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***Research paper***



# Poetry Guided Speaking

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**Abstract**

This study compares the effect of traditional teaching materials exploited for teaching speaking skills in Pakistani universities and poetry guided speaking (PGS) materials on the overall speaking skill and speaking sub-skills of ESL (English as a second language) learners. The study was a quasi-experimental one having two intact groups; a control group (CG) and an experimental group (EG). Total number of respondents was 77, 38 in CG and 39 in EG. Both the groups were first year students from the faculty of biological sciences, University of Malakand, Pakistan. The age of the respondents varied from 19 to 21. CG was taught speaking skills through traditional teaching materials whereas EG was extended PGS as teaching materials for speaking skills. Pre-tests and post-tests were conducted to measure the effect of the different kinds of teaching materials on the overall speaking skill and its four sub-skills including pragmatic competence, discourse competence, fluency and grammatical competence. T-tests were applied to compare the performance of the control and experimental groups. The results of the study indicated that PGS materials were more effective in teaching speaking skills than the traditional teaching materials. The study suggests that PGS maybe be utilized to teach speaking skills in Pakistani universities.

***Keywords***: *PGS; Speaking skills; Speaking sub-skills; Traditional teaching materials*

## 1. Introduction

Language teaching materials have an importance place in language learning process. Appropriate and authentic teaching materials not only improve the linguistic aspects of the language learners but also develop their none-academic ones such as motivation, interest and positive attitude (1). Appropriate teaching materials are those which are meant for native speakers and are not exploited for teaching language inside the classroom (2). Teaching materials should enable the language learners to get exposed to real life language. The leaners should be enabled to learn the usage of the target language in the native speakers' community. Moreover, language learners should be afforded real life language situations to develop their pragmatic competence (3).

In Pakistani universities, speaking skills are being taught through a variety of materials including grammar books (High School English Grammar by Wren and Martin), books of phonetics and phonology (Phonetics and Phonology by Peter Roach) and dialogue and grammar based books (Grammar in Use by Ramond Murphy). The researcher being a teacher in a public university is well aware of the fact that these books, though authentic in their own way, fail to produce motivational, interactive and involving environment for the development of speaking skills. The above teaching materials besides, creating an artificial rather than real/natural speaking environment lead to demotivation of language learners.

The policies regarding English language in Pakistan have been changing since its creation in 1947. There have been many ups and downs in the status of English language in the educational institutions. Different governments in their respective tenures kept changing their policies with respect to English language. While some of them emphasized (4) the importance of English language, others placed the focus on the national and ethnic languages (5, 6). It was in the reign of Musharraf, that English language was lent due attention and was announced as a compulsory course right from grade 1. The federal education minister of the then government Zubaida Jalal in her speech declared English language as "urgent public requirement" (Jalal, 2004, p. 25).

The purpose of the policy was to produce citizens with good communicative competence which means that the learners should be able to understand others and be understood by others. Those who can speak good English, in the context of Pakistan, are not only guaranteed good jobs but also an honored position in the social strata. All the executive jobs in Pakistan demand a high level of speaking proficiency. Most of oral examinations including interviews for coveted positions like (Central Superior Service (CSS) and Provincial Management Service (PMS) are conducted in English language and proficient speakers are given more weightage than others. Hence the importance of speaking skills cannot be overemphasized. In support of the above mentioned argument Coleman and Capstick (7) state that communicative competence in English guarantees both executive jobs and good academic career in Pakistan. The Written examinations for Central Superior Services (CSS) and Provincial Management Commission Services (PCS now PMS) are conducted in English. They add that after success in the written examination, the interview is taken in English Language. Unfortunately, the education system in Pakistan does not produce good speakers in English. Majority of the degree holders cannot speak acceptable English (8). There are numerous reasons/factors responsible for this situation. The first of them is that the prevailing method of teaching English in schools is Grammar Translation Method (GTM), which is mainly based on translation from the target language (English) into the native language (Urdu) and vice versa. The focus of GTM is teaching (9) rules and structure of the target language. Students are actually taught translation skill and form of the language, which consequently enables the students to learn the rules (10) but

