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COMPARING THE ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY (ELP) WITH OTHER FACTORS IN PAKISTANI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' DROPPING OUT AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS (ABOUT IT)

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to compare the role played by English Language Proficiency (ELP) with other factors in the students' dropping out among university students of Sciences, Social Sciences and Arts/Humanities groups. It is hypothesized that not being proficient in English Language can increase the risk of dropping out at the university level as compared to other factors i.e., academic, administrative, family, health issues and financial or personal problems. The participants were thirty students of three major disciplines from Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan who had taken re-admission; the data collection tool was a questionnaire divided in three sections in which statements about five factors of dropping out Likert scale. The analysis was done through measuring the coefficient of variation (CV) by grading the factors from most important to least important. Lacking English Language Proficiency and Health/Personal/Financial factors were rated as the most significant causes of dropping out. In this regard, university teachers' perceptions about the role played by English Language Proficiency impacting learners' academic achievements have also been explored through a survey. Although, they also consider ELP as the vital factor affecting the university students' performance; yet, they have mixed tendency to consider it to be wholly responsible for failure. Some suggestions, related to academic practices and administrative policies based on the opinions on students, are also made at the end to reduce the dropout rate.

English Language Proficiency

English Language Proficiency is defined as learners' capacity to create and convey meaning in spoken and written contexts by using English Language during their study program at the university (University of Southern Queensland, 2016). Gottlieb (2006) defines language proficiency as the command of student on the language including the four major language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Wharton and Race (1999) have stated seven aspects of language that affect pedagogic practices: vocabulary, pronunciation, and listening, reading, speaking, writing, grammar. Krashen (1989) consider linguistic knowledge to be inextricable from other types of knowledge as using the mental faculties for cognitive development help in learning language as well e.g., learners start learning language structures when they are in the process of comprehending through defining and describing. William & Gloria (2003) state that Language operates in understanding of concepts, e.g., reading includes delineation of ideas that is also a cognitive process.

In Universities/Higher Education institutes (HEIs) of Pakistan, English language is used as the basic medium of instruction. In this context, Ijaz, Zarif & Tehseen (2013) report that although, English language is used as the medium of instruction to be employed in the classroom by teachers, yet, some teachers are confused about its authenticity and effectivity. Khan (2013) cited that despite English medium instruction being recognised as obligatory in Pakistani universities at post-graduation level; yet, it is not entirely practiced. The several reasons for this non-practice are poorly qualified teachers, poor examination system, separated language learning from context; whereas, learning should be an analogous activity alongside academic knowledge acquisition concepts and skills at all stages including university level (Jalal, 2004; Aly, 2007; Din, 2015). Din (2015) found that in Pakistan, learners at graduate and post-graduate level did not possess the required language proficiency as realized through poor language in their language proficiency tests, paper writing and observations of presentations because of which the instructors confronted issues in evaluating their competence. This whole phenomenon in Pakistani universities' context realizes that although students are expected to be proficient in English language (Clokie & Fourie, 2016) whatever subject they opt as they have to skim and scan the books, articles, handouts and other reading material; write class assignments, projects, exam papers, research reports etc (Joughin, 2007); listening and speaking to teachers and fellows during lectures (Harrison & Shi, 2016; Nash, Crimmins & Oprescu 2016), seminars or delivering presentations (Tsang, 2020); and grammar and vocabulary as well to convey the subject related knowledge in class (Buckridge & Guest, 2007) and in exams (Redden, 2014). Having very weak command or disinterestedness (Shah, 2013) in all these areas of language would definitely impact the academic performance of learners increasing the risk of dropping out (Burrus & Roberts, 2012; Grieve et al., 2021). Hence, the need arises to study the dropout rate and factors responsible for this situation in Pakistani Higher Education Institutes.

After specifying the contributing factors from the students' perspectives, the role of English Language proficiency needs to be explored from the viewpoint of university teachers that how much significance do they attach to students' language skills, the weakness of which may impact their academic performance resulting in failure. So, the research questions formulated to investigate the following phenomena:

1.   How far the dropped-out university students consider English Language Proficiency to be a contributing factor in their dropout as compared to other factors?

2.   To what extent, the university teachers' perceive that their own and their students' language practices related to English Language Proficiency affect learners' academic performance?

LITERATURE REVIEW
Many causes are identified in previous studies that report the factors of dropping out. Wendy (1995) identified the reasons for students dropping out i.e., learners' doing some part-time job due to financial problems, family uncertainty, negative self-appraisal, procuring bad grades, learners' incapacity to do assigned tasks and absence of synchronisation with the instructors. Lynn (1999) indicated family reasons, individual personal causes (low motivational level) and aspects related to the institution (dearth of suitable activities for at-risk students) as key factors for dropping out. Caraway & Tucker (2003) stated that high dropout rates can be caused by learners' weak educational background at school. David & Amy (2006) highlighted the glitches leading to dropout linked with parents' low educational achievement, the size of family, and the absence of motivation. Burrs & Roberts (2012) investigated the demographics and indicators to recognise learners at peril of dropping out. Lee and Pang (2013) examined the association between motivation to carry out educational journey and academic achievement of mature learners. Orion, Forosuelo and Cavalida (2014) realized the impact of educational plans and strategies implemented by the institution and the instructors, student teacher rapport, monetary resources and academic achievement as the significant factors responsible for drop out. Aldowah et al. (2019) explore the factors pertaining to Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and quote studies that the huge volume of input, low level or absence of motivation (Khalil & Ebner, 2014), and inadequate feed-back (Li & Moore, 2018) could be the conceivable explanations for not completing the course by the huge number of MOOCs students. However, Rosé et al. (2014), Yang et al. (2014) and Zheng et al. (2015) ascribed the high attrition rate in MOOCs to specific social aspects related to low collaboration and communication with other fellows, friends and the teachers; Gütl et al. (2014), Khalil & Ebner (2014) and Shapiro et al. (2017) pinpointed personal characteristics; Shawky & Badawi (2019) stressed on the issues related to the contents of the course and Ma & Lee (2019) related learners' disinterest in the MOOCs course to the other social and environmental factors.

