

EXAMINING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING CHALLENGES IN SULAYMANIYAH PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

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Abstract

This research investigates the challenges faced by primary school students in Sulaymaniyah City/Kurdistan Region/Iraq in learning English, focusing on both public and private schools. The main objective of the research is to discover the contradictory approaches to English language learning among primary school students, particularly concerning the influence of teachers and the surrounding educational environment in public and private primary schools in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. By analyzing data collected through questionnaires (n=100) which were 15 statements to be answered and interviews (n=4) with students and teachers which were 3 questions to be asked, the research highlights significant differences in the English language learning experiences between public and private schools. The key findings of this research reveal that students' proficiency in English is influenced by various factors, including their motivation, family background, and school environment. Moreover, teachers' instructional methods play a crucial role, as students benefit from engaging and diverse teaching strategies. Furthermore, the research underscores that a supportive and well-resourced learning environment—characterized by adequate classroom facilities, minimal noise, and effective teaching materials—significantly impacts students' ability to learn English. The research suggests that enhancing teacher training, updating classroom resources, and fostering supportive home environments could improve English language learning outcomes for students across both types of schools. Overall, this comparative case study provides valuable insights into how different educational contexts influence English language acquisition. The research offers recommendations for improving educational practices in primary schools generally and public schools, specifically in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Keywords: *English language learning; public schools; private schools; Sulaymaniyah; teaching strategies; educational resources*

1. Introduction

From the background perception of the research, the research seeks to assess whether students in private schools receive a better quality of education and more

opportunities to develop their English language skills than their counterparts in public schools, especially in Sulaymaniya City of Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). It is relevant to Sulaymaniya Schools since the researcher gathered all the data from that region and the data was generalized as it could be one of the limitations that is mentioned in the last section. Regarding the comparison between public and private schools, more details can be found in the analysis and discussion section in which different statements and the collected data can precisely show the differences.

The primary objective of this research is to explore the differing approaches to English language learning among primary school students, particularly concerning the influence of teachers and the surrounding educational environment. This research aims to determine whether the learning environment and teaching methodologies in private schools offer a more advantageous setting for acquiring English as a second language compared to public schools as it is believed by many teachers, and it has become a common perception.

Moreover, this research was prepared to systematically investigate and analyze the challenges faced by primary school students in both public and private institutions when learning the English language. The research's purpose is to provide a comparative analysis of these challenges, highlighting any significant differences between the two educational settings. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the importance of diverse teaching methods and the positive impact of a conducive learning environment on students. It also considers the students' backgrounds and their motivation to learn a second language. By understanding the students' perspectives on learning English and the challenges they encounter, as well as their confidence in their teachers' instructional approaches, the research could offer valuable insights to school administrators too. These insights could underscore the importance of the learning environment in language acquisition and help in enhancing educational strategies.

In addition, the research addresses the challenges of English language learning in both private and public primary schools. Private schools are often associated with academically successful students, particularly in English, as well as superior facilities and teaching techniques. In contrast, public schools frequently face criticism regarding their educational environment and instructional methods. The research's goals are to explore the potential reasons behind the struggles with English language acquisition in public schools, which may include governmental delays in providing resources, insufficient teacher training, and the students' socio-cultural backgrounds.

The research hypothesizes that most students have a positive opinion about the English language, they also recognise the importance of language, and they are motivated by different factors to learn English. Secondly, it is also hypothesized that teachers play a crucial role in encouraging and assisting students in overcoming difficulties in learning English, drawing on their extensive knowledge of effective teaching methods. Finally, it is expected that teachers who employ diverse techniques and create an engaging classroom atmosphere will have a positive impact on students' English language learning. The researchers would like to uncover factors contributing to some students being more proficient in learning English than others, to explain how teachers influence students' success in learning English, and to reveal how the educational environment impacts students' ability to learn English.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Challenges Faced by Students in Learning English

Learning the English language, particularly as a second language, involves teaching and studying English with the primary aim of equipping students who do not speak English natively. Given that English is a mandatory subject from primary school through college, mastering it presents significant challenges for many students. Primary school students, in particular, may encounter difficulties in learning English due to its novelty, making it imperative to identify these challenges and understand their impact on language acquisition.