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not the language. This practice does enable the students to translate isolated sentences, as contrary to discourse, from one language into the other but they are unable to speak in a real-life situation (11-13). Examination in these institutes evaluates only writing skill of the students (14). No assessment is made of the oral skills. Essays, stories, applications, letters and grammar taught (15) to the students are to be reproduced by them in writing during the examination. Thus, speaking is nowhere even in the background of the evaluation process. Hence Warsi (16) and Haider (17) view that examinations in Pakistan are memory driven evaluating only reading and writing skills. The writers further argue that as far English language is concerned, students' involvement in it for the sake of proficiency will be wastage of time for them. So instead, they rely on rote learning for the final examination in order to obtain good marks and no doubt, they succeed in it but they are a real failure in learning the language in itself. Lack of competence in oral skills on the part of the teachers in these schools is also one of the causes for the poor speaking skills of the students. Teachers themselves have been through the same system of learning, so most of them have poor oral skills. Thus there is no speaking environment in the classrooms. Kabilan (18) carried out a study in Malaysia which according to Choi and Lee (19) is equally applicable to Asian countries such as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and so on. In this research study, Kabilan (18) says that teachers here have limited linguistic proficiency and competence, hence to expect them to produce competent and proficient students would be an unrealistic demand on our part. Textbooks based on grammar rules, translation skill and some comprehension questions at the end of the lessons further aggravate the situation. There is no attention given to speaking in these textbooks. Carroll (20) in this regards opines that textbooks based on GTM give a detailed explanation of the language structure and other grammar points but actual language practice is given a meager portion at the end of the lesson. The stress is on grammar and vocabulary. He adds that students who are capable of translation from the target language into the native language and vice versa are deemed as competent students. This practice is matured among the students through writing and reading drills. Hence, listening and speaking skills are ignored. Teevno (21) argues that in these textbooks English is treated as a regular course not as language materials. Only reading and writing skills are focused without giving their students an understanding of the syntactic rules governing the semantics of the language. This practice renders learners unable to have conversational ability.

Focusing on the end product is the main emphasis of the syllabi of classroom in Pakistan. Teaches have to rush against time in order to finish the syllabus in the stipulated time. Thus teachers are not given freedom to engage their students in any role-plays, group work or other such activities to develop oral skills of their students (22, 23).

To make up for the above deficiencies in the teaching materials used in the language classroom of Pakistani universities, the researcher proposed poetry guided speaking (PGS) as the right and appropriate materials for teaching speaking skills. In PGS, the main focus is on exploiting certain feature of English poetry for teaching English speaking skills. Besides, there has been little research on applying poetry as materials for the improvement of communication skills in Pakistani universities. Hence, finding the right and appropriate teaching materials for the teaching of speaking skills is of vital importance. In this regard, PGS as teaching materials can be exploited due to it being motivating, developing personal involvement of the learners in the speaking act and leading to interaction among the learners.

PGS is actually a combination of five characteristics of poetry including ambiguity, universality, personal relevance, linguistic richness and cultural richness and Savvidou (24) six stages of teaching English language through poetry. The figure of PGS is given as below.

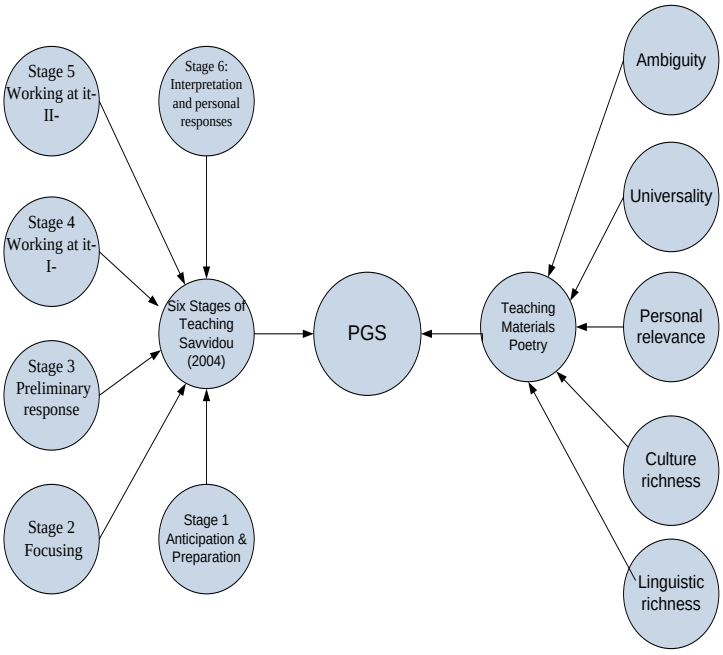



**Figure 1: PGS**

## 2. Literature review

Teaching materials exploited in language classroom should pass the test of four major criteria which include motivational, cultural, linguistic and methodological (25). Linguistic criterion implies that language teaching course should be rich in language constructions. The materials should carry various grammar rules and vocabulary. Besides, the teaching materials should be comprehensive both syntactically and semantically. Different types of expressions such as formal, informal and colloquial should exist in language teaching materials (25, 26). Language teaching materials should be rich in different kinds of sentence structures and constructions. According to Maley and Duff (1) all the aforementioned characteristics exist in the text of poetry. The text of poetry is authentic having a variety of language expressions and constructions.

Methodological criterion means that language teaching materials should be flexible enough to lend themselves to any teaching methodology which a language teacher deems appropriate for their students. The language materials should be exploited for group activities and different role-plays during class. Moreover, language teaching materials should lead the learners to diverse opinions. Besides, language learners should be provided with an environment of real interactions (27). Poetry as teaching materials has all the aforesaid characteristics. It has ambiguity which opens its text to different interpretations. It has universality which enables students to relate it with their real life activities and concepts. It provides teacher with the opportunity to engage the learners in several activities and be their organizer (28-30).

