

Teachers and Students Perspective towards Curriculum Reforms in English at Secondary Level: A Cross Sectional Study

Mahnaz Iqbal Yousafzai ¹ Muneer Ahmed ² Riffat Shaheen ³



Abstract

This cross-sectional study focused on teachers' and students' perspectives towards curriculum reforms in English at the secondary level in the Mardan district. 320 students and 40 teachers were taken through a systematic sampling technique and purposively from 20 secondary schools, respectively. A closed-ended questionnaire with a Likert scale was used for the collection of data. Percentages and frequencies of each category, i.e., SA, A, UD, DA, and SDA, were calculated, and the chi-square test was used to check the significance. Teachers' and students' responses showed that the new English textbook reduces the course work for teachers and students and improves the standard of English education. Responses showed that students have gained four skills (LSRW), and it has an impact on student performance, and the new English book reforms were welcomed. So it was concluded that more time was needed to be given to the students for better academic performance, more refreshing courses, and incentives should be given to teachers so that they can change their attitude toward curriculum reform. Modern teaching methods and AV aids should be used during the teaching a new English textbook in class.

Key Words

Teachers, Students, Curriculum Reforms in English, Secondary Level, Education

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Introduction

The introduction of the new English textbook at the secondary level has been instrumental in enhancing students' language proficiency. This textbook integrates a balanced combination of grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing activities aligned with students' cognitive levels. The inclusion of skill-based tasks also reflects learner-centered pedagogy, where students are encouraged to participate actively in their learning process (Nunan, 2004). Thus, the textbook's content and design support the holistic development of students' language proficiency. According to Richards & Rodgers (2014), a well-designed textbook serves not only as a language input source but also as a framework for classroom interaction, thereby shaping the quality of language instruction. The integration of contemporary themes, interactive exercises, and real-world contexts makes the learning experience more meaningful and relevant. According to Nunan (2004), textbooks that provide task diversity allow teachers to

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implement flexible methodologies suited to learners' needs and contextual realities. The integration of real-life situations, project-based activities, and reflective questions within the textbook also encourages experiential and learner-centered teaching methods. Ur (1996) notes that grammar instruction is most effective when integrated with skills development and practiced in varied contexts. Moreover, the systematic progression of grammar topics in the textbook from simple to complex supports cognitive development and language retention among secondary students.

Objective of the Study

1. To measure teachers' and students' perspectives towards curriculum reforms in English at the secondary level in the study area.

Research Question

1. How do teachers' and students' perspectives contribute to curriculum reforms in English at the secondary level?

Significance Of The Study

The study provides an overview of achievement in terms of curriculum reform in quality education at the secondary level in the rural and urban areas of Maradan. The study will be helpful in identifying problems faced by teachers and students in the implementation of curriculum reforms in the subject of English. It will also provide feedback to policymakers, textbook writers, teacher trainers, and curriculum developers for improving the quality of education through curriculum reforms. The study will be beneficial to all stakeholders: students, parents, teachers, and educationists.

Delimitations Of The Study

The study was delimited to:

1. IX–X secondary classes of high schools in Mardan district.
2. Government high secondary schools in the urban and rural areas of the Mardan district.
3. English curriculum at the secondary level.

Review Of Literature

According to Richards and Schmidt (2010), the use of well-structured materials that reflect real-life language use is essential for developing communicative competence in learners. The textbook also includes contemporary literary texts and updated references that engage students and promote critical thinking. As noted by Tomlinson (2011), the inclusion of authentic and culturally relevant content in textbooks significantly improves language acquisition and learner motivation. Moreover, the focus on interactive exercises and contextual learning further supports the development of reading and writing skills, enabling students to attain a higher level of proficiency. The design of the textbook reflects modern pedagogical approaches that shift from rote memorization to learner-centered practices, aligning with current educational reforms (Nation & Macalister, 2010).

The new English textbook effectively incorporates all four essential language skills, Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing (LSRW), in a balanced and integrated manner. This comprehensive approach aligns with communicative language teaching (CLT) principles, which emphasize the importance of developing all aspects of language competency to promote real-life communication (Richards, 2006). Listening and speaking activities are presented through dialogues, role-plays, and audio-based tasks, encouraging learners to engage in authentic spoken interactions. Reading passages include both literary and informational texts that build comprehension skills while exposing students to diverse genres and cultural contexts. In addition, writing exercises focus on guided, structured, and creative composition, helping students express their ideas with coherence and accuracy. According

to Harmer (2007), effective language learning materials should offer learners opportunities to integrate and practice all four skills in meaningful contexts.

