Strategies for Overcoming L1 Interference in English Language Learning: Comparative Insights from Saudi and Pakistani Learners

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ABSTRACT

Aim. This research aims to identify the strategies employed by Saudi and Pakistani learners in order to overcome the influence of L1 with English language learning. The study also explores effectiveness of various instructions and techniques used in teaching English language and the cultural attitudes towards second language acquisition in Saudi and Pakistan.

Methods. The study purposes questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussion to reveal different L1 interferences that are phonological, syntactical, lexical, and morphological with 100 learners and 50 instructor participants each from Saudi and Pakistan.

Results. The study shows that phonological factors, syntactic aspects, morphological and lexical interferences are major factors that hinder learning a new language and therefore require educational intervention approaches.

Conclusions. The study also states best practices to overcome L1 interference, including extra practice, implementation of innovative measures, peer learning, and individualised tutoring etc as the means to address language learning issues. The findings of this research hold great significance to educators and policymakers in devising policies to ensure better English opportunities for Saudi and Pakistani learners.

Keywords: phonological factors, second language acquisition, L1 interference, syntactic aspects, morphological, lexical interferences

Introduction

Learning English as a second language (ESL) is a challenging task, and it becomes even more challenging when learners have to deal with the first language (L1) while learning a second language (L2). This phenomenon is referred to as L1 interference; it involves the remnant of linguistic features from the first language in the learning of the second language which causes a lot of confusion and hinderances in acquiring a new language (Aziz, 2019). In this study of Saudi and Pakistani learners, L1 interference is a serious concern since the learners" first languages Arabic and Urdu, respectively, differ from English in terms of both structure and sounds (Alotaibi, 2019). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate and analyse how learners from

the Pakistani and Saudi Arabic linguistic background manage the Interlanguage L1 interference, with an emphasis on finding out the efficiency of different approaches and the learning and cultural factors influencing those strategies (Sultana et al., 2022).

Phonological, syntactic, lexical, morphological errors are the most typical L1 interferences observed among learners with the English language in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia (Al-Shalabi, 2021; Amin et al., 2018). While, phonological interferences are realised in other aspects of the Arabic speaking learner's pronunciation of English sounds that are unfamiliar to Arabic and syntactic interferences stem from different syntax structures and grammar (Adil, 2019). Similarly, as it has been established that these phonological interferences arise from the phonetic systems of the first language, Urdu-speaking Pakistani learners are also likely to be affected by the phonetic system of Urdu along with syntactic interferences from the grammatical structures of Urdu. It is therefore important that these particular difficulties are well understood in order to be able to tailor the educational approaches to such complexities (Akbar et al., 2022; Alam, 2025b).

Educational settings of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan create a broad setting for comparison of L1 interference between two languages. Although both countries promote English language education from the early ages in childhood (Qasem, 2020). English language still poses hindrances because of distinct linguistic contexts, educational policies, and cultural perceptions of English (Kasap & Emamvirdi, 2022; Alam et al., 2022). For education in Saudi Arabia and many of its neighbouring Arabic-speaking countries, Arabic is dominant while Pakistan being a multi-lingual state Arabic, English is also common alongside Urdu as well as multiple regional languages (Iffat Rahmatullah, 2020). All these disparities present significant aspects of how learners from the distinct background engage and resist L1 influence.

This study adopts a quantitative cross-sectional survey together with qualitative interview and focus group data from a sample of learners and educators to determine the percentage incidence and effects of L1 interference according to the different types identified. This makes the proposed comprehensive methodology ideal as it captures and quantifies naturality while also presenting an understanding of the specific strategies Saudi and Pakistani learners use and the efficacy of these strategies in managing particular linguistic facets (Siddiquah et al., 2021; Alam, 2025c; Amir et al., 2025).