The criterion related to motivation implies that language teaching materials should motivate the learners during language learning process. Students should feel emotional affiliation with the concepts and ideas being discussed during class (31-33). Besides, teaching materials should appeal to the personal life of the learners. Poetry due to its emotional content appeals to the emotional self of the language learners thereby motivating them. Language learners can easily relate it to their personal and practical life.

Cultural criterion implies that language teaching materials ought to be pregnant with the cultural features of the language being taught. This aspect of language teaching materials affords learners the cultural context of certain language expressions. Besides this, learners associate the culture of the target language with their own thereby increasing their insight into some expressions and struc-

tures of the target language (34-36). Thus the presence of cultural elements in language teaching materials facilitates language learning process. According to Collie and Slater (37) poetry provides language learners with the culture of the target language. Poets are the children of their age and they represent their society and culture through their poetry. The learners are empowered to understand and analyse cultures, life style and creeds different from their own (36).

However, the characteristics of poetry recommended for English language classroom by majority of the researchers are ambiguity, universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, economy, suggestive power, authenticity, cultural richness, linguistic richness and so on (1, 38). The researchers argue that these characteristics of poetry induce the interest and increase the motivation of the learners in language learning classroom. Through these characteristics, the learners could be involved in different group activities and tasks. They could lead to greater student centeredness during language teaching (39).

This research study has the following questions to answer:

1. Are PGS materials more effective than the traditional teaching materials in the development of overall English speaking skills of the ESL students?
2. Are PGS materials more effective than traditional teaching materials in development of each sub speaking skill of the ESL students?

## 3. Methodology

This study attempted to find the effect of PGS and traditional teaching materials on the overall speaking skill and its main four sub-skills comprising pragmatic competence, discourse competence, grammatical and fluency. Some of these sub-skills have been further divided into smaller speaking sub-skills as given in the table below. Each speaking skill has been assigned 5 marks as shown in the Table 1.

**Table 1:** Speaking sub-skills and their division into further sub skills with the marks assigned to them

| GC | | | DC | | PC | F | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GR | V | P | OC | MC | EVF | SN | |
| 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 35 | |

Adopted from Fatah Tory (2006)

Note: GC=Grammatical Competence, DC=Discourse Competence, PC=Pragmatic Competence, F=Fluency, GR=Grammar rules, V=Vocabulary, OC=Organizing Conversation, MC=Maintaining Conversation, EVF=Expressing Various Functions, SN=Speaking Naturally

Furthermore, the study was a quasi-experimental study having two intact groups: a control group (CG) and an experimental group (EG). Both the groups belonged to the faculty of biological Sciences University of Malakand, Pakistan. CG was taught English speaking skills through traditional teaching materials whereas, EG was taught through PGS. The experiment spanned over a period of eight days (eight classes). The learners of the two groups were given a speaking test prior to the intervention which was marked by the researcher and his colleague examiner according to the scoring rubrics as attached in appendix A. Average of both the examiners' score was considered as the ultimate score for each student

After the completion of intervention both the groups were given the same speaking test again and the students were assessed in the same way as on the pre-test. T-test was exploited for both inter and intra group comparisons.

### 3.1 Reliability tests

Each student was assessed separately on each test by both the examiners in the light of the rubrics. The inter-rater reliability of both the examiners was established by applying Cronbach's Alpha test. The results of the inter-rater reliability through Cronbach's Alpha tests are shown in the following table:

**Table 2:** Summary of the results of the inter-rater reliability tests

| Groups | Test | Raters I&II |
|---|---|---|
| CG | Pre-test | .907 |
| | Post-test | .928 |
| EG | Pre-test | .951 |
| | Post-test | .964 |

#### 3.4.1. Text for intervention

The researcher selected four poems for the intervention for one month (eight classes). The researcher began the intervention with simple poems and then moved on to comparatively difficult ones. Moreover, the poems were taught in terms of PGS. The titles and name of their authors are given in the Table as below:

**Table 3:** List of the Poems

| SNO. | Title of the poems | Author |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | To Dianeme | Robert Herrick |
| 2 | Speak Gently | David Bates |
| 3 | The Road Not Taken | Robert Frost |
| 4 | Sick Rose | William Black |

The texts of the poems are given in the Appendix B

## 4. Results and findings

This study exploited two intact groups; a control group and an experimental group. Initially either of the group consisted of forty students but the strength of the students decreased to 38 in control group and to 39 in experimental group due to attrition. The table of the students of both the groups is given below.

**Table 4:** Number of students in each group

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CG | NO of Students | 38 |
| EG | NO of Students | 39 |
| Total NO of Students | 77 | |

**Table 5**: T-test results of the pre- test comparing the control and experimental groups mean scores in overall speaking

| Groups | N | M | SD | St.Error M | T-value | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CG | 38 | 20.5395 | 2.43394 | .39484 | 2.882 | .005 |
| EG | 39 | 18.9744 | 2.33099 | .37326 | | |

The above table indicates that there was significant level of difference at .05 in the overall speaking proficiency of control and experimental groups on the pre-test. Besides, the mean scores of the two groups confirm that the difference in the overall speaking proficiency was significant in favour of control group at .05.

