Examining Assessment Design in the Pakistan English Language Curriculum at Secondary Level: A Comprehensive Qualitative Analysis of its Implementation

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Abstract

Curriculum guides assessment, and assessment guides learning. The effectiveness of assessment design and assessment practice determines how language skills develop. This research study critically analyses the Pakistan English Language Curriculum (PELC), 2006, regarding language assessment design. The study examined the methodologies, strategies, and assessment designs proposed in Pakistan's language curriculum. The study aimed to discover the extent to which the Pakistan National Curriculum, 2006 of English language intended assessment design for language development. Another objective is how this design addresses and facilitates language assessment concepts. The Pakistan National Curriculum 2006 was the subject of a document analysis that considers formative and summative assessment methods, techniques, and strategies. The language assessment theories and Bloom's assessment mechanism were theoretical lenses. This study employed the document analysis paradigm put forward by Bowen (2009). The study results show that raising the Standard of Pakistan's English language curriculum, 2006 assessment design could be more beneficial in fostering language proficiency. There is a lack of methodologies and assessment procedures for developing all language skills. The action words used for Standards, benchmarks, and student learning outcomes (SLOs) fall into the first three stages of the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy, indicating a poor proficiency level of assessment design. The summative test rather than ongoing assessment is indicated; hence, the marking scheme is solely meant for writing skills. Speaking and listening skills are nearly entirely ignored in assessment design. The Standard for the development of textbooks is likewise deficient in terms of assessment. The guidelines for teachers training on assessment are missing. In order to improve the language assessment design, policymakers and curriculum developers will use the study's findings. The findings will also help teachers comprehend and implement language assessment design appropriately.

Keywords: Assessment, Assessment Design, Language Assessment, Curriculum, Textbooks, Instruction.

1. Introduction

Language skills development depends on the appropriateness of assessment (Cho et al., 2020). The curriculum provides the appropriate assessment design for language development. It linked the teachers, students, instructions, and assessment (Nawaz & Akbar, 2022). Understanding each student's needs, interests, learning preferences, and academic levels is made easier for teachers by assessment, the essential part of instruction. Learning from assessments informs future language planning and policy development and enhances classroom language education. Language assessment aims to gather data to support assessments of an individual's knowledge, skills, and language-related abilities (Green, 2021). Curriculum is seen as a crucial component of the educational process. It is a methodical procedure created to achieve the objectives set forth by the authorities in a particular field. The curriculum is a formal document with numerous parts, including chapters on objectives, content standards, recommended teaching strategies, and evaluation techniques. The learning process without assessment practices is impossible (Oliva & Gordon, 2012). Assessment design and tactics are incorporated into every curriculum component. The quality of the assessment in the Standard, benchmarks, and SLOs was represented by the action verbs. Moreover, the content and learning resources developed using SLOs provided more evidence of the assessment's worth. The writing of assessments is crucial to language development. Developing the four fundamental language skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing requires particular assessment techniques. According to Kakar et al., (2021), educators only concentrated on writing competence in assessment practices since they were aware that only writing is given wattage in assessment design. Pupils' assessment through traditional reading is an element of instruction in classrooms. However, speaking and listening skills must be assessed formally, and students are not given formal reading assignments. The instructional process did not include the formative and summative assessment strategies for listening and speaking. Gudu (2015) also finds that students need to have the opportunity to express themselves or be assessed through speaking and listening; instead, teachers exclusively focus on reading and writing skills (Gudu, 2015). Examining the curriculum's assessment design is essential since it is a roadmap for instruction and evaluation.

1.1 Problem Statement and the Rational of the Study

Based on the researcher's personal experiences as a student, teacher, and curriculum designer, it is vital to examine the assessment design envisioned in Pakistan's English language curriculum to comprehend the assessment system for language skills development. According to language assessment research, further research on rigorous and authentic assessment approaches for language development is needed. The study aims to critically evaluate the language skills assessment design envisioned in Pakistan's English language curriculum, 2006. It is only feasible to comprehend the language skills learning markers through suitable and accurate assessment. Comprehensive research is required to establish how authentic the assessment design and strategies specified for each language competence in the 2006 curriculum are envisioned. Curriculum developers would benefit from this research by better understanding and acquiring

perspectives of the language assessment design intended for the curriculum in 2006. It would help with better policy implementation on language assessment techniques in schools, particularly in Baluchistan's schools in secondary classes. It will help to strengthen assessment procedures to give all language skills the wattage they deserve, notably the often-overlooked speaking and listing competencies. It will give curriculum designers information they may use to create high-quality language assessment designs and improve the assessment policies.