There are other studies which found the positive relationship between proficiency of learners in terms of English Language, academic achievement

and, consequently, its influence on increasing the risk of dropping out (Sivaraman et al., 2014; Martirosyan et al., 2015; Din & Saeed, 2018; Nasirudeen & Xiao, 2020) in international and Pakistani learners' context. In different researches from higher education institutions, researchers also found direct relationship between learners' proficiency in English and academic success to be directly connected (Xu, 1991; Al Haddad et al., 2004; Aina et al., 2013; Kumar, 2014) in Nigerian, Indian, American and Malaysian contexts.

To summarize, it becomes obvious that the previous studies about phenomenon of dropping out bring out five elementary factors i.e., 1) Individual personal factors correlated to the students including motivation and language proficiency (Obeidat, 1994; Wendy, 1995; Al-Sroor', 1997; Lynn, 1999; Al Bakoor, 2003; Al-Robei', 2007; Ghignoni, 2017; Arias-Velandia et al., 2018; Behr et al., 2020); 2) Reasons related to academic factors (Heidrich, 2018; Guzmán, et al., 2020); 3) family-related factors (Al Khazraji & Al Samrai, 1993; Abdul Rahim, 2000); and 4) Reasons related to financial situation (Contreras, 2018; Behr et al., 2020; Palacio et al., 2020; Schmitt et al., 2020); 5) reasons related to administrative aspects at HEIs (Armstrong et al., 2018; Choi & Kim, 2018).

In the perspective of all the above-mentioned researches, a research gap is found to investigate the role of English Language proficiency and its comparison with other factors in increasing the risk to dropout from academic programs in higher education institutes of Pakistan. Findings of the research can offer insights to identify different steps that the university, parents and students need to undertake to address the problem.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Data for this research was collected from two sets of participants i.e., university teachers (n=48) and students (n=30) from Sciences, Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities disciplines through questionnaires.

The sample from the students consisted of 30 participants i.e., 19 male and 11 female university students in the survey with an average age of 20 years of different programs in Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan who had taken readmission and were currently studying in different semesters. The students were asked about the factors of their dropout through a questionnaire based on five-point Likert scale of 1 to 5; from strongly agree to strongly disagree in which 25 questions related to five different factors of dropping out were asked about. Their responses were measured through analysis of the coefficient of variation (CV) that is a relative measure of variability that indicates the size of a standard deviation in relation to its mean. It is a standardized, unitless measure that allows to compare variability between disparate groups and characteristics. Lower values for the coefficient of variation are considered better because it means there is less variability around the mean. The following items contain the key to factors for dropping out and sources of motivation mentioned in the survey:

Table 1: Factors, codes and number of items used in questionnaire

Factor Name	Factor Code	No. of items
Academic	AC	**5**
Family	FA	**5**
Administrative	AD	**5**
English Language Proficiency	ELP	**5**
Health/Personal/Financial	HPF	**5**
Overall		**25**

The analysis of demographics realizes not only the frequencies but also the probabilities/risk factors contributing in the process of dropping out for students as English Language Proficiency is a constant variable across different disciplines but gender, family income and residence are not constant. So, it can be implied that male students, students having the family income of below 50,000 and students residing at hostels are more likely at the risk of dropping out as compared to female students, students having family income more than 50,000 and day scholar students. All the 60 students took readmission in the same department implying they had no choice; they wanted to challenge themselves or they saw opportunities only in the field in which they had already failed. Although, this is too small data to generalize the factors to determine the students who are at the risk of failure, yet, it provides some implication for future research.

Table 2: Demographics of participants in terms of different variables

Demographics	Sub-category	Frequency
Discipline	Arts/Humanities	10
	Social Sciences	10
	Sciences	10
Gender	Male	19
	Female	11
Family Income	0-50,000	20
	51,000-100,000	7
	101,000-more	3
Residence	Day scholar	13
	Hostel residents	17
Department of Re-admission	Same	30
	Different	0

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented after analysing the questionnaire through the measurement of coefficient of variation (CV). The graphs are tabulated on the basis of CV for each factor and rating according to the weight of each answer on Likert scale. The tables and graph given below realize that Health/personal/financial issues and English Language Proficiency factors are considered to be the most important ones by majority of the students from

three disciplines respectively whereas the academic, administrative and family factors were considered to be the lesser important by all.

Table 3: Overall Factor Ranking through Coefficient of Variation (CV)

Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	CV	Rating
Academic	30	7	22	14.60	3.765	25.787	3
Family	30	7	22	13.67	3.817	27.922	5
Administrative	30	6	25	18.43	4.883	26.494	4
English Language Proficiency	30	8	25	15.80	3.745	23.702	2
Health/Personal /Financial	30	8	25	16.97	3.586	21.131	1

Health/Personal/financial factor was rated as the most important factor as these individual issues may become responsible for the failure of learners; this finding is corroborated by De Hart and Venter (2013) who considered economic conditions to be significant determinant in dropout of learners. The hostel students stressed the unhealthy living situation at hostel to be responsible for the failure. The financial pressure was also responsible for contributing in their failure in the first attempt as endorsed by Hines et al. (2015) Lewine et al., (2019) and Castleman and Meyer (2020) who found that students coming from low-income and adverse background are usually more at the risk of dropping out as they usually go for part-time jobs and do not take part in paid extra-curricular activities that may have a negative impact on their social integration at higher education institutes.