**Table 6:** T-tests results of the pre- test comparing the control and experimental groups in speaking sub-skills competencies

| Speaking Sub-skills | Groups | N | M | SD | ST.Error. M | T-Value | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GR | CG | 38 | 3.4342 | .48171 | .07814 | .227 | .821 |
| | EG | 39 | 3.4103 | .44236 | .07083 | | |
| V | CG | 38 | 3.3026 | .56400 | .09149 | 2.785 | .007 |
| | EG | 39 | 2.9872 | .42126 | .06746 | | |
| P | CG | 38 | 2.7763 | .47502 | .07706 | 2.705 | .008 |
| | EG | 39 | 2.4615 | .54271 | .08690 | | |
| OC | CG | 38 | 3.1974 | .45825 | .07434 | -.208 | .836 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | EG | 39 | 3.2179 | .41031 | .06570 | | |
| MC | CG | 38 | 2.7500 | .55447 | .08995 | 2.417 | .018 |
| | EG | 39 | 2.4615 | .49184 | .07876 | | |
| PC | CG | 38 | 2.2105 | .32114 | .05210 | 4.032 | .000 |
| | EG | 39 | 2.0385 | .31171 | .04991 | | |
| F | CG | 38 | 2.8684 | .50248 | .08151 | 2.386 | .020 |
| | EG | 39 | 2.4231 | .46649 | .07470 | | |

Note: GC=Grammatical Competence, DC=Discourse Competence, PC=Pragmatic Competence, F=Fluency, GR=Grammar rules, V=Vocabulary, OC=Organizing Conversation, MC=Maintaining Conversation

Similarly, the table above specifies the overall results of the difference in proficiency of speaking sub-skills. The table shows that the difference in proficiency regarding speaking sub-skills "grammar rules and organizing a coherent conversation" is not significant at .05 between the control and experimental group. The table however confirms that the difference in proficiency in regard to speaking sub-skills "vocabulary, pronunciation, pragmatic competence and fluency was significant at .05 in favour of control group. The table above indicates that there was significant difference in terms of improvement in the overall speaking proficiency between the two groups at .05. The mean scores of both the groups however show that the level of improvement in the overall speaking proficiency was significant in favour of experimental group, which implies that PGS materials were significantly more effective than the tradition teaching materials for the development and improvement of ESL students' overall speaking proficiency. Thus, the table also verifies alternative hypothesis which states that there will statistically be a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group exposed to PGS as teaching materials, and the control group exposed to conventional teaching materials on the post-test in general speaking proficiency in favour of the experimental group.

**Table 7:** T- test results of the post- test comparing the control and experimental groups mean scores in overall speaking

| Groups | N | M | SD | St.Error M | T-value | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CG | 38 | 19.8947 | 4.36534 | .70815 | 2.516 | .014 |
| EG | 39 | 22.5000 | 4.70861 | .75398 | | |

Note: CG=control group, EG=experimental group

The table above indicates that there was significant difference in terms of improvement in the overall speaking proficiency between the two groups at .05. The mean scores of both the groups however show that the level of improvement in the overall speaking proficiency was significant in favour of experimental group, which implies that PGS materials were significantly more effective than the tradition teaching materials for the development and improvement of ESL students' overall speaking proficiency. Thus, the table also verifies alternative hypothesis which states that there will statistically be a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group exposed to PGS as teaching materials, and the control group exposed to conventional teaching materials on the post-test in general communication in support of the EG learners.

**Table 8:** T-tests results of the post-test comparing the control and experimental groups in speaking sub-skills competencies

| SSS | Groups | N | M | SD | St.Error M | T-value | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GR | CG | 38 | 3.5395 | .61930 | .10046 | 3.281 | .002 |
| | EG | 39 | 4.0385 | .71068 | .11380 | | |
| V | CG | 38 | 2.6974 | .65285 | .10591 | 2.231 | .029 |
| | EG | 39 | 2.8333 | .71941 | .11520 | | |
| P | CG | 38 | 3.1316 | .73231 | .11880 | .868 | .388 |
| | EG | 39 | 3.5385 | .86134 | .13792 | | |
| OC | CG | 38 | 2.5658 | .83965 | .13621 | 3.059 | .003 |
| | EG | 39 | 2.8077 | .72198 | .11561 | | |
| MC | CG | 38 | 3.3421 | .62715 | .10174 | 2.302 | .024 |
| | EG | 39 | 3.8333 | .77233 | .12367 | | |
| PC | CG | 38 | 2.6316 | .69442 | .11265 | 1.357 | .179 |
| | EG | 39 | 3.0128 | .75644 | .12113 | | |
| F | CG | 38 | 2.0395 | .58566 | .09501 | 2.966 | .004 |
| | EG | 39 | 2.4359 | .58691 | .09398 | | |