Furthermore, Tomlinson (2011) highlights that textbook that includes authentic texts, clear learning outcomes, and inclusive content contribute positively to learners' engagement and achievement. The new textbook's emphasis on all four language skills (LSRW), contextual grammar, vocabulary development, and critical thinking tasks supports students in developing both linguistic and academic competencies. The newly introduced English textbook at the secondary level is expected to significantly enhance the standard of English education by aligning with modern pedagogical principles and learner needs. Unlike traditional textbooks that primarily emphasized rote learning, the updated version incorporates communicative and competency-based approaches aimed at developing students' language proficiency holistically. As noted by Nation and Macalister (2010), curriculum materials that are systematically planned to meet learner needs and educational goals are key to improving educational outcomes. Therefore, the revised English textbook is likely to elevate the overall quality and effectiveness of English education at the secondary level.

The content of the new English textbook is designed to support a variety of teaching and learning methods, making it adaptable to both traditional and modern classroom environments. By including a mix of individual, pair, and group tasks, the textbook encourages interactive learning and promotes student engagement through communicative and task-based approaches. Richards & Farrell (2005) argue that materials that accommodate multiple instructional strategies, such as direct instruction, cooperative learning, and inquiry-based learning, better support the development of communicative competence. Additionally, Tomlinson (2011) emphasizes that materials that promote varied modes of learning, such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, help address different learning styles and increase classroom inclusivity. Thus, the thoughtfully constructed content of the new textbook not only meets curriculum standards but also empowers teachers to apply a range of pedagogical strategies for effective English language instruction.

The new English textbook offers sufficient and structured opportunities for grammar instruction, aligning with modern pedagogical principles that emphasize both form and function. Grammar is presented contextually within reading passages and writing tasks, allowing learners to understand grammatical rules through meaningful use rather than isolated drills. This approach reflects the principles of form-focused instruction, which, according to Ellis (2006), balances explicit grammar teaching with communicative language use, leading to more effective acquisition. The textbook provides guided grammar explanations, practice exercises, and application-based activities that promote both accuracy and fluency. As Thornbury (1999) argues, effective grammar teaching requires both clarity of presentation and opportunities for meaningful practice, both of which are evident in the textbook's design. Therefore, the inclusion of well-sequenced and contextually embedded grammar content ensures that learners gain a solid foundation in grammatical competence.

Methodology of the Study

Research Design

The research paradigm of the study is positivism. It was a cross-sectional study that focused on teachers' and students' perspectives towards curriculum reforms in English at the secondary level. The main purpose of the study was to find out teachers' and students' perspectives towards the new English textbook at the secondary level. The systematic sampling technique was used for taking the students' sample, and purposive sampling was used for the teacher sample from selected schools.

Analysis of Data and Description of Statistics

The data were arranged and tabulated. The primary data about the teacher and the student were collected through close-ended questionnaires, analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). Percentages and

frequencies of each category, i.e., SA, A, UD, DA, and SDA, were calculated, and the chi-square test was used to check the significance. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations were made on the basis of the analysis of the data.

Population

The population consisted of teachers and students enrolled in government high secondary schools in the district of Mardan. The total number of government high schools was 83, whereas the total number of government higher secondary schools was 42, which makes 125 in total. In these 125 high/higher secondary schools, about 125 English teachers were available.

Sampling

The systematic sampling technique was used to take the student sample from the population. A list of 125 government higher schools of Mardan district was taken from the DEO (District Education Office). From 125 girls' high schools, 40 schools were randomly selected, a purposive teacher sample was selected, and every kth number of girl students was selected for the sample from the 9th and 10th grades to fill the close-ended questionnaire. Two secondary school teachers (SST) were selected from every school, so a total of 40 teachers were selected, and 16 students from every school, so a total of 320 students were selected for the data.

Research Instrumentation

For each teacher and student, a closed-ended questionnaire was used. Keeping in view the objectives and research question of the study.

Data Collection Procedure

All the selected students and teachers were administered the closed-ended questionnaire personally. The teachers in the participating schools assisted during the administration of the questionnaire. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Instructions were read and explained to the participants. This helped ensure proper filling of questionnaire items. Immediately after the administration of the questionnaire, all the questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents.

Analysis of Data and Description of Statistics

The data was arranged and tabulated. The primary data about each and every teacher and student question collected through close-ended questionnaires was worked out and analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). Percentages and frequencies of each category of the responses, i.e., SA, A, UD, DA, and SDA, were calculated, and the chi-square test was used to check the significance. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations were made on the basis of the analysis of the data.

