

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WEBLOG-ASSISTED
READING MODULE ON TERTIARY
ENGINEERING EFL STUDENTS' READING
COMPREHENSION IN PAKISTAN**

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COMPREHENSION IN PAKISTAN**

by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL	English as a second language
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESP	English for specific purposes
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
ICT	Information and communication technology
ADDIE	Analyse, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate
SAMR	Substitution, augmentation, modification, and redefinition
MOI	Medium of instruction
ELT	English Language Teaching

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**KEBERKESANAN MODUL BACAAN BANTUAN WEBLOG KE ATAS
KEFAHAMAN MEMBACA PELAJAR EFL KEJURUTERAAN INSTITUSI
PENGAJIAN TINGGI DI PAKISTAN**

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk merancang dan mengembangkan modul pemahaman membaca berbantuan weblog, dan menyelidiki keberkesanannya terhadap prestasi pemahaman bacaan pelajar kejuruteraan dari segi membuat ramalan, mencari maklumat leksikal, menganalisis idea utama, dan strategi ringkasan di universiti kejuruteraan Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan. Motivasi utama untuk merancang dan mengembangkan modul pemahaman membaca adalah prestasi pemahaman bacaan pelajar kejuruteraan yang rendah dan kurangnya minat untuk meningkatkan kemampuan membaca mereka. Oleh itu, reka bentuk penyelidikan pra-ujian selepas-ujian quasi eksperimen dan penjelasan berurutan digunakan, yang membolehkan pengumpulan dan analisis data kuantitatif terlebih dahulu untuk memperoleh pemahaman umum mengenai kajian diikuti dengan wawancara kualitatif separa berstruktur. Sebelum melakukan intervensi ujian pra dan selepas intervensi, ujian pasca diberikan. Sampel kajian adalah 87 orang pelajar dari dua kumpulan (dua kelas utuh); satu kumpulan eksperimen ($n = 45$) dan satu kumpulan kawalan ($n = 42$) pelajar. Dari sampel tersebut, 10 orang pelajar dipilih untuk temubual separa berstruktur. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan ujian t-sampel bebas, ujian ANCOVA, dan ujian MANCOVA bersama dengan semua ujian awal untuk memeriksa skor min ujian pra dan ujian pasca mengenai prestasi pemahaman bacaan pelajar kejuruteraan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dalam skor min kedua-dua kumpulan. Setelah analisis kualitatif, analisis tematik digunakan untuk memeriksa

semua data kualitatif yang diperoleh. Hasil kajian kualitatif menunjukkan bahawa modul pemahaman membaca berbantuan weblog mempunyai beberapa kekuatan dan beberapa kelemahan. Tambahan pula, ciri multimedia modul pemahaman membaca berbantuan weblog tetap berkesan juga dalam meningkatkan pemahaman membaca pelajar. Mengikut dapatan kajian ini, lebih banyak kursus bahasa Inggeris berbantuan teknologi untuk pelajar kejuruteraan harus disediakan. Penyelidikan ini juga menunjukkan bahawa kursus bahasa Inggeris yang disesuaikan harus dikembangkan untuk pelajar kejuruteraan lain.

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF WEBLOG-ASSISTED READING MODULE ON
TERTIARY ENGINEERING EFL STUDENTS' READING
COMPREHENSION IN PAKISTAN**

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to design and develop the weblog-assisted reading module. Moreover, the study investigated the effectiveness of the weblog-assisted reading module on engineering students' reading comprehension performance in terms of making predictions, finding out lexical information, analysing the main idea, and the summarisation strategies at the engineering university of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan. The major motivation for designing and developing the reading comprehension module was engineering students' low reading comprehension performance and lack of interest in improving it. Therefore, a pre-test post-test quasi-experimental an explanatory sequential mixed methods research design was adopted, which allowed collecting and analysing quantitative data first to gain a general understanding of the study followed by a semi-structured qualitative interview with a smaller sample to further explore and explain the study. Prior to conducting the intervention, a pre-test and after the intervention, a post-test was administered. After a pilot study, initially, the quantitative study was conducted with the sample of (n= 87) students of two groups (two intact classes); one experimental group (n = 45) and one control group (n = 42) students (boys and girls) for the current study. Later the semi-structured interviews were conducted with (n=10) students (boys and girls). Students' postings and comments were also collected as qualitative data. The quantitative data was analysed using the Independent-samples t-test, ANCOVA test, and MANCOVA test along with all preliminary tests to check the mean score of pre-test and post-test concerning the reading comprehension performance of the engineering students. The results revealed