Note: SSS=speaking sub-skills, CG=control group, EG=experimental group

Likewise, Table 8 above presents the results of the proficiency of speaking sub-skills. The table indicates that there difference in the improvement of speaking sub-skills including grammar rules, vocabulary organizing coherent conversation, maintaining the conversation and fluency was significant at .05 in favour of experimental group. However, there was no significant difference in terms improvement in proficiency regarding speaking sub-skills comprising pragmatic competence and pronunciation between the students of the two groups. Nonetheless, when the mean scores of Pragmatic competence and fluency on the pre-test and post-test were compared, a significant difference was found at .05 as shown in the preceding tables and will be presented in the succeeding tables as well. Thus, the results of the table above confirm the significant effectiveness of PGS materials for the development and improvement of proficiency in the speaking sub-skills. Furthermore, the table also proves alternative hypothesis which states that there will statistically be noteworthy difference between the average scores of the learners of EG and CG on the post-test in the speaking sub-skills.

**Table 9:** T-test results of control group comparing overall speaking on pre & post-tests

| CG | N | M | SD | St.Error. M | T-value | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-test | 38 | 20.5395 | 2.43394 | .39484 | .875 | .387 |
| Post-test | 38 | 19.8947 | 4.36534 | .70815 | | |

Table 9 above indicates that there was no significant improvement in the overall speaking proficiency of the students of the control group in favour post-test scores of the students. Besides, the mean scores of the students of the group show a slight deterioration in the overall speaking proficiency on the post-test which was due to their low level of motivation during the class as has been confirmed by the observation checklist later in this chapter.

**Table 10:** T-test result of control group comparing speaking sub-skills competencies on pre & post-tests

| SSS | CG | N | M | SD | StErrorM | T-value | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GR | Pre-test | 38 | 3.4342 | .48171 | .07814 | .850 | .401 |
| | Post-test | 38 | 3.5395 | .61930 | .10046 | | |
| P | Pre-test | 38 | 2.7763 | .47502 | .07706 | .666 | .510 |
| | Post-test | 38 | 2.6974 | .65285 | .10591 | | |
| V | Pre-test | 38 | 3.3026 | .56400 | .09149 | 1.379 | .176 |
| | Post-test | 38 | 3.1316 | .73231 | .11880 | | |
| PC | Pre-test | 38 | 2.8684 | .50248 | .08151 | 1.924 | .062 |
| | Post-test | 38 | 2.5658 | .83965 | .13621 | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| F | Pre-test | 38 | 2.2105 | .32114 | .05210 | 1.572 .124 |
| | Post-test | 38 | 2.0395 | .58566 | .09501 | |
| OC | Pre-test | 38 | 3.1974 | .45825 | .07434 | 1.403 .169 |
| | Post-test | 38 | 3.3421 | .62715 | .10174 | |
| MC | Pre-test | 38 | 2.7500 | .55447 | .08995 | .843 .404 |
| | Post-test | 38 | 2.6316 | .69442 | .11265 | |

Note: SSS=speaking sub-skills, CG=control group

In the same way, Table 10 shows that there was no significant difference in terms of improvement in the proficiency of all speaking sub-skills in favour of post-test. The t-value (two tailed) of all the speaking sub-skills is not significant at .05 as shown in the above table.

Moreover, a paired T-test was also applied to the scores of the students of the experimental group on pre and post-tests in order to confirm if there was any significant improvement in the overall speaking and its sub-skills of the students after the intervention. The results of the test have been shown in the following tables respectively.

**Table 11**: T-test results of experimental group comparing overall speaking on pre & post-tests

| EG | N | M | SD | St.Error M | T-value | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-test | 39 | 18.9744 | 2.33099 | .37326 | 6.088 | .000 |
| Post-test | 39 | 22.5000 | 4.70861 | .75398 | | |

Note: EG=experimental group

The table above shows that there was a significant difference in the overall speaking proficiency of the students of experimental group in favour of post-test. The value .000 is highly significant at .05 which confirms the effectiveness of the PGS materials (intervention) for the development of overall speaking skills. The table also endorses the alternative hypothesis of the study which states that there will statistically be a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental group on the speaking pre-test and post-test in general speaking proficiency in favour of the post-test scores.

**Table 12:** T-test result of experimental group comparing speaking sub-skills competencies on pre & post-tests

| SSS | EG | N | M | SD | St.Error M | T-value | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GR | Pre-test | 39 | 3.4103 | .44236 | .07083 | 7.02 | .000 |
| | Post-test | 39 | 4.0385 | .71068 | .11380 | | |
| P | Pre-test | 39 | 2.4615 | .54271 | .08690 | 3.25 | .002 |
| | Post-test | 39 | 2.8333 | .71941 | .11520 | | |
| V | Pre-test | 39 | 2.9872 | .42126 | .06746 | 4.75 | .000 |
| | Post-test | 39 | 3.5385 | .86134 | .13792 | | |
| OC | Pre-test | 39 | 3.2179 | .41031 | .06570 | 5.79 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 39 | 3.8333 | .77233 | .12367 | | |
| MC | Pre-test | 39 | 2.4615 | .49184 | .07876 | 4.94 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 39 | 3.0128 | .75644 | .12113 | | |
| PC | Pre-test | 39 | 2.4231 | .46649 | .07470 | 3.56 | .001 |
| | Posttest | 39 | 2.8077 | .72198 | .11561 | | |
| F | Pre-test | 39 | 2.0385 | .31171 | .04991 | 4.22 | .000 |
| | Posttest | 39 | 2.4359 | .58691 | .09398 | | |

