

An Examination of Educational Inequalities and Implicit Curriculum across Socially Stratified Schools

Afia Kanwal^{*}, Sham Haidar^{**} and Wasima Shehzad^{***}

Abstract

Curriculum provides specific kinds of exposure to learners in a continuous process and determines learners' abilities. According to different educational policies, developing an integrated curriculum in primary education is one way of balancing content exposures for all learners across socioeconomic classes. However, schools within the country vary greatly in terms of curriculum and its delivery. Curriculum variations lead to disparities in educational content. This study explores the nature of variations in the English curriculum used in different types of schools since there are different school systems in the country. The study explores reasons for disparities in curriculum across socially stratified schools in Pakistan with a specific focus on the English language instruction. The study uses phenomenological methods to gather data through interviews, demographic information and analysis of the fifth class English textbooks across 30 different schools. Results show how and why curriculum differs across low, middle and high cost schools and elaborate on how teachers can improve instructions to minimize the differences.

Keywords: Curriculum, socially stratified schools, variation, equity, disparity

^{*}Assistant Professor, Department of English, Air University, Islamabad.

Email: afiakhere@gmail.com

^{**}Assistant Professor, Department of English, Air University, Islamabad.

Email: sham_haidar@yahoo.com

^{***}Dean, Department of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences, Air University, Islamabad.

Email: wasima.shehzad@yahoo.com

Introduction

Curriculum is a complex phenomenon and covers a variety of solid facts, ideas, concepts and implications. Curriculum is defined as “an interrelated set of plans and experiences that a student undertakes under the guidance of the school” (Marsh, 2009, np). It is not only the essential knowledge of a subject but the “totality of learning experiences” through which students attain general skills and knowledge (Marsh, 2009, p. 9-13). The process of curriculum implementation is a continuous process which includes: need analysis, goals, content selection, teaching styles, learning outcomes, evaluation and redesigning. Curriculum as a whole determines the experiences and skills that are designed to be delivered to students; henceforth it plays an important role in learners’ development. The overall goal of curriculum is to provide learning opportunities to students through contents and learning process. Syllabus, textbooks and materials used to fulfill curriculum benchmarks are often reflective of the impact of curriculum on learning and achievements. However, the overall goals and beliefs of curriculum for each system of schooling provide the ideologies and philosophies behind their motivations to provide students with particular kind of exposure. Curricula reflects sociocultural artifacts as well as local beliefs and values.

In English instruction, curriculum is the broadest organization involving teaching, learning and evaluating (Murray & Christison, 2011). Curriculum approaches for English may be linguistic based (structural, academic, function, vocabulary, skills), content based (situational, integration of language and content), learner centered (competency, standard, outcome based). The choice of Curriculum and its implementation may have a significant impact on pedagogy and learning within school. In fact, school vision and goals shape everyday instructional and learning practices. In Pakistan, the educational system introduces class stratification (schools are designed for the upper, middle and lower classes) where “schooling works as a mechanism for allocating children to positions in the class structure and in legitimizing the structure of social division”(Carnoy, 1975, p.xxx; Haidar, 2016). These differences are maintained through many implicit practices.

Curriculum is based on visions and goals due to which it is sensitive and political in nature. These visions guide curriculum implementation and outcomes which ultimately determine the skills and abilities of learners. An important component of a curriculum is hidden curriculum, which operates along the standard curriculum. The hidden curriculum deals with unsaid implicit academic, social, and cultural messages communicated to school students (Kentli, 2009). It involves interaction of students with peers and teachers which results in behaviors and attitudes that students develop in a certain institution. Curriculum becomes important because “students are being evaluated on their embodied

cultural capital, institutional cultural capital, and their knowledge of hidden curriculum” (Smith, 2013, p. 22). Thus, the cultural and social norms within one institute form a culture of status quo and capital embodied through ones’ language, interaction, and behavior.