1.1 Research Objective and Questions

The objectives of the study were i.e. (a). To evaluate the efficacy of the assessment structure, design, and process in the 2006 national curriculum in fostering language proficiency and achievement. The research questions were i.e. (a). How is the concept and implementation of assessment envisioned within the framework of Pakistan's English language curriculum of 2006?; and (b). To what extent does the assessment structure, design, and methodology envisioned in Pakistan's English language curriculum, 2006, support effective language assessment practices?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Assessment

A stronger emphasis on 21st-century knowledge, skills, and dispositions, as well as year-end accountability testing, are two notable trends in classroom assessment that have emerged during the past ten years. Other assessments that are more successful at assessing major outcomes are introduced to complement well-established assessment traditions that focus on "objective" testing following instruction, which is strongly encouraged as a lead-up to similarly timed high-stakes exams. These assessments are known as "alternative" ones. Other forms of assessment that necessitate the active construction of meaning rather than the passive regurgitation of isolated facts include simulations, authentic assessments, performance assessments, portfolios, exhibitions, demonstrations, journals, and technology-enhanced items (McMillan, 2017). Formative assessments, conducted during the learning process, provide feedback to both teachers and learners. This feedback loop can inform adjustments to the curriculum, helping educators identify areas of strength and weakness and refine instructional strategies to better meet the needs of learners (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Summative assessments, which occur at the end of a course or program, play a role in evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum. Results from summative assessments can inform decisions about the curriculum's overall success in achieving its intended learning outcomes (Airasian, 2000).Assessment data can inform instructional design. Teachers can analyze assessment results to identify areas of strength and weakness in student understanding, allowing them to adjust their teaching methods and content delivery (Black & Wiliam, 1998). This data-driven approach supports responsive and effective teaching practices. There should be alignment between teaching methods and assessment to ensure that what is taught is effectively measured. As emphasized by Biggs and Tang (2011), constructive alignment involves aligning intended learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment tasks. This alignment enhances the validity of assessments, ensuring they accurately reflect the intended learning objectives.

2.2. Language Assessment

Language assessment involves the systematic collection of information about an individual's language abilities. It includes various methods such as tests, examinations, interviews, and portfolio assessments (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Language assessment typically covers multiple language skills. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) outlines proficiency levels in speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Council of Europe, 2001). An individual's total language competency and the prediction of their language performance in real-world circumstances are determined by analyzing evidence of language usage in test or classroom contexts through language authentic assessment (Green, 2014; McNamara, 2004). Language assessment is defined by Bachman (2004) as a method of acquiring information about a person's language abilities through "systematic and thoroughly grounded techniques." Multiple choice items, essays, portfolios, oral interviews, observation, and reflection are all possible sources of understanding students' knowledge. Therefore, the main objectives of language assessment are to provide a "standard yardstick" for comparing the test taker's performance, to reflect the processes and outcomes of teaching and learning, and to inform decisions about immigration, employment, and promotion (Hughes, 2010). Language assessments can be categorized as formative and summative. Formative assessments, such as classroom quizzes, are conducted during the learning process to provide ongoing feedback. Summative assessments, such as standardized tests, are administered at the end of a course or program to measure overall proficiency (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Task-based language assessment involves evaluating language proficiency through the completion of real-world tasks. This approach emphasizes the practical application of language skills in authentic situations (Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

2.3 Relationship Between Curriculum and Assessment

The relationship between curriculum and assessment is crucial in education, and how a curriculum supports assessment can significantly impact teaching and learning outcomes. Curriculum defines what is taught and learned, while language assessment evaluates the extent to which learners have achieved the objectives outlined in the curriculum. The curriculum sets the learning objectives and goals for a particular course or program. Language assessments should align closely with these objectives to ensure that they measure what was intended to be learned (Stiggins, 2002). The relationship between curriculum and language assessment is part of a continuous improvement cycle. As outlined by Wiggins and McTighe (2005), the process involves setting learning goals, developing assessments aligned with those goals, implementing instructional strategies, assessing student performance, and using the results to inform future iterations of the curriculum and assessment. A well-designed curriculum outlines clear learning objectives. Assessment methods are aligned with these objectives to ensure students are evaluated on the knowledge and skills they are expected to acquire (Gronlund, 2006). Effective curricula incorporate both formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments, integrated into the instructional process, provide ongoing feedback to teachers and students, while summative assessments evaluate overall learning outcomes (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Furthermore, the curriculum supports assessment by

advocating for various assessment methods, such as quizzes, projects, and presentations (Stiggins et al., 2004). The design of language assessments is informed by the curriculum content and instructional methods. Assessments should cover a representative sample of the curriculum to provide a comprehensive evaluation of learners' language proficiency (Wiggins, 1998). The relationship between curriculum and language assessment highlights the need for a balanced approach to assessment and instruction. Assessment should not only measure learning but also contribute to the learning process itself, fostering a continuous cycle of improvement (Shepard, 2000). Language assessment results provide valuable data that can guide curriculum adaptation. If assessments reveal consistent challenges in specific language skills, educators may choose to modify the curriculum to address these areas more effectively (Gronlund & Waugh, 2009).

