

# Common Goals, Uncommon Settings: The Impact of Physical Environment on Teaching and Learning English for Communication

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## Abstract

The purpose of this survey study was to investigate the impact of physical and academic environment on the attitude of students towards learning English for communication and the attitude of teachers to applying communicative approach in teaching English at Bachelor's level. The sample population consisted on 720 first and second grade non-English major students and 12 teachers from one Pakistani university and two of its affiliated colleges. For the data collection, attitude scale was used for students, classes were observed in the three institutions and teachers were interviewed. The data reveals that there is found a significant difference in the attitude of students towards learning English for communication and teachers' attitude to applying communicative approach in different environments. The students who study in the main campus of the university demonstrated better attitude towards learning English for communication than the college students. Teaching strategies applied by the university teachers were found closer to the tenets of communicative approach as compared to that of college teachers.

**Key words:** Physical environment, attitude, learning, teaching, communication.

## 1. Introduction

A plethora of research suggests that physical learning conditions play an important role in the students and teachers' attendance, engagement in work, attainment and well being (Earthman 2004, Sundstorm 1987, McNamara & Waugh 1993, Lackney & Jacobs 2004, Higgins et al 2005, Keep 2002, oblinger 2006, Montgomery 2008). The researchers have connected provision of physical facilities to teaching styles and learning outcome. Learning environment affects learners' cognition, behavioral development and vulnerability (Ellis, 2005: 57-61). The objective of this case study was to determine relationship between physical environment and teaching and learning English for communication. Under the present educational reforms in Pakistan, the universities have been made responsible to arrange Bachelor in Science (BS) classes from 2009. BS program is new for the universities in Pakistan. Earlier, BA (Bachelor of Arts) and B.Sc. (Bachelor of Science) classes were the concern of colleges and the university was responsible to conduct their examination in annual system. The universities were not fully prepared to take BS program, so it was decided that the universities will start this program with the help of selected affiliated colleges to the university. The same syllabus will be taught on parallel basis in the university and colleges. The objective of this empirical research was to evaluate any significant difference in the attitude of students towards learning English for communication and, the attitude of teachers towards applying communicative approach in teaching English in two different environments.

### 1.1 Background of the study

Low proficiency in English language in Pakistani students has remained one of the other reasons for a slower socioeconomic progress in the country. In the wake of 21<sup>st</sup> century, however, the stakeholders have taken many steps to raise the educational level of the masses in general and reform English Language Teaching (ELT) in Pakistan in particular. It is quite evident from the instructions of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan to the university and college authorities to improve the quality of teaching so as to make the coming generation expert users of English language. The National Committee on English (NCE) under the auspices of HEC recommended

establishing English Language Teaching Reforms (ELTR) in July, 2004. Since that time, the HEC has launched numerous Teacher Training programs and refresher courses, like Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), and Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) program in association with many international organizations and individual experts, i.e. British council and US embassy in Pakistan, etc. Just recently, the HEC in coordination with the British Council has launched Transforming English Language Skills (TELS) modules with a focus on improving standard of ELT in Pakistani Higher Education Institutions (Pakistan observer, Oct 9, 2012). Another example of these training programs is International Resource Person (IRP) training to the teachers of colleges and universities in Pakistan (HEC, 2011ab). This program emphasized on:

- Professionalism in language Education
- Individual language rights
- Accessible, high quality language education
- Collaboration in a global community
- Interaction of research and reflective practices for education improvement
- Respect for diversity and multiculturalism

Aims and objectives of this program include:

- Contextualizing and modeling
- Controlled language practice which involves four models (Teacher- teacher, Teacher-student, Student-student, Student-teacher) practice
- Reinforcement through listening and writing
- Integrated skills development, communication activities
- Assessment and evaluation

The HEC has remained successful in its efforts to improve the standard of English language instruction in the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The teachers have been urged to use communicative approach in classrooms. The result is obvious that the graph of students going abroad for higher education has risen significantly which ultimately will bring economic and intellectual revolution in the country. The HEC has reformed the infrastructure of HEIs in the country, trained teachers, boosted up research in all academic fields (sciences, commerce, technology, social sciences and arts) and, hired qualified staff for the universities. The administration of colleges is mostly under the control of the Ministry of Education. Owing to different socio-economic and political reasons, the colleges are still under privileged and, there are found big differences in the academic and physical environments of universities and colleges. Starting Bachelor program in the universities and colleges on parallel basis was a big challenge for the concerned authorities.

