

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study explores how secondary school English language teachers exercise instructional leadership through various dimensions: goal-setting, curriculum alignment, instructional support, climate building, and technology integration. Together these instructional leadership practices create an enriched environment conducive to effective English language education in secondary schools. The main objective of the study was to explore the Instructional Leadership Practices among Secondary School Teachers in English Language Education. This study was adopted a quantitative data collection and analysis in parallel to comprehensively examine instructional leadership practices. A sample of 200 secondary school teachers was selected through stratified random sampling ensuring representation across Public schools of lahore city for quantitative analysis. A structured Questionnaire was developed based on established instruments, Its reliability assessed through Cronbach's alpha. Content validity was identified with the intervention of experts of the field of assessment. Instrument was administered via printed forms and ensured collection of data. Descriptive statistics was used in terms of Mean and SD for data analysis. The data reveals several areas of ambiguity and uncertainty among teachers regarding key aspects of curriculum alignment, inclusive language practices, and technology integration in English language teaching.

Key words: *Secondary School Teachers, English Language Education, Instructional leadership practices, Goal-setting, Curriculum alignment, Instructional support, Climate building, Technology integration.*

Introduction

In today's globally interconnected world, English has solidified its role as the lingua franca of international communication, academic scholarship, and digital engagement. Consequently, English Language Education (ELE) has become a central pillar of national education systems, particularly at the secondary level where academic literacy development is vital for future educational and professional pathways. However, the responsibility of achieving excellence in ELE does not rest solely on curriculum designers or policymakers. It also significantly depends on the instructional leadership practices of teachers, who are the primary agents of classroom change (Grant, & Drew, 2024). Day et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2022). Instructional leadership, traditionally associated with school principals, has increasingly been recognized as a shared responsibility in which teachers lead pedagogical improvements, foster collaboration, and promote effective instructional strategies within their subject areas (Hallinger, et al, 2025). In the context of ELE, this form of leadership is especially critical due to the unique challenges English teachers face: diverse learner needs, varying levels of language exposure, curriculum overload, and growing demands for digital competence (Nguyen, 2022; Li, 2024). Effective English teachers are not just instructors—they are visionaries, mentors, curriculum innovators, and climate builders who drive systemic improvements in language education. These leadership dimensions are vital to improving learner outcomes, particularly in multilingual and postcolonial

education contexts where language instruction intersects with issues of equity, identity, and access (Garcia & Wei, 2023; Darling-Hammond et al., 2023). Setting clear academic and language learning goals is foundational for instructional leadership. It involves defining a clear vision and objectives for English language achievement aligned with national curriculum standards and school improvement plans. Making language-learning objectives explicit benefits both students and teachers by providing focused direction and measurable milestones to track progress (Koruklu, 2023; MichiganAssessment, 2025). This clarity guides teachers' instructional planning and motivates students toward attainable outcomes coordinating and aligning curriculum and instruction is essential to meeting diverse learner needs in English education. Instructional leaders adapt curriculum materials responsively, ensuring integrated teaching of the four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing across relevant subjects. They also encourage consistency in assessment and instructional approaches within English departments, enhancing coherence and equity in learning experiences (MEF University curriculum framework, 2025; NYSED, 2025). Supervision and support of instructional practices form another critical dimension of leadership. Effective instructional leaders conduct peer observations, offer constructive feedback, and mentor less experienced teachers. By modeling innovative teaching strategies and fostering collaboration among English teachers, leaders contribute to building professional capacity and improving pedagogical practices (Kiplagat et al., 2024). Creating a positive language learning climate is vital to promote student engagement and language development. Instructional leaders foster classrooms where risk-taking in language use is encouraged, culturally responsive teaching practices are incorporated to address the needs of multilingual learners, and student progress in English proficiency is regularly recognized and celebrated. Establishing links with cultural organizations further enriches learners' exposure to language and literature, supporting a holistic learning experience (Nava School, 2024; British Council, 2018). Finally integrating technology into English language teaching is increasingly significant. Instructional leaders promote the use of digital tools such as online writing platforms and language learning apps to enhance student learning. They provide training to peers on educational technology, thereby building technological capacity within the teaching staff. Encouraging blended learning models and online collaboration fosters more interactive and personalized English instruction, aligning with current educational technology trends (Aspirasi International Journal, 2025; Bridge Education Group, 2025). Together these instructional leadership practices create an enriched environment conducive to effective English language education in secondary schools. This thesis aims to critically explore how secondary school teachers enact these practices and their impact on teaching and learning outcomes in English language education.

