
|An analysis of Universal Litnum Assessment (ULA) for Primary Curriculum Support Program

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to analyze the effectiveness and efficacy of universal Litnum Assessment ULA for the primary curriculum support program. Primary-level schools situated in the district of Gujranwala were the target population of this study. Two public schools were selected for the collection of data for the study: one each from rural and urban sections. Control and experimental group of twenty-five students each were made from both schools separately. The results of the study were obtained by applying A ULA test. The experimental group was taught through the ULA support manual and ULA action plan. The data collected from these tests is analyzed through SPSS 19, as it is a quantitative study. After two months of teaching, two post-tests were conducted. The analysis of these results shows no significant change in the results of the control group, however, a significant change is observed in the experimental group. It is evident from the obtained results that the systematic SLO-based language teaching through the ULA support manual and ULA action plan provided by the school education department (SED), technological assistance and on-hand training helps a lot in improving English language teaching. The findings suggest that such assessment programs can improve the overall ELT environment and it is recommended that such a program should be extended not only to other private and public schools of district Gujranwala rather to the entire Pakistan.

Keywords: Universal Litnum, Primary, Curriculum.

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INTRODUCTION:

The educational system in Pakistan is based on the traditional pre-partitioned British Indian Educational system. Since then very little has changed especially in the school system (Amir, Sharf, & Khan, 2020). The Constitution of Pakistan (1973) delegated the

responsibility to the federal government for making policies for planning and promoting educational facilities in Pakistan which includes overall policy making along with advisory roles in different capacities. Since education is the primary responsibility of the Government of Pakistan, therefore, a number of different policies were introduced in different eras; the New Education Policy –1970, The Education Policy – 1972/80, 1979, 1992 and 1998/2010. In addition to these a number of development plans had also been employed; the National Plan of Educational Development – 1951/57, First Five Year Plan – 1975/80, Sixth Five Year Plan – 1980/85, National Literacy Plan – 1984/86, Seventh Five Year Plan – 1988/93 and Eighth Five Year Plan – 1993/98 (Amir et al., 2020).

It is, however, unfortunate that the government, although introduced many policies and plans, was unable to make any significant difference in our educational system. Therefore, teachers keep on practicing the same traditional and conventional way. It is also pertinent to understand that teachers who do understand the latest pedagogic techniques do not use these techniques in classrooms the reason being the lack of resources and infra structure.

The performance of the students highly depends on the teachers' competence in all countries. Many ways are adopted to train the teachers and enhance their competence level. This has been done in Pakistan as well. Especially in Punjab, for many years, there have been public concerns about the poor performance of the students and for this DTE's (District Teacher Education) system launched in 2003 for mentoring the primary teachers for effective teaching. They had to visit twice a month in every public school assigned to them and render their services by assessing and analyzing the ways of teaching while delivering the lectures in the classes and overall students' performance also.

But this DTE's system got failed to produce the desired results. Then Govt. introduced a Literacy and Numeracy Drive system also called LND across Punjab but it was limited to the public schools only. The objective of LND is to uplift primary education system in Punjab and for that to bring major changes in the teaching of core subjects for instance, Mathematics, Urdu and English. Pakistan is an underdeveloped country and lack adequate resources in its primary schools. The most important and worth mentioning point of this campaign was to introduce students to the new advanced technologies of teaching by providing them tablets, Ipads and laptops. This is due to the reason that these gadgets are thought to be a necessary part of today's primary education. According to Kocak (2015) 4.5 million Apple Ipads were sold in USA during the year 2010. Teachers are provided with electronic devices like tabs for pedagogic use because use of multimedia raises the confidence level of the students.

To check the quality of education performance of LND system, assist and improve the teacher's and student's performance overall and attain the desired goals/results that is 75% set by Chief Minister of Punjab, a Universal Litnum Assessment (ULA) has been introduced at 3rd grade of all public schools of Punjab, Pakistan. So that, every student of 3rd grade may experience the assessment atmosphere and teachers may get such data on the basis of which they can improve/make their students' performances better with the help of specific ways. The ULA is a complete resource pack and comprises of the seven sections.\

This teaching of English Language is going to be a novel experience especially for the primary level students in the public sector school of Pakistan. However, the teaching of English of English has already been declared compulsory for primary school across

