

Introducing Phygital English Language Classrooms in Pakistan

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Abstract

The experience of the pandemic has given a new flavor to online learning and teaching to the whole world. So, after the pandemic, the learners equally welcome classrooms which are the mixture of physical and online learning. This concept is called phygital classrooms. This term is gaining popularity recently. The current study emphasizes investigating the efficacy of phygital English language classrooms in Pakistan. The population of this study was Grade 12 learners of Pakistan. These learners were studying English as their compulsory subject. The sample size is 100 students. Following the empirical research method, two groups were formed. The experimental group used phygital classrooms as their independent variable whereas the control group used face-to-face learning (conventional mode) as their independent variable. The results of the English language (as the subject) are investigated as the dependent variable. Pre- and post-test assessment technique have been used. The results revealed no significant difference in the scores of pre-tests. On the other hand, the post-results show that there were significant differences in the performance of both groups. It clearly reflects that the experimental group performed much better than the control one. This exhibits the efficacy of phygital classrooms in the Pakistani context.?

Keywords: *English, English language classrooms, Grade 12 of Pakistan, Phygital classrooms.*

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Introduction

The influence of technology in educational situations has begun to be more learning-focused rather than educator focused. Learning is viewed as an idea that can happen in schools

and extraordinary organizations, yet additionally in each second of life (Ali et al., 2022). The previous learning places used to be physical where learning could never be a virtual thing. With the inclusion of modern gadgets

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for learning and teaching the concept of education has been transformed. A new path has been paved which comprises learning beyond time and place (Ali et al., 2021). This concept has now become an established fact after the COVID-19 Pandemic (Ali et al., 2020). Modern classrooms are now a fusion of mixed learning. Mixed learning also called as blended-learning. Presently it has been given a new name and that is phygital learning (Hussein, 2021). It is a technique for distance instruction that utilizes innovation (high innovation, for example, TV, Internet, mobile phones and low innovation, for example, messages by voice and gatherings) with customary educating and learning (Benhadj, 2021).

Myravyova, et al., (2021) are of the view that phygital learning is a blend of advantaged parts of both online learning and in-class learning. Phygital learning has typically implied the utilization of at least two strategies for the need of learning. To characterize phygital learning, it is a

utilization of the best approaches to learning for accomplishing learning results for specific purposes (Li, 2021).

The involvement of mobile phone particularly after pandemic has given a new rise to this concept. Mobile phones can work as a major tool in virtual and phygital learning classrooms (Ali et al., 2021). Likewise, the job of educators will be of extraordinary importance in additional growing experiences too. Tang et al., (2021) stated that educators now are prepared and can guide student effectively for the phygital learning as it enhances the performance of the learners. This method is innovative and modern as it is the amalgamation of physical and digital learning platforms.

Viewing the classroom situation in Pakistan, it can be viewed that they follow conventions. The established methods are not providing desirable results yet they are practiced rigorously. The role of technology is limited to the use of multimedia and

even OHPs only. There are rare instances where the use of smart boards is practiced. So, the overall methods of teaching are not the latest and this has created trouble, especially in English language classrooms. It is most suitable to introduce a method that is a blend of classroom teaching and the involvement of digital devices so that learners and teachers can be gradually transformed to the latest methods. This can also have impactful results on the learners.

Problem Statement

In Pakistan, learning English has been an area of trouble for local learners. Despite enjoying high prestige, people remain unsuccessful to learn English because of conventional teaching methods. The classroom techniques and tools are so old that they are unable to create a positive impact on learning. Moreover, the methods are still rote learning focused which are outdated presently.

Significance of the Study

This research will be significant as in Pakistan, the

conventions are rigorously followed in learning and teaching situations. Though in the pandemic learning was done online, the majority of the teachers and educational policymakers are still following traditions. This research will be important to provide a new learning dimension to the researchers. It will also be significant to explore that if a method that is an amalgamation of both physical and digital classrooms, can be beneficial for Pakistani learners or not. This study will also be important to see if an already established trend in the western world is beneficial for local context or not.

