics. Therefore, if applied linguists take such accounts more seriously – discourse which is rarely heard - applied linguistics may contribute more directly to improve the human condition (Corson, 1997). In terms of the current study, this means an improved set of conditions for teachers, and by extension, learners.

Moreover, the available research related to language teachers' pedagogy in resource-poor contexts tends to be driven by correcting a perceived deficit in teachers or their teaching through prescriptive advice, usually in the form of suggestions and policy guidelines of how one ought to teach, regardless of questions relating to context (Walsh, 2012). There is a tendency to neglect the study of pedagogical activities that are actually emerging and why, thus degrading what currently exists (Sackmann, 2007). As a result, the insights into the richness and depth of pedagogy as developed by the participants in difficult conditions is compromised, a problem which the current study intends to redress. Due to the fact that the demand for English language and educational provision in several developing contexts are somewhat similar to those in Pakistan (Coleman, 2010), it is hoped that the research findings

and possibly some of the resultant policy and practice recommendations might be of some benefit to such contexts. In this regard, Pakistan's state schools situation might be seen to symbolize other such contexts both nationally and internationally.

According to Kiely (2014) and Hall (2011), any kind of responses to the reports of inadequate learning outcomes in most contexts are likely to have a limited impact without any corresponding level of change by teachers themselves. Thus, applying a critical realist perspective in examining language teachers, as in this study, may provide an alternative view of looking at language teachers' agency as something that is achieved through the active engagement of individuals with aspects of their contexts-for-action (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). In practice, it may have implications for more contextually appropriate professional development initiatives for language teachers in similar contexts as opposed to the more universal ones. As Pickering (1995: 245, as cited in Ahearn, 2001) suggests, "Within different cultures [contexts here] human beings and the material world might exhibit capacities for action quite different from those we customarily attribute to them".

## 1.7 **Thesis structure**

The thesis will be organized in a sequence of detailed chapters, 1 to 9, which are structured as follows:

This chapter (1) has outlined a brief introduction to my research topic, and defines the focus, followed by the research rationale, aims, questions, a brief outline of the theoretical framework and methodology, and finally the significance and scope of the study.

Chapter 2 (Resource-poor ELT Context) will provide a conceptual clarification with regard to institutional context or structures. This will be followed by an explanation of the characteristics of 'resource-poor' teaching contexts. This will lead to an overview and discussion of the previous and current research done undertaken so far on the language teachers, with some reference to the mainstream/general educational research, in resource-poor or challenging contexts. This information will help to better situate this study in the current relevant academic discussion. In the following section, I will explain in detail the main gaps in knowledge which I established in chapter 1 and the opportunities for research that arose from my reading. Finally, I will provide a brief picture of the research context, Pakistan and a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the state schools in which the study took place.

Chapter 3 (Critical Realist perspective) will present the different views on agency in literature and a view adopted in this study, followed by a detailed discussion on the debates surrounding the relationship between the twin concepts of structure and agency in social sciences and the limitation of each perspective. This discussion will lead to the justification for adopting CR as - the study's main theoretical framework as well as its detailed presentation: CR's main assumptions in general in contrast to Archer's (1995, 1996, 2003) variants in particular.

In Chapter 4 (Methodology), I will mention the key ethical considerations of the study and also the specific steps I took to try and answer the research questions. I will also provide a detailed description of the main methodological approach – a multiple case study approach - that I chose to adopt. Further I will describe in detail the stages of data collection and analysis, justifying some of the important decisions I made at each stage. I also consider some of the ways in which I attempted to maximise the “trustworthiness” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the findings, as well as addressed some of the main issues regarding my role as a researcher and my relationships with the participants.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the data analysis methods and their justification, as well as detailed procedure(s) of analysis. In this chapter I will explain how I decided to present the findings in the following data analysis chapters (6 and 7) where I will provide a detailed presentation of the research findings of four teachers as four cases.

In chapter 8, I will present the cross-case analysis of the four teachers in order to provide a detailed overview of the similarities and differences among them. In this chapter, I will also discuss these cases at length in the light of the relevant literature. This chapter and the discussion therein will lead me to conclude the study in the subsequent chapter (9) where I will outline the possible contribution of the study to related research, point out its limitations as well as address the study's implications for policy, practice and future research. I will finally end the thesis by outlining briefly how this study contributed to my own professional and personal development.

## Chapter 2                      **Resource-poor ELT context**

### 2.1      **Introduction**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this research focuses on the *interplay* between structure(s) (teaching context) and (English language teachers’) agency. This necessitates a conceptualisation of both structure(s) (the resource-poor ELT contexts where the teacher-participants work) as well as the teachers as agents whose agency is embodied in that context. While the latter will be dealt with in the following chapter, the present chapter details the former. For this purpose, and relevant to the explanation of structure(s) or context in this study, the discussion in this chapter centres on four key areas which constitute the three main sections of this chapter.

The first section (2.2) will focus on the meaning of the ‘*context or structure*’ and its scope generally. This discussion will enable me to provide a conceptual framework of the structure(s) adopted for this study. This is followed by the second main section (2.3) which explains what a ‘*resource-poor*’ teaching context means. This will lead to an overview of the research done so far on the language teachers, with some reference to mainstream/general educational research, in resource-poor contexts or difficult circumstances. This information will help me to better situate this study in the current relevant academic discussion. Finally, in the last section (2.5), I will sketch out in detail the wider research context of Pakistan and the specific research sites - the secondary state schools in Pakistan – to enable the reader to make better sense of the data and findings of the study during the data analyses’ chapters.

### 2.2      **‘Context’ or ‘Structures’**

Context as described by Wedell and Malderez (2013) constitutes micro and macro elements, many visible and invisible layers, and three interrelated components (people, place and time) (see Wedell & Malderez, 2013 for more details). For example, from the classroom (micro), which is the centre of any education system, outwards to the institution or school within which the classroom is located, further to the town/city and region, to the country with its physical, and geopolitical position in some specific part of the world (outer macro layers). These are also the core ‘visible’ aspects of context in the sense that they are able to be empirically perceived by an outsider, comparatively quicker, through observation, that is,

seeing, listening, reading or questioning. The core ‘Invisible’ aspects of context are equally real, though being inaccessible directly to the senses, take more effort and longer to understand. These include, for example, group dynamics at the classroom level, school/institutional culture, local attitudes at the village/city/town level and so on. (ibid). These ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’ layers of the context have been categorised by Davis et al. (2000) as cultural, social and physical contexts, which collectively are termed by Strom (2015) as material (for example, equipment, instructional materials) and non-material sources (for example, teacher’s qualities, teacher education, past experiences). This shows the scope (breadth and depth) of the *context*.

What has been termed as ‘context’ in general educational literature, has been referred to as *social structures* in social sciences (Archer, 2010; Scott, 2010), and so in this study. ‘Structures’, in social sciences, has been theorised differently by different scholars, though having overlaps. For example, Fleetwood (2005) categorised structures as; materially real, ideally real, artifactually real, and socially real. Materially real structures, according to Fleetwood (ibid), are entities like water and mountains which exist independently of what individuals say, do or think. On the contrary, artifactually real structures are material entities which are concept-mediated, for instance, computers, textbooks or buildings. They are physical (material) objects, however, at the same time mediated conceptually. Ideally real structures are broadly discursive entities, such as beliefs, genres, discourses, or theories. Socially real structures include practices, entities or states of affairs, such as, becoming unemployed, caring for children, the market mechanism, and specifically the social structures which constitute organizations. Eldervass (2008: 281) describes components of structure as institutional, relational and embodied structure. Block (2015) suggests a model of structure which consists of five realms: economic, physical, social, psychological/embodied, and interactional structure. Both Eldervass’s and Block’s categories encompasses almost all the above-mentioned components of structure(s) and, therefore, their explanation is somewhat repetitive here, though the readers, if they want, can refer to these studies for more information. Similarly, Bourdieu defines similar categories of structures, quite concisely and at the same time inclusive of different types of ‘capital’ or resources as economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). On account of such features of conciseness and inclusiveness, I conceptualise ‘structures’ (‘context’ in this study) in terms of the Bourdieu’s categorisation of structures as economic, social and cultural resources. These terms are explained in section 3.5 below.

From the above attempt to present a thorough picture of the context or structures, it becomes clear that it is very complicated to describe context, as also noted by Fullan (1993: 208 as cited in Wedell & Malderez, 2013), due to "... a huge number of variables and their interactive change nature" and, therefore, "... it is logically unfeasible to get all the necessary information, and cognitively impossible for individuals to understand the total picture, even if the information is available". Therefore, it needs to be accepted that it is not quite possible to look at each component of context in its entirety, particularly in a study such as this, with limited scope. Therefore, in an attempt at a complete understanding of the participant-teachers' teaching context, components will necessarily be omitted (Wedell & Malderez, 2013). It must be noted that important factors might be missing on account of the complex relationships which exist between the investigator and what is being investigated (ibid). Such relationships, depending on the experiences of the researcher and the researched, may considerably change the form of, or the emphasis within, the descriptions finally reached. Hence, an effort to understand a context needs to be guided by a personal purpose (ibid). Thus, as I have already stated above (chapter 1), my personal purpose is to understand the English language teachers' professional context in terms of its influence on them in pedagogical terms, that is, which main features of the teachers' professional context impact their work and how. However, as I have made clear so far, the professional context where my participant-teachers work and which forms the focus of this study are 'resource-poor' Pakistani state schools. Therefore, it is important to first understand what 'resource-poor educational contexts' mean both in academic literature and in this study, and what do the current studies say about its impact on the work of teachers in general and language teachers in particular. It is to this topic that we turn to next.

### 2.3 **Resource-poor educational context: its meaning and impact on teachers' work**

According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) and Poesen and Nicaise (2015), the different kinds of 'capital', or resources, and their volume and structure determine a school's position in the field of education as either disadvantageous or advantageous and hence categorise a school as resource-rich, resource-poor or resource-medium.

In educational literature, such as Kuchah (2008), Nakabugo et al. (2008), Coleman (2010), Kuchah and Smith (2011), Hockly (2014), and Shamim and Kuchah (2016), in addition to 'resource-poor', a number of other terms have been used for such a challenging context.

These are, for example, ‘low-resource’, ‘resource-constrained’, ‘developing’, ‘poorly-resourced’, ‘under-resourced’, and, ‘unfavourable or difficult circumstances’ when contrasted with “well-resourced/favoured” contexts (ibid). The umbrella term commonly used for such contexts in literature is ‘South or East’ or ‘TESEP’<sup>5</sup> and ‘North or West’ or ‘BANA’<sup>6</sup> respectively (Holliday, 1994; Kuchah & Smith, 2011). Although the terms ‘TESEP’ and ‘BANA’ were coined by Holliday some time ago, they still remain useful as not only do they highlight the differences which are usually commented upon in the ‘ET context literature’, but also present an initial way of differentiating between the two still current broad ET paradigms (Wedell & Malderez, 2013). Thus, the afore mentioned terms have the same meaning and are representative of contexts with more or less common features (as explained in section 2.4). Therefore, for the purpose of consistency, in this study, I will use the term ‘resource-poor’. This is because, I consider the term ‘resource-poor’ as most reflective of - the conditions which qualify any context as a deprived. However, from here on I will be drawing on any literature focusing on such contexts, irrespective of the specific term(s) they use, in relation to teachers in general or specifically language teachers.

In terms of the impact of resource-poor educational context on teachers’ work, the existing studies have drawn more or less similar conclusions. While identifying difficult circumstances with limited financial and material educational resources, Shamim and Kuchah (2016) and Kuchah and Smith (2011) quote Michael West (1960) – who first brought to light the issue of difficult circumstances in English language teaching (ELT). In his book “Teaching English in difficult circumstances” he drew attention to the many challenges of ELT classrooms in resource-poor contexts such as, “over 30 pupils (more usually 40 or even 50), congested on benches..., accommodated in an unsuitably shaped room, ill-graded [i.e. of mixed ability], with a teacher who perhaps does not speak English well, working in a hot climate” (p.1).

Hence, the predominant feature of the resource-poor educational context is the constraining influence of material/economic factors or what Wedell and Malderez (2013), in the field of language education, have termed ‘context of place’ or visible layers of context. As noted

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<sup>5</sup> Tertiary, secondary or primary level (TESEP) institutions within the state sector in non-English speaking countries

<sup>6</sup> Britain, Australasia and North America (BANA)

previously, this includes the visible physical surroundings, conditions and facilities of the classroom and institutional context. I would say mainly financial or finance related factors, that is, features of place which impact the physical structures within which education occurs and so have a bearing on the type of learning and teaching that occurs therein (ibid). This may include, for instance, its size, number of individuals in it, soundproofing and weather, availability of IT equipment, desks, boards, electricity, paper and other learning-teaching support materials/facilities, and money available, among others (Wedell & Malderez, 2013; Shamim & Kuchah, 2016). These elements provide clues regarding the kinds of activities which may be performed within that place and how those activities are likely to be performed (Wedell & Malderez, 2013). For example, in a study on the challenges of large class teaching, in a mainstream education in Uganda (Nakabugo et al., 2008), resources, such as limited physical space for interaction and movement, insufficient textbooks and instructional materials, few desks, cramped working spaces and a severe lack of textbooks, were identified as the most common major constraints (24.37%) than other constraints. The researchers in this study found that the teachers considered the available resources as insufficient for the large numbers of students and due to this dearth of resources, the time required for the implementation of lessons increased unduly, for instance, the teachers utilized more time writing material on the board. Further difficulties were felt regarding attention paid to individual students and ensuring that all students participated fully in the lessons, as well as the teachers carrying out substantial exercises, marking them and providing students with useful feedback. Resultantly, some teachers resorted to offering less practice and exercises as a way to reduce marking burden. Difficulties in classroom management were also raised which resulted in poor indiscipline, such as, excessive noise. Moreover, the difficulties of making learning interesting through hands-on activities were also mentioned by the teachers.

Similarly, Benbow et al. (2007) also observed that overpopulated classrooms can negatively affect two significant and interrelated aspects of teacher practice – instructional time and classroom management. Large classes take a toll on the teacher's ability to manage time, and perform task management and behavioural management, thus leaving less time for actual instruction (Wilson 2006; Holloway, 2002; Ehrenberg, et al., 2001). Wilson (2006) reports that larger classes are noisier than smaller classes. Nilsson (2003) reports that in Zambia, for example, teacher attrition is increasingly becoming a problem on account of inadequate salaries, work conditions, professional development opportunities and support.

Moreover, Kuchah and Smith (2011) in their study in the resource-poor ELT context of Cameroon found that, while teaching, it was not feasible for Kuchah to carry out pair and

group work language activities: CLT and interactive activities. This context practiced a mainly examination-centred syllabus where teachers' work was measured in terms of the textbook units they had covered within a given period, and the only solution appeared to be to adopt a teacher-centred practice, thereby, focusing more on vocabulary and grammar, outlining rules and practicing exercises from the textbook. In other words, a teacher-centred approach, he believed, was the best solution for him to deal with the large classroom size. Thus, teachers and researchers have identified several problems such as learners' engagement and interaction, discipline and time issues in teaching large classes, particularly in resource-poor ELT contexts (Shamim & Kuchah, 2016).

Although mainly associated with economic or material resource deficiencies (Nakabugo et al., 2008; Kuchah & Smith, 2011), the literature on resource-poor or, in Holliday's (1994) terms, TESEP English Teaching (ET)<sup>7</sup> contexts (where the majority of non-English speaking teachers worldwide work), indicates some other common features. These are outlined in detail by Maley (2001) while summarised by Ives (2000), Aborisade (2013) and recently by Wedell and Malderez (2013) and Shamim and Kuchah (2016) as:

- Teachers teach learners who learn something being part of the curriculum, and, if paying 'school fees', do not pay particularly for learning English.
- Classes are mostly large, monolingual and taught by comparatively untrained teachers who share the learners' mother tongue and have an uncertain command of/in English.
- Classes are usually poorly resourced and teachers mostly have little access to a variety of equipment and/or materials.
- Teachers often have less flexibility in making decisions regarding what or how to teach, thus having a limited range of professional experiences.
- Teachers lack adequate English language or/and pedagogical skills.

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<sup>7</sup> Term used by Wedell & Malderez (2013)

- Teachers are largely influenced by the textbook, the syllabus, and examinations.
- Teachers are usually expected to use methods and/or materials which originate from BANA contexts.

Limited class time, challenges related to management, feeling of anonymity, lack of flexibility and mixed level classes that challenge the teachers. Furthermore, hesitation of students to ask teachers questions, minimum teacher attention to students and the need for individual effort challenge the students.

Bughio (2012) have captured such features of English teaching in large classes at a Pakistani university as follows:

On the one hand, there is a lack of infrastructure; on the other hand, teachers are poorly trained in language teaching. There is a lack of resources, a lack of suitable furniture for language teaching, and an absence of visual aids... the teachers are less motivated to change their teaching methods due to a lack of required training.... Reluctance to introduce any change is also due to the sociocultural influences on the teaching. Teachers transfer knowledge rather than sharing it. Therefore teachers consider that changing teaching methods is difficult because of the learner's traditional orientation and behaviour for classroom learning. (p. 135)

Moreover, some other empirical studies in the field of language education in resource-poor/developing contexts also reflect similar situations to those mentioned immediately above. Such studies include the work of Kuchah (2016), Kuchah and Smith (2011), Ampiah (2008), Goza et al. (2008), Komba and Nkumbi (2008), Muthwii (2001), Nakabugo et al. (2008), O'Sullivan (2006), Sawamura and Sifuna (2008).

Furthermore, Tembe (2006) has revealed that the implementation of an 'Education for All policy', providing free education, has further increased the existing challenges like overcrowded classrooms, lack of libraries and textbooks, low teacher motivation, qualification, and proficiency, learners' limited exposure to the use of English language, lack of material and financial resources, and other cultural constraints. Despite this situation, there has been consistent demands for quality teaching (UNESCO, 2005) and so an increasing need for teacher training (Akyeampong et al., 2013). Resultantly, there has been the tendency to introduce different forms of CLT - a typically BANA notion - in ELT circles, including TESEP context(s) (Maley, 2001). Although, Cook and Seidlhofer (1995: 8) assert

that language teaching is an area which needs “principles to mediate between linguistic theory and pedagogical practices”, (for which it needs applied linguistics) in situations like TESEP, this has something of a hollow ring (Maley, 2001). This is because the applied linguistics discourse community, which primarily addresses BANA contexts, seem to have little to offer to TESEP contexts by means of possible solutions (ibid).

One explanation for this shortfall in solutions could be that the educational literature specific to BANA have mainly an ‘individualistic’ or ‘voluntaristic’ orientation as do the ensuing language teaching and learning theories based on it (for instance, CLT). As a result, the educational research studies, whether belonging to the BANA or TESEP contexts, mainly have the same ‘individualistic’ orientations leading either to the total neglect of contextual/institutional/structural factors or a superficial treatment of such factors. The model for educational progress in the periphery (TESEP) is something that is still imported from the centre (BANA) (Kumaravadivelu, 2013) without realising that anything effective in one context might not be effective in the other unless it is properly adapted to differing educational and sociocultural characteristics (ibid). For international comparison, various governments, especially in Africa and Asia, tend to advocate the adoption of centre-produced 'best practices' regardless of their appropriacy to local conditions (ibid). The international trends seem to have been mostly followed blindly in most of the TESEP contexts without a sufficient understanding of the TESEP teaching context in terms of whether and to what extent centre-produced approaches are applicable to such context(s).

Similar situation seems to exist in the research context of Pakistan. Following international trends, in an attempt to create student-centred communicative teaching-learning environment and considering the centre-produced approaches as a golden rule or magic to facilitate greater learner proficiency, educational policymakers focused all their attention in making the English language curriculum and the textbooks based on it, highly communicative in orientation. This is clearly reflected in the objectives of the national curriculum (explained in detail below in section 2.5.2). As a result, (as we shall see in detail in chapters 6 and 7 (Data Analysis)), English language teachers have been introduced and encouraged, in their general pre-service training courses, to use a method called the ‘direct

method<sup>8</sup> which follows CLT principles. However, despite these attempts, the prevalent educational culture to which the majority Pakistanis are exposed remained largely teacher-centred, particularly in the ESL classes in state schools, and failed to produce the desired outcomes as mentioned in the previous chapter (section 1.3.2).

This shows that instead of attempting to understand the language classroom in terms of what is possible therein, in any attempts made to provide solutions, usually more attention has been paid to assumed deficiency of teachers and suggesting to implement CLT approaches by any means in ELT classes even if such approaches fits therein or not (for example, see Bughio, 2012). In such a situation, it becomes more important to understand the language classroom first in terms of what teaching approach to use, and how much the application of a certain teaching approach is possible (Wedell & Malderez, 2013). Also of importance is an understanding of what the obstacles are in implementing an apparently promising communicative curriculum, especially from the teachers' perspective. This involves ascertaining what teachers believe are the underlying causes for students behaving in a particular way in the language class in order to be in a better position to improve classroom practice. The current research is an effort in this regard; an attempt to move away from a top-down ready-made solution (for example, implementing a communicative curriculum, utilising training based on Western ELT approaches) to a bottom-up understanding of the language classroom first. In this way, this research will not only add to the Pakistani ELT literature, policy and practice (see chapter 10) but also to the currently very limited number of research papers on this specific topic from other such resource-poor ELT contexts. Since reports from several other developing countries across the world suggest that the transition from teacher-centred towards more student-centred learning (as promoted by CLT approaches), have not been successful (Song, 2015; Schweisfurth, 2011; Elkind, 2004). This is unsurprising given that such a change to teaching practice is extremely complex.

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<sup>8</sup> Teaching the target language (English here) through the continuous/direct use of target language (Richards & Rodgers, 1986)

## 2.4 Explaining the gap in the current literature

In educational literature regarding teachers, we generally find three main types of research studies. These are: a) research which focuses on *language teacher beliefs and identity in well-resourced teaching contexts*, b) research which focuses on *mainstream teacher agency in well-resourced teaching context*, and c) research which focuses on the *institutional factors both in the general educational and ELT fields in resource-poor teaching context*. All three types of research link the level of individual to that of social but in different ways, and with different emphasis.

With regard to a), the research largely revolves around the discourses employed by teachers and the narratives constructed by them. Philosophically, research regarding teacher beliefs and identity is influenced, to varying extent, by poststructuralist and postmodern thought with a concurrent stress on epistemological issues (knowing) instead of ontology (being). Regardless of the diversity existing among the different perspectives, identity, and even social reality itself, is considered as socially constructed and discursively mediated (for example, Duff & Uchida, 1997; Varghese et al., 2005; Abednia, 2012; Kiely, 2014; Cheung, Said & Park, 2015; Wolff & De Costa, 2017; Zotzmann, 2018). The focus centres on how a person co-constructs and positions him/herself in relation to others. This point will be further discussed in section 3.4.

Regarding b), the research on teacher agency draws our attention to the capacity of teachers (agents) to exercise influence on their respective professional contexts (structures). The concept of agency (intrinsically paired with the concept of structures) has emerged in the social sciences and explored more fully in social theories (explained in detail in the following chapter 3). Being a social sciences concept(s), the agency-structure couplet (having equal and mutual influence on each other) has been mainly taken up in general education research or in other disciplines and has rarely been an explicit focus of language education research. Even so there are implicit assumptions about the concept of agency (and structure) in language teacher identity research where often attempts have been made to account for contextual influences. However, the underlying assumption regarding social reality as discursive construction certainly directs one's attention to an individual's perceptions and interpretations of, or narratives regarding, social reality than the on which he/she reports (Martinez, Martin & Marlow 2014: 453). Although, researchers put forth claims about extra-discursive powers having causal influence on people and/or their narratives, researchers'

claims are made without explaining where the extra-discursive power is supposed to emerge from, as if reality is indeed a purely social construction (Zotzmann, 2018).

With regard to c), generally *context* oriented research studies are limited within the field of applied linguistics or ELT (Wedell & Malderez, 2013), even rarer are the studies which represent the TESEP context, despite the greater ELT community that it represents. As observed by Kumaravadivelu (2013), “we live in a world where English language use among non-native speakers of English far exceeds English language use between native and non-native speakers” (p. 318). According to Kuchah (2016), he met many teachers from such contexts whose pedagogic practices were quite creative and hence enriching to their students’ learning experiences. However, Kuchah also observed that unfortunately such practices are not usually shared publicly, and thus tended to go unnoticed. To this extent, Kuchah (2016) indirectly emphasises the urgent need for educators to produce and disseminate empirical research on English language teachers and teaching situations in resource-poor/TESEP contexts. This is an argument also put forth previously by other scholars in the literature (for example, Rubdy 2008; Bax 2003; Kumaravadivelu 2001; Holliday 1994a, 1994b). These scholars emphasise the fact that appropriate approaches to ELT ought to emerge out of the local teaching context, instead of being imported and imposed upon teachers.

However, some research attempts (such as those mentioned in section 2.3 above) have been made in TESEP contexts to understand the general and English Language teaching-learning context and to find possible solutions to the challenges of such contexts with the aim of promoting an effective teaching-learning environment. Such studies list different contextual factors and identify the strong impact of contextual constraints on teachers, and their learning or professional development. However, these studies seem to be quite superficial in their understanding of the *process of influence of and response to* such constraints by the teachers. Such studies tend to be more postmodernist in orientation and fail to examine the *mutual* influence of both structure and agency. Constructing agency merely in terms of a manoeuvre against sociocultural influences represents a reductionist approach to academic practice (Kahn, 2009). What is required is a promising way of reconciling structure and agency, and objectivity and subjectivity; something offered by the realist social theory by Archer (1995, 2000, 2003, 2007). With specific regard to resource-poor *ELT* contexts, research is mostly limited to highlighting the sole issue of class size and its associated problems but not beyond that at least in their emphasis. In the words of Wedell and Malderez (2013), we may like to look at some of the other ‘moans’ (apart from large classes) and the possible reasons for their

existence. An account of contextual factors in terms of their influence without perceiving teacher agency as embedded in the institutional structures, I believe, is insufficient to account for such influences. As Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) note:

the micro-perspective of language teachers' inner worlds and individual practices is embedded in the larger ecologies of workplaces, educational systems, national language policies, and global issues. (p. 445)

The word 'embedded' here signifies an 'embodied' individual where the concept of 'agency' is more meaningful than the notion of human beings being merely 'actors'. This is due to the fact that the former is tied to structure(s) and evokes an active being capable of reflecting upon and responding to a given role while the latter is conceived of as an occupant, tied to the social role they come to occupy, and therefore is perceived to be a passive pre-programmed role-taker and executor of that role (Archer, 2003).

Regarding this, Archer (2003) argues (and as is the case with previous research on contextual influences as pointed out previously in the section 2.3) that sometimes we talk about structural factors as operating on us as a one-sided force or influence, with humans passively receiving the impact of such influences without our awareness as in the 'unacknowledged conditions of action'. This implies that structural impact exist independent of their subjective reception by the humans, in which case, it may be felt that the human subjectivity does not make any contribution to the outcomes (ibid). However, it would be a mistake to believe that subjectivity is expelled from such process of conditioning (ibid). Pawson (1996) calls it 'knowledgeable action with unacknowledged conditions'.

Therefore, an in-depth understanding of how the structural/institutional/contextual factors *interact* with language teachers' agency embedded in such resource-poor ELT contexts, in the absence of hardly any empirical study, particularly from these contexts, I believe, warrants investigation. By this I mean, the way these factors are received, reflected upon and responded to by English language teachers. I want to explore and understand how a context characterised by limited cultural and socio-economic resources, may shape language teachers' agency embedded in such a context. In simple words, we, as researchers, require to engage deeply with the *interplay* between (language) teachers and the social reality of their teaching context to understand not only who the teachers present themselves to be but, more importantly, what they do, and why they do what they do (Zotzmann, 2018).

Thus, any account of agency, as in social theories, is intrinsically paired with a conceptualization of structures, and as argued in this study, can help us to capture not only the essential role of teachers (agents) but also the enabling and constraining features of the teaching context and the structures which pre-exist them, that they enter into and need to work with and respond to. Such an understanding of the causal relationships between agents' (teachers) reasons for their action, practices and the structures (institutional/working context) wherein they operate, can best be evaluated by adopting a CR perspective (Bhaskar, 1986, 1998; Archer, 1995, 1996, 1998a), which focuses on ontological issues with the purpose of identifying and understanding what is/ is not causally effective in particular situations. I will explain this perspective in more detail in the following chapter. Before that, in order to contextualise the current study, I will next briefly present the English language situation in the wider research context – Pakistan – where the current study has been conducted. However, secondary state schools, being the specific research site, will be presented in relatively more detail (section 2.5.3 below).

I would like to add here that the information relayed in the following section with regard to Pakistan regarding the educational settings are based on the relevant readings and by virtue of my being a citizen of Pakistan, on my observations and experiences. Regarding educational settings, my observations resulted from my experience(s) as a teacher in different educational settings in Pakistan, before beginning this research study (see section 1.3.1 above for details). However, the essential features of the educational system, particularly the state secondary schools and their related aspects (for example, English language teachers), were largely revealed during the research process.

## 2.5 **The research context: Pakistan**

Pakistan, having a population of approximately 176 million (Government of Pakistan, 2011), is the world's sixth largest population. Its predominantly Muslim majority constitutes 96% of the population making it the second largest Muslim country of the world, after Indonesia (Miller 2009; Coleman & Capstick, 2012). It has four provinces, namely, Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, and Kyberpukhtunkhwa.

Pakistan, in common with most parts of South Asia, underwent colonisation by the British (Coleman & Capstick, 2012). The presence of British in South Asia commenced with the establishment of trading posts during the early seventeenth century (ibid). The influence expanded over the Indian territory, as it is today, over the next two centuries (ibid). The

British, however, could not attain control over the provinces that constitute contemporary Pakistan until 1840s (ibid). However, after the unsuccessful uprising against Britain in 1857, the British took direct control. Slowly a national Muslim identity emerged, championed by a Muslim leader, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817–89), gradually leading to the foundation of a political party, All India Muslim League in 1907<sup>9</sup>. It strongly supported the establishment of a separate Muslim-majority nation-state, Pakistan, which successfully led to the partition of British India and foundation of Pakistan in 1947 by the British Empire.

Pakistan has been through intermittent experience(s) of military regimes for around thirty of its sixty-four years of existence until 2008 (ibid). Currently, the country is democratic, though it faces continuous challenges to the sustenance of its democratic system (ibid).

### 2.5.1 **The status of English language in Pakistan**

Pakistan is a multilingual country, having 61 languages (Rahman, 2010: 21). The country is rich in regional languages with Urdu as a national language and English as a major foreign and/or second language. English was and continued to be the official language of Pakistan, both before and after independence. Since independence, “English has been associated with the ruling elite in the urban centres and has consequently been identified as the language of power and dominance” (Shamim, 2008: 253). Being an official language of Pakistan, English is extensively used in media and for business purposes (Usman, 2008). People from all walks of life, such as, business, commerce, and politics consider English more important for the country’s development than local languages (Mahboob, 2009). Moreover, the fact that English is a lingua franca gives it a very prestigious status giving added value to its users.

These factors have rendered the learning and teaching of the English language inevitable for the people in Pakistan, making it an essential component of the Pakistani education system as well. Wright explains the prominence and significance of English in countries like Pakistan, when he says: ‘learning English is now regarded as a basic educational goal for people in many countries because of its pre-eminence as a global language’ (Wright, 2010: 265). Due to its global importance, English is taught as a compulsory subject at different

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<sup>9</sup> <http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/pakistan/history>

levels mainly from class one to B.Sc/B.A in educational institutions: i.e. in state and private, primary and secondary schools, and universities (Usman, 2008, Iqbal, 2013). It is the medium of instruction (hereafter- MI) in elite private schools and cadet colleges that are run through the administration of the armed forces (Aftab, 2012; Bughio, 2012; Shah, 2012). In most of the private and in some state schools, all subjects are taught in English. The different levels and types of educational institutions in Pakistan are explained in the following section.

### 2.5.2 **Educational system in Pakistan**

The Pakistani educational system is a legacy of British colonial power (Shamim, 2008). The British had initiated two streams of education: English-medium and vernacular-medium to serve their own political ends (Rahman, 1996). The English-medium settings would produce bureaucratic staff while vernacular-medium would produce clerical staff to serve the bureaucrats. Post-independence, this education system remained the same, that is, separate educational institutions existed for the masses and for the ruling classes. Children of an elite class get education in the elite school system, while those of the masses attended vernacular language schools, private schools (for the middle classes) or state schools (Aftab, 2012; Bughio, 2012).

With the passage of time, this categorisation of educational institutions became more complicated. Currently, schools in Pakistan are categorized according to the MI used in these schools (Coleman & Capstick, 2012). These are: a) state run schools, b) deni Madrasahs (religious schools of various sects), c) old missionary schools (developed during British colonial times), d) semi-autonomous schools (for the upper class), e) elitist private schools, f) army garrison schools, g) private schools (for the upper and middle classes), h) Urdu medium schools, and i) schools currently established by NGOs<sup>10</sup> in several parts of the country. (Bughio, 2012).

Elite private schools are inspired by the British public school system, having extremely high fee structures and employing English as the MI. Schools administered by the armed forces also use English as the MI. State schools cater for the masses and do not charge any fee. The MI in most of the state schools in Pakistan is Urdu, whilst Pashto is also largely used in KPK

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<sup>10</sup> Non-Government Organisation

schools. In 2010, the Pakistani government decreed that English should be used as the MI for teaching of mathematics and science from the primary level in state schools. It seems that only very few primary teachers have the language skills needed for this. With regard to non - elite 'English - medium' schools, there has been a rapid increase, in recent years, in the development of private schools that demand modest fees. Their aim is to serve the lower middle class students who cannot afford fees of the elite schools. Although, they claim to be 'English medium', such claims need to be treated with care. Madrasas are a quite heterogeneous category of institutions with varied language practices. Their main orientation is towards religious studies. A small number demand no fees and hence are appealing for the very poor. (Coleman & Capstick, 2012).

A three-tier system of education exists in Pakistan which has been outlined by (Shah, 2012) as follows;

- Elementary (from grades 1-8): Elementary education is further split up into primary (from grades 1-5, ages approx. 6-10) and middle/elementary (from grades 6-8, ages approx. 11-13) and is served in elementary and primary schools.
- Secondary (from grades 9-12, ages approx. 14-17): In Pakistan, secondary education lasts for four years (from grades 9-12). It is provided by government secondary and higher secondary schools. Most of these schools cater for middle classes (from grades 6-8) as well. Broadly similar kinds of schools and colleges exist in all the four provinces to serve secondary classes.
- Tertiary or higher education (ages approx. 18 and over) in Pakistan starts after twelve years of schooling, after the completion of level/grade twelve and is conducted in universities, and colleges.

The Pakistani primary and secondary education system is hierarchical, with private schools occupying the highest level, government/public/state schools the lowest, while army run schools exist somewhere in between these two extremes. This stratification, stems from the disparity in the schools resources and/or socio-economic conditions. Private schools are mostly for those children whose parents are sufficiently wealthy while state schools are for the poor. Government investment in state schools education is quite low especially in economic resources (e.g. overcrowded classes, less furniture, not appropriately and sufficiently equipped classes i.e. audio/video instructional aids such as projectors etc.) and

cultural resources (e.g. training) (Westbrook et al., 2009). To all intents and purposes, the state school system is underfunded (Shah, 2012).

Speaking of the curriculum and textbooks in general, historically, education in Pakistan is prominently featured in the constitution. There was a major shift regarding the formal delegation of education in 1973, when more responsibilities were assigned to the provinces. Thus, education has mostly remained a provincial subject, particularly, with regard to elementary and secondary education. Not having federal patronage, elementary and secondary schools lacked the federal financial support, which added to the financial burden of the provinces. At the federal level, the formulation, evaluation, approval and implementation of the national curriculum for all disciplines, including the nationwide provision of English is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. However, the provinces is tasked with establishing their own planning as well as implementing plans according to the national education plans and policies. This includes the responsibility for developing textbooks in accordance with the National Curriculum which lies with the provincial and regional Textbook Boards for both state and private schools. Therefore, the finalized national curriculum, at the federal level, is then sent to the testing bodies known as Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (hereafter - BISE) and the Provincial Bureau of Curriculum which then send the national curriculum to the provincial textbook boards. The textbooks are then developed in line with the guidelines laid out in the national curriculum document. The textbooks, before printing and circulation need final approval by the Federal Bureau of Curriculum (curriculum wing of the ministry of education). It scrutinizes whether the textbooks are aligned with the national curriculum and after final approval, the textbooks are then published followed by distribution to the market. (<sup>11</sup>Dept. of E & SE, Government of KP, 2012)

After presenting a general overview of the educational system, in the next section I will only focus on state schools, known in Pakistan as government schools, with specific reference to secondary schools, on account of the current study having taken place in this setting.

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<sup>11</sup> Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

### 2.5.3 **English language teaching situation in state schools**

In Pakistan, as mentioned above, all state schools are mainly primary, elementary, secondary or higher secondary (Shah, 2012). In state schools (both primary and secondary), teaching occurs in a broadly similar pattern in different settings (Shamim & Allen, 2000). These schools provide education to most of the student population even in urban areas in Pakistan (Shamim, 1993, Bughio, 2012). They can be termed ‘disadvantaged schools’ because they are largely deficient in resources such as library resources, technological resources, sufficient land and proper buildings. The standard of these schools is far from satisfactory, and physical resources are almost absent (Shah, 2012).

These schools follow the government’s prescribed syllabus and the eight main subjects taught in these schools are: Urdu, Mathematics, English, Arts, Science, Islamic Studies, Social Studies, and sometimes computer related courses. There is no demarcation of English as a content or language subject and in the national curriculum, English is offered as a school subject. In 2006, the government made the English language compulsory from level/grade one upwards. Before that, it was only taught as a compulsory subject from grade six (secondary school level - age approx. 11 years) onwards. On the basis of performance in class VIII, students are selected for either Science or Arts groups. After completion of class VIII, students study for two years and at the end of class X, which is the final year of secondary school, students have to attend the formal, summative examination, set and conducted by the BISE (the regional board) which is a statutory body. The exam is locally called as ‘matriculation examination’. After passing the matriculation, the students further study for two years (grade eleven and twelve) and appear in the examination set again by BISE usually called the ‘intermediate examination’. After this examination, and for higher education, students go to either a university or some university-affiliated college mostly around the age of eighteen. (Shamim, 1993; Bughio, 2012; Shah, 2012).

The examinations, mentioned above, assess and measure the student learning outcomes (SLO) which are set out in the national curriculum (National Curriculum for English language, 2006) for every grade level for teachers’ guidance. Thus the curriculum is planned in the form of SLO which clearly defines the expected outcomes from students at the end of an academic year and when/if the curriculum is implemented. Regarding ELT, the curriculum document seems a comprehensive plan for teaching English in Pakistan. Although, it does not state any specific educational model or theory, ostensibly it appears to be a well-rendered document given its coverage of language skills where each language skill

is given due importance. With regard to the purpose and aim of teaching English, the curriculum stresses that English ought to be promoted as an academic and vocational language and the different skills of English language need to be taught not in isolation but in a coherent manner. The curriculum also stresses the notion that since the language serves as the basis for different disciplines of knowledge, proficiency in it will help the learners in acquiring command in other subject areas. All this reflects the main aim of the curriculum as the promotion of the functional aspect of the language and sets quite an ambitious road map which states:

The new curriculum aims to provide holistic opportunities to the students for language development and to equip them with competencies in using the English language for communication in academic and social contexts, while enabling them to be autonomous and lifelong learners to better adapt to the ever changing local and world society, and to knowledge advancement... it aims to offer academic and practical skills that learners can use.... rather on acquiring knowledge about the language for its own sake. Such an approach acknowledges, on one hand, the importance of teaching the knowledge about the language system; on the other, it moves a step forward to emphasize the appropriate use of that knowledge so that students' ability to communicate in real life situations is improved and made effective for various purposes....The curriculum is multidimensional and incorporates all components of language, i.e., phonology, grammar, lexis, discourse, and language functions and skills. Emphasis is placed on developing competency in all areas of the language. Skills and micro skills related to a particular standard are identified and developed through various processes and strategies with a major focus on development of language skills rather than on content. Functional, mass media, literary and every day texts provide a context for the teaching of the micro skills and strategies used in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The teaching strategies ensure that work in speaking, listening, reading and writing is integrated. Students learn to acquire information and ideas through reading and listening, and to effectively communicate their ideas through writing and speaking. (p. 1-2)

This indicates that overall, the curriculum document is quite communicative and student-centred in orientation, which clearly mentions skills, such as, oral communication skills (speaking and listening) in the English language, that require evaluation in the classrooms during formative assessments. To achieve the abovementioned learning outcomes, the

curriculum emphasises the following competencies to be developed in the English language: Writing Skills, Reading and Thinking Skills, Formal and Lexical Aspects of Language, Oral Communication Skills, Appropriate Ethical and Social Development (p. 3). The curriculum lists five competencies accompanied by eight standards for key learning areas of the English language (ibid). For a summary of ‘competencies’ and ‘standards’ and Benchmarks, see sections 2.3, 2.4 of the National Curriculum (2006).

The curriculum document provides thorough guidance and objectives which starts from grade 1 to grade 12. The skills at all these developmental stages depends on what has been introduced at the preceding developmental level. That is, the benchmarks at grades 9 and 10 are derived from competencies gained at grades 6, 7, and 8. In addition to that, the depth and breadth of the expectations also increase with every developmental level, that is, from “simple knowledge and comprehension to higher order skills of analysis, synthesis and evaluation” (Government of Pakistan, 2006: 3; Shah, 2012).

This curriculum document, as mentioned above in section 2.5.2 is implemented via the textbooks that are expected to reflect the curriculum and act as its alternative. Thus, the text book is the most important tool for a second/foreign language teacher. Therefore, proper English language knowledge cannot be imparted to the students without proper textbooks (Shah, 2012; Iqbal, 2013). The textbooks are claimed to have been produced within the above stated parameters mentioned by the National Curriculum (2006). The contents of the textbooks are further claimed (presumably in line with the national curriculum) to have been designed to prepare learners to improve their language skills; listening, speaking, writing and reading. For example, according to the preface of the English textbook for class 10, “The contents are designed to prepare the students to improve their skills; speaking, listening, reading and writing”. Particularly the accompanying “note for the teachers” (appendix K) regarding how to conduct their classes are highly communicative in orientation but hardly observed to be implemented by the teachers, in the manner prescribed, in their classes.

Classroom teaching in Pakistan revolves mainly around textbooks, as the examinations conducted by different boards of education (mentioned above), are not based on the English curriculum but on the textbooks themselves. Teaching to the test is an acceptable phenomenon and takes precedence over teaching to the curriculum. Teachers are expected to prepare learners, who are also used to memorising the textbook’s contents and reproducing factual knowledge, for the examinations. The question papers in/for examination show most test items as clone items based on text books, and not on the English

curriculum, so are either exactly taken verbatim from the textbooks or very similar to items found within them. The learners are encouraged to pass external examinations. They prepare by using the previous years' question papers and model question papers widely available on the market. The question papers tend to test the students' memory instead of their conceptual knowledge and/or understanding. As a result, the teachers and learners might be rewarded for some learning achievement or scores which might not be actual learning. Furthermore, such scores may also misguide the learners regarding their ability and could be demoralizing when learners enter the next study level or attempt to communicate in a real life situation. (Shah, 2012)

According to Volante (2004), "Artificially high scores may lull students into a false sense of security, particularly for those heading to post-secondary institutions." Therefore, it may be argued that testing the content of textbook rather than the cognitive ability behind the content, as explained in the curriculum, may ultimately negatively impacts the learners' confidence in their own potential and abilities (Shah, 2012). In this way, the examination promotes rote memorisation and cramming instead of creative abilities and thinking. "[T]he major focus of examination is on simple recall questions not on understanding and application of the concept" (Shah & Afzaal, 2004: 20).

The teachers who teach English language possess limited authority in the content selection on the basis of students' interests and needs. The reason might be that these teachers are not native speakers of English language, and for majority of them English is not even their second language. Thus, choosing the appropriate content that could provide effective learning experiences is far from easy for most teachers. However, the teachers can carry out formative assessments in classrooms which are mentioned, in the English curriculum document, as essential tools for the measurement of skills in language, specifically oral communication skills. According to Shah (2012), assigning such responsibility (of teaching, assessment and the evaluation of the oral skills) to teachers, who lack proficiency in the English language, as expressed in the curriculum document seems not more than a lip service or an attempt to make the curriculum document theoretically correct. This implies that learners may not acquire the stated skills in accordance with the aims of the document. (Shah, 2012)

The scheme of study is provided by the ministry of education which includes the time allocated for teaching different subjects per week. Lesson plans (not in a formal way but generally an idea regarding how to conduct a class) are produced locally by the teachers.

Regarding gender specific schools, all the state schools in Pakistan are single sex schools, that is, they constitute either boys or girls only. In state schools, the students usually come from the uneducated, lower income class of society, and have quite conservative backgrounds. In majority of cases, the families lack even the basic literacy skills. Very little difference exist in the socio-economic background of the learners attending the state schools in various parts of the country and cities (Shamim, 1993). The teachers' socio-economic background in state schools mostly match those of their students (ibid). Usually, the teachers in these schools are themselves the products of the same system (ibid).

With regard to the language of/for instruction, almost all state-run schools are categorised as 'Urdu-medium' schools, using Urdu as MI (Coleman & Capstick, 2012) and as the official working language. In English language classes, teachers also use regional languages to help students' comprehension of the subject in hand. As stated above, English is the MI mainly in 'English medium' or private schools. As noticed by (Shamim, 1993), the labels 'English medium' and 'Urdu medium' are interpreted alike by students, teachers, and the layman in relation to the school's focus on learning English, the resources available, the participants' social status and the differential quality of education offered in these schools. The state-run schools' reputation relies greatly on the school location and the socio-economic status of its population, the school results in the matriculation (Board) examinations, and the head teacher's administrative experience (ibid).

Students attending state schools make very little use of English in their classes and hardly any outside the classroom. English is taught as a rote learning process (Shamim, 2008). Students are asked to read out the text in front of the class by turn. The teacher solves exercises for the lessons on the black board and students make notes to memorize for the exam. It has been generally observed, as mentioned above in section 1.3.2, that students passing from these institutes have a poor background in English. The majority of these students join government sector universities where they have to struggle with their English language in order to cope with the studies which are predominantly conducted in the English language.

To elaborate further, English in (Pakistani) state schools is taught largely by the translation method (Rahman, 2001). Shamim (2008) and Bughio (2012) further describes this situation that instead of encouraging oral use of the language, teachers tend to explain grammatical rules. Resultantly, learners become dependent on rote-learning instead of using language contextually or creatively. Teaching is largely teacher-centred focusing mainly on teaching

two skills in the class: writing and reading. Listening skills are totally ignored while speaking skills get very little attention. Vocabulary teaching mainly focuses on vernacular definitions or meanings. In class, the teacher spend much of the time delivering lectures and explaining the lessons instead of allowing learners' engagement in discussions, often thinking that student-talking time obstructs learning. Learners also regard teachers as an authority and so, prefer to listen to teachers than to their peers. Moreover, teachers, being fearful of losing control of the class, do not feel confident enough to involve learners in discussion and interaction. Such an isolated and passive way of learning by students impedes their academic growth. Consequently, learners develop cramming skills and communicate poorly in English. Furthermore, students are rarely asked to produce written compositions (which is also promoted via rote-learning, rather than through developing creative skills). Students do not get the opportunity of experimenting with their own learning. Most learn passively and teachers are considered the sole arbiters of correct English.

According to Bughio (2012) and Shah (2012), one reason for teachers following such a traditional way of teaching English may be that, as mentioned above, at secondary level, the learners are assessed by the external examination boards. So, the teacher's performance is commonly measured by the examinations' results. Therefore, there is little attempt to nurture the teachers' decision-making ability and creativity: the teacher's role (at secondary level) is confined to conveying the content of textbooks and what will be examined. The teachers do not appear motivated to assist learners to learn a new language. They seem contented with imparting only textbook content and never approach the curriculum document as a guideline. Another, equally strong reason may be attributed to the scarcity of training in ELT as explained below in the following section.

#### 2.5.4 **English language teachers' training in Pakistan**

According to Johnson and Golombek (2011) and Kumaravadivelu (2013), the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) is a professional discipline which needs a specialised training. However, teacher's training is not a popular focus in Pakistan and specialised teacher's training is not obligatory for people joining this profession (Usman, 2008). Teacher training is almost non-existent in the case of ELT particularly for teachers in state schools. This problem is compounded by overcrowded classrooms, few (if any) teaching resources, and a shortage of Pakistani English language teachers (Bughio, 2012). Teachers in this study reflect this reality to some extent and the apparent inability of the education system to improve educational standards and to be innovative.

The minimum degree qualification for English language teachers in state schools, is usually an undergraduate (Bachelor in Arts/Science - BA/BSc) which contains English as a compulsory subject (from class one to BA/BSc level) and a postgraduate degree (Master's in Arts/Science - MA/MSc) in any subject, not necessarily just in English language or literature. Even at a university level, teachers lack formal qualifications in ELT. Their recruitment as an English language teacher is because of their Master's degree in English literature. Any degree or training in language teaching is not a prerequisite for a lecturer job. However, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), which is a federal institute, sometimes organizes short training courses for teachers of different subjects, including English, at university levels to train them (National Curriculum Document, 2002; National Education Policy, 2009). Not only are these courses free, but teachers are also paid for attending the training.

In Pakistan, teacher training is the provincial government's responsibility. For government/state school teachers, teacher trainings/certifications are not subject specific and constitute: Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC – hereafter) for teachers teaching to grades 1 to 5 requiring 10 years of education; Certificate of Teaching (CT - hereafter) for teachers teaching to grades 6 to 8 requiring 12 years of education or an intermediate certificate. Both of these programmes are one year long providing general (non-specialist) teacher training for teaching any subject, including English. For teaching grade 9 and 10 students, at least Bachelors of Education (hereafter - B.Ed. – 2 years) is the required qualification for teachers teaching English language at these levels. Hardly any in-service professional development courses are provided for these teachers.

These existing training programmes have been criticized for different reasons, as noted by Bughio (2012). Firstly, they are quite theoretical and not sufficiently practical. Secondly, trainees need to pass an examination for qualification for the course certification. This redirects the trainee's attention towards passing the examination rather than learning to apply the acquired skills in classroom contexts. Resultantly, they resort to short-cuts such as cramming and rote-learning to pass the examination. Thirdly, no additional qualification is needed to become a teacher trainer and anyone can be appointed such by teaching institutions, such as, schools, colleges or universities (Davies & Iqbal, 2006, as cited in Bughio, 2012; Khan, 2011). These teacher trainers normally possess master's degrees in English literature rather than ELT and are hired because of a dearth of qualified professionals and teacher trainers (Bughio, 2012).

Regarding this study, in addition to the teachers' profiles, the schools and classes where the four sample teachers (see section 4.7.5.2 for details) worked in, contained many similarities, greatly reflecting the above-mentioned features of low resource schools, classrooms and teachers. This is further explained below.

### 2.5.5 **Commonalities between the schools, classes and four teachers/cases (Description)**

Looking at different English language classes in secondary state schools (the main research sites) in Pakistan, revealed great uniformity in classroom processes and teachers' / learners' behaviour. That is, the classrooms were observed as largely teacher-centred. Also, learning and teaching were mainly driven by the annual (end of year) exams which were more about memory testing (for example, words meanings, grammar rules etc.) than testing the learners' ability to use the language in their daily lives. Therefore, the classroom processes of the eight teachers, (of which I am presenting four cases for the reasons mentioned in section 5.4), in relation to institutional structures, have many similarities, though as individuals, some differences did exist. Moreover, while there are differences in the biographies of the four participant-teachers (see Table 1, section 4.7.5.1), the teachers also shared some similar profile features which, in order to avoid unnecessary repetition and space issues, I will present in a combined summary in the following paragraph.

All the four teachers were locals belonging to the same region where the observed schools were located, that is, a central rural area (Mardan) in the province (KPK) of Pakistan. All the four teachers shared with majority of their students, a Pashtun ethnic background, having Pashto as their mother tongue and first language. Their students were also predominantly locals. All the teachers belonged to the middle or lower-middle social class and seemed to be sufficiently satisfied with their salaries and having a secure, permanent government job - which seemed quite compatible with their social class. With the exception of Nawaz, who held an M.A. in English linguistics and literature, the other three participants had the same educational qualification, that is, they held an undergraduate (B.A.) degree in English. This means that all of them had experienced nine to fourteen years of learning English language in formal school setting. However, having studied in state schools, and having limited exposure to the English language (for limited school hours), these teachers did not seem to have a good level of English proficiency as revealed from the data (see the chapters of analyses below). They had fixed working school/teaching hours and, as they reported, had

very little of institutional support for their professional development (as is further explained in chapter 6, 7 and 8). Their class sizes ranged from 45 to 80 students who aged approximately 11-16 and who belonged to quite poor families as I had observed and as the participant-teachers reported.

With regard to the specific schools where the participant-teachers were teaching, although all four schools differ in their statistics in terms of enrolled students' number, teachers' number, range of class size, and their exact location, they were not significantly different from each other with regard to the following aspects: the definition of teacher-learner roles, activity types used in the classroom, and other instructional and management techniques, the classroom facilities available to them, the teaching-learning environment, their administration, institutional guidelines, classroom settings (main layout and condition) and the type of area where they were located. The details on the schools' location and description of school and classroom settings with regard to the four participant-teachers are as follows.

### **Alia's school**

**Locality** : Alia's school was located in a relatively peaceful area at some distance from the main central area of the city. The school was surrounded by homes of very poor people in terms of their socioeconomic status and on one side, it was a quite big open field. There were few small shops around and one another school at some distance. Due to the location of the school and the wide space (open fields) in which it was situated, physically accessing the school was not a problem as compared to the previous school 'B' where it was slightly difficult due to the location of the school and the crowded area it was situated in. (Field notes, 23/08/2016)

**Nature of the school**: This was a purely girl's school so all the students were girls. The school building seemed to be old but somehow maintained. The school area was sufficiently large, having a well sized ground at the front side as soon as one enters the front gate. There seemed to be enough number of classrooms which seem to be adequately spaced for the given number of students, that is, neither very spacious, nor very congested. There was a watchman standing at the gate. (Field notes, 23/08/2016)

**Nature and condition of the classroom (inside)**: The class where I observed Alia was a traditional teacher fronted class, having one chair and one big square table for the teacher placed in between the front of the room and near the entrance door as I have been observing in all the schools and classes so far. These were the first things to be seen when one enters

the room. For students, there were three columns of benches suitable for two girls at one time for sitting. These were coupled with same sized benches to be used as desks. There were two girls sitting together sharing the bench and desk as was suitable for their size. The room was not very spacious nor very congested but sufficiently spaced given the number of students (forty-five) to accommodate. Therefore, the students seemed sitting quite relaxed. However, the space was not that enough to accommodate students bags and so they had placed their bags on the desks and as a result, probably, their books in their laps. The students were mainly sitting in three big columns where each column was further split into two, making a total of six columns. The rows were six. There was some space between three big columns where one person could easily move back and forth. The furniture in the class was in a good condition, neither too bad, nor too maintained. The room was square in shape with a big white board on the wall in the front of the room. There were two cupboards on the front wall, on either side of the white board, having students' copies.

This room was quite ventilated having windows at little distances. That is three windows on each side of the wall and two on the back wall. All the windows were wide open for fresh air due to which the room was also well lit. Though due to the windows and door being opened there were noises coming from outside or other classes. There were few charts around the room hanging on the walls having some subject specific prose written on them and seemed to have been made by the students. There were four fans, two of which were not working and so switched off but since the room was well ventilated, despite the intense heat and summer, one could survive. The bulb holders were there but there were no bulbs in them. It was extreme summer, around 45°c outside. The students apparently seemed disciplined, though the back rows had some disturbance occasionally as compared to the front rows. (Field notes, 23/08/2016)

**About girls/students:** All the girls were aged approx. 11-13 years and majority seemed to be from poor families. As being part of that culture, I could identify what kind of clothes or appearance are representative of which class of people in our society. Apparently they seemed to be listening attentively to their teacher. However, they sound quite bored as few students around me would yawn/look around/do murmuring with fellow student or would keep silence and not repeat reading after teacher when she would be out of sight during her movement around the class. They would pretend being attentive and alert when they would sense the teacher coming closer. (Field notes, 23/08/2016)

**Nawaz's school**

**Locality:** Nawaz's school was located in a quite busy, noisy and rough area. That is, surroundings were not very clean. There were few small shops around. The school was located in and surrounded by narrow streets. There wasn't enough space even for my car to be properly parked. Crowd of students were getting in and out of school. Many people were standing at the gates (possibly for admissions) as the school had recently opened after summer holidays. (Fieldnotes, 17/08/2016)

**Nature of the school:** This was a purely boy's school so all the students were boys. Perhaps that might be the reason, people around do not seem to be used to females. Possibly that's why the students and other people inside were giving me strange looks. The school building consisted of two storeys and seemed very old and not properly maintained. The school area was quite large, having a well sized ground but maintenance was quite poor. There seemed to be enough number of classrooms though the classrooms did not seem to be sufficiently spacious for the given number of students. An old watchman was there at the gate. (Fieldnotes, 17/08/2016)

**Nature and condition of the classroom (inside):** The class had a very old traditional look. There was one chair and one big square table for the teacher placed in between the front of the room and near the entrance door. These were the first things to be seen when one enters the room. This showed that the teacher mainly operated from the central front of the classroom.

For students, there were three longitudinal columns of long benches for sitting coupled with long benches to be used as desks. The room was not very spacious especially given the number of students (eighty-two) to accommodate. Therefore, most of the students were almost squeezed on their benches which had the capacity to accommodate 3 to 4 students but around 6 to 7 were sitting on most of them. Not having enough space, almost all the students had placed their bags on the desks and as a result, probably, their books in their laps. Rows were 3. The furniture in the class was very old, and rusty, truly representing a resource-poor school which seemed quite typical of other resource-poor government schools. The paint on the walls was removed from many places. There were 2 narrow cupboards having students' copies. There were quite narrow pathways between the columns and rows.

There were three windows on the opposite side of the entrance door. The room was square in shape with a big white board on the wall at the room's front. There were four fans for 82 students which seemed to be insufficient to reduce the heat in such an intense summer. Mostly there was power cut and so no light and electricity but having it occasionally. Since it was extreme summer, around 44°C outside, the students seemed to be quite disturbed because of extreme heat as some of them using books as fans. The students were not very noisy despite being huge strength as is common in such crowded government schools possibly because of having someone unusual, that is, me (either being a stranger or being a female). As one of the boys in the front row was continuously looking at me and smiling (possibly due to video recording them). Other reason might be the personality of the teacher (e.g. either authoritative or serious or having command on the subject).

**About boys/students:** All the boys were aged approx. 13-15 years. Almost all were wearing ordinary clothes, rather from their clothes, majority seemed to be from quite poor families. Apparently they seemed to be listening attentively to their teacher. Sometimes they would steal a glance at me and when observed me writing my notes, they would turn their face and start looking at the teacher again. Some students near me were smiling with themselves possibly because of my presence or the camera. Since the research culture and/or presence of the researcher has not been a common practice in our society especially in such backward areas, usually people (and these students might also) mixed being filmed with filming for electronic media/reporting/publicity purposes. Here also the teacher seemed to have a good class control though there was comparatively some disturbance at the back rows as compared to the front rows. (Field notes, 17/08/2016)

### **Sami's school**

**Locality :** Sami's school was located in the same locality as Alia's but two streets away. It was also located in a relatively peaceful area within the open fields aside from the main hustle and bustle of the city. It was also surrounded by homes of very poor people in terms of their socioeconomic status and exposed to a quite big open field on the two sides. There were few small shops few steps away and a small mosque at some distance. Here also, due to the location of the school and the wide space (open fields) in which it was situated, physically accessing the school was not a problem as compared to the previous school 'B' where it was slightly difficult due to the location of the school and the crowded area it was situated in. (Field notes, 30/08/2016)

**Nature of the school:** This was also a purely boy's school so all the students were boys. Here also, people around did not seem to be used to females. Possibly that's why the students and other people inside were giving me strange looks. This school building was also two storeys and seemed old and without proper maintainance. The school area was large, but not enough empty ground and having scattered classroom materials (chairs, tables, blackboard etc) at different corners of the verandas. From the architecture of the building it seemed old time buildings having large enclosed areas with enough number of classrooms though the for the given number of students, classrooms did not seem to be sufficiently spacious. A physically challenged watchman was controlling and looking after the movements across the school. (Fieldnotes, 30/08/2016)

**Nature and condition of the classroom (inside):** This class was even more congested and untidy than the ones I have attended previously during the field work. It seemed to have not been cleaned for days. Desks and benches seemed to be quite comfortable but shabby. It was a first class after holidays. Also annual exams were going around. So students' strength seemed to be quite low as compared to the other days. The walls were heavily covered with different kinds of charts, having diagrams relating to different subjects but mostly having religious content on them in a very large font as well as Urdu text written on the walls. One very interesting note was written in Pushto on the wall opposite me as, "da wakht bu hum tair shi" (This time will also pass ultimately). This phrase could have both positive or negative connotation but being part of the same culture (so I may know the possible interpretation in this situation) and written in such resource poor school, it usually have negative connotation of "passivism", that is, "not very good time so consoling oneself not to be dishearted as this difficult time will also pass one day".

This class, like other traditional classes in the other schools mentioned above, had one chair and one big square table for the teacher placed in between the front of the room and near the entrance door. For students, there were four longitudinal columns of long benches for sitting coupled with long benches to be used as desks. In this class (probably being first class after holidays and majority students absent), the students seemed conveniently accommodated on the given benches and the given seating arrangement seemed sufficient for the given number of students. Though the furniture was broken and dented at some places and was quite old, a clear representation of mostly resource-poor government school. The paint on the walls was worn off at different points. There were 2 narrow cupboards at the front of the class containing students' copies. There was not sufficient space for movement across and within coloumns.

There were four windows on the two opposite walls . The room was square in shape with a big white board on the wall at the room's front. There were four fans, one of which was switched off (probably out of order). Mostly there was power cut and so no light and electricity, therefore most of the students using books and copies as fans to dispel the intense heat of the prevalent weather. (Fieldnotes, 30/08/2016)

**About boys/students:** The boys were aged approx. 15-17 years. From their attire, most of these students also seemed to be from quite poor families, as in the other two schools mentioned above. The students were looking at me and smiling. There was a lot of movement of students, in and out of the class which was quite disruptive. The teacher seemed to be least bothered by whatever was happening around. He was so engrossed in reading from the book that he did not seem concerned with whether the students were listening or not, were attentive/following or not. He seemed to be concerned with just finishing the chapter as soon as possible. There was simply no interaction with the students in any form (either Q/A, or any other way) to check or ensure that whether the students were following or not, engaged or not. The students were also quite silent, either because they were understanding the teacher or not at all. They were either used to this style of teaching or not at all. They might be silent because of being conscious of my presence or the teacher authority or apparent command on the subject as he was explaining in English language, possibly perceived as a command of the teacher on English language or the teacher as a knowledgeable person. As in our culture, whosoever speaks in English language, people are quite impressed from him/her, thinking him/her as a quite knowledgeable person. (Field notes, 30/08/2016)

### **Sara's school**

**Locality:** Sara's school was located in a narrow street in a very crowded residential area inhabited by people from lower middle class. The locality was one of the main oldest areas of the city. The school was surrounded by small and medium sized houses with few small shops mostly comprising provision stores and some occupied by artisans.

**Nature of the school and classrooms condition:** This was exclusively girls's school so all the students were girls. Though being a female, there was not anything unusual for the people in the school, however, initially for some time I had been looked at as someone not belonging to their community. This school consisted of one storey with some construction work going on (possibly for expansion), however, the existing building did not seem to be maintained properly. The school area did not seem sufficient for the given number of students and at different vacant places in the open air, some teachers were taking their classes with students

sitting on the floors. This would make movement around the school quite difficult with students attention drawn to the passers-by and things happening around. Even inside the classrooms, the students were many and classrooms were congested. Mostly the teachers had kept room doors and windows open to keep the rooms airy and well-lit. Still the suffocation could be felt at times and noise of the construction would sound disruptive, though the students apparently seemed to have been used to such issues and not quite bothered.

This class was also a traditional class having one chair and one big square table for the teacher placed in between the front of the room and near the entrance door. For students, there were four longitudinal columns of desks and chairs. The students were sitting in a quite tight position. There were three fans but still were insufficient to reduce the intense heat of the weather. There were 2 normal sized cupboards at the front of the class containing students' copies. There was some space for teacher's movement across and within columns. The room was square in shape with a big white board on the wall at the room's front. There were two windows on one side of the room wall. (Fieldnotes, 27/08/2016)

**About girls/students:** The girls were aged approx. 15-17 years. From their attire, most of these students also seemed to be from either poor or lower middle class families, as in the other three schools mentioned above. The front rows of the students seemed attentive but in the back rows there was some disturbance which would calm down when the teacher would take a round. Some of the students would look behind at me and would smile, as seemingly not used to strangers in their classes. (Field notes, 27/08/2016)

## 2.6 **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I mainly concentrated on the different aspects and conceptualisations of context or structure(s) in general and resource-poor ELT context in particular, the latter being the main focus of the study. This led to an overview of the research undertaken so far on teachers in mainstream/general education with particular reference to English language teachers in resource-poor contexts. This information allowed me to situate the present study in the current relevant literature. I also provided a brief overview of the research context, Pakistan, as being representative of resource-poor contexts internationally, and a detailed/thick description of its state schools and their common characteristics. After dealing with the context or structural component of the study in detail, in the next section I will move onto clarify the equally important concept of agency in relation to the structure(s), linking it to the teacher's agency, in the following chapter. Also, since I am investigating the English

language teachers' agency in resource-poor ELT contexts from a critical realist perspective, it will be necessary to explain this perspective in great detail as well in the following chapter.

## Chapter 3                      **Agency and Structure:**

### **A Critical realist theory**

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from past.

(Marx 1978 [1852]: 595, as cited in Elder-Vass, 2010)

#### 3.1     **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will continue the discussion from the previous chapter where I expressed the need to explain the critical realist (CR) perspective (Bhaskar, 1986; 1998; Archer, 1995, 1996, 1998a) on structure and agency in detail, due to it being the main theoretical framework for the current study. However, in order to better understand the CR theory and its main assumptions and variants, it is important to first know what ‘agency’ is and how it is conceptualised in this study (section 3.2) and the different views on the relation between ‘agency’ and ‘structures’ as explained by different social science theories, their main tenets and limitations (Section 3.3). This discussion will allow us to understand the current philosophical trends and their implication in second language (L2) teacher education research which is discussed in section 3.4. Based on the limitations of the different philosophical standpoints and theoretical perspectives underpinned by them, these debates will allow me to provide justification and argue for adopting the CR perspective in this study (section 3.5). However, it is important to note here that since there has not been any empirical research, to my knowledge (see chapter 1) on the CR perspective of language teachers’ agency, I will be mostly drawing on literature from the social sciences, mainly Archer’s (1995, 1998a, 2000, 2003 and others) work, whose CR perspective I am using in this study.

#### 3.2     **Theorising and conceptualising agency**

As I mentioned above in the introduction, ‘agency’ per se, is extensively theorised, especially in sociological literature pertaining to the agency-structure debate. However, teacher agency, that is, agency specifically theorised in respect of teachers’ activities in schools, remains subject to less explicit research and/or theoretical development (Vongalis-Macrow, 2007). Interest and research in teacher agency, both in general and in language education, is even more recent and relatively new (Kalaja et al., 2016). The limited research

that exists in language teaching, and the role of the teachers has been underplayed or rather misconstrued in terms of agents in their own right (Leander & Osborner, 2008).

In this study, my interest, with regard to the English language teachers' agency, is to understand how English language teachers' agency is achieved through and in particular structural conditions and circumstances in concrete settings (see Biesta & Tedder, 2006). In short, the question being asked is how do actors "shape their responses to problematic situations" (ibid: 11). This concept of agency posits that "actors always act by means of their environment rather than simply in their environment [so that] the achievement of agency will always result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations" (Biesta & Tedder, 2007: 137). More specifically, such a conceptualisation of agency highlights the quality of actors' engagement with temporal-relational contexts-for-action. Thus, instead of viewing agency as existing in individuals or a quality or property of the actors, agency is understood as an emergent phenomenon arising from actor-situation transaction, where the focus is on the teachers' judgement based on their lived experiences, that is, their engagement with the present/here-and-now situation (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). Emirbayer and Mische (1998) referred to this as the 'practical-evaluative' dimension of agency which entails "the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgements among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (ibid: 971).

Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) analysis emphasises the significance of structure and context in terms of viewing agency as the "temporally constructed engagement with different structural environments ... which, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgement, both reproduces and transforms those structures in interactive response to the problems posed by changing...situations" (ibid: 970). This is enacted in the present or here-and-now where such enactment is affected by what is known as material, cultural, and structural resources (Biesta & Tedder, 2007). This leads us to view agency as "strongly connected to the contextual conditions within which it is achieved" (Priestley et al., 2012: 197). It is, therefore, possible to see the same individual exercising more agency in one context and less in another (Kayi-Aydar, 2015). I believe that such a view of language teachers' agency becomes more relevant in contexts in which structural conditions might well constrain the exercise of this agency to a certain extent, such as resource poor ELT contexts. It points to the need for language teachers' "actions ... to be understood within the contexts which are constitutive of their meaning" (Sayer, 1992: 118-120). This will, in terms

of theory, provide an alternative view of looking at agency as something which is achieved via active engagement of humans with different aspects of their contexts-for-action (Biesta & Tedder, 2007) “and not as merely a capacity or possession of the individual” (Priestley et al., 2012: 197).