Teaching practices that in the Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have different practices of learning when it comes to English. These practices involve direct teaching of grammar rules to EFL learners since childhood, teaching language components such as writing, listening, reading and speaking early on, but the learners still struggle to apply basic English grammatical rules (Akhtar & Munir, 2023; Altamimi & Ab Rashid, 2019; Alam, 2025a). Furthermore, understanding cultural perspectives and motivational factors showcase different ways that learners adapt to manage L1 interference (Ahmad & Alam, 2024). Therefore, it can be noted that programmed compliance is the greatest determinant of the effectiveness of all the strategies and positive attitudes

towards English along with high motivation level also contributing to the effectiveness of the strategies used Saudi and Pakistani learners (Bakri, 2023).

This research addresses several key questions: Focusing on L1 interference, it is necessary to find out the Saudis' and Pakistanis' major problems and compare them in order to identify differences (Ahmed, 2019; Alkhudiry et al., 2020). When it comes to phonological interferences, what measures do learners from each context often employ to avoid them, and which ones work best in handling issues of phonology, syntax, lexicon, and morphology? (Aziz, 2019). What roles cultural perceptions and motivational factors play within these strategies and which instructional approaches and intervention methodologies are used most frequently by teachers for learners with L1 interference.

This research therefore consists of comparing the learning environments of learners in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in the hope of making concrete scientific contribution to the linguistics of Pakistani and Saudi Arabian language discourse. The research explores various strategies employed to overcome L1 interference in learning to help educators and policy makers in improve teaching methodologies of English language (Alam, Ahmad & Biryukova, 2024). Synthesising the evidence contributes to the cumulative knowledge of second language acquisition and provides useful recommendations for enhancing ESL instruction strategies in various linguistic contexts.

Literature Review

Phonological Interference in Saudi and Pakistani Learners

Phonological interference has been one of the most highlighted aspects in the investigation of L1 interference. For instance, Arabic learners tend to find it difficult to pronounce English phonemes that are not present in the Arabic language (al-anzi, 2024). Dheifallah Altamini & Ab Rashid (2019) discovered that Saudi learners tend to confuse between /p/ and /b/ as well as /v/ and /f/ resulting to low word recognition. Likewise, phonological difficulties experienced by Pakistani learners of English stem from disparity in the phonological system of both languages, Urdu and English. As study by Saira Ambreen and Carol K. S. To (2021) stated that the Urdu speakers have a tendency to mispronounce the non-aspirated sounds of English like /th/ & /ph/ for which little aspiration is made in Urdu.

Syntactic Interference

Syntactic interference is a transfer of L1 grammatical structures to L2 inappropriately when L2 has different rules (Shams et al., 2025). The learners of Arabic face challenges in grammar and structure because Arabic has a different structure than that of English

as it is a Verb-Subject-Object (VSO) structure while English is Subject-Verb-Object (SVO). Research by Sumera has indicated that this results in frequent mistakes in sentence formation among Saudi learners (Baby (2021; Chaudhary & Al Zahrani, 2020). When it comes to Pakistani learners' syntactic differences between Urdu and English particularly in using articles and prepositions create particular types of mistakes being made to features like absence of articles and erroneous use of prepositions in Urdu speakers (Mahmood et al., 2020).

Lexical and Morphological Interference

Lexical and morphological interference of this nature occurs when learners transfer features from their L1 directly into the L2 and hence the wrong or an ungrammatical rendition. This basically as noted by Shalabi, was evident with the Saudi learners where the usage of Arabic vocabulary was directly copied into English thus resulting in semantic mistakes (Al-Shalabi, 2021). The same applies to Pakistani learners, and as pointed by Bibi Halima, Urdu speaking learners tend to produce translations that are formally equivalent to the English expression and form but have little or no regard for the collocations and idiomatic expressions (Halima et al., 2021; Shah et al., 2021).

Morphological interference is employed through the wrong use of grammar in the written language. Other challenges that Saudi learners encounter as observed by Altamini consist of incorrectness of English plurals and verbs, Saudi learners drop the 's' and conjugate verbs inappropriately, have issues when transiting phrases from Arabic to English etc. English as an additional language proves problematic for Urdu speaking individuals especially in matters of tenses and grammar (Altamimi & Ab Rashid, 2019). A study by Aneesa Majeed further shows that Pakistani learners make systematic errors in the use of tense while translating from English to Urdu, because they conjugate the English verbs according to Urdu verb rules (Majeed et al., 2023).

