

**RESEARCH PAPER****Exploring the Effectiveness of English Language Textbooks at Intermediate Level in Developing Productive Language Skills****<sup>1</sup>Gul Zareen Khan and <sup>2</sup>Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseer Ud Din\***

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**\*Corresponding Author** [ch.nadeem@aari.punjab.gov.pk](mailto:ch.nadeem@aari.punjab.gov.pk)**ABSTRACT**

The study aimed to assess the effectiveness of intermediate level English language textbooks in developing productive language skills. Using a mixed-methods approach, quantitative analysis and qualitative inquiry were combined. A checklist was used as the research instrument to analyze the content of English textbooks for development of productive language skills. The evaluation involved examining pages, lessons, exercises and more with a team of experienced teachers ensuring consistency. The study identified deficiencies in writing activities, lack of diverse and challenging exercises, insufficient engagement and creativity in writing tasks. Limited opportunities for creative writing and inadequate speaking activities were also noted. The findings suggest a need for improvement in textbook content recommending diverse and challenging writing tasks, engaging and creative activities, enhancing opportunities for creative writing, improving writing tasks suitability, incorporating effective speaking activities and including activities for improving pronunciation and personalized feedback.

**Keywords:** English Language, Productive Language Skills, Textbook**Introduction**

The effectiveness of English language textbooks specifically designed for intermediate learners in developing productive language abilities is a crucial yet insufficiently researched subject in Pakistan. The significance of these textbooks in enhancing speaking and writing skills becomes increasingly pronounced as English continues to establish itself as a dominant worldwide lingua franca. This study undertakes an investigation into the field of language pedagogy, with the objective of examining the impact of intermediate-level English language textbooks in development of productive language skills. In this regard, it seeks to explore methodologies, content and instructional strategies employed in these textbooks which are crucial in shaping language learners' proficiency. This study endeavors to intricately probe the significance of English textbooks utilized within intermediate curricula across diverse higher secondary institutions and colleges in KP. Addressing discernible issues and gaps, the research aims to shed light on the pivotal role these textbooks play in shaping language acquisition within this context. Certainly, textbooks have a significant role in the teaching and learning process within the field of education, especially in the context of language instruction. As the process of learning and teaching progresses, textbooks assume an increasingly significant role occupying a position of utmost importance. The impact of their influence is profound on the intellectual development and achievements of students at all levels of schooling (Azizifar, Koosha, & Lotfi, 2010). No doubt, studying English as a foreign language boosts job prospect across the globe. In many nations, being skilled in English is a job market advantage; employers favour those fluent in it (Yuan, Liao, Wang, Kong, & Zhang, 2022). Research proves that sound English proficiency leads to better pay and career benefits (Lu, Liu, An, & Zhang, 2022).

Undoubtedly, English is vital for global businesses. As companies expand worldwide, it's the go-to language for trade, investment and communication (Brown, Stoeckel, Mclean, & Stewart, 2022). Proficient English lets people interact well with global clients, engage in international negotiations and access business resources (Zahoor, Khan, Meyer, & Laker, 2023). English is crucial for international organizations too. Entities like UNO, WHO and IMF use it officially (Pun & Thomas, 2020). These organizations often require strong English for jobs and growth (Johnson, 2019). Since these places are multicultural, English skills aid collaboration and navigating the international arena (Johnson, 2019). More so, mastering English is vital for academic triumph and research success. Leading global universities and research centers adopt English demanding strong skills for entry and engagement (Leith, Graddol, & Jackson, 2020). Proficiency in English empowers sharing research findings and joining international academic events (Fenyi, Jones-Mensah, Tabiri, & Owusu, 2021). On the other hand, tourism thrives on effective communication where English proficiency makes the difference. With its global prevalence, English enriches journeys by enabling interactions, navigation and info absorption (Shooshtari & Hosseinimehr, 2020). English often serves as the tourism industry's language, used by info centers, hotels and services (Bahari & Salimi, 2021). Its proficiency sharpens info understanding, enriching travel. It also aids in comprehending local culture for immersive experiences. Similarly, English skills matter in media and entertainment. Most movies, shows, and music are in English, so knowing the language is key to enjoying popular entertainment (Park, 2022). English is also vital for keeping up with global news and trends, engaging online and connecting worldwide. English proficiency is a must for global events. Conferences and competitions often require strong English skills to participate (Ariawan, 2020) as it aids in sharing ideas internationally, broadening horizons and growing personally through cross-cultural exchanges (Seo & Kim, 2020). Furthermore, learning English offers cultural and personal benefits and opens doors to literature, music and art from English-speaking places (Tang, 2020). Additionally, communication with diverse cultures is easier that boosting empathy (Zhang, Chen, & Li, 2021). Plus, it boosts confidence, nurturing better relationships and creating new opportunities (Bahari & Salimi, 2021). English study also hones critical thinking, problem-solving and communication skills for personal and professional growth (Seo & Kim, 2020).