With respect to ELP that was 2nd most important factor, Students agreed that despite having the clear concepts, they lacked the appropriate writing skills required for the university students in written exams (Sajjad et al., 2021) they were shy to speak in class (Emanuel, 2011) and preferred interacting in Urdu language realizing low proficiency and confidence level in oral communication (Alghail & Mahfoodh, 2019). Moreover, they reported problems related to reading skills (Qrqez, & Ab Rashid, 2017) grammar, and limited vocabulary that hampered their academic performance (Orlanda-Ventayen, 2019). Rodriguez (2020) affirms these linguistic challenges faced by the non-native weak students at the risk of dropping out endorsed by Dondero and Muller (2012) as well.

To explore the academic factors responsible for dropping out, first aspect is their previous academic record i.e., if the learners come with low grades at a high school or intermediate level, they are more at risk of failure in HEI as indicated by Faizullina et al., (2013), De Hart and Venter (2013), Hines et al., (2015), Keiffer and Parker (2017) and Lewine et al., (2019). Second aspect is the provision of no support structure provided to the weak students academically as students reported that university/department did not provide the proper guidance, counselling, extra attention, time or arrange remedial classes for them when they were in the process of failing or dropping their grades as Nishat et al. (2020) state that the GPA of those students is positively

impacted who receive extra tutoring or services provided to the students withing HEI. Moreover, the students having no access to educational facilities like hardware, software or internet etc (Meisalo et al., 2002; Pérez et al., 2019) and poor choice while selecting the course and problems faced after getting enrolled (Pillay and Ngcobo, 2010; Pérez et al., 2021) are the academic issues affecting their academic performance.

In relation to administrative factor, most of the students stressed upon the disparity between teaching methodology and examination system and the non-supportive policies of universities in terms of identifying the weak students (Castleman & Meyer, 2020), teacher-student and student-institution communication (Meisalo et al., 2002) and how to handle the linguistic diversity of students hampering their academic performance.

Family issues accumulate psychological pressures on the academic performance of learners i.e., single-parent, separation/death of parents, living in extended family leading to incompletion or unsuccessful degree although, the number of participants in this data reported very few such issues (Pillay and Ngcobo, 2010; Nishat et al., 2020; Guzman et al., 2021).

Impact of different variables on dropout factors

Different variables that can impact the factors of dropping out can be Discipline, Gender and Residence. When the factors are compared among the students from different disciplines as stated in Table 4 below, it can be seen for sciences students, Administrative, Academic and health/personal/financial factors were most important respectively as compared to family and English Language Proficiency; This phenomenon realizes that students of Sciences discipline do not consider their ELP as a significant factor either they are competent enough to perform well or their weak ELP makes no difference to the teachers rather for them, Academic and Administrative factors were more important. Whereas in contrast to this tendency, the students of Social Sciences and Arts & Humanities students consider ELP and HPF factors as the most significant factors for the dropping out; the reason might be that many of Art & Humanities and Social Sciences students are less exposed to English Language overall during their previous academic career e.g., Matric and Intermediate. That less exposure to English language can be carried out as a weakness during pursual of University degrees leading to the phenomenon of dropping out.

Table 4: Discipline-wise Ranking through Coefficient of Variation (CV)

Discipline	Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	CV	Rating
Sciences	Academic	10	7	18	12.80	3.67	28.72	2
	Family	10	7	19	12.60	3.86	30.66	4
	Administrative	10	10	23	17.30	4.85	28.06	1
	English Language Proficiency	10	8	25	16.10	4.97	30.91	5
	Health/Persona	10	8	25	16.50	4.81	29.17	3

	l/Financial							
Social Sciences	Academic	10	7	19	15.30	3.36	22.01	4
	Family	10	9	18	13.10	2.56	19.53	3
	Administrative	10	6	25	17.40	6.36	36.56	5
	English Language Proficiency	10	12	19	16.20	2.69	16.66	1
	Health/Personal/Financial	10	11	22	17.00	3.29	19.41	2
Arts/ Humanities	Academic	10	8	22	15.70	3.92	24.95	4
	Family	10	10	22	15.30	4.57	29.88	5
	Administrative	10	10	21	15.10	3.51	23.25	3
	English Language Proficiency	10	16	23	20.60	2.22	10.78	1
	Health/Personal/Financial	10	13	21	17.40	2.63	15.13	2

From the perspective of gender (See Table 5 below), for male students ELP and HPF were the most important factors but for female students, the situation was reversed as they compared HPF, Academic and Administrative factors more significant than Family and ELP.