## 2. Literature Review

This section draws on some empirical evidences on the influences of academic and physical environment on teaching and learning. The learning environment takes the learner, teachers, other students and physical environment in which the students spend time. An ideal academic environment is that which provides cooperative and self-directed learning activities. The old concept of active learner and passive learning environment has been replaced by the idea of making both factors active. The constructivist approach of learning provides opportunities for students to make discoveries and practice theory to transform themselves into life-long learners. A quality physical environment significantly influences learners' achievement. Many a research findings on this topic have attributed the improved attitudes of teachers and students to the improved teaching and learning environment (Higgins et al, 2005). Siegel (1999:04) asserted that

*The arrangement of space has immediate and far reaching consequences for teachers' ability to effectively and efficiently accomplish daily activities, the formation of social and professional relationships, and the sharing of information and knowledge.*

The researchers (Marton and Saljo 1976, Entwistle 1991, Biggs 1999) argued that students approach learning with different motives. The students' motives to learning have dual combination of motives and strategies. Their

orientation to learning may either be ‘deep’ (understanding for meaning) or ‘surface’ (reproductive and instrumental). Their motives are the aim for learning and strategies refer to methodology used in learning. The students with surface motivation would be seeking for a verbatim recall and reproduction. The students with deep motivation would be seeking to satiate intrinsic interest for learning. The students’ motives and strategies, however, are highly influenced by various situational factors, like the physical or academic environment. Still another important consideration is whether the learning approaches remain constant in a specific academic environment, or what other factors influence their learning strategies and perceptions about learning. Many educators show deep concern with the factors which contribute to increase communication skills with the provision of a particular academic or physical environment.

Dart and Clarke (1991) suggested improving students learning outcomes by modifying their physical environment. The results from many empirical researches show that the students who studied in a conducive physical and academic environment got higher grades in the examination and were found with enhanced communication skills, as compared to those who studied in less suitable places with lower quality learning facilities. Those institutions which ensure students’ active participation in the learning process are successful in motivating them to adopt active learning approaches. The aesthetic beauty of the institutions has also been found influential in shaping the personality and character of students and teachers. Niece (1988) wrote that,

*The aesthetic qualities of the learning environment are also an important consideration. Although little research deals with the aesthetic beauty on the student or teacher, we assume that attractive surroundings enhance pleasant and productive attitudes. Ideally, a facility should be pleasing, inviting, and exciting.*

Eisner (1985) asserted on the suitability of buildings. He highlighted the impact a school building can have on the attitude of students and teachers, like the building of a bank can have on our sense of security in entrusting with our savings and paychecks, and like the building of a factory mirrors the efficiency of its workers. Brooks (2011) conducted a study to know the relationship between physical learning places and the students learning outcomes. He asserted that, ‘Technologically enhanced learning environment, independent of all other factors, have a significant and positive impact on students learning’. Beichner et al (2007) reported the findings of their research to explore the impact learning environment exerts on students and teachers. They found that large round tables in the classroom, internet access, libraries, and laboratories for experimentation improved the formal learning environment and, the students’ problem-solving skills, attitudes and class attendance were improved.

Pedhazur & Schmelkin (1991) reported the results of their empirical study that software-based simulations and improved audio-visual facilities provided an active learning environment, the students became more expert in problem solving, hands-on experimentation, higher order in conceptual understanding and collaborative learning techniques. Dori *et al* (2003) employed a quasi-experimental design in their research to know the impact of physical facilities on students’ achievement. They reported lower failure rates and higher conceptual understanding in students with improved facilities than the students in a traditional lecture-based learning environment. McGregor (2004) asserted the social aspect of school place and the significance of interaction in students’ learning and academic achievement. Bunting (2004) wrote that there is a strong link between physical learning environment and students’ attitude to learning. If the students leave school without a love for learning, they will probably be disadvantaged in today’s knowledge society. ‘Learning opportunities can be woven into the structure of school, making it an active space rather than passive space housing a disarray of *things*’ (Taylor & Aldrich, 1998 cited in Keep, G. 2002). Learning spaces and the architectural design of buildings contribute to teachers’ improved efficiency; students better attitude to learning, and achievements. Earthman (2004) wrote that, ‘there is sufficient research to state without equivocation that the building in which students spend a good deal of their time learning does in fact influence how well they learn.’ Significant improvements in learning environment lead to better attitude in teaching and learning. The results from the previously conducted empirical research on this issue clearly indicate that physical and academic environment influences the efficiency of both teachers and students.

