Teacher development through Exploratory Practice at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan

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Abstract

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Exploratory Practice (EP), as a framework for teacher development, is a collaborative endeavour of both teachers and learners which engages them in reflection to improve the quality of life in a language classroom. The present case study was carried out at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro (USJP) in Pakistan, where teachers in the institute of English Language and Literature participated in the project by following the principles of EP in their teaching. The project ran for a full academic year consisting of two semesters of four months each.

The present study evaluates the effectiveness of the EP project carried out at the USJP which is measured from two perspectives; its significance as a form of practitioner research, and as an approach to teacher-development. The significance of EP as a form of practitioner research is measured by evaluating the impact of EP during the project to the ELT practice at the USJP. An evaluation of EP as an approach to teacher development is carried out in the light of the experiences and views of the teacher-participants presented in the post-interview results which are conducted at the end of the project.

The teacher-participants had very little exposure to professional development approaches, and were unfamiliar with EP before joining the project. However, the findings show they were successful in following the principles of EP in their teaching, and the puzzles worked through by the participants who employed EP as a form of practitioner research during the project made a significant contribution towards the ELT practice at the USJP. The post-interview results show that teacher-participants found EP to be a useful approach to their professional development which did not require extra effort and time to put into practice.

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All praise to Allah who is the creator and sustainer of the universe. Without his help, I would not have been able to complete this work.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work of mine to my deceased father, though was poor but never gave up in providing me better education. While appreciating the vision of my father, I can't disregard the physical labour of my mother in facilitating my education. While being grateful to my parents, I am unable to neglect inspiration I always received from the love of my son who was born in the UK during my studies, and remained here until I completed it.

Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

1. Background

English is the only official language in Pakistan, and it is taught in every public school in its four provinces: Sindh, Punjab, Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province (N.W.F.P). The University of Sindh, Jamshoro, in Pakistan (USJP) is the second largest university in the province with approximately 43 teaching institutes/centres/departments which offer both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. After Pakistan's independence in 1947, English was introduced as a compulsory subject from grade six, but since April 2003, it has been taught from the first grade, that is, in all the provinces including Sindh, where English is taught as a subject at lower and higher levels of studies from primary to university level.

Although English is taught as a subject from grade six, surprisingly, the majority of the students who are offered admission at the USJP have a poor level of English due to the poor system of schooling in the province. In view of this fact, remedial English, a compulsory course, is taught at both bachelor and master levels at USJP. The purpose of this compulsory course is to develop a higher level of proficiency in English amongst the graduates of USJP. Teaching remedial English is administered by the department of English at the university which has 20 permanent and 12 part- time faculty staff members.

1.1. Brief history of English as a subject at USJP

Since the start of the university, a course called *English Compulsory* was taught as a compulsory subject at bachelor level for the first four semesters, for six months each. The prescribed syllabus for *English Compulsory* consisted of six books: only one focussed on grammar or language learning, whereas the remainder focussed on English

literature. The semester wise description of the syllabus is given: *Introduction to Grammar* was taught in the first semester, whereas the second semester consisted of three plays: *Mr Sampson, Women at War, The Great Globe Itself*, *Points of view and Winchester book of English verses* were taught in the third semester. *Richard II*, a play by Shakespeare, was prescribed for the fourth semester.

For the first time in the history of the university since its inception in 1948, the name of the course *English compulsory* was replaced with *Remedial English* in 2002. Since no specific curriculum had been designed at the time of replacing the *English compulsory* course, key books were recommended to be covered in the Remedial English course. However, in 2005, the University of Sindh hired the services of Oxford University Press to design a specific curriculum for the Remedial English course based on communicative language teaching, and also arrange a few short-term training courses for the tutors of Remedial English. The revised syllabus of Remedial English consists of two books: one book *Oxford Practice Grammar* is meant for teaching grammar such as structures and functions of tenses, sentence structures etc., and the other book *English for Undergraduates* aims at improving students writing and reading skills.

In addition to replacing the previous curriculum, some other measures were also taken by the university authorities to facilitate the English department to run the Remedial course smoothly, such as reducing the size of large/crowded classes into smaller sections; hiring part-time faculty on good wages to meet the shortage of staff; extra wages for teaching Remedial English classes were paid to current members of the English department; committees of senior faculty members were also formed to monitor teaching activity by observing Remedial English classes without prior notice.

Although some initiatives have been taken to address the issue of large classes by dividing them into sections of 30 or 40 students as part of ELT reforms, it still remains

one of the main problems in Remedial English classes. Large classes have been a huge issue since the foundation of the University. English being a compulsory subject for all bachelor students in all disciplines, the teachers are asked to take combined classes of students from various disciplines. These combined classes on average accommodate more than 200 students which pose a variety of problems (for more details see section 4.3.2.).

In addition to the issue of large classes, the variation in proficiency level of learners is a common problem in almost all Remedial English classes (for further detail see section 4.3.1.). The USJP attracts students from various social groups, thus creating huge differences among individual students in the same class. These students differ from one another in educational background (English/Urdu/Sindhi medium schools), previous schooling in private and government-run schools, different locations (urban/rural), family background (educated/un-educated parents), socio-economic status (poor/wealthy), confidence level (many students feel afraid of speaking English in and outside the class due to peer and social pressures). These are some of the broad contextual factors that influence the English language skills students bring with them and are able to acquire during the course of their studies at the USJP.

1.2. Brief introduction to the English professionals at the USJP

The detailed introduction about English language professionals, challenges and difficulties they face in teaching English, the ways and techniques they adopt for their professional development, is stated in the fourth chapter (see section 4.2). This section is a brief introduction. The department of English at the USJP offers the degree of MA (English Literature). All course units in MA (English Literature) cover some of the works of British and Western authors except English Compulsory/Remedial English, which aims to improve English language skills. A person with an MA (in English

Literature) meets the eligibility criteria to become an English language teacher to teach both English literature and language at the USJP. Since there is no formal plan or system of teacher training, the newly appointed teachers of English in the USJP do not receive any training before starting their career, and they hardly have a chance of participating in teacher development programs during their careers.

Many English language professionals at the USJP teach part-time, either at the USJP or at other institutes, in the evening session in order to increase their disposable income. In such circumstances, where an English teacher is overburdened with teaching classes in the evening session as a necessity in addition to morning sessions, the Commission of Higher Education of Pakistan (the high level organization supervising education at the university level) has set some criteria for the appointment and promotion of university teachers in the form of Tenure Track. The introduction of a Tenure Track System in universities is an attempt to push and attracts university teachers to carryout research. According to this system, the nature of the job is temporary and to be continued subject to satisfactory performance. This system also requires English language professionals to publish research articles in well-recognized journals for timely promotion. In the light of the above facts, an English professional in the USJP confronts the following challenges to survive in the profession:

1. Job insecurity due to the contractual nature of the profession in which it is essential for every teacher to meet satisfactory performance levels set by the HEC for further extension of their job in the absence of any support such as workshops, teacher training or development programs.

2. Necessity to engage in research (which is also essential for promotion) without any training in academic research.

1.3. Rationale for the study

Despite taking measures such as introducing a new curriculum, hiring teachers to meet the shortage of teaching staff, providing handsome wages to Remedial English teachers and where possible, dividing large classes into sections, we have not yet improved the standards of English of those who graduate from the USJP (Memon and Badger, 2007). There may possibly be a myriad of factors i.e. perhaps the curriculum is not appropriate, low motivation level may possibly be a problem, perhaps wash back from tests/exams is a problem. Thus, Khan (1997) remarks that a lack of research and inquiry is the main issue which prevents growth of the ELT profession in Pakistan. He (ibid) suggests that the orthodox attitude of teachers to value teaching at the cost of research prevents the growth of an atmosphere of inquiry at universities in Pakistan including the University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

There is no denying the fact that the orthodox attitude as proposed by Khan (ibid) has a negative effect on the overall teaching and learning environment at the USJP, but it is essential to discover the reasons for this attitude. It could be argued, the main reasons are that a majority of teachers join the profession with a degree in English literature rather than ELT, and they receive either no or few teacher development opportunities in their career for their professional development. Many of these teachers neither have training in academic research tools nor do they have exposure to professional development approaches. Thus, it could be argued that instead of blaming university teachers for having an 'orthodox attitude', it is essential that teachers are supported in changing their attitude. Thus, in the teaching and learning environment of Pakistani universities in general, and the USJP in particular, an immediate response could be to introduce a form of practitioner research which may help teachers in their professional development, and assist in establishing a culture of research and inquiry. Among

available forms of practitioner research, I chose EP as a more suitable approach. (See sections 2.6.2 & 2.6.3.).

Professionally, university teachers are required to meet the criteria recently set by the Commission of Higher Education (HEC) in Pakistan in which they must meet the minimum satisfaction level for further extension of their job in the face of non-existence of teacher-development programs. They also need to remain engaged in the work of research to receive promotion despite the fact that they know very little about academic research tools. In such circumstances, English language professionals usually find it difficult to meet the requirements of the HEC. Keeping in view the problems of my colleagues, it is essential to introduce them to such a form of practitioner research that may be useful for their professional lives, and practicable in the existing circumstances. Thus, 'action research' as a form of practitioner research was rejected on certain grounds; it requires some expertise in academic research tools and seems to require extra time to put into practice, which English language professionals at the USJP cannot afford because firstly, they know very little about academic research; secondly, they cannot afford to spare extra time due to their engagement in both morning and evening teaching commitments. Thus, in these circumstances, Exploratory Practice (EP) (Allwright, 2005), which integrates research into pedagogy by utilizing routine teaching activities as tools of data collection, is deemed a better choice.

Efforts such as introducing a new curriculum and meeting the shortage of staff, downsizing the classes into small manageable units, and arranging in-service short – term teachers' training programs have been encouraged to improve the standard of English among graduates in the USJP but that was carried out without consulting those involved in Remedial English classes, especially learners and teachers probably because we did not have an established system of practitioner-based inquiry, which may be

because the traditional form of such inquiry was found demanding and time consuming. Whatever the reason may be, it is essential to understand the issues from the perspectives of both learners and teachers before introducing any change. Keeping in view of this fact, we needed to have a form of inquiry which seeks to understand the issues facing the ELT profession before making any change. In this regard, EP as a form of practitioner research engages both teachers and learners in reflection to improve the quality of life in language classrooms through humanistic ways rather than resorting to a technicist solution of the problem (Allwright, 2003). After reflection, and before taking action to resolve a problem, the most important stage in EP is developing deeper understanding of the problem. Working to develop sufficient understanding is very important on two grounds; a change prior to understanding would aggravate the situation, and through understanding many situations that appear problematic can be tackled by improving 'quality of life' instead of focusing on a practical solution (Naidu et al, 1992; Perpignan, 2001). Thus, EP is the most suitable choice because the ELT profession at the USJP requires the development of sufficient understanding about issues which hinder the progress of the ELT profession before taking any action.

1.4. Purpose of the research

The academic purpose of this study is to evaluate the significance of EP as a form of practitioner research and an approach to teacher–development in general and particularly in the context of the USJP. The academic purpose is achieved by conducting an EP project at the USJP in which teacher-participants engage with the principles of EP in their Remedial English classes for a full academic year consisting of two semesters. The EP project intends to discover how a group of teachers apply the principles of EP in their classroom pedagogy, and the effect of EP on their professional development, and how it helps participants in understanding life in Remedial English

classes. The project aims to firstly, discover ways and means to improve the standards of English in the USJP among university graduates by following and facilitating the latest curriculum, in the conditions mentioned earlier; secondly, facilitate and develop the culture of research and inquiry among the participants in particular, and teachers of English in general as part of routine teaching; thirdly, develop an approach to teacher-development in the form of practitioner research, which may be practical and on-going without causing burn out.

There is a close link between the three aims mentioned above: inquiry/research into one's practice could be a useful approach towards teacher development that could have positive effects on the overall teaching environment at the USJP. In this way, we can attend to the problems of English language professionals, on the one hand, and on the other, can develop understanding about the issues that hinder the progress of the ELT profession at the USJP. As mentioned earlier, teachers tend to be over-burdened by being busy in both evening and morning sessions. Nevertheless, they will have to show satisfactory performance in teaching as a necessary condition to survive in the profession according to the new system of tenure track. In addition, they will have to remain engaged in the work of research to receive promotion. These challenges if met properly by English language professionals can contribute to the progress of the ELT profession at the USJP.

1.5. Research questions

This study seeks to achieve its purpose by evaluating the effectiveness of the EP project carried out at the USJP. The effectiveness of EP is measured on two grounds; its significance as a form of practitioner research, and an approach to teacher-development. In order to achieve its purpose, the present study seeks to address the following questions:

1) How far does this project abide by the principles of EP?

2) What is the contribution of EP in developing understanding about the issues faced by the ELT profession at the USJP?

3) What is the significance of EP as an approach to teacher development in the context of the USJP?

4) What is the contribution of this investigation to our thinking about EP/research about EP?

The above research questions do not apparently seem to have connection with each other; there is a very delicate inter-relationship between them. This inter-relationship of these research questions is to achieve the purpose of the research, which is to evaluate the effectiveness of the EP project. As mentioned earlier, the effectiveness of EP is measured in relation to its significance as a form of practitioner research, and an approach to teacher-development. In this regard, the first research question is of paramount importance because it is unique, in that, it has not been addressed in previous EP research. By addressing this question, claims can be made about the validity of the findings for this project. In this way, this research question guides the researcher to confirm the validity of the answers to the other two questions: 1) contribution of EP in addressing the issues faced by the ELT profession at the USJP, and: 2) usefulness of EP as an approach to teacher development. The fourth question is relevant to the evolutionary process of EP which suggests that it is a context free set of principles that is always open to evolution by context bound practices. Although, the context bound practice may not necessarily change the basic fabric or the principles of EP, it can make some contribution or bring some understanding about EP.

1.6. Methodology

To achieve the aims of this study, and address the research questions, the researcher worked as both an EP practitioner and a teacher-consultant to a group of teachers at the USJP for a full academic year consisting of two semesters of four months each. The main sources of data are interviews: pre and post-interviews, group meetings, and puzzles developed or personal inquiry conducted by undertaking EP principles by each individual teacher in phase I, and group of teachers in phase II. The pre-interviews were conducted at the beginning of the EP project to gather information about the English language learning and teaching environment, and English language professionals at the USJP. The post-interviews were conducted twice during the project, first after phase I from those who left the project half way and a second time after the completion of phase II from those who continued till the end.

1.7. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first is the introductory chapter, which provides an overview of the ELT profession at the USJP and states the rationale for the study, defines the purpose of the study, and mentions research questions. It briefly outlines the methodology that has been adopted throughout the research process.

The second chapter starts with a review of the literature before moving onto a range of related topics such as defining key terms used in the field of TESOL teacher education, and then provides a brief history of the TESOL teacher education field. Next, it engages in a comparative study of teacher-development approaches, after that, analyses the use of teacher research/ practitioner research in the field of teacher education with special reference to Exploratory Practice as a form of practitioner research.

The third chapter focuses on research methodology. It starts with a brief discussion of the paradigms, and proceeds immediately to describe research methodologies in general, and particularly the research methodology adopted in this study. It further addresses the ethical issues and access matters. It then discusses the research instruments adopted in this study and covers matters of trustworthiness. It finally describes analytical procedures applied in this study for academic research.

The fourth and fifth chapters constitute the largest section of this thesis. The fourth chapter is about data presentation and analysis. The data is presented in five sections: 1) pre-interviews results conducted at the beginning of project which gives a description of the ELT profession at the USJP; 2) reports on the progress of each individual-teacher who participated in the project by attending group meetings in phase I; 3) presents post-interview results of those participants who left the project half way or were unable to continue to the next phase; 4) reports on the progress of the EP group in phase II; 5) ends with post-interview results of the participant-teachers who participated in both phases.

The fifth chapter is titled *Discussion of Results*. This chapter is set in light of the key research questions, and is divided accordingly. The first section provides an evaluation of the project in light of Allwright's (2005) six global principles, and two suggestions. The second section discusses the relevance of puzzles investigated in the project with the issues identified in pre-interviews, and their significance and contribution to the ELT profession at the USJP. The third section evaluates EP as an approach to teacher development in the light of teacher-participants' experience in the project, views and their suggestions in the post-interviews.

The sixth chapter is the concluding section of the thesis. It summarises the main findings of the research and provides an account of the importance of the research,

followed by its originality and limitations. It also indicates future research possibilities. The thesis ends with the appendices and the reference section.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

As outlined in the first chapter, the aim of this study is to find an approach to teachers' professional development in the form of practitioner research that may be practicable and ongoing without burnout in the context of the USJP. Thus, the literature review focuses on the forms of practitioner research employed as professional development approaches in the field of TESOL. The search of literature brought forth three main approaches: Action Research, Reflective Practice and Exploratory Practice in the context of TESOL Teacher Education. Out of the three approaches, two are forms of practitioner research: Action Research and Exploratory Practice. Keeping in view the aims of the project, EP is considered a more suitable approach than Action Research because it utilizes routine teaching activities as tools of data collection instead of employing academic research tools and prefers understanding quality of life in a language classroom instead of solving problems. The academic purpose of the research lies in evaluating the effectiveness of EP as a form of practitioner research and an approach to teacher-development. Although EP has been used as a form of practitioner research (Slimani-Rolls ,2003; Miller, 2001; Gunn, 2001; Perpignan, 2001), and a teacher development approach (Miller, 2001; 2003), there does not seem to be a study which has tried to evaluate the impact of EP as both a form of practitioner research and an approach to teacher development. Thus, the literature review chapter which consists of five sections includes a range of topics to identify the present work in the existing body of literature by providing the academic and research matter that is relevant to the topic. Section 1 starts with defining key terms used in the field of TESOL Teacher

Education to highlight what we meant by teacher development. It then gives a brief review of developmental phases of the teacher education field: the shift from a positivistic to a situated paradigm. While tracing out the development of TESOL Teacher Education, the chapter highlights the contribution of socio cultural theories of learning, and research on teacher cognition to the field of education which led to the emergence of situated teacher-development approaches based on reflection. Section II emphasizes the importance of reflection in situated teacher-development approaches. It then mentions teacher development models based on reflection, and provides a comparative study of Action research, Reflective practice and Exploratory Practice models. Section III starts with defining teacher research, and provides a brief history of teacher research, then discusses different underlying conceptualizations of contemporary forms of teacher research with special reference to Exploratory Practice as a form of practitioner research by tracing the origin and development of its principles. Section IV highlights the benefits of using teacher research, and then offers some critiques of teacher research, and after that, argues the case of teacher research with special reference to EP particularly in the context of the USJP. Section V provides a brief summary of the chapter.

2.2. Some key terms in the field of TESOL teacher education

There is a lengthy list of terms currently referred to in the field of TESOL teacher education such as professional development, professional growth, teacher preparation, continuing professional development (CPD) and staff development, teacher education, teacher training and teacher development (see for instance Mann, 2005). It is necessary to define and differentiate between teacher training and teacher education in addition to teacher development so as to be clear about what I mean by the term teacher development in my project.

2.2.1. Teacher education, training and development

Edge (2006) differentiates between training and education by saying that the former is about instilling habits or skills, whereas the latter is about guiding people towards moral and intellectual excellence by encouraging teachers to understand the issues related to the options available in the field and then realizing their worth in actual practice. Widdowson (1983:19 cited in Edge, 2006) writes,

> …. that the difference between training and education (at least as far language teaching is concerned) is….that training seeks to impose a conformity to certain established patterns of knowledge and behaviour, usually in order to carry out a set of clearly defined tasks…….. Education, however, seeks to provide for creativity whereby what is learned is a set of schemata and procedures for adapting them to cope with problems which do not have a ready-made, formulaic solution (Widdowson, 1983:19 cited in Edge, 2006).

Mann (2005) agrees with Edge (2006) and Widdowson (1983) on the definition of training by advocating that there is a common belief which suggests training imposes a specific approach or a model. Mann (2005) proposes the purpose of training is to familiarize trainees with "methodological choices and models, terms and concepts, strategies and techniques." (ibid:104). Although Freeman (1989:39) differentiates between training and development, he seems to support the definition of training with the other three scholars by stating, "the aspects of teaching that are 'trainable' are discrete chunks, usually based on knowledge or skills, which can be isolated, practised, and ultimately mastered" (Freeman, 1989:39).

However, there are some key differences in opinion between Freeman (1989) and Edge (2006) on the definition of 'development'. Freeman (ibid: 40) advocates, "the purpose of development is for the teacher to generate change through increasing or shifting

awareness" of the context in which he works. While Edge (2006: 8) defines development as "a personal motivation of the individual to take responsibility for his own self-development." Mann (2005) agrees with Freeman's definition of development as "context based awareness of which technique or strategy is appropriate for a particular individual or class in a particular place" (ibid: 104), while he disagrees with Edge (2006) by putting self-development as a central objective of all terms and concepts such as training, education, professional, staff, and teacher development, and CPD, instead of it solely being part of teacher development.

There seems to be a widespread agreement on the definition of training as dealing with developing key skills, and a clear disagreement on the definition of development. However, the definitions of education advocated by Edge (2006) and Widdowson (1983) are almost similar to the definition of development proposed by Freeman (1989). Mann (2005: 105) provides a comprehensive definition of teacher development acceptable for all to eliminate disagreement on the definition of this term. According to him (ibid: 105) teacher development:

a. is a bottom-up process;

b. values the insider view rather than the outsider view;

c. is independent of the organization but often functioning more successfully with its support and recognition;

d. is a continuing process of becoming and can never be finished; a process of articulating an inner world of conscious choices made in response to the outer world of the teaching context;

e. is wider than professional development and includes personal, moral and value dimensions;

f. can be encouraged and integrated in both training and education programs.

According to Allwright (2001) education, training, and development over-lap and it is difficult to draw water-tight boundaries between them. Tarone & Allwright (2005) believe that while thinking about teacher education programs, we should differentiate between the courses offered to novice/pre-service, and those to in-service/experienced teachers. To understand this difference, they believe it is essential to know the conceptual and practical difference between teacher training, teacher education, and teacher development. According to Tarone & Allwright (ibid), training is more concerned with pedagogical skills (how to get things done in class), education is about knowledge of the subject content such as use of articles in English, and development is concerned with understanding. In other words, training focuses on addressing the question of how classroom practices should be carried out, and education on what needs to be learned, and reaching better understandings of classroom pedagogy. Understanding, according to Tarone & Allwright (2005) and Allwright (2001), refers to knowledge that helps us use our skills and knowledge effectively.

Tarone & Allwright (2005) maintain that although these terms are inter-related, and more or less relevant for the career development of teacher learners at all stages, the required degree of their level varies from stage to stage. A novice language teacher may first need practical skills in the beginning of his/her career to survive the initial teaching experience. At a later stage, he/she may require more background knowledge of language teaching. After the later stage, when he/she will have acquired skills, competence and wider knowledge, and may wish to develop deeper understanding about the issues affecting language learning and teaching in his/her own language classroom. Tarone & Allwright (2005) believe that understanding is quite essential for utilizing skills and knowledge to the maximum level.

In light of the differences between training, education, and development, Tarone & Allwright (2005) suggest different types of programs to educate pre-service and in-service teacher learners. For instance, pre-service teacher education programs should focus more on teacher training which offers learning of tangible teaching skills. During training, teachers also need

> to begin to form a base of knowledge and to acquire enough understanding to begin to construct a framework within which they can make informed decision about the use of their newly acquired (learned) skills or new knowledge (Tarone&Allwright,2005 :14).

In order to make this practicable, Tarone and Allwright (2005) suggest integrated presentation of knowledge and skills within a coherent framework of understanding because it will help them learn why certain kinds of knowledge are required and when certain skills or parts of knowledge are to be applied in their language classrooms. Although such teacher education programs could become very useful for teachers' survival in the start of their career, they would be required to develop much in-depth understanding to benefit from the knowledge received in such programs.

In-service teachers who are experienced are likely to need teacher development rather than on acquiring skills (Tarone and Allwright, 2005). The teachers can increase their knowledge about and develop understanding of their practice by various means, for example, reading books and articles, attending teacher education programs, and applying a technique for their professional development. Since the target participants are the teachers with varying level of experience, the main aim of the current project is professional-development of in-service teachers. So the focus of the project has been on helping them (participants) develop a systematic framework useful for their professional development and for the context in which they work.

2.3. **Teacher education field: A brief historical review**

Before we discuss situated teacher-development approaches based on reflection, I deem it necessary to give a brief review of developmental phases of the teacher education field so that we can identify the factors which have determined the direction of the field towards teacher-development from teachers' training. Before the 1970s, teacher educators and researchers focused on teachers' specific teaching behaviours (skills) which resulted in learning outcomes in particular contexts and they argued such behaviours if practised efficiently by teachers in other contexts would be equally useful for the students' learning (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974). They viewed teaching as a set of distinct behaviours/actions, a selection of skills to be transferred from one context to the other. In this way, teacher education programs during that time focused on providing such knowledge to the participants in the form of theories or methods, believing that it will be applicable in all contexts, and be useful for the learning outcomes of students all over the world. Such a model of teacher education involved three contexts, each different from the other. Knowledge about effective teaching was gathered from one context through observing teachers who were experts, supplied to teachers in another context through organizing teacher development or hosting teacher education programs, and the knowledge acquired through such programs was applied in a third context through practical teaching (Freeman and Johnson, 1998).

According to Freeman and Johnson (ibid), in this model of teacher education, the educational researchers had to determine the notion of good teaching and be explicit about how it should be carried out. They did not acknowledge the significance of individual teachers' understandings, or variation of contextual realities. They viewed teaching as discrete behaviours universally acceptable for all teachers in different contexts, easily transferrable from one place to the other, and equally useful for teachers

and learners irrespective of their academic background and socio-political conditions. In this way this model of teacher education did not only ignore but also devalued the individual experiences, and perspective of teachers. It created "an abstract and decontextualized knowledge that denies the complexities of human interaction, and reduces teaching to a quantifiable set of behaviours" (Freeman and Johnson,1998: 399).

This above given model remained popular until research conducted in the mid of 1970s (Jackson, 1968; Shavelson & Stern, 1981) started to describe teachers as thoughtful people who could make rational decisions on the basis of their understanding of the contexts, and teaching and learning situations. Although researchers' attention moved from watching what teachers did, to asking teachers why they did what they did, teachers' thoughts, judgments, and decisions were believed to be part of their cognitive process rather than shaped by their past experience. Therefore, teachers' individual perspectives and experiences remained a secondary concern (Freeman, 1996). Thus, the focus of research had been on uncovering conceptual models of teacher thinking that could be used to educate inexperienced or new teachers by helping them "to perceive, analyse, and transform their perceptions of classroom events in ways similar to be used by effective teachers" (Clark & Peterson, 1986: 281).

2.3.1. Socio-cultural turn in the field of TESOL teacher education

Johnson (2006) argues that of many factors which have developed understanding of L2 teachers' work, the most significant of these is research on teacher cognition (Borg, 2003; Freeman, 2002; Woods, 1996). The research on teacher cognition helped "capture the complexities of who teachers are, what they know and believe, how they learn to teach, and how they carry out their work in diverse contexts throughout their careers." (ibid: 236). As research explored the complexities of teachers' mental lives (Walberg, 1977; Freeman, 2002), teacher educators started realizing the fact that teachers'

previous experiences, their understanding and explanation of the activities they remain engaged in, and the contexts in which teachers work have substantial effect and influence on their teaching. Thus, the positivistic paradigm which treated teachers as channels/conduit to students and their learning was found deficient for explaining the complexities of teachers' mental lives and teaching processes. Therefore, an interpretative or situated paradigm, largely drawn from ethnographic research in sociology and anthropology, was deemed more appropriate to explain the complexities of teachers' mental lives and the various aspects of teachers' professional life (Elbaz, 1991). Johnson (2006:236) maintains that the shift from positivistic to the situated paradigm as means for informing the field did not take place automatically "but was influenced by epistemological shifts in how various intellectual traditions had come to conceptualize human learning" (ibid).

2.3.2. The shift from positivistic to constructive/situated model

As mentioned earlier, L2 teacher education, mainly grounded in the positivistic paradigm, establishes the idea that teacher education programs are a suitable platform for teachers to learn about the content knowledge and teaching practices, and apply them in their respective contexts. However, the emerging body of research on L2 teacher cognition offers a different view of how teachers learn to do their work (Borg, 2003, Freeman, 1996, 2002; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Golombek, 1998; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Woods, 1996 cited in Johnson, 2006). For instance, it describes L2 teacher learning as "a normative and lifelong process" which is an outcome of teachers' direct experience and involvement in their social contexts during their life while learning in classrooms and schools, participating in professional teacher education programs, and teaching in the settings where they work. It displays the fact that L2 teachers are both users and creators of legitimate forms of knowledge who can make

rational and useful decisions about how to improve teaching to their L2 students within complex socially, culturally, and historically situated contexts.

Ethnographic research which studied teachers working in their classrooms revealed that teachers were capable of constructing explanations of teaching. This research also drew attention to the fact the teachers carried out their work, and thought about it in a complex process (Elbaz, 1983; Lampert, 1985).Recently, a volume of research reveals that teachers' knowledge about teaching is mainly socially constructed out of their experiences as both learners and teachers. The knowledge teachers use within the classrooms and schools in which they work is 'highly interpretive', 'socially negotiated', and 'continually restructured' (Clandinin, 1986, Grossman, 1990). Such views of teachers' knowledge are further supported by the socio-cultural perspective on knowledge (Leont' ev, 1978; Collins, Brown & Newman, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978) which describes the social nature of learning and cognition, and theories of situated cognition, describing knowledge as part of life process, not just accumulated information to be transferred (Chaiklin & Lave, 1996; Collins et al, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Such views of knowledge consider learning processes as socially negotiated, and constructed through experiences as part of social practices connected with particular activity in a particular context (Wenger, 1998).

Viewing 'knowledge' from a socio-cultural perspective, teachers are both possessors and producers of knowledge. What teachers know and how they use it in the classroom depend on teachers' understanding of their own selves, students, the classroom environment, and the curriculum. Teachers' learning, a lifelong process, is socially constructed from their experience as learners in classrooms, as participants in teacher education programs/ teacher-development project, and as members of teaching staff. Therefore, "professional development emerges from a process of reshaping teachers'

existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices rather than simply imposing new theories, and methods or material on teachers" (Johnson & Golombek, 2002: 2). Thus, it seems crucial to recognize the importance of how teachers gain knowledge of their classroom teaching and learning, and how they make sense of that knowledge, and adapt their classroom practices accordingly.

The Reflective Teaching Movement (Lockhart & Richards, 1994; Schön, 1983; 1987), Action Research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; McNiff, 1993; Somekh, 1993), Teacher Research Movement (Edge & Richards, 1998; Freeman, 1998cited in Johnson & Golombek, 2002) consider teachers as capable of working for their professional self – development and able to produce knowledge useful to contribute to the field of teacher education research in L2 teaching and learning. Johnson & Golombek (2002: 2) suggest that emergence of practitioner research in teacher education research is an embodiment of

> "ongoing efforts to articulate an epistemology of practice that characterizes teachers as legitimate knowers, as producers of legitimate knowledge, and as capable of constructing and sustaining their own professional development over time" (ibid:2).

Such type of work has the potential to modify existing teacher education practices based on the traditional knowledge transmission model in L2 teaching and learning, and also contribute to the professional development of teachers and improving schools or classrooms in which teachers work (ibid). Johnson & Golombek (ibid) further maintain that recognition of knowledge produced by teachers can change the hierarchical relations of teachers as mere consumers of knowledge by bringing them on an equitable footing with academics. In this way, the field of teacher education research,

can benefit from both academic research and teacher research, the former outsiders' view being infused with insiders', whose knowledge is multilayered and contextually located(ibid:3).

2.4. Reflective professional development

The contribution of socio cultural theories of learning, and research on teacher cognition in the field of education led to the emergence of situated teacher-development approaches based on reflection. This section first highlights the importance of reflection in teacher-development, and then critically analyses a comparative study of Action research, Reflective Practice and Exploratory Practice models by arguing the case of EP as a suitable approach to teacher development in the context of the USJP.

2.4.1. Reflection in teacher development

The ability to reflect upon (teaching) practice has been considered an important element of effective teaching since the writings of Dewey (1974). Dewey (1933: 9) defined reflective thinking as the "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge." Similarly, Hatton and Smith (1995) defined reflection as "deliberate thinking about action with a view to its improvement" (ibid: 52). Schön, (1983, 1987) emphasized the need for practitioners to critically analyse their thoughts and actions in order to improve their professional practice. He rejected the dichotomy between theory and practice by proposing a model of "knowing –in-action" which is grounded in and inseparable from practice, empowering practitioners as producers of theories instead of being only at the receiving end. The element of reflection facilitates teachers to view relationships between means, methods, and results. Schön (ibid) advocated that the process of understanding and improving teaching begins when a practitioner reflects upon his experiences. Thus, he suggests that a practitioner should

remain engaged in the process of reflection in two ways: *reflection –on-action* and *reflection-in-action*. The former involves thinking back over practice in a methodical and purposeful way, the latter involves revisiting personal views of teaching and learning while teaching; in this way teachers actively understand and develop their classroom practice compatible with their contextual realities.

Current teacher development models include an element of reflection (Farrell, 2004; Freese, 2006; Harrison et. al., 2005a; Loughran, 2002). A reflective approach to teaching has become popular in many English speaking countries (Wallace, 1991; Stanley, 1998). Schön (1983) proposed that 'problem identification' and 'problem solving' should be carried through continuous reflection and professional inquiry into practices. Korthagen et al. (2005) maintain that reflection in education occurs only when teachers critically analyse their own beliefs of teaching and learning. Richards (1990: 5) describes reflection as "an activity or process in which experience is recalled, considered and evaluated, usually in relation to a broader purpose."

There is a growing interest in using reflection for teachers' professional development in developing contexts such as Pakistan (Dean, 2000; Halai, 2001; Rarieya, 2005). Rarieya (2005) argues that, though reflective practice is now being considered a significant component of teacher education in Pakistan, there are few teachers who would be availing it. Rarieya (ibid) maintains that the development of reflective practice and the recognition that teachers need to be reflective practitioners is generally non-existent in the educational institutions of Pakistan.

Research on reflective practice (Rarieya, 2005) has described Pakistan as having an oral culture and, hence, most teachers are not willing to reflect on their practices in writing. Thus, reflective conversations provide a platform for teachers to share their experiences and learn from each other without the labour of writing. Ashraf and Rarieya (2008)

report that use of reflective conversations contributed to enhancing the teachers'
professional development, and helped them inquire about their classroom practices,
share teaching and learning experiences, and enhance their range of teaching strategies
and constructed knowledge. The present teacher-development project through EP
utilizes the oral cultural by arranging group meetings on a regular basis and offering a
good platform for discussing, exchanging arguments, sharing experiences, and offering
suggestions under the umbrella of EP principles. EP's obvious focus on collective
understanding involving every stake-holder is a very useful approach for teacher
development through reflection in the context of the USJP.

2.4.2. Teacher-development approaches

Breen (2006) sums up the existing approaches to teachers' professional development as
two types: 'trainability' and 'vernacular pedagogies'. The former type of teachers'
professional development consists of short training courses designed to serve policies
adopted by the institutions/governments or publishing corporations. However, follow up
professional development programs for teachers are a rare occurrence. These short term
training courses are found less helpful in developing understanding (Hargreaves, 1994).
An alternative to the trainability pedagogies, there are local pedagogic principles and
various frameworks for classroom practice that are generated by teachers in real and
diverse situations. These are termed as vernacular pedagogies which are deemed more
culturally and situationally sensitive than imported innovations but are found to be
resistant to innovations in the field (Canagarajah, 1999; Ellis, 1996; Kramsch and
Sullivan, 1996; Kumaravadivelu, 1994 cited in Breen 2006). Breen (2006) believes that
the idea of vernacular pedagogies is useful for future teacher development, but the
resistance to the interaction between vernacular pedagogies, research-informed
innovations and alternative pedagogic innovations generated in other parts of the world

are not likely to be useful for the profession. He further proposes that the assertion of the authenticity of local knowledge and practices would lead to complacency with the conventional ways of thinking, thus making it difficult for teachers to cope with global and local changes, which is likely to lead to the marginalization of ELT professionals from the wider society. Breen (2006) proposes that the future of teacher development approaches depend upon the teachers' level of readiness to accept the contribution of past research and the latest research innovations as a tool for guidance.

Among *vernacular pedagogies*, Breen (2006) gives special reference to three teacher development approaches: Reflective Practice model, Action Research, and EP which are already mentioned in this chapter. According to Breen, such approaches are useful for future teacher development if these approaches accept and accommodate research-informed innovations. Breen maintains, these approaches were developed in response to skepticism against the primacy of rationalism in dealing with the environment in which professionals relied upon scientifically grounded theory and techniques in undertaking the day to day work in their professional lives.

2.4.2.1. Reflective practice

The significance of reflection in teacher development approaches has already been discussed in the earlier section. In this section, we discuss Reflective practice as an approach in the context of language teaching. Reflective practice as a mode of professional development tends to works when a teacher focuses on such 'indeterminate situations' in his/her language classroom, consider them closely, and tries out some ways to act in such situations. According to Schön, (1987:28), confrontation with unexpected situations causes a reflection during action/work which has the potential for a 'reflective conversation' leading to on-the-spot experimentation. There may be various ways for facilitating and undertaking such reflective conversations (Calderhead

& Gates, 1993). With regard to the development of a language teacher, reflective conversation is the process of making sense of practical issues/problems through their identification and reflection upon them, and adopting alternative ways to introduce alternatives to solve the issues/problems (Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Wallace, 1991).

2.4.2.2. Action research

Action research is believed to be a methodological extension of reflective practice (Burns, 1999). It was first proposed by (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Through action research, a teacher explores alternative ways of approaching an identified problem to discover a solution for it by means of action and research. By applying the action process, a teacher develops alternative ways of thinking about their work, and implementing alternative practices beneficial for their professional development, and for teaching and learning situations in which he/she works.

2.4.2.3. Exploratory Practice

EP developed in response to the undue demand of action research which employed academic research tools and required extra effort and time to practice. Action research proved itself to be not very valuable when compared to the time and energy teachers spent on applying it in their teaching (Allwright, 2005). EP as a framework to teacher development was first proposed by Allwright and Bailey in 1991 as a means to tackle classroom puzzles by utilizing routine teaching activities as tools for data collection. Being grounded in the classroom, EP evolves out of the shared experiences of teachers in different situations, and could be likened to teacher development programs that have been teacher-generated (Breen, et al., 1989). EP is defined by Allwright and colleagues as:

An indefinitely sustainable way for classroom language teachers and learners, while getting on with their learning and teaching, to develop their own understanding of life in the language classroom. It is essentially a way for teachers and learners to work together to understand aspects of their classroom practice that puzzle them, through the use of normal pedagogic procedures (standard monitoring, teaching, and learning activities) as investigative tools. (http://www.lehras.puc-rio.br/epcentre/epcentre.htm) 5 April 2008.

EP as a framework for teacher development is a collaborative endeavour of both teachers and learners which engages them in reflection to improve the quality of life in language classrooms. Subsequent to reflection and before proceeding to undertake action to resolve the issue, the most important stage in EP is developing deeper understanding of it, because there are many situations that seem to be problematic requiring a practical solution that could be handled through dealing with quality of life (Naidu et al, 1992; Perpignan, 2001). Deeper understanding of language classroom life tends to be achieved/attained by using everyday classroom activities and practices rather than using time-consuming design or conventional research tools and procedures as in the case of action research.

Breen (2006) proposes that EP seems to have improved on earlier forms of reflective practice and action research in being 'process oriented' by integrating research into pedagogy using routine teaching activities as investigative tools rather than adding some extra work on practitioners, by focusing on the local concerns and needs of both teachers and learners. Breen argues that EP is capable of 'resisting performativity and a preoccupation with effectiveness due to the fact it focuses upon teachers' professional well-being through the cooperative understanding of every day puzzles' (ibid: 216).

Breen (2006) claims that EP avoids the risk of potential insularity of vernacular pedagogies found resistant to the innovations in the field (Canagarajah, 1999; Ellis, 1996; Kramsch and Sullivan, 1996; Kumaravadivelu, 1994 cited in Breen 2006). EP as an approach to teacher development deems its practitioners responsible for public sharing of achieved understandings of language classroom processes with other groups of teachers through emails, websites, and publishing their works in journals. EP does not disregard the importance of academic researchers and teacher educators in the progress of the field, but it demands a change in their conventional role by asking them to work for insiders' agenda- both teachers and learners. A researcher could be invited to work as a resource person serving the insiders agenda, while a teacher educator can serve as a facilitator and member of the EP team participating in this understanding of what teachers and their learners discover locally. He can integrate these understanding to disseminate them among the wider community of professionals around the globe. In this way, we can reduce the risk of insularity and mere reproduction of local practices, by ensuring there is interaction between vernacular pedagogies, research-informed innovations and alternative pedagogic innovations generated in other parts of the world.

