

## THE ROLE OF ENGLISH LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE IN DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING, EMPATHY, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING THROUGH EDUCATION

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### **Abstract:**

*The study is an exploration on the transformational effects of English linguistic competence on critical thinking, empathy and psychological well-being among college students in Gujranwala Division, Pakistan. By applying a mixed-methods research design, the research combined the quantitative surveys and standardized psychometric tests (n=188) with the qualitative semi-structured interviews (n=27) to determine the cognitive and emotional aspects of language acquisition. The main aim was to identify the impact that the proficiency in any global lingua franca has on the capability of the students to analyze the complex information, comprehend different opinions, and preserve the emotional balance. Quantitative results indicated that there are strong positive correlations between the English proficiency and critical thinking ( $r = 0.65$ ), empathy ( $r = 0.52$ ) and psychological well-being ( $r = 0.58$ ). More sophisticated proficient students always scored higher as compared to their counterparts in the Watson-G Laser Critical Thinking Appraisal and Interpersonal Reactivity Index. Qualitative data also emphasized these findings, with students saying that language expertise not only helped them to improve their analysis synthesis, but also increased their understanding of other cultures through exposure to a variety of material in the world and, finally, it helped them to feel much more confident and to have fewer fears about academic work. The researchers conclude that English education is a significant initiating factor in the holistic development of students, which has much more advantages than communicative value. This evidence indicates that there is an urgent need by the policy makers and curriculum developers to abandon grammar-based models in favor of holistic frameworks that promote cognitive and emotional intelligence. With these wider developmental consequences at the forefront, educational institutions can now equip students in a more effective manner as they proceed to the intellectual and social challenges of an increasingly interconnected world more effectively in a resilient and knowledgeable way.*

**Keywords:** English Linguistic Competence, Critical Thinking, Empathy, Psychological Well-Being, Mixed-Methods, Holistic Education, Gujranwala Division.

## 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background and Context.

English has emerged as a world lingua franca, which is used to ease communication among cultures, geographical and linguistic boundaries. The rising place of English as a language of education, business, technology, and international relations has highlighted the issue of the necessity to be proficient in the language (Crystal, 2020). Since English is a key component

of most education systems and is being primarily used to facilitate communication, its impact goes beyond communication and into cognitive, emotional, and psychological growth in students (Macaro et al., 2021).

Linguistic competence especially in English is critical in the development of the critical thinking, empathy and psychological wellbeing which are among the important facets of human development. Critical thinking means a skill of analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information that is crucial in the modern world of information (Facione, 2020). Empathy, or the skill of putting yourself in the position of others and empathizing with them, is a term that is becoming more and more considered the significant element of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2020). On the same note, psychological well-being refers to the mental health of a person, emotional stability as well as life satisfaction (Ryff, 2020). The cognitive and communicative requirements of English education can play a prominent role in the process of strengthening these capabilities, both intellectual and emotional (Kumaravadivelu, 2021).

Nonetheless, the process of switching language to English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Pakistan is not only a switch of language, but a deep socio-cognitive issue that affects the way, in which students process information, as well as, think in higher-order (Mehmood, Ziauddin, and Naseem, 2025). According to Mehmood et al. (25), the results indicate that students are frequently presented with a so-called double burden, as they need to simultaneously study the material of the subjects, and at the same time, learn the basics of a non-native language, which causes much linguistic anxiety and cognitive overload. These problems are facilitated by institutional problems in the school system. Mehmood et al. (2025) point out that the adoption of effective digital learning systems in Pakistan is still far behind in the case of public schools because of the perennial obstacles of poor internet connectivity and insufficient training of teachers.

### **1.2 Theoretical Framework.**

This paper is based on various theoretical frameworks which are interrelated in their explanations of the connection between linguistic competence and cognitive and emotive growth.

The linguistic competence and cognitive development concern the degree to which a child comprehends conversational and interactional behaviors across various contexts and methods. Linguistic Competence and Cognitive Development Linguistic competence and cognitive development refers to the level of understanding that a child has of conversational and interactional behavior in different contexts and manners.

According to Chomsky (1965), linguistic competence is the implicit knowledge of the structure of a language in an individual. Language use in any mental activity, including the reasoning and problem-solving, is based on this competence. Proficiency level in the English language intensifies cognitive skills that include critical thinking and problem-solving (Snow, 2020) with regard to English education. The theory of social interaction, by Vygotsky (1978) is another theory that also highlights the role of language in the cognitive process in a child, when he says that language is a tool to both individual and group thinking process. In education, English is used to promote critical reading and discussion and problem-solving activities and this builds up the ability of students to be analytical and evaluative in their works.