### 3.3 **Perspectives on the relationship between structure and agency in social theory**

The interrelationship between structure and agency lies at the heart of most social theories and there are different debates and theories regarding it (see, for example, Elder-Vass, 2010 for a summary of these debates). These debates have resulted in two completely different and extreme views of ‘structuralism’ and ‘individualism’. The former explains social phenomena in terms of the social forces/structures that affect it, while the latter explains social phenomena in terms of the individual’s contributions.

Moreover, there is the third set of contemporary authors who reject the idea of agency and structure as representing a binary choice; that either the structural forces or the free choices of individuals determine social behaviour (Elder-Vass, 2010). Within this third set, as suggested by the Marx’s quote (at the start of the chapter), there are two alternative ways of reconciling the two, that is, structurationist and post-structurationist theories (parker, 2000). Regarding the former, the prominent figures are Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens, who have emphasised the significance of both agency and structure, but see structure(s) as something residing (at least in part) within individuals; a move criticised by Margaret Archer (1995) as the ‘central conflation’ of agency and structure. Regarding the latter, Archer (ibid) has also stressed the significance of the two, but also insists that both must be understood as analytically distinct, expounding the theory of ‘analytical dualism’ (explained in detail in section 3.3.4 below). Porpora (1998: 339) categorises these debates as four approaches to the conceptualisation of social structures as follows.

#### 3.3.1 **Methodological Individualism**

According to Porpora (1998), this approach considers social structures as patterns of aggregate behaviour that become stable over time and reduce each aspect of society to humans’ activities, who are considered the basic units of social structures. Patterns are observed in an empiricist fashion without any explanation sought for social structures at other levels, both within the physiology or psychology of individuals (Archer, 1995), or

beyond, in what Porpora terms macro-social phenomena such as power relations, economic crises, or de-industrialization. Bhaskar (1998b: 212) considers such a view of society and individuals as ‘Weberian’ whereas Archer (1995: 434) terms it ‘methodological individualism’, and refers to the method used as ‘upwards conflation’; that is there are actions but no conditions (1995: 139). It is almost the direct opposite of the methodological collectivist model as explained next.

### 3.3.2 **Methodological collectivism**

This approach sees social structures as governing the behaviour of social facts (Porpora, 1998). Such a position is considered as Durkheimian, in that it presents a holistic picture of society not reducible to its individuals. It separates individual’s agency from that of the behaviour of society as a whole (Durkheim, 1982). Patterns in social phenomena, which result from the actions of several individuals, are sought at a macro-level this time and entail an empiricist analysis of the macro or large-scale effects. But again no probing of underlying reasons or causes is undertaken. Porpora argues that such conceptualisation overlooks the relationships between individuals; relationships that are not described easily by laws, not even statistically. Adopting this stance refrains one from viewing exactly what these social structures may actually mean to human beings (Archer, 1995: 47). Archer (1995: 346) defines this position as ‘methodological collectivism’ which leads to her concept of ‘downwards conflation’, that is, there are conditions but no action (ibid: 139).

It might be argued that both these approaches capture some aspects of truth, however, by embracing empiricism in their overall approach, neither of these models can account for the several emergent properties that become visible on “moving from the level of individual activity; to the level of groups; to the level of movements and to the level of whole societies” (Connors, 2015: 48). This necessitates some kind of multi-levelled approach to considering agency-structure interaction as provided in sections 3.3.4 and 3.5 below.

### 3.3.3 **Idealism, duality and theory of structuration**

The third view of society, as explained by Porpora, as a set of collective resources and rules which structure behaviour is linked with Anthony Giddens (1979). Giddens stresses the role played by resources and rules, which Giddens argues, constitute structures (ibid). However, structures possess just a ‘virtual existence’ here (Giddens, 1979: 26). Giddens believes that the presence of rules causes individuals to act in specific ways, however, he denies that social

structures have material embodiments. For example, as Connors (2015) explains, money has its physical embodiment in bankers' drafts, papers, coins, invoices or funding agreements. The importance of such physical things has been socially agreed. Their physicality has become too familiar in daily life to be forgotten easily. The material requirement of life, for example, means that teachers need money, or at the minimum an electronic alteration to their bank statements at their salary time, to carry on their activities. This undoubtedly affects what happens in their discursive and social lives. Even then, when analysing teachers' agency in their institutions, the social power hidden behind such material resource (money) is usually ignored. Thus, Giddens adopts an idealist conception of social structures that does not take into account the material embodiment of structures or these interacting with the material conditions. Furthermore, Giddens builds a theory of structuration by which he considers the mutual dependence of agency and structure without considering time. According to Giddens (1984: 25), the constitution of structures and agents are not two separate and independent sets of phenomena (a dualism) but they represent a duality.

To put it simply, structuration theorists such as Giddens (1984) and to some extent Bourdieu (1990) argue that structures come only into existence through the behaviour of agents and do not exist outside of them. Archer (1995: 101) labels such conceptualisation as 'central conflation': that is, there exists no distinction between actions and conditions (195: 139). This is because, for Giddens, the concepts of agency and social structure are tied together in time so tightly that it is impossible to study their interaction. This is where Archer (1995, 1996, 1998a, 2010) interjects and further develops this point as will be seen in the following section.

### 3.3.4 **Analytical dualism and theory of morphogenesis**

The fourth model of society (a natural sciences approach) is espoused by Bhaskar (1998b) and is further developed by Archer (1995, 1998) from a social sciences perspective. Porpora explains that according to this view, society develops from roles having stipulated relationships among these roles, and the rules governing them. Power is reflected in the form of physical resources linked with these roles and the relationships which might be occupied by various generations of agents, each making some mark upon them through the process(es) of morphogenesis.

Such conceptualisation allows for a relationship between the interests of various groups and structures in society. Interests and power relations generate conflicts of interests and, as a

result, agents or actors may develop new structures. Porpora argues (in reference to this model) that the interaction/relationship between the actions of agents and structures is not deterministic. Individuals can be creative or may choose to respond in different ways even if it results in losing resources by them. Changes which have occurred in structures could be, unintended or intended, consequences of the individuals' actions.

To elaborate, agents find themselves within structures not made or chosen by them, but inherited by them. However, they find ways to adapt or change these to build their own projects, thus changing their social environment (Archer, 1998a). The morphogenetic approach maintains a concept of change which remains “something of a mystery” in central conflationary theories (Archer, 1995: 158). Such a model of social structure, as proposed by Archer, is the one adopted in this study as it adheres closely to my research goal (see chapter 1). According to Archer (1995), the “basic task is to conceptualize how ordered social forms have their genesis in human agency, just as social beings have their genesis in social forms” (p. 167) (as further explained below). To this end, the teaching ‘context’ which has been conceptualised, in this study, in terms of institutional ‘structures’ and defined and categorised broadly as social, material, and/or cultural patterns (see section 2.2 for details), can enhance or inhibit, enable or constrain human beings’ (teachers, in this study) ability to effect changes to their (educational) environment. I will come back to the detailed explanation of this theory and the key concepts involved therein in the second main section 3.5 of the current chapter. Before that, since the present study relates to English language teachers, I consider it relevant to first mention the current philosophical trends in L2 teacher education research as follows.

### 3.4 **Current philosophical trends in L2 teacher education research**

L2 teacher research is mainly underpinned by the ‘methodological individualism’ or ‘structuration’ philosophical standpoint, as explained above (section 1.3.3 and 2.4). The main exponent of this standpoint are the sociocultural theories – anchored in Marxian social theory through Vygotsky and very thoroughly developed in Giddens’ theory of structuration (Sawyer, 2002). As stated above, based on SCT, the main research areas which evolved in L2 teacher research are L2 teacher *beliefs* and L2 teacher *identity* research. Sociocultural theory posits that teacher’s teaching and practices are deeply situated in particular cultural, social, and physical contexts (Davis et al., 2000). It provides an account of the mind as it

relates to the social and physical world (Wertsch, 1985). According to this theory, knowledge is constructed by the learner and is influenced by both the historical and cultural background of the learner and their social, emotional and cognitive interaction with the environment in which they learn (Vogel et al., 2001; van Huizen et al., 2006).

Thus, both L2 teacher *beliefs* and *identity* research, employing SCT and its variants, focus on the socially situated nature of learning and teaching activities, with the social context and individual interacting together (Smagorinsky, 1995). Both kinds of research, within the SCT framework, account for the social dimension of knowledge and thought and argue that knowing, thinking, and understanding, and the activities of teaching, grow out of participation in the social practices in specific classroom and school situations (Flavell, Miller & Miller, 1993; Cross, 2010). However, the former is more *individual-centred, internally* (cognition) oriented while the latter is more *externally (context - socialisation)* oriented, and in addition making implicit assumptions about teacher *agency*.

Indeed, both types of research (teachers' 'beliefs' and 'identity') has greatly enriched our understanding of a number of issues which, with regard to the L2 teacher, have been summarised concisely by Borg (2003), and Johnson (2006) respectively:

Teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalized, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs.

Borg (2003: 81)

L2 teacher learning [is] normative and lifelong, as emerging out of and through experiences in social contexts: as learners in classrooms and schools, as participants in professional teacher education programs, and later as teachers in settings where they work. It [teacher beliefs research] described L2 teacher learning as [highly interpretative], socially negotiated and contingent on knowledge of self, subject matter, students, curricula, and setting. It shows L2 teachers as users and creators of legitimate forms of knowledge who make decisions about how best to teach their L2 students within complex socially, culturally, and historically situated contexts.

(Johnson, 2006: 239)

Despite the diversity that exists among the different sociocultural perspectives, we can clearly see that *context* is considered vital to understanding, learning and practice (Sfard,

1998). However, as I have mentioned above in section 2.4, as a result of poststructuralist and postmodern thinking (where the focus is on how individuals co-construct and position themselves in relation to others), attention shifts to the discursive work the agents engage in when positioning themselves or are positioned in a discursive network imbricated with power relations (Zotzmann, 2018). Social life is viewed as either mediated (moderate social constructivism) or totally constituted (radical social constructivism) via discourse (ibid). An example of mediation or moderate social constructivism is seen in Wertsch (1993, 1994) who focuses on mediated action which recognises, to some extent, the separate and independent nature of both structure and agency. However, in case of the total constitution or radical paradigm, Lave and Wenger (1991), for example, hold to a “strong” view of the inseparable nature of structure and agency; with structure residing inside agency. This is somehow evident in Wertsch’s (1993) suggestion for the use of the term “mastery” (p.169), as opposed to Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of “internalisation”. (p. 57). Thus, socioculturalists, on the one hand, refuse reduction of the social to the individual (in theory), however, in contrast, being constructivist, also ignores social determinism (Sawyer, 2002). Both socioculturalists and constructivists are thus ‘reductionist’ in practice due to their conception of agents as active forces in the constitution and perpetuation of society (Connors, 2015). As a result (and due to having roots in psychology), socioculturalists have barely argued for the irreducibility of macro level structures or entities such as social class, social power and its forms, geographic regions, social networks and institutional structures (ibid). This is where the current study comes in, which, like the socioculturalist perspective (which atleast in theory), not only avoids the reduction of the social to the individual, but goes a step beyond that by arguing for the irreducibility of the institutional (schools) structures, thereby attributing equal causal powers, like agents (teachers), to the structures (schools contexts). Such an explanation, I understand, can be appropriately provided by the critical realist (CR) theory which I have adopted for this study as detailed below in section 3.5.

From a CR perspective (explained below), by focusing mainly on identity and discourse, poststructuralists and postmodernists seem to have effectively (though unintentionally) “melted [structures] into ‘constructs’” (Archer, 2007: 1) (upward conflation). Structurationist accounts thus make it difficult to analytically delineate between structures and agents, and thus between cause and effect (Zotzmann, 2018). Structurationists reject social causation; that irreducible collective entities have causal influences over human beings (Giddens, 1979, 1984). Instead, Giddens describes actors who consciously choose

from available options instead of being unknowingly forced to act by external structure(s). He prefers to present structure(s) as ‘enabling’ instead of ‘constraining’; such a focus stresses agent’s practical consciousness or knowledgeability (Sawyer, 2002).

Now the question arises, how can we better connect with both individual psychology, on the one hand, and macrosociology, on the other? What can be the best theory for understanding groups, individuals, and processes? To what extent do we need psychology to introduce theoretical models from sociology, and sociology to bring in psychological models of humans (Sawyer, 2002)? The answer, I believe, lies in the social science concept of ‘analytical dualism’ as explained in detail above (section 3.3.4), which is a main construct in the CR theory. This theory and its main tenets are explained next.

### 3.5 **Critical realist perspective on structure and agency**

As mentioned above, CR, a philosophical meta-theory developed mainly by Roy Bhaskar (1986; 1998) and Margaret Archer (1995, 1998a, 2003, 2007), provides yet another stance on the agency-structure relationship. It seems especially well suited for shedding light on the interaction/ interrelationship between the embodied self and the reflexive agency of humans/agents, on one side, and structures as “the enduring, affording and constraining influences of the social order” (Sealey & Carter, 2004: xiii), on the other, as it attributes causal power to each.

Reviewing the debates around structure and agency, Zotsmann (2018) provides a succinct summary of the CR perspective. According to her, critical realists acknowledge the insights offered by poststructuralism and postmodernism regarding how our world’s knowledge is mediated via discourse and concepts. However, they also consider it important to make explicit ontological claims about a world ‘out there’ “regardless of what we happen to think about it” (Sayer, 1999: 2). Thus, we may ‘construe’, but not necessarily ‘construct’ components or aspects of the social and natural world (Bhaskar, 2008) which might be distinct from discourse, for example, natural or material conditions, social structures (including agency), institutions, as well as emotions, reasons, and values (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). These distinct components of the natural and social world are imbued with their own specific causal powers which exist as potentialities (*real*) (Bhaskar, 1975). When activated (*actual*) these powers interact with the other forces and produce change which may or may not leave observable traces (*empirical*) (ibid). This viewpoint differs from both post-structuralism/postmodernism and positivism which usually exclusively focus on

the empirical level (for example, discourse, behaviour) and thus risk either overlooking or miss-attributing causation, which exists but might not leave empirical traces (*transphenomenality*) or which contradicts what exists on the surface level (*counter-phenomenality*) (Collier, 1994). Also, CR stresses that any knowledge construed by us is fallible, although it also argues that some theories or explanations are better than others since these relate to a referent outside themselves.

Although different components of the natural and social world are deemed distinct, they exist in a dialectical relationship with the agency. For example, school buildings and textbooks are *pre-existing* structures where students and teachers enter (literally - in case of building) and need to *respond* to these in one way or the other. Structures, however, do not determine the actions of agents. Their powers occur in potential (real) and get activated via human activities. For instance, teachers in an educational system might not be in agreement with the prevalent structures (e.g. rules or practices) and act accordingly, although they may be constrained heavily by the powers at play. Structures hence *pre-exist* agents, however, their powers only get activated via *reflexive agents* who pursue specific projects (Archer 1995, 2003, 2007). The agents reflect upon the constraints and affordances of structures with regard to their values, concerns, and projects to achieve a viable *modus vivendi*. Therefore, it is important to not only look at both the enabling and constraining aspects of structures but also at the reflexive deliberation that human agents engage in as, after all, enablements and constraints only show the ease or difficulty with which particular projects can be accomplished by individuals standing in the given relationships to (part of) society. They do not inform us of anything at all regarding which projects are entertained, although they can tell us about who has an objective ideational or material interest in carrying out a maintenance project instead of a transformatory one. Furthermore, agents need to diagnose their situation, identify their interest and then design projects that they consider appropriate for attaining their goals. The agents do these acts via ‘the internal conversation’ which is the modality via which reflexivity towards self and society, and the relation between them, is exercised. In itself it implies things as articulating to oneself where one is placed, thereby ascertaining where our interests rests and outlining plans of future action. (Archer 1995, 2003; Zotzmann, 2018).

From a CR position, pre-existent structures and people interact with one another on the basis of their distinct powers in an open system. This implies that contexts differ and so interrelate/interact differently with the specific realization of agential powers. The outcomes of agents’ reflexive deliberation contribute either to some kind of reproduction

(*morphostasis*) or social change (*morphogenesis*). This, in turn, serves as the basis for and thus pre-exist subsequent interactions (Elder-Vass, 2010). The researcher's task is to reach to a sufficient *theorization* regarding the interplay/interaction of causal mechanisms (including actors' rationales and understandings for action) and the contexts within which they operate (Pawson, 1996).

As compared to the social constructivist perspectives in social research, that attend to something available empirically at the discourse level, CR also attempts to make theoretically grounded claims in relation to “the unsaid, the unknown, the absent and what may lie in potential” (Martinez, Martin & Marlow, 2014: 456). For instance, a language teacher in some elite school may not be aware of and, therefore, may not speak of the privileges enjoyed by their students. Similarly, teachers in under-privileged places may also not be aware of the resources which are *not* at their disposal, such as access to professional development opportunities and technical equipment. The stratified ontology of CR directs our attention to structural/contextual affordances and constraints which potentially can, and actually do, affect agents. CR can hence sensitize analysts to the unequal distribution of economic, linguistic, and cultural resources, it is also able to locate semiotic processes “within the practical engagement of embodied and socially organized persons with the material world” (Fairclough, Jessop, & Sayer, 2002: 7). Therefore, in the interviews' analysis in this study, I focus on the teachers' agency through their reflexive deliberation on their personal volitions (desirable) - through their concerns, interests, values, projects and beliefs—and what they believe they can do (possible) in their context of specific socio-economic and institutional structures. While doing so, I treat these interviews not as a “play of varied narratives” (Zotzmann, 2018) but as illustrations of reflexivity, providing potential insights into the “social contexts, constraints, and resources within which those informants act” (Smith & Elger, 2014: 114). The insights gained from interviews were further enriched by the classroom data (video recordings) which helped me better interpret the interview data. The methodology and data analysis procedures are further explained in detail in chapter 4 and 6.

In line with the focus of the study, that is, to investigate the causal influences of both the *structures* (teaching context) and English language teachers' *agency*: this study formulates the research questions as mentioned in section 1.5 in light of the following three stages of Archer's (1995) ‘analytical dualist’ theory:

- 1) Structural properties *objectively shape* the situations confronted involuntarily by the agents, and possess generative powers of enablement and constraint in relation to (Structural conditioning);
- 2) The agents' own configurations of concerns, as *defined subjectively* by them (Social interaction).
- 3) Producing courses of action through *reflexive deliberations on behalf of the agents*, who subjectively determine their practical projects with regard to their objective circumstances. (Structural elaboration: reproduction or transformation)

Taken together, according to Archer (1995), these three propositions explain the *mediatory* process whereby the first stage in the conceptualisation of mediation of structure to agency entails specification of how the structural properties shape/influence the situations (in which the agents involuntarily find themselves) by moulding the agents' circumstances that were not of their making. This means identifying a structure independently of its incumbents and occupants, yet indicating its influence upon them by establishing the reality of structures through the causal criterion, and accounting for the ultimate outcome that either transforms or reproduces the initial structure.

This shows that if one accepts analytic dualism i.e. separating the parts (structure) from the people (agency), as is the case here, one is required to focus simultaneously on the nature of; a) individuals, b) social environments, and c) their causal interaction (Sawyer, 2002; Caetano, 2014). The *two-way causal relationship* between social properties and individuals, include both the internalization processes linked with development, as well as the externalization processes whereby individuals influence social structures (Valsiner, 1998). This is based on the non-conflation of agency and structure and their analytical separation on a temporal basis (Archer, 1995). Hence what is involved is splitting up the sequence analytically into the three stages as mentioned above, which can be termed Emergence-Interplay-Outcome, where, the structures necessarily predate the action(s) and interplay/interaction is held to emerge from these structures, where the interaction condition most of what such interaction can make of these structures (ibid).

Archer's (1995) approach analyses the generative mechanisms that potentially emanate from structures as emergent properties and their reception by individuals who exercise their own emergent powers of self and social reflection. The outcomes do not simply reflect one or the other i.e. either agents or structures, but are the products of their interplay (ibid), such as

$H_2+O=H_2O$ . This is exactly what the current research intends to do: to explore how the institutional structure(s) of schools, condition the English language teaching opportunities for the teachers and their reception by these teachers (agents). This led to the research questions (see section 1.5) guided by Wedell and Malderezs' (2013), which might be seen as notions for language teachers to reflect upon and which have been framed in the light of Archer's theory with the intention of making them more focused and operational for this research.

Here, we can see that by considering the 'structure' and 'agency' as autonomous and distinct entities, Archer problematize the relation between them by promoting the ontological primacy of 'structure' over 'agency', through the notion of 'analytical dualism' (Caetano, 2014). Archer proposes this as an alternative to Giddens's (2004) and Bourdieu's (1984) structurationism (section 3.3.4), arguing that the mutual constitution of agency and structure obstructs the analysis of their interaction/interplay. Although, like Bourdieu and Giddens, she acknowledges the interdependent characteristics of their relationship, nevertheless, she believes that agency and structure operate on different timescales (Caetano, 2014). That is, structure(s) reside outside of agents, in some sense, whereby agency and structure determine each other, but do not construct each other (Wheelahan, 2007), thereby *linking*, instead of, *sinking* the differences between the two (Archer, 1995). Social events/outcomes, thus, result from the interaction/interplay of both agential and structural causal power. For the present study, this means the extent to which teachers can exercise free will and/or are restricted and controlled by their institutional structures (ibid). In this way, Archer supplied a social theory that accounts for why things are so and not otherwise, and which not merely identifies but also unpacks. Thus, it provides a more fine-grained conceptualisation of structural conditioning: on how structural affects are transmitted (as reasons and not hydraulics - see Archer 1995 for details) to specific agents in determinate situations and positions (the who, the where and the when), and on the strategic combinations that lead to morphogenesis instead of morphostatis (which outcome?). Thus, the basic theorems of Archer's (1995) M/M<sup>12</sup> approach, constituting analytical dualism state that:

1) structures necessarily *predate* the action(s) that transform them.

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<sup>12</sup> Morphogenesis/statis

2) structural elaboration necessarily *post-dates* those actions that have transformed it.

Autonomy and pre-existence denote discontinuities in this structuring process that can only be captured by making analytical distinctions between the ‘before’ (phase 1), the ‘during’ (Phase 2), and the ‘after’ (phase 3) stages, all of which assume the essential continuity of human activity for the endurance of all social phenomenon. For example, language users or church-goers find their language or beliefs readymade at their inception, thus “people do not create society. For it always pre-exists them ... Social structure ... is always already made”. (ibid)

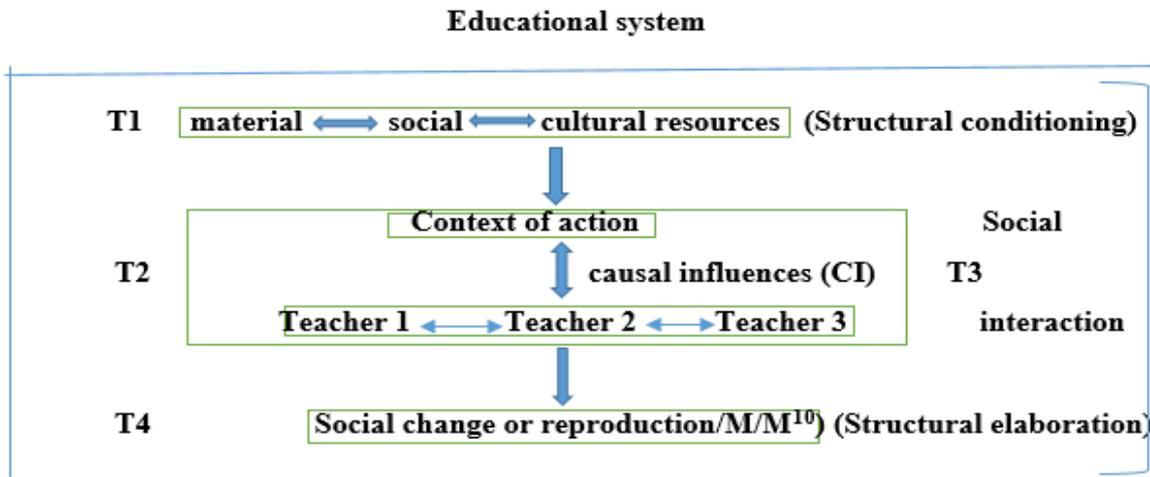
Thus, neither the analytical history of emergence, nor the identification of emergent properties, or their part in the shaping of agency, can be investigated without separating the parts from the people. This represents the bed-rock of understanding structure over time, which then aids in explaining the specific forms of structural elaboration (ibid). The practical application of morphostatic / genetic analysis to the structures that constitute the social system (educational system in this study) entails four basic propositions (ibid):

- 1) there are internal and essential relations between and within social structures(s) (SS);
- 2) causal influences are exerted by SS on social interaction (SI);
- 3) there are causal relationships between individuals and groups at the level of SI;
- 4) SI elaborates upon the composition of SS by modifying the current necessary and internal structural relationships and introducing new ones, hence morphogenesis. Alternatively, SI reproduces such structural relations during morphostatis.

Proposition 1) represents the charter for analytical dualism as it involves the possibility to make statements regarding the elements of social structure(s) without any reference to current agents precisely as the former are held as emergent properties, whose emergence depends upon the activities of previous generations (ibid). These components broadly are the material, cultural and social resources detailed in this study. Proposition (1) serves as a foundation for propositions (2), 3), and 4). Such analytical distinction is represented diagrammatically by Archer (1995: 157) as:



The above mentioned four proposition provides the conceptual framework for the study as follows:



**Figure 2| : Study's conceptual framework**

Individuals or communities, such as schools, have economic, social and cultural capital. Economic capital includes tangible and/or financial resources, for instance, a school infrastructure, its physical environment and financial resources. The cultural capital, in the embodied form, for instance, means skills, knowledge and training; basically anything which makes the teacher's belief system (Wedell & Malderez 2013). So, for example, professional development of teachers can be an instance of cultural capital. Lastly, social capital refers to the (human) resources which arises from networks and/or relationships, for example, communities of practice.

As shown in the figure, the social system, in this study, is the educational system which is represented by the secondary state schools. The social system is a particular configuration of its component structures, where the former derives its emergent properties from the relationships between the latter. The component elements, or conceivable properties pertaining to this system which may exert causal influence upon each other in this study, are broadly identified as: the material, cultural and social resources of the schools (parts) constituting the context of action for another component, the participant-teachers (people plus positions). These parts and people are the structural properties of the said educational system (schools) (T1) which themselves contain non-observable (emergent) causal powers whose combination (relations between parts and people) (T2/T3) generate further emergent systematic properties (T4).

By adopting Archer's perspective, the central premise of which is analytical dualism, I commit to considering 'structure' and 'agency' as two distinct and autonomous entities

where structures pre-exist agents. Thus, identification of structures is the first stage and is possible on account of their autonomous influence, and their irreducible and relatively enduring characteristics, but above all, they pre-date any specific cohort of incumbents/occupants. This leads us to discuss next how ‘social/structural conditioning’ and ‘conditioned actions’ occur.

### 3.5.1 **Social structuring/Structural conditioning and conditioned actions**

Social structuring is a process that is continuously activity-dependent and is shaped by the processes and powers whose interplay accounts for its elaboration (Archer, 1995). As such “it is moulded and remoulded but conforms to no mould; it is patterned and re-patterned but is confined to no pattern; it is organized and re-organized but its [social structuring] organization needs comply with none of its precedents” (ibid: 165). It requires both ‘structure’ and ‘agency’ interacting in tandem to occur. In other words, structure(s) pre-exist, and constitute the environment of contemporary action but something needs to be there to be empowered or restrained before a structure can influence it. That something is human agency or agents which is not only influenced by structures but also by the individual’s awareness about them (Archer, 2003). Agential subjectivity impacts the ways agents interact with their surrounding structures, thereby the latter condition patterns of action, providing agents with strategic directional guidance (Connors, 2015). Objectively, it restricts what can be reformulated, reproduced, transformed or rejected (Archer, 1995). Structures map out an environment imbued with certain potentialities, and limitations, thus condition agents involuntaristically (defined as possible, attainable and even desirable) without their consent, compliance, or complicity, however, non-deterministically, but with directionality (ibid) as explained above.

Since ‘conditioning’ is not ‘determinism’: this process (conditioning) essentially entails the interplay between two different types of causal powers, that is, those pertaining to agents and those to structures and, so too does the adequate conceptualisation of conditioning (Archer, 2003). This process firstly entails a specification of *how* structural powers impinge upon agents, and secondly, *how* agents utilise their own personal powers to act ‘so rather than otherwise’, in such situations (ibid). The former concentrates on the question of transmission (as reasons), while the latter, on construing these reasons or influences as ‘enablements’ and/or ‘constraints’, and, as such, entails the two causal powers of ‘structural

objectivity' and 'agential subjectivity' (ibid). This results in shaping the situations in which agents find themselves, such that some courses of action will be facilitated and others impeded depending on the agents' vested interests (ibid). Agents' vested interests are the objective elements of their situations that predispose them to different courses of action for the attainment of some particular agential enterprise which triggers the 'enabling' and/or 'constraining' powers of the given structure(s) (Archer, 1995, 2003). The generic term assigned to this enterprise is 'project(s)' by Archer (2003) as further explained below.

### 3.5.2 **Human projects and structural constraints and/or enablements**

The project is a human device, which implies a desired end, however, nebulously or tentatively, and also a notion, however imprecise, of the course of action by which to accomplish it and for which humans design strategies (that might/might not be successful) (Archer, 1995, 2003). The term 'project' here signifies any goal intended by a social agent (Archer, 1995). Now it is due to the relationship of compatibility or incompatibility between humans' 'projects' and the generative powers of the 'parts', that make up their environment, where the latter exerts a conditional influence upon the former as an 'enablement' or a 'constraint' (ibid). It excludes the possibility of thinking any emergent social property as being enabling or constraining by nature or in abstraction (ibid). 'Enabling' and 'constraining' are rather relational terms, that is, there are no constraining and enabling factors per se but are triggered by every person in relation to their 'projects' and operate by anticipation of impediments and the ease with which a project can be achieved' (Archer, 2003). They designate the congruence or incongruence between two sets of powers, that is, powers of the 'parts' in relation to the 'projects' of the people (Archer, 1995).

This means, by their nature, individuals have levels of freedom to determine their courses of action through their own powers of reflexive deliberations (explained below in section 3.5.3). These indeed vary with the strength of enablements and the stringency of constraints. Moreover, the impact of enablements and constraints are only tendential, depending on the reflexive abilities of individuals to withstand them and/or to strategically circumvent them. Thus, the influence of these structural causal powers depends on two open systems: the world with its contingencies and individuals/agents' "reflexive acuity, creativity and capacity for commitment" (p. 7). In sum, the activation of causal powers linked with enablements and constrains relies on the use of personal emergent properties to accomplish agential projects. (Archer, 2003)

Thus, what is needed for structural factors to exert their powers of enablement and constraint may be summarized as follows. Firstly, such powers depend on the presence of human projects. Secondly, a relation of congruence (to operate as enablement) or incongruence (to operate as constraint) needs to exist with specific agential projects. Thirdly, the agent has to respond to such influences, which, being conditional instead of deterministic, are subject to agents' reflexive deliberation over the nature of response. (Archer, 2003). This means that the 'causal power of social forms is mediated through social agency' (Bhaskar, 1989: 25-6) via 'internal conversations' or 'reflexive deliberations'.

This means the exercise of socio-cultural powers depends, among other things, upon their realization and reception by humans. Their influence is not direct but mediated, due to its having no other ways in which it might be exercised without invoking impersonal social powers. Thus, humans (agents) are capable of resisting, suspending, repudiating or circumventing structural tendencies, in unpredictable ways, due to their creative powers as human beings. Also, it could be the case that the operation of agential powers are modified, suspended or re-directed etc. by the social structures within which they are deployed and developed. The influences of social forms work through humans who are the sole means of their actualization: the effects of the 'parts' are essentially mediated, with the agents standing as mediators. It is through the powers of agents that the powers of 'parts' can exercise a conditioning effect in a non-reified manner. Structures fundamentally exercise their influences through and in relation to the 'projects' formulated by agents (as explained above). Only in this way, indeed, can the same environmental property (e.g. an official language) develop situations that some agents find constraining and others enabling. Such a non-reified account of structural conditioning thus needs an active agent so as to mediate the process. In other words, conditional influence(s) never functions as an irresistible pull or push on an un-reflective matter to which things just happen, without a self-monitoring capacity/ability that can make a difference to the outcome. (Archer, 1995, 2003, 2007). Such an ability/capacity is referred to as 'reflexivity' by Archer (*ibid*) which is quite central to agency.

Archer argues that humans are reflexive. This means that although humans/agents may show how external structures influence them - as has occurred so far in the limited number of studies relating to language education, (as explained in detail in the previous chapter) - we need, (as this study has attempted to do), to also trace how agents *receive* and *act upon* external structural influences (Connors, 2015). It is the interaction/interplay between the powers of these structures and those of the agents' internal properties that make changes

occur (ibid). Therefore, the projects held dear by people are crucial factors in what actually happens and this is where the agents' powers to think, to deliberate, to believe, to evaluate, to care and to take/not take positions, come into play (ibid). According to Charles Taylor (1985), the human self has the ability to reflect upon and evaluate their desires, or carry out 'self-interpretations', to make choices (p. 27). These self-interpretations are linked with the questions of value (ibid). In other words, individuals evaluate their own evaluations (ibid).

Connor (2015) reviews Archer's notion of 'reflexivity' as an ability which aids humans in developing their awareness of the circumstances and the available options therein. The 'reflexivity' impacts the chances of individuals' project's success in different structural contexts. Archer (1995) argues that there is an inner subjectivity that is real and influential in determining human actions. This inner subjectivity emerges from personal embodied properties and develops through interactions with the environment, producing the emergent powers which humans possess, such as their understanding regarding various aspects of the world (Archer, 1995, 2003, 2007). Such powers are ontologically subjective (Searle, 1992), meaning that they can be directly accessed only by the individual they belong to. However, this does not mean that they become any less a part of the real world (Connors, 2015). Humans do not always need to operate alone and their ability to partner others in joint ventures enhances their potential agency (ibid).

In an attempt to make any kind of material changes to the world, humans' physical bodies change as well as a result of such activity (for example, going to the gym or eating or learning to play the piano). All our acts as an agent develop resources to enhance our agency further (Connors, 2015). During the process of our physical activity, we leave the results/marks of our work in the form of changes to the environment, in tools and artefacts (ibid). However, this process is so familiar to us in our daily lives that we hardly pay it any attention. When the form of these changes are social, the results may be the construction of social structures and institutions, designing new roles and relations and preserving or changing existing ones (ibid). By fulfilling some role in society, we perpetuate that role, that is, by making changes to the way we perform it, we either undermine its potential, or develop it further, for our successors (Bhaskar, 1998b). Simultaneously, we also gain and embody experience(s) of how to operate in such situations.

Thus, the generative powers of both the 'people' and the 'parts' are essential conditions for a particular development, and only together do they provide the adequate conditions for the fulfilment of any project (Archer, 1995). However, it needs to be borne in mind that it is not

simply a case of the independent confluence of the two sets of powers that are either congruent or incongruent (ibid). Conversely, one of the most significant conditional influences of structures is their impact upon “the projects to be conceived, entertained and sustained within a given social environment” (p. 200). This means that the circumstances confronted by every new generation are not of their making, although they do influence what the contemporary agents can make of them (structural elaboration) and how the agents are reconstituted in this process (agential elaboration) (ibid) as explained next.

### 3.5.3 **Structural and agential elaboration**

Archer (1995, 1998) explains the phenomenon of structural elaboration by using the terms morphogenesis and morphostatis which corresponds to the processes of transformation and reproduction respectively. The term ‘morphogenesis’ refers to “those processes which tend to elaborate or change a system’s given form, state or structure” (Buckley, 1967): ‘morpho’ signalling shape, and ‘genesis’ indicating that the shaping is the product of social relations. On the contrary, ‘morphostatis’ points to the processes that tend to maintain or preserve a system's given state, form, or organisation. Both these terms represent processes that come ‘after’ something that existed ‘before’ them (Archer, 1995). Hence, for social structure “it is no longer true to say that human agents create it. Rather we must say human agents reproduce or transform it. That is to say, if society is already made, then any concrete human praxis can only modify it and the totality of such acts sustain or change it” (Bhaskar, 1979, as cited in Archer, 1995: 140). In Archer’s terms, morphogenesis is always a transformation of morphostatis.

Similarly agential elaboration indicates the way(s) in which agents find themselves in specific social, material, and cultural structural environments that condition and constrain them. Potentially agents can make changes to such environments by their interaction with them and with other agents. Consequently, there is a phase of structural elaboration during which either the situation changes or resists change thereby producing new structural circumstances. The agents may or may not develop new properties or capacities that could produce further powers of interaction. Ultimately, the new circumstances lead to new conditioning and interactions and then elaborations occur, and so on in, a spiral over time. (Connors, 2015). Bhaskar (1979) argues that society is both the ever-present condition and the continuously reproduced outcome of human agency.

### 3.6 **Conclusion**

In line with the aims of this study as outlined in chapter 1, this chapter begins with a conceptualisation of agency from CR perspective and a brief overview of different perspectives on structure and agency: positions taken vary from considering human agency as dominant, to human agency as being completely subservient to the structures within which it operates (Connors, 2015). This background leads to a better understanding of CR - an alternative meta-theory to both positivism and poststructuralism / postmodernism in the natural and the social sciences - its main assumptions in general and Archer's (1995, 1996, 1998, 2003) variants in particular, and the reason for adopting this approach in this study, which followed next.

The argument was built on the basis that “many theorists have failed to distinguish agency as an analytical category in its own right” (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998: 963). This led to the tendency of conflating agency and action, thereby viewing agency as an innate capacity of the individual (something individuals possess), and so to be viewed as being more or less agentic as individuals, rather than viewing agency as an emergent phenomenon – something which is achieved by humans via the interplay of personal capacities and the affordances, resources, and constraints of the surrounding environment by means of which humans act (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015). Such an ecological conceptualisation of agency stresses the significance of both individual capacity and contextual/situational dimensions in shaping agency (ibid). The distinction between agency as variable, as capacity and as phenomenon is a crucial distinction usually ignored in the literature (ibid). For this purpose, I utilised the potential of CR with its focus on ontological theory and its interest in causality to shed light on teacher agency with regard to social structures.

Archer's work as located within the broader paradigm of CR posits both the presence of social realities (ontological realism) as well as the provisionality of our knowledge regarding them (epistemological relativism) (Collier, 1994). Archer's concept of ‘analytical dualism’ (Archer, 1988, 1995) has been used to separate the ideational (or discursive) and material from the social to understand the exact relation between the social, material and the cultural spheres at a specific point in time, and reconstituting them when applying the fruits of such deliberation (Connors, 2015). As I have mentioned above, in this study, I was interested in how institutional structures constrain and enable teachers (who teach English language) and how the individual teachers, in turn, try to align their own values, concerns, and practices to such structures/contexts to establish a practicable professional *modus vivendi* (Archer, 2003,

2007). To achieve this end, I followed a specific methodology which is explained in detail in the next chapter.



## Chapter 4 **Methodology**

First of all, an abstraction is made from a fact; then it [the fact] is based upon the abstraction. That is how to proceed if you want to appear [...] speculative.

(Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, in Martin, 2003)

### 4.1 **Introduction**

This chapter addresses the methodology used in the research to collect the data for investigating and answering the research questions which were reshaped and refined during the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The research questions are:

**R.Q1)** How do the factors, as revealed from the data, *condition* the context of action for the participant-teachers in the secondary state schools of Pakistan?

**R.Q2)** How, in pursuit of their interests/concerns/values, do the participant-teachers *respond to* (encounter, negotiate, receive) such institutional structural conditioning/influences in their given context?

**R.Q3)** What is the *behavioural outcome* (current pedagogy, and whether showing morphogenetic tendency or morphostatic tendency) of the interaction between participant-teachers and the structural influences?

For the purpose of addressing these research questions, section 4.3 provides an account of the qualitative approach, which leads to a discussion on the exploratory case study research design (including its rationale) in section 4.4. This is followed by the methods adopted in this research for the collection of data (and the methods' rationale) in section 4.6. Prior to these sections, I will first present the philosophical approach which underpins the study as follows.

### 4.2 **Researcher's philosophical stance**

And as we think, so do we act.

(Schwartz & Ogilvy, 1979 in Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Mortimore stated that “the main aim of educational research is to replace anecdotal accounts with evidence” (2000: 5). However, due to the diversity of perceptions and views which may exist, so too do different perspectives exist, regarding what constitutes evidence (ibid). These perspectives are shaped by the researcher’s ontological and epistemological positions which affect the way reality is conceived and knowledge collected and interpreted by different researchers (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Philosophical issues are crucial to the research process as they impact the researcher’s thinking from the very beginning of designing the research project (Scott & Usher, 1999: 10). Since researchers tend to differ in their philosophical stances, these stances need to be made explicit in order to justify the research approach taken. The choices (regarding a specific research approach) will be addressed in the following section.

#### 4.2.1 **Realism: My ontological position**

Realism is a philosophy which considers that there is a reality that exists irrespective of our knowledge about its existence and that exists independently of our theories, perceptions, and constructions (Maxwell, 2012). Realism is committed to an explanatory framework that acknowledges (a) pre-existent structures as generative mechanisms, (b) the interplay of these structures with other elements of the social which possess causal powers, and (c) non-predictable but explicit outcomes arising from interactions between them, taking place in the open system (society) (Archer, 1995, Sayer, 1992).

Realist approaches, thus, are consistent with a non-reductionist approach to methodology and a rejection of empiricism and positivism (Scott, 2000; Sayer, 2000; Archer, 1995; Collier, 1994; Bhaskar, 1979). Also, they exclude theoretical approaches that conflate epistemology with the ontology of phenomena as is the case with constructivist / interpretivist approaches that repudiate the existence of any reality other than our constructions (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2017; Maxwell, 2012). According to realists, the world exists but its existence does not depend on our knowledge of it, even though our actions influence it as we ourselves are a part of it, and ourselves influenced by our own interactions with the world (Connors, 2015; Sayer, 1992).

With regard to this study, realist social ontology enjoins a methodological realism. This entails commitment to stratification, depth and emergence (the basic tenets of realism) as a definition of social reality (Archer, 1995). Methodological realism approaches agency and structure via ‘analytical dualism’ - an ability to explore the connections between these

separate strata with their own irreducible, autonomous, and emergent properties that consequently denies any kind of conflation (downwards, upwards, or central, as explained in section 3.3) in social theorizing (ibid). Thus ‘analytical dualism’ is intrinsic to social realism as adopted in this study (section 3.3.4).

Now, after explaining my philosophical perspective, the next step is to set out the epistemological issues of investigating it. We turn to this task next.

#### 4.2.2 **Critical realism: My epistemological position**

A critical realist (CR) approach seems to be the most appropriate analytical tool for this study as, contrary to the opposite extreme views of positivism and interpretivism / constructivism (neither of which adequately addresses the difficulty of investigating the social world), it takes an ontologically realist position to claim that a phenomenon exists whether we know or do not know about it (and that human social life is a part of this reality) (Connors, 2015). Also, according to the CR perspective, any phenomenon in the social world exists at different levels (ibid). This means that surface phenomenon at one level might exist due to causal processes or changes operating at another or different level in a stratified ontology (Bhaskar, 1979). This stratification of the world (both in time and space) is a tenet of CR.

To illustrate, with regard to this research, and in line with its focus, investigating what a teacher does and why, involves a study of the participant-teachers’ physiological level (the way they teach) and psychological levels (internal conversations/reflexivity (see section 3.5.3) and their interaction with the material, social and cultural aspects of their teaching context. At all these levels, teaching is enabled or constrained by the social structures of the schools in which they teach. This point has been explained in detail in chapter 3 above.

As mentioned above, although CR states that, even though a real world exists independently of our knowledge about it, the ‘reflexivity’ of individuals is a part of the ontology of such a world. That is, the meanings and ideas held by people – their feelings, concepts, intentions, beliefs, and so on – are equally as real as physical objects and processes (Maxwell, 2012). Archer (1998a) noted that even if people could be completely enclosed within a box, they would still act reflexively and would start altering the given situation. Individual’s ideas, thoughts and relationships can influence their activities and thus their situation. This makes the social world ontologically different from the natural world in the sense of its being

notably more reflexive in nature and one of the reasons to investigate the social world differently from the inanimate material in traditional laboratory situations. This is because, as opposed to the inanimate material, what human agents believe influence their activity and so their surroundings (Easton, 2010). The other reason is that as humans operate in open systems, they cannot be isolated from their social, material, or discursive environment (ibid).

Thus, a CR approach to the world as stratified implies that empiricism (as in positivism) as a research methodology is not sufficient, since empiricism assumes a flat ontology, considering only what operates at one (surface) level (ibid). Such an empirically accessible surface phenomenon mostly results from processes occurring at a different level (i.e. from underlying causes) that need to be apperceived in order to understand the phenomenon under investigation (ibid) (how social structures shape participant-teachers' agency – in this study). In simple words, there is more to the world than meets the eye (ibid). For example, the participant-teachers' ways of teaching English language in their classes may seem to be a matter of their free choice at the surface level, but in actuality may emerge as a result of other invisible reasons (as we shall see later in the data analysis chapter 7 and 8). Also, considering the world's stratification, it may be possible that a given structure potentially sets several processes into motion, which may not always be influential. Other structures at the same or possibly different levels may block their impact. For example, in this study, what the participant-teachers wants and is capable of doing and what they ultimately do in their classes on account of some institutional constraints. Thus, the teachers' potential might not be actualised in their particular teaching environment, nor emerge as empirically accessible through observation (this we shall see as well in Data Analysis chapters 6 and 7). A deeper consideration is therefore required to uncover what is actually occurring.

Having identified the ontological questions and decisions taken about what form of knowledge is required, the next step is to develop the research design and/or methodology which best fits such considerations. Thus, the qualitative research approach appeared to be the most appropriate for this study and was thus adopted as is further explained below.

### 4.3 **Research approach: Qualitative study**

[Qualitative research] practitioners are committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience.

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 6)

As evident from the abovementioned quote, the main purpose of qualitative research is to understand the phenomenon in question by studying it in its natural setting, without any attempt to manipulate or control the situation as is sometimes the case in quantitative studies (Holliday, 2007). For this purpose, this study employs qualitative approach which allows for the “collection of data that is rich in description of people, [the given context] ... and an understanding of behaviour from the participants’ own frame of reference” (p.10) and to develop a detailed view of the meaning of phenomena for individuals (Creswell, 2014). Such a flexibility of the qualitative approach entails the use of a range of methods and includes watching and asking so as to describe events and people in detail without resorting to any numerical data (Best & Kahn, 2006). In this way, qualitative studies are comparatively emergent instead of “tightly prefigured” (Davis, 1995: 429) as in quantitative studies. Although qualitative research may have some theoretical inclinations in the field at the outset, it is usually guided and driven by emerging themes from the data grounded in their naturalistic setting and participants’ narrative accounts. Thus, qualitative research is heuristic in the sense that the findings are drawn from interpretation of a particular context, participants’ subjective understandings and the researcher’s reflexivity and experience. Reflexivity is deemed important and potentially enabling, facilitating understanding of the phenomenon under consideration as well as the research process itself.

Moreover, as with any research, it is the research questions that guide the broad research design. The research questions in this study are seeking answers to ‘how’ questions rather than, for instance, ‘how many’; that is, ‘how’ English language teachers (agency) are influenced and shaped by the institutional structural factors in a resource-poor ELT context. This points to the main aim of this study as being to *understand* the English language teachers’ agency (behaviour and thinking) in their classrooms in the selected Pakistani secondary state schools (see the following sections for details on this). Such understanding can only be achieved through careful, in-depth and detailed analysis of the phenomenon in its actual setting (Ho, 2011) to extract both the direct and/or observable, as well as indirect and/or unobservable, structural influence(s) on teachers’ agency for which “traditional quantitative methods are not always up to the task” (Hood 2009: 67). This is because, quantitative methods constrain participants’ responses by the researcher’s imposition of the constructs of pre-coded categories (Creswell, 2014). In a sense, such approaches focus on the researcher’s priorities and interpretations instead of deriving from the respondents their own narratives regarding their understanding of the phenomenon under consideration (Elliott & Bempechat, 2002). In contrast, qualitative methods prevent such control of data and may

provide more interesting data since what the teachers are saying is not limited to what the researcher asks (Creswell, 2014). These specific features of the qualitative approaches make it the most suitable approach for this study to achieve its main aims.

Even though within realist frameworks, most qualitative research is still inspired by idealist and relativist commitments, qualitative methods are still a powerful means of investigating social reality in all its complexity and ontological depth in that they increase the causal-explanatory potential of social investigation (Iosifides, 2016). This is because, CR views reality to be layered, and the research process as a constant probing into the ontological depth of reality. Therefore, research approaches that are limited to surface level analysis, do not seem suitable, be they positivist or social constructionist (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2017); an argument also supported by Bhaskar (1991) and Archer (1998b). This shows that neither of the extreme positions of positivism and constructionism alone can capture the in-depth understanding of the social reality which is required in realist approaches. Thus, class room *observational data* has also been included, in addition to the interview data / interpretivist account of the participants (commonly and as only method employed in studies within realist framework as stated just above).

Although CR strongly favours an interpretive dimension in its theoretical framework (Archer, 1998a), it integrates it with causal explanation based on realist ontological and epistemological principles. Qualitative methods, within such premises, are not just preoccupied with meaning but are also attentive to courses of action, practices, and social relations of all types and at various levels (Iosifides, 2016). According to Iosifides (2016), when a study involves questions pertaining to the *composition* of a social object and the *interrelationship* between its different constituents and the *causal consequences* of such relations, as this study does, qualitative methods are more suitable for answering such essentially qualitative questions. Particularly, the inherent benefits of employing qualitative methods for answering such questions increase significantly when the ontological and epistemological propositions of CR are adopted (ibid), as in this study.

Furthermore, the central tenets of realist ontology (as explained above) makes the richness of data - which is the essence of qualitative approach - more important in my study than the amount of data gathered. This richness cannot be conveyed by simple interpretations but by 'thick descriptions', and by looking into complexity, details, and situated meaning of the individuals' everyday life and/or social phenomena (Schwandt, 1994). This involves talking to individuals, observing processes and phenomena, participation in social situations and

learning from different sources of data (Iosifides, 2016). Through these activities, realist qualitative researchers explore social processes and the generative causal mechanisms which produce them and by means of which they act in specific ways or exert specific causal influences upon their constituents and other objects and entities (ibid). The realist qualitative researcher must also account for the consequences of the interplay among different entities and their causal powers, thus to explain social phenomena (ibid).

That said, although, qualitative approaches contain the potential to yield varied and rich data, the analysis and interpretation of which may lead to uncovering significant facts when the individuals' perspectives are important (Guilloteaux, 2007), it may lead to the qualitative researcher acquiring too much information. This is one of the main disadvantages of such an approach, particularly when time and writing space is limited. That is why purely qualitative studies are labor-intensive and its analysis time-intensive. However, one technique, which may be used to overcome this problem to some extent is thematic analysis, which is employed in this study (see the following section 5.2.1 on this point).

Overall, the depth, understanding, and richness suitable to a CR approach can better be achieved by making sense of the data which emerge from the subjective experiences of the teachers from their narratives, enriched by understanding from their classroom teaching. To do this, the research investigated teachers in the course of their work and events as they unfolded within their natural settings (classrooms) (Punch, 2009). The data was collected in the field (schools) where participant-teachers worked to allow studying behaviours and events in the teachers' everyday context through observation (section 4.7.5.3). This included focusing on participants' actions and also delving into meanings and reasons which such actions implied, through the use of semi-structured interviews (sections 4.6. and 4.7.5.3).

After deciding to use the qualitative approach for the above mentioned reasons, the next step was to choose a specific research design among the various qualitative approaches, such as, the phenomenological approach, grounded theory approach, narrative approach and others (see, for example, Creswell, 2006, 2012; Mackey & Gass, 2012 for an overview on different qualitative approaches). After deliberation, I found the (multiple) *case study* approach to be the most appropriate, among the different approaches, for this study as explained in detail in the following section.

## 4.4 **Research design: Multiple case Study**

The case study is a comprehensive research strategy (Merriam, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Yin, 2009), in which the researcher explores a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, through detailed, and in-depth data collection that involves multiple sources of evidence or information (such as interviews, classroom observations, and field notes in this study) (Creswell, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2017). The case study approach is employed to understand a problem or an issue using a specific case as an illustration (ibid).

### 4.4.1 **Defining case study**

The renowned case study scholar, Robert Stake (2005: 443) considers the ‘*case*’ as definitional of a case study. The term ‘case’ can refer to a person, a group of individuals, an institution, or an organization (Yin, 2014). The case preferred must be a well-bounded, complex, specific, and functioning “thing” (Stake, 1995: 1-2), and/or some real life phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Describing ‘case’, Stake (1995) argues:

The case is an integrated system. The parts do not have to be working well, the purposes may be irrational, but it is a system. Thus people clearly are prospective cases. (p. 2)

Drawing on Stake’s argument, in educational research, a case might, then, be a child, a class, a teacher, a school or a program (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1998). Following on from this, a *case study* is defined as an ‘intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit’ (Merriam 1998: 27), and a bounded system (Merriam, 1998; Hood, 2009). A “bounded system” means the case boundaries are clearly defined regarding what they do/do not include (Smith, 1978, as cited in Hill, 2014). In this study, a case with boundaries are defined as each teacher in relation to their teaching context, (similar to cases in an empirical study by Connors (2015)).

According to Creswell (2006) and Creswell and Poth (2017), the case study is an appropriate approach to employ when the researcher has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries, and sets out to offer a thorough, in-depth understanding of a particular case or a comparison of several cases. Such an understanding of the case is developed through close analysis of the particular (the phenomenon of structural ‘conditioning’ and teachers’ ‘response’ in this study) (Stake, 1995; Hood, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2017). It acknowledges the context as a

dynamic and unique system, thus making it specifically appropriate for new insights grounded in the local context (Yin, 2009).

#### 4.4.2 Justifying the current study as a ‘case’ study

The need for case studies is born of the desire to understand complex social phenomena, where the interest is in the *process* and in the *context* (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Similarly, in this research, my focus is specifically “language teachers” whose agency (behaviour and thinking) I am studying and investigating, which is embodied, in a particular teaching context the understanding of which encompasses important contextual conditions as they are highly pertinent to the said phenomenon (Yin, 2003; Yin & Davis, 2007) as a case study does.

Case studies have been the preferred approach in studies which involve the unobservable hidden side of a person/teacher (termed ‘reflexivity’ in this study) such as language teacher’s cognition studies. For example, Li, & Walsch (2011), Ng and Farrell (2003), Borg, M. (2005), Borg (1999). Li, & Walsch (2011) especially asserted its importance for the proper understanding of teachers’ beliefs which are part of teachers’ internal reflexivity. Similarly, empirical studies such as Connors (2015) who, in common with the current study, also analyses the relationship between structure and agency using a CR theoretical perspective, also deems *case studies* as the most appropriate approach for such studies. This might be because, as mentioned above, realists are concerned with the description of how causal mechanisms work, so they “tend to favour [...] information-intensive case studies that permit such description” (Shapiro & Wendt, 2005: 47, as cited in Iosifides, 2016).

A stratified ontology, as is the case in this study, means that a phenomenon at one level, for example, the changes in participants’ teaching behaviour, might be due to factors at a classroom and/or institutional level. Similarly, participants’ actions might only become possible as they draw upon their personal embodied properties through reflexive deliberations (explained in section 3.5.3). Such changes might be observable empirically, however, the mechanisms by which they occur might not always be observable (Scott, 2000). A methodology designed to track changes in a phenomenon and its causal mechanisms at structural levels entails the need for what has been called by Harre (1979) and (following him), Sayer (1984: 221) as an ‘intensive research design’; to move beyond, in CR terms, the empirical realm in order to access deeper levels of reality.

Intensive research tends to study groups or individuals in situ, instead of isolation, so as to access the actual processes involved (Connors, 2015). Causality is explored and analysed by studying the actual linkages between the research objects, while the research outcomes are evaluated through corroboration of causal explanations (ibid). Preoccupation tends to be with the investigation of a specific case to illuminate the processes at work (ibid). Therefore, intensive research incorporates an ethnographic aspect and a case study approach allows the collection of rich data through multiple data sources to generate thick description (Geertz, 1975; Clegg & Stevenson, 2013).

Thus, this study employs an intensive design in the form of a case study research (Hammersley, 1992; Stake, 1995; Bassey, 1999). This entails employing multiple data sources such as semi structured interviews, classroom observations and field notes (see the following section 4.6 for details on these methods). Participants included eight English language teachers, each constituting a case (teacher: activities, and account of that teacher) bounded by the situation (the teaching context). Thus, the study is a multiple-case study of eight English language teachers, chosen across and studied within four different secondary state schools in Pakistan, making it a multi-site case study as well. The cases (teachers) are different in terms of gender: four male teachers and four female teachers working in two boys' and two girls' schools respectively. That is, two female teachers per each girl school and two male teachers per each boys' school. However, the cases are similar in respect of the teachers' teaching context as characterised by constraints, mainly material/socio-economic and cultural. Further details on the participants are given in section 4.7.5.1.

Depending on the focus of the research, a case study can be *intrinsic*, collective or multiple, or *instrumental* (Stake, 1995). Multiple case studies do not focus so much on the persons taking part, but on a particular phenomenon that they manifest, selecting multiple cases to illustrate the issue (Stake, 1995; Morton, 2012). Similarly, in this study, the researcher focuses on a single issue or phenomenon both through an in-depth analysis of single cases to illustrate the phenomenon in question, as well as a comparison of these cases and hence rich insights into and a better understanding of the phenomenon, thus making it a 'multiple-case' study. According to Yin (2009), the analytic advantages of having two or more cases might be substantial and analytic conclusions more powerful on account of having an opportunity for comparison. Multiple-case (eight teachers, here) and multiple-site (four schools, here) case studies also allow the possibility to study a range of variables in relation to a single phenomenon (Shamim, 1993).

A number of scholars have argued for case study research involving more than a single case (Bryman, 2016). For example, according to Yin (2009), when you have the option and resources, multiple-case designs could be preferred over a single one as the chances of doing a good case study are better when there are more participants. Thus, a multiple case study might be designed in a way where a few cases could be literal replications (ibid). If all the cases turn out as predicted, these cases in combination would provide compelling support or evidence for the set of propositions (ibid). Due to these reasons, multiple-case study design is regarded as more robust and its evidence more compelling (Herriott & Firestone, 1983).

As stated above, a very important component of a case study approach is the "unit of analysis" (Yin, 2009) which in my research is the "teacher, together with their teaching context", as I am looking into how the teachers are influenced by different structural influences, which involves both the processes of *conditioning* by institutional structures and *response* by the teachers (see chapter 3 for details). Yin (2009) seeks "literal replications" for greater "external validity" (p. 41): he suggested that for a greater degree of certainty that the researcher may use five, six or more replication cases (p. 58). The principle probably is to select the cases from similar pairs and to ensure the pairs share as wide a range of relevant variables as possible (Stenhouse, 1985: 12). Therefore, I opted to use eight teachers with a range of variables (see section 4.7.5.1 below for details). These constitute eight case studies, whom I am investigating in relation to their school/teaching context; each of which were considered within their institutional context.

However, initially four cases (teachers) in four different schools (1 teacher in each school) were chosen, and four more were added later when some new aspects of teaching/pedagogy were observed to emerge within the study or some contrasting features were noticed in some cases (in relation to each other) at the same institution (see the following section 4.7.5.3 for details). This illuminated some interesting points regarding how personal agency, and/or specific structure(s), actualised emergent possibilities in one case but not in the other (Connors, 2015) (see chapter 9).

Despite their strength(s), case studies have been criticised for their subjectivity and bias and hence their reliability and validity. These are sometimes questioned on account of the researcher performing both data collection and analysis (Stake 1995; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Moreover, case studies are usually qualitative and interpretive, "a subjective research paradigm is a given" (Stake 1995: 45). However, subjectivity need not to be seen as a failing which requires elimination. Instead, subjectivity is an integral component of understanding

the human condition and a part of all research (Stake, 1995; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). However, what the researcher should remember is the obligation and responsibility of conducting the research ethically, and interpreting and reporting the evidence honestly, fairly, and justly (Stake 1995; Merriam 1998; Yin 2003; Hood 2009) which I attempted my best to achieve as much as possible by following procedures outlined below.

#### 4.5 **Trustworthiness in a qualitative case study research**

Guba and Lincoln (1994), and Lincoln and Guba (1985) have established four measures to achieve trustworthiness and hence rigour in qualitative research. These are; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as substitutes for internal validity, external validity, reliability and confirmability respectively which exist in quantitative research. The present study adopted these criteria as follows.

Credibility (internal validity) or ‘truth value’ signifies confidence of the researcher in the truth of the research findings. For this, Lincoln and Guba (1985) have listed techniques to enhance the credibility of resultant findings, such as, prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation, persistent observation, referential adequacy, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, and member checking, a number of which have been used in this study as is detailed below.

Regarding ‘prolonged engagement’, it is argued that longer the time the researcher spends in the field, the greater the chances they will eschew their own preconceptions or biases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006; Cohen et al., 2011). In this study, this was achieved by spending sufficient time (nearly 11 weeks, including two weeks of pilot study) in the field, during which any disturbances because of my presence, my own biases and the impact of unexpected events (mentioned in section 4.7.3 below) were tried to overcome (Erlandson et al., 1993). This was the maximum period I could spend for practical reasons, keeping in mind the total duration of the study as well as participants’ suspicions regarding my intentions for trying longer association with their schools and other reasons mentioned in section 4.7.3 below. However, I endeavoured to observe as many of the participant-teachers’ classes as possible, stopping observations only when I began to notice repetition of almost similar teaching patterns (Adler & Adler, 1994). Furthermore, credibility through prolonged engagement was also achieved on account of being a Pakistani citizen and having experienced its educational system, both as a learner and a teacher (approx. 15

years) before the research began, meant that I had a good understanding of the context before I started collecting the data.

‘Persistent observation’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006) was also implemented by spending more time with participants, in order to identify such elements/features which were most relevant to the research focus, in turn, to enhance the chances of understanding the phenomenon under consideration. This also enhanced the possibility of winning the participants’ trust; an important element of the research process (de Laine, 2000; Richards, 2003).

Furthermore, the cross-referencing of data gathered through different methods and sources served as some form of methodological triangulation, providing explanations on the phenomenon from different perspectives (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Cohen et al., 2011). The classroom observations also provided an opportunity to assess the consistency of the teachers’ comments regarding their practices with my observations. The findings from one method corresponding to that of the other, reinforced the interpretation of the data (Connors, 2015).

Member checks, also known as respondent or participant validation, (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Punch, 2005; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015), that is, clarifying the truthfulness of the analysis or findings with respect to their constructions, was also conducted during data analysis and the interpretation stage. This involved showing participants the interview transcripts, and allowing them to verify their content before data analysis as well as through follow up interview questions where more clarification was required. During the field work, member checks were carried out during interviews through summarising participants’ information, asking them for more explanations, such as, can you explain this more? What do you mean? Paraphrasing or quoting their exact words, explaining what I understood by those words, and waiting for participants’ clarification/ confirmation. I also got opportunities for few informal member checks (discussions with participants), such as discussing their class sometimes over a cup of tea after a lesson observation.

Another criterion, ‘transferability’, refers to the generalizability of the research findings: i.e. how they might be transferable or relatable to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Being a qualitative case study, the degree of this study’s generalisability or transferability is limited as transferability is not the primary intention of the current enquiry as explained above. In this case, the responsibility shifts to the reader for deciding if the research findings might or might not be relevant to their contexts. Such relevance, according to Lincoln and Guba

(1985), relies on the similarity between contexts. However, to support the reader in making such a decision, a highly detailed description of the research process is required (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Yin, 2009; Robson, 2011). One way to achieve this is by including a ‘thick description’ of the research context (see section 2.5 above) where the investigation has taken place (Geertz, 1973; Larsson, 2009). Such descriptions may range from the participants, setting, and data to the detailed descriptions of the research outcomes with quotes verbatim from participants’ interviews, and/or documents, etc. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This “enable[s] someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 316).

In this research, I attempted to achieve this in section 2.5 above, which presents a reasonably detailed account of the context: the broader research context (Pakistan) as well as the main research sites (secondary state schools of Pakistan). However, it is to be noted that I avoided to making the ‘thick description’ overly ‘thick’ due, primarily, to space limitations and secondly, to avoid making the text overly complex to read. Also, I realised that by providing too much detail regarding the institution or the participants and the particular classes (both discussed in chapter 2 as well as within the Data Analysis chapters), might increase the possibility of their being identified, which would constitute a breach of the need for participant confidentiality – major ethical concern (see section 4.7.1 below regarding confidentiality). However, the information presented in chapter 2, and the detail provided in the two chapters of data analysis (6 and 7), may be sufficient for the reader to evaluate the degree to which the research findings could be applicable to their contexts.

Moreover, in this study, the ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973, 1975) provide details on how different decisions were reached at various stages of the research process i.e. during its design, analysis and interpretations, as explained at their respective points in this document. Such descriptions allow readers to potentially transfer their experiences and personal reflections to their own contexts (Erlandson et al., 1993). The other techniques used in this research are purposive sampling, and convenience sampling (see section 4.7.5.2 for details). For the purpose of transferability, Merriam and Tisdell (2015) recommend small purposeful sample in order to understand the issue in depth, contrary to discovering what normally holds true for many. As pointed out by Wolcott (2005: 167), “every case is, in certain aspects, like all other cases, like some other cases, and like no other case”.

Dependability (or reliability) implies the stability and consistency of the investigation processes used over time through an ‘audit trail’ (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 319). That is, the

qualitative researchers try to establish the robustness and rigor of their research by describing in detail the data analysis process(es) and decisions which led to the research findings (Eu, 2011). The 'audit trail' serves as a tracking system for providing details regarding how the data were collected, the methods involved, how and what decisions were undertaken during data analysis, and how different categories have been derived (Wolf, 2003; Mertens, 2015). It ensures the level of consistency between interpretations of the researcher and that of the evidence found in the data, and also the degree to which similar studies can be conducted by other individuals in different settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The greater the consistency of the researcher in the research process, the more dependable will be the findings (Williams, 2011). Common features of the audit trail include a record of memos, research journals or field notes completed (Williams, 2011; Mertens, 2015) while undertaking the research.

With regard to this research, I used field notes during my stay at the schools and during classroom observations would note down any information relevant to my research focus. I also used a research journal which captured my personal reflections, and momentary insights during the research process or while myself reflecting on the decisions regarding interview questions, data collection, coding, interpretation and analysis. I have transparently and openly outlined the procedures undertaken while collecting the data. Such a strategy allows readers or other researchers to review the path taken by the investigator from the raw data to the conclusion of the final results (Wolf, 2003), and to conduct similar kind of research, with adaptations to adjust for particular features of their own specific contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2009).

Finally, the last criterion of trustworthiness is objectivity or confirmability, which evaluate the 'neutrality' of the research: the degree to which the research findings reflect the reality of the research context and not the researcher's bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Again, this might be quite difficult to achieve within qualitative approaches as in the current study, due to the inherent subjectivity in/of the approach (Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Coffey, 1999; Munro, 1998) as I already mentioned above in section 4.3. The data in this research emerged from the face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, and class observations, and so were grounded in actual/real events occurring during the academic year. Thus, triangulation of the data collection sources and methods along with the auditing procedure 'audit trail' allowed to balance out the effect of potential researcher bias and attain some degree of objectivity and so a good degree of 'confirmability' in this research study. Also, all of my data, drafts, and notes have been kept and are available for an external audit if needed. Moreover, my two seasoned supervisors have been scrutinising my research over the four years of our

working together. However, complete neutrality, during the analysis of data that was intrinsically meaningful and interesting (Coffey, 1999), is not possible within CR framework. These issues have been addressed again in the following section 4.7.3, which presents my role as a researcher as well as my relation with the participants.

After having established the trustworthiness of the study, next, I will present the exact methods employed for conducting this research. Although few case studies employ quantitative methods, for instance, surveys (Yin, 2003; Gillham, 2000; Merriam, 1998) but it is quite rare. Most educational case studies use qualitative methods (Simons, 2009; Hood, 2009; Yin, 2003; Gillham, 2000; Merriam, 1998). Same is the case with the present study as is explained in detail below.

## 4.6 **Methodological approach**

The suitability of any methodological approach lies [...] in its suitability for the research question or questions guiding the investigation.

(Van Kleeck & Daly, 1982: 702)

This study employs qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews and non-participant classroom observations (video recordings) and field notes for the following reasons. Firstly, this is in line with the researcher's ontological and epistemological belief about social reality and structures as independent and stratified, and its emergent properties as not easily observable yet dependent on human actions among other reasons as explained in detail above. Secondly, these data collection methods allowed me to access 'embedded' processes by focusing on the context of teachers' everyday lives where decisions, by them, are enacted and made (Barbour, 2014). Thirdly, the multiple sources of evidence increase the study's credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 1994; Silverman, 2000; Fontana & Frey, 2005; Angouri, 2010) as mentioned above. Observations in natural settings also allowed better understanding by comparing and complementing 'what teachers do' with 'what they say they do'. Finally, it allowed a first-hand account of the way(s) in which the participant-teachers managed their teaching practices in their given context.