Strategies Implemented to Overcome L1 Interference

Several strategies have been proposed in previous researches to minimize L1 interference for English and Saudi Learners. Regarding phonological interference, pronunciation drills are effective for managing this type of interference. To overcome this issue, Fatima Al-Shalabi suggested phonetic training that focuses on using minimal pairs or similar sound discrimination techniques in Saudi learners (Al-Shalabi, 2021). Thus, Mohammad Adil pointed out that Pakistan's learners could benefit from the incorporation of audio-visual aids in the learning process to enhance pronunciation performance (Adil, 2019).

Regarding syntactic interference, there are two main strategies of the second language instruction, which have been recommended: contrastive analysis and teacher's direct explanation of grammatical rules. According to Muhammad Sabboor Hussain et al. (2020), the disagreement between Arabic syntax and English syntax when expounded may assist the Saudi learners to internalise the proper syntactic structures. Furthermore, the possible strategies for Pakistani learners should include definite grammar points to perform special comprehension exercises using articles and prepositions adequately (Hussain et al., 2020; Hussain et al., 2021).

Most frequently, interference occurs at the lexical level, and it can be reduced by reading and lexical/vocabulary exercises which focus on context rather than on simple word lists. Specifically, Shadma Iffat Rahmatullah documented an increase in Saudi learners' understanding when they are exposed to authentic text and activities relating to vocabulary (Rahmatullah, 2020). In the same regard, Musharraf Aziz and Sahbi Hidri suggested context-based vocabulary teaching in case of Urdu speaking students in order to avoid the surreptitious use of translated words and phrases (Aziz & Hidri, 2019).

In order to counter morphological interference, what the teacher needs to do is teach English morphemes and their proper use (Fakir et al., 2025). In a study done by Yami, he argued that teaching English plurals and verb forms through drills and exercise helped Saudi learners (Al-Yami & Al-Athwary, 2021). Recommendations for Pakistani learners, Aishah Siddiquah et al., (2021) proposed that meaning orientation in tense and aspect in grammar instruction could decrease the error in verb conjugation.

Theoretical Framework

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)

The theoretical framework for this study incorporates CAH proposed by Lado in 1957 (Wardhaugh, 1970). It is grounded in the fact that the errors persistent is one's L2 learning can be determined by the differences between the learner's L1 and L2. In this regard, the theory is relevant as it draws on the framework of phonological, syntactic, lexical and morphological errors faced by Saudi and Pakistani learners due to their native language. The differences between the native language and the wholly different framework of English thus interfere with each other and cause learning difficulties (Cox & Charles, 2024; Alahmadi & Kesseiri, 2013).

Interlanguage Theory

Interlanguage theory is also a pertinent theoretical framework which was proposed by Selinker in 1972 (Frith, 1978). It states that L2 learners often reach a state of interlanguage where they have evolved from L1 and L2 into a state of learners' transition,

where the dynamics of each language blends together in an evolved system. This framework helps explain the L1 induced errors in the L2 proficiency and the strategies such as exposure ad extra practice to help reduce the hindrances associated with English learning in L1 learners (González & Martínez, 2020; Marcet & Sasamoto, 2023).

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach with both qualitative and quantitative analysis integrated into the study. This portrays an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of Saudi and Pakistani learners in the study and identify strategies to overcome L1 interference in English language.

Participants

The study divided the participants into three groups for comprehensive data collection and analysis. 100 Saudi Arabian learners from various educational institutions in Saudi Arabia would take part in the study. Similarly, 100 Pakistani learners participated in the study from different educational institutions. While 50 teachers, educators or instructors in both countries provided insights into the institutional practices and their respective perceptions. In addition, the approval of the participants was obtained before starting data collection and they were ensured that ethical considerations of maintaining their anonymity would be strictly observed to avoid subsequent problems.