### **3. Research Methodology**

A number of methodological considerations should be addressed to assess confidently which factors contribute to make teaching and learning environment conducive to improve communicative competence of the learners. A

realistic assessment in natural settings is, however, challenging for the researchers and practitioners. Some researchers have used a quasi-experimental design with the treatment and control groups to assess the impact of academic and physical environment on students learning (Newble and Clarke 1986, Kember et al 1997). But this kind of research needs longer time and heavy resources. Another predominant approach is to employ a between-subjects research design which means to compare different sample groups of students experiencing different academic and physical environments. For this survey study, a between groups research design was selected due to time constrains. A triangulation of data source was used with mixed method research approach. The students and teachers with common goals and uncommon settings provided the subject matter for this research. The following research questions were posed for a clear understanding of the issue being investigated:

1. What is the significance of difference in students' attitude towards learning English for communication in different environments of the university and colleges?
2. What is the significance of difference in teachers' attitude in different environments towards applying communicative approach in teaching English?

### 3.1 Research Participants

The participants of this research were the bachelor students and their teachers in Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan (Pakistan) and two of its affiliated colleges. A total of 720 students who belonged to non-English majors of first and second grades: 320 students from the university and, 200 students from the boys' and girls' college each participated. Keeping in view the research design, a non-probability judgemental sampling procedure was adopted in which the researcher chooses sample population on his own (purposive) judgment (Milroy, 1987). As the course of study was the same at grade one and two for the natural sciences and social sciences students, all were inclusive in the research population. From the twelve teachers who participated in this study, four belonged to the university and, four each from two colleges. Those teachers were selected who had experience of teaching to the non-English majors at first and second grades.

### 3.2 Research Instruments

The research instruments used in this research were (a) attitude scale for students, (b) observation schedule and, (c) semi-structured interview with teachers. These instruments are detailed below:

#### 3.2.1 Attitude scale for students

Gardner's (1985) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) provided the base for constructing the attitude scale which has previously been used by Benson (1991) and Qashoa (2006). This questionnaire comprised on 26 items, every item with five options: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and, Strongly Disagree (SD). In case the items were positive in the light of learning English for communication, the responses were marked respectively as 5, 4,3,2,1 and, vice a versa. The questionnaire comprised on two main parts: (a) part dealt with the demographic information and (b) part consisted on questions that drew on their motivation for learning and attitude towards learning English language for communication. The questionnaire was pilot tested and some amendments were made accordingly.

#### 3.2.2 Observation Schedule

Collecting data through class observation provides with direct experience of the phenomenon (Koul 1996, Nunan 1991). Schmuck (1997) wrote that,

*Observation methods are useful to researchers in a variety of ways. They provide researchers with ways to check for non-verbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities.*

The observation schedule was comprised on 27 items, every item with five levels of intensity: Always (A), Frequently (F), Occasionally (O), Rarely (R ) and, Never (N). The items were marked respectively as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 in case the item reflected a characteristic of communicative approach and, vice a versa. A total of twelve teachers were contacted for class observation (four teachers each from three institutions).

### 3.2.3 Interview

The interview with teachers was a continuum of the data collection through class observation. The purpose of the interview was to cross-validate the information from class observation and complete a whole picture of the phenomenon being investigated. This was a semi-structured and observation referenced interview. Three kinds of questions were asked: a) What do they understand CLT approach is, and how do they implement it, b) which hurdles do they face while using CLT approach in classroom and, c) how to improve the situation so as to make the coming generation expert users of English language. The interviews were audio recorded and notes were taken during the process.