2.4.3. Comparing teacher development approaches

Allwright (2001) in his conceptual review of two pairs of key terms, provided three micro processes which in turn give us three current proposals which, according to him, are available practices in the field of teacher development. These are Reflective Practice, Action Research and Exploratory practice. These two pairs of key terms are: contemplation and action, understanding and change. These are related graphically as follows: (Allwright, 2001)
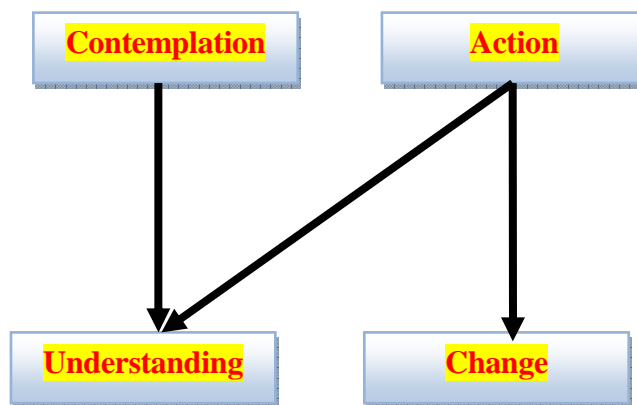
The first pair of key terms is about processes, whereas the second pair is about the products or purposes for which these processes are undertaken. The diagram illustrates that contemplation is restricted to understanding, thus should not lead to action, while action could be conducted for the sake of both understanding and change. Understanding is shown as a central point, which must be reached through contemplation and action before taking steps for change. Thus, the diagram suggests the following three macro processes:

Contemplation for Understanding: If we take action without reaching adequate understanding of an issue, it would unsettle the situation and would make it more complex to understand. Thus, contemplation or thinking about an issue should precede taking action because understanding could serve as a better guide for future action.

Action for Understanding: The first process sometimes may not help reach adequate understanding of the issue. In this case, we must not proceed directly to bringing about change, but search for a type of action to reach adequate understanding. Otherwise, the change brought without understanding would waste time and energy without any benefit and can affect the teaching and learning activity in a classroom.

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<u>Action for Change</u>: Once enhanced understanding through action is reached, one may proceed to change or intervention if necessary. This change could be introduced, if possible, by a teacher or a group of teachers, or academic researchers could be asked to do so.

Although the interaction between these macro processes results in three proposals, what makes them different from each other is variation in interaction between each pair of key terms. In a proposal of reflective practice, the first macro process such as contemplation for understanding dominates, and thus makes it too reflective, lacking in action. In action research, the third process of action for change is the main concern without reaching adequate understanding of the issue/problem. In comparison with Reflective Practice and Action Research, the aim of Exploratory Practice is to be neither too reflective nor too action motivated. It aims to develop understanding about the issue/puzzle first through contemplation and then, if necessary, via action. In the end, action for change could be taken where necessary. In most cases, EP develops understanding either through contemplation or action for understanding (Perpignan, 2001).

In addition to the differences mentioned above, it could also be argued that EP is significantly different from the majority of teacher development approaches as its emphasis is on involving teachers and learners in the inquiry in which they work collaboratively for their mutual development. EP seeks collective understanding by involving both teachers and students where they work for each other's mutual development and consider themselves as equally important in the process. In this way, everybody involved receives an equal chance of "reaching whatever level of understanding they are capable of, however 'deep' or ''shallow' that may be." (Allwright & Hanks 2009: 151).

2.5. Definition and origin of teacher research

Having discussed teacher-development approaches by locating them in the broader body of literature on teacher education, we are now moving towards the other half of this chapter which deals with the use of teacher research in the field of ELT. Though there may be repetition from the previous section as different forms of teacher research have also been used as teacher-development approaches, this section exclusively focuses on the practitioner forms of research in particular Exploratory practice and Action research. Thus, this section defines and traces out the history of practitioner forms of research so that we could locate EP as a form of practitioner research in broader perspectives.

Various terms are used to define research that teachers carry out in classrooms. These may include practitioner research, action research, or teacher research. Practitioner research refers to systematic inquiry conducted by professionals in any discipline to investigate their own practice (Borg, 2010). Action Research is a form of practitioner research but it is characterised by specific procedures involving the introduction and evaluation of practices via a number of investigative cycles (Wallace, 1998; Burns, 2005b). In addition, teacher research refers to systematic inquiry conducted by teachers in their own professional contexts (Borg, 2010). Borg (ibid) points out that 'teacher research' tends to be a broader term than 'action research'. Although action research is teacher research, not all teacher research employs the same procedure used in action research. It is also necessary to distinguish between 'teacher research' and 'classroom research' as all teacher research is classroom research but not necessarily all classroom research is teacher research when it involves academics conducting the research in classrooms. Bailey (2001:491 cited in Borg, 2010) further differentiates between teacher research, action research, and classroom research "the term CLASSROOM

RESEARCH refers to the location and focus of the study. TEACHER RESEARCH refers to the agents who conduct the study. ACTION RESEARCH denotes a particular approach."

Teacher research first appeared on the horizon in the form of action research and KurtLewin is considered the father of action research (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002) who applied his theory in a community related study in social psychology. Borg (2010) suggests that another early source of action research was by Corey (1953) who introduced action research in the field of education, and highlighted the importance of educational practitioners to conduct their own research in order to improve their learning and teaching practices. Corey (1953) is believed to be the first person who saw action research as a more exact, objective, and scientific form of teachers' everyday efforts to improve their practice. According to Corey (ibid), rigorous and systematic data collection procedure as in the case of action research could produce appropriate evidence which could be tested against the understanding of both classroom culture and educational theory.

Action research disappeared in from the educational context during the 1950s and 60s, however teacher research re-emerged in the 1970s as part of parallel efforts in the USA and the UK to democratize education and make it "a more participatory process" (Borg 2010: 395). Borg suggests that (2010), in UK, the teacher research movement was employed as part of initiatives made to reform the curriculum closely matching the work of Stenhouse (1975). In the USA, Schön's (1983) work on reflective practice renewed interest in teacher research. Schön's argument that professionals were not unthinking technicians but "reflective professionals" encouraged teachers to embrace the role of autonomous investigators of their work.

Borg (2010) asserts that, classroom-based research came in the field (L2) when the large -scale studies did not succeed in finding the best way to promote language learning. The inconclusive results of these studies developed awareness that search for the best method/ global pedagogical prescriptions was not useful. Although it can be argued that early classroom research was not teacher research, it served as a foundation stone for classroom research conducted by teachers themselves. Thus, Burns (2005a) argues that the idea of engaging practitioners in research may have emerged earlier in the form of empirical research (Lane, 1962), but serious proposals for practitioner research in language teaching seem to have been made from 1980. Burns (ibid) advocates that amidst concerns shown by Wallace (1991), research requires expertise in research methods, financial resources and a particular academic state of mind, the idea of teacher research continued to grow as the Nunan's book, *Understanding language classrooms* (1989a) served as "a significant step in making classroom research accessible to many teachers."(Burns, ibid: 61). However, Borg (2010) considers Allwright and Bailey (1991) as an early attempt to promote teacher research.

2.5.1. Different conceptualizations of the contemporary forms of teacher research

Borg (2010) believes that contemporary forms of teacher research may have different underlying conceptualizations, but they are seen to have worked in three main directions in the field of education. Drawing on the views of Hammersley (2004a) in relation to action research, he sees teacher research as a way of promoting social change. This view of teacher research is described as emancipatory (Carr and Kemmis 1986), and referred to as critical praxis (Hollingsworth & Socket 1994). Borg (2010:396) remarks that such a view of teacher research "adopts a socio-political stance to the study of education which aims to disrupt and change existing inequitable social conditions."

The second view of teacher research is seen as a form of collaborative inquiry, which is ways of knowing within communities (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999) in which communities of teachers work together for improving classrooms, and schools. In this view, teacher research can contribute to both individual teacher development and broader improvements to schools and classrooms as well. The third view of teacher research as practical inquiry, involves individual teachers focusing on solving practical classroom problems by developing their practical knowledge.

Apart from the above three main conceptualizations of teacher research, Borg (2010) makes specific reference to Exploratory Practice (EP) in the field of language teaching. Disagreeing with proponents of EP, Borg (2010) seems to agree with Dörnyei (2007: 193) that EP is another version of action research. Although (Borg 2010: 397) supports EP's idea of integrating research into pedagogy to make teacher research "a more feasible and productive activity for teachers and learners," he does seem to not find EP different from action research. Borg (2010), agreeing with Altrichter et al. (2008: 1) maintains that EP's stand on developing understanding is not novel but was already in practice by action research as "a method used by teachers and other professionals to improve their understanding of their practice situations, and as a way to generate knowledge about practice." The researcher argues against the views held by Borg (2010), Dörnyei (2007: 193), and Altrichter et al. (2008) in relation to the view that EP is an extension of action research, in section 2.6.2. In the following section, the story of the development of EP is presented.

2.5.2. Development of EP

The reasons behind the development of EP are essential to present so that we could understand the difference between EP and action research. Thus, a brief historical outline is presented. Allwright became disillusioned with the efficacy of the academic

model used by teachers to become their own classroom researchers when he was asked to work as an academic researcher to raise the research profile of the teachers in Rio de Janeiro Cultural Inglesa in Brazil. He observed that classroom based Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research as well as Action research tended not to be different from academic research in terms of its methodological demands, and had felt the projects were time-consuming. Thus, Allwright started searching for a classroom research model which should be practically viable for practitioners in their given circumstances, and had immediate relevance to the lives of those involved, both teachers and learners.

2.5.2.1. Design Criteria as an ethical framework

Allwright (1992) first came up with a list of design criteria laying down the ethical framework of EP as a form of practitioner research. The emergence of a design criteria was "an attempt to redress the balance after years of well-intentioned mistakes of prioritising technical concerns over the ethical" (Allwright,2005:355). The set of design criteria called for 'integrating research into pedagogy' in order to address the technical issue of employing academic methods for classroom research which was taking too much of teachers' time, and becoming parasitic upon the normal working lives of teachers. Therefore, the move was made in light of two aims; how to address the issue of burn out, and ensure what teachers did was quite useful for the lives of teachers and learners. According to a list of design criteria, EP as a form of practitioner research focuses on how "to get pedagogy done in a way that incorporated a research perspective" (Allwright, 2005:356) in contrast to academic and action research, both of which prioritise research over a pedagogy and interrupt the normal teaching environment by employing academic research tools.

2.5.2.2. **A list of eight practical steps**

The design criteria were followed with a list of eight practical steps. The EP group in Rio-de-Janerio was happy to work with a set of design criteria, but they were pressurized to produce such a list to facilitate teachers, especially those running workshops for other teachers working within the EP framework. Allwright (2005) admits that the emergence of a list of practical steps was made in haste and against the better judgment as what made sense as practical steps in one educational setting would not necessarily work elsewhere. In addition, a list of practical steps was an attempt to find a technical solution to what was essentially a set of ethical problems. For some years, a list of eight steps dominated much of the work presented within the EP framework, and the EP group soon realized that presenting EP in terms of context-specific practical steps similar to the technicist tradition did not serve their purpose. They wanted EP to be represented in terms of global principles instead of a list of eight practical steps. Then, two developments helped the group to achieve the purpose; practical and theoretical developments, both of which made context-specific set of eight steps to move to global principles (Allwright, 2003). Practically, those who were associated with EP in Rio did not need a list of practical steps and were capable of developing their own methodology in light of the design criteria. Theoretically, the deep reflection and thinking of members in Rio, plus doctoral work along philosophical and pedagogical lines of EP contributed to the development of global principles.

2.5.2.3.Principles of EP

The first set of global principles was drafted in the Epilogue to Allwright's 1991 book with Bailey. Having realized that the classroom research as suggested in his book was very demanding, requiring extra time and extra support, Allwright wrote the epilogue which is said to be the academic origin of EP (Allwright, 2003). In this epilogue, he

made four important statements which set the path for the evolutionary journey of EP principles.   He proposed that teacher research should focus on developing situational understanding and engaging academic researchers as research consultants rather than directors of research using teachers as objects of their study. He also suggested active involvement of learners in carrying out classroom research while working with 'puzzles', rather than 'problems'.

This first set of principles came in practice in Cultural Inglesa in Rio de Janeiro where Allwright was invited to work as a classroom research consultant. From then on, principles have been evolving. To further understand how local thinking produced as a result of local action contributes to the development of EP principles, Allwright (2003) refers to the Friends of the Earth movement's saying: 'think globally, act locally', and gives a cyclical view of this in the following diagram,

Think globally, act locally, think locally.

Global principles serve as general guidance to apply EP in any local context. Acting in the light of EP's global principles generates more thinking which contributes to global thinking. In this way, every EP practitioner working in any context can have a say, and his/her work makes some sort of contribution in the development of EP. So Allwright (2003:115) remarks that our global principles are the outcome of "the sum total of our experiences in particular contexts."

While working as a classroom research consultant in Cultural Inglesa in Rio de Janeiro, Allwright (2003) thought that he had three practical ideas which were useful for classroom investigation which made significant impact upon the development of the EP principles. Firstly, teachers were already trying to understand what was happening in their classrooms, but by using normal classroom activities as investigative tools, not the

sophisticated classroom research tools; secondly, sometimes they thought 'understanding' was itself sufficient without taking action to change; and thirdly, they knew how to bring their learners into the whole enterprise of developing classroom understandings to make them *generators* of understanding, not just consumers of it. Before we move to the set of EP principles (Allwright, 2005), lets define what EP is.

According to Allwright (2003) Exploratory Practice involves

1. practitioners (e.g.: preferably teachers *and* learners together) working to understand:

(a) what *they* want to understand, following their own agendas;

(b) not necessarily *in order to* bring about change;

(c) not primarily *by* changing;

(d) but by *using* normal pedagogic practices as investigative tools, so that working for understanding is *part of* the teaching and learning, not extra to it;

(e) in a way that does not lead to 'burn-out', but that is *indefinitely sustainable*;

2. in order to contribute to:

 (f) *teaching and learning themselves*;

(g) *professional development*, *both individual and collective*.

As mentioned earlier, the academic origin of EP started from the epilogue to the book published in 1991 by Allwright and Bailey. The list of design criteria (Allwright, 1992) played a crucial role in laying down the ethical framework of EP. It could be argued that the six criteria by Allwright (2001) helped distinguish EP from Action research. The list of the following six principles followed by two practical suggestions is the outcome of yet more thinking (Allwright, 2005: 360). The latest work on EP (Allwright& Hanks,

2009) also presents a similar list of principles. However, it is necessary to mention that these principles can evolve and change in the future.

Principle 1 Put "quality of life" first.

Principle 2 Work primarily to understand language classroom life.

Principle 3 Involve everybody.

Principle 4 Work to bring people together.

Principle 5 Work also for mutual development.

Principle 6 Make the work a continuous enterprise.

Suggestion 1 Minimize the extra effort of all sorts for all concerned.

Suggestion 2 Integrate the "work for understanding" into the existing working life of the classroom.

In the next section, I illustrate these six principles and two suggestions in three headings on the basis of their proximity and relation. To discuss these principles, I draw on the previous as well as latest work on EP including that of Allwright & Hanks (2009). The first two principles are grouped under one heading, and the following three principles are under another, and the last two suggestions are grouped in the third heading.

2.5.2.3.1. Put the quality of life first and work primarily to understand language classroom life

Quality of life, which lies at the heart of EP, highlights a tension between those who "promote technicist and problem-solution orientations in education and those who strive for authentically humanistic and process-oriented views of classroom life." (Gieve & Miller, 2006:18). The former believe that improving educational quality is a simple process which can be achieved through technical solutions by adopting a perfect task.

The upholders of this notion tend to believe in general solutions for common problems in all teaching and learning contexts all over the world. Realizing the inherent complexity of classroom life, Allwright & Hanks (2009) advocate that quality of life cannot be achieved through description leading to prescription and in simplistic ways by resorting to methods or prescriptions but by *working primarily to understand language classroom life* as it is experienced by language learners and teachers. Working to understand the quality of life is important before improving it.

In agreement with Gieve & Miller (2006), Allwright and Hanks (2009) maintain that the notion of *quality of life* is dauntingly complex and elusive, which must be understood before trying to interfere with it as there are many situations that seem to be problematic requiring a practical solution that could be handled through dealing with quality of life issues (Naidu et al, 1992; Perpignan, 2001). EP strictly avoids and indeed condemns any action that is taken without reaching adequate understanding. Understanding the relationship between people carrying out investigation and being investigated is the main objective of EP as a form of practitioner research (Allwright, 2005). Understanding, which underpins the epistemological foundation of EP, is too deep to be explained in words, resembles in nature *the tacit dimension* of Polanyi (1967 cited in Allwright 2005). Understanding may be defined as an aspect of experience arising out of any human situation. It may be difficult to communicate such understanding to others but is very useful for the person carrying out the investigation (Allwright, 2003). EP provides the opportunity for everyone involved to develop understanding at 'as deep a level as possible and try to live these understandings' (Allwright, 2005, p.359).

2.5.2.3.1.1. The reason why EP is concerned with quality of life in a language classroom

Drawing on Allwright's assumptions, Gieve & Miller (2006) state that as our personal and professional lives are interlinked so are the understanding and learning which make

a part of the life we spend. In other words, understanding quality of life is a very elusive notion which cannot be measured in terms of efficiency but could best be felt while experiencing as we pass our lives. Similar to Wenger (1998), Gieve & Miller (2006) suggest that professional lives are directly influenced by our private lives. So as members of our communities of practice, we (teachers and students) come together with multiple and complex identities which make up the fabric of life in our language classrooms. Thus, Allwright (2002) and Gieve & Miller (2006) seek to a bring balance between work and life through highlighting the notion of *understanding quality of life*.

Allwright (2003) states that the first priority of EP is to deal with the *quality of life* through a humanistic way rather than resorting to a technicist solution of the problem in a language classroom. Focusing on *the quality of life* does not mean that EP disregards *the* quality *of work* or draws a boundary between both of these, but it highlights the contribution and complementary role *the quality of life* has to play for *the quality of work*. Gieve & Miller (2006) seem to regret the fact that to date, the *work* has predominantly been the focus of the field at the cost of life despite the fact that both are important. They highlight the strong relation between *the quality of life* and *quality of work* by saying 'work being a part of 'life' and 'life' being a part of 'work', or, possibly, 'work' being a form of 'life' and 'life' a form of 'work'.

The quality of life highlights the complex and idiosyncratic nature of life in a language classroom. It thus suggests approaching life through understanding rather than technological solutions adopting 'efficient' behaviour or the 'best' method. The notion of understanding versus efficiency was the already focus of EP since its inception in 1991 in which Allwright and Baliey clearly mention that EP assists teachers to understand their own practice, and their learners (Allwright and Bailey, 1991). EP provides the opportunity for everyone to get involved in developing deep understanding

(Allwright, 2005). In other words, the collective understanding of language classroom life by involving everybody, most importantly both teachers and learners is the main motto of EP. To summarise why quality of life is important, we end with a note by Allwright, 2006 cited in Gieve & Miller (2006: 20):

> The quality of classroom life is itself the most important matter, both for the long –term mental health of humanity (and the mental health of the language teacher) and for the sake of encouraging people to be lifelong learners, rather than people resentful of having to spend years of their lives as 'captive' learners, and therefore put off further learning for life.

2.5.2.3.2. Involve everybody by bringing people together as to work for mutual development

In the earlier two principles of EP, the motive and the purpose of EP were highlighted. The above three principles explain the mechanism to achieve that goal. Since the goal of EP is to develop understanding of issues faced in a language classroom, it emphasizes the involvement of both teachers and learners so that collective understanding could be developed. To develop collective understanding, it is necessary to ensure involvement of all stake holders in particular learners and teachers, teachers and researchers.

Thus, 'bring people together' and 'work for their mutual development' requires a shift in attitude between teacher- learners' relations inside classroom, and between teacher-researchers relation outside it. Historically, the teacher has had a dominant role in a class and has treated learners as passive listeners at the receiving end, and thus never assigned them active role. In the same way, researchers have followed their agendas which have turned to be 'parasitic enterprise' resulting in mistrust, leaving the impression on them that what researchers do has little relevance for their own and their

students' professional lives. EP aims at redressing this by bringing people together so that they could work for their mutual development.

The focus of these principles is on the importance of getting involved collegially in a mutually beneficial enterprise, and working together towards understanding an issue/puzzle of common interest. Although the beneficiary of such an enterprise would surely be the teacher and the learners who are at the heart of EP, Allwright (2003) suggests maintaining collegial relations with teacher colleagues, within the hierarchy of the employing institution, with training and development staff, with outsider researchers and with other colleagues in other institutions.

2.5.2.3.2.1. Collegiality between teachers and learners

Since EP highlights the role of learners in investigative work in the classroom, it insists on teachers maintaining collegial relations with them. Without a collegial relationship between learners and teachers, EP work cannot move forward. Learners are quite often the source of puzzles, and without their cooperation, it is very difficult to develop understanding. Thus, it is necessary to engage learners in the investigation.

2.5.2.3.2.2. Collegiality among teachers in the same institution

Although the learners' involvement is very important, teachers are more likely to work together than learners. They could establish better collegial relations due to common interests, and job responsibilities. There are probably many issues which keep teachers away from each other such as professional jealousy, and personal problems, but working within the framework of EP can facilitate them by providing many occasions when talking to someone else is a good idea. Thus, EP aims to establish workplace collegiality among teachers so that they could benefit from each other's experience, expertise, and knowledge for betterment of learning and teaching environment.

2.5.2.3.2.3. Collegiality and the hierarchy within an employing institution

There is no doubt that the idea of hierarchy stands in contrast with the notion of collegiality, but it is essential to foster collegial relationship between teachers, institutions, and employers. Any decision regarding pedagogical changes or curriculum innovations should be negotiated rather than imposed on teachers. EP facilitates practitioners to remain engaged in investigative work without burn out, and develop understandings about the issues to help inform the decision makers for the betterment of the profession. However, in the context of the USJP, some changes such as a new syllabus for Remedial English was introduced without consulting teachers and learners-the main stake holders, with the effect that some teachers are still critical of this change believing that the curriculum is not useful given the contextual realities of the USJP.

2.5.2.3.2.4. Collegiality between teachers and training and development people

Teacher educators are encouraged to work as mentors to teachers. In the present study, I work as teacher consultant encouraging teachers to pursue their topic of interest, rather than imposing my agenda on them.

2.5.2.3.2.5. Collegiality between teachers and academic researchers

'Academic' researchers in the language field are advised to act as research consultants rather than research directors *controlling the* research agenda. They are advised *on* the conduct of investigations so that they could regain the trust of teachers and learners by working in the interest of teachers and learners rather than pursuing their own agenda of building grand theory from empirical research in classrooms.

2.5.2.3.3. Make the work a continuous enterprise by integrating research into pedagogy

It is commonly agreed that life is ever changing and undergoes an evolving process. In view of the dynamic nature of life in a classroom, it is illogical to prescribe lasting

solutions. The process of understanding should be ongoing as life continues. To make the work for understanding life in a language classroom continuous, the choice of academic research is found unsuitable on various grounds. Professional research relies on funding agencies which have strict time limits to complete the project. Such research projects heavily focus on outcomes. Such research models may be useful for getting professional research done but are deemed as being not able to fully serve the purpose which is " to get *teaching* done so that it embodies a research perspective and helps everyone develop their understandings as practitioners." (Allwright & Hanks: 2009: 153).

Working for understanding is *a continuous enterprise* of EP. In order to materialize it, Allwright (2005) and Allwright and Hanks (2009) suggest integrating EP work into the existing working life of the classroom. Otherwise, teachers and learners who are busy enough already cannot afford to carry the extra burden such as employing research methods or adopting any practice that is demanding. Thus, Allwright (2003) proposes to use familiar classroom activities as investigative tools. According to Allwright & Hanks (2009:154), good research is good pedagogy and the main focus of EP as mentioned already is to get teaching done rather research "in a way that fosters the development of understanding in and among all the participants."

2.6.   Benefits of teacher research

This section highlights both the benefits and critiques of teacher research so that the author can evaluate the significance of EP as a form of teacher research in terms of benefits it can offer and how far it attends to the concerns raised in the literature about the use of teacher research in the language teaching field.

Borg (2010) proposes a comprehensive list of potential benefits of teacher research. For instance, it can help teachers develop their capacity for making independent judgments about their profession (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004) and alleviates the teachers' feelings of frustration and isolation (Roberts, 1993). In addition, it allows teachers to come out of a submissive position to become curriculum innovators (Gurney, 1989), and to be more reflective, critical, and analytical of their role as a teacher in the classroom (Atay, 2006). On the one hand, teacher research assists teachers to become less dependent on outsiders by taking self-initiatives to approach challenges themselves (Donato, 2003), on the other hand, it facilities connections between teachers and researchers (Crookes, 1993).

Regarding the benefits of teacher research in language teaching, Nunan (1989b: 3) remarks 'it sharpens teachers' critical awareness through observation, recording and analysis of classroom events and thus acts as a consciousness-raising exercise". Taylor (2006: 94) states that the teacher research "helped me to relax about the students' use of L1 and to see it as a useful diagnostic tool rather as something detrimental to the students' acquisition of English." Borg (2010) believes that the use of teacher research in language teaching is useful for enhancing teachers' awareness of learners' views, improving their practices, and developing understandings of the impact of certain instructional strategies on the learning outcomes of the students. Despite the claims of teacher research benefits in the context of teacher education, there are only a few research studies which support such claims. That is why; Grossman (2005: 447) states that,

> although many teacher educators proclaim the value of various forms of practitioner research in pre-service teacher education, we are still at the early stages of being able to bolster these claims with empirical evidence (ibid).

Among the little empirical evidence regarding benefits of teacher research in the field of language teacher education, Borg (2010) points to Burns (2009) who offers a review of the use of action research in teacher education by reporting specific initiatives and their impact in a number of other sources.

2.6.1. Critiques of teacher research

Although many benefits of teacher research have been described, there are reservations, such as that teacher research does not involve a rigorous process as used in academic research models, thus it lacks validity and trustworthiness. In this regard, Huberman (1996) raises questions regarding the reliability of the investigative methods often employed in teacher research with particular reference to narratives. Elliot and Sarland (1995: 373) believe that in teacher research, it is description that dominates the analysis, and there is "the tendency in many accounts to adopt a narrowly technicist stance to the problems of pedagogical change." Similarly, while presenting the reports produced by teachers involved in the Teacher Research Grant Pilot Scheme, Foster (1999) concludes that some of the reports did not look like a piece of research, but rather 'personal descriptions of, or justifications for, their own practice; or accounts of their efforts to improve pupil achievement, or of their involvement in staff development activities' (p. 383). Ellis (2010: 189) also says that "the methodological limitations that are evident in much teacher-research that may make its findings of little value to the academe".

The criteria to measure the quality of research are generally based on two general positions (Seale 1999 cited in Borg 2010): a foundationalist and non-foundationalist position. The former position argues that there should be a universal standard to judge the quality of all types of research, the latter argues that there should be different sets of criteria for different types of research. However, Huberman (1996) argues there are at least two universal criteria such as to provide sufficient evidence of the study, and

freedom from obvious bias applicable to teacher research as well. In language teaching, Nunan (1997: 367) argues that the "key distinction should be not whether an activity is practitioner research or regular research but whether it is good research or poor research." In this regard, Borg (2010: 405) remarks that "a basic level of (not necessarily 'scientific') rigour must apply to the collection and analysis of data if teacher research is to generate understandings we can have confidence in." Burns (2005a: 250) in the context of action research as type of teacher research acknowledges Borg's (2010) view point by arguing,

> one of the strongest features of action research that can contribute to enhancing rigour is its iterative, or cyclical nature ….he iterative aspect becomes particularly powerful when research is conducted collaboratively, as findings and outcomes can be cross-referenced across multiple activities (ibid).

The above criticism of teacher research raises the one issue that teacher research is poor quality research, because it lacks rigorously systematic methods of data collection and analysis. The objection revolves round the issue of validity and trustworthiness, and the applicability of it to the wider contexts. However, some have tried to defend teacher research against such concerns. Among them, Bartlett and Burton (2006) suggest that professional relevance is one criterion that enhances the validity of teacher research. Anderson and Herr (1999: 15) mention that its collaborative nature "the extent to which research is done in collaboration with all parties who have a stake in the problem under investigation" can enhance the validity and trust worthiness of the research, While Reis-Jorge (2007) believes that employing an academic model of teacher research cannot help to achieve our goal of promoting teacher research, as "a formally designed research project produced to meet the criteria imposed by academic regulations may not be the most appropriate kind of project."

2.6.2. Establishing the case of EP as a form of practitioner research

The case for teacher research will be argued with special reference to EP particularly in the context of the USJP. In the first instance, we argue the case for practitioner research as a research practice even if it does not use academic research tools for data collection, and then justify the choice of EP as a suitable form of practitioner in the context of the USJP.

Generally speaking, research practices are evaluated on three grounds: methodological, epistemological, and ethical (Ortega, 2005). Methodological issues involve concern about scientific rigour, criteria for research quality, and reporting standards. Epistemology attends to the queries about the nature of reality/knowledge and the ways of knowing. Ethical issues focus around informed consent, confidentiality, and making sure research does not pose any threat to research participants. Ortega (ibid) remarks that although the methodological, epistemological, and ethical dimension are deemed as interlinked, discussions in SLA focuses on two: epistemological and methodological with more focus on the later.

The focus on methodological rigour in applied linguistics research has been criticized as undue. In this regard, Ortega, (2005) believes there is a danger in this methodological focus which explicitly defines definite ways of producing knowledge at the expense of ethical questions regarding purpose and aims of research. Similar concerns have been raised by Holliday (2004) and Shohamy (2004) in reaction against the attempts of specifying criteria for methodological rigour in applied linguistics research. Allwright (2005) also highlights the same issue by remarking that a technicist approach which employs academic research tools for generating knowledge has become futile and parasitic in classroom research for teachers. In this regard, Ortega (2005) suggests that SLA field is epistemologically diverse as it deals with language learning – a complex

phenomenon in which educational and societal forces/factors interplay continuously, so it has become ethically imperative to discuss epistemological dimension in a quite broad framework focusing "on moral imperatives, values that guide action, and worthy purposes of research that give meaning to entire research programs" (Ortega, 2005: 420). "To be truly ethical, educational researchers must be prepared to defend the purpose of their research"(Howe & Moses, 1999:56). In addition, we should design our research programs by keeping in view the beneficiaries/participants involved (Fine et al, 2000 cited in Ortega, 2005).

In the case of EP as a form of classroom research by teachers is being argued as mentioned earlier by Ortega on a broader epistemological and ethical framework. Epistemologically, EP does not refer to familiar debate in the mainstream literature about the nature of reality or ways of acquiring knowledge, but the relevance of knowledge to the lives of those involved, particularly teachers and learners (Fine et al, 2000 cited in Ortega, 2005). EP attends to ethical concerns by integrating research into pedagogy and recommending routine teaching activities as tools of data collection instead of academic research tools which demand extra effort, additional time-commitment, and a greater level of energy. While arguing the case for EP as a suitable form of classroom research for the USJP, I will be comparing it with other forms of practitioner research .i.e. action research. EP is chosen in light of the aims of the study, which is twofold; developing understanding of the issues hindering the progress of the ELT profession (epistemological issue), and establishing a teacher-development approach among colleagues in the USJP which should be least demanding and long lasting.

2.6.2.1. Exploratory Practice versus Action research

Earlier, Borg (2010) considers EP an extension of Action research. The present section highlights the fact that EP is not extension of Action research but it is entirely different from it. Methodologically, Action research as a model for classroom research demands that teachers develop research skills taken from the academic repertoire. Thus, in terms of practice, there is not much difference between action research and academic research (Nunan, 1989a). That is why, Block (2000: 138) with reference to action research remarks that "the entire enterprise is strong in theory but very difficult to carry out in practice." He mentions two reasons why an academic model of teacher research i.e. action research is not plausible because it demands extra time and requires a greater level of energy to practice it. Academic research and action research prioritise research in contrast to EP which tries "to get pedagogy done in a way that incorporates a research perspective" (Allwright, 2005:356). Action research prioritises technical concerns over the epistemological, and ethical.

2.6.2.2. EP as a form of re-thought practitioner research

The case of EP as a form of practitioner research is being argued substantially on epistemological and ethical grounds. Allwright (2003) clarifies that defending the case of EP on epistemological and ethical grounds does not mean advocating a poor choice of method, but he wants to make clear that the choice of practitioner research as an approach to investigation should not be justified in itself in methodological (technicist) terms. Practitioner research should be defined more in terms of relationship of identity between the people being investigated and the people doing the investigation, rather than as a research tool. Defining EP in terms of 'relationship of identity', it is a plural first person pronoun '*We* research *our* practice' compared with the academic researcher's '*I* research *your* teaching,' and with the Action researcher's '*I* research *my*

teaching.' The purpose of EP in practice is to build an atmosphere of trust (Perpignan, 2001, 2003), and a relationship of collegiality and mutuality (Allwright, 1992), and involve everybody i.e. learners, and colleagues (Allwright, 2003) in the process, and help each other develop understanding about the issues in their own ways.

2.6.2.2.1. Practitioner research must be about the lives of the practitioners.

Research should not prove to be futile or parasitic on the lives of practitioners. Under the technicist framework, practitioners usually remain preoccupied with carrying out technical formalities i.e. collecting data through academic research tools and analysing the results. While doing it, they are likely to forget the ultimate goal – teaching and learning. EP as a form of classroom research prioritises teaching /pedagogy carried out with a research perspective so that it could benefit the lives of all those involved in the classroom research/inquiry. In this regard, Perpignan's work (2001; 2003) is worth mentioning here because it demonstrates a good example of classroom research as a *social enterprise and a collegial process* resulting in mutual development of all those involved. She conducted qualitative research within the paradigm of EP where the instruments used for self –reports were in the form of questionnaires in which one questionnaire was used for generating data to investigate the learners' preference of feedback type, and the other questionnaire was based on classroom activity. In addition, semi-structured interviews were also conducted to become familiar with learners' ideas and opinions regarding feedback given to them over the course. All data collection tools used by Perpignan were not parasitic as they did not only accommodate but assisted the normal teaching environment in the classroom. In particular, self-reports used by Perpignan demonstrate an ideal and perfect example of "integrating the work for understanding into the life of the particular pedagogical and social circumstances" (Perpignan,2003:268). The matching game and the "Z" Activity used by Perpignan in

her research serve as better guideline for how to abide by EP's principle of integrating research into pedagogy. By virtue of using classroom friendly data collection tools, on the one hand, we can avoid interruption in normal teaching environment. On the other hand, we develop understanding about certain issues which may not be possible if we remain pre-occupied in using just academic research tools for classroom research. On the whole, it can be argued that Perpignan's doctoral thesis (2001) on improving written feedback on students writing offers a good demonstration of integrating research into pedagogy.

2.6.2.2.2. Understanding not problem-solving

Understanding language classroom life for teachers and learners is a top priority of EP as a form of practitioner research in contrast to that of action research which aims to find a solution to a problematic issue. EP strictly avoids any action that is taken without reaching adequate understanding. According to EP, many situations that seem to be problematic requiring a practical solution could be handled through dealing with quality of life (Naidu et al, 1992; Perpignan, 2001). Understanding the relationships between people doing the investigation and being investigated is the main objective of EP as a form of practitioner research (Allwright, 2005).

2.6.3. Why EP

In the light of the above discussion, EP is a suitable choice among the options available in the literature as it favors epistemological and ethical concerns over technical issues. In fact, the ELT profession in the USJP as mentioned in the introductory chapter confronts ethical and epistemological issues rather than technical concerns. We therefore need to develop understanding about the issues hindering the progress of the ELT profession (epistemological), and help colleagues work for their professional self-development by using a form of practitioner research as an approach to their

professional self-development which is viable for them in their existing circumstances (ethical). Epistemologically, we do not seek to solve the problem by introducing changes in syllabus or in teaching methodology until we develop sufficient understanding about the issue faced by the ELT profession in the USJP. Thus, we intend to understand language *classroom life by putting the quality of life first*. Working to understand quality of life is very important on two grounds; a change prior to understanding would aggravate the situation and through understanding, we can handle many issues without changing them.

Since the main aim of the project is to develop an approach to teacher development in the form of practitioner research which may be long-lasting without burn-out, the choice of action research does not seem a practically viable option for the USJP due to its demand on teachers for developing academic research skills and employing them for classroom research. Action research as an approach to teacher development is suggested to be used as 'the framework for a final project' rather being repeated on daily basis (Burns, 1999; and Edge, 2001). In order to make such a project successful, there should be good support available i.e. support of an academic supervisor with access to a good library. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, almost all of the teachers at the USJP do not have training in academic research tools, and teaching them these skills would not be possible during the project because they work in both evening and morning sessions, and are not likely to find time and energy to employ Action Research. In contrast, EP which uses routine teaching activities as tools for data collection is deemed more suitable approach to teacher development.

2.7. The Summary of the chapter

The first section of the chapter traced out the journey of TESOL teacher education. It mentioned how the field progressed over time from a positivistic to a situated model.

The positivistic model, which focused on transferring theories and methods from one context to the other context, treated teachers as mere conduits/carriers of knowledge, and disregarded their individual experiences and perspectives on teaching. The research on teachers' cognition gave a breakthrough by shedding light on the complexities of teachers' mental life and its influence on their teaching. Key research on teacher cognition provided a different view of how teachers learn to do their work contrasted with that of the positivistic paradigm. The fact that teachers' learning is a lifelong process which begins as they start their social life, so is the teachers' knowledge about teaching which is mainly socially constructed out of their experiences as both learners and teachers.

In view of research on teacher cognition and socio-cultural perspective on learning, teachers are not mere consumers of knowledge. They are also the creators of legitimate knowledge which can make useful contributions to the development of the field. In this regard, Johnson & Golombek, (2002:2) maintains teachers' professional development is a process of 'reshaping their' existing knowledge, beliefs, and practices rather than simply imposing new theories and methods or material on them. Taking into account the complex process of teachers' professional development, the practitioner form of research is a suitable approach which provides them genuine opportunity to look into their practices in their respective contexts for their professional development. According to Johnson & Golombek (2002), the emergence of practitioner research in the teacher education field on the one hand helps acknowledge the fact that teachers are producers of knowledge and capable to work independently for their professional development. On the other hand, it has potential to modify the existing teacher education practices based on the traditional model.

Kurt Lewin, Corey, and Schön may be considered founders of practitioner research, but it has been used in language teaching from 1980 (Burns, 2005a). Since the use of practitioner research in the field of education, different concepts of practitioner research have emerged. Borg (2010) believes practitioner research has worked in three main directions in the field of education 1) promoting social change 2) collaborative inquiry in which communities of teachers work together for improving classrooms and schools 3) practical inquiry by individual teachers to solve classroom problems. Apart from these three main conceptualizations of teacher research, Borg (2010) makes specific reference to Exploratory Practice (EP) in the field of language teaching. Borg (2010: 397) supports EP's idea of integrating research into pedagogy to make teacher research "a more feasible and productive activity for teachers and learners."However, Borg (ibid) considers EP as an extension of Action Research. It can be argued that, EP and Action Research are entirely different from each other. For instance, methodologically, there is not much difference between action research and academic research (Nunan, 1989a) as both of them employ academic research tools in contrast to EP, which utilizes routine teaching activities as tools of data collection. EP tries "to get pedagogy done in a way that incorporates a research perspective" (Allwright, 2005:356), unlike academic research and action research which prioritise research. In addition, understanding language classroom life is a top priority of EP in contrast to that of action research which seeks to find a solution to a problematic issue. Irrespective of different forms of teacher research,Borg (2010:242) proposes the following comprehensive list of potential benefits of teacher research.

1. It develops teachers' capacity for autonomous professional judgements (Lankshear & Knobel 2004);

2. allows teachers to move out of a submissive position and be curriculum innovators (Gurney, 1989);

3. allows teachers to become more reflective, critical, and analytical about their teaching behaviours in the classroom (Atay, 2006);

4. makes teachers less vulnerable to and less dependent on external answers to the challenges they face (Donato, 2003);

5. fosters connections between teachers and researchers (Crookes, 1993).

Although different forms of practitioner research have emerged that offer a variety of potential benefits, their use in education and language teaching has been accompanied with criticism such as practitioner research lacks validity and trustworthiness as it does not involve a rigorous process as used in academic research model. Nevertheless, many scholars have defended the case of practitioner research on different grounds (see for instance Holliday, 2004; Shohamy,2004; Ortega, 2005; Allwright, 2005). In this regard, Huberman (1996) argues if any piece of research i.e. practitioner research provides sufficient evidence of the study, and freedom from obvious bias, then it should be treated as a good piece of research. In contrast, Borg (2010) maintains that it is necessary to apply a basic level of rigour while collecting and analyzing data to make the findings of practitioner research more valid and trustworthy.