Table 1

Demographics of Learner Participants from Saudi and Pakistan

SR. No	Demographic Variable	Saudi Learners (n=100)	Pakistani Learners (n=100)
1.	*Gender*		
	Male	50	56
	Female	50	44
2.	*Age Group*		
	18-24	40	36
	25-34	30	40
	35-44	20	16
	45 and above	10	8
3.	*Educational Level*		
	High School	30	24

SR. No	Demographic Variable	Saudi Learners (n=100)	Pakistani Learners (n=100)
	Undergraduate	40	50
	Graduate	20	16
	Postgraduate	10	10

Source. Own research.

Table 2

Demographics of Teacher Participants from Saudi and Pakistan

SR. No	Demographic Variable	Saudi Instructors (n=50)	Pakistani Instructors (n=50)
1.	*Gender*		
	Male	30	32
	Female	20	18
2.	*Age Group*		
	25-34	20	18
	35-44	15	20
	45-54	10	8
	55 and above	5	4
3.	*Teaching Experience*		
	1-5 years	10	12
	6-10 years	20	25
	11-15 years	15	10
	16-20 years	5	3
4.	*Educational Level*		
	Bachelor's Degree	15	12
	Master's Degree	25	30
	Doctorate Degree	10	8

Source. Own research.

Data Collection

Quantitative Data

The study employed the means of surveys and structured questionnaires to gain perspectives and insights from Pakistani and Saudi Arabian learners. Gathered data included types and frequency of L1 interferences from phonological, syntactic, lexical and morphological perspectives. Furthermore, the strategies to mitigate L1 interference were inquired about in the questionnaires along with their respective effectiveness.

Qualitative Data

The study gained insights from semi-structured interviews from each group of learners respectively. While focus group discussion enabled the researcher to examine collective experience of the learners in an interactive setting. The instructor interviews were done separately to ensure both countries and their representatives were able to provide their perspectives coherently.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis included summarised data of the surveys and provided frequencies and types of L1 interference along with the strategies employed and their efficacy. Furthermore, it entailed the comparative analysis of the data obtained from the Saudi and Pakistani learners and analysed it for possible differences and/or similarities regarding the strategies employed to mitigate L1 interference in English language learning.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis of the study includes thematic analysis of the interview and focus groups to identify themes and patterns related to the topic and to derive outcome from the strategies employed. Moreover, the qualitative data obtained from both Saudi and Pakistani learners were compared to identify similarities and differences in the strategies employed by both countries institutional practices to mitigate L1 interference in English Language learning.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative Findings

Types of L1 Interference

Table 3

Types of L1 Interference

SR. No	Types of Interferences	Saudi Learners (n=100)	Pakistani Learners (n=100)
	Phonological Errors	75	80
	Syntactic Errors	60	65
	Lexical Errors	70	78
	Morphological Errors	55	60

Source. Own research.

In Table 3, phonological errors were observed in Saudi and Pakistani learners, where 75 out of 100 learners in Saudi and 80 out of 100 Pakistani learners reported experiencing phonological errors in their language learning experience indicating high prevalence of pronunciation of specific sounds not present in their native languages. A study by Eman M. Al-Yami and Anwar A. H. Al-Athwary (2021) provide a similar outlook on this stating that phonological errors are most common in Saudi learners of English language. Whereas, a study by Syeda Bushra Rizvi et al., (2022) states a similar predicament for Pakistani speaker's and learners of English language in relation to phonological errors.

In respect to Syntactic errors, both Saudi and Pakistani leaners reported influence of their native language's grammar and rules on their ability to grasp English language, which in turn leads to high frequency of syntactic errors. The results showed that 60 Saudi learners and 65 Pakistani learners out of 100 stated experiencing syntactic errors in their English learning endeavour. Multiple studies state that learners of different educational qualifications make syntactic errors in their writing due to L1 interference in Saudi and Pakistani context (Ahmad et al., 2023; Khaliq & Abbas, 2024; Nisa et al., 2023).