2.1.1. Students' Motivation for Language Learning

As noted by Ames (1990), student motivation is a universal issue in education, often cited by teachers as a major challenge (p. 410). Motivation in language learning can stem from various sources, including family encouragement, teacher influence, or the students' intrinsic desire to learn. Motivation can be viewed as either a stable trait or a situation-specific response. When students engage meaningfully in an activity, they demonstrate motivation by aligning with the activity's purpose, feeling empowered, and seeing the value in learning. Even students who typically show little interest in learning may become motivated when teachers capture their interest or highlight the importance of the subject matter. Thus, motivation is a key factor in successful language learning, influencing how students engage with and benefit from educational activities (Wentzel, 2020).

2.1.2. Deficiencies in Language Skills

Primary school students should develop proficiency in the four foundational language skills—reading, listening, writing, and speaking—to effectively use English. Each skill reinforces the others, with listening improving speaking, reading enhancing writing, and writing supporting reading fluency (Kurniasih, 2011: 71). However, understanding spoken language can be particularly challenging for students, especially when they are unfamiliar with the sounds of the foreign language, leading to anxiety and a struggle to comprehend. Moreover, fear of making mistakes can inhibit students from speaking, necessitating the teacher's role in encouraging participation without fear of correction (Kurniasih, 2011: 74-77). Similarly, difficulties in reading often arise from a lack of familiarity with words and sentence structures, making it essential for reading instruction to be prioritized in primary education to support overall language development (Kurniasih, 2011: 77).

2.1.3. Fear of Making Mistakes in Class

Students' fear of making mistakes, particularly when speaking in class, is a significant psychological barrier to learning English. According to Salihoğlu, Yiğit. (2024), this fear is often linked to concerns about judgment and negative evaluations from peers and teachers, leading to anxiety and reluctance to participate in speaking activities (p. 101). Shyness and a lack of confidence further worsen this issue, as students fear embarrassment and criticism if their peers do not understand them or if they struggle to comprehend others. This fear can result in students withdrawing from classroom interactions, which in turn hinders their language development (Salihoğlu, Yiğit, 2024).

2.1.4. Inadequate Curriculum

The curriculum is a critical component of education, representing the values and principles of the educational system and significantly influencing students' learning experiences. However, an inflexible curriculum that fails to accommodate diverse learning styles and needs can be a major obstacle to effective learning. To address this, curriculum adaptation is necessary to ensure that all students can access the material and that their unique learning strengths are recognized and nurtured (Motitswe, 2012: 33-34). In both public and private schools, the challenge lies in modifying the curriculum to meet the specific needs of all learners, ensuring that educational practices are inclusive and supportive of every student's learning journey.

2.2. The Impact of Teachers on Students' English Language Learning

Teaching and learning are dynamic processes that evolve with changing generations. Despite significant transformations in the educational system, the role of teachers remains pivotal. Teachers are responsible for implementing strategies that facilitate second language acquisition and adapting their methods to the needs of their students (Munna, 2021: 1).

2.2.1. Traditional Classroom Settings

Traditional education, characterized by a teacher-centred approach, remains a prevalent mode of instruction. In such settings, students typically gather at a specific time and place, with the teacher directing the learning process. While this approach allows for direct interaction between students and teachers, it may not cater to the individual interests and abilities of all students, potentially limiting their engagement and understanding. As traditional classrooms are often not tailored to the diverse needs of learners, they may not effectively enhance students' learning experiences (Salim, 2019).

2.2.2. Step-by-Step Instruction and Patient Re-Teaching

Effective teaching requires instructors to be knowledgeable and skilled at conveying information to students. Good instruction involves a personalized approach that considers the universal development of the student. Teachers should be aware of the individual differences among their students and adjust their teaching methods accordingly. When students struggle, it is crucial for teachers to patiently re-explain concepts, ensuring that all students understand before moving on. Repeating explanations, being explicit, and checking for understanding are essential practices that help accommodate diverse learning needs and promote student success (Hargreaves et al., 2016: 9).

2.2.3. Utilizing Enhanced Audio and Visual Aids

Learning can be significantly enhanced by the use of various teaching tools, particularly audio and visual aids, which capture students' attention and make learning more engaging. These aids, such as music, images, posters, games, videos, and movies, help reinforce learning by making abstract concepts more concrete and accessible. Incorporating technology and creative teaching methods can make lessons more vibrant and tailored to students' interests, thereby improving their motivation and retention (Shabiralyani et al., 2015: 226).

2.3. Environmental Factors Influencing Students' Learning

The environment in which students learn plays a crucial role in shaping their educational experiences. Several factors, including classroom conditions and external surroundings, can either support or hinder the learning process.