Curriculum is a set of influences that operates at institutional structure and culture (Hafferty, 1998) that manipulates learners in instructional process. In education, learners go through the process of identity construction as they adapt to institutional environment (Hafferty, 2006). When the learners adjust themselves with the environment that leads to the formation of their habitus, which serves as a social capital for them (Bourdieu, 1991). For example, in Pakistan students in elite schools develop a more democratic and western attitude as compared to students in low cost schools (Rahman, 2001). Therefore, they are well adjusted in the elite environment that makes them liberals and hold positive attitudes about India and Western values in comparison to students of general schools who are more conservative. Henceforth, the curriculum in different schools leads to the social stratification of different classes in which elite class is more inclined towards the modern world as compared to ordinary people which results in an increasing gap between different classes in the country (Haidar, 2019a; Haidar & Fang, 2019a).

In fact, one of the major challenges confronting education systems in the 21st century “is the development of a more equal and pluralistic society” which enables learners of different backgrounds to participate actively and equally (Whitworth & Philip, 2009, p.260). Equality in educational opportunities ensures one national vision across all primary schools. Through curriculum, it provides all students equal exposure to educational content; regardless of background and parents’ abilities to finance schooling, all learners can maximize their abilities.

Pakistani primary school systems are based on socio-economic divisions (Malik, 2015). Along with other differences, the curriculum also plays an important role in student outcomes, assessment practices and teacher accountability. Regardless of many teacher trainings, investments and improvement programs in primary schools across the country in the past, generally educational outcomes remain unsatisfactory – especially for English language courses. The English language skill is a doorway to success and upward mobility (Haidar, 2019b). The role of the English language increases as students move to high school, college and professional life (Haidar, 2016). Basic language skills, when introduced properly at an early level can lessen chances of failure and build ability to counter adverse risk factors. Similarly, with improved language skills the chances of social inclusion, mobility and success can also increase. There is a need for universalization specifically of the language skills. The required universalization has not been achieved because of the persistent divide in the curriculum. This divide is a result of

different school systems in the country as elite class children are provided easy access to better English instruction both in elite private and public schools while ordinary school students lack these facilities (Haidar & Fang, 2019a). In fact, the English language is one of the most important disciplines in primary education and serves as a key determinant of future educational success (Haidar, 2019b).

The Vision 2030 claims that a major goal of education systems in Pakistan is to achieve one curriculum and one national examination system. National Education Policy (2009) also clearly emphasizes the need for equality in education systems, specifically in primary education. The implementation of one curriculum and one national examination system can have a tremendous influence on education by removing social apartheid. The National education policy (2009) specifically states, “educational system is supposed to ensure the right of an individual to grow in income and stature” on the basis of excellence in education (p.12). However, the policy discusses equity only in terms of gender not in terms equality of the educational system. Similarly, enrollment is emphasized more here than equality of exposure. This means, to realize the 2030 vision, the existing practices need to be further explored.

Literature Review

During colonial times, British colonialists introduced English education in the Indian subcontinent to produce Westernized Indians that may serve as a bridge between the rulers and general public (Graddol & Council, 2010; Majhanovich, 2013). For this purpose, they established elite English medium schools for the elite class and continued local language schools for general public (Rahman, 1998). The dominance of English and symbolic power continued after the independence of the country due to the stakes of the elite class. They were competent in English and resisted its replacement by local languages. Moreover, the separate elite school system ensured the transfer of prestige to their children (Haidar, 2019a). Therefore, this segregation due to English is still creating divisions in the present Pakistani society through schools, as some follow curriculum developed at Oxford while others follow local curriculum (Haidar, 2016). What is most unfortunate is that these divisions are being created and maintained year after year in primary schools throughout the country without being challenged (Haidar, 2016; Haidar & Fang, 2019a).