Table 5: Gender-wise Factor Priority through Coefficient of Variation (CV)

Gender	Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	CV	Rating
Male	Academic	19	7	19	13.89	4.15	29.85	5
	Family	19	7	18	12.11	2.86	23.67	3
	Administrative	19	6	25	18.15	5.32	29.27	4
	English Language Proficiency	19	8	21	15.15	3.15	20.77	1
	Health/Personal/Financial	19	8	20	15.78	3.43	21.69	2
Female	Academic	11	12	22	15.82	2.75	17.38	2
	Family	11	10	22	16.36	3.85	23.55	4
	Administrative	11	10	23	18.91	4.23	22.37	3
	English Language Proficiency	11	10	25	16.91	4.55	26.90	5
	Health/Personal/Financial	11	14	25	19.00	3.00	15.79	1

As there were more hostel students in the data who failed and took re-admission, residence has also been analysed as a variable which might have contributed in failing. Some of the hostel resident students shared their off the record statement that they had not even informed their family about their failure. They had problems in adjusting in the new atmosphere; home sickness, unhygienic and uncomfortable situations contributed in increasing

their issues alongside the ELP, academic and administrative issues and that is why hostel students seem to be more at the risk of dropping out (Ghenghesh, 2015). This perception proved to be correct as for hostel residents HPF and ELP were reported to be more significant factors contributing to drop out as compared to day scholar students for whom Academic, HPF and Family were more important factors. Hines et al. (2015) and Bania and Kvernmo (2016) focus on the physical and mental health issues as responsible for dropping out of the students endorsed by some of the participants of this study who realized the stress of health-related issues on their dropout (Troester-Trate, 2020). The impact of residence variable on other factors is corroborated by Ghenghesh (2015) Contreras (2017); Behr et al. (2020) Palacio et al. (2020) and Schmitt et al. (2020) who identify residential, personal, health related and financial variables to have strong relationship with the dropout rate among the higher education students. Heublein et al. (2010) highlight the funding opportunities and cost associated with the higher education having an impact on the drop-out rate; this financial pressure was realized by a few male participants who had to do the part time jobs to meet the educational and family expenses that led to their drop out event (Nishat et al., 2020; De Hart & Venter, 2013).

Table 6: Residence-wise Factor Priority through Coefficient of Variation (CV)

Group	Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	CV	Rating
Day Scholars	Academic	13	8	22	15.77	3.81	24.17	1
	Family	13	10	22	13.46	3.67	27.23	3
	Administrative	13	6	23	17.92	5.17	28.85	5
	English Language Proficiency	13	10	25	15.38	4.25	27.65	4
	Health/Personal/Financial	13	11	25	16.92	4.11	24.29	2
Hostel residents	Academic	17	7	19	13.71	3.58	26.15	4
	Family	17	7	21	13.82	4.03	29.184	5
	Administrative	17	9	25	18.82	4.77	25.35	3
	English Language Proficiency	17	8	21	16.12	3.41	21.14	2
	Health/Personal/Financial	17	8	22	17.00	3.26	19.17	1

Graph 1 below summarizes the whole findings in which comparison of Coefficient of Variation (CV) for all the factors realizes that for the majority of the students Health/personal/Financial and weak command on English Language Proficiency are the top most prioritized factors among the students who dropped out and took re-admission.

Graph 1 Representation of variables affecting Drop-out rate
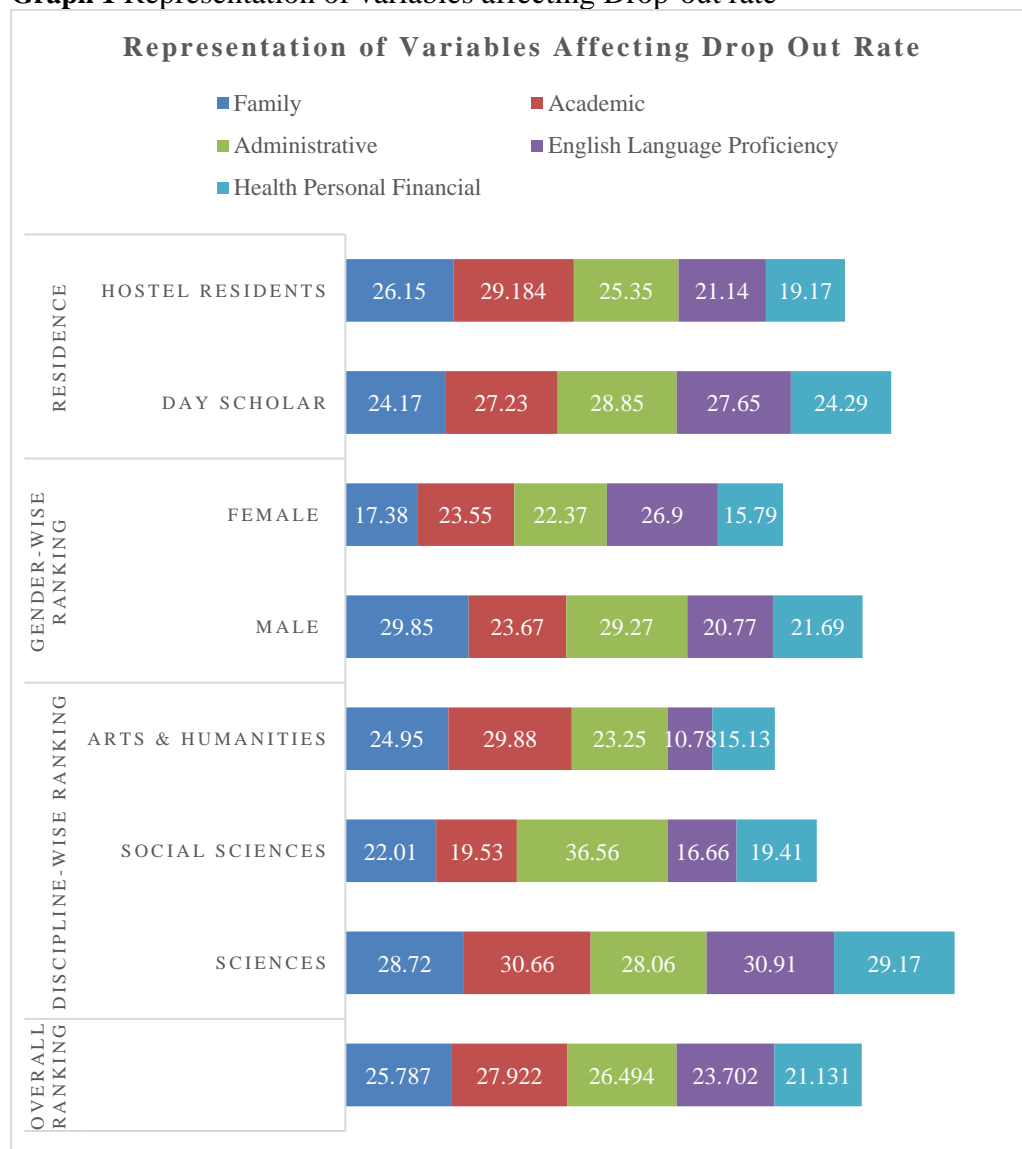
Among the individual questions related to ELP, Students agreed that despite having the clear concepts, they lacked the appropriate writing skills required for the university students in written exams; they were shy to speak in class and preferred interacting in Urdu language. Moreover, they reported problems related to reading skills, grammar, and limited vocabulary that hampers their academic performance. Among the academic and administrative factors, most of the students completely agreed with the statements that university/department did not provide the proper guidance, counselling, extra attention, time or arrange remedial classes for them when they were in the process of failing or dropping their grades. Moreover, students also stressed upon the disparity between teaching methodology and examination system. The hostel students stressed the unhealthy living situation at hostel to be responsible for the failure.