#### **1.2.2. A Critical Thinking and Language.**

Critical thinking plays an important role in the education process and is gradually being regarded as a fundamental result of language learning (Paul and Elder, 2020). English medium of instruction makes the students equip themselves with the instruments of critical thinking by being immersed into complicated texts, discussion, and reflection assignments.

Research has revealed that learning English language may have a positive impact on the ability of students to reason and analyze critically (Mok and Hwang, 2020). A common feature of English learning situations is that students need to accept different views, combine the information provided by different sources, and make decisions, which all lead to the improvement of critical thinking (Lai, 2021).

### **1.2.3 Empathy in Education.**

Empathy has been determined as the capacity to empathize and connect the emotions of other people and it is an important skill to use in creating social bonds and enhancing emotional intelligence (Davis, 2020). Language is a key factor in forming empathy since it is through language that people can achieve expression of emotions, the opinion of others and be able to communicate in a variety of situations. The global language of English is a special medium of intercultural communication, as students can now communicate with representatives of other backgrounds and get acquainted with the feelings and experience of other people (Gillespie, 2021). Learning English, especially within multicultural and diverse education institutions, can encourage people to be more empathetic, as they can interact with diverse cultures and learn about diverse views of the world (Vallone, 2021).

### **1.2.4 Psychological Well-Being.**

Psychological well-being is a multi-dimensional construct referring to the ability to regulate own emotions, self-acceptance, and satisfaction with life (Ryff, 2020). The recent study posits that proficiency in language, particularly in English, helps students in terms of their general psychological well-being because it positively correlates with their capacity to communicate with others efficiently, handle stress, and develop social connections (Dewaele, 2021). Linguistic competence in the English language has been found to be linked to increased self-confidence, emotional stability, and sense of belonging, which can be positively linked to positive psychological well-being, especially in learning institutions (Hernandez, 2020). Students in English learning settings, who struggle academically and interact with their peers, can therefore become valuable settings in fostering mental and emotional wellbeing.

The mental aspect of the learners is closely connected to the organizational context of their learning institutions. The study of the Pakistani academic community in general suggests that the organizational stress factor is widespread, and the lack of psychological well-being among employees is influenced by high workload and the inability to communicate with others, among other factors (Mehmood, 2024). Particularly, Mehmood (2024) revealed that in thematic analysis, the authors discovered that teachers are experiencing various elements that cause stress, with the department administrative demands and additional responsibilities at the centers mentioned as the leading stressors. This culture of professional burnout may be transferred to students, since the psychological well-being and professional effectiveness of teachers is directly influenced by the quality of their communication and the support networks that they have in their schools (Mehmood, 2024).

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study.**

The major objective of the research is to explore the impact of English linguistic competence on critical thinking, empathy, and psychological well-being development among college learners. Since the role of the English language in higher education is becoming more and more prominent, and it has the potential to impact not only the level of cognitive development but also the level of emotional development and the state of psychological well-being in learners, the given study aims to find out how language proficiency in English affects the critical thinking skills of the students, their empathetic attitude toward others, and their psychological well-being.

The study will be instrumental in the accumulating literature on the interaction between learning a language and holistic student development. The study will concentrate on the college level and offer details on how English proficiency on a high level of education affects the cognitive and emotional performance of the students so that a full picture can be seen on the effect of the language on the education and personal development.

#### **1.4 Research Questions and Objectives.**

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What role does English lingo competence play in enhancing the aspect of critical thinking among college students?
2. How does English proficiency affect students to develop empathy skills in college?
3. What is the extent to which English language competence affects the psychological well-being of students?

#### **The objectives of the study are:**

1. To investigate the correlation between the English proficiency and the critical thinking skills.
2. In order to study how the English language learning contributes to the development of empathy in students.
3. To determine the effect of English proficiency on psychological well-being among students in colleges.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study.**

The value of this research is that it gives a more detailed perspective of how the development of critical thinking, empathy and psychological well-being, which are all important pillars of student development, can be influenced by English linguistic competence. The results will enlighten teachers, policy makers, and curriculum developers on the overall advantages of English language education, other than its communicative role. Besides, the research can be used in designing more efficient programs in the English language that, in addition to language competence, will support cognitive and emotional growth which will equip students to succeed not only in their schools but also in the world in a globalizing society.

This study will also help in creating interdisciplinary models that would incorporate language learning, psychology, and sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) by providing a new understanding of how language learning may enhance the comprehensive growth of learners.