Table 12 above presents the results of the difference between the average scores of the students of the EG on pre and post-tests in respect to the speaking sub-skills. The table clearly indicates that there is highly significant difference in all the speaking sub-skills of the students of the experimental group in favour of post-test. The table also verifies the alternative hypothesis of this which states that there will be significant difference between the average scores of the EG on the pre-test and the post-test in every speaking sub-skills in support of the post-test scores. Thus, it can be concluded from the above two tables that PGS materials (intervention) is significantly effective for the development of overall speaking skills and its sub-skills of the ESL students.

## 4.1. Discussion

In the light of the significant results of this research study, it can be concluded that PGS as teaching materials proved significantly effective for developing and improving both the overall speaking skill and speaking sub-skills of the students of experimental group. The score of both the control and experimental groups on post-test and their subsequent analysis through T-test show a significant difference in favour of experimental group both in terms of overall speaking skill and its sub-skills. The results arrived at through independent samples T-test in regard to the mean scores of control and experimental group on the post-test showed a significant difference in the overall speaking skill in favour of the experimental group. T-value was 2.516 whereas P-value was .014 (see Table 7) which is highly significant at 0.05. Thus, the results confirm that PGS as teaching materials are more effective for the development and improvement of ESL learners' overall speaking skill than traditional teaching materials used Pakistani universities. Moreover, the results of independent samples T-test with respect to the mean scores of the speaking sub-skills of the control and experimental group on the post-test indicated a significant difference in favour of the students of experimental group. The T-values 3.281, 2.231, 3.059, 2.302 and 2.966 with regard to speaking sub-skills grammar rule, vocabulary (sub-categories of Grammatical Competence), organizing a coherent conversation and maintaining the conversation (sub-categories of Discourse Competence) and fluency respectively showed a significant difference in favour of the students of the experimental group. Their values of the level of significance .002, .029, .003, .024 and .004 respectively prove that the difference is highly significant at 0.05 (see Table 8). However T-values .868 and 1.357 (see Table 8) in respect of speaking sub-skills pronunciation (sub-category of Grammatical Competence) and pragmatic competence respectively do not show any significant improvement on the post-test. Nevertheless, taking into account the mean scores of the aforementioned speaking sub-skills (pragmatic competence and pronunciation), it can be clearly seen that these sub-skills have improved because the difference between the control and experimental group on pre-test was significant regarding pronunciation and pragmatic competence with the values of significance .008 and .000 (see Table 6) respectively which are highly significant at 0.05 in favour of control group but on the post-test these values are not significant (.388 and .179 respectively) at 0.05 (see Table 8) which shows enough development and improvement in these sub-skills on the post-test in favour of experimental group. This difference in favour of experimental group is also proved by the mean scores of these two sub-skills namely pronunciation and pragmatic competence on the post-test. The mean scores as given in Table 8 are CG=3.13 and 2.63 regarding pronunciation and pragmatic competence respectively whereas these values in terms of the aforementioned sub-skills are EG=3.53 and 3.01 (see Table 8) which clearly indicate an improvement in these sub-skills in favour of experimental group. Similarly the results of the pre-test and post-test of experimental group in regard to overall speaking skill shows a significant difference in favour of post-test. T-value -6.088 and P-value .000 (see Table 11) show that the mean scores difference of the students of experimental group on pre-test and post-test is highly significant in favour of post-test. This shows that the students of the experimental group performed significantly better on post-test than pre-test which implies that PGS (intervention) has improved the overall speaking skill of the students of the experimental group. Likewise, the results of the paired T-test of the per-

formance of the students of experimental group on pre and post-tests regarding the speaking sub-skills prove that PGS (intervention) has improved every speaking sub-skill of the students of experimental group. The P-values .000, .002, .000, .000, .000, .001 and .000 (see table 12) in regard to grammar rules, pronunciation, vocabulary, organizing a coherent conversation, maintaining the conversation, pragmatic conversation and fluency respectively indicate a significant difference with respect to each speaking sub-skill in favour of post-test.
On the contrary, the results of the T-test of the students of control group on pre and post-tests show that there is no significance difference in their speaking performance before and after the 8-days teaching for the development and improvement of their overall speaking skill through traditional teaching materials instead of PGS. The T-value in this regard is .875 and P-value is .387 (see Table 9) which (both the values) imply that the traditional teaching materials have produced no positive effect on the overall speaking skills of students of control group. Moreover, the mean scores on the pre and post-test show deterioration in the overall speaking skill of the students. In the same way, the results of the T-test of the performance of the students of control group on pre and post-test in respect of speaking sub-skills show no significant difference in any speaking sub-skill in favour of post-test. P-value in case of each speaking sub-skill is higher than 0.05 (see Table 10).