Table 1

The new English textbook helps students attain a level of proficiency.

Group	Percentages					χ^2	df	Significance
	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA			
Teacher responses	7 (18%)	24 (60%)	3 (7%)	5 (13%)	1 (2%)	19.917	4	P<0.05
Students responses	116 (36%)	187 (59%)	6 (2%)	7 (2%)	4 (1%)			

Figure 1

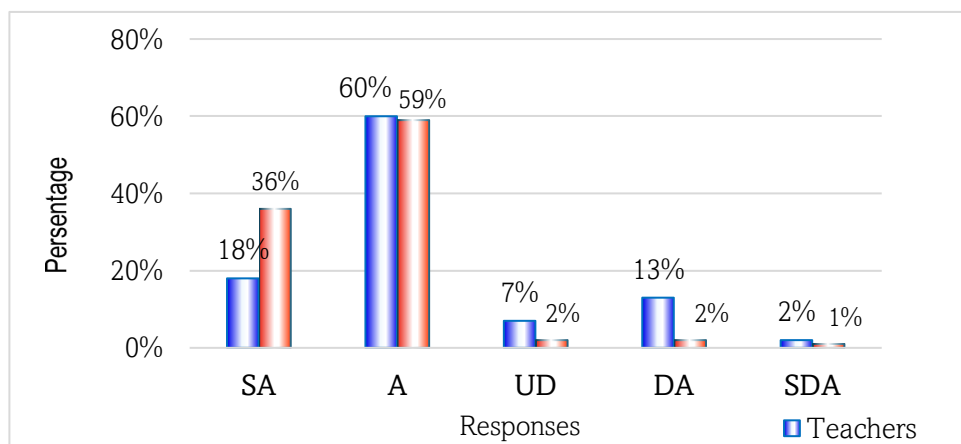


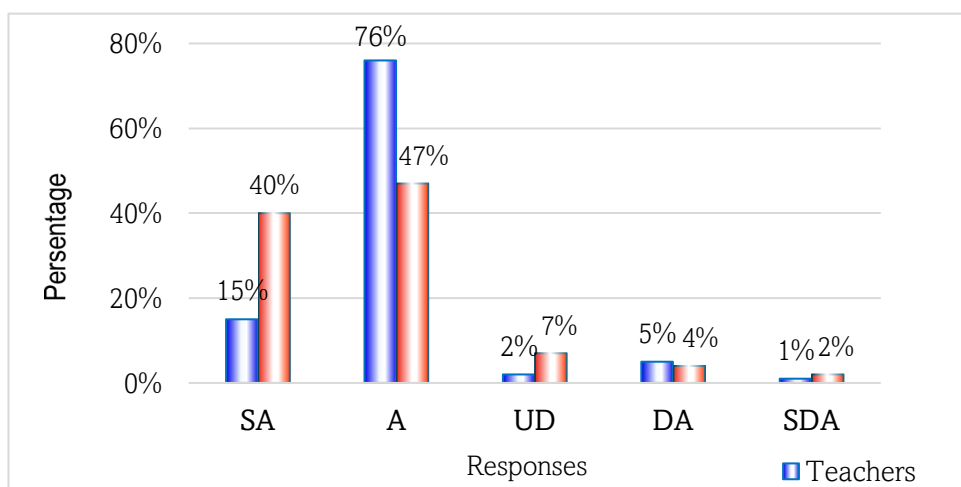
Table 1 shows the responses of the teacher and students toward the new textbook on the level of proficiency in English. According to the table, about two-thirds of the teachers, 37 (93%), strongly agreed with the statement that the new English textbook improved the proficiency of the students. The responses of the teachers were strongly supported by about 266 (83%) of the students. The number of non-responding teachers and students was few. There was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the response of teachers and students. In the conclusion of Table 1, the graphic representation shows that the new textbook of English has a positive effect on the proficiency of English, which is in parallel with the results of Richards & Schmidt (2010), Tomlinson (2011), and Nation & Macalister (2010). This strengthens the result of the current research.