there was a significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups. Following the qualitative analysis, thematic analysis was used to examine all the qualitative data obtained (semi-structured interviews and student comments on the weblog). The results of the qualitative study indicated that the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module had several strengths and some weaknesses. Furthermore, the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module's multimedia features remained effective too in improving students' reading comprehension. According to the findings of this study, more technology-assisted English language courses for engineering students, as well as other ESP students, should be provided. This research, on the other hand, strongly suggested that tailor-made English language skills material for engineering students and other ESP students be developed specifically considering their needs.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The central focus of the current study is to develop the reading module for engineering students that uses digital integration as an instructional platform (weblog) to assist them to enhance their reading comprehension and their reading interest in the ESL context. Furthermore, by deploying that reading module, the study will assess the effectiveness (positive/negative) of the "weblog-assisted reading module" on engineering students' reading comprehension performance in the EFL/ESL context at a Pakistani engineering university. In this chapter the following ideas are discussed:

Introduction, the background of the study, English language issues in Pakistan, English language teaching in engineering universities of Pakistan, the problem statement, the objectives, the research questions, hypothesis, the significance of the study, the limitation of the study, and the operational definitions of the terms used in the study.

1.1 Introduction

Francis Bacon says, "*Reading maketh a man perfect*" (Bacon et al., 1908). Reading is regarded as one of the most important English language skills that students must master to acquire knowledge and new information, which can take the form of text, a picture, a diagram, or a combination of all three (Sari, 2017). Reading is not merely the process of transferring meaning from one word to another; it is also one of the ways in which the author communicates his or her point of view in the text and the readers attempt to understand what the author is saying (Yang et al., 2019). To put it another way, reading may be described as an interactive activity in which the reader

and the text's author communicate with one another. Reading requires a variety of tasks, ranging from grapheme detection to the integration of large concepts from the reading material. Word identification, syntactical evaluation, and reading text comprehension are the three most frequently recognised reading degrees that define one's ability to read (Long & Doughty, 2016). Besides, Goodman more simply stated, *“reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game. It involves an interaction between thought and language”* (Goodman, 1967, p.2).

To describe the process of reading comprehension, two psycholinguistic methods have been proposed: top-down and bottom-up processing. Top-down processing is a method that depends on the reader's schemata and prior knowledge, expecting the reader to comprehend the text's components as much as the words themselves (Wilson, 2008). Such a process involves a conscious and unconscious thinking approach in which a reader reads a text with a massive collection of prior knowledge and experience, as well as presumptions about the written text. Such prior knowledge, experience, and values are structured as a schema in the reader's mind. During reading each schema connects to many other schemas in doing so the reader matches the ideas and information given in the text with his background knowledge and becomes able to decode it (Qanwal & Karim, 2014).

Acquiring reading skills means one should be able to read a variety of texts, build prior knowledge, know the reading purpose to follow it with proper strategies, understand the lexical composition of the text, understand the text, and critically can evaluate that text (Suleiman, 2006). Some of the most important features that influence reading comprehension are vocabulary, morphology, prior knowledge, reading strategies, working memory (Hartshorn et al., 2017). Moreover, Çakıcıa (2016) added that the contents matter a lot in the interaction of the reader and reading material thus,