Since the emergence of EP as a form of practitioner research, there have been many studies conducted under the sphere of EP. In view of the past studies, EP could be used for the following: open-ended voluntary work with teachers (Miller and Bannell, 1998) in a consultancy relationship where a teacher trainer or academic researcher can work as a consultant to colleagues encouraging them to use EP as a form of practitioner research for their professional development, and developing understanding about the context in

which they work (Miller, 2001; 2003); as an approach to academic research in which EP principles can be useful for guiding their investigation (Gunn, 2001; Perpignan, 2001), as a form of practitioner research to develop understanding about the quality of life in the language classroom instead of discovering teaching techniques (Slimani-Rolls, 2003; Miller, 2001; Gunn, 2001; Perpignan, 2001).

The present study is unique in its kind. Although EP has been used as a form of practitioner research (Slimani-Rolls,2003; Miller, 2001; Gunn, 2001; Perpignan, 2001) and an approach to teacher development (Miller, 2001; 2003), there is not a single study which has ever tried to evaluate the significance of EP as both a form of practitioner research and an approach to teacher development. In this way, the present study fills in this gap by carrying out an evaluation of EP as both a form of practitioner research and an approach to teacher-development. The details of how this project is studied are given in chapter 3. The second research question, "what is the contribution of EP in developing understanding about the issues faced by ELT profession at the USJP?" evaluates EP as a form of practitioner research on the basis of its contribution towards addressing issues faced in Remedial English classes. The third research question, "what is the significance of EP as an approach to teacher development in the context of USJP," evaluates EP as an approach to teacher development. This research question tries to show that teachers are capable of working independently for their professional development in their respective contexts and fills a gap by contributing towards establishing an alternative to teacher education practices based on a positivistic model. In addition, the first research question, "how far does this project abide by the principles of EP?" offers a framework to reflect on the work carried out within the EP paradigm. This has not been addressed in the previous research work on EP. Although six principles of EP and two suggestions (Allwright, 2005) offer a clear set of guidelines for

EP practitioners, this research question demonstrates a practical way for evaluating one's (EP practitioner) own work to check whether the principles are observed. In addition, this question also addresses the concerns that practitioner research lacks validity and trustworthiness by offering a framework which applies a basic level of rigour in collecting and analyzing data to make the findings of practitioner research more valid and trustworthy as suggested by Borg (2010).The fourth research question, "What is the contribution of this investigation to our thinking about EP?" is a byproduct of every piece of EP research carried out in any context because reflection on EP contributes to its growth, and provides at least some understanding for future EP projects. The researcher's reflection on the whole EP project through systematic analysis of the application of EP principles may provide some useful insights for EP practitioners.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1.   Introduction

Research is a rational process by which we develop knowledge about various aspects relating to human life in order to clarify and resolve issues we face in our life. Research is thus described as a "systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry which aims to contribute towards the advancement of knowledge and wisdom" (Bassey 1999: 38). The present study which evaluates Exploratory Practice as an approach to teacher development and as a form of practitioner research at the USJP makes its contribution in different ways. Firstly, it aims to understand the significance of EP as a form of practitioner research for addressing the issues in the language classrooms at the USJP. Secondly, it seeks to know the significance of EP as an approach to teacher development for English professionals at the USJP. In every type of study, the researcher plays an active role in designing the research, conducting the study, and analyzing the results. The active involvement of a researcher is appreciated by Johnson (1994) who argues that a researcher may not simply act as a decoder of messages; rather, he must play an active role in reflecting reality by looking at it from different angles. The level of involvement by a researcher varies according to the nature of a study, and philosophical perspective behind it. Positivists recommend less involvement of the researcher so that objectivity of the study is maintained in contrast to interpretivists who want to see the world through the eyes of their participants, and make subjective interpretations while remaining honest and disinterested. The present study which falls within the interpretive paradigms, assigned an active role to the researcher for the completion of the project. In other words, without active involvement

of the researcher, the project would not be completed because the project has both professional and academic goals to achieve. To achieve the professional goal, the researcher has to play a very active role. He works as a teacher consultant by holding group meetings with the participants and providing them assistance for undertaking EP principles in their teaching for their professional development. He also works as a practitioner-researcher similar to other teacher-participants in order to develop understanding in the life of language classrooms in Remedial English. In order to achieve the academic goal, the researcher tries to remain honest and disinterested in the whole process from beginning till the end. He conducts pre-and post-interviews and transcribes the recordings of meetings and evaluates the contribution of EP work during the project towards ELT profession at the USJP.

3.2. Choice of paradigm

It is commonly believed that researchers are people who have pre-set philosophies, ideas, skills and preferences which influence their choice of research endeavour. Thus, it is not possible for a researcher to disassociate himself from his pre-set beliefs and philosophy while determining his choice of research (Yaacoub, 2008). In this regard, Creswell (2003: 6) argues, "stating a knowledge claim means that researchers start a project with certain assumptions about how they will learn and what they will learn during the inquiry. These claims might be called paradigms (Guba and Lincoln, 2005), philosophical assumptions, epistemologies, and ontologies (Crotty, 1998) or broadly conceived research methodologies (Burns, 2000)." In line with his philosophical assumptions, the researcher makes decisions about the nature of knowledge; ways and means of seeking it; values that lie beneath it; methods of reporting and studying it (Crotty, 1998). This is a very crucial stage in which a researcher tries hard to make the

correct decisions. In this regard (Crotty, 1998) maintains that choosing the right philosophical stance by a researcher is a very crucial step in any study.

There are different paradigms or belief systems in modern research inquiry (Guba and Lincoln, 2005), which broadly fall between two main opposing paradigms. These are the scientific paradigm and the interpretive paradigm. Each of these paradigms has different ontological and epistemological assumptions which support them. Ontology refers to the nature of reality or how the world is viewed, while epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge and how this knowledge is acquired (Burns, 2000).

The scientific paradigm employs scientific methods to study certain phenomena. This approach views reality as objective and something that can be measured and uncovered by a neutral researcher (Gall et al., 2007; Lichtman, 2006). This position has also been named positivism; a term associated with the French philosopher Auguste Comte in the first half of the nineteenth century and used through to the current day, and has historically been the dominant paradigm in research inquiry (Cohen et al., 2007).

The interpretive paradigm has emerged since the 1960s in response to the problems associated with using a positivist approach to researching social phenomena. The supporters of this paradigm believe that the world cannot be viewed as an objective reality. Instead, it needs to be understood in relation to the subjective interpretations of human behaviour and experiences (Bryman, 2008). Gall et al (2007: 21) explains further:

> An opposing epistemological position to positivism is based on the assumption that social reality is constructed by the individuals who participate in it. These "constructions" take the form of interpretations, that is, the ascription of meanings to the social environment. Features of the social environment are not

considered to have an existence apart from the meanings that individuals construct for them.

While Creswell (2003 cited in Yaacoub, 2008: 87) argues a researcher chooses mainly from the four 'schools of thought' given below:

1. Postpositivism: according to this school, knowledge is objective, and thus can be observed, measured and verified (Creswell, 2003).

2. Constructivism: which believes that knowledge is subjective, fluid and can be "examined through the eyes of participants rather than the researcher" (Cohen et al, 2007:22).

3. Advocacy/participatory: in this school of thought, the researcher has "an action or agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life" (Creswell 2003:10). Feminist and critical research fall under this category.

4. Pragmatism: where the researcher is entitled to use any approach as long as it helps in solving the problem.

In the same way, Cohen et al (2000) describes three major ways which are employed in educational research: the scientific procedure, the interpretive approach, the critical approach. The present study employs EP within an interpretive approach and seeks to explore the efficacy of EP as a form of practitioner research and an approach to teacher development in the context of the University of Sindh, Jamshoro by inviting all the participant-teachers to undertake the principles of EP in their teaching for two semesters of six months each.

3.2.1. Research methodology

There are different methodologies or styles of research, some of these strategies conform to an interpretive qualitative style while others conform to a positivist, quantitative style. The following methodologies adhere to the interpretive paradigm:

- Ethnographic research studies the cultural background of a particular group (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989).

- Narratives in which the researcher collects information about the lives of particular individuals by asking others about them, and by retelling and repeating their stories in a sequential account interlinked with the researcher's life (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

- Grounded theory is drawn from the views of informants in a study (Creswell, 2003).

- Case study produces detailed information in vivid and rich ways about one or more actors in a definite context (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1989).

- Historic research searches for evidence and proof to confirm or negate certain facts about past events (Borg, 1963).

- Action research, in which the researcher undergoes a cycle of planning and action in a disciplined way to develop a particular practice (Ebbut, 1985).

- In addition to the above research methodologies, Exploratory Practice is also considered a distinctive research methodology within the interpretive approach. Allwright (2003) maintains that EP primarily developed as a form of practitioner research as an alternative to other forms of practitioner research based on academic research models. However, researchers who were to undertake

academic research projects, found EP principles helpful in guiding their inquiry/investigations. Thus, EP has been successfully used for doctoral research (see for instance, Miller, 2001; Gunn, 2001; and Perpignan, 2001) and has also proved to be a suitable framework for a Master's level course and dissertation work at Lancaster and in their MA level work in Hong Kong (see for instance, Hanks, 1998; Chen, 2002; Chan, 2002; Cheng, 2002; Chuk, 2002; Le, 2002; Ho, 2002). It is also important to mention the doctoral research of Wu (2002) who discusses the principles of EP from a philosophical perspective and the significance of such thinking for a development project in the context of the Chinese university where he works. The present study utilizes the principles of EP to complete the academic research project on teacher development. All the participants adopt EP as the form of practitioner research to investigate their own practices in a similar way as practiced by Miller, (2001), Gunn, (2001) and Perpignan, (2001) in their doctoral research.

As mentioned earlier, the present study employs EP within the interpretive approach. In this way, the present study employs two different approaches. All individual teacher-participants including the researcher himself employ EP by adopting it as a form practitioner research. Secondly, this study is a type of case study research conducting an in depth investigation into the use of EP as an approach to teacher development and a form of practitioner research. This study intends to find out how a group of teachers undertook the principles of EP in their teaching and what the significance of EP was for their professional development, and how EP helped participants in understanding life in Remedial English classes. While analysing data collected from various methods (mentioned later in this chapter), the researcher is equally interested in the particularity of each of the participants who applied EP as well as pursuing the wider agenda rooted

in advancing understanding and providing insight into the use of EP as an approach to teacher development and a form of practitioner research.

3.2.2. Ethics and access

Dealing with ethical issues in a research is of paramount importance. However, it is a very difficult and strenuous process (Busher and Clarke, 1990). "The application of moral knowledge and wisdom then turns out to be governed as much by reflective judgment as by rule-following and the practicing of skills"(Lovlie,1993:76). Researchers are humans; they can make mistakes in dealing with ethical issues (Cohen et al, 2000). To minimize the chances of making mistakes in addressing ethical issues, researchers "need two attributes: the sensitivity to identify an ethical issue and the responsibility to feel committed to acting appropriately in regard to such issues" (Eisner and Peshkin 1990: 244).

Busher (2002) maintains that ethical codes are not the same everywhere which vary from person to person, culture to culture, and context to context. In this way, something valid in one setting or context may be unacceptable in another. "The application of ethics to research is situated in and depends on how each situation is deconstructed to understand the needs of all the participants in it, including the researchers and research sponsors" (Busher, 2002: 87). A researcher should be sensitive to the culture of the setting, and compromising in making ethical decisions according to circumstances. Cohen et al (2000:49) remarks that a researcher needs "to strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in the pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by the research." A cautious and conciliatory attitude should be adopted by researchers to assess their interests and the people's right to know against the privacy and confidentiality rights of informants (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992). Stake (2005) maintains that valuing the

rights of the participants adds strength to the quality of the research. He (ibid: 459) remarks, "the value of the best research is not likely to outweigh injury to a person exposed. Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world. Their manners should be good and their code of ethics strict."

Privacy is a sort of guarantee that information received from participants will be used appropriately without affecting the participants' rights (Deiner and Crandall, 1978). Confidentiality means protecting the identity of participants from being identified by others from the information they share during the process of research (Cohen et al, 2000. "The protection of subjects' privacy by changing their names and identifying features is an important issue in the reporting of interviews" (Kvale, 1996: 4). Cohen et al (2000) suggests that the participants should be made aware of the fact if information about them is made public. The participants should be given the right to participate or withdraw from taking part in the study.

Before conducting research, a researcher needs consent from the participants, which is usually less problematic if the research is carried out in an organization where a researcher works as a member of staff. Eisner (1991: 215) suggests,

> "we all like the idea of informed consent, but we are less sure just who is to provide that consent, just how much consent is needed, and how we inform others so as to obtain consent when we have such a hard time predicting what we need to get consent about" (ibid).

After consent is granted, a researcher needs to be honest and clear regarding the study demands and obligations. Lincoln (1990) suggests that after getting consent from the participants, a researcher should have on-going discourse with participants for establishing good friendly relations to avoid any disharmony.

Although I was a member of the teaching staff at the department of English at the USJP, I sought the approval of the university to access the informants at two stages. First, I wrote a formal letter to the Director of the institute asking for consent to carry out the research at the university campus. In that letter, I explained the purpose and process of my research. Having received the approval from the head of the institution, I distributed an invitation letter (Appendix A) among colleagues, which explained the purpose and nature of the project, along with the procedures and time frame of the research, and the obligations for participants while participating in the project, as well as clearly stating the confidentiality and privacy rules, including the participants' right to voice their opinions and objections, or even to withdraw from the research for any reason.

There was no obligation on English professionals to participate in the project. The researcher who has already worked at the institute with some of the participants is quite mindful of his relation with the teachers when he invited them to participate in the project. However, the majority of the participants were appointed at the USJP, while the researcher was completing his studies abroad. Thus, he has made every possible effort to not affect the participants' decision regarding joining the project. Teacher-participants did not feel any compulsion either from the head of the institute or from the university authorities to participate in the project; it was a voluntary participation. The reason why teacher-participants participated in the project may have been due to the prospects that EP offered them their professional development as described in the invitation letter. The researcher tried his level best to guarantee participants' rights so that they would not feel compelled to work on the project and be allowed to join and withdraw the project whenever they wanted it.

While conducting interviews, pre and post, the researcher sought the approval of the subjects to tape-record the interviews. In the beginning of each team meeting in the first

semester, consent was sought for tape-recording group discussion as well. However, participants were assured that no one will have access to these tapes except the researcher. The researcher was an active listener while conducting interviews, and tried to show respect and empathy for the informants. Ethical issues were always kept in mind throughout the project in all stages of the research process. To avoid any potential harm to the subjects or their future options, information was kept confidential. The information received is treated with utmost care and secrecy; however, for some information potentially recognizable to others, the researcher had received the consent of participants for the release of that information. Fictional names are given to the participants to respect their privacy. Interesting or important quotations were used only after seeking owners' approval.

In order to collect data, the invitation letters were distributed among all the colleagues at the department of English at the beginning of the new session in January 2009. Nine participants showed their consent to join the project by agreeing to terms and conditions mentioned in the letter. According to the initial plan in the research proposal, I decided to run a single group of four teachers. Keeping in view the principle of EP, which gives open offer to join the EP venture at any institute, it became difficult to pick only four out of nine willing to join the project. To justify the decision of choosing a limited number of participants, I decided to follow the 'first come first serve' criteria. Initially, I picked four people, and conducted their interviews.

Having conducted their interviews, when it was time to reach a decision about arranging the time for a group meeting as a part of the project; it was not possible for these participants to meet at the same time due to their busy and varied schedules. Meeting the set-back in the very initial stage of the project, which increased my fear of drop-out in future due to many other unanticipated reasons, I decided to induct as many

colleagues as possible. I, therefore, proceeded to conduct interviews with five more colleagues who had already given their consent to join the project. This time, now since the number of the participants increased from four to nine, it was not possible to convene all of them at one time, and manage them into a single group. I, therefore, decided to run two groups. The decision of running two groups at different days of a week and times facilitated to accommodate all the willing participants. Ultimately, I became successful in accommodating eight participants including myself by forming two groups. Although there was no intention of running separate groups for male and female teachers, it was by chance that there were separate groups for them. The researcher attended meetings of both groups and worked as an EP practitioner with other colleagues (teacher-participants) and shared his experience while attending meetings.

In phase I, we had eight meetings in total, three with male and female group each running side by side, and two joint meetings which were held later. We decided on joint meetings when I was left with just one member in the male group and two members in female group. In phase II, we had five gatherings in all, and there was no drop out in all five meetings.

In order to achieve professional and academic goals, the researcher played a dual role as both teacher consultant and academic researcher. Therefore, it was difficult to manage both goals simultaneously which consequently led to a significant increase in the researcher's work-load. As a teacher consultant, the researcher assisted teacher participants in undertaking principles of EP by providing them with materials and suggestions whenever they required in and outside the scheduled meetings. I had to face complaints of some teachers if other participants did not arrive on time to start the meeting. I had to reschedule group meetings a number of times to accommodate the

participants. In addition to this, as part of professional agenda, it was hard to transcribe all group meetings of phase I, and handover the transcripts of these meetings to the participants before the next meeting. In addition to this, the day to day strikes at the USJP also halted our progress on the project as we had to extend the date of meetings so that teacher-participants spent sufficient time in the class to undertake EP principles before attending the next meeting. Meetings ran smoothly in the next phase, as there was no drop out and we mutually decided to present the minutes of the meetings instead of transcription. The teachers who had already spent time in undertaking EP principles in the phase I were more comfortable in the next phase.

As an academic researcher, the researcher was quite mindful of his responsibilities so that his responsibilities as a teacher consultant did not affect negatively on his role as a researcher evaluating the significance of EP as an approach to teacher development and as a form of practitioner research. The tools of data collection employed in this study served dual purposes: professional and academic. The details of the instruments that served these purposes are presented at the end of this chapter. The following section describes the instruments used for collecting data in this study.

3.3. Research instruments

The researcher chose research instruments by keeping in view the aims and purpose of the research. There are many research tools which can be employed to find answers to the research questions. Cohen et al (2000) mentions the major tools: interviews, questionnaires, accounts or diaries, observation, tests and personal constructs. Those data collection tools that are based on pre-set questions, performance data and statistical analysis mainly fall in the category of the quantitative approach (Creswell, 2003). Those data collection tools which are based on open-ended questions, observation data and document data analysis mainly belong to the qualitative approach (Creswell, 2003). In

this study, data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews: pre-interview and post-interviews. In addition to interviews, group/team meetings of participants held regularly during the whole project, were also audio-recorded, which were then transcribed.

3.3.1. Interviews

Interviews are conducted to collect information about participants' experiences, knowledge, opinions, beliefs, and feelings (Best & Kahn, 2006). Interviews are considered to be a very good source of gathering descriptive data in the participants' own words (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Interviews may be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Less structured interviews are more flexible and provide opportunities for interviewees to express their point of view more freely (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Eliott, 1991).

In a structured or fixed response interview, the questions and response categories are fixed in advance, and a large number of questions can be asked in a short period of time. Data analysis of such interviews may relatively be simple by comparing the responses of each individual participant. However, interviewees are forced to produce responses that fit into researchers' categories, which may not provide an accurate account of their thoughts, opinions, or feelings (Best & Kahn, 2006). On the other hand, unstructured interviews resemble informal conversations. The questions emerge in context and are asked in the natural course of the conversation. This increases their relevance, and provides a more accurate account of what the respondent is thinking and feeling. However, if relevant questions do not arise naturally as part of the conversation the answers do not always provide useful or comprehensive information. Because different information is collected from different participants with different questions, responses

cannot be compared, and data organization and analysis is often complex and difficult (Best & Kahn, 2006).

Semi-structured interviews, which have pre-set questions but allow interviewees to digress and raise issues or topics that they wish to pursue, are often very useful. In semi-structured interviews, all interviewees are asked the same basic open-ended questions, the wording and sequence of which are fixed in advance. However, there is more flexibility for interviewees to express their ideas fully and freely. In semi-structured interviews, interviewers are able to ask extra questions to gain more detailed information, or to pursue a point made by the interviewee (Best & Kahn, 2006). As all interviewees are asked the same basic questions, most of their responses can be compared, and it is easy to organize and analyse data.

Care and skills are required to conduct successful interviews (Best & Kahn, 2006). Interviewees should be informed of the purpose of the interview, and assured that their responses will be confidential. In good interviews, participants are put at ease and encouraged to talk freely about their points of view. Most interviews begin with informal conversation to develop a rapport, particularly when the interviewer and interviewee are strangers (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Good interviewers are attentive, and communicate interest to participants with their facial expressions, gestures, and body language. Interviewers may ask for clarification if responses are ambiguous/unclear (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Interviewers should listen carefully to participant's responses, and assist them to formulate their thoughts without being directive. While the purpose of open-ended interviewing is to find out what is in the participant's mind, care should be taken not to put ideas into the participants' mind. Interviewers must understand their role and not express their personal opinions, as

responses may be biased if participants are aware of the perspective of the interviewers (Best & Khan, 2006).

Unstructured or semi-structured interviews, which provide participants with opportunities to express their own issues and concerns, should be audio recorded (Best & Kahn, 2006). To audio record the interview, consent must be received from the participants, and they should be assured of confidentiality because some participants may be self-conscious about having their voice recorded. Some will ask for reassurance that private information will not be revealed to others, either on the recording itself or in the form of a written transcript (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). It is also suggested by Best & Kahn (2006), if an interviewee is not willing to be recorded, the interviewer should take notes to be expanded immediately after the interview because the information will be easier to remember. However, in the present study, everybody participating in the project gave consent for their interviews to be recorded. Pre interviews (Appendix B) were conducted from eight teacher-participants at the beginning of the project inquiring about:

- Their teaching experiences in the USJP.

- The use of techniques for their professional development.

- Issues faced in Remedial English classes.

- Their views about the new curriculum, teaching environment, and learners' attitude.

- Ways and suggestions to improve the ELT profession at the USJP.

Post-interviews (Appendix C) were conducted twice during the project; first after phase I from those who left the project half way, and then after the completion of phase II from those who continued until the end. The post-interviews inquired about the following information from the participants:

- Their experience as members of the EP project.

- Difficulties in applying EP.

- Difficulties in attending group meetings.

- Reasons for leaving the project.

- Evaluation of EP as an approach to their professional development.

3.3.2. Group meetings

Group meetings were the most significant source of data collection underpinning the methodological approach of EP as a form of practitioner research that an inquiry should become a joint venture as 'we research our practice' (Allwright, 2005). The participants in the group meetings helped each other by offering suggestions, sharing experiences, and reporting their progress on their puzzles. Every participant-teacher shaped his/her inquiry individually by working independently with the learners in the class. In this way, group meetings served a good platform for bringing teachers together and making them work for each other's mutual development by demonstrating good collegial relations. In addition, all group meetings were audio-recorded with consent of the participants.

Noddings (1986 cited in Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) remark that in research on teaching "too little attention is given to matters of community and collegiality and that such research should be construed as research for teaching" (p. 510). She highlighted

the importance of the collaborative nature of the research process as one in which all participants view themselves as participants in the community, which has value for both researcher and practitioner, theory and practice. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) believe that a collaborative research requires a relationship similar to that of friendship, and mere negotiations or application of principles cannot guarantee a fruitful study. To develop such a relationship of friendship in collaborative research, we should make sure that there is equality between participants, and everybody participating is respected, and we maintain the feelings of connectedness among us (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988).

In each meeting held at the USJP, special care was taken to develop such an environment where each individual may feel his or her part in the process, valuing the participation of other individuals as well. In the group meetings, we ensured that everyone was given the chance to talk about the nature of their puzzle, in terms of the ways of working and dealing with it, and problems he/she faced while working on it. During group meetings, teacher-participants were involved in reflective conversation by recalling their teaching experience, by sharing them with their colleagues, which involved them in discussions, and reasoning. In this way, they discussed issues quite frequently, they argued with each other, they disagreed on many points, and moved on in an atmosphere of friendship.

3.3.3. Trustworthiness

There is a large body of literature available about trustworthiness, validity, reliability, authenticity, generalisability. These terms are often related and overlapped. Cohen et al (2007) maintain that if a study: quantitative or qualitative in nature is not valid or trustworthy, is useless. There are different kinds of validity with different applications. Cohen et al (2007) mentions about content, construct, ecological, catalytic, predictive,

concurrent, internal and external validities. The last two types: internal and external validity are very popular (Cohen et al, 2000; Seale, 1999) and have relevance with the present study. Cohen et al (2000) suggests internal validity can be achieved by giving an accurate description of the topic under investigation. It "concerns the extent to which causal propositions are supported in a study of a particular setting" (Seale 1999: 38). According to Cohen et al (2000: 109), external validity "refers to the degree to which the results can be generalised to the wider population, cases or situations."

The application and implications of validity differ with respect to the choice of paradigm: interpretive and positivist. In this regard, Cohen et al (2000:106) states that "the researcher will need to locate her discussions of validity within the research paradigm that is being used." Many authors supporting qualitative research use a different terminology than validity. Maxwell (1992) uses 'authenticity', whereas, Bassey (2002) prefers the term 'trustworthiness', and Lincoln and Guba (1985) prefer to use 'credibility' to internal validity and 'transferability' to external validity.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that qualitative researchers, instead of proposing generalisations, should concentrate on offering very vibrant and rich information of the research, leaving it to their readers to come to a decision if transferability is possible. In this regard, Guba (ibid: 316) remarks, "thus the naturalist cannot specify the external validity of an inquiry; he or she can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether the transfer can be contemplated as a possibility." Similarly, Seale (1999:107) argues "that the goal of generalisation is not always an important consideration for research studies. Particular cases may be worth investigating for their own sake."

With regard to the issue of generalisability in educational research, which refers to the applicability of research findings to other contexts and settings (Mills, 2000), there are difference of opinions. Best and Kahn (2006) believe that for addressing the issue of external validity, a researcher should accept the need to reproduce the study and its findings. However, Scott and Weeks (1998) suggest removing the notion that generalisation and external validity are essential in educational research. According to them, research that is sensitive to the settings/contexts, individuals, and conditions is equally valid. In addition, McNiff and Whitehead (2005:92) argue that "it is not possible to give solid evidence to prove research findings are trustworthy and credible."Somekh (2006:3) claims that,

> knowledge acquired from qualitative research is generalisable to similar settings …and …knowledge acquired from research involving close partnership with participants is quickly validated and appropriated by those in similar setting who recognize its immediate usefulness (ibid).

As mentioned earlier, the present study employs EP within the interpretive approach. So, necessary measures were taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the study in accordance with the paradigm chosen for the study. The study can enhance the internal validity by offering thick and rich description of the topic under investigation (Cohen et al 2000). To enhance the validity, the researcher has to give full details of every step and move taken during the project. The information regarding research context i.e. teachers, curriculum, learners, and problems faced in Remedial English classes is provided via pre-interviews. Group meetings captured the full record of EP work carried out by the participants. The post-interviews provide insight into the participants' experiences and views about EP as an approach to teacher development. The detailed description provides enough information to develop readers' confidence in the

authenticity (Maxwell, 1992) and trustworthiness (Bassey, 2002) of the findings of this study.

3.4. Data analysis

Analysis is a very crucial stage in which a researcher can employ different analytical methods in accordance with the purpose of the investigation and the data material (Kvale, 1996). The most common methods of data analysis in qualitative research are discourse analysis, thematic analysis, grounded theory. In addition, the most common approaches of analysis are "categorization, condensation, narrative structuring, deeper interpretations, and ad hoc tactics for the generation of meaning" (Kvale, 1996:181). However, Miles and Huberman (1994: 9) suggest a common analytical approach comprising of the following steps:

- Affixing codes to a set of field notes drawn from observations or interviews.

- Noting reflections or other remarks in the margins.

- Sorting and sifting through these materials to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, distinct differences between subgroups, and common sequences.

- Isolating these patterns and processes, commonalities and differences, and taking them out to the field in the next wave of data collection.

- Gradually elaborating a small set of generalisations that cover the consistencies discerned in the database.

- Confronting those generalisations with a formalized body of knowledge in the form of constructs or theories.

Ely et al (1991) asserts that analysis of qualitative research is largely flexible and reflective process to be informed by the data itself. However, researchers are advised to feel accountable for clearly mentioning their reasons for choosing particular methods and processes (Leiblich et al., 1998). Despite using any qualitative analytical method, Coffey and Atkinson (1996) stress the importance of writing craftsmanship, representation skills, and reading of the works of others as crucial inputs to insightful analysis.

In the present study, different methods of analysis were adopted to answer the research questions. As mentioned earlier, there were two main tools of data collection: interviews (pre-and post-interviews) and group meetings held in phase I and II of the project. They provided rich data to answer the research questions by serving both professional and academic purpose of the study. The pre-interviews served both professional and academic agenda and were conducted for three-fold purposes; first, to achieve insight into ELT profession at the university, from the teacher's perspective; second, stimulate participant teachers to think about the issues facing the ELT profession; third, serve as a starting point so that the researcher could evaluate the significance of what was carried out later during the project/ how far the work which was carried out during the project is significant and relevant for the ELT profession. The post-interviews mainly served the academic purpose by becoming familiar with the views of the participant-teachers about EP as an approach to their professional self-development after they had applied EP for their professional development. The group meetings which were the main and rich source of data served for both professional and academic purposes. The group meetings served a good platform for the participants' professional development where they helped each other through discussion and suggestions. These meetings contained details of each piece of EP research carried out

during the project which helped the researcher to achieve his academic goal by evaluating EP's (research in the form of puzzles) contribution towards the ELT profession at the USJP.

3.4.1. Analysis of interviews

In the present study, a thematic analysis method was employed for analyzing pre- and post-interviews conducted at the beginning and end of the project. According to this method, data is first closely studied to create and recreate categories and then themes are generated, patterns are identified and differences are noted (Ely et al, 1991). In thematic analysis, the researcher first focuses on categories from which themes are generated, but some start with generating themes instead of categories (Ely et al, 1991).

The writer was the only coder in the whole process, but he involved participants at different stages for checking validity on the data analysis. He shared transcripts of the interviews with all the participants in the beginning before moving into the coding process. He then shared the summary and themes of his analysis of the interviews before presenting the full analysis to all the individual participants. As a first step, each interview was transcribed. The transcription of the recorded data may be a time consuming and tedious process, but is considered a useful way to familiarize yourself with the data (Riessman, 1993). In addition, Bird (2005) considers transcription an important step of data analysis in qualitative research. After completing the transcription, the researcher checked the transcripts of all interviews against their original audio recordings for the sake of accuracy. The coding process is considered a main part of analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In the second phase, the codes were generated from the data by identifying features of the data which were found relevant to the research questions. The researcher made sure that the important features of the data did not go unattended. He thus used different text colours to identify features of relevant

data. For example, he used brown for 'Qualification' (QL), and green for 'Causes of Variation in Proficiency level' (CVPL). In this way, he produced 21 codes in total which represented opinions of the participants on different issues (see Appendix B).

In the third phase of the analysis, the coded data was organized into themes. The total of 21 codes formed six themes (see Appendix D). Some titles of the themes were same as the codes; other titles were developed by the researcher to fit in different codes under a single umbrella.

First theme titled "Personal profile" consists of four codes, QL (Qualification), TE (Teaching Experience), CETC (Challenges in Early Teaching Career, PDA (Professional Development Approaches).

The second theme titled "Variation in Proficiency Level" contains three codes, CVPL (Causes of Variation in Proficiency Level), DVPL(Difficulty in Attending Variation in Proficiency Level), WTVPL(Ways of Tackling Variation in Proficiency Level).

The third theme titled "Large classes" was comprises of three codes, IALC (Issues associated with Large classes), TALC (Techniques to address the issue of Large classes), SAILC (Suggestions to address the issue of Large classes).

The fourth theme titled " Some other issues facing ELT profession" was developed by putting together far related issues pointed out by the individual-participants such as Negative attitude, Low level of confidence, Students do not know importance of learning English, Preoccupation in covering syllabus, Duration of class, Psychological barrier.

The fifth theme titled "Views about Curriculum" consists of just two codes, AC (Appreciation of Curriculum), CC (Criticism of Curriculum).

The sixth theme titled "Suggestions to improve ELT profession in USJP" comprises of three codes, TT (Teachers' training), OS (Other suggestions), LD (list of demands).

After searching for common themes, the researcher entered into the phase of reviewing them. Firstly, the researcher reviewed the coded data extracts to make sure all collated extracts were logically connected and fit well into the different themes by forming a coherent pattern. Secondly, the researcher reviewed the entire data set to check the validity of themes developed out of codes taken from the data. In the final stage, the analysis was presented by providing sufficient evidence from the data extracts in a concise and interesting narrative form to the individual participants.

3.4.2. Analysis of group meetings

Group meetings in both phases of EP project were recorded. In phase I, reports (Appendix E) about all the participant-teachers were prepared from the transcription of the recorded team meetings. The reports included the record of all participants' attendance in the meetings, and their progress on their puzzles. The reports on the progress of puzzles by those who had left the project were prepared by the researcher himself, however, for those who had completed their inquiry into their puzzles, though the record of their progress was available in the transcription of the meetings, the researcher worked together with each of the three participants to develop narratives of their inquiry into the puzzles. The researcher provided the related transcripts of the meetings to the participants in order to provide extra support. The researcher monitored the activity of narrative writing so that no extra information could be added by the participants in their narratives by comparing it with the original transcripts.

In the phase II in which all participants worked together on the same puzzle, the researcher developed a summary of each meeting on the very day of meeting by listening to the recording which was then handed over to all the participants three days

before the next meeting. The summary of each meeting included a range of issues which are present in the following chapter. In the second phase, the inquiry was conducted in two stages; in the first stage teachers employed routine teaching activities, and in the second stage, we employed a questionnaire (Appendix F) for data collection. So for the data collected via the questionnaire in the final stage of this phase was analysed by using the software package commonly known as SPSS.

Throughout the project, the researcher has been sharing the data and its analysis with respective participants at different timings so that the chances of misinterpretation could be minimized and reliability of the results could be ensured. In other words, the participants have played an active role of the in the analysis of data. During the analysis, the full transcripts of coded pre- and post-interviews with a summary of the emergent themes were shared with every participant-teacher to make sure they accurately represented their views and experiences. Apart from seeking the cooperation of participants in enhancing the credibility of interview results, the researcher assisted the participant-teachers in developing narratives of their puzzles by providing them the transcripts of the group meetings. To ensure the validity of what they included in their puzzles, the researcher rechecked what the participants wrote in their puzzles by comparing them with the transcripts of meetings to ensure that participants had not added new information to the puzzles. In this way, group meetings provided an internal check to enhance the trustworthiness of the puzzles. Thus, all these measures were taken to ensure the validity of the study.

In order to seek the answer of the first research question *How far does this project abide by the principles of EP*, the researcher evaluated the work of all participant-teachers in the light of EP's six principles and two suggestions (Allwright, 2005). The analysis model is adopted from the way the six principles and two suggestions are presented in

literature review chapter. The six principles and two suggestions are presented in three headings on the basis of their proximity, and relation with each other.

1. Put the quality of life first to understand language classroom life.

2. Involve everybody by bringing people together so as to work for mutual development.

3. Make the work a continuous enterprise by integrating research into pedagogy.

The second research question "*What is the contribution of EP in developing understanding about the issues faced by the ELT profession at the USJP?*" seeks to understand the significance of EP as a form of practitioner research is answered by evaluating the contribution of EP research carried out by the participants in the form of puzzles. The researcher evaluates how far these puzzles were successful in addressing issues facing the ELT profession at the USJP.

The third research question "*What is the significance of EP as an approach to teacher development in the context of the USJP?*" is mainly answered from the results of post-interviews conducted twice in the project by those who left half way, and those who continued until the completion of the project. To answer this research question, the researcher evaluated the significance of EP as an approach to teacher development in the light of the experiences and viewpoints of both participants who left and those who completed the project.

The fourth research question *"What is the contribution of this investigation to our thinking about EP/research about EP?"* is not more than just thoughtful reflection and deliberation on the process and procedures of the project. It's purpose is to offer guidance to other teachers who may want to carry out an EP project, or undertake the

principles of EP in their teaching. In addition, the researcher wants to share findings with other EP practitioners in different contexts.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

Since the EP project comprises of two phases, the results of each phase are presented in separate sections. The researcher presents data in the order similar to one in which data were collected for two reasons. Firstly, the reader may get a clear idea of what is included in this chapter without breaking the flow of the narrative. Secondly, to put things in a logical order, there was no room to change the order of data in which data were collected except changing the order of post-interviews. Nevertheless, the order of post-interviews results was not changed because of its significance to answer the third research question clearly. In addition, it was more essential to understand individual views of every participant with respect to the work they carried out in the project. So, the results of post-interviews are presented in the order in which they were conducted so that the reader could better understand the individual views of the participants about EP as an approach to teacher-development in relation to their level of engagement in the project. The researcher also finds it convenient to discuss and answer the third research question while referring to related data in the fourth chapter.

Thus, the chapter starts with presentation of pre-interview results conducted at the beginning of the project. The pre-interview results give a description of the ELT profession at the USJP. It then reports on the progress of each individual teacher who participated in the project by attending group meetings in phase I. The data collected at the end of phase I present post-interview results of those participants who left the project half way or were unable to continue to the next phase. The phase II section includes a summary of all meetings; these summaries include details about the

discussions and decisions taken, investigative procedures employed, and data analysed throughout the inquiry in the phase II of the EP project. At the end of this chapter, post-interview results of the participant-teachers who participated in both phases are presented.

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, there was a three-fold purpose in conducting pre- interviews at the beginning of the project. Firstly, it was necessary to receive insight into the ELT profession at the university from the teachers' perspective. Secondly, pre-interviews which inquired largely about issues facing the ELT profession may well stimulate participant- teachers to think actively about ELT issues at the USJP. Thirdly, there was also an academic purpose in doing this. The pre-interview results serve as a starting point so that the researcher could evaluate the significance of what was carried out later during the project. In other words, the researcher can see how far the work which was carried out during the project is significant and relevant to the ELT profession as described by the participants themselves.

In the first section of this chapter, the analysis of data from pre-interviews presents a personal profile of each participant's qualifications, duration of teaching experience, and his/her early recollections of their teaching career, and existing teacher development approaches being employed to professional development. It also lists the issues and problems as identified by teachers in pre-interviews, and what approaches, if there were any, were being adopted to solve these issues. The teachers' views about the new curriculum are also presented here. It also mentions the suggestions given by teachers to improve the ELT profession at the University of Sindh.

4.2. Personal profile of teacher-participants

The actual names of the teacher-participants are not displayed to respect their privacy, thus pseudonyms are given below. It is also necessary to mention here that some codes are used while citing quotations from the interview-transcripts throughout this chapter. The codes are used to identify interviewees and page numbers from where quotations are taken. For example, in code "001:01", 001 identifies an interviewee and 01 identifies a page number of the transcript. This coding process helped in managing the process of data analysis.

4.2.1. Mr Hameed

Mr. Hameed has an MA English (literature) and has four years of teaching experience at the University of Sindh. He joined the profession without any pre-service teachers' training programs. During his early teaching career, he had to face a great deal of difficulty. The first six months of his career were like a challenge. He had to struggle a lot to cope with teaching as how to prepare for class, make lesson planning, maintaining discipline, and teaching to large classes. Recalling the early days of his teaching, he remarks: "'First class was like that I was empty after teaching for 20 minutes (he laughs)….now by the grace of Allah, I can take two hours class. This is how the experience has taught me" (001:01). In absence of any formal in-service teachers' support programs in the department, Mr. Hameed relies on learning from his experience to become a good teacher. According to him, it took him almost six months to feel some confidence in him as a teacher, and perform better in the class. For his professional development during the early period of teaching, he relied on referring to some books (he did not mention the names of these books) and occasional support from senior teachers.

4.2.2. Mr. Sangi

He is the most experienced participant in my project with fourteen years of experience at the University of Sindh, Jamshoro. He holds an MA (English Literature) and a diploma in ELT. He is the only person who believes he did not have any problem when he started his career. Recalling the early period of his career, he said he was asked to take an English grammar course. Since he was very sound in grammar teaching, he did not find any difficulty in teaching it to his students. For teaching grammar, he followed the traditional grammar translation model which his teachers used when he himself was a student. According to him, it is a common belief that 'if students know the grammar they know the language" (002:03). He felt confident while teaching English to his students because he was quite good at teaching grammar. However, he had to face some problems, classes were too large and he had to devise classroom activities which were not available in the course books so he had to print handouts himself and get them photocopied for his students. He could not continue this way as it was expensive for him. Therefore, he had to depend once again on the blackboard and chalk because these were the only facilities available in the class. Thus, he would write on the blackboard and students would copy from it. This way of teaching and learning took a lot of time.

His professional journey marked a shift from the traditional grammar method to a communicative teaching method after successfully completing a diploma in CLT (communicative language teaching). Before studying for the diploma, he taught grammar to students in the class, but then he changed his approach and started arranging communicative type of activities. According to him, "….. this was the basic source of improvement in my own teaching that I used communicative exercises in the class and thus could motivate the students also and interact with them in a better way" (002:03).