Lexical and Morphological errors were also notable in Saudi learners with 70 and 55 out of 100 respectively. Whereas, in Pakistani learners these errors were observed to be 75 and 60 out of 100 respectively. Studies show that morphological and lexical errors are very common amongst university learners in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The errors are caused by L1 interference along with the very strong influence of the learner's native language on English learning abilities (Halima et al., 2021; Nisa et al., 2023; Umarlebbe et al., 2024).

Strategies Employed to Mitigate L1 Interference

Table 4

Strategies Employed to Mitigate L1 Interference

SR. No	Strategy	Saudi Learners (n=100)	Effectiveness Scale (1-5)	Pakistani Learners (n=100)	Effectiveness Scale (1-5)
	Extra Practice	86	4.1	70	3.5
	Use of Visual Aids	64	3.2	60	3
	Peer Learning	62	3.1	61	3.1
	Language Immersion	40	2	36	1.8
	Tutor Assistance	75	3.8	66	3.3

Source. Own research.

Table 4 shows the strategies implemented by Saudi and Pakistani learners to deal with L1 interference and its evaluation in depth. The strategies comprise of extra practice, use of visual aids, peer learning, language immersion and tutor assistance. The results

use Likert Scale from 1 to 5-point scale, where 1 point was used to indicate least effective strategies and 5 point indicating most effective strategies for mitigation of L1 interference (Joshi et al., 2015).

The findings state that extra practice and tutor assistance have a highly positive effect on reduction of L1 interference in English learning. Extra practice is a highly effective strategy for L1 mitigation with 4.1 and 3.5 efficacy in Saudi and Pakistani learners respectively, while tutor assistance showed effectiveness of 3.8 and 3.2. Researches state that multilingual people who worked on their English language skills with assistance, extra attention and practice were able to reduce L1 interference significantly. Accordingly, the mitigation of these interferences depends highly on the learner's own ability, resilience and determination along with proper assistance and guidance from tutors and peers (Alasmari et al., 2022; Shousha et al., 2020).

Furthermore, average rating provided by learners on a scale of 1 to 5 deemed peer learning to be moderately effective with 3.1 and 3.3 efficacy rate. While use of visual aids and language immersion both are low to moderately effective with values ranging from 1.8-3.1 depicting its usefulness in English language learning (Usama, Alam, Hameed et al., 2024; Usama, Alam, Tarai et al., 2024). Past studies show that L1 interference decreases with peer learning, use of visual devices to aid better language learning and various language immersion techniques (Alzahrani, 2023; Mahmood et al., 2020; Panhwar, 2023).

According to the findings of the survey, both groups of learners relied heavily on adopting techniques such as extra practice, the use of visual displays, peer learning, language immersion, and tutor help. As a result, due to cultural and educational differences, we found differences in the frequency and effectiveness of the use of the mentioned strategies between Saudi and Pakistani learners.

Role of Cultural Attitudes and Motivational Factors

Table 5

Role of Cultural Attitudes and Motivational Factors

Factor	Saudi Learners (n=100)	Pakistani Learners (n=100)
Positive Attitude	61	68
High Motivation	75	79
Exposure to English	85	83

Source. Own research.

Table 5 shows the effect of cultural and motivational factors on L1 mitigation on English language learning. Exposure to English reported to be most influencing in proper English learning with 85 Saudi learners and 83 Pakistani learners stating its efficacy in the questionnaire. Whereas, high motivational factor was stated

to be the second most influential factor in L1 mitigation with 75 Saudi and 79 Pakistani learners' agreement. Finally, positive attitude towards learning English was found to be least influential with 61 Saudi learners and 68 Pakistani speakers in agreement. According to various studies, cultural and motivational factors have a strong impact on ESL learners. Therefore 10% decrease in L1 interference has been established with the use of right strategies in Saudi learners (Hussain et al., 2020). Whereas, strong motivation has been observed in Pakistani learners with respect to reduction in L1 interference in English language learning (Alqasham, 2022; Samad et al., 2021).