the material must be properly scrutinised and produced for teaching and learning the reading skill. Therefore, language educators must know the effective techniques to produce, adjust, modify, and choose the apt reading materials to match the learners' needs and learners' context and adapt it accordingly. Furthermore, those selected materials must have the characteristics to meet the goal of reading skills (Nabijanovna et al., 2021). In the current era, the reading material is massively obtainable in paper form as well as digital from different resources, thus teachers and designers can explore and design it according to the teaching and learning needs (Guess et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Thais et al. (2020) mentioned that teaching students reading skills is a challenging job for teachers; it requires the teachers' creative skills to create reading tasks productive in order to increase students' reading interest. The teacher employs a variety of strategies while teaching reading skills, all of which have an influence on the students' ability to develop reading comprehension skills (Wibowo et al., 2019). To hone the students' reading skills, teachers can adopt either media; electronic media or printed medians, or both (Thais et al., 2020). According to Khatoun et al. (2021), teachers should adopt blended teaching approaches, and students should be encouraged to use technology for their reading. As Habeeb (2020) added, technology integration in the ESL classes facilitates language learning, thus, teachers should bring innovation in the teaching methodology with technology integration in the ESL classes (Habeeb, 2020). Furthermore, various technical devices such as laptops, desktop computers, mobile phones, tablets, and other similar devices are being employed in the ESL/EFL context all over the world to make teaching and learning English language and English reading more novel and engaging (Beisel, 2017). Furthermore, the integration of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter,

WhatsApp, and weblogs in the teaching and learning environment is among the top trends throughout the world (Chen et al., 2016).

Since good reading skills lead to the successful attainment of academic accomplishments (Mushtaq et al., 2020) therefore, the value of reading in an academic context has been emphasised by many researchers because students need to acquire and improve their reading skills in order to read a lot of texts in their academic life (Marzuki et al., 2018). Moreover, all tertiary ESL/ EFL students either from any general university or professional university must be proficient readers because reading skills will help them to achieve their other academic endeavours with success (Rohani & Abdul, 2017). English reading ability is one of the most important language skills for engineering students to enhance for their academic career and future demands (Tsai, et al., 2016). As Wahi (2013), mentioned for passing the engineering courses engineering students need to read diverse texts to accomplish the requirements and goals. Since engineering courses are related to statistical notions and professional details which are all comprehensively written in English. Those texts are having information related to their engineering field with various technical terms, structures, and procedures that must be comprehended by each of the engineering students accurately (Wahi, 2013). Therefore, one does not ignore the status of reading skills in the process of acquiring knowledge if one is to attain his or her academic and professional goals in the academic and professional life thus, he/she must be a proficient reader (Ameyaw & Anto, 2017).

1.2 Background of the Study

To justify the need of the current study, it is necessary to present the background concerning Pakistani students' English language issues generally and reading issues in particular to understand the problem discussed in the study.

1.2.1 English Language Issues in Pakistan

The English language has become the world's lingua franca today, connecting people from all walks of life via communication in English. It is the language of trade and education, and it is learned as a second language and a foreign language all over the world (Srinivas, 2019). English is greatly regarded as an official language of Pakistan which is used as the language of trade and education (Manan et al., 2017).

Although English is taught as a compulsory subject throughout the educational career, from school to university to Pakistani students, however, students do not perform well in English language skills in terms of (reading, writing, speaking, listening) skills (Warsi, 2004). There may be multiple reasons behind this flaw as Manan et al. pointed out that students' low performance in English language skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) is due to the dual system of the medium of instruction (English and Urdu) (Manan et al., 2017). According to Haidar (2017), neither teachers nor students in Pakistan are concerned with teaching or developing language skills; rather, they are entirely concerned with passing tests. There are teacher-centered classrooms with no English language skills development in most of Pakistan's higher educational contexts (universities) (Ahmed et al., 2018). In Pakistani universities either professional universities or general universities, teachers follow traditional methods by focusing on the translation methods and students focus on rote learning thus, they rarely develop their reading skills in the ESL classes (Muhammad,

2013). Thus, Mastoi (2019) stated, English language teaching methodology needs improvement and innovation for improving students' English language skills' performance (Mastoi, 2019).

Furthermore, Abdul et al. (2016) said that there are ineffective English textbooks in Pakistan. The books' contents, as well as the skills they teach, are not well-designed (Abdul et al., 2016). According to Jalaluddin (2017) curriculum must be revisited and redesigned according to the needs of the student's English language skills development. Similarly, Farhat and Dzakiria (2017) found in their study that, in Pakistan yet there is a dearth of innovation in teaching and learning methods, courses, syllabi, and materials.