2.4 Standards, Benchmarks, and Students' Learning Outcomes (SLOs) Role in the Assessment Design

The role of standards, benchmarks, and student's learning outcomes in assessment design is crucial for ensuring that assessment practices align with educational goals and expectations. Educational standards provide a framework of what students are expected to know and be able to do at different grade levels. They set the foundation for assessment by defining the knowledge and skills that should be assessed (Stiggins et al., 2004). Standards guide educators when designing assessments, helping them align assessment tasks with the desired learning outcomes. Assessments are constructed to measure whether students have met the established standards. Standards play a role in defining the criteria for quality assessments. The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (2011) emphasizes the importance of standards in ensuring that assessments are fair, valid, reliable, and relevant. Adherence to these standards enhances the credibility and utility of assessment results. Benchmarks are specific, observable criteria that break down standards into manageable components. They provide intermediate goals that students should achieve on their way to meeting broader standards (Marzano, 2003). In assessment design, benchmarks help create targeted tasks focusing on particular standard aspects. They allow for more granular evaluation and help track students' progress toward meeting the standards. Learning outcomes articulate the specific knowledge, skills, or attitudes students are expected to acquire due to their educational experiences. They represent the observable and measurable learning achievements (Gronlund, 2006). Assessment design is directly linked to students' learning outcomes. Assessments are created to measure whether students have achieved the intended outcomes. They provide evidence of the extent to which students have mastered the knowledge and skills outlined in the learning outcomes. Alignment of Assessments with Standards, benchmarks, and Outcomes is crucial to ensure that assessments are valid and reliable. Assessments need to measure what they intend to measure, which should be directly connected to standards and learning outcomes (Popham, 2008). The alignment between assessments and learning outcomes is crucial for ensuring that assessments measure what is intended in the curriculum. As emphasized by Biggs and Tang (2011), constructive alignment involves aligning assessment tasks with intended learning outcomes to enhance the validity of assessments and provide meaningful feedback to students. Formative

assessment, conducted during the learning process, is closely tied to students' learning outcomes. According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), formative assessment practices that provide timely and specific feedback contribute significantly to students' learning progress. These assessments support ongoing improvement and understanding of learning outcomes.Summative assessments are administered at the end of a course or program to measure the overall achievement of learning outcomes. These assessments provide a snapshot of students' knowledge and skills at a specific point in time, helping to determine the extent to which the learning outcomes have been met (Boud, 2010). Assessments aligned with standards and learning outcomes provide meaningful data about students' progress and achievement. This alignment ensures that assessments truly reflect what students are expected to learn. Assessment results, linked to standards and learning outcomes, offer valuable feedback for educators and students. They highlight areas of strength and areas that need improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

3. Method of the study
3.1. Research Design
The researcher adopted the qualitative research approach and document analysis strategy for this study. Qualitative research is a scientific approach that entails gathering and evaluating non-numerical data to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be applied to produce fresh research ideas or to have a deep comprehension of an area. According to Babbie (2020), a qualitative study aims to elucidate the underlying significance and patterns of links through the non-numerical analysis and interpretation of observation (Babbie, 2020).

3.2 Data Collection Approach and Data Analysis Process
A critical document analysis of the Pakistani curriculum (2006) of the English language for secondary documents was the data collection methodology. Document analysis is a type of elemental analysis used to examine qualitative information. Like other qualitative research methodologies, document analysis requires data evaluation and interpretation to assess importance, gain insight, and produce empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). With the study's objectives in mind, the researcher designed the data collection tool. The tool was developed based on Bloom's Taxonomy cognitive domain action words to understand the level of assessment design in standards, benchmarks and students' learning outcomes (SLOs). The instrument was discussed with five Bureau of Curriculum Balochistan (BOC) experts to ensure validity, and their expert opinions were considered.