### 3.3 Data Collection

Necessary permission was obtained from the concerned authorities in the university and two colleges for conducting research. First of all, attitude scale was got filled in by the students in three different places with the help of class teachers. The researcher himself accompanied the class teachers and explained to the students of the objectives of research. They were asked to be clear on every item included in the questionnaire. On the second stage, classes were observed at the university and two college campuses. The teachers were requested to be as normal during teaching as possible. A total of twenty-four classes (two classes per teacher) were observed and the time spent on observation was 18 hours (45 minutes per class). Semi-structured observation schedule was used and notes were taken during the observation. Audio recording was also made of the process. The three were matched with one another to sort out a clear understanding of the situation. On the last stage, teachers, whose classes were observed, were interviewed.

## 4. Data Analysis

The data for this study came from three sources: attitude scale for students, observation schedule and, interview. For the first two kinds of data, quantitative analysis technique was used. For the attitude scale, the items were classified into positive and negative items and, marks were assigned accordingly. This result was used to statistically differentiate university and college students on their attitude towards learning English for communication. For this purpose, SPSS 17 was used and t test was applied on this data. Earlier, percentage on every item was calculated. For convenience, the responses in the attitude scale were further divided into three categories, Agree, Disagree and Neutral. Hence, the results are also shown in this vein as first the percentage of students' responses on various items has been narrated and then the result of t test has been presented.

To analyze the data from observation schedule, inferential statistics was used and percentage on every item in the observation schedule was calculated. From the teachers, two major categories were identified, university teachers and college teachers. And, the result has been presented accordingly. The data from interview was analyzed using qualitative technique (content analysis). For this, two major categories were classified: a) the interviewees' answers to the structured items and, b) some emerging themes during the process which were felt relevant to the topic were included. As this was an observation referenced and open ended interview, some questions were not the same for university and college teachers.

### 4.1 Attitude of students to learn English language

All of the target population related to the Bachelor class (BS) grade I (366), grade II (354); their age ranged from 17 to 20 years; 289 male and 431 female. They were enrolled in different natural sciences and social sciences subjects, i.e. Statistics 33, environmental sciences 27, Botany 40, Zoology 38, Islamic studies 44, Political science 39, Urdu 32, Psychology 37, Chemistry 41, Physics 45, Computer science 38, Law 24, Mathematics 36, Economics 85, Education 84 and, History 77. The survey result indicates that all of the students learn English as a compulsory subject. This

situation was found common in university and college students. 98 % of the university and 87% of the college students supported learning English as a compulsory subject at Bachelor's level. On the matter of English as a medium of instruction in all subjects, the opinion was divided widely. The students who studied natural science subjects at higher secondary level had experienced learning optional subjects in English-medium instruction. They mostly showed agreement on this issue. These students belonged to the university as well as colleges. But the students who studied subjects of social sciences at higher secondary level, they showed disagreement on this issue. The majority students (56% university and 64% colleges) agreed that learning English caused fear and anxiety for them at school level. For this reason, may be, 32% from university and 45% from college students disagreed to start English as a compulsory subject from grade one. It is alarming for the Educational planners in Pakistan who have just recently made English as a compulsory subject from grade one. On the issue of speaking English with others, the university students showed very positive response where 91% disagreed to be afraid of speaking English. The college students, however, were found afraid of speaking English with the native and non-native English speaking people. On using full-time English as a medium of instruction in the classroom, the university students showed agreement (64%), whereas the college students did not agree and 72% disagreed with this idea. The university students (68%) told that they did not fear mistakes while speaking or writing English. The college students (74%) were found afraid of making mistakes while speaking or writing in English. It was shocking to know that majority of students from both sides (52% university and 65% college) did not want to learn English in their spare time or out of class room. The university atmosphere seems to provide better opportunities to the students where 90% students agreed that if someone wanted to speak English with them, they also reply in English. The college students (58%) were shy to respond in English to anyone addressing them in English. It also seemed to come out that majority of university students (59%) were agreed on watching English movies to improve their listening skill. The college students showed mixed response on this issue which means that ratio was almost equal on Agree, Disagree and Neutral responses. The university 61% students liked to know and understand the culture of English speaking countries. The majority students from colleges (62%) showed disagreement on this issue. When asked whether only reading and writing in English is enough for its understanding, the response of students on both sides was encouraging for the practitioners and teachers, as 83% of the university and 57% of the college students disagreed on it. Likewise, on the question of improving listening and speaking skills for communication, 88% of the university and 73% of the college students were found agreed. On the importance of English in their professional life, the majority of students (99% university and 94% college) were convinced. But there was found a controversy among students on the importance of English and their interest in English language classes. The majority of students disliked taking English classes. This disliking was very strong in the college students where 61 % disagreed that English classes are interesting. When asked whether English is important for higher education in the country or abroad, the majority students (99% university and college 95%) agreed. On the connection of proficiency in English and personality development, the majority students (96% university and 92% college) agreed. The college students were found comparatively more under-pressure than the university students who showed agreement on two issues that they learn English mostly to pass the examination (78%), and that they learn English because their parents and teachers wanted them to do so (69%). For 43 % university and 62% college students English was a boring subject, while 45 % university and 62% college students confessed that it was hard to have grasp on English. 39% university and 52% college students thought that it was better to learn other subjects than English.