Pakistan. Nevertheless, till the date it has been taught through rote learning and students' intention is just to cram every lesson without learning its practical real life utility. What happening is just a true representation of Grammar Translation Method or GTM. Classes are teacher centered, first teacher reads a lesson aloud and is followed by the students. Students learn by repetition and practice. This cramming method is also employed even to learn important grammatical structures or new vocabulary items. The behavioristic norms of reward and punishment are also very much in fashion as well. As this method doesn't create creativity or true understanding of the subjects so students can't perform well in English paper at matriculation or higher level. That's why this method is generally termed as the failure of public schools in Pakistan (Shier, 2016). The situation is not good and changing the prevalent teaching patterns is a big challenge for the government. The intention of the government is to make students not cram things but learn them and then make its use in real life during conversations. This challenge can only be met if some sort of interest can be created in the students. For this purpose, government is introducing technology to enhance students' interest and make them perform better at later levels of education. The current study is, to the best of researcher's knowledge, first of its kind to determine the efficacy of this program.

The introduction of technology, as mentioned earlier is in form of tablets, which are provided by the government to every single school across Punjab. Tablets have attained the status of a smart tool, as they fall somewhere between laptops and cell phones as asserted by Barrister & Wilden (2013) these devices are going to become an important expectations for learning in the near future. Here again the tablets are better tool than or all other options because unlike other tools they are not easily transportable the teaching ease and comfort offered by tablets is matchless.

The use of tablets in Pakistan is already on the rise as stated by (Faiz, 2015) the tablet market is among few highly progressing industries of Pakistan. In September 2015, a report published in a magazine, claimed that "Pakistan Tablet Market to grow due to on-education initiatives" (Baloch, 2015,). All the public schools are directed to purchase Tablets and install/download an app named "LND Public" which consists of mixed MCQs about English, Urdu and Math. The individual practice by every student on Tablet increases the confidence level and information that how can such technology be based devices be used in the best way to enhance the teaching and learning.

Then there is comparison of a proficiency tests (a validated proficiency test administered by the research) results conducted before and after implementation/practice of ULA Subject Support Manual & action plan and analysis of the effectiveness of ULA on both groups is recorded. This comparison will help to observe whether there is any significant difference in the two primary level public school students' populations which are otherwise enjoying similar resources and other facilities. The proficiency test is based upon a very comprehensive assessment which was suggested and recommended by the LNDA body. The proficiency test will work at two level firstly it will determine the quality (good, average or weak) of SLOs and at second level it will check the level of improvement and learners' proficiency in English.

Statement of the Problem

The study aims to analyze the effectiveness and efficiency of ULA for primary curriculum support program LND (PITB, 2015a) which is mainly a technology based intervention into government primary schools' teaching process, operating through tablets, centrally prepared SLOs and monthly online tests by monitoring and Evaluation Assistants, on the English language learning in primary sections of public schools of Punjab, Pakistan, especially focusing on students of grade three.

Objectives of the Study

The objective set for this study is:

- (i) To analyze the effectiveness of introduction of ULA for primary curriculum support program LND on English language learning in public schools of Punjab.

Methodology

The study is quasi-experimental in nature. The students were divided into four groups; two control and two experimental groups. The experimental groups had ULA support manual and ULA action plan based on LND SLOs practice on tablets and laptops, planned daily for two months. The control groups carried on taking the routine English classes on the traditional pattern in the teaching space, without any intervention of subject support manual, action plan, use of tablets, SLOs based teaching. After two months ULA tests were given to the experimental and control groups as post tests. For pretest, one test of English proficiency of two groups of twenty five students each were administered. Likewise for posttest, same groups appeared in test. The test had certain SLOs connected with the questions. The test had seven MCQs for each student, carrying the items, given below. The test had 30 marks overall. The marks division is mentioned below:

Alphabet series completion	5
Correction of Spellings	5
Recognition of Pictures	5
Completion of Sentence (has, have/ is, are, am)	5
Comprehension	10

The tests strictly follow the pattern, which is provided by official application for LND (PITB, 2017). This standard ULA Test for the pre and posttest is a distinct reading and comprehension examination, administered on a tablet. It takes about four to five minutes to finish.

Population

As ULA is introduced to improve primary curriculum support program – LND specifically for the third-grade students, so the population of the study is the students of third grade of public schools of district Gujranwala of Punjab province, Pakistan.

Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling technique was used, as the selection of the members of control group and experimental group in this study depended upon the selection, made by the researcher. The purposive sampling is nonrandom in its nature. The sample gathered through this technique is based on the previous knowledge of that sample, hence making that 'representative'. The other reason of picking that sample is that they have the required info with them (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 1993).

Sample

As the population for the study was third grade of public schools of Gujranwala, so the sample had to be picked from these schools. Two schools from Gujranwala division are selected. These schools were chosen by the researcher due to convenience of the approachability and location. The total strength of students in first school is almost four hundred, with twelve females serving as faculty members. First control and experimental group of twenty five each, students of third grade from this school made fifty students as the participants of the study. These students were picked non randomly, as the first twenty five out of the total fifty students were equally distributed into two groups. The other school is Govt. Girls Elementary School Arshad Popular, school of urban background. This elementary school has strength of six hundred male and female students with sixteen females as faculty members. Second control and experimental group of twenty five each, students of third grade from this school made fifty students as the participants of the study.

There were total two groups; picked from students of class three, comprising of 50 students, and 25 from each schools. One control group, which studied according to the traditional method opted for ELT at most of the public and private schools in Pakistan, while there was another experimental group, each one of thirty students from both schools. One hundred students took part in the whole study, fifty students each, from both schools. These children were of the age between nine to ten years in third class.

School 1	
Group 1	Group2
Control	Experimental
25 students	25 students

School 1	
Group 1	Group2
Control	Experimental
25 students	25 students

Data Analysis

Data for this study was analyzed by using through Statistical Package for the Social sciences Version 19 (SPSS). Data collected from these pre and posttests was compared and Paired t-Test was used for this, as the t-Test had been used to measure the difference between the means of control and treatment groups in social sciences' research studies. There was a gap of two months, maintained between pretest and posttests. To assess the normality of pre-test data, Shapiro-Wilk test was applied. Mean and standard was used for the disruptive analysis of numerical variables, while box and whisker plot and histogram with normal curve was also used for displaying numerical data. For the comparison of scores after ULA tests, conducted as per LND standards, Paired t-test was applied to assess the average change in students' English language proficiency after learning through Subject support manual and action plan. P-value <0.05 was employed for the significant of results at 95% confidence level with two tail.

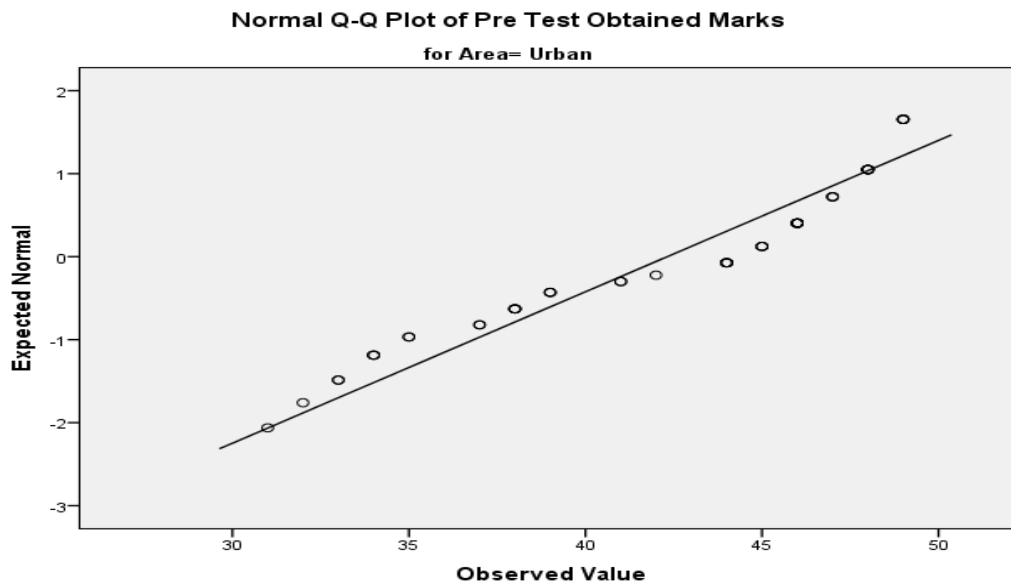
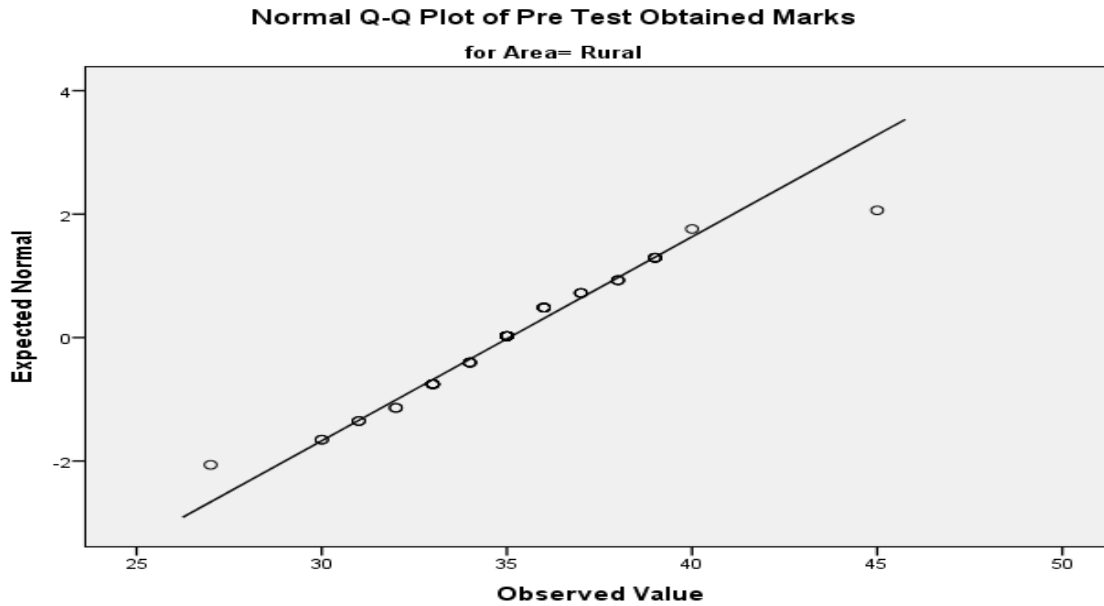
Normality Test