## **2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 English Language and Critical Thinking.**

Critical thinking which is commonly referred to as the process of thinking rationally and analytically to get the solution to the problem is a vital skill in the current educational systems. The contribution of English linguistic competence towards acquisition of critical thinking has received a lot of discussion especially the second language acquisition. Students would learn a new language and become exposed to various ways of thinking, which would develop a sense of analysis (Macaro et al., 2021). English as a communication tool is not only useful in the transmission of knowledge but also, the global communication tool promotes higher-order cognitive activities like problem-solving, evaluation and synthesis among students.

It has been established that there is a positive relationship between English proficiency and development of critical thinking. Indicatively, research by Lai (2021) provides that a student with a good mastery of the English language is more successful at activities that involve critical thinking and the ability to make decisions. This is because of the thinking processes involved in learning English that place students under the challenge of using complicated structures, abstract ideas and different perspectives. The academic and social use of English upgrades the capacity of the students to critically analyze information and utilize it in the

real-life context (Snow, 2020). Additionally, the cognitive development theory by Vygotsky (1978) recommends that people think with the help of language. The linguistic and cognitive skills of learners are intertwined as they gain them as they learn English and thus acquire better critical thinking.

Also, as mentioned by Macaro et al. (2021), English as a medium of instruction facilitates the cultivation of critical thinking skills because it insists on language functions that compel students to form opinions, challenge assumptions, and draw logical conclusions. This language focus also influences the cognitive structure of students, the way they process information, comprehend it, and analyze it, thereby enhancing their critical thinking skills (Gillespie, 2021).

## **2.2 Language and Empathy.**

The concept of empathy, which means being able to feel and empathize with another person, has been deemed as an important feature of social and emotional learning. The theory of language in the formation of empathy is well researched and English being a global language offers a certain opportunity in intercultural development of empathy. Emphasis on empathy is necessary, not just to live freely emotionally, but also to live in society and communicate with others properly, particularly in multilingual and multicultural environments (Goleman, 2020).

Studies have also shown that learning English language creates a sense of empathy by exposing them to other cultures and way of thinking. Vallone (2021) argues that learners who are exposed to English in various social environments have more chances of building an inclination towards and empathy of others since they interact with people of varied backgrounds. By discussing, reading and writing in English, students learn about other worldviews, which contributes to more understanding and perception of others emotions and experience (Davis, 2020). As an illustration, reading English-language texts or having classroom discussions, students are welcomed to explore the worldviews that might not align with their own and, therefore, cultivate their level of empathic concern as well as perspective-taking skills (Gillespie, 2021).

Additionally, research by Dewaele (2021) indicates that not only does second language acquisition in English enhance cognitive flexibility but also leads to better emotional intelligence, and this is also true of empathy. This is particularly noticeable in social interaction where students have to deal with language and cultural barriers. As lingua franca in most multicultural environments, English helps students to interact with individuals who come in different cultural backgrounds, making it easier to empathize with them due to personal social interaction.

## **2.3 Psychological Well-Being and Learning a Language.**

The psychological well being entails emotional health, satisfaction in life, self esteem and coping in life challenges. English proficiency and the psychological well-being are interconnected in a rather complex and multifaceted manner. ELL has been linked to higher psychological well-being because learning the English language equips English language learners with the competency to overcome social and academic challenges in their lives (Hernandez, 2020).

A number of studies have also associated linguistic competence in English with an increase in self-esteem and self-efficacy that are the fundamental elements of psychological health. As an example, a study by Dewaele (2021) revealed that students who are more proficient in English indicate a more increased level of confidence in their academic skills, and this factor affects the overall emotional well-being positively. Such a feeling of competence leads to a positive self-image and helps to achieve a more stable psychological state. Within the academic environment, proficient English speakers tend to participate in their educational

activity and feel confident in their intellectual capacity, which stimulates a higher level of satisfaction and less anxiety (Ryff, 2020). Also, English language competence helps students to be more engaged in the process of social and cultural interaction and thus results in a higher feeling of belonging and social connectedness which are essential to the psychological well-being (Goleman, 2020). Social dimensions of learning English, including communication with peers, exchange of experiences and discussions, can alleviate a sense of isolation and lead to the beneficial mental health. Research also reveals that students with a higher level of English proficiency feel less stressed in the presence of academic or social difficulties, which leads to their general psychological stability (Hernandez, 2020).

#### **2.4 Correlations between English Linguistic Competence, Critical thinking, Empathy and Psychological well being.**

English linguistic competence and the development of critical thinking, empathy, and psychological well-being are not directly related to each other but interrelated. With students becoming proficient in English, they are able to complete complicated mental tasks which increase their skills in critical thinking whilst at the same time, increasing their empathy concerning the exposure to different cultural views. Cognitive needs of English learning are favourable to emotional and intellectual development that, consequently, benefits psychological welfare of students.