University teachers' perceptions about the role of English Language Proficiency in university students' academic performance

At the university level globally, English medium instruction (EMI) is used to impart the knowledge of almost all the subjects from different disciplines in written, oral and readable forms (Doiza, Lasagabaster, and Sierra 2012; Werther et al., 2014, Martirosyan et al., 2015; Zhang, 2017) and also used as a tool for students' assessment and evaluation to determine their academic performance (Ginther & Yan, 2018; Orlanda-Ventayen, 2019; Bo et al., 2022). Hence, in a non-native perspective, it is substantial to probe the university teachers' language usage patterns as these are directly connected to both their own efficacy for the employment of classroom instructional strategies (Yilmaz, 2011; Doiza et al., 2019), and what do they expect from the students to do using English language (Yang et al., 2019; Peng & Xie, 2021) the failure to meet these standards in terms of medium of instruction can have serious consequences for the university students (Wolf & Faulkner-Bond, 2016; Bo et al., 2022), although Arroyo-Barrigüete et al. (2022) contended this notion by exploring the academic performance of EMI and non-EMI students in Spanish university that realized no significant difference.
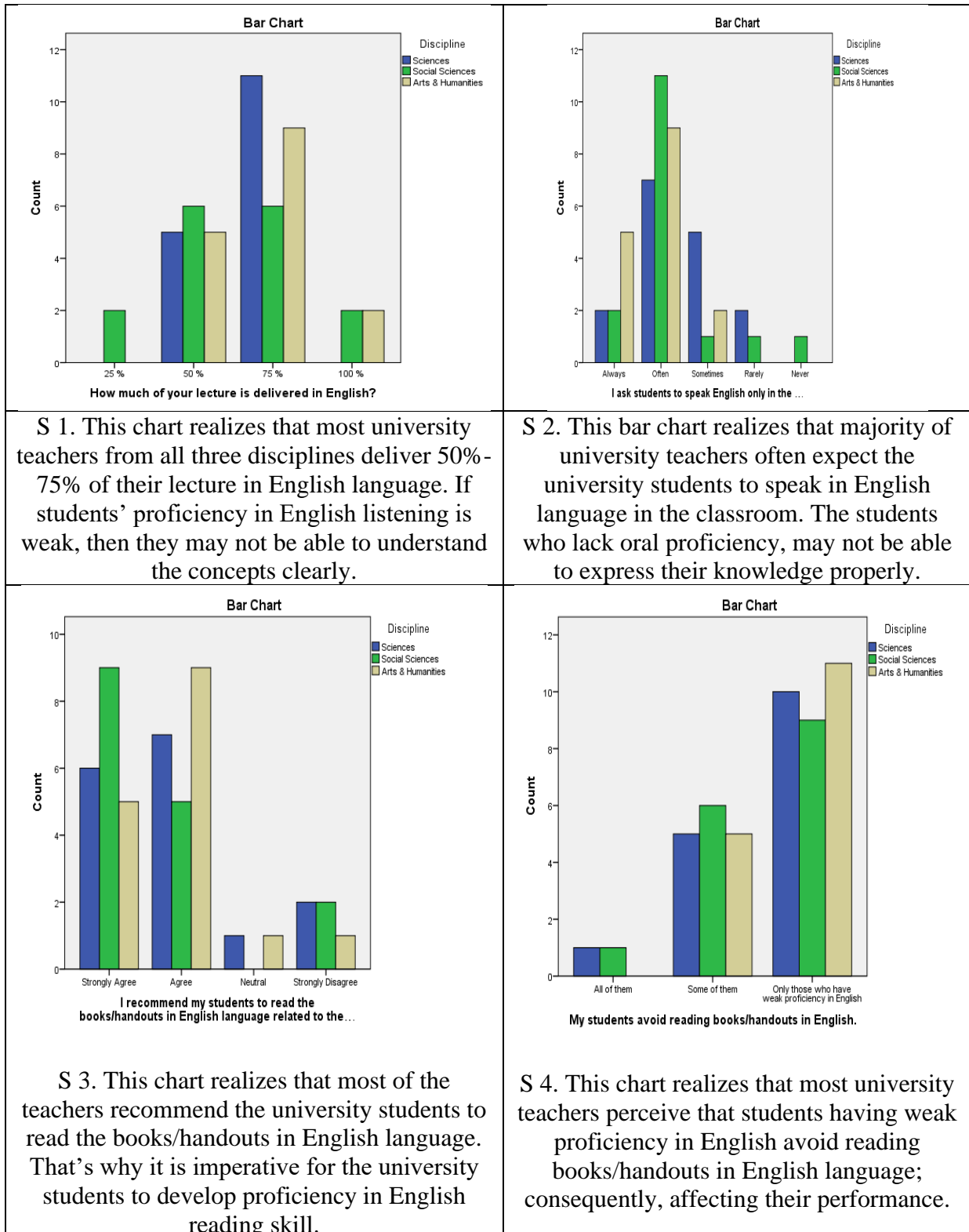