Checking the normality of a data set is considered a must in all the statistical and numerical investigations, as it justifies the credibility and authenticity of data selection/generation process. Though there is an otherwise viewpoint too, that in case a data set is >30,40, then normality checks can be ignored too (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Anyways, as the small values of W are evidence of departure from normality, it is better to be checked. For the applied test to perform effectively and efficiently, the variation of data needs to be the unchanged through the whole data set. They name it as homogeneousness of the variance. SPSS uses more than one tests for checking normality, however Shapiro-Wilk (D'Agostino) was used in this study. In the following are the results of this test.

Table 1. Tests of Normality

	School	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-Test	School 1	0.148	50	0.07	0.958	50	0.074
Obtained Marks	School 2	0.2	50	0	0.896	50	0

Normal Q-Q Plots



Plot 2

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Particulars	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre Test Obtained Marks	50	38.69	5.72024
Post Test Obtained Marks	50	48.6	6.13155
Valid N (list wise)	50		

Table 2 shows overall comparison of pre and post results of 100 students respectively.

As a whole marks before any intervention were 38.69 ± 5.72 and after the experiment it became 48.60 ± 6.13 .

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Respondent's Group		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Control Group	Pre Test Obtained Marks	25	36.26	4.5482
	Post Test Obtained Marks	25	44.76	2.76686
	Valid N (listwise)	25		
Experimental Group	Pre Test Obtained Marks	25	41.12	5.77694
	Post Test Obtained Marks	25	52.44	6.18147
	Valid N (list wise)	25		

Table 3 shows the data with respect to groups i.e. control vs. experimental group.

As a whole in control group, marks before intervention were 36.26 ± 4.54 which became 44.76 ± 2.76 after intervention while in experimental group as a whole the marks before intervention were 41.12 ± 5.77 which became 52.44 ± 6.18 after intervention.

If we see the comparison of pretest marks of control group vs. experimental group, we come to know that the pretest marks of control group were 36.26 ± 4.54 which is less than the pretest marks of experimental group i.e. 41.12 ± 5.77 .

Similarly if we compare the posttest values of control group vs. experimental group, we come to know that the posttest marks of the control group were 44.76 ± 2.76 which are, again, less than the posttest marks of experimental group i.e. 52.44 ± 6.18 .

Table 4.