2.3.1. Essential Classroom Supplies

A well-organized and comfortable classroom is essential for creating an environment conducive to learning. Classroom furniture, in particular, plays a significant role in students' comfort and ability to focus. Given that students spend a substantial amount of time sitting and writing, it is important that the furniture supports a proper posture and is suitable for the student's needs. Comfortable and ergonomically designed classroom furniture contributes to better concentration and a more effective learning experience (Popcornfurniture, 2015).

2.3.2. The Impact of Noise Levels

According to Gilavand and Jamshidnezhad (2016), noise in the classroom can significantly disrupt learning by distracting students and making it difficult for teachers to communicate effectively. Excessive noise not only affects students' ability to concentrate but also impairs their language and reading development. Teachers often need to raise their voices to be heard over background noise, which can lead to voice strain and reduce the effectiveness of instruction. Minimizing noise levels in classrooms is therefore crucial for maintaining a healthy and productive learning environment (Gilavand and Jamshidnezhad, 2016: 1454).

2.3.3. The Role of Natural Surroundings

Exposure to natural environments has been shown to enhance students' ability to focus and reduce stress, leading to better learning outcomes. Studies suggest that students who spend time in nature or have access to natural views experience less mental fatigue and perform better on cognitive tasks. Incorporating outdoor learning or providing access to green spaces can thus play a significant role in supporting students' educational experiences and overall well-being (Kuo, 2019).

3. Research Method

Kothari (2015) describes research methodology as a structured approach to addressing a research problem, essentially forming the science behind conducting academic research. This methodology examines the various strategies a researcher might employ to analyze a research problem, as well as the rationale behind these strategies. The practicality of this research lies in the use of inquiry methods and immersion activities to gather reliable information. The data, primarily quantitative, was collected through a survey and questionnaire that featured clear and easily understood questions. The researcher maintained objectivity, allowing participants to respond freely based on their awareness. (Kothari, 2015).

The validity of this research is affirmed by the precise measurement of methods, which produced results consistent with existing characteristics, traits, and variations within the physical or social environment. The data collected accurately reflects real-world findings

among individuals relevant to the study. (Kothari, 2015). Furthermore, this research is considered authentic because the questions posed were closely aligned with real-life situations, enabling respondents to answer truthfully. The researcher ensured that the respondents were open and honest by eliminating any factors that might compromise their honesty (Kothari, 2015). The reliability of this research is demonstrated by its consistency; repeated surveys would yield the same results as long as respondents were not influenced by external factors during the data collection process (Kothari, 2015).

The research methods refer to the processes used to collect data, which can then be analyzed to assess current methods or to gather additional information on a particular topic (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). The research involved 104 participants. A total of 100 students completed the questionnaire: 50 from Dilan Public School and 50 from Leaders Private School, with each school having 25 students from grade three and 25 from grade six. Additionally, one teacher and one student from each school participated in the interviews. The research was conducted in two primary schools: Dilan Primary School, a public school, and Leaders Primary School, a private school, serving as the data collection sites.

The questionnaire and interview were piloted with four participants: two students (one each from grades 3 and 6) and two teachers, representing both Dilan Public School and Leaders Private School. The sample for this research consisted of 100 participants who completed the questionnaire and four participants who took part in the interview. The questionnaire involved 25 students from grade three and 25 students from grade six in each school, totaling 100 participants who answered 15 statements. The interview, which consisted of 3 questions, included two students (one from each school) and two English teachers, also from each school. For the data analysis, different statistical programs were used to carry out a precise figure and numerical data for the questionnaire. Moreover, the transcription of the data was used for the interview section; however, all the names and personal identities were kept confidential and none were shared with any third party.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Result

1. Demographic of the Participants

This section presents an overview of the participants' demographic details, including their educational level and gender distribution. The research involved 25 students from grade three and 25 students from grade six at Dilan Public School. Similarly, Leaders Private School provided 25 students each from grade three and grade six for the research. At Dilan Public School, there were 28 boys and 22 girls, whereas at Leaders Private School, the participants included 27 boys and 23 girls. Overall, the participant pool comprised 45 girls and 55 boys.

2. Statement Analysis

The analysis of the questionnaire responses was conducted statement by statement, with findings separated by school. The survey was administered at both Dilan Public School and Leaders Private School.