Objectives

1. To explore the importance of phygital classrooms in Pakistani context
2. To examine the Phygital learning concept in Pakistan

Research Questions

1. What is a phygital classroom?
2. What is the impact of phygital classroom on Pakistani learners?

Literature Review

Defining Phygital Classroom

‘Phygital’ is a term used to depict the connection between a physical and computerized space. The understudy phygital experience is the mixing of the conventional nearby actual experience and the computerized, online innovation driven climate. Utilizing computerized or mobile innovations to make better than ever understudy encounters is a developing need for pioneers in the scholarly field.

Building effective phygital conditions opens up new roads for makers to investigate while first planning an article or space. Effective phygital conditions brag a smooth connection point and guarantee all components inside, permit clients to collaborate with both the physical and mobile universes in manners that they have never had the option to go for phygital classrooms (Goretti et al., 2022).

Because it is in line with the requirements of the Industrial

Revolution 4.0, Phygital learning has a strong connection to the digital literacy skills of both students and lecturers.

Skills in digital literacy include media literacy, information literacy, and technology literacy (Ali, 2022). On the other hand, Albiladi and Alshareef, (2019) stated that information literacy is the capacity of students to access information in a timely manner, accurately, and accurately evaluate information before distributing it to others. Zhang and Zhu (2018). Students' ability to select and use a variety of media in order to communicate effectively is linked to media literacy.

While investigating the utilization of phygital components inside the instructive area, there are both genuine instances of purpose and regions that can be extraordinarily developed. Being able to get to an advanced space using a mobile, tablet or PC permits understudies and staff to work from any area proficiently. Driving this further takes the positive

parts of the actual encounters and coordinates them with the valuable open doors presented by innovation (for example the capacity to impart data immediately founded on recorded client information). Logical programming is an extraordinary empowering influence to collecting all understudy connections and permitting fitted correspondences and upgrades to that singular's current circumstance from a distance and naturally.

Advanced instances of phygital objects happen in the gaming scene. The vast majority would be known all about Guitar Hero where the gamer has a 'phygital' guitar that exists both in physical and computerized domains. Correspondingly the Wii regulators permit families to "play tennis" where they grasp a "racquet" (Krishnamurthy & Venkita chalam, 2022).

Benefits of Phygital Classrooms

Globally, this trend is getting popular. It has the potential to change education. This is due to the reason that it contextualizes and reimagines

education, it is the future. However, we must create an environment that enables teachers and students to navigate this space in their own language with confidence and comfort. With blended education, frontline workers have access to numerous opportunities for capacity building. It has a lot of potential for empowerment because it can help adults, especially women, go back to school. Phygital classrooms have the potential to empower every Indian and act as an engine for economic expansion.

Some of the chief advantages of phygital classrooms are that the:

1. Learners acquire knowledge in various ways.
2. Engagement, learning, and retention are significantly boosted when multiple modalities are utilized
3. The learning pace can be controlled by learners.
4. The cost is reduced.
5. Learning becomes more personalized (Hadiyanto et

al., 2021).

Phygital English Language Classrooms

The characteristics of phygital learning should be fully understood by instructors so that its implementation does not stall. The following are characteristics of phygital learning:

1. Lecturers can guide students through the learning process in two ways: in person in the classroom or online, where they can provide additional explanations; Instruction can be provided both in person and online;
2. Students can choose between offline and online learning options;
3. Lecturers are already proficient in two distinct learning methods;
4. Students are taught beforehand how to use these kinds of applications in online learning;
5. Whether educational institutions have ICT

infrastructure; and student-centered learning strategies (Medina, 2018; Lalima & Dangwal, 2017).

Based on a variety of arguments, these characteristics highlight the fact that Phygital learning cannot be implemented holistically at all educational levels earlier. Yet because of the recent circumstances (particularly in the circumstance of the Covid19 pandemic), mixed learning has turned into the prevailing learning technique applied at all degrees of schooling, including advanced education (Ali et al., 2020).