As an overall approach, these methods were considered appropriate, according to Corson (1997) - whose views are greatly influenced by Roy Bhaskar (a renowned CR philosopher) - to adequately interpret the structural effects that influence teachers' classroom practices. First, social reality is made sense of by looking at what individuals report the reality is for

them, followed by attempts to confirm the reported reality. Later stages entail explanation of the operation of the structural influences, and using this knowledge to promote change(s) of some form as a morally binding response. (ibid)

Further elaborating these methods and approaches of data collection, scholars argue that as reasons for a certain behaviour can be accepted as causes and “things that are believed become real and can be inquired into” (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 4), one must enter the mind of the other individual to acquire that social knowledge (Krauss, 2005), that is, to engage with the causes and beliefs/thinking of the participant-teachers regarding their particular teaching behaviours in this study. However, the focus, as in this study, on potential influencing structures, needs to be somehow directed away from the participants and towards the examination of wider structures (Dobson, 2003). The explanation and unearthing of such structures might well be beyond the understanding and capability of most of the actors (in this case - teachers) involved (ibid). Thus, there should be an additional focus away from the realm of the individual actors concerned (ibid). Therefore both the narrative approach (semi-structured interviews) and the naturalistic/ethnographic approach have been employed for data collection. This is because;

Investigations into teachers’ beliefs entail inferring beliefs not only from the statements that teachers make about their beliefs, but also by examining teachers’ intentionality to behave in a particular way and, then of course, what they actually do.

(Johnson, 1994: 440)

Also, because I was “ultimately . . . interested in understanding teachers’ professional actions/decisions, not what or how they think in isolation of what they do” (Borg, 2003: 105). Therefore, interviews and observation both served as the main as well as the complementary tools supplemented by field notes. However, in the absence (to my knowledge so far) of any previous empirical studies which explores language teachers’ agency from critical realist perspective (see section 1.3.3 above), I mainly took guidance, with regard to the appropriate data collection methods, from empirical studies on language teachers’ beliefs (‘beliefs’ which are also a part of an agent’s reflexive deliberations) and social sciences literature, which discusses the relationship between structure and agency. This point is more fully addressed in the next section.

With regard to research on teachers' cognition/beliefs, many studies use research methods, such as, observation and interviews (Borg, 2009). Examples include Calderhead and Robson (1991), Johnson (1994), John (1996), Sato and Kleinsasser (2004), Farrell and Kun (2007), and Li and Walsch (2011). This is because, as Borg (2009: 168) remarks that:

Observations on their own can tell us nothing about what teachers think, believe or know; thus, they are typically used in conjunction with interviews, which also, if conducted on their own, cannot provide any direct evidence of what teachers do; they only produce reports of what teachers say they do.

Similarly, Li and Walsch (2011) also strongly argue against using just interviews or observations in isolation. They suggest that a deep understanding is required of the complex interplay between personal beliefs and context-specific actions - especially when contextual influence is equally the main focus of an investigation - as reflected in classroom interaction. Moreover, the complexity of the notion of 'belief' (in the current context, teachers' internal thoughts) and the assumption that they are held unconsciously (Pajares, 1992; Borg, M. 2001; Tsui, 2007; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Kumaravadivelu, 2012) (which can be understood via behaviour and actions), it was considered important for this research to observe the participant-teachers in action. This necessitated collecting data on how teachers act instead of relying solely on the self-reported data.

Furthermore, as already mentioned above, this study aims to understand the structural influences (the generative/causal mechanisms) which might have shaped the participant-teachers' agency (which includes beliefs and reflexivity – see chapter 3), in its then current state, in the given school context. According to Sayer (1992: 104), "To ask for the cause of something (in the present case, the specific way of teaching) is to ask 'what makes it happen', what 'produces', 'generates', 'creates' or 'determines' it, or, more weakly, what 'enables' or 'leads to' it". Such an understanding of the causal mechanisms requires seeking explanation, by developing a holistic description, until epistemological closure is obtained (Easton, 2010). The realist notion is that as social events are interwoven among different layers of social reality, so must be any account of them (Pawson, 1996). For this purpose, the researcher should try to collect as much data as is possible employing more than one source of data collection. In such a situation, research - such as this - based on the ontological assumptions of CR - may benefit from utilising ethnographic method or (non-participant) observations (Rees & Gatenby, 2014). This involves linking individual accounts of the research participants to different layers of context and/or social structure and attempting to

explain rather than merely describe social phenomena (Watson, 2012, as cited in Rees & Gatenby, 2014).

Ethnographic methods may also be useful in initiating the ‘retroductive journey’ (Rees & Gatenby, 2014: 133). Retroduction is the key epistemological process which critical realists usually employ in line with its (critical realism) most fundamental aim: *explanation* of “what caused the events, under discussion, to happen?” (Easton, 2010). Retroduction is a meta-process, the results of which are identification of the mechanisms which explain what caused specific events to occur (ibid). This is because causal explanation requires “finding or imagining plausible generative mechanisms for the patterns amongst events” (Harre, 1975: 125, as cited in Rees & Gatenby, 2014), leading to “the postulation of a possible mechanism, the attempt to collect evidence for or against its existence, and the elimination of possible alternatives” (Outhwaite, 1987: 58, as cited in Rees & Gatenby, 2014).

Events or outcomes are what critical realists investigate, that is the external and visible behaviours of people, systems and things as they occur (Easton, 2010). According to Easton (2010), it is only possible to understand a social phenomenon by recording and then analysing the inter-linked events which occur due to the actors’ acting. These events may be recorded live or lie in the past records including memories of the actors who can attest to the events (ibid). An explanation by the critical realist will thus “involve a gradual transition from actions through reasons to rules and thence to structures” (Sayer, 1992: 112), that is, observation followed by interviews in this study. This is the sequence that is followed in the present research on account of its utilising the critical realist perspective as explained in section 4.7.5.3. However, it is important to acknowledge that, contrary to this study, most social science research methods create data that are reported rather than directly observed (Easton, 2010).

Both the teachers’ interviews and classroom observations were semi-structured. This means that, unlike structured observations and interviews with a predetermined set of categories, I started with loose categories, concepts or assumptions in mind, and informed by the relevant literature, the prevalent ELT and learning situations as well as a knowledge of classroom practices generally in state schools in Pakistan and in resource-poor schools globally (see chapter 2 for all these details). These were articulated as interview and observation guides or aide memoires (Appendix A and B). Thus, this exploratory case study collected data mainly using two instruments: interview schedules, and observation schedules (of teaching and classroom processes), complemented by field notes and brief reviews of some document

(exam paper, national curriculum, and text book). The instruments were established and validated through a pilot study of teachers in similar kinds of institutional context in the same region (see section 4.7.4 for details). The main features of both these methods (interviews and observation) and the rationale for using them, as a method per se, are further provided in turns below, along with the exact procedure (manner and sequence) of using these methods while conducting the field work including the pilot procedure.

## 4.7 **Fieldwork procedure: The process of data collection**

The field work/data collection procedure involved two main stages: the pilot stage (see section 4.7.4) and the main data collection stage (see section 4.7.5). However, before that, I will first discuss the ethical requirements which were addressed before embarking on the field work.

### 4.7.1 **Ethical considerations**

The guiding principle of research ethics is that no harm should befall the participants (Dörnyei, 2009), therefore, ethical considerations were attended to and integrity was upheld while dealing with the data and participants. This involved seeking approval from the participant-teachers. To elaborate, I explained in detail to the participants the nature of this research that is: purpose of the study, the reason why were they selected, the tasks expected from them, and the purpose for which the data would be used. I answered their ensuing questions relating mainly to issues of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses which were assured to them. The participants were also informed about the voluntary nature of their participation including the option to refuse participation and/or withdraw from it at any time (see appendix C).

The participants, particularly females, were initially slightly reluctant to take part, mainly based on concerns about confidentiality and anonymity (see section 4.7.3 below for the reasons). However, I tried to obtain their permission to take part by convincing them of the possible significance of the research for them in the long run (see chapter 9 for possible implications of the study) and also my continuous reassurances about their integrity being the foremost priority for me. Also with the passage of time, I was able to earn their trust and confidence in me (see sections 4.7.3 and 4.7.5.3 below for details). Those who agreed to take part in the research were given a participant information sheet (Appendix C) which I explained verbally to them on request, followed by their signing of the consent form

(Appendix D). Ethics approval for conducting this research study was granted by the Ethics and Research Governance Online (ERGO), University of Southampton (ERGO number 21506).

Moreover, during my fieldwork, I would make sure that all the data, both interviews and classroom observations, were transferred and stored safely and electronically in computer files. Hard disk for backups were also maintained to avoid losing any data by any chance. All these documents were filed and referenced to ensure easy access to all the data, for further use. Furthermore, I intend to disseminate the research findings through publications once the PhD is completed. Every care will continued to be taken in maintaining anonymity of the institutions and/or the participants in any publications in future, possibly destroying all the raw data after attainment of PhD status and putting the study forward for publication.

Next, I will explain the site where the main study was conducted, the reasons for their selection and how I accessed the site and the participants therein.

#### 4.7.2 **Research setting**

The data for the current study was collected from four secondary government/state schools in KPK, Pakistan. Pakistan, being a developing country, is a useful setting to illustrate issues pertaining to resource deficiencies since it enjoys comparatively far fewer resources overall than other regions of the world, for example, Europe or US. Hence, it might be seen to be representative of other resource-poor contexts. Also, being a Pakistani citizen, this country was more accessible to me. Within Pakistan, state schools particularly in remote areas, and in KPK, feature significant socioeconomic disparities<sup>13</sup> in society as a whole, which is in line with the main consideration of the study (see chapter 1). According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Government of KPK (DESE Gov. KPK – hereafter) (2012), the province is one of Pakistan’s poorest, containing the highest percentage of poverty, presently producing only ten percent of Pakistan’s GDP (Gross Domestic Product), further reinforcing its appropriateness for this study.

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<sup>13</sup> poor infrastructure, lack the basic quality of safety and hygiene, school teams consist least qualified and the least experienced teachers (Westbrook et al., 2009)

Moreover, another reason for choosing state schools in KPK is that the majority of learners in Pakistan attend state schools (as compared to the private schools – see section 2.5 above) which serve a great portion of the overall population. Therefore, it seemed necessary to assess if the desired outcomes are being achieved in these schools because if broader objectives of the policy are not accomplished, that is, if the personal development of the majority population is not attended to, it may reinforce social inequality (Shah, 2012). This is an urgent issue which the government is seeking to address. KPK has the youngest population in the country where eighty five percent of citizens are under forty-five years of age and the literacy rate of the population aged ten years and above is fifty-three percent (the second lowest rate in the nation) (DESE Gov. KPK, 2012). According to DESE Gov. KPK (2012), the youngest population is a potential asset (if properly educated) as well as being a potentially archaic threat to society if deprived of quality education (ibid).

Furthermore, even in KPK province, the main supplier of education to the student population is the state-run educational system of schools. According to the Annual Statistics Report of Government Schools (2015) for the year 2015-16, in KPK, there are 27 506 state schools (71% of the total number of schools) having 4 219 789 (67%) students enrolled in them. Among these state schools, there are 1838 schools within Mardan district (where the chosen schools for this study are located) having the second highest number in the whole of KPK (consisting of 25 districts) while having the highest number (152) of (state) *high/secondary* schools (the specific research sites). District Mardan is the central zone and the most densely populated (35.78% of the total population) area of KPK. All the aforementioned statistics clearly show that the chosen schools are quite representative of how Pakistani state schools are more widely structured socially and pedagogically with respect to socio-economic conditions (see section 2.5). Thus, *representativeness* and the state schools' *dissatisfactory* language learning outcomes, (as explained and evidenced in chapter 1), were the two main motivations in selecting them for this study.

After narrowing down the selection of research sites from the country (Pakistan) to province (KPK), then to city (Mardan) and further to schools (state), the next decision was made regarding the levels of study. The decision to focus only on the secondary level was informed by three following considerations: 1) the fact that the English language education from grades I-XII forms an integral whole: The National Curriculum for English Language (2006), identifies five developmental levels for a description of performance. According to these descriptors, I-II and III-V (I-V) are foundational levels. Whereas, the levels XI-XII represent the terminal and specialised levels. However, the intermediate levels VI-X

(secondary level) are a significant transitional phase (also pointed out by Nawab, 2012) which builds from primary level, and moves towards the specialised level. At this level, a lot of grounding is done, specifically providing practice in the basic language so as to build a strong and adequate language foundation (National curriculum 4). This points to the fact that the learners at this level have a basic level of English but are not yet proficient and thus represent the stage between beginners and advanced learners where maximum learning of the language is supposed to take place (Nawab, 2012); 2) recently, the findings of the research study by Ahmad et al. (as quoted in Iqbal, 2013) concluded that, “the condition of learning English at secondary level in N.W.F.P. (new name is KPK) is worse and there is a need to address these problems on priority bases especially in the provincial government schools of N.W.F.P. (KPK)”, and 3) the dearth of research studies, more widely, beyond Pakistan, on language teachers within *secondary* state schools (Borg, 2015).

With regard to the selection of the specific secondary state schools, the classes and the participant-teachers therein, I went through a process which involved different stages and decisions which are detailed in the following sections. However, as the qualitative research process is not linear, where the process of data collection takes shape as the researcher goes along, the following discussion does not strictly reflect any 'temporal order' of stages or events in the research process (Shamim, 1993).

### 4.7.3 **Issues of access and researcher’s positional**

Regarding the particular chosen schools, they were selected on the basis of researcher’s familiarity with the region (being a local there), availability, access to and willingness of these schools and the research participants therein. In addition to these factors, another factor considered during the participant selection process was to cover as wide a range of teachers in terms of; the secondary state schools they teach in, their teaching experience, gender, and age (see table 1 below for the participant-teachers’ biographic details) and class level to gain a clear understanding of the phenomenon in question on the basis of similarities and differences, or in Stenhouse’s (1985) terms, to maximise similarities and minimise differences.

Gaining access to schools is usually negotiated either via the official channel, that is, formal permission requested and granted, and/or relevant letters obtained etc. or informally through the researcher’s own understanding of the behavioural norms of the community’s culture where she/he is working (Shamim, 1993). In this study, being part of the Pakistani

educational culture both as a student and as a teacher for the last twenty years, I knew very well that the formal channel might be very time consuming. This entailed passing through different stages of officials such as Director of Education, District Education Officer and others, as is normally the case regarding any matter in Pakistan including education. Since being a PhD student and limited by time, I did not want to waste time in formalities when I could otherwise achieve my aims instantly and conveniently through informal channels. This included accessing the heads of different schools who I knew either personally through family connections or because of sharing the same educational field. In this way, and after approaching and visiting many schools and heads, I finally gained permission to access to two secondary state schools for girls and two for boys (four in total).

After accessing the schools, the next step was to reach out to the participant-teachers. Since each school had many English language teachers (required participants), I first met the heads of each school who introduced me to all the available English language teachers in their schools to whom I spoke informally about my research. As a result, and after some discussion, in which I tried to clarify any doubts, worries and concerns of the participants regarding myself or the study, I was able to secure the willingness of a small number of teachers. Among these teachers, the final selection of two teachers per school were made where the different factors, mentioned above, played in together.

Being the prime research instrument, the researcher, in a qualitative research, assumes great importance. The researcher's presence and the participants' perception of the researcher's role may affect the setting that she/he observes, and so impact the quality and kind of data collected (Shamim, 1993). Such a perception is also closely related to the kind of research environment in which she/he operates, which, with regard to this study were resource poor state schools where research by local researchers was quite a rare phenomenon. Therefore, in this whole above mentioned process of negotiating access, and despite making attempts to allay the participants' fears regarding my role as a researcher, I experienced a somewhat defensive attitude by teachers especially in the beginning as reflected in their general response towards my visits to their schools, my presence in these schools' staff rooms, but especially in their classrooms, possibly on account of the following two reasons:

The first reason might be the participants not being used to researchers or anyone observing their classes. That is, given that the schools were resource-poor and located in suburbs, it is perhaps unsurprising that they were not very used to being the subjects of research. Therefore, initially, despite reassurances, the overall feeling the teachers seemed to display

was seeing the researcher as someone more knowledgeable than them, being an academic from a foreign university (see table 1 for teachers' biographic details).

Secondly, due to Pakistan having a predominantly VIP<sup>14</sup> (very important person) culture, approaching the teachers through the principals (administrative heads) of the schools established my role as someone too privileged to have been granted access to the classrooms, thus, identifying me with elite official or administration staff. Initially, I influenced the participants by unconsciously creating an impression as an evaluator of their teaching and possibly reporting their teaching to their superiors. That is, I was initially perceived by the heads and teachers of the schools as some official who was visiting their schools and observing the teachers with the intention of making reports on the schools and passing them on to the relevant authorities.

Such perceptions about me were evident from the ways the participant-teachers would justify their teaching behaviour both in interviews and during informal chats and would ask for reassurance(s) about their teaching. It became clear to me that I was being treated in much the same way as an academic inspector. Because of these two kinds of perceptions about me, the teachers seemed to have been, to some extent, trying to impress me both in their interviews and class teaching. For example, in one of the interviews, the participant-teacher asked me at the end, "how was my interview" (Int-3, line 87). Moreover, on one occasion, initially during my classroom observations, when I entered the classroom of one of the participant-teachers, Yasir, the teacher asked all the students to stand up and pay salute to me which was kind of a gesture of extremely high respect and reserved for inspectors. Such perceptions about me might have resulted in a slight discomfort for the teachers and might be intimidating to some extent, and some pretentious teaching might have occurred as a result, and teachers might have behaved rather differently from normal.

Although I do not claim to have completely eliminated my influence on the participants, and so the possibility of teachers and/or students' abnormal or pretentious behaviour, I felt aware of a significant change after little more than a week in teachers' and students' behaviour, inasmuch as they appeared more relaxed as compared to the beginning of my observations.

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<sup>14</sup> Local term used for elite class people

Soon, after a few visits, my wearing quite low profile attire<sup>15</sup> and manner of conversation, as well as having informal chats, they got quite used to me as an ordinary researcher and human being. I soon got accepted as a conversational partner for general chat in staff rooms in the girls' schools, and on an individual level with the male participant-teachers in the boys' school. For example, we would have informal chats about the current political and security situations in Pakistan, TV programmes, and latest trends in clothes. So, by the time I was conducting the interviews, I felt I had gained the participants' trust to the level that they were sharing quite conveniently their professional life experiences with me. In fact with the passage of time, everyone around me, including the participants, got so used to me that my research was not making a big difference to them and it seemed that I got accepted as some non-threatening figure and no more just a stranger.

Moreover, these issues were overcome by the researcher assuring the participant teachers that the research aim, broadly speaking, was to understand the learning and teaching activities being carried out in their classrooms and not to supervise or monitor their work in any way and my role, therein, was non-evaluative and non-judgemental. While doing so, being a qualitative researcher and so more flexible, I would vaguely state my objectives as being an effort to understand teachers' experiences of teaching English, the problems they face and to visit their classrooms to look at their lived experiences of the English language teaching-learning environment. However, on account of research being a rare event in the school environment, the teachers' ensuing unfamiliarity with the process made it quite challenging to achieve the right balance between non-leading questions and to elicit the required information from them within the given time frame. Also, the lack of research culture and these schools being in a relatively conservative areas of the city, in the exclusive boys schools, I initially felt out of place on account of myself being gazed at as someone very strange and unexpected, especially by the students. I handled this situation by trying to keep myself and appear normal and confident, as if not bothered by such reception. With this attitude, and with the help of a few male teachers, after initial few visits, boys' students

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<sup>15</sup> To dispel any impression of belonging to a very high or elite class as in Pakistan appearing very fashionable or smart means belonging to an elite or high class which may influence to a great deal the person in front of /around you.

seemed to have become used to me where my presence no more seemed anything strange to them.

Moreover, as a researcher, having not been an experienced hand at research with around hardly three research studies so far (this being the third and relatively more intense), I stepped into the field for data collection with the impression that everything would run smooth and on time as I had planned, which certainly did not turn out to be the case. The greatest hindrance associated with gaining access to the participant teachers and entrance in the schools was participant teachers' fear and school administration extreme consciousness of terrorist (suicide bombers) attacks which are part of Pakistanis' lives. During my data collection period, 3 major suicide bombers hit different institutions and the news were still floating around about more such attacks by intelligence agencies. This resulted in sometimes school administration and sometimes the teachers' reluctance to allow me sit in their classes and to take their interviews. I would be asked frequently that why I could not obtain all my data in few days or in a week's time. I visited several schools, explained at length both to the head teachers and the participant teachers, the purpose of my visit and research. Finally after some struggle and using special contacts/acquaintances I could gain access to few schools and teachers among which I finalised 4 schools and 8 teachers based on the criteria (mentioned at the start of this section) (as per my initial target) but with the condition by almost all of them to finish my data collection as quickly as possible.

Furthermore, initially, as straight forward it seemed to me, I had planned to undertake the study of each teacher in regular cycles. This means that the interviews and class observations of each teacher were to be conducted in the following manner. One week four teachers would have observation of one of their classes and then post-observation interview about that class. The next week same procedure would be followed with the next four teachers and carried on this way over a period of eight weeks. Hence, every two weeks each teacher would have a cycle of observation and post observation interview on alternate turns. This eight week time frame was considered to provide the researcher a good basis for having teachers' narratives and this combination of interviews and observations at regular intervals would have allowed me to collect quite rich data. Moreover, spreading interviews and observations evenly over the given time frame might have allowed me to see some (may it be even slight) variation in teachers teaching practices. This might have allowed me more rich data, more time for refining data as well as some analysis alongside on the field. However, I had to abandon the initial research plan and adjusted it on account of few difficulties such as exams in most of the schools, holidays due to festivities, the ignorance or unfamiliarity of the school

community about research process and what it involves, VIP's (very important person) visit and security concerns. This resulted in re-scheduling my visits to the schools as well as having to limit visits during examination periods.

Even though I could not succeed in my initial plan of observation and interviews in regular cycles spread evenly over the time period (for the reasons just mentioned above), the initial time frame of remaining in the field for eight weeks remained intact and, at least, and after some insistence every time, I could manage 1 main (up to 1 hour or above) post observation interview and 3 to 4 classroom recordings per teacher with few second post observation interviews (approx. 15 -20 mins), at their convenient day, time and place (see section 4.7.5.3 below). My next attempt was to collect at least the amount of data that I had initially planned for in the given circumstances irrespective of the irregular gaps in between the observations followed by interviews, as I was expecting more worst situations ahead involving more withdrawals of participants and access restrictions to the schools. Even my second and third post observation interviews were quite affected owing to the prevalent circumstances in addition to most participant teachers' otherwise least interest in further interviews.

After I designed my main methodology and finalised the sites and participants, prior to carrying out the actual research, piloting was undertaken to test and judge the effectiveness and functionality of the data collection tools and methods as follows.

#### 4.7.4 **Piloting: Participants, procedure, outcome**

The main aim of piloting was to test the interview questions for their clarity and relevance for the main/actual study, to get a better sense of the classroom observations and to identify and to prepare for any problems beforehand, thus piloting contributed to the study's trustworthiness.

The pilot participants were six volunteer teachers, who taught English and were selected on the basis of convenience, access and geographical proximity. A friend living locally helped arrange access to the pilot schools and participants. Regarding their profile and number, they were chosen on the basis of; firstly, the time allocated to the pilot study; secondly, a belief that six teachers would suffice to highlight any possible flaws in the research design and/or methods, and thirdly, that these teachers share, to a great extent, almost similar characteristics with the target sample (Teijlingen van & Hundley, 2001).

These teachers were interviewed (1 hr each) and their classes observed (3 classes each; each class about 40 mins) at a time and place convenient to the participants. Initially, the first three interviews from three participants were taken before the start of their class observation but later on, this sequence was changed as explained below. The main study afterwards then followed the same design as the amended order in the pilot study where I first observed the first one or two classes of each participant followed by conducting the interviews which were further followed by the remaining one or two class observations of each participant (see the table 4 below). The pilot study spanned almost three weeks, starting almost mid-July to the first week of August 2016.

Participants were interviewed using the interview guide prepared for the main study. In addition to answering the questions, they were encouraged to ask about or clear any ambiguity related to the questions. Furthermore, in order to advance the clarity of the questions, they were also requested to comment on their meaning, connotation and phrasing and were also invited to provide suggestions and feedback about the procedures and methods being used. Similarly, during the classroom observations, different points were paid thorough attention and these were taken as a great opportunity to practice both the field work and the art of collecting data.

The pilot data/study proved to be useful in providing insights into the main issues being investigated and informed the final research design with fresh empirical observations. Methodologically, it provided information regarding relevant interview questions (see appendix A for the details of the changes in questions after the pilot study) and the logistics of the field investigation, for example, where to sit and do the recording from (see more on this in section 4.7.5.3 below). The required adjustments, though not many, were made, ultimately establishing a satisfactory procedure for the main data collection. The pilot study helped in deciding whether the methods for the data collection were effective in terms of answering the research questions. It also helped in, detecting and resolving any difficulties that arose during their use and, refining the interview guide. Briefly speaking, the pilot study guided the main study as follows:

Firstly, having been taught in mostly quite well-resourced private teaching contexts (e.g. having more resources, regular teacher development opportunities/workshops, more individualised attention to students, regular formative assessments, good parent-teacher relationship and regular contact between them, system of check and balance for the teachers etc.), the pilot study helped me to gain familiarity with the resource-poor school teaching

context under investigation. It helped me to develop an overall idea regarding what aspects of the teachers, teaching and the teaching context could be useful to observe and to probe deeply to achieve my research aims, for example, teachers working with limited resources, and too many students; teacher-student interaction; teachers professional development opportunities (see more aspects in the data analysis chapters 6 and 7).

Secondly, the pilot study guided the sequence of data collection. Initially, as I mentioned above, I started with the participant-teachers' interviews followed by their class room observations. However, half way through I realised that it would be more beneficial to invert this sequence to identify opportunities/areas for discussion in the post-observation interviews relevant to research questions/focus on the basis of observations. In this way, the classroom observations proved helpful to map out the various types of observed activities and the roles performed by the observed participant-teachers. These were helpful in informing the following semi-structured interviews with various topics and issues relevant to the observed activities.

Thirdly, carrying out interviews with the participants (teachers) revealed that some issues required attention in the main study. For example, arranging and conducting interviews were time consuming, and thus needed careful preparation. It was difficult to arrange interviews with participants having different commitments and timetables at a suitable time and place. However, due to the pilot study, I learnt to identify the free time slots of the participants, such as, their lunch break. I also learnt to side-line my own less important preoccupations and to find ways of being more responsive to the participants. Moreover, it was during the pilot study that I decided to add 2 more participants to the original 6 to make allowances for unforeseen circumstances, as mentioned below in section 4.7.5.2. Also, it became clear during the interviews that the participants differed in the ways they interacted with the interview questions. For example, being repetitive, going off the topic, losing focus, and talking about their personal concerns and interests were few of the issues that I experienced. Thus, I learnt how to maintain some balance between being flexible and managing time effectively. This could be observed in my actual interview questions where I used different prompts to manage this situation, the lesson I had learnt in the pilot study.

Fourthly, the pilot guided me in how to ask questions that would elicit from the participants the fullest responses. For instance, on two different occasions when I asked the participants an open-ended question typical of qualitative interviews, i.e.: "Tell me about your English language teaching experiences", the participants asked me, "Tell me exactly what you want

to know about my teaching”. At such a point, it became clear that I would have to be slightly specific in my questions as the participants may not be used to being asked questions in such a highly unstructured way possibly on account of unfamiliarity with the research culture as mentioned above. Therefore, slightly specific questions (though still open-ended) were asked of the participants from then on.

Fifthly, the pilot study gave me confidence in accessing my participants and establishing rapport with them, to earn their trust and to put them at ease so that I could ensure maximum response from them. For example, it highlighted the importance of having a few informal chats with the participants to allow them to know me better and establish my credibility before inviting them to participate in the study. These factors impacted the main study in that they actually helped me build trust with the main participants as well as to sit in and record their classes, especially the female participant-teachers who were more reluctant for video recordings to take place, due to an overall conservative culture of the region.

Lastly, in the case of observations, the pilot provided me with sufficient practise in taking field notes i.e. what, how and how much to note down as well as an opportunity to test my audio and video recorders. It brought out the need for carrying spare recorder batteries with me. It guided me where to position myself and the recorder in the class for better recording and to minimise my impact on classroom activities. That is, to sit at the back or the edge of either side of the class rather than anywhere else. Initially overwhelmed by both extremes: what to note down and everything to note down, pilot helped me to be guided by and refer to my research questions as well as to read through and adopt some framework (see section 4.7.5.3 below for details on this) from the relevant literature for a more focused observation.

Above all, the pilot study enhanced my confidence as a researcher, an interviewer and an observer. After piloting, and guided by it, I embarked on the main research and gathered data. The steps and procedures of the data collection process that I followed with reference to selection and number of participants as well as interviews and observations are as follows.

#### 4.7.5 **Main research study**

The first step in the main study was the selection of the participants. The procedure which was followed in accessing them has already been explained above. However, the details regarding their biography and exact number along with the accompanying rationale are outlined next.

#### 4.7.5.1 Participants

As stated above, the participants in this study were eight teachers who were non-native speakers of English and who taught English as a second language (ESL) to classes/levels 6 to 10 in the chosen four schools (see section 2.5.2 above for the types of schools based on different levels). Their mother tongue was Pushto. In many respects each participant was a typical representative of English language teachers in this setting. Based on the reasons stated above in section 4.7.3, an attempt was made to select equal number of both male and female teachers (four of each) to reduce gender bias. Also, a varied range of participants in terms of age (ranging from 23 to 50), and ELT experience (4 months to 27 years) were chosen, from those who consented to participate, in order to obtain a rich data. The participants possessed different qualifications, trainings and levels of experiences of teaching English language as shown below in table 1. With respect to the teaching qualifications, they had done either CT (Certificate of teaching), B.Ed. (Bachelors of Education), or M.Ed. (Masters of Education) as their pre-service general teacher training, depending on the level of the class they taught (see section 2.5.2 above for details on these courses). Hardly, anyone of them had had any in-service teacher training experience throughout their teaching career. All these teachers were working in challenging conditions and constraints, experiencing a lack of support, a lack of resources, and usually working with large classes (as detailed in the following Data Analysis chapters). Biographic details of these participants are listed in table 1 below.

**Table 1** Biographic details / Profile of the participant-teachers

	Name of Teachers (All pseudonyms)	Gender	School (represented by alphabets)	English language teaching experience	Pre-service training	In-service training	
1	Sami	M	A	Boys' Schools	27 years	CT / B.Ed / M.Ed	None
2	Shah	M	A		3 months	B.Ed	None
3	Nawaz	M	B		10 years	B.Ed / M.Ed	None
4	Yasir	M	B		25 years	M.Ed	2 weeks (2007)
5	Ayesha	F	C	Girls' Schools	12 years	B.Ed / M.Ed	Once in whole service
6	Alia	F	C		10 years	M.Ed	None
7	Mehwish	F	D		20 years	M.Ed	None
8	Sara	F	D		7 years	B.Ed / M.Ed	None

#### 4.7.5.2 Sampling methods and sample criteria

As it is normally impossible for a researcher to cover each informant, no clear answer/suggestion exists for the right sample size and selections are required to be made on the basis of their appropriateness to the purpose of the study (Bryman, 2016). The selection is mainly dependent upon the research objectives, the nature of its design, research questions, undertaken analysis, and cost constraints in terms of money, time, available research resources and administrative support (Dornyei, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Cohen et al., 2011). In qualitative research, particularly, research involving case studies, sampling is recommended as a procedure for understanding a specific phenomenon in all its complexity instead of attempting to generalise the study's findings (Shamim, 1993) as explained in chapter 4 above.

Taking into account the scope of the study and other factors as mentioned above, the main sampling criteria better suited to the research was a combination of non-probability sampling methods, that is, purposive and convenience sampling<sup>16</sup>: for ordinary, accessible and representative cases and maximum variation sampling (Creswell & Poth, 2017): to cover varied range of characteristics (see section 4.7.3 above for details on this point).

In purposive sampling, participants are/were chosen because they meet pre-determined criteria (Barnard & Burns, 2012) which in this study was to 'select information-rich cases for in-depth study' (Patton, 1990: 182) to obtain insight into the phenomenon under consideration for the purpose of understanding it. This is because, purposive sampling provides more depth to the investigation from a small number of carefully chosen cases (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Moreover, based on conception of purposive sampling, "to acquire in-depth information from those who are in a position to give it" (Cohen et al, 2007: 115), participants were chosen on the basis that they were non-native teachers of the English language, and were teaching in resource-poor schools. Furthermore, from information rich cases, participants were determined by applying convenience sampling method where "a certain group of people [were] chosen for the study because they [were easily] available" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993: 103) and willing to participate (Barnard & Burns, 2012). As mentioned above, since I have been associated with the ELT profession for some years so I

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/samprnon.php>

have acquaintances and contacts in state schools in that particular region whom I approached for this study for convenience and time saving.

Regarding the number of participants, samples in qualitative research should neither be too small to lead to difficulty in reaching data saturation (information redundancy), nor so large as to make it difficult for the researcher to take a deep, case-oriented analysis (Sandelowski, 1995). Samples should generate sufficient data for the inquiry to allow thick descriptions, thus increasing descriptive and interpretive validity (Maxwell, 1992). Furthermore, in case study design (as is the case with the current study), it is the unit of analysis which is the primary concern rather than the size of the sample (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) suggests that the main unit of analysis is likely to be at the level being addressed by the main study questions, which here is ‘teachers’ agency in relation to their teaching context/structures’.

The decision to have a sample of eight participants was eventually reached through a number of considerations supported by the literature. Firstly, for case studies, there is no ideal number of cases; Eisenhardt (1989) suggested a number between 4 and 10<sup>17</sup>, Creswell (2013, 2015) recommends not to include more than 4-6 cases in a single study, for this “should provide ample opportunity to identify themes of the cases as well as to conduct cross-case theme analysis” (2013: 157) According to Creswell (2014) “[i]t is better to select a few, rather than many, individuals or sites to study, to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon” (p. 256). For these reasons, eight participants were considered to be an appropriate number, allowing leeway for any unplanned or unforeseen circumstances, for example, participants withdrawing from the study (Dörnyei’s, 2007) as well as to provide more opportunity for cross-case analysis, which may add to the study’s credibility. Secondly, one of this study's purposes is to achieve depth of information rather than breadth. This is ensured not only through using a case study approach but also a small sample size, for I chose not to sacrifice depth for breadth through a larger sample (Monique, Hutter & Bailey, 2010). This is advocated by qualitative pioneer, Patton (2002: 245) who noted “... validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and the observation/analytical capabilities of the

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<sup>17</sup> Eisenhardt (1989) opines that fewer than 4 cases, its empirical grounding is likely to be unconvincing, unless the case has several mini cases within it. With more than 10 cases, it quickly becomes difficult to cope with the complexity and volume of the data

researcher than with the sample size”. Thirdly, building from Patton’s quotation, practical reasons to manage various issues like financial costs, time limitations in participant’s availability and also the time needed to transcribe, check, read and code /recode the data (Emmel, 2013) motivated this small sample number. Lastly, case studies expert, Yin (2009) also suggested that one should think of the decision regarding sample number as a reflection of the number of (literal) case replications (as in this research explained above in section 4.3) that one needs or would like having in one’s study. This depends upon the certainty the researcher wants to have about the multiple-case results; greater certainty lies with the greater number of cases (ibid). For a greater certainty, according to Yin (2009), one may opt for five, six, or even more replications. So I went for eight cases to achieve more certainty, even though I presented only four teachers’ case analysis in this study in the Data Analysis chapters for the reasons mentioned in section 4.7.3 below.

Next, I will provide an account of the procedure involved in conducting semi-structured interviews and classroom observations.

#### 4.7.5.3 Procedure during interviews and observations

The data collection process (including pilot) commenced around mid-July 2016 and continued until the 1<sup>st</sup> of October, 2016. It took place at four schools: A, B, C and D, and involved eight ESL teachers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the examination of contextual factors in relation to teachers’ agency entailed two main types of data: the participant-teachers’ interviews as well as their observation in their present classroom settings. Each teacher’s statements offered data on their individual teacher’s perceptions of the teaching context and the effect these had on their decision making (Smith, 1996). While, observations provided me with the opportunity to compare teachers’ statements with their enacted actions, further enriching my understanding. The particular order of the process of data collection is outlined below in the table 2:

**Table 2. Stages of the data collection process**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Months</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>People involved</b>	<b>Main aims</b>
<b>1</b>	May 2016	Chats about access to schools	Researcher, Gatekeepers	To obtain permission to carry out the research.
<b>2</b>	July 2016	Gaining access to different schools	Researcher, Gatekeepers, Teachers	To recruit the teacher participants

<b>3</b>	July 2016	Final selection of schools and participants	Researcher, Heads of schools, Teachers	To confirm the final selection
<b>4</b>	July-Aug 2016	Pilot study	Researcher, Pilot teachers	To practise use of methods and to make necessary adjustments
<b>5</b>	Aug-Sep 2016	Classroom observations	Researcher, Teachers, Students	. To start building trust/rapport with the participant teachers . Retrodution process
<b>6</b>	Aug-Sep 2016	Interviews	Researcher, Teachers	General related to the research focus as well as based on observations
<b>7</b>	Aug-Sep 2016	Looking the first set of data	Researcher, Teachers	Preparation for further classroom observations and interviews
<b>8</b>	By start of Oct 2016	Obtained all the required data	Researcher	To start the analysis for addressing the research questions

While I have already addressed stages 1 to 4 above (section 4.7.3 and 4.7.4) of data collection, the remaining stages 5 to 7, I explain in the following sub-sections, while the 8th stage is discussed further in chapter 5 below.

*Phase one: Classroom observations*

Observation is “the process of gathering open-ended, first-hand information by observing people and places at a research site” (Creswell, 2008: 221). This data gathering approach was particularly suitable for my research inasmuch as it provides the researcher with an

opportunity to study an event, a situation, or a phenomenon as it happens in a specific context or setting (Merriam 1998; Yin, 2003; Cresswell, 2008) and moves the investigator towards a deeper understanding of the case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003).

The role of classroom observations is to take benefit of/from an existing process (teaching-learning situation already in place without making any special arrangements to set it up) for obtaining data regarding classroom behaviour and are generally meant to review the teaching processes and their possible relationship to the teaching context (Eu, 2011). Similarly, in this study, observations enabled me to actually see participant-teachers' teaching in relation to their workplace context (structural influences) which shaped what they 'did' in their classroom and the ways in which they 'did' it, thus to establish how these teachers' deliberations, concerns, and values play out practically in their teaching. Also, it allowed me to identify areas for discussion in the post-observation interviews, particularly regarding the reasons (causes) for their action – in line with the study's main aim (see for example the, reflective comments in appendix B and field notes in appendix E where potential areas for discussion can easily be spotted). Observations better complemented the interviews as according to Pawson, 1996: 302) and also Pawson and Tilley (1997: 162-3):

people are always knowledgeable about the reasons for their conduct but in a way which can never carry total awareness of the entire set of structural conditions which prompt an action, nor the full set of potential consequences of that action.

Regarding the role of the observer, in literature, it is usually defined in terms of a continuum ranging from a “‘complete participant’ or a ‘participant observer’ to a ‘complete observer’ or ‘non-participant observer’” (Merriam, 2009: 124- 125; Punch & Oancea, 2014: 199- 200; Yin, 2014). My role was of a complete or non-participant observer as my main purpose in observation was to look at what the observed participants (the teachers) usually do in their routine classrooms, and b) to avoid, as much as possible, getting involved in or influencing the situation under consideration in any way. However, it is argued that all social research is a form of participant observation as the researchers cannot study or approach social life without being involved in (Adler & Adler, 1994, as cited in Cohen et al., 2013; Wellington, 2015). Also, the classroom processes are so complex that it is extremely difficult to observe everything happening at any one time (particularly in large classes) (Shamim, 1993). Thus, it was decided to do audio-visual recordings of the classroom events which can be referred to during data analysis.

During both in and outside (but inside schools' premises) classroom observations, field notes helped supplementing the recorded data. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998: 108) field notes are “the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study”. Thus, the classroom observation process involved the following data sets: ‘classroom interaction’ and in / outside class (but within schools) ‘field notes’.

Some challenges of the observational method are the possible impact of the researcher’s prejudices, personal biases and the observer’s influence on the participants (known as the ‘observer effect’ (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) or ‘observer’s paradox’), which suggests that “the act of observation will change the perceived person’s behavior” (Cowie, 2009: 177). In other words, the students and/or the teacher may not continue as normal due to the presence of a visitor in their class. Although both the personal biases, opinions and the observer effect cannot be completely eliminated (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Merriam, 1998), I tried to minimise their influence by becoming conscious of them and was always guided by the research questions and making efforts to “interact with the [participants] in a natural, unobtrusive and non-threatening manner” (Bogdan & Biklen 2007: 39). This was achieved by clearly telling the participants about what and why I am observing, as well as positioning myself in the classrooms in a way where I could be least distracting. However, to discourage any unnatural behaviour likely to arise as a result of full disclosure, I shared just the main aims of my research with the participant-teachers (Cowie, 2009). Moreover, being a reflective observer is/was another way to minimise any prejudice and bias (Bogdan & Biklen 2007; Merriam 1998).

In line with the CR approach, and following a process of retroduction, I started the field work with classroom observations of the participant-teachers in order to observe, in CR terms, the patterns of events in a particular class with a specific focus on the teacher. This can be seen in appendix B which provides the examples of patterned behaviour or events from one of the classes of one participant-teacher, Alia, showing the teachers’ behaviour, classroom events and interaction with students. Although, I was open to any kind of observation relevant to my research focus, I started with semi-structured observation(s) where I considered broadly the syllabus (text book) content, students’ role, teacher’s role, and materials used. These broader categories came originally from Richard and Rodgers’ (1982) framework in relation to the ‘participation structures’ and ‘lesson task structure’ (Smith, 1996). These structures represent decisions on the part of the teacher during the implementation of a particular lesson which include language learning/teaching focus

(accuracy/fluency- focus as communicative language use), teacher role (director/facilitator), time frame (tasks), percentage of time for teacher-centred versus student-centred tasks, and task type (ibid). According to the focus of the study, the observations also included the physical setting; the resources used; and the participants' interactions and how they influenced their pedagogic decisions (Murphy, 2008).

These analytical categories helped me in two ways (lessons learnt during the pilot study): a) without having much expertise in classroom observations, to have some frame of reference to start with which allowed me to follow a method of progressive focusing as the research proceeded (Connors, 2015), and b) to focus on the main components of the class without losing any time in confusion regarding what to observe, though, as I said above, I was open to any unexpected practices likely to arise out of the observations, for example, mainly using mother tongue for most of the class time (as I observed) by the observed teachers in classroom teaching activities.

Any observation would be followed by the abductive inference which means to incorporate moves of 'induction' and 'retroduction' (Reichert, 2007; Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010), a process, which Bhaskar (1994: 18) terms 'conjectured hypothesis', and which asks what might have made a particular event occur. By 'induction' I mean, some regular feature emerging out of my observation, followed by my postulation about the possible mechanism giving rise to that particular feature (retroduction). Hence, observations led me to develop retroductive conjectures regarding the events or behavioural patterns or participants' personal embodied properties. My postulations about possible mechanisms were written down as reflective notes. For example, see appendix B for reflective notes which represent my postulation for the possible mechanism for the particular behaviour, documented therein, of the participant-teacher, Alia. The rest of the classroom observations also progressed in the same way. These postulations provided a clear focus for discussion and reflection in the subsequent interviews, in an "attempt to collect evidence for or against their existence, and the elimination of possible alternatives" (Outhwaite, 1987: 58 as cited in Rees & Gatenby, 2014). This can be seen in appendix B and E where I have provided a few examples as potential areas for discussion that arose from class observations and which did not feature on the prepared interview guide (appendix A).

Regarding the number of lessons observed, variation in different studies on language teachers indicates that the ideal number depends on the purpose of the study. For instance, eight by Orafi and Borg (2009), six by Farrell and Ives (2015), three by Phipps and Borg

(2009), and two by Zheng and Borg (2014). In this study, three to four classroom observations were conducted for each teacher, taking place over a period of eight weeks, for three main reasons. Firstly, it was hoped that such multiplicity might decrease chances of participants' "procedural reactivity" caused by the researcher's presence in their classroom (Foster, 2006: 87). Secondly, it was an attempt to cover, to the maximum degree possible, the teachers and their teaching in its entirety: to have a clearer, thorough and complete sense of their classroom behaviour. Thirdly, there was relatively little time in each class (due to limited official timing allocated per class, that is 40 mins) to observe significant events of interest to this exploration, so this deficiency was made up by observing more classes per teacher to ensure meaningful observations. This occurred until classroom patterns became quite repetitive.

The nature of the four specific classes per teacher that I observed was based on the fact that two kinds of English language classes were mainly being conducted in the schools. In one class, the teachers would teach language, with a main focus on vocabulary and/or meaning (sometimes tenses, and/or grammar point) through a text called (both locally and technically) as 'chapters' from a prescribed course book produced locally (see section 2.5.2 above for details). The chapters contained different types of grammatical exercises at their end adhering mainly to grammar translation principles. In the other type of class, teachers would focus explicitly on teaching a specific point of grammar or some skill, mainly (apparently) creative writing. An attempt was made, where possible, and if it fitted the agreed/arranged observations schedule, to conduct two classroom observations for both types of classes per teacher in cases where they took both the kinds to cover maximum aspects of their teaching. The table (3) below presents a brief summary of the observed classes.

**Table 3: Nature of observed classes**

Teacher	Class (students No)	Topic	Main pedagogic focus
Yasir	Year 10 (60)	<u>Chapter</u> : The last address of the Holy Prophet	Vocabulary
	-	<u>Chapter</u> : The Caliph and the gardener	Vocabulary
		<u>Essay</u> : Morning walk	Essay writing
Nawaz	Year 9 (80)	<u>Chapter</u> : The Medina charter	Vocabulary
	-	Present perfect tense	Grammar
	-	<u>Chapter</u> : The two bargains	Vocabulary
Ayesha	Year 6 (41)	<u>Chapter</u> : Hazards of smoking	Vocabulary
	-	Tenses	Grammar
	-	Subject verb agreement	Grammar
	-	Adverb	Grammar
Sami	Year 10 (60)	<u>Chapter</u> : The last address of the Holy Prophet	Vocabulary, tenses in general
	-	<u>Chapter</u> : The Caliph and the gardener	Vocabulary, general grammar
	-	<u>Chapter</u> : The Caliph and the gardener (remaining half)	Vocabulary, general grammar
	-	<u>Chapter</u> : After twenty years	Vocabulary

Alia	Year 7 (45)	<u>Chapter</u> : How to read	Vocabulary, general
		<u>Chapter</u> : How to read (remaining half)	grammar point encountered during text
		Pronoun and its types	Grammar
		Preposition	Grammar
Shah	Year 9 (68)	<u>Chapter</u> : The Medina charter	Vocabulary
	-	Parts of speech	Grammar
	-	<u>Chapter</u> : The snare	Vocabulary
Sara	Year 10 (60)	<u>Chapter</u> : Begum Rana Liaqat Ali	Vocabulary, tenses in general
	-	<u>Parts of speech</u> : Adverb	Grammar
	-	<u>Chapter</u> : The income tax man	Vocabulary, parts of speech
	-	<u>Chapter</u> : The income tax man (remaining chapter)	Vocabulary, General grammar
Mehwish	Year 9 (62)	<u>Chapter</u> : A visit to Swat valley	Vocabulary, parts of speech
	-	<u>Chapter</u> : A visit to Swat valley (end of chapter grammar exercises)	Grammar
	-	<u>Chapter</u> : Avalanche	Vocabulary

Each lesson lasted approximately 35 to 40 minutes, making a total of approximately thirteen hours of observation. This is closer to Walsh's (2002) eight hours of classroom recording of eight teachers (2 recordings of 30 mins each teacher) employing classroom discourse analysis which is the method of analysis used in this study as well (see the following section 5.2.2 for details). However, Walsh's (2002) classroom data was mainly CLT oriented whereas in my case it was mainly a grammar translation, teacher-fronted method for most of the session's total time, therefore, it was worthwhile recording significant observations

especially regarding students' role/interaction, if any. Table 4 below summarises the classroom observation details for each participant.

**Table 4: Class observation details**

	<b>Participants (Teachers)</b>	<b>Number of observed classes (each class about 35-40 mins)</b>	<b>Total Duration of observations</b>
<b>Pilot Study</b>	1	2	80 mins
	2	2	75 mins
	3	2	78 mins
	4	2	80 mins
	5	2	73 mins
	6	2	75 mins
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12 classes</b>	<b>461 mins</b>
<b>Main Study</b>	Sami	4	136 mins
	Shah	3	89 mins
	Nawaz	3	95 mins
	Yasir	3	85 mins
	Ayesha	4	110 mins
	Alia	4	123 mins
	Mehwish	3	86 mins
	Sara	4	89 mins
	<b>Total</b>	<b>28 classes</b>	<b>813 mins/13.55 hrs</b>
<b>Pilot + Main study</b>	<b>Net total</b>	<b>30 classes</b>	<b>1274 mins/21.23 hrs</b>

Classrooms were video recorded with the participants consent by using my galaxy note 3 mobile camera so as to be less intrusive which might not have been the case with video camera - a lesson learnt in the pilot study. Even so, this camera had a good resolution, a large screen and clear view. Furthermore, a good quality digital audio recorder was used as well as a back-up. The main advantages of video recording the classrooms are threefold. Firstly,

during my data analysis, it enabled me to revisit any scene any number of times and provided me with minor details or information which I might have missed or neglected to observe or jot down. Secondly, it helped me to do a more focused analysis as the research progressed and to compare the field notes which I had taken. Thirdly, it enabled me to focus more on observation (in real time) and reflect upon it than to be distracted by jotting down excessive field notes. Observation notes were initially handwritten but typed up afterwards.

Prior to the actual observation days, I checked the classrooms for technical issues and ascertained the best camera position: one which was as convenient and unobtrusive as possible. In tune with my non-participant role (see section 4.7.5.3) focusing mainly on the teacher and the classroom activity, I chose a desk where I could easily capture aspects of teaching which I thought relevant to the study aims. Particularly ‘what’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions regarding teachers’ action (behavioural outcome). Such actions were embedded in the workplace (school) context and were believed to shed light on teachers’ agency (including their reflexivity).

Observer paradox was also looked for as I knew the effect of my presence could bias the teachers’ behaviour - a limitation of observational methods (Dörnyei, 2007). The pilot study also proved very helpful in guiding me on these issues. This means that data obtained during first few days (2 lectures from each teacher) were not used as a research data as, quite understandably, the students and teachers were not usually comfortable and were quite conscious of my presence and the camera. Observing these first two classes in the first week was helpful to me as well in familiarising myself with the school and my field work procedures, with the teachers and students, and similarly, they familiarising themselves with me and my presence. Later on, they got quite used to me and appeared unconcerned by my presence as mentioned above.

As stated above, despite video recordings, I used field notes during observations in order to capture a triangulated account of aspects of the teachers’ classroom behaviour. These field notes entailed mainly a description of the school and class setting, what the teacher would write on the board, teachers’ comments and my own reflections, rough notes, personal reactions, analysis and feelings regarding what was observed (see appendices B, and E for few examples). Field notes also helped me to reflect on and understand the research process as it unfolded. They were not directly relevant to the data as I already had video recordings of the classes, although they were helpful in providing data related to schools not captured by the camera. Also, they helped during my analysis in making a clearer sense of the data

thereby facilitating my interpretation and analysis of the data. Moreover, where video recordings helped me to capture a thorough description of the class as captured through the camera lens (the body language, movement and the gesture of the teachers), field notes helped me to capture the other contextual descriptions of the class (e.g. the number of students and their gender, seating arrangement, wall posters etc.) and the different features of the school outside the domain of the camera. Thus, I attempted to document the maximum possible number of details, especially those features outside the remit of the video recordings, so as to retrieve them any time I needed during any analysis stage. I also maintained a chronological diary to record who I talked to, which day, where and so on.

*Phase two: Semi-structured interviews*

Understanding that “good interview questions are those that are open-ended and yield descriptive data, even stories about the phenomenon” (Merriam, 2009: 99), one-on-one, post- observation semi-structured interviews were conducted, usually after the second classroom observations of the participants, when I had gathered a sufficient number of questions to ask. Both Merriam (2009) and Yin (2014) also encourage to use ‘less structured’ interviews in qualitative research. Using semi-structured interviews in this study was based on the reasoning “that they may be used as the principle means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives” (Cohen & Manion, 2000: 268) and their potential to offer more detailed descriptions of occurrences or events (Ho, 2011). They do so by permitting “open-ended exploration of topics and elicits responses that are couched in the unique words of the respondents” (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996: 290). Thus, their ability to yield rich data means they are more suitable for exploratory questions and their flexibility renders comparison possible across interviews (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). Interviews are:

Formal encounters on a subject agreed upon by the researcher and the participants; the main questions set by the interviewer create the overall structure; prompts and probes fill the structure; and the interviewee has a fair degree of freedom about what to talk and how much to say and the interviewer can assert control when necessary.

(Drever, 1995: 11)

Semi-structured interviews are specifically well-suited to discover participants’ own interpretations and meanings while responding to the researcher’s general framework of research (Shiner & Newburn, 1997). They offered flexibility to the respondents to expand their ideas and thoughts on the questions or issues at hand (Merriam 1998; Bogdan & Biklen

2007). They allowed me to probe deeply into ‘‘people’s more personal, private, and special understandings’’ (Arksey & Knight, 1999: 4). Respondents’ verbalizations of their own experiences helped me in gathering some natural data regarding the research focus.

Like any other research method, face to face interviews are not unproblematic. The main disadvantages in my study, were: a) that they were extremely time consuming; the pre-interview phase needed detailed planning to agree on a mutually convenient time (teachers being quite busy people); b) the actual interview time demanded side-lining other appointments to allow the time allocated; c) backup interviewees had to be arranged in case the original participants failed to attend the interviews (though it did not happen in this research); and lastly the post interview stage entailed engaging in the huge amount of work involved in transcribing the interviews. These disadvantages could not be completely eliminated though some careful planning in advance and effective time management were the strategies used to manage such issues to some extent.

Semi-structured interviews were held in the participants’ schools during their schools opening times (see section 4.7.5.3 more on this) at a time, place and language of interaction preferred by them. Participants favoured their regional language (Pushto) for interviews, possibly due to their lack of proficiency in the English language. They seemed to be more confident to clearly and fully express their views in Pushto and seemed to use it more conveniently and proficiently. Speaking their L1 also helped in avoiding misinterpretations, if any, that might have arisen due to their lack of English proficiency. Interviews were audio recorded via digital sound recorder or dicta-phone with the participants’ consent. Recording(s) allowed for subsequent analysis and freed the researcher to concentrate on the conversation instead of making notes about it (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008).

The interviews’ duration varied (see table 5 below) as most of these teachers were overburdened and worked to tight busy schedules. I found that apart from teaching (that they would do almost the whole school day), the teachers would be busy correcting students’ exercise books, doing some substitute task for other (absent) teachers, or were otherwise engaged in some administrative work (Shamim, 1993). See Nawaz’s interview (transcript 1-appendix I) for a clear illustration of the daily tasks engaged in by participant teachers. For this reason, interview schedules involved mostly rearranging their classes to allow, as much as possible, sufficient time for the interviews, at least for one main interview which lasted between 40 to 55 minutes. Some interviews, usually the second ones, were conducted during breaks and were comparatively short (around 10 to 20 minutes) for the reasons mentioned

in section 4.7.3 above. Moreover, as the teachers did not have the time as well as the inclination for further follow-up discussions about their lessons, any subsequent discussions (after the first long interview and in some cases the second one) which took place were quite informal, often being held in the corridors and on the stairs while moving between their classes.

**Table 5: Semi-structured interviews: numbers and durations**

<b>Participants (Pseudonyms)</b>	<b>Number of interviews</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Sami	Two	<u>Main int:</u> 40 mins <u>Second int:</u> 19 mins
Shah	Two	<u>Main int:</u> 53 mins <u>Second int:</u> 18 mins
Nawaz	Two	<u>Main int:</u> 50 mins <u>Second int:</u> 15 mins
Yasir	Two	<u>Main int:</u> 48 mins <u>Second int:</u> 19 mins
Ayesha	One	<u>Main int:</u> 46 mins
Alia	One	<u>Main int:</u> 54 mins
Mehwish	One	<u>Main int:</u> 52 mins
Sara	Two	<u>Main int:</u> 40 mins <u>Second int:</u> 10 mins
		<u>Total duration:</u> 464 mins <u>Total word count:</u> 33820

Moreover, one difficulty which I realised with the passage of time, though was not aware of initially, was that the participant-teachers would allow me their interviews only in their school timings and during their break and free period which was not more than one hour in

total for each teacher a day. Moreover, I also observed that any kind of disruption to the normal teaching schedule of the participant-teachers would result in putting stress on other teaching staff and their fixed teaching schedule. Due to these reasons, it was quite challenging to schedule interviews with the teachers within the school timings and on their terms because I found that almost all teachers had busy personal social lives outside of school and were not very comfortable in giving me time outside school hours. Moreover, the logistics to organise some empty or quiet room for interviews were a bit daunting because of the limited rooms and other space. Although the classroom observations were relatively easy to manage as there was not any kind of compromise involved in terms of special arrangements, raised some other issues later on which I have explained in detail above in section 4.7.3.

During the interviews, I followed Cohen et al's., (2000: 276) suggestion that "the interview questions should normally start from a general question and logically flow to more specific ones". Therefore, after restating the ethical safeguards (see section 4.7.1 above) and broader research aims to the participants, initially the respondents were asked some general questions in a friendly conversational manner to facilitate building trust and rapport and to make them comfortable, for example, see the first few questions in the interview guide (appendix A).

Moreover, interviews were developed in such a way as to elicit uninhibited responses from the teachers about the phenomenon in question. This was ensured by encouraging respondents to contribute to the conversation freely but within the guidance of a loose framework (Dörnyei, 2007), that is, the interview guide. The interview guide contained a broader framework of questions based on concepts and ideas from and relating to the existent educational literature (focussing on resource poor settings) and the social sciences theoretical perspective (CR, mainly Archer's theory) (see chapter 2 and 3 for details). This literature served "as a guide [...] to ensure that the questions that are meant to be asked are not left out to maintain consistency", while also avoiding aimless rambling (Cohen et al, 2000: 275). The pre-set questions in the interview guide mainly revolved around material, social and cultural institutional structures, teachers' knowledge and teaching skills, the supporting and constraining factors faced by the teachers, how teachers respond to different situations and others (see Appendix A for details). However, the actual interviews, as stated above, also contained questions based on retroductive conjecture, regarding the participants' agency which underpins their observed classroom behavior, and which goes some way towards explaining their present actions. These were guided by the observational data which enabled me to probe for further in-depth information and also to clarify the points observed therein.

The interview questions focused on the following main topics described by Smith (1996: 205) as: teacher teaching experience and TESL background; perceptions of the instructional context such as collegial, student and setting factors; perceptions of the instructional task; and planning decisions regarding task and participation structures.

As is a common practice with semi-structured interviews, the sequence and exact phrasing of the questions were not fixed (Zhu, 2004) thus permitting me to follow up new themes which could emerge in the conversation. These interviews were intended to be more of a dialogue, a co-construction, instead of an acquisition of complete knowledge (Heyl, 2007). Therefore, they were carried out in a more conversational tone than a strictly interrogative one. Participants were encouraged to reflect on their own teaching practices and relate them to their underlying theory, thus, to (re) construct a fully articulated understanding of the rationale for their interactional responses, pedagogical decisions or classroom behaviour (Connors, 2015).

However, I must say that being a novice researcher, it took me some time and effort to develop sensitivity to establishing balance between silence and encouragement, in order to allow the interviews to proceed naturally. Pilot interviews proved quite helpful in this regard. Moreover, despite having broader pre-set categories for interview questions in the form of an interview schedule, many questions asked in the interviews were (re)formulated on the basis of discrete observation that were useful to sharpen the focus of every interview. Thus my pre-planned interview questions were to some extent revised for each individual respondent. Such a practice allowed for more flexibility in investigating different roles and activities witnessed during the two different types of language classes.

Although, interviews cannot be claimed as giving completely unreconstructed access to someone's inner thoughts, which is one of the limitations of the naturalist paradigm (See, for instance, Richards 2003, Yin 2009, and Cohen et al. 2011, among others). The criticism is that how do we know that people's stories are accurate. For example, participants might not always be fully honest with the researcher. Such unproblematic acceptance of these narratives (interviews) as accessing 'reality' was balanced out in three ways. Firstly, an overall atmosphere of trust and rapport with the participants were attempted to be established (see section 4.7.3 above for details). Secondly, a comparatively informal style was attempted, as much as possible, to earn the respondents' trust, responsiveness and openness leading to few little adjustments as the interviews were developing, depending on the response of the participants. Thirdly, by a closer examination of the narrative accounts. This

means that as a reflexive process of sense-making both for self and others, interviewees neither produce nor interpret personal narratives in a vacuum (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009). Instead, an inherent part of narratives or talk, in general, is that utterances are both ‘retrospective and prospective’ (Schiffrin, 2006: 335). That is, to make sense, stories build upon what preceded them and project possible interpretations and trajectories (Sacks 1992; Prior, 2010). By placing individual versions in the context of the larger sequence of interview interaction, I (researcher) could better identify the ways in which the whats and the hows (Holstein & Gubrium 2004; Prior, 2010) of the telling achieve cohesion and difference, and so make more sense.

The semi-structure nature of interviews also defined my role as an interviewer which was “to raise questions, rephrase the questions if necessary, listen to the responses, prompt for further information, ask for clarifications, check with the interviewees my interpretation of their responses, and answer respondents’ questions (Zhu, 2004: 33). A variety of probes were also used based on responses, for example, echo probe, UH-Huh probes, nods, tell-me-more probes, phased-assertion probes, until conversation on the topic satisfied the study’s objectives (Guest et al. 2006; Bernard & Ryan, 2010). However, every care was taken not to limit the participants and instead, allow them to talk freely. Also, attention was paid to the fact that the participants do not feel judged or evaluated in anyway pertaining to what I think teachers should be doing, saying or how they behave. In short, their voice was valued and was deemed of greater importance than mine.

Altogether, data obtained via observations and interviews provided a broader and richer picture of the issue at hand and also allowed for corroboration of evidence, for both methodological and data triangulation (Yin 2003).

## 4.8 **Conclusion**

This chapter presented a detailed overview of this study’s research design - a qualitative case study using ethnographic methods. This methodological approach has been established with the attention of aligning this study as closely as possible with a CR approach. The exact methods employed in this study constituted semi-structured interviews and classroom observations including field notes. Trustworthiness of the research was also established through certain measures. Moreover, this chapter also outlined the exact procedure followed during the field work to implement the research design. This included discussion of the ethical issues, rationales, and procedures regarding both the pilot and the main study that

were employed in conducting this research. The pilot study aided in testing and further refining the research methods and overall research design implemented during the main research phase. In the following chapter, I will present details of the procedure and techniques used while accessing and analysing the gathered data.



## Chapter 5

## Data Analysis

[Data analysis is] consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said, and what the researcher has seen and read—it is the process of making meaning...These meanings or understandings or insights constitute the findings of the study.

(Merriam 1998: 178)

### 5.1 Introduction

Data analysis involves “examining, categorising, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining evidence, to draw empirically based conclusions” (Yin, 2009: 126). To this end, this chapter outlines the methods, approaches and procedures used in analysing the data including the rationale for such choices. These are explained in detail in turns below.

### 5.2 Data analysis methods

As mentioned in chapters 4, this study is purely qualitative in nature and uses two main sources of data: verbal commentaries (semi-structured interviews) and video-taped observations including field notes. Having established the research instruments, the next task was “to identify categories, themes and patterns that help explain the phenomena under consideration and the contexts in which they occur” (Hood, 2009: 78) since, unless the amount of (gathered) data is reduced, it is not possible to interpret the material (Bryman, 2016).

However, unfortunately, no general consensus seems to exist among qualitative researchers regarding how to analyse data. There are “nearly as many analysis strategies [...] as qualitative researchers” (Eisenhardt, 1989: 540; Crabtree & Miller, 1999: 17), such as, narrative analysis, content analysis, grounded theory and more. Qualitative research does not have a distinct set of analytical practices or methods which are completely its own (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), and all of them can provide “important insights and knowledge” (Nelson et al., 1992: 2). Among the different methods available to a qualitative researcher, this study employed ‘thematic analysis’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and ‘classroom discourse analysis’, and more specifically the ‘ad hoc approach’ (Walsh, 2006, 2011) for analysing the

data followed by cross-case analysis (chapter 9). The rationale for using these approaches is set out below.

### 5.2.1 **Thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, and analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). It is an approach where the emergent themes become the categories for analysis (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Themes, also termed families or categories capture “something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response of meaning within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 82; Saldana, 2015).

I have chosen this approach for analysing both the interviews and classroom data, due to its benefits which are: 1) it minimally describes and organizes any data set in (rich) detail and interprets several aspects of the given research topic. For example, structural conditioning, participant-teachers’ social interaction, response, pedagogical decisions, and/or behavioural outcomes in this study (see chapter 3 for details), 2) It is flexible in terms of not linked to any particular theory and can be used with any theoretical framework or epistemology, thus equally compatible with the realist paradigm in this study, 3) It allows the researcher to determine themes both deductively and inductively, that is, whether preconceived from the theory or literature or emerging from the data, and above all 4) it can offer a more accessible form of analysis, particularly for those early in a qualitative research career like me. (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Regarding its (main) disadvantage, although, in thematic analysis, an overall rich description is attempted, however, some complexity and depth is lost, especially if the research is restricted to a short article or dissertation having strict word limits. But again, the advantages, which I have mentioned above, outweigh this shortcoming. Moreover, the primary purpose of thematic analysis is to offer a rich (thematic) description of the whole data set, to enable the reader to get an idea of the important or predominant themes (ibid) which is quite in line with the main aim of this study and so has been evaluated as the most appropriate approach for this study. Moreover, the case (individual teacher) analysis has redressed the balance, to some extent, for the loss of depth and richness of data. Furthermore, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is specifically useful when an under-researched area is being investigated, or research involves participants whose views regarding the given topic are not known, which is again the case in this study (see chapter 1 for details).

Although many researchers, for example, Freeman (1998), Simons (2009), Creswell (2007) and Hood (2009) have presented their versions of thematic analysis for case studies, I adopted the thematic analysis approach of Braun and Clarke (2006) (table 6) for this study. This is because, as is visible from the table (6) below, these scholars have established clear guidelines for conducting thematic analysis in a relatively rigorous way and have outlined its application in accessible language.

**Table 6 Braun and Clarke’s six stages of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 87)**

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Also, they present a fifteen points checklist/criteria for a good thematic analysis which became my points of reference for ensuring the reliability at each stage of analysis (Table 7).

**Table 7** **Braun and Clarke’s checklist/criteria for a good thematic analysis**

Process	No.	Criteria
Transcription	1	The data have been transcribed to an appropriate level of detail, and the transcripts have been checked against the tapes for ‘accuracy’.
Coding	2	Each data item has been given equal attention in the coding process.
	3	Themes have not been generated from a few vivid examples (an anecdotal approach), but instead the coding process has been thorough, inclusive and comprehensive.
	4	All relevant extracts for all each theme have been collated.
	5	Themes have been checked against each other and back to the original data set.
Analysis	6	Themes are internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive.
	7	Data have been analysed – interpreted, made sense of – rather than just paraphrased or described.
	8	Analysis and data match each other – the extracts illustrate the analytic claims.
Overall	9	Analysis tells a convincing and well-organized story about the data and topic.
	10	A good balance between analytic narrative and illustrative extracts is provided.
	11	Enough time has been allocated to complete all phases of the analysis adequately, without rushing a phase or giving it a once-over-lightly.
Written report	12	The assumptions about, and specific approach to, thematic analysis are clearly explicated.
	13	There is a good fit between what you claim you do, and what you show you have done – ie, described method and reported analysis are consistent.
	14	The language and concepts used in the report are consistent with the epistemological position of the analysis.
	15	The researcher is positioned as <i>active</i> in the research process; themes do not just ‘emerge’.

Furthermore, an equally important element of the analyses was to present the teachers’ verbal statements during their interviews in parallel with what has been observed in their classes (for example see the following Data Analysis chapters 6 and 7). Therefore, along with thematic analysis, I also used the classroom discourse/interaction analytical approach as a lens through which to understand the participant-teachers’ agency in relation to their given teaching context.

### 5.2.2 **Classroom discourse analysis**

Classroom discourse (henceforth – CD) broadly refers to all kinds of talk which can be found or occurs within a classroom (Jocuns, 2013, as cited in Sert, 2015) including nonverbal communication (Sert, 2015), while CD analysis is “systematically observing, analyzing and understanding classroom aims and events” (Kumaravadivelu, 1999: 454, as cited in Walsh, 2011). It provides an internal perspective on the L2 classroom which looks at teaching as “a series of interactional events” (Ellis, 1998: 145). An understanding of such events needs to

focus on classroom interaction which lies at the heart of understanding teaching and learning (Li & Walsh, 2011, Walsh, 2011).

In line with the study's aims (see section 1.5), with teachers as my main focus (in relation to their teaching context), my focus of observation were broad factors, for example; teaching methods, teacher talk, teachers' movements, interaction between students and teachers, the language of instruction used in the classroom, and textbook usage. My aim was not to uncover the minor details of the classroom interactions, as is the case with approaches providing the micro-analytic perspective, for example, the conversation analysis approach. Therefore I used adhoc approach by Walsh (2006, 2011) for the following reasons.