Currently a ‘tripartite’ division exists in educational institutes in terms of curriculum: English medium schools, vernacular schools, and madrassas (Qadeer, 2006; Rahman, 2001). English medium schools are for the prestigious class, and vernacular schools are for lower classes and traditionalists. Madrassas usually attract the lowest strata of society who often cannot afford schooling (Malik, 2015). This results in increasing differences in a society faced with ‘divergent pulls’ in education (Qadeer,

2006). Though there are modest improvements in the overall lifestyles, the average Pakistani remains poor as social and economic disparities have become sharper. While a third of the population is in poverty, the others are explained as, “the floating up or filtering down processes has been functioning for only some segments of lower/middle and not across the board. The rich have gained dis-proportionality. However, the salaried middle class are always struggling to meet their needs” (Qadeer, 2006, p. 269). Moreover, the bureaucratic elite produces opportunities for only those within that group including powerful land lords and military elites.

Education is a prime medium that helps people move along the mobility ladder. Along with education, the English language is a prime tool of empowerment as all education revolves around English being a medium of information and employment gains (Haidar, 2019b). In Pakistan, majority students gain information through the languages of Urdu, Sindhi, and Pashto in different areas of the country. A parallel system of private schools, however, caters to the needs of the upper class. At public expense, the upper class stratum distinguishes themselves by attending different educational systems (Rahman, 2002). Institutions operate to reproduce inequality and existing systems have varied visions and curriculum. The lack of neutrality is obvious from the existence of different educational systems in the country. This study explores how primary schools follow the national agenda of reducing inequality; for this purpose, the study intends to compare school visions, curriculum, themes, and standards of English textbook across stratified school systems and analyze curriculum for any hidden themes.

Methodology

This phenomenological study engages participants in formal and informal settings in order to understand their perspectives. Phenomenology is focused on the meaning making of the participants (Check & Schutt, 2012). The tools used to collect data included: interviews, demographics and textbook analysis.

Interviews. Interviews in phenomenology provide data which help in understanding the perspectives of the participants. The interviews are focused on learning impartially about the participant. They also help in understanding personal and cultural experiences. The role of the researcher as an interviewer is not only to receive information for conducting research but is also open to unexpected responses (Atkinson, Coffey, Delamont, Lofland, & Lofland, 2001). The purpose for using the interview format is because it provides valuable and credible information through it.

We interviewed the participants while they were in the specific schools and outside the school settings. The interviews used in this research are semi-structured interviews with some of the key questions written to start a dialogue. Semi-structured

interviews provided an in-depth understanding of the practices and perceptions of the participants. Usually the interviews lasted approximately from 15 to 20 minutes. The concerns and issues discussed were focused on interviewees' specific experiences. A total of 45 interviews were conducted over the period of two years. The research participants were educational specialists, parents, English teachers, students, ministry and Government officials, political persons, and people from education-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As shown in table-1 below.

Table 1
Research Participants

S. No	Department	Level	No of participants
1	Ministry of education	Secretary and other officers	5
2	National Education Assessment system/NEAS	Director	1
3	Political leader involved in poor children education	Ex Member of National Assembly	2
4	An educational leader	Professor	1
5	Ministry of population	Minister	1
6	University administrator	In charge of selection committee of deserving students	1
7	NGO working on education	President	1
8	Private school system	Executive Director/principal	3
9	Federal schools	Principal	1
10	Different schools in Rawalpindi	Teachers from elite, middle level and low level schools	35

The interviews were carried out ethically by obtaining prior permissions from the participants. They were assured of confidentiality and ethical reporting. Moreover, the interviews were recorded. Only in a few cases, where the interviewee requested not to be recorded, the responses were noted down. Likewise, the participants were free to speak in the language of their choice with no pressure to speak in English.