Background of the Study

In many developing and linguistically diverse countries, English is taught as a second or foreign language, often within an examination-driven and rigid curriculum. Despite government investments in teacher training, curriculum development, and school reform, students' English proficiency levels remain below desired benchmarks in several regions (Rahman & Akter, 2024; UNESCO, 2021). One critical, yet underexplored, factor influencing these outcomes is the presence or absence of instructional leadership among English language teachers. Recent literature affirms that instructional leadership by teachers significantly contributes to enhanced academic outcomes, teacher efficacy, and learner engagement (Leithwood et al., 2020). Within ELE, five key dimensions illustrate this leadership. Instructional leadership begins with the

articulation of a clear vision for English language achievement. This includes defining language learning outcomes aligned with national curriculum standards and school improvement plans (Robinson et al., 2022). Teachers acting as instructional leaders ensure that students and colleagues understand explicit language learning objectives, thereby promoting accountability and direction in classroom practices (Hattie, 2023). Clarity in goal setting increases students' metacognitive awareness and helps teachers align instruction with long-term academic progress. The study is particularly important in helping educators and policymakers understand how secondary English teachers can set clear academic and language learning goals, aligned with the Single National Curriculum (SNC) and school improvement initiatives. In Pakistan, many schools continue to operate without articulated language goals or alignment to broader institutional visions (Akram & Qureshi, 2024). This research will highlight how goal-setting practices can enhance student clarity, accountability, and motivation particularly in English learning contexts where outcomes are often vague or exam-driven (Hattie, 2023). English language learning is most effective when the curriculum is adapted to the diverse needs of learners and when instruction is coordinated across grades and departments. Effective instructional leaders modify materials, integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing across disciplines, and foster coherence in teaching methods and assessments (Fullan, 2021). This horizontal and vertical alignment supports continuity in skill development and ensures that instruction remains responsive to learners' linguistic and cultural contexts (Li, 2024). By exploring how teachers coordinate and align curriculum and instruction, the study provides insight into how they adapt materials to diverse linguistic backgrounds and integrate skills like reading, writing, speaking, and listening across subjects. Given the multilingual nature of Pakistani classrooms and the variability in students' English exposure, this research will provide evidence-based strategies to promote curriculum coherence and assessment consistency within English departments (Li, 2024; Rahman & Akter, 2024). Instructional leadership involves mentoring peers, conducting peer observations, and offering constructive feedback. English teachers can enhance department-wide effectiveness by modeling lessons, demonstrating innovative methods such as task-based learning, and fostering a culture of collaborative reflection and inquiry (Guskey, 2021; Danielson, 2022). These practices build teacher capacity and promote a shared commitment to excellence in ELE. A supportive classroom climate encourages students to take linguistic risks, engage in meaningful interaction, and build confidence. Instructional leaders play a key role in cultivating such an environment through inclusive, culturally responsive practices and recognition of student achievements. Moreover, connecting learners with cultural institutions and community organisations enriches exposure to English literature and global narratives, making language learning more relevant and engaging (Garcia & Wei, 2023). The findings will also contribute to improving peer mentoring, professional collaboration, and instructional supervision, which are often overlooked in Pakistani schools. In many government and private institutions, English teachers work in isolation, lacking structured opportunities for peer observation, constructive feedback, or joint planning (Siddiqui, 2022). This study will demonstrate how instructional leadership fosters a culture of shared learning and accountability, leading to more effective teaching practices and continuous professional development (Guskey, 2021).

As Pakistan embraces the Digital Pakistan Vision, there is a growing need for English teachers to act as leaders in technology integration, especially in post-COVID hybrid learning contexts. Many teachers, however, lack both the resources and training to utilize tools such as language