4.2.3. Mrs Komal

She has four years of teaching experience at the University of Sindh. Before joining the university, she used to teach at secondary level in a private school. Although she has an MA (English Literature) which is a prerequisite to become a teacher at the university, she regrets that it is not a relevant and useful qualification, and wishes to get some qualification in ELT. While recalling her early experience at the University of Sindh, she says she had faced a great deal of difficulty in teaching to a combined class (large class) consisting of students from various departments, she says,

> I was in a complete shock as if I was speaking to the worlds. Not even a single word of my language was understood by the students. For that, unfortunately, I had to go for language translation method explaining some of the words in Sindhi, some of the words in Urdu. So I had to use three languages for teaching them (003:01).

For her professional development, she learnt from her surrounding, by which she meant adapting her teaching style to the needs of her students. She observed classes closely before adopting her teaching style. For example, she developed a serious tone for serious students and becomes friendly with those who wanted her to be flexible and easy going. Keeping in view the nature of the class, she employed different strategies in different classes. She spoke in English in Management Science and Mass Communication, and had to resort to the Grammar Translation Method in combined classes where students did not understand English.

4.2.4. Miss Shumaila

She has an MA (English Literature) with two years of teaching experience. She acknowledges that although an MA (English literature) is a pre-requisite qualification to

become an English language teacher in a university, it is not useful when someone starts his/her teaching career. She says,

> ….. I had literature background, when I came to teach language, it was quite new field for me. Language was not the problem, but how to teach it in the class was. So like in the start, of course, even right now, if I think about myself, then I will think if I get some workshops, like seminars, teachers' training programs like how to teach English language. So I was void of such things, because we have background in literature (004:01).

For her professional development, she worked as an apprentice under the guidance of a senior teacher in the early period of her teaching career. Working under the guidance of the senior teacher, she learnt how to teach, and developed teaching skills, got to know certain methods, and learnt a few tips to handle students. According to her, all that helped her develop as a good teacher. Despite working under the guidance of the senior teachers, she still had to face difficulty in teaching to large classes with students having varying levels of proficiency.

4.2.5. Mr.Shoib Shah

Shoib Shah holds two degrees: MA (English Literature) and MA (Linguistics).He has been teaching at the University of Sindh for the last two years. He started his teaching career by teaching to secondary level students in a well reputed private school in Hyderabad after successfully completing his Masters qualifications. He believes he had learnt a few techniques and strategies from his past teaching experience at school level, but teaching at university level was an entirely different experience. He recalls his early teaching experience at the University of Sindh as "catastrophic full of challenges, and

uncertainties."He says he was always short of confidence, uncertain about how to teach, felt nervous before going to class. Recalling his early teaching career he believes:

> …. I would say training is fundamental…as educator must be educated before educating others…so a teacher must be trained before teaching - …its (teaching) a science, teaching is almost like a science, we need to be trained, It is very important for the teachers to be trained how to conduct large classes, how to carry on the lessons, how to teach any skill…… (005:02).

While being asked how he worked for his professional development, he does not specify any technique or familiar pattern. However, he says he works on his mistakes by reflecting on the errors. He believes that the practice of reflecting on his mistakes helps his professional development. He thinks he still has many flaws in his teaching and he is working towards improve them.

4.2.6. Miss Ishrat

She has an MA (English literature) and has four years of teaching experience at the University of Sindh. While recalling her early teaching experience, she was uncertain about many things that she did in the class as she did not know whether what she did was right or wrong, so she had to struggle in the beginning of her career in absence of any guidance or assistance for newly appointed teachers. Since there was no specific syllabus when she joined the Institute of English Language & Literature, she had to prepare the class activities by reading and referring to many books on language learning in absence of any defined curriculum. Now she feels she has learnt so much from her past experience that she now feels comfortable while working as a teacher.

While talking about how she worked for her professional self-development, she says she learnt while teaching. To her, experience is her best teacher. Although she claims that her past experience had helped her understand students, their behaviour and psyche, and gain knowledge of learners' problems, she does not specify any pattern that she employed in her professional development.

4.2.7. Miss Sumera

She holds an MA (English literature) and has been teaching English to university students for two and a half years. While recalling her early teaching career at the University of Sindh, she says she had a terrible experience of teaching a combined class consisting of students from 12 different departments. So she struggled a lot at the beginning of her career at the USJP because she was trying to cope with issues such as large classes, students with varying level of proficiency and disciplinary problems. According to her, the sort of experience which she had gained while working in another university before coming to the USJP proved not to be useful for her as a teacher. So she believes every newly appointed teacher who joins the USJP should be given some training in how to deal with large classes, how to maintain discipline, and to teach English to students with varying level of proficiency in English . In addition to offering pre-service teachers' training, she suggests developing a healthy and inspiring working environment in which senior teachers should help inexperienced teachers in their early career development.

4.2.8. Mr. Ab. Wahid

He holds an MA in English literature and an MA in Linguistics. He has been working as a tutor at the University of Sindh for the last three years. He had some problems at the beginning of his career. He had to struggle to become a teacher in the absence of any formal support from colleagues or in-service training programs. Recalling his

experience, when he was asked to take large classes consisting of 250 students, he found himself completely at loss while facing a crowded class. His voice did not reach students, and he was unable to maintain discipline in the class. However, he believes he has learnt certain things from his previous experience which are quite helpful for him to teach such large classes. He believes his MA in linguistics has helped him a lot during his teaching career; the TESOL module was practically helpful in many ways which helped him in his career development. On being asked how he worked for his professional development, he remarked:

> '….sir, when I go to the class. I there feel that I should be a good teacher or the best teacher in the eyes of students as well as in the eyes of authorities. Second, I myself try as well striving for these things. When I have got free time in my home I study good books regarding ELT as well as some of the English stuff. It is very useful for me as a teacher (008:02).

4.3. Issues facing ELT profession at USJP

The ELT profession at the USJP does not only have teachers' training issue but it has a variety of other issues as well which include large classes, poor background of learners, unavailability of resources, the negative attitude of learners towards learning English, lack of research and inquiry, poor management, and other disciplinary issues. Some of these issues raised by teacher-participants in their pre-interviews are given below.

4.3.1. The poor background /varying proficiency levels among USJP learners

The issue of differing levels of proficiency among USJP graduates was the one most highlighted by teacher-participants. Some participant-teachers believed that variation in proficiency level has been one of the main hindrances in teaching the Remedial English

course. In the following sections, I present views of the participant-teachers about variation in proficiency level among learners in a Remedial English class. The teacher-participants spoke on the causes of variation in proficiency, and the difficulties they face in teaching Remedial English, and ways they tackle these issues.

4.3.1.1. The Causes of variation in proficiency level

There may be different causes of variation in proficiency level of learners. However, five teacher-participants mentioned only two main causes: poor schooling and rural and urban location of learners. Four teacher-participants thought that poor schooling is one of main causes of variation in proficiency level among learners. Majority of students who get admission at the USJP receive their education in public sector schools which are almost dysfunctional due to mismanagement, corruption, and merit is not considered in the appointments of teachers. One participant mentioned that English teachers in public sectors schools are not qualified teachers. That is another important reason that a majority of students who spend considerable time in learning English at their previous schooling, do not have basic knowledge of English.

One teacher-participant thought that rural-urban location plus socio-economic background of the learners are main reasons for their variation in proficiency level. There are better private schools in urban areas and the students who belong to rural areas have to rely on public sector schools. Thus, those students who come from urban areas have better background knowledge of English as compared to those who come from rural areas. In this way, the wealthier class can afford better schooling for their children in the private sector and can afford home tuition for their children as well. Whereas, lower middle class students seek their whole education at public sector schools and have a little background knowledge of English. In this regard one participant remarked: "in a class we have always got the mixed group, some students

from urban areas, they are quite good at language but those who come from rural areas, they are not so good so this problem of putting the two groups together sometimes creates the problem, because there are some students who always try in the class to go ahead in advance, while the others lag behind (Sangi: page: 05).

4.3.1.2. Difficulties in dealing with issue of variation in proficiency level

Differing levels of proficiency among learners create a great deal of difficulties for teachers in various ways. All the teacher-participants agreed with each other that they could not keep tempo due to varying levels of proficiency. They have to change their strategy in order to accommodate all levels of students. Employing different approaches disturbs their classroom management. One teacher said when he spared some extra time to help low ability group of students by repeating the information, the other students with a stronger background lose interest and complain. In contrast, another teacher-participant said when he treated all students at same level; he has to face the dissatisfaction of those with a poorer background. In this way, teachers find themselves on horns of dilemma, and had to vacillate from one strategy to the other in order to accommodate students with varying level of proficiency.

4.3.1.3. Ways of tackling variation in proficiency level

Teachers adopt different ways and means to tackle these issues. The most common way was to approach students personally, give them individual attention to help cope with problems through motivation or start from the basic level, and start teaching them the basic skills to push low proficient students to attain the level of other students in the class. Two teacher-participants claimed to apply some of the ways to tackle the issue, but were unable to describe particular steps or actions that they took. On being asked how they tackled the issue of varying level of proficiency, the participant- teachers described different ways, some of which are mentioned below:

- I tried to start with zero (from basic level) by explaining things more vividly. To some extent, task is done, but not completely done. The problem remains the same as usual (Shoib Shah: page 02).

- Sometimes, we have to give special time to a candidate, who does not understand the things that the rest of the class does understand. So in that way, it's difficult to manage or control all those different mind-sets. In 30 or 45 minutes, I do activities in the class as all students with the different levels come together and let the low proficiency level students grow out of this environment (Ishrat: page 03).

- What I have to practically do is to explain to them things more and more, again and again. Then they are able to catch up and cope up with that of the students of the higher level. Basically, the material is same, given to all types of students, some students can do these exercise on their own. But others are there, which (who) need these explanations again and again, I need to go to them, talk to them, give them examples, and then to some extent , they are also able to do these exercises (Sangi: page 05)

The variation in proficiency level is a bitter reality which is rooted in prior schooling of learners. There is no denying the fact that it poses a serious problem for teachers in the smooth running of the Remedial English classes. However, no serious efforts have been taken by either the teachers or the university authorities to address this issue properly. Teachers have been dealing with this issue in a unilateral method which is to spare some extra time and give special attention to the low ability group and start from zero level to pull everyone along in the class. However, while trying to deal with this issue, teachers will have to face other difficulties such as they are unable to complete the course on time, or when teachers devote extra time to help low ability groups of students, the other

students with a stronger background lose interest. So, teachers have to compromise on attending to the issue of variation in proficiency levels. Although, university authorities cannot address this issue at the grass root level, they can resolve it to a large extent by introducing different English courses to accommodate learners with various levels of proficiency. University authorities can also arrange some short training courses for teachers on how to deal with this issue.

4.3.2. Large classes

As part of ELT reforms starting from 2005, the USJP authorities proposed to divide the large classes in sections; however, it has not been possible in every institute due to the unavailability of classrooms in some departments. Thus, there are still very large classes amounting to more than 200 students sometimes. In this regard, Sangi remarked, "now the difference is there after the introduction of Remedial English to some extent, the classes are smaller though they are not to an ideal level (page: 02).In this way, there is no uniform number of students in Remedial classes in various departments. Large classes pose a variety of problems in Remedial English. Teacher-participants reflection on the issue of large classes in presented below.

4.3.2.1. Issues associated with large classes

While dwelling on the issue of large classes, all the participants agreed that in the past the classes were too large. In this regard, one participant said that large classes looked like political gatherings. He further maintained that this problem of large classes has been solved to some extent because the classes are smaller, but still are not to an ideal level. The teachers still face a variety of problems in large classes while teaching the Remedial English course, which are mentioned below:

- Due to many students in large classes and class duration of just 50 minutes, teachers have to face the difficulty in carrying out discussions or arranging presentations (Shumaila).

- The issue of mixed ability groups is common in every class, but it becomes more acute in large classes where it is quite difficult for teachers to offer individual attention to the students of lower levels (Wahid; Sumera).

- The atmosphere of rivalry and antagonism is a by-product of combined classes. Combined classes are main reasons to have large classes. In combined classes, students who come from various departments do not get on well with each other, and thus develop unfriendly feelings for one another which affect the overall environment (Shumaila).

- Large classes become difficult to manage, and it becomes difficult for teachers to maintain the decorum, which bring about some disciplinary issues such as noisy classes, lack of interest among students, rivalry (Komal; Sumera; Hameed).

- AV resources are not available in all classes, so a teacher's lecture is not audible to students in large classes (Hameed; Wahid; Komal).

- Submitting assignments is part of exam assessment in the Remedial English course. So every student submits assignments, which becomes quite difficult for teachers to assess assignments of all students in large classes (Shoib Shah).

- Individual class presentation is a very common practice in Remedial English classes. In large classes, it is not possible for teachers to allow all

willing participants to present. Keeping in view the time limit, the teachers will have to pick a few individuals for class presentation. In this way, those students who do not get a chance complain and grumble against this attitude and blame teachers for prioritising some students and ignoring others (Ishrat).

4.3.2.2. Techniques to address the issue of large classes

The teacher-participants listed a variety of problems they currently face in large classes. However, half of the teachers did not specify any specific strategy to tackle the issue of large classes. Four of the eight teachers mentioned that they adopted only one method to address the issue; that is arranging pair work, and holding group discussions. In so doing they have to face other key problems. Two teachers said they attend the issue of large classes by conducting group discussion or group work but they say it does not work well due to unsuitable material in the course books and unavailability of AV resources, and overhead projector. One participant believes that a reason why pair and group work does not go well is variation in the academic background of learners. According to him, if a group or pair has got learners with mixed ability, then it does not work well. Some students are very strong and others are quite below the level so much that they cannot speak English or understand the activity. As a result, they remain inactive. In this way, the group or pair work fails. In addition, one participant also highlighted that group or pair work do not work well in Remedial English classes due to seating arrangements and shortage of space. Seats are fixed in rows which are immovable and the class is usually packed with students. Students cannot form a group in order to work with each other; they can only work in groups while being seated in rows rather than in a circular form. One participant mentioned that fifty minutes which

is the duration of a class, is another hindrance in successfully arranging and completing group or pair work activities in large classes.

4.3.2.3.   Suggestions to address the issue of large classes

On being asked, teachers offered a few following suggestions for immediate solution of the above given problem.

- Timings of the class should be increased (Shoib Shah).

- Classes should be spacious where seating arrangement could be managed easily (Shumaila).

- An audio sound system should be made available and an overhead projector should replace a blackboard (Hameed; Wahid; Komal).

- More teachers should be employed to solve the problem (MK Sangi).

- Six participants out of eight demanded that the number of students in class should not exceed 40.

As part of the ELT reforms in 2005 at the USJP, the issue of large classes was solved to some extent. However, since then no efforts have been taken to address this issue on a regular basis in view of the fact that there is always a significant increase in number of student admissions in each new academic year. Since 2005, the numbers of students have increased three-fold, but no efforts have been taken to construct new classes and hire new teachers. In addition, the approach, teachers use towards addressing the issue of large classes does not seem to be very useful, as they only try to solve the issue by arranging pair work and group work. They themselves admitted that pair and group work do not work well due to other problems. Thus, it seems as if the issue of large classes cannot be resolved until serious efforts are taken by the university authorities and the teacher community together.

4.4. Some other issues faced by the ELT profession at the USJP

Apart from the issue of large classes and varying levels of proficiency among the USJP students, the teachers also raised certain other issues. These issues help us to gain insights into other problems that the ELT profession is currently facing at the USJP.

4.4.1. Negative attitude

Ishrat pointed out the issue of negative attitude of learners towards learning English. According to her, the negative attitude of students towards learning English means that they do not like to learn English, but attend the Remedial class in order to pass the exam with good grades. Students' priority is to achieve good grades rather than understanding or learning English. The participant strongly believes it will not be possible to achieve success without changing this attitude amongst students.

4.4.2. Students do not know the importance of English thus they don't take interest in Remedial English

Hameed supposes that students do not take interest in English because they do not know its importance. According to him, the learning situation in Remedial English cannot improve until we (teachers) are successful in convincing learners that learning English is very important in their career development.

4.4.3. Low level of confidence among the students

Komal mentioned that lack of confidence/belief in self among learners affect negatively on the overall performance of students, in particular, those students who come from rural areas. According to her, to improve ELT conditions, teachers should try to think hard about how to develop confidence among the students who come from rural areas.

4.4.4. Teachers' preoccupation with covering syllabus

Wahid believes that teachers remain preoccupied with covering the course-books which diverts their attention from real issues. They seem to just focus on covering the course books rather than understanding the problems of learners

4.4.5. Duration of class

Fifty minutes class duration was one of issues raised by a majority of the participants who pointed out that, it is very difficult to carry out classroom activities such as pair work, group work, or other interactive activities in Remedial English classes within the time constraint.

4.4.6. Psychological Barriers

MK Sangi pointed out the issue of psychological barriers as a main hindrance learners face while acquiring English language. He himself was not quite clear about what he exactly meant by psychological barrier. He says it is very difficult for teachers to explore this problem which can take a long time to overcome or address.

4.5. Views about the curriculum

As mentioned in the first chapter, for the first time in the history of the university since its inception in 1948, the name of the course 'English compulsory' was replaced with 'Remedial English' in 2002, and a new curriculum was introduced in 2005. In the following section, the views of the participants about the latest curriculum are presented below:

Six out of eight teacher-participants appreciated and admired the curriculum as more effective for both teachers and learners, two participants criticized it as unsuitable for the USJP, and one disregarded the importance of the curriculum, and demanded not to

have a fixed curriculum as it does not help in improving the ELT conditions at the USJP.

4.5.1. Appreciation of the curriculum

While lavishing the praise on the existing curriculum, one of the teacher-participants remarks, "There are grade types of exercises in the book, they are not useful only for the students but we also learn from these exercises. There are instructions given on how to use the piece of text, which helps to devise more activities on that pattern" (Sangi; page 02). Sangi meant that the exercises in the beginning are simple and easier and move towards the difficult exercises. Hameed said that books are not only useful for learners but they provide enough guideline on how to teach the material inside the books which makes the task easier for the teachers and we (teachers) benefit a lot from following instructions on how to teach different units given in every section. Wahid shared almost the same opinion by saying that the nature of the course books as being self-introductory with guidelines given on how to carry out activities helps him in his professional development. Shumaila finds many merits in the existing course, such as, it is an activity based and functional in nature, and is self-explanatory compared with the previous course of compulsory English which focused mainly on literature. However, she finds some difficulties in covering some parts of course books in absence of audio and visual aids. Sangi said that due to the nature of course books, the teachers are impelled to adopt a task-based language teaching in which learners are exposed to real-life language by providing genuine opportunities for learners to practice English in classroom which was almost non-existent in the past when he taught the old curriculum. Sangi also agrees with Hameed, Shumaila and Wahid that the course books are self-explanatory.

4.5.2. Criticism of the Curriculum

Being critical of the course books, Shoib Shah remarked the curriculum is idealized which does not match with the contextual realities at the USJP, such as, very large classes and different proficiency levels among learners in a class, lack of equipments such as audio visual aids, and unsuitable materials in the course book. According to him, though it is claimed that the course books are based on CLT but on closer inspection, they are not really based on CLT. He argues that, though the syllabus (curriculum) has been changed, there is no change in teaching methodology, and teachers teach in the traditional way in which they spend much time lecturing rather than creating interaction (interactive class) between students, and students and between teachers and students.

Dwelling on the importance of course books, particularly efficacy of the Remedial English syllabus, Komal believes that the course books are not important. Since she has taught both the old and new curriculum, she does not find considerable difference in the effects of two different curriculums on the learning outcomes of students. She criticizes the concept of a fixed curriculum in the face of variation in proficiency level of learners so one size cannot fit all. However, she admits that there must be a single curriculum but that should be somehow flexible as teachers may be able to adapt it to the needs of their learners.

The majority (6 out of 8) of participants appreciated the new curriculum and considered it to be better than the previous one because they found it useful for both learners and teachers themselves. The course books are activity based and provide opportunities for learners to practice language. Teachers seem to receive enough guidance on how to teach the books which helps them in their professional development. The admiration was accompanied with criticism of the curriculum being unsuitable for the contextual

realities of the USJP. Over all, the majority of teachers were appreciative of the new curriculum. The reason may be that they would have compared it with the previous syllabus which contained English poetry, essays and some novels and plays and a book of traditional grammar. Thus, their views should be taken in the perspective of comparison of the new curriculum with the old one. Otherwise, one participant who said that curriculum is not suitable for the ground realities at the USJP may be right. However, we take for granted the views of the participants for the new curriculum until some special study is conducted to assess the efficacy of the new curriculum in Remedial English classes.

4.6. Suggestions to improve ELT environment at USJP

There were different suggestions given by the participants, but all the participants reiterated the need for teachers' education and development programs. In the sections following, we will first describe the views of teacher-participants about teacher education programs in the USJP, and then enlist their suggestions given for improving ELT conditions in the university.

4.6.1. Teachers' training

All of the participants believed that pre-service training should be provided to all new-comers in the profession. According to them, a newly appointed teacher who teaches without pre-service training finds him/herself in a very difficult and confusing situation until s/he learns to teach (learning from experience) over a quite long period. Many teachers, as mentioned in the beginning, revealed that they learnt from their experience and believed if they had received pre-service training, they would have been on a better track from the very beginning of their career.

Teacher-participants also reiterated the need to have regular in-service teachers' training programs for their professional development. Some teachers wanted to have short term workshops on particular issues. For example, how to deal with large classes, and what are the psychological barriers among the students that they are unable to learn English, or how to deal with the issue of variation in level of proficiency.

4.6.2. Other suggestions

Ishrat believed the most critical issue is the negative attitude of learners towards learning English and if this is addressed quite well, there is much possibility of improvement in the ELT profession at the university. She suggests the following three ways/steps to tackle the issue:

1. Teachers themselves should change their attitude and must be clear that their job is not just to complete the syllabus (curriculum) but to make sure that learning takes place in their classes.

2. The Remedial English course should be non-creditable as students may feel more comfortable and focus on learning rather than just thinking about getting a good result in the exam.

3. Teachers should try to create a very friendly and healthy environment, and participate in the class as a learner rather as an authoritarian.

In order to achieve the above goals, she insists on carrying out collective efforts involving all concerned: teachers, learners, and administrative officials. The students should be offered a platform to share their issues with the teachers and administrators, and collective efforts should be taken to attend to the problems of learners.

Komal, while suggesting some improvements in ELT profession at the university, disregards the importance of the curriculum, and even the teaching itself. According to her, it is critical to understand the problems of learners. Students have psychological issues; they are either upset, overconfident or have no confidence at all. She therefore suggests that the first month of each session should be spent in orientation of the students, and efforts should be made by the teachers to understand learners' problems. Otherwise, there is no possibility for positive change in the teaching and learning environment.

4.7. List of demands

In addition to offering some suggestions, the teacher-participants made the following list of demands to be met immediately by the administration or concerned authorities.

- Technological help such as providing AV resources.

- Soft boards should replace the blackboard.

- Repeated failure of electricity should be addressed by providing standby generators.

- The classrooms should be air-conditioned because the sound of ceiling fans during summer hinders teachers' voice from reaching out to the whole class.

- The institute should provide a language a laboratory, and library with appropriate books and language learning games.

- Number of students in a class should be 30 or at the most not more than 60.

4.8. Individual reports about participants' progress in the Project

In the following section, I present a report about each individual participant who was a member of the EP project. The progress report of each individual member is developed from analyzing each group meeting. The story of each participant may depend on the following: their personal circumstances, level of interest and understanding the principles of EP, and concern towards their professional development, nature of puzzle (difficult or easy), and variation in the dedication, and feelings of motivation and frustration arising while working on the project. However, group meetings are used to tell the story of how each individual progressed in the project, what puzzle he/she picked, and their progress are presented below. At the beginning of this section, I am presenting individual progress reports of those who could not complete their inquiry into their respective puzzles.

4.8.1. MK Sangi

MK Sangi who attended just the first two meetings of the project came up first in picking his puzzle. He was concerned *why students did not come forward to participate in the class*. It seems he was already concerned with this issue, and found EP as a platform to conduct inquiry into this issue. As soon as he picked the puzzle, he started his inquiry. In other words, he was very quick in picking a puzzle and addressing it. In order to address his puzzle, he first tried to discover the reasons and causes why students did not participate in the class. He realized through reflection that one reason may be that he prefers individual students who answers all his questions so quickly that other students do not have a chance to take their turn. At the initial stage, he convinced the student not to participate so that the other students may get a chance. In this way, he witnessed some progress from other students, and wanted to further investigate this issue. However, he did not attend after his second meeting.

In a short period of time, MK Sangi was very quick in picking his puzzle and solving it. While conducting inquiry into his puzzle, he seems to have departed from the essential principles of EP. His approach has been more towards solving problem rather than putting "quality of life" first which may be why he went straight into solving the issue without "understanding language classroom life." His approach to address the issue was single handedly carried out by him via personal reflection without involving anybody which is against the spirit of EP which emphasizes the learners' involvement. In this way, it is clear that MK Sangi's inquiry into his puzzle did not follow the principles of EP. There may be two reasons why his inquiry was not according to the spirit of EP; firstly, he seems to have already been pre-occupied with this issue and approached it in an arbitrary way without trying to undertake the principles of EP, and second, he could not understand the principles of EP because he stayed for a short period of time with the EP group, and therefore was unable to apply them.

4.8.2. Komal

Komal who also attended just two gatherings made her mind to work on balancing the level of confidence among her students. She was one of the most enthusiastic members of the group. She participated quite freely, and was generous in giving suggestion to other participants. For instance, her suggestions to Ishrat showed that she had developed a good understanding of the principles of EP. However, she struggled in working on her own puzzle. Komal made up her mind to work on the confidence level of her students. For this she stated she would help build confidence of those who lack it and balance the confidence of those who are over confident.

Komal had already identified the issue of confidence level among the students in her pre-interviews. So, she picked that as a puzzle in order to address it. In the second meeting, when I asked her how she would identify over confident, and low confident

learners, she replied that the face of student showed whether he was confident or not. All that indicates, she was proceeding to approach the issue without developing adequate understanding. After the meeting, she did not reappear. There may be different reasons; maybe she left due to the complex nature of her puzzle which she found difficult to cope with, but in her post-interviews she said she left because she was unable to concentrate on her teaching while attending group meetings/working on the project.

4.8.3. Sumera

Sumera attended three meetings in all. She struggled alot in picking an appropriate puzzle. She came up with different types of issues which were too broad to be covered within the given time of a semester. All these issues were dropped after her discussion with me and other group members when we discussed the mechanism of approaching these issues. After a long time, and her frequent personal meetings and discussion with me, she seemed to have picked an appropriate puzzle "why students are not ready to participate in group activity." She picked this puzzle in the third meeting, and then she could not continue because she had to prepare for her selection board as mentioned in her post-interview.

4.8.4. Ishrat

Ishrat was a unique case who attended all the team meetings but could not make any significant progress on her puzzle. In her puzzle, she wanted to tackle the issue of variation in level of proficiency among her students. She had been struggling to approach this issue due to its complex nature and suggested different proposals which were either not possible or were abandoned when she could not make progress on them. In her fourth meeting, she decided to conduct a test to identify the proficiency levels of the learners in her class. While conducting the test, she also asked learners to include

their personal information such as rural/urban location, private/public schooling, gender so that she would become able check the results, and will monitor how their performance or proficiency in English relates to their schooling, gender, and locality. The positive aspect was that she used a normal routine teaching activity as an investigative procedure for her inquiry, but this stage did not seem to be leading her to further inquiry into her puzzle.

4.8.5. Mr Shoib Shah

While working as a member of the EP group, Shoib Shah was struggling to select a puzzle. He finally made up his mind <u>to investigate why students took more interest in the reading unit *Traffic Nightmare* compared to the *Age of Probot*.</u> This puzzle developed out of his perception that students seemed to be less interested in the second unit 'The Age of Probot' as compared to the first unit 'Traffic Nightmare'. He supposed that the first unit, having familiar topic of traffic problem, was more popular among his students. On the other hand, the second unit which dealt with the unfamiliar topic about Probot, was less popular especially among those students who come from rural areas, and were educated in public sector schools. Mr. Shoib's supposition was challenged when one of members in a meeting disagreed with him and argued that he believed that students liked *Age of Probot* more than *Traffic Nightmare*. This served as an impetus for him to inquire more into this issue.

He decided to utilize student assignments as a tool for data collection. Assignments are part of the assessment, carrying five marks for each module in each semester. He gave the students an assignment to explain the reasons why they do not like the units: *Traffic Nightmare and Age of Probot*. He asked the students to work in a group of five and offered them the freedom to form a group by themselves. He received 14 assignments in which 73 students participated. There were 3 groups of six students; the remaining

groups had five students each. The teacher asked the students to focus on the following three aspects of the units under inquiry,

1. Theme /their relevance to their life.

2. Vocabulary used.

3. Type of exercise/ activities.

Thematically, many students liked Unit II. They said the idea of robots was new for them but it was very interesting to imagine how robots can facilitate human life. Many wished they had robots. They said that it was easy to remember the story about robots because it was very interesting. Thus, they found the unit *Age of Probot* easy to learn. In contrast to unit II, the majority of students found the first unit about *Traffic Nightmare* less relevant and less interesting. As majority of students come from rural areas and small towns where there are as such no traffic issues, students thought that the unit about traffic issues was less relevant and rather unfamiliar, thus they found it boring. According to them, due to the unit being less interesting, they took less interest and did not participate in the class discussion which in turn, affected their performance in the class. However, some students said that the theme was interesting but the exercises were boring and difficult. The students who liked this unit may have been from cities which suffer from traffic problems but even then some issues such as pedestrian crossing are still unknown as there is no concept of pedestrian crossing even in many large cities in Pakistan.

Most of the students found the vocabulary used in both units difficult, which created a lot of problems for them to read and understand and also to participate in the class activities. Comparing the vocabulary used in both units, students found the

vocabulary in first unit less difficult. The number of difficult words mentioned by the students in each unit are given in the following table:

Unit 1	Unit 2
1. Come into force	6. Drift
2. Squeeze	7. Whisk away
3. Die down	8. Utopia
4. Monitor	9. Strenuous
5. Nightmare	10. Profound
	11. Widespread
	12. Portray
	13. Chores
	14. Mystery
	15. Manipulate
	16. Tremendous
	17. Virtually eliminated

The majority of the participant-students found exercises such as B (finding the fact page 4) and D (reporting questions) in unit 1 very difficult and boring. Some students found exercise A (making notes), and B (writing the minutes) from Unit I

difficult. Despite having difficult vocabulary used in unit II, many students found exercises in unit II interesting, and made positive comments about the exercises in unit II.

On the whole, unit II *The Age of Probot* was found more interesting as compared to the first one *The Traffic Nightmare*. Thematically, students liked unit II, and in terms of vocabulary, both units were found to be difficult. However, students had found more difficult words in unit II compared to unit I. Students found exercise and activities in unit II very interesting and they did not like the exercises in Unit 1 as these were difficult and boring.

Initially, Shoib Shah experienced difficulty in undertaking the principles of EP in his teaching. However, he was successful in the end by making productive use of routine teaching activities for the purposes of data collection. This indicates that it is normal for novice EP practitioners to find it challenging in the beginning. Being successful in accomplishing inquiry into his puzzle would certainly have boosted his confidence about use of EP in his teaching. On the whole, Shoib Shah's progress is in contrast with the progress of Ishrat in the project. Both of them found EP challenging in the beginning to practice, and only one of them was successful in completing his inquiry near the end.

4.8.6. Miss Shumaila

She started with the idea of comparing the combined class with a class of Economics. A combined class at the university is made up of students from various departments/disciplines together to attend the Remedial English course. Her inquiry initiated from her query *why things are better in a class of Economics and bad in a combined class?* She observed that the class of Economics was easy going compared to

the combined class, and overall performance of students in Economics was better than that of the combined. She therefore started making some observations in the combined class to understand why things were not going well. She made the following observations which according to her were the most frequent issues that she confronted:

a) Only few students take part in the class.

b) Backbenchers (who sit in the chairs at the back of the class) hardly participate and seem to be taking less interest in learning.

c) Some students want to participate but appear scared and feel hesitant.

d) It's difficult to create interaction in such a large class.

e) Many students appear uneasy and feel uncomfortable in the combined class.

Having made these observations, she discussed them with other members in group meetings. She then decided to start her inquiry about why students feel uncomfortable in a combined class. She picked this puzzle because she believed other issues are likely to be linked. For example, if they are uncomfortable, they may feel hesitant which may be why they do not engage. If they are unwilling to participate, it will be very hard to conduct an interactive class. So she thought the key issue is to know 'why they are not comfortable'. By doing so, she would get answers to other issues as well.

She sought suggestions of participant-teachers about what possible ways could be adopted to collect data on this issue. Some participants suggested conducting interviews, holding individual meetings to find out why students are uncomfortable in combined class. However, she decided to engage students in a group activity as a way to collect information on the issue under inquiry. In the group activity, she asked students to discuss why they felt uncomfortable in the class. For this, she asked students to work

in a group of five in which one member would act as the group leader. All the members in a group were asked to speak in English during discussion. During the activity, the group leader in each team took notes of views of all participants during the discussion. At the end of the activity, all group leaders presented the report of their respective groups to her. At her leisure, she worked on these reports submitted by the group leaders and discovered the following main themes as most common reasons for students being uncomfortable in the class.

- They feel shy in the presence of students from other departments.

- Students from departments of Fine Arts and Sindhi are more confident, which leaves impression on other students that this class is not the right level for them.

- Class space is not sufficient enough to accommodate all students easily.

- The presence of students from other departments has a negative effect on their confidence.

- They feel afraid of being mocked at by other students if they make any grammatical mistakes. By not participating, their weaknesses remain hidden.

- They do not feel relaxed in the class.

The initial analysis of the data collected showed that the main reason of their being uncomfortable was the combined class itself. To further establish this fact, she decided to maintain a diary/note book where she made notes for some days to see whether it was true that students felt uncomfortable in the combined class. The purpose of doing it was to look at the fact from another angle to develop a deeper understanding about the issue.

The following facts discovered through making diary notes supported the view point that students are not comfortable in the combined class:

- Students from each department sat together making their own group, and did not mingle with other students. They got the seats reserved for their fellows from their respective departments, and did not allow any other students from a different department to sit together with them.

- They showed undue support to the students from their departments if he/she came forward for presentation or participation in the class and discouraged or looked down on the students from other departments if he/she made even a minor mistake. Due to this environment, the number of participants decreased.

- If teacher admired somebody from one department, the students from other departments became jealous of him/her.

- They kept demanding from the very beginning to have separate attendance sheets only because they belonged to separate departments.

- They came up with unjustified complaints against each other.

- The class seem to be divided, which disturbed teaching and learning activities.

It was confirmed through two different sources that students of one department did not feel comfortable sitting together with the students from other departments, and there was some rivalry or jealousy existing among the students of different departments. Realizing the fact that she could not change the issues of having a combined class, she thought of arranging a departmental competition in order to exploit jealousy/rivalry into a healthy competition. For that, she chose an exercise from unit 2, and divided students

into groups according to their departments, and there were subgroups of female and male students in each department as well. The reason why she subdivided a department was because in each class at the USJP, girls and boys do not sit together. In this way, there were 10 subgroups five of boys and five of girls. As a whole, there were just five groups from five departments. The rules of the competition were as follows:

- The competition will go on until a unit is completed.

- The teacher would ask equal number of questions from groups in which right answer carries 3 marks, and wrong answer gets one negative mark.

- The score of the teams representing their respective departments, and sub-teams within each department representing groups of girls and boys will be recorded instantly on the black board, which will be maintained throughout the competition to declare the rating of departmental teams and sub-teams.

- The teacher would put up a question at her discretion from any member of the team.

- There will be prizes for three high scoring teams, and there will also be a prize for a sub-group which scores better than other sub-groups in the same department.

According to her, the activity yielded good results. Classroom jealousy which was disturbing the environment of the class became very useful because students were enthusiastic, and ready to work. Despite some difficulties i.e. seating arrangements, largely crowded and rowdy class, the effort was deemed fruitful by the teacher. In her informal discussion, she heard positive remarks about the competition activity from the

learners. So she hoped that by doing this activity, students found a positive way of expressing their jealousy.

4.8.7. Mr. Hameed

In his four years of teaching experience he always pre-supposed that the reasons why students did not take an interest in English was because they did not know the importance of English in their career development. He thought that learners preferred major subjects to English, because they saw more prospects in them for building their career. In order to convince students to take an interest in English, he used to deliver lectures in the beginning or at different intervals on the importance of English as a global language, and its role in building the students' career. He assumed that this strategy worked to some extent, and there was a rise in the interest level of the students towards learning.

Having given his consent for working as a member of the EP project, he decided to explore the puzzle *why aren't students taking interest in learning English in the class?* Instead of taking things for granted, he embarked upon the inquiry. In the beginning, he struggled a little with how to conduct the inquiry into his puzzle such as where to start his inquiry to understand the reason why students did not take interest in English. However, his personal discussion with me and suggestions from his colleagues in group meetings helped him how to carry out his inquiry. He decided to arrange a classroom activity in which he asked students to write the reasons why they did not take interest in English. Thirty five students participated in writing the reasons out of 40 present in the class at that time. According to him, writing on four of the chits was unintelligible. Many students mentioned similar reasons. In total, the following 10 reasons were indicated by students:

1. This is repetition of what we had been learning in our previous classes (lessons taught were similar to the ones taught to them at school or college).

2. There is hardly any time left to study English after working on our major subjects.

3. Some students do not participate in the class due to negative behavior from other students.

4. The text book is too difficult to be understood.

5. The English course is boring.

6. The teacher gives preference to those who participate regularly in the class.

7. English is a foreign language, and it is the language of non-Muslims. Thus, Arabic, or local languages i.e. Sindhi or Urdu should be given preference to English.

8. The teacher does not use local languages while teaching English.

9. The teacher is concerned with covering topics, and hardly spares time for a question and answer session.

10. The teacher speaks very difficult language.

After reading the response of the students, his assumption that the students do not take interest in English because they do not know the importance of English seemed untrue. None of the above 10 reasons clearly supported his assumption. However, there were just two reasons (number 2 and 7) that somewhat indicated that the students did not deem it important to learn English. They gave priority to their major subjects because

may be they thought that devoting time on learning English was not as useful as their major subjects. They might prefer local languages because they did not realize the significance of learning English. Thus, he experienced surprise and shock from the findings of his puzzle. However, he decided to devote two to three lectures on telling students about the importance of English rather than accepting that not all students will share his viewpoint.

Hameed believed that he could have taken each of the ten reasons mentioned earlier by learners as a puzzle for further inquiry, but he felt more concerned about some students' misunderstanding that English is the language of non-Muslims so it should not be taught and learnt and mistakenly believing that English is preferred to local languages, and is posing threat to the existence of local languages. He thought it essential to clarify the learners' confusion about English. To clarify their confusion, he arranged a debate as a part of a speaking activity in which he invited speakers/learners to speak for and against teaching English in Pakistan. The purpose was to create an opportunity for learners to express their views, and listen to each other. During the debate, Hameed made notes of learners' statements about the topic. After the debate, Hameed prepared a lecture in the light of the arguments and allegations put forth by learners in the debate. In the next class, Hameed started his lecture by providing a summary of the debate, and then expressed his view point about learning and teaching English. The purpose of the lecture was to convince the students who were against learning English to challenge their beliefs, and to clarify their misunderstandings so that they may rekindle their interest in learning English.

4.8.8. Abdul Fattah

As a member of the EP group working at the USJP, I resumed teaching after a period of about two and a half years. I was not at ease while teaching; it seemed as if something

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was wrong with my teaching. I therefore started exploring my teaching to know about the issues that were getting in the way. In order to identify these issues, I started observing closely the classroom environment/life, and sometimes took notes of the events taking place in the class. By doing so, I identified the following issues being faced in my Remedial English class:

1. Majority of the students did not seem to be interested in learning English.

2. Many students did not bring textbooks with them.

3. They were busy talking to one another instead of listening to me during class, and they would change seats, and would go out of the class which disturbed the flow.

4. All the students sitting in the front rows on the right of the class kept gazing at the girls sitting at the other side of aisle.

5. It was a combined class of two departments: Botany, and Geography. The students from Geography would always complain that they sit at the backbenches, and were unable to hear the lecture in the big auditorium with 6 ceiling fans on during class.

6. Just few students participated in the class time.

Instead of asking students to comment on these issues individually, I put these issues into categories, and asked students what they would do if they were teachers and faced the issues given below. The main purpose of this activity was to move learners from their traditional role of passive listeners to active thinkers as they could start realizing their significance in the process of teaching and learning activities. In order to carry out this activity, I asked students to form groups of five or six because on each desk/bench, five or six students sat together. I then asked the person sitting in the middle to work as

a group leader. The responsibility of the group leader would listen to each member and note down his/her member's suggestions. The task assigned to students was: *If you were a teacher, what would you do if facing the following issues.* The students were directed to choose one of the issues, and discuss the possibilities for addressing it with each other in their respective groups.

a. Students do not behave well in the class; they make noise, and remain busy in talking to one another, and keep moving in the class during lecture.

b. Your voice is not audible to all students in a huge auditorium full of students.

c. How would you increase the number of students to participate in the class?

d. Students do not bring Remedial English books in the class.