Documents analysis. School visions and curriculum related document analysis formed an important part of this study. It helped in providing an account of reality less influenced by the researcher. The writer of the document interacts with the topic and the content becomes a direct reflection of the writer's views, feelings and abilities. Documents included fifth class English textbook across different streams of stratified schools. This tool was used due to the astute information that it is capable of reflecting about the writer. This study used document analysis technique to examine in-depth

features of various situations. It was a way to look into the underlying goals and motives followed by each school. Documents served as a resource to allow understanding and interpretations of school streams as well.

Demographics. Statistical study of demographics about the students who accessed a specific school was used to categorize schools as high cost, middle cost and low cost schools. The sample of schools was reorganized based on the fee differences they had. The number of schools, which were visited for data collection, was 30.

Table 2

Demographic of schools

S No	Monthly tuition	Category	Number
1	20-500	Low cost	10
2	500-2500	Middle cost	10
3	Above 2500	High cost	10

Data Analysis. Analysis of the qualitative data was based on Merriam's (1998) techniques. It was based on the five steps of analysis: narrative, generating categories with various themes and developing patterns through coding, interpretation in light of the research objectives, confirmation, presentation and discussions. For understanding the phenomenon at hand, we used a systematic procedure to analyze data; such as reading for meaning, dividing the text into meaningful units, expressing the meaning in a more transferrable method, formulating a structure that highlights the experience in the narratives and illustrating the themes in detail.

Findings and Discussions

The interviewees threw light on the current educational scenario and the influence of curriculum about the experiences of the learners. The data not only highlighted how and why curriculum differs across low cost, middle cost, and high cost schools but also provided useful insights and reasons for such practices.

Social Stratification and Education

One of the major themes that emerged from the data was that of stratification in society as a universal phenomenon. However, its influence on education was strongly felt and pointed out by all the participants. A participant said this is "an international problem and not unique to us". Another participant a political person, Ex-Member of National Assembly involved in educating orphans stated, "The influence of stratified system on education is quite influential specifically as education has taken up the shape of industry and form of a developed business". He, however, had positive views regarding socioeconomic classes and divisions and said that "he knows many individuals who are

helping the society change and influence positive change regardless of belonging to low classes”. He was of the view that potential exists in every individual regardless of SES. He agreed that English is creating a ‘divide’ in educational settings.

The interviewees commented on the education system in the country highlighting some of its problems. The director NEAS stated, “Education is not our nation’s priority”, and she added, “many programs are being run yet the monitoring is poor due to which the country’s educational system remains ineffective”. She also added that the lack in monitoring is often blamed on lack of resources. However, there is a deliberate negligence on the part of the decision makers in the country. Likewise, the standard of textbooks is different across primary schools where different curriculum visions are followed. The content of textbook varies across different boards. Another participant, a well-known educationist, added that there are “three educational systems with huge gaps, we want to close the gaps but we don’t know how to and we have not been able to, although there are boards of teacher trainings everywhere yet we don’t see a change”. He emphasized that,

We have not been able to do it because of our political system that does not support equality. We have three elements in the society, there are the richest, who have O/A levels after which they go abroad due to the wealth of their parents and they are a class within their own rights. The matric system is very broad and can be very bad and very good and it has the basic germ that we could develop progress from and then there is the madrassa system and mushroom private schooling that take little fee and do not teach a thing and parents have to send their children to tuition centers.

He called the educational system “a tripod and we need to put a lot of effort to close the gaps and frankly there is a huge gap that people in the society want to retain”.

An interview was conducted with the President of a non-governmental organization involved in education in the nearby slum areas of Rawalpindi with the help of foreign aid. During his interview he emphasized the role of education and said that he is “not satisfied with the overall education system as it is different for different SES and nothing is being done to equalize it. The curriculum is different and so is the teaching methodology”. He held the political turmoil in the country responsible for de-prioritizing education in the country and said “we need to improve on emergency basis with provisions at Government and individual levels, while programs like Alif Alilaan are playing a significant role, they are not enough”. Moreover, the programs are being run and managed by the middle class man who does not have many resources and power.