Document analysis and content analysis were used for this study's data analysis. The "Bowen (2009)" document analysis methodology was applied for this investigation. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is a rigorous strategy for assessing or evaluating printed and electronic documents. Like other qualitative research methodologies, document analysis requires data evaluation and interpretation to assess importance, gain insight, and produce empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Images of documents and text (words) were taken without the assistance of a researcher. Since cultural artefacts are regarded as trace or silent evidence, they are not

encompassed in this topic. Atkinson and Coffey (1997), cited on page 47, documents are social realities that are shaped, shared, and utilized in socially ordered ways (Bowen, 2009). The English Language National Curriculum of Pakistan document (ELNCP, 2006) was examined concerning formative, summative, performance, authentic assessment, methods, approaches, and procedures. The expected formative and summative assessment procedures regarding language skill development were also critically analyzed. The language used in the standards, benchmarks, and student learning outcomes was examined using standard-to-language assessment. When examining the curriculum's assessment component, the language assessment design put out by language assessment theorists was considered. Two steps were taken to analyze the 2006 English language national curriculum. First, the entire official curriculum document was analyzed from the first to the last page. Every section from the mentioned curriculum document was extensively analyzed with the assessment in mind. Any sign, phrase, or action related to the assessment was analyzed, and a conclusion was drawn. The content that served as an indication of the assessment is found in sections two, three, five, and six. The SLOs, benchmarks, and standards language clarified the language learning and assessment level. The expected assessment design data are included in the Chapter Five discussion on teaching strategies. Assessment theories, methods, and strategies were carefully considered in Chapter Six, which dealt entirely with assessment plans.

4. Results, Findings and Discussion
4.1 Results

Table 1. The Action Words of Bloom Taxonomy used for Assessment in Standard, in English language Curriculum of Pakistan's (2006)

Competencies of English language skills of ELC, 2006	Standards	Action Words Used in Standards
1. "Reading and Thinking Skills"	Standard, 1	"(Discover, Understand)"
	Standards, 2	"(Read, Analyze)"
2. "Writing Skills"	Standards, 1	"(Creative Writing)"
3. "Oral Communication Skills"	Standards, 1	"(Use)"
4. "Formal and Lexical Aspects of Language"	Standards, 1	"(Articulate)"
	Standards, 2	
	Standards, 3	"(Understand, Use)"
5. "Appropriate Ethical and Social Development"	Standards, 1	

Table no 1 explains the degree of assessment design envisioned in the Standards of Pakistan English language curriculum (2006) for secondary classes. The action words used in the Standards aligned with those used in Bloom's taxonomy cognitive domain. The table above displays that the maximum action words used in the Standard of curriculum belong to the lower level of the

cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy. Moreover, the words used are not appropriate for writing Standards. This shows that the assessment design standard curriculum Standards are low.

Table 2. Words used for Benchmarks in Pakistan's English language curriculum 2006

Competencies of ELC, 2006	Standards	Benchmarks		Action Verbs Used in Benchmarks
"Reading and Thinking Skills"	Standard, 1	Benchmark,	1	"(Analyze)"
		Benchmark,	2	"(Analyze)"
		Benchmark,	3	"(Analyze)"
		Benchmark,	4	"(Analyze, Synthesize, Evaluate)"
	Standard, 2	Benchmark ,	1	"(Analyze)"
"Writing Skills"	Standard, 1	Benchmark,	1	"(Analyze)"
		Benchmark,	2	"(Write , Analytical)"
		Benchmark,	3	"(Write)"
		Benchmark,	4	"(Plan , Comparison, Contrast, Classification, Cause, Effect)"
"Oral Communication Skills"	Standard, 1	Benchmark,	1	"(Use)
		Benchmark,	2	(Demonstrate)"
"Formal and Lexical Aspects of Language"	Standard, 1	Benchmark,	1	"(Pronounce, Communicate)"
	Standard, 2	Benchmark,	1	"(Analyze)"
	Standard, 3	Benchmark,	1	"(Recognize)"
		Benchmark,	2	"(Recognize)"
		Benchmark,	3	"(Analyze)"
"Appropriate Ethical and Social Development"	Standard, 1	Benchmark,	1	"(Recognize, Practice)"
		Benchmark,	2	"(Develop)"
		Benchmark,	3	"(Understand, Evaluate)"

Table two explains the degree of assessment design envisioned in the benchmarks of Pakistan's English language curriculum 2006. The action words used in the Benchmarks aligned with those used in Bloom's taxonomy cognitive domain. The table above demonstrates that a maximum of the action words used for Benchmarking belong to the higher level of the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy. Moreover, the words used are appropriate for writing Benchmarks. This shows that the assessment design standard is appropriate in Benchmarks.