1.2.2 English Language Teaching in Engineering Universities of Pakistan

Like all other university students, Pakistani engineering students must be able to have good English language skills in both their academic and professional lives (Ayoub & Khan, 2017). Unfortunately, the existing English language curriculum for engineering university students in Pakistan has not improved markedly their English language skills' performance (Pathan et al., 2021). Besides, engineering universities of Pakistan do not focus to develop English courses based on ESP criteria by understanding the needs and wants of the engineering students (Ayoub & Khan, 2017). Besides, it is stated that English language instructors (ELTs) lack the requisite content understanding of ESP students majoring in engineering (Ali YousafZai & Fareed, 2019).

Furthermore, Sultan et al. (2019) stated, the authorities in the corporate sector are also dissatisfied with the English courses provided at Pakistani engineering universities. They require that engineering candidates must have practical and

effective interpersonal language skills in order to employ them at work. Thus, taking into account the importance and demand of the academic and engineering industries' weightage on language skills the higher education commission of Pakistan (HEC) revised that engineering universities should offer three English subjects instead of one to practice and learn English in the engineering programs in Pakistani engineering universities(Sultan et al., 2019). Similarly, Jalaluddin (2017) stated, in the 21st century we must prepare our students for their workplace in the future, therefore there is a dire need to improve their language skills as they can utilize them in their professional context later (Jalaluddin, 2017).

1.3 Problem Statement

Reading and understanding technical texts are the most required English proficiency skills for engineering students (Chesler et al., 2013). But it is noticed that most students can read, yet mostly they are not good at reading comprehension. They are not able to comprehend the text properly. They feel difficulty in inferring the meaning from the text (Kadir et al., 2014). According to Ahmed et al. (2019), although Pakistani students receive their background education in English, when they join any university (general/medical/engineering), they struggle with reading comprehension (Mansoor Ahmed Channa et al., 2017).

Considerable research has proved that Pakistani engineering students are facing problems in reading comprehension. One of the studies was conducted at a Pakistani engineering university in Sindh, which identified that engineering students were not good at reading comprehension because they were not using prior knowledge and using proper strategies to comprehend the text (Mansoor Ahmed Channa et al., 2017). Besides, Ahmed et al. (2013) explored the needs, wants, and challenges of first-

year engineering students at a Pakistani engineering university when it came to using English. The findings revealed that engineering students struggled to read and comprehend texts and their reading skills were poor. Sentence structure, vocabulary in context, paragraph organisation, grammatical rules (structures), prior reading and comprehension skills, and poor paragraph organisation were the most common reading issues of those engineering students (Ahmed & Songsri, 2013). Similarly, another study of engineering undergraduates in Sindh, Pakistan revealed that students were unable to identify proper sentence structure, vocabulary in context, grammatical structures, and prior knowledge. Overall, the reading ability of engineering undergraduates were at a low level (Mansoor Ahmed Channa et al., 2016). Besides, another study investigated the factors affecting reading comprehension performance of the engineering students, which revealed engineering students who were not proficient at bottom-up reading have classroom reading anxiety also which affect their reading performance. This study suggested that teachers should select reading texts considering the proficiency and level of students, and reading strategies (Soomro et al., 2019).

Their poor performance in English reading comprehension is linked to the weaknesses and deficiencies in the Pakistani educational system, which does not encourage properly students to develop a reading culture in order to improve their reading comprehension skills (Memon, 2014). Those deficiencies are related to the contents of teaching and learning reading skills, the teaching methodology in the engineering context. Engineering sophomores are technical subjects' learners and they are tech-savvy students. As compared to the general university students their interests, needs, and wants are also specific and different from general university students. Thus, their reading contents and teaching methodology should be specific according to their

specific fields and contexts (Ayoub & Khan, 2017). Since engineering students are getting prepared to meet the ultimate needs of their profession later (Jalaluddin, 2017). Therefore, their English courses should enable them not merely to pass their academic exams but to establish a sound foundation for their future needs also (Hashmi et al., 2015).