English Language and Pakistan

Ali et al., (2018) stated that English language is a universal language. As a consequence of this, there has been an increase in the demand for the English language to the point where it is now necessary for citizens of modern societies to possess sufficient proficiency in order to be successful in their academic and professional endeavors. Students must

read and write with an appropriate level of comprehension in order to succeed and continue their education. Writing provides a means of expressing one's thoughts and feelings, making it an essential skill in the English language learning process. According to Dar and Khan (2015), secondary school students in Pakistan need to be able to write for a variety of educational purposes, such as completing assignments assigned by teachers and taking tests and final exams.

Additionally, effective reading skills are necessary for writing development. Effectively reading a variety of genres helps students become effective writers because they learn sentence structures, vocabulary, and writing style from the texts they read. As a result, both abilities are crucial and interdependent (Ali et al., 2021). Even though Pakistani schools say they emphasize English, “language learners still face difficulties in almost every area like vocabulary, grammar, reading,

writing, speaking, listening, and listening to...” (Dar & Khan, 2015, p. 122). This is due, in part, to the fact that teachers and students are more concerned with completing the syllabus and getting ready for board exams than they are with building skills. This is one reason why skill-based language instruction is not widely used at the SSC level (Ali et al., 2017). Since English is the language of instruction in many Pakistani secondary schools and resource books and other instructional materials are primarily written in English, it is essential for students to have command of at least reading and writing skills in order to comprehend and produce learning at a satisfactory level.

So, for real issue lies in the methods of teaching which have become so obsolete that they are failing to provide any benefit in ESL learning. Moreover, the syllabus is also focusing on rote learning. There is no real-time opportunity for the

learners to be expressive in the classrooms (Ali et al., 2018).

English Language Classrooms in Pakistan

Pakistan is a country where numerous languages are spoken. There are more than 70 languages spoken in the country. Amongst them the top of the list is English. The status of English is undeniable and it is a compulsion in educational contexts. From primary to degree classes, English language is mandatory (Ali et al., 2020). English language classrooms in Pakistan are following orthodox teaching and learning practices and there is no change in the methods of teaching. Consequently, the learning methods are also unchanged. With the changing trends in the world there is a strong need to involve new learning methods which can uplift the learning scenarios (Ali et al., 2019).

There are some studies which have focused on the situation of learning and teaching in Pakistan. The study conducted by Zahid and Ijaz

(2021) focused on the official status of the English language and the difficulties of English teaching in Pakistan. Likewise, the study performed by Khaliq, Asif and Ahmad (2021) investigated the quality of teaching in Pakistan. It highlighted the issues of teaching methods and the use of already established ways that are creating trouble in English language learning. There are also some studies that presented the use of technology in classrooms. Ali et al. (2018) performed a study that explored the impact of mobile assisted language learning (technological methods for teaching and learning) in classrooms. It was explored that MALL influenced learners positively and elevated their performance. Similarly, Ali et al., (2020) investigated the impact of Mobile Assisted Language Learning on young English language learner's vocabulary development. It was concluded that MALL significantly helped to bring positive impact on learners.

So, there are studies that either focus on conventional classrooms or technology-based classrooms in Pakistan. There is a scarcity of studies that focused on exploring the impact of phygital classrooms in Pakistan. This study will be focused to explore how the blend of physical and digital classrooms can create a new learning and teaching environment and it will also like to investigate the impact of this method of learners.

Methodology

This study emphasized on investigating the impact of Phygital classrooms on English language learning. To execute the experiment a quantitative research procedure was adopted. Ali et al., (2021) are of the view that quantitative research is a pivotal and significant method to Investigate the impact of a phenomenon.

This research employs a methodical approach that is based on the observation of observable phenomena. Hypotheses or theories about particular concepts are

developed and implemented through the use of statistical models, computational methods, and mathematics. Rahman (2020) states that this work's success is largely dependent on the measurement procedure. The findings are generalized to the sub or whole population. It is because the population is representative of the sample.

The population of the study

In this study, all 12th-grade learners studying in formal educational institutes in Pakistan were the population.

Sample of the study

The sample for the current study was chosen from Lahore through a convenient sampling method. All the public and private institutes offering 12th-grade education were considered and by convenient sampling, a group of hundred learners was made part of the study.