learning apps, online writing platforms, and multimedia content (Saeed & Lodhi, 2023). This study will reveal how instructional leaders can train and support peers in using digital tools, ensuring that learners are equipped with the skills necessary for the digital age. In the post-pandemic educational landscape, technology is no longer optional—it is essential. Instructional leaders embrace digital tools such as language learning apps, online writing platforms, and virtual classrooms to enhance student engagement and autonomy. Furthermore, they guide and train colleagues in effectively integrating these tools into classroom practice, thus promoting a digitally literate teaching community (Selwyn & Jandrić, 2023). This alignment guarantees that language goals reflect required competencies at each grade level and that classroom activities systematically advance students toward these competencies. Methods to achieve alignment include reviewing relevant standards, adapting lesson plans to meet them, and employing inclusive teaching strategies to cater to diverse learner needs effectively (Learning Mole, 2025; Prodigy, 2024). In Pakistan, while extant research frequently examines instructional leadership at the level of school heads, much less attention is paid to subject-specific teacher leadership. Nonetheless, these studies provide useful insights: Iqbal et al. (2021) explored how principals' instructional leadership in Rawalpindi impacted teaching and learning practices. Findings indicated that leadership driven by clear goals and structured instructional programs positively influenced classroom practices. Noor and Nawab (2022) critically examined rural Pakistani schools and found that principals often lacked an explicit vision for student achievement; instead, their focus tended to be on syllabus completion and attendance highlighting a gap between theoretical leadership constructs and actual practice. The theory of goal setting, particularly Locke (2023), holds that clear, challenging, and specific objectives can significantly enhance motivation and performance in educational contexts. Locke and Latham (2015), holds that when teachers articulate learning goals explicitly, they foster a greater sense of direction and ownership among learners. Leithwood, et.al. (2020) provoked the school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning. Contextualizing this for Pakistan, Farooqui et al. (2024) identified a significant disconnect between traditional and modern teaching approaches specifically a reliance on grammar-translation and rote learning over communicative, learner-centered methods. This methodological tension hinders effective adaptation of English curriculum materials to meet diverse student needs. In Pakistan, English language education plays a pivotal role in academic progression, social mobility, and access to higher education and global opportunities. As English is both a subject and, in many cases, the medium of instruction, its effective teaching is critical especially at the secondary level, where students transition from foundational literacy to academic language proficiency (Mahboob, 2023). However, persistent challenges in quality instruction, lack of contextualized pedagogical leadership, and inconsistent curriculum practices hinder student outcomes in English language learning. This study is significant in that it aims to bridge a critical gap in Pakistan's educational research and practice: the underexplored area of instructional leadership among English language teachers at the secondary level. Unlike conventional models that place leadership responsibility solely on principals, this research emphasizes the role of English teachers as instructional leaders who directly influence curriculum delivery, classroom climate, peer development, and student achievement. The main Objective of the study was to explore the Instructional Leadership Practices among Secondary School Teachers in English Language Education.

The study was guided by the following key research questions:

- 1.1 How do secondary English language teachers set and implement academic and language learning goals in alignment with curriculum standards and school visions?
- 1.2 In what ways do teachers coordinate and align curriculum and instruction to address student diversity and language integration?
- 1.3 How do English teachers provide supervision and instructional support through feedback, mentoring, and demonstration of teaching practices?
- 1.4 What practices do teachers adopt to promote a positive and inclusive language learning environment in their classrooms?
- 1.5 How do teachers integrate technology into English language teaching, and how do they support their peers in using digital tools effectively?

Research Methodology

This study was adopted a quantitative data collection and analysis in parallel to comprehensively examine instructional leadership practices. This approach enables recommendations from educational leadership of secondary school English teachers. A sample of 200 secondary school teachers was selected through stratified random sampling ensuring representation across Public schools of Lahore city Pakistan for quantitative analysis. A structured Questionnaire was developed based on established instruments, addressing the following domains with Likert-scale items (1–5): i)- Goal Setting: Vision clarity, alignment with curriculum, explicit objectives. ii)- Curriculum Coordination: Adaptation for diverse learners, integration of language skills, departmental consistency. iii)- Instructional Support: Frequency of peer observations, mentoring, demonstration of model lesson. iv)- Learning Climate: Promotion of risk-taking, cultural responsiveness, recognition of student progress, engagement with cultural organizations. v)- Technology Integration: Digital tool use, peer training, and adoption of blended learning. This instrument was pilot-tested with a small group (10 teachers) to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity mirroring best practices of the teachers. Reliability assessed through Cronbach's alpha and was 0.84 Content validity was identified with the intervention of experts of the field of assessment instrument was administered via printed forms during scheduled meetings and ensured collection of data. Descriptive statistics was used in terms of Mean and SD for data analysis.

Results

Table 1

Group statistics for the research question "How do secondary English language teachers (N=62) set and implement academic and language learning goals in alignment with curriculum standards and school visions?"

Factor	Subject	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Set and implement academic and language learning in alignment with curriculum</i>	English	3.27	.721

It is indicated in the above table that secondary English language teachers (N=62) set and implement academic and language learning goals in alignment with curriculum standards and school visions (M=3.27 with SD .721).