Designing language teaching textbooks involves considering students' language levels, cultures and learning styles (Chen & Hwang, 2020). Quality textbooks are orderly, clear and user-friendly for both students and teachers (Wang & Sun, 2020). Though, Multimedia, like audio and visuals, is now popular for more interactive language learning (Khan, Ali, Kumar, & Venugopal, 2023) however, in resource-limited government schools, textbooks often stand alone for language instruction (Deng, 2018) and their quality greatly affects students' language progress (Deng, 2018). Ensuring alignment with goals and student levels is vital (Ibrahim & Barnawi, 2022). Textbooks hold immense importance for students, offering structured learning. They aid review and motivation (Bahari & Salimi, 2021). For teachers, textbooks provide a teaching framework. They aid planning and student engagement.

Productive language skills involve speaking and writing, vital for effective communication and education. Developing productive language skills (writing and speaking) is key in second language learning. Reading boosts vocabulary and grammar, while listening predicts speaking. Receptive skills often develop first in language acquisition, supporting speaking and writing growth. Listening and reading input reinforces language knowledge (Hajiyeva, 2014).

English textbooks are vital for intermediate students' language growth. Research indicates they significantly aid vocabulary and grammar learning. With organized content, textbooks help students lay a sturdy language foundation. Still, they can overlook speaking and writing, possibly hindering practical communication (Widyantoro, 2017). Oral exam,

written exam and portfolio assessment are the main methods of assessment of language productive skills. Therefore, the researcher intended to evaluate the effectiveness of English textbooks in developing productive language skills at intermediate level in KP.

### **Material and Methods**

The research used a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative analysis for reliability and qualitative inquiry for depth. A dynamic strategy provided a comprehensive understanding by considering multiple dimensions, leading to synergistic illumination and a more holistic view of the subject. A checklist was employed to gather quantitative data, while interviews were conducted to elicit qualitative insights in the course of the study. English textbooks at intermediate level at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (A Textbook of English-1<sup>st</sup> year and Intermediate English for Class-XII) were selected as material for this study.

### **Research instrument**

This study employed a checklist to analyze and assess the content of English textbooks at intermediate level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) for effective productive language skills. The chosen checklist, Mohamed's, was recognized for its contemporary and inclusive approach, widely used in prior research within Pakistan.

### **Data collection and analysis**

The evaluation involved examining various elements like pages, lessons, exercises and more. Due complexity of the task, a team of ten experienced teachers evaluated the textbooks using the checklist ensuring consistency. The modified checklist, influenced by linguistic experts, measured the textbooks' efficacy in fostering language skills across four rating categories. The collected data from evaluators shed light on the textbooks' quality and their potential to enhance students' language abilities.

### **Validity and reliability of instrument**

The research tool underwent validation procedures to assess its efficacy in enhancing language proficiency, followed by an evaluation of its reliability through the examination of responses obtained during pilot testing.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Review of the KP Province Eleventh Grade English Textbook**

The first English textbook for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) comprises a total of 300 pages, with 22 topics and 198 activities. The aforementioned exercises encompass all aspects of language learning, including comprehension, grammar, vocabulary acquisition, writing skills, listening proficiency and oral communication. Approximately 13% of the tasks pertain to the cognitive process of comprehension which include activities such as responding to questions that test understanding and providing concise summaries of the literary work. The book allocates 34% of its content to the study of grammar, encompassing abstract nouns, noun types, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions and punctuation. The components comprising 26% of vocabulary problems include word definitions, pronunciation, antonyms, idioms and circumstances.