I removed one suggestion on the grounds that it may have been unethical if I asked *how you would handle students who are gazing at the girls during class*. However, later felt I could have asked them how they would handle seating arrangements if they had a class like this (the one I was teaching).

There were 90 students in the class at the time of the activity, which made 16 groups of five or six students in each. Since there was freedom to discuss any of the above given issues, there was no uniformity in number of groups discussing these categories. The number of groups and category discussed are shown below:

Category/issue	No: of groups

a.	4
b.	3
c.	2
d.	6

Although each member in a group of 5 or 6 was supposed to give some suggestion, the average response from each group was 2.5, in other words, offering only 40 suggestions from 16 groups. The low average response may have been due to similar suggestions or no participation from the members. In the instructions given at the beginning of the activity, a group leader was asked not to include similar points/suggestions from the members. There were some similar suggestions from the groups as well. In this way, I just received 26 suggestions in response to 4 issues raised during the group discussion. The average suggestions from each group were 2. However, the number of suggestions for each issue varied differently. The following table shows the number of suggestions given in response to the issues raised during group discussion.

Category/issue	No: of groups	No: of suggestions
a.	4	6
b.	3	4
c.	2	5
d.	6	5

The suggestions of learners in response to each issue are given below.

a. Students do not behave well in the class; they make noise, and remain busy in talking to one another, and keep moving in the class during lecture.

1) Get those students out of class.

2) Try to be a very strict teacher.

3) Identify those students and change their seating place.

4) Rebuke and scold these students in front of the class, as they should never feel encouraged to disturb the class again.

5) Approach these students personally and try to convince them to behave as good students.

b. My voice is not audible to all students in a huge auditorium full of students.

1) Use a microphone.

2) Switch off ceiling fans.

3) Speak while standing in the middle of the stairs instead of staying near the blackboard.

4) Try to stop students from making noise. If they are silent, teachers voice can reach out to everyone in the class.

c. How to increase the number of participants in the class from a few to many.

1) Arrange a debate on any topic.

2) Teachers must encourage students to participate.

3) Try to create a friendly atmosphere.

4) Stop other students that laugh at those who make mistakes while participating in the class activities.

5) Try to give equal chances to everyone who is willing to participate and do not let a few students dominate the whole class.

d. Students do not bring Remedial English books in the class.

1) Do not allow those students in the class who do not bring books.

2) Give them some sort of punishment.

3) Let us help those who cannot afford buying books.

4) We can share books with those who do not bring books.

5) For the time being they should be told to photocopy of the first few units till they buy their own books.

Before applying suggestions given for each of above four issues, I reflected on the suggestions in my free time. After reflection and analysis of these suggestions, and some discussions with learners, some suggestions were dropped on ethical grounds and some that were practically not possible at the USJP context. In this way some suggestions were applied immediately, and others were taken for further inquiry. The following table shows the number of suggestions that were dropped and number of suggestions that were either applied immediately or taken for further inquiry.

Category/issue	No: of sugg:(suggestion)	No of sugg: dropped	No:of sugg: taken

a.	6	5	1
b.	4	2	2
c.	5	0	5
d.	5	2	3

Out of 20 suggestions, just 11 suggestions were considered. We (both teacher and learners) decided to apply the following suggestions in the class:

- I will now speak while standing in the middle of the stairs instead of staying near the blackboard to make my voice audible to all students.

- Those who were attending class without textbook will now get a photocopy of the first few units until they buy their own books.

- I will arrange a debate on some topics in which those students who do not involve themselves in classroom activities will be invited to participate.

- I will try to give equal chances to everyone who is willing to participate and not let only few students dominated the whole class.

It was a little difficult to think of a way to make sure that every willing learner had equal opportunity to participate in the class. To make sure, we (both teacher and learners) decided that from now on, no student would answer more than once while covering a single exercise. In Remedial English, the most common opportunity in which students get themselves involved is through participating in oral drills in which students

are asked answers questions. In this way, those who did not get chance had enough time to think and take their turn for participating in the class.

Out of 11 suggestions, three highlighted the issue of classroom environment. The students suggested that there were two main reasons which were affecting the classroom environment. First, some students laugh/taunt others who make mistakes while participating in the class activities, so they feel scared to participate the next time. Second, some students make noise while teacher teach. To solve these issues, it was suggested that we should approach these students personally and try to convince them to behave well.

In this way, it was agreed that now I would identify those students that would laugh at other students when others make mistakes while participating in the class activity. I also tried to identify those students who would not behave well in the class and made noise during lectures. To identify these students was a difficult job, especially when the teacher cannot remember all of the students' names. I am not good at remembering the names of my students, which made this task doubly difficult. I then decided to take the attendance of the students at the end of class instead of the beginning. While taking their attendance, I ticked the names of those students that were not behaving well. I continued this practice for a week, and then decided to meet these students who had been uncooperative three or more times during activities. In this way, I identified 15 students and decided to meet them in 3 groups of five students. All these students were male. I called them in groups to my office and discussed in a friendly way, the reasons why they behaved in a negative manner in the class. The main reason offered by the students was to have fun and pass the time. I then told them about my difficulties as a consequence of their poor behaviour, and also mentioned the loss of learning as other students suffer due to their behaviour. All of them at the time of meeting promised to

behave well, and they did so as I noticed some improvement in the behaviour of the students but there were still a few students that continued making noise or laughing at other students. I followed the same exercise, and identified 6 students. I called them in the office, and tried to convince them to behave better, and warned them if they continued doing so I would inform their parents or the head of department about their behaviour. In this way, we were successful in checking the poor behaviour of the remaining students.

I offered the following suggestions to my students with the intention to promote collaboration and mutual respect.

- Let's help those who cannot to afford buy books.

- We can share books with those who do not bring books.

- Try to create a friendly atmosphere.

- Encourage students to participate.

However, it was decided that there is no need to take any exclusive initiative for these suggestions. We discussed them in the class, and agreed that these four suggestions highlight only two issues; the first two suggestions offer some solution to help those who do not bring books in the class, and the latter two suggestions indicate how to create a favourable learning environment in the class. These two issues have already been touched indirectly. As for the issue of students not bringing textbooks, it was already agreed that these students would get a photocopy of the first few units to help solve this issue until they buy their books. To develop a friendly and encouraging atmosphere, we (both teacher and learners) had already been working together in which we approached the students who were spoiling the environment, and arranged debates in which we invited different students to participate.

4.9. Post-interview held in phase I

As mentioned earlier, post-interviews were conducted twice in the project: after phase I from those who withdrew from the project, and after phase II, from those who continued till the end. The researcher who worked as an EP practitioner in the project could also have included his interview but did not do so because he was being conscious that his personal views might affect the findings of this study. The reason why the post-interviews of both phases are not presented together in the same section is to the continue narrative rather than breaking it. By doing so, the researcher believes that the reader will feel comfortable in referring back to previous sections where necessary. For example, if the reader wants to refer to EP research of any individual participant while reading his post-interview results.

The purpose of conducting post-interviews was for the following reasons: to become familiar with the participants' experience of working within the EP project, to identify difficulties in applying EP principles and attending group meetings, to make explicit the reason why they left, to observe how they evaluate EP as an approach for their professional development, and to discover what they think about the significance of EP in relation to ELT issues faced by the USJP. The results of post-interviews are very significant to the research questions. The researcher discusses these results in depth in the following chapter. For instance, to find out what was said and why it was said. Next, in the following section, only the experiences and views of each individual about EP who withdrew from the project half way are presented below, and the post-interviews of phase II participants are presented later in the same chapter.

4.9.1. Experience/significance of the EP project

Komal considers her experience of working as a member of EP project as a confusing one. She attributes her confusion to choosing the broad topic 'to build up the confidence level of her students'. She faced a problem in approaching the issue. In this regard she remarks, "Basically, I have not been able to establish ground work. I felt as if I jumped into the sea without understanding the depth of that sea" (003:01). She said she was confident that she would successfully work on her chosen issue but was unable to do so, saying "I had a clear mind-set that this is what I want to work on........when I actually started following that…then I thought maybe prediction and practicalities are not same things" (003:01).She says that she was confused not only about how to identify students with low and over-confidence, but also about how to undertake the principles of EP in her inquiry. Shoib Shah thinks the circumstances such as (syllabus is idealized, and classes are large, students are not willing to learn, and issue of variation in proficiency level among learners plus political disturbance in which the project was carried out have not been helpful due to which he could not avail the potential benefits of the EP project and that is why he thinks his 'experience was partly good'. In addition, he thinks he could have had a better experience if he was provided some training on EP before starting the project. Mr. Sangi enjoyed the experience of working on the EP project and feels grateful to have been introduced to EP. According to him, by virtue of working in the EP project, he had the chance to sit and work together with other colleagues and discussed issues and problem for the improvement of the profession. He thinks the conditions of ELT at the USJP will never improve until we work together for which EP "offers the best platform" (002:01). Sumera enjoyed working on the project and deems her experience as 'productive' and useful for herself and for the ELT

profession at the university. In addition, she realized the significance of interacting with learners for the advancement of the ELT profession at the USJP.

The teacher-participants' reflection on their experience of working on the EP project highlights different aspects of EP. For instance, Komal does not have a good experience as she struggled with undertaking the principles of EP while approaching the issue of variation in confidence level of learners. Perhaps, the reason could be that the nature of her puzzle (variation in confidence level) which was too broad and too abstract to be addressed by a novice EP practitioner. Thus, the frustration in not addressing her issue may have developed her notion of EP as being difficult to put into practice. Shoib Shah's view that, it is difficult to reap full benefits of EP in the existing issues faced by the ELT profession at the university is in contrast with the spirit of EP, which seeks understanding about issues rather than working in ideal conditions. In contrast to the views of Komal and Shoib Shah, Sumera and Sangi did not seem to have any difficulty, they enjoyed their time working on the project and found the experience very useful for themselves and for the ELT profession in their context.

4.9.2. Views about group meetings

All of the four participants appreciated group meetings as a useful platform. In this regard, Komal remarked "I liked the way we shared our experiences, and sought suggestions from the colleagues. … I recommend that it is very necessary to have a platform where all colleagues come together and discuss about how to improve the teaching" (00302). Sangi admired the idea of group meetings. According to him, group meetings offer a good platform to share experiences and discuss issues, and give suggestions to each other". Sumera showed similar views about group meetings by suggesting "since we are language teachers, we should share things and experience with each other, in this way group meetings are very essential , and thus we should continue

this sort of thing (meeting) for the improvement of our profession" (007:02). Shoib Shah enjoyed attending group meetings in which he sought guidance from colleagues in understanding his puzzle. Though participants appreciated the significance of the group meetings, they faced some problem in attending group meetings. According to Komal, some teachers were not punctual, which delayed proceedings of meeting, and made her wait for some time, and secondly she was unable to spare time for attending meetings due to being busy in curricular and extra-curricular work. Sangi and Shoib Shah said they did not have any problem with attending group meetings. Sangi enjoyed the company of youngsters while attending EP meetings. However, Sumera said the issue of clash in timings between teaching times and scheduled EP group meetings was a problem for her.

There is no difference of opinion among the participants on the efficacy of group meetings held during the EP project. The four participants who withdrew from the project half way highlighted the significance of teamwork in the form of group meetings under the umbrella of EP for the advancement of the ELT profession at their university. However, some teacher-participants had to face problems such as clash of timings between group meetings and their teaching hours. Proceedings of the meetings had to be delayed because some participants were late. Apart from Komal, no other participant said he/she was unable to spare time to attend group meetings.

4.9.3. EP requires extra efforts and energy

Komal was the only one among all the participants who felt that working on the EP project had put an extra burden on her. She was comfortable in the beginning as there were no regular classes taking place, and she had enough time to work with EP group. As soon as her classes started in full swing, she got busier and busier, taking classes, preparing for lectures, and arranging extra-curricular activities, so she was unable to

attend meetings, and pursue the topic she picked for her inquiry. While working on the project, she realized that she was unable to fix her full attention on teaching and curriculum so she withdrew from the project and said she was not able to work in the project while teaching ."Every person has got his own nature, and I am the person who can concentrate on one thing at one time, and EP was new and something difficult. So I could concentrate either on teaching or EP, I preferred teaching, and course getting done to working on EP project"(003:01). Sangi on one hand says EP is easy to practice, but on the other hand suggests allowances such as lessening the work load and some flexibility in the choice of their timings so they could attend the meetings. In contrast to the views of Sangi and Komal, Shoib Shah and Sumera do not think EP requires extra energy or time to practice. She does not consider EP as an extra burden as she remarks, "EP is a part of my teaching, part of my learning as well" (007:02).They believe that EP did not disturb their teaching at all when they participated in the project. Sumera said that EP was easy to practice, and Shoib Shah disagreed with Komal that EP required extra time and effort to apply into classroom pedagogy.

There are different views of participants about EP requiring extra time and energy. Komal categorically says that undertaking EP principles puts extra burden on her which she was unable to carry while teaching. Whereas, Sangi indirectly supports the view point of Komal when he says that special concession should be given to those who participate in the projects such as EP. The participants might have developed an inaccurate notion that undertaking the principles of EP in one's teaching requires regular meetings. That may be the reason they think that EP practitioners should be given concession in timings so that they could attend the meetings. Another reason for developing the wrong notion could have evolved out of their difficulty in approaching their respective puzzle. Komal tried to approach a very complex puzzle without careful

planning, which may have been the reason she thought EP required extra time. As Shoib Shah says that handling a puzzle plays an important role on developing the impression of EP over the new practitioners about EP whether it is easy or difficult to practice.

4.9.4. EP as an approach to teacher development

Komal appreciates EP as a very useful approach for professional development by believing that she would have made a significant difference in her career building if she had continued with it (EP as an approach to teachers' professional development). She remarked, "if this sort of thing had been continued, it would have made a lot of difference on the way I was teaching, on the way I was developing as a teacher"(003:04). In addition, she says that working with EP has enlightened her vision about teaching because she had always believed that she was the best teacher, but having worked in the EP project, she realized that there are many things yet to be learnt to become a good teacher, saying, "EP is one thing that has opened my sight …. Before the techniques of EP, I thought I was a good teacher…, now I think I need to learn a lot" (003:04). Shoib Shah says that EP as an approach to teacher development is very useful for him. For instance, he suggests EP is a better venue for teachers to improve their skills. In this regard, he remarks, "But we should think what our job is-this is to teach as better as we could. So EP helps us, and we should accept it and try to use it. It's easy, as I did not take many efforts or a long time to learn it." Sumera says she has high regards for the project. In the beginning, she thought EP will not be practicable at the USJP, but as she started using the principles of EP, she found it helped to improve her teaching. Sumera said she would continue EP in her classroom practice as it helps her to approach a problem in a systematic way without exerting extra effort and consuming additional time.

Realizing the significance of EP, teacher-participants have suggested utilizing EP for the professional development of English in the USJP. Shoib Shah says the issue of teachers' training (teacher development) is pending for long time and has never received any attention. Thus, EP serves a better platform to address this issue. He, thus, emphasizes the need to facilitate the EP project in the future so that teachers could work for their professional development. Sangi suggests 'we should immediately integrate EP in our syllabus (curriculum) and ask the other colleagues to use EP"(002:02). Realizing the importance of EP, he suggests to use EP as a way for pre-service or in-service teachers' training, and to introduce this as a subject (module) at Masters Level at our institute. According to him, the outgoing students, the majority of whom start their career as English teachers can also avail the benefits of EP, and can use it for the advancement of their career. Komal and Sumera suggest that EP should be introduced as an approach to teacher development to all teachers at the USJP so that they could work towards their professional development.

All of the four participants have high regard for EP as an approach to teacher development. Komal says, despite having difficulty in applying EP, she thinks EP has enlightened her vision of teaching, and Sangi believes that EP does not require lots of effort to apply to classroom practice so it should be practised and integrated in the syllabus for final year students who start their career as teachers. Shoib Shah agrees with Sangi and Sumera that EP can better address the issue of teacher training if it is applied by colleagues in the USJP. The participants' high admiration of EP as an approach to teacher development over shadows the minor concerns raised by some participants.

4.10. Reporting group meetings held in Phase II

Phase II started in the second semester, in which we had five gatherings in total. Those participants, who had worked in phase I, rejoined in phase II. During the second phase, the group did not change, and there were no participants who withdrew from any of the five meetings.

The summary of each meeting provides the narrative of EP work in phase II, such as how it was mutually decided to work together on the same puzzle instead of working individually on separate puzzles as in phase I. It describes investigative procedures employed by each participant in the first stage of inquiry, and using questionnaire in the second phase. The summary of each meeting given below provides details about each step taken throughout inquiry in phase II, so that the reader could easily understand the investigative procedures employed and the decisions involved. The discussion about whether this inquiry followed or departed from the essential principles of EP is included in the following chapter where the researcher evaluates every aspect of the inquiry in light of the EP principles.

4.10.1. Group meeting I

After the semester break, the first group meeting was convened on 15th August, 2009.A specific agenda was not set up for the first meeting; the purpose was to prepare the participants for the next phase of the project. However, participants shared their experience about the last phase, and came up with some suggestions. A few key issues need to be mentioned:

1. It was mutually agreed that this time the participants would work together on a single issue instead of working individually on separate issues.

2. The participants were considering the transcription of the group meeting as an integral part of the EP project, and they thus felt concerned about who would do the job of transcribing group meetings after I would finish the project. Keeping in view such apprehensions of the participants, we mutually decided to go without transcribing verbatim all group meetings. However, the meetings were audio-recorded, and the minutes of each meeting were to be prepared while listening to the recording instead of transcribing each meeting. In addition to this, the researcher maintained a diary during the group meetings as well. The decision of not transcribing each group meeting verbatim was taken in the spirit of EP integrating research into normal pedagogy. The purpose was two-fold: to show the participants that recording and transcribing is not an essential part of EP practice, and secondly, to work some other way which is less demanding is closer to the spirit of EP.

3. While sorting out/deciding to pick an issue for collective inquiry, we came across many issues but Individual Class presentation (ICP) captured more attention in the meeting compared to other issues.

4.10.2. Group meeting II

Due to reshuffling in the teaching schedule/timetable of the participant teachers (which is common at the Institute of English, USJP), participants were unable to sort out timings within a week of the first meeting. So the next meeting was held after 16 days from the first. In this meeting, we resumed discussion on the issue of ICP raised in the last meeting. ICP has frequently been practised in Remedial English classes, and considered to be an effective practice. It was the reason that everybody had lavished praise on it and nobody raised a question about the efficacy of it. They believed that ICP

is the best way to provide students an opportunity to build their confidence, and it encourages students to work independently. They thought that the learning takes place by conducting individual class presentation, because via ICP students share knowledge with the other students, and benefit from their knowledge of the topic.

Some of the views of participant- teachers are presented in both their actual wording and in summary prepared by the researcher. The discussion moved round the following four points about ICP:

1. Significance of individual class participation (ICP) in teaching and learning English.

All of the participants believed that ICP is very significant for Remedial English. Individual Class presentation is actually a channel through which students break the ice and come in front of an audience to speak up, especially in our context, where students are shy to participate; presentations encourage students to deliver their ideas. It develops students' communication skills and helps them enhance their confidence level and helps students to prepare for their prospective jobs. It has also proved helpful for both students and teachers to learn new ways to deliver knowledge and learn innovative methods of teaching. ICP provides opportunities for participation, and keeps students working on the topic given for the presentation. In this way, they learn to grow as independent readers.

2. Number of students getting chance per semester in your class

Due to the large classes, and very short duration of 50 minutes class, it is difficult to accommodate each student for ICP. However, one teacher said an average of less than 50% of students get the chance to participate in ICP in her classes. Another participant said that very few students are given a chance in large classes compared to small classes

because in large classes, she will have difficulty maintaining discipline if there is ICP, so she avoids it in large classes. The third participant said that she tried to invite at least three students per class/per period. If there were 25 classes per semester, 20 to25 students are given chance to present in a class of 100.

3. Reasons why students take part in ICP

Some teachers believe that students participate in ICP for only earning assessment grades. Students participate so that they could get some appreciation from teachers and students. Others participate to become prominent in class. Some students want to break their hesitation by participating in ICP, and others take part to polish their communication skills. Via ICP, some students increase their knowledge and build up their confidence.

4. Criteria applied by participant teachers to pick students for ICP

Sometimes teachers employ a voluntary participation method in which every willing students is given a chance to participate. Sometimes teachers assign presentation slots to prominent students. Some teachers make a random election of students for ICP. Some teacher target 'back benchers', and force them to participate. Sometimes teachers pick most intelligent students if topic for presentation is difficult.

5. Rationale for inquiring into the practice of ICP

The individual class presentation is used as the most frequent technique for providing opportunities for the students to participate in the class. Majority of the teachers do not question the status quo as nobody has ever questioned its efficacy. So I raised some deliberate questions about the efficacy of individual class presentation in order to questions their assumptions about the conventional approach of Individual class presentation in Remedial English classes. I asked them how they can claim that the

Individual Class Presentation (ICP) yields better results as mentioned earlier without ever trying to check it. In this way, we decided to conduct some sort of inquiry into the efficacy of ICP in Remedial English. As the time of meeting was about to end, we agreed to try out some inquiry in their respective classes by undertaking the principles of EP in our classrooms before the next meeting.

4.10.3. Group meeting III

Each participant in the group undertook an inquiry and employed the following ways to collect viewpoints of their learners on ICP:

Shumaila: <u>Chatted</u> with students about ICP.

Ishrat: Learners were asked to write about the significance of ICP in their learning of English on small <u>Chits</u>

Fattah: Suggested the topic of ICP to be discussed in <u>Dialogue Practice</u> in his class.

Hameed: Instead of conducting an inquiry about ICP, worked towards trying some alternatives to ICP such as group work /pair work.

Shumaila: During Remedial English classes, she picked a student (who rarely participated in ICP) and asked him in Sindhi (mother tongue) if he liked ICP. Shumaila was surprised when he said that he disliked ICP practice and never listened to anyone giving ICP. He also said that teachers engage students in ICP when they are tired or not ready/prepared for teaching. Having heard such comments, she became curious to know whether her students liked or disliked the ICP practice in her class. She asked students who did not like ICP to raise their hands. To her surprise, she found the majority raising their hands. Thus, she became skeptical about the role of ICP, and suggested conducting further inquiry into it.

Ishrat: As a part of her routine teaching activities, she was conducting ICP in her class in which she gave a chance to at least three students for ICP in a week. After doing that for about a week and half, she asked students to write the significance of ICP in terms of developing their confidence, and helping them towards learning English. She asked them to write in any language they liked. In a class of 40, she got chits from about 30. The main summary of her results is presented below:

1. ICP has no role in students learning.

2. Students feel scared when called for ICP, and their classmates make fun of their mistakes and hesitation, so they do not like it but their teacher forces them to participate in it.

3. ICP is a good technique for passing time.

4. According to Ishrat, the number of people who disliked ICP was more than those who liked it in her class.

Fattah: As there was an exercise for dialogue practice in a unit in which student were directed to work in pairs to discuss about a topic, I suggested they should discuss with each other about the practice of ICP, and the students agreed. I also told them that they should discuss the negative and positive aspects of ICP. As it was the last Remedial class of the week, I left it for the next week to hear their views but that week the class went for a study tour, and on the other day there was a strike so I was unable to hear students' views about ICP.

Suggestions on how to move forward

It was suggested that we should not stop here but pursue some measures to understand the significance of ICP in Remedial English classes. The main suggestions offered by the participants are given below:

1. Try to see effects of ICP through meetings with students.

2. Ask them to write about the importance of ICP in their learning on small chits.

3. We should attend each other's' classes to help for each others' professional development.

4. We should make notes during the class.

5. Develop a questionnaire and conduct a survey.

Among the suggestions, we unanimously decided to conduct a questionnaire survey, which we decided to develop in the next meeting.

4.10.4. Group meeting IV

We developed a questionnaire in the light of the discussion in the second meeting about the significance of ICP and the result of personal/individual inquiry on ICP conducted by each participant in their respective classes. We developed a questionnaire by

1. Selecting questions.

2. Reordering questions.

3. Developing response categories (closed or open-ended).

To lessen the burden of the inquiry, we decided that each teacher would distribute 24 questionnaires (Appendix F) by employing Stratified Sampling Method in a way that the sample may closely represent the population in a class. Remedial classes in the USJP are bifurcated by an aisle in two sections; girls sitting at one side and the boys at the other. Usually, at the front seats, above average level students are seated; the centre/middle seats are for average level students; and the back seats are normally for below average students. Thus, we had two sections and three divisions in each. So we

distributed 4 questionnaires in all three divisions of each section. Graphical description of a class with number of questionnaires distributed in each division is presented here: Number "4" indicates questionnaires distributed.

Low	Female Students	4	4	Male Student
Average		4	4	
High		4	4	

4.10.5. Group meeting V

As the participants were asked to prepare a report on the survey carried out by each of them, everybody came prepared to report the results of their respective questionnaire survey and we worked collectively while uploading and the analyzing data.

In the first phase, we integrated the results of open questions together in the meeting, and later we analysed closed questions by using SPSS software. However, the results of the survey are presented in the order followed in the questionnaire.

The total number of participants were 96 -24 each from four classes. Out of 96, 47 were male participants which makes 49% and 49 were female participants constituting 51%.

Gender
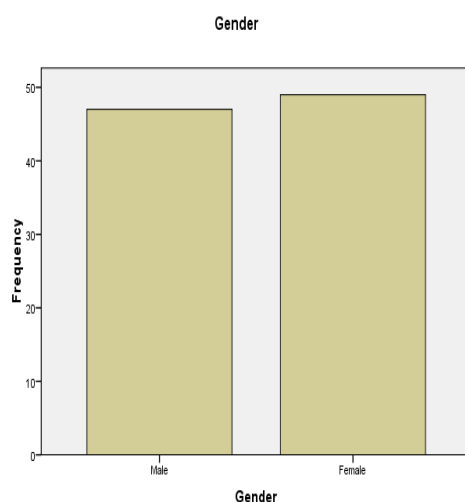
With regard to inquiring about the significance/contribution of ICP in learning English, 13.5% of participants considered ICP as most significant, 20.8% as more significant, 36.5% less significant, and 29.2% not significant. Thus, 34.3% deemed ICP is somehow significant as compared to 65.7% who did not see any role of ICP in learning English.

What is the significance of ICP for you in learning English
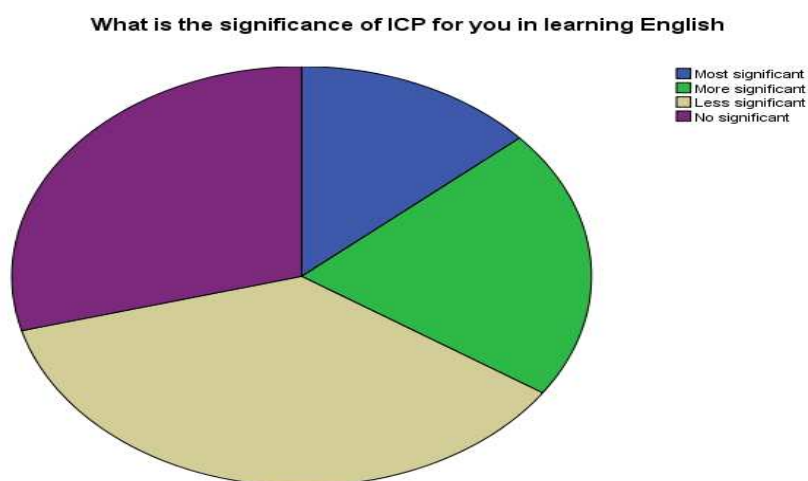
Regarding the participation of students in ICP, 12.5% said they contributed frequently in ICP, 16. 7% participated sometimes, 39.6% rarely participated, and

31.2% have never participated. As a whole, 25.2% have chance to participate in ICP compared to 74.8% who either do not participate or have rare chance.

How many times have you been participating in the ICP?

A bar chart titled "How many times have you been participating in the ICP?" The y-axis is labeled "Frequency" ranging from 0 to 40. The x-axis is labeled "How many times have you been participating in the ICP?" with four categories: Frequently (approximately 12), Sometimes (approximately 16), Rarely (approximately 38), Never (approximately 30).

Source: (reference yourself)

Can you tell us the reasons why you like to participate/why you do not like to participate in ICP?

Those who like to participate in ICP

Those who liked to participate in ICP identified reasons almost similar to the perceptions of teachers. There were three main reasons mentioned by students.

- Firstly, the students aim to impress teachers through ICP. According to them, when they perform well in ICP, teachers remember their faces and names so they give them some additional score in the assessment.

- Some students want to earn some appreciation from their teachers and classmates. They have a chance to prove and show themselves as hardworking and intelligent in front of the class and teachers.

- Students want to build their confidence and remove hesitation through ICP.

- Impress girls through taking part in ICP was also a reason mentioned by a few participants.

Those who did not like to participate

The students who did not participate in ICP also pointed to three reasons. They thought that ICP is not useful in any way and found it a waste of time, so they avoided participation. Some liked to participate in ICP, but they did not have chance because they are ignored by the teachers who always seem to prefer a few selected students. Many students declared the classroom environment as the main reason they did not like to participate. Girls do not participate due to the negative attitude of boys in the class. They believed when they come out for presentation some boys stare at them in a strange manner so they did not like to participate.

To investigate the effect/contribution of ICP in confidence building and helping to improve speaking skills, 19.8% believed that ICP played a significant role in building their confidence. 24% thought it has some role in developing their confidence. 56.2% did not find any role of ICP in their confidence building. 16.7% believed that ICP serves as a good source to improve their speaking skills. However, 60.4% think there is no such role of ICP in improving their speaking skills. On the other hand, 22.9% thought there is some role of ICP in improving their speaking skills.

To investigate if there is a difference in attitude towards ICP by gender, we tried to investigate if there is difference in perception about significance of ICP in learning English, and if there is there a significant difference in participation by male and female students. Regarding the significance of ICP in learning English, 8 male participants found it most significant compared to 5 female, 9 male participants think ICP as more significant compared to 11 female, 21 male participants consider ICP less significant

compared to 14 female, and 9 male participants deem ICP as not significant compared to 19 female participants.

Bar Chart
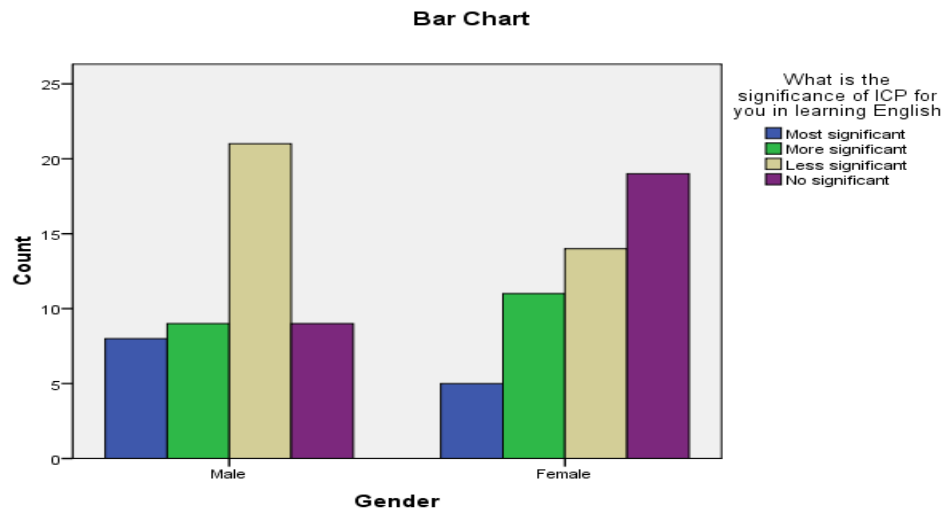
Out of 12 participants who participated frequently in ICP, 8 were male and only 4 were female students. Out 16 who had some chances, 7 were male compared to 9 female. Out of 38 who had a rare chance to participate in ICP, 21 were male and 17 were female students. Out of 30, who never participated in ICP, there were 11 male and 19 female students. For further details see the bar chart given below

Bar Chart
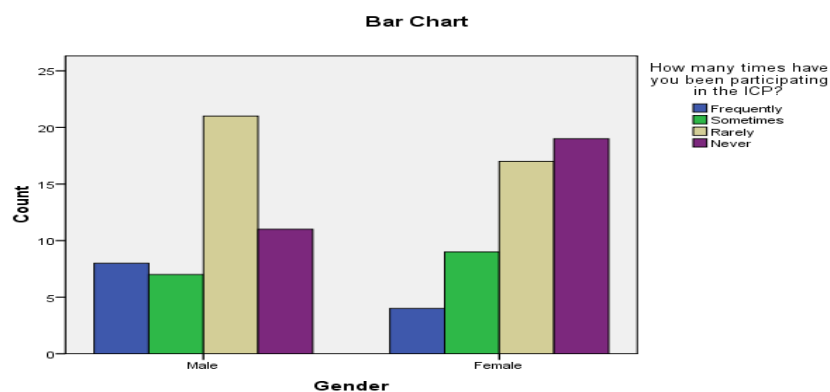
What are the positive or negative effects of ICP on you?

Positive effects:

Some students thought that ICP develops a sense of competition among them. They therefore work harder to perform better, and refer to different resources and become independent readers. They also believed that ICP helps develop good presentation skills, and increases their confidence level.

Negative effects

Some students believed there are negative effects of ICP. According to them, ICP does not have any contribution in teaching and learning English. They rather think it has many negative effects on teaching and learning English. Some students complained that teachers employ ICP as criteria to judge the intelligence and performance of students. Those who give frequent presentation are preferred to those who do not participate. Teachers give undue favour and award them some extra marks. One student said, "I feel frustrated when I see a teacher giving preference to those who usually participate in ICP in the class. They are given more marks, more appreciation, and more chances for participating in other class activities" Some thought that teachers use ICP when they are not prepared.

Suggestions

We had variety of suggestions regarding practice of ICP in Remedial English classes. Some suggested that ICP should be removed from the practice as it is useless and has more negative effects than positive. Instead of engaging students in ICP, the teacher should utilize that time in teaching English. While other students suggested some changes in order to improve the practice of ICP. For instance, equal chances should be given to students for participating in ICP, instead of picking the same students time and

again. In this way, many students will get a chance to participate in ICP. Some students wanted to convey their complaints of being unjustly treated in assessment because teachers tend to give additional marks to those who made themselves prominent through participating in ICP, and ignored the remainder of the class. One of the students remarked, "teachers should think that those who do not give ICP may be better students than those who give ICP."

4.11. The Results of the post-interviews held in phase II

4.11.1. Experience/significance of EP project

Ishrat, while sharing her experience, thinks that her experience of working on EP project was not good in the beginning, and particularly in phase I because she felt difficulties in approaching her puzzle. She says she would have left the project if there were not consistent encouragement from the researcher because she felt frustrated and embarrassed when she was unable to make progress on her puzzle. According to Shumaila, the EP project was more like a workshop, or a training program in which she learnt many things like working together with colleagues and sharing experiences with each other. She liked the overall atmosphere of EP, but says she had only one difficulty while involving learners. Students in USJP are accustomed to listening to teachers, where they remain silent listener and solely depend on teachers. Always being passive is one of the difficulties an EP practitioner can face while undertaking EP principles which emphasize on learners' active involvement in the process of inquiry. In this regard, Shumaila reported that she had difficulty when she asked students to cooperate. In the beginning, "they (learners) feel all these activities as wastage of time, because they are habitual since their KG class, teacher should be dominant, and they remain passive" (004:01). In these circumstances, she struggled to convince her students about the importance of working together. Hameed enjoyed his experience of working on the

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EP project. He found it quite useful by remarking, "nobody can deny the importance of EP project, it was very useful."(001:01) in which he learnt while working on his puzzle. He adds that this project had a very positive impact, "there are two benefits of this project; first, it has given us a path so we should improve our teaching skills, and second, it deals with problems of students. It attacks two birds with one stone. It's a good practice" (001:02).

The participants' reflection on their experience of working on the project develops a deeper insight into the EP project. This highlights the difficulties of novice EP practitioners in the form of Ishrat's experience. Ishrat remained under pressure in phase I when she was unable to make progress on her puzzle, while her colleagues were doing well. She was unable to progress on her puzzle because her puzzle dealt with a very difficult topic 'variation in proficiency level of learners' which is not easy to be handled by novice EP practitioners. In addition, the views of Shumaila shed light on the nature of classroom environment at her university context where learners remain inactive and passive listeners. Thus, undertaking the principles of EP was not an easy task in this situation. However, assigning active role to learners is essential to improve the ELT profession despite the fact that it is difficult in the context of the USJP as mentioned by Shumaila.

4.11.1.1. Views about group meetings

There is no difference in the views of three participants about group meetings. All of them appreciated the mechanism of working together and learning from the suggestions and experiences of each other and acknowledged the significance of group meetings for the ELT profession at the USJP. Group meetings gave participants a chance to work as a team in accordance with the principles of EP which emphasize on working together for mutual development by involving everyone. Nevertheless, two out of three

participants had faced some problems in attending group meetings. For instance, Ishrat felt frustrated and embarrassed when she was unable to make progress on her puzzle in face of the reality that other colleagues were doing well on their respective puzzles. Shumaila, though appreciates that group meetings were supportive and useful for her, but thinks that in group meetings some teachers were not cooperative, and they were hesitant to share the views with the rest of class by saying, "…the other was that some people were uncooperative, (I don't know if I should tell or not but I am telling you), and they do not believe in sharing their ideas, research or data as they are having. I don't point my figure at them, but tell you they were not happy to share their experiences or offer suggestions instead were getting jealous if another member in the group had worked better than them"(004:02). Moreover, she said that timings of meetings sometime clashed with classes so she was unable to attend some group meetings. However, Hameed did not face any problems while attending group meetings. He enjoyed good collegial relation with his colleagues.

The views of the participants shed light on the two very important factors which can create disturbance in the smooth flow of the EP project. Shumaila's views about group meetings point out the unwillingness of participants to extend cooperation to other colleagues and help each other mutually. If participants are not willing to cooperate in sharing their experience and offering suggestions, then it is very difficult to make the most of attending group meetings. In addition, if this is true as told by Shumaila, then it goes against the very spirit of EP which emphasizes on developing collaboration and mutual friendly relation between colleagues and colleagues and teachers and students. Ishrat's experience and her views about group meetings point and divert our attention to the possible frustration of a novice EP practitioner when s/he is unable to make progress

on his/her puzzle. Thus, it is very important to understand the difficulties of participants while they are undertaking EP principles in their teaching.

4.11.2. Comparing phase I with phase II

There are different opinions of participants on the mechanism of phase I and phase II. Ishrat liked phase I more than phase II because in the former she had to face difficulties while working on an individual puzzle. However, she was far from comfortable in phase II in which all colleagues worked collectively on a single puzzle. According to her, working on individual puzzles in phase I created rivalry among the participants. She felt under pressure when she could not keep up with the pace of her other colleagues by saying "I felt frustrated each time I got stuck, and especially when you see your colleagues progressing along you. I hope you won't mind to hear that I thought many times to leave your project" (006:01). However, she says she did not feel under pressure in the phase II when she worked with other colleagues on the same topic in which she found a lot of support, and there was no rivalry that somehow prevailed in the first semester. She enjoyed working together on the same puzzle much more than on the individual one in the phase I. She remarks, "I was comfortable very comfortable. So I now think EP is not difficult to practice" (006:02). Comparing phase I with phase II, Hameed does not feel a significant difference between them. He enjoyed both sessions, and learnt from applying EP principles in his teaching. However, he believes that phase II was more hectic and interesting than phase I in which he really enjoyed the experience of debating, discussing, and talking, and hearing different views on the same issue, and negotiating on other issues. He learnt a few new things in phase II such as how to develop a questionnaire by going through phases of questions' selection, and ordering and formatting phases. While comparing phase I with phase II, Shumaila liked both phases, but found phase II more "enthusiastic and easier" (004:02). In the second

phase, she felt more at ease in sharing views and participating in discussion. Whereas in phase I as every individual had his/her own puzzle, there was lack of interest, and enthusiasm in discussion from the participants.   She further thinks that the second phase gave more chances to discuss issues in detail and depth. Over all, she thought the second phase was more useful as they enjoyed group meetings a lot. She enjoyed phase II, saying "No, I already told you this session was interesting like we had one goal, one direction. And, no competition at all, as there was in phase 1, competition like talking too much and showing (off) I am better than other. I did not find this feeling in here"(004: 02).

The difference in the mechanism of phase I in which participants worked on individual puzzles and phase II where they worked collectively on a single puzzle draw interesting opinions from the participants. Their reflection on both phases, on one hand describes EP practitioners' difficulties while working on individual puzzles, and on the other hand, highlights the advantages of working collectively on a single puzzle. Working on individual puzzle may develop a feeling of rivalry to win over each other as mentioned by Ishrat, which could result in frustration among those participants who lag behind. Working on a collective puzzle has potential to diminish unfriendly feelings which may possibly take place when colleagues work on separate puzzles. All of the participants appreciated and rather admired the working environment of phase II as compared to phase I by admiring it as a more friendly, very supportive, enthusiastic, creating more space for open discussion, debate and negotiation, creating a relaxed and comfortable environment.