Instructional Practices and Interventions by Educators

Table 6

Instructional Practices and Interventions by Educators

Practice/Intervention	Saudi Instructors (n=50)	Pakistani Instructors (n=50)
Direct Grammar Teaching	40	38
Interactive Activities	35	40
Regular Assessments	29	33
Use of Technology	25	22

Source. Own research.

Table 6 displays practices and interventions employed by educators and their efficacy in L1 mitigation in English language learning. These practice and intervention methods include direct grammar teaching, interactive activities, regular assessments, use of technology, cultural integration respectively. The findings showed that direct grammar teaching is the most effective strategy employed by instructors from their perspectives with 40 and 38 instructors from Saudi and Pakistan in agreement respectively. A study by Muhammad Asif states that interventions from educators alleviate interferences in language learning and help engage learners positively (Asif et al., 2020).

Furthermore, interactive activity integration was also deemed effective with 35 Saudi and 40 Pakistani instructors recommending it. Whereas regular assessment and use of technology were accepted as influential only by 29 and 33 instructors and 25 and 22 instructors from Saudi and Pakistan respectively. A study done by Abdulelah Mohammed Alkhateeb in King Saud Bin Abdul-Aziz University also stated that L1 interferes with English learning and writing practices in Saudi Arabian learners which can be reduced with the intervention in learning by instructors and innovative strategies (Alkhateeb, 2021).

Qualitative Findings

Table 7

Thematic Analysis Theme Identification

No	Theme	Identification of Theme	Code Words	Keywords
1.	*Phonological Differences*	Difficulties with specific English sounds	Pronunciation, Mispronunciations, Sounds	/p/, /v/, Aspirated, Unaspirated, Phonetic, Pronunciation issues
2.	*Syntactic Challenges*	Issues with sentence structure and grammar rules	Syntax, Grammar, Sentence structure	Subject-verb-object, Articles, Prepositions, Word order, Sentence construction
3.	*Lexical and Morphological Interference*	Struggles with vocabulary and word forms	Vocabulary, Morphology, Words, Forms	Plurals, Verb conjugations, Direct translation, Lexical gaps, Morphological errors
4.	*Role of Cultural Attitudes*	Influence of cultural perceptions on language learning	Culture, Attitudes, Motivation	Identity, Linguistic heritage, Multilingual, Integration, Openness
5.	*Effectiveness of Instructional Strategies*	Perceived usefulness of teaching methods	Instruction, Strategies, Methods	Technology, Apps, Online resources, Peer learning, Group discussions, Tutors, Feedback

Source. Own research.

Phonological Differences

In the identification of themes from the recurrent use of keywords, it was identified that the issue of phonological differences was a crucial area of focus for both Saudi and Pakistani learners as well as their tutors. Some of the challenges mentioned by the learners included general confusion when it came to pronunciation of some English sounds that were unfamiliar to them. For example, a Saudi learner said, I have difficulties producing /p/ and /v/ since I know them in the Arabic language. These sounds are difficult to pronounce and I do not sound coherent to my fellows and teachers because of my accent because it effects my English (Participant 5). Also, a Pakistani learner stated, "I find difficulty in the aspirated sounds in English such as the "th" sound in "think". I have been doing various exercises to pronounce it correctly but it is a time consuming procedure. (Participant 18). The teachers also supported these limitations with one of the Saudi teachers saying that, "Teachers of our institute have identified various phonological issues in learners therefore, pronunciation drills are inevitable for our learners to overcome these phonological constraints." (Instructor Participant 19).

Above mentioned statements from learners and teachers were similar to the persistent issue of phonological issues and differences in acquiring English language. In this regard, researchers state that acquiring a new language requires excessive practice and determination strategies within the learning practice to mitigate L1 interference especially in the case of English language in Saudi and Pakistani as these languages have different phonetics, grammatical rules, allophonic variances to mention a few (Al-Shalabi, 2021; al-anzi, 2024)