In order to evaluate the perceptions and practices of university instructors regarding the role of ELP in the performance of learners, 48 university teachers from Sciences, Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities with different period of experience were asked to fill a questionnaire to give their opinions related to all the major areas of English Language Proficiency i.e., listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. The statements were related to university teachers' perceptions about their own and their students' language practices in the classroom and how much importance do they attach to leaners' ELP as a factor of failure or success at the university level.
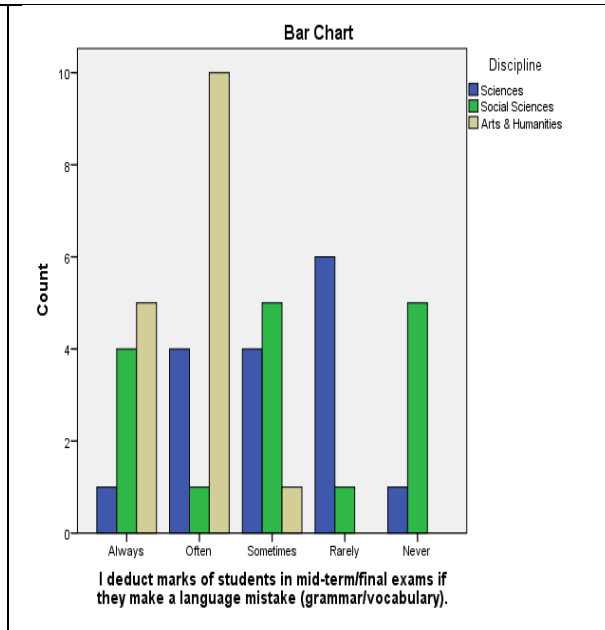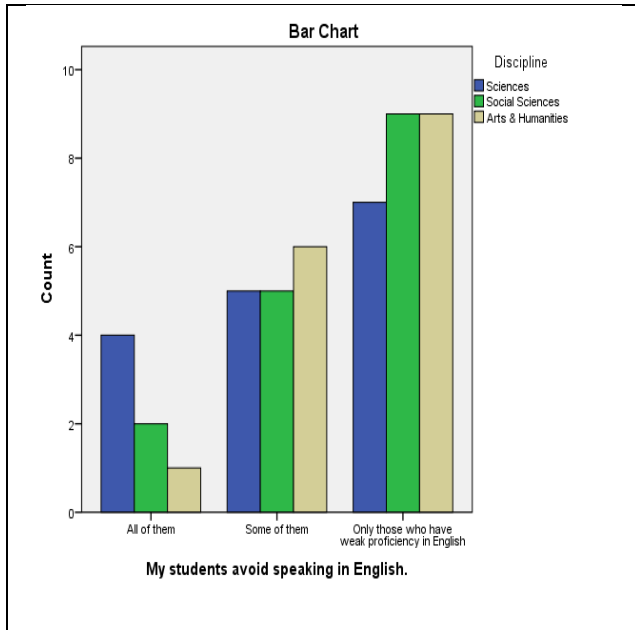
Table 7: A tabular representation of frequency of university teachers' questionnaire

Statement	Options	Discipline			Total
		Sciences	Social Sciences	Arts & Humanities	
Experience of teaching at university level	1-10 years	5(0%)	7(15%)	8(17%)	20(42%)
	11-20 years	8(17%)	5(10%)	6(13%)	19(40%)
	21-30 years	3(6%)	2(4%)	2(4%)	7(15%)
	more than 30 years	0(0%)	2(4%)	0(0%)	2(4%)
How much of your lecture is delivered in English?	25 %	0(0%)	2(4%)	0(0%)	2(4%)
	50 %	5(10%)	6(13%)	5(10%)	16(33%)
	75 %	11(23%)	6(13%)	9(19%)	26(54%)
	100 %	0(0%)	2(4%)	2(4%)	4(8%)
I ask students to speak English only in the classroom.	Always	2(4%)	2(4%)	5(10%)	9(19%)
	Often	7(15%)	11(23%)	9(19%)	27(56%)
	Sometimes	5(10%)	1(2%)	2(4%)	8(17%)
	Rarely	2(4%)	1(2%)	0(0%)	3(6%)