Diversity in Education

The diversity of educational system was discussed with each interviewee. They presented their view regarding diversity of the educational systems and its influences based on their specific experiences. The Executive Director of an elite private schools system stated,

The basic reason is the diversity of education system that creates differences in educational outcomes and students arriving in universities are coming from systems that take different fees which ranges from 50 rupees to 2000 dollars. Hence private schooling is not an urban elite phenomena, it is a rural urban phenomena.

He added,

Since curriculum is different hence exposure is given more in private schools yet commitment is found to be of a lesser degree in private school students, whereas, the government school students are passionate yet they lack economic support.

An interview with the director of national education assessment system was carried out. She monitored schools throughout Pakistan, worked with curriculum designers, and monitored the effectiveness of the government schools. She was able to provide a comparison of different school systems and their performances. Overall, her team was responsible for monitoring learning achievement of elementary students and they were responsible for improving curriculum, textbook and learning material and instruction methodologies of teachers. They directly deal with the policy makers to influence a change in policy. According to her, “diversity in education exists due to the difference in curriculum, which is good yet implementation is an issue”. She talked about NEAS findings about ‘ghost schools’ that operate throughout the country because of the low performance of government schools. She also said,

Private schools are both good and bad but they keep the ball rolling and it is not possible to demolish their growth yet they too need to be systematized as individual schools create obvious class differences with their curriculums, teaching methods and exposure levels they provide to students.

She further added “earlier government schools did well but with the rising business like private schools and government schools have a reduced status now”. She added that government is strong and with decisiveness can influence and enhance the maximum population that has access to government schools yet “politics is involved” in their decisions.

Variations in Curriculum

The interviews pointed out that the main cause of the diversity of educational system across the socioeconomic milieu was curriculum. Variation in curriculum and teaching are considered to be the prime cause of difference in academics generally and linguistic performance specifically. In this regard, secretary education minister said, “basic standards in curriculum are different across school systems which is the main reason for problems in education”.

Curriculum is influential in all aspects of academic and individual grooming of students as it forms experiences and equal chances of success. The study participants were fully aware of the value of curriculum to their teaching and its impacts on outcomes of their students. One teacher pointed out, “the curriculum in my school is based on international standards and had defined goals whereas the teachers were specifically instructed to follow them”. Teachers from English medium schools pointed out that curriculum in their schools was designed by the school board and the textbooks were revised. However, they also pointed out that in classrooms “teachers did not follow the curriculum, yet focused on teaching students only the exam syllabus to pass the students”.

The chairman of an elite private school system stated, “education cannot be equalized yet it can be universal in values and curriculum”. He emphasized “the uniformity of curriculum” which may lead to equalizing social classes; however, he said “the system of the world is based on this distinction”. He said that, “teachers are becoming teachers by default not by design”. Moreover, he spoke of missionary schools, private and low cost schools and the differences of curriculum and teaching in these systems. Another participant also emphasized the role of teacher in implementing curriculum standards, yet lamented on the differences in curriculum and school expectations of children across different socioeconomic classes.

The role of politics was highlighted by the interviewees as a significant cause in stratified schooling and difference in curricula. In this regard, secretary to education minister said, “there is so much politics in education that the top management does not want to change and a lot of social pressure is involved, at times I do not foresee any change”. He blamed the overall instability of the country for the fact that education is not prioritized as it is in the neighboring countries. Another participant discussed in detail the role of politics in academia. He has worked closely with the politicians of the country for many years and his views regarding the social structure of the country and its influence on education were significant and insightful. In the interview, he traced the history of the development of different social classes in the country and their manifestations through educational institutions as their prime platform. He also spoke at length about the role of

politics and those in power in the current condition of education in the country. He referred to the “feudal culture and religious control as allies who work to keep the masses uneducated” and added politicians to this category of powerful people in the country. He said that, “the most powerful keep a closed door exclusively for themselves to enter and I call them the feudal the upper class of Pakistan”. With time, the power shifted to the middle classes in the form of military, where the middle class found out that they have little chances to move up so these people legitimately went up the ladder through forces. According to him, “it is the ambitious people in classes that use different instruments to move up and keep the door closed for the rest, education first and English next happens to be an instrument for these ambitious people”.