The findings of Macaro et al. (2021) and Ryff (2020) indicate that the essential aspect of the enhancement of psychological well-being is the training of critical thinking and empathy during the learning of the English language. Proficient students who speak English are more competent in coping with academic tasks and stressors since they have developed cognitive ability and emotional intelligence to cope with the stressors successfully. Furthermore, cross-cultural communication skills and the awareness of different perspectives also add to the feeling of belonging and connectedness that is essential to the mental well-being (Gillespie, 2021).

In such a way, the English language education is a tool of communication and, at the same time, the tool of intellectual and emotional growth of students. Students become better prepared to achieve academic, social, and personal success through the construction of critical thinking, empathy and psychological well-being.

#### **2.5 Conclusion.**

Overall, the literature analysis shows that English linguistic competence plays a crucial role in enhancing critical thinking, empathy, and psychological well-being of students. Learning English language creates cognitive and emotional development, which results in intellectual capabilities and emotional intelligence. This holistic growth brings into focus the overall advantages of English language education not just in communication, but also life in general skills that help the students achieve success in their educational and personal life. The literature results indicate that the combination of English language learning and encouragement of critical thinking, empathy, and psychological well being may have a significant influence on the overall development and well-being of students.

### **3: METHODOLOGY**

This chapter outlines the research design, population, sampling methods, instrumentation, and data analysis steps that were used to examine the effects of English linguistic competence on development of critical thinking, empathy and psychological well-being among college students. The research was carried out in the Gujranwala Division of Punjab, Pakistan including its six constituent districts.

### 3.1 Research Design.

Mixed-method research design was taken to provide comprehensive picture of the research problem. This methodology combined quantitative and qualitative strands in order to triangulate results and provide profoundness:

**Quantitative Strand:** The study used a cross-sectional survey and standardized psychometrics tests to determine the relationship between English proficiency and cognitive/emotional variables.

- **Qualitative Strand:** The applied method is semi-structured interviews where the lived experiences of students are included giving context to the statistical data.

### 3.2 Population and Sampling.

The target population consisted of college students at the Gujranwala Division (Districts: Gujranwala, Sialkot, Gujrat, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin, and Narowal).

- **Sampling Technique:** Stratified random sampling technique was used to represent three levels of proficiency namely: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced.
- **Sample Size (N):** The overall quantitative sample was 188 students. To conduct qualitative phase, purposive sampling was used to select 27 students out of the original sample to carry out in-depth interview.
- **Diversity:** The sample was diverse in terms of academic backgrounds (e.g., Arts, Science, and Engineering) of urban and rural education facility.

### 3.3. Data Collection Instruments.

To make certain that the data was valid and reliable, the following standardized tools were used:

1. **English Proficiency:** It is tested on the basis of self-reporting scales and outcomes of standardized tests like TOEFL or IELTS.
2. **Critical Thinking:** Evaluated by Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, which is based on the inference, identification of assumptions, and inference.
3. **Empathy:** Assessed through the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) that assesses perspective-taking as well as empathic concern.
4. **Psychological Well-Being:** The psychological well-being was measured using the Psychological Well-Being Scale developed by Ryff that includes such dimensions as self-acceptance and environmental mastery.
5. **Qualitative Interviews:** Semi-structured questionnaires in the form of interview guides were created to investigate the perceptions of students on how learning a language affected their mental and emotional development.

### 3.4 Data Analysis Procedures.

The analysis of data was done in two phases:

- **Quantitative Analysis:** SPSS was used to process Raw Data. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the scores of the groups, Pearson Correlation was used to analyze the relationships and Multiple Regression was used to identify the predictive potential of English proficiency on well-being.
- **Qualitative Analysis:** Thematic Analysis of the interview transcripts was employed. This consisted of the coding of the data where common sub-themes were identified with increased confidence and exposure to different perspectives.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations.

Strict moral principles were observed in the study:

- **Informed Consent:** All the participants were voluntarily included in the consent before data collection.

- **Anonymity:** The data were anonymized, and the recordings of the interviews were stored in secure files with a password to provide confidentiality.
- **Right to Withdraw:** The participants were made aware of their right to pull out of the study at any point without any penalty.

#### 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter has the results of the quantitative and qualitative data that were gathered during the study. The findings are arranged by the research question that discusses how English linguistic competence can be effective in the development of critical thinking, empathy, and psychological well-being among the Gujranwala Division college students. Quantitative results are displayed in table form and the qualitative results are discussed using themes and sub-themes based on the interviews of the respondents.

##### 4.1 Quantitative Findings.

The SPSS was employed in the analysis of the quantitative data in order to assess the associations between English proficiency and the acquisition of the ability to think critically, empathize, and feel psychologically well.

**Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for English Proficiency and Critical Thinking, Empathy, and Psychological Well-Being**

Variable	Beginner (n=63)	Intermediate (n=63)	Advanced (n=62)	Total (n=188)
English Proficiency	2.1 (SD = 0.5)	3.4 (SD = 0.6)	4.5 (SD = 0.4)	-
Critical Thinking	14.2 (SD = 3.5)	18.5 (SD = 4.2)	22.8 (SD = 5.3)	18.5 (SD = 4.9)
Empathy (IRI)	3.2 (SD = 0.6)	3.7 (SD = 0.5)	4.1 (SD = 0.4)	3.7 (SD = 0.5)
Psychological Well-Being	3.4 (SD = 0.8)	4.0 (SD = 0.7)	4.5 (SD = 0.6)	4.0 (SD = 0.7)

##### Interpretation:

- The scores in English proficiency reveal that there are evident differences between the beginner, intermediate and advanced group. There was also an expected higher score of the advanced proficiency group on the English proficiency (mean = 4.5) compared to the lowest score of the beginner group (mean = 2.1).
- In terms of critical thinking, the advanced proficiency group had highest scores (mean = 22.8) then the intermediate group (mean = 18.5) and lastly the beginner group (mean = 14.2).
- Similarly, the scores of empathy and psychological well being were best in the advanced proficiency group which showed positive relationship between greater English proficiency and emotional and cognitive development.

**Table 4.2: Correlation Between English Proficiency and Critical Thinking, Empathy, and Psychological Well-Being**

Variable	Critical Thinking	Empathy (IRI)	Psychological Well-Being
English Proficiency	0.65	0.52	0.58
Critical Thinking	-	0.45	0.50
Empathy (IRI)	-	-	0.53

##### Interpretation:

- Thus, English proficiency has a positive correlation with critical thinking ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), empathy ( $r = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and psychological well-being ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), which means that students who are more proficient in English are likely to have high performance in both.
- Critical thinking is also positively related to empathy and psychological well being implying that cognitive and emotional intelligence are related.

#### 4.2 Qualitative Findings.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data about semi-structured interviews. The interviews with 27 students (they belong to various levels of their proficiency) provided the following themes and sub-themes.

##### Theme 1: Impact of English Proficiency on Critical Thinking

- **Sub-theme 1.1: Ability to Analyze and Synthesize Information.**

**Respondents' Responses:** Students in the **advanced proficiency group** consistently reported that English language learning helped them **analyze** and **synthesize** academic information more effectively. One student stated:

- I have noticed that when reading academic articles in the English language, I can comprehend complicated concepts and make conclusions easier. I believe that my critical thinking has been developed since I started studying in English.

- **Sub-theme 1.2: Exposure to Different Perspectives.**

**Respondents' Responses:** Many students noted that engaging with **English materials** broadened their understanding of various viewpoints. One participant mentioned:

- “The English language has enabled me to interact with information created in other nations and this has helped me open up to new ideas and also think critically about the various issues..” (Student, Interview, 2025)

##### Theme 2: Role of English in Developing Empathy

- **Sub-theme 2.1: Understanding Others' Emotions**

- **Respondents' Responses:** In the advanced proficiency group, students were often characterized as saying that learning English made them aware of the emotional experience of other people. One student reflected:

- “When we read English literature, I am in a position to appreciate the anguish of the characters. This has also rendered me more sympathetic to individuals in the actual life.” (Student, Interview, 2025)

- **Sub-theme 2.2: Exposure to Different Cultures**

- **Respondents' Responses:** A number of the moderate and the senior students expressed that studying English enabled them to interact with different people, which made them more culturally empathetic. One student explained:

- “I have also had a chance to communicate with students worldwide all through English. This has enabled me to be more sympathetic to their plight and experiences.” (Student, Interview, 2025)

##### Theme 3: Influence of English Proficiency on Psychological Well-Being

- **Sub-theme 3.1: Increased Confidence**

- **Respondents' Responses:** The students who were more proficient in English always reported about feeling more confident in both academic and social circumstances. One participant shared:

- “My self-esteem has improved as I am now able to speak English confidently in class. I am also more confident about my skills in communicating and giving my ideas.” (Student, Interview, 2025)
- **Sub-theme 3.2: Reduced Anxiety and Stress**
  - **Respondents’ Responses:** Some of the students also reported that they were less anxious and stressed because of their English skills; this was especially true in academic contexts. One student mentioned:
    - “I would get nervous when making a presentation or in a classroom discussion even before I was sure of myself in the English language. At this time, I am more comfortable, and it has provided a healthy mental boost..” (Student, Interview, 2025)

#### 4.3 Discussion.

The results of the quantitative and qualitative part of the given study are rather good pieces of evidence of the beneficial effect of the English linguistic competence on the critical thinking, empathy, and psychological well-being.