Procedure of Research

The group of students chosen from the convenient sampling method

was initially presented with the pre-test. Based on the results these students were equally divided into two groups. Controlled and experimental group learners. The controlled group learners learned through traditional learning methods. On the other hand, the experimental group learners learned in phygital classroom. The span of learning was two months and the first English chapters of their English language compulsory book. Finally, a post-test was conducted and

the results of both groups were compared.

Research Instrument

The instrument for this research was a test. The data was collected on the performance of pre and post-test of both groups.

Results and Discussions

For checking the reliability various methods are applied yet one of the authentic ones was Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR-20), Kuder-Richardson 21 (KR- 21) and Cronbach alpha techniques (Erkuş, 2006).

Table 1

Experimental and controlled group (pretest).

Group	N	Rank Average	Rank Total	U	P
Experiment	50	25.40	615.40	318,516	.587
Control	50	24.60	726.50		

Table 1 reflects the results of the Mann- Whitney test. Here the consideration is the pre-test scores of both groups. It is evident that the difference of both group' non-significance score (U=318,516,

p>.05). The rank averages reflect not much of a difference is present between the experimental and controlled groups. Moreover, the values in the table validate this fact.

Table 2
Experimental and controlled group (post-tests).

Group	N	Rank Average	Rank Total	U	P
Experiment	50	40.27	989	26	.000
Control	50	24.15	488		

In this table, the post-test results of the Mann-Whitney test U post-achievement test results of students are presented. There was a marked difference in the scores of both groups. The experimental group which was taught in phygital classroom performed significantly better than controlled group. The difference between both groups validated the performance of the experimental group ($U=26$, $p<.05$). The rank averages reflected that experimental group learners were much better in their performance in comparison to controlled ones.

Table 3
Academic success permanency test results of experiment and control groups.

Group	N	Rank Average	Rank Total	U	P
Experiment	50	40.28	989.50	153.00	.000
Control	50	24.25	488.50		

Table 3 mirrors the Mann-Whitney U retention test results of controlled and experimental group learners. The values indicated that both groups had a vivid difference in their performance. The experimental group was far ahead than the control group ($U=16,500$, $p<.05$). Moreover, the rank averages reflected the span between both groups. So, it validated that phygital classroom was more effective than a conventional classroom.

Table 4

Academic success test averages and standard deviation values.

	Pre-test			Post-test		
	N	X	S	N	X	S
Experiment	50	39.00	4.59	50	87.87	4.95
Control	50	40.03	4.68	50	74.12	3.14

The table showed that the standard had almost the same performance. deviation value and the mean score both were different before and after the intervention. It was clear that before the intervention both the groups, whereas after the intervention the experimental one got a mean score of 87.87 which is higher than the controlled ones.

Table 5

Academic success test pre-practice and post-practice points ANOVA results.

Variance Resource	Square Total	Sd	Square Average	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
Among subjects	1299.782	52			
Group Experiment/ Control	660.24	1	660.24	52.139	.000
Error	649.498	50	12.990		
In subjects	11019.889	53			
Calculation pre-test post-test	98959.726	1	98959.726	7544.440	.000
Group	9812.257	1	9812.257	73.865	.000
*calculation					
Error	670.141	50	13.532		
Total	10514.6121	104			

The factors showing repeated measures showed vivid interactional impact on both retention and achievement of both groups. Yet, comparing two groups gave a result that experimental group learners performed remarkably well as compared to controlled ones. Thus, it can be validated that phygital classrooms are more impactful as compared to conventional classrooms. The results above stated some pivotal facts. It can be seen from the above tables that the learners who were in experimental group performed notably better than the learners in controlled group. Though, there was not much difference in the performance of the learners in their pre-test, yet in post-test the experimental group of learners performed much better in comparison with the learners of controlled ones.

No significant contrasts were found between pre-accomplishment test scores of the two groups. As per this, it tends to be presumed that the two groups were comparable concerning accomplishment in

friendly examinations. This was viewed as essential to figure out the adequacy of mediation.