Issues, Challenges and Solutions

The interviewees gave different responses regarding the solution to the issues and challenges of stratification to education and linguistic development. The difference in responses emerged from the diversity of experiences each interviewee had. According to one interviewee, “public private partnership must be emphasized” and “monitoring” of the current system is required to enhance the status of education. The interviews pointed out, “a single person cannot regulate the system as the rich schools have turned into business institutes hence, a collective effort is needed”. The interviewees remained positive regardless of all the problems the nation is facing in education. They added that education “is becoming our priority with a lot of knowledge coming in from our students who are returning from foreign [yet]we need to overcome the lack of trust between government and private educationists who seem to be competing rather than working together and pose danger to each other”. They added, “curriculum documents and textbook decisions should be taken at national level and the visions, which schools ought to follow, must be decided collaboratively”. Another participant stated “we need a generational change that is prone to learning and as language learning is a process; it requires practice and time that business like schools cannot provide”. She emphasized, “though stratification can never end in Pakistan yet education should not merely be job focused specifically in schools but in building individuals and the nation who have all the skills necessary to compete”.

Overall, the interviewees said that there exists a great difference in students, who come from different schooling as they are taught different skills. This leads to a divide and the impact lingers on as the students enter education in later years. Moreover, the participants pointed out that the potential of government role and private partnerships in overcoming the gaps while emphasizing the inculcation of appropriate language skills at school level through uniform curriculum. Similarly, the role of teacher catering for the linguistics needs of student with the textbook, teaching methodology and curriculum was considered important to enhance linguistic outcomes and overall improvement of student skills.

Curriculum, Vision and Textbook Analysis

The visions for the sample schools were categorized into high cost, middle cost, and low cost schools and studied with respect to the curriculum goals and visions. Common curriculum features and language skills emphasized were extracted to point out prominent features of visions and curriculum across different schools. The curriculum is not same across school systems and is separated in terms of aims and purposes that guide the process of teaching and learning. The curriculum documents and visions refer to the differences in curriculum experiences. Each category of school has devised a different curriculum and focused on different language skills. Moreover, the themes and content in textbooks that set ideological grounds at primary school level vary as shown in table-3.

Table 3
Summary of Curriculum Themes across Stratified Schools

Categories	Low cost School:	Middle Cost Schools	High cost Schools
Goals Visions Mission	Purposeful, quality, healthy educational environment national values, community, culture of innovation, learning	Education suited to our cultural, historical/ religious framework, empower and equip., the country and the wider world, affordable, accessible and quality education, basic knowledge of skills explorative mind, moral and ethical values, National objectives	Cambridge, Reggio Emilia approach, Scottish Curriculum, UK National Curriculum, international standard, develop a first language competency of English, excellence through quality management, quality teacher teaching, diverse community, global, entrepreneurial centered achievement, development of attitude, skills, knowledge, high academic standard, inclusivity, acceptance, respect, and responsibility, a deep understanding of the traditions and values of our community, distinguish themselves academically and become conscientious citizens of a greater community, confident, personally fulfilled,
Language skills emphasize	Reading, writing	Reading, writing, speaking	Speaking, listening, reading/literature, writing, critical thinking, problem solving ability with special focus on at least one of the four language skills
Language practice is done through	Read and answer, fill in the blanks, sentence making, grammar (verbs, adjectives, nouns, articles, tense, negatives, interrogatives, punctuation) true false, matching lists, spellings, story writing	Translation, Read and answer, fill in the blanks, sentence making, vocabulary, grammar (verbs, adjectives, nouns, articles, tense, negatives, interrogatives, punctuation), true false, matching lists, spellings, translation, essay, story writing	Activity books, comprehension, proverbs, idioms, vocabulary, Language rules, grammar (parts of speech and their categories), Functions of language to create a dialogue, communicative competence, conversation, responding critically, recalling incidents through speaking, identifying /differentiating sounds, pronunciation w.r.t stress/intonation, example based inductive exercises with a focus on discovery, Recalling, brainstorming, planning, sentence structures, subject/verb agreement, creative/imaginative writing, and Completing incomplete paragraphs.
Themes and Contents	Patriotism, Religious holidays, family, school, seasons	Patriotism, Religious holidays, family, school, basic activities, seasons	Biography, opinions, facts, reading for entrainment/ expression/ information/ discussion/ explanation, ethics/priorities