#### **Review of the KP Province twelfth Grade English Textbook**

The second English textbook from KP is a comprehensive guide with 332 pages, 20 lessons and a total of 131 activities. It is designed to enhance language skills such as understanding, grammar, vocabulary, writing, listening and speaking. Around 15% of the activities focus on understanding tasks like recalling information and interpreting passages. Grammar makes up 43% of the content, covering topics like parts of speech and verb forms. Vocabulary activities constitute 13%, while writing skills make up 18% with tasks like essays and summarizing. Speaking skills (10%) involve narrating, expressing views and discussions. Listening skills are not explicitly mentioned.

### Analyzing the effectiveness of KP Intermediate English Textbooks

Two intermediate-level textbooks were assessed for their ability to enhance productive language skills using the checklist method outlined in the research methodology chapter. Ten evaluators (teachers) from KP participated in the assessment and their feedback was documented using a four-point scale from the checklist.

**Table 1**  
**Cut Point of Scores**

Cut point	Score
Poor	0-25
Inadequate	26-50
Satisfactory	51-75
Excellent	76-100

**Table 2**  
**Quality of Writing Activities**

Textbook	Score	Evaluation
KP-1	40	Inadequate
KP -2	34	Inadequate

Table 2 reveals deficiencies in writing activity quality in intermediate-level English textbooks by KP. Scores show activities surpass student proficiency in both regions, aligning with Johnson's (2019) research on poorly planned assignments that do not ensure engagement. All textbooks lack language skill development in writing exercises. Atkinson (2021) advise diverse challenging tasks for wholesome language development. KP-2 score of 34 rates both books' writing activities as poor or medium, consistent with (Heng, Hamid, & Khan, 2020) finding.

**Table 3**  
**Interactive Writing Exercises**

Textbook	Score	Evaluation
KP-1	39	Inadequate
KP -2	37	Inadequate

Table 3 displays evaluations of writing activities of English textbook at the intermediate level in KP province. Scores and evaluations show task engagement for student interest. Both the textbooks have insufficient engaging activities with scores below satisfactory. Textbooks KP-1 and KP-2 scored 39 and 37 respectively, lacking engaging tasks. This matches Lin, Huang, & Chen (2018) findings of uncreative textbooks. Similarly, inadequate engagement is seen, lacking creativity and enthusiasm. Kaviani & Mashhadi Heidar (2020) urge diverse and imaginative tasks while Shooshtari & Hosseinimehr (2020) highlight interactive tasks for students engagement.

**Table 4**  
**Ways to Encourage Unrestricted Writing**

Textbook	Score	Evaluation
KP-1	16	Inadequate

KP-2	15	Inadequate
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Table 4 illustrates how intermediate English textbooks offer opportunities for creative writing. Scores indicate the extent of free expression without grammar or structure concerns. Results highlight limited focus on promoting creativity. KP-1 and KP-2 scored 16 and 15 respectively, indicating lack of expressive chances. Few opportunities exist for students to convey thoughts through writing. (Adams, 1990) affirmed the value of creative writing, especially for EFL students. Freewriting exercises enhance writing skills and reduce anxiety. This validates creative writing's importance in EFL classrooms. (Adella et al., 2023) stressed open-ended tasks in textbooks to foster creativity and self-expression.

**Table 5**  
**Assessment of Appropriate Writing Tasks**

Textbook	Score	Evaluation
KP-1	30	Inadequate
KP-2	31	Inadequate

Table 5 assesses quality of writing activities in intermediate-level English textbooks based on length, precision and instructional support. The data reveals varied suitability levels. For instance, KP-1 scored 30 and KP-2 scored 31, indicating limited suitability. These scores underscore the need to enhance writing tasks in KP English textbooks for better student writing development. These results align with prior research by AlDowyan, Abdallah, & El-Gharabawy (2017), emphasizing the importance of appropriate length, precision and instructional support to boost writing skills and language proficiency.