### 4.2. Findings

Based on the results of this research endeavour, the following inferences can be drawn:

The results of this study provide evidence for the effectiveness of PGS for the development and improvement of ESL learners' overall speaking skill and speaking sub-skills. The study showed that PGS increased students' motivation level because it provides a fear-free speaking environment to them. They took risk to speak creatively and innovatively (40).
PGS as teaching materials provided the students to scaffold and be scaffolded to the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which means the less learned/knowledgeable learnt from the more learned peers. This helped them to continue their personal development along with that of the peers (41).
PGS provided the students an access to the culture of the target language which is instrumental in learning the target language (42, 43).
Due to PGS the students were able to hold on to balance between the rules and content of language. They learnt tenses, verb forms and parts of speech in a concrete context which was provided by PGS. This helped the students make a balanced their effective and affective use of filters (32, 33, 44).
The ambiguity, universality and personal relevance of PGS materials provided space for discussion, prediction and arguments which enhanced the speaking proficiency of the students and their ability of making long and coherent conversation.
PGS provided authentic materials to the students because poetry always discusses social, cultural and personal life of people. Thus the students related the experience of the poet with their own practical life.
PGS allowed the students to have instant feedback on their comments and ideas both from the teacher and members of other groups.
PGS provided the students an opportunity in the true sense of the term to do things on their own. The teacher was just in the background as a facilitator.
In addition, the students were made to realize that they are the real stakeholders of the teaching and learning process.
PGS afforded the students the opportunity to publically perform in front of the whole class. This boosted up their confidence and increased their level of interest in the class (45).
PGS involved the students in language speaking practice and drills, which developed both the overall speaking and speaking sub-skills of the students of experimental group.

## 5. Conclusion

This study attempted to find out the effect of PGS and traditional teaching materials on the overall speaking skills and four major speaking sub-skills of the university learners in Pakistan. The study being a quasi-experimental one had two intact groups: a control group and an experimental group. A speaking test was given to both the groups before the intervention (pre-test). After the pre-test the CG was taught through speaking skills through traditional teaching materials whereas the EG was extended the PGS materials. The intervention spanned over eight classes/eight days. After the intervention, both the groups were given a post-test. In order to determine the effect of both kind of teaching materials on the overall speaking skills and its sub-skills, T-tests were applied for inter and intra group comparisons. The results of the T-tests showed that PGS had significantly improved both the overall speaking skill and its sub-skills of the EG. On the contrary, the learners of CG did not show any significant improvement in the overall speaking skill and its sub-skills. Thus, poetry guided speaking (PGS) the researcher's own developed teaching materials as shown in figure 1, proves more effective for teaching English speaking skills than the traditional teaching materials used in Pakistani universities for teaching English in general and speaking skills in particular.

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## Appendix A

The rating scale rubrics for correcting students' speaking performance

**First Grammatical Competence**

| **Grammar** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 (V.Good) | 4 (Good) | 3 (Fair) | 2 (Poor) | 1 (v.Poor) |
| A relatively effective use of grammatical rules (within level of proficiency. | Almost no Grammatical inaccuracies except for occasional few grammatical errors. | Some grammatical and word order errors occur which may cause misunderstanding. | Frequent minor and major errors in grammar that impede comprehension; speech may be characterized by a confusion of structural elements. | Almost all Grammatical patterns inaccurate, except for a few stock phrases. Grammatical Mistakes severely hamper communication. |
| **Pronunciation** | | | | |
| 5 (V.Good) | 4 (Good) | 3 (Fair) | 2 (Poor) | 1 (V.Poor) |
| Pronunciation is intelligible. An acceptable rhythm of speech characterized by the appropriate use of stress, the smooth linking of words, and the use of appropriate intonation. | Almost acceptable stress, linking of words, and intonation. Flaws in articulation, stress and intonation rarely disturb the listener. | Stress, intonation and linking words are sometimes faulty. | Serious errors in, pronunciation. Stress, intonation and phonemic articulation are generally poor and often heavily influenced by the mother language, which makes understanding difficult. | Severe and Constant intonation and pronunciation problems cause almost complete unintelligibility. |
| **Vocabulary** | | | | |
| 5 (V.Good) | 4 (Good) | 3 (Fair) | 2 (Poor) | 1 (V.Poor) |
| The speaker uses relevant, adequate and correct vocabulary and word collocations (within her level of language proficiency) | Almost Appropriate range of words with few difficulties Occasionally Uses inappropriate words and word collocations. | Vocabulary range is somewhat limited which might sometimes prevent communication of the message. Sometimes uses incorrect word collocations and some misunderstandings may arise from inaccurate word choice. | Frequent misuse of word, and limited vocabulary make comprehension quite difficult | Vocabulary is irrelevant, inadequate even for the most basic parts of the intended communication. Vocabulary is Extremely limited. |