One of the studies conducted in Sindh at an engineering university revealed that the engineering students were not given reading material that was tailored to the needs of engineering students thus, their reading performance was poor. As a result, the research recommended that teachers should select or develop suitable reading materials to meet the needs of engineering students (Mansoor Ahmed Channa et al., 2016). As Manan et al. (2017) also reflected, the contents used in the reading classes in Pakistani ESL classes are not for the concept formulation and linguistics internalization, but they are just the copied practices of reading exercises. Consequently, students are not good at analysing, interpreting, creating, and properly critiquing or reflecting on the text in Pakistani engineering universities. Besides, the study conducted by Mirza et al. (2018) at the same research site (current study's site) revealed the same issue that the contents were not meeting the demands of engineering students, due to the fact that students were not taking interest in attending English language classes with interest. In addition, the present study's researcher also researched at Sindh's engineering university (same research site). The study looked at what makes engineering students reluctant to learn English in ESL classes. Numerous demotivating variables were discovered in the study, including the instructional materials they were utilising were not tailored to ESP and that they were instead being taught general English (Mirza et al., 2016).

Moreover, the study's findings revealed teachers' traditional instructional practices were neither new nor inspired students' interest in ESL classes or studies (Mirza et al., 2016). As one of the studies explored how teaching reading practises and reading material affect students' reading performance, the findings revealed that teaching reading methods and reading materials were not satisfactory in Pakistan, which had an effect negatively on the reading performance of the students (Asif Khan et al., 2019). Besides, teachers are unaware of the practice of aligning the teaching practices with the learning outcomes in the attainment and improvement of reading skills (Umar, 2018). Moreover, Mansoor Ahmed Channa et al. (2016) also revealed in the study that students are facing problems in reading comprehension because of traditional methods of teaching English in engineering universities in Pakistan where teachers do not update or modify their teaching approach according to the needs of the engineering students. Also, Abdul et al. (2016) pointed out about English language teaching methods in Pakistan that teachers have yet to realise innovation and creativity. They still use the grammar-translation method GTM, which is just an imitation process, and thus, it cannot improve language skills specifically reading skills (Abdul et al., 2016).

Hence, it can be concluded that:

- Engineering students' reading comprehension performance is poor.
- They are uninterested in increasing their reading comprehension skills because of the traditional method and content, which do not meet their reading learning needs and do not arouse their interest in improving their reading skills.

- Teachers in reading classes do not employ tailored resources to teach engineering students reading skills; instead, they use authentic reading texts (from any topic and area) and lecture them using PowerPoint presentations and YouTube videos (if needed).

As a result, the researcher identified these problems as a research need. As a result, the researcher intends to create reading comprehension material that is tailored to the needs and desires of engineering students, based on the ESP criteria, and by taking into account the students' interest in technology, the reading material will be developed with technology integration (with technological instructional platform). This may modify the current teaching and learning reading class environment and result in a favourable improvement in the reading comprehension performance of engineering students at Sindh's engineering university. Additionally, in the context of reading, there is a gap in the usage of "weblog" as an instructional platform. Therefore, the study will focus on the "weblog" as a platform for teaching and learning reading comprehension, because that is also one of the research gaps. As a consequence, the emphasis is on developing and implementing a weblog-assisted reading comprehension module to facilitate engineering students in improving their reading comprehension performance.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The fundamental purpose of this research is to develop the reading module and evaluate the reading module's effectiveness. the rationale to develop such module is that the reading comprehension performance of engineering freshmen has been found to be poor, and they do not correctly employ reading strategies such as making predictions, analysing the main idea, summarising, and finding lexical information

strategies. The reading module was developed using the ESP criteria to help engineering students at a Pakistani engineering university improve their reading comprehension skills in terms of making predictions, analysing the main idea, summarising, and finding lexical information strategies. Thus, the reading comprehension module was developed with the intent of providing reading comprehension material (texts, exercises) for engineering freshmen based on these four reading strategies to help them enhance their reading comprehension performance. Furthermore, the reading material is integrated to a technological instructional platform (a weblog) in order to increase students' interest in learning to read. As a result, wordpress.com is used to develop the instructional platform.

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To design and develop the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module.
2. To analyse the effectiveness of the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module in the enhancement of engineering students' reading comprehension performance.
 - a. To analyse if there is any significant difference in the mean scores of pre and post-test of the two groups (control and experimental group).
 - b. To analyse if there is any significant difference in the mean scores of pre and post-test of the two groups (control and experimental group) in terms of making predictions, analysing the main idea, finding out lexical information, and summarising strategies.