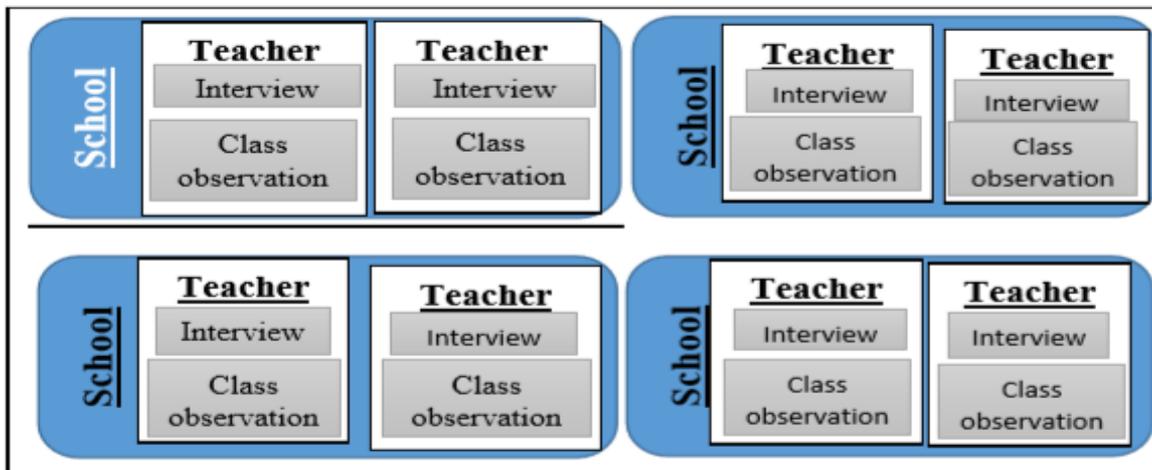
Adhoc approaches favour the development of a more flexible instrument that may be based on a particular area of interest or research question. They are flexible in allowing the researcher to focus on particular details of the classroom interaction that he/she then describes and tries to explain. The entire process is more about looking from the inside out than from the outside in - the case with system based approaches (having predetermined, fixed categories using coding schemes) such as the FIAC system (Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories) by Flanders (1970) or COLT (Communicative Orientation to Language Teaching) by Allen et al. (1984). (Walsh, 2006, 2011; Sert, 2015). Adhoc approaches are "more likely to promote understanding and generate explanations than the system based approaches" (Walsh, 2011: 80) which fail to take sufficient account of the local context which are the main focus of this study. The instrument, being based on a specific problem or question within a particular context, renders the entire research process relatively more realistic and meaningful. Having no pre-determined and fixed categories to be imposed on the research participants, allowing them more flexibility in discussion, it offers participants ownership of the research design process leading to greater insights into the issue at hand with the researcher having more confidence in the data. (Walsh, 2006, 2011)

Analyzing classroom discourse helped me to uncover how real time teaching is enacted in language classrooms (Johnson & Dellagnelo, 2015) in relation to the teaching context. That is, it enabled me to examine how the teachers "online decision making (pedagogic decisions made while teaching during the lesson)" (Walsh, 2011: 44) can be linked to their agency (embedded in their teaching practices), which, in turn, are embedded in their local teaching context. This is possible because classroom interaction is greatly influenced by the local context. More importantly, analyzing classroom discourse provided me with an opportunity to compare teachers' interviews with their actual teaching in real time (Li & Walsh, 2011).

In turn this enhanced my understanding of teachers' agency on the basis of similarities and differences between the two types of data which I refer to as *with-in case* analysis, followed by *cross-case* analysis as I explain next.

### 5.2.3 With-in case and cross-case analysis

In multiple case studies, Yin (2009, 2014) suggests two types of approaches: with-in case and cross-case approaches for analysis and comparison. As this study is also a multiple case study, both have been used to add to the robustness of the study. Regarding the former (chapter 7 and 8 below), it provides a detailed and thorough description and analysis of each case (individual teacher): their semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and field notes (within-case design). Regarding the cross-case analysis (chapter 9 below), looking for particular patterns or themes across the whole data set, allowed me to study and understand the phenomenon in question, in comparison to the other teachers in different educational settings (4 institutions/schools) with each teacher reflecting the characteristics of their particular school. Figure 3 below represents this design situation graphically.



**Figure 3: Within-case and cross-case analysis design**

Thus, the overall idea was to develop a deep familiarity with every case as a stand-alone entity allowing emergence of the unique patterns of each case before I could generalize these patterns across cases (Eisenhardt, 1989). Additionally, such intimate familiarity with every case accelerates the cross-case comparisons (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). The advantage of cross-case analysis is that it forced me to go beyond the initial impressions by viewing the data in divergent ways. In this way, it counteracted the tendency towards premature and false conclusions as a result of, for example, being influenced by the vividness of certain

data or inadvertently dropping disconfirming evidence (Eisenhardt, 1989). Yin (2009, 2014), believes that a cross-case syntheses have highly positive impact on the quality of case studies. Finally, this design also allowed me to examine the process (es) of the shaping of a teachers' agency unique personal agency and also the processes common among them at a more general level, across the chosen state schools.

According to Yin (2009), each individual case study involves a 'whole' study where convergent evidence is looked for in the facts and conclusions of that case which are then regarded as the information requiring replication by the other individual cases. Following Yin (2009) and as is visible from the Figure 3 above, first, themes were drawn out from the verbal/interview data through thematic analysis. Then, the classroom observation and field notes data were analyzed employing both thematic as well as classroom discourse analysis. This procedure allowed me to search for patterns consistent within the cases (individual teachers) by examining what the participant-teachers say they do during their teaching, with what they actually do in reality, as evidenced in their classroom pedagogy. The conclusions drawn out from all single cases, analyzed in this way, were compared (i.e. underwent cross-case analysis) as a way of obtaining insights into the phenomenon (interplay/relationship between teachers' agency and structural influences). This design is represented in the form of a table (8) as follows.

**Table 8** With-in and cross-case comparative analysis

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Teacher participants</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>Within case analysis</b>	<b>Case reports</b>	<b>Cross case synthesis / analysis and final report / write-ups</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Case 1</b>	Interview	<b>One</b>	<sup>17</sup> T1	
		observation			
	<b>Case 2</b>	Interview	<b>Two</b>	<b>T2</b>	
		Observation			

2	Case 1	Interview	Three	T3
		Observation		
	Case 2	Interview	Four	T4
		Observation		
3	Case 1	Interview	Five	T5
		Observation		
	Case 2	Interview	Six	T6
		Observation		
4	Case 1	Interview	Seven	T7
		Observation		
	Case 2	Interview	Eight	T8
		Observation		

Employing these strategies of data analysis, I undertook the following procedure while analysing the collected data.

### 5.3 Procedure of data analysis in this study

Once the interview and classroom discourse data were gathered, it was necessary to organise this data into a manageable and analysable form (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The first stage, in accomplishing this task, involved converting the oral (interview) data into written transcripts to facilitate the accurate interpretation of themes and patterns before the analysis could begin. Therefore, I started this process by first transcribing and translating the interview data only (but not the classroom discourse one at this stage), as further explained below.

### 5.3.1 **Transcribing and translating the data**

As the interviews were conducted in Pushto by the participants' choice (see section 4.7.5.3), I transcribed and translated the interview data manually myself as I considered the translation process itself to be a good opportunity to become more familiar with it. During translation, an effort was made to keep to the spirit of the language that the participants used rather than adhere to 'standard' English, in order to understand, as much as possible, the meaning intended by the participants. To check the translation accuracy, I asked my friend, who is currently a lecturer in a university in Pakistan to also translate the interviews into English. Except for a few differences in word choice or phrasing, no considerable differences regarding the actual essence or meaning was noticed. Also, I did not transcribe those sections of the interviews which were clearly irrelevant to the research focus, for example, general conversation about friends, relatives etc. Thus, such sections have not been added in the total duration and word count in table 5 above.

In the case of classroom discourse analysis, the observation recordings were watched, listened to and reviewed few times and then relevant parts picked and transcribed. Since, the classroom data was a mix of Pushto, Urdu and English, the Pushto and Urdu sections were translated into English during the presentation of the data. Both the interview and observation data (video recordings with the accompanying field notes) were analysed in the same way, that is, by themes. The observation data were analyzed from the perspective of discourse analysis (see section 5.2.2 above). Once a pattern was identified, the classroom data were further analysed for more instances of the same pattern. Field notes helped in understanding the classroom data. The only difference between the interview and video transcripts is that in the former, where required, I also considered teachers' actions and their bodily movements for a proper understanding of the classroom situation at that point of time.

Next, using thematic analysis, as mentioned above, and mainly driven by analytical questions (research questions-see section 1.5), I analysed the interview transcripts, looking for particular themes or patterns (Creswell, 2013). During this process, the interview transcripts were read and recordings listened to few times with the aim of becoming more intimate with the material (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2016) so as to identify relevant data based on research questions. This included careful examination of the interview transcripts and the notes jotted down during field work, labelling phrases and sentences and finally putting them into different categories (see section 5.3.2 below for details). The themes were based on teachers' phrases or words showing (explicitly or

implicitly) patterns of behaviour which would appear with some consistency both within and across transcripts, for example, words, phrases and/or any concept repetition.

However, before this formal analysis, the data analysis process started informally during the process of transcribing when I got immersed in the data when reading and re-reading through it, while concurrently listening to the recordings. Thus, while transcribing, I was thinking about coding as well. This is because it provided an opportunity for "analysis and contemplation of the data" (Janesick, 1998: 49). Dornyei (2007: 250) also suggests that the first step in analysis should begin during transcribing which allows the researcher space for "meeting the data meaningfully". Cohen et al. (2013) refers to it as 'pre-coding stage' as some themes already come to the surface during this phase. The next stage was the formal coding process as follows.

### 5.3.2 **Coding**

A code implies a feature found interesting by the researcher and indicates "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information than can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon" (Boyatzis, 1998: 63). Saldana (2015: 4) adds that "a code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data". The coding process is part of the analysis process (Miles & Huberman, 1994); it "is the representation of analytical thinking, it is not analytic thinking itself" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016: 222).

For coding the 'processed data' (data which have been transcribed and translated) (Wengraf, 2001), Nvivo qualitative data analysis software (version 11) was employed to enhance the flexibility and speed in coding, storing, retrieving, and linking data. It facilitated searching for and aggregating codes; where codes were systematically grouped under themes/categories. Also, writing analytic memos, for summarizing key ideas which codes signified, aided in some possible interpretations.

In approaching the data, I adopted 'sequential analysis' (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002). This means the verbatim transcripts were split up into segments and coded, finally dividing them into multiple categories, making them into themes. I started the coding process by "generating names and labels for phenomena identified in the data" (Marshall & Rossman, 2016: 222). This process entailed the 'breaking-up' of data, assigning them a label to specify

their features based on pithy phrases or words or words which would appear regularly, as understood by the researcher. A sample of the coding process and codes book are shown in appendix G and H respectively. Related codes were then put together into themes or categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2015). It is important to note that the effectiveness of a theme does not necessarily lie in quantifiable measures, rather more crucially “if it captures something important in relation to the overall research question” (ibid). In this way, the entire data transcripts were coded, to get a “tag or label for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during the study” (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 56). The themes were established, reviewed, refined and finalized.

The coding was abductive, where the themes were mainly literature and theory driven though some of them also came up from the data inductively. Moreover, the themes were identified both at the explicit or semantic level and implicit or latent themes. In the case of the former, the themes were captured at the semantic (surface) appearance, that is, something said ‘literally’ by the participants – having the ‘literal’ meanings (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). This approach displays the simplest and most evident themes indicating patterns existing in the data. Latent themes penetrated the surface/semantic level and indexed the underlying assumptions, and ideas which might have shaped the data’s semantic level, reached at through researcher’s interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Since my research not only involved identifying the ‘what’ factors, that is, the institutional/structural factors which influence the participant-teachers’ agency but also to exploring and understanding the ‘how’ factors, that is, how given factors which do not necessarily reside directly at the surface level of the data influence the teachers’ agency, which do not necessarily reside directly at the surface level of the data. Therefore, I had to look through the data and link the themes back to the theory and/or the reported literature, as in chapter 2 and 3. Moreover, I coded the research questions both in my mind and in NVivo by their main driving concepts, such as, ‘structural conditioning’, teachers’ ‘response’ and ‘behaviour/outcome’ for easy, manageable, memorable and retainable reference during coding in NVivo (see appendix G).

With regard to the classroom data and the latent themes in the interviews, the interpretation of classroom situations and hidden meanings in interviews were based partly on my own understanding and insights as an ESL teacher who shared similar teaching and learning experiences as the participants (see section 1.3.1 above) and partly on the views of the participants, as expressed by them, in their interviews. The participants’ classroom behaviour/practice might not have made sense without their comments on their own

classroom decisions and a verbal explanation of those in the face-to-face interviews. So, the interview data also helped in informing my interpretation of the classroom situations through reference to the participants' commentaries. Hence, interviews proved useful in two ways during the analysis. Firstly, they included the rationale for classroom pedagogy/decisions/actions; and secondly, they afforded a general background, to complement the classroom data analyses, thus facilitating its interpretation.

Moreover, regarding interpretation of the respondents' statements, my insider (emic) position (being part of the same culture) facilitated the interpretation from the respondents' perspectives in terms of the words and the L1 (Pashto) they used and how they used these to express/verbalise their thoughts. For instance, I was able to somehow recognise whether the participants were narrating their actual experiences or defending their practices or opinions. Moreover, during interpretative readings of the collected data (Mason, 1996), attention was paid to their 'stories' (references to personal experiences and/or incidents) (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest that researchers should carefully attend to these stories, because they mostly communicate important themes and contain key messages behind them.

The codes and themes were crystallised through a process of iterative analysis where a number of themes were broken down into sub-themes and some collapsed into one<sup>23</sup> theme based on 'internal homogeneity' and 'external heterogeneity' (Patton, 2002). The former criterion concerned "the extent to which the data that belongs in a certain category hold together or "dovetail" in a meaningful way. The latter concerned the extent to which differences among categories are bold and clear" (ibid: 465). In some situations, some initial themes did not appear to be themes in the final review, in the sense that either the current data did not support them adequately or the data was too diverse (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### 5.3.3 Accessing the data

In terms of accessing the data for analysis, I first analysed interviews and extracted themes.

This was followed by analysis of the field notes together with classroom data, finalising the themes. This is because, when I started analysis, I realised that it was quite hard to clearly

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<sup>23</sup> For instance, 'technology' merged into 'In-sufficient classroom facilities/equipment'

understand the classroom processes, as the data, representing the teaching-learning situation, was more complex than I had thought. However, the study being qualitative, the researcher has to be systematically selective, so as to avoid cherry picking certain data. Thus, I first started with the interview data, which I felt would be comparatively straight forward in providing me with some tentative themes on the basis of which I may proceed with the classroom data analysis. These themes served as a point of reference and/or starting point to analyse the classroom data which was more rich and intense. Then, coding thematically, I compared classroom data with interview data as well as identifying any sections of it that could address the research questions in some way. The following figure 4 shows this process of accessing the data.

**Interview data** —————> **field notes + classroom interaction data** <————> **Interview data**

**Figure 4    Process of accessing the data**

Although initially I proceeded in the above mentioned manner between data sets, at later stages I would move back and forth reiteratively between these data in order to reach the best possible interpretation of the said data. Next, in order to facilitate the reader in making better sense of the data, I am going to explain how the findings/results will be presented in the data oriented/analysis chapters 6, 7, and 8 below.

#### **5.4    Presentation of data**

Yin (2009) suggests that both the single cases as well as the multiple case results should be the focus of the summarised report. For every single case, the report should show ‘why’ and ‘how’ a specific proposition was/was not demonstrated across other cases (ibid). Following Yin, while presenting the findings/reports, I will first deal with each individual teacher (case), and will produce detailed write-up reports for each individual case (chapters 6 and 7 below), followed by making some observations and comparisons across all the participant-teachers/cases (chapter 8 – cross case analysis). During the presentation, themes will be accompanied by a few (due to limited space) representative quotes from participants’ interviews (as instances of their reflexive deliberations: concerns, values, projects, beliefs and interests), field notes and/or excerpts from observation data to illustrate the most relevant issues found according to the objectives of the study. These concepts, which are an invisible aspect of the teachers’ agency i.e. their internal conversation, will be used interchangeably. These extracts will then be compared, both for congruence and incongruence, with excerpts

from the observation data. Thus, unlike the analysis of data, the *presentation* of this research's findings, in their relevant chapters, will be in an integrated manner and not separately.

The quotes will be presented by referring to the interview transcripts and the exact lines within which these comments appear as, for example, (Int-1, lines 20-22) where 'Int' is short form of the word 'Interview' and 1 refers to the ordinal number of transcript (see Appendix I – “sample of the interview transcripts of participants Nawaz and Sami”). The interview transcripts will be numbered for the participant-teachers as <sup>24</sup>1 for Nawaz, 8 for Sami, 3 for Alia, and 5 for Sara. Similarly, classroom observation (CO) data will be referred to as, for example, (Sami, CO-2), where I am referring to some consistent pattern prevalent throughout the class (one recording) of a specific participant, or as, for example, (CO2, mins: 04:30-07:15 - the exact time in the video recording) where I intend to refer to a particular section/time sequence in the observed data (video recordings) in order to facilitate finding the mentioned video fragment. Similarly, field notes (FN) will be referred to by their actual date of observation as, for example, (FN-18/09/2016) (e.g. see appendix E). It is to be noted that due to video recordings of the classroom data, the field notes mainly provide summaries of the main classroom events which are otherwise captured in and referred to as video data in the findings chapters. Therefore the findings chapters contain comparatively fewer references to the field notes, except where they refer to my own reflections during the field work or any feature of the schools in general, not captured in the video recordings.

As explained in detail in chapter 2, structure/context is a very broad term having many aspects, layers and levels (see Wedell & Malderez, 2013), however, the inner-most layers, that is the classroom/instructional and institutional/school, are the most immediate ones and their factors are more influential on the teachers, as compared to the outer layers (ibid). The institutional level influences refer to the forces outside the classroom but within the educational institutions (the four chosen schools) in which the participants' work, whereas influences at the instructional level refer to the factors which operated at the micro level of the classrooms inside the said educational workplaces (Jesry, 2014). Since, as I have mentioned above, it is not possible in the given space to present all the findings regarding

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<sup>24</sup> These numbers represent the original order in which I transcribed the interviews

‘context’ covering it in its entirety, I will be mainly presenting data with regard to the aforementioned two important layers/levels.

It also needs to be kept in mind that the findings from the data are not to be put into exclusive compartments of one or the other *influencing* factor(s) or one or the other *type* of structural factor. As we shall see in the following findings chapters, mostly the structural influences on teachers are the combined results of different institutional factors, which sometimes directly impact the teachers (for example, students’ weak English) and sometimes indirectly by affecting other factors (for example, students’ poor socio-economic status impacting students’ attitude and in turn affecting teachers) as is further explained where appropriate. Similarly, cultural factors (for example, exams [in terms of implicit practices or rules]), or material factors (such as class size) can be termed social factors as well. This might be due to the reason, as pointed out by Poesen and Nicaise (2015), that the different domains are not separate entities in their own right and the structural aspects are inextricable in the real context. Therefore, though seemingly simple and straightforward, an overlap of the structural factors and stages presented a difficulty in teasing out these factors as I experienced during the data analysis process as well as in the (re)presentation of the data in this chapter. Sayer (2000) also points out that such problems might arise if we divide what is indivisible, or conflate what are separable (Sayer, 2000). However, separating them, as Archer (1995) emphasises (and is attempted in this study), allows us to access the processes of interplay between them for the purposes of understanding their relations. In order to deal with this overall complexity, the findings are therefore presented as individual structural factors which are categorised as individual themes in this study, such as student characteristics, teacher characteristics and so on (see the following chapters). Moreover, the words of the participant’s belonging to one specific theme but expressed at different points during the interview have been placed together as a continuous quote. However, where the same quote of a particular participant belongs to different themes, I will put the quote once for the first theme and will just cross-refer to it, for example, as “(Int-3, lines 21-24)”, where it is relevant to the subsequent categories/themes.

Also, I consider it important to mention that although I have chosen eight teachers as individual cases for in-depth analysis (for reasons mentioned in section 4.7.5.2 above), I realised at a later stage, when compiling the findings chapters, that I cannot present the analysis of all of them on account of limited word count as the exact amount of findings yielded by the data were unpredictable. Therefore, choosing depth over breadth in terms of only the *presentation* (as opposed to actual analysis) here, I will present only four case

(teachers’) analyses in this study in the following chapters 6, 7, and 8 as shown in table 9 below; a comparison of this table with table 1 in section 4.7.5.1 above will make it clearer which cases (teachers) have been chosen (with a tick) and which ones left out (with a cross).

**Table 9**      **Selection of cases for presentation**

	<b>Name of Teachers (pseudonyms)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>School (represented by alphabets)</b>		<b>Class</b>	<b>Teaching experience</b>	<b>Selection of cases for presentation in Data Analysis chapters</b>
1	Sami	M	A	Boys' Schools	10	27 years	✓
2	Shah	M	A		9	3 months	×
3	Nawaz	M	B		9	10 years	✓
4	<u>Yasir</u>	M	B		10	25 years	×
5	Ayesha	F	C	Girls' Schools	6	12 years	×
6	Alia	F	C		7	10 years	✓
7	<u>Mehwish</u>	F	D		9	20 years	×
8	Sara	F	D		10	7 years	✓

The reasons for selecting these four cases as marked in the table above are based on the following criteria: To keep intact the original idea of covering a range of factors regarding a particular teacher in-line with the maximum variation sampling (see section 4.7.5.2 above for details), for example: four different schools (A, B, C and D) with one teacher at each school, gender balance (two males, two females), available class range (7, 9 and 10), and lastly, providing two slightly different perspectives on the same phenomenon under consideration. Two perspectives mean that while responding to the institutional constraints, cases - Sami and Sara, exhibited comparatively more compliance and less agency (so their

findings are presented in one chapter ‘8’ below), whereas, cases – Nawaz and Alia, seemed to show some tendency of exercising agency and being creative (so their findings are presented in one chapter ‘7’ below). However, I did not notice any instance of *complete* non-compliance or exercise of *extreme* agency or creativity, completely *overpowering* the given constraints among the eight cases.

The cases which I am not presenting here, were quite useful as well, during the analysis, in terms of providing me with more opportunity to understand the phenomena in question, however, in comparison to other cases, these have been left out (one in each school) on account of the following reasons:

Shah: having only 3 months of English language teaching experience as an internee does not seem to have matured well. Thus, Shah was not quite at par with the other cases/teachers, who were having a greater difference of experience from him.

Yasir: similar to Nawaz was an equally good case to be presented, however, I chose Nawaz as he was the only M.A English graduate among all the eight participants (all others have an undergraduate degree) and therefore quite an interesting case to include.

Ayesha: in comparison to Alia, Ayesha has been left out because after my data collection, I realised that I actually needed participants who were teaching from year 7 upwards, while Ayesha was actually teaching year 6 students. This is because, I found out that secondary schools (focus of this research) internationally mostly start at class 7, for example, across European schools. However, in Pakistan, secondary schools starts from class 6 (see section 2.5 for details), so to avoid this confusion during comparison of the study’s findings with other international literature.

Mehwish; was omitted from the study because her colleague Sara was able to offer a more interesting perspective on the phenomena I wanted to investigate (see the preceding paragraph) along with another case, thus to balance out cases for providing slightly two different lenses on the same phenomenon to understand it better.

I consider it important here to caution that the ‘compliance’ and ‘being agentic’ are not exclusive categories having clear boundaries that can be expressed in the form of ‘either/or’. Instead, the same person may exercise both: being more one or the other is a matter of degree as we shall see in the following findings chapters.

Next, before moving to the detailed analysis of data in the following chapters, I consider it important to first present a recap of the social/critical realist analysis of the data as the main framework adopted for this study and how my data analysis and the interpretation of the findings are informed by it as follows.

## 5.5 **Social/critical realist analysis of the data**

As explained in detail in chapter 3, Archer (1995, 1996, 2003) argues that the impact of structural factors are mediated to the individual's agency by a process which involves three main stages. The first of these is that structural properties objectively shape the situation in which these individuals (teachers here) find themselves by constraining and enabling the development of a particular practice. They represent the objective limitations on the settings and situations encountered by the agents. In this way these emergent, pre-existent structures condition patterns of action, supplying agents with strategic directional guidance. However, agency should not simply be seen to be affected by social structures in this way, rather the concerns held by the agents also shape their agency, as do the reflexive conversations/deliberations the agents engage in. Agency unfolds in real time, and not through some detached or static perspective which ignores recourse to human subjectivity. (ibid; Kahn, 2009).

With Archer's theory on structure and human agency as a theoretical tool, I noted the teachers' preferences for their concerns, formulating what Archer (2000) terms 'projects' (see section 3.5.2 above on this). This lens helped me to analyze the structural context of the schools where teachers operate and the teaching opportunities framed/afforded by such contexts which enable and/or constrains the range of options or choices available to the teachers. Furthermore, this lens allowed me to conceptualize the process of choice made by the participant-teachers in terms of why the participant-teachers chose a particular course of action during their teaching of English language in their classes. This can be likened to an instance when a person is weighing up different potential courses of action within a given situation, he/she conducts internal conversations (Archer, 2003, 2007). Archer (ibid) has introduced a specific framing - the notion of 'reflexivity' - to characterize the way humans carry out their internal conversations as revealed from the participants' data (see data analyses chapters 6, 7, and 8 below). The agents' reflexive deliberation and the resultant outcome contribute either to morphostasis or morphogenesis thus forming the basis for

subsequent interactions (Elder-Vass, 2010). Such tendencies, to some extent, can be observed from the data as analyzed and presented below in their respective chapters.

## 5.6 **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have explained in detail the procedure I went through while analysing the collected data, including the methods I used for analysis and the sequence in which I analysed the data. I also mentioned the rationale for the different decisions taken at different stages, as well as how I will present the findings in the relevant chapters. In the following two chapters, I will provide the detailed analysis of each case: two male teachers in chapter 6 and two female teachers in chapter 7.



## Chapter 6 Case analysis (Findings): Nawaz and Alia

### 6.1 Introduction

In order to fully understand individual teachers' agency in relation to (and as shaped by) their teaching context, each teacher is analysed separately in detail, as I have mentioned previously in section 4.7.3. This chapter reports the findings of the two teachers, Nawaz and Alia. However, before that, I want to remind the reader that I have previously explained in section 4.7.3 above, how the data analysis of all the four teachers has been organised. Therefore, I will immediately proceed to the presentation of the social/critical realist analysis of the first participant-teacher, Nawaz. However, to enable the reader make better sense of the data, I will present my *interpretation* of the different terms/categories, that I refer to in my findings, during the presentation of the findings of the first case (Nawaz). The reader can (if they want) refer to these while reading through the subsequent cases analyses. Moreover, due to this interpretation as well as explaining the different points, as much as I could, in the light of the social/critical realist theory, the first case analysis might appear to be more detailed. In the subsequent analyses, the reader should be familiar with the nature of the analysis so due to space constraints, I will keep the explanations therein relatively short. Also, Nawaz was very vocal, as we shall see, in comparison to the other participant-teachers and shared many ideas and insights. I will now present Nawaz: the first case analysis.

### 6.2 Teacher: Nawaz

The participant-teacher, Nawaz was an experienced teacher of English as a second language who had around ten years of English teaching experience both in private and state schools. As stated above, he held an M.A. in English linguistics and literature as well as Bachelor and Masters of Education (B.Ed. and M.Ed. respectively) (see details on these courses in section 2.5.4 above). Based on his professional qualification, Nawaz was assigned to teach English language to class 9 and 10 students. Having an M.A. – a higher qualification than many of his colleagues – made him a quite confident English language teacher. This is quite visible from the fact that he came across as the most vocal and expressive respondent during the interview as compared to the other participant-teachers.

### 6.2.1 Structural conditioning (RQ1)<sup>25</sup> and Nawaz's response (RQ2)

As mentioned in the previous (section 5.4 'presentation of data'), there is an overlap of different stages in the process of *interplay* between structural/institutional factors and teachers' agency, as reflected in the participant-teachers' accounts of classroom teaching. Therefore, I will analyse the teachers' interviews/accounts simultaneously from both the aspect of a) how the different factors, as perceived by the teachers, *condition* the teaching situation (RQ1) which gives rise to the teachers' particular pedagogical *responses* (RQ2), and b) any tendency of the teachers to either *comply* (perhaps) with institutional expectations or (perhaps) exert greater agency in their behaviour according to their values, concerns and projects (see chapter 3 for details on these concepts). Briefly speaking, this means what do teachers value, what do they aim for and what do they want to do to achieve that aim, (as reflected in their interviews). Answering these two research questions will involve the answer to RQ-3 which looks at the 'outcome'; the actual classroom teaching that is evolved as a result of 'conditioning' (RQ-1) and 'response'(RQ-2). The participant-teachers' accounts will be further enriched and accompanied by evidence from the observation data and some field notes, based on my interpretation of the said data.

The *conditioning* factors appeared in the form of a) Constraining, b) enabling, c) both constraining and enabling, and/or d) neither constraining nor enabling factors/influences . Constraining factors appeared constraining in terms of what the participants would like to do regarding different aspects of their teaching, but (possibly) refrained from - at least fully - pursuing their concerns into their desired projects, due to these factors to contend with at their respective schools. These factors restricted teachers from taking a particular course of action in their teaching which they would have otherwise taken, had the particular constraints not been there.

Enabling influences appeared enabling on account of allowing or facilitating the participant-teachers to translate their specific concerns into their desired projects, regarding different aspects of their teaching. In other words, to perform teaching practices according to their desires and intentions.

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<sup>25</sup> RQ=Research Question

Both constraining and enabling factors/influences seemed to have both positive and negative impact on the teacher's pedagogy; having their one aspect as constraining while another enabling. They appeared constraining in terms of not benefitting the participant teachers in their classroom practice in one area of classroom teaching but were at the same time enabling in terms of benefitting the teachers teaching in some other area(s).

Finally, neither constraining nor enabling factors were those few factors which existed as part of the educational system which had neither constraining nor enabling influence on the teachers but were there. That is, such influences appeared to have neither any positive (in terms of improving) nor any negative effects on the participant-teachers' pedagogical practices but existed as part of the educational system.

### **Constraining factors/influences**

To begin with the participant teacher, Nawaz's concerns, values, interests or projects, Nawaz seemed to be committed to and valued, at least theoretically, the communicative function and use of the English language. Nawaz's overarching interest seemed to be to develop his students' communicative proficiency in English. I came to know this when I asked Nawaz why he followed particular pedagogical principles in his classes. Nawaz, while reflecting upon his current teacher-fronted grammar translation method (henceforth – GTM) of teaching, showed his awareness of the importance and main purpose of ELT as;

We teach English language so that there comes fluency in students' English (Int-1, lines 108- 109)

Nawaz seemed convinced that;

... when I taught my lesson today, I should have given kids some activity (Int-1, lines 158-159)

Even though, here, Nawaz has not used any explicit terms associated with CLT<sup>26</sup> (such as “group” or “pair work”, or “role plays” or “interactive activities”), but his use of the words and phrases such as “fluency”, “given kids some activity” and “something extra with them” (in the quote below) shows orientations to more communicative and student-centred

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<sup>26</sup> Communicative language teaching

approaches. On further probing as to why Nawaz could not adopt more student-centred communicative ways of learning-teaching, Nawaz pointed out certain external obstacles which he felt prevented him from implementing such approaches as;

... that fluency [in English language] cannot come if this grammar translation method is there. (Int-1, lines 109-110) > (Teaching method)

If ... students' strength is up to 30 or 40 [originally there are 80 students in his class], there may be some chances to do something extra with them. (Int-1, 117-118) > (large classes)

The first hindrance, as identified by Nawaz and visible from his above quotes, was the teaching method that he had to follow. He seemed to have not been in favour of it and so was forced to adopt his current teaching method. One of the reasons for this was attributed by him to the number of learners in his classes that he had to teach at a time (the second quote above). It is quite understandable that it might have impacted his ability to offer the individualised planning, attention, and energy required to teach the English language in a more communicative way, particularly in the given teaching time (maximum 40 mins per class) relative to the students. This clearly shows that class size was a major constraint on Nawaz's pedagogic behaviour. Most of the causal constraints, on Nawaz's current classroom pedagogy, as revealed from Nawaz's interviews, were on account of the invisible issues associated with and relative to *large classes*. These were, for instance, problems with class discipline, teachers' individual attention to students, assessment of students' work, and insufficient space as detailed next.

### **Large classes**

'Large' implies different meaning to different people (Wedell & Malderez, 2013; Shamim & Kuchah, 2016). For example, Wedell and Malderez (2013) lists some scholars who define class size differently. For example, for Kuchah and Smith (2011), its 235 students in Kuchah's English class in Cameroon. Wang and Zhang (2011) reported that in China, large might mean a class of 50–100 students, whereas according to Smith and Warburton (1997) and Fin and Achilles (1990<sup>27</sup>), in the UK and US, 25–30 pupils represent a 'large' class. In

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<sup>27</sup> As cited in Kuchah and Shamim (2018)

this study, the classes identified as being large ranged from forty-five to eighty students. In the case of Nawaz, the number is around eighty which he considered problematic in many ways, particularly in terms of teacher-student ratio. This impacted Nawaz's desire to create a student-centred language learning environment in the following ways.

- *Class discipline/management*

Nawaz appeared to consider group activities, which is one of the main features of student-centred communicative classes, not possible in his classes. According to Nawaz;

If I make a group of 80 people in class, have you noticed the situation, how I will do grouping in them? Will grouping be manageable with these many students?  
Among these 25 to 30 students were absent. (Int-1, lines 19-21)

This quote shows that Nawaz initial concern had been to conduct interactive group activities among the students according to his CLT philosophy, which he believed as an important part of language learning. For this, he believed that some kind of group arrangement was required among the students. However, he came to the conclusion that it is not possible with a huge number as in his classes, manifested in his reflexive deliberations as verbalised above. The reason for this, though not stated explicitly by Nawaz, could be either the insufficient space (see section below for further explanation) or the resultant discipline issues. However, on one occasion, Nawaz clearly linked students' large number with discipline issues, while talking about his observation with regard to other teachers in his school:

If I give you one round trip, then you will see how the teachers teach. The teacher is talking and so are the students among them. Hardly anyone is listening to what the teacher is saying. The students have their own stories and lessons to tell to each other (smile). Even the teacher has no control over the strength. (Int-1, lines 337-340)

Nawaz, by sharing his experience of other teachers generally, demonstrates that the students' strength per teacher is more which makes it difficult to be easily controlled by other teachers or him, especially if CLT oriented class is attempted.

Although, my interpretation from the classroom observations of Nawaz do not reflect Nawaz's expressed level of disturbance in his classes, except for occasional murmuring voices or when Nawaz would invite some response from the students. For example, I observed that:

The students are not very noisy despite being huge class number as is common in such crowded government school classes, possibly because of having someone unusual, that is, me (either being a stranger or being a female). As one of the boys in the front row is continuously looking at me and smiling (possibly due to their video recording). (Nawaz, CO-3, FN-17/08/2016)

Thus, the contradiction between what the teacher, Nawaz, says here and what I observed can be attributed to my presence (either due to the presence of a *video recorder* or a *stranger* or both) there, as I have expressed in my observed notes above, which might have made the students conscious and alert. This was confirmed when I asked Nawaz about it. He appeared to think the same as I did, as represented by his following quote:

... you were also there so may be because of the respect element they were quiet. Otherwise, if I take you to the normal class, you will see what happens [hinting at class discipline issue]. (Int-1, lines 333-335)

Nawaz's response to class discipline: Regarding class discipline, the internal conversations of Nawaz, as reflected in his verbal commentary, shows that his main concern in conducting a communicative language class has been replaced by his efforts to maintain class discipline even if it compromises some good teaching (as perceived by him on his part). Nawaz seems to be occupied more by class management issues than on conducting the lesson as is required for making the lessons more effective (for example, group activities here). For example, on one occasion, Nawaz, referring to other teachers, said: "They [the teachers] just take class on the scheduled time and that's it." When I asked, "Even if someone (students) is interested or not?" Nawaz replied, "Yes, if anyone is interested or not, listening or not, here this is the formula." (Int-1, lines 342-344)

As is implied in Nawaz's conversation, he was unable to run the classes fully according to his values, and interests (that is, interactive group activities here). However, he also did not seem to totally give up like his other colleagues (as mentioned by Nawaz above), who just take class regardless of whether students are listening/learning something or not, in order to cope up with the discipline issues associated with large classes. Instead, Nawaz, being relatively agentic, managed to find the middle way (an enabling factor in the form of teacher's command of the subject and lesson plan - explained further below) between conducting a more communicative/interactive class and total indifference to students learning gains, by delivering his lectures primarily as a strategy to maintain discipline.

- Teacher's individualised attention

According to Schweisfurth (2013), working in a student-centred way requires more from a teacher as compared to working in a totally teacher-centred way, particularly with regard to fulfilling the students' individual needs. To find the time for doing this might not be feasible for most teachers. Thus, it does not seem surprising that in the case of Nawaz, the great number of students also appeared to constrain Nawaz's ability to involve every student in the language learning experience. Nawaz considered teachers' individual attention to students an important factor in promoting more students' involvement which may further promote their language learning abilities. He believed that when students are actively involved, they are more focused and this also shows their ability to take some responsibility for their learning. However, he felt that due to the given number of students, this was not practically possible for him. Expressing such concerns, Nawaz said:

If ... the students strength is up to 30 or 40, there may be some chances to do something extra with them. [Now] it's simply not possible to involve every student of the class and pay them individual attention, without which, I don't think there isn't much of learning. (Int -1, lines 117-120)

Even my classroom observation also interprets the situation in the similar way:

while teaching, the teacher is mostly directly facing the middle row but he can also somehow manages keeping an eye upon the kids sitting in the front few (two or three) rows on his both right and left hand sides. On the other hand it seems difficult for the teacher to keep an eye on the students sitting at the rear of the classroom. Thus, the teacher seems to have more focus on the front area of the classroom and the students therein. While the rear of the classroom seems to be out of the teacher's focus and possibly attention domain. This seems to influence students' behaviour at various locations in the classroom such as the rear or the front of the classroom. For example, apparently the front rows seem to be more attentive to the teacher as compared to the rear ones. (Nawaz, CO-3, FN-17/08/2016)

Nawaz's response regarding individual attention to students: The large numbers of students in Nawaz's classes seemed to negatively impact his ability to pay them individual attention. This I gathered from Nawaz's main reliance on his one sided teaching and more talking and students just passively listening, as I have observed in almost all of his classes. This was contrary to engaging and inviting students in the classroom activities in line with Nawaz's

teaching philosophy of establishing communicative teaching-learning environment as I mentioned above.

- Assessment / reinforcement work

By assessment/reinforcement work, I mean any kind of independent activity for/by students, either in class or for homework, through which the teacher can somehow assess the current language learning ability or language proficiency of a particular student.

Although Nawaz did not explicitly talk about giving assessment work to students, his interest regarding it can be deduced from one of his quotes that he mentioned in relation to students' apparent casual attitude regarding their homework. He stated:

... when I taught my lesson today, I should have given kids some activity... which they should study and come prepare tomorrow. But if you ask them question tomorrow, no one will be able to answer it. If you ask them why, they will say we went to the shop and came late in evening. Some will say I went to the mosque and came late. Mostly say there was no light, so a lot of problems. (Int-1, lines 158, 160-163)

Nawaz's response regarding giving assessment work to students: From this quote, we can clearly see that Nawaz is highly in favour of giving some kind of activity which could assess students' current progress. However, he never asked students to complete any kind of homework. Although, Nawaz did not explicitly refer to his abstinence from giving any assessment work to the large student population of his classes, I believe the large number of students might also be one of the reasons based on other participant-teachers' accounts (as we shall see later). Although, Nawaz mentioned other reasons (as can be seen in his quote above) for not giving homework to students which will be dealt with in detail further below. However, in class, he adopted a middle way by asking a few students (3 to 4) to repeat the text and its translation, in a way taught by him, aloud to the other students as can be clearly seen in his classes, for example, (Nawaz, CO-1, 12:13-15:50 mins or CO-4, 20:30-28:30 mins)

- Teaching method

Regarding teaching method, as already indicated above through Nawaz different quotes (Int-1, lines 158, 159, 108-110, 117, 118, 19-21), Nawaz seemed to be interested in teaching English in a more communicative way. Nawaz, for instance, explicitly said that;

... if I teach through direct method<sup>28</sup>, the students will learn the language more. But 80 is the class strength, can you accept it? Will that work? I think for direct method, you should not have, maximum, more than 25 students. (Int-1, lines 14-16)

Here, we can clearly see Nawaz's interest in employing a teaching method where the students may get more opportunity to hear and possibly speak the language. However, English being a language students are not used to, such an attempt may require more attention and involvement of on part of the students which may not be possible with so many students, as Nawaz believed, "Because then you can't involve every student of the class through direct method for activities." (Int-1, lines 18-19). This shows that big class size is obstructing Nawaz's preferred teaching approach.

Nawaz's teaching method in response to large classes: For the reasons explained above, instead of trying any CLT oriented method, despite wanting so, Nawaz feels himself restricted to one particular teaching method, that is, his current method of teaching which is teacher-fronted, and dominated by teacher talk. This is not only implied from Nawaz's quotes mentioned above but also from his most explicit statement in his interview (Int-1, lines 109-110) mentioned above. Moreover, the same can be revealed from his teaching in all of his classes based on my observations. Nawaz believed such a way of teaching as the only available choice left to him due to the large numbers of students in his classes.

Another constraining factor, for Nawaz, appeared to be, in a number of respects, insufficient space as is explained next.

### **Insufficient space for different activities**

As is obvious from Nawaz's words mentioned above (Int-1, lines 19-21), insufficient space, with regard to the given number of students, appeared to be a significant constraint for Nawaz. This is because limited space clashed with his CLT philosophy as Nawaz felt himself to be unable to carry out interactive activities in a classroom with a traditional structure of rows and columns of students facing the teacher. This, in turn, considerably affected student-student interaction which, he thought, was quite an important element for developing communicative competence. For example, Nawaz said:

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<sup>28</sup> Teaching language through using language (English here)

Here, in the school there is no such big room or hall, where I can take students and make the groups there for any kind of interactive activity. (Int-1, lines 23-24)

As we can see here and above (lines 19-21), Nawaz's concern is to conduct interactive activities among the students. For this, he needs sufficient space where he can make groups in order to provide the students more opportunities for interaction, which he believes, is more communicative and so facilitative of more effective language learning. In order to pursue his desired project of interactive group activities, he felt constrained by the material (structural) factor embodied in the form of insufficient space. As a result, his concern could not be materialised into his desired project of group activities.

Nawaz's response to insufficient space: Lack of enough space led Nawaz's teaching (practice) to be more teacher-fronted where he would address the whole class as one group almost throughout the duration of the lesson. We can clearly see this in my interpretation from his class observation:

The class is quite teacher fronted where the teacher is mainly conducting the class from the front. There is no student-student interaction or any kind of activities to involve students in their self-learning. It might be hard to conduct interactive activities in this kind of a classroom layout. The teacher has almost, throughout the class, addressed students as one large group. (Nawaz, CO<sup>29</sup>-2, FN-31/08/2016)

Moreover, as I had observed in Nawaz's classes, "The teacher is just moving to and fro but not moving around the full space of the class" (Nawaz, CO-2, FN-31/08/2016). Based on my interpretation, the way Nawaz frequently moved to and fro in the class was possibly to be more accessible to the students. However, despite this tendency, his movement seemed to have been restricted to just the front of the class. When I asked Nawaz about this observation, he also affirmed limited space for movement as one of the reasons for mostly remaining at the front of the class.

However, although, a mainly teacher-fronted class, we can still see a tendency towards problem solving, where the teaching practice of Nawaz showed a kind of middle path between what exactly he wanted to do and achieve and what he actually practiced. This

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<sup>29</sup> Classroom observation

middle path seemed to take into account both Nawaz's interest and concerns as well as to account for the given constraint. For example, as I had observed and mentioned above (see Nawaz, CO-1, 12:13-15:50 mins). We can see here how Nawaz's practice has actually evolved, where he was able to involve, to some extent, some of his students in some language learning activity by asking a small number (3 to 4) to repeat the text and its translation, in a way taught by him, aloud to the other students. We may say that due to the space constraint, the teacher's desire to engage the class in interactive group activities could not be translated, as he wanted, into a successful project. However, such a project driven by the Nawaz's concern as well as constrained by the insufficient space evolved into his above mentioned practice showing some kind of a middle approach.

Another main obstacle, that Nawaz mentioned, was related to the students themselves. The students appeared to define the teacher's work context through their diversity, and individual as well as cohort personalities (McLaughlin, 1993) as explained next.

### **Student-related factors**

From Nawaz's interviews, two major factors regarding students seemed to impact his teaching context: (1) students' poor socio-economic background and (2) students' weak proficiency in English. These major factors indirectly affected other aspects related to students, and, in turn, Nawaz's teaching, as are explained below.

#### *- Students' poor socio-economic backgrounds*

Nawaz, seemed to be concerned about the effect of his students' belonging to economically poor (low-income) families. This, apparently, seemed to have been one of the reasons indirectly negatively affecting his students' interest in the class and the lessons, and their time to self-study. This impact was explicitly expressed by Nawaz as;

... these are kids from poor families ... When they go from here, almost 70% of kids go with their fathers to their shop or their father have placed them somewhere for work to learn some skills. For example, when I taught my lesson today, I should have given kids some activity... they should study it and come prepare tomorrow. But if you ask them questions tomorrow, no one will be able to answer it. If you ask them why, they will say we went to the shop and came late in the evening. Some will say I went to the mosque and came late. Mostly say there was no light, so a lot of problems. (Int-1, lines 148, 156-163)

According to Nawaz, despite his attempt and interest to give his students some homework (as mentioned above) to reinforce the lesson they studied on a particular day, in his experience, students normally either avoid or are unable to do it for the various reasons as is expressed by him. The visible reasons for not doing homework might have various underlying invisible causes. The foremost of these invisible causes, as manifested in Nawaz's reflexive deliberations and also from my emic perspective (being born and grown up in that society) is students belonging to poor families and being stressed by the need to earn a livelihood for themselves and their families. Describing this situation from my emic perspective, I know very well that in this particular society, boys (as Nawaz taught at boys' school) and men are mostly responsible for the livelihood and financial matters of their families. In particular, given the quite conservative area where these schools and participants were located, hardly any females would take on the financial responsibilities of either themselves or their families.

Another, though secondary, reason for students' not doing homework, as expressed by Nawaz, and also seen from my emic perspective, could be the primacy of the need for fulfilment of religious obligations, as in this particular society, the people living in rural areas are relatively more serious about their religion giving it priority over anything else. Also facilities such as light and electricity (discussed further below) could also be the main issues for affecting students in different ways, such as the (apparent) lack of interest in class or homework. My classroom observations also captured the students' poor financial condition as reflected in their overall attire. For instance, I note:

Almost all the students are wearing ordinary clothes, rather from their clothes, majority seems to be from quite poor families. As being part of this culture, I can identify what kinds of clothes are representative of which social class of people in our society. (FN-17/08/2016)

Students' inability to take homework seriously might be due to the other underlying causes such as students' lack of interest in studies, parents' interest and attitude to education in general which could influence learners' experiences of and attitudes to learning as well (Wedell & Malderez, 2013). It could be related to the status of English language in society and/or importance of English language personally to them. Even though I have not interviewed students (one of the limitations of the study – see section 9.5 below), being part of that society personally and as considering the reactions experienced by Nawaz in his classes and expressed above by him, the predominant reason seem to be the students' poor

financial situation. Also English has got an elite status in Pakistan and is a gateway to good jobs (see section 2.5 above for details), so, I also believe the immediate need of earning basic wages compared to the relatively distant need of learning English language for future jobs might have affected students' attitude.

- *Students' lack of interest or attention*

Irrespective of my assumption regarding students' lack of interest as I mentioned in the preceding paragraph, Nawaz, while sharing his teaching experience, also pointed out quite explicitly as:

Once, in my 10 grade class, I taught the students three lines, then I suddenly asked one of my students from where I am reading. He did not know as ... He was not interested in today's class. (Int-1, lines 325—329)

Although, my interpretation from the classroom observation of one of Nawaz's lessons, is slightly opposed to what Nawaz said regarding students' interest. That is;

... the way the class is silent and every student, it seems they are quite attentive and absorbed - at least apparently. It seems they are understanding the lesson or the teaching matches their level of understanding or is interesting for them. (FN-31/08/2016)

Students' silence could be one indicator of their interest, however, I also noted another indicator of students' lack of interest in the class, that is, "Students' participation does not seem to be very active throughout the class" (FN-31/08/2016). For example, any kind of understanding or clarification questions to the teacher which could show some level of engagement. Based on my observation of Nawaz's classes, students would only answer when the teacher would directly ask them something, or when the teacher would ask many times. For example, (Nawaz, CO-1, mins 01:15 – 02:33). The reasons for this could be, a) either the students did not understand what the teacher said, or b) out of respect for the teachers which is so culturally embedded in Pakistani society that students might not initiate any response unless called for by the teacher (see section 2.5 above on this point).

- *Students' lack of self-study culture and sole reliance on teachers*

Whatever might be the reason for students' lack of interest, it might have further resulted in their lack of self-study culture as Nawaz showed concern that "the students do not read

themselves in their houses” (Int-1, lines 376-377). Looking critically at this, Nawaz asserts that;

... this culture that the students go there [library], sit there and study should be developed to make our jobs little easy. But this is not so here, the books are locked in the cupboard ... The kids come and use the books for 15 days but in very rare cases. If you see the list of issued books of the library, you will find that hardly anyone has issued the book. In the whole school, only 10 students would have taken any book or even may have not. (Int-1, lines 168-170, 173-175)

Apart from interest, another reason for students’ lack of self-study could be that they, “just rely on teachers and find it authentic, trusting teachers that they are right.” (Int-1, lines 377-378). This could be related to their silence in class, as mentioned above, which indicates the students’ reliance and complete trust on the teachers as an authority on the English language, whom they are supposed to simply listen to and absorb their instructions (information) without any question (also see section 2.5 above on this point).

- *Students’ lack of required competence*

Required competence here refers to the (students’) weak foundation in and weak level of English, relative to their current level of study as well as their poor comprehension levels.

As mentioned above, students’ lack of interest, self-study culture and/or total reliance on teachers could possibly be some of the reasons for students’ lack of required competence. However, according to Nawaz, the major contributor to the students’ weak level of English, relative to their current level of study, was the students’ weak foundation in the English language in the previous classes, which had been carried over to their current levels of study, resulting in students’ lack of required competence as was generally expected of them at their current level. This confirms Wedell and Malderez’s (2013) argument that in ELT in particular, factors such as, whether, how, or how much the learners have been previously exposed to English are likely to be significant in determining what they already know. Reflecting on this situation, Nawaz said:

The class in which we were sitting now, when these students were promoted from 8 to 9 class, I told them to write small and capital letters from A - Z. Some of the students were not even capable enough to write them [the alphabets] down ... If

you want to improve the English language of the kids, their base should be given more focus (Int-1, lines 521-524)

Nawaz's response to student-related factors: Overall, based on my interpretation of the data above, we can say that apparently Nawaz seemed to be concerned and worried by the above mentioned issues related to the students. These, as expressed by Nawaz and visible in his classrooms, impacted his pedagogy and ways of conducting his classes as he seemed quite helpless in this regard. The impact appeared in the form of Nawaz ignoring what was required for the students at this level and in such situation and focusing more on what was practical and possible (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). He seemed unable to deviate from the implicit norms of teaching a lesson in a certain way (teacher fronted class), using a 'teacher led' approach, where students tend to be highly passive and demonstrating low levels of engagement (producing little or no homework, low level activities, students passively listening), teaching the very basic level of English compared to what is otherwise expected at their current level of study, and the repetition of the lessons a number of times in different ways (see, for example, Nawaz, CO-1).

Moreover, these factors appeared to have played out in influencing Nawaz's work in terms of him adopting GTM as the main teaching method, and furthermore, the frequent use of Urdu and Pushto languages as the main medium of instruction (see for example, Nawaz, CO-3) in order to facilitate students' comprehension of the lesson. Nawaz massive reliance on word to word translation can be evidenced from my observation of his classes where Nawaz translates even apparently easy and basic words, such as, 'high', 'price' (@06:34-06:45 mins), 'his'(@ 08:40 min), 'return'(@10:09min), and so on (these words can be seen written on the white board). These words seem quite basic given the students' level (class 9) and having been exposed to the English language as a subject for the last eight years (from class one).

The link between the students' lack of required competence and Nawaz use of GTM becomes clear when, based on my observation, I asked Nawaz the reason for his GTM mainly, Nawaz replied:

Because of both reasons<sup>30</sup> [that is, to keep in mind students' weak level of English as well as to cover the content so that they can pass the paper].... We do it [the lesson] in Pushtu also so that they can understand it as their Urdu is also weak.... There are 16 lessons in the book which I think can be covered in 2 months, if the students were competent. [In that case] I would do the translation quickly and then would switch to other activities. (Int-1, lines 27-28, 573-575)

Nawaz seemed to be losing his agency, as visible in his pedagogic behaviour, to adapt his teaching to the students' weak competence in English, by adopting all the aforementioned prevalent modes of conducting his classes as can be gathered from almost all of his classroom observations. This goes against his desire and values to mainly teach the English language in a more communicative way for achieving his ultimate project of a more communicative class, as I have explained above). Nawaz seemed to have abandoned, for instance, teaching English through English mainly in favour of students' comprehension (and his use of the students' L1) (Atkinson, 1987).

This resulted in more burden on Nawaz, in the sense that he was under pressure to bring the students for bringing the students English language proficiency up to the required level (see section 1.3.2 above for the relevant literature on this point) had they not experienced the deficient instructions at their prior levels. Making up for this deficiency proved to be an onerous task as well as one of the main reasons for limiting the time which could have been effectively used for slightly more advance language learning objectives as mentioned by Nawaz (Int-1, lines 573-575) already quoted above.

Another causal factor for Nawaz's pedagogic decision of doing mainly the translation is the nature of the English exam paper. This is further elaborated below.

### **Exam (nature of English question paper)**

The specific types of questions expected in the English exam paper (see appendix J for question paper) was also found to be the causal mechanism underlying Nawaz's current teaching method. Nawaz, expressed this in a very clear way as is visible from his words I have quoted above (Int-1, line 570). On another occasion, he said;

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<sup>30</sup> Another reason is exam as is explained in the following section 6.2.1

... Here we write the stories for the students. They memorize these readymade stories and then write them in the paper. (Int-1, lines 102-103)

As we can see in appendix J, section C, Q-7 (b) is related to writing a story.

While attending to the students' weak competency in English, by giving readymade content to them and furthermore, the students relying on rote learning for that, Nawaz, also seemed to be concerned about the translation focused questions in the annual English exam paper, as he felt:

Another problem is of exam. Here in the [English] paper, the pattern is to attempt 2 compulsory translation related questions, like translate into English or translate into Urdu.... the problems are in this question ... and it is of 8 marks which you cannot leave.... For that we teach translation to kids in Urdu language. We do the translation in Pushtu also so that they can understand the lesson as their Urdu is also weak. (Int-1, lines 24-28, 582-584)

We can see this in appendix J where section C, Q-6 a) is 'translate the sentences into Urdu' and Q-8 is 'translate the sentences into English'.

Based on my interpretation of the observation from Nawaz's classroom (for example, Nawaz, CO-2, mins 02:00 – 10:00), we can clearly see that Nawaz started the lesson by linking its importance to the English exam paper where he informed the students at length about what types of questions, regarding translation are expected in the annual paper. Throughout the lesson, he teaches the present perfect tense (the focus of the lesson) like a "formula" (Int-1, line 114) emphasising and ensuring that the children do accurate word to word translation of the sentences that may appear in the paper.

Nawaz response to exam/paper related constraints: We can clearly see from the above data that Nawaz seemed to be too focused on the type of questions set in exam/English paper. Due to this he was limited to few pedagogical choices which could mainly serve the purpose of helping some students pass the exam rather than deeply addressing the actual language needs and skills development of the students. Nawaz seemed to understand the need and value of improving students' English language proficiency by developing their English language skills as implied from his following quote where he was talking about a problem concerning a language skills focussed class:

If I want to do something else for listening or develop their [students'] writing skills through some techniques, I can't do it. (Int-1, lines 80-81)

Here we can clearly see that Nawaz seemed helpless to materialise his interest of improving students' language proficiency due to the demands of the examination and students' expectations and need to pass the exam. Although, I believe that Nawaz could do both by preparing students for exams whilst at the same time conducting communicative lessons (to some extent at least), but, when I asked Nawaz why he could not do what he wanted, he replied:

This book takes one year [to finish]. Other than this, more things are required [in exams] from the kids in the school like application, stories, letters etc. ... which requires time. I do tenses which takes a lot of time ... one tense is not possible to be done in 40 minutes ....Time is less and there is exam tension as well ... there is no choice in story question so we prepare students for 20 stories at least. [In the absence of exam factor], it [students' other language skills] could have been improved. (Int-1, lines 86-91, 579-580, 591-592, 586-587)

Nawaz's response to time constraints: This quote not only provides evidence regarding why readymade stories were being spoon-fed to the students (as I pointed out above) but also highlight another related issue of 'limited time' in addition to the constraints placed upon the teaching in the form of examinations. As a result, the classroom teaching was more focused on preparing students for exams, to the extent of almost spoon feeding them, due to their poor competency.

Another contextual constraint mentioned by Nawaz pertained to some economic issues at the school as further explained below.

### **Economic issues**

Economic issues imply money related matters/issues and any problem/constraint arising due to the lack thereof. For example, in case of Nawaz, it included the following.

- *Inadequate or inappropriate learning resources*

When I asked Nawaz about the availability of learning resources, he said;

[There is] no net....Library is there but with old books. No new books are there which you can study for something specific. (Int-1, lines 165-168)

This indicates that Nawaz felt that the school does not have sufficient learning resources such as the internet as well as up-to-date books which could benefit both the teachers and the students generally as well as if someone is looking for some specific and update information. This could be one of the reasons for the lack of self-study culture among students (as explained above) as well as for Nawaz himself, as further explained below. The only available resource for Nawaz was his own personal dictionary to consult for words meanings.

- *In-sufficient classroom facilities*

Where traditional teacher-centred approaches might just require a marker and a board; more student-centred approaches might need a more sophisticated arrangement of instructional materials (Schweisfurth, 2013). Similarly, the teacher, Nawaz, also felt constrained in his teaching due to the lack of sufficient audio/visual aids and space as follows.

*Audio/Visual teaching aids:* Nawaz believed that had there been adequate instructional materials at his disposal, he might have the opportunity to bring more variety into his teaching approaches. In this way, the students might not only be able to know the correct pronunciation of different words but also to learn the usage of English language in context. This might have reduced the students' total reliance on him for their language learning needs, and instead enable them to proceed with less reliance on moment by moment teacher guidance. Nawaz states:

Here I can teach them [students] through some other best method. I can teach them through the direct method. This way I can take these kids along with me so that their pronunciation becomes good... [but] For the direct method, we need what we call AV [audio/visual] aids such as some tape recorders, projector, screens, something for listening. Just listening to me won't make it. Here it [AV aids] is not available which can make our work easier. (Int-1, lines 69-71, 75-77, 66-67)

Here we can see that Nawaz's concern was to use a teaching method, which he called a 'direct method', which involved interacting with students directly in the target language so as to enable the students to know the correct pronunciation of different words which, he thought, was not otherwise possible with a non-native speaker like himself. His concern was to provide students with the opportunity to experience usage of language in a range of real situations conducive to language learning. However, Nawaz's above stated concern or desire required AV equipment, which was unavailable.

Insufficient space: Lack of classroom facilities also appeared as a constraining influence for Nawaz in the form of insufficient space both in the classroom (for the given number of students as explained above) and also in the form of lack of sufficient space for a good sized library and study spaces where students could work independently. For example, Nawaz pointed out that;

For a library you need a hall or a big room, so that ... the students go there, sit there and study.... But this is not so here. (Int-1, 168-170)

Issues of light and electricity: Although Nawaz did not say anything explicitly about the issues of light and electricity, my field notes have captured:

There is only one fan for 80 students. Mostly there is power cut and so no light and electricity but occasionally. Since its extreme summer, around 45°c outside. So all students seem very disturbed because of this extreme hot with some of them using books as fans. (FN-17/08/2016)

Nawaz's pedagogic response to insufficient classroom facilities: Nawaz's accounts reflected how he felt constrained to teach in a certain way due to the lack of proper equipment such as audio/visual aids. Thus, the lack of facilities obstructs the way Nawaz wanted to carry out his English lesson both directly as well as indirectly by restricting him and his students independent study/learning opportunities. The lack of facilities possibly impacted his teaching approach: his insistence on teacher-centred learning allowing him to more easily to attend to students' basic needs in language learning. Moreover, this might have been the reason for his own PCK (explained below)(limited to vocabulary teaching and highly structured grammar teaching) as a more word to word translation, and grammar teaching in a highly structured way as I have mentioned above and as I could see from his classes, based on my observation. The lack of proper equipment (audio/visual aids) resulted in Nawaz's practice of using the grammar translation method of teaching with the hope of finding a possible middle way by:

... listening and correcting these students' pronunciation and meanings of the words which the teacher thinks incorrect or faulty. (Nawaz, CO-1, FN-17/08/2016)

Another constraining factor which affected Nawaz's classroom teaching pertained to himself as a teacher in the following ways.

### Teacher-related factors

- *Lack of self-study culture and complete reliance on training courses*

While talking about the absence of in-service training (courses/workshops/programmes), Nawaz strongly felt the lack of such training negatively affected his ability to polish his teaching skills. According to Nawaz:

Since I am in service and when I did my MA English, after that I have no study or training or any course. We do not get it ... for that I say there must be some refreshers courses, which may refresh [refine/polish] the teachers. (Int-1, lines 61-64)

Even though Nawaz's quote, on the one hand, indicates the complete absence of in-service as well as specialised ELT training courses (explained further below), it also shows Nawaz's complete reliance on training courses and lack of self-study (relating to professional development) on his part. Such an absence of self-study practise seemed, indeed, to be a constraint which might have affected the quality of Nawaz's pedagogy. For example, once again talking about in-service training courses, Nawaz stated:

with the passage of time the student number increases, and it is also possible that with the passage of time, the teacher might forget what he has learnt in the pre-service course. So there must be some up to date techniques or strategies [for teaching]. (Int-1, lines 58-61)

Once again, as it appears from this quote, that on the surface, Nawaz was talking about the lack and need for some kind of in-service training which could help him address the problems that he was facing during his ELT. However, the same quote implicitly indicates Nawaz's lack of any attempt to self-study to find a solution to the problems he encounters and, instead, complete reliance on teacher training courses for it. For this reason, he lacked, what Shulman (1986, 1990; Shulman & Shulman, 2004) and Richards (2012) have called pedagogical content knowledge (henceforth - PCK). PCK means *how* to teach the content subject ('English language' in this case study). This constraint regarding professional development courses is further explained next.

- *Lack of and appropriate guidance for teachers*

Guidance here means any form of formal guidance, such as, pre- and/or in-service courses or any informal guidance provided by colleagues.

Lack of in-service training courses: As mentioned just above in the previous section, Nawaz strongly felt the complete absence of in-service professional development opportunities or guidance which could refine his ELT skills. According to Nawaz;

The problem is that there are lack of refresher courses or workshops during service which can make the teacher expert in their field and could bring improvement in them from time to time (Int-1, lines 41-43)

Nawaz's quote clearly points to the fact that the key factor in the success of any reform (which Nawaz received in the form of general preservice courses) seems to be the extent of support provided over a sustained period of time, something absent in his case. Scholars also argue that top-down reforms may be successful, as long as these offer an appropriate level of support for the teachers *over time* during their attempts of implementing changes (Schweisfurth, 2013; Cross & Hong, 2011; Fullan, 2007; Wideen et al., 1998).

Lack or need of specialised ELT guidance: While criticising the general pre-service courses that Nawaz had attended (see below), Nawaz indirectly pointed to the need for specialised ELT courses which could specifically focus on the pedagogy of language teaching. Nawaz explained this point by referring to an ELT method, which he called the 'direct method,' taught to him in the pre-service (B.Ed./M.Ed.) courses as being inappropriate for the given number of students in his current classes. The direct method basically means teaching language through the direct use of English/target language with the students in the class. Nawaz believed that:

... if I teach through the direct method, the students will learn the language more. But 80 is the class strength, can you accept it? Will that work? I think for the direct method, you should not have, maximum, more than 25 students. (Int-1, lines 14-16)

Nawaz's response to the constraints regarding teacher related factors: Due to lack of self-study and complete reliance on in--service professional guidance (which was almost entirely absent), Nawaz seemed to have been mainly restricted to his current teacher-dominant pedagogy and massively reliant on word to word translation for vocabulary teaching-learning. For example, on one occasion, when I asked Nawaz about where he took guidance

for his lesson preparation when he did not have any kind of institutional support, Nawaz replied:

But if there is some issue regarding words/meanings, then I use the dictionary, I have ‘English into English’ and ‘English into Urdu’ dictionaries, and I take help from them. (Int-1, lines 315-317)

The reason for such a dominant teacher-centred approach in this case, might also be attributed to the lack of professional training regarding PCK which could provide Nawaz with ideas for more student-centred vocabulary teaching strategies. However, being slightly agentic and trying to find a possible way out, Nawaz considered and tried to overcome the constraints of his lack of teaching proficiency, through more preparation and reflection (see below). Also his experience helped him in this regard (see below).

Although constraints were more prevalent, there were some factors of the educational system which had neither constraining nor enabling influence on the teachers. In the case of Nawaz, it was only the (general) preservice courses which state school teachers in Pakistan have to undertake if they want a teaching position in the state schools (see section 2.5 above). This is further explained below.

### **Neither constraining nor enabling influences**

These were the following:

#### **General preservice courses for PCK**

We can also deduce, from Nawaz’s account, as mentioned in the preceding section (subsection: Lack of specialised ELT training courses) and my accompanying interpretation, that for Nawaz the general pre-service courses are neutral (neither a constraint nor enablement) in terms of neither having positive nor negative effects on Nawaz’s PCK (specialised ELT). However, I do not deny the positive effects they might have on Nawaz’s general pedagogic skills or knowledge (PK), such as classroom management and discipline and lesson planning in general (see below).

Apart from this, some factors appeared to have both constraining and enabling influences on Nawaz regarding their different aspects. These factors pertained to Nawaz’s; a) preservice courses for pedagogical knowledge (hereafter – PK), b) misunderstanding of/mixing

command on content or subject matter with PCK, c) course textbooks, d) as well as Nawaz's student life educational experiences. These are explained in turns below.

### **Both constraining and enabling factors**

Such influences appeared in the following forms.

#### **Pre-service courses**

The available general preservice teacher training courses were quite prescriptive in nature, and failed to consider the essential differences that existed in different contexts (Vavrus, 2009; Haser & Star, 2009; Zappa-Hollman, 2007) and, furthermore, were disconnected from actual classroom contexts, even in the specific case of Pakistan (Westbrook et al., 2009). The same was reported by Nawaz who did not seem to be satisfied with the general pre-service courses (B.Ed. / M.Ed. – see section 2.5 above for details on these courses) that he attended, which were a compulsory requirement for teaching at state schools in Pakistan. The need for PCK or subject specific (specialised) guidance for English language teachers like him can be inferred from Nawaz's following account:

[B.Ed. / M.Ed. courses or the content therein] are not enough.... the extra theories that they teach such as Plato definition for education or his theory, so I have nothing to do with Plato definition. For my English language teaching, I need to make students fluent and how they can learn English language effectively. B.Ed. course has 10 papers and only 1 is about English; methods, reading, writing etc. They [B. Ed. courses] should have, instead, given me special attention to teach me effective English teaching methods. They should have given me a class, and asked me to teach that class. Then they should have monitored me and given me feedback, such as, the students have developed listening skills but not their writing skills or, let's say, speaking skills are not developed yet. It should have and be done like this but the B.Ed. courses are only formalities. If you come to the practical field you will see the difference yourself. (Int-1, lines 552-556, 544-550)

As we can see from this long quote, Nawaz criticized the B. Ed./M.Ed. (Bachelors / Master of Education-general teacher training one year course) for their general universal content, and for their idealised, formal and overly theoretical nature, their irrelevancy, and inapplicability. Nawaz explicitly said that;

... in B. Ed., everything is ideal ... there a kind of overall/total knowledge is given, like such and such are the methods, which are not followed here in the class....So when the teacher comes to this system and follow these methods, they become rusticated. (Int-1, lines 10, 12, 32-35, 43-44)

Nawaz considered these courses more of a formality for getting a teaching position than to actually improve their teaching in given teaching situations. According to Nawaz;

Here B.Ed. is informal, like when you do B.Ed., it is affiliated with some university... Those colleges focus on the fees ... if you tell them that you cannot attend the class and will only come for the exam, they will agree. You will prepare the exam at home and then they will take the exam. (Int-1, lines 540-544).