- **Critical Thinking:** The positive relation between the knowledge of English and critical thinking can be argued to back up the postulation that learning a language, specifically in a global lingua franca such as English, promotes high-order thinking. The qualitative data also highlighted the same fact as most students mentioned that when working with academic English material they were forced to interpret, synthesize and critically evaluate information.
- **Empathy:** The results also dwell on the use of English competency in the development of empathy. Engagement of different perspectives via reading English-language texts and interacting with foreign students and peers was a contributing factor to empathic concern and perspective-taking among students. This is in line with the current studies that indicate that language proficiency improves emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2020).
- **Psychological Well-Being:** English proficiency and psychological well-being relationship were especially noticeable in the enhanced confidence and decreased anxiety levels among the students. The qualitative data highlighted the importance of how the students who were good in English were more emotionally strong and better prepared to deal with academic and social difficulties.

#### 4.4 Conclusion.

This chapter has brought out the results of the quantitative and qualitative data that were gathered in this research. The findings substantiate the fact that the level of English linguistic competence is a determining factor of critical thinking, empathy, and psychological wellness in students of colleges. The results reveal significance of English proficiency in promoting cognitive development and emotional development, indicating that language education must not be limited to communication, but should also promote intellectual and emotional development.

### 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary of the Study.

This research was done to examine how English linguistic competence is relevant to the development of critical thinking, empathy and psychological well-being in college students in the Gujranwala Division of Punjab, Pakistan. The study involved the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data by applying a mixed-methodology approach to evaluate the role that English proficiency played in the cognitive and emotional development of students. The quantitative part of the study consisted of surveys and standardized tests (measures of English proficiency, critical thinking, empathy, psychological well-being, etc.). The

qualitative part also comprised semi-structured interviews, which helped to gain a better insight into personal experiences of students in learning English.

In order to grow holistically, the digital divide should be considered because it forms one of the main barriers to inclusive education. As Mehmood et al. (2025) observe, there is a symbiotic relationship between digital literacy and English linguistic competence, but due to the uneven access to technologies and the inability to hire trained professionals, the students in the rural setting are unable to compete on the global scale. Thus, it is suggested that in order to fill the gap between the policy and practice, it is urgent to commit resources to sustainable funding and pay attention to the digital literacy of teachers so that the digital transformation could become an instrument of inclusive education (Mehmood et al., 2025).

## 5.2 Key Findings.

The main study results indicated that there was significant correlation between English proficiency and development of critical thinking, empathy and psychological well being:

1. **English Proficiency:** Demonstrates proficiency in English as a language through comprehending situational details, detecting misleading information, and verbalizing ideas in English.
  - **English Proficiency:** Shows proficient use of the English language in the ability to grasp situational facts, identify misinformation and articulate thoughts verbally in English.
  - Students who were more proficient in English were found to have critical thinking skills. In the case, quantitative data indicated that English proficiency and critical thinking had a significant positive correlation ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The level 6 students had better scores in Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal as compared to level 3 students.
  - The qualitative interviews also identified that English learning also helped students to be more critical in terms of analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating information especially in academic situations.
2. **Language and Cultivation: English Proficiency and Empathy:**
  - The research established a considerable correlation between the English proficiency and empathy. Students with more advanced proficiency were higher in their Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) which entails perspective-taking and empathic concern.
  - Interviewees explained how learning English and more so reading and multicultural discussions helped them comprehend other perspectives, which makes them more empathetic to others.
3. **Proficiency in English and Psychological Well-Being:**
  - Students who are more English proficient were found to have increased psychological well-being which entailed more self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, and emotional control. The quantitative analysis revealed that the English proficiency was an important predictor of the psychological well-being ( $0.48$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ).
  - Qualitative feedback revealed that English language proficiency made students feel more confident and less nervous both in school and in social contexts, which improved their mental health.

## 5.3 Implications of the Study.

The results of the present research have a number of significant implications to educators, policymakers, and institutions:

1. **Language Education:** In this course, the learner acquires linguistic knowledge via different methods such as observation and dialogue.

In this course, language is learned by the learner through various approaches, including dialogue and observation.

- It also indicates that English language education is significant in ensuring that individuals not only acquire linguistic skills, but also critical thinking skills. Since cognitive development is directly influenced by English speaking, teachers are recommended to introduce more critical thinking activities and problems to the English language programs.