#### 4.1.1 Comparison between university and college students on learning English for communication:

On a number of issues raised in the questionnaire, the data shows that the university students have better attitude towards learning English for communication over the college students. To have a clear understanding of the issue, the 26 items in the questionnaire were assigned marks, i.e. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 in case of a positive statement and vice versa. The SPSS 17 was used to analyze the data quantitatively. As two groups of students were identified as the sample population, e.g. university and college, the independent samples t test was used to analyze whether there was found any significant difference between the two groups on the issue of learning English for communication. The table 1 below shows the result of the data where N= 320 (University) and N= 400 (Colleges). The Mean score obtained by the university is 103.75 and colleges 97.52. the significance of the two Mean scores was 0.00 that is less than the standard probability value 0.05 and, the degree of freedom was 71. It shows that there is found a significant difference between the two groups.

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error (D)	t value	Sig. (2-tailed)
University	320	103.75	13.599	1.246	5.178	0.00
Colleges	400	97.52	18.680	1.204		

Table 1: A summary of analysis, t test results of two groups

#### 4.2 Attitude of teachers to applying communicative approach

The second objective of this survey research was to evaluate how far the university and college teachers use communicative approach in classrooms. For this purpose, a semi structured class observation schedule was used. Eight classes (45 minutes each) from the university and two affiliated colleges each were observed. Overall, the situation of classrooms in the university was closer to the characteristics of communicative approach. The university teachers always (25%) or frequently (50%) used English as a medium of instruction in the classrooms, whereas the college teachers rarely (75%) used English as a medium of instruction. Teacher- student interaction was frequently (50%) in the university, while the college teachers had occasionally (50%) teacher-student interaction. Student-student interaction was occasionally (75%) in the university classrooms and, this ratio was rarely (50%) or never (50%) found in the colleges. Student-teacher interaction was frequently (50%) in the university and, in the colleges, it was rarely (50%) seen. The university teachers rarely (50%) or never (50%) explained the grammatical rules in the classroom and, the college teachers always (50%) explained grammatical rules to the students. Pair-work and group-work activities in the university classrooms was occasionally (75%) and frequently (50%) respectively in the university. The college classrooms had rarely (50%) and never (50) pair-work and group-work activities. The university teachers rarely (50%) corrected students' errors on the spot and, the college teachers always (75%) corrected on spot students' errors. The university teachers frequently (75%) created life-like situations in the classrooms and, the college teachers rarely (50%) or never (50%) created life-like situations in the classroom. The university classrooms were occasionally (50 %) teacher-centered whereas, the college classrooms were always (62.5%) teacher-centered. The university classrooms were occasionally (50%) student-centered and, the college classrooms were rarely (37.5%) and never (37.5%) student-centered. The university teachers always (75%) promoted students to speak in English and, the college teachers rarely (75%) promoted students to speak in English. The university teachers always (50%) or frequently (50%) promoted the students to ask questions in classrooms whereas, the college teachers rarely (50%) or never (50%) promoted students to ask questions in classrooms. The university teachers always (50%) or frequently (50%) used teacher made material in the classrooms and, the college teachers rarely (37.5%) or never (37.5%) used teacher-made materials. The university teachers occasionally (100%) used textbooks in classroom instruction and, the college teachers always (62.5%) used textbooks in classroom instruction. The university teachers rarely (50%) or never (50%) emphasized on accuracy in the use of language and, the college teachers always (75%) emphasized on it. The university teachers frequently (50%) emphasized on fluency and the college teachers rarely (62.5%) emphasized on it. The university teachers frequently (50) or occasionally (50%) tolerated students' errors and, the college teachers never (62.5%) tolerated students' errors. The university teachers rarely (50%) focused on reading and writing whereas the college teachers always (37.5%) or occasionally (37.5%) focused on reading and writing. The university teachers always (75%) emphasized on meaning conveyance and the college teachers rarely (50%) emphasized on meaning conveyance. The university teachers frequently (75%) promoted students to use variety of language structures and the college teachers rarely (50%) promoted students use variety of language structures. The university teachers occasionally (50%) translated original text to the class whereas, the college teachers always (62.5) translated text. The university teachers rarely (50%) used L1 in classroom instruction and, the college teachers always (82.5%) used L1 in classroom instruction. The university teachers frequently (50%) promoted peer feedback and, the college teachers rarely (75%) promoted peer feedback. The university classrooms had always (50%) or frequently (50%) a variety of teachers role in classroom, whereas the college classrooms had never (62.5%) displayed a variety of teacher's role. The university teachers rarely (50%) insisted on the memorization of vocabulary and, the college teachers always (75%) insisted on memorization.