4.11.3. EP as an approach to teacher development

According to Ishrat, EP is a fine approach which helps a lot in her professional development; she thinks one of the best aspects of EP is to involve learners in the

inquiry. She thinks that in usual practice, we (teachers) always ignore our students, but now she realizes that "without them it's not possible to understand the problem" (006:02). She cites the example of ICP which according to her was a very useful practice, but by involving learners, she came to a real understanding about it. She thinks there may be many such other problems in our classes which could only be understood properly by involving learners. According to Hameed, EP provided him a significant realization regarding his misunderstood beliefs about teaching which were brought to the surface by working on his puzzle. According to him, EP is the best way to clarify ones thinking about teaching. Hameed shows great regard for EP as an approach to teacher development compared to in-service teachers training that he has attended in the past. He suggests that, EP is better because it helps us to work independently on different issues that we face while other teacher training programs just focus on one or the other skill. Shumaila believes that by applying the principles of EP, she feels more comfortable than before as a teacher. She suggests that, before the EP project she focused on bringing in useful material and trying to present them in a proper way. She never considered other factors such as developing interaction with learners to understand what factors were affecting their progress. However, after the project, she realized that students played a significant role in the process of teaching and learning. Before that she always focused on her teaching skills, and never considered the factors which were affecting learning outcomes. Through EP, she learnt how to develop understanding about her learners' problems. According to her, she now realizes, "Yes, students should be active participants, if the learners do not give proper feedback or input than how can a teacher analyse that students are learning or not…... learners' role should not be ignored, they should be given the dominant role"(004:01).

Realizing the significance of EP as an approach to teacher-development, the participants suggested to employ EP for the professional development of English professionals in the USJP. Shumaila deems EP as a quite suitable approach for the professional development of teachers in the university. Hameed says instead of arranging other training programs which he has attended so far at the USJP, EP should be utilized for the professional development of teachers. Ishrat recommends that EP should be continued at the institute. She thinks "EP would be the best choice due to its simplicity… it helps us a lot to improve our teaching and understand the problems of our students"(006:02). She thinks all newly appointed teachers at the institute must be introduced to EP. If they become familiar with EP, they will be able to work systematically for their professional self-development and would not have to struggle at the beginning of their career.

The participant-teachers highlight various useful aspects of EP as an approach to teacher development. Ishrat is attracted to EP because it is simple (easy) to practice. Shumaila is impressed with the way EP accommodates the learners' involvement in the process. Hameed, while comparing EP with other teacher training programs he has attended so far, appreciates EP as a more holistic approach which can assist in addressing a variety of issues rather than just focusing on one aspect as happens so often in training programs. Both Ishrat and Shumiala appreciate EP's emphasis on the learners' involvement and the significance of their involvement for their professional development. It is also very interesting to know that Ishrat found EP easy to practice despite the fact she faced a great deal of difficulty in undertaking the principles of EP in the first phase of the project.

The results presented above in this chapter are collected in a range of ways: individual and joint puzzles. Next, pre-interviews and post-interviews are discussed in relation to research questions in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion of Results

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, results are discussed in relation to our research questions: 1) Evaluating the practices employed in this project in the light of the principles of EP/how far did this EP project abide by the principles of EP; 2) What is the contribution of EP in developing understanding about the issues faced by ELT profession at USJP?; 3) What is the significance of EP as an approach to teacher development in the context of the USJP? While discussing each of the above research questions, I will frequently refer to the results presented in previous chapter, and where necessary will link them to the relevant literature.

5.2. How far does this project abide by the principles of EP?

In order to seek the answer of the first research question, the researcher evaluates the work of the participant-teachers in the light of a set of EP's six principles and two suggestions (Allwright, 2005). The purpose of engaging in evaluation is to see how far teacher-participants were successful in abiding by the EP principles while working on their respective puzzles. By engaging in evaluation, we come to know if any participant-teacher departed from the principles and to assess if there are any justifications for departing from the essential principles of EP. Before we proceed to discuss the first research question, I deem it necessary to mention that the evaluation of the project is carried out in a way six principles and two suggestions were discussed in the literature review chapter.

5.2.1. Put the quality of first to understand language classroom life

The first two principles of EP suggest prioritizing *quality of work* to developing techniques and skills, and *understanding the life in a language classroom* before finding a solution to a problem. So in this section, I am evaluating the five puzzles; four from phase I in which individuals worked on their respective puzzles including the researcher's own puzzle, and the one from phase II in which all members worked collectively on a single puzzle. The evaluation is made so that the reader can analyse how far we have been successful in respecting these principles, and where we have made mistakes. Either way, it will enhance our understanding of the EP project.

The puzzle by Shumaila dealt with the issue of jealousy/ rivalry among students in a large (combined) class. Jealousy/rivalry is a natural phenomenon in a combined class consisting of students from more than one department. Life in a language classroom particularly in a combined class at USJP is already a complex one which would have aggravated if not tackled well. Shumaila in her puzzle tackled this complex issue of rivalry in a simple way by putting *"quality of life" first* and then *understanding language classroom life* instead of taking a hasty decision to find a solution to the problem. The puzzle titled *rivalry in a combined class/ large class* does not emerge spontaneously but is discovered by following a wise procedure. Having felt that learning environment is not as good as in her other Remedial classes; she sets up her journey to explore *quality of work* in her combined class.

By following the first two principles of EP, Shumaila was successful in addressing the issue in her combined class. She would not have diagnosed the main cause of rivalry in her combined class if she had not prioritized the *quality of work* and would have gone in the wrong direction if she had not taken the serious efforts in *understanding language*

class room life. Shumaila's puzzle challenges those who ''promote technicist and problem-solution orientations in education'' (Gieve & Miller, 2006:18). To address the issue, Shumaila did not resort to a technical solution (in form of introducing a new method/technique), instead approached the issue by putting *the quality of life first* as suggested by Allwright & Hanks (2009). Thus, Shumaila's exploration supports the view that, description leading to prescription cannot assist in achieving the quality of work which is possible only if we work p*rimarily to understand language classroom life* (Allwright & Hanks, ibid).

Hameed seemed to have been misguided by his implicit beliefs for a long period of time and seemed to have been wasting time and efforts on delivering lectures without having sufficient understanding of the problem '*why students did not take interest in English was because they did not know the importance of learning English'*. In fact his problem was that he was unable to put *the quality of work first* and had been trying to address the issue without working *to understand language classroom life*. That is why Gieve & Miller (2006) maintains that quality of life is a complex phenomenon which requires serious effort to understand before moving further. While approaching the issue in accordance with the first two principles of EP, Hameed experienced almost a similar situation as Naidu et al (1992) and ultimately realized that there were different issues from those he had been thinking of. The results of the inquiry into Hameed's puzzle reiterate the fact it is essential to understand life in a language classroom before changing anything, as there may be a situation which can be handled well through undertaking first two principles of EP.

Shoib Shah's timely inquiry into his puzzle *why learners liked "The Age of Probot" more than the first unit " Traffic Nightmare"* rectified his misconception, and saved him from moving in wrong direction which would have aggravated the situation

instead of resolving it. Shoib Shah *put the quality of work first* instead of treating his issue through a technicist approach by applying best method or strategy. He then embarked upon understanding the issue by involving learners to work on an assignment so that they could let him know their views about two units. By virtue of applying two principles, he was successful in dealing with the issue in a simple humanistic approach and saved himself from developing misconception about two units. Undertaking the first two principles in normal teaching seems to have a lot of significance in the professional development of teachers. They helped Shah to avoid developing misunderstandings about two units.

The researcher was puzzled by the feeling as if something wrong was happening in his classroom teaching. To *understand language classroom life*, the researcher embarked upon the journey of exploring quality of work by prioritizing his learners. He did this by involving learners to develop shared understanding of the issues and invited them to suggest ways to approach the issues faced in Remedial English class. The most significant aspect of this puzzle is that understanding of language classroom life seems to become easier when learners are encouraged to take part because they have the ability to express themselves, rather than their responses being predicted by their teachers (Allwright and Hanks (2009). No matter how the quality of life in the language classroom may be daunting and elusive (Gieve & Miller, 2006), learners' active involvement in the inquiry can easily bring it to the surface.

The collective work by EP practitioners inquiring into the efficacy of ICP provided unexpectedly surprising findings which are quite different from those anticipated by the teacher-participants. The findings showed that ICP is not an effective technique as deemed by the teachers at the USJP. The understanding about ICP came by virtue of applying the first two principles of EP. It can be argued that the quality of work has

never been the priority of teachers at the USJP, that is why issue of ICP was becoming chronic and was not being attended properly. The inquiry into ICP by undertaking principles of EP undid the myth regarding effectiveness of EP and brought forth actual facts about it. By putting the *quality of life first*, all the participants worked *primarily to understand classroom life* in two stages; initially, individual teachers conducted inquiry into the efficacy of ICP in their respective classes by employing normal routine teaching activities, and at the next stage, a questionnaire survey was conducted ona large scale to find out more about ICP. The decision of conducting further inquiry in the form of a questionnaire survey was carried out to confirm this assumption. By virtue of undertaking EP's first two principles, the teacher-participants were successful in developing understanding about the issue of ICP.

The inquiry into ICP conducted in the light of first two principles of EP diverts our attention to Allwright's six promising directions for applied linguistics (2006). These promising direction   help us understand logic behind accepting teaching and learning as life rather than work. ICP has been applied as a technique to develop a variety of skills among learners over forty years at the USJP. However, teachers have not tried to understand its significance by putting *the quality of work first* because they assumed ICP was a long lasting remedy for developing skills among learners. Considering any technique to be having lasting solution is against the logic because learning a language is a highly complex process which must not be taken as a simple process to be carried out by finding or implementing a best method (Allwright, 2006). Rather it is inherently a complex process, which cannot be handled by searching for general solutions for common problems but via developing a co-constructed understanding of the local situation through collaborative efforts by both teachers and learners (Allwright, 2006). The inquiry into ICP reaffirms the wisdom behind Allwright's (2006) six promising

directions for applied linguistics that the life in language classroom is ever changing and more unpredictable from context to context from one time to the other, so the universal solutions, and long lasting remedies are against wisdom and common sense (ibid).

The teacher-participants were successful in applying the first two principles of EP in their teaching. By virtue of undertaking these two principles, the participant-teachers handled different issues in a humanistic approach without resorting to any technique or changing their classroom pedagogy. Undertaking the first two principles of EP particularly in the context of the USJP are of paramount importance for the advancement of the ELT profession. On one hand, they can help us develop understanding issues such as ICP which have been pending over long period of time and hindering the progress of the ELT profession at the university. On the other hand, they can help teachers to rectify their misconceptions and avoid developing misunderstanding about teaching and learning (see the EP work of Hameed and Shoib Shah). The use of the first two principles of EP in the context of the ELT profession atthe USJP can bear fruitful results if applied successfully as by the participants.

5.2.2. Involve everybody by bringing people together so as to work for mutual development.

Since EP focuses on collective understanding by considering teachers and students as equally important, EP tries to ensure everybody (both teacher and learners)has the opportunity of "reaching whatever level of understanding they are capable of, however 'deep' or 'shallow' that may be"(Allwright and Hanks, 2009: 151). This is why principle 3 emphasizes that learners should be treated as 'fellow participants" and "co-researchers". Principle 4 focuses on establishing collegial relations to frustrate forces which seek divisions between teachers and researchers, and teachers and students.

Principle 5 mentions that collegial relation would bear fruit only if all involved work for each other's development.

In order to implement the above three principles, we require a change in attitude between teacher- learners' relations inside the classroom, and between teacher-researchers relation outside it. In the EP project, the participants entertained a variety of relations: teachers with learners while undertaking principle in their respective classrooms, teachers with teachers while working as members of the EP group, and the researcher with teachers pursuing his academic agenda. Thus, the researcher evaluates participants' involvement in a mutually beneficial enterprise and how they worked together towards understanding an area of common interest. To find this out, the researcher examines 1) whether teachers treated their learners as 'fellow participants'; 2) whether teachers enjoyed good collegial relations; 3)whether the researcher served his own agenda or worked for the agenda of insiders.

5.2.2.1. Collegiality between teachers and learners

Since EP highlights the role of learners in investigative work of a classroom, it insists on teachers maintaining collegial relations with them. Without a collegial relationship between learners and teachers, EP research cannot make progress. Learners are quite often the source of puzzles, and without their cooperation, it is very difficult to develop understanding. Thus, it is essential to engage learners in the investigation so that a deep understanding of classroom life should be developed (Allwright, 2003).

In each of the five puzzles, the teachers involved learners in the classroom inquiry which resulted in the understanding which was of interest for both teachers and learners. For instance, Shoib Shah investigated *why students took more interest in reading unit Traffic Nightmare compared to Age of Probot* was directly related to the learners' choice and interest in the said units. Thus, without their participation it would not have

been possible to understand the issue which is why Allwright and Hanks (2009) maintain that the learners can express themselves rather than their responses being imagined by their teachers. Although the plot for inquiry was set up by the teacher himself who gave an assignment to his students to write their likes and dislikes for various aspects of the two units, the real actors were the learners themselves who expressed their views about both units. The understanding developed through this inquiry resulted in the professional development of Shoib Shah as it clarified his misunderstandings about the units. In future, he will be approaching this issue positively in light of the understanding developed via inquiry so that better learning can take place among the learners.

Shumaila investigated rivalry in a combined class, she (EP practitioner) seemed to be in the driving seat determining every move but always kept the focus on learners' involvement. In the initial development of her puzzle, she controlled every move, made observation, wrote notes, but then involved learners in remainder stages by engaging them in a group activity so that she could seek their views about the issue under inquiry. In the end, she culminated her inquiry by seeking active involvement of learners in the inquiry by arranging a group debate. Although she started alone by making personal observations and writing diary notes, she then immediately involved learners in the crucial stages of the inquiry by seeking their suggestions, and involving them to develop understanding about why learners felt uncomfortable in their combined class. The outcome of this inquiry was equally beneficial for both the teacher and her learners. She tackled the issue via cooperation of her learners while learners utilized their feelings of rivalry in a positive way by participating in the debate and creating favorable learning environment in the class.

At the beginning, Hameed involved learners to inquire into his long established notion of why students did not take interest in learning English. He, then went further into the inquiry of his puzzle in light of the learners' suggestion, and involved them again for further understanding of his puzzle. In his whole inquiry, he seems to have made a decision according to his own discretion, but at each step he does not go further without involving his learners. Hameed allows his learners to work as co-participants (Allwright, 2003) with him to rectify his inaccurate notion, and designed a further line of action to develop understanding about other issues in the classroom. Having rectified his inaccurate notion, Hameed, on the one hand, will be able to get rid of the parasitic activity of delivering a lecture. On the other hand, he will try to approach the issue properly in the way beneficial for the learning outcome of his learners.

The researcher's puzzle of dealing with the issue of collaboration between a teacher and students/learners, assigned the leading role to his learners in exploring the quality of life in the class. He embraced the role of facilitator, while his learners played an active role in understanding classroom life by making decisions, and setting their directions independently. He seemed to be encouraging his learners to assume the role of learner-practitioners who are "capable of taking learning seriously, of taking independent decisions, and of developing as practitioners of learning" (Allwright and Hanks (2009:152).By working together with learners, he not only improved his teaching, but also addressed a range of issue hindering the learning process in his class.

Similarly, in the teachers' shared puzzle, where there was an inquiry into ICP, learners were actively involved in the inquiry. The purpose of involving learners was to identify their views about the practice of ICP. At the first stage, every individual teacher conducted an inquiry in their respective classes seeking to hear learners' viewpoint about ICP. Having observed learners' views, the large scale inquiry was conducted

through a questionnaire survey by employing the stratified sampling method. According to the initial plan, we were to involve learners in designing the questionnaire but could not do so due to some restrictions. Since this inquiry was a matter of understanding the views of learners about ICP, it therefore did not assign active role to learners. However, it provided full opportunities to learners to express their long suppressed views freely and independently about ICP, and offer suggestions to improve this practice. That was the reason why learners came up with harsh criticism of ICP. For instance, they demanded that ICP should be removed. Other students asked to revise the pattern of ICP. In this way, the outcome of this inquiry resulted in better understanding about ICP beneficial for the teachers' professional development and students' learning.

While analysing the level of learners' involvement in EP research carried out by teacher-participants. I would say the involvement of learners, though may not have been to the level desired by Allwright (2003) and Allwright and Hanks (2009), but it is very inspiring and more than anticipated given the circumstances in which these teachers work. At the USJP, the teacher-centered approach is adopted by teachers to teach English in which they usually rely on delivering long lectures and learners remain passive listeners. Teachers hardly involve their learners in classroom decision making. It was a reason, Shumaila in her post-interview mentioned that she had to face a great deal of difficulty when she invited students to play an active role in their classroom while undertaking the principles of EP. According to her, since students who attended the USJP are familiar with listening to long lectures from their early education, it was very difficult when she engaged them in activities or invited them to have their say on classroom affairs as part of inquiry into her puzzle. The students showed resistance and looked down upon the activities designed for inquiry as a useless enterprise. Despite having such an environment where there is lack of interaction rather no interaction

among teachers and learners on the classroom affairs, EP practitioners have achieved a great success in getting learners involved as part of the EP process. Involving learners in the classroom inquiry paid well in the form of understanding classroom life beneficial for both teachers and learners. The teachers and learners involved themselves in mutually beneficial enterprise and worked together to understand the issues faced by the ELT profession in the USJP.

5.2.2.2. Collegiality among teachers

Allwright (2003) believes that collegiality between teachers is more likely than between teachers and learners because teachers have common interests, and similar job responsibilities which enables them to form working relationships, and he asserts that working within the framework of EP can bring teachers to work together by overcoming professional jealousy, and personal problems that may exist among them.

In this section, we are evaluating the collegial relations of teachers working within the EP framework. It's difficult to measure how far the EP framework has been successful or unsuccessful in establishing good collegial relations among the members of the EP group during the project because we did not have an insight about their relations in the past. Nevertheless, the following discussion will provide some insight regarding teacher-participants' relations with each other during the project.

The project as a whole did not witness any break up of relation among colleagues. Nevertheless, there had been some occasions where teachers did not enjoy good collegial relations. Some instances of tension among colleagues occurred only in phase I of the project. For instance, one of the participant teachers from a female group (phase I) reported that some colleagues were not generous to share views and offer suggestions but were rather becoming hesitant and jealous. This may be true because as a member, I had also observed that environment in the female group meetings was more tense

compared to the male group meetings. The female members tried to outsmart each other by dominating the discussion by focusing on their respective puzzles, and sometimes arguing unnecessarily to the point where I had to intervene to stop the arguments. Thus, there existed some sort of tension in female group meetings, which may have been due to teachers working on their individual puzzles. Working on separate puzzles might have created a sense of rivalry and competition causing some sort of pressure on the participants. Thus, one of the female teachers reported in her interview that she felt under pressure and frustrated when she was not progressing on her puzzle. She therefore thought of withdrawing from the project. This also confirms that there was some tension existing in female group meetings in phase I.

We didn't find any rivalry or tense relations among colleagues in phase II in which participant teachers worked on a single issue and demonstrated an excellent example of collegiality. This is the reason that both the teachers who had pointed to some tension in phase I, found a relaxed and more cooperative phase II, where they felt more at ease in sharing views and discussing issues due to a common interest arising out of working on the same puzzle. Interestingly, in phase II, teachers reported that they had found support from their colleagues, and there had been no rivalry that had somehow prevailed in the phase I.

Overall teacher-participants enjoyed good collegial relations with one another during the whole project. The tense relation among some colleagues in phase I could have happened due to two reasons; firstly, working on separate issues in phase I had developed an environment of competition and rivalry particularly among female participants. Secondly, the negative feelings affecting collegial relations hindering mutual development among some female participants might have been rooted in their personal relations dating back rather than their participation in EP group meetings. I had

observed and listened to some reservation shown by female teacher-participants for each other which might have affected their collegial relations during the project. The phase II provided an ideal environment for teachers to enjoy perfect collegial relations. In view of the facts, in both phase I and phase II, I think EP provided teacher participants a good platform where they worked for their mutual development by enjoying good collegial relations. Teachers assisted each other in sorting out their puzzle, developing investigative procedures, and encouraging each other. They learnt by sharing their views and experience about learning and teaching.

5.2.2.3. Collegiality between researcher and teachers

Allwright (2003) also dwells on the collegial relation between an academic researcher and teachers. He condemns the traditional role of academic researchers who seek their interest by treating teachers as objects of study, rather than as collaborators in their research. He thus suggests that in the EP framework, the role of academic researcher should be as a consultant and facilitator advising on the conduct of investigations so that teachers could pursue their own agenda, rather than being used for the interests of researchers. By doing so, teachers can build theory from their own research in their classroom which will be useful for the immediate context.

My role as an academic researcher throughout the project has been in accordance with the suggestions made by Allwright (2003). I worked as a teacher-consultant while completing my academic research, and allowed participant-teachers to pursue their own agenda/puzzles of their choice so that they could work for their professional development. In addition, I also worked with them as a fellow EP practitioner while carrying out my academic work, which facilitated us to have better collegial relations. We treated each other on equal terms, and worked together as members of a teacher community to enhance the ELT profession in the USJP under the framework of EP.

5.2.3. Make the work a continuous enterprise by integrating research into pedagogy

In order to continue the practice of EP as ongoing process, it is essential to act upon Allwright's (2005) two suggestions which clearly indicate to minimize the extra effort of all sorts for all concerned by integrating the "work for understanding" into the existing working life of the classroom. By utilizing routine teaching activities as tools of data collection, the EP practitioner does not only save him/herself from suffering burnout, but also avoids interrupting the normal flow of teaching. To 'make the work a continuous enterprise' is very important because, "…any language classroom is a dynamic social situation, such that any understanding reached on any one occasion may rapidly become irrelevant" (Allwright, 2003:130). Thus, EP practitioners require understanding language classroom life as an ongoing process, for which it is not possible to carry on with academic research tools which are not only difficult to acquire but require extra effort and time to apply them.

In this section, we seek to evaluate how far we have been successful in integrating research into pedagogy by analyzing the procedures adopted for data collection in the puzzles by EP members during the project. Integrating research into pedagogy is essential to act upon the sixth principle of EP (Allwright, 2005).

Shoib Shah utilized assignments as a tool for data collection. Since, the assignment is part of student exams which carry five marks for each module in each semester; it is a good example of a data collection tool that integrates research into pedagogy to minimize the extra effort. For instance, the learners worked on the assignment, and the teacher's assessment was part of the existing working life in the classroom.

Shumaila started with making a personal observation of combined classes followed by writing some diary notes. She then arranged a group speaking activity as means to

collect information on the issue under inquiry. At the end, she chose an exercise from unit 2 to arrange a group debate activity by dividing students into groups according to their departments. There were subgroups of female and male students in each department as well. So in her puzzle, with the exception of diary notes which may be a little extra work, the rest of the techniques were best integrated into the working life without adding extra burden on the teacher and the learners. Even for diary notes, there is some justification that many teachers maintain it as part of their professional work. Thus, Shumaila was a teacher who regularly engaged in the practice maintaining a diary.

While struggling on the progress of his puzzle, Hameed decided to arrange a classroom activity in which he asked students to write the reasons why they did not take interest in English on small chits which he took home, and sorted them out himself at his leisure. Being surprised with the result, he arranged a debate as part of a speaking activity in which he invited speakers/learners to speak for and against the chosen topic. During the debate, Hameed wrote notes of important views which he later used to prepare his lecture for the following day. If we judge the criteria employed by this practitioner for his data collection, these seem to be turning away from the ideal rule of EP integrating research into pedagogy. However these techniques are not as complex, difficult, and time consuming as academic research tools. Since he was a novice EP practitioner, his slight departure from the essential principles of EP can be ignored at this stage.

The researcher started with a personal observation assisted with short notes. Having identified certain issues, the researcher employed a group activity as a main tool to collect data. He then took the summary of the discussion from each group (written by a group leader) at home, and sorted them out at his leisure. After this, he frequently engaged learners on various occasions while applying or dropping suggestions or

making further inquiry as part of classroom discussions. The group activity which was used as a main tool of data collection in the researcher's puzzle was well integrated into normal pedagogy proving to be a genuine speaking activity which is frequently used by teachers in Remedial English classes. The teacher spared some time at his leisure to read , and organise the learners suggestions from their group discussions which may be a little extra work, however, it did not demand a great deal of energy or time that may exhaust a practitioner to continue his inquiry. Over all, the researcher utilized normal routine activities as tools of data collection in his puzzle.

The inquiry into ICP (individual class presentation) was conducted in two stages. In stage I, individual teachers in the team carried out an inquiry in their respective classes to identify the views of learners about the ICP practice. In the second stage, a questionnaire was employed to collect data.

At stage I, each team member used different methods of data collection. Shumaila had an informal chat with students about ICP. In contrast, Ishrat asked learners to write about the significance of ICP in their learning of English. The researcher employed a Dialogue Practice activity to discuss the significance of ICP in a class. Hameed, instead of conducting inquiry about ICP, worked towards trying some alternatives to ICP such as group work /pair work. In the second phase, teachers mutually decided to collect data about ICP via a questionnaire for which teachers worked together to develop in group meetings. The response of learners to open questions was discussed in team meetings, and closed question data was analysed by using SPSS software (by the researcher).

At stage I, the methods employed for data collections can be justified because they did not require extra work or energy, and did not disturb the normal routine teaching activities. Some of the methods i.e. dialogue practice was a genuine example of integrating research into pedagogy because dialogue practice was an activity in a unit in

which teachers asked learners to discuss the significance of ICP instead of another topic. As for the rest of the methods adopted by other colleagues, they might not have found opportunity to fit their inquiry into their normal teaching practice. Thus they resorted to different ways i.e. using chits, having a chat which can also be justified on the ground that they did neither require extra work nor caused a significant interruption in normal teaching.

A serious concern can be raised regarding use of a questionnaire as tool of data collection because it did not abide by the two suggestions from Allwright (2005) to minimize the extra effort of all sorts for all concerned to "make the work a continuous enterprise." However, the choice of using a questionnaire can still be justified keeping in view the team members' mutual decision of using a questionnaire, and the pattern of developing the questionnaire and analysing data. In the first instance, it was decided that each teacher would engage learners in their respective classes to develop a questionnaire to evaluate the significance of ICP because developing a questionnaire was an exercise in a unit to be carried out as a classroom activity at the time of inquiry. Nevertheless, some practical concerns did not allow us to do this. Firstly, learners could have faced difficulty in choosing appropriate questions for ICP, second, some teachers had already covered this activity and asking learners to work again on developing questionnaire would not be useful or part of normal classroom pedagogy.

The decision of using a questionnaire could further be justified on the following grounds: firstly, the teachers were already familiar with developing a questionnaire as it was an activity in a unit; second, the pattern in which questionnaire was developed shared the burden as all participant-teachers worked together. By working together, teachers did not feel exhausted. Data analysis was also done in a manner which did not prove to be a burdensome process. The open question data was analysed together, and

closed questionnaire data was analysed using SPSS by the researcher himself making the job easier for the team members. This may have been the reason that all participants appreciated and enjoyed the process of developing the questionnaire, and analysing data as reflected in their post-interviews. In this way, an academic research tool could be employed within the EP approach if the burden is shared in a way that it does not cause burn out.

By utilizing routine teaching activities, the teacher-participants have been successful in carrying out good research by getting teaching done "in a way that fosters the development of understanding in and among all the participants." (Allwright & Hanks, 2009:154). They made a good demonstration of integrating the "work for understanding" into the existing working life of the classroom to "make the work a continuous enterprise" (Allwright, 2005). Since life in the language classroom is dynamic in nature, we cannot prescribe a lasting solution. To understand life in the language classroom, it is necessary to revisit it regularly. For this, the option of academic research is not suitable. Thus, in view of investigative tools which did not require extra effort and additional time employed by EP practitioners during the whole project suggests that EP is a more friendly version of teacher research (Dörnyei, 2007) and is a good alternative to Action Research which relies on academic research tools. By adopting EP, the practitioners can make the work a continuous enterprise without burn out to contribute well to the enhancement of the ELT profession.

5.3. What is the contribution of EP in developing understanding about the issues faced by the ELT profession at the USJP?

The second research question which seeks to find the significance of EP as a form of practitioner is answered by evaluating the contribution of EP work carried out in the form of puzzles by the participants. The researcher evaluates how far these puzzles were successful in addressing the issues faced by the ELT profession at the USJP.

As mentioned in the previous chapters we had two EP groups at the beginning of the project, but due to drop out among participants, we mutually decided to merge them into a single group. Among eight participants who worked in two groups only four concluded their puzzles, whereas the other four only identified puzzles and made only little progress on their puzzles. First, the researcher assesses the relevance and significance of the puzzles carried out by the participant-teachers in relation to the issues identified in pre-interviews.

The researcher acknowledges that teacher-participants did not pick core problems faced by the ELT profession at the USJP. Nevertheless, some puzzles do address an aspect of these broad issues mentioned by teachers in their pre-interviews. For example, Shumaila's puzzle about rivalry in large classes addresses an issue associated with large classes. Shoib Shah's inquiry into the puzzle *why students liked Unit I more than Unit II* deals with curriculum issues. Ishrat's inquiry into her puzzle tried to address the core issue of variation in proficiency level, but no progress was made. The puzzles taken by other teacher-participants only dealt with some of the minor issues mentioned by the participants in pre-interviews such as, how to raise confidence among students, why group activities do not work well in Remedial English class, and why students take less interest in English compared to their major subjects. The researcher's puzzle which dealt with the significance of collaboration between learners and teachers in a classroom

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teaching and learning environment at the USJP also did not touch the broad issues mentioned in the pre-interviews by the participants.

There are some reasons why teacher-participants had not picked the core issues. Firstly, the project did not have an exclusive focus on certain issues, and it would have been against the spirit of EP if the researcher had set the agenda for the participants by asking them to pick up core issues. The purpose of the project was to introduce teachers to some platform so that they could carry out some inquiry into the issues faced by the ELT profession at the time of the project, and to continue their inquiry in the future. Secondly, it was practically not possible to address the broad issues because there were too broad and multifaceted if analysed closely, so they need to be tackled gradually. In this regard, Shumaila's puzzle shows a good precedent of dealing with a broad issue/core issue of large classes in Remedial English. Attempts in addressing a broad issue in one sweep can result in failure and frustration as in the case of Ishrat who tried to deal with a core/broad issue of variation in the proficiency level among learners in her class, but felt frustrated and thought of withdrawing from the project when she was unable to make progress.

More detailed discussion about relevance of each puzzle by four participant-teachers who completed their inquiry into their respective puzzles is given below. The answer to the first research questions largely depends on the analysis of the four puzzles by the participants in the phase I and team work on a single puzzle in the phase II.

5.3.1. Shoib Shah

He was the only member of EP group who inquired into a puzzle related to the issue of curriculum. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the existing curriculum was introduced in 2005 without consultation with teachers and since then no systematic inquiry was conducted into the efficacy of it. However, the teacher-participants had

showed difference of opinion based on their personal experience about efficacy of the curriculum in the pre-interviews. The majority of the participant-teachers have appreciated the syllabus as a positive change particularly in comparison with the old course.

It is worth noting here that this puzzle was developed when his assumption that students seemed to be less interested in the second unit "The Age of Probot" as compared to the first unit "Traffic Nightmare" was challenged by the disagreement of another member in a team meeting. So Mr. Shah decided to frame this into a puzzle for inquiry. The findings of his inquiry proved his assumption wrong. Theme wise, students liked unit II, and vocabulary wise, both units were found difficult but students found more difficult words in unit II as compared to unit I. Students found exercises and activities in unit II very interesting and they did not like the exercise in unit I as they were difficult and boring for them.

Although this puzzle does not deal with a significant topic, it addresses an issue associated with curriculum. It is thus significant in two ways; firstly, it sets a good precedent for conduct further inquiry into the issue of syllabus/curriculum on the large scale which means other teachers can emulate the procedure, and conduct inquiry into various issues associated with curriculum according to their own understanding. Secondly, it reinforces the notion of EP that a deep understanding should be developed before taking any action to change as many issues requiring practical solutions can be handled through dealing with quality of life (Naidu et al, 1992). Thus, this inquiry into his puzzle rectified Shah's misconception. He acknowledges this fact in his post-interview, "In the beginning I thought it is unnecessary to work on it (puzzle) because initially it looked very petty issue and I thought why should I work on it since it has got no relevance with either learning or reading but then when I started work on it, I

realized that I was coming to know many new things which I did not guess in the beginning"(005:02).

5.3.2. Hameed

In his four years of teaching experience, he always assumed that the reason why students did not take interest in English was because they did not know the importance of learning English. To convince or persuade students to take an interest in English, he used to deliver a lecture at the beginning of each semester on the importance of English as a global language, and its role in the students' career. Despite delivering a lecture, he had not found a significant change in the learning attitude of his learners towards English. He, thus, decided to work on this issue and framed it into a puzzle "why aren't students taking interest in learning English in the class?" To his surprise, the findings of his inquiry showed a different picture than what he had expected. In this way, his assumption that students did not take interest in English because they did not know the importance of English was shaken, and he then started looking at this issue from different angles in light of his inquiry.

This puzzle sheds light on the prevailing learning and teaching atmosphere at the USJP where many issues are taken for granted. In case of this participant, he assumed that students did not take interest in learning English because they did not know the importance of it, and thus developed the solution for the problem without developing understanding about it. This attitude exists due to lack of awareness, and exposure to research and inquiry (Khan 1997). In this environment, EP as form of practitioner research offers them a chance to examine their long-established assumptions due to its focus on developing understanding through putting quality of life first in a language classroom (Allwright, 2003). Hameed's puzzle was a matter of understanding life. It could be argued that he seems to have misunderstood life without ever trying to explore

it. Hameed had been approaching his issue with an action without having a full diagnosis of it. Thus, his approach aggravated the situation instead of resolving it. By undertaking EP principles, he was successful in attending this issue which opened new venues for him to go further in the right direction. The EP work of Hameed sets a good precedent for English professionals at the USJP to conduct a fresh inquiry into their long established notions of teaching and learning. Such kind of inquiry has the potential for the enhancement of the profession at the USJP. In this regard, EP as a form of practitioner research is the best way forward which can help participants challenge their long-established assumptions via its key principle of understanding quality of life.

5.3.3. Shumaila

Her inquiry initiated from her puzzle of why the classroom environment is better in her Economics class than in the combined class. She carried out her investigation by adopting careful procedures in light of the EP principles, that students of one department did not feel comfortable sitting together with the students from other departments, and there was some rivalry or jealousy existing among the students of different departments. She decided to address this issue by arranging a departmental debate competition in order to exploit jealousy/rivalry and turn it into a healthy competition. The classroom jealousy which was disturbing the environment of the class served as an impetus in pushing learners to work hard. In her informal discussion with learners, she heard positive remarks about the activity from the learners in which learners found a positive way of expressing their jealousy by getting involved in this activity.

This puzzle addresses an issue associated with large classes faced by language teachers. As mentioned earlier, although measures had been taken in 2005 to address the issue of large classes by dividing them into manageable sections wherever possible, the issue of

large classes still persists as a main issue in Remedial English as mentioned by participant-teachers in pre-interviews. Teachers face a variety of issues in large classes; rivalry/jealousy is one of them. This puzzle addresses an aspect of large classes rivalry. The issue of rivalry was addressed by putting quality of life first. In this way, inquiry into this puzzle sets the foundations for further inquiry into the issue of large classes which is an unpleasant reality that does not seem to be addressed by the authorities concerned. Thus, it is better to start addressing this issue by undertaking principles of EP. There are two benefits of approaching the issue of large classes via EP. First, some issues in large classes may be handled by putting the quality of life first and understanding classroom life. Second, deep understanding before implementing any type of change in a classroom is essential. So if concerned authorities want to bring some changes to address the issue of large classes, they can benefit from the EP research on large classes carried out by the teachers. In this way, teachers can contribute in addressing the issue of large classes by sharing their knowledge sought via undertaking the principles of EP.

5.3.4. Fattah

The researcher resumed teaching after a period of about two and a half years, and identified his puzzle by feeling as if 'something was going wrong' in his teaching. He therefore started to explore what was puzzling him in his Remedial English class. He noted a few issues that were frequently getting into his way. Instead of working on each of these issues individually, he framed them into questions, and asked learners for suggestions by asking them to imagine what they would do if they were teachers who were faced with these issues. The main purpose of this activity was to move learners from their traditional role of passive listeners to active thinkers so that they could start

realizing their significance in the process of teaching and learning and may become capable of working as 'co-participants'.

Although this puzzle addresses a range of issues such as behavioural issues, developing interest of learners and increasing learners' participation in a class, the main focus of this puzzle has been on involving learners in a classroom inquiry, and make them feel active participants in a class rather than being passive learners. Involving students in classroom decisions may seem quite novel in the context of the USJP where a teacher-centered approach is in practice, in which teachers usually carry out teaching by delivering long lectures, and offering students chance to ask questions at the end of the class. In such an environment, it is challenging for anyone to involve learners in classroom inquiry, and engage them in the process of reaching or developing understanding about the life in a Remedial English language classroom. Attempts to involve learners in the inquiry maybe thwarted in the first instance as neither teacher nor learners are accustomed to working together. However, the present puzzle seems to be a good demonstration of an attempt to engage learners in classroom inquiry and can also serve as a model for colleagues in the USJP who may want to undertake EP principles in their teaching.

This puzzle is a little different from the puzzles of other participants in this project because in this puzzle, the learners play a dominant role in the inquiry compared to other puzzles. The learners worked together in a form of group activity several times during the inquiry in which they discussed issues and came out with very useful suggestions to deal with issues faced in their Remedial English class. There is no denying the fact that the researcher himself framed the issue, and asked the questions, but learners were assigned a leading role in taking responsibility, and making decisions in the class. The active involvement of learners in this puzzle complies with the notion

of Allwright and Hanks (2009: 152) that, all learners in a class are knowledgeable people who are "capable of taking learning seriously, of taking independent decisions, and of developing as practitioners of learning."Thus, in this puzzle, the practitioner encouraged learners to move from their traditional role of passive listeners to active thinkers so that they could realize their significance in the process of teaching and learning. In addition, this puzzle serves as a better practical example for other practitioners to engage learners in the classroom inquiry which is at the heart of EP research.

5.3.5. Inquiry into individual class presentation (ICP)

At the USJP, it is observed that teachers do not question the status quo, and take many classroom practices for granted, and rely on untested assumptions as in the cases of Hameed, and Shoib Shah. The case of ICP is similar; teachers had the long established notion that ICP is a very effective technique. Before inquiring into ICP, the participant-teachers had a very positive regard for it. Inquiry regarding ICP was made in two stages in the second phase of the EP project; initially, individual teachers conducted inquiry into efficacy of ICP in their respective classes by employing normal routine teaching activities. In their primary inquiry, teachers found that there was difference between teachers' views about ICP and those of their learners. In the next stage, we decided to employ a questionnaire to conduct a study on a large scale to find out more about ICP. The decision of conducting further inquiry into ICP was made due to two reasons; first to further confirm the fact as part of deeper understanding of the issue under inquiry; secondly that challenging ICP practice based on individual inquiries by participant teachers may not have been acceptable to other colleagues, and the administration.

This puzzle is significant in two ways; on one hand, it has developed understanding about the issue of ICP in Remedial English. The issue of ICP which has been passed on from generations of teachers since the start of the USJP and was never investigated. The practice of ICP was taken for granted as an effective technique because it was inherited from its predecessors. Not being inquisitive is one of the main characteristics of the culture prevailing in the teaching community at the USJP which is one of the main hindrances in improving the ELT profession at the university. They do not question the status quo, and take things for granted without investigating them. Inquiry into the issue of ICP may serve as an eye opener and open up a Pandora's Box full of other issues that are taken for granted.

This puzzle also highlights another important aspect of EP which is to involve learners in inquiring life in a language classroom. Although it may appear as if learners played a passive role, being used as research subjects, I think their involvement in the process was more than just research subjects, because it was by virtue of their involvement in the inquiry that we arrived at a better understanding of ICP. In other words, the impetus for conducting inquiry into ICP came from identifying the views of the participants in the first stage of the inquiry. At the second stage, the group was initially planning to engage learners in designing the questionnaire but that was not practically possible due to constraints of time. Despite this, the inquiry into ICP underlies the significance of learners' involvement in understanding classroom issues by bridging the gap between teachers and learners. The lack of collaboration between teachers and learners at the USJP has aggravated the situation for a long time. This inquiry is significant in the way that teachers involved their learners to express their views and perception about ICP. To understand the quality of life, it is very important that both teachers and learners work together particularly in the context of the USJP where learners remain suppressed and

hardly challenge teachers. There are many reasons why teachers keep learners suppressed, firstly, teacher assume they know best, secondly, asking learners to become involved may involve an imagined loss of face for them. Undertaking the principles of EP could change the orthodox attitude of teachers, and provide a good platform to bring learners and teachers together. It can also assist students to become familiar with expressing their views and opinions openly on various issues related to teaching and learning.