Table 3. Bloom Taxonomy Action Words Used for Students Learning Outcomes (SLOs) In The English Language Curriculum of Pakistan (2006)

Competency 0f ELC, 2006	Standard	Benchmark	Action Verbs Used in SLOs
"Reading and Thinking Skills"	Sd, 1	BM, 1	"(Analyze, Identify, Define, Illustrate, Compare, Recognize, Arrange, Order)"
		BM, 2	"(Apply, Distinguish, Deduce, Use, Read, Locate, Recognize, Explore, Interpret, Extract, Summarize, Relate, Evaluate, Apply)"
		BM, 3	"(Interpret, Analyze, Organize, Recognize)"
		BM, 4	"(Locate, Choose, Identify, Recognize, Comprehend, Use, Utilize)"
	Sd, 2	BM, 1	"(Read, Analyze, Identify, Recognize, Infer, Compare, Create)"
"Writing Skills"			"(Develop, Select, Write, Order, Analyze, Write, Explain, Use, Incorporate, Synthesize)"
	Sd, 1	BM, 1	
		BM, 2	"(Analyze, Write, Narrate, Distinguish, State, List, Organize, Use, Anticipate, Summarize, Evaluate, Identify, Recognize, Interpret, Restate, Replace)"
		BM, 3	"(Write, Analyze)"
		BM, 4	"(Develop, Select, Draft, Plan)"
"Oral Communication Skills"	Sd, 1	BM, 1	"(Select, Use, Respond, Express)"
		BM, 2	"(Demonstrate, Restate, Explain, Modify, Exhibit, Negotiate, Express, Summarize, Use, Identify, Analyze, Compile, Create, Negotiate, Exhibit, Evaluate)"
"Formal and Lexical Aspects of Language"	Sd, 1	BM, 1	"(Use, Recognize)"
	Sd, 2	BM, 1	"(Illustrate, Use, Examine, Deduce, Analyze, Understand, Explore, Examine, Recognize, Identify)"
	Sd, 3	BM, 1	"(Demonstrate, Apply, Recognize, Illustrate, Identify), Classify, Form, Use)"
		BM, 2	"(Apply, Illustrate, Recognize, Express)"
		BM, 3	"(Analyze, Classify, Identify, Use, Recognize)"
"Appropriate Ethical and Social Development"	Sd, 1	BM, 1	
		BM, 2	
		BM, 3	

Table three explains the degree of assessment design envisioned in students' learning outcomes (SLOs) of Pakistan's English language curriculum in 2006. The action words used in the SLOs aligned with those used in Bloom's taxonomy cognitive domain. The table above shows that the maximum of action words used for students' learning outcomes (SLOs) belong to the lower level of the cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy. However, some action verbs are from the higher level of the cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy. Moreover, the words used are appropriate for writing standards. This shows that the assessment design standard is appropriate in SLOs and balanced.

4.2. Findings and Discussion

The study's conclusions align with previous studies in the same field and existing literature. Nonetheless, a few results shed light on the body of previous research. A few important discoveries revealed the discrepancies between language assessment theory and the assessment plan designed for the Pakistan English language curriculum, 2006. It could be more important to consider the recommended level, kind, assessment procedures, and their suitable level for language acquisition. The study emphasized the value of assessment design and concluded that it should be included in all curriculum documents, including language curricula. Every curriculum area incorporates assessment design and procedures since learning cannot occur without assessment (Oliva & Gordon, 2012). The action verbs employed in the curriculum are from the lower level of the cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy. Hence, the maximum benchmarks, standards, and student learning outcomes (SLOs) for developing English language proficiency in the Pakistan national curriculum (2006) are low-level. No specific assessment techniques are mentioned in the curriculum documents. The four language skills, speaking, listening, reading, and writing, are different and require specific instructional approaches and assessment practices. The curriculum document does not provide specific strategies or mechanisms for each skill.

The statement "listening and speaking skills are to be developed in the classroom context" is the only statement in the first section of NELC, 2006, that explicitly classifies the assessment design. Therefore, even if the assessment design is included in the curriculum document, it will undoubtedly be controversial if it is not in practice. There is no way to evaluate the three language skills: reading, speaking, and listening using a pen and paper test. Every skill requires unique assessment methodologies and an ongoing assessment process. Language assessment involves the systematic collection of information about an individual's language abilities. It includes various methods such as tests, examinations, interviews, and portfolio assessments (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). This implies that a continual assessment design is required for these skills. The curriculum document must specify how the data should be arranged in a portfolio format. The literature further reinforced this position.Maintaining a portfolio of written work over time allows for a comprehensive evaluation of writing skills development. Portfolios can include a variety of writing samples (Reiss, 1994). The portfolio is a widely used assessment tool in language arts, music, arithmetic, and many other subjects in the classroom. When teaching English as a second language (ESL), a portfolio is one of the most crucial assessment tools for tracking a student's language

development over time (Fox, 2014; Fox & Hartwick, 2011; Little, 2009). As previously indicated (Cheng & Fox, 2017, p. 83), portfolios enable you to gather and display various performance data, producing a rich and comprehensive picture of each student's accomplishments.