However, with regard to its enabling aspect, Nawaz seemed to benefit from the general pedagogical skills taught in his preservice courses. This can be noticed from Nawaz's comment regarding this. On one occasion when I asked Nawaz about his preparation of lesson plan, he said that:

... this is taught in B.ED that the teacher will have lesson plan, like if they teach some paragraph, they must prepare it at home. This must be ensured. (Int-1, lines 280-282)

Nawaz's quote indicates that though he had been taught the general usefulness of making a lesson plan in general, before delivering a lesson, it seemed that he did not get any subject specific training in terms of what to include in and how to make a lesson plan specific to a language class.

Similarly, with regard to class discipline, the general preservice courses seemed to help him. Although Nawaz did not say anything explicitly in this regard, we can (apparently) see this, based on my interpretation of his classroom observations (see, for example, my observation notes above – section 6.2.1, Nawaz, CO-3 & 4).

### **Mixing or conflating content knowledge with PCK**

Nawaz viewed teaching as unproblematic and believed that it is sufficient for a teacher to have a command of the subject or the topic he is required to teach. While, this is partly true, such a belief became problematic when Nawaz thought that one may not require to know anything specific to language teaching to be a language teacher (Jesry, 2014). This

highlighted Nawaz's tendency to overestimate his own teaching abilities, thus underestimating the complexity of teaching (ibid). This tendency can be clearly seen in Nawaz's quote:

... English is my own subject, I have done masters in it. But if the same English subject is taught by political science teacher ... as compared to him, I am confident as this is my subject. (Int-1, lines 382-384)

The command of a subject is, indeed, enabling, but it might become a constraining factor, I believe, when it leads to overconfidence in one's teaching abilities which may, in turn, reduce the chances of, for example, engaging in extra self-development and self-study rather than just using a textbook to prepare the topics to be taught.

### **Institutional guidelines (syllabus/Textbooks)**

Nawaz's main reliance in his classroom teaching was on using the prescribed English textbook (see section 2.5 above for details on textbooks). He would teach both grammar and vocabulary largely from text books. The predominant reason for this, as I explained above appeared to be the forthcoming English exam, which contained few questions from the chapters in the book (see Appendix J, Q-2 and Q-5). However, another reason might possibly be that in the absence of any specialised ELT training, the textbooks were the main source of guidance for Nawaz regarding what to teach to students, the content of which was quite form/grammar focused. I presume, Nawaz could, to some extent, have adapted the book's content to create relatively more student-centred learning, had he received some training to that effect.

Although Nawaz did not explicitly say anything about the textbooks in terms of them being either a constraining or enabling influence, the effect of textbooks as being both constraining and enabling is what I gathered from his classroom observations. I think it constraining in terms of Nawaz's over reliance on it. There is an assumption that following closely the content therein, as it stands, without any attempt to adapt his teaching (even slightly) could promote student-centred learning environment. However, this possibly restricted Nawaz's creativity to some extent as well as preclude any attempt for extra study as I have explained above. For those (such as Nawaz here) with little training, few resources and relatively weak students, textbooks could be seen as enabling, and certainly far better than no textbook at all.

### **Student life educational experiences: Apprenticeship of observation**

Educational life experiences, termed “apprenticeship of observation” (hereafter-AOO) by Lortie (1975), suggest that teachers form their initial beliefs regarding teaching on the basis of their early experiences as learners. These appeared to be both a constraining as well as enabling factor for Nawaz. I believe them constraining in terms of limiting Nawaz, though unconsciously, to fixed ways of teaching, based on his practical experience as a learner during his student life. In contrast, it seemed enabling in terms of providing Nawaz with some point of reference, that is, implicit theories or latent models of action (Jesry, 2014) to guide Nawaz in his teaching. Again like the textbooks, Nawaz’s apprenticeship of observation was something better than nothing. To elaborate this point with respect to Nawaz, having spent the majority of his life as a learner immersed in the Pakistani educational culture, which is generally quite teacher-centred (see section 2.5 above for details), seemed to have left Nawaz with hardly any alternative other than to copy or replicate those approaches in his own teaching.

Although he unconsciously replicated his past teachers’ ELT approaches in his practice, Nawaz tried to achieve his desire of creating a student-centred learning environment in the current situation. However, his educational life experiences have become a point of reference or guidance for him in a different way: Nawaz attempted to avoid his own teacher’s way of teaching by putting himself in the shoes of a learner. For example, Nawaz said:

If I tell you about my personal experience, if you see this paper, it has pair of words. In my school, my teacher never told me about pair of words. So at that time when we would prepare for the exam paper, I would just take the guide and prepare by myself memorizing the pair of words. We would not know the meaning of pairs of words, but would memorize them as they are ... Now when I teach [pair of words] to kids I first explain them thoroughly. Then ask them to use them in sentence, and in this way get them practice these. When they do some of the words, then I give them my notes ... telling them to compare and then follow the one they want. So by this method, the kids also learn the sentence making and use the principles in their sentence [practically] and learns [about the topic I teach]. So this is the difference [between me and my past teachers]. (Int-1, lines 407-419)

As we can see here, in order to translate his goal of good teaching into a successful project, Nawaz’s negative experiences of his language teacher during his student life served as a good point of reference. These student life experiences provided Nawaz an opportunity to

compare his teacher's way of teaching the language with his current teaching and to assess what did not work for him. This helped him to reflect on his own practice and try different approaches which he believed may work for his students, thus shaping and expanding the repertoire of his teaching practice.

Apart from the above mentioned enabling factors (in some aspects), there were some other factors which, according to the data, influenced Nawaz, in two ways: that is a) to respond to the specific given constraints dealt with above, and b) were helpful, in general, in his classroom teaching. These enabling factors (b) are detailed as follows.

### **Enabling factors**

Nawaz's concern or goal was to make his teaching as effective as possible. The term 'effective' is used here in terms of Nawaz's overarching concern of students gaining communicative competence (as mentioned above). In order to materialise this concern or goal to some extent, Nawaz was mainly helped out by cultural resources such as, the general pre-service courses (but only in terms of pedagogical skills and not PCK as explained above, and Nawaz's teaching experience as explained next.

### **Experience**

According to Ampiah (2008), it is a generally acknowledged fact that the number of years utilised in teaching affects the quality of teaching/instruction in the classroom. Same was the case with Nawaz who found his experience to be a great help in achieving his goals of class control, maintaining discipline and applying a suitable (current) teaching method. For example, when I asked Nawaz about his teaching experience and if he feels any difference in his current teaching as compared to his past, he replied:

... In the beginning, I would be nervous that how I will teach in the class, how I will control the class. What is the best way to teach them. These were the problems in the start. But these problems then got overcome as a teacher teaches. It all comes with experience. It changes your way of teaching and [I feel] there is a lot of improvement now. (Int-1, lines 499-502)

### **Some other factors**

Some other factors which were helpful to Nawaz to deal with the given constraints were: a) his confidence about having command on his subject due to his Masters qualification as

compared to the other teachers in his school (Int-1, lines 382-384); b) reflective practice on “how [he] can make kids understand it [the lesson], how the kids will better pick it. Here there is nothing special to prepare [the lecture] from. I do things myself and prepare it” (Int-1, lines 313-316); and c) getting help in case of some problem from the only available resource ‘dictionary’ for words meanings (Int-1, lines 315-317). Also, despite having good length of experience (10 years) and having comparatively high qualification, Nawaz seemed to believe on and practice preparing a lesson before going to a class. This is evident from his advice to an applicant:

... you should never say that you have taught for 8 years. You should not depend on it. If I say this [something] cannot be changed into English and we teach it this way throughout the year ... I would think that I have taught [some lesson] for the whole year, what if I forget some word, then? (Int-1, lines 298-302)

Next, I will present the second case (teacher - Alia) analysis as follows.

### 6.3 **Teacher: Alia**

The participant-teacher, Alia was also an English language teacher, having 10 years’ experience of teaching different subjects in state schools including teaching English language. Her professional qualifications consisted of a CT, a B.Ed. and an M.Ed. as her professional qualification. Her professional qualification also qualified her to teach the higher classes of 9 and 10 but I observed her teaching in class 7 where she taught as an English language teacher. Like Nawaz, Alia also seemed to have been creative and exploratory, i.e. finding ways out and exercising her agency in the given circumstances to provide maximum English language opportunities for her students. This we shall see below in detail during her case analysis. First, though, I will detail the constraining influences that conditioned Alia’s ELT behaviour.

#### 6.3.1 **Structural conditioning (RQ1) and Alia’s response (RQ2)**

The following factors shaped the participant-teacher Alia’s teaching context and her teaching behaviour.

### **Constraining factors/influences**

Although I did not get any explicit idea regarding what language learning goals for the students Alia aspires to, nor what specific teaching approach she favoured, desired or wanted, however, on the basis of data, I may say that she seemed to have adopted the traditional structural approach to ELT and learning. She seemed quite enthusiastic about ‘what’ and ‘how’ she would teach, finding ways to ensure that the students maximised their learning. This enthusiasm can easily be noticed both in her classes the way she was teaching and while talking about her experiences in the interview (examples will be seen below). However, while trying to pursue her ‘project’ of students’ maximum learning, she confronted some constraints which needed to be overcome to pursue her desires. These were as follows.

#### **Large classes**

For Alia, her class of forty-five students was a large class, teaching which she felt constrained in terms of giving assessment work to students, class management issues and providing individual attention to all students. I explain these points in turns below.

##### *- Assessment/reinforcement work*

While discussing her large class size, Alia said that, “Handling forty-five students is quite difficult”. She further explained that had she had fewer students, “their copy checking, listening to their reading or answering their questions” would have been easier for her (Int-3, lines 286-289). We can see here that Alia found it quite difficult to carry out any reinforcement work with the students in the given time as the number of students would not allow this.

Alia’s response to the given constraint: Despite the large number of students, however, Alia tried her best to not be overwhelmed by this constraint and find some way out regarding this issue. Her enthusiasm for the students’ language learning guided her action in this regard. Her solution in such a situation, according to her, was:

... I teach the same things over and over and I make their groups and ask them to revise and re-read certain lessons. So, from my side, I try my best. I also ask them to write certain things ten or twenty times which allows them to remember the spellings as well as remember the words. I believe in practice. Even when I give homework, I give them things which I have taught in class, I don’t give them

something new to do. The exercise that I've given them today, I know that they will make mistakes but this allows them to go back to the text, read it again, mark what they don't understand and ask me the next day. (Int-3, lines 199-207)

Irrespective of the appropriateness of her approach, we can clearly see that she has found her way (agency) through maximising students' practice and repetition of the task at hand. Her underlying belief seemed to be 'practice makes a man perfect'. Whether the students were benefiting from this approach in terms of their language learning gains is another issue. But one might argue that such approaches seem to be the best possible in the given situation rather than following any other ideal/decontextualized language learning theory which might not have been practicable in the given scenario.

Therefore, in line with her beliefs regarding giving students assessment/reinforcement work (the above quote), we can notice that in almost all of her classes, Alia gives students some kind of practice work during or at the end of the lesson. See, for example, (Alia, CO-1, mins 16:23-17:25, FN-23/08/2016). During this time period, we can see Alia giving homework to the students, asking them to look at the questions at the end of the lesson and find their answers which she will discuss with them the next day in class. Moreover, she tried to do an activity in the class as well, such as silent reading, where she asked the students to pair up and do the silent reading and check who was finishing the reading within 5 minutes. Similarly, Alia did the activity asking students to create lists of words they had learnt in the lesson that day.

Similarly, we can also notice in Alia's other class (Alia, CO-2, mins 20:08-27:80, FN-10/09/2016) - where she was conducting a lesson on "pronouns" and asking students to make a few sentences using personal pronouns. In the middle of the lesson (@ min 12:15), Alia asked students to write sentences with different pronouns and indicate them in those sentences. A similar tendency can be observed in Alia's other class, for example (Alia, CO-3, mins 24:32-33:23, FN-21/09/2016) on the topic of "preposition"

All these instances show Alia's exercise of agency by adding reinforcement activities in her classes in some way, despite finding them difficult to do (as per her verbal statement quoted above).

- *Class discipline / management*

In the account of the problems regarding class size in the above quote (preceding section - Int-3, lines 286-289), Alia further continued talking about the constraint regarding class discipline as:

The period is of forty minutes, just getting the students quite in that time is something big. There is the problem of discipline. (Int-3, lines 290-291)

Once again, we can clearly see that how Alia felt constrained on account of the large class size particularly when combined with limited class time.

Response to the given constraint: With regard to the class management issues, Alia found a way out by keeping the students busy in some way so that they have less chances of doing anything else but to focus on the given lesson. Her solution was to make the students repeat the lesson aloud and in chorus after her. So she would read few lines which would be repeated by her students in chorus. Thus she would continue the entire lesson in this way, that is, alternate reading by her and her students. We can clearly see this pattern in almost all her lessons that I observed. For example, (Alia, CO-1, 2, and 3). When I asked Alia the reason for this, she replied;

... they should read with me. It keeps them busy. When they're just listening, they're not attentive enough. I say they definitely lose attention. But when it's done this way, they pay attention. (Int-3, lines 30-32)

We can see this in all of four classes of Alia that I observed where she would read a text from the book, followed by its reading by the students in chorus. Then Alia would do its translation, followed, in the similar manner, by the students in chorus. This approach contrasted with other classes of the other participant-teachers I observed where students would just passively and silently listen to the teacher.

- Teacher's individualised attention

In the same quote as mentioned above on the topic of Alia's experience about assessment/reinforcement work, Alia clearly mentioned the problem of giving individual attention to students in her class on account of the large number of students. To use the same quote again, but in this context, with regard to the teacher's individual attention, Alia said;

Handling forty-five students is quite difficult and because of this you can't give individual attention to any student. Had there been like twenty students, this would have been easier (Int- 3, lines 286-288)

Alia's response: Alia although employing 'drilling' and 'repetition' as a way to respond to the class management issues, her words, which I have quoted above in relation to the *response* to the class management issues (lines 30-32) and the referred classroom observations, implicitly indicate that these actions are a way to respond to the lack of individualised attention as well. Although, this might not be the best way to provide individual attention to the students, one may term it to be a reasonable option in the given circumstances.

We can say that Alia was trying to be interactive with the class, if not at individual level, but at the whole class group level, where she would read from the text followed by the students' reading in chorus as well as, at the same time, her asking them questions at intervals from the same text already there in the books (CO-2, FN-10/09/2016) is a very good example of this approach). We can also notice this in, for example, CO-4, FN-22/09/2016 (mins 01:25-03:50) where Alia is asking students the translation of the words 'enough', 'equal', 'labour', 'household', 'duties', 'cooking', 'food', 'clean', 'wash', 'house', 'husband' and 'child' etc.

In addition to these constraints, Alia also felt some issues pertaining to students. These were regarding students' lack of interest/attention, and required competency level. I explain them in turns below.

### **Student-related factors**

#### **- Students' lack of interest or attention**

The issue regarding students' lack of attention/interest had been mentioned both explicitly by Alia and can also be implied from her words. For example, when I asked Alia the reason for her current teaching approach during the post-observation interview, she explained that if she just delivers the lecture with students just passively listening, "they don't have the same attention" (Int-3, lines 16-17)

Also, on another occasion while talking about the insufficient facilities, Alia again talked about students' interest which could be provoked by some other means (see details below on this point). For example, referring to the insufficient facilities, as I quote Alia below (lines 39-41), Alia believed that students take more interest when a teacher teaches a particular

lesson in different ways. These two instances indirectly revealed that Alia had been struggling with the issues regarding her students' interest and attention in the given lesson. However, she explicitly made a statement about this when she mentioned that;

Handling forty-five students is quite difficult and because of this you can't give individual attention to any student. (Int-3, lines 286-287)

Alia's response: According to Alia, she tried to respond to the given constraint by asking students "... to read after me. It's a primary type method but in this way, they are attached to me in some way" (Int-3, lines 17-18). Alia words show that she seemed to have not been quite comfortable with her current teaching approach, however, she considered it to be one of the most workable options in the given situation.

Another way used by Alia to grab students' attention (possibly) was to ask the students, at the outset of a lesson, about the previous lesson which also acted as a kind of warm up for the current class (see, for example, CO-2, mins 00:00-01:27) as:

Teacher (T): Today, we will read grammar. And what had we read the day before yesterday?

Students (S's): Pronoun

T: (confirming) Pronoun. Can you define pronoun?

Pause (5 secs)

T: (Addressing one of the students) Malaika (as if asking her to answer)

S: (Answered)

T: Anyone else can?

S: (Answered and so on.....)

Also, Alia would take full walking rounds across the whole classroom which seemed to ensure all students were participating as they seemed quite alert and active, most probably due to the primacy of the need to show respect to teachers in Asian culture (see section 2.5.2). For example, see Alia, CO-1, mins 00:00-8:17, FN-23/08/2016) where she is reading the whole lesson with the class students (see section "Alia's response to the students' competency issue" below for details on her way of reading with the class).

Also, Alia would ask students to point out the difficult words for which she would write the meanings on the board. This was contrary to the practice of other participant-teachers who would guess which words were challenging and would provide meanings without involving the students. For example, in CO-1 (mins 08:36-11:23), Alia asked students, “any difficult words”, in response to which students pointed out words such as ‘recreation’, ‘statistics’, ‘sufficient’ and so on. Once again Alia asked, “Find out the difficult words and let me know”. Then again the third time, she asked, “Ok! Any other word?”, possibly to ensure maximum students’ participation, interest and/or attention in the given lesson. This strategy of Alia for engaging students seemed to be effective as, for example, in CO-4 (mins 00:35, 01:24, FN-22/09/2016), I noticed a girl at the front yawning, and sounding bored but was still reading the lesson with the teacher, and therefore was at least paying some attention.

- *Students’ lack of required competence*

In relation to my same question regarding the reason(s) for Alia’s particular approach to teaching as well as the difficulties she had been facing while teaching English language, Alia mentioned students’ understanding as one of the main reasons for her current teaching approach. She said;

We just do it [translation] for the students. Gradually all our courses are going towards English. Science ... Math and maybe even social studies ... we just translate to make them understand. (Int-3, lines 70-72)

Alia further continued;

... when we’re talking about something in the lesson, there are some particular words, which the students are unable to pick as best as they should. And without the proper understanding of these words, our course cannot be completed. Student is the most important factor... it’s difficult for the students to grasp them [words] (Int-3, lines 188-193)

In addition to the issue of students’ understanding in general and with regard to particular lessons, Alia also appeared to have been grappling with the students’ weak base in the English language as compared to the level they were currently at. This became evident when she said;

Actually, the students that come here, they don’t have a base in English language and, therefore, they definitely miss out things ... so we translate everything so that

they can understand everything. We also do words meaning so that when the students want to use those words tomorrow, they know what they mean and how to use them ... I believe by this method, they can gain some words [vocabulary], also their pronunciation can improve, that is why I teach the lesson like this. (Int-3, lines 15-19, 62-65)

Taking evidence from the classroom data with regard to this constraint, we can notice that when Alia invited the students to ask her the meanings of difficult words (see the last paragraph of the previous subsection '*Students' lack of interest or attention*'), students asked the meanings of (in researcher's view given their class level) such simple words such as 'themselves', 'awake', 'often' (Alia, CO-4, mins 00:43-00:48, 02:08, FN-22/09/2016). Similarly, when Alia asked the students to make a list of the words they had learnt on that day, for example, (CO-1, mins 21:47-25:58, FN-23/08/2016), the students again listed quite simple words such as, "textbook, dictionary, reason, something, listen".

Alia's response to the students' competency issue: All this above mentioned data not only points towards issues pertaining to students' understanding and their weak base in the English language (given the students' educational level) but also indicate these being some of the main causes of Alia's current teaching approach. This involved Alia's very deductive approach to teaching such as word to word translation, teacher-fronted presentation and heavily vocabulary driven classes. For example, see Alia's CO-1 (mins 00:00-08:20, FN-23/08/2016), where we can see Alia reading one line in English from the text. The student follows the same way, then Alia translates that sentence and students again follow her in the same manner. This drilling and repetition approach to teaching was something unique to Alia as compared to the other participant teachers, in addition to employing translation and words meanings. The same pattern can also be observed, for example, in CO-4, so much so that even in CO-2 (mins 1:30-05:05, FN-10/09/2016) and CO-3 (mins 01:40-13:10, FN-21/09/2016) which were grammar focused classes where the lesson's focus was on 'pronoun'. Alia would read the definition of 'pronoun' and its different examples in the same way: that is reading a line from the text and then its translation and a lot of explanation in Urdu. Moreover, despite having everything written in the textbook, Alia would still write the entire lesson on the board while simultaneously delivering it from the book verbally (for example, Alia, CO-2).

Alia, even though she seemed to have been trying her best to enhance the language learning opportunities for her students through excessive drilling and repetition, still felt herself quite

constrained in terms of not having sufficient classroom resources which could complement her teaching as revealed from her interview and is further explained below.

### **Economic issues**

#### **- *Insufficient classroom facilities***

On one occasion, in the context of answering my question regarding the effectiveness of the preservice courses that Alia had attended, Alia referred to the lack of some classroom facilities which she felt inhibited the learning opportunities of her students in the following ways:

... they [preservice trainers] tell us to make models, make charts which ends up being expensive. Even at school, we don't have funds for these materials. Yes, listening helps, but when you show the student a model, its better. The child gains from it because they have more interest in it ... If you have a model you can clarify each part to them, once they see it with their own eyes, they can make out much better what a thing is. Like when they watch TV, they remember a lot from it. By just listening, you can't remember things in the same way. (Int-3, lines 38-41, 47-50)

We can see here that despite knowing some other ways to enhance students' language learning opportunities, Alia was unable to implement them as they require some facilities, materials or equipment, which were unavailable. The absence of these resources negatively affected Alia's desire to conduct her lessons differently despite her wish to do so. We can also observe this in almost all her classes where she was just restricted to using just chalk and board at the most.

Response to the given constraint: Although Alia had been trying hard in her own way to create better and more effective language learning environment for her students in any possible way, she could not do much beyond a certain point. That might be the reason that we see her classes mainly dominated by teacher fronted approaches, though she tried some innovation, from her limited perspective, within the given circumstances.

### **Teacher-related factors**

#### **- *Lack of required competency***

As compared to Nawaz who was quite overconfident due to his long teaching experience and qualification, Alia came across as quite humble in this regard. She considered her competency in her subject (ELT) quite low as she commented;

We don't have a command over English ... our spoken English isn't that strong ... I do feel that I lack a proper command on pronunciation as there are many words which I can't pronounce and my tongue gets stuck ... [Also] we ourselves, get confused....When we translate things in our minds from Urdu, it's quite difficult ... Like I didn't know how to explain 'face' to the students in Urdu. When I went home I realized that I could have explained it as 'to confront'. When I went home, I was thinking about this the entire time. (Int-3, lines 98-101, 180, 215-216, 220-221)

Here, we can see that Alia did not seem to have been very confident about her competency with regard to the different components of language. This lack of required competency is also clearly visible in Alia's classes. For example, the frequent pronunciation mistakes that she made even in very simple common words (see her CO-1 for words), such as, 'chosen' @ min 01:40; 'television' @ min 05:00; 'pleasure' @ min 24:01. Similarly, see her CO-2 for words, such as, 'instead' @ min 01:33, 'reciprocal' @ min 08:23, 'Or' @ min 19:23; and CO-4 for words as, 'dawn' @ min 01:00, 'entertaining' @ min 02:46, and 'deny' @ min 05:05.

- Limited approach to English language learning

Alia seemed to have a quite limited vision of English language learning and what it entails. This became clear with regard to Alia's statements, on different occasions, during her interview when replying to my questions regarding different factors which affected her ELT. For example, explaining the reason for her particular teaching approach, Alia stated that:

... I believe by this method they [students] can gain some vocabulary, their pronunciations can improve that is why I teach the lesson like this. (Int-3, lines 18-19)

Similarly, she also commented that:

... We also do words meaning so that when tomorrow they want to use those words [in a certain situation], they know what the words mean and how to use them. (Int-3, lines 63-65)

While replying to my question regarding difficulties in her teaching, Alia talked about the textbooks as:

... Now there's a proper portion for grammar which touches upon almost every grammatical point. (Int-3, lines 79-80)

Also, with regard to teaching different chapters of the textbook, Alia commented that:

Through the chapters we try to teach the vocabulary. There are words meanings, there are all kinds of grammar basically, the tenses etc. (Int-3, lines 90-91)

While irrespective of what these comments actually mean in relation to the particular factors, nevertheless, all these comments indirectly revealed Alia's very structural approach to English language learning and teaching. To Alia, language meant and is limited to, the learning and teaching of mainly pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. She did not seem to understand that language learning also includes learning listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. This might be one of the reasons for the prevalent structural teaching approach in almost all of her classes that I observed.

- *Lack of and appropriate guidance for teachers*

*Lack of and appropriate in-service training courses*: In reply to my question regarding the provision of any in-service training courses for Alia, she briefly replied:

Not as such. I was taught and trained in 1996 and not after that. How can I teach per the trends of today without any in service courses when I am only familiar with the trends of 1996? (Int-3, lines 258-260)

Alia, in the above quote, quite explicitly mentioned the absence of any kind of in-service courses for her to update her ELT knowledge and skills. Alia further continued commenting on the other features of such courses (if there is any) in a negative way as:

... but even if there are some [courses], they teach you the same things they teach in B. Ed, M. Ed. I believe they should help us improve our language. If there are changes in the curriculum, they should teach them ... they should ask us about our courses and train us per the latest trends ... [Moreover] one school knows about it [the training], the others don't. Whoever gets the information has the opportunity to attend it, and whoever isn't aware, doesn't. (Int-3, lines 235-239, 252, 271-273)

We can see here that Alia highlighted the negative features of the already limited in-service training courses, such as, the lack of up to date knowledge in these courses, the inability of the educational system to choose the right candidate for such courses, and lack of subject (language) specific teaching training.

*Lack/need of specialised ELT guidance:* While commenting upon the ineffectiveness of one or two available in-service courses, Alia further explained and more clearly pointed out the lack/need of specialised ELT guidance. Alia suggested that:

In English, new words are being introduced, new methods are coming into being for which we need to prepare ... and keep ourselves in touch. (Int-3, lines 182-184)

On the one hand, while all these above mentioned quotes highlight the deficiencies of in-service training courses for the teacher, on the other hand, they also show, in common with Nawaz, Alia's main reliance on these courses for her professional development. In particular, her comment with regard to the changes in curriculum and training her in language teaching according to the latest trends mentioned just above (lines 238, 239, 252). This might be on account of the less common trend of improving one's teaching through self-study which is, in general, a part of the Pakistani educational system.

*Alia's response:* Due to these constraints, Alia did not seem to be sufficiently prepared as an English language teacher and so sometimes would commit even basic mistakes. However, she would try her best to respond to these constraints, through her reflection and instincts as well as gaining some guidance from her educational experiences as a student (see the following section for explanation)

Besides these above mentioned constraining influences, there were, however, some factors in Alia's teaching context which proved to be quite helpful for her both in general as well as helping her to deal with these constraining influences (regarding specific constraints, its already explained above). The general ones were as follows.

### **Enabling factors**

The enabling influences for Alia appeared mainly in the form of social resources such as help and support of colleagues as well as her reflection on her own teaching.

### **Collegial relationship**

The foremost enabling influence for Alia appeared to be the help and guidance of her colleagues. In a reply to a question regarding discussing teaching problems with other teachers, Alia commented that:

... if there's something we don't understand we can ask one another ... it does help  
... We do look at our colleague's methods and follow them and we also take their help (Int-3, lines 175-177, 277)

### **Reflective practice**

Another enabling factor for Alia appeared to be Alia's reliance on her instincts and reflection on her own teaching situation. For example, she would assess the competency of her students which would provide her with some solution regarding her teaching the language in an effective way. This can be gathered from Alia's answer when I asked her about the reason for using her current teaching method. Alia said;

I've thought of this (teaching method) on my own ... These are my own ideas. It depends on how the students understand. (Int-3, lines 23, 309)

Similar to Nawaz, although constraints were more prevalent in the case of Alia, neither constraining nor enabling factor appeared in only one form: her educational experiences as a student, as mentioned next.

### **Neither enabling nor constraining influences**

#### **Student life educational experiences: AOO**

The factor which appeared to have had neither constraining nor enabling impacts on Alia's teaching, as revealed from her interview, have been her educational life experiences. When I asked Alia whether her own schooling had helped her in her ELT in any way, she briefly replied, "Well, not much" (Int-3, line 307)

Even though from Alia's brief reply, her educational life experiences seemed to have no effect, I personally consider, based on my interpretation of the data, that they might have helped her to some extent in her teaching as explained below.

### **Both enabling and constraining influences**

#### **Student life educational experiences: AOO**

It is quite interesting to note the two contradictory findings from Alia's interview regarding her educational life experiences. While her explicit remark regarding the usefulness of her educational life experiences was quite a negative one (see above), on another occasion, while talking about the idea she had got about her teaching method, Alia's statement that, "Most of our teachers would teach like this. I personally like this method" (Int-3, line 28) implies she has been influenced positively by her educational experiences. The reason for these two different statements regarding the same factor, based on my insider's view, might be attributed to the fact that Alia's educational experiences might not be very helpful to her in a clear and visible way but only to some extent, in terms of some reference point to help her in her current teaching, as having no other form of guidance available to Alia. So her own teachers' teaching method(s) seemed to be the *unconsciously* adopted method by Alia. However, they might not have been so helpful to Alia to the extent that she would deliberately adopt those teaching practices in her own teaching, to the students' benefit.

Also being unconsciously limited to few teaching possibilities might be constraining in terms of not trying for other alternatives by Alia in her teaching.

#### **Institutional guidelines (syllabus/Text book)**

Alia found the textbook as a good form of guidance. While comparing the current updated textbooks to the previous version, Alia commented that in the current textbooks:

... there's a proper portion for grammar which touches almost every grammatical point. Back then there would be simple exercises at the end of each topic, they would have words meanings and then it would be entirely dependent on the teacher if she would teach the students an essay or some other application of the grammar. Now they give everything step by step and obviously, we also study things in that sequence also and learn. Doing it step by step is also beneficial for the students when they go to class tenth. We would not do grammar like this. (Int-3, lines 79-86)

I have already explained this point with regard to Nawaz above (section 6.2.1): the textbook seemed to have been a good reference point for Nawaz, especially in the absence of any other form of guidance or resources to prepare from. Indeed, the same seemed to be the case

with Alia as well. Although Alia found the textbooks to be a great help / enabling factor on account of the detailed steps by step guidance that they provided, I believe the textbook to be both an enabling and constraining factor for Alia as well. I presume it enabling in the sense of it being a reference point (as explained above) while constraining in terms of its quite structural approach to language teaching which, I believe, might be limiting Alia's vision of language learning (see above section 6.3.1). In other words, Alia might be considering whatever is there in the textbook as the main components of language learning (and thus teaching) and, therefore, less flexible in accommodating her language teaching to teach, for example, other components (skills) of language learning in general. A good example of Alia's complete reliance on the text book can be seen in her class on grammar (Alia, CO-2, mins 00:00-17:43) in which Alia delivered (reading, translating and explaining) the entire lecture on 'pronoun' from the textbook.

### **Preservice courses**

As was the case with Nawaz, the pre-service course (that Alia had attended) seemed to have had a positive impact on Alia's general approach to teaching (PK) but did not seem to be quite relevant specifically to ELT, especially considering the lack of sufficient resources to put some of the methods taught in preservice courses into practice. In the latter case, such course seemed to be something of a constraining factor, inasmuch as they did not provide training applicable to the language teaching context. For instance, when I asked Alia about the utility of the preservice courses attended by her, she replied:

M. Ed. wasn't very beneficial but in B. Ed. and CT, the methods were good though the resources and the equipment required for putting their methods into practice were lacking ... like they tell us to make models, make charts which used to be expensive. (Int-3, lines 34-38)

Despite the above mentioned constraints, in comparison to the other teachers, whom I had interviewed and observed, 'Nawaz' and 'Alia' showed some agency in their given teaching situations (as stated at the start of this chapter). Such an exercise of agentic tendency, in terms of trying to go against the norms, can be observed, to some extent, in their attempts at problem solving and being more creative as is detailed next.

## 6.4 Tendencies towards ‘creativity’ and ‘problem solving’

### 6.4.1 The case of Nawaz

As we have seen above, there were very few instances of Nawaz being able to fully implement the teaching practices that he would *ideally* like to do, according to his teaching philosophy, that is, to make his classes more communicative and student-centred in different ways. However, Nawaz seemed to have made some attempts, though quite rare, to achieve what he would *ideally like to do* and what he felt was *realistically possible to do* within his specific context and within the given constraining and enabling influences. This led Nawaz to a kind of compromise at both ends: complying as well as being agentic. For example, in dealing with students’ low proficiency in language as well as keeping them motivated and engaged, Nawaz said that:

I take the traditional class which is used throughout the Pakistan, but I do variations ... so that the kids do not get bored. (Int-1, lines 319-320)

When I asked Nawaz about the variations, Nawaz replied:

... for example, when I teach idioms, I read these to kids in Urdu first and explain the meaning what actually the idioms are and their definition ... i.e. the combination of 2 or more than 2 words which are not used in its literal meaning but its indirect meaning, then I write their Urdu meaning, (giving examples) and say more Urdu idioms and then explain them very briefly. Then I ask them to give me some examples of idioms of Urdu and Pushtu. So this is how I prepare students in one class. Then in the next class, I explain the idioms in English. Same I did for simile and metaphor ... If I had taught them directly its definition as “likeness between 2 indifferent things”, the kids might not have understood it. So first I provide them some base and for that I definitely teach them in Urdu e.g. what is ‘comparison’.  
(Int-1, lines 252-254, 258-267)

Similarly, another example, regarding this, we have already seen above in section 7.3.1 (Int-1, lines 407-419)

These examples are a clear demonstration of the exercise of agency in terms of how much Nawaz could do in the given situation. That is, he was aware that the traditional teacher-fronted way of teaching English language may not be very effective for the students, possibly

based on his experiences as a student, mentioned above in one of his quotes (section 6.2.1). However, it seemed he had to do it as due to the high student numbers, the available resources and other constraints mentioned above in section 6.2.1, this was possibly the only way to teach. Although, Nawaz felt restricted ('directed' in Archer's terminology-see chapter 3 for details) to follow the traditional way of teaching, he exercised his agency by circumventing and making attempts to bring variations in his teaching method which, he believed, could be more supportive of students' language learning. That is, to present and teach language in slightly different ways (in his view). We can see the practice of detailed explanation, as stated by Nawaz above, in one of Nawaz's class (Nawaz, CO-2) where he teaches tenses to the students. Nawaz's accompanying explanation for this manner of teaching the tenses was;

We teach English language so that there comes fluency in students' English, that fluency cannot come if this grammar translation method is there. [That is] If the lesson is finished, I will ask the students to write short questions, then I will do the related grammar in the exercise. Other than that I told you there is one question in the exam 'translate into English', then I will teach them one tense and show them that how they will translate Urdu sentences into English. Here are formulas for translation, like in sentences, if it comes, he, she, they, so, then use this formula. This is a wrong system, why can't I tell them [directly] that this is present indefinite tense. (Int-1, lines 108-115)

Criticising the prevailing approach to teaching tenses, through an example here, Nawaz seemed to be against teaching tenses in such a 'structural' or 'synthetic' (Wilkins, 1976) way. That is, "one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step-by-step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accommodation of the parts until the whole structure of the language has been built up" (ibid: 2). Nawaz called it a 'wrong system' and believed that the tenses should be taught in a more inductive way as the last line of his quote clearly indicates. Thus, Nawaz most of the time, instead of totally surrendering to the given constraints, appeared to seek 'middle ways' in his teaching situation generally, showing his tendency of problem solving or creativity. Some more examples of such a middle way approach can be gathered from, for example, Nawaz's practice(s) of a calling few students to the front of the class for reading aloud and translating the text at hand, in his manner, while Nawaz would correct their meanings and pronunciation mistakes. This approach was taken due to the difficulty of paying individualised attention to students, giving reinforcement activities, and insufficient teaching resources, and space. Such a tendency

shows how he has converted his negative educational experiences as a student into positive teaching/learning experiences for his students (see section 6.2.1 above).

Similar tendencies towards problem solving and creativity (to some extent), instead of total compliance in the face of the given constraints, can be observed in the case of Alia as explained next.

#### 6.4.2 **The case of Alia**

Alia, with regard to achieving her aims according to her values, concerns and beliefs, seemed to have been making some efforts to find possible solutions to her present teaching, in order to maximise the language learning opportunities for her students in the given circumstances. This is evidenced at different places during her interview as well as her classroom teaching (as we have seen above). Some of the examples are as follows.

Firstly, as an explanation of her current teaching method (section 6.3.1 lines 29-32), Alia explained that she had been advised in her B.Ed. preservice training course to not use this teaching method for a large class such as hers. However, she still continued following it as a solution to maintain class discipline, and to draw and / or maintain students' attention by keeping students engaged and involved with her in some way and also as an alternative to pay more individual attention to each student.

Secondly, despite being unable to bring much variety into her lessons (due to insufficient classroom facilities and other constraints (see above)) to make them interesting for the students, Alia still made an attempt to utilise different approaches as compared to the other teachers in her school. That is, while other teachers would just deliver the lecture and students just listened to them, Alia tried to engage students in the form of 'drilling' students and getting them to 'repeat' reading the lesson and its translation after her. From Alia's perspective, in addition to keeping the students engaged, this method might also help the students improve their vocabulary and practice their pronunciation. Such an exercise of agency is clearly reflected in Alia's words when I asked her whether she has been taught to teach in her particular way in the B. Ed. or somewhere else, Alia said:

No, I've thought of this method on my own. They [B. Ed. trainers] mostly tell you to just read and usually teachers after the sixth grade don't make the students read, they just make them listen but I involve them with myself. I want them to be involved and secondly their pronunciation can improve. (Int-3, lines 23-26)

Alia's agentic tendency can also be noticed in her words when she further said that:

... I personally like this teaching method. I was told that this method should not be used for such a large class but I say that no it's okay, they [students] should read with me. (Int-3, lines 28-30)

Moreover, her words that, "These are my own ideas. It depends on how the students understand" (Int-3, line 309), also show that Alia would not blindly follow any ideal theory of English language learning and teaching. Instead, she would assess her actions in relation to her teaching context and the factors therein (e.g. students here), to come up with the most effective way (in her view) to teach the language.

Lastly, one more instance of Alia's exercise of her agency can be observed when she was commenting on the assessment/reinforcement work to her students. Instead of giving up to the given constraint of large classes and not conducting any assessment work/reinforcement activities for the students, Alia still tried to do so in some way to the benefit of her students (see section 6.3.1, heading 'Assessment/reinforcement work', lines 199-207). Also, to engage students (to address their lack of attention), Alia would invite students to ask her the meaning of difficult words from the lesson or ask questions about the previous lesson (see section 6.3.1 for details)

In order to compare and better understand these above mentioned cases of Nawaz and Alia and their agentic tendencies, in the next chapter, I intend to present a detailed analysis of the next two cases of Sami and Sara, who showed relatively more compliance and less agency, providing a slightly different lens on the same phenomenon.



## Chapter 7      **Case analysis (findings): Sami and Sara**

### 7.1      **Introduction**

In this chapter, as I indicated in the previous chapter, I will present the case analysis of the teachers, Sami and Sara. First, I will present their brief biography in sections 7.2 and 7.3 respectively. For a brief description of the schools and the classroom setting where I observed these teachers teaching, see appendix E for Nawaz and previous section 2.5.5 regarding Alia (for the reasons explained in section 2.5.5 above). Finally, I will present the detailed social/critical realist analysis of the two teachers.

### 7.2      **Teacher: Sami**

The participant-teacher, Sami, was also an experienced teacher, with twenty seven years' experience of teaching different subjects, including English language, in state schools in KPK. As outlined above (Table 1), Sami held a general teaching qualification of CT, B.Ed. and M.Ed. (see details on these courses in section 2.5.4 above). Based on his professional qualification (see section 4.7.5.1 above for details), Sami was also assigned to teach English language to the senior most class (10). On the basis of his extensive teaching experience, Sami considered himself a good language teacher who had a firm grasp on his subject to the satisfaction of his students. However, not having a high degree qualification in the English language, would sometimes affect his confidence. This impression can be gathered from when, at the end of his interview, Sami asked me;

Sami: Any gaps in me?

Me: (smilingly) No not at all.

Sami: I thought I will learn something from you, not you from me

(Int-8, lines 401-403)

In the above statement of Sami, by “gaps” he meant (based on my insider perspective) to ask me if I had noticed any weakness in him as an English language teacher. This can be confirmed from his subsequent statement (3<sup>rd</sup> line) when he was expecting to learn

something from me as someone more knowledgeable than him (see more on this point in section 4.7.3 above).

### 7.2.1 **Structural conditioning (RQ1) and Sami's response**

As opposed to Nawaz, but similar to Alia, Sami, in terms of his concerns, values, interests or projects, seemed to be predominantly inclined to the structural approach to ELT and learning both in theory and practice. Both his interview as well as classroom teaching, as I observed, evidenced this. For example, on one occasion, when I asked Sami about his views on specialised ELT professional development courses for him, he replied:

Yes, for English they should have it [specialised courses]. There should be special courses for teaching English ... there should be separate classes for teaching grammar, pronunciation, intonation and writing ... to teach us how to do all of them with the students (Int-8, lines 78-83)

Here, we can clearly see that Sami seemed to understand the English language as a system of structurally related components, and the target of language learning to be the mastery of these components of the system, which are usually defined in terms of, for example, the phonological, grammatical, and/or lexical items or units (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Similarly, this was clearly reflected in his classroom teaching, which was heavily characterised by words translation and grammar, in almost all of his classes. For example, in CO-2, or CO-3, we can clearly notice this feature. In CO-2 (@ 06:27 min), Sami came across the word 'say' in the text, so he asked his students what is the second and third form of the verb 'say' and then explained the form few times. Similarly, CO-3 (@ 07:34 min), he asked and explained, in the same manner, word/verb 'return' and its different verb forms. Also, during CO-3 (02:20-03:05 mins), Sami asked about and explained the word class and verb forms of the word 'learn'. Moreover, in the same class we can see him asking/telling lots of words translation to his students (00:05-05:20 mins), such as, meanings of the words 'gold', 'learn', 'forgive', 'doubt', 'story' and 'storey' etc.

One possible explanation for such an approach could be Sami's limited content knowledge (hereafter - CK) (Shulman, 1986, 1990; Shulman & Shulman, 2004; Richards (2012). This point can be better understood if, for example, we compare him with Nawaz (see section 6.2 above) who had comparatively broader exposure to the theories of English language learning and teaching, on the basis of which Nawaz seemed to be inclined to be creative, possibly to

incorporate the CLT approach in his class. Sami seemed to have adopted his ways of teaching the English language from his own teachers or by the way he had been taught (AOO-Lortie, 1775) (see section below on this).

Whatever his teaching philosophy might have been, Sami seemed to have been constrained within, or by, his current teaching context in the following ways:

### **Constraining factors/influences**

#### **Large classes**

As I have mentioned previously, a large class is defined differently by different people. For Sami, this number was around sixty which he considered as problematic in the following ways:

#### - *Class discipline/management*

Sami considered class discipline as an important element in facilitating a conducive ELT and learning environment. He thought that, "... When there is a good discipline, there is good learning and when there is no discipline, there is no learning" (Int-8, lines 244-246). However, Sami found maintaining discipline in his class, with many students, quite problematic. Sami explained that:

... one big issue is of discipline in such [having many students as his] classes ... To bring discipline, I feel problem because to maintain peace and order in such huge classes and then teaching and also when the time is limited, is not possible all the time and for every teacher. Because most of the teachers are weak in maintaining discipline and they simply cannot do it ... [class discipline] techniques does not work in these classes. (Int-8, lines 243-248, 257)

Based on my observation, we can particularly notice the issues regarding discipline in Sami's class (CO-3, FN-06/09/2016), where the students, especially after the first half of the class, were moving into and out of the class (towards the end) while the teacher, Sami, seemed less bothered. He was just engrossed in completing his lesson.

Sami's response to class discipline issues: Sami seemed to have given in to this constraint as is somehow visible from his comment above. He seemed to have made some attempts to maintain good discipline in his class at different times which might not have worked for him. Not only from Sami's words, but also from his classes which I observed, Sami seemed to

have been teaching more as a formality without any clear attempts on his part to ensure whether students are listening or attentive or not; something Nawaz had pointed out (see section 6.2.1 (Int-1, lines 342-344)). In most of the cases, the classes would become quite noisy but Sami would continue teaching without making any efforts to quieten the students (see the example just above).

- Assessment / reinforcement work

In answer to my question regarding issues or problems that Sami had been facing in his classes while teaching, Sami mentioned managing assessment and reinforcement work in his class of around sixty students as being problematic in quite clear words as;

... in a large or huge class if we check homework as well, the time is over and sometimes we are unable to check it or if we somehow do, we do not properly check like we can check of a normal class student. (Int-8, lines 277-279)

Sami's response to this constraint: It is interesting to note that Sami indirectly perceives his class as abnormal on account of having a large number of students as compared to a class containing lesser students, which he perceives as normal. As a probable result of having many students and having found assessment/reinforcement work difficult to conduct, as Sami's words show, I did not notice any regular pattern of Sami conducting or giving any assessment/reinforcement work to his students (at least in the classes that I had observed of him), despite his intentions to do so as his words convey. At the most he would continuously ask students questions from the text but in a rather superficial manner (see further section 'individualised attention' below). Although on two occasions he mentioned the homework to the students in quite a casual way. That is, in CO-1 (@ min 17:06) where he asked the students to write twenty difficult words with meanings and show them to him in the next class. Another occasion was in CO-3 (@ 15:30), where he asked the students to write a paragraph with translation for homework. Although Sami did not explicitly deny giving any kind of reinforcement activity, as I did not observe such homework and/or some form of follow up as a regular feature of Sami's class (as I had observed in case of Alia), I believe these two instances might either be due to my presence or a one-off instance.

- Allocated class time

Since Sami had to take students' attendance/name call as part of his job specification, and since his class had many students, Sami felt that taking their attendance consumed a lot of his class time which affected his lesson time. According to Sami:

... over population has many other issues, for example, time related issue. I have around 50 or 60 students and I take their attendance, which takes around 15 minutes, say 20 minutes will be required for 100 students. If these 20 minutes are taken from 45 minutes so 30 minutes are left and if we take 20 minutes then 20 minutes are left ... [in such a case] the teacher will only be able to teach only say upto 20 minutes. (Int-8, lines 265-271)

Sami's words clearly indicate that there should have been some extra time allocated for such administrative tasks so that he could give full time to the lesson on the day for the benefit of the students.

We are given 45 minutes, a bit more would be fine ... as I said before, students are many. At least there should be some extra 10 to 15 minutes just for attendance. (282-283, 290-291)

- *Teacher's individualised attention*

In addition to the attendance issue within the given time, Sami also found it difficult to pay more attention to the students, listening to or talking through the students' issues which he thought might be helpful in promoting a more conducive teaching-learning environment by possibly helping out students with those issues. Sami continued:

... if a student comes late or is absent on some day and if I ask him, for example, why did not you come yesterday? Why did not you do homework? More time will be spent in such conversation while 40 minutes are all we have got, which will be over in this way. You tell me then how will the teacher be able to teach his topic properly? Of course, the teacher will not properly teach his topic because the time is over. (Int-8, lines 272-276)

We can notice in Sami's class that he would sometimes ask questions in the middle of the lesson regarding some point in the lesson. For example, (Sami, CO-1, mins 05:00-06:20) where he asked the students, "any student who can use the 'heart' in your own sentences?" After not getting any response, he then asked, "what is the meaning of heart?" Still not getting any response, he further asked, "what is the meaning of heart attack?" then one

student replied, “dil ka dora”. Sami instantly, and without paying any attention to or making any comments upon the student’s answer, interrupted, “I learnt this lesson by heart” (making a sentence of the word ‘heart’).

Then he continued;

Teacher: (looking from the book and picking up a word from there) Prophet. What is the meaning of prophet?

Student: Paighambar

Teacher: (confirming student’s answer) “Paghambar”. You can use prophet in your own sentences? You can say (while not inviting the students’ response, Sami replied) Muhammad is the last prophet of Allah. Muhammad is the greatest prophet of Allah.

Sami’s classes were usually characterised - as compared to the other three participant-teachers- by such frequent attempts of interaction (through Q/A<sup>31</sup>) with his students, such as CO-2 (e.g. 00:00-05:50mins), CO-3 (e.g. 00:00-06:03mins), as a way to interact with students but mostly in the same (superficial) manner as the example above. It is as if Sami had been asking from his own self, without having much response from, or interaction with, the students. This might be the reason that Sami did not explicitly mention this factor as a constraint as he was (apparently) involving students in some way. He could have, if students were not answering, used some prompts, such as ‘fill in the blanks’ activity, or ‘complete the sentence’ to possibly elicit more student responses rather than just asking questions as more of a formality without waiting for students to answer, for instance.

### **Economic issues**

With regard to the economic issues, Sami felt quite restricted in his teaching approach due to the issues resulting mainly from inadequate or inappropriate learning resources, insufficient classroom facilities and lack of peaceful environment.

- *Inadequate or inappropriate learning resources*

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<sup>31</sup> Questions/Answers

With regard to the academic resources, Sami considered the dictionary as an important academic resource, "... so that kids can see, and learn how to use different words practically" (Int-8, lines 208-209), and in this regard its non-availability as something limiting the opportunity for students to learn a language. Also, Sami considered the non-availability of sufficient AV aids as a constraint in terms of lacking complementary materials which could enhance students' English language learning experiences by possibly aiding conceptual understanding. Sami explained this through an example as:

We must be provided with additional teaching materials. For example, if you are teaching what I just did a chapter on the The Prophet (PBUH), for it, I think it is necessary to have a map of Mecca, Madina and Ghar-e-Hira<sup>32</sup>, or a digital map of Arafat then the kids will understand easily by seeing things practically in front of them. Their learning capacity will increase by 50% and kids will learn almost 50% quick. (Int-8, lines 199-204)

- *Issues of light, electricity and peaceful environment*

Similarly, Sami also felt that the lack of sufficient light, electricity and peaceful environment also negatively affected the teaching-learning environment in his class by distracting the students' attention from the lesson:

When there is a load shedding, kids are soaked in sweating which causes disturbance and students attention is affected ... Most of the classes are covered in darkness which is not only troublesome for studying during the class but it also affects kids eyesight ...When there is no light and fans in summers, the kids are soaked in sweat ... then they use books as fans. They struggle to get rid of the heat first rather than to learn a language. (Int-8, lines 223-224, 232-234, 238-240)

Even during Sami's classroom observation, for example, CO-1, FN-22/08/2016, I noticed children sitting on the floor. They did not even have chairs and desks/tables. Also, just as Sami mentioned above, there were no other teaching aid than just the marker and the board.

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<sup>32</sup> Mecca, Madina, Ghar-e-Hira and Arafat are the Muslim holy places in Saudi Arabia

Sami's response to the given constraint: The above mentioned economic issues, we may say, could be a reason for Sami to regard teaching more as a formality in terms of just covering the content he considered as important without taking much trouble to ensure whether any language learning had actually been taking place. As his words above reflect, when a person (in this case a student) is struggling with the basic necessities, how can he / she focus on other things? Also, like Nawaz, the lack of sufficient academic facilities, and as well as the lack of self-study practice of Sami and subsequent limited knowledge of ELT, might also be the reason for his more teacher-centred approach.

With regard to the student-related factors, Sami saw himself and his teaching constrained by the students' lack of required competence and weak level of English and understanding. This is further explained as follows:

### **Student-related factors**

#### *- Students lack of required competence*

Although Sami did not directly relate his current teaching approach (grammar or word to word translation) to the students' competence level, his words indirectly signal that:

... for teaching we use GTM [grammar translation method] and feel GTM as more useful for Pakistani students as they can easily learn through this method. This is the reason why we translate every sentence in Urdu and Pushto. This is how the students learn the topic easily and can do more work in the English language. (Int-8, lines 7-10)

Sami's response to this constraint: As clear as it can be, the above mentioned words of Sami, in addition to signalling students' weak level of competence, also indicate the said constraint to be the main reason for his current teaching approach. His classroom teaching, as I have observed, and as is evident in all his classes, is also mainly dominated by a very teacher-centred/deductive approach, with a heavy reliance on explanation and word to word translation. For example, in CO-1 (mins 03:25-08:52, FN-22/08/2016), Sami reads a few sentences from the book and its translation/explanation multiple times, that is, from three to six in the following excerpt:

Sami: <sup>33</sup>(reading from the book) “All glory be to Allah” (repeats the sentence and its translation three times in a row)

(Then read again a sentence from the book) “Rose the cry from the heart of the Prophet Muhammad” (repeated this sentence and its translation three times in one go)

(Then read next sentence from the book and repeated its translation six times in one go) “His family is traced back to hazrat Ismail and Hazrat Ibrahim” and so on...

Another example can be taken from CO-2, FN-30/08/2016 (@min 11:06) where Sami read a line from the text, “...he thought about his necessities” and repeated its translation six times.

Moreover, Sami’s concern for students’ weak competency level can be gathered from his classes where he translated, without being asked by any student, such basic words as ‘gold’ (Sami, CO-3 @ min 01:04), and ‘money’ (CO-3@ mins 00:50) given the expectations regarding level of English one can have about the students current class level.

### **Teacher-related factors**

#### - Lack of required competency

Regarding competency, one impression that I gained about Sami was his overconfident attitude to teaching English language, based on his extensive (27 years) teaching experience. While Sami did not seem to be aware of this, I personally believe that such over confidence unconsciously interferes with his preparation as an effective language teacher. Sami thought that:

... experience is the best teacher. The 27 years of teaching has helped me in a way that now even without preparation, I can deliver any lesson properly and 75% of what the lecture should be, I have already learnt. I do not face any difficulty with preparation. By the grace of God, I can talk about any topic in the class. Initially I

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<sup>33</sup> Inside brackets are my comments

was not that confident. Anyone who lack experience, he/she cannot do the lecture without preparation. They have to first prepare it. (Int-8, lines 294-300)

Sami's response in this case: These lines clearly show Sami's limited vision of ELT. Sami seemed to have a view of knowledge as something fixed and limited which does not require updating (kumaravidavelu, 2003). He considered, as I have already said above, translation, pronunciation and vocabulary to be sufficient for English language learning and teaching as he "... knows 5 to 6 meanings of one word and can use them in any sentence very easily for the students" (Int-8, lines 303-304). This might have led to his lack of lesson planning/preparation, extra study to update his knowledge, as well as explaining his limited CK/language proficiency as he had been conscious of, on many occasions in his interview. One example could be the one I have mentioned above at the start of the current section (Int-8, lines 400-402). Also, it was sometimes difficult for me to follow him or his words during his classes, for example, during CO-4 (00:44-00:58 mins, FN-10/09/2016) while speaking in English. Some evidence of Sami's lack of required competency can be taken from his classes where, despite being a 27 years experienced English language teacher, he committed very basic and simple pronunciation mistakes. For example, mispronouncing words: 'family' (CO-1, mins 09:27-09:37), 'born' (CO-1 @ min 16:17), 'desert' (CO-1 @ mins 16:41); 'clothes' (CO-2 @ min 19:03); 'heard' (CO-3 @ mins 00:11-00:14) and making grammatical mistakes in sentences, such as, "Checks its afters eids holidays" (CO-4, @min 16:45).

- Limited approach to English language learning

While I have already explained Sami's limited / structuralist view of, or approach to, English language learning, his following quote more clearly indicates this:

For the class, I would prepare the lesson by learning the translation of the intended lesson and all the difficult words with their meanings. For that I would search the dictionary... how it [a word] is pronounced or what does it mean? ... now by the grace of Allah we are seniors now. There are many words which have difficult pronunciation and which we have already learnt. (Int-8, lines 306-314)

Here we can clearly see Sami's focus being just on vocabulary, translation and pronunciation as elements of English language and hence of its learning and, in turn, teaching. Another instance of this, from Sami's interview, can be seen while he was talking about his search for a solution for the problems he would face during his teaching:

We go for help, asking, for example, what is the meaning of this word? What word class it belongs to? What tense is it in? Is it active or passive? How we will translate it? So we discuss our lesson related problems in these ways. (Int-8, lines 162-164)

In this quote, we can see that Sami, while apparently discussing solutions to problems he would face during ELT, indirectly revealed his quite structural approach to teaching which mainly revolved around seeking help regarding tenses, meaning, pronunciation and grammar. We can find a lot of instances of Sami's such an approach from/in his classroom teaching. For example, in one of his classes, during teaching/translating some chapters, when Sami came across the word 'take', he first explained it as a verb and then explained to the students its 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> form as, "took, taken" (CO-2, mins 16:50-17:30). Similarly, in CO-3 (mins 02:55-03:10), when he came across the word/verb 'pay', he explained to students that, "paid, paid, pay is verb, this is past indefinite tense"; and with the word/verb 'do' that, "do, did, done, do is the first form, did is the second form and done is its third form" (CO-3, mins 04:02-04:17). One possible explanation for such an extremely grammar-focused approach, as opposed to, for example, directing students to learn English through its usage (such as, in 'sentence construction' activity) might be the exam factor/English paper pattern and thus the components he needed to cover (as we saw in the case of Nawaz above), although Sami did not explicitly state exams as a causal reason.

- *Lack of and appropriate guidance for teachers*

*Ineffective preservice courses and lack or need of specialised ELT training courses:* The compulsory pre-service courses available to Sami which he had attended were regarded as not particularly helpful to him on account of them being ineffective, impractical, decontextualized and having a universal approach. For example, on one occasion, Sami talked about being taught in his B.Ed. course about how to maintain discipline in the class. When I asked Sami whether it helped him in his class, he said that, "... it does not make any difference. They teach us some techniques but those techniques do not work in these classes." (Int-8, lines 256-257).

Sami also signalled the need for some specialised training courses for English language teachers which could specifically focus on how to teach the English language. According to Sami:

... there should be separate classes for teaching grammar, pronunciation, intonation and writing. There should be separate classes for all these subjects to teach us how to teach all of them to the students. (Int-8, lines 81-83)

*In-service training courses (dearth and choosing the right candidate)*: When I asked Sami about the in-service training courses, his replies conveyed some aspects of the in-service courses operating as constraining influences, possibly responsible for Sami's current limited approach to ELT. For instance, when I asked Sami his opinion about the provision of such courses, he said that these should be provided. This shows that such courses were not available to Sami and where available, they were very rare and he hardly benefitted from them. According to Sami:

Yes, definitely, there should be in-service courses. There are few in services courses offered but for those courses, heads of institutions are being approached ... I teach English but they recommend others for professional training ... since these are general courses and not very specific to ELT, the others are offered those ... [rather] they should recommend those teachers who have direct connection with the English subject ... [It is] all because of references and favouritism and TADA<sup>34</sup> advantages. So every human and everybody wants that his relative or beloved gets this opportunity of grabbing easy money. So those who have powers make their way... sometimes the same people go again and again while others, like me, do not go, not even once. (Int-8, lines 384-398)

In addition to the dearth of professional in-service courses, Sami's words also point towards the lack of a proper system in place to ensure that every teacher gets a fair chance to benefit from the very rare ones (courses) available.

- *Lack of self-study and complete reliance on training courses*

Sami's quote mentioned above in this section (lines 81-84), also indirectly reveals his main, or I may say, sole reliance on training courses for his professional development. This might be either due to inadequate learning resources (see above), or just the absence of self-study culture generally in the educational system in Pakistan. This might have led Sami to consider

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<sup>34</sup> Travelling allowance and dwelling allowance

such courses as a major, or possibly only source of knowledge and more reliance on external professional teacher training/guidance as a strategy by which teachers acquire knowledge from external sources (Borg, 2015). This can be better explained through an example from Sami's interviews. During a reply to my question about challenges he had faced in his ELT career so far, Sami said:

... when we say “stop” and we change it to the second form and write with “pped” and then 3rd form. Similarly, for “help”, at its end, we also have ‘P’ but we only put “ed” for 2nd and 3rd form and then change it. So what is the reason? Why is this difference in ending? How the kids will know by which technique they will learn the rule regarding verb ending? So for this, there should be some book at B.Ed., CT, PTC<sup>35</sup> level. So this is the problem for PTC teachers. (Int-8, lines 124-129)

Response towards lack of guidance: In the face of little or ineffective guidance, one may say that Sami should have been doing more self-study in order to improve his ELT skills, lacking which or we may say that due to the dearth of guidance, he might have relied on his educational life experiences to guide his teaching. This is evident when he said:

... we have mainly learnt from our teachers. My teacher had made an acronym. He had made this word (NAPATVIT) about part of speech, N means noun, A is for adjective, and so on. That is how they have made the acronym so every alphabet in it has its own meaning. This is helpful for kids and they easily understand that this is part of speech. This is how I also teach my students. (Int-8, lines 171-175)

From this quote, we can infer that teaching in the way he had been taught might be the only option for him as he did not have any other form of guidance available to him.

In the presence of the constraints that I have mentioned above with regard to Sami, there were some factors which were helpful to/for Sami generally in his ELT. These are detailed in the next section.

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<sup>35</sup> Teacher training courses in Pakistan (see chapter 2 for details)

### **Enabling factors**

#### **Collegial relationship**

Sami's main form of guidance to deal with the given constraints appeared to be discussion with his seniors in case of any trouble he would confront, mainly for the CK. Pointing towards this helpful factor, Sami said;

We have senior teachers. We discuss our problems with them ...We go for help, asking, for example, what is the meaning of this word. What word class it belongs to. What tense is it in? Is it active or passive? How we will translate it? So we discuss them in these ways. (Int-8, lines 159-164)

### **Both constraining and enabling influences**

As I mentioned above, in the case of some factors, few aspects would appear as constraining while others were enabling. In Sami's case, these were the following:

#### **Pre-service courses in general teaching (PK)**

Regardless of some features of the preservice courses being ineffective for Sami in relation to ELT, few of their other features appeared to be helpful to him, particularly with regard to teaching in general, similar to Nawaz and Alia. For Sami, these were, for instance, drawing students' attention to the lesson, getting students engaged in the lesson, the psychology of a child and how to deal with it. Talking about such helpful features of the pre-service courses, Sami said:

... we are taught in those courses that before starting a particular lesson, we should tell the students some attractive story in order to have their attention. In this case [senior class] it should be based on some reality. The students' attention is caught in this way and then we start the topic. Starting any lesson in this way will result in more students' engagement which will result in more learning of the students. (Int-8, lines 48-53)

Sami further continued:

In these courses from childhood to grown up ages, all the stages of students are covered in terms of how to teach them, the kind of activities to be done with them and generally how to carry out a class ... It includes nafsiyat [psychology] which

tells that at a particular time what type of mood the kid will be having, for example, whether the kid is in a mood to study now or not ... whether a particular kid is also present mentally or just physically? ... We are taught all this. (Int-8, lines 58-68)

We can clearly notice in these quotes that since the pre-service courses are general teaching courses meant for teachers of all subjects (see section 2.5.4 above for details), they were helpful for Sami in general classroom teaching (PK<sup>36</sup>) but not specifically for ELT (PCK).

In his classes, although I did not see any instance of storytelling to grab students' attention (as mentioned by Sami), I did notice Sami asking students a few questions (in English) at the start of the lesson on the 'Prophet Mohammad', possibly for the purpose of engaging them. For example, see the following excerpt from his first class:

Excerpt (CO-1, 00:00- 02:10 mins)

Sami: First of all I ask you two questions. Do you know about the birth of Muhammad (SWT). Do you know about the birth of Muhammad (SWT) (repeated the question). Yes, you (pointing towards a student)

Student: Muhammad (SWT) was born on Monday, the 12<sup>th</sup> Rabiulawal

Sami: 20th April [xxx]<sup>37</sup> AD (confirming the student's answer). What is the meaning of AD?

Student: The meaning of AD is [xxx]

Sami: Second question. Do you know about his family? Any student do you know about his family? (The teacher pointed out a student to answer)

Student: (Answers while teacher joins him in chorus) His family is traced back to Hazrat Ismail

Teacher: (Asked another question) Who brought him?

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<sup>36</sup> Pedagogical knowledge or skill

<sup>37</sup> Unintelligible speech

Student: Hazrat abu talib

Even at the end of the lesson, he would ask the students concept clarification questions from the students. For example, (CO-1, @ min 15:53) as “once again I ask from you two questions” and then he asked for word meanings from different students, such as “nobility”.

### **Experience**

The fact that Sami had a great length of teaching experience of around 27 years in teaching also helped him to deal with some of the constraints that he identified, particularly with regard to the class management/discipline issues. This is quite evident from his words above in section ‘Teacher-related factors – Lack of competency, lines 294-300). However, this factor might be in some way constraining in a way as Sami felt too overconfident on the basis of his extensive experience to the point of neglecting any lesson preparation for his class. For example, reflecting upon and preparing to teach the lesson in different ways or through different activities, where it could facilitate students’ learning of other English language skills such as writing.

### **Student life educational experiences: AOO**

When I asked about the role of his own educational life experiences in his teaching, Sami expressed them as quite helpful to him in his current classroom teaching, as I have stated above in the preceding section by quoting Sami (Int-8, lines 170-175). As I explained in that section, while dealing with the constraints regarding the dearth of any form of guidance, Sami’s educational experiences would serve as a guidance in/for his ELT. Talking about this enabling factor, he said, “kharboza kharbozay ko daikh kar rang pakarta hai<sup>38</sup>” (Int-8, lines 170-171). All of these lines clearly reflect Sami’s educational experiences as a source of guidance in/for his current ELT.

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<sup>38</sup> Urdu proverb which means a person learns by looking at and observing others

### 7.3 **Teacher: Sara**

The participant-teacher, Sara, was an English language teacher with seven years' experience teaching different subjects including English language. Regarding her professional qualifications, as mentioned Table 1 above, Sara had done a B.Ed. and an M.Ed. Again like the other participants, based on Sara's higher professional qualification, she was also supposed to teach the senior class (10). Although Sara did not have as extensive experience as the other participant-teachers, she came across as an enthusiastic teacher who was eager to learn more about both her subject as well her teaching role (CK and PCK). This can be clearly seen on some occasions in her interview. To give an example, on one occasion, when she was talking about her lesson preparation, she said:

There are a lot of words which we haven't come across before and which we are learning now. What I've just taught in the chapter 'Begum Rana Liaqat Ali Khan', its exercise contain words such as "cataphoric" and "anaphoric" which I've never heard before. To understand these terms, I even asked my own teacher colleagues, who did not know what "cataphoric" and "anaphoric" were. Then I went to an academy called Pelics to check what do these terms mean. They even searched them up but didn't know what do these terms mean. (Int-5, lines 49-54)

In these lines, Sara attempts to find the meanings, definition or explanation of the two words clearly show her serious attitude, enthusiasm and interest in her job. However, despite her enthusiasm and passion in her job, she came across as more compliant in the face of the given constraints as explained in the following section. For a more or less similar description of the school and classes where Sara would teach and where I had observed her, refer to, for example, Alia (section 6.3)

#### 7.3.1 **Structural conditioning (RQ1) and Sara's response (RQ2)**

Sara's teaching context and her teaching behaviour was shaped mainly by the following structural influences/factors:

##### **Constraining factors/influences**

The constraining influences for Sara appeared in the following ways:

## Large classes

With regard to her class of sixty, Sara felt the following constraints:

- Class discipline/management

Sara also expressed the large number of students as being problematic for her in terms of managing discipline issues in the class. When I asked Sara about the effects of class strength on her teaching, she replied:

... when there's a large number of students, the students at the back keep talking to each other which is not in our control ... had it been in our control, we could keep a check and would know who is talking and who to quiet. Now we can't even understand where the noise is coming from and by the time we realize it, those students become quiet. (Int-5, lines 35-40)

Sara's response: In such a situation, Sara tried to deal with this problem by continuing "teaching so that they [students] may not get a chance to talk" (Int-5, lines 36-37). She did not seem to be too concerned about this issue in terms of finding some effective way of bringing discipline into the class. Instead, she seemed to have surrendered here by teaching more as a formality than actually making sure that students were being attentive. We can also observe very clearly in her class that Sara would stand at the front of the class without taking any 'monitoring' rounds at all, despite having sufficient space for that between the columns of seats to ensure that the students in the middle rows and at the back were listening to/attentive to/following her. She would finish the lesson in one go as if she needed to finish her target for/of the day regardless. See for example, Sara's CO-1, from the start until mins 14:05. However, I did not notice clear discipline issues in Sara's classes (at least the ones I observed) possibly because of my presence as I explained in the case of Nawaz and also in section 4.7.3 above.

- Insufficient space for different activities

Similar to the other three participant-teachers, Nawaz, Sami and Alia, Sara also felt that the given class space, where her students had been accommodated, was not sufficient to carry out any kind of interactive or group activities facilitative of language learning. Through an example, in relation to my question regarding Sara's ideas about her teaching method, Sara indirectly pointed out the given space was insufficient to do any kind of communicative or fun activities with the students as:

We've been taught many teaching methods in B.Ed. but because our students are usually above eighty and hundred ... we can't use those methods for so many students ... meaning first we teach them, then we divide them into groups and make them do activities. Those activities we can't do with so many students. Because of the great strength, we teach them using the normal method ... For example, we were taught to stick flash cards and ask the students to run to the word which they thought would be suitable for the fill in the blanks activity. So you would have your group setting, among whom a student would run to the word they think is right. That thing we don't have ... We don't have that kind of space either. (Int-5, lines 21-28, 84-90)

Sara's response: The aforementioned quote reveals, to some extent, Sara's awareness of the interactive and/or fun activities conducive to language learning. However, to carry them out did not seem to be possible for her both due to the lack of space and of other teaching resources (further explained below). As a result she seemed to have ended up with having a very teacher-fronted class with almost no activities for the students, addressing the whole class as one large group. At the most, like Nawaz, she would point out a few students at the end of her lecturing to repeat the lesson in the same manner as she would. That is reading one line from the text, followed by its translation aloud in the class while she would correct any pronunciation or translation mistakes (if) made by the students. For example, see CO-1, (mins 14:05-19:32).