The evaluation of the puzzles carried out above shows that EP as a form of practitioner research has made a significant contribution in the stalemate conditions of the USJP. The significance of classroom research as suggested by Allwright (2005) depends on how far the knowledge produced is beneficial for participants involved in it (Fine et al, 2000) and the relevance of knowledge produced to those involved in research (Howe & Moses, 1999). The knowledge produced through dealing with puzzles is useful for both teachers and learners. They developed understanding through collaborative inquiry about issues which were hindering the progress of the ELT profession and causing disadvantage to both teachers and learners. Thus, the significance and relevance of knowledge produced through the puzzle attends the concerns raised by Ortega (2005) that too much focus on observing methodological rigour does not help achieve necessary purpose and the aims of classroom research. Allwright (2005) also raises same issue that a technicist approach which employs academic research tools for generating knowledge has become futile, and parasitic in classroom research. The teacher-participants in this project employed mainly routine teaching activities as tools of data collection to investigate their puzzles which dealt with a variety of issues faced by the ELT profession and the knowledge they produced is found useful for the advancement of the ELT profession at the university.

5.4. Evaluation of EP as an approach to teacher development in the context of USJP

The third research question evaluates the significance of EP as an approach to teacher development in the context of the USJP. To answer this question, the researcher first discusses the professional background of teacher-participants as described by themselves in their pre-interviews and then evaluates the significance of the EP project, and then EP as an approach to teacher-development as expressed by the participants in their post-interviews.

5.4.1. Background knowledge

The pre-interview results show that an MA in English Literature, a pre-requisite post-graduate degree to become an English teacher at the USJP, does not provide relevant training or related knowledge in the field of English language teaching. Thus, teachers struggle at the beginning of their teaching career. The only support teachers could get is guidance from senior colleagues which is not necessarily available to everyone. Therefore, the majority of the teachers have to struggle to survive the initial period of their career. Moreover, there is hardly any in-service teacher-development program available for English professionals during the rest of their career development, so almost all participant-teachers rely on learning from experience. When asked if they employed any specific technique for their professional self-development, none of the participant-teachers mentioned any specific technique, except one who said he employed reflective practice. This shows the state of teachers at the USJP who neither get access to main stream literature on ELT nor have opportunities to attend teacher professional courses during their career.

Keeping in view the challenges faced by English professionals, teacher development through the Exploratory Practice (EP) project was carried out for a full academic year consisting of two semesters of four months each, and it was hoped that this project would introduce them to a suitable approach to their professional development. In the following section, I will evaluate the significance of EP as an approach to teacher development in light of the teacher-participants' views and experiences about applying EP in their practice as expressed in their post interviews.

Despite having no exposure to teacher-development approaches or teachers' training programs, teacher-participants responded positively in undertaking EP as an approach to their professional development. Though all of teacher-participants enjoyed their experience of working in the EP project, a few teachers had to face some difficulties while working in the project. For instance, Komal felt confused about how to undertake EP principles when she was unable to progress on her puzzle. In addition, Ishrat felt under pressure and rather frustrated when she was lagging behind other colleagues in her progress on the puzzle. Shoib mentioned general difficulties such as the teaching and learning environment in the USJP was not favourable as there were boycotts, strikes and protests of political parties which disturbed the teaching and learning environment. Shumaila diverts our attention to a very serious issue when she said she faced resistance from learners when she tried to engage them her inquiry. However, the remainder of the teacher-participants, Hameed, Sumera, and Sangi did not experience any difficulty while working on the project.

Regarding the difficulties faced by the participants, there were genuine problems with Komal and Ishrat. Both of them picked very difficult topics for their respective puzzles. Ishrat's topic was to deal with variation in proficiency level, and Komal wanted to balance confidence level among her learners. It could be argued that, both of these

topics were too difficult to be handled by a novice EP practitioner. That was the reason, Komal developed inaccurate notions about EP as being difficult to practice when she was unable to sort out her topic. Ishrat also confirms that she thought EP quite difficult to practice until she realized while working on the collective puzzle in phase II that EP is not difficult to practice. The problem faced by Ishrat and Komal in undertaking principles of EP fall in preview of the difficulties faced by the novice EP practitioners rather than be considered as faults with EP. Ishrat and Komal attract our attention to the probable difficulties a novice EP practitioner could face when he/she is unable to progress on his/her puzzle. EP emphasizes working together for mutual development by respecting and assisting each other, and giving sufficient space to everyone involved so that he/she can work for professional development (Allwright, 2003).

Shumaila pointed out a very important issue that she had difficulty in engaging her learners with EP. Involving learners in inquiry lies at the heart of EP (Allwright, 2003; 2005; Allwright and Hanks; 2009). Nevertheless, Shumaila found it difficult to convince her learners to participate in the classroom inquiry as they considered such inquiry a waste of time. Shumaila draws our attention to the attitude of learners who are not used to playing an active role in the class; instead, they remain passive listeners. An effort of assigning them an active role by undertaking principles of EP is more likely to be thwarted. However, teacher-participants were largely successful in engaging learners in classroom inquiry and were successful in making them realize the significance of their role in the betterment of the ELT profession at the USJP.

5.4.2. Views about group meetings

The group meetings which underpin the methodological approach of EP in which teachers were invited to work as a community for the betterment of the institution has been appreciated by all participants because they highlighted the significance of team

work in the form of group meetings under the umbrella of EP for the betterment of the ELT profession at the USJP where they shared their experiences, and sought suggestions from the colleagues and assisted one another in their mutual development. Teacher-participants, realizing the significance of team work after working on the project, demanded to have such platform so that they can work together for the enhancement of the ELT profession in future.

Nevertheless, some teacher-participants faced problems in attending group meetings. For example, Komal felt uneasy when some teachers were unable to attend on time which delayed proceedings of meetings. Sumera and Shumaila had to face the issue of clash in timings between their teaching hours and scheduled EP group meetings. Shumaila also mentioned that some teachers were not cooperative, and they were hesitant to share the views with colleagues. Clash of timings between teaching hours and timings of group meeting as well as delay in attending meetings by some participants were not serious problems which could have been addressed through personal management and better collaboration with the management of the institute. However, Shumaila diverts our attention to a serious problem that some teachers were not cooperating to extend help, and offer suggestions and share their experience with one another. This is a matter of concern for both EP itself and the USJP. But it is very important to note that Shumaila's statement is relevant only to female group meetings held in the early stage of phase I. Being a member of the project, I had observed and listened to some reservations shown by female teachers for one another, and this culture of jealousy did prevail particularly among female teachers. So the negative feelings which she came across might have been rooted in their personal relations in the past rather than happening due to their participation in EP group meetings.

In light of the above facts, it can be argued that there was a friendly environment in which teachers worked together despite the fact that it was the first time since the establishment of English department that teachers gathered on a joint platform offered by EP. Having no previous experience of working as a team in the form of group meetings, they have been successful in developing friendly and favourable atmosphere during the group meetings of phase I.

The environment of group meetings in phase II was highly appreciated in comparison to group meetings in phase II. One of the participant-teachers believed that though she liked both phases, she was more enthusiastic about phase II and felt more at ease in sharing views and discussing things due to common interest arising out of working on the same puzzle, in contrast to the previous phase in which every teacher tried to speak more about his/her own puzzle, creating an environment of rivalry and competition. For example, Ishrat who felt under pressure and frustrated in phase I was comfortable in attending phase II meetings. However, the case of Ishrat highlights the complexities of the pattern of working together on separate puzzles in a group. The procedure and pattern of any EP work in which participant- teachers work on individual puzzles should be meticulously monitored so that each participant feels comfortable, and receives equal chance, and does not feel under pressure as Ishrat.

Comparing the mechanism of group meetings held in both phases highlights some very important issues. For instance, working on separate puzzles seems to have caused tensions such as a feeling of rivalry, confusion and frustration making members feel like withdrawing from the project. In phase II, participants did not indicate anything which posed difficulty for them. There was no rivalry, and participants felt more at ease and comfortable compared to phase I. Compared to phase I where there was a massive drop out, there was no drop out at all in phase II. Comfortable working environment plus

no drop out in phase II might have occurred due to some factors: first, participant-teachers became more comfortable with practicing EP after working in phase I; second, my role as a teacher consultant may have improved due to previous experience in phase I; third, members might have adapted themselves better to working together as a team, and developed a better tempo with one another. It is important to note that issues and difficulties we faced in phase I were almost nonexistent in phase II.

Thus, we can conclude that group meetings paved a way for collaborative research (Connelly and Clandinin, 1988) and brought English professionals together so that they could research their practice (Allwright, 2005). In this way, the EP project highlighted the importance of the collaborative nature of the research process as one in which all participants see themselves as participants in the community (Noddings 1986 cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 1990).

5.4.3. EP requires extra efforts and time to practice it

Among seven teachers who participated in the project, only one clearly said that EP required extra time and effort, whereas one other participant indirectly supported Komal by saying that some compensation in the form of lessening their workload should be offered to those who participate in the EP project. If the point of view of these two participants is true regarding EP requiring extra time and effort, it stands in direct contrast to its ethical justification (Allwright, 2005) which suggests integrating research into pedagogy and recommending routine teaching activities as tools of data collections so as to avoid extra burden on EP practitioners. And, in case it is true, as claimed by the participant, then it weakens our arguments of preferring EP to Action Research (Allwright, 2005). If EP requires extra time to practice it, then it is unethical to introduce EP to English professionals at the USJP who are already overburdened with classes in both evening and morning sessions.

It is very important to discuss the view of Komal about EP taking extra time and energy from different angles to reach the truth. Since her view about EP is an outcome of her direct experience in the EP project, it is essential to see her progress and engagement in the project. She attended only the first two meetings and thus stayed in the project for just a short period of time so we cannot easily trust her views about EP. Secondly, although she was enthusiastic during the meetings, she had been struggling to cope with her own puzzle which was about balancing confidence level among her learners. Maybe, since she was struggling to cope with her puzzle, she might have developed this impression that working with EP required extra time and work.

Another member who indirectly supported Komal's view point that EP requires extra time and effort was Mr. Sangi. He, while recommending EP as an approach to teacher development for in service English professionals, made a self-contradictory statement. He recommends EP on the ground that it is teacher friendly and easy to practice, but suggests giving some concession such as lessening the work load and some flexibility in the choice of their timings as they could attend the meetings. We cannot guess what he meant by giving some concession to teachers who work in a project such as EP. Maybe, he thinks EP puts some extra burden on the teachers who undertake the principles of EP or maybe he thinks it is necessary to provide some space for novice EP practitioners until they get used to undertaking the principles of EP.

Apart from Komal and Sangi, there was no other participant who said that EP required extra effort and time to apply into classroom practice. In particular, we should give weight to the views of those participants who worked in both phases. No one agreed with Komal by holding a different view about EP as easy to practice which did not require extra effort and time. It would be fair therefore, to conclude by saying that participants did not feel that EP required extra time and effort. And, they were largely

successful in integrating research into pedagogy by employing routine teaching activities while undertaking EP for their professional development. The experience of teacher-participants at the USJP supports the idea conceded by Borg (2010:397) that EP is a more friendly version of teacher research which integrates research into pedagogy to make teacher research "a more feasible and productive activity for teachers and learners." Despite the fact the teacher-participants were quite unfamiliar with EP at the start of the project, they adopted it comfortably and found it easy to practice.

5.4.4. EP as an approach to teacher-development

EP as an approach to teacher-development has had very positive contribution in the professional development of teacher-participants. For example, EP renewed Komal's vision of teaching and reshaped her concept of 'a good teacher'. Having worked in the project, she thought she should work far harder to prove herself as a good teacher. EP brought a basic shift in the approach of Shumaila as a teacher, shifting her attention from just bringing in good material to realizing the significance of interaction between herself and learners. In addition, Hameed found EP useful in rectifying his misconceptions about teaching. Whereas, Shoib realized that apparently petty things happening in classroom underlined serious problems which can be identified by putting the quality of life first. Furthermore, Ishrat and Sumera realizedthe importanceof involving learners to understand issues faced in a language classroom.

Regarding efficacy of EP as an approach to teacher-development at the USJP, there is no difference of opinion among teacher-participants. All of them agreed that EP should be continued as an approach to teacher-development for in-service teachers, and should be utilized as a pre-service teachers' training program so that newly appointed teachers may better be able to cope with the challenges in their early teaching career. One of the teachers suggested integrating EP in curriculum as a module for teacher development at

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Master level so that students who move onto their career as teachers may be able to benefit from it in their career development.

The significance of EP as an approach to teacher-development for in-service teachers as suggested by the participants is well justified in light of the contextual realities as mentioned in the introduction chapter as well as the pre-interviews. Teachers join the teaching profession at the USJP without having pre-service teachers' training and hold an MA English (literature) degree which is not very useful for becoming an English teacher. In addition, they hardly have a chance of participating in teacher development programs during their careers. In the existing circumstances, where an English teacher is overburdened with taking classes in the evening as a necessity in addition to the morning session, it is essential for every teacher to meet satisfactory performance level set by the HEC for further extension in a job which is contractual in nature. EP as practised by teachers was not only found useful for the professional development of teachers, but was considered as teacher friendly and easy to practice requiring no extra effort to apply to classroom pedagogy. To help English professionals meet challenges of HEC in the existing working conditions, EP can serve them well.

Teacher-participants' suggestion of using EP for pre-service teachers' training program is an issue that needs to be resolved. EP as an approach to teacher-development is commonly used by the experienced teachers. Thus, we may hesitate to offer EP in in-service-teachers' training programs because inexperienced novice language teachers require practical skills in the beginning of their teaching career so that they can cope with their initial teaching experience. Teacher education programs in Pakistan focus on imparting basic teaching skills, methods and approaches rather than allowing for exploration of the quality of life in classrooms. As a result, use of EP could enrich initial teacher education if ways can be found to accommodate it. In this way, EP as an

approach to teacher-development could be useful for newly appointed teachers to improve their skills, techniques, strategies they acquire in in-service teachers' training programs. For instance, EP can help them develop understanding about these skills, strategies, and techniques in relations to the learners as well as a context where they apply them. Thus, it is a good idea to introduce EP to potential candidates for teachers in teacher-training programs.

The idea of integrating EP as a module in curriculum for Master students is a useful suggestion in view of the fact that an MA (English literature) degree is less relevant to train teachers or equip outgoing students with knowledge to work independently for their professional development. So instead of introducing EP as a pre-service teachers' training programs, it is a better idea to integrate EP in the curriculum because outgoing students who become English teachers tend not to be given a chance to attend teacher development programs. Those students, who pass, may contribute well to the profession by undertaking principles of EP in their teaching. Moreover, EP is easy is to practice and does not require extra effort as mentioned by the teacher-participants, so it will be a suitable approach for outgoing students from the Department of English, USJP.

Breen (2006) refers to the six criteria for best practice of teacher development (Allwright 2000, 2001). The present study embraces the criteria. For instance, teacher-participants first tried to develop understanding about their puzzling issues by employing normal classroom activities to avoid creating hindrance in the teaching and learning environment of Remedial English. As a result, the understanding developed through using EP was found relevant to the life of both teachers and learners. While applying EP, participants were involved in collaborative work for mutual development. Teacher-participants realized the significance of involving learners in their professional development and thus tried hard to help their respective students move from the

traditional role of passive listeners to active learner practitioners. Since teacher-participants utilized routine teaching activities in their professional development, they found EP easy to practice which did not put any extra burden on them. As a consequent, they are more likely to continue engaging in EP for their professional development.

The experience and evaluation of EP as an approach to teacher-development by the teacher-participants in the context of the USJP supports Breen (2006) who asserts that, 'vernacular pedagogies' are more useful and culturally sensitive than 'trainability'. Teacher-participants found EP a suitable approach to their professional-development. They did not find any resistance in applying EP. The present teacher-development project also utilized the oral culture (Rarieya, 2005) by arranging group meetings at regular basis in which teachers engaged themselves in reflective conversations (Ashraf and Rarieya, 2008)which helped them inquire about their classroom practices, and share teaching and learning experiences with one another. While working together, teacher participants enjoyed good collegial relations and assisted one another in their mutual development. The present study also supports the view suggested by Breen (2006) that among reflective practice models, action research, and EP which are considered vernacular pedagogies, EP is more suitable because it does not employ academic research tools in contrast to action research, and focuses on the local concerns and needs of both teachers and learners by involving everybody, in particular both teachers and students. Subsequently, EP is a more suitable approach to teacher development than action research in the context of the USJP. English professionals, who are already overburdened with taking classes in both evening and morning sessions, cannot the spare time to engage in action research. EP, in this regard, is culturally a more suitable approach for teachers at the USJP which can help them meet the criteria set by the HEC to survive in the profession.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

6.1.   Introduction

This final chapter summarises and discusses the main findings of this study with relation to four s*pecific research questions* to identify how far the project was successful in achieving the targets set in the first chapter. It then discusses the significance of the study and makes some recommendations based on the findings of this study. Finally, the researcher discusses the limitations of the study and then puts forward some suggestions for future research.

6.2.   Summary and discussion of main findings

The main objective of the project was to develop an approach to teachers' professional development in the form of practitioner research that may be suitable and practicable within the existing circumstances in which English professionals had been working at the USJP. In order to achieve the objective of the research, thestudy set out to evaluate the significance of Exploratory Practice as a form of practitioner research and an approach to teacher-development at the USJP. Four specific research questions were developed to guide data collection and analysis. These questions focused on 1) evaluating the work carried out during the project in light of the EP principles; 2) contribution of EP as a form of practitioner research in developing understanding about the issues faced by the ELT profession at the USJP; 3) evaluation of EP as an approach to teacher-development at the USJP; 4) contribution of this investigation to our thinking about EP. It is very important to note that the first research question which focuses on how far the practices employed in the project abided by the principles of EP is not relevant to the main objective of the research, but is significant to answering the second

and third research questions. The reliability of the answers to these two questions depends on the degree to which the project abided by the basic principles of EP (Allwright, 2005). The fourth question agrees with Allwright (2003) that practices conducted in light of the EP principles in any context contribute to its development and therefore looks at what contribution or understanding this project has developed for EP practitioners.

In order to answer the research questions and achieve the aims of the present study, the teacher-development project was carried out at the USJP for a year. There was dual agenda of the project: professional as well as academic. Teacher-participants employed EP as an approach to their professional development by undertaking principles of EP in their teaching. While undertaking the principles of EP, the teacher-participants developed a narrative of inquiry into their respective puzzles. To achieve the academic agenda, on the one hand, the researcher assessed the significance of participants' work in the form of puzzles for the benefit of the ELT profession at the USJP. On the other hand, he evaluated EP as an approach to teacher-development in light of the teacher-participants' views identified in the post-interviews.

6.3. General findings

The findings showed that the project largely abided by the principles of EP and two suggestions (Allwright, 2005) with certain exceptions but not without justification. The participants' work in the form of puzzles was found very useful for the benefit of the ELT profession. The participants' puzzles dealt with a variety of issues faced by the ELT profession at the USJP. For instance, the participants' research brought novelty in the conservative teaching and learning environment of the USJP by challenging long held untested assumptions of teachers about teaching and learning English and creating a window for engaging learners to play their role for the advancement of the profession.

The findings showed that participant-teachers found EP as a useful approach to their professional development. The majority of participants appreciated working in teams and found EP easy to practice, apart from only a single participant who thought otherwise. In addition, the local practice conducted in the context of the USJP has brought some understanding about the future use of EP in global contexts.

6.4.   Specific findings

6.4.1.   Evaluation of the EP project

The trustworthiness of this research entirely depends upon following and respecting the principles of EP. In other words, to what extent 'we should' trust findings depend on how far 'we' have been successful in respecting the principles of EP. The evaluation of this project in light of Allwright's (2005) six global principles, and two suggestions shows that the project largely abided by the principles of EP.

6.4.1.1. Put the quality of life first to understand language classroom life

The first two principles of EP suggest prioritizing *quality of life* to developing techniques and skills, and *understanding life in a language classroom* to finding solution to a problem. Because, there may be a variety of issues that can be tackled well by putting *quality of life first* instead of importing solution or taking any action in the form of introducing any new technique or strategy. Each of the five puzzles demonstrated a good application of these two principles. For example, Shumaila's puzzle dealt with complex issues of rivalry which did not surface automatically but she adopted a wise procedure to discover this issue and finally developed understanding about it by putting the *quality of life first* instead of finding solution to the problem. In addition, the puzzles by Hameed and Shoib showed that they both had been unable to put *the quality of life* first. The inquiry into their puzzles in light of the first two

principles of EP helped them rectify their misunderstandings. Furthermore, Hameed who had been pursuing the wrong direction made the situation worse by taking the wrong action was put back on the right track by virtue of putting quality of life first to understand the issue under inquiry. Shoib Shah saved himself at the right moment when he was heading to aggravate his misunderstanding about his classroom issue via undertaking the first two principles of EP. The researcher's puzzle demonstrated the important involvement of learners to understand life in a language classroom. He addressed a range of issues by adopting a humanistic approach instead of searching for a technical solution. The issue of ICP was a chronic problem which was never touched upon; it was the first time in the history of the USP that an investigation was conducted by putting in practice the first two principles of EP. As result, the inquiry showed startling facts regarding the efficacy of ICP as students said that it had more negative effects than positive on their learning outcome. They subsequently suggested that the practice of ICP should either be modified or removed for the benefit of the ELT profession at their university.

6.4.1.2. Involve everybody by bringing people together as to work for mutual development.

Collective understanding, which is a focus of EP, can be achieved if there are good collegial relations between those working together. This project involved a range of relations; learners and teachers, teachers and teachers, teachers and the researcher. The participants entertained good relations and worked together for the benefit of the ELT profession.

Traditionally, the role of learners at the USJP has always been as passive listeners, and thus there had always been a lack of collaboration between teachers and learners. The lack of collaboration may be a significant factor which affected the progress of the ELT

profession. Involving learners in a classroom inquiry was challenging, and it was observed that some participants found it quite difficult to convince students to collaborate with them in the inquiry. However, each of the five puzzles demonstrated that teachers and learners enjoyed healthy relations during the inquiry. In each of the five puzzles, there was a varying level of learners' participation in which they cooperated with their teachers for understanding *quality of life* in a language classroom. For example, in Hameed's puzzles, he sought cooperation of his learners twice to explore his issues. Although Shumaila led inquiry herself in the beginning, however in later stages she involved learners to address the issue under inquiry. In Shoib Shah's puzzle, the plot for inquiry was set up by the teacher himself, but the real actors were the learners themselves. In the researcher's puzzle, he played a role of facilitator, and allowed his learners to lead the role in exploring *quality of life* in the class. Working together by enjoying good collegial relation, the teachers and learners were involved in a mutually beneficial enterprise by developing understanding for issues of common interest and beneficial for the ELT profession at the USJP.

Teachers enjoyed good collegial relations with one another. Regular group meetings offered them a good platform in which they gave suggestions to one another, shared their experiences, and participated in the discussions on common issues faced by the ELT profession. All of the teachers appreciated group meetings which served as a good platform to bring them together so that they could work collectively for the betterment of the ELT profession. Although no such serious event took place which could disturb the good collegial relations among teachers, there had been a few instances which affected relations of some colleagues with one another. All of such instances took place in phase I of the project. These instances may be attributed to two reasons; first, working on separate individual puzzles in phase I developed an environment of

competition and rivalry particularly in female group meetings. Secondly, teachers were not used to working as a team before the project started so they had to struggle in the phase I, but got on quite well with each other in phase II. Overall, teachers enjoyed good collegial relation despite the fact that it was first time since they joined their profession to sit and work together for the betterment of the ELT profession and assisted one another in professional development.

The researcher also enjoyed good collegial relations by acting according to the suggestions made by Allwright (2003). Instead of using teachers for his agenda, he worked as a teacher-consultant while doing his academic research work. As a teacher-consultant, he assisted his colleague and advised teacher-participants on the conduct of inquiry whenever needed by them. By doing so, he facilitated participant-teachers to pursue their own agenda/puzzles.

6.4.1.3. Make the work a continuous enterprise by integrating research into pedagogy

Teacher-participants largely utilized routine teaching activities as tools of data collection while undertaking principles of EP in their teaching. Shoib Shah utilized assignment as a tool for data collection. The learners working on the assignment, and the teacher assessing them were all part of existing working life of the classroom. Shumaila wrote diary notes, arranged a speaking group activity and finally chose an exercise from unit 2 to arrange a group debate. Hameed arranged a classroom group activity in which he asked students to write the reasons why they did not take interest in English on small chits and then arranged a debate as part of a speaking activity. The researcher employed group speaking and writing activities as main tools to collect data. He also spared some time at his leisure to sort out the suggestions of learners written on the small chits to move ahead. In the first stage of inquiry into ICP, the team members used different methods of collecting data. For example, Shumaila had an informal chat

with students about ICP. Whereas, Ishrat asked learners to write about the significance of ICP in their learning English on small chits. The researcher employed dialogue practice activity to discuss significance of ICP in Remedial English class. In the second stage of inquiry, teacher-participants employed a questionnaire as the tool of data collection.

Although the majority of data collection tools demonstrated a perfect example of *integrating research into pedagogy*, use of chits, diary notes and, sparing some extra time in sorting out learners' suggestions by the researcher himself seem to be slightly drifting away from the ideal suggestions of Allwright (2003:360) to "*minimize the extra effort of all sorts for all concerned* by integrating the *"work for understanding" into the existing working life of the classroom"*, but there are reasons to justify them. Firstly, there is provision to use these tools if it is not possible to fit the inquiry into normal teaching practice. Secondly, EP condemns extra burden, but if a teacher is fine with sparing some time and energy which does not affect his normal work, there is no harm in employing such tools for data collection. Even though, some serious concerns can be raised against the use of a questionnaire as a tool of data collection in the second phase, the choice of using questionnaire can still be justified by keeping in view the team members' mutual decision of using questionnaire and working together for developing a questionnaire and analysing data in a way that would not add extra burden on any member of the team.

Over all, the teacher-participants have been successful in conducting teacher research by utilizing such tools of data collection which did not put extra burden on them. By utilizing such techniques, the teachers at the USJP can make this 'work a continuous enterprise' to explore the dynamic nature of life in a Remedial English class without experiencing burn out.

6.4.2. What is the contribution of EP in developing understanding about the issues faced by the ELT profession at the USJP?

In the fourth chapter, teacher-participants pointed out different issues in the pre-interview results. We acknowledge the fact that the puzzles worked through by the teacher-participants did not pick those core issues mentioned. However, the work carried out by the participants through employing EP as a form of practitioner research is found very significant for the betterment of the ELT profession at the USJP.

Shoib Shah sets a good precedent for how to conduct an inquiry into the issue of syllabus/curriculum on a large scale through his puzzle. The other teachers working at the USJP can draw guidelines from the inquiry of Shoib Shah and conduct an inquiry into various issues associated with the curriculum according to their own understanding and nature of issues cropping up in their usual teaching practice. Hameed who had been approaching the issue without developing sufficient understanding about it was ultimately successful in attending this issue. The puzzle by Hameed sets a good precedent to challenge untested teachers' notions about teaching and learning at the USJP. Teachers can utilize the principles of EP to get rid of wrong notions about learning and teaching at USJP. Shumaila dealt with the issue of rivalry in large classes through *putting quality of life first to understand language classroom*. In this way, this puzzle sets a good foundation for further inquiry into the issues cropping up in large classes. The researcher addressed a variety of day to day issues, which were disturbing the teaching and learning environment in his Remedial English class by putting *the quality of life first* by assigning the leading role to the learners in making classroom decisions. The issue of ICP which has been passed on from two generations of teachers was handled through employing EP as a form of practitioner research. The joint inquiry into the issue of ICP demonstrated a practical way of engaging teachers as a community

to work for the advancement of the ELT profession at the USJP. The inquiry into ICP sets a good platform to develop the culture of research and inquiry and conduct investigation into different teaching and learning practices which have been inherited from the predecessors and are not tested hitherto. Teachers at the USJP are less inquisitive, thus they hardly question the status quo, and take classroom practices for granted without investigating them. In order to change this culture at the USJP, EP as a form of practitioner research can serve well.

Overall, the work carried out by employing EP as a form practitioner research brought some sort of stir in the stalemate conditions of the ELT profession at the USJP. The project provided a better platform for teachers to move further and continue using EP as a form of practitioner research for the benefit of the ELT profession.

6.4.3. What is the significance of EP as an approach to teacher development in the context of USJP?

All teacher-participants appreciated working in team as very useful for their professional development. According to them, team meetings provided a healthy environment, in which they shared their experiences, discussed their problems, received valuable suggestions, and argued with each other for further clarification of the issues. That was the reason two of the four participants who concluded their puzzles attribute their progress to their discussion with their team members in meetings. They found discussions with colleagues very useful for their professional development. Since research on reflective practice has already described Pakistan as having an oral culture where teachers are found less willing to reflect on their practices in their writing but are more inclined to engage in reflective conversation (Rarieya, 2005). By utilizing oral culture in the group meetings, the teacher participants involved engaged in reflective conversation which helped them enhance their professional development.

According to Sangi, EP is a better way for teachers to improve their skills without putting much effort and consuming extra time. EP as an approach to teacher-development developed a renewed vision of teaching in Komal who used to feel that she was the best teacher. Having worked on the EP project, she feels she should strive hard to become a good teacher. EP changed Shumaila's approach as a teacher from shifting her attention from only bringing in good material, to realizing the significance of the interaction between herself and learners. Hameed found EP helpful to rectify his misconceptions about teaching and learning and beneficial for his professional development. Shoib Shah believed that EP attracted his attention to minor classroom issues which were creating serious problems causing hindrance in the progress of teaching and learning in the classroom. Ishrat appreciated the focus of EP on the involvement of learners to understand the issue faced in their language classroom. Sumera found EP helpful in improving her teaching in a systematic way without putting extra effort and spending extra time.

Among seven teachers who participated in the project, only Komal categorically said that EP required extra time and effort, whereas Sangi indirectly supported Komal's view about EP by saying that some concession in workload should be given to those who work on such projects. Apart from these two members, all other teacher-participants found EP easy to practice which did not require extra effort and energy to put into practice. While evaluating the view of Komal on few grounds; firstly, she is only a single participant out of 7 participants who thought EP added extra burden, secondly, she attended just first two meetings thus stayed in the project for a short period of time so we can't trust in her views about EP. Thirdly, she was unable to progress on her puzzle which may have left on her the impression that EP is difficult to practice. Thus, we should believe in and give weight to the views of those participants who worked in

both phases and spent longer time in undertaking principles of EP and developed better understanding about EP as an approach to teacher-development. The majority of participants did not feel that EP required extra time and effort and they were largely successful in integrating research into pedagogy by employing routine teaching activities while undertaking EP for their professional development.

6.4.4. What is the contribution of this project to the understanding of EP

Allwright (2003) mentions a crude picture of the Friends of the Earth slogan:

Think globally, act locally, think locally.

According to this, every local action carried out in any part of the world has implications for development of EP. In this way, the present EP project carried out in the context of the USJP has some significance and relevance for EP research.

The EP project was carried out in two phases each different from the other. In phase I, there were two groups, each of the participants worked on separate puzzles. In phase II, there was one group who worked collectively on a single puzzle. Some statements made by teacher-participants in their post-interview about their experience of working on the project provided some understanding about the mechanism of phase I and phase II.

It is very important to note that those who worked in both phases found phase II more enthusiastic and easier where they felt more at ease in sharing their views and discussing things due to the common interest arising out of working on the same puzzle, in contrast to the previous phase in which every teacher tried to speak more about his/her own puzzle creating an environment of rivalry and competition. As in the case of Ishrat who felt under pressure and frustrated due to being unable to make progress on her puzzle and had thought about withdrawing from the project but she experienced a

supportive environment in phase II where she felt at home and comfortable. From the whole project, we develop some understanding about EP in the following way:

1. Working on separate puzzles in a team meeting highlighted the tension causing rivalry and competition among the participant-teachers.

2. It is also important to note that the puzzles of those who could not make sound progress were the most complex and difficult to cope with such as *balancing confidence level* or *attending the variation in proficiency levels.* This indicates that the nature of the puzzle plays a crucial role in the practitioner's progress on EP projects particularly for those who are new and novice.

3. Working on separate puzzles seemed to have caused tensions such as a feeling of rivalry, confusion and frustration among members which made one member ready to withdraw from the project. It also affected negatively on building good collegial relations among colleagues.

4. In phase II there was no drop out at all in contrast to phase I where four participants left out of 7. No drop out in phase II might have happened due to a variety of factors such as1) participant-teachers became familiar with EP as result of their involvement in phase I; 2) they did not face any genuine issue in phase II meetings which might have caused them to leave; 3) my role as a teacher consultant may have improved due to previous experience in phase I; 4) members might have adapted themselves better to working together as a team.

In light of the understanding developed for the project, it is suggested that in future if similar projects are to be carried out in any part of the world, it is better to start with working on a single puzzle to avoid tension and minimize feelings of rivalry among colleagues and develop more friendly and cooperative environment. When novice EP

practitioners become familiar with working together and become better aware of the process and procedure of EP, they should be encouraged to work on individual puzzles while working in the team. If teachers work on separate puzzles at the beginning of such projects, it is suggested some training or assistance should be provided to teachers so that they could pick plausible and easily workable puzzle at the initial stage. By doing so, we can help new EP practitioners avoid developing the wrong impression that EP is difficult to practice and requires extra effort or time.

6.5. The significance of this study and recommendations

6.5.1. Significance of Exploratory Practice as a form of practitioner research for the context of USJP

1. A way forward to deal with long established teachers' arbitrary notions about learning and teaching practices

EP as a form of practitioner research prefers understanding to problem-solving. It thus offered a breakthrough in the stale and standstill profession of the ELT at the USJP. The inquiry into the puzzles pointed out the dangers of prevailing learning and teaching atmosphere where many teaching practices are taken for granted, and arbitrary notions are formed about teaching and learning which are passed onto the following generations of teachers without ever trying to investigate them. The lack of research and inquiry at Pakistani universities including the USJP is the main cause to develop such arbitrary notions among English professionals. The investigation conducted through EP challenged the arbitrary notions of the teacher-participants about learning and teaching of English and demonstrated a practical way to improve the ELT profession by abandoning such practices which are not useful for the EFL context in the USJP. Since English professionals at the USJP are not trained in academic research, adopting EP as a

form of practitioner can help them remove such arbitrary notions to improve the ELT profession at the USJP.

2. Help develop sufficient understanding before introducing any change

Although the actions such as introducing a new curriculum, downsizing classes, and arranging short term teacher training programs had been taken, these changes had not made a significant difference in improving the ELT profession (Memon and Badger, 2007). While introducing such changes, no consultation was carried out either with teachers or learners. The reason may be either the authorities did not consider worth consulting teachers and learners; or teachers themselves were not able to offer any suggestion based on any systematic inquiry as they neither had any training in academic research nor did they have exposure to any form of practitioner research. Since teachers at the USJP experienced exposure to EP as form of practitioner research during working on the project, they can now utilize it to conduct a systematic inquiry. By virtue of using EP as a form of practitioner research, they can develop sufficient understanding about issues faced by the ELT profession at the USJP before asking the concerned authorities to introduce any change. In this way, EP as a form of practitioner research can offer two in one. On the one hand, it can help handle issues faced by the ELT profession at the USJP by putting *quality of life first to understand language classroom life*. On the other hand, it can help avoid making changes as carried out in 2005 in a language classroom without developing sufficient understanding about the issues.

3. Realizing the significance of assigning active role to learners in classroom inquiry

Inactive role of learners in a language classroom is one of main causes of downfall of the ELT profession at the USJP. Teachers do not normally allow or involve learners in decision making in classrooms. Thus, learners remain passive listeners. They even do

not feel the courage to challenge any decisions of the teacher. The use of EP as a form of practitioner research provided a good platform to bridge the gap between teachers and learners. The teacher-participants in their puzzle tried to involve learners by moving them from the traditional role of being passive learners to active ones. The results showed that EP practitioners were largely successful in involving learners. By doing so, they have demonstrated a very practical method of engaging learners in classroom inquiry. By undertaking the principles of EP, participants realized the significance of engaging the learners in classroom inquiry. Such realization has a greater significance which can put the ELT profession in the right direction and lead it to progress.

6.5.2. Significance of Exploratory Practice as an approach to teacher development for the context of the USJP

Teacher-participants found EP a practically viable option in their given circumstances. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the teachers remain over-burdened in taking classes at both morning and evening sessions. EP utilizes routine teaching activities instead of academic research tools unlike action research. Thus, EP did not put any extra burden on teacher-participants when they applied it as a tool for their professional self-development during the project except for a single participant who had left the project in the very early stage. Teacher-participants not only found EP a practically viable option in their given circumstances, but also appreciated the mechanism of working together with colleagues and learners. They found team gatherings/meetings very useful despite some minor problems which could have been handled through proper management, and came to realize the significance of learners in their professional development. Thus, the researcher makes the following recommendations in the light of the findings of this study for EFL context of USJP.

1. **EP should be introduced as an approach to teacher development for in-service teachers at the USJP**

As mentioned in the first chapter, English professionals join the profession with MA in English literature as a pre-requisite degree which was considered not very useful in the professional development of teachers as stated by some participants in the pre-interviews. In addition, English professionals are not offered pre-service teacher training and rarely have an opportunity to participate in the teacher-development programs during their teaching career. In face of such realities, the criteria set by the HEC put teachers in a precarious position in which they will have to meet the satisfaction level set by the HEC to secure an extension in their employment contract. In such circumstances, EP, which was found easy to practice without burn out, can serve teachers as a useful approach to their professional development and help them meet the criteria set by the HEC.

2. **Integrate EP as a module in the curriculum**

In light of the teachers' experience of working on the EP project and their views about EP as an approach to development, we should also consider the suggestion of Mr. Sangi about integrating EP in the curriculum as a module for final year students most of whom start their career as English teachers after completing their degree in MA (English). Since teachers join the teaching career without pre-service training and get fewer opportunities during their teaching career, EP which is easy to practice and does not require extra effort can help them in their professional development if it is introduced as a module.

6.5.3. Significance of EP for EFL context of Pakistani universities

The conditions of ELT profession at all public sector universities of Pakistan are almost same as are at the USJP. The use of EP can serve both the ELT profession and professionals.

Dwelling on the different concepts of teacher research, Borg (2010) refers to emancipatory (Carr and Kemmis 1986), collaborative inquiry -ways of knowing within communities (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999), individual practical inquiry (Borg, 2010). EP is a collaborative type of inquiry which involves both teachers and learners to work together by putting the quality of life first to understand language classroom. Adopting EP as a form of teacher research in the EFL context of Pakistani universities can contribute to both individual teacher development and broader improvements to the context in which it is applied.

EP as form of teacher research involving community of teachers can help the ELT profession progress in the right direction. As mentioned by Khan (1997), the lack of research and inquiry is a major cause of downfall of the ELT profession. For the lack of research and inquiry, the concerned authorities are to be blamed as they did not take any proper measures to establish such culture. In existing circumstances, use of EP as a form of teacher research can compensate for this loss. The English professionals who are not trained in academic research tools can utilize EP to establish the culture of research by using routine teaching activities. In doing so, EP can make a significant contribution in improving the ELT profession at Pakistani universities on the one hand. On the other hand, it can contribute to the professional development of English professionals so that they can meet the criteria set by the HEC as mentioned in the introductory chapter.

6.5. Contribution of the present study to the related field

1. The present study contributes to the alternative model of teacher education inspired from sociocultural perspectives on how teachers learn to teach in light of research on teachers' cognition. The teacher development model adopted in this study opposed a positivistic model of education in which three different contexts were involved. In one context, a theory/method (knowledge) was developed which was supplied to the participant-teachers attending teacher education programs in another context who then applied it in their respective contexts. Although the Reflective teaching movement (Lockhart & Richards, 1994; Schön, 1983, 1987), Action Research (Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 1988; McNiff, 1993; Somekh, 1993), and the Teacher Research Movement (Edge & Richards, 1998; Freeman, 1998) were part of an effort to establish the case of alternative to the transmission model of teacher education, the present study contributes in this direction. Teachers used EP as an approach to teacher development embedded in their normal teaching practice taking place in their original context rather than importing methods or theories by attending teacher education programs held far away from their teaching context.

2. The present study is a part of an effort initiated by Johnson & Golombek (2002) which seeks to position teachers as the producers of knowledge and capable of working independently for their professional development rather as consumers of knowledge and/or just means of transferring knowledge. The use of EP as a form of practitioner research by the participants produced useful knowledge in the form of puzzles which was equally useful for both the teachers and learners. The knowledge produced through dealing with puzzles was useful for the professional development of teacher-participants and relevant for the context in

which research was conducted. In this regard, the use of any form of practitioner research empowers teachers to produce useful knowledge which is not only beneficial for the teachers and their immediate context, but it has the potential to modify the existing teacher education practices based on the traditional model.