Syntactic Challenges

The interaction between syntax of the first and second languages became the second theme identified in the study. From the difficulties that were observed, it was evident that learners from both groups were having issues within English sentence construction and grammar formations. One Saudi learner said, in English, the order of the words is rather different than the Arabic one, and I confuse the subject-verb-object order. Therefore, I put in extra effort to learn the pattern and make sure to not make any mistakes in the grammar (Participant 118). Pakistani learners faced the same problems especially with articles and prepositions. For instance, one of the Pakistani learners said, "In Urdu, we do not use articles as we use in English that is why most of the time, I do not write articles or sometimes I write wrong articles." (Participant 25). Pakistani teachers endorsed these claims about the differences by stating that, there is a severe need to teach learners grammar and as a teacher, I remember one of my colleagues saying, here we spend much time ensuring correct usage of articles and prepositions because we have noted these are problematic for our learners. (Instructor Participant 45).

A lot of the responses from the participants portrayed the same ideas and claim therefore a few were incorporated to display the collective idea of the participants'' perspectives. According to various researches, Pakistan and Saudi languages are themselves very different in every aspect possible. Therefore, learners whose native language is Urdu or Arabic tend to face syntactic issues as they are fuelled by L1 interference in English learning (Khaliq & Abbas, 2024; Mahmood et al., 2020; Shousha et al., 2020).

Lexical and Morphological Interference

Another area of difficulty that was observed among the learners was in the area of vocabulary and morphological structures. One common issue that Saudi learners often mentioned was the problem with translation of English words that have no parallels in Arabic. As one Saudi learner put it, "Many English words do not have a direct translation into Arabic and that makes it difficult to either remember or use them properly." (Participant 139).

The learners from Pakistan reported some challenges in dealing with plural forms and verb conjugations. A Pakistani learner quoted saying,

In Urdu plurals and verbs are simple so most of the time I get slightly confused with these rules in English. I also feel that since Urdu and English are so different all in all, it makes it even more difficult for us to use these forms and conjugations properly (Participant 48).

Teachers reported the effectiveness of specifically targeting vocabulary development activities. A Saudi teacher explained: "We do many contextual learning practices in an attempt to assist learners understand meanings and real-life applications of such learnt word(s)" (Instructor Participant 37). Above mentioned responses portray the perspectives of most of the participants coherently. Researches state that lexical and morphological interferences in English are common for people whose native language is Urdu or Arabic. Syntactic, lexical and morphological errors are common due to L1 interference in the learning of English language. Therefore, it is suggested to enhance teacher training and incorporate learners' feedback to cater to learners' needs and ensure better language learning with ease (Shahid et al., 2023; Shousha et al., 2020; Umarlebbe et al., 2024; Beg et al., 2025).

Role of Cultural Attitudes

Perception of English and language learning in relation to the cultural beliefs and practices affected the learners' motivation and their commitment to learning. For the Saudi learners, English is seen as crucial for academic and career achievement, while at the same time, the Saudi subjects wanted to retain their Arabic language identity. An Arabic learner from Saudi Arabia said,

I know English is relevant, but I don't wish to lose touch with Arabic. I try to learn both languages at the same time but these are both so different that it is a task in its own to balance both (Participant 54).

However, more Pakistani learners indicated that they would like to use English in everyday real-life situations, which might be due to the nature of the multilingualism in Pakistan.

One Pakistani learner stated:

We do use quite a lot of English in Pakistan so that is why I can confidently integrate English and Urdu together. I have learnt English since I was in school so I think I have much better exposure to English than many learners here (Participant 183).

A Pakistani teacher said,

Our learners are more receptive to the use of English in casual situations which makes them exposed to more practice. The college provides various means to learn the language and ease any issues faced by the learners in acquiring English with all its rules (Instructor Participant 20).

Thus, these cultural beliefs and perceptions of the learners influenced how the teachers perceived the learners' attitudes towards language learning. The role of cultural

influence and exposure of the native attitudes significantly effect a person's ability to adapt a new language. In English, it is required that learners learn with determination and let their cultural aspects evolve with their learning to benefit from the new language acquired and their own unique identity and culture together (Mahmood et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2021).

Effectiveness of Instructional Strategies

Regarding the theme of effectiveness of instructional strategies, Saudi learners identified procedural practice and technology as key features that should be incorporated in practice.