### **Student-related factors**

#### - Students' lack of required competence

Similar to the other three participant-teachers, Sara also confronted the issue of students' low competency level and considered her current teaching method to be quite appropriate to their current level of understanding and proficiency in the English language. As an explanation of/for her current teaching method, Sara referred to students as:

... when we look at the students we decide on our own to start using the translation method ... The level of the grammar exercises is above the students' level (Int-5, lines 9-10, 47-48)

Sara's response: Just as Sara's words indicate, one can easily notice in her class that, like Sami, she was trying or struggling to do exact word to word translation, repeating the same

meaning of a particular word twice and thrice mostly in a row and recurrently when going back and forth over the lines in the book, possibly to ensure that the students understood the lesson. A few examples from her classes, where she was teaching chapters on a particular topic, are as follows:

- Sara while telling/translating meaning to the students in Urdu as;

‘Down trodden’ mean ‘poor people’ (3 times repetition) (CO-1, mins 03:14-03:21)

‘Unpopular’ [ghair maqbool/mashoor] (3 times) (CO-1, mins 07:57-08:28)

To raise [barhana] (5 times) (CO-1, mins 10:11-10:43)

The same pattern can also be observed in her other classes, for instance, CO-4 (from mins 16:27-21:15, FN-09/09/2016)

Sara doing translation of such easy words for the current class level such as, ‘hardly’, ‘believe’, ‘half’, ‘total’ (CO-4, mins 03:21-04:06), to the extent of even translating the numbers, such as, 14, 7, 50, 8 in Urdu (CO-4, mins 03:37-03:48).

Similarly, Sara’s belief (see her quote above) that the grammar exercises are above the students’ level can be gathered from her classroom teaching when she was teaching grammar more like a formula. For example, see (CO-1, mins 05:50-06:12) where Sara, while teaching/translating a particular text from the book, explained the infinite ‘to’ as: “To + first form of verb (while writing to + help on the board)”, adverb of manner as: “Adjective + suffix (ly)” (CO-2, @ min 22:52), and present perfect as: “have + 3<sup>rd</sup> form of verb” (CO-4, @ min 01:30).

Moreover, Sara’s teaching was quite a monologue which lacked any attempts of interaction with the students when she could easily have done so through questions and answers about the given topic. Even though in her class the students appeared quite active and ready to participate whenever the teacher invited any response from them on which Sara could easily build (see FN-09/09/2016), CO-4 (mins 21:16-25:09).

### **Exam (nature of English question paper)**

Sara’s class was not much different from the classes of the other cases (participant-teachers). Her class was also quite teacher-fronted, dominated mainly by the teacher talking and lecturing and less students’ involvement. She would also use GTM or word-to-word

translation as the main element of her classroom teaching. When I asked Sara the reason for this particular way of teaching, she replied:

... when the exam is around, there are twenty marks for translation. Because of those twenty marks we teach them [students] through the indirect [translation] method. (Int-5, lines 11-12)

Sara's comment clearly shows that she seemed to have been restricted to her particular teaching method due to the nature of the questions that are set in the question paper. Thus, the translation method appeared to be the main strategy for dealing with the examination questions as, quite expectedly, any teacher might be more concerned about the nearest targets (exams in this case) than the long term targets (language learning) when the given circumstances favour any one option.

### **Economic issues**

#### - *Inadequate or inappropriate learning resources*

As I mentioned above, while talking about her lesson preparation, Sara words (see heading 'Teacher: Sara', lines 49-54) clearly indicate the lack of sufficient academic resources due to which she seemed to be quite troubled to get the required information. We can see here that how, in search of the words meaning/explanation, Sara had been resorting to different solutions.

Sara's response: As previously mentioned, in the absence of sufficient academic resources to consult, in case of any problem faced by Sara, she had been trying really hard to find alternate ways of solving her problems, in this case, finding the meanings of the other two words in different ways.

#### - *Insufficient classroom facilities*

Teaching aids: Also, while talking about the preservice courses that Sara had attended and their utility for her, Sara indirectly indicated the reason for her current teaching approach as:

We've been taught many methods in B.Ed. but ... For those other ways of teaching, there need to be proper cards, charts, flashcards but we do not have these things to use them frequently. (Int-5, lines 21-24)

Sara's response: Here, Sara's words show her desire to bring some variation or complement her teaching by the use of some other materials to improve opportunities for language learning for the students. However, not having such teaching aids to hand, she seemed to have resorted to the deductive approach of teaching. That is, teaching mainly dominated by translation and explanation by the teacher while students listening passively, as apparently the only available option to/for her. The non-availability of different teaching materials, as mentioned by Sara, could be easily seen in her classes. The only available equipment was the chalk and the blackboard which she was using frequently during her lessons.

### **Teacher-related factors**

#### *- Lack of required competency*

Sara's interview also revealed that she had also been grappling with some issues pertaining to her command on the subject (CK). This is evident when I asked Sara how she would prepare her class lesson, Sara explained in that context that:

... the grammar exercises ... we learn it first and then teach it ... There's a lot that we haven't come across before but now we're learning. (Int-5, lines 47-50)

Sara's situation regarding her CK as she pointed out (in her words), can also be observed to some extent in her classes. For example, in one of her classes (FN-27/08/2016), she was trying to explain the meaning of the word "crusader". For the first time, she instantly wrote its Urdu meaning on the board. Then she repeated the word and its meaning again while looking at it, paused for a moment as if thinking and trying to find some further better explanation of the word. However, apparently being unsuccessful at it, she skipped the explanation and moved ahead. See the following excerpt below as an example:

#### Excerpt 1: (CO-1, 02:13-02:40 mins)

Sara: (After writing the word "crusader" and its meaning on the board) Crusader, meaning those who participated in the crusade. Actually here it means those who struggle, (repeating again) those who struggle. (Repeating again) Here it means (pause 4 secs (02:34-02:37) actually those who struggle....so on.

Here we can clearly see Sara taking a reasonably long pause in search of a better explanation of the word, failing which she just avoided the situation by repeating the same meaning she

did twice earlier and moved ahead. The explanation for this can be easily gathered from her verbal comment regarding this as I have quoted above in this section.

Similarly issues with required competency can be observed in Sara's many basic grammatical and pronunciation mistakes. For example, in her CO-2, (FN-03/09/2016) regarding a lesson on 'adverb', Sara wrote on the board, 'adverb is a word which *modify* (instead of *modifies*)' and at different points wrote four times 'modify' instead of 'modifies'. Similarly she explained and wrote on the board, 'In adverb, ad *mean* (instead of *means*) how an action *happen* (instead of *happens*)'. Similarly she wrote 'he spoke *quitly* (instead of *quietly*)' and gave examples of 'adverb of place' as 'school, college, Peshawar, Mardan' (@ min 11:53) which are actually nouns, and gave example as "Ali played cricket in Peshawar" (@ min 13:01) indicating 'Peshawar'<sup>39</sup> as an adverb.

Some of the examples of pronunciation errors from CO-3 (FN-08/09/2016) are 'determine' (@ mins 03:17, 03:39, 05:25, 05:52); 'mysterious' (@ mins 05:40, 05:42, 05:47, 16:52), from CO-4 (FN-09/09/2016) are 'heavens' (@mins 03:22, 3:28); 'got up' (@ mins 05:22-05:25)

Sara's response: All of these above instances show that Sara did not seem to have the required competency to teach her current class. In order to tackle this situation, instead of, for instance, taking her preparation for granted or trying to dodge or avoid the students, she was making extra efforts to make sure she knew her lesson thoroughly on the day. This is evident from her interview, as I have mentioned above (heading 'Teacher: Sara', lines 49-54). This is also clear from her more explicit remarks regarding her lesson preparation (see below, heading 'lesson preparation', lines 42-44, 46-48)

- Lack of and appropriate guidance for teachers

Lack of in-service training courses: Similar to other participant-teachers, Sara also felt the constraint of the lack of in-service training courses for her. She asserted that, "They [concerned people] don't give us training ... there is no training for us" (Int-5, lines 69-71). Sara believed that, "If they would give us training we would teach the students how we would be taught" (Int-5, lines 72-73). In addition to this, she also experienced that if there

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<sup>39</sup> A city in Pakistan

were one or two courses available over the years, there was not any proper system in place to assign the right candidates to/for these. This is evident when Sara pointed out this feature of the in-service courses:

I have a friend who says that the office has divided the teachers into two categories; A and B. They give training to the one and chores to the other, hence giving the same people opportunities for learning the same thing ... They keep giving the opportunity to people who have already done it and don't even use it ... They say that teachers do training because there's money involved. Had there been no money involved ... we would get the opportunity to avail it as well. Once the greed for money goes then everyone can do it ... There is some money allocated for receiving training. You are given money to come and take a class ... People from NGO's come and give these trainings ... the headmistress calls only her friends. If they could give us training once a year at least, it would be nice. (Int-5, lines 65-79, 92-94)

As we can see here, from Sara's words, the extremely scarce in-service courses seemed more of a source of earning easy money for the teachers than a motivation to learn something about teaching. As a result, the teachers, like Sara here, who were really interested in getting the benefit from such courses, were left out and those with connections were given the opportunity.

Sara's response to the lack of in-service courses: On the one hand, Sara did not seem altogether happy with the current situation regarding in-service courses, on account of her above mentioned reasons, and seemed to strongly favour the provision of such courses for her. On the other hand, at the same time, she, as opposed to the other three participant teachers, makes her own attempts to improve her teaching. For example, see above lines 49-54, under the heading 'Teacher: Sara'. Her enthusiasm probably drove her to these attempts.

However, at a more general level, in order to deal with the above mentioned given constraints, Sara considered some of the following factors as quite helpful:

### **Enabling factors**

#### **Collegial relationship**

As was the case with the participant teachers, Alia and Sami, Sara also felt help and guidance from her colleagues was valuable. When I asked Sara about seeking the help of other teachers in the school, she replied affirmatively:

We do take help from one another. When we don't know a certain pronunciation then we take each other's help. (Int-5, lines 61-62)

### **Lesson plan/preparation**

Another enabling factor for Sara in the face of the given constraint was her solution to go fully prepared for the class she was supposed to teach. She strongly believed that:

When the teacher comes completely prepared to the class then definitely there won't be a problem. But if the teacher is not prepared then obviously it's her fault. I've noticed that majority of our teachers are like this, they don't come prepared. (Int-5, lines 42-44)

See also lines 49-54 under heading 'Teacher: Sara' for further evidence regarding Sara's attempt to have good preparation for her lesson. Moreover, a good example of Sara's thorough preparation could be gathered from her grammar class where she was teaching the word class "adverb" (CO-2, FN-03/09/2016). She had written detailed notes about the meaning, definition, types of adverb and the related examples to all these categories in her notebook when she already had sufficient material available in the textbook.

Like the other participant-teachers, as well as in Sara's case, one factor served as both enablement and constraint as explained below.

### **Both constraining and enabling factors**

#### **Pre-service training courses**

With regard to the preservice training courses that Sara had attended, Sara pointed out some features from which she felt she had not benefitted. Some of these were the ideal nature of these courses. Sara felt them to be somewhat impractical, de-contextualized, ineffective and theoretical. This is visible from Sara's following quote:

Well, in B.Ed. we were taught to use the direct method, but with our students here, from the beginning their mother tongue is mainly Pashto or Urdu that is why we teach them through the indirect method. We use the translation method. Though we are taught to use the direct method from the beginning but when we look at the students we decide on our own to start using the translation method. (Int-5, lines 6-10)

In this quote, we can clearly notice the aforementioned features of the pre-service courses. Some of the other evidences can be observed from the verbatim quotes of Sara mentioned above (heading ‘Insufficient space for different activities’, lines 21-28, 84-90, and heading ‘Insufficient classroom facilities’, lines 21-24). In both these cases, Sara considered B.Ed. training to be rather ineffective on account of the less space and fewer resources to put into practice what had been taught to her on those courses.

The lack of guidance relevant to the given context can also be presumed from Sara’s classroom teaching where even in the given situation, and with few attempts, the class could have been more interactive and the students more involved, as the students seemed quite active and ready to participate, as I have mentioned above (Student-related factors). However, she did not seem to have made any good attempts in this regard.

For Sara, even though the features of the pre-service training course were largely constraining, some of its other aspects were useful for her. She might have gained some general teaching benefits from these, like the other participants as she pointed out in her different quotes above, though she did not mention anything explicitly in this regard. For example, they appeared to have been enabling for Sara on account of showing her different methods and techniques for dealing with the students. However, they came across as constraining on account of them being ineffective in the given teaching context, for example, due to ‘insufficient space for different activities’ (see above, Int-5, lines 21-28, 84-90), and/or ‘insufficient classroom facilities’ (see above, Int-5, lines 21-24).

### **Institutional guidelines (syllabus/textbook)**

Similar to Nawaz and Alia (section 6.2.1 and 6.3.1 respectively), textbooks seemed to have been both constraining and enabling influences in case of Sara as well, for the same reasons I have provided for Nawaz and Alia in their respective (aforementioned) sections. See these section for the relevant argument<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> To avoid unnecessary repetition and save the available limited space

## 7.4 Tendency of compliance

As I have mentioned previously, overall, based on the evidences that I have tried to provide above in their respective places, Sami and Sara came across as more compliant to their institutional constraints than Alia and Nawaz. This is further explained as follows:

### 7.4.1 The case of Sami

The tendency of compliance in the case of Sami can be better explained if we compare Sami with Nawaz. Whereas Nawaz's words and actions (classroom teaching based on my observation) (see section 6.2 above on Nawaz) reflect tendencies of creativity and problem solving, and some kind of struggle to conduct his classes according to his aims, concerns, and beliefs, we do not get such a sense in the case of Sami. Sami came across more as resigning to the given constraints, hardly making any attempts to improve the teaching-learning situation in his class with regard to the different factors that I have mentioned above in his case. As a result we get an overall feel for Sami as more compliant and less agentic. Some of his quotes, as I have mentioned above (and my accompanying interpretation), are a very clear indication of such compliance. For example, teaching in any case (more as a formality) irrespective of whether anyone is paying attention/learning something or not, just to keep the class engaged in some way to manage the discipline issues. Another example could be Sami's asking students questions in a very superficial manner without any response time and hardly any activities in the class due to the large class size and insufficient allocated time (see above relevant sections for details).

As explained in section 7.2.1 above, we can clearly see a quite positive influence of Sami's own English language teachers on him. Again, this point can be better explained if here again I compare Sami with Nawaz who (Nawaz) seemed to have learnt some constructive lessons from his negative educational experiences and teachers (see above). To explain it, Nawaz tried not to follow what his teachers had done, and to rather try something different from his teachers to make his lesson more effective, exhibiting his agency. These few examples show an overall (comparatively) compliant nature of Sami to his surrounding circumstances as compared to Nawaz who seemed to have a tendency to challenge what he does not consider appropriate. While Sami can be observed to be more accepting of situations as they are without any attempts to challenge them to bring improvement in the teaching-learning environment.

### 7.4.2 **The case of Sara**

Similarly, in the case of Sara, from the analysis of the data obtained from her, one gets a sense of a more compliant, rather than agentic, tendency to the given constraints. One good example could be Sara's statement regarding the solution for maintaining classroom discipline when she said, "Students at the back remain talking ... but we continue teaching" (see above for explanation on this point). Similarly, is her tendency to conduct teaching more as a monologue, even having quite active students, possibly on the basis that students have quite low competency and it might be more convenient to just teach, rather than attempt to engage them in some form for instance. Another reason for this could be time, however, I do not consider it a strong reason as the amount of time she invests in so much explanation and repetition could be utilised, even to some extent, in engaging students in the manner I suggested.

After providing individual, and in-depth analysis of each case (teachers), next I will compare all these cases in the cross-case analysis to illuminate some key similarities or/and differences between the participants in relation to the focus of the study, and to make a better sense of the insights revealed from the data. Also I will relate it to the current relevant literature, in the following chapter.

## Chapter 8 **Cross-case analysis and discussion of findings**

### 8.1 **Introduction**

In the previous two chapters, I presented a qualitative data (social/critical realist) analysis of four cases (teachers) in the light of the objectives and the research questions of this study as outlined in chapter 1, that is, to understand how English language teachers operate in resource-poor school contexts. More specifically, I set out to explore how structural (institutional) factors shape the teaching environment which, in turn, shapes the teachers' responses to these influences, resulting in their current pedagogical outcomes/practices. Such an understanding has been achieved by interpreting the current findings through a critical realist (CR) theory of 'analytical dualism'/a three-stage model (Archer, 1995, 1998a, 2003) of the mediation of structure to agency to account for the practice(s) of the participant-teachers in their given institutional context in this study. These constitute, 1) *structural conditioning*, 2) *reflexivity* (concerns, values, projects, interests and beliefs), and 3) *structural elaboration/social change* (see chapter 3 for more details), representing the three research questions of this study.

The findings, presented in chapters 6 and 7, clearly reflected this process of the interplay between objectivity (structural conditioning) and subjectivity (teachers/agents' reflexivity), bringing into play the above-mentioned processes. However, in these two chapters, the cases have been presented separately to preserve the unique, individual nature of every participant's (process) of shaping of their agency in their current teaching context (see section 4.3 above). In this chapter, I will briefly revisit the research findings through a cross-case analysis to synthesise and highlight the main themes emanating from the results/findings over the four cases, and develop the key issues which will be discussed alongside these issues in the light of the available relevant literature in terms of their contribution to our current understandings of the given field. First, I briefly present the overall picture of the findings as answers to my three main research questions next.

## 8.2 The general picture

The general picture which revealed from the data, is that institutional features of the schools, where the participant teachers' work, constituted important elements which affected teachers' perspectives regarding teaching, creating specific modes of action. In Archer's terms, these are the structural influences which emanated from the teaching context, and constituted the environment of contemporary action, shaping the teachers' work (the way they teach and conduct their English language classes). However, such shaping, known as social structuring or structural conditioning (Archer, 1995), takes place when teachers reflect upon and respond to the structural influences. In this way, these factors constituted a "two-way struggle in which teachers [partly] try to create their own social reality by attempting to make their work match their personal vision of how it should be, whilst at the same time being subjected to the powerful socializing forces of the school culture [or institutional factors]" (Day, 1999: 59). Therefore, the first stage and hence the first research question was to look into the factors which *conditioned* the teaching context, but, in relation to teachers' subjective interpretations of these. This is because according to Archer (1995), it is the agents' (teachers here) reception of the factors that generates the power of these factors either as constraints or enablements.

From a CR perspective, these institutional structures were found to exist in their *embodied forms* (such as professional knowledge, collegial relations, resources etc. among others- see chapter 6 and 7 for the details) and served as; a) *constraining*, b) *enabling*, c)<sup>41</sup> *both constraining and enabling*, and/or d) *neither constraining nor enabling* (the four main themes) influences of the social structures/teaching context. While responding, teachers reflected upon possible options by conducting internal conversations, which provided potential insights into the "social contexts, constraints, and resources within which those informants act" (Smith & Elger, 2014: 114) and verbalized through their interviews/narratives (as instances of their reflexivity), an understanding further enriched by observation data and field notes.

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<sup>41</sup> The types of factors/influences c) and d) are my addition based on the findings and all these four types are this study's main findings.

While this chapter presents a brief summary of the findings, it needs to be understood that the whole process of the shaping of teachers' agency ('conditioning', 'response' and 'outcome') is considerably complex and I hope to have made clear, at least to some extent, the process of *interplay* between teachers' agency and institutional structures throughout the thesis. Moreover, as might have become clear, there was quite an overlap between components representing these processes, and the themes, particularly, between the themes addressing 'enabling influences', 'teachers' response' and 'pedagogical outcome'. However, to present them for the reader in a manageable way, it was essential to develop some kind of artificial boundaries such as these, summarised below.

### 8.3 **RQ-1: Structural conditioning**

According to the data, as mentioned above, the participant teachers' teaching methodology, and content and manner of conducting their classes revolved around the following four types of influences/factors, which *conditioned* (see RQ-1) their teaching context. Sometimes, the teachers were aware of such influences, as we can see from their interviews, when they clearly talked about them and the ways they influenced their teaching. However, sometimes, the teachers were not aware of such constraints despite their impact upon their teaching in some ways which is the point at which classroom observation became quite relevant inasmuch as what could be gathered from the observational data as practice can result from the unconscious beliefs and intuitions, which evolves out of practice (Thompson, 1984). While complete details of what I have found in relation to these factors, and the detailed insights and explanations afforded by my analysis, have been dealt with in the data analysis chapters (6 and 7) (and can be referred to), for space issues, I present and discuss them briefly below. However, the fruit of CR analysis will become clearer in the last concluding chapter 9, in terms of its implications for policy and practice.

#### 8.3.1 **Constraining influences**

As we can see in table (10) above and generally in this study, in pursuit of their overarching interest, and to achieve their desired projects, the teachers attempted to conduct their lessons accordingly, when they confronted certain constraints, which determined their course of action:

... actors occupy positions which are anterior to either of them, which stand in a necessary relation to each other (e.g. teachers and students), and which exist in a

context where material resources are critically involved (for example, availability of sufficient resources per student) (Sealey & Carter, 2004: 138)

The above statement by Sealey and Carter, for instance, can be evidenced through the participant-teacher, Nawaz, in whom we could clearly discern a tension between actor (Nawaz with his interests – class activity, extra work), positions (teacher restricted to translation method) and the context (structures – class size). This reflects the sets of behaviours on the part of teachers which are congruent with the environmental demands of teachers' work place contexts (Farrell, 2008).

The majority of contextual influences on the participant-teachers, appeared to be constraining, possibly on account of the nature of the context (resource-poor) that these teachers were mainly operating in. These influences were broadly related to: large classes and the associated issues, economic issues, student related factors, exams/nature of paper pattern, teachers and time related factors as further explained below.

### **Large classes and associated issues**

As revealed from the data, large classes on their own did not seem to be problematic but when combined with other factors made large classes a significant issue. The foremost among these were: 1) the student-teacher ratio and the linked issues as well as: that is, the number of students relative to the number of teachers allocated to these students at one time for teaching English language, 2) issues of restricted space: the given space to accommodate students. These two factors seemed to have indirectly influenced the teaching-learning environment in a number of ways: a) class discipline/management issues, b) teachers' individualised attention to students, c) carrying out assessment/reinforcement work, d) restriction to one particular teaching method, e) constraint on time allocated for teaching and addressing different issues within this specified time, as well as f) conducting interactive activities and the required class layout for it in the given class space. In a study by Ampiah (2008), in classes with more than 50 students, it was noted that individual student-teacher interactions were minimal. Teachers and researchers have identified several problems in large classes, such as learners' engagement and interaction, class management etc. (Shamim & Kuchah, 2016). Interactions and class management were observed as more manageable in the classes having student-teacher ratio near 35:1 (Ampiah, 2008).

Having said that, however, all these constraints associated with large classes were not felt equally by participant-teachers but for some, one factor appeared more influential than the

other. For example, for Sara, factors b) and c) did not appear to be particularly influential, though they might be relevant, while e) appeared as a strong constraint mainly for Sami who also had to perform some administrative tasks as well within the given (lesson) time.

### **Student related factors**

According to McLaughlin (1993), students are the most powerful and prominent feature of the workplace influences which shape the ways in which teachers perform their work. This is because teachers reassess their beliefs, for instance, on the basis of students' involvement in activities which foster their interests and take decisions on some adaptations of the course book components to better attend to those interests, thus students shaping teachers' work at the classroom level (Jesry, 2014). Nakabugo et al. (2008) also noticed that sometimes it is difficult to motivate students in large classes and some may lose interest.

With regard to the students in this study, the most influential constraining factor found to be common among all teachers appeared to be students' low competency level. This is due to students' weak foundation in the English language (due to historically poor teaching during their time in the school), and their weak understanding of the lessons in the class, probably due to the same reason. Coleman and Capstick (2012) reported that, in Pakistani state schools, language teaching, during the earlier years, does not take account of young students' specific needs and characteristics. Further constraining influences regarding students, specifically in the case of Nawaz, were found to be: a) students' poor socioeconomic backgrounds, b) their lack of interest or attention, and c) lack of self-study/self-directed learning and sole reliance on teachers, while for Alia factor c) also appeared as a constraint.

### **Exam factor/nature of English question paper**

There has been a great tendency in state schools in numerous countries to focus on standardisation and/or examinations (for example, Jacobs & Farrell, 2001; Deboer, 2002; Elkind, 2004; Griffith & Lim, 2010), and Pakistan is no exception. Shah (2012) has also found that only those aspects of the English language which are expected to come up in the examination are mostly taught while other features of the language are mostly ignored. The pressure of getting students to perform well in exams forces teachers to use most of their efforts and teaching time to prepare for standardised tests; the practice termed 'teaching to the test', or more specifically, 'item-teaching' (Popham, 2001; *ibid*). This means that teachers teach using the exams items or items almost identical to the exam, thus aiming for high pass rates regardless of the enhancement of students' cognitive skills / ability to

communicate, which usually remains unchanged (Shah, 2012). For example, not teaching learners the concept of adjectives in a way to enable them to use these in different situations to promote 'authentic learning' or communication (Volante 2004, as cited in Shah, 2012).

The same is evident in this study as well, especially in case of the participant-teachers, Nawaz and Sara, for whom the nature of questions that appeared in the exam seemed to be the main factor which restricted them to their current teaching approach, characterised heavily by word to word translation, lots of explanation, and repetition of points in the lesson, taught on the day. This occurred particularly when the time per lesson was also quite limited and Nawaz felt that he had to cover a lot of content within the given time frame. Also, for Nawaz and Sami, the pressure of the exams and their main interest in students' passing the exam, made them more focussed on covering the content most likely to appear in the exam paper, first. Wedell (2005) also observed the same; that national curriculum aims (of developing learners' language skills) are usually ignored by assessment systems that emphasises more on knowledge *about* language. This sole focus on such language aspects which will be assessed, does little in encouraging teachers to use English naturally in their classrooms and so, when the other activities are tried in English, students find them difficult to understand and, in turn, more difficult to carry out (ibid).

### **Teacher related factors**

The constraining influences regarding teachers appeared in three forms: 1) Lack of required competency, 2) Lack of appropriate guidance for teachers, and 3) Lack of self-study culture and main reliance on training courses. The former (1) further entailed; a) Lack of command of the subject / lack of language proficiency, and b) Limited approach to English language learning. In the case of the latter (2), it involved; a) Issues regarding in-service courses, b) Issues regarding preservice courses, and c) Lack and/or need of specialised ELT guidance.

Among these, constraint (1) seemed common to all the participant-teachers, except for Nawaz, on account of his comparatively higher degree (M.A) in English and thus having more command of the language. While the rest of the three participant-teachers, in the chosen schools in this study, can also be categorised as sufficiently qualified having B.A, with some relevant experience due to having been exposed to the English language in the form of compulsory subject for the fourteen years of their education. Therefore, the subject-matter knowledge of these teachers seems to be adequate, to some extent, for secondary level students. However, the pedagogic content knowledge (PCK - skill regarding teaching the subject effectively (Shulman, 1986, 1990; Richards, 2012)) of all the four participants

seemed to be deficient for teaching the English language skilfully and effectively in the given circumstances. The same has also been observed by Shah (2012): he notes that, in Pakistan, English language teachers are not fully equipped with language teaching skills. For example, how to engage learners in self-directed learning and to behave like partners in their learning process where the learners could function more as resources for the language classrooms. This is quite possible in the absence of sufficient resources and with few physical resources (Stroupe & Kimura, 2013) as is experimented upon and evidenced by Kuchah in his study in a similar resource-poor ELT context of Cameroonian schools (Kuchah & Smith, 2011; Kuchah, 2016). According to Kuchah (2016), learners have a variety of talents and encouraging them to seek answers to some basic questions about learning (for example, What do I want to achieve? How can I achieve it and the challenges involved? How can I overcome these challenges? etc.) is the key to developing learner autonomy and learning to learn, which may ultimately lead to a pedagogy of partnership. Such an awareness needs to be created among the teachers teaching English language in such contexts, as in the case of the present study, it seems to be as simple a matter of awareness than anything else.

Regarding factor 2 above, it seemed to be a common constraining influence for all the three participant-teachers, Sami, Alia and Sara while for Nawaz it was applicable to a limited extent. That is, all the participant-teachers found the pre-service courses ineffective for different reasons, for example one common problem was their theoretical, decontextualized and universal nature. All of them found in-service courses to be rare, and where available, according to Sara, these were not up-to-date and lacked a proper system in place to select the right candidates to attend such courses. Moreover, where Sami explicitly talked about the lack and need of specialised ELT training courses for him, in the case of the other three participants, it was implied in the data. We could clearly see that the teachers were in dire need of specialised ELT oriented training courses which could exclusively deal with different aspects of ELT, and thus appeared in need of training on what Shulman (1986, 1990; Richards, 2012) have termed, the PCK. This finding is in line with what Ampiah (2008) has argued for, while investigating the quality of education in Ghana's (resource-poor) schools. Ampiah concludes that teachers' qualifications, which include both the subject matter and PCK, do influence teaching quality. Such qualification, according to Parker (2004), should be balanced in terms of a good mix of both types of knowledge (subject matter and PCK) as it is essential for effective lesson delivery. The interpretation of the data regarding factors 1 and 2 also led me to an impression about these participant-teachers, as is implicit in the data, about factor 3 above.

### **Economic issues**

In developing countries such as Pakistan, large classes are a 'hard reality' and an increase in class size is mostly recommended to increase enrolment without concurrent increase in the amount of expenditure per pupil (Shamim, 1993). According to Shamim and Kuchah, (2016), problems in large classes get compounded when they are accompanied by inadequate resources and classroom conditions that are not conducive to learning. Teachers and researchers have identified several problems in teaching a large class, such as learners' engagement and interaction, high noise levels and heterogeneous classes. The same was the case in classes here, and another constraining influence for the participant-teachers appeared in the form of economic issues which mainly included: a) In-adequate/inappropriate learning resources, b) Insufficient classroom facilities, such as AV aids, and c) Issues of light, electricity and peaceful environment. While a) and b) were constraining influences common across all teachers, especially the teaching material, to complement the participants' lesson to facilitate students' conceptual understanding, c) was found as constraining influence mainly for Sami. Shah (2012) also emphasised that, in addition to textbooks in classes, other instructional materials are also required in classes to ensure alignment of classroom teaching with the curriculum goals.

### **Other less visible aspects of structure/context**

Some of the other less visible aspects which surfaced during the data analysis involved: political interference during recruitment of teachers in the schools; administrative inefficiency regarding allocation of classes to teachers, filling up the vacant posts, schools' inspections and teachers' evaluation, nepotism in different teachers' related matters, lack of accountability of teachers; overburdened teachers; and inappropriate teachers' recruitment procedure.

Although, as stated above, constraining influences are more dominant, the data revealed some enabling factors as well, that is, the school environment marked out certain potentialities such as networking and collegiality. These enabling influences operated in two ways: either as a force to enable the teachers to deal with a particular specific constraint or in a more general manner to enable teachers to solve problems arising during their teaching. These influences mainly appeared in the form of social resources such as help and support of colleagues and few cultural resources such as the general pre-service courses (in terms of pedagogical skills such as classroom management). Again, while the detailed

explanation/analysis with regard to such findings can be referred to in chapter 6 and 7, here I provide a brief summary as follows.

### 8.3.2 **Enabling influences**

Now that *involuntaristically*, that is, not so intending but with *directionality*, that is to act in a specific way on account of working within specific structural limitations (Archer, 1995- see chapter 3 for details), the participant-teachers adopted their current teaching practices (with Sami and Sara comparatively being more compliant and Nawaz and Alia being more agentic – refer to sections 7.4 and 6.4 above respectively), the next concern or goal for them was to make their teaching as effective as possible in their own ways. In order to materialise this ‘concern’ or ‘goal’, the teachers were assisted by the following factors.

#### **Collegial relationship**

According to Aho et al., (2010), simple conversations in staff rooms can guide teacher’s classroom management. A teacher absorbs influences from his/her surrounding environment, and so some methods become part of his/her classroom management via this route. For instance, in the study by Aho et al., (2010), teachers pointed out how few methods were agreed upon via collaborative work within organizational culture of the school. The same was the case with this study, where the collegial support and discussion (networking and exchanging ideas with each other), especially when seeking a solution to some difficulty in teaching appeared to be a strong culture in all participating schools and hence the most powerful enabling influence for the participant-teachers to the given constraints (see sections 6.3.1, 7.2.1 and 7.3.1 above for details). Such collegiality mainly appeared in the form of informal conversations among the teachers, especially where the teachers would face some difficulty in their particular lessons. This supports Williams, Prestage and Bedward’s (2001) argument that one most important factor in becoming a teacher is the teachers’ relation with their colleagues. Hopkins et al, (1998) also argue that teachers develop professionally via collaboration that can lead to improved practice.

Archer (1995, 2003) called such individuals as ‘corporate agents’: those who join others at some stage, sharing common aims in order to bring about the desired situations. They engage in (collective) professional inquiry which generates fresh understandings from within (Borg, 2015). Having said that, while Nawaz, who was relatively more qualified, appeared to be mostly providing such support (see section 6.2.1 above), the other three participants

appeared mostly at the receiving end. This finding is, however, contrary to the ones by Farrell (2006; 2008), who studied the experience of an English language teacher in Singapore and the dilemmas and complications he goes through. Farrell (2008: 51) notes: “collegial relationships proved to be the most difficult for him to resolve, if he ever did.”

Collegiality, despite being an important factor for the participant-teachers, seemed to have been ignored by the schools where these teachers worked. This became apparent from the data which did not reveal any kind of efforts on part of the schools to provide opportunities which could promote collaboration among the teachers (such as see section 9.4 below for some possible examples of opportunities).

### **Experience**

It is a widely accepted fact that the length and extent of one’s teaching experience affects one’s instructional quality in the classroom (Ampiah, 2008). Similarly, for the teachers, particularly Nawaz and more strongly for Sami, another enabling influence appeared to be their teaching experience of 10 and 27 years respectively. They found their experience to be a great help in achieving their goals of class control, maintaining discipline and utilising suitable teaching methods. However, according to Wedell and Malderez (2013), it is not as simple as saying that the more experienced a teacher is, the ‘better’ he/she is, as it also depends on a range of other factors (see the same literature, p. 156 for details on other factors)<sup>44</sup>. Also, a teachers’ stage in development is not directly related to the number of years they have been teaching but to whether or not the teacher has developed ‘learnacy’<sup>45</sup>, i.e. continuing to learn as a teacher (ibid: 157). Echoes of this were seen in this study: the fact of his having spent a number of years in teaching is something that made Sami overconfident to the level of not making any effort to prepare his lessons, as I have mentioned above while presenting findings regarding Sami (section 8.2.1.3.2).

### **Other factors**

While Nawaz considered *command of the subject* (Content Knowledge – Shulman, 1986, 1990; Richards, 2012) and *preparing a lesson* properly (section 7.2.1 above), as helpful in

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<sup>44</sup> For limited space here

<sup>45</sup> A specialist term from Wedell and Malderez (2013)

responding to some constraints, for Alia and Sara, *lesson preparation* (see for example section 7.3.1 above for Sara) enabled them to deal with some of the constraints. For lesson preparation, the only available resource for these teachers was mainly the *dictionary*, and in the cases of Alia and Sara, some limited access to the *net* (see table 10 above). Additionally, *reflection on their lesson* in the light of the contextual factors (such as students) also appeared helpful for Nawaz and Alia (see for example section 6.3.1 above for Alia). However, for Sara, her *enthusiasm and interest* (section 7.3.1 above) in/for her teaching appeared to be another enabling factor for her in the given constraints

### 8.3.3 **Both constraining and enabling influences**

As mentioned above, during the case analyses, some factors operated simultaneously as constraints as well as enablement, in terms of their different aspects in the following ways.

#### **Apprenticeship of Observation (AOO)**

Lortie's (1975) 'apprenticeship of observation' is a widely accepted concept and has rarely been challenged (Phipps & Borg, 2009; Borg, M. 2005; Pajares, 1992). AOO are mostly unconscious in nature (Kumaravadivelu, 2012; Borg, 2001; Pajares, 1992). This idea also appears consistent across a range of cultures and countries. For example, China (Liu & Xu, 2011; Tsui, 2007; Ouyang, 2000), Turkey (Haser & Star, 2009; Phipps & Borg, 2009), England (Borg, 2005; Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000), and Egypt (Mansour, 2013). This study is not an exception to such findings which reinforce the argument of the internalisation of teaching models gleaned during teachers' time as a pupil (Zeichner et al. 1987, as cited in Gates, 2006).

Sometimes, the already established teaching practices within the given constraints become an enablement for the subsequent generation of teachers. For example, with regard to this study, all the participant-teachers' seemed to have been quite influenced by their educational cultures and contexts in which they were raised. For these teachers, student life experiences appeared to have served as a guide and a reference point, particularly in the absence of any specialised ELT training - many of which seemed to be unconscious in nature. While Nawaz learnt from his negative experiences of his teachers - which turned into positive teaching experiences for him (section 6.2.1 above) for Sami, his educational experiences had a positive impact on his teaching, which served as a guide for him in his teaching (section 7.2.1 above). In the case of Alia, she felt such experiences had no effect on her (possibly

owing to their unconscious nature) (see section 6.3.1 above), and likewise Sara did not say anything explicit about learner experiences. However, both of their actual teaching seemed to have the impact of AOO, based on my insider/emic perspective. So at a theoretical level, Alia's student life experiences have neither positive nor negative influences on her. However, at a practical level, as is implicit in her classroom teaching, she seemed to have been positively influenced by such experiences. In this sense, I believed educational life experiences to be enabling, but also consider these as inhibiting on account of their restricting the teachers (unconsciously) to a particular way of conducting their teaching and classes, who possibly (unconsciously) consider these methods as the one right approach to teaching English. Eisenstein-Ebsworth & Schweers (1997, as cited in Borg, 2003) also concluded that the language teachers' experience as teachers and learners emerged as a powerful influence on their views about grammar teaching, and the teacher-participants rarely justified their approaches by referring to research studies or any particular methodology.

#### **Institutional guidelines (syllabus/textbook)**

In the majority of the state system (English) classrooms, teachers teach 'the textbook' emphasising factual learning of the language knowledge (Wedell, 2013). With reference to Pakistan, Shah (2012) also found textbooks as the sole teaching resource/material used in state schools, and their role appears to be to guide the teaching process. In Pakistan, textbooks are the centre of teaching-learning, and unlike developed countries such as the USA, or the UK, teachers mainly follow the textbooks word for word (ibid). This was the case with all the four participants in this study. They mainly used textbooks for teaching 'grammar' and 'vocabulary' (two main types of classes – see section 4.7.5.3 above), possibly on account of having English exam papers containing questions from the textbooks. Moreover, another reason for their ubiquitous use could be, as Schmidt et al. (2001) illustrate, that textbooks assist teachers with the tricky question(s) of what to teach. They provide teachers the clues that help them to choose the topics to emphasise on during their teaching (ibid). In short, they are used as a guide and reference point (as explicitly admitted by Alia) (section 6.3.1 above) while implicit in the data of other participants (for example see sections 6.2.1 and 7.3.1 above). In this sense, they seemed enabling for the teachers, however, as textbooks cannot answer all the curriculum needs (Shah, 2012) or actual language learning needs and so just (unconsciously) limiting teachers to the textbook content might have inhibiting influence (see the same sections of the participants just mentioned above). Wedell (2005) also points to the same fact that textbook content, as the de facto

syllabus for the majority of teachers, makes it difficult for teachers to allow class time for more ‘time consuming’ activities.

### **Preservice courses in general teaching (PK<sup>46</sup>)**

The pre-services courses which the four participants had attended were meant for teachers of all kinds of subjects. Therefore, in terms of its aspect of training teachers in general classroom teaching (e.g. areas such as classroom management), these courses appeared beneficial for them as was explicitly mentioned by Nawaz, Alia and Sami, (sections 6.2.1, 6.3.1 and 7.2.1 respectively above) and implied from data regarding Sara (section 7.3.1 above). This finding is slightly opposed to the plethora of studies (such as, Pennington & Urmston, 1998; Donaghue, 2003; Phipps, 2007; Liu & Xu, 2011; Sanchez, 2013) on the ineffectiveness of the teacher training (here - pre-service) courses. The general tendency in the research studies is to reject training courses in its entirety for their ineffectiveness regardless of the fact that some aspects of such courses might be useful for the teachers in their real classroom teaching.

### **Confusing / conflating CK<sup>47</sup> with PCK**

Another factor which was implicit in the behaviour of the participant teachers was their impression regarding the subject matter knowledge. They seemed to have a misunderstanding that knowing the subject matter properly means that a person can teach the English language effectively. In other words they seemed to have conflated ‘what to teach’ with ‘how to teach’. While these may, to some extent, overlap conceptually, it must be pointed out that ELT is a specialised skill and needs to be taught in a certain way to better students’ language learning, thus requires specialised teacher knowledge (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). For example, some of the teaching skills particular to language teaching are: “preparation of communicative interaction activities (e.g., group work, games, role plays, simulations); organization and facilitation of communicative interaction; judgement of proper balance between fluency and accuracy; presenting language, controlled practice, eliciting dialogues and narratives, using dialogues, using texts and setting up communication activities” (Richards, 1998). This might possibly be one reason why the participant-teachers

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<sup>46</sup> Pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 1986, 1990)

<sup>47</sup> Content Knowledge

employed a strongly structural approach to language teaching (for example, sections 6.3.1 for Alia and 7.2.1 for Sami above). They seemed to believe that teaching a language entails just teaching *about* a language (with main emphasis on grammar and vocabulary). An oft stated fact is that without one being aware of the aims of a particular task, its desired result cannot be achieved. To make learning much more effective and systematic, teachers should be clear about the long term goals and specific aims of teaching English (James, 2001; Nawab, 2012).

#### 8.3.4 **Neither constraining nor enabling influences**

The data revealed that some institutional factors existed but had no effect on teachers' behaviour whatsoever. They were neither helpful nor inhibiting but rather were neutral in their impact and seemed to be present for the sake of it or probably just as a norm or a formality.

#### **General pre-service (B.Ed. / M.Ed.) courses for PCK**

According to Wedell and Malderez (2013), some training programmes for teachers give less recognition to the idea that teaching itself needs to be learnt, as a result of focusing almost exclusively on teachers' knowledge *about* the language to be taught. As a result, they are likely to view teaching as 'transmission'. They may not prepare teachers in terms of reflective practitioners, able to engage with questions such as Johnson's (1999) (see the study for questions<sup>48</sup>). This was the case with the participant-teachers in this study: they did not seem to have benefitted from their general preservice courses in terms of equipping them with PCK. This might be one reason that they tend to confuse CK with PCK (as mentioned above in section 8.3.3). While data from Nawaz clearly reflects this (section 6.2.1 above), in the case of the other participant-teachers, this tendency is more implicit in their data.

### 8.4 **RQ-2: Teachers' response to the given constraints**

Archer (2000) argues that agents use their personal powers - for instance, their capacity of engaging in deliberation - to conceive and pursue courses of action within social contexts. A realist approach to social theory "begins by presenting an account of this sense of self,

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<sup>48</sup> As limited space here

which is prior to, and primitive to, our sociality” (ibid: 7). According to Archer, and as I mentioned in detail in chapter 3 above, it is the pursuit of particular projects, driven by individuals’ concerns, which ensures individuals’ engagement with the enablements and constraints of the social context. Such concerns relate to the agents’ performative achievement in the exercise of his/her expertise. Projects might then lead to the development of successful practices by the agent. This trajectory, from concerns to practices, is driven via ‘inner conversation’ or ‘reflexive deliberation’ upon oneself and concerns with regard to society, thus, helping to explain why people act one way than the other within a given context (Archer, 2007): what the teachers *want* and *can* do in terms of their personal capacity and what they *actually* do (being unable due to the constraints). It is necessary to see individuals as being socially positioned and, at the same time, showing agency, navigating constraints and actively responding to the possibilities open to them in particular school and classroom sites.

In the context of this research, the findings indicate that the teachers had their particular concerns and goals. The overarching concern, for example, for Nawaz was to conduct the language classes in more communicative and interactive ways. For the other participant-teachers, it was also an (implied) concern that the students learn the language in the long term. The teachers responded, made attempts in their own ways, and took their decisions (in relation to their workplace/teaching context) to materialise their concerns into their desired projects. However, during such attempts, they confronted the structural constraints mentioned above and almost all the participant-teachers appeared to be in a quite constrained space in terms of what they can or want to do or would have done (teachers’ concerns, values and projects) and what they actually end up in doing (outcomes) with regard to teaching in their classes. Having been required to act, behave and adjust approaches that are appropriate to fit in with their workplace context(s) (of time, place, and learners) involved the teachers having to construct and reconstruct new assumptions and values (Pennington et al, 1996; Wedell & Malderez, 2013). This resulted in the participants’ teaching being shaped in a way which reflected a confluence of their concerns, goals and beliefs as well as the constraints they have encountered.

According to Archer (2003), when a project is enabled or constrained during its execution, agents can act strategically in an attempt to find ways around it or to define a second-best outcome (in the case of constraints), in search of a better practice in the given circumstances, as we saw, in this study, in the participant-teachers’ attempts at adjusting their ways of teaching. Thus, humans naturally have levels of freedom in determining their own courses

of action (Archer, 2003). With regard to this study, the second best (though not just one) outcome or concern (in the face of given constraints), for instance, for Sami and Sara, after effective language classes being the first concern, was to maintain the classroom discipline by any means necessary. For Nawaz, it manifested as his desire that students achieve good marks in exam, while for Alia, it was to keep the students engaged and motivated (see the relevant sections of analyses above in data analysis chapters 6 and 7). To achieve their desired projects, though still constrained, the participants responded in a range of ways, some of which were common to all of them, i.e. doing a lot of explanation and word to word translation, teaching the whole class as one group, rote learning, teaching for the exams and just covering the content and making (just few) students repeat the texts aloud in the class. However, certain responses were unique to the participants: Nawaz would try doing more preparation for the given lesson to ensure better command on the subject, some variation in his teaching style, and employ more self-reflection. In the case of Alia, she would massively drill students aloud in chorus, making them practice topics covered in the class, limited variation in teaching style, and self-reflection and preparation. In the case of Sami, he would respond by, teaching in any case (see Sami's analysis above), and a lot of interaction but in a superficial manner, while Sara response was characterised by self-study, preparation, teaching in any case (see Sara's analysis above), and her enthusiasm and interest in teaching. Similar to constraining influences, response was also something not always deliberate but needed to sometimes be deduced from the teachers' behaviour in a particular situation in their classes.

### 8.5 **RQ-3: Pedagogical outcome**

While 'response' and 'outcome', may sound more or less the same phenomenon, the difference in this study is that by 'response' I mean teachers' specific moment by moment decisions they intended to take with regard to specific constraints. While by 'outcome' I mean, teachers actual classroom behaviour/practices which were characteristic of their overall approach to teaching as I will explain next.

According to Easton (2010), teachers might find themselves operating within various structures which are not of their making, but they still have many possibilities to change, at least to some extent, their structural environment. For example, in case of Nawaz and Alia,

their tendencies of being creative, possibly based on ‘autonomous reflexivity’<sup>49</sup> may in the long run result in contextual discontinuity (Archer, 2003, 2007, 2012). The participants predominantly shared similar classroom teaching behaviours, however, there were few differences on account of them being different individuals, as revealed from the data and visible in the table (10) above. The similarities might possibly be due to the teachers’ similar teaching/working context, or probably their receiving the same formal initial teacher preparation support (along with almost no in-service support<sup>50</sup>) (Wedell & Malderez, 2013). Furthermore, the similarities might be due to strong collegiality (which means teachers potentially doing similar things as a result of discussions), termed ‘communicative reflexivity’ by Archer (2003, 2007, 2012) resulting in contextual continuity (ibid). While the differences can be observed in the table (10) or in the detailed analysis of the cases in chapters 6 and 7 above, and for the claims set out<sup>51</sup> below, I will here present the broader pedagogical or teaching outcome / behaviour (summary) of the participant-teachers, which can be better explained in terms of the main classroom realities described in a number of East Asian EFL contexts (by studies such as Wedell (2003, 2009, 2013), Nunan (2003, as cited in Wedell, 2008) and Wedell and Malderez (2013) and in Pakistani context by Nawab (2012)). The behaviours / outcomes are summarised as:

- the classes of these teachers were mainly teacher fronted and grammar focused where formal top-down, traditional transmission oriented teaching methods persisted.
- teachers did not have adequate command of the English language and even after having completed the training (pre-service courses) faced difficulty in/with their English skills and teaching English. Teachers’ own language proficiency was in-

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<sup>49</sup> engagement in “action primarily on the basis of solitary internal conversations, prioritising performativity in relation to their practice” (Archer, 2003, 2007).

<sup>50</sup> According to Wedell and Malderez (2013), the kind of support teachers receive mainly influence personal differences between teachers.

<sup>51</sup> The summary presented here is impressions drawn from the teachers’ analyses spread across their entire analyses in chapters 6 and 7 where the evidence for these claims can be found at their respective places, relating all of which here is quite space consuming (for limited allowed space).

sufficient to deal with the pedagogic demands and could only teach the language with limited personal proficiency.

- teachers would usually use a single textbook, following it very closely and would mostly (if at all) use written exercises.
- emphasis was on translation, vocabulary and grammar for knowledge based exams.
- students had little (I would say hardly any) opportunity for using the language for communication purposes.
- all learners would learn in the same way in the classes in terms of being taught using the same teaching approach as if they had a single set of language needs.
- most of the teaching would be in ‘lockstep’, with the classes mainly working together as one large group with hardly any pair and/or group work. Teachers would need command of a limited range of largely whole-class teaching procedures and classroom management skills.

## 8.6 **Summary of the main themes: ‘conditioning’, ‘response’ and ‘outcome’**

We can clearly see in the data/findings, (as captured in the quotes of the participant-teachers, as well as from the classroom observation (chapter 6 and 7)) how the different structural/institutional factors shaped the teaching contexts of the teachers. Most of these factors such as large classes and related factors, teacher related factors, student factors, exam and time factors appeared in the form of constraints which rendered the participant-teachers more helpless and less creative. The teachers seemed to be struggling and finding ways to cope with these constraints: for the most part they were more or less over powered by these institutional structures, rather than shaping the teaching-learning environment entirely according to their will. For example, Nawaz main interest and concern was to promote a more student-centred communicative language teaching-learning environment which he understood and believed to facilitate and develop language proficiency of the students to achieve the ultimate goal of students’ acquiring communicative competence, and which he was hardly able to achieve. This is somewhat similar to a finding in a study by Kuchah and

Smith (2011) in a resource-poor ELT context of Cameroon. These scholars found out that, while teaching, it was not feasible for them to carry out, with the students, the group and pair work language activities: CLT and interactive activities, on account of the syllabus being mainly examination-centred and the number of textbook units the teacher had to cover within a given period. Thus, to them the way out seemed to be resorting to a teacher-centred approach (focusing more on vocabulary and grammar, providing rules and giving practice exercises (if any) from the textbook), which they believed, was the best solution for them to handle the classroom size.

However, in such a situation, some institutional factors (cultural and social factors) appeared to have helped teachers to deal with the given constraints. These were mainly, for instance, teachers' teaching experience, and social (collegial) relations. Some factors appeared to be there but with no significant effect regarding their particular aspect, such as, general preservice B.Ed. courses for PCK. That is, these courses appeared to be helpful to the extent of guiding teachers in the general pedagogic skills (such as class discipline). However, these courses appeared to have neither positive (useful) nor negative (constraining) effects on the teachers pedagogic behaviour in their classes, on account of such courses not being sufficiently rooted in teaching realities, in terms of equipping the teachers with pedagogical content skills (i.e. how to teach the English language effectively). However, some factors appeared to have both constraining and enabling influences regarding their different aspects, such as, text books, and teachers' educational life experiences. All these factors, in Archer's critical realist terms, conditioned the teaching context for the teachers who attempted to respond to the structural conditioning in the light of their beliefs, values and concerns (see chapters 6 and 7 for evidence in the respective sections).

During the process of responding to the institutional structures, the teachers underwent internal conversations/ reflexive deliberations, which were verbalised in the form of their narratives (interviews), which showed the teachers weighing possible options available to them in the given circumstances and responding accordingly. Such responses were reflected in the participant teachers' behavioural outcome in their classes, for instance, being more teacher-fronted; few or no interactive activities; massive reliance on translation, explanation, drilling and repetition; focus on covering the content, exam focused classes, lack of teachers' PCK, and few or no reinforcement/assessment activities. Also, although the national curriculum followed in these classes were mainly based on the global approaches to English language teaching and learning, which promotes more communicative ways of language teaching and learning (involving interactive/learner centred approaches) - in practice,

indirectly restricts and/or limits such ways of teaching through the imposition of standardised tests as explained above. However, having said that, even though in state schools, teachers did not get sufficient encouragement and support to adapt curriculum content/teaching to their students' needs, also suffered no hindrance if they wanted to do so in anyway.

The reflexive deliberations (as just said above), served as a mediator between the given institutional structures and teachers' actual behaviour (pedagogical responses), resulting in the participant teachers' behaviour as mainly seemingly compliant, but at the same time, as in case of Nawaz and Alia, showing some elements of creativity and problem solving. That is, being helpless and partially conforming to the given constraints, while also exercising agency, to some extent, according to their values and interests, which resulted in teaching in a more of a middle / hybrid way. Such tendency might be representative of that space where prior structures are gradually transformed and new ones slowly elaborated, as represented in phase T2 and T3 in Archer's morphogenetic model<sup>52</sup> (Archer, 1995).

## 8.7 **Contribution of the realist theory**

As we can see from the above mentioned summary of the findings, in terms of the list of contextual/institutional factors which were found to have impacted the participant-teachers work and behaviour in different ways, the findings are consistent with the previously conducted studies that I have outlined in detail in the literature review (chapter 2). Thus, most of the findings are not unexpected, novel or unique to the four participant-teachers at the selected state schools with regard to the '*what*' contextual factors which impact teachers' agency. Indeed, as mentioned above in the literature review, various similar issues are reported from a range of research studies, both from Pakistan and other countries. For example, the issue of large classes have been largely highlighted by Pakistani scholar Fozia Shamim in her many publications (such as, Shamim, 1993, 2008; Shamim & Allen, 2000; Shamim, & Kuchah, 2016). Other studies include Bughio (2012), and Nawab (2012) in the Pakistani context, Zappa-Hollman (2007) in the Argentinian context, Smotrova (2009) in the Ukrainian context, Altinyelken (2010) in the Ugandan context, Kuchah and Smith (2011) in Cameroon, and Song (2015) in the Cambodian context. Regarding economic issues, we have

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<sup>52</sup> However, looking at long term transformation is not the focus of this study.

example from studies, such as, Croft (2002) from Malawi, Mustafa and Cullingford (2008) from Jordan, Westbrook et al., (2009) from Pakistan, Altinyelken (2010) from Uganda, Obaidul Hamid (2010) from Bangladesh, and Kuchah and Smith (2011) from Cameroon. In the case of teaching for exam purposes, we have examples of studies such as, Haser and Star (2009), Phipps and Borg (2009), and Mansour (2013). The main features of the training course(s) being prescriptive in nature, and failing to consider the essential differences present in different contexts, have also been highlighted in studies, such as, Zappa-Hollman (2007) from Argentina, Westbrook et al. (2009) from Pakistan, Vavrus (2009) from Tanzania, and Haser and Star (2009) from Turkey. Wedell (2005) has found almost the same contextual factors as in this study which make it difficult for the teachers (participants) to implement the training they have received. With the specific reference to Pakistan, Westbrook et al. (2009), also commented upon how disconnected the Pakistani teacher education is from the actual/real classroom contexts.

However, what this study actually adds to this existent body of knowledge is another *perspective* of exploring the educational context and the implications drawn on the basis of it (see section 9.4 for details below). This is because the way in which we theorise the individual, agency, and structure has normative implication for what we should do. In other words, *ought* is derived from *is* (Bhaskar, 1998). It provides *insights* into the process of how and in what ways these different influences operate in relation to language teachers, stimulating them to operate in a particular way, instead of just exclusively by their own will, as SCT<sup>53</sup> usually assumes (see chapter 2 and 3 above). This end is in line with the aims of this study which is in essence, to understand this process of ‘*interplay*’ (in Archer’s terms) between the teachers (agents) and their teaching context (structures): an area which seems to be quite under researched as opposed to the list of contextual factors where we can find quite good number of studies, as I just said above and in detail in chapter 1 and 2 (see these chapters for the details of difference between those studies and what this study is adding through the theory of CR). The interplay/interconnections between the two can be used as a platform for strategy training and instruction, providing guidance to concerned colleagues, as how you understand teaching will shape how you educate others to teach (Freeman, 2001). In this regard, this might provide the basis for a more tailored approach to policy and practice initiatives (see section 9.4 below) in order to improve the overall teaching-learning

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<sup>53</sup> Sociocultural theories

environment in the studied context and, to some extent, beyond. In this way, we may say that by introducing the theory of ‘analytical dualism’ (an ability to explore the *interplay* between separate strata of society), CR makes a methodological contribution to the study of how teachers respond to expectations regarding the way they teach and/or conform their teaching to their curriculum. Thus my data is quite relevant to the applied linguists. Also, applied linguistics is a social theory as well.

While the fruits of such a *perspective* can be found in detail in the final chapter (8) below in terms of its policy and practical implications, to give an example, (in critical realist terms), in the case of Nawaz, at the empirical level we saw a teacher-fronted pedagogy, with more teacher talk and little or no engagement on behalf of the students who passively absorbed the information provided by the teacher. The class seemed to be conducted in this particular way as a matter of choice by the teacher Nawaz. However, sometimes we practice what we do not believe, though we might not be aware of it or want to believe it (Edwards & Mercer, 1987, as cited in Gates, 2006). Thus the reality appeared to be different. What appeared as the apparent visible teacher’s and students’ behaviour (for example the above mentioned bullet points in section 8.5), were due to underlying mechanisms and causal processes existing at different levels in a stratified ontology (Bhaskar, 1975, 1979), such as, exams, lack of resources, class size, lack of in-service and specialised ELT courses for Nawaz, students’ lack of interest and the dearth of a self-study culture. All these *visible (apparent/surface level)* and *invisible (not immediately apparent)* events and effects have *further underlying causal mechanisms* (as it appeared), such as students’ socio economic conditions, for instance, for students’ lack of interest and self -study culture, which in Bhaskar’s (ibid) terms are termed *empirical, real* and *potential* respectively (chapter 3). Similarly, the invisible underlying mechanisms pertaining to educational experiences, collegial relationship and his teaching experiences also produced their effects by helping Nawaz to cope with the given institutional constraint. Though there do not exist clear boundaries between the ‘actual’ and ‘real’ underlying causes (they overlaps), the important point is that, taken together, they shaped the teacher’s visible behaviour and the teaching context. However, being an explanatory framework, more time is required to explore full potential of the CR and more space to write in detail about the findings: constraint of the CR framework experienced during this PhD study (with its time and space limitations).

In terms of its policy and practical implications, as I have already mentioned at the start of this thesis (section 1.6), and is further explained in section 9.4 below, this may help in taking some of the blame off the teachers especially regarding such studies which tend to “portray

the [...] teacher as the central problem in teacher education” (Wideen et al., 1998: 168). According to Wedell (2009), when intended outcomes, in terms of students’ behaviour or ultimate performance, are not achieved, teachers are the first to be blamed as if they are primarily responsible. Sometimes these assumptions are explicit and in some studies, implicit, for example, studies employing sociocultural theoretical perspectives (see sections 1.3.3, 2.4, and 3.4 above). The participant-teacher, Alia’s words, in this study, show quite a clear reflection of this tendency when she said, “This is the thing with the government schools, they hold the teachers accountable for everything at the end of the day” (Int-3, lines 302-304).

Wideen et al., (1998) argue that “other features of a larger system must be recognized as equally significant, and addressed, if research and practice in teacher education are to be improved”. Similarly, Wedell (2009; 2013) has also stressed that adjustments to the other “parts” of educational systems, possibly made by other ‘partners’<sup>54</sup>, might be required to facilitate teachers in implementing any desired educational changes (see section 9.4 below for suggestions regarding which ‘other parts’ of the educational system might undergo such adjustment). Thus, this study draws one’s attention to the fact that one ‘partner’ (variable or element), for example, teacher, is not solely responsible for what is happening in a class at one particular time. Instead, the teacher and / or their teaching might have been influenced by a range of other factors, beyond their control. Rather, teachers represent just a very small aspect of what may require to be changed to implement more complex changes successfully.

## 8.8 Conclusion

This chapter brought together and discussed the main themes that emerged over the four cases in relation to the study’s aims, focusing on three separate research questions. It also provided an opportunity to compare the cases through cross case analysis to appreciate both the similarities as well as the differences among four cases. In the next and final chapter, I

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<sup>54</sup> Wedell’s term / concept of the ‘partners’ refers to all those individuals involved within different levels of educational systems, such as: teacher trainers; school leaders; teachers of other subjects; parents; and students.

will draw conclusions, and implications based on the research findings, as well as point out possible areas for future research.

## Chapter 9

## Conclusion

### 9.1 Introduction

In this last chapter, I intend to summarise the main points of this research study (section 9.2) and how it may contribute to the existing body of knowledge within the field of (second) language teacher education or applied linguistics (section 9.3). This is followed by a brief acknowledgement of some of the study's limitations (section 9.5). I also outline the study's implications (section 9.4) and make several recommendations, on the basis of limitations, for future research (section 9.5). I will conclude this study by making a brief comment regarding its contribution to my own (personal and professional) development (section 9.6).

### 9.2 Summary of the research

I started this study with the rationale that the growing importance and rapid spread of the English language, and resultantly the ever increasing number of pupils in state schools and classrooms, particularly in the developing countries today is posing new challenges which urgently required to be addressed (Kuchah, 2016). The ideal classrooms of thirty or fewer students, sitting at individual desks in a well air-conditioned rooms and taught by the native speaker teachers are no longer the norm but the exception in the current ELT world (ibid). Generally, in (resource-poor) developing countries, despite the fact that the state schools provide ELT to a large number of children and a plethora of research exists on similar issues to those I mentioned above, English language learning outcomes are still not satisfactory as I established in the first chapter. This led me to explore and attempt to understand *English language teachers' agency*, through another *perspective (CR)*<sup>55</sup> as teachers, being the interface between actual learning and policy requirements, their role and agency requires to be more explicitly valued, acknowledged, and incorporated into the policy enactment process (ibid).

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<sup>55</sup> As an attempt to further improve the situation possibly through insights obtained by using this lens.

This is because teachers are too used to being blamed for the failure of pedagogic policies when such policies are enacted and handed down by different official bodies with little or no consideration for those who are called upon to implement them in the classroom (Kao, Grima & Kuchah 2013: 21).

Also, the prevalent arguments in the literature, (for example, Holliday 1994a, 1994b; Kumaravadivelu 2001; Bax 2003; Rubdy 2008) that appropriate ELT approaches need to emerge from local teaching context(s), instead of being imported and imposed on teachers, and myself having personal (negative) experience in this regard (see section 1.3.1 above), also drove my current research focus.

I pointed out that when talking about language teacher's agency, in language education literature, scholars, such as, Borg (2003) and Wedell and Malderez (2013) assert that the teaching context is a strong factor in influencing language teachers' behaviour. I also argued, that institutional factors (the teaching context) impact strongly on language teachers' agency; and so such an impact needs to be understood. However, too little attention has been given to this relationship (as mentioned in detail in chapter 1), on account of it being taken for granted in education, particularly in the field of ELT (*ibid*). This study was an attempt to bridge this gap in the existing research, that is, this research has attempted to understand the relationship between English language teachers and their teaching context through examination and exploration of the *interplay* between agents (English language teachers) and social structures (their working/teaching context) respectively. This is done by drawing on Margaret Archer's realist social theory (1995, 1997, 1998a, 2000, 2003, 2007) which seemed to be the most appropriate framework for understanding such a phenomenon of *interplay*. Next, I will summarise, what I consider are, the main contributions of this study.

### 9.3 **Summary of main contributions**

As stated above, the main aim of this study was to understand how English language teachers' agency is shaped by their institutional teaching / working context in order to be in a better position to provide a more tailored teacher education policy and practice endeavours. To explain this point through a metaphor, understanding how pain works and where it comes from can give us insight into the appropriate reaction to different types of pain. Such an understanding required detailed investigation/explanation of the complex phenomenon of shaping as is attempted by this study as, according to Bhaskar (as understood by Corson, 1997), "the world cannot be rationally changed unless it is adequately interpreted" (p. 169).

According to Wedell and Malderez (2013), understanding to the maximum possible degree about the current context of a specific classroom is the prerequisite for any desired/effective change. Such an understanding is required both to establish a clear and appropriate rationale for any change and its hoped-for outcomes, as well as to establish appropriate processes to facilitate achieving the aims of the change (ibid).

In this way, the main contribution of the study is that it might have deepened our understanding of the emergence and development of *language teachers' agency* in general though at the same time about the shaping of agency of a *specific group of Asian or Pakistani* English language teachers. As a result, this research might be of interest to a much wider audience - that is, to anybody interested in the workings of language teaching and teachers, and language teacher education, thereby increasing our understanding of how teachers go about teaching foreign languages. According to Corson (1997), by knowing the reality of structural influences on human actors' lives, others come to understand what things the actors value, and what things oppress them, because failing to sustain desired structural influences means ignoring the real interests of actors, while leaving the unwanted structures in place means ignoring real forms of oppression known to exist.

This research offers yet another case study that might add to the mosaic of knowledge regarding language teacher's agency *in relation to institutional context*, particularly from the *under-researched ELT contexts* of developing countries. The idea was to tease out the two elements (agency and structure) to look at their *interplay* while investigating the agency-structure relationship in terms of the teachers-schools (teaching context) relationship. This offered us a window into examining the very fine structures or issues that may otherwise go overlooked due to the stratified nature of the world, and the entities therein (Corson, 1997). Seeing things broadly (more as a typology) than actually looking at how or in what ways they are enabling or constraining might obstruct attending to those fine and subtle details which may take minimal effort to be improved by the stake holders (e.g. teacher educators, policy makers) but which might have a significant positive impact in the English language education overall. This implies that causal mechanisms are mostly not immediately evident empirically and so require further work to access them (Connor, 2015). According to Wedell and Malderez (2013), an explicit understanding of context is required to underpin the work of any English teaching professional (textbook writer, teacher, curriculum developer, teacher of teachers, ministry planner, tester and inspector), as how each plays their role affects what happens in classrooms, so that policies aiming for change could be grounded in a real understanding of the processes at work, instead of rhetoric and wishful thinking (Lewin &

Stuart, 2016). Therefore, studies such as this complement research on teacher education, curricula, and educational systems by exploring how individuals' actions that impede or promote learning are subtly shaped by the contexts where they operate (ibid). In this sense, this study may have further important contributions, in the following three ways:

Firstly, to the existing field of teaching-learning in mainstream education, though, more specifically in the field of ELT, as I have already explained above (section 8.7) both in terms of opening debates regarding the framework applied in this research and also in terms of setting an example study to build on in the future research regarding how context and agency can be studied effectively in relation to each other, especially in an ELT/applied linguistics field. This is because what we need is actual explanations of why and how events in the observable world take place. It is hardly a controversial claim that a human is constituted by the social context, however, what is important is a way of looking at how such constitution can be manifested. Such an approach is different as it locates personal action not within the individual, but within the collective, social dimension in which human interaction and activity occurs as proposed by sociocultural theories. The outcome of research using a different approach, such as CR, to the exploration of teachers and their contexts is, therefore, not merely a characterisation of language teacher agency but more importantly an understanding of the situational logic which underlies the observed outcomes. In favour of this (CR) approach, the key scholar, Archer (1995: 135) argues that;

The vexatious fact of society has to be tackled in theory and for practice. These two tasks cannot be separated, for were practical utility to be the sole criterion, we would commit ourselves to instrumentalism – to working with theoretically ungrounded rules of thumb. Conversely, a purely theoretical taming of the vexing beast may give a warm inner glow of ontological rectitude but is cold comfort to practical social analysts. They want a user-friendly toolkit and although it cannot come pocket-sized with an easy reference manual, customer services have every right to complain when handed an unwieldy device without any instructions to the assumption that if they handle it sufficiently this will somehow sensitize to something.

Moreover, what this study adds to Archer's theory of CR (to my understanding) is that being agentic or non-agentic are not exclusive categories but more of a continuum. That is, as we have seen in the analysis and findings in this study that a person can be more agentic or less compliant and/or vice-versa depending on the context and situation he/she is operating in.

Similarly constraints/constraining influences and enablements/enabling influences are not just two exclusive categories but are more of a continuum where some aspects of one factor can be enabling while others constraining and/or vice versa, for example, in the case of the effect of general pre-service courses for PK (enabling) and PCK (no effect).

Secondly, by providing the above-mentioned stakeholders with insights into potentially effective initiatives for their respective ELT domains both internationally, as well as, in the specific context of Pakistan. Though the main focus of this research is the English Language classroom, this research can be relevant to general educational contexts. Globally, the number of students learning English has grown exponentially, particularly in the developing countries where the 'Education for All' movement has led to increased enrolments at primary level without an equal increase in resources (Kuchah, 2016). At the national and regional level, the insights can be more beneficial if disseminated (as I do intend soon, the least of which is that I will talk informally about them) nowadays at different forums, such as conferences, and reports, as there has been a recent shift in political climate (in August 2018) and the current government of the province, where the schools approached for this research are situated, is extremely keen on, and invites initiatives, and suggestions to improve the prevalent condition of the state schools educational system. In this way, this research study might prove to be a humble but beneficial resource in terms of its practical implications.