- c. To analyse if there is any significant increase in the mean scores of the experimental group after participating in the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module.
3. To analyse if there is any significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups in terms of their educational backgrounds (private and public) in the language of instruction (English/ Urdu) on engineering students' reading comprehension performance.
4. To investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module experienced by the students (experimental group).
5. To investigate the facilitation of weblog's multimedia features (audio-visual aids i.e., audio, videos, dictionary, highlighter, chatroom, comment section) of the weblog in learning reading comprehension.

1.6 Research Questions

- RQ1. What is the design and development process for the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module?
- RQ2. Is there any significant effectiveness of the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module in the enhancement of engineering students' reading comprehension performance?
- a. Is there is any significant difference in the mean scores of pre and post-test of the two groups (control and experimental group)?
 - b. Is there any significant difference in the mean scores of pre and post-test of the two groups (control and experimental group) in

terms of making predictions, analysing the main idea, finding out lexical information, and summarising strategies?

- c. Is there any significant increase in the mean scores of the experimental group after participating in the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module?

RQ3. Is there any significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups in terms of their educational backgrounds (private and public) in the language of instruction (English/ Urdu) on engineering students' reading comprehension performance?

RQ4. What strengths and weaknesses of the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module are experienced by the students (experimental group)?

RQ5. How did weblog's multimedia features (audiovisual aids i.e: audio, videos, dictionary, highlighter, chatroom, comment section) of the weblog facilitate students' learning reading comprehension?

1.7 Hypothesis

Based on the research questions, the current study will test the following null hypotheses:

H₀₁. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of pre and post-test of the two groups (control and experimental group).

H₀₂. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of pre and post-test of the two groups (control and experimental group) in terms of

making predictions, analysing the main idea, finding out lexical information, and summarising strategies.

H₀₃. There is no significant increase in the mean scores of the experimental group after participating in the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module.

H₀₄. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups in terms of their backgrounds (private and public) in the language of instruction (English/ Urdu) on engineering students' reading comprehension performance.

1.8 The significance of the Study

The purpose of this research is to develop a technology-based instructional platform (weblog) that includes multimedia features, modified texts (Engineering context-related texts), and reading activities to help students learn and improve reading comprehension. The current research may be regarded as a contribution to the design of the module in the context of a Pakistani engineering university and the region of Sindh. As a result, it will open up new possibilities in the field of English language instruction in the context of engineering in Pakistan. Although technology integration in the ESL context in Pakistan is still in its infancy, this research can pave the way for the design and development of technology-integrated courses, modules, and materials. Furthermore, the weblog is used as a reading instructional platform, which is a contribution by itself because weblog has primarily been used to teach and learn writing skills in previous research studies; thus, the current study would contribute in the context of reading by using weblog as an instructional platform.

This may bring change in the attitudes of the policymakers, course designers, teachers and researchers locally as well as internationally. Furthermore, while there is a variety of studies undertaken on blogs, there is little work done in the areas of ESP reading, EAP reading, or English for engineers internationally. Thus, it would be also one of the contributions in the engineering context concerning ESP material development. Moreover, the current study will not only provide the weblog-assisted reading comprehension module, but also the assessment instrument in the shape of pre-test and post-test.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

This study has a few delimitations. Among those delimitations identified are; the scope of the study, methodology, the participants and their context involved in this study, the content of the module, and the availability of the specific instruments, used in the current study.

The scope of the study is delimited because this designed module is for engineering context according to the needs of the engineering students thus, its use will be limited to science and engineering students.

Moreover, a quasi-experimental design is practiced in the current study which has certain delimitations, nevertheless, they are addressed in the current study such as, there would not be any randomization in a quasi-experimental research methodology in terms of the sample selection. Since for two intact classes the researcher chose two engineering schools (computer system engineering and electrical engineering) for two groups (control and experimental), which were randomly selected from 9 engineering schools (the same English course in that semester). Furthermore, from first-year intact classes of (electrical engineering and computer systems engineering), one was selected

randomly from three sections A, B, C. Besides, the sample for the current study (both groups: control and experimental) are selected from the same engineering university, but their disciplines are different, and they do not meet with each other thus, there would not be any contamination of the data. Another delimitation related to the participants is they are first-year students who study 'Functional English' in their first semester in a government engineering university thus, the reading comprehension module only addresses the reading comprehension needs and issues of these students.