2.1. Statement One

Regarding the statement, "The English language is an important language to learn," 47% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, and 3% agreed. At Leaders Private

School, 38% strongly agreed, 11% agreed, and 1% strongly disagreed. This suggests a higher level of strong agreement among students at Dilan Public School compared to their peers at Leaders Private School.

2.2. Statement Two

For the statement, "I'm not good at one of these skills (reading, listening, writing, or speaking), so it creates problems for me in learning the English language," 17% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, 16% agreed, 10% strongly disagreed, and 7% disagreed. In contrast, at Leaders Private School, 3% strongly agreed, 8% agreed, 21% strongly disagreed, and 18% disagreed. This indicates that students at Dilan Public School reported more difficulties related to specific skills than those at Leaders Private School.

2.3. Statement Three

Regarding the statement, "In my opinion, books, phones, and pads are suitable for improving the English language," 34% of Dilan Public School participants strongly agreed, 11% agreed, 3% strongly disagreed, and 2% disagreed. At Leaders Private School, 27% strongly agreed, 18% agreed, 2% strongly disagreed, and 3% disagreed. This shows that students at Dilan Public School were more inclined to view these resources as beneficial for learning English.

2.4. Statement Four

For the statement, "I speak in English with my classmates," 8% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, 8% agreed, 15% strongly disagreed, and 19% disagreed. At Leaders Private School, 26% strongly agreed, 14% agreed, 4% strongly disagreed, and 6% disagreed. This indicates that students at Leaders Private School more frequently engage in English conversation with their peers compared to those at Dilan Public School.

2.5. Statement Five

Concerning the statement, "When I'm not understanding the lesson, I will ask my teacher without being shy," 38% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, 6% agreed, 2% strongly disagreed, and 4% disagreed. At Leaders Private School, 32% strongly agreed, 9% agreed, 4% strongly disagreed, and 5% disagreed. This demonstrates that students at Dilan Public School are somewhat more proactive in seeking help during lessons than those at Leaders Private School.

2.6. Statement Six

Regarding the statement, "I like the style of my English teacher," 47% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed and 3% agreed. In comparison, at Leaders Private School, 30% strongly agreed, 18% agreed, and 2% disagreed. This indicates that students at Dilan Public School generally have a more favorable view of their English teachers' styles than those at Leaders Private School.

2.7. Statement Seven

For the statement, "My teacher is helping me to learn and improve my English language," 42% of participants at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, and 8% agreed. At

Leaders Private School, 32% strongly agreed, 14% agreed, 1% strongly disagreed, and 3% disagreed. This reflects a stronger perception of support from teachers among students at Dilan Public School compared to those at Leaders Private School.

2.8. Statement Eight

Regarding the statement, "My teacher uses both English and Kurdish to teach the lessons," 38% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, and 12% agreed. In contrast, 18% of students at Leaders Private School strongly agreed, 11% agreed, 8% strongly disagreed, and 13% disagreed. This suggests that students at Dilan Public School perceive a more bilingual teaching approach than those at Leaders Private School.

2.9. Statement Nine

For the statement, "My teacher uses pictures and necessary utilities to explain the methods," 36% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, 11% agreed, 1% strongly disagreed, and 2% disagreed. At Leaders Private School, 21% strongly agreed, 18% agreed, 6% strongly disagreed, and 5% disagreed. This indicates that students at Dilan Public School are more likely to feel that visual aids are effectively used in their English lessons.

2.10. Statement Ten

Concerning the statement, "When I'm not understanding the lesson, my teacher gives me time to ask a question," 31% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, 16% agreed, and 3% disagreed. At Leaders Private School, 29% strongly agreed, 14% agreed, 2% strongly disagreed, and 5% disagreed. This shows that students at Dilan Public School are slightly more likely to appreciate the opportunity to ask questions during lessons compared to those at Leaders Private School.

2.11. Statement Eleven

For the statement, "I like the environment of my classroom in the English lecture," 35% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, 11% agreed, 2% strongly disagreed, and 2% disagreed. At Leaders Private School, 25% strongly agreed, 17% agreed, 1% strongly disagreed, and 7% disagreed. This indicates that students at Dilan Public School generally have a more positive view of their classroom environment compared to their peers at Leaders Private School.

2.12. Statement Twelve

Regarding the statement, "My classroom contains coolers and heaters, so, I don't feel cold in winter or hot in summer," 35% of participants at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, 14% agreed, and 1% strongly disagreed. At Leaders Private School, 39% strongly agreed, 7% agreed, 1% strongly disagreed, and 3% disagreed. This suggests that students at Leaders Private School are slightly more satisfied with the temperature control in their classrooms than those at Dilan Public School.