3. Grossman (2005) maintains that a lot of proclamations have been made about the value and significance of different forms of practitioner research in teacher education, but there is little empirical evidence of it present in the literature. The present study fills this gap by providing empirical evidence of the significance of EP as a form of practitioner for teachers' professional development in the context of the USJP. On the basis of the evidence for the usefulness of EP as an approach to teacher development, English professionals all over the world can utilize it for their professional development.

4. The present study strengthens the case of EP as a plausible form of practitioner research and a better alternative to other forms of practitioner research based on an academic model i.e. action research. The teacher-participants who used EP found it easy to practice. They did not exert extra effort nor did they feel burnout. The use of EP as a form of practitioner research can attend the concern raised by Reis-Jorge (2007) and Block (2000) that an academic model of teacher research does not help in promoting teacher research. The reason being that the existing form of practitioner research is based on an academic model which requires expertise in academic research tools plus substantial time and energy to continue it. EP which utilizes routine teaching activities as tools of data collection contributes in promoting teacher research by offering a practicable model without burnout. The demonstration of EP as a form of practitioner

research in the context of the USJP was an effort to promote teacher research through a practicable model.

5. The present study has developed a framework to analyse EP work in light of its six principles and two suggestions (Allwright, 2005). This framework, which has not been used in previous EP studies, is one of the main contributions of the present study. This framework is significant in two ways. On the one hand, this framework can provide useful feedback to novice EP practitioners while they are undertaking EP principles. On the other hand, analysis of the framework adopted in the present study met the requirement of applying the basic rigour to the collection and analysis of data in teacher research as mentioned by Borg (2010). By adopting this framework, the researcher addressed the concerns of Elliot and Sarland (1995: 373) that in teacher research, "it is description that dominates the analysis" and Ellis (2010: 189) that "the methodological limitations that are evident in much teacher-research that may make its findings of little value to the academe."

6. The present study advocates the use of EP as an established research methodology for conducting higher degree research on a teacher development project of this kind. It is argued that EP has got an edge over action research to be employed for conducting higher degree research, because as mentioned earlier, EP is a more plausible form of teacher research due to the use of routine teaching activities as tools of data collection. EP meets the essential requirements of applying the basic rigour (systematic process) to the collection and analysis of data (Borg, 2010) through the framework developed in the present study. Thus, it be adopted as an established research methodology acceptable to the academic community for conducting higher degree research.

6.6.   Limitations of the study

The work of a researcher, especially that of a novice one, is not expected to be flawless. The present study could also have some flaws. Identifying flaws or limitations of the study enhances researchers' understanding of his work which becomes very useful for those who may conduct future research in the related field.

There are a few issues which might have affected the findings of the study. Firstly, all teachers who participated in the project did not know about EP. It was quite unknown to them when they joined the project. Their lack of knowledge about EP may have affected their performance and progress during the whole project. Secondly, the significant drop out among teacher participants may have an effect on the findings of the study. Thirdly, my role as a teacher consultant which has direct implication to the outcome of the project may have been affected by the additional burden of working as an academic researcher and teacher practitioner. Being a novice and inexperienced teacher consultant may also have had some effect on my performance. In addition to this, running two groups in phase I which doubled my workload must also have had some impact on performing my role as a teacher consultant which might have improved in phase II where there was just one group. The other factors such as frequent boycott of classes plus sudden closure of the university have also had some influence on the progress of the EP project.

Certain efforts were taken to address the above mentioned limitations of this study. Before the project begun, as soon as I received the consent of the participants, I provided each participant with the article by Allwright (2003) "Exploratory Practice: rethinking practitioner research in language teaching" so that they could get some idea of EP. In addition to this, I offered them my assistance anytime they required during

office hours. I had also been supportive and helping to my participants during the meetings, and even after meeting I was easily accessible for assistance to anyone who required any help. I tried my level best to keep record of the progress of every participant, reasons of withdrawing from the project, and then conducting post interviews from each of those who attended group meetings. Although there is no denying the fact, that my role as a consultant teacher in the phase I may have been influenced due to my inexperience in teacher-consultancy plus the double workload of running two meetings, however, I took every effort to give it the best.

With regard to the limitation of this study, it is also very important to refer to the notion of understanding (Allwright, 2003). EP, which fundamentally aims to understand life in the language classroom, is to produce 'situated understanding' useful and relevant for the immediate participants and the context. In this way, the situated understanding which has been developed regarding variety of issues in both phase I and phase II has more or less relevance only for the immediate context of the USJP. Nevertheless, the investigative procedures which have been employed by the teacher- participants can be useful for the wider population of EP practitioners in any part of the world.

6.7.   Further research

The Friends of the Earth slogan by Allwright (2003) mentioned earlier clearly indicates that every local action carried out in any part of the world has implications for the development of EP. In other words, every study which utilizes EP is part of the chain started since its emergence. There have been many studies conducted under the sphere of EP. The present study evaluated the significance of EP as both a form of practitioner research and an approach to teacher development. Since the findings of the present study supports the early studies which found EP to be a plausible form of practitioner research (Miller, 2001; Gunn, 2001; Perpignan, 2001; Slimani-Rolls, 2003) and a useful

approach to teacher development (Miller, 2001; 2003). Thus, EP could be utilized as both a form of practitioner research and an approach to teacher development with some more confidence in light of the findings of the present study.

To avail the potential benefits of EP, it is essential to utilize EP in the EFL context of the USJP as well as all the universities in Pakistan. English professionals can use EP as a form of practitioner research to develop understanding about life in the language classroom. They can carry out similar projects or undertake principles of EP individually in their respective classrooms. Use of EP to greater extent in Pakistan can develop further understanding about how to utilise it better. Apart from the Pakistani context, similar projects as one carried out in this study, can contribute to the progress of the ELT profession all over the world.

I conclude with a final note that in order to utilize the principles of EP well, it is essential to continue the practice of EP instead of limiting it to a specific project for specific time. I hope those participants who worked with me during the project would continuously be practising EP. After doing my PhD, I will be working with them as an EP practitioner for the advancement of the ELT profession at the USJP.

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Appendix A

Teacher-Development through Exploratory Practice

The Teacher-Development through Exploratory Practice (EP) project is going to start from January, 2009, which is being funded by the Commission of Higher Education, Government of Pakistan and carried out under supervision at the School of Education, University of Leicester. The main purpose of this project is to develop an approach to teacher development embedded in the normal practice of teaching Remedial English by language professionals in The University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan (USJP), which may be practicable and ongoing without burn out. Exploratory Practice, unlike other forms of practitioner research like action research, recommends using normal routine teaching activities as sources of data collection so as to avoid putting any extra burden on English teaching professionals or causing any disturbance in the normal teaching and learning environment. To accomplish this PhD project, I am seeking the participation of a few colleagues who would be able to cooperate throughout the project. The details of this project are given below:

- The participant-teachers would undertake EP in their own classrooms during the course of the year.

- The duration of the project is 10 weeks each semester for one academic year.

- The participant-teachers will be interviewed thrice in the beginning, middle and at the end of the project.

- The participant-teachers will be asked to attend weekly meetings of one hour for about ten weeks each semester, which will be audio-recorded

- They will also be asked to write a narrative telling about their experience while working with the project at the end of each semester.

- Narrative, audio-recording, and interviews will be employed as forms of data collection during the course of the project.

- The collected data from this project would be used for research purposes only such as getting PhD degree, publications in research journals, or presenting papers in conferences. In presenting the data for any research purpose, the names of the participants will be anonymised by the use of proxies, e.g. 'teacher x' or 'teacher y'.

- Where necessary, the data collected from individual participants will be shared with them to allow them the opportunity edit facts or opinions attributed to them should they so wish. . Any participant who feels uneasy due to any reason is entitled to withdraw from the project at any time.

If you have any query about the project or if anything is unclear about the terms or details of the project, I will be very pleased to explain them before you agree to participate.

I feel pleasure to invite colleagues to join the project, and those who are willing to participate in it are requested to fill in the following details. Those who show their consent through signing this letter are believed to have understood and accepted the terms and details of the project as mentioned above.

Yours faithfully,

Abdul Fattah Soomro

PhD student

University of Leicester

United Kingdom

I agree to participate in the project 'Teacher-Development through Exploratory Practice' and understand and agree to the terms of my participation.

Name---------------------------------------Job title---

Signed …………………………..

Date-------------------------------

Sample Pre-Inquiry Interview Transcript

F: Would you please tell me about your qualifications B.1

S: I have done Masters in English that was in 1994, and in1996, I did diploma in Teaching of English as an international language. These are two major degrees that I have done   QL

F: But sir, as I remember, you have been doing PhD too

S: PhD is going on, for last 7 years I have been working on it. And now, by the grace of Allah, I have been able to complete my thesis, which is yet to be sent for evaluation.   QL

F: you did your Diploma after two years of doing your Masters,

S: yes.

F: How long have you been teaching English?-

S: for about 14 years   TE

F: A long duration with wide experience of teaching

S: yes, it is.

F: How would you then briefly tell your experience of teaching English?

S: Experience has been good though not up to the mark, because if we look at the background of the students that has been very poor since in schools and in colleges we do not have qualified teachers.   CVPL

In spite of spending more than 7 years in learning language (English), their outcome has been not so good. So we feel difficulty here in order to make them cope with what we want them to learn here. So difficulties are there such as Poor academic background of students and teachers who are non-qualified teachers   CVPL / DVPL

F: So you think students are below level because they had been taught English by non-qualified teachers. What do you mean by being a qualified teacher?

S: Qualified teachers means he must have a some good background of language-either he has a degree of MA (English) or he must have some other extensive courses. .   CVPL

F: Could you recall the early period of your profession, when you newly started your teaching career with what you are at the moment.

S; Previously in 1990s the classes were too large they were like political gatherings. - Now the difference is after the introduction of Remedial English to some extent the classes are smaller though they are not to an ideal level. But we compare them relatively better. This is the major difference. The other is courses that we use. There   CETC / ILC

ILC

we had only Wrein& Martin like book which was not based on activities. And not communicative approach was there. Even, now we have got good course. And we have got smaller classes. So relatively speaking, things are better.

AC

F: Comparing your early period of your profession, you think that your profession works better for both teaching and learning in present time.
 S: I think so.

F: Since you have been teaching English for last 14 years, how have you then been working for your self-professional development?

S: When it was Wrein & Martin like things, I used to make activities myself, and devise them myself. But I do not think I have been successful in doing. Because most of times, I needed pamphlets and handouts by printing them and getting photo state, which was expensive So I could not tackle it. So the only thing available in the class was the chalk and black board. so I would write on black board and students would copy it., and this way we did exercises. It took too much time

CETC / PDA

 We do not have that (situation)….and that problem is not there now. We have got that English for undergraduate's books and this is all based on activities-this all we want in our classes. Before this we used to have handouts which were similar to the design of this book. Now the whole book is in our own hand so we feel on ease now to deal with our teaching in the class. There are grade types of exercises in the book, they are not useful only for the students but we also learn from these exercises. There are instructions given on how to use the piece of text, which helps to devise more activities on that pattern.

AC

F; What do you mean by having graded exercise in the prescribed book for syllabus?

S: it means it starts from very simple or easier and moves towards the difficult exercises.

AC

F: you mean to say is that this book is self-explanatory

S: yes, this is self-explanatory, and it helps for my professional development.
F: Did you have training before you started your teaching carrer?

AC/ PDA

S: Not before that after being appointed as a lecturer I had chance of having training that was one year Diploma course

F: How was your experience of teaching English without any training?

S: First time, it was only that I had to teach, and even in my mind the idea was that if students know the Grammar they know the language because when I was student, in schools, in colleges, in university it was Grammar that was taught. Fortunately, I was good at Grammar, so with the help of grammar I could develop my own language, so this was what I could think of other students when I started teaching them. First, it was all grammar but then things changed

PDA

. Then some more communicative types of exercises were there, which were quite new for me and which happened to be better than just teaching them grammar so this was my basic source of improvement in my own teaching that I used communicative exercises in the class and this I could motivate the students also and I could interact with them in a better way.

PDA

F; So it was like following your teachers as models and you taught your students as you were taught by them

S; Yes very much, but then the model was changed from traditional grammar method to communicative type of teaching especially after training in the form of Diploma.   PDA

F; So is it necessary to give some training to the teachers before they start their teaching,

S: Yes very much necessary because teaching is like an art. And your own studies is a different kind of thing , their mode of learning when as a student may be quite different from what is required in the class to teach other students. So if in the beginning the training is imparted that will help them to be on the right track from the very beginning so training like things are very important for the teachers.   TT

So what type of training you suggest?

See we have got problem here especially of the large classes . How to deal with large classes that must also be told and to deal with a non-native language, we need expertise on the part of teachers how a non-native language can be used or can be taught in the class so some psychological barriers may be there with which if we are already aware we can tackle them easily but if we are not aware of them then things would be difficult and then it will take teachers long time to explore these things on his own and then to solve them in the class. If in the right, in the beginning, things are introduced or informed then they can be tackled in a better way.   ILC

OI

Do any of these things come to teachers through doing an MA in English literature?

Specifically speaking about language teaching, MA in English Literature won't be sufficient, so some auxiliary type of courses or material should be needed for teaching of language.   TT

You have mentioned the problem of large classes, how have you been tackling that issue in the class?

In large classes, students sometimes need individual attention, which is quite difficult in the given span of the time. Our class is just of 50 minutes and we have 100 students in the class so it is naturally quite impossible to give individual attention to students .In one of the things is to make the group of the students, sometimes it is pair work, they are given different tasks or exercises, they try to solve these exercises in their own groups and then they interact with the other group. They try to tally their answers, their results with those of other groups. In this way learning takes place. The interaction also takes place there., and the feedback is also there, the students come to ask me of what they are required to do or whether they are doing it right way or wrong way so . Group work is one of the ways to tackle with the large classes as sometimes pair work. As for as prior knowledge of the teachers is concerned, I keep studying new material, new books and old ones as well. . Whenever I get something new which I think is beneficial for the students also, I impart that in the class and try to exploit that in my teaching.   IALC

TALC

TALC

TALC

How would you then compare the old syllabus (course) of English Compulsory syllabus with that of Remedial English which was introduced few years back.

We have already spoke of first traditional method based on just grammar teaching, now this is based on given passages and texts as they say that language is used in some sort of particular context not in a vacuum. When in previous years before the introduction of this new syllabus , we used to teach was only grammar , isolated sentences were there which I think were not helpful for improving English of students. Now we have these text-based and activity based books. There I think students have in their a type of situation what they are talking about, when they talk first they think about that, when they are thinking about that same situation then they can talk about that situation also in a proper way . In a way they are exposed to English, when the teacher is using it and when they are asked to participate in the same kind of discussion; they have the situation in their mind, because of the activities that we have in the book so they keep participating in those exercises, I have seen this that now they participate in the better way and this way they are trying to learn more and more. The scheme of the book to me is very helpful in this regard.

AC

But you mentioned "some other problems" in the latest syllabus (curriculum), what are these? Can you tell, please.

The difficulty that already spoke of was their poor background; here we just assume that they have got to learn a language which will help them to go ahead. First, in their first year, we try to interact with them, and then we find them much lower than what is expected from them to be at particular stage. So again is the difficulty, in a class we have always got the mixed group some students from urban areas, they are quite good at language but those who come from rural areas, they are not so good so this problem of putting the two groups together sometimes creates the problem, because there are some students who always try in the class to go ahead in advance, the other are which lag behind so I have to pull them together so this creates some sort of problem. Other thing that we have no audio-visual aids, the only facility we have chalk and black board in the class. So if we are given technological facilities, we can improve the situation.

DVPL

CVPL

DVPL

WTVPL / LD

So since there is mixed abilities, how do you try to tackle that, any way or means you adopt to solve?

What I have to practically do is to explain to them things more and more, again and again, . Then they are able to catch up and cope up with that of the students of the higher level. Basically, the material is same, given to all type of students, some students can do these exercise by their own. But others are there, which need these explanations again and again, I need to go to them, talk to them, give them examples, and then to some extent , they are also able to do these exercises .

WTVPL

How do you identify such kind of students who are having very low level?

See the kind of attitude that I have with my students is very much friendly, I just motivate them and encourage them to ask me what they don't know. I just make them feel free as they feel no hesitation to ask these things. So there I get feed back as this inquiry is concerned. Whenever there is problem they just come up with that and ask me to explain that to them. Sometimes I do not encourage them to speak their own language other than English sometimes they come with their problems in their own language. But then I try to put that in English and try to explain them things in English so in this way, I identify them as they ask me things again and again that they need more attention.

WTVPL

WTVPL

WTVPL

So there may be some students who are too shy to ask?

Yes, there may be, some may be very frank other may be too shy to how to ask then it becomes difficult to identify them.

Have you tried to use other ways to identify them?

I haven't been so particular about them but whenever I have feeling about somebody that they feel shy of asking, then I myself go to them and explain them things.
So do you think there could be some other ways to approach that problem?

WTVPL

Yes, that would be better if some sort of psychological barriers are there facing some students if a teacher comes to know this, then he can handle the problem in a better way.
In existing conditions, what more measures do you like to suggest for improving the standard of English in USJP?

OI

The problem of large classes, though we have hired some tutors, then we have divided classes into small groups. But that is the thing which yet need more attention .if more teachers are employed then problem can be solved in a better way. And an ideal strength of the class they say should not exceed like 35 or 40 so. If all around the campus we have this kind of class strength then I think will be better to cope with problem of large classes.

ILC

SAILC

SAILC

QL: Qualification, **T. E**: Teaching Experience, **CETC**: Challenge in Early Teaching Career,
PDA: Professional Development Approach, **CVPL:** Causes of Variation in Proficiency Level
DVPL: Difficulty in attending Variation in Proficiency Level, **WTVPL**: Ways of Tackling Variation in Proficiency Level,
ITT: Issue of Teachers' training, **ILC:** Issue of Large Classes, **IALC:** Issues associated with large classes, **TALC:** Techniques to address the issue of large classes, **SAILC:** Suggestion to Address the issue of large classes, **AC:** Appreciation of Curriculum, **OI:** Other Issues, **TT:** Teachers; training,

Sample Post-Inquiry Interview Transcript

Can you please tell me about your experience working as a member of EP project?

My experience has rather been confusing – initially when I was given this opportunity to become member of this , I had a clear mind-set that this what I want to work on ; this how I going to achieve my goal. When I actually started following that rather doing it. Then I thought may be prediction and practicality are not same things. Theoretically speaking, I thought by doing one thing or other, I can be able to work on the confidence level of my students. When I set out to achieve this in practice, off course this was a difficult job –far difficult about what I initially thought. Now when I started off I see myself like, almost no technique, no understanding, how to approach this problem. Basically, I have not been able to establish ground work. As if I jumped into sea without understanding the depth of that sea.

So were you confused about the process of EP, or the topic itself-confidence level was confusing

It was both –on the one hand I was confused about how to go further by following the process of EP, on the other hand, -topic itself- confidence level of students. Before conducting investigation into this topic, I felt that it was easier to find the students with over and low level confidence , But then as I started inquiry I realized that it wasn't so easy . Because, one student who was depressed on the one day, the other day was talkative in the class. Some students who were not speaking surprisingly became confident. So it's not confidence that is problem at the time, sometimes its lack of interest, sometime it's this or that, so it be many things. In the beginning, I was thinking that I should focus my attention on that problem which will change their (students) way of study, and put them on right track . But it was very difficult for me to make some progress on my puzzle about confidence level among my learners.

So can you please tell how did you work on this topic while trying to develop their Confidence level,

All right, what I do in the class, I gave ways, I think like, as what they want to say, they should be articulate about it. Mostly students speak in the phrase, what I said to them to speak complete sentences so that they may feel confident. This is one thing, other thing which I told was that – that they should concentrate on listening to the lecture of the teacher, and don't wander around here and there. Don't concentrating on the lecture makes them confused and at the end of the lecture, they are unable to answer the teachers' questions. This affects their confidence level. I also told them, this one thing from my side, what I see when students are standing side by side; they talk to each other and whisper. They don't talk in a loud manner. Then I asked them to stand at the considerable distance from each other and so when they are speaking they will have to yell at each other. Not take a negative sense of it, at least vocal parts should have some practice, and loudly not slowly. These are the things I told and other things I should not be able to remember now. They did increase their confidence level so much so that they became sometime over confident; they started neglecting their studies, thinking they are perfect in the studies after mastering these things.

No, I told you earlier - I was confused as soon as I started my inquiry into my puzzle. It was very difficult. I was unable to do anything. According to my early plan, I thought I would identify the students with low and high level of confidence. After finding these students , I would solve their problems by helping the low level students to build up their confidence , and assisting the high level confident students to bringing down the level of their over confidence. These both –over and low confidences are big hindrances; they are equally bad, and negative for the learner's learning. I wanted to resolve this, but unfortunately I could not move further, because I was unable and very much confused while trying to find out who are over confident and low level confident students.

Can you please discuss about EP as project, its importance or if you had any difficulties about applying it.

Actually in the beginning, it was not a problem for us as there were no classes- At that time we could spare lot of time to sit with each other and talk, and discuss. Bu as soon as classes started, we got busy in taking classes. It was a matter of life and death to take some time out for meeting. And we could not do it, sometimes I was in the class or some other member of our group was in the class. , or there were extracurricular activities, or there was some boycotts, always sort of things happening one way or other. So this disturbed me a lot, and I was not able to find out what going in the mind of other persons, and I was getting what was expected of me. Somehow I think that I lost track of what I had originally set out to achieve because of having less time, because of conducting classes and getting done with course, and all that.

So do you think that attending group meetings was an additional burden on what you were doing normally?

Yes, it is true (emphatically speaking), yes you can't do both the things at a single time- the focus should be on teaching, sometimes the focus is not on the teaching but on with course done especially with all boycotts taking place . We have to take a paper for examination and then for assessment, for that we need to cover a particular type of course, curriculum. I therefore focused on one issue rather than the other. And one more things, group meetings are useful in which we discussed things, but it is also frustrating when you wait for other colleagues , and don't do any things. In that situation, I thought I was wasting time and wanted to leave the meetings.

Why do you think group meetings were useful?

Though I attended only a few meetings, , but it was good, I did like the way we sat together and discussed about Remedial English, I liked the way we shared our experiences , and sought suggestions from the colleagues. Honestly, speaking, I recommend that its very necessary to have a platform where all colleagues come together and discus about how to improve the teaching. But there were some problems when some teachers were unable to come on time which delayed proceedings of meeting, and we were just idling away time. In that situation, I felt frustrated and wanted to leave the meetings .If we want to utilize group meetings, we will have to introduce certain rules and regulation, and should enforce on every one participants. One should be punctuality. All teachers should be asked to come on time. Another should be to give equal chances, and listen to each other. In our group meetings, I observed that some teachers were taking more time, and others were silent. In certain cases, I witnessed hot arguments being exchanged among colleagues who were trying to prove their point, and undervalue the view point of other. Such environment undermines the effectiveness of group meetings. These problems should be solved when we have group meetings otherwise we won't be able to achieve our aims. The other thing is, it is not easy for everyone to attend group meetings. Some teachers have got a few classes,- they may not have any problem-the other have too many classes, and some extra responsibilities assigned to them- in these circumstances, its not possible for them to attend group meetings. They are either overburdened or can't afford to spare time for attending group meetings or they have clash of timing-busy somewhere either in teaching or carrying out other extra curriculum responsibility at the time of meeting. If some teachers have these problems, he/she can't afford to attend group meetings.

After working for quite some time , how do you think EP as an approach towards teachers professional-self development?

Obviously, if this sort of thing has been continued, it would have made a lot of difference on the way I was teaching, on the way I was developing as teacher. But a one good thing that came out of this was how to teach new things in a way suitable for the learners .If I had continued, I would have learnt them but could not. Nevertheless, and, I am going to attend one teachers' training program next week in Islamabad, I hope I will learn these things .
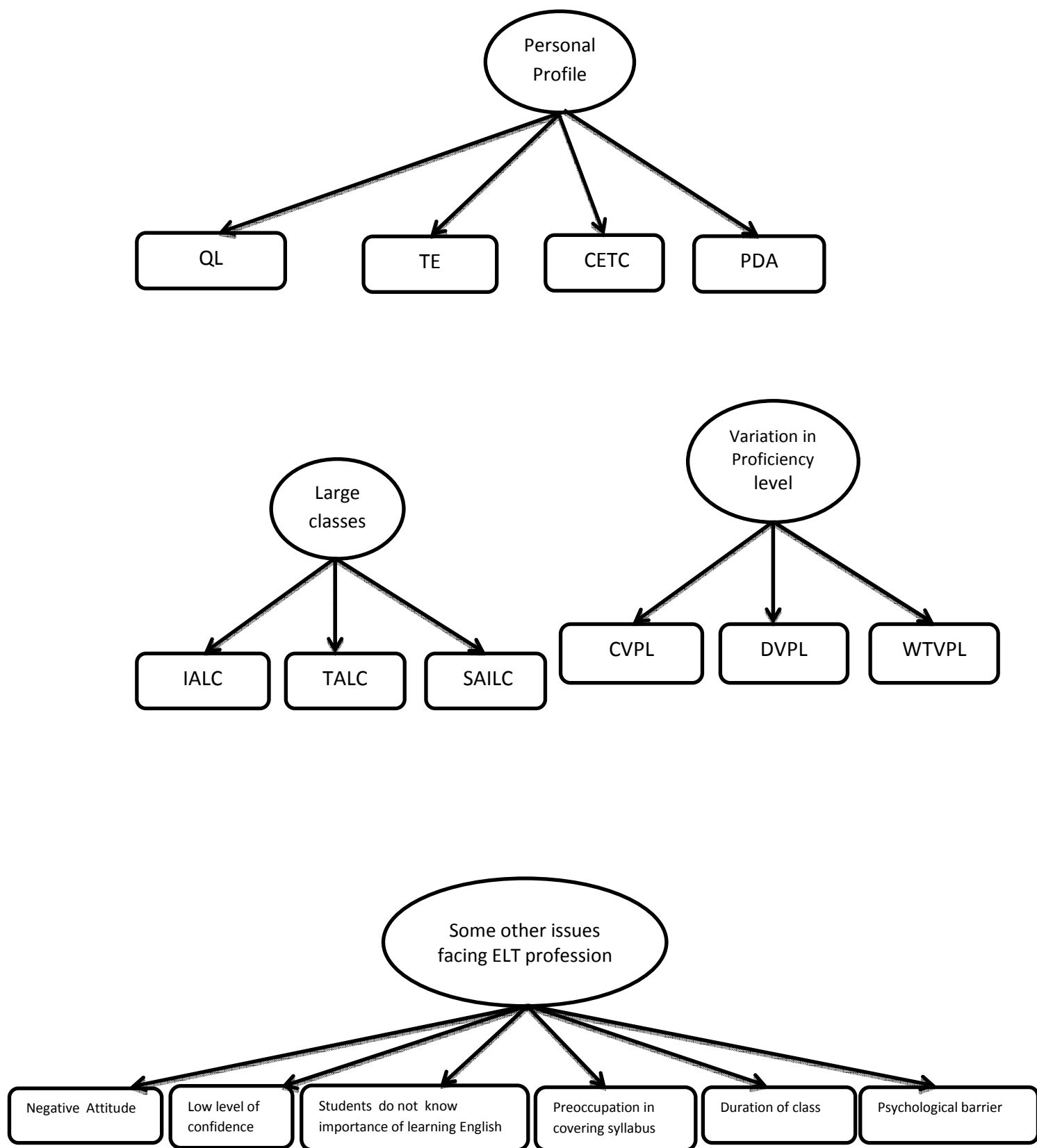

What was the reason you left EP project, any particular thing or reason?
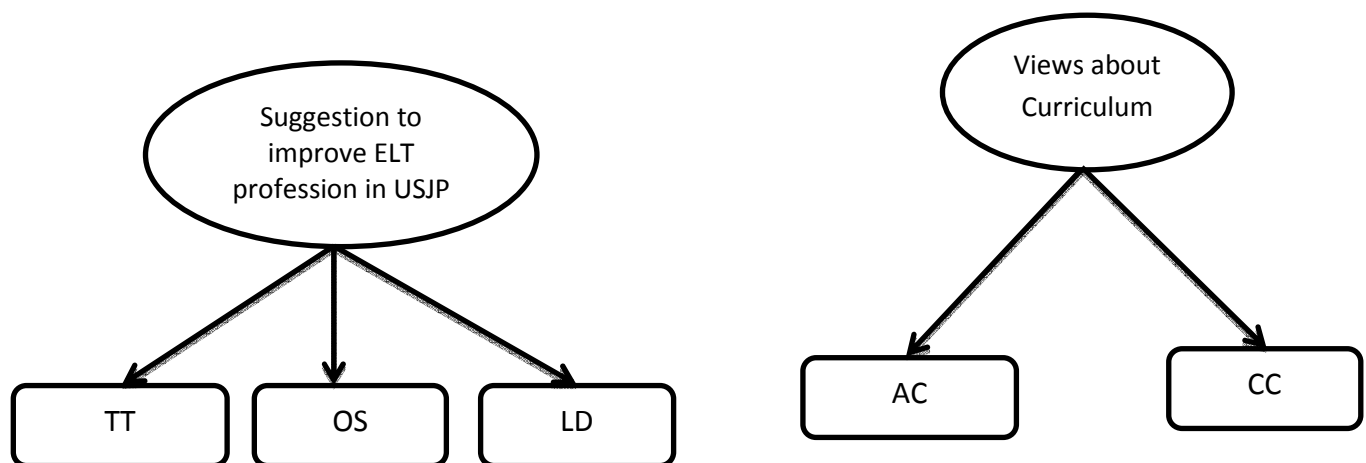

I was not able to take care of two things at a time. Every person has got his own nature, and I am the person who can concentrate on one thing at one time, and EP was new and something difficult. So I could concentrate either on teaching or EP, I preferred teaching, and course getting done. EP is one thing which created door way to other things. I told you before just now, although I am no longer part of EP project, although I was concerned with getting course done rather EP, but I felt there is much that I don't know, when teachers used to think I thought to myself that, this is the thing that I never thought of thing in this way, because of that I gave my name for this, EP is a one thing that has opened my sight that in a way I feel need so much to learn. Before the techniques of EP, that we discussed I thought I was a good teacher , and I thought I knew a lot, even interview you took, of the beginning of this session, I would suggest

the same things that I was over confident in some ways, now I think I need to learn a lot. So for I am concerned EP has done a lot, as for the actual techniques of EP are concerned, I have no idea, I am not able to practice it or assimilate it to my teaching properly.

Thematic Map for Pre-interview

QL: Qualification, **T. E**: Teaching Experience, **CETC**: Challenge in Early Teaching Career, **PDA:** Professional Development Approach, **CVPL:** Causes of Variation in Proficiency Level**DVPL:** Difficulty in attending Variation in Proficiency Level, **WTVPL**: Ways of Tackling Variation in Proficiency Level, **ITT:** Issue of Teachers' training, **ILC:** Issue of Large Classes, **IALC:** Issues associated with large classes, **TALC:** Techniques to address the issue of large classes, **SAILC:** Suggestion to Adress the issue of large classes, **AC:** Appreciation of Curriculum, **OI:** Other Issues, **TT:** Teachers; training,

Excerpts tracking the progress record of one participant

<u>**Excerpts from Group meeting-1**</u>

Shumaila: I am taking Economics P. I and then the combined class of Arts faculty

F: So both of these are remedial English

Shumaila: Yes, both

F: How many days are you taking Remedial

Shumaila: The last three days of the week

F: What is size of your class?

Shumaila: Economics 120, and in combined class, we have got more than 160 students- all the students do not get seats in the class, many take class while standing in the class.

F: Is this the regular attendance, while the enrolled students may be more.

Sh: Yes, many more than these.

Komal: I teach two departments: Management Sciences, and the other is Mass Communications.

Both the departments, I take part (I). The students in the Management sciences would be about 80 t0 90 students, and in Mass Communications around 100.

F: As for the size of the class, Ishart believes though the enrolled students may be 150 or so But number of regular students is always around 60 or 70.Is that the case in your class as well.

K:More than 70 attend normally my class, but sometimes you have more than 100 students as well specially around the time of mid-terms, or when the classes are in full swing; when there is no boycotts, then everybody is coming to attend the class.

S: I agree with Komal, the normal attendance is around 100 in my class.

I: suppose if 80 is the number, then approximately 50 or 40 students attend the class. But the number increases when there is no boycotts or any disturbance.

F: You remember, Ishrat, when you had said in your interview last time that the size of class has never been the problem, and it has always been manageable, do you still agree to it?

I: yes, sure, I easily manage when the size is about 70 or so.

K: One more thing, if I am not interrupting, in BCS there are larger class rooms , like large auditorium so if 50 , 60 students are there , they do not look like a huge class. But, if there are smaller classes, though the students may not be many, but the class looks totally full, and you then say oh my God, so many students have come in the class. I think one of solutions for the huge classes could then be to have spacious classes,

I: yes, of course

Shumaila: (while agreeing with other colleagues)-, Sumera says 'managing the class and teaching the class are two different things. Suppose, you are teaching, but you do not know whether they are learning or not even though they are listening to you, are silent, and disciplined, so you can't make sure in the class of 70 to know whether they are getting what you are teaching them"

I: there I could like to say, if you want to know whether they are learning or not, its then the responsibility of the teacher to know it. Give them the type of exercise, where they do participate , and at the end of a day or during the class, you can ask such types of questions, you could ask questions from some students in one day, and the other day you ask other students. In this way, you will automatically come to know how many of the students are learning in the class and how many of them are not. You cannot know in one class whether the students are learning or not but you come to know with the passage of time. Say for example, you start knowing from the beginning of the semester, and at the end of semester you can know that this is the number of the students that are learning in your class. So in the second semester you can concentrate on the rest of them. This is the process. So you cannot say in one day there is change or there is no change.

F: Shumaila, can you suggest any thing to see whether the learning is taking place or not?

Shumaila: Every day that we conduct the classes, this is something which is kind of habitual thing for teachers. We do have recaps, and we can ask students whether they have understood something or not. Next day, when we come, we have more questions to ask what we discussed yesterday, not all of them answer, and it is also not possible to ask everybody in a huge class that of combined class. However, by this way we know whether they have understood or not. But the question is how to make sure that they will understand you. I don't think that is possible.

Excerpts from Group meeting-2

Shumaila: Yes, I tried to focus on the combined class, which I had told you about in the previous meeting. If we look at the combined class it's more difficult than of Economics. The reasons might be that the Economics students- they all belong to one department so they are familiar with each other. They are already frank with each other so they can speak freely with one another and the class is also small. It is not a big auditorium where students are away from each other. They are sitting quite close to each other. I am also vocal there. When we come towards to the combined class then the class is also like bigger than the class of economics, and secondly the problem is they come from variety of departments so still they are not aware of each other's name even. So they feel a bit of hindrance to express their views or participate in the class.

F: So how do you handle the combined class where students are from different departments?

Shumaila: Number one, I try to be frank with them and don't get very strict to them, keep on cutting the jokes with them, and then when they reply me, for example today I was teaching them present simple, then I say ok make some request to me, then one student said, "madam please shut the door" then I replied why should I shut the door. So this way I was trying to get them frank and all were laughing, smiling. So this way my lecture was better than the previous one but then still, few students complained to me , "madam , we all do not get you because students sitting in front were getting attention ,

and the rest were not given attention" . They said, "in this a huge class we should be bifurcated; we cannot understand your all points". So they were quite right in that way. And, this combined class is in new wing where there is a problem. Light is always not there between 10 to 11-o-clock, and every can't listen to me, and I feel diverted when find students standing over there in the class.

F: In such environment, where there is small class and many students, so do you think you become successful in making learning take place?

Shumaila: I don't think so, that it takes place much-no. Because I say no, why because I teach the same topic – I go from one class to the other- first in the combined than in the economics. I feel those students in economics are getting more points , and I feel that they understand me but I am unable to finish even half of the same topic, I keep repeating but students do not understand. It may be due to variation in proficiency level among the students who come from Arabic, Sindhi, Muslim history, Fine Arts, Psychology departments

Excerpts from Group meeting-3

Shumaila: Sir, I have been observing combined class and I had told you about some of problems in it. So, I started taking notes of the problems and the difficulties I faced. I found that only few students participated in the class, and students sitting in the backbenches looked less involved in the class. Despite my trying, I could not create interactive class, and majority of the students did not participate. Comparing it with the class of Economics, students in this class are very slow in learning things so I cover few things and go very slowly. Environment is tense and students do not feel comfortable, it may be because of crowded class, students from many departments …

F: Could you tell us, how did you take note of these events?

Shumaila: Sir, I normally do it in my other classes as well. I have diary, I take short notes of what I see, what I cover in the class, and so this time I was taking notes of difficulties I had been facing in combined class.

F: So what are the difficulties you found through taking t.

Shumaila: Sir, I have to compose them yet

Excerpts from Group meeting-4

Shumila:……………., I would like to tell you that my concern was to explore the issues regarding combined class. Because I felt comfortable teaching in class of Economics but I had lot problems to face in combined class which I came to know by taking diary notes such as students did not like to participate in the class activities-may be feeling hesitation; the students sitting at the back benches did not listen to me carefully. I got conscious why students in combined class are uncomfortable, but students in a class of economics were fine. So I started with asking students in the combined to tell what are the reasons that they do not look comfortable in the class. For this I thought why should not I start with group activity. And, you know the combined class is always very big so it was not possible to ask every individual. I then arranged a speaking group activity and asked them to form a group of five members. As you know the seating arrangements do not facilitate such kind of activities, I therefore asked students that the middle person

would be a group leader, and will collect the opinions of his members and will submit to me at the end of group activity.

Sir, there is no doubt, it was very messy to do such things in big classes. The activity did not go smoothly-some students were not participating in it willingly. The response was not high but I got a good response enough to understand the problem. I exactly do not remember how many groups were there but students raised some concerns which were about different things such as students felt shy in the presence of students from other departments; students from two departments dominated the whole class which was leaving negative impact on other students from other departments. Students felt afraid in front of other students because they might have been mocked at.

Sir, I then read the views of students in free time. The views of many students were similar, and they have pointed same things. From their views it looked that students were not comfortable in the combined class due to internal rivalry among the students belonging to different department. In order to confirm that fact, I decided to maintain diary. In this dairy, I took notes for three days to see whether it is true that students feel uncomfortable in the combined class.

Hameed: I think you should try to give few lectures on telling that they should not be rivals and be friends.

Shumaila: But if there is rivalry , I don't think a teacher can handle it through moralizing-for that one should take some solid steps like finding out the students , and discouraging them in front of others in the class as they should dare doing it again in the class.

F: I don't think we may treat students in this way, this would create some other problems. We should try to find out ways.

Shumiala: I want to utilize this negative tendency by arranging competition class. I think the rivalry would not last for long time, and when students would know each other then they can develop friendship with one another

Excerpts from Group meeting-5

As, it was confirmed through two different sources that students of one department do not feel comfortable sitting together with the students from other departments, and there is some rivalry or jealousy existing among the students of different departments. I then thought of arranging a sort of departmental competition in order to exploit jealousy/rivalry in to healthy competition.

For that, I choose an exercise from unit 2, and divided students in to groups according to their departments. Before start of competition, I informed my students about the rules of competition which I wrote on the blackboard. I told them that competition will remain continued till the end of unit and I said that I would ask each group equal number of questions carrying some marks, and the score of each team was recorded as it

happens in quiz competition. And, I told them I would give 3 prizes to three high scoring teams.

No doubt, it is difficult to monitor and handle the situation in large classes, and there was some disturbance, shouting, hooting, and mocking , teasing in the beginning but it looked students were getting involved and started enjoying the activity slowly and gradually. They became serious in winning the competition.

Hameed: who won the competition?

Shumaila: There were three teams who won the competition, I do not remember the exact score of each team, but two of them from girls and one was of boys. The competition was interesting in way, on the hand it was competition between department to department and on the other hand it competition between girls and boys.

Questionnaire Survey

The purpose of this questionnaire is to know the opinions of yours about Individual Class Presentation (ICP), which has been in practice for a quite long period in Remedial English class. Your participation by responding to the following few questions about ICP would help us develop some understanding about this issue.

Your cooperation in this regard will highly be appreciated

What is the significance of ICP for you in learning English?

Please put the sign of X in one of the following boxes

Most significant ☐   more significant ☐   less significant ☐   No significant ☐

How many times have you been participating in the ICP?

Please put the sign of X in one of the following boxes

Frequently ☐   Sometimes ☐   Rarely ☐   Never ☐

Can you tell us the reasons why do you like to participate/why do you not like to participate in ICP?

How much do you benefit from ICP by other students in your class?

Please put the sign of X in one of the following boxes

A lot ☐   Somewhat ☐   Not at all ☐

What is the role of ICP in your confidence building?

Please put the sign of X in one of the following boxes

Significant ☐   Somewhat ☐   Not at all ☐

Does ICP help you improve your speaking skills?

Please put the sign of X in one of the following boxes

Yes ☐   Somewhat ☐   Not ☐

What do you think are the positive or negative effects of ICP on you?

Please write down suggestions, if you would like to give about ICP.