	Never	0(0%)	1(2%)	0(0%)	1(2%)
I recommend my students to read the books/handouts in English language related to their subject.	Strongly Agree	6(13%)	9(19%)	5(10%)	20(42%)
	Agree	7(15%)	5(10%)	9(19%)	21(44%)
	Neutral	1(2%)	0(0%)	1(2%)	2(4%)
	Strongly Disagree	2(4%)	2(4%)	1(2%)	5(10%)
My students avoid reading books/handouts in English.	All of them	1(2%)	1(2%)	0(0%)	2(4%)
	Some of them	5(10%)	6(13%)	5(10%)	16(33%)
	Only those who have weak proficiency in English	10(21%)	9(19%)	11(23%)	30(63%)
My students avoid speaking in English.	All of them	4(8%)	2(4%)	1(2%)	7(15%)
	Some of them	5(10%)	5(10%)	6(13%)	16(33%)
	Only those who have weak proficiency in English	7(15%)	9(19%)	9(19%)	25(52%)
I deduct marks of students in mid-term/final exams if they make a language mistake (grammar/vocabulary).	Always	1(2%)	4(8%)	5(10%)	10(21%)
	Often	4(8%)	1(2%)	10(21%)	15(31%)
	Sometimes	4(8%)	5(10%)	1(2%)	10(21%)
	Rarely	6(13%)	1(2%)	0(0%)	7(15%)
	Never	1(2%)	5(10%)	0(0%)	6(13%)
I deduct marks of students in class assignments/projects/tests if they make a language mistake (grammar/vocabulary).	Always	1(2%)	4(8%)	6(13%)	11(23%)
	Often	2(4%)	1(2%)	8(17%)	11(23%)
	Sometimes	6(13%)	5(10%)	2(4%)	13(27%)
	Rarely	7(15%)	1(2%)	0(0%)	8(17%)
	Never	0(0%)	5(10%)	0(0%)	5(10%)
Students do not like to write their notes/projects in their own words.	All of them	4(8%)	3(6%)	3(6%)	10(21%)
	Some of them	7(15%)	3(6%)	8(17%)	18(38%)
	Only those who have weak proficiency in English	5(10%)	10(21%)	5(10%)	20(42%)
I think poor English Language is one of the most important reason of students' failure in exams.	Strongly Agree	2(4%)	3(6%)	3(6%)	8(17%)
	Agree	9(19%)	5(10%)	11(23%)	25(52%)
	Neutral	1(2%)	5(10%)	2(4%)	8(17%)
	Disagree	4(8%)	3(6%)	0(0%)	7(15%)
I focus on concept development rather than that of English Language proficiency.	Strongly Agree	3(6%)	3(6%)	0(0%)	6(13%)
	Agree	10(21%)	7(15%)	9(19%)	26(54%)
	Neutral	2(4%)	3(6%)	5(10%)	10(21%)
	Disagree	1(2%)	1(2%)	2(4%)	4(8%)
	Strongly Disagree	0(0%)	2(4%)	0(0%)	2(4%)
Total		16(33%)	16(33%)	16(33%)	48(100%)

**Graph 2:** A graphic representation of university teachers' questionnaire

S 1. This chart realizes that most university teachers from all three disciplines deliver 50%-75% of their lecture in English language. If students' proficiency in English listening is weak, then they may not be able to understand the concepts clearly.

S 2. This bar chart realizes that majority of university teachers often expect the university students to speak in English language in the classroom. The students who lack oral proficiency, may not be able to express their knowledge properly.

S 3. This chart realizes that most of the teachers recommend the university students to read the books/handouts in English language. That's why it is imperative for the university students to develop proficiency in English reading skill.

S 4. This chart realizes that most university teachers perceive that students having weak proficiency in English avoid reading books/handouts in English language; consequently, affecting their performance.

S 5. This chart shows that although universty teachers feel that many university students avoid speaking in English Language but most of them have weak proficiency in English language.

S 6. This bar chart indicates that university teachers have mixed tendency of deducting marks of students in mid-term or final exams on the basis of grammar/vocabulary from always to never.
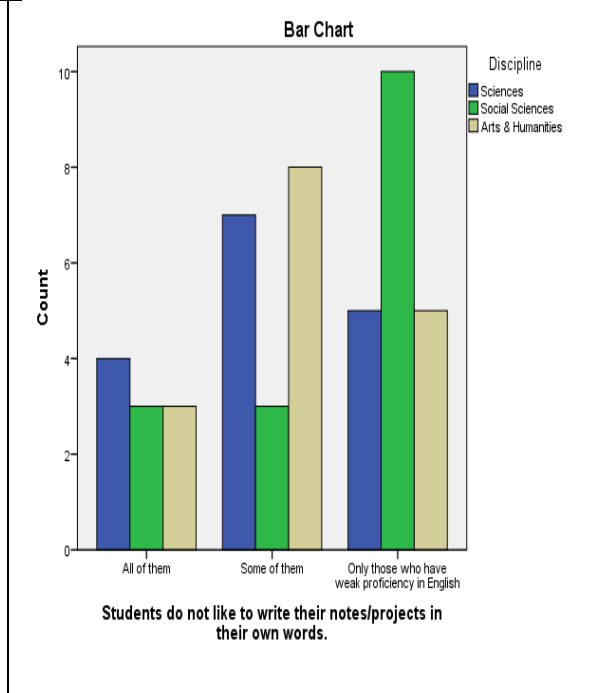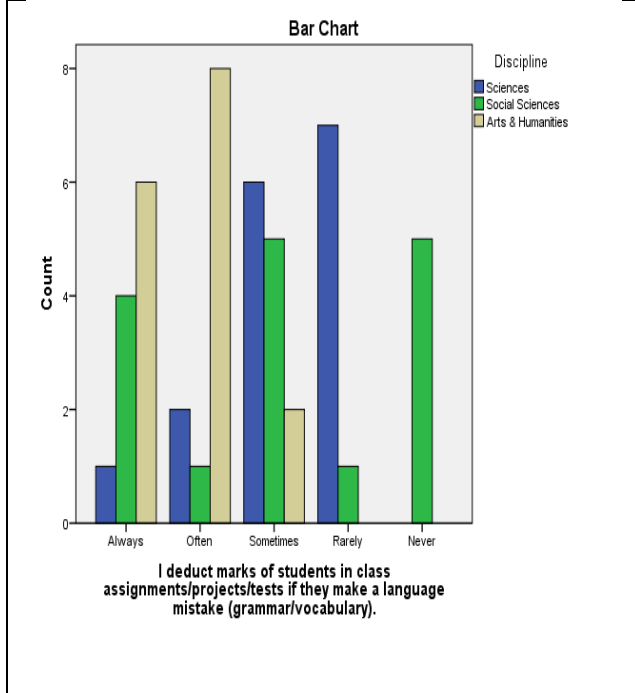
S 7. This chart shows that university teachers have mixed tendency of deducting marks of students in class assignments/projects/tests on the basis of grammar/vocabulary. Majority of teachers chose the options among always to sometimes realizing the significance of this aspect of English Language proficiency.