**Table 6**  
**Creative Writing tasks**

Textbook	Score	Evaluation
KP-1	24	Poor
KP-2	22	Poor

Table 6 assesses how intermediate English textbooks support creative writing. Results show shortcomings in promoting creative writing. KP-1 scored 24, KP-2 scored 22, revealing insufficient emphasis. Yet, improvement opportunities exist to enhance creative writing in intermediate English textbooks.

**Table 7**  
**Effective Verbal Communication**

Textbook	Score	Evaluation
KP-1	46	Inadequate-Medium
KP-2	45	Inadequate- Medium

The table data shows that both the textbooks lack effective speaking activities for promoting meaningful oral communication. KP-1 and KP-2 scored 46 and 45, hinting at moderate but insufficient focus on this aspect. Neglecting oral communication might impede real-life language use and speaking skills growth. Meaningful oral communication is crucial for fluency and confidence. Zahoor et al., (2023) found similar issues, stressing the need for improved speaking tasks. Adding such tasks enriches learning, motivates participation and boosts language skills.

**Table 8**  
**Interactive Learning Activities to Promote Student Engagement**

Textbook	Score	Evaluation
KP-1	52	Inadequate-Medium
KP-2	51	Inadequate- Medium

Table 8 assesses how intermediate-level English textbooks promote active participation in speaking tasks. Results show a lack of effective encouragement for student engagement in these tasks, with textbooks KP-1 and KP-2 scoring 52 and 51 respectively, indicating insufficient emphasis on active participation. This mirrors Wang & Sun (2020)

findings of similar deficiencies. They also highlight the importance of interactive activities to improve student engagement and communication skills.

**Table 9**  
**Activities that Promote Integrated Pronunciation Development**

Textbook	Score	Evaluation
KP-1	16	Poor
KP-2	15	Poor

Table 9 examines how intermediate-level English textbooks incorporate activities for improving pronunciation. The table shows that these textbooks generally lack pronunciation related activities which are crucial for refining pronunciation by enabling learners to practice in real situations. Textbooks KP-1 and KP-2 scored 16 and 15 respectively, suggesting insufficient inclusion of pronunciation activities. Effective pronunciation development involves listening exercises with audio to expose learners to authentic models. Dialogues and tasks let learners practice in context, mirroring real language use. Leith et al., (2020) research underscores integrating pronunciation activities which help learners more than just drills.

**Table 10**  
**Individualized Feedback**

Textbook	Score	Evaluation
KP-1	6	Poor
KP-2	4	Poor

Table 10 shows that intermediate level English textbooks lack personalized feedback on pronunciation. Personalized feedback is significant for improving pronunciation skills. KP province textbooks (KP-1 and KP-2) received scores of 6 and 4, indicating some effort but inadequate implementation of personalized feedback. Limited feedback hinders learners' ability to address pronunciation challenges effectively.

### Interview Interpretation

Ten English experts were interviewed about the effectiveness of KP English textbooks (Book 1 and Book 2). Their responses are mentioned below:

- The quality of writing activities in intermediate-level English textbooks in KP province is low. It is important for students to have access to well-written exercises that challenge their writing skills and promote language development.
- The lack of diverse and challenging writing exercises in both the textbooks is a notable issue. It is crucial for students to be exposed to various types of writing tasks that help them improve their language skills and think critically.
- The insufficient engagement in writing activities, as indicated by the scores in Table 3, is worrisome. Students need more opportunities to practice their writing skills and engage in meaningful activities that promote language development.
- The lack of creativity and enthusiasm in writing activities is a significant concern. Creative and engaging writing tasks can help students improve their writing skills and enjoy the learning process.
- The limited opportunities for creative writing in intermediate English textbooks is a lost opportunity. Creative writing tasks can help students express themselves and develop their language skills in a unique way.
- Freewriting exercises are essential for enhancing writing skills and reducing anxiety. Students need the opportunity to write freely and express their thoughts without fear of making mistakes.