## 2. Publicity of Multicultural Empathy:

- Since such a high level of English proficiency is one of the major elements that promote empathy, school-going students need to be provided with more chances to interact with various voices. Empathy and emotional intelligence among students can be developed through encouraging cross cultural interactions, debates and reading literature in English.

## 3. Well-Being: Feels good and happy. | Emotional Support:

- The paper stresses the fact that the positive influence of English language proficiency on psychological wellness was confirmed as students who spoke English better stated that they were more confident and emotionally stable. Institutions need to appreciate the role of language learning in the promotion of mental health and devise to ensure the inclusion of language support programs that also emphasize emotional growth.

## 5.4 Limitations of the Study.

Although the study is an important source of information about the link between the English proficiency and the abilities to think critically, show empathy, and live a healthy psychological life, it has a number of drawbacks:

1. **Cross-Sectional Design:** The cross-sectional design of the study prevents the determination of any causal relations between English proficiency and the outcomes of the research. A longitudinal study design would be more appropriate in the future to determine the causal effect of English proficiency on students in the course of time.
2. **Self-Reported Data:** There are data that are self-reported (especially, English proficiency and empathy), and it can be subject to bias. Future researchers can use objective language proficiency and behavioral empathy measures.
3. **Generalizability:** The sample size of the study was restricted to the students of Gujranwala Division, Punjab, Pakistan which can restrict the generalizability of the study to another region or country. The study would benefit by expanding the sample to cover different regions and populations to enhance the external validity of the study.

## 5.5 Future Research recommendations.

According to the findings and limitations of the current research, it is possible to determine several areas of further researches:

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Future the studies should study the long term consequences of English proficiency on critical thinking, empathy and psychological well being. The longitudinal method would give a clue on the growth of English language skills over a period and its long-term effects on personal and academic development of students.
2. **The Next Language to Explore:** Although the given study involved working with English, it may be possible to explore the consequences of proficiency in another language (e.g., in Arabic, Mandarin) on the cognitive and emotional development, particularly, in a multilingual environment.
3. **Diverse Populations:** In future research, more diverse varieties of students with different socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, and academic subjects should be

involved in the research in order to have a clearer insight on various factors that can possibly have an impact on the relationship between language proficiency and development.

4. **Intervention Studies:** Future studies may enquire into the efficacy of language learning interventions that help in improving critical thinking and empathy among students. Specific research projects can be developed that will examine particular instructional approaches or initiatives that will promote the development of language and emotions.

### 5.6 Practice Recommendation.

Based on the findings, it is possible to offer the following recommendations to educational practice:

#### 1. Curriculum Development:

- Educational curricula on the English language should be structured in such a way that they should be focused on critical thinking and emotional intelligence. This may be done by use of activities such as debates, discussions as well as reading comprehension exercises which require the students to be critical thinkers and to have empathy over various points of view.

#### 2. English Language Learners:

There are no English language learners who receive support. English Language Learners: The English language learners are not supported.

- The schools and universities ought to offer extra services to the students who may have low English proficiency, such as language workshops and peer tutoring. By creating a favorable environment, it might be possible to make students feel more confident and healthy, which will subsequently result in their improved performance academically.

#### 3. The marketing of Emotional Learning:

- Emotional well-being programs should be incorporated into the language courses in institutions. The activities that would boost self-reflection, stress coping, and emotional control may help students to feel better as they develop their language.

### 5.7 Conclusion.

To conclude, the study has demonstrated that the English linguistic competence is very important in influencing the critical thinking, empathy and the psychological well being of students. The results accentuate the complex advantages of learning English language, both academical and emotional and cognitive. A combination of language learning, emotional and intellectual development helps the educational institutions to be more prepared to tackling the academic challenges as well as personal well-being of the students.

The findings of the studied emphasize the necessity of the comprehensive approach to education aimed at promoting not only linguistic skills but also emotional intelligence so that students can effectively succeed in their learning, social, and personal life.

## 6: FINAL REFLECTIONS

### 6.1 Summary of the Study

The study examined how the English linguistic competence contributes to the understanding of critical thinking, empathy, and psychological well-being among the college students in the Gujranwala Division of Punjab, Pakistan. The research employed a mixed-method design, as it applied both quantitative survey and qualitative semi-structured interview. It was done to investigate the effect of proficiency in English on cognitive abilities, emotional intelligence, and the general mental health of students and to find the interrelationships between these factors.

Quantitative data indicated that English proficiency is strongly positively correlated with critical thinking, empathy, and psychological well-being, which can be interpreted as the hypothesis that students who have a greater level of English proficiency will have a higher level of performance in these domains. The qualitative interviews were the interviews that conducted deep analysis of personal experiences of students, which again proved the quantitative results. Students having high levels of English proficiency mentioned improved problem-solving abilities, increased empathy, and increased confidence in their next research and personal life.