##### 4.2.1 Interview with teachers

Twelve teachers, four from the university and four each from two colleges were interviewed. Seven out of twelve teachers were M.A, while five were M.Phil; four teachers had M.Ed degree and six of them were B.Ed. Their general teaching experience ranged from four years to eighteen years. Four of the teachers (from Boys College) were male and eight teachers (four from the University and Girls' college each) were female. This was an observation-referenced and open-ended interview. Those teachers were interviewed whose classes had already been observed. On the basis of data from class observation, some questions from the university and college teachers varied. Hence, the data from interview is also presented in this vein, first the data from the university teachers and second from the college teachers.

The university teachers were observed using classroom strategies close to the tenets of communicative approach, though their approach cannot be fully termed as communicative. All the four teachers claimed to use communicative approach, so these teachers were referenced from the class observation some drawbacks in their teaching strategies. One common thing observed was the lack of pair-work/group work activities and peer feedback. Three of the four respondents thus answered that the students come to university for the first time in their life in grade one. The academic environment of Pakistani schools and colleges till higher secondary school is different. The students are not used to work in groups and pairs. Peer-feed back is also something new for them and mostly students feel embarrassment from peer feed back in the class room. Its big reason is separate schools and colleges for male and female students. Mix-gender education is new for them in the university, so they take time to adjust themselves in the new environment. Another important question asked from the university teachers was that which difficulty they feel in teaching through communicative approach. The most common response was that students don't fully comprehend classroom instructions in English unless translated into L1. This caused for them a big hurdle in the beginning. Another related question was about the syllabus/course work for the students. It was realized that the students learn some grammatical portion in the university which they already have learnt in the schools and colleges, i.e. idiomatic phrases and pair of words. The teachers however did not take the responsibility of designing syllabus for the students, although they tried to justify saying that at school level, the students learn in a different style. So at university, they need to learn many things again in new setting. The university classrooms were not equipped with computers or A/V aids. the teachers told that occasionally they bring their own computers in classroom and borrow multimedia, etc., to facilitate their teaching.

In the colleges, it was observed that the teachers mostly use Grammar Translation Method (GTM), although they claimed to use communicative approach. So the questions asked from these teachers mostly shed light on this issue. Some of the teachers even could not fully explain what communicative approach was. Two of the college teachers, one from the boys college and the other from the girls college, had received TESOL (Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Languages) training under HEC program. The others who had completed their B.Ed/M.Ed, yet they did not receive any training on the use of communicative approach. Four of the teachers said that they have been required to use communicative approach in classrooms, but the classrooms are devoid of the latest technology, like computers and the other related accessories. They have also not been provided with other related material for teaching. That is why they feel difficulty in preparing their own material for teaching. Even the prescribed course is not very clear to many teachers. It was felt here that there was found a lack of coordination between the university authorities who design syllabus and make plans, and the college teachers who have to comply with the university instructions. Two of the respondents complained that the concerned university authority does not respond well on their queries about the syllabus or other related issues. Another issue was the over-crowded classrooms which caused hurdles in applying communicative approach at college level.