- The varied suitability of writing tasks in KP textbooks is an issue that needs to be addressed. Writing tasks should be appropriate for students' language levels and help them improve their skills.
- The insufficient emphasis on promoting creative writing in KP textbooks is also a concern. Creative writing is an important skill that should be nurtured in students through well-designed exercises.
- The inadequate speaking activities in KP textbooks hinder meaningful oral communication. Students need more opportunities to practice speaking and develop their speaking skills in a supportive environment.
- The lack of encouragement for active participation in speaking tasks in KP textbooks is a challenge. Students should be encouraged to actively participate in speaking activities and engage in meaningful conversations to improve their oral communication skills.

### **Findings**

- The quality of writing activities in intermediate-level English textbooks in KP province is deficient, as evidenced by the scores in Table 1.
- Both the textbooks lack productive language skills development in writing exercises and need more diverse and challenging tasks.
- The scores in Table 3 indicate insufficient engagement in writing activities in KP textbooks.
- There is lack of creativity and enthusiasm in writing activities given at the end of chapters in both the textbooks.
- Opportunities for creative writing limited in intermediate English textbooks as highlighted in Table 4.
- Freewriting exercises are essential for enhancing writing skills and reducing anxiety.
- The suitability of writing tasks in KP textbooks is varied, with scores in Table 5 indicating the need for improvement.
- The insufficient emphasis on promoting creative writing in KP textbooks is evident in Table 6.
- Inadequate speaking activities in KP textbooks hinder meaningful oral communication, as indicated by scores in Table 7.
- The lack of encouragement for active participation in speaking tasks in KP textbooks is evident in Table 8.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis of the data from the tables provided valuable insights into how well English textbooks are helping students in KP province, Pakistan, in developing active learning skills like writing, speaking and pronunciation at the intermediate level. However, the results also showed that some of these skills are not being emphasized adequately in the textbooks, indicating a need for improvement.

### **Recommendations**

- The study revealed that writing activities in textbooks lack language skill development and engagement. Johnson (2019) suggest diverse and challenging tasks to improve student engagement and writing skills. Therefore, it is recommended that curriculum planners may incorporate diverse and challenging writing tasks in intermediate-level English textbooks in KP province.
- The study revealed that textbooks lack engaging and creative tasks, with scores below satisfactory. Chen & Hwang (2020) emphasize the importance of creative and

imaginative tasks for student engagement. Therefore, it is recommended that curriculum planners may include more engaging and creative writing activities in intermediate-level English textbooks of KP province.

- It was found that scores indicate limited opportunities for students to express their thoughts through creative writing. Fenyi et al., (2021) highlights the importance of creative writing for EFL students and its role in enhancing writing skills and reducing anxiety. Therefore, it is recommended that enhance opportunities for creative writing in intermediate-level English textbooks in KP province may be included.
- Findings of the study revealed limited suitability of writing tasks based on length, precision and instructional support. Brown et al., (2022) emphasize the importance of appropriate length, precision, and instructional support to boost writing skills and language proficiency. Therefore, it is recommended that curriculum planners improve the suitability of writing tasks in intermediate-level English textbooks in KP province.
- The study revealed that textbooks lack effective speaking activities for promoting meaningful oral communication. Hajiyeva (2014) stresses the need for improved speaking tasks to enhance fluency and confidence in speaking skills. Therefore, it is recommended that textbook planners include effective speaking activities in intermediate-level English textbooks in KP province to promote meaningful oral communication.
- The study revealed that textbooks lack activities for improving pronunciation and personalized feedback. Azizifar et al., (2010) research highlights the importance of integrating pronunciation activities to aid learners in addressing pronunciation challenges effectively. Therefore, it is recommended that curriculum planners incorporate activities for improving pronunciation and personalized feedback on pronunciation in intermediate-level English textbooks in KP province.



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