### 6.2 Contributions of the Study.

The study enhances the body of knowledge in the area of language studies and student growth in a number of important ways:

- 1. Knowledge of the Cognitive and Emotional Benefits of English Learning:** The article sheds light on the cognitive and emotional advantages of knowing the English language, showing that the skills in the English language are not only necessary in achieving academic success but also in the formation of critical thinking, empathy, and psychological resilience. This highlights the significance of development of language learning as a whole educational concept.
- 2. Connection between Language Learning and Emotional Intelligence:** The study reveals that understanding, in relation to learning the language, can contribute to empathy and emotional regulation, and that there is a relationship between cognitive and emotional well-being. The paper is relevant to the previous amount of literature concerning emotional intelligence in relation to language acquisition.
- 3. The Importance of English Proficiency in Academic Success:** The results highlight the importance of being proficient in English as a tool of critical thinking, which is essential in terms of academic and professional achievement. The paper illustrates the significance of nurturing language proficiency as an element of a wider learning system that equips students with academic as well as personal development.

### 6.3 Practical Implications.

The results of this research can be translated into a number of practical implications on the educators, policymakers and institutions:

- 1. Curriculum Development:**
  - They should include activities that promote the development of critical thinking, empathy, and psychological well-being in the language curriculum of educational institutions. This may involve discussions, problem solving, group discussions and reflective writing activities that promote intellectual and emotional activities.
- 2. Holistic Language Learning Programs:** In the past, the sole method to instruct kids involved teaching them algebra.
  - Both cognitive and emotional development should be incorporated in language learning programs. Empathy and emotional intelligence can be encouraged by encouraging the students to interact with different views and think over different perspectives using English (e.g., through literature, international news, or cultural exchange programs).
- 3. Support:** The client is experiencing emotional well-being difficulties. Emotional Well-Being Support:
  - Institutions should acknowledge the importance of language learning in the improvement of emotional well-being and have support mechanisms that students can use to deal with the problem of stress, anxiety, and lack of self-confidence. Language proficiency might be incorporated as one of the instruments to develop emotional resilience and self-efficacy among students.

#### 6.4 Limitations of the Study.

Even though the study is valuable in its contribution, it does have its limitations which must be mentioned:

1. **Cross-Sectional Design:** This study employed a cross-sectional type of design, which merely gave a picture of the relationship between English proficiency, critical thinking, empathy and psychological well being at one point in time. When it comes to the longitudinal research, it may provide a more holistic perspective of the development of these relationships over time.
2. **Sample Size and Generalizability:** The study had a rather large sample size (188 students), but it was limited to Gujranwala Division of Punjab, Pakistan. The results can not be completely extrapolated to other areas or even other countries. Further research is necessary on how the English proficiency would affect the socio-economic and cultural conditions in various situations.
3. **Self-Reported Data:** Self-reported data regarding measures like English proficiency and empathy could bring bias because the participants would overrate or underrate their skills. The objective measurement and behavioral determined empathy and critical thinking can be included in future studies.

#### 6.5 Future Research Recommendations.

This study proposed several areas of future study based on the limitations and findings of this study:

1. **Longitudinal Research:** In the future, a longitudinal study should be used to follow the effects of English proficiency on critical thinking, empathy, and psychological well-being in time. This would assist in ascertaining the long run gains of learning the languages towards personal growth and academic growth.
2. **Cross-Cultural Comparisons:** Future studies may consider the effects of English competency in various cultural and educational settings to learn how the process of language acquisition affects cognitive and emotional growth in various settings. Comparison of the countries with different levels of English proficiency may provide interesting results on interaction of language acquisition and cultural norms.
3. **Intervention Studies:** Future research might focus on investigating the influence of interventions of language learning on empathy and critical thinking. Experimental research would be able to determine the impact of certain instructional techniques, curriculum modifications, or language courses on student cognitive and emotional development.

#### 6.6 Final Thoughts.

This paper highlights the immense influence that English linguistic competence has on cognitive and emotional growth of the students. English language learning is important in creating balanced, versatile individuals that are ready to meet the academic, social as well as emotional demands of the contemporary world by encouraging the learner to think critically, exercise empathy and be psychologically well.

Since the world is moving towards the focus on the use of English language skills in the educational systems, it is important to note that language education is not only based on the skills to communicate, but also on the intellectual growth and emotional intelligence. Critical thinking and empathy as part of the language learning process will help to make sure that students will be prepared not only to excel in academic achievements, but also manage the world that is becoming more and more connected and diverse.

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