## 5. Discussion of results

To ensure an effective teaching and learning environment, physical facilities provided to the teachers and students play a vital role. The data from this survey research shows that the students who study in the university campus, possess better attitude towards learning English for communication as compared to their counterparts in the colleges, though they study the same syllabus and their examination pattern is the same. The university students had better opportunities to interact with teachers and other students in English. They were given classroom instructions in English. They were not found shy of speaking English to others. They liked to attend English classes as compared to



the college students. It was concluded that the university students considered their English classes interesting than the college students. The university students realized listening and speaking equally important for communicative purpose. The college students were shy of communicating in English to the natives or non-native English speaking people. They disliked the idea that the teacher should give all classroom instructions in English. The university students were clearer on the importance of English communication in life and its use in higher studies and professional life. They also agreed that a good command on English communication improves personality. The college students also wanted to improve their communicative competence. But the academic and physical environment in which they studied did not promote them to do so.

The university teachers were using classroom strategies near to the characteristics of communicative approach, although it cannot be fully termed as communicative. It appeared from the data that they needed further training on the use of communicative strategies. The classrooms needed to be equipped with technology. The situation of college teachers was alarming as they mostly used GTM in classroom despite the instruction of the HEC to utilize communicative approach in teaching. The college teachers lacked in training and, other facilities for teaching communicatively were also absent. They were not seen using teacher-made materials for classroom instruction. They also did not use pair-work or group-work activities. They were found engaged making on spot corrections of students' errors in the use of language. Their classes were teacher-centered. They mostly did not promote students to speak in English or ask questions from teachers or other students. They were seen translating word by word and promoting students to memorize vocabulary.

## **6. Conclusion**

Does the physical and academic environment have same kind of effects on students learning strategies and teachers' using teaching approaches, is an ongoing debate. The study was taken with a view to investigate the impact physical and academic environment has on the behavior of students towards learning English for communication and, the behavior of teachers in applying communicative approach in language classrooms in varying environment. The results reveal that there is found a significant difference between the university and college students and teachers on this issue. In the university, the students have better opportunities for learning. They have libraries and internet facilities, trained teachers and healthy surroundings which provide motivation to improve communication skills. The students studying in colleges have urge to improve English skills, but they face a lot of problems in this context. The teachers are mostly not trained in using communicative approach in teaching. Libraries are empty of books and no internet facilities are provided to the students. The students most of the part learn in teacher-centered classrooms with traditional approaches.

Based on the findings of current study, it can be suggested that the educational authorities should improve the standard of teaching in colleges. The colleges where Bachelor program is in progress have already been declared as the sub-campuses of the university. But this is not enough. The teachers should be properly trained prior to expecting them use modern language teaching techniques. The classrooms should be upgraded with the provision of computers and A/V aids. Library and internet facilities should be provided in the colleges too, like that of the university. There should be full coordination between the university and colleges to facilitate teaching and to improve the quality of instruction.

### **6.1 Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research:**

Students learning strategies can be affected by various contextual variables (Ahmad & Rao, 2012). The teaching quality, workload, parents' involvement, students' personal interest in studies are quite a few to be counted. Students may or may not produce the same results taught by a specific teacher. Parents' involvement may or may not prove beneficial for a better outcome of students learning. The findings of the present study may be influenced by the sampling procedure. Students in natural sciences and social sciences can have different orientation towards learning English. This factor can affect the results to be generalized. The gender differences were also ignored during

sampling procedure which may affect findings as co-education is uncommon for the Pakistani students till higher secondary education. Which kind of positive or negative influences they receive in the university environment needs to be explored. The students differences with varying economic and social backgrounds were not considered which may hinder to generalize the findings of this research, as some students might experience studying throughout their academic life in high-profile English medium schools. The researchers are interested to evaluate the impact of physical and academic environment on individual differences in students and teachers. As contrary to this study, the influence of learners and teachers on their academic and physical environment should also be studied. The university is the authority for syllabus design and, examinations and preparation of results. It should also be investigated that what is the effect of this phenomenon on the achievement of students in two contrary environments.

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