Thirdly, this project can act as a point of reference for the comparison of general and English language teaching situation in a range of contexts and where there are reports of inadequate learning outcomes (Kiely, 2014). In ELT contexts, the qualitative changes are less evident, reflecting a need for improvement in English language teaching and learning situations (ibid). Moreover, on account of the challenges, for teachers in the Western contexts, imposed by vast migrations of students from resource-poor contexts (who might not have been considered so far in the literature on ELT established mainly in the West (Kuchah, 2016)), the findings may be insightful for such Western language teachers as well as practitioners in the West.

According to Maley (2001), it is a characteristic of ministries of education (among others) to seek simple solutions to complex problems. While it was not the main purpose of this study to provide any kind of educational solutions, per se, I can nevertheless outline several of the implications of the study, as a guidance to the practitioners, based on my research findings and the insights, as follows.

## 9.4 **Implications of the study**

As the development of more enabling conditions enable agency to mediate the challenges posed by education systems (Archer 2003; Boughey, 2009; Behari-Leak, 2017), I offer some of the suggestions, arising out of this research, regarding some of the enabling conditions below. However, as there are no easy solutions and/or what I suggest below cannot be taken to offer blanket solutions, at best, they provide some hope for improving the current situation. Indeed, ideally speaking, resource poor environments will work better with more resources, which is usually missing or not possible in developing countries like Pakistan. The chances of all contextual constraints being “eliminated” is extremely unlikely. However, the current situation might still be made to work reasonably effectively, I believe, by making some changes in curricula and other areas where improvement is possible through some awareness and even with minimal resources as explained below.

Firstly, pedagogic innovations ‘donated’ to developing countries and imposed by policy makers, upon teachers already struggling (Kuchah, 2015) with the kinds of issues as I have presented in this study, should be informed by, instead of informing, teachers’ agency. Teachers’ opinions should be given due consideration and representation in any decision having some bearing on classroom teaching, as teachers are the key players in any reform process (Riley, 2000: 37 as cited in Wedell, 2003). For this to happen, research and policy enactment might need to be more bottom-up, and context driven, as this study attempted. One of the participant-teachers exactly highlighted such importance of the bottom-up approaches as:

They should have asked the teachers their opinions and taken this step [separating arts and sciences] in the very first year of teaching rather than waiting ten, twelve years to do the same thing. (Int-3, lines 244-246)

So, my immediate suggestion and initiative might possibly be to work towards something along the lines of teacher association (TA) research, as suggested and implemented by Kuchah (2016). TA research is, ‘systematic inquiry which is based on [TA] members’ priorities and officially endorsed by a TA and which engages members as active participants in what they see as a collective project’. Where possible, they can inform policy and practice thus seemingly more closely aligned with more bottom-up initiatives and practices from grassroots level (ibid).

Secondly, in line with the principles of the CR, the sharp distinction between agency (human action) and structure provided an analysis of the mechanisms at work which are responsible for the shaping of the human action and structures, thus going beyond common conceptions prevalent when such mechanisms are not clearly visible, and providing a space for more tailored action (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2017). Thus, through the lens of CR in this research, we were able to see that somethings cannot be changed and so imposing any idea forcefully, because of its universal popularity (CLT approaches for instance), could result in chaos. Instead, we should be focusing on areas where we can make relatively easy adjustments and to greater effect. To explain it in the light of the findings of this study when imposing, for example, group work on a class of 80 students, we should consider (beyond total reliance on just language teachers) other factors, such as, using students as resources for providing and producing an effective language environment. According to Maley (2001), economic deprivation does not necessarily imply that the environment is ill-equipped, or that the learners are empty shells. Maley noted that once he began projects with his students, a whole world of interest opened up. Along the lines suggested by Maley (2001), recently Kuchah and Smith (2011), in his resource-poor ELT class, made an attempt to focus on the students' aspirations, instead of challenges imposed by the resource deficient context. Following a negotiation process with his students (see Kuchah & Smith 2011 and Kuchah, 2016 for details), Kuchah was able to develop what he calls a 'pedagogy of partnership' or 'pedagogy of autonomy' that significantly increased the students' learning experience. Accounts of good language learners (Griffiths, 2008; Rubin & Thompson, 1994, as cited in Stroupe & Kimura 2013) provide many instances of self-directed learning behaviour from students even with few physical resources at their disposal (Stroupe & Kimura 2013, see the same reading for more details). In education in general, and particularly in curricula, policy statements leading to change should take into account the pragmatic conditions during any planning, implementation, and evaluation (Cardenas, 2015).

Moreover, in teaching contexts such as the one in this study, students were quite used to teacher-centred approaches and might not be quite as receptive to more communicative approaches. In such a situation, the English language teachers, I believe, instead of just directly applying any communicative approach, such as "direct method" as revealed in the data, should first familiarise students with such approaches, create awareness about communicative approaches and emphasise the benefits of these in their language learning at the outset, along with small reminders to them at intervals. This might, at least, help with the students' mental readiness and possibly their motivation to play their role in language

learning which might be facilitative of implementing such approaches. Students should also be made aware of the importance of self-study. By following these suggestions, we might shift, to some extent, to students, the responsibility of their learning. Encouraging students to question their sole reliance on teachers may facilitate a conducive learning environment and also address class discipline and some other issues revealed in the data. However, given such radical changes, this might be a long range project: the English language teachers may be asked to be patient to see the fruits of such changes which might take a while.

Thirdly, if possible the education ministers and local boards of education might reflect upon the examination system which was found to be a hindrance to effective language learning in an environment already stressed by other deficiencies and problems. For example, Michael West's solution, emerging from his work in West Bengal in the 1930's, stated that reading is the most effective way of learning a new language (Day & Bamford 1998, as cited in Maley, 2001). Having said that, teaching skills should not be limited to curriculum guidelines or syllabi but skills oriented questions should also be included in exams to motivate and drive teachers to make at least some attempts at teaching such skills. The English language question paper pattern or at least a part of it should also focus on testing language skills and proficiency rather than being strictly grammar focused. According to Bachman (1990), "tests are not developed and used in a value-free psychometric test tube; they [should] virtually always intend [...] to serve the needs of an educational system or of society at large (p. 279)." Also teachers should be freed from the misconception that ELT should focus exclusively on vocabulary and tense teaching. Though it largely is, it is also about teaching and learning of English language *skills*, at least, if overall proficiency or command at the language is intended. Thus, there needs to be a simultaneous uptake of all these factors and not just one: in short it is essential that we while clarifying teachers' misconceptions about ELT, include skill based questions in examinations, and encourage a skills based syllabus and curriculum.

Fourthly, the relevant authorities should recognise the need to initiate specialised ELT training courses for state school teachers. While so doing, they should refrain from importing internationally reputed and idealized theories of ELT based on resource-rich Western ELT contexts. Instead they need to adapt and contextualise both the content according to the realities of the teaching situations as well as to train teachers in terms of their practical application. The aim should be to design the kind of training courses which could provide teachers with some level of flexibility to adapt and/or adjust the course contents within their own contexts as well as provide the tools to effect and practice such adaptation. Furthermore,

teachers can be trained to establish a ‘pedagogy of autonomy’ for learners as I have explained above (second suggestion). Coleman and Capstick (2012), with regard to the Pakistani context, suggest that more linguistics courses need to be run to prepare English language teachers for ELT, as Literature courses alone are quite ineffective. Meanwhile, the trainers/teachers of the current preservice B.Ed. / M.Ed. courses should be provided with some basic language teaching specific training.

With regard to the currently rarely available in-service courses, it should be ensured that every teacher, especially the enthusiastic and motivated teachers such as Sara, get the opportunity and fair chance to benefit from such courses and that these courses might not just be used as a means of getting promotions or earning some extra money in the form of TA/DA (Travelling and Dwelling allowance) by the teachers, in which case it would mean just wasting the money invested on such courses. Instead, their purpose should be to instigate some real improvement in the skills of English language teachers, who have availed these courses, and hence benefit real teaching situations. Also, the teachers should be encouraged to undertake self-study and not completely rely on teacher training courses for their professional development which, if they were available, they would not take any initiative for their personal professional development at all. Also awareness needs to be raised among teachers that mere teaching ‘experience’ is an unacceptable substitute for effective and thorough lesson preparation. Rather, they should aim for updating their knowledge regarding how and in what ways they can make their lessons more effective. They should take ‘experience’ as a complement but not as a complete alternative to be too overconfident about it, if more productive class or better language learning outcomes are expected.

Regarding those structures of the educational system which exist without conferring significant benefits on the system as a whole, for example general pre-service courses for ELT (from the findings), it might be a good idea to convert / improve them into enabling influences or completely eliminate them. Instead, money and time should be invested into more productive initiatives.

Moreover, the teachers should be familiarised with a range of more communicative approaches instead of just limiting teaching to a single method, for example just the “direct method” as mainly pointed out by the participant-teachers. While doing so the trainers should also exchange ideas with the language teachers regarding how and in what ways such approaches can possibly be implemented in their given context. According to Holliday (1994a), English language teachers in state education already have wealth of local

knowledge regarding their students and the realities of their classrooms. Therefore, their experience should be capitalized upon and incorporated into a more environment-sensitive approaches to teaching (ibid). Moreover, in the current situation, the classes could be made more interactive and student-centred if the teachers are provided some orientation in that direction. However, where teachers are already making attempts at interactive classes, such as Sami, they should be guided regarding the ways to more effectively elicit students' response. As mentioned above (in section 7.2.1), filling in the blanks, sentence completion activities, directing students' attention to sentence construction or highlighting how ideas are expressed in different paragraphs, might be effective foundation approaches, as opposed to just focusing too much on grammar such as tenses (a limited approach to language learning). Or for instance, in case of Alia, instead of repeating the same lesson three times in the same way (to ensure students have learnt well), she could do it once this way while the remaining time could be devoted to more practice, as I just suggested in the preceding lines, to reinforce the lesson learnt on the day.

Fifthly, for the practitioners working on a global scale, it can be recommended to advance local instruction theory for the teachers belonging to resource-poor contexts. That is, to develop local models and train English language teachers on the basis of these models, rather than aspire to more universal models derived from resource-rich ELT context(s). If such a move seems too radical, at least sensitising practitioners and policy makers, who work with English language teachers from such contexts, to the need for context sensitivity so that policies and programmes are designed which could be tailored to local and individual needs and circumstances. They should aim at changing what actually happens in school classrooms instead of just the surface language or appearance of the curriculum or the materials (Wedell, 2011). Implementation never looks identical across the whole of any education system anywhere. Thus, any evaluation of success should bear this in mind (ibid).

Sixthly, this study also highlighted the misconception that resource-poor means just (though predominantly) 'constraints', while resource-rich means just (though predominantly) 'enablements'. This means that both exist in both. What is required, in the case of resource-poor ELT contexts is to strengthen the enabling factors more, at least if investment in time and resources is not feasible or possible. For example, in this study, collegial support appeared to be a strong enabling factor so it is suggested to be made most out of it by encouraging and directing language teachers to collaborate within institutions and between institutions, as this may have a positive enabling effect. At a more local level, teachers' relational agency can be worked upon – a capacity to work purposefully with other

professionals and become aware of the resources they could bring to bear to support a child (Edwards, 2007). That is, the language teachers can be supported by making them aware of the importance of discussions with colleagues, reflection on their practices, and observing each other classes if they have some time. They can be encouraged to exchange workable and better ideas among themselves and to create a space, forum and environment where this could happen. Teachers can, for instance, be facilitated in building appropriate professional relations with students and other actors in order to respond adequately to students' diverse needs (Pantic & Florian, 2015). Supportive relationships and knowing students is particularly important when teaching students from diverse backgrounds (den Brok et al. 2010). Teachers can be made aware to work with families from a variety of cultures and social contexts in order to understand how home (and other) environments influence educational outcomes (Flecha & Soler 2013).

Moreover, the more universal trends of language teaching training or teachers inquiry methods, for example, reflective practices, action/teacher research, peer observation, teacher support groups, lesson study, study groups (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Tasker, 2011; Borg, 2013), which are less formally structured approaches, might be quite relevant and fruitful here. Teachers can be provided short placements in diverse ELT context in order to sensitise them to every type of context and possibly refine their reflective skills while dealing with these different situations. For such collaboration to be genuinely supportive, it needs to be formally recognised as a part of teachers' work, be timetabled to take place regularly, and be structured and facilitated (Wedell, 2005). Also, it would be a good idea to design and provide the teachers readymade lesson plans initially for some time to enable them to get some ideas and practice implementing them. Moreover, school/university linkages should be promoted where school and university teachers can visit each other's institutions, can sit in and observe each other classes for pinning down pedagogical and educational issues and working on them. Also, in this way, they can benefit from each other's ideas in action and assessing their adoptability or adaptability for their own teaching and in their particular teaching context. It is precisely via collaborative engagement that change can happen and a deeper examination of its complexity can be carried out (Cardenas, 2015).

Even though it might be impossible to implement all of the above mentioned suggestions instantly, simply discussing them is nonetheless a useful way of beginning to think about how ELT initiatives may be planned and carried out more effectively (Wedell, 2013). That

said, as with any research, there must be some limitations and so I briefly address these in the following section, and also suggest some areas for further research.

## 9.5 **Limitations of the study and possible areas for future research**

The first limitation I would like to point out is that even though this study attempted to provide a comprehensive picture of contextual influences at institutional level, but according to Wedell and Malderez (2013), describing the complete context of an educational setting is complicated. Referring to such complexity, Fullan (1993, as cited in Wedell & Malderez, 2013) states that:

. . . a huge number of variables and their interactive change nature is so large that it is logically unfeasible to get all the necessary information, and cognitively impossible for individuals to understand the total picture, even if the information is available. (p. 208)

Therefore, if the reader feels this investigation is missing any information regarding contextual factors, they should keep Wedell and Malderezs' (2013) analysis in mind and need to accept that we cannot look at each component of context from every perspective. Even, if by any means we are able to do so, it is not possible to present all the findings in depth in qualitative research studies limited by word count, such as the current one.

Closely linked to the aforementioned limitation is another one, related to the nested nature and levels/layers of the teaching context, with the layers possibly largely overlapping. Even so, I tried to tease them out as carefully as possible and showed some of the causal mechanisms contributing to the teachers' teaching behaviour at the institutional level. However, it must be born in mind that what is happening at a particular level may have many further causal influences which are not within the ambit/scope of this paper due to space and words constraints. These influences include mechanisms operating at the provincial, national or global level.

Secondly, the qualitative approach has been employed on account of its ability to provide in-depth understanding about a particular phenomenon. However, the qualitative nature of a study with a limited number of participants, is its inability to lead to greater generalizations. Although, the aim was to gather data which could offer insights into the context of the four

schools on certain key institutional factors which affect teaching behaviour, the focus on four schools out of over 200 places a further limitation on this study. Thus, this study is not generalizable its findings to all state schools in Pakistan or beyond. However, it does orientate or sensitize the interested reader(s) or researcher(s) to the tendencies of English language teachers' agency and classroom teaching behaviour in resource-poor state schools. The key issues raised in this study are therefore relevant for the vast majority of such schools regionally, nationally and internationally. However, I still think that it would have been interesting to gather interview data from a wider range of teachers, in order to see whether the findings of this study resonates with them. Therefore, I would recommend that similar studies be carried out with other teachers in similar contexts: at different state schools, regions, educational levels and institutions in Pakistan (for example, primary, tertiary levels), and beyond Pakistan. This might broaden our understanding based on the similarities and differences in findings across these different studies.

Although as the research stands now, I tried my best to make sound decisions at every stage (in which I might have succeeded to some extent). However, at the later stages of this research, I realised that this study could have been more improved (I believe) if instead of using both interviews and class observations as the main research tools of the case studies, I had just used interviews as a main tool and conducted many more, say 50, interviews across wide range of teachers and schools. This might have provided me with more opportunities for comparing the findings. This is something I might do as a follow-up to this research.

Moreover, since qualitative studies have no endings, but only questions (Wolcott, 1994, as cited in Creswell & Poth, 2017) and have no right stories but only multiple stories, the general feeling is, "Did we (I) get the story 'right'?"(Stake, 1995). So, as a next step, I would suggest a longitudinal or comparative study. That is, to investigate or examine interconnections within other resource poor contexts and compare the results, particularly resource-rich contexts which, I think, would be more interesting for such comparison(s). Furthermore, as compared to the insights which a longitudinal study may provide, this study is more of a snapshot which is more about providing a way/framework in which teachers' agency or contextual influences (two sides of the same coin) in relation to each other can be investigated. However, if I need to do a follow up study, I might do a purely ethnographic study with a more prolonged stay (both per day as well as over the months) within the teaching context of the participant-teachers.

Thirdly, a further limitation of this study is its focus being primarily upon the teachers' experiences, with no recourse to students' experiences. I realised at a later stage of the research that omitting such a triangulation of the findings was a shortcoming of this project, especially given the fact that students were identified by almost all participants as having a significant impact on participant-teachers' classroom teaching. Therefore, it might have been interesting to look into the experiences of some or any of the other "partners" (Wedell & Malderez, 2013) involved in the implementation of any form of educational change (for instance, preferably students, or other teachers, Heads of School, educational leaders etc.). Focusing on any or some of these individuals may enable us to reveal some of the reasons why they might or might not be able to support English language teachers to implement the required changes.

Fourthly, developing/resource-poor countries are not a simple homogenous grouping. Though implications can be proposed and resonances drawn based on similarities in their socio-economic status, they cannot all be referred to in the same breath as if they had common structural features, similar educational and cultural traditions and convergent expectations of the role that this study can play in contributing to their development.

Fifthly, socio-economic constraints have rarely been the focus of research in language teacher education and even less so in resource-poor contexts. Only one of this context's main problem, that is, 'large classes' has been explored to some extent. For this reason, literature was also drawn to some extent from general education in order to contextualise the current study.

Sixthly, it is just recently that more sustained attention has been given to the actual operationalisation of the 'reflexivity' concept as is attempted in this study, as so far, its discussion has generally been more theoretical (Caetano, 2015). Such a move from the theoretical to the empirical (for investigating an abstract notion in social reality) needs to pay special attention to the methodological instruments (ibid). This is a fundamental stage in any social scientific empirical research (ibid). Saying this with respect to the current research, there is an extremely limited number of empirical studies in general education literature, which have applied Archer's CR model of analysis (with almost no study in the language education literature). As I have pointed out at different places throughout this thesis, one main challenge in trying to operationalise such model, without any precedent to take guidance from, required the development of a methodological strategy which could achieve the defined research aims as well as fit the theoretical parameters. More specifically,

introducing class room observation method with CR framework. Whether such an attempt has met the research aims and objectives, I leave it to the reader to be the judge.

Finally, as we have seen in this study, through Archer's (1997, 2000, 2003, 2007) CR lens, one may trace more directly how adaptations/adjustments to practice get progressively concrete. However, scope still exists for a wider application of this approach with regard to understanding the academic practice (Kahn, 2009). Such consideration provides a challenging but interesting focus for future research. Therefore, I would suggest that further such studies on the comprehensive understanding of the process of 'interplay' between structure and agency might provide educationists a substantial basis for assisting early-career academics to find an appropriate *modus vivendi* for their academic practice, while navigating their way through a range of constraints and enablements. Indeed, such an understanding might also help academic developers to perform their role in supporting any institutional change (Gosling, 2001). Indeed, the degree to which academic developers may or may not assist academics in developing and/or enhancing practice, instead of simply imposing their own views, remains a continuing concern (Holmes & Grant, 2007; Kahn, 2009).

## 9.6 **Final concluding remarks**

The last point which I want to make is that this study has significantly contributed to my own personal and professional growth as an English language teacher, researcher and prospective future trainer, and above all as a human. This research might not be outstanding in terms of my approach to it or its outcome for some (or possibly all) readers, however, the change that I feel in myself, in terms of the skills (personal, professional and transferable) that I developed over the study's four years duration, I hope will prove invaluable after I return to work in educational settings, particularly, in challenging or difficult contexts that I belong to (see section 2.5 above). Specifically, observing the participants' classes and conducting the field work has provided me with some great ideas about introducing more conducive English language learning activities within the confines of the given context in my own ESL classes. Furthermore, listening to the experiences of the participant-teachers and observing them was not only interesting, but it also provide me with an opportunity to reflect on my own journey both as a teacher and how I can further improve my own practices. Finally, on a more personal level, this study proved to be quite an emotional and psychological challenge which, nonetheless, has taught me a great deal about myself and my capabilities.

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## **Appendix A                      Interview guidelines**

### **Broad outline**

1. General discussion regarding level of students, materials and course books used in the classes.
2. Discussion on teaching and teaching practices (why a certain teaching style, method and/or principle was adopted? What particular principles do they follow in teaching? Why particular activities in the class were planned and organised in particular ways? What factors affect their teaching planning and activity design?)
3. Discussion about English language teaching in Pakistani government schools (policy, curriculum, testing system, textbooks, administrative role and expectations, teachers' rights, responsibilities and expectations)
4. Discussion on what, why and how of class organisation (teacher/learner role, distribution of tasks and workloads, questions regarding pair work, group work, and individual work)
5. A good language teacher (knowledge, skills, personality)
6. Challenges in English teaching (e.g. grammar, language points, skills for communication)

### **Examples of slightly specific questions**

The three broad categories: schooling, professional education and contextual factors are taken from Borg's cognition framework (Borg, 2003) and also from Smith (1996: 205) as: teacher teaching experience and TESL background; perceptions of the instructional context such as collegial, student and setting factors; perceptions of the instructional task; and planning decisions regarding task and participation structures. However, the specific questions regarding contextual/institutional factors or influences were informed by the relevant literature as explained in detail in chapter 2 and 3, on the basis of which I developed as many possible questions as I could think of. This was the guide to start with though I followed the natural flow of conversation during the actual interviews as I explained in detail in chapter 4.

<b><u>Initial interview Questions and slight changes after pilot study (highlighted in blue colour)</u></b>	<b><u>Purpose of questions</u></b>
<p>What is your name?</p> <p>How long have you been teaching English in this school?</p> <p>What levels/classes do you teach?</p> <p>What is your qualification?</p>	<p>Establishing the context, building a relationship of confidence and trust and a relax environment</p>
<p>Have you received any training (general or specialised) for teaching English?</p> <p>How has been your experience of teaching English? Tell me about your experiences?</p> <p>Do you always teach English in one particular way or differently?</p> <p>Where do you get ideas about teaching English?</p> <p>What are the main sources that guide your ways of teaching?</p> <p>How do you prepare your lectures or lessons?</p> <p>What are different kinds of influences on your teaching in any shape and form?</p>	<p>General questions: To open up the conversation and to explore what English teaching is like for them</p>
<p><b><i>Interview questions for RQ1 and 2 (structural conditioning and teachers' response)</i></b></p>	
<p>Questions here were mainly based on what I observed e.g.:</p> <p>Why you adopted this (particular) teaching method?</p> <p>Why you interacted with the students in this (a certain) way?</p> <p>Why did you choose this (a certain) activity in the class?</p> <p>Why you did not follow, for example, (here I would ask about different other options)?</p>	<p>To know about teachers' rationalisation for their teaching practices</p>
<p>How much are you guided by your instincts, your beliefs, your personal qualities in teaching English?</p>	

<p>Tell me something about your school experiences of learning English?</p> <p>To what extent your schooling/education plays a role in preparing you as a teacher?</p> <p>What role models do you follow for teaching English?</p>	<p>To know/identify what shapes teachers teaching practices to know about English language learning experiences</p>
<p>How much do you feel yourself prepared to teach English?</p> <p>What do you think a good language teaching is?</p> <p>What do you think how it can be achieved?</p> <p>In what ways do you think English language teaching can be improved?</p> <p>What preservice training have you received to become an English language teacher? <b><u>(Q before pilot)</u></b></p> <p>What CT / PTC / B.Ed<sup>56</sup> courses have you done to become an English language teacher? <b><u>(Change in Q after Pilot)</u></b></p> <p>How much your preservice training have helped you in your teaching English? <b><u>(Q before pilot)</u></b></p> <p>How much these courses have helped you in your teaching English? <b><u>(Change in Q after Pilot)</u></b></p> <p>Do you take/have you taken part in any kind of CPD (continuous professional development) courses? <b><u>(Q before pilot)</u></b></p> <p>Do you take/have you taken part in any language teaching course during your teaching service?<sup>57</sup></p>	<p>To know about teachers' professional education: pre-service, in-service courses and informal learning inside schools</p>

<sup>56</sup> As I came to know these were the prevalent preservice courses teachers need to do to get a teaching job (see section 2.5 in the main thesis for more details)

<sup>57</sup> As teachers were not quite familiar with such technical terms (see section 4.7.3 in the thesis for more on this)

<p>Does it have any effect on your teaching? <b><u>(Q before pilot)</u></b></p> <p><b>How has such course(s) affected</b> your teaching <b><u>(Change in Q after Pilot)</u></b></p> <p>Do you have any kind of support system/groups? <b><u>(Q before pilot)</u></b></p> <p><b>What kind of<sup>58</sup> support system/groups do you have in school?</b> <b><u>(Change in Q after Pilot)</u></b></p> <p>Do you exchange conversations with other teachers? <b><u>(Q before pilot)</u></b></p> <p>Do you <b>have any kind of discussion about any aspect of your English language teaching</b> with other teachers? <b><u>(Change in Q after Pilot)</u></b></p> <p>Do you observe or ask other teachers regarding how to teach English language?</p> <p>Tell me something about education system in these schools?</p> <p>Have your ways of teaching English changed in anyway over the time since you started teaching?</p>	
<p>In what ways or to what extent do you think the workplace/school conditions have influenced your teaching?</p> <p>What kind of resources are available/not available to you for teaching in your class?</p> <p>Do you feel constrained in anyway while teaching English in terms of the resources available in your class or all is fine with your teaching?</p> <p>What kind of difficulties or challenges you face or faced during your teaching so far?</p> <p><b>What is problematic and why?</b> <b><u>(addition after pilot)</u></b></p> <p>How do you cope/have coped with these challenges and difficulties?</p>	<p>To explore in what ways different social and institutional factors shape teachers' teaching while they operate in their workplace/teaching context</p>

<sup>58</sup> Realised it's more of an open ended question likely to elicit more information from the teachers owing to the nature of the participants (see section 4.7.3 for more on this)

<p>If you have the choice, what would you like to change about the current teaching situation and why?</p> <p>How will your teaching be different if the current circumstances change?</p>	
<p><i>Winding up interview</i></p>	
<p>Is there anything else you would like to share about your English language learning and teaching experiences in general and particularly in these (secondary) schools?</p>	<p>To ensure that I do not miss any important information and participants share what they want if not already covered by my questions</p>



## Appendix B      Observation guide and field notes template

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of observation** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Duration of class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class level:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class size:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Language learning/teaching focus/use:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>What to observe</b> (Descriptive notes on classroom activities)		<b>Reflective notes or comments</b>
Teacher activity		
Student(s)' activity		
Main teaching approaches and methodologies		
Instructional materials/resources		
Classroom environment		
others		

Adapted from Ho (2011) and based on ideas from Richard and Rodgers' framework (1982) and Smith (1996) (see chapter 4, section 4.7.5.3)

An example from the real time observation is the following.

**School:** C

**Teacher:** Alia

**Date of observation:** 21/09/2016

**Class time:** 9:45-10:25 am

**Duration of class:** 40 mins approx.

**Class level:** 7

**Class size:** Forty-five

**Lesson Topic:** Preposition

**Language learning/teaching focus/use:** Grammar (mainly accuracy focused)

What to observe (Descriptive notes on classroom activities)		Reflective notes or comments
Teacher activity	The teacher told the students that today they will read grammar.	
Student(s)' activity	Students listens.	
Teacher activity	Teacher relates today's lesson with the previous lesson by asking the students what they had read yesterday.	Possibly as a warm up or revising the topic.
Student(s)' activity	Students answered in chorus "pronoun	
Teacher activity	The teacher asked can you define the pronoun.	Students do not answer possibly they do not know the answer or can't dare.
Student(s)' activity	Silence/no body attempts to answer.	

Teacher activity	The teacher calls out a student “malaika” to answer the teacher’s question by reading from the book.	Having no response from students the teacher by pointing out a student, kind of forcing/ensuring response.
Student(s)’ activity	Malaika answers.	Asking student to read from the book might mean either helping her to speak up or just fulfilling a formality.
–	The teacher listens and when the girl finishes her answer, ask for volunteer by asking “anyone else”.  Resultantly, a student stands up and starts reading from the book just like her teacher has been doing the previous day.	Sounds rote learning without grasping the concept. Getting students to imitate does not necessarily ensure conceptual understanding
–	The teacher asks the student to sit down.  Student is reading nonstop from the book.	Quite mechanic
–	The teacher asks students to look at page 82 which is about ‘preposition’ and with this writes the topic “preposition” on the blackboard along with saying the spelling aloud.  Students opens the page and listen to the teacher.	
–	The teacher starts reading from the book and when she finishes the sentence, asks students that now they tell what a preposition is.  The students answer in chorus as a full class and they also read the answer from book.	Reading like the previous lesson on ‘pronoun’  Quite chaotic

-	<p>The teacher again repeats and reads from the book the same definition of preposition.</p> <p>Students look at the books and listen.</p>	
-	<p>The teacher tells the Urdu translation of preposition as “haroofe jar” and writes the Urdu version on board while saying it aloud and starts the Urdu translation of the whole definition of ‘preposition’ which she just read from the book.</p> <p>Students look at the books and listen.</p>	
-	<p>Teacher asks students the definition of noun, while she reads the definition of preposition from the book.</p> <p>The students answer in chorus.</p>	<p>Quite difficult to know which student is answering and whether all are answering.</p>
-	<p>Teacher asks about the pronoun.</p> <p>Students responded.</p>	<p>Quite a lot of repetition in the same way. Won't reinforcement in some other way be more fruitful e.g. some activity regarding pronoun.</p>
-	<p>The teacher then translates the definition of preposition in Urdu.</p> <p>Students listen.</p>	
-	<p>Teacher again reads the definition and examples of preposition from the book.</p> <p>Students listen.</p>	

–	<p>Teacher writes the examples of preposition from the book on the board while saying it aloud</p> <p>Students sometimes join the teacher in chorus.</p>	<p>Possibly teacher feels that the students are not getting the lesson or concept that's why lot of repetition by her.</p>
–	<p>Teacher again starts reading from the book and asks the students the meaning of 'before' which came in during the reading.</p> <p>A student attempts to answer and the teacher corrects her as she said the meaning wrong.</p>	
–	<p>Teacher again starts reading from the book in English and translates the same in Urdu with some explanation in Urdu language.</p> <p>Students listen.</p>	
–	<p>Teacher starts re-reading the same lines in one go in English from the book. This time without Urdu translation.</p> <p>Students listen.</p>	
–	<p>Teacher while reading from the book as examples come, she starts writing them on the board and saying it aloud as well.</p> <p>Students listen.</p>	<p>Why is she writing the same examples on the board which are already there in the book and the students can see</p>

-	<p>Teacher points to the board and explains by asking the students which one is preposition in this sentence. While they are answering, the teacher also checks students understanding of the grammar by asking about few other words, “cat, sleeping, table” as which parts of speech these words belong to.</p> <p>Students tried to answer.</p>	<p>She might have taught these words in some previous lessons and so now checking their understanding</p> <p>She is writing on the board possibly to discuss the examples with the students</p>
-	<p>Teacher explains the whole sentence once again and the different parts of speech in it.</p> <p>Students listen.</p>	<p>Too much teacher talk</p>
-	<p>The teacher continues the same above process with few more sentences translating and explaining them in the same way: write few sentences on the board and few does verbally. She is explaining preposition mentioned in examples in Urdu. Reads example from books and few examples from real life alongside.</p> <p>Students listen.</p>	<p>Possibly at this point she could have asked students to try giving few examples of pronouns from their real life.</p>
-	<p>Teacher asks “samjh aa gaye<sup>59</sup>” and starts all over again asking students “what is preposition?”</p> <p>The students answer in chorus reading from the book.</p>	<p>I personally don't think it a good way to check understanding as the students are reading and answering from the book.</p> <p>Either she is saving time or do not know the alternative possible ways.</p>

<sup>59</sup> English translation: Have you understood?

-	<p>Now the teacher again repeats the definition of preposition from the book and asks students “abb samj aa gaye<sup>60</sup>” referring to the sentences written on board and explains preposition in Urdu.</p> <p>Students listen.</p>	<p>Why is the teacher presuming that the students have not understood yet? If so, why doesn't she try some other way to check students' understanding?</p>
-	<p>Teacher starts reading from the book “types of preposition” and asks students the meaning of “type” and continues reading the text in English and provides Urdu translation of the word “phrase”. She further explains that now they will be reading about the different types of preposition</p> <p>Students listen.</p>	
-	<p>Teacher cleans the board and starts writing “types of preposition” with each type copied and written from the book on the board.</p> <p>Students look at the board and listen.</p>	<p>Why is the teacher copying words on the board already there in the book?</p>

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<sup>60</sup> English translation: Now have you understood?

-	<p>Teacher then reads that type from the book with its examples and translate and explains the lines read in Urdu line by line. Occasionally asks students a certain point but such engagement is rare in between. The teacher talks more by explaining in Urdu the points from the book. Teacher once or twice relate the examples with students real life examples.</p> <p>Occasionally students answer in chorus.</p>	
-	<p>Teacher writes the examples of the same first type on the board while saying it aloud. Teacher asks students few times “samjh aa gaye” in between. She explains/translates such simple words as “lunch” to students.</p> <p>Students mainly silent and looking at the teacher</p>	<p>Why she writes again on the board the same examples she just read from the book?</p> <p>She is asking for reassurance that the students have grasped the concept by asking them multiple times than trying other ways to know this.</p>
-	<p>Teacher asks the students if it’s enough for today and asks them if they have learnt it.</p> <p>Students remain silent. Few just nods head.</p>	<p>I believe should try to know this in other ways than directly asking them. Seems more of forcing concepts in students’ memory at one time.</p>

-	<p>Teacher asks the students to look at page 79 and points them to the activity in the book where they are required to find the preposition in the given text. The teacher asks the students to underline the prepositions. She repeated the activity and instructions once again</p> <p>The students starts the activity.</p>	<p>Sounds good. At least tried something differently.</p>
-	<p>While the students are doing the activity, the teacher explains the instruction twice again with a rough example and answers any confusion asked by students. She moves around the class while the students are doing the activity and looks at their copies. The teacher reminds them to keep silence whenever the noise goes up.</p> <p>The students seem to be doing the activity.</p>	
-	<p>The teacher checks few copies of the students who completed the exercise and brought the copies to the teacher.</p> <p>The students still seem to be doing the activity.</p>	

-	<p>Teacher asks a student “shabana” to read the lines of the activities where she has underlined the preposition. While she is reading the lines, the period bell went off. However the teacher still continues. When the student answered, the teacher repeats the answer and also explains it a little to the students.</p> <p>The student pointed out by the teacher answered what the teacher asked her.</p>	<p>Seems the teacher needs some more time to finish the activity</p>
-	<p>The teacher continues the feedback on activity in the same way by asking 3 more girls in turn and repeating and explaining the students’ answers. The teacher once again asks the students “samjh aa gaye”.</p> <p>The students pointed out by the teacher answered what the teacher asked her.</p>	
-	<p>At the end the teacher gives H.W as to write the definition of preposition and the examples and identify/underline the different parts of speech in the sentence and write them in the form of a table below.</p> <p>Students note down the home work.</p>	

Main teaching approaches and methodology	<p>Teacher is mainly reading and translating word to word from the course book.</p> <p>She explains and repeat a lot, having more teacher talk and creating less opportunities for students practice.</p> <p>Reinforcement by students in class is mainly through imitating teacher by reading from the book in chorus marked by less students' participation.</p>	
Instructional materials/resources	<p>Blackboard and chalk for writing. - Duster for wiping the board.</p> <p>Course/text book to teach from.</p>	
Classroom environment	<p>Crowded</p> <p>Silence at the front but sometime gets little noisy at the back</p>	
others	<p>Some construction work is going around, creating great disturbance</p> <p>No light and teacher has kept the doors and windows open possibly for light and air</p>	
<p><u>Overall comments:</u></p> <p><u>Students' predominant role:</u> Not active (passive recipient), less student participation.</p> <p><u>Teacher's predominant role:</u> Director / knowledge transmitter, More teacher talk.</p> <p>In this lesson the main teaching style and engagement of the students by the teacher was the same as the previous classes. However, this time I noticed the drilling comparatively a little less and more talk time by the teacher. Also, this time I notice comparatively less interaction between the teacher and students even as a whole group.</p>		



## Appendix C Participant Information Sheet

Dear participant,

Thank you for accepting to participate in my research project. This form provides you the necessary information regarding the research project in which you are invited to take part in. Participation in this project is voluntary.

**Please read the following information and if you are happy to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form.**

**Research project title:** Exploring English language teachers' agency in resource-poor secondary state schools of Pakistan: A critical realist perspective

**Aim of the project:** This project aims to undertake a research in a specific area of Applied Linguistics required for the fulfilment of PhD degree and also to train the prospective researchers in designing and carrying out a research as an independent researcher. The interviews you are being asked to participate in and your classes that I am being allowed to observe will enable me to have sufficient data necessary for the successful completion of this project. This project is a compulsory element of my PhD course at the University of Southampton.

**Data Collection:** The data necessary for the project will be obtained by observing your English classes in which I will just sit quietly and observe the activities of the class. It will also include taking your interviews in which you will be asked few questions framed around the project which you will be kindly asked to answer to the best of your knowledge. This is not a test so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. We are interested in your personal opinion. Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation. Secondly, you will have an opportunity to have your say in order to enable me to use these results as part of future teacher development courses for effectiveness of teaching. Also, you can be sent the results of the findings if you are interested.

**No Risks:** The interview questions and observations do not target any specific teacher but relate to teachers' general experiences, so there are no risks involved, still you can either suggest your name or any identification that you can be associated with, in which case, it will not appear on the research project, in order to maintain your anonymity. But I would

surely ask for your contact number and email address for any future correspondence just in case.

**Confidentiality:** The contents of this form, the observations and your responses will be absolutely confidential and will not be shared with anyone in any situation. Information identifying the respondent will not be disclosed under any circumstances. Although your name and some other personal details are being asked for, it is only done so in order to be able to contact you in case I feel the need for any clarification of any part of the interview responses or sections of the observed classes or to further interview you.

The University of Southampton regulations require each participant to consent to his/her participation, so I am asking you to sign the consent form attached next in case of your participation.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation and gratefulness for your participation in my research project. Please feel free to send me your queries, comments or suggestions about this project at email (Ms12g12@soton.ac.uk)

Kind regards,

Mahrukh Shakir

PhD student

Ethics number: 21506

University of Southampton

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D                      Consent form

**Study title:** Exploring English language teachers’ agency in resource-poor secondary state schools of Pakistan: A critical realist perspective

**Researcher name:** Shakir, M

**Student number:** 25757326

**ERGO reference number:** 21506

**Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):**

I have read and understood the given information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my data to be used for the purpose of this study.

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without my legal rights being affected

Data Protection

I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study and only by the researcher. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.

Name of participant .....

Signature of participant.....

Date.....



## Appendix E

## Sample of field notes

### Field notes: 17/08/2016

Main focus of my observation is the teacher so my camera will mainly capture her and anything related to her. Secondly, since the students are slightly conscious of myself being there and the recording so I should avoid focusing sharply on them. Anything inside the brackets and highlighted in yellow below are my reflections/annotations which indicate possible reasons for a particular event or teacher's behaviour and so possible areas for post observation interviews.

#### **School B:**

**Locality of the school:** Quite busy, noisy and rough area. That is surroundings are not very clean. There are few small shops around. The school is located in and surrounded by narrow streets. There isn't enough space even for my car to properly park. Crowd of students are getting in and out of school. Many people are standing at the gates (possibly for admissions). An old watchman is there at the gate.

**Nature of the school:** Since it's a boy's school, people around do not seem to be used to females. (Possibly that's why the students and other people inside are giving me strange looks). It's a 2 storey building. The school building seems very old and is not properly maintained. The school area is quite large, having a well sized ground but maintenance is quite poor. There seem to be enough number of classrooms though the classrooms do not seem to be sufficiently spacious for the given number of students as students in most of the classes are sitting squeezed in or quite tight to each other.

The school has recently opened after summer holidays.

Since its boys school so all the students are boys.

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**Teacher:** Nawaz

**Date of observation:** 17/08/2016

**Class time:** 9:45-10:25 am

**Duration of class:** 40 mins approx.

**Class level:** 9

**Class size:** 80

**Lesson Topic:** Text/Chapter “The Madina Charter”

**Language learning/teaching focus/use:** vocabulary and pronunciation (mainly accuracy focused)

**Nature and condition of the classroom (inside):** The class has a very old traditional look. There is one chair and one big square table for the teacher placed in between the front of the room and near the entrance door. These are the first things to be seen when one enters the room. This shows that the teacher mainly operates or teaches from the central location of the front of the classroom. (I believe, from this position he might have an easy access to the blackboard) which is mostly the only main resource in these classrooms with one other, that is, the textbook. While teaching, the teacher mostly directly faces the middle row but he can also somehow manages keeping an eye upon the kids sitting in the front few (two or three) rows on his both right and left hand sides. On the other hand it seems difficult for the teacher to keep an eye on the students sitting at the rear of the classroom. Thus, the teacher seems to have more focus on the front area of the classroom and the students therein. While the rear of the classroom seems to be out of the teacher’s focus and possibly attention domain. This seems to influence students’ behaviour at various locations in the classroom such as the rear or the front of the classroom. For example, apparently the front rows seem to be more attentive to the teacher as compared to the rear ones.

For students, there are three longitudinal columns of long benches for sitting coupled with long benches to be used as desks. The room is not very spacious especially given the number of students to accommodate. Therefore, most of the students are almost squeezed on their benches which have the capacity to accommodate 3 to 4 students but around 6 to 7 are sitting on most of them. Not having enough space, almost all the students have placed their bags on the desks and as a result, probably, their books in their laps. Rows are 3. The furniture in the class is very old, and rusty, truly representing a resource-poor school which seems quite typical of other resource-poor government schools. The paint on the walls is removed from many places. There are 2 narrow cupboards having students’ copies. There are very narrow pathways between the columns and rows. I am not sure but may be this is the reason the teacher is not moving around in the class, or may be due to the need of excessive writing

(each and every point) on the board, he cannot afford moving around (possibly a Q to ask in the interview)

There are two windows on the same side as the entrance door is. The room is square in shape with a big white board on the wall at the front of the class room. There is only one fan for 80 students. Mostly there is power cut and so no light and electricity but having it occasionally. Since its extreme summer, around 45°c outside. So all students seem very disturbed because of extreme hot as some of them using books as fans. The walls are heavily covered with different kinds of charts, having diagrams relating to different subjects but mostly having religious content on them. The students are not very noisy despite being huge strength possibly because of having someone unusual, that is, me (either being a stranger or being a female). Other reason might be the personality of the teacher (e.g. either authoritative or serious or having command on the subject) (Possibly I need to ask this question in the interview later). Though the back rows have some disturbance occasionally as compared to the front rows.

**About Boys/students:** Almost all students are wearing ordinary clothes, rather from their clothes, majority seems to be from quite poor families. As being part of that culture, I can identify what kind of clothes are representative of which class of people in our society. Apparently they seem to be listening attentively to their teacher. Sometimes they steal a glance at me and when observe me writing my notes, they turn their face and start looking at the teacher again. Some students near me are smiling to themselves (possibly because of my presence or the camera). Since the research culture and/or presence of the researcher is not a common practice in our society especially in such backward areas, usually people (and these students might also) mix being filmed with filming for electronic media/reporting/publicity purposes. (I should ask about these different possibilities in the interview afterwards. For example, about the particular behaviour of students that I observed in this class, the effect of my presence on them, Q's whether the class is different in any way from the one when I am not there, students' speculations about me etc.)

All these observations are regarding this particular class but most of these features are common to other classes that I have observed in this school, with slight variations I mentioned in those field notes. The school and the classes are typical of resource-poor government schools in Pakistan as I know from my experience being part of this culture as well as on the basis of some of the schools that I have visited during this research.

**Events and incidents:** When I entered the school, I was first taken to the headmaster room where I met the teachers I was intending to observe and interview. We had a cup of tea and then one of those teachers took me to his class which was next in the timetable.

When I entered the class, all the boys stood up and greeted me and their teacher. I am not sure is it just for me or their teacher. Since I belong to this culture, I know that its part of our schools especially primary and secondary schools culture to greet the teachers by standing up for him/her saying either in Arabic “assalamoalaikom” or “good morning or good afternoon” depending on time of the day. The teacher then asks them to sit down. I am offered a choice where to sit in the classroom. I chose to sit where I can be less distracting yet I can see everyone clearly especially the teacher who is the main focus of my study. Initially, there is quite a noise as the students are trying to settle down; moving benches slightly to suit their comfort, shuffling books and papers, etc. They do not sit in neat rows but have spread out randomly. The students seem to be slightly conscious of my presence possibly both on account of myself being a female, I believe, and a stranger as well.

A typical teaching pattern and the teacher/student activities in the classroom are as follows.

At this point in the class when teaching started, I continued filling up the table in chronological order in the same manner as I have mentioned in Appendix B with reference to the participant-teacher, Alia. However, here, I mention some events of the same class where I am speculating possible reasons/mechanisms for particular teacher’s behaviour and possibly questions for post observation interview).

- Sometimes the teacher is asking students direct questions about the sentences he is explaining and translating (possibly for keeping students engaged and involved).

-Since it's a religious topic so the teacher is also referring to the background religious knowledge of the students (possibly for making students better understand)

-The teacher considered this much teaching of the text to be enough (may be to teach more might be too much for students to digest for their age or current level of language proficiency)

-After explaining the whole topic once, now the teacher has started the text all over again but this time he is continuously just reading the text and translating it side by side without any questions from the students or break (possibly to ensure smooth flow and an overall understanding of the students)

- Teacher is mostly using Pushto language. He hardly uses few sentences in English. (Possibly he might think students have difficulty understanding English and they may understand more if the text is translated in their L1)

Some more example of field notes from the participant-teacher Yasir from the same school as Nawaz is given below, although I have not presented his case analysis in this thesis for the reasons mentioned in chapter 5 section 5.4. This is to give a further idea of my field notes.

**School:** B

**Teacher:** Yasir

**Date of observation:** 25/08/2016

**Class time:** 9:15-9:55 am

**Duration of class:** 40 mins approx.

**Lesson Topic:** Text/Chapter “The last address of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W)”

**Class level:** 10

**Class size:** 60

**Nature and condition of the classroom (inside):** The class is quite untidy and seem to have not been cleaned for days. Desks and benches seem to be quite comfortable but shabby. It's a first class after holidays. Also annual exams are going around. So students' strength seems to be quite low as compared to the other days. The walls are all covered with a lot of charts having very large font of religious and Urdu text written on them. One very interesting note is written in Pushto on the wall opposite to me as, “da wakht bu hum tair shi” (This time will also pass ultimately). This phrase can have both positive or negative connotation but being part of the same culture (so I may know the possible interpretation in this situation) and written in such resource poor school, it usually have negative connotation of “passivism”, that is, “not very good time so consoling oneself not to be dis-hearted as this difficult time will also pass one day”. This class is even more congested and shabby than the ones I have attended previously during the field work. This teacher is not writing anything on the board yet. He is teaching in a way as if in a hurry to finish the class or topic.

However, as opposed to the other teacher, he first finished reading and translating the text, then started writing words (difficult in his view) on the board in one go while asked the students to read the text one by one with translation. This style may be a way to engage

students in reading and thus avoiding them to be less disruptive or possibly be for students' pronunciation and fluency. Whatever the reason may be, the teacher is engrossed in writing words and their meanings on the board, least bothered by correcting the students in any way. The difficult words written on the board by the teacher even contain very simple words and translation for students of class 10 (in terms of their language proficiency). Such as "died", "age", (possibly the teacher considers these students to be too weak in English language).

In the middle of the class, a man with a stick came inside and all stood up in respect. He sounds like some man of authority the way he carries his posture and the way the students greeted him by standing in respect for him (in our culture, standing for someone is a kind of showing highest level of respect for someone). Then he sat on a nearby bench meant for students and kind of looking around as if observing the class (well I will ask about it in the interview). Since it's not a common practice in govt schools to have inspection, it seems this man has come exactly at a time when I am here which is another indication that they are possibly taking me some kind of a high-up authority reporting on schools and so possibly giving me an impression that how much they keep an eye around.

#### Field notes: 31/08/2016

Today the teachers hardly agreed to allow me observe their further classes on the condition to wind this observation process as quickly as possible as they felt quite disturbed by my presence. This is possibly due to the fact that these are resource-poor schools and so have no idea of research and might have understood it with kinds of report to the high-ups. This can be evident from the fact that in initial few classes they were kind of paying over respect by especially greeting me. Also on one occasion, one of the teachers asked me to give good comments about us if you are passing on your observations to someone. This teacher was also kind of reluctant initially to confront me both for the interviews and class observation.

#### Field notes: 02/09/2016

Today one another kind of problem surfaced. Initially most of the participants agreed on my terms but after 2<sup>nd</sup> interviews, almost all of them are quite reluctant for prolonged and recurrent interviews. That is after every class (possibly they view it as not a very useful activity especially for them or possibly they might be quite busy to spare some time each time). So keeping in view the participants comfort, observations and interviews are being tried to be conducted as much as possible on the participants' terms except for participants who are still ready.

Also participants are not ready to allot any other time for interviews other than school timings, because of their different reasons, such as, mostly their family commitments, some living quite at a distance and need public transport to catch, some need to be home on time due to reserve culture and prevailing law and order situation etc. And during school timings they are mostly in a rush for their classes. So I need to kind of squeeze post observation questions in those few minutes along the way to their classes. The only big chunk of time available to them and so to me was their break time which was roughly one hour which helped me to manage at least one detailed interview in that.



## Appendix G Samples of the coding process

The following are few screenshots from the N-vivo while coding during the data analysis process that show how the two research questions guided the initial coding stage and how further categories and sub-categories emerged.

The screenshot shows the NVivo software interface with a tree view of nodes. The root node is 'RQ-1 Structural conditioning'. It has two main sub-nodes: 'Constraints' and 'Enabling factors'. Under 'Constraints', there are sub-nodes for 'Administrative factors', 'Exams factor', 'Material factors', 'Students related factors', 'Teachers related factors', and 'Time related factors'. Under 'Enabling factors', there are sub-nodes for 'Accountability element in exams', 'AOC', 'Appreciation and encouraging environment', 'Colleagues help', 'Command on the subject', 'Enthusiasm', 'Experience', 'Lesson plan or prep', 'material resource', 'Nature of textbook', 'Preservice courses', 'reinforcement through deductive approach', 'Reliance on reflection', 'Subject specific qualification', and 'Variation in teaching'. Each node is associated with a number of files, references, and creation/modification dates.

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
RQ-1 Structural conditioning	0	0	29/07/2018 00:22	MS	06/10/2018 11:53	MS
Constraints	0	0	29/07/2018 00:22	MS	29/07/2018 00:22	MS
Administrative factors	0	0	29/07/2018 14:48	MS	29/07/2018 14:48	MS
Exams factor	1	2	29/07/2018 14:15	MS	13/10/2018 10:50	MS
Material factors	0	0	09/10/2018 16:17	MS	09/10/2018 16:17	MS
Students related factors	0	0	29/07/2018 14:21	MS	29/07/2018 14:21	MS
Teachers related factors	0	0	29/07/2018 16:45	MS	13/10/2018 19:06	MS
Time related factors	0	0	29/07/2018 18:22	MS	29/07/2018 18:22	MS
Enabling factors	0	0	06/10/2018 14:47	MS	06/10/2018 14:47	MS
Accountability element in exams	1	2	22/10/2018 19:08	MS	22/10/2018 20:15	MS
AOC	1	1	16/10/2018 20:45	MS	16/10/2018 20:50	MS
+ve AOC	2	2	09/10/2018 15:46	MS	16/10/2018 18:26	MS
-ve AOC	1	4	07/10/2018 17:39	MS	16/10/2018 20:45	MS
Appreciation and encouraging environment	1	1	09/10/2018 17:30	MS	09/10/2018 17:31	MS
Colleagues help	4	8	06/10/2018 19:19	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Command on the subject	1	1	06/10/2018 19:30	MS	16/10/2018 19:09	MS
Enthusiasm	2	3	11/10/2018 10:59	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Experience	2	4	06/10/2018 19:25	MS	16/10/2018 17:27	MS
Lesson plan or prep	2	7	06/10/2018 14:48	MS	23/10/2018 20:17	MS
material resource	4	5	06/10/2018 16:49	MS	16/10/2018 19:54	MS
Nature of textbook	1	1	10/10/2018 14:39	MS	16/10/2018 19:57	MS
Preservice courses	0	0	06/10/2018 17:05	MS	06/10/2018 17:07	MS
reinforcement through deductive approach	1	1	13/10/2018 12:58	MS	13/10/2018 12:58	MS
Reliance on reflection	2	3	06/10/2018 16:47	MS	16/10/2018 20:41	MS
Subject specific qualification	1	2	06/10/2018 19:27	MS	16/10/2018 20:41	MS
Variation in teaching	1	1	06/10/2018 16:24	MS	16/10/2018 20:44	MS

The screenshot shows the NVivo software interface with a tree view of nodes. The root node is 'RQ-1 Structural conditioning'. It has two main sub-nodes: 'Constraints' and 'Enabling factors'. Under 'Constraints', there are sub-nodes for 'Administrative factors', 'Exams factor', and 'Material factors'. Under 'Enabling factors', there are sub-nodes for 'Economic issues', 'Large classes', 'Students related factors', 'Teachers related factors', and 'Time related factors'. Each node is associated with a number of files, references, and creation/modification dates.

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
RQ-1 Structural conditioning	0	0	29/07/2018 00:22	MS	06/10/2018 11:53	MS
Constraints	0	0	29/07/2018 00:22	MS	29/07/2018 00:22	MS
Administrative factors	0	0	29/07/2018 14:48	MS	29/07/2018 14:48	MS
Exams factor	1	2	29/07/2018 14:15	MS	13/10/2018 10:50	MS
Nature of English question paper	2	4	13/10/2018 11:21	MS	13/10/2018 11:29	MS
Material factors	0	0	09/10/2018 16:17	MS	09/10/2018 16:17	MS
Economic issues	0	0	29/07/2018 19:59	MS	13/10/2018 11:35	MS
Inadequate or inappropriate learning resources	3	3	29/07/2018 20:02	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Insufficient classroom facilities	4	16	09/10/2018 15:53	MS	23/10/2018 19:56	MS
Lack of peaceful environment	1	1	09/10/2018 17:26	MS	09/10/2018 17:26	MS
Large classes	2	2	29/07/2018 12:48	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Insufficient space for different activities	3	5	29/07/2018 14:04	MS	22/10/2018 23:06	MS
Relative to assessment or reinforcement work	2	2	09/10/2018 16:29	MS	13/10/2018 14:13	MS
Relative to class management or discipline	4	4	29/07/2018 14:05	MS	13/10/2018 12:14	MS
Relative to teacher's attention to students	2	2	29/07/2018 14:02	MS	13/10/2018 14:13	MS
Relative to teaching method	2	3	29/07/2018 12:49	MS	22/10/2018 22:52	MS
Relative to the allocated class time	1	1	22/10/2018 16:52	MS	22/10/2018 16:52	MS
Students related factors	0	0	29/07/2018 14:21	MS	29/07/2018 14:21	MS
Lack of interest or attention	2	6	29/07/2018 18:21	MS	13/10/2018 19:04	MS
Lack of required competence level	0	0	07/10/2018 19:37	MS	13/10/2018 16:30	MS
Lack of self study culture	2	3	29/07/2018 20:09	MS	23/10/2018 19:58	MS
Parents disinterest	2	2	07/10/2018 20:38	MS	10/10/2018 21:05	MS
socioeconomic status	1	5	29/07/2018 19:52	MS	13/10/2018 16:22	MS
Teachers related factors	0	0	29/07/2018 16:45	MS	13/10/2018 19:06	MS
Time related factors	0	0	29/07/2018 18:22	MS	29/07/2018 18:22	MS

**Nodes**

Name	Range Code	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Material factors	Code content within specified ranges at selected codes or cases. For example, code paragraphs 1-5 or transcript rows 3-6 at selected nodes.	0	09/10/2018 16:17	MS	09/10/2018 16:17	MS
Students related factors		0	29/07/2018 14:21	MS	29/07/2018 14:21	MS
Lack of interest or attention		2	29/07/2018 18:21	MS	13/10/2018 19:04	MS
Lack of required competence level		0	07/10/2018 19:37	MS	13/10/2018 16:30	MS
students weak level of understanding		4	29/07/2018 14:22	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Weak base in English language		3	07/10/2018 19:38	MS	23/10/2018 18:18	MS
weak English level		4	29/07/2018 18:45	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Lack of self study culture		2	29/07/2018 20:09	MS	23/10/2018 19:58	MS
Parents disinterest		2	07/10/2018 20:38	MS	10/10/2018 21:05	MS
socioeconomic status		1	29/07/2018 19:52	MS	13/10/2018 16:22	MS
Teachers related factors		0	29/07/2018 16:45	MS	13/10/2018 19:06	MS
Competency		0	07/10/2018 18:05	MS	07/10/2018 18:05	MS
Language proficiency or command on the subject		4	10/07/2018 18:03	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Non serious attitude towards ELT or lesson preparation		3	07/10/2018 19:21	MS	23/10/2018 20:07	MS
Structuralist approach to or vision of English language learning		3	09/10/2018 16:45	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Guidance for teachers		0	08/10/2018 21:59	MS	13/10/2018 20:13	MS
In-service training courses		0	29/07/2018 14:50	MS	21/10/2018 22:42	MS
Choosing the right candidate		3	10/10/2018 09:00	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
lack of inservice courses		4	29/07/2018 14:51	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
lack of uptodate or contextualised knowledge and techniques		4	29/07/2018 16:42	MS	24/10/2018 19:13	MS
Lack of general guidance		1	06/10/2018 14:53	MS	13/10/2018 21:50	MS
Lack or need of specialised ELT guidance		3	08/10/2018 22:02	MS	13/10/2018 22:03	MS
preservice training courses		0	29/07/2018 12:40	MS	21/10/2018 22:42	MS
Main reliance on external professional guidance		3	09/10/2018 15:33	MS	24/10/2018 17:34	MS

**Nodes**

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
RQ-1 Structural conditioning		0	29/07/2018 00:22	MS	06/10/2018 11:53	MS
Constraints		0	29/07/2018 00:22	MS	29/07/2018 00:22	MS
Administrative factors		0	29/07/2018 14:48	MS	29/07/2018 14:48	MS
Exams factor		1	29/07/2018 14:15	MS	13/10/2018 10:50	MS
Material factors		0	09/10/2018 16:17	MS	09/10/2018 16:17	MS
Students related factors		0	29/07/2018 14:21	MS	29/07/2018 14:21	MS
Teachers related factors		0	29/07/2018 16:45	MS	13/10/2018 19:06	MS
Time related factors		0	29/07/2018 18:22	MS	29/07/2018 18:22	MS
Enabling factors		0	06/10/2018 14:47	MS	06/10/2018 14:47	MS
Accountability element in exams		1	22/10/2018 19:08	MS	22/10/2018 20:15	MS
AOO		1	16/10/2018 20:45	MS	16/10/2018 20:50	MS
Appreciation and encouraging environment		1	09/10/2018 17:30	MS	09/10/2018 17:31	MS
Colleagues help		4	06/10/2018 19:19	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Command on the subject		1	06/10/2018 19:30	MS	16/10/2018 19:09	MS
Enthusiasm		2	11/10/2018 10:59	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Experience		2	06/10/2018 19:25	MS	16/10/2018 17:27	MS
Lesson plan or prep		2	06/10/2018 14:48	MS	23/10/2018 20:17	MS
material resource		4	06/10/2018 16:49	MS	16/10/2018 19:54	MS
Nature of textbook		1	10/10/2018 14:39	MS	16/10/2018 19:57	MS
Preservice courses		0	06/10/2018 17:05	MS	06/10/2018 17:07	MS
Helpful in general teaching skills		2	09/10/2018 13:54	MS	16/10/2018 21:28	MS
Helpful in lesson preparation		1	06/10/2018 17:08	MS	16/10/2018 21:02	MS
Helpful in seeking students attention		1	09/10/2018 13:07	MS	16/10/2018 21:03	MS
reinforcement through deductive approach		1	13/10/2018 12:58	MS	13/10/2018 12:58	MS
Reliance on reflection		2	06/10/2018 16:47	MS	16/10/2018 20:41	MS
Subject specific qualification		1	06/10/2018 19:27	MS	16/10/2018 20:41	MS

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
R-Q 2 and 3 Teacher's response or pedagogical outcome		0	06/10/2018 11:55	MS	06/10/2018 18:10	MS
Compliance		0	15/10/2018 17:33	MS	15/10/2018 17:33	MS
In relation to discipline issues		1	15/10/2018 17:35	MS	15/10/2018 17:35	MS
In relation to preservice guidance		1	09/10/2018 12:58	MS	15/10/2018 17:35	MS
Creative tendency		2	10/10/2018 11:49	MS	16/10/2018 20:44	MS
Regarding constraints		0	09/10/2018 13:09	MS	09/10/2018 13:09	MS
Dealing with class management		3	10/10/2018 12:12	MS	16/10/2018 16:42	MS
Dealing with lack of professional guidance		1	09/10/2018 15:36	MS	25/10/2018 22:33	MS
Dealing with lack of resources		2	10/10/2018 12:18	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Dealing with students' required competence		1	10/10/2018 11:42	MS	16/10/2018 16:16	MS
Deductive approach to teaching		4	07/10/2018 17:32	MS	15/10/2018 23:13	MS
In-sufficient class time		1	09/10/2018 16:41	MS	15/10/2018 18:47	MS
Reliance on L1 and L2		1	06/10/2018 12:00	MS	15/10/2018 19:57	MS
Towards assessment or reinforcement activities or work		2	13/10/2018 12:49	MS	16/10/2018 16:44	MS
Towards lack of command		2	11/10/2018 11:06	MS	16/10/2018 19:39	MS
Towards preparation for exams		1	11/10/2018 10:12	MS	16/10/2018 15:34	MS
Towards students' interest or attention		3	06/10/2018 18:05	MS	15/10/2018 18:28	MS
RQ-1 Structural conditioning		0	29/07/2018 00:22	MS	06/10/2018 11:53	MS
Constraints		0	29/07/2018 00:22	MS	29/07/2018 00:22	MS
Administrative factors		0	29/07/2018 14:48	MS	29/07/2018 14:48	MS
Exams factor		1	29/07/2018 14:15	MS	13/10/2018 10:50	MS
Material factors		0	09/10/2018 16:17	MS	09/10/2018 16:17	MS
Students related factors		0	29/07/2018 14:21	MS	29/07/2018 14:21	MS
Teachers related factors		0	29/07/2018 16:45	MS	13/10/2018 19:06	MS
Time related factors		0	29/07/2018 18:22	MS	29/07/2018 18:22	MS



## Appendix H

## Code book

Name	Description
R-Q 2 and 3 Teacher's response or pedagogical outcome	These are instances where the teacher respond to a particular constraint in a certain way which count towards his/her current pedagogical outcome
Compliance	Instances where the teacher gives up to the given constraint and acts or behaves in a way which he/she might not have done in the absence of that constraint
In relation to discipline issues	Teacher tries to maintain discipline in any way even if it compromises effective teaching
In relation to preservice guidance	Teacher tries to follow as it is what he/she has been taught irrespective of its usefulness in real teaching
Creative tendency	The teachers make some attempts to do things slightly differently despite given constraints in order to cater for their students' language learning needs.
Regarding constraints	What has been the teachers' response towards a certain constraining factor or influence
Dealing with class management	What strategy teacher uses to manage the class effectively in his/her view. The way teacher deals with the issue of class discipline arising due to large classes
Dealing with lack of professional guidance	Teachers mainly rely on professional development courses for their professional development and if they don't get it, they don't try any initiative on their own
Dealing with lack of resources	What the teachers do to make for the deficiency or lack of resources.
Dealing with students' required competence	How the teacher deals with the students' weak base or proficiency level in English

Name	Description
Deductive approach to teaching	Teacher relies on a detailed explanation of the main lesson which might be required by them based on their perceptions of students weak level of understanding and English
In-sufficient class time	The teacher thinks that the given class time is not quite enough for the given lesson and tasks required as a teacher
Reliance on L1 and L2	Teacher relies a lot on students' L1 and L2 to possibly aid student's comprehension of the lesson in question
Towards assessment or reinforcement activities or work	Teachers attitude towards assessment and or concept reinforcement tasks
Towards lack of command	How the teacher responds to their lack of command on their given subject/topic in hand
Towards preparation for exams	Teachers respond/teach in a certain way to prepare students for the particular exam questions
Towards students' interest or attention	Teachers response when students are apparently not interested in or attentive towards the lesson
RQ-1 Structural conditioning	Here I will mention what factors and how they influence teachers' behaviour by either constraining or enabling them?
Constraints	Something which restricts teachers from doing what they would have otherwise done or done differently had these constraints not been there
Exams factor	How teachers are confined to one particular teaching methods, grammar translation here because of particular exam questions
Nature of English question paper	The content and nature of questions in the question paper.
Material factors	All tangible and money related factors mainly other than cultural and social (relations) factors

Name	Description
Economic issues	Mainly money related matters
Inadequate or inappropriate learning resources	Lack of mainly academic resources to study from or to refer to for knowledge and ideas
Insufficient classroom facilities	Lack of some extra teaching aids or materials which could complement text books to help students learn things in different ways to improve their understanding of a certain concept
Lack of peaceful environment	Any kind of disturbance around the class which disturbs or distracts the class in anyway
Large classes	How class size directly or indirectly affect teaching-learning situation in the given class
Insufficient space for different activities	With more students, arrangements for any kind of students' interactive activities become difficult due to given less space and more space requirement for such activities
Relative to assessment or reinforcement work	Any kind of exercise, activity or homework for students to reinforce the concept taught in the class
Relative to class management or discipline	With more students, the difficulty of managing interactive activities possibly for discipline issues arising as a result
Relative to teacher's attention to students	With more students the difficulty for a particular teacher to pay individual attention to the students in the class.
Relative to teaching method	How a particular teaching method is dependent on the class size
Relative to the allocated class time	How the class size impacts the lesson indirectly by impacting the time allocated for a given lesson

Name	Description
Students related factors	how different factors related to students affect teaching-learning situation in the class
Lack of interest or attention	Apparently less interest of the students either in the class lessons or English language in general
Lack of required competence level	This includes students' weak level of understanding and their current level of English as not up to the required level of class they are currently in.
students weak level of understanding	Teachers codeswitch to L1 (Pushto) or L2 (Urdu) mainly to aid students' comprehension of the English language lesson.
Weak base in English language	Student's current level of English as weak due to weak foundation being built up in the previous or lower classes.
weak English level	Overall weak level of English of the students as compared to the level they are currently in.
Lack of self-study culture	Students' avoidance of making attempts of doing some self-directed learning or study on their own.
socioeconomic status	Apparent poor socioeconomic status or background of the students.
Teachers related factors	Any related aspect of teaching or teachers which affect teachers teaching
Competency	Teacher's command on the English language in general and the lesson being taught.
Language proficiency or command on the subject	Teachers command on the subject or language (being the same in this case) such as vocabulary, concept(s), spellings etc.

Name	Description
Non serious attitude towards ELT or lesson preparation	Teacher's attitude regarding how serious they take their classes and their attitudes towards lesson preparation.
Structuralist approach to or vision of English language learning	Teacher thinking that ELT is just limited to few things mainly words meanings or vocabulary teaching, pronunciation and grammar
Guidance for teachers	Any kind of general and/or professional guidance for the English teachers to help them in their English language teaching in the class
In-service training courses	how different aspects related to in-service courses affect teachers work in some way
Choosing the right candidate	Ensuring that the right person attends the already limited available training
lack of in-service courses	Non-availability of any form of in-service training/course for teachers.
lack of up to date or contextualised knowledge and techniques	New knowledge or current knowledge/skills relevant to the actual classroom teaching.
Lack of general guidance	Lack of any form of guidance such as peer observation/feedback which could help teachers in their actual teaching.
Lack or need of specialised ELT guidance	Lack of some form of professional guidance for English language teachers specific to how to teach English language or improve ELT skills
preservice training courses	How different aspects of the pre-service courses affect teachers work in some way

Name	Description
Formality	These courses are more of a formality for acquiring a teaching position or job than to actually prepare teachers for their real classroom situations
Ideal	Content does not have much relevance to the actual classroom teaching.
Impractical or de-contextualised	Does not have much utility in the real or actual class or teaching situation
In effective	Not quite effective for the actual class teaching.
Incompetent trainers	B.Ed. courses are taught by teachers who do not know much about their subject
Insufficient	Reliance on just B.Ed. courses is not enough. There should be more as well as improvement in the current courses.
Irrelevant	
Outdated	Not updated. Teaching the old ways of teaching
Teaching English like other subjects	The tendency of the courses to promote teaching English like other subjects
theoretical	The courses are more knowledge oriented, and superficial irrespective of what needs to be taught and more practical in the given situation
universal approach	focus is on the total knowledge to be given irrespective of practical use
Main reliance on external professional guidance	Teacher rely mainly on any form of professional development courses or guidance as a source of their professional development. For example, no trend of self-study for professional development.