| **Second Discourse Competence**<br>**1. To organize discourse coherently and cohesively (coherence and cohesion).** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 (V. Good) | 4 (Good) | 3 (Fair) | 2 (Poor) | 1 (v. Poor) |
| Discourse is Generally coherent with clear, logical organization. It contains enough details to be generally effective. Cohesive devices, references, fillers are used effectively. | The speaker can almost structure the discourse according to the genre. The discourse is almost coherent. Few errors in the use of cohesive devices, which don't affect organization. | Discourse is Sometimes affected by its unclear organization and it may lack enough details. Mostly simple cohesive devices are used. Referents and conjunctions are used sometimes incorrectly. | Response is often incoherent, loosely organized and utterances hesitant, often incomplete and restricted in length. Response often lacks details. Rare use of even Simple conjunctions. | Response is incoherent. Utterances halting, fragmentary with no references and no use of cohesive devices and lack of linguistic competence interferes with discourse competence. |
| 2**. To interact and manage the conversation effectively to keep the conversation going.** | | | | |
| 5 (V.Good) | 4 (Good) | 3 (Fair) | 2 (Poor) | 1 (V.Poor) |
| The speaker contributes fully and effectively throughout the interaction. She takes turns, maintains conversation through showing understanding, backchannel ling, and expanding on responses or developing topics. | The speaker contributes with ease for most of the interaction, with only occasional difficulties in negotiation. She can almost take turns, ensure comprehension, show understanding, backchannel and develop topics. | The speaker Contributes effectively for some of the interaction, but with intrusive deviations at times. Responses may be short without attempt at elaboration. Turns might sometimes be irrelevant to what is said. | Rarely able to Understand enough to keep the conversation going. Difficulty in maintaining contributions throughout. The speaker's turns are always irrelevant to what was said. | Communication is Totally dependent on repetition, and repair. The conversation totally stops. |
| **Third Pragmatic Competence**<br>**To express a range of functions effectively and appropriately (functional competence)** | | | | |
| 5 (V.Good) | 4 (Good) | 3 (Fair) | 2 (Poor) | 1 (V.Poor) |
| The speaker is able to fulfill a wide range of functions to satisfy the goal of the task. The speaker Generally considers register and demonstrates appropriate response. | The speaker is almost able to fulfill required functions clearly and effectively. Almost appropriate response to audience/ situation. Errors not significant enough to be likely to cause social misunderstandings. | The speaker may lack skill in selecting language to carry out the intended functions. Evidence of response to role and setting, but inappropriate responses may sometimes cause social misunderstanding. | The speaker often lacks skill in selecting the language that addresses the intended functions. Functions most of the time are performed unclearly and ineffectively. Generally inappropriate response to audience/ | Unable to perform the functions in the spoken language. No evidence of ability to respond to audience/ or register. |
| **Fourth: Fluency: to speak fluently demonstrating a reasonable rate of speech.** | | | | |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| The speaker can express herself fluently and smoothly with no pauses and hesitation. | Delivery is smooth with few pauses that don't strain the listener or impede communication. Pauses to think of ideas rather than language. | Occasional and Noticeable hesitations. Communication is achieved but strains the listener at times. The speaker may pause to think of language. | Delivery is often slow and utterances are characterized by frequent pauses and hesitations that impede communication and constantly strain the listener. | Delivery so slow that only few words are produced. |

Adopted from Fatah Tory (2006)

**Appendix B**

**To Dianeme by Robert Herrick**

SWEET, be not proud of those two eyes
Which starlike sparkle in their skies;
Nor be you proud that you can see
All hearts your captives, yours yet free;
Be you not proud of that rich hair
Which wantons with the love-sick air;
Whenas that ruby which you wear,
Sunk from the tip of your soft ear,
Will last to be a precious stone
When all your world of beauty's gone.

**Speak Gently by David Bates**

Speak gently! -- It is better far
To rule by love, than fear --
Speak gently -- let not harsh words mar
The good we might do here!

Speak gently! -- Love doth whisper low
The vows that true hearts bind;
And gently Friendship's accents flow;
Affection's voice is kind.

Speak gently to the little child!
Its love be sure to gain;
Teach it in accents soft and mild: --
It may not long remain.

Speak gently to the young, for they
Will have enough to bear --
Pass through this life as best they may,
'T is full of anxious care!

Speak gently to the aged one,
Grieve not the care-worn heart;
The sands of life are nearly run,
Let such in peace depart!

Speak gently, kindly, to the poor;
Let no harsh tone be heard;
They have enough they must endure,
Without an unkind word!

Speak gently to the erring -- know,
They may have toiled in vain;
Perchance unkindness made them so;
Oh, win them back again!

Speak gently! -- He who gave his life
To bend man's stubborn will,
When elements were in fierce strife,
Said to them, 'Peace, be still.'

Speak gently! -- 't is a little thing
Dropped in the heart's deep well;
The good, the joy, which it may bring,
Eternity shall tell.

**The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost**

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

**The Sick Rose**

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

O Rose thou art sick.
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.