The curriculum in low paid schools is oriented towards purposeful and quality education with a focus on community and national values. The specific language skills emphasized in low paid schools are reading and writing. In low paid schools, the visions were not clearly stated. However, they included words such as “purposeful, quality, healthy educational environment, national values, community, culture of innovation, and learning”. The language skills emphasized across low cost schools included reading and writing. Textbook content included exercises that involve read and answer exercises, fill in the blanks, sentence-making, grammar practice (verbs, adjectives, nouns, articles, tense, negatives, interrogatives, punctuation) true false, matching lists, spelling and story writing. The themes emphasized in the syllabus included patriotism, religious holidays, family and seasons.

The curriculum in middle cost schools is oriented towards the same values as the low cost schools that includes ethics, religious aspects and a focus on compatibility with the wider world. The visions included terms such as “education suited to our cultural, historical/ religious framework, empower and equip, the country and the wider world, affordable, accessible and quality education, basic knowledge of skills, explorative mind, moral and ethical values, and national objectives”. The specific language skills emphasized in middle paid schools were reading, writing and speaking. However, it was observed that speaking was mentioned in the curriculum as a skill to be emphasized but is actually not taught or practiced in language classes. Language practice was carried out through translation, read and answer, fill in the blanks, sentence making, vocabulary, grammar practice (verbs, adjectives, nouns, articles, tense, negatives, interrogatives, punctuation), true false, matching lists, spellings, translation, essay and story writing. The themes found in the textbook content were related to patriotism, religious holidays, family, school, basic activities and seasons.

The curriculum in high paid schools is oriented towards specifically developing English language skill with improved teaching, management and monitoring. Moreover, these schools have a focus on developing independent individuals who are competent with the international world. The terms found in visions document included terms such as Cambridge, Reggio Emilia approach, Scottish Curriculum, UK National Curriculum, international standard, develop a first language competency of English, excellence through quality management, quality teacher teaching, diverse community, global, entrepreneurial centered achievement, development of attitude, skills, knowledge, high academic standard, inclusivity, acceptance, respect and responsibility, a deep understanding of the traditions and values of our community, distinguish themselves academically and become conscientious citizens of a greater community, confident, personally fulfilled. All these terms are reflective of the practices followed and the kind of exposure they provide.

The specific language skill emphasized in high cost schools are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The skills were practiced through literature, critical thinking and problem solving ability with special focus on at least one of the four language skills. Language was practiced through activity books, comprehension, proverbs, idioms, vocabulary, language rules, grammar (parts of speech and their categories), functions of language to create a dialogue, communicative competence, conversation, responding critically, recalling incidents through speaking, identifying/differentiating sounds, pronunciation, stress/intonation, example-based inductive exercises with a focus on discovery, recalling, brainstorming, planning, sentence structures, subject/verb agreement, creative/imaginative writing, and completing-incomplete paragraphs. The themes found in textbook content included: biography, opinions, and facts, reading for entrainment / expression / information / discussion / explanation, and ethics/priorities. It is interesting to note that some schools which are categorized as high cost and included in the study also included specific terms as ‘our community’ and ‘our culture’. These terms refer to the specific efforts by these schools to maintain themselves as a distinct class that is unique in terms of the kinds of material and cultural exposures and privileges they provide to their learners.