Table 2

All Four Skills (LSRW) are Adequately Covered in the New English Textbook

Responses Group	Percentages					χ^2	Df	Significance
	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA			
Teachers	6 (15%)	30 (76%)	1 (2%)	2 (5%)	1 (1%)	12.984	4	P<0.05
Students	129 (40%)	150 (47%)	22 (7%)	14 (4%)	5 (2%)			

Figure 2



SA: Strongly Agree A: Agree, UD: Undecided, DA: Disagree, SDA: Strongly Disagree

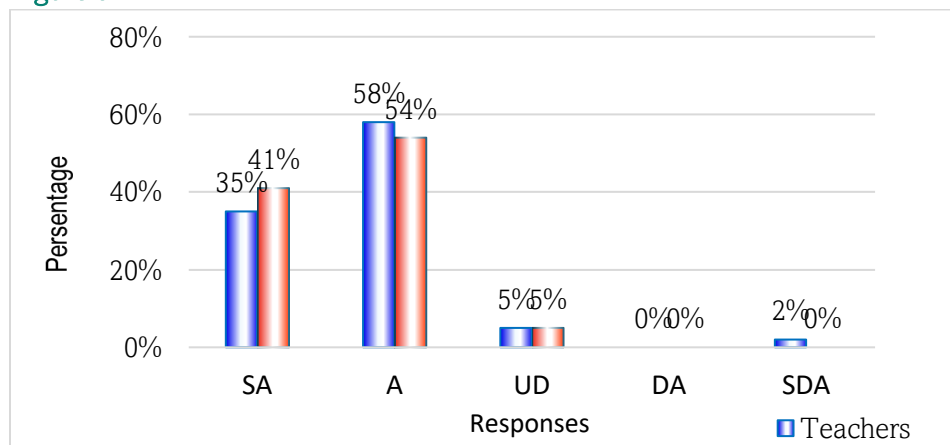
Table 2 shows the responses of the teachers and students toward all four skills (LSRW) of the new textbook. According to Table 36 (91%), the teachers agreed with the statement that all four skills (LSRW) are adequately covered in the new textbook. The responses of the teachers were supported by 279 (87%) of the students. The number of non-responding teachers and students was few. There was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the response of teachers and students. It is concluded from Table 4.3 and the graphic representation that all four skills (LSRW) are adequately covered in the new textbook and are supported by Richards (2006) and Harmer (2007).

Table 3

The New English Textbook will Improve the Standard of English Education at the Secondary Level.

Responses Group	Percentages					χ^2	df	Significance
	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA			
Teachers	14 (35%)	23 (58%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	8.345	3	P<0.05
Students	130 (41%)	174 (54%)	16 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)			

Figure 3



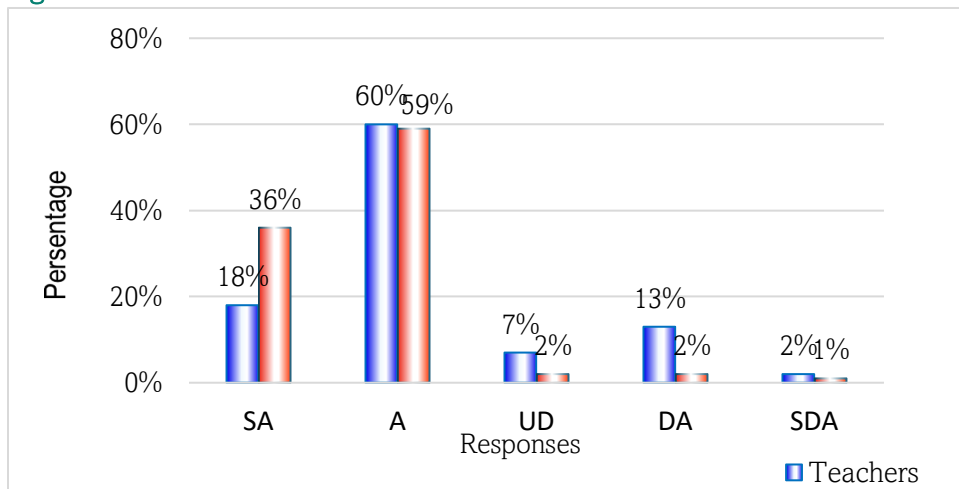
SA: Strongly Agree A: Agree, UD: Undecided, DA: Disagree, SDA: Strongly Disagree

Table 3 shows that the new English textbook will improve the standard of English education at the Secondary level. 37 (93%) of the teachers and 304 (95%) of the students agreed with the statement. There was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the response of teachers and students. The research finding: the new English textbook improved the standard of English education at the Secondary level and was supported by the research studies conducted by Tomlinson (2011) and Nation & Macalister (2010).

Table 4

The Content of the New Textbook allows different Teaching and Learning Methods.