Table 2

Group statistics for the research question “In what ways do teachers coordinate and align curriculum and instruction to address student diversity and language integration?”

Factor	Subject	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Coordinate and align curriculum and instruction	English	3.33	.60

It is indicated in the above table that secondary English language teachers (N=62) coordinate and align curriculum and instruction to address student diversity and language integration (M=3.33 with SD .60).

Table 3

Group statistics for the research question “How do English teachers provide supervision and instructional support through feedback, mentoring, and demonstration of teaching practices?”

Factor	Subject	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Provide supervision and instructional support	English	3.55	.82

It is indicated in the above table that secondary English language teachers (N=62) provide supervision and instructional support through feedback, mentoring, and demonstration of teaching practices (M=3.55 with SD .82).

Table 4

Group statistics for the research question “What practices do teachers adopt to promote a positive and inclusive language learning environment in their classrooms?”

Factor	Subject	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Adopt to promote a positive and inclusive language learning environment	English	3.10	.62

It is indicated in the above table that secondary English language teachers (N=62) adopt to promote a positive and inclusive language learning environment in their classrooms (M=3.10 with SD .62).

Table 5

Group statistics for the research question “How do teachers integrate technology into English language teaching, and how do they support their peers in using digital tools effectively?”

Factor	Subject	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
integrate technology into English language teaching	English	3.35	.58

It is indicated in the above table that secondary English language teachers (N=62) integrate technology into English language teaching, and how do they support their peers in using digital tools effectively (M=3.35 with SD .58).

Conclusion

Teachers are undecided about this factor that *Set and implement academic and language learning* in alignment with curriculum is not clear. Teachers are undecided about this factor that coordinate and align curriculum and instruction regarding students' diversity and language integration teachers are not clear about this factor. Teachers are agreed about this factor that they provide supervision and instructional support through feedback, mentoring, and demonstration of teaching practices. Teachers are undecided about this factor that Adopt to promote a positive and inclusive language learning environment teachers are not clear about this factor. Teachers were undecided about this factor that they integrate technology into English language teaching, and how do they support their peers in using digital tools effectively. The data reveals several areas of ambiguity and uncertainty among teachers regarding key aspects of curriculum alignment, inclusive language practices, and technology integration in English language teaching. Notably, teachers show indecisiveness on factors such as: Setting and implementing academic and language learning objectives aligned with the curriculum. Coordinating curriculum and instruction to address students' diversity and language integration. Adopting strategies to promote a positive and inclusive language learning environment. Effectively integrating technology and supporting peers in its application. These findings suggest a lack of clarity, guidance, or training in implementing these critical instructional practices, possibly pointing to gaps in professional development, institutional support, or policy articulation. The uncertainty may also stem from inconsistent practices across schools or insufficient collaborative planning time. In contrast, teachers agreed that they actively provide instructional support through supervision, feedback, mentoring, and demonstration. This positive response indicates that while some systemic and conceptual aspects of language teaching remain unclear, teachers are confident and engaged in peer support and professional collaboration. This contrast highlights a significant opportunity: schools already have a foundation of peer-driven support that can be further mobilized to address areas of uncertainty.

Recommendations

- Develop clear, accessible guidelines and exemplars that articulate how academic and language learning outcomes can be aligned with national or institutional curricula.
- Include specific strategies and lesson models that illustrate integration of language skills within content areas.
- Organize targeted training sessions focused on culturally responsive teaching and language integration strategies for diverse learners.
- Use case studies, classroom scenarios, and co-teaching demonstrations to make abstract concepts more practical and relatable.
- Establish subject- and grade-level curriculum alignment teams to coordinate instruction, share resources, and co-develop inclusive lesson plans.
- Encourage joint planning and reflective teaching practices that prioritize student diversity and language development.
- Provide workshops on socio-emotional learning, classroom discourse, and inclusive language that promote a welcoming environment for all students.
- Encourage the use of multilingual resources, inclusive texts, and culturally affirming teaching strategies.

- Offer practical, hands-on training in educational technology tools that support English language learning (e.g., interactive language platforms, AI-powered language apps).
- Foster peer mentoring programs where tech-savvy teachers support colleagues in integrating digital tools effectively.
- Build on teachers' willingness to mentor and provide feedback by formalizing instructional coaching models.
- Recognize and support teachers as instructional leaders who can facilitate learning communities focused on curriculum alignment, inclusion, and technology.
- Implement periodic surveys or focus groups to monitor changes in teachers' confidence and clarity in these key areas.
- Use the data to continuously refine support strategies and professional learning opportunities.

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