Furthermore, there is a delimitation concerning the content of the study is it is only focusing on reading comprehension skills therefore, no other component of language is added in the designed module. Besides, the module has science and engineering-based texts related to computer science mostly because the experimental students are from the computer system engineering field thus other engineering disciplines such as civil engineering, mechanical engineering, or any other engineering field may have different course requirements thus, this content is specifically designed for the computer science and electrical engineering students.

Moreover, in the module, the social media tool (weblog) is used as an instructional platform that is designed according to the needs of the reading comprehension class specifically.

Along with all these delimitations of the study, the pre-test and post-test are designed according to the need of the designed module and intervention, thus, it is also one of the delimitations.

1.10 Operational Definitions

a) Weblog

Weblog, the publishing tool can provide the opportunity to reflect, access different materials, showcase projects, and use it as a communication medium. Weblog usage improves communication skills, gives a sense of relatedness, and it enhances social interaction (Hsu & Wang, 2010). In this study weblog is a reading instructional tool to provide reading material online with all audiovisual aids along with the facility of communication and collaboration.

b) Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and integrate with what the reader already knows. The ability to comprehend text is influenced by the reader's skills and their ability to process information (Tavakoli & Koosha, 2016).

c) Making predictions

Making predictions strategy in reading is comprised of different activities such as activating prior knowledge, previewing, and overviewing commonly, all these activities are focusing on the purpose to encourage students to use their existing knowledge to facilitate their understanding of new ideas encountered in the text (Duke & Pearson, 2009). In the current study reading activities will activate the prior knowledge of the students to understand the provided knowledge in the texts.

d) The main idea

The main idea is the author's idea which he develops about the topic and he forms it by both the topic and idea provided in the text (Qanwal & Karim, 2014). The current study is comprising activities that will develop students' knowledge regarding the main idea provided in the texts which students need to find out while reading.

e) Summarising strategy

Summarising strategy is the activity of producing a succinct and fluent summary while preserving key information content and the overall meaning of the given texts (Allahyari et al., 2017). In the current study, students would attempt and practice the tasks to make summaries of texts/paragraphs/ videos.

f) Lexical information

Lexical information is relating to words or the vocabulary of a language as distinguished from its grammar and construction (Farhat & Dzakiria, 2017). In the current study, students are provided activities to identify words using contextual clues identifying their meaning/ synonym/antonym.

g) Weblog-assisted reading module

The weblog is an instructional platform that includes a reading comprehension module that comprises making predictions, analysing the main idea, finding lexical information, and summarising strategies for learning reading comprehension.

h) Multimedia features

Multimedia is any content that uses a combination of different content forms such as text, audio, images, animations, video, and interactive content. Multimedia can be recorded and played, displayed, interacted with, or accessed by information content processing devices, such as computerized and electronic devices (Aikina & Bolsunovskaya, 2020). In the current study, the weblog has multimedia features (audio, video, highlighter, comment section, images, etc) to facilitate reading comprehension.

1.11 Summary

The portrayal of the research in this chapter begins with an explanation of the study's background, followed by the objectives for achieving the goal of developing the reading module along with the development of the weblog as an instructional platform. This chapter also explained that the study is focusing on determining the effectiveness of the weblog-assisted reading module on engineering students' reading comprehension performance in the ESL context. This chapter also has provided a summary of the context and difficulties of teaching and learning English in Pakistan, as well as operational definitions, to help readers understand the researcher's road map.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter compares all the research variables with past studies to determine what has been done before and what gaps need to be addressed by the present investigation. It opens with a discussion of the English language's status in Pakistan, including how English is used in Pakistan and what significance it has in the engineering context. Because English is employed as a language of instruction in all higher educational institutions in Pakistan, the present chapter examines how English as a medium of instruction influences the teaching and learning of engineering students. In the engineering context, ESP courses are often devised and developed for teaching engineering students and preparing them for their future professional careers. As a result, the present chapter also examines English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in the context of Pakistani engineering universities. Furthermore, because the current study is based on the development of a reading comprehension module with the integration of a technological tool (Weblog), the theories, models, and methods of developing a reading comprehension module with technology integration are examined in depth.