Group	Percentages					χ^2	df	Significance
	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA			
Teacher responses	7 (18%)	24 (60%)	3 (7%)	5 (13%)	1 (2%)	19.917	4	P<0.05
Students responses	116 (36%)	187 (59%)	6 (2%)	7 (2%)	4 (1%)			

Figure 4


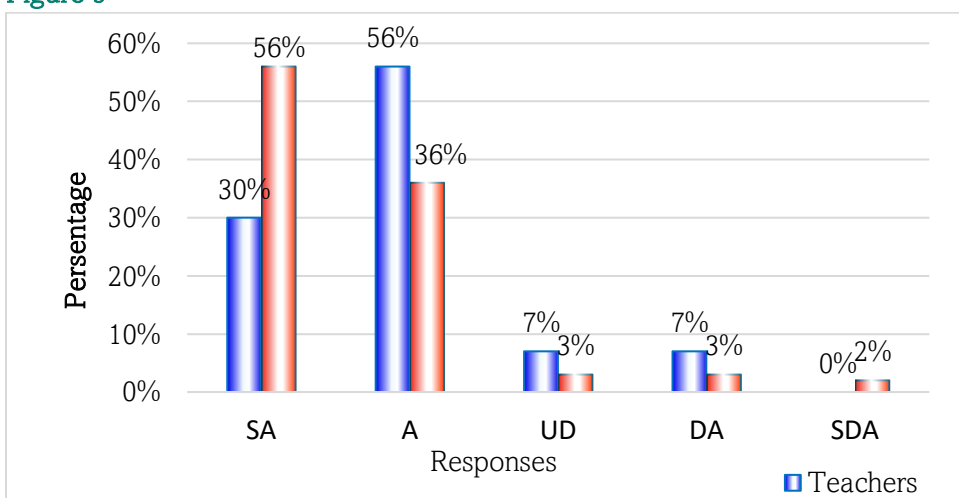
SA: Strongly Agree A: Agree, UD: Undecided, DA: Disagree, SDA: Strongly Disagree

Table 4 represents the content of the new textbook that allows different teaching and learning methods. 31 (78%) of the teachers and 303 (95%) of the students agreed with the statement. There was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the response of teachers and students. The research finding: the content of the new textbook allows different teaching and learning methods and is supported by the research studies conducted by Richards & Farrell (2005) and Tomlinson (2011).

Table 5

The New Textbook has an Adequate Provision for Grammar Teaching

Responses Group	Percentages					χ^2	df	Significance
	SA	A	UD	DA	SDA			
Teachers	12 (30%)	22 (56%)	3 (7%)	3 (7%)	0 (0%)	13.372	4	P<0.05
Students	178 (56%)	116 (36%)	9 (3%)	9 (3%)	8 (2%)			

Figure 5


SA: Strongly Agree A: Agree, UD: Undecided, DA: Disagree, SDA: Strongly Disagree

Table 5 shows that the new textbook has adequate provisions for grammar teaching. 34 (86%) of the teachers and 294 (92%) of the students agreed with the statement. There was a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the response of teachers and students. The research finding: the new textbook has adequate provision for grammar teaching and is supported by Ellis, (2006) and Thornbury, (1999) that the academic achievement of the students and the development of different language skills and the different aspects of grammar is directly proportional to the time consumed by secondary stage students.

Findings

The following are the major findings of the research work.

- ▶ It was found that about two-thirds of the teachers 37 (93%) and 266 (83%) of the students strongly agreed that the English textbook improved the proficiency of the students.
- ▶ 36 (91%) of the teachers and 279 (87%) of the students agreed that all four skills (LSRW) are adequately covered in the new textbook.
- ▶ The new English textbook will improve the standard of English education at the secondary level, and found that 37 (93%) of the teachers and 304 (95%) of the students agreed with the statement.
- ▶ The content of the new textbook allows for different teaching and learning methods. 31 (78%) of the teachers and 303 (95%) of the students agreed with the statement.
- ▶ It was found that 34 (86%) of the teachers and 294 (92%) of the students agreed that the new textbook has adequate provision for grammar teaching.

Recommendations

The following are the main recommendations of the study:

- ▶ The English teacher should be encouraged to receive adequate in-service training for teaching the new textbook.
- ▶ The English teachers should provide maximum time to the students for the development of speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills, and for learning different aspects of grammar.
- ▶ Grammar rules should be explained to students and an attempt may be made to reduce students' spelling mistakes.
- ▶ For effective teaching and the benefit of the students, adequate time may be given to students for classroom activities. Because at the secondary stage, the students need more guidance of the teachers for effective functioning of the group work in the class.

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