S 8. This graph illustrates university teachers' perception that majority of the university students avoid writing notes/projects in their own words which shows their lack in English Language proficiency.

S 9. This statement realizes that majority of the university teachers either strongly agree or agree to this option that poor English language becomes the cause of failure in the exams.	S 10. This analysis of this statement indicates majority of teachers focus on concept development rather than that of English language proficiency although a small number of respondents disagreed with this statement as well.

DISCUSSION

Interrelating the findings of questionnaires from university students and teachers realizes that students although impacted by many other factors, consider weak proficiency in English Language as one of the the basic/prioritized reasons of dropping out as supported by many other researches (Nasirudeen & Xiao, 2020; Din & Saeed, 2018; Martirosyan et al., 2015; Sivaraman et al., 2014). The possible explanation can be the difficulty in understanding the concepts or communicating them properly in academically standard language as Krashen (1989) relates the inseparability of linguistic knowledge with comprehension of concepts. Due to this reason, most of the teachers, although, focus more on concept development and do not use English language 100 % to deliver subject knowledge admitting the weak language proficiency of most of the learners and notably consider it to be responsible for many students' failure in exams. This phenomenon is reported by Abbad (1988), Murray (2010) and Barthel (2012) who endorse that university students especially the non-native ones usually have weak proficiency at the time of their admission despite meeting the inclusion criteria and that should be concern of the university administration. This is the similar situation reported by Din & Saeed (2018) during university classrooms' observations that teachers employed code switching frequently e.g., stating the terms in English but illustrating or explaining them in Urdu. Harrison and Shi (2016), in this regard, stress that teachers' method of academic content delivery is usually restricted within the settled norms creating a challenge to visualize the variation of its reception at the end of students. In this situation, teachers should bring variation in their content delivery and student engaging activities not only to help them to comprehend the topic but also overcome the English language challenges. To provide the learners more practical support in

oral communication skills, teachers and university should help the learners to prepare and practice to improve confidence and command on language in public speaking (Ferreira Marinho et al. 2017; LeFebvre et al. 2020; Grieve et al, 2021).

Teachers also perceived that most of the students lacking command in English language avoid reading or writing on their own and usually do not engage in speaking English. Some of the teachers especially from Arts and Humanities group deduct marks for language mistakes in projects or exams scripts of learners but teachers from sciences and social sciences prefer evaluating the knowledge of learners ignoring the language mistakes as observed by Din & Saeed (2018). Although, Ghenghesh (2015) concludes that ELP is a strong element of academic accomplishment for the Sciences and Social Sciences students, so, teachers and university administration should focus on students' needs analysis to remediate the learners at the risk of dropping out due to lack of ELP.

This research also confirms the findings from Din (2015) when teachers do not show consensus in assessment standards resulting in students' dissatisfaction or ignorance with teachers' criterion of marking exams scripts. Here teachers themselves admit that they are divided in their approach of either checking the conceptual knowledge or linguistic competence alongside with it.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of finding from students' questionnaire, it can be concluded that English Language Proficiency, academic and administrative factors were considered mostly by students to be responsible for failure. The findings from the teachers' questionnaire realized that most of the Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities teachers assign a lot of importance to English Language Proficiency as compared to Teachers from the Sciences discipline; they also perceive that many university students lack command on English Language Proficiency affecting their academic performance. On the basis of second section of questionnaire, where students were asked to suggest some remedies to reduce the drop-out rate, the following recommendations are made:

The students should be provided with proper counselling through a qualified counsellor/psychiatrist at the department regarding the subject they are inducted, new atmosphere within class, co-education and adaptation techniques. Students should be properly briefed and prepared for the different teaching methodology and examination system like semester system. Economic assistance should be provided to the students who belong to low-income group as they have to work part time to manage the expenses; need based scholarships should be provided more. Teacher-student co-operation should be increased and friendly environment should be developed and monitored by the high-up. A profile of each student should be maintained; weak students should be picked up for extra coaching/remedial classes in the particular subjects and language areas in which they are weak. Living situation at hostels should be improved as it should be noise free and healthy place to live that is conducive to learning. Language barrier should be managed as some of the students could not understand the curriculum/syllabus in English.

A proper relationship between institution and home should be made; Parent-teacher meetings can be arranged for the weak students' improvement. Extrinsic and intrinsic motivations should be highlighted for the students and marked for the weak students. Teaching system, the performance of teachers and regular classes should be monitored properly at the departments.

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