Students in the experimental group performed much better than students in the controlled group, as shown by the study's findings. In addition, in the post-test results of both groups, the learners' performance was higher, but a mark difference was observed while comparing the post-test values of both groups. The findings of the study are comparable to those of an earlier investigation (Hockly, & Dudeney, 2018). Kim (2014) was of the view that language learning actually got benefits from mobile phones. Ginaya et al., (2018) noted that phygital learning provided the ideal setting for language learning. The results showed that controlled group students did not significantly differ in their performance on the pre- and post-tests. It was possible that when ESL instruction was delivered in a conventional classroom setting, students lose interest, and the learning process as a whole becomes repetitive.

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According to Ali et al., (2021) some English language lessons failed to have an impact on students and, as a result, demoralize them and lost their interest in the learning process. The findings of this study also provided an explanation for the fact that Pakistani students and educators alike enjoy and value phygital learning, a teaching and learning method that is common in western classrooms and educational institutions. The fact that the experimental group performed significantly better than the controlled group demonstrates that Phygital learning does have an effect on students' performance. In this way, this study was in line with the research conducted by Gaballo (2019) who was of the view that phygital learning's important characteristics include, a variety of learning methods, mobility/portability; ubiquity, social interaction, collaborative learning, and learners' autonomy.

The results extracted from this investigation stated that phygital learning offers a variety of learning

methods is one of the primary reasons for the improved performance of the students in the experimental group. This is identical to the study performed by Ehsanifard et al., (2020) who opined that the conventional method of presenting course material is typically sterile, which reduces student interest. Most of the time, phygital learning methods are hip, exciting, and modern. These methods of education occasionally challenge the conventional approach to education and attract students. Additionally, it helped the students increase their level of concentration.

The outcomes aroused from this study provided information that phygital learning provided motivation to the learner by developing their interest in learning and as a result they performed better. This is similar to the study by Mabuan and Ebron (2017) stated that phygital learning actually increase students' interest and keep them engaged in the learning process. Moreover, the results extracted from this investigation also proved that

conventional methods are outdated and fail to provide any significant impact in learning. This is similar to the idea provided by Damayanti and Sari (2017) stated that conventional methods have become commonplace, and in light of shifting trends, the methods and issues of contemporary syllabuses and contexts were unable to meet the learning requirements of students. Phygital learning provided students with a wide range of learning options, and they could also choose the best method for supporting their understanding of a syllabus or content. This is exactly what happened in this study, where students in the experimental group performed better because they learned through phygital learning, which supported students in understanding concepts more easily. Phygital learning activities were structured and made to make it easier to understand any concept or syllabus material and to foster learning in both formal and informal settings. Ahmedi (2018) said that phygital learning is praised by students because it

provided numerous learning paths for language learning.

Conclusion

The fact that phygital learning possesses a crucial feature of mobility, portability, and ubiquity is yet another significant reason that was deduced from the significant performance of learners in the experimental group in this study. In the past, learning was supported inside the classroom; however, in phygital learning classrooms, students learned, comprehended, and even followed up on various learning materials and the process of learning while roaming around. In a similar manner, mobility gave way to another crucial aspect, learning flexibility. Traditional classrooms, especially in Pakistan, encouraged situated learning, or learning inside the classroom, where students could only focus on learning inside the classroom. On the other hand, phygital learning provided flexibility for learning, so learning was no longer confined to the classroom. The quality of being lighter in weight

and phygital learning in size, which made mobile devices a person's constant companion, was known as portability. According to Bakeer (2018), the benchmarks of phygital learning include features like lower prices, adaptability, and ease of use.

Upon reviewing the findings of this experimental study, it is concluded that mobility and portability significantly contributed to the improvement of ESL learners' performance in Pakistan. Therefore, the study carried out by Ogata and Yano (2005), who were of the opinion that mobility and flexibility promoted learning by providing luxury in learning methods, supported these aspects of phygital learning that benefited Pakistani ESL students. Bailey, J. & Martin, N. (2013) argued that phygital learning created a comfortable learning environment by providing portability and mobility, these features of mobility and portability actually helped the students in this study and flexibility in their learning situations. This is similar to

the argument made by Ghazizadeh and Fatemipour (2017) who said that the main benefits of phygital learning for students were its portability and mobility.

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