Conclusion

The study helps in informing teachers about the implications of their practices and the possibility of benefits that intervention models can make in reducing their students’ performance gaps through reflective instruction. The contributions of this study would be of interest to scholars working in a range of areas associated to language instruction, socio-economic and cultural studies. Moreover, the results would be informative to the larger society with a number of questions that must be addressed at national level in hope of a possible egalitarian society that is in line with the national agenda.

The findings of this data are helpful for teachers who must intervene as to what goes on in class and what level of skill the student takes along with them. It is clear that the education policy of the country may be used to mobilize status upward nationally and internationally for enhancing the economy of the country. In light of the above discussion, it is clear that for quality education one must keep equity as the prime focus in terms of the kind of exposure it provides to boost the human and economic capital of the country. There are many hurdles in reaching this goal, one of the most important problem is the disparity created by socially stratified school systems that reproduce inequality through curriculum differences. This can derail individual chances to mobilize and the nation’s chances to have a successful and stabilized economy. It is important to point here that the ultimate goal of quality education is not to provide means to

individuals for merely mobilizing them economically, but to form an educated class that can help support and uplift the society at large through intellect, knowledge and skill. Education should promote national unity instead of creating obvious gaps and disparities among masses. However, the educational scenario in Pakistan is far from providing equal education to all and requires extensive reformation. Education is one of the means of upward mobilization; therefore, pressure to maintain and sustain stratification naturally grows in the society. This was seen in the array of different stratified school systems operating in Pakistan each of which provides different kinds of exposure, and thereby, reinforces the societal inequalities within education.

Status accumulation happens in terms of the inculcation an individual receives from the constant exposure of material and cultural resources (Bourdieu, 1991). These resources vary in their availability across socioeconomic classes. Henceforth, the experiences, which they create, also vary. Educational institutes are expected to neutralize the background differences by equalizing the experience individuals receive through their interaction with curriculum content. The study found that diversified education is based implicitly on socioeconomic criteria of stratification across school systems. Moreover, specific efforts are made to maintain and provide unique material and cultural exposure and privileges at institutional levels to students in high paid schools that already belonged to a high class (Bourdieu, 1991). This material and cultural exposure was missing in low and middle paid schools although, it was these two social classes that needed it the most.

Finally, it is concluded that English curriculum has been widely diversified in nature and scope and has become major reason for the divide in the experience learners receive at schools. The interpretations of the data also highlighted why specifically English language learning takes place as means of creating and maintaining stratification through a deliberate difference in visions, curriculum, and textbooks. Students from stratified educational systems accumulate certain kinds of language competencies, attitudes, behaviors, cultural knowledge, and problem solving skills. It is the accumulation of these language competencies, attitudes, behaviors, cultural knowledge, and problem-solving skills over time in the form of curriculum that are advantageous or disadvantageous in the long run.

During school education, the patterns of social stratification are reintroduced in new ways. Institutions define social reality and structural experiences, but they should not reward those who already possess a linguistic competence and fail to provide it to those who are in need of it (Bourdieu, 1991; Kissell, 2007). Different school systems infuse different experiences which develop as patterns of experiences that accumulate overtime. According to the conflict perspective, they are instruments of class domination (Hugher, Kroehler, & Zanden, 2000). Specific efforts are made to maintain differences in

curriculum experiences. For instance, English is considered to be a criterion of school success and a privilege which is an advantage for only some to enjoy and while others cannot (Elvin, 1965); as a result, the language competence of students also varies as a result of being exposed to a specific kind of curriculum. It is due to this elevated position and utilitarian role which English plays in raising individual status that chances of better employment not only vary by social class, but is also maintained through implicit practices of the curriculum.

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