The language used in the second and third units for the student's learning outcomes (SLOs) standards and benchmarks disclosed the level of assessment design. Alignment of Assessments with Standards, benchmarks, and Outcomes is crucial to ensure that assessments are valid and reliable. Assessments need to measure what they intend to measure, which should be directly connected to standards and learning outcomes (Popham, 2008). The action words used for each of the three categories of objectives, as shown in Bloom's taxonomy action verbs table, indicate the higher and lower levels of assessment plans. These words can be applied to creating exam strategies, instructional strategies, classroom questions, and textbook preparation. These words suggest the level of assessment even if there are no defined assessment rules. As seen throughout the document, most of the action words adopted for the Standard correspond to the lower three cognitive domain stages of Bloom's taxonomy. This illustrates the low bar set by the standards and the assessment strategy. By supporting particular "high-level" student objectives, the concept of "Standards" grew in acceptance and impact during the 1990s (McMillan, 2017, p. 47). The benchmarks are the subtypes of standards, and the Standard itself must include higher levels like synthesis and evaluation as SLOs. It is expected that if the standards are low-level, the benchmarks, SLOs, and learning strategies will follow suit, along with the guidelines and assessment methods. It demonstrates that the curriculum developers should have emphasized the assessment plan in this part. The benchmark's wordings are of higher quality than standards, showing the low-level alignment and development of the curriculum. Benchmarks are specific, observable criteria that break down standards into manageable components. They provide intermediate goals that students should achieve on their way to meeting broader standards (Marzano, 2003). Most action verbs found in benchmarks fall into the last three stages of Bloom's Taxonomy cognitive domain, indicating that a more in-depth assessment is anticipated. The problem with the curriculum official document is that, from an assessment standpoint, the sub-objectives (benchmarks) are more advanced than the objectives (standards). However, it aids textbook authors and teachers in constructing and administering assessments. Additionally, SLOs are at a moderate level. Learning outcomes articulate the specific knowledge, skills, or attitudes students are expected to acquire due to their educational experiences. They represent the observable and measurable learning achievements (Gronlund, 2006). A fair and reasonable level of assessment is sought in SLOs, as evidenced by the fact that while many of the action words employed in SLOs are found in the lower three stages of Bloom's taxonomy, some are in higher stages. Many people have paid close attention to the cognitive domain of Bloom's taxonomy, which has been utilized to create action verbs that correspond with different types of cognitive learning. These are the terminology McMillan (2017) used to describe the upper and lower levels. Bloom's taxonomy cognitive domain consists of six levels. Every high level in the hierarchy indicates a cognitive type that is more complex. The developer of Bloom's Taxonomy considered only the first stage, "knowledge," as a lower stage of the cognitive domain. The other stages are constructed on the first stage and are

considered the higher. However, the experts classified the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy into lower and upper levels (McMillan, 2017, p. 51).

The classroom instructional approaches are covered in the fifth section. There should be alignment between teaching methods and assessment to ensure that what is taught is effectively measured. As emphasized by Biggs and Tang (2011). This portion of the curriculum document highlights the importance of the instructor placing students in communication situations and giving them the chance to listen, talk, read, and write. Teachers should also follow the natural order of speaking, listening, and observing. The teacher should permit students to communicate their thoughts in writing when they have mastered oral communication. The emphasis should be on reading and writing skills at a higher level. It is suggested that students work in groups, pairs, and individually in the classroom. There should also be self- and partner-based assessments. Although there is no clear statement, this shows the continuous assessment. Teaching methods that promote active learning, such as group activities, discussions, and problem-solving, have implications for assessment. Active learning methods can be effectively assessed through strategies like peer assessment, self-assessment, and project-based assessments (Prince, 2004). The researcher has deduced all of these observations. The teacher and material developers still need clear norms, instructions and methods. It is advised that assessments, quizzes, classroom questioning, material development, activities, and syllabus preparation be completed while teaching. The summative assessment design is displayed.