Name	Description
Time related factors	Time required to pay attention to the different components of the language in different ways
less time and more content to cover	The requirement to cover more content in the given time frame.
Enabling factors	Factors which help teachers in some way to deal with any given constraint
AOO	Learning from teachers during student life educational experiences.
+ ve AOO	Learning from teachers having positive influence on the teacher current teaching practices.
-ve AOO	Teacher negative English language learning experience(s) during their student life are drivers for them to teach differently the lesson in question.
Appreciation and encouraging environment	Any form of encouragement or appreciation motivates teacher to do their work with more interest
Colleagues help	Dealing with any kind of difficult (ies) regarding teaching through colleagues help.
Command on the subject	Command on the subject is helpful
Enthusiasm	Keen to learn and solve problems arising during teaching
Experience	How experience helps teachers in dealing with any teaching situation in the class such as lesson preparation or problem solving
Lesson plan or prep	Importance of a lesson pan to account for (to some extent) any lack of command on the subject and the language.

Name	Description
material resource	Any material object which is helpful to/for teachers to handle any difficulty they have in the lesson under consideration.
Miscellaneous	Different material resources helpful for teachers.
Nature of textbook	The textbooks being a helpful resource for teachers in guiding them in their teaching.
Preservice courses	Aspects of the courses helpful for the teachers in different ways during their actual teaching in the class.
Helpful in general teaching skills	Courses being helpful in providing guidance on general but not subject specific teaching skills.
Helpful in lesson preparation	Courses being helpful regarding preparing a lesson plan for a general but not specific to English language class.
Helpful in seeking students attention	Course being helpful in teaching how to grab students' attention.
Reinforcement through deductive approach	Conducting top down approach for practising any component of language learning
Reliance on reflection	Teacher reliance mainly on their instincts and thinking while preparing lesson for the class.
Subject specific qualification	The usefulness of teacher degree qualification in English language.
Variation in teaching	Trying different ways of teaching to arouse or keep students' interest in the class or lesson.

## Appendix I      Sample of the interview transcript of the participants Nawaz and Sami

M represents the interviewee (Mono= M).

The alphabet “A” in the two transcripts is initial of both the respondents’ original names

### **Transcript (Nawaz)**

1) M: Sir, you were discussing at the end of the class that there are some problems, what type of problems were you talking about?
2) A: Yes there are problems but can you tell me first what exactly your research is
3) about? Please tell me your topic.
4) M: Sir, my topic of research is you can say, in simple words, how the English
5) teachers uses certain methods in their class for teaching English, why do they use
6) these methods? Basically when you do English teaching, the ideas, lesson plan,
7) class control, material you use and why, wherefrom have you learnt the skills,
8) basically everything around teaching English in your classes?
9) A: Ok, here we have a post SST, for it we do B.Ed. courses, and for that B.Ed.,
10) you need B.A qualification, but in B.Ed. everything is ideal?
11) M: Ok, ideal?
12) A: Ideal, means it is not followed in the class.
13) M: Like how?
14) A: Like, for example, if I teach through direct method, the students will learn

15) the language more. But 80 is the class strength, can you accept it? Will that
16) work? I think for direct method, you should not have, maximum, more than 25 students.
17) M: Why?
18) A: Because then you can't involve every student of the class through direct
19) method for activities. If I make a group of 80 people in class, have you noticed the
20) situation, how I will do grouping in them? Will grouping be manageable with
21) these many students? Among these 25 to 30 students were absent.
22) M: Ok? So you think that they cannot be divided into groups to do some activities?
23) A: Here in the school there is no such big room or hall, where I can take
24) students and make the groups there for any kind of interactive activity. Another
25) problem is of exam. Here in the paper, pattern is that 2 questions are must for
26) translation, like translate into English or translate into Urdu. For that we will
27) teach translation to kids in Urdu language. We do it in Pushto also so that they
28) understand it as there Urdu is also weak.
29) M: Ok. And you were saying something about your B.Ed. course, what have you learnt in B.Ed.?
30) A: In B.Ed. if you remember, throughout the world, in masters of English, ELT
31) paper, there is grammar translation method, audiolingual method,
32) communicative approach etc. So there a kind of overall/total knowledge is given,
33) like these are the methods, such and such, which are not followed here.

34) M: Ok, only this is taught in B.ED?
35) A: Yes, only this. That is, these are the methods but these are not followed here.
36) Next is like teachers here, I am M.A English, but with the sir you were sitting
37) before is not Masters in his subject. And the one I told you which is on ad-hoc,
38) he also teaches English here. The other post is vacant here. The teacher is not
39) here. From April the classes are started and the post is vacant till date.
40) M: So you think that the Master's degree is important to teach English language?
41) A: Not that important in our country. The problem is that there are lack of
42) refresher courses or workshops during service which can make the teacher expert
43) in their field and could bring improvement in them from time to time. So when the
44) teacher comes to this system and follow these methods so they become rusticated.
45) M: So do you mean that in B.Ed. the courses which are taught are general methods and these are applied in all subjects?
46) A: No not in all subjects. Here the problem is that SST has a general course at 9
47) and 10 level. One is SST science. Then for science there are different methods like
48) lecture, demonstration methods like this. They are taught these. Here in general, it
49) includes English, Urdu and Pak-studies.
50) M: Ok, but Urdu and English are languages, is Pak-studies also taught by this method?
51) A: Yes of course. Here for Pak-studies they do not give lectures for it at school
52) level. E.g. if there is a class of Pak studies and here is one question like write the
53) main points of constitution 1973. So on the other side of the book, the ready made

54) answer is there. So the teacher makes it short and ask the students to write form this
55) point to this point and mark it down. Then the students memorize it like ratta.
56) M: And when you say in service training is required, why do you feel so that it is
57) beneficial for you? How it is different from the one you have received?
58) A: It is different like e.g. with the passage of time the student number increases,
59) and it is also possible that with the passage of time, the teacher might forget
60) what he has learnt in the preservice course. So there must be some up to date
61) techniques or strategies. Since I am in service and when I did my MA English
62) after that I have no study or training or any course. We do not get it. Here are
63) more problem of teachers, so for that I say there must be some refreshers courses,
64) which may refresh the teachers.
65) M: What do you mean by refresher courses?
66) A: New methods e.g. like through projects or through screens. Here it is not
67) available which can make our work more easy. E.g. here we teach through only
68) one technique which students can see, the grammar translation, by themselves.
69) Here I can teach them through some other best method. I can teach through direct
70) method. This way I can take these kids along with me so that their pronunciation
71) becomes good.
72) M: Like which facilities are not available?
73) A: Facilities like some alternatives are required
74) M: For example?

75) A: For the direct method, we need what we call AV aids such as some tape
76) recorders, projectors, screens, something for listening. Just listening to me won't
77) make it. So that kids may take interest in it. I will do right pronunciation,
78) everything right, but a time will come when they will get fed up from me. When
79) they will say sir all the time you just follow one way and the whole year is spend
80) like this. If I want to do something else for listening and develop their writing
81) skills through some techniques, I can't do it. But here is the problem there is no
82) such methods or techniques or resources to use for writing skills.
83) M: What type of techniques you need for writing?
84) A: For writing you need exercise.
85) M: So why don't you do it?
86) A: This book takes one year. Other than that more things are required from the
87) kids in the school like application, stories, letters etc.
88) M: So, you mean you can't do writing exercise because of shortage of time?
89) A: Time is less and exam tension.
90) M: So you mean if there were no exam tensions, you could have improved students' English language?
91) A: Yes it could have been improved or the board should change the pattern of the paper.
92) M: OK, how do you think pattern should be changed?
93) A: Change it like remove the translation and memorization type of questions
94) from them. Here it is a special pattern, like I can tell in advance these things are

95) important and these things can come, like these are the expected stories. Have
96) you studied from here?
97) M: yes
98) A: Early education?
100) M: Yes
101) A: Then you would know that here we had been writing stories such as greedy
102) dog and thirsty crow. Here we write the stories for the students and they
103) memorize the readymade stories and write them in the paper. Like I am saying
104) the students should know such things perfectly (that is how to write the stories),
105) then we could have helped and prepare them further so that they could write
106) themselves on topics like daily routine, we ask them to write it, and the
107) questions should not have been repeated again and again. Teachers would have
108) then involved a lot of students interest. We teach English language so that there
109) comes fluency in students' English, that fluency cannot come if this grammar
110) translation method is there. If the lesson is finished , I will ask the students to
111) write short questions, then I will do the related grammar which will be in the
112) exercise, other than that I told you there is one question, translate into English,
113) then I will teach them one tense showing that how you will translate Urdu
114) sentences into English. Here are formulas for them, like in sentences, if it
115) comes, he, she, they, so do this. This is wrong system, why can't I tell them this is present indefinite tense.

116)	M: So do you think if there is decrease in students' strength, although there are no facilities, will it affect your teaching in some way?
117)	A: If there are no facilities but the students' strength is up to 30 or 40, there
118)	may be some chances to do something extra with them. It's simply not possible
119)	to involve every student of the class and pay them individual attention, without
120)	which, I don't think there isn't much of learning. Now you consider the strength
121)	is 80 or let's suppose 60, 20 students are let's suppose absent, and if I take test
122)	from them, and I do not have one section, I teach 5 sections, and as I told you
123)	one post is vacant, and for that post which is vacant, I teach general science for
124)	it. Also, if the teacher is on casual leave, I also adjust that class. Now you are
125)	sitting here so no one is coming here but I have admission withdrawal
126)	responsibility for the school as well. So when my classes are finished and I
127)	come back, here people wait for me, and say, sir I need such and such certificate,
128)	I need date of birth certificate, sometimes they come for school leaving certificate.
129)	M: So you feel that you are too burdened?
130)	A: Yes, a lot of burden.
131)	M: So if you were not burdened to this extent, do you think you would have taught English differently?
132)	A: Yes, I could have performed better if this burden had not been there. The
133)	number of classes are let's suppose ok, 4 per day so in week it becomes 24. So
134)	this is the problem. The other problem is that some teachers are at my level, in

135)	which you took class, and if the teachers are on casual leave. I am given 3
136)	English classes and they have just one section. So equal distribution is required.
137)	They give me because they say I am an MA English. But other burdens are also
138)	given to me. If the English class is given to me then they must not give me
139)	general science and Pak studies. The school admission withdrawal duty should
140)	not have been with me, or it should have been given to other teachers who have
141)	more easy subjects like Pak-studies or Urdu.
142)	M: So, do you mean there is no such rule here that which teacher will take which class and there is no equal distribution?
143)	A: They have equally distributed but the thing is they have only Urdu and
144)	Pushtu. They have also 24 classes. I have also 24 classes. But I have all English
145)	Classes and they have Pak-studies or Urdu. I also take the classes for the reason
146)	that I may give students more advantage because this is my subject. For that I
147)	also do not tell them that we will equally distribute like they take 2 and I will
148)	take 2. I also do not prefer it. I say these are kids from poor families. If any
149)	family can afford they would go to private schools.
150)	M: Are the kids too poor?
151)	A: Too poor.
152)	M: How much is the school fee?
153)	A: It is government school so no fee. And it's free.
154)	M: Are books also free?

155)	A: Yes books are free too. The students only buy notebooks from their own.
156)	These kids have one more issue. When they go from here, almost 70% of kids
157)	go with their father to his shop or their father have placed them somewhere for
158)	work to learn some skills. For example, when I taught my lesson today, I should
159)	have given kids some activity like if they have known about Madina Charter in
160)	Urdu or Islamaiyat, they should study it and come prepare tomorrow. But if you
161)	ask them question tomorrow, no one will be able to answer it. If you ask them
162)	why, they will say we went to the shop and came late in evening. Some will say
163)	I went to the mosque and came late. Mostly say there was no light, so a lot of problems.
164)	M: Does the school have any library or net?
165)	A: No net
166)	M: And library?
167)	A: Library is there but with old books. No new books which you can study for
168)	something specific. For library you need a hall or a big room, so that this culture
169)	that the students go there, sit there and study should be developed to make our
170)	jobs little easy. But this is not so here, the books are locked in the cupboard.
171)	M: But when kids uses library, do they get books?
172)	A: yes they are given books. But as I told you this culture should be developed.
173)	The kids come and use the books for 15 days but in very rare cases. If you see
174)	the issue list of books of the library, you will find that hardly anyone had issued

175)	the book. In the whole school, only 10 would have taken or maybe not.
176)	M: And is there any study area in the school?
177)	A: No, no study area is there which is a big problem. Here we have one section
178)	extra. We have 3 sections for every class A, B and C sections. But we have one
179)	section extra. Sometimes we place them in veranda. Now the NGO have
180)	constructed some new rooms so we take the classes of extra section there.
181)	M: So your basic qualification is Masters in English and after that you have done B.ED, right?
182)	A: I have done M.ED as well. B.ED is bachelors while M.ED is Master's in education.
183)	M: So you have done both B.ED and M.ED?
184)	A: Yes both.
185)	M: And what it is called CT, PTC?
186)	A: Yes, CT, PTC, and for primary you need PTC.
187)	M: Have you done that as well?
188)	A: No I have not.
189)	M: And CT?
190)	A: CT is required for class 6 till 8, means middle.
191)	M: Have you done that as well?
192)	A: No I have not. Everybody sees where he can be adjusted. Then according
193)	to that he does a particular course.
194)	M: Ok, and from where unified syllabus of B.Ed. and M.Ed. is made?

195)	A: There is no unified syllabus. Every university design its own syllabus.
196)	M: And are there only two universities which design it like Allama Iqbal and Peshawar University?
197)	A: No AWKUM also does it, like CT and PTC is done down. They have
198)	separate institute for it in Peshawar and it is known as PIET like Peshawar
199)	Institute of Teacher Education.
200)	M: Ok.
201)	A: Another one is RITE, Regional Institute of Teacher Education.
202)	M: Ji sir
203)	A: Rabanni sir may have Allama Iqbal University detailed books. Those books
204)	are not even available in Peshawar University.
205)	M: What kinds of details?
206)	A: Details about education courses like PTC and CT.
207)	M: Ok sir. May I ask you how much time have you been in teaching?
208)	A: In government sector, I have 5 years of teaching experience.
209)	M: And other than that?
210)	A: I have done Masters in 2005 from Peshawar University, other than that I
211)	have done teaching in private schools and colleges. So from 2006, I have been teaching.
212)	M: Ok so roughly 10 years of teaching experience?
213)	A: In private schools this is the advantage. The maximum strength is 35. I have
214)	done teaching for 7 years in private schools where there are no more than 35

students.
215) M: Then why did you leave private sector?
216) A: Because government job is better.
217) M: How?
218) A: There are more salaries plus the private job is not that durable. There, if the
219) principal is happy from you, you can continue the job otherwise not.
220) M: What is the recruitment procedure here for teachers?
221) A: Here in government sector, the SST level comes in 16 scale. The teachers
222) on this scale do teaching to class 9 and 10 and all teachers comes through public
223) service commission. But with the passage of time the problem arises when our
224) politician have entered their own people. They write that the particular person
225) is set for the job. They don't check whether the teacher can do teaching or not.
226) This was also done. But when the PTI government came to power, they have started NTS.
227) M: Ok, so first a post is advertised?
228) A: Yes, a post is advertised, a vacant post and then they take the test.
229) M: Which one? NTS?
230) A: Yes, NTS. Then original documents are taken, they are checked and then
231) they are selected. But I came through PCS. In PCS they first took the test and then interview.
232) M: So, in NTS there is no interview?
233) A: Yes, there is no interview in NTS. They call the process interview but only

234)	original documents are checked.
235)	M: Oh! Then this means NTS is easier. Just give the test and then be selected, no interview?
236)	A: Yes right.
237)	M: But I guess the test is difficult. Anyway coming back to our main
238)	Discussion regarding English teaching, have you ever faced any difficulty
239)	during your overall teaching time period?
240)	A: No I have not. If you ask me how do I teach English or I handle such situation, I can tell you.
241)	M: Actually I mean to say whether in your ten years of teaching experience, have you ever faced any difficulty during the whole teaching English period?
242)	A: Yes, problem in method. Yes in GTM, one language cannot be translated as
243)	it is into another language. Now I will give you recent example. I have taught
244)	this paragraph in 9 class yesterday. I told them to write “relationship” for “ties”.
245)	They afterwards told me when you were translating it again in Urdu this
246)	relationship word does not come. They are kids but I told them it is impossible
247)	to translate 100% from one language to another language. I told them I did it
248)	intentionally to let you explain the phenomena. Some other problems are if kids
249)	get idioms or proverbs. Then they see exact translation is required, like if I tell
250)	them “ the world is going towards dog” means the world is getting destroyed
251)	but the kids will think there is no word for destruction so how come dogs means
252)	destruction. So these are difficulties. But I try my best, for example, when I read

253)	idioms, I teach kids in Urdu first and explain the meaning what actually the
254)	idioms are and their definition. Then the kids ask the principal to give me the
255)	Urdu subject as well. So I first teach them the meaning of idioms in Urdu, which
256)	should have been taught by the Urdu teacher but he didn't. If it was taught by
257)	Urdu teacher it would have saved my time, then I taught the meaning of idioms,
258)	i.e. the combination of 2 or more than 2 words which are not used in its literal
259)	but its indirect meaning, then I write their Urdu meaning, (giving examples)
260)	and say more Urdu idioms and then explain them very briefly. Then I ask them
261)	to give me some examples of idioms of Urdu and Pushtu. So this is how I
262)	prepare students in one class and in the next class, I explain the idioms in Eng.
263)	Same I did for simile and metaphor. Now when I asked them have you done it
264)	in Urdu, they say no we have not, then first i teach them in Urdu. If I had taught
265)	them directly its definition as "likeness between 2 indifferent things", the kids
266)	might not have understood it. So first i provide them some base and for that I
267)	definitely teach them in Urdu what is comparison. I explained "the comparison"
268)	in previous days, like comparing of one thing with regard to another. I also
269)	taught them the difference and also taught them it's between 2 different things
270)	and same e.g. comparing 2 different flowers and we will use like as words for
271)	it. I just gave one verse of Mir Taqi Mir one day as kids do not have this
272)	knowledge as well. They have not developed it. Like in Urdu it includes poem
273)	or verses. But in English we have simple poems like "nation's strength" etc.

274)	The sense cannot be developed. But in Urdu the aesthetic sense of the kids can
275)	be developed. Then they start loving the poetry. So kids ask me to take their Urdu class as well.
276)	M: So the Urdu teacher does not teach it or is all this not in the syllabus?
277)	A: It is in the syllabus, but they do not teach, this is the big problem, or may be
278)	the teachers also do not know the answer. Such teachers are here as well.
279)	M: So you mean the teachers do not prepare lesson plan or anything for the class?
280)	A: No they do not have lesson plan. Like I told you this is taught in B.ED that
281)	the teacher will have lesson plan, like if they teach some paragraph, they must
282)	prepare it in home. This must be ensured. I was teaching in Quaid-e-Azam. This
283)	is very famous institute. You must have seen its sign boards everywhere. If they
284)	would recruit any one, i and principal who was MSC chemistry, would sit in
285)	the meeting. They have policy of taking demonstration in recruiting. They asked
286)	me to take demonstration. Once a teacher came for Urdu post. I gave him Urdu
287)	book of 9 class and ask him to take time and prepare anywhere from the book
288)	and give demonstration in the class for 40 minutes. He took the book and threw
289)	it away and said i am teaching this book for the last 8 years so no need to
290)	prepare. Then i said ok and offered him tea so that he can relax and started
291)	chatting. Then i took him to the class, he went there and ask the students to tell
292)	him any topic and he will teach. The boys asks him to teach them Ghalib poetry.
293)	The students were of 9 class, he started teaching. He started one verse and

294)	explained it, as he was explaining, one kid stood up and asked the meaning of
295)	one word. The teacher forgot the meaning. In the explanation, you can dodge
296)	the students but not in meaning if the students ask you directly. The teacher got
297)	so much confused that his blood pressure got low and he fainted in the class.
298)	He became depressed to such condition. Then he came to office. I told him you
299)	should never say that you have taught for 8 years, you should not depend on it.
300)	If I say this cannot be changed into English and we teach it throughout the year.
301)	These lessons are there and what i would think that I have taught for the whole
302)	year and what if I forget some word, then? Like if I forget the meaning of
303)	“goodwill” and what if students ask me. if i am a good teacher I will tell them I
304)	do not know and will tell you tomorrow. But mostly the teacher dodges the
305)	students and the students are dodged.
306)	M: Yes, may be because no one takes the risk of being called incompetent?
307)	A: No it is not here, now I will tell you my school result. No rewards are given
308)	to good teacher. No punishment is given to incompetent teacher. Do you want to drink tea? It is fully ready.
309)	M. Tea ok.... but little sugar, so you were talking about lesson plan, what about you? Do you prepare it?
310)	A: Yes, I do.
311)	M: How do you do it? From where do you prepare it? What do you prepare?
312)	A: Here it is a simple method, I study a paragraph, other than that if something
313)	is related to grammar or structure. I think on it and check how I can make kids

314)	understand it, how the kids will better pick it. Here there are nothing special to
315)	prepare from. I do things myself and prepare it. But if there is some issue
316)	regarding words/meanings, then I use the dictionary, I have dictionary English
317)	into English and English into Urdu, I take help from that.
318)	M: Do you also plan what questions you will ask and what activities you will do in the class?
319)	A: yes I do it in the planning. I take the traditional class which is used
320)	throughout the Pakistan, but I do variations as you saw today so that the kids do not get bored.
321)	M: So, do the kids get bored?
322)	M: So, do the kids get bored?
323)	A: Have not you noticed, if you ask anything from the kids they won't be able to answer you.
324)	M: ok really if I ask them they won't be able to answer me?
325)	A: I have noticed it. I keep a close observation on the kids. Once, in my 10
326)	grade class, I taught the students three lines, then I suddenly asked one of my
327)	students from where I am reading. He did not know as he had first class after
328)	vacations of some 75 days, which he had spent somewhere, so today all their
329)	thinking revolved around those 75 days. He was not interested in today's class.
330)	M: So what do you think would he be normal after few days?
331)	A: Yes I think he would get normal in few days.

332)	M: But as I observed, the kids were sitting so quiet as if they were quite attentive and observing everything.
333)	A: It depends on the teacher as well. And you were also there so may be because
334)	of the respect element they were quiet. Otherwise, if I take you to the normal
335)	class, you will see what happens.
336)	M: Is it too much noisy then?
337)	A: If I give you one round trip, then you will see how the teachers teach. The
338)	teacher is talking and so are the students among them. Hardly anyone is
339)	listening to what the teacher is saying. The students have their own stories and
340)	lessons to tell to each other (smile). Even the teacher has no control on the strength.
341)	M: Then what the teachers do?
342)	A: They just take their class on time and that's it.
343)	M: Even if someone (students) is interested or not?
344)	A: Yes if anyone is interested or not, listening or not, here this is the formula.
345)	A: Yesterday Mayar sahab came here.
346)	M: Here, why sir?
347)	A: He came and had a visit. He also visited the classes.
348)	M: Ok, ok so was all satisfactory?
349)	A: They wanted to see what are the weaknesses or deficiencies in teachers.
350)	M: Ok.
351)	A: Do you know Himayat?

352)	M: Yes, very well, my friend's known relative.
353)	A: Ok.
354)	M: Ok sir so we were talking about class discipline and teacher's attitude
355)	regarding it. So, at such times, are the B.Ed. courses helpful to guide you how to manage the class?
356)	A: yes it does teach, but to control the class, the teacher must have command
357)	on the subject. This I also tell to my colleagues. If you have full command and
358)	have proper lesson plan, you will smoothly teach and will be able to involve the
359)	kids. Then the kids will not make noise no matter how many the students are.
360)	The problem will arise when you will dodge the kids, then they lose interest.
361)	M: So does command or proper planning really controls the class?
362)	A: Yes it does. When you were not here, my class is always like this you can
363)	even ask about me from my colleagues how I am in teaching.
364)	M: When you face problems in teaching, do your colleagues help you?
365)	A: It also depends from teacher to teacher. If the teacher, let's suppose, says
366)	I want to halal my income and this is my job and i should be sincere with it.
367)	There are teachers with us who find problems in the classes 6, 7 and 8. They
368)	come to my room, i have admission/withdrawal duty, so I have been given this
369)	room. So the teachers come to me, do the discussion like i don't understand this
370)	sentence, how the translation for this sentence will be done. The main problem
371)	comes when teacher starts teaching idioms because they look for the exact

372)	translation but I tell them that this is the idiom. For example, they get the idiom,
373)	“apple of my eye” and if a teacher is not expert in translating idioms, he will
374)	say, he is apple of my eye. So usually the teacher comes to me with idioms, so
375)	how long will I keep teaching them about idioms and their meanings, and then
376)	also invite them for future discussion. The other problem is that the students
377)	do not read themselves in their houses, and just rely on teachers and find it
378)	authentic, trusting teachers that they are right.
379)	M: So, do you think you are a perfect teacher or do you feel any deficiencies in your teaching?
380)	A: No, Alhamdulillah I find myself perfect and competent, in my view.
381)	M: Why do you think so?
382)	A: Experience plus English is my own subject, I have done masters in it.
383)	But if the same English subject is taught by political science teacher, then they
384)	know that it is not my subject. So as compared to him I am confident as this is my subject.
385)	M: So, are there any deficiencies/weaknesses that you find in yourself?
386)	A: No, Alhamdulillah, nothing.
387)	M: Do you think that Master level education is important for this level of teaching?
388)	A: Yes, it is very important especially now, because the books are improved now a lot.
389)	M: How? Isn't it the same old book?

390)	A: How old book?
391)	M: Like same content. I was teaching in government Girls College 7 years back, these books are same like 7 years before.
392)	A: No there are changes. Like if you talk about today's chapter which I taught
393)	"Medina charter", these types of lessons are same as being Muslims they cannot
394)	remove them. If they do so, then they are called Jews.
395)	M: So you mean that there are other changes?
396)	A: Yes, a lot of changes. Inside the chapters, the activities all are changed.
397)	M: Activities about what?
398)	A: About grammar and many more things.
399)	M: So, do you do the exercises with students?
400)	A: Yes I do when the lessons are finished.
401)	M: But you didn't do it today?
402)	A: Those are in exercise, we do them in exercise. Today we just did the translation.
403)	M: OK you mean to say that today you have done half chapter and when the complete chapter is done, then you will do the exercise?
404)	A: Yes, in the exercise then we do the grammar.
405)	M: Do you feel your own education has helped you in your teaching? For
406)	example, the teachers who taught you are now of any help to you in your current teaching?
407)	A: If I tell you about my personal experience, if you see this paper, it has pair

408)	of words. In my school, my teacher never told me about pair of words. So at
409)	that time when we would prepare for the exam paper, I would just take the guide
410)	and prepare by myself memorizing the pair of words. We would not know the
411)	meaning of pairs of words, but would memorize them as they are. For example
412)	it's "accept" and its "except". Now, when i teach to kids, i tell them this is
413)	homophone, i.e. sounds are same but meaning is different, then i start and teach
414)	them, like "principle" and "principal", these are also homophones. Then I ask
415)	them to use them in sentence, and in this way get them practice these. And when
416)	they do some of the words, then i give them my notes or write some words
417)	telling them to compare and follow the one they want. So by this method the
418)	kids also learn the sentence making and use the principles in their sentence and
419)	learns about homophones. So this is the difference.
420)	M: Ok, is there any teacher which was quite good in your times and you consider him/her as your role model? Or apply his techniques or teaching styles?
421)	A: Yes, I learnt from a lot of teachers.
422)	M: What did you learn? Can you say something about it?
423)	A: First we would note that if the teacher is teaching something, does he know
424)	that himself or not. Like i told you when you asked about the recruitment in our
425)	government sector, like recruitment is done through PCS. But if you know Toti
426)	khan, he selected his own people from time to time, Mazhar Hussian done his
427)	own selection for recruitment. They have only seen the qualification of these

428)	people that they can be set here, so they were selected. That day my friend who
429)	is teaching in another school, showed me the application of the teacher who is
430)	recruited in this way, the casual leave application, which he granted to himself.
431)	He was not the principal but allowed leave to himself and had written
432)	"allocated" instead of "allowed". So how you will expect from such incapable
433)	teacher that he will teach right thing to the kids. He told me to take Photostat
434)	for it. Here people from AWKUM come and contact me most of the time. Those
435)	who have some research or project so they come here. So what will you show
436)	to such researchers that such type of people teach in our school. In the end he
437)	wrote "thanks" for which he wrote the spelling as "Thinks". So if such school
438)	teachers teach English to kids, how he will correct mistakes of the students,
439)	when he himself is full of mistakes.
440)	M: So, are the recruitment through PCS mostly on merit or through references?
441)	A: PCS is proper channel, I told you they first take test and then interview.
442)	M: Then how these people get through to these schools?
443)	A: No , i told you with the passage of time, like in this school, we have a SST
444)	general post vacant. Now PCS doesn't advertise just one post for this vacancy
445)	unless a lot of posts are vacant in many of the schools, like 60 and 100. Then,
446)	for example, our education minister, he will select his own favourite persons and will fill the post.
447)	M: So the status of this post is currently vacant and will be advertised later?

448)	A: No it is filled, as he selected his own person. So i was saying that if such an
449)	incapable teacher teaches you, what experience you will gain from them. But if
450)	I tell you about my school level Urdu teacher. He was our teacher in 5, 6 and 7
451)	class. And he in these three years, would have hardly taken 40 or 50 classes in
452)	full year although he was regular throughout the year.
453)	M: How would you study then?
454)	A: By my own. One more problem, I have a class in 8 grade - one good
455)	point came in my mind. The 9 and 10 exams are taken by board, as you know,
456)	and paper is from outside. I don't know about paper, what will come, what area,
457)	what type of questions, we do know the pattern but not the questions, stories
458)	will come, but what stories, I do not know. So i have this fear that my result
459)	should be good. Because here at DO (District Office), we are asked about results
460)	of 9 and 10 class, subject wise result. So i do hard work. But at low level like
461)	6, 7, 8, there is no check from outside. One teacher who gets the class, and make
462)	paper by his own. So just assume, if there are 20 lessons and the teacher have
463)	only taught 5 lessons, so he will make paper from those 5 lessons. But I will
464)	teach all lessons of the books, then the exercises and also from outside as well.
465)	M: So this means the teacher set the question papers till class 8, while 9 and 10 are by board?
466)	A: Yes questions paper for 9 and 10 are set by board. That is independent
467)	institution. This is also government problem that they ask results from me, why

468)	the government only pays me, or only class 9 and 10 teacher. The government
469)	should ask the result from primary level teachers as well so that's the kids'
470)	foundation can be good, and the primary level teacher will also be in fear to
471)	make the good base of the students. But the government doesn't do this, and the
472)	teacher promotes the students by themselves form 5 to 6, 7 and 8. So if in class
473)	6, 7 or 8, the student is weak, the teacher does not care, he says he is weak
474)	because of previous classes and he will be promoted to higher classes and no
475)	one will ask me about the results, so he does not care. So automatically he
476)	comes to us and we have this big problem. This is one of the biggest problems.
477)	I will take you to class 6, 7 and 8 and you just select any class of your own
478)	choice and then ask the kids to just read. I am sure not even 50 rather 25% of
479)	the students will be able to properly read the English. So this is the problem I
480)	face. If a student comes to me in 9 class, I will first focus on correcting his
481)	reading because I am asked about the results. So I will do efforts so that my
482)	result is good and percentage. So these problems are there a lot.
483)	M: How about private schools? Do these problems exist in private schools as well or they do not have such problems?
484)	A: No in private schools, it doesn't happen. The principal is in the school and
485)	he checks the results of every class. You asked me why I don't teach in private
486)	school. In private school if the principal knows that the result is not good or the
487)	students are not satisfied from the teacher or he is not a good teacher, then that

488)	teacher is relieved from his duties. The private schools are independent. They
489)	have their own choices which teacher to select and which not to select.
490)	M: Have you studied in government school?
491)	A: Yes I have studied in government schools.
492)	M: How would you do your studies in your school days?
493)	A: Self-study.
494)	M: It means from your early education, you haven't learnt anything significant from your school teachers?
495)	A: From some I learnt. These were some of the exceptional cases which are here.
496)	M: It means there were some teachers who you do follow now?
497)	A: Yes there were many teachers from whom I have learnt a lot.
498)	M: Ok. Do you think is there any change in your current teaching method/style as compared to 10 years before? How do you compare now and then?
499)	A: Yes a lot. In the beginning, I would be nervous that how I will teach in the
500)	class, how I will control the class. What is the best way to teach them. These
501)	were the problems in the start. But these problems then got overcome as a
502)	teacher teaches. It all comes with experience. It changes your way of teaching and there are a lot of improvements now.
503)	M: Do the students' parents or the school environment, for example administration affect your teaching in anyway?
504)	A: If I tell you here in schools the parents do not come. The parents only come
505)	when we ask the students to call your father or brother when a student is

506)	involved in some fighting. But the children try to bring some unknown person
507)	so that his parents do not know the fighting issue. So very poor family students
508)	are here and there objectives is to give schooling to kids till metric so that he
509)	just knows how to write or the basics. The ratio of such students is very high
510)	here. So parents have no influence on my teaching whether they are satisfied or
511)	not with my teaching or even they know my ways.
512)	M: Anything from the administration or from principal side, positive or negative or both which you think might affect your teaching?
513)	A: No not such influence. Here just one annual inspection is done, in which
514)	they just judge the students whether they can read or not. But after that nothing
515)	else such as how you will the teachers improve their teaching or suggest to us
516)	some solutions. That is just a formality. Just someone told me that when our
517)	inspection was done, the DO told our principal that the students are very weak.
518)	So the principal replied this is government school and this is universal truth that
519)	the kids will be weak here. So the talk is over.
520)	M: Why he said so?
521)	A: If you want to improve the kids, the base should be given more focus. The
522)	class in which we were sitting now, when they were promoted from 8 to 9 class,
523)	I told them to write small and capital letters from A - Z . Some of the students
524)	were not even capable enough to write them down. I had mobile phone, so those
525)	students who wrote ABC on the board, i asked them to write the name at the

526)	end and then i took the picture. I thought if there is inspection and DO asks me
527)	why they are weak, then i will show these pictures and will tell him to check
528)	how he has improved now in one year.
529)	M: Ok, do you observe other teachers to improve your teaching? Or you sit in their classes?
530)	A: Here, observation is impossible in class. But when we sit in the staffroom
531)	then we do discuss and help out each other. But do not sit in the class to observe
532)	not even the principal comes and observe and see what is teaching style or methods.
533)	M: Why? Is it because it's not allowed?
534)	A: It is allowed but the trend is not here.
535)	M: So you only do verbal conversation with the colleagues regarding difficulties, nothing else?
536)	A: Yes the teachers do take help, e.g. if one teacher has a class in one section
537)	and I have in another and if he asks how I teach, then we do help.
538)	M: You said that in B.Ed., you have been taught different methods and
539)	techniques but are there still such things for which you do not feel yourself as prepared for the class?
540)	A: Here B.Ed. is informal, like when you do B.Ed., it is affiliated with some
541)	university like AWKUM. Those colleges focus on the fees. They will tell you
542)	that e.g. the annual fee is 30,000 rupees and if you tell them that you cannot
543)	attend the class and will only come for the exam, they will agree, you will

544)	prepare in home and they will take the exam. This is the problem. They should
545)	have instead given me special attention to teach me effective English teaching
546)	methods. They should have given me a class, and asked me to teach that class.
547)	Then they should have monitored me and given me feedback, such as, the
548)	students have developed listening skills but their writing skills or, let's say,
549)	speaking skills are not developed yet. It should have and be done like this but
550)	the B.Ed. courses are only formalities. If you come to the practical field you will see the difference yourself.
551)	M: So do you think there should be specialized courses in which only English should be taught? Or only general B.Ed. courses are enough for you?
552)	A: No they are not enough. But in B.Ed. they do teach you teaching style but
553)	the extra theories that they teach such as Plato definition for education or his
554)	theory, so I have nothing to do with Plato definition. For my English language
555)	teaching, I need to make students fluent and how they can learn English
556)	language effectively. B.Ed. have 10 papers and only 1 is about English, methods, reading, writing etc.
557)	M: So you think that is not enough?
558)	A: I told you first that the student-teachers do not go to class, and the teachers
559)	of B.Ed. are also not competent. They don't know how to teach.
560)	M: But in B.Ed., they have micro teaching portion as well, where they ask teachers to come and teach in class and give some practice. Isn't it like this? Does it not help?
561)	A: Only one class it is known as director lesson, it is like the college is with

562)	AWKUM, so anyone from education department comes and do the teaching.
563)	So it is not dependent on one person. Their own colleagues sits and suppose
564)	they are 9 and 10 students and then they do teaching practise of one paragraph.
565)	I remember in my B.Ed. in 2006, the affiliation was with Peshawar university,
566)	when I had director lesson and I did teaching, and my English teacher Hafiz
567)	Zubair who was principal in NO 3 college ,was very competent and was my
568)	teacher as well, he said, kid you will apply grammar translation method.
569)	Actually I did in very different style. I said I knew it but I was just fulfilling the
570)	requirements. At that time 2 people from Peshawar University came and the
571)	college owner was also sitting. They actually praised me a lot.
572)	M: As you mentioned before, students can't pick lesson so what do you think the reason is? Is it because the students are weak in language that's why or is it exam reason?
573)	A: Because of both reasons. If the students were competent, there are 16
574)	lessons in book which I think can be covered in 2 months, I would do the
575)	translation quickly and then would switch to other activities.
576)	M: What would you do then?
577)	A: Nothing much, not possible as there are many things other than book in
578)	the paper like application, stories, letters etc. and proverbs. So proverbs will be
579)	written in English and urdu both. So it requires time. I do tenses which takes a
580)	lot of time. In the paper different sentences comes. Let me show you sample
581)	paper. Q1 is objectives, Q2 is short questions, then comes paraphrasing. Q3 is

582)	stanza comprehension,Q4 paragraph comprehension, the problems are in this
583)	question, like translate the following into Urdu and it is of 8 marks you cannot
584)	leave it, so you translate it in Urdu, the other Q is of 7 marks of application
585)	writing, then letter writing, then story writing , points are given and story have
586)	to be written. And there is no choice in story question so we prepare students
587)	for 20 stories at least. And then last question translate into English. Here it is
588)	written, Omar is playing since morning. So I will teach kids the tenses that this
589)	is present continuous tense, then helping words, "is" and "are", verb is present
590)	participle, then will write the structure, also teach the negative interrogative
591)	sentences. Then they will do practice. Then one tense is not possible to be done
592)	in 40 minutes. Then the proverbs which can only be memorized because the
593)	meaning is totally different.
594)	M: So, you mean if the students had a strong base then they can do everything, so no need of memorization.
595)	A: Yes you are right.
596)	M: That's it. Thanks a lot for your time sir. Anything you would like to add that we have not discussed?
597)	A: Well, I believe we have talked about most of the things but if anything comes to my mind, I will let you know.
598)	M: Ok, sir. Thanks once again for your time and valuable comments.

### **Transcript (Sami)**

1) M: Now sir tell me the grammar translation method you were discussing

2) like you were saying in class we used it, because of this reason and that, now please continue it.
3) A: I was saying that the method we use for teaching and in most of Pakistani schools
4) or in KPK is GTM (grammar translation method). This means we translate from
5) English into Urdu and then Urdu into English and then Urdu into Pushto. The
6) Reason for this is English is not our mother tongue but our national language, that
7) is why for teaching we use GTM and feel GTM as more useful for Pakistani
8) students as they can easily learn through this method. That is the reason we
9) translate every sentence in Urdu and Pushto. This is how the students learn
10) the topic easily and can do more work in English. They can learn more information in the language.
11) M: So what about direct method as you were saying a while ago? Do they not learn from direct method?
12) A: Yes, direct method is used in some of private schools, but there are
13) some words that cannot be explained in direct method. (e.g. honesty or
14) beauty). There are some words which cannot be explained in direct method so
15) direct method can only be used in private schools, mostly, not government schools.
16) Next question please.
17) M: Sir, where have you learnt about these methods?
18) A: We know about these methods in courses of teaching, CT courses. We have
19) learnt from B.Ed. and Med courses. We have learnt that which methods are used
20) for children and are more useful, more beneficial and more children can
21) learn so that is why we use them.

22) M: Sir, which teaching course have you done? Like you are saying we
23) have learnt from there? What courses have you done?
24) A: I have done CT course, I have done BED, and MED I have done.
25) M: Ok. Is there any differences in these courses like CT, B.Ed. and Med?
26) A: B.Ed. and M.Ed. are for teaching high classes. CT is for teaching till
27) middle classes, like all the courses till middle, It shows you how you
28) will teach till middle level classes. What techniques you will use that
29) children can learn more and more. And B.Ed. is for secondary level and higher education and metric.
30) M: Then, is there any difference in these teachers' courses? I mean like
31) in every course do they teach something different or same things are being taught in all of them?
32) A: It is not only little difference like there is difference in ages of students that
33) we get, so as these courses are also different, and are meant for teaching the kids
34) Who are on average having ages 13 years,12 years, that is ages which are usually
35) ages of students till middle school level. But here we usually get students aged
36) around 14,15,16, or 17 years. Here kids are grown up boys, adult kids. So there
37) are individual differences between these kids.
38) M: So what do they teach you in CT and in B.Ed.? You said they teach you how
39) to teach kids? Can you just give one example to differentiate, like what is special
40) about little kids and what about grown up kids, just give one example.
41) A: As the mind grows, the scope of understanding is widened. So there comes
42) the difference in handling the students of different ages. At middle level, we

43) teach the kids through telling stories of angel, and seek their attention in this way
44) and also teach them the topic in this way. But here stories of angles are not told
45) This is because they know the reality and might not be fascinated by angel
46) stories so then we teach them the actual thing and seek their attention in other
47) ways, something which has a real existence and is used in everyday life and
48) through which we can seek their attention. As we are taught in those courses that
49) before starting a particular lesson, we should tell the students some attractive
50) story in order to have their attention. In this case it should be based on some reality.
51) The students' attention is caught in this way and then we start the topic.
52) Starting any lesson in this way will result in more students' engagement which
53) will result in more learning of the students.
54) M: So this is what you have been taught in your B.E.D and M.E.D that you can
55) seek attention of students in this way?
56) A: Yes, they taught us this?
57) M: What else they teach you in those courses?
58) A: In these courses from childhood to grown up ages, all the stages of students
59) are covered in terms of how to teach them, the kind of activities to be done with
60) them and generally how to carry out a class, all this are taught.
61) M: So it means BED and MEd courses help you in your teaching?
62) A: Yes, absolutely why not, very helpful. They teach us techniques.
63) M: What kind of techniques?
64) A: Yes techniques regarding how to teach kids. It includes nafsiyat which tells
65) that at a particular time what type of mood the kid will be having, for example,

66) whether the kid is in a mood to study now or not, whether a particular kid is also
67) present mentally or just physically? So psychology basically teaches you whether
68) the kid is physically present but mentally, he may not? We are taught all this.
69) M: So when you teach English or you teach Math, do you feel any difference
70) that there should be different teaching courses for every different subject
71) or BED or MEd as general courses are enough for teaching every subject.
72) A: At B.Ed. level, mathematics, biology, physics all subjects are there. But it
73) depends on teacher which subject they want to take.
74) M: So, you mean to say for English, there is a separate B.Ed. or M.Ed.
75) A: No, not at all, for English it's the same.
76) M: So have you ever felt that there should be separate subject in B.Ed. or
77) M.Ed. courses which could teach you about English language teaching?
78) A: Yes, for English they should have it. There should be special courses for English.
79) M: Why do you think so?
80) A: Because English is an international language our country is not [unintelligible]
81) so there should be separate class for grammar teaching, separate for pronunciation,
82) intonation and separate for writing. There should be separate classes for all these
83) to teach us how to do all of them with the students. In case of writing skills it
84) should teach like how to write straight, for example.
85) M: You mean there should be teachers to teach them?
86) A: Yes for (teachers and kids), there are 2 or 3 methods for writing. One
87) is straight. Girls and boys do writing differently. Most of the girls do straight

88) writing and some boys do slanting writing. So they should be taught about them.
89) We should teach them some techniques which are very necessary that our kids
90) should be taught about calligraphy so that these kids could do different types of
91) writing like straight and slanting as we have 2 kinds of writing and students use
92) both. So for this reason the writing is not clearly visible and intelligible and do
93) not look good. It does not look good to eyes as presentation is an important thing.
94) M: Ok. Can you tell me sir for how long have you been in the teaching profession?
95) A: In total I have done 27 years of teaching.
96) M: you mean for the last 27 years you have been teaching English?
97) A: Yes, I am teaching English, Maths and Pak studies.
98) M: English and Pak-studies?
99) A: Pak-studies and Maths as well.
100) M: Ok. Have you ever faced any difficulty in teaching English?
101) A: Yes, I usually face difficulty in English such as children usually ask
102) questions, for example, we say CITY, CT like here this C sounds like “seen”
103) but if we say ‘cat’ the “c” sounds like “kaaf” then how we will teach them.
104) In such situations, the kids stand up and ask me that why is this difference
105) in sounds for the same alphabet. That here it is CAT and you sound “c” as
106) “kaaf” but in the ‘City’ why is it different so these types of questions makes
107) difficulty. Other example is like GAT and general. In “GAT” it is like “G”
108) and “General” it is not like “G”. In one G sounds like J and in the other, its not
109) like this. What is the problem? How we will explain it to kids. So for such
110) situations we should have some books, methods or training at B.Ed. level or

111)	we should have some books, methods or training at B.Ed. level or MEd level
112)	so that we can teach kids the right pronunciation and learn. Other than that ‘C’
113)	has a problem, G has problem and other words as well like chemistry ‘C’ is and
114)	(kaa) and in child same “ch” is like “chaa” so that problem is here in classes
115)	and specially with kids. They get confused as to how it is done that in chemistry
116)	it is “kaa” so this is a problem.
117)	M: Ok. If so, how do you handle this problem then?
118)	A: Through our experience. Experience is the best teacher. We have learnt these
119)	words before. We have also learnt their techniques for example if after C it is
120)	E is will sound like “seen” and if after C it comes I it will sound like ”sssss”
121)	and if it comes behind same then it sounds “seen”.YEI and other than that other
122)	words will sound like “kaaf” same is the problem if we make 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> form.
123)	M: Do verb forms also cause problems?
124)	A: Yes exactly, e.g. when we say “stop” and we change it to the second form
125)	and write with “pped” and then 3 <sup>rd</sup> form. Similarly, for “help”, at its end, we
126)	also have ‘P’ but we only put “ed” for 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> form and then change it. So
127)	what is the reason? Why is this difference in ending? How the kids
128)	will know by which technique they will learn the rule regarding verb ending?
129)	So for this, there should be some book at B.Ed., CT, PTC level. So this is the problem for PTC teachers.
130)	M: Ok. Sir, Can you please tell me what your qualification is?
131)	A: My qualification is MA political science and MED.

132)	M: So may be that is the reason, if you had done MA English, you possibly
133)	might not have such problem as you might have been taught all this then,
134)	such as phonology/phonics/pronunciation etc.?
135)	A: It is not there at CT level.
136)	M: Yes, its not at BED and MED level, but English at masters level or possibly
137)	there are some at BA level but no not at all BA level.
138)	A: Madam, I am saying all the teachers are not MA English.
139)	M: Ok so you are saying....
140)	A: So at BED level such courses should be included. It is for SST level English
141)	teaching at secondary level teachers for that B.Ed. qualification is required for
142)	that, and not MA English. Its not requirement for that. MA English is for
143)	higher level business subject specialist “which teaches for high secondary level”.
144)	M: So you are saying at small level these courses should be included at BED and MED level.
145)	A: Yes at BED level and other refresher courses at these levels. It should have
146)	been included. Government needs to do something for it. I am telling you that
147)	even those who mostly have done MA English does not know about it. I have
148)	raised this question in these courses. e.g. if we say, it is vowel we call it
149)	“haroof-e-ilat” in Urdu and others such things, what will kids tell them in Urdu.
150)	We may be asked this question. Kids may ask about vowel as to what is this
151)	called in urdu. we call it harf-sahi. That sound produces as “sahi”. It should be
152)	there at BED and MED level. It should be included properly for English
153)	teachers. Those having MA can become English teachers if they are SST. For

154)	teachers teaching English, so for them at CT level or BED level, things such as
155)	pronunciation for kids, spellings for kids, of kids calligraphy, of kids
156)	intonation should be included. It will be good and right.
157)	M: Ok sir, you have talked about some problems in teaching. So whenever
158)	there is a problem in English teaching, what do you do then?
159)	A: We have dictionaries as well. We have senior teachers. We discuss our
160)	problems with them. Even if they are not there, we do not leave the word like
161)	this and so research about these word. The sentences topic we ask from my
162)	other colleagues who teach English. We go for help, asking, for example, what
163)	is the meaning of this word. What word class it belongs to. What tense is it in?
164)	Is it active or passive? How we will translate it? So we discuss them in these ways.
165)	M: Sir you think in your own school or the way you have been taught,
166)	those teachers or the way they used to teach have helped you in your
167)	current teaching? I mean to say the way you teach in your class, do you
168)	follow or are inspired by any of your teacher who also have taught in the
169)	similar ways and you also feel to teach your students in a more or less similar way?
170)	A: Yes, true true. As it is famous saying in urdu “kharboza kharbozay ko daikh
171)	kar rang pakarta hai”, we have mainly learnt from our teachers. Yes we have
172)	learnt from teachers. My teacher had made an acronym. He had made this word
173)	(NAPATVIT) about part of speech, N means noun, A is for adjective, and so
174)	on. That is how they have made the acronym so every alphabet in it has its own

175)	meaning. This is helpful for kids and they easily understand that this is part of speech. This is how I also teach my students.
176)	M: So you have learnt this from your teachers?
177)	A: Yes, I have learnt it from my teacher.
178)	M: Sir what do you think about the facilities in this school?
179)	A: Facilities? What exactly do you mean?
180)	M: Sir, I mean to ask that do you think that the facilities for teaching are
181)	enough or you feel there should be more or if in this school there are more
182)	facilities available, it may affect your teaching in some way?
183)	A: Yes of course.
184)	M: How?
185)	A: Yes there will be change if there have been some facilities.
186)	M: What type of facilities do you mean and how would/will those facilities affect?
187)	A: Facilities like teaching aids are not available here. We do not have
188)	teaching aids. For example when we teach kids and we are teaching “daranti”
189)	to kids which is called sickle in English. These children do not know what
190)	daranti / sickle is so how can we teach them effectively “daranti” that what is
191)	daranti. They will stand and ask about it as they may not have seen it. But if we
192)	have some extra teaching materials like in this case a sickle then we can show
193)	them what it is which may help in their understanding the concept better.
194)	We can show them and tell them that this is sickle. Similarly if we have “hoe”
195)	and they do not know what is kurpa and if we have kurpa we will show them

196)	and they will better understand. The kids which are studying in cities, they do
197)	not face this problem. These problems are for our kids in these schools. Or
198)	take another example if we teach kids belonging to villages in a way they are
199)	taught in cities, they must have a module. We must be provided with additional
200)	teaching materials. For example, if you are teaching what I just did a chapter on
201)	The Prophet (PBUH), for it, I think is necessary to have a map of Mecca,
202)	Madina and Ghar-e-Hira, or a digital map of Arfat, then the kids will understand
203)	easily by seeing things practically in front of them. Their learning capacity
204)	will increase by 50% and kids will learn almost 50% quick.
205)	M: Ok. Anything else? What other facilities you think should have been
206)	there to help you in teaching or made your teaching different or more effective or only these aids are enough?
207)	A: Other than teaching aids, there should be other facilities like academic
208)	resources for us and for kids, facilities like dictionary so that kids can see, and
209)	learn how to use different words practically. So such kind of things should be
210)	in the schools.
211)	M: Sir what is the strength or total number of students in your class?
212)	A: Here total are fifty two
213)	M: In one class?
214)	A: Yes
215)	M: Have you ever faced difficulty in teaching English because of this number of students in your class?
216)	A: Yes definitely! Problem is like in Europe or England the total number of

217)	students are 25 or 30. Here, in the underdeveloped countries, we also must have
218)	maximum 30 to 40, but should not be more than that in any case, Unfortunately,
219)	in our schools we or for that matter in my class there are 60 students, but there
220)	are also some schools where 80 students or boys or more in one class. So the
221)	classes are so full that even teachers cannot stand in the classes, let alone doing
222)	good teaching. Apart from that, there are other problems as well like light
223)	problem. When there is load shedding, kids are soaked in sweating which
224)	cause disturbance and students attention is affected. In Europe and other
225)	countries they have these facilities in private schools, say, if there is load
226)	shedding or power cut, they use generators and start teaching without any
227)	trouble. But here these are the problems.
228)	M:-So do you think that if these problems were not there, your teaching
229)	would have become better or affected in anyway?
230)	A: Yes it affects our teaching.
231)	M: How does the lights affects teaching or any other such thing? Can you explain?
232)	A: Light like there is no proper system of electricity in the school. Most of the
233)	classes are covered in darkness which is not only troublesome for studying
234)	during the class but it also affects kids eyesight which may become if not now,
235)	in the long term then. You tell me if there is no light, the kids are then forced
236)	to exert more pressure on their eyes in order to be able to see. Thus their
237)	eye sight becomes weak. So it is extremely necessary to have proper light.
238)	When there is no light and fans in summers, the kids are soaked in sweat.

239)	M: So you think that they do not take interest in studies then?
240)	A: Of course, then they use books as fans. They struggle to get rid of the heat first rather than to learn a language.
241)	M: You talked about class strength. How the more strength of students
242)	in class affect your teaching. Do you think it affects?
243)	A: Well one big issue is of discipline in such classes. When there is a good
244)	discipline, there is good learning and when there is no discipline, there is no
245)	learning. To bring discipline, I feel problem because to maintain
246)	peace and order in such huge classes and then teaching and also when the time
247)	is limited, is not possible all the time and for every teacher. Because most of the
248)	teachers are weak.in maintaining discipline and they simply cannot do it and
249)	for learning environment, good and conducive environment is quite necessary for learning.
250)	M: What do you mean by good, conducive environment?
251)	A: Well, peaceful environment where all students are sufficiently engaged.
252)	M: So like you said you have been taught about discipline in B.Ed., so for
253)	higher classes do they teach you how to maintain discipline in higher classes?
254)	A: Yes it has been taught.
255)	M: So does it make any difference then?
256)	A: Not as such. It does not make any difference. They teach us some
257)	techniques but those techniques does not work in these classes.
258)	M: Does not work? How? Why?
259)	A: Because it highly depends on teacher that how he/she maintains the

260)	discipline in the class and make proper environment for study. If there is no
261)	discipline and teacher teaches it, then it is of no use. The students do not get
262)	what the teacher is teaching today.
263)	M: Hmm. Ok so in higher classes other than discipline, is there is any
264)	other issue which causes problem in teaching because of students strength or number or any other issue.
265)	A: There are problems, over population has many other issues. For example,
266)	time related issue. I have around 50 or 60 students and I take their attendance,
267)	it takes around 15 minutes, then 20 minutes will be required for say a 100
268)	students. If these 20 minutes are taken from 45 minutes so 30 minutes are left
269)	and if we take 20 mins then 20 mins are left. But if the class strength is less then
270)	the teacher will teach for at least 30 minutes and if strength is high, the teacher
271)	will only be able to teach only say up to 20 minutes. Then listening to
272)	students issues, for example, if a student has come late or is absent yesterday
273)	and if I ask him why did not you come yesterday? Why did not you do
274)	homework? More time will be spent in that and 40 minutes are all that we
275)	have got, which will be over in this way. You tell me then how will the teacher
276)	be able to teach his topic properly? Of course, the teacher will not properly teach his topic because the time is over.
277)	Other than that in a large or huge class if we check homework as well, the time
278)	is over and sometimes we are unable to check it or if we somehow do, we do
279)	not properly check like we can check of a normal class student. So these are the problems, a lot of problems.

280)	M: Ok you talked about class time, do you think class time is sufficient
281)	for teaching and learning an English language or do you think more time than this is required?
282)	A: No, I think time is according to standard. We are given 45 minutes, a bit
283)	more would be fine but not too much as how can one teach/learn for 80 minutes.
284)	We are not electronic brains but humans and also for second upcoming class
285)	we all need some break/peace of mind so that we become fresh for another class.
286)	Though the given time seems less because of the number of students we handle
287)	and teach in the given time, that is the ratio is slightly imbalanced.
288)	M: So you think this total time in whole year is enough to teach English
289)	language, in terms of sufficient command on the language? Are you able to teach enough of the language?
290)	A: Yes 40 to 45 mins is enough but as I said before students are many. At
291)	least there should be some extra 10 to 15 minutes just for attendance.
292)	M: Ok. In your 27 years of experience, what changes do you feel in your
293)	teaching, like teaching before 27 years and teaching after 27 years, what changes do you feel?
294)	A: As I have already said that experience is the best teacher. The 27 years of
295)	teaching has helped me in a way that now even without preparation I can deliver
296)	a lesson properly and 75% of what the lecture should be, I have learnt. I do not
297)	face any difficulty with preparation. By the grace of God, I can talk about any
298)	topic in the class. Initially I was not that confident. Anyone who lack
299)	experience, he/she cannot do the lecture without preparation. They have to

300)	first prepare it and cannot come without preparation.
301)	M: So would you prepare in the beginning of your teaching?
302)	A: Yes in the beginning of my career, I would do preparation but now I have
303)	taught it for 6 to 7 times and by the grace of Allah, I know 5 to 6 meanings
304)	of one word and can use them in any sentence very easily for the students.
305)	M: In the beginning when you would prepare for the class, how would you prepare your lesson?
306)	A: For the class, I would prepare like the lesson I would learn the translation
307)	of the intended lesson and all the difficult words with their meanings. For that
308)	I would search the dictionary. If I could not find a certain word in dictionary,
309)	I would ask some senior teacher/colleague that what is the pronunciation of the
310)	word, how it is pronounced or what does it mean?
311)	M: So would that be helpful for you?
312)	A: Yes it was very helpful. Now we also gained experience, now by the grace
313)	of Allah we are seniors now. There are many words which have difficult
314)	pronunciation and which we have already learnt. Now we teach our junior
315)	teachers. They seek guidance from us.
316)	M: What do you say about the environment of school? Does it affect your teaching in anyway?
317)	A: Yes of course
318)	M: How? Can you explain?
319)	A: If there is not a proper environment, the class is affected e.g. if there is a
320)	ground and there is noise and there is “noise” and we are teaching in a class as

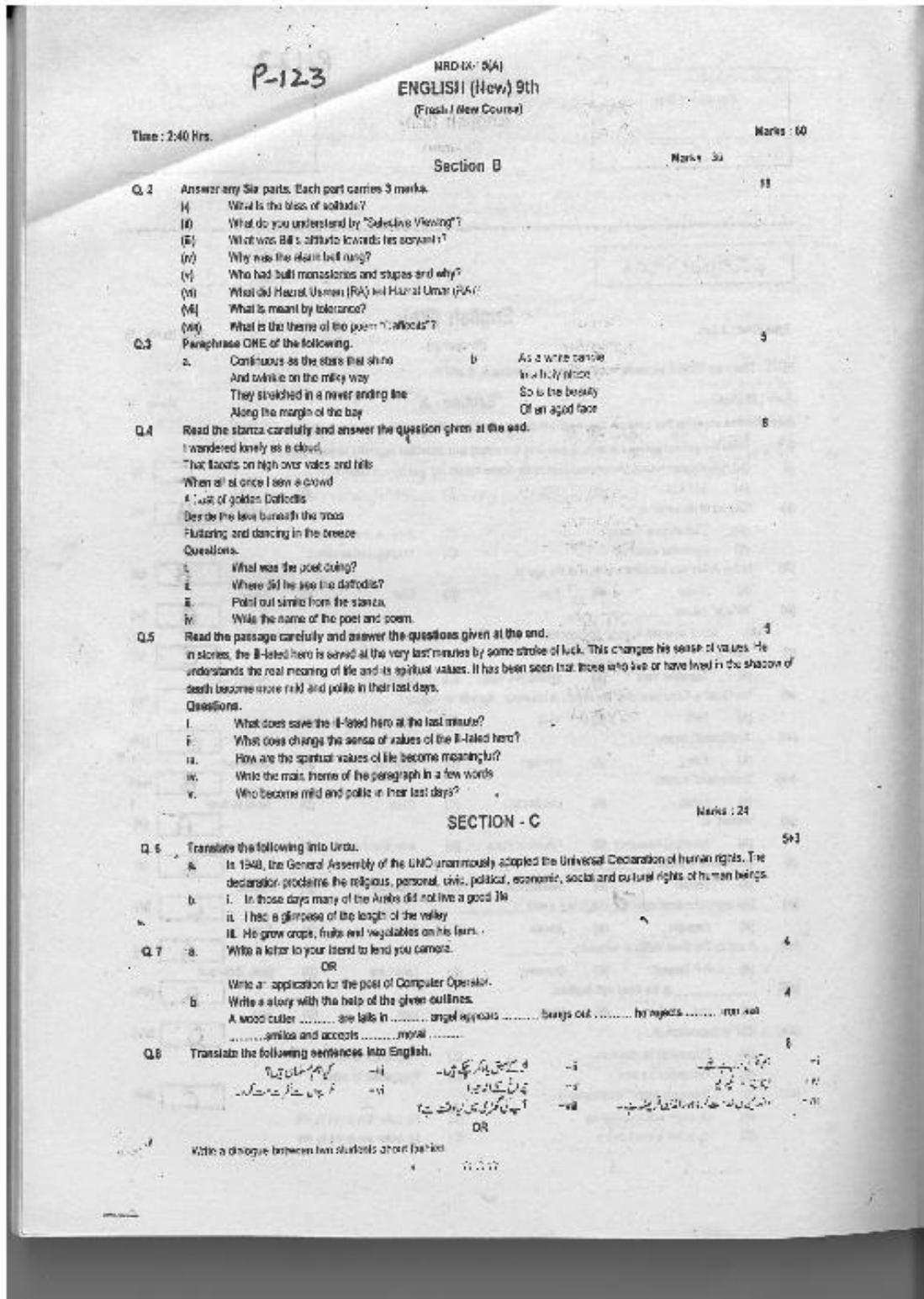
321)	here, then how we will teach the kids. The kids will also be driven to see in that
322)	side as to what is happening, there will be a lot of noise this is not good. The
323)	overall discipline is most necessary which get affected.
324)	M: What do you think about the role of kids' parents, or administrator or
325)	principle? Does it affect your teaching?
326)	A: Like what exactly you are asking?
327)	M: I mean to say do any of these factors such as the kids parents, school
328)	administrator or principle affect your teaching in any good or bad way?
329)	A: Good, yes we become appreciated when kids are happy and say we are being
330)	taught good, that the teacher is teaching us good and works hard with us, then
331)	we become happy. Because we get encouraged. It energises us to do more
332)	preparations. Then we try more to do best presentations. The parents are
333)	usually illiterate. From kids they get to know that particular teacher is
334)	hardworking and the other is not. This one waste times. The other one does
335)	not. He is teaching with interest with love. So from kids they get to know that
336)	the teacher is strict, the other is lenient. The parents does not know but the
337)	kids sits and tell about teachers to their parents, their mother and father that
338)	particular teacher is very good and best teacher and teachers very best then we get encouraged.
339)	M: Do you feel yourself perfect as a teacher? or you feel you have deficiencies as an English language teacher?
340)	A: Well, no human is perfect. Those even with the highest qualifications such
341)	as MPhils or PhDs, even they must have deficiencies. By the grace of Allah

342)	even when we have asked sentences from these people, even they sometimes
343)	do not know most of the things. So whenever we feel such a weakness in
344)	academics, I try to overcome it. But I try my best to not go to class unless I am
345)	fully prepared. I try to fully grab the topic/concept so that if kids ask any
346)	questions in class, I may be able to satisfy them and I try for it. Then our inner
347)	self is also satisfied and we are happy that we have done our responsibility to its fullest.
348)	M: So what deficiencies do you feel in yourself? What are the weaknesses do you think you have?
349)	A: Deficiency is that first the English words. The texts are mostly written by
350)	Western writers. Its all American writers and these writers have written the
351)	texts according to their thinking and according to their culture. By the grace of
352)	Allah we are Muslims and our philosophy is Islam. Our curriculum should also
353)	be according to Islam. According to our culture and if we include topics like
354)	America and America leader, we have (P.B.U.H) Hazrat Abu Bakar and Omer
355)	and Usman. Other than that we have many great leaders. So the English lessons
356)	should be about them and about their achievements. Our aim is to learn English.
357)	In this way we will learn English as well as we will learn about Islam and get
358)	knowledge about our religion. It will be like killing two birds with one arrow.
359)	Why do we need American leader and American community written about in
360)	the books. If we have Omer, his life, his adventures and achievements, his
361)	government, those should be included as texts. In this way, the kids will be able
362)	to learn about them and then we will be able to follow his footsteps. they will

363)	tell these stories in houses they will tell these in streets. In this way an Islamic
364)	culture will be developed.
365)	M: But today the lesson that you taught wasn't about holy prophet?
366)	A: It was but it was just one. The textbook has also Nelson Mandela. So if we
367)	replace with Hazrat Omer, that how he was Khalifah for more than two years
368)	Hazrat omer were there as khalifah. Every welfare leaders would be Muslims
369)	Today. Is there any great leader than him. These are two to three lessons. There
370)	should be more. If for example we have lesson about war like why not battle of
371)	Badr included in it? In English we will explain it like this was a battle in
372)	English. Kids will also explain it in English language. Language can be learnt
373)	in this way as well. For example, in English, there is no God but Allah and
374)	P.B.U.H is his prophet. Like a poem before "speak gently means speak softly.
375)	This is just translation and speak gently to the little, to the rigid people, poems/
376)	text like these should be included so that there is spiritual development of kids
377)	and mentally as well, and with that social development as well plus English
378)	language learning alongside. For kids these types of lessons should be
379)	included which have all many aspects of development of the kids. but we only
380)	want to learn English. We do not learn our culture. Islam is our religion and how
381)	we will learn about our religion Islam. and this is an easy way to learn both,
382)	language and our history or culture
383)	M: Sir do you think there should be professional development courses for teachers like you?
384)	A:-Yes, definitely, there should be in-service courses. There are few in service

385)	courses offered but for those courses, heads of institutions are being
386)	approached, e.g. at secondary level they ask which teachers in your school
387)	teaches English. I teach English but they recommend others for professional
388)	training while here I only teach English but since these are general courses and
389)	not very specific to ELT, the others are offered those. The expenses on
390)	these professional courses, I believe, is just waste of money. At least they
391)	should recommend those who have direct connection with the English subject.
392)	M: So why they recommend others and not you who teaches English?
393)	A: All because of references and favouritism and TADA advantages. So
394)	every human and everybody wants that his relative or beloved gets this
395)	opportunity of grabbing easy money. So those who have powers make their way.
396)	M: You mean to say there are courses but right people are not able to avail them?
397)	A: Right and sometimes the same people go again and again while some
398)	people, like me, do not go, not even once.
399)	M: Ok Sir. This is it for now. Thank you so much sir for your time and interview. Would you like to add anything relevant we might not have talked about?
400)	A: Any gaps in me?
401)	M: (smilingly) No not at all.
402)	A: I thought I will learn something from you, not you from me
403)	M: Smiled

# Appendix J English exam question paper





## Appendix K      Note for the teachers

(From the class 10 English text book)

### Note for the Teachers

The book has a clear, simple structure and is designed to be easy for both teachers and students. The objective is to improve listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of the students.

- Provide an opportunity to every student to practice the public speaking skills.
- Briefly explain the idea of word stress and sentence intonation. This step should take approximately 5 minutes. They can choose their own topic or the teacher can assign them directly.
- Pronounce words and sentences for them, pointing out stress patterns and intonation.
- Reading aloud helps the listening and reading skills at the same time. Reading strategy will enhance their vocabulary as well as pronunciation. The listeners should be told to deduce the meaning of unknown words and tell the gist of what they have heard.

Reading strategy can best be taught by the help of newspapers. The teacher can bring many Newspaper pages, set up the classroom in a way that all pages can be displayed and read at once. After ten minutes ask them:

- What did they read?
- When did they read?
- Why did they read?

Ask them how often they read newspapers. They must be encouraged to read the newspaper everyday ... may be only the headlines and the first paragraphs. Then they should express their views about what they have read.

- Some thinking exercises have been given. These will require the students to think how ideas relate to each other in the text.
- Writing skills can best be improved by writing something on a daily basis. The students should be told to write everyday for at least three minutes. Tell them not to stop writing until the time is up. It is assumed that students will have access to and use a good dictionary. Besides, a Thesaurus is a good tool to help find new words.

Suggested readings have been given at the end of every unit. The students should write a review after reading the books. This will develop their reading habit as well as improve their writing expression.

Text based grammar exercises have been devised, which will help students to fully understand the text. There are mind maps for further help.

Teachers' guidance is needed at every step.

Footnotes are there for the help of the teachers as well as students.

Variety in grammar exercises is there to maintain the students' interest and enhance their creativity.

The book is user friendly, interesting and easy to comprehend.

The teachers should try to help their students understand and attempt all the required exercises.

The explanation of all the difficult points is given.

The goal is to help teachers in their purpose that students will have good command over the language and enjoy reading.

Hopefully, teachers will find this book interesting and useful.