A Saudi learner said that "I practice with English language learning apps on my own whenever I have free time. These apps help me with various grammatical rules and help with the language learning in depth" (Participant 96).

Whereas, Pakistani teachers and learners preferred peer-learning and discussing in groups. Learner learning with fellow learners seems to enhance understanding according to a Pakistani learner. As understood from the responses of teachers from both countries, the supportive and knowledgeable tutors were identified by the respondents.

A Saudi teacher shared her opinion stating, "It is the individual focus of tutors that impact learners' performance most. Therefore, the teachers in our institute try our best to impart as much knowledge as we can to our learners with different means of strategies and innovative practices" (Instructor Participant 9).

The responses from most of the participants stated that they support multicultural and more effective methods of impacting knowledge and knowledge acquisition to suit the different classes of learners. Various researches state that the integration of innovative strategies and newer teaching methods can help mitigate L1 interference (Ajmal et al., 2025). Hence, strategies such as innovative learning, active learning, exposure to the new language through technological means help the learners learn and adapt English to the fullest and the learning does not get hindered by L1 interference profusely (Duangpaserth et al., 2022; Halima et al., 2021; Shahid et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the analysed qualitative results provide a detailed insight into the interlopers and processes being experienced in learning English as a second language due to L1 interference. Phonological, syntactic, lexical and cultural factors are key barriers to learning and therefore when teachers adopt good instructional practices in teaching phonological, syntactic, lexical and culturally appropriate tasks then learners are most likely to succeed.

Practical Implications

- This research will aid in implementing phonetic training programmes to focus on the challenges faced by the Saudi and Pakistani learners. These may include pronunciation exer-

cises, phonetic drills etc. to address the issues learners face with L1 interference because of their native languages.

- The use of technological immersion and innovation in the learning process of English can prove to be significantly helpful to integrate their native language in the learning process. The learning apps can be used as a tool to advance towards multilingualism and develop their own personalised learning practices.
- This research encourages peer learning to enhance collaborative learning and provide proper mentorship and peer learning approach to integrate support in their language improving journey (Alam, 2024).
- It can also be implemented to advance the level and criteria of teachers towards excellence and incorporate innovative elements in the classroom to ensure better learning prospects for learners and reducing L1 interference in Saudi and Pakistani learners (Alam, Usama et al., 2024).

Further Research Directions

- This research can be expanded towards a longitudinal study to track the progress of Saudi and Pakistani learners over a span of few years. The insights can prove the long-term effectiveness of strategies employed in mitigation of L1 interference in English language learning;
- The investigation of socio-economic factors can be incorporated in further researches to understand the effect of variables such as educational background, resources, family influence and its effects on L1 interference (Králik, 2023).;
- The exploration of teacher training can be further identified to identify the effectiveness of strategies employed in institutions to address L1 interference in learners from different countries, native languages and diverse backgrounds,

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study explored and examined the hindrances learners endure because of L1 interference with English learning and the strategies for mitigating L1 interference in English language among Saudi and Pakistani learners. The findings stated that learners experience phonological, lexical, syntactical and morphological interference in learning with significant impact in learners from both countries. Since English is drastically different from Urdu and Arabic in pronunciation, grammar, phonetics etc., learners struggle with various issues persisting because of their native language. Thematic analysis provided the role of cultural impact and teachers' effect along with the efficacy of innovative measures in learners' engagement with English language learning. Hence, diverse strategies and influences were explored in the study consistent

of visual aid, peer learning, language immersion etc. to address the linguistic challenge in the leaners of English language. Finally, this research would provide new research opportunities along with laying valuable groundwork for changes in the educational sector and lead to improvement in ESL learning methodologies and improve English language acquisition.

LIMITATIONS

The primary limitation of the study is the small sample size as it is not possible for researchers to conduct large surveys due to financial constraints. The findings of the study may not be representative of the diverse and large populations of English language learners in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. For future study researchers can consider more explicit explanation of how the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) and Interlanguage Theory intersect and inform regarding the L1 interference.

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