2.2 Status of English Language in Pakistan

The English language has remained influential in Pakistan. Its role as a lingua franca and, before that, as the official language, has given it a prominent position in Pakistan's multilingual society. It has gone through numerous ups and downs throughout the years since it is employed in a bilingual environment. It has, however,

never been completely obliterated and forgotten. The English language has never been superseded by the country's local languages since Pakistan's independence from British domination. It has always been complemented by other regional and local languages in Pakistan at all levels (Zaidi & Zaki, 2017). According to Kachru (1986), English performs two vital tasks in any multilingual setting: it serves as the language of administration, that is, it serves as the state's official language, and it also serves as the language of mass communication. English is becoming more important in Pakistan as a state and official language, as well as the language of the military and higher education. According to Tariq Rahman (2010), English has long been connected with power, and it has been the language of a ruling class that has shaped the country since its inception. There is a separate Pakistani dialect of English that is being standardised.

The immense economic and personal growth potential of English as a "global language" appears to be a significant reason for Pakistan's younger population to study English. According to Akram and Mahmood (2007), a Pakistani learner is motivated to learn English for a variety of reasons, including:

1. Studying overseas.
2. More work prospects outside of his hometown.
3. To achieve social, missionary, or military goals.
4. Trade and business.
5. For educational purposes.

Pakistan's educational strategy favors the introduction of English as a compulsory subject from grade one, following the constitution and light of the effects of globalization on all nations. The higher education commission also approves English as the language of instruction. However, for the foreseeable future, English has been and will undoubtedly continue to be the major medium of instruction (MOI)

at Pakistan's higher education institutions (Mahboob, 2017). Despite its effectiveness, the policies are unable to create desirable results in all areas of English language usage. People, particularly educators, are ill-equipped to give the high-quality results that are required (Zaidi & Zaki, 2017).

2.2.1 English as a Medium of Instruction

There are two distinct educational systems in Pakistan, which are characterized principally by the medium of instruction, namely English and Urdu. Privately operated English medium schools serve the upper and middle classes, as well as certain members of the lower class. Urdu medium schools, on the other hand, are largely state institutions that give free education to low-income households. Private schools provide a "quality" education in well-equipped classrooms utilizing the English language for privileged children (Shamim, 2013). Furthermore, the high fees private schools are catering to the rich elite and high-income people's children with English medium education, whereas in the public school system students from low income and poor are studying and dealing with Urdu medium instruction which affects English communication competence, contents and meaning full learning of the target language (English) (Shamim et al., 2016). The students from elite schools' and rich home environments, attain higher levels of English proficiency than children in under-resourced schools who get little or no English outside of the 30–35-minute English class session (Shamim, 2019). Thus, these two modes of teaching and learning English are opposed and have produced two distinct groups of learners since the British rule. As a result, the educational system has been disrupted, with learners being segregated based on their English language proficiency (Mahboob, 2017).

2.2.1(a) Previous Studies on the Medium of Instruction

There are not more studies conducted in Pakistan concerning the medium of instruction (background education) effects on students' language performance nevertheless, it is discussed in a few which is also one of the gaps to be addressed by the current study by discussing and investigating the background educational medium of instruction influence on learning reading comprehension. Besides, in a study, it was found that elite schools foster students' high-level language proficiency by developing their creativity, critical thinking, and capacity to see things from different perspectives moreover, their proficiency in the English language is also good (Haidar, 2017).

English language instruction prepares students for various social roles (Haidar, 2019). One of the survey research conducted by Khan et al. (2020) revealed that in Pakistan, students from government-run schools where Urdu is the language of instruction have more trouble connecting, both written and spoken than students from English-medium private schools (especially the elite) English medium background greatly supports students in developing their English language skills in their higher education.

Besides, the level of elite English private schools' instruction was typically greater than to lower level private schools. Moreover, private schools' students perform well than public schools' students (Abdul et al., 2016). Similarly, Maqbool (2018) stated, one of the factors contributing to Pakistani students' poor English language proficiency is the medium of instruction used in primary school.

In addition, there are a few studies conducted in Tanzania to see the impact of language of instruction on students' language performance, because in Tanzania there are two types of schools like Pakistan where two languages are used as a medium of