Particulars		Pre Test Obtained Marks	Post Test Obtained Marks
N	Valid	100	100
	Missing	0	0
Mean		38.69	48.6
Std. Deviation		5.72024	6.13155

The above table 4 shows overall data of pre and post test results.

Table 5.

Respondent's Group			Pre Test Obtained Marks	Post Test Obtained Marks
Control Group	N	Valid	25	25
		Missing	0	0
	Mean		36.26	44.76
	Std. Deviation		4.5482	2.76686

Experimental Group	N	Valid	25	25
		Missing	0	0
	Mean		41.12	52.44
	Std. Deviation		5.77694	6.18147

The above table shows overall data of pre and post test results in control and experimental groups.

Table 6. Paired Samples Correlation

Place of Residence			N	Correlation	Sig.
School	Pair 1	Pre Test Obtained Marks & Post Test Obtained Marks	25	0.301	0.03
School	Pair 1	Pre Test Obtained Marks & Post Test Obtained Marks	25	0.507	0

The table shows the standard deviations of the rural and urban centers, also bifurcating their pre and post tests. It also presents the number correlation and significance of the results of pre and post tests of rural and urban centers to be tallied. The correlation between pre and post tests of rural center was 0.301, while for the urban center it was 0.507. The significant value of correlation for school 1 was 0.034 which is greater than 0.005. For the school 2, this significant value was 0.000 seems the value is smaller than 0.005.

Table 7. Paired Samples Statistics

Respondent's Group			Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control Group	Pair 1	Pre Test Obtained Marks	36.26	25	4.5482	0.64321
		Post Test Obtained Marks	44.76	25	2.76686	0.39129
Experimental Group	Pair 1	Pre Test Obtained Marks	41.12	25	5.77694	0.81698
		Post Test Obtained Marks	52.44	25	6.18147	0.87419

Table 8. Paired Samples Correlation

Respondent's Group			N	Correlation	Sig.
Control Group	Pair 1	Pre Test Obtained Marks & Post Test Obtained Marks	25	-0.209	0.15
Experimental Group	Pair 1	Pre Test Obtained Marks & Post Test Obtained Marks	25	0.675	0

The table presenting the mean, number of participating students, standard deviation of pre and post tests of control and experimental groups separately to be tallied. It shows the means and standard deviations of control and experimental group, also bifurcating their pre and post tests. The improvement in control and experimental group has a clear difference, as the means are telling clearly. It also shows the standard error means of pre and post tests of control and experimental groups to be tallied. It also presents the number of students' correlation and significance of the results of pre and post tests of control and experimental groups to be tallied. The table stated that the correlation between the pre and post tests of the experimental and control groups was -0.209 while for the experimental group, it was 0.675. The significant value of correlation for control group was 0.145 which means greater than 0.05. For the experimental group, this significant value is 0.000 since the value is less than 0.05.

A great impact of the introduction of ULA test in the public schools of Gujranwala, Punjab was found and measured. There was a difference of means of pre and posttests between the students but the results show that the impact of ULA test in association with ULA subject support manual and action plan is visible on both places, however the better results of 1st school have some other aspects like societal structure, awareness of parents and know-how of English basics, which needs to be explored more.

Recommendations

In the light of the results of study and observations of the researcher, some recommendations were made for the English language teachers, particularly those, who were teaching at primary and elementary schools. Precisely, they were suggested to utilize the technology interventions more and more to better the ELT environment. Supporting, rather instigating the students to use the technology interventions like tablet PCs proved a fruitful experience in different parts of the world (Kocak, 2015). The use of individual and collective activities in class room, while teaching English, as proposed and guided by ULA subject support manual and action plan is also helpful and teachers must utilize them to improve the results of their students.

- The Universal Litnum Assessment (ULA) must go on in the public schools of Punjab at primary level.
- The area of operation of Universal Litnum Assessment (ULA) test should be enhanced to all classes of primary sections of the public schools of Punjab and other provinces.
- The testing pattern of ULA in association with ULA subject support manual and action plan should also be applied to all the classes of primary classes initially and later on to all the higher classes of public schools.

- The number of tablets in class three should be increased in public schools, as the number of students gets exceeded many times. There should be at least one-seven ratio.
- The tablets should be free for the classes instead of using them for the office chores, as many educators and students complain so.
- Specific software should be developed for those students, who hail from rural centers and need to have sound base, which is lacked due to certain factors, few of which were mentioned earlier.

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