The development of oral, speaking, and listening skills is emphasized in the curriculum.The improvement of reading and writing skills is also emphasized. Language assessment typically covers multiple language skills. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) outlines proficiency levels in speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Council of Europe, 2001). This section's wording clarifies that improving language skills is a continuous process. It demonstrates that if language development is a continuous process, formative and continuous assessment methods must be used to assess language progress continuously, but continuous assessment and portfolio development are not discussed in the docoument. The English Language Curriculum 2006 suggests some key techniques as instructional tactics for language acquisition, including questioning, discussion, role play, inquiry, cooperative learning, projects, and presentation. Clarifying the content of these strategies and implementing an assessment process are both necessary. These instructional techniques must have a system of assessment. Nevertheless, formative and continuous assessment can be implemented since these activities appear student-centred. Cheng and Fox (2017) suggest teaching tactics for developing language skills. They classify the first communication as between a teacher and student, including conferences, interviews, class sessions, group discussions, and conversations. The second category of activities consists of daily work, rehearsals, group discussions, and independent work. The third task centres on the student's finished work, comprising portfolios, exams, artwork, performances, presentations, critiques, reviews, and self- and peer-reflections (Cheng & Fox, 2017, p. 83).

The 2006 curriculum's sixth part, which addresses assessment design, is crucial. The text offered various assessment options and promised a skill-based assessment methodology. Formative and

summative assessment methods were mentioned in the texts. Both types are important to be regarded as a language assessment strategy. It also emphasizes that to use formative assessment procedures, teachers must give regular feedback to students and assign homework, quizzes, class assessments, and group discussions. The other type of summative assessment is the end assessment, which is less advantageous for the student because of the curriculum material. Formative assessments, such as classroom quizzes, are conducted during the learning process to provide ongoing feedback. Summative assessments, such as standardized tests, are administered at the end of a course or program to measure overall proficiency (Black & Wiliam, 1998).There should also be a description of how teachers may comprehend this and the qualities of good tests, validity, reliability, and practicality. The information makes it abundantly evident that the goals of both formative and summative assessments are to enhance the learning process and give educators and students feedback. Nonetheless, it is necessary to put into practice a simple assessment design about students, performance, and achievement.Tests and performance assessments, both objective and subjective, were recommended by the English National Curriculum, 2006, in Pakistan. Peer and self-assessment by the learner are also recommended. It is also advised to use objective types, including matching, binary choice, multiple-choice, and interpretative tasks. Constructive response, restrictive response, and extended response essays are examples of semi-objective and subjective types of exams offered for assessment. It is advised to use peer assessment, teacher observation, and student self-assessment as a method of classroom assessment. McMillan, (2017), expalained the objectives and subjectives tests, as well as peer and self assessment.

This assessment approach does not have a grading system, but it does reflect the three assessment methods mentioned above: formative, summative, and continuous. Teachers and textbook authors must be given clear instructions on how and when to apply these assessment techniques. Beyond only providing definitions, educators and textbook authors must also receive clear guidance on assessment design, particularly concerning certification and advancement. Only the definitions and significance of these assessment strategies are displayed in the texts.

Every language skill development needs to have its assessment design integrated. There are differences in speaking, writing, listening, and reading language skills. Different teaching methods and assessment methodologies are required for this skill development. Researchers elaborated different techniques for language skills. Conducting interviews or oral exams allows assessors to directly evaluate a person's spoken language proficiency, widely used in language testing (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Creating role-play scenarios or simulations provides a context for individuals to demonstrate their speaking skills in real-life situations. This approach enhances the authenticity of the assessment (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Designing listening comprehension tests where individuals listen to spoken passages and answer questions assesses their ability to understand spoken language (Weir, 2005).Having individuals listen to lectures or presentations and take notes can evaluate both listening and note-taking skills, providing insights into their ability to extract information from oral communication (Brown, 2004).

Traditional reading comprehension tests assess individuals' ability to understand written texts, identify main ideas, and infer meaning (Alderson, 2000). Cloze tests involve removing words from a passage, and individuals must fill in the blanks with appropriate words. This assesses reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge (Nunan, 1988).Assigning essay or composition tasks evaluates individuals' writing skills, including organization, coherence, grammar, and vocabulary usage (Weigle, 2002). There is no specified assessment method for each skill in the curriculum document. Furthermore, a continuous assessment system and portfolio are required to offer equal assessment chances and mark all three language skills, listening, speaking, and reading, as inappropriate summative assessments for evaluating these abilities. Every skill assessment that is the focus of the literature needs to have its own set of assessment techniques. Cheng and Fox (2017) provide several essential teaching strategies for developing language skills. The researcher states that the first type of strategy is teacher-student communication, which includes conferences, interviews, class sessions, group discussions, and conversations for the entire class. The second category of activities consists of daily work, rehearsals, group discussions, and independent work. The third group of activities centres on the student's end product, including performances, presentations, tests, portfolios, critiques/reviews, and self- and peer reflections. Additionally, the researcher Cheng and Fox (2017) provided some crucial reading assessment methodologies. Oral dictation interviews, questioning, and read-aloud are observing activities. Other strategies include teacher-made tests with items from standardized reading tests, student reading response journals, portfolios, peer and self-assessments, closings, missing word identification, sentence completion, true/false, matching, multiple-choice, interpretative, and reading passages (forms, applications). For evaluating writing skills, the researcher Cheng and Fox (2017) also lists a few crucial techniques. First, there are examinations created by teachers that include true/false, matching, and multiple-choice questions that ask students to recognize the grammatical mistake(s) in sentences, writing and essays. Student journals, student portfolios, peer and self-evaluation, and standardized writing assessments are further tactics. The researcher Cheng and Fox (2017) suggests reading, interview dictation, dialogues, debate, presentation, and public speaking as methods for speaking and listening assessments. The researcher Cheng and Fox (2017) suggests using teacher-made assessments, which involve having students describe things orally, follow instructions provided orally, produce summaries of what they hear, answer multiple-choice questions, and participate in standardized speaking tests. This is the second sort of method. According to Cheng and Fox (2017, p. 83), the listening assessment procedures include note-taking, recounting a narrative after listening, peer and individual evaluation of the student portfolio, and standardized listening examinations. All these above mentions activites for language skills development are not invesioned in the content of enghlish language curriculum (2006) of Pakistan.

The curriculum text also includes the marking scheme for all language skills.The National Curriculum of 2006 includes the essay rubric. Only the significance of the marking scheme, subjectivity, and objectivity in test items are explained in the materials. Nonetheless, performance assessment must have a designated spot in the assessment design. There is no plan for the portfolio or stake in the students' marking scheme, even though there is a rubric for the oral presentation.

Although it cannot be used for certification, the rubric can enhance education. The texts make it abundantly evident that summative evaluation, an annual exam, is crucial for assessing student progress and that formative assessment is crucial for enhancing instruction. A portfolio and continuous assessment indicator are required. Other areas of the curriculum material should include an indication regarding assessment.

5. Conclusion

An essential component of learning is assessment. It is among the four curriculum components' most important elements. Upon thoroughly examining curriculum documents and texts, it has been determined that the intended assessment design may benefit from greater assertiveness. The curriculum document's assessment section merely covers the definitions, kinds, and significance of assessments. Using any framework, mechanism, or design for language assessment is not advised. Enhancing the grading system for language proficiency in reading, speaking, and listening is imperative. While performance, formative, and continuous assessments are important, they should be discussed in the assessment section of the curriculum plan. The curriculum document must contain specific learning and assessment procedures required to improve each assessment skill. The goals created for this curriculum design are the Standard, benchmark, and SLOs. According to the investigation, standard phrasing may be higher in level than benchmarks. The action verb for standards should be altered and improved, and most should consist of the higher level rather than the lower level of the cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy. The benchmarks are the standards' sub-objectives that must be aligned logically. The assessment level of assessment design is low because the action words utilized for curriculum "Standards", "Benchmarks", and "Students Learning Outcomes (SLOs)" are all at the lower level of Bloom's Taxonomy and need improvement. The curriculum's intended degree of assessment design is generally quite low. Over-assessment design in the national curriculum of Pakistan (2006) of English language for secondary classes needs improvement.

6. Recommendations

- It is recommended that policymakers evaluate the official curriculum document and incorporate an assessment design that outlines particular procedures for every language skill.
- It has been suggested that all skills should have equal access to certification and grading schemes and a continuous assessment mechanism.
- The level of assessment design of the national curriculum of Pakistan standards, benchmarks, and students' learning outcomes (SLOs) should be upgraded using higher-level action words suggested by Bloom's taxonomy.
- The "Oral communication" competency should be separated into speaking and listening skills. The reading and thinking skills should be kept apart. The national curriculum standard should also be restructured and improved.

- Use Bloom's Taxonomy's higher-level action verbs to enhance the activities and exercises.

- The overall assessment design in the curriculum document must be improved in the assessment and teaching methodologies chapters**.**

7. Limitations of the Study

The research study is limited to the analysis of Pakistan's English language curriculum for secondary classes regarding assessment design. The analysis of the overall English language curriculum and other curriculums will provide more sophisticated information regarding assessment design. The study is also limited to using a document analysis process only. Using several data collection procedures, such as interviews and focus group discussions, would be more informative.

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