2.13. Statement Thirteen

For the statement, "Our chairs and tables are new and not broken, so I can sit comfortably in the classroom," 23% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, 11%

agreed, 7% strongly disagreed, and 9% disagreed. At Leaders Private School, 24% strongly agreed, 17% agreed, 2% strongly disagreed, and 7% disagreed. This indicates a higher level of agreement regarding classroom furniture conditions at Leaders Private School compared to Dilan Public School.

2.14. Statement Fourteen

Concerning the statement, “There is no noise in my classroom during teaching, so I can listen to my teacher well,” 22% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, 15% agreed, 7% strongly disagreed, and 6% disagreed. At Leaders Private School, 13% strongly agreed, 6% agreed, 16% strongly disagreed, and 15% disagreed. This reflects that students at Dilan Public School experience fewer disruptions in class compared to those at Leaders Private School.

2.15. Statement Fifteen

For the statement, “My classroom has lights, curtains, and other necessary facilities,” 40% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, 6% agreed, 2% strongly disagreed, and 2% disagreed. At Leaders Private School, 36% strongly agreed, 10% agreed, 1% strongly disagreed, and 3% disagreed. This suggests that students at Dilan Public School are more likely to appreciate the availability of essential classroom facilities compared to those at Leaders Private School.

3. Student Interview Analysis

The interviews conducted as part of this research aimed to enhance the validity of the findings. Each interview consisted of three questions, designed to gather in-depth insights from the participants. Two students from each grade—three and six—were interviewed from both Dilan Public School and Leaders Private School. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of the student’s experiences and perceptions regarding English language learning in these educational settings.

- a. What style or technique does your teacher use in the classroom that has been very helpful in learning or developing your English language? Dilan student interviewee: “My teacher uses data, shows and explains the lesson in a good way, so we understand it well.” Leaders student interviewee: “The first one is that the data show that our teachers shows us videos, and the second is that we have an English book to read, which helped me a lot.”
- b. Except for school, at home, how have you tried to develop your English language? Dilan student interviewee: “I use just the academic book and a little bit of a mobile phone.” Leaders student interviewee: “Through reading stories and watching English videos.”
- c. What equipment or necessities does your school have that you feel helps you develop your English language skills? And what equipment needs to be added? Dilan student interviewee: “It has a lot of materials, like the data shows, and there’s nothing that I want to add to it.” Leaders student interviewee: “We have a library where I read a lot of English books and learn English through them, as well as a data show from which they put us on an English video. Something to add to my school is for my teachers to use something as a fun game in English and learn more from it, for example, the game of guessing sentences or words.”

4. Teacher Interview Analysis

To strengthen the validity of the research, interviews were conducted with teachers, incorporating three targeted questions. Two teachers from each school—one from Dilan Public School and one from Leaders Private School—participated in these interviews. This methodology aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the instructional challenges and strategies related to English language learning in the respective educational environments.

- a. As a teacher, in your opinion, what will make students weak in English? Dilan's teacher interviewee: "The most important reason is family. We do our best to teach students by all available methods in the classroom, and the student receives information from us, but does s/he go home and do the same thing? No, and the reason is that most parents are illiterate, and if they are employees or teachers, they don't have the energy to teach their children, or if they have a question, they don't know what to answer. Another point is in the class itself. For example, we have 25 students in one class, and the teacher cannot interact with all the students, so you have to choose a different group of students every day and make them participate, so every day 5 to 6 students will be deprived. Another very important point is the method of teaching. For example, we brought speakers by ourselves; we have data shows, but we don't have electricity or a connection for them, so those will affect students." Leader teacher interviewee: "In my opinion, the reason for the student's weakness in English is that they are not exposed to an English environment at home; everything in their home has become Kurdish, including their writing, television, channels, and children's games, which is not bad but not good for English because it has not created an English environment. The second reason is that their family delayed learning English, so the children will also not care about it."
- b. As a teacher, what techniques do you use to teach your students English, or what way do you think students should develop their English language? Dilan teacher interviewee: "Each teacher has his style and technique according to his experience, but what is the more common style? We have two books, and you can't get out of them and you have to follow them, but the easiest way is to make yourself a student friend and make them love English lectures. How does a child like English? You have to add interest to your class by adding games, commands, and songs that will attract the child to you. As a technique, we have a set of presentations that you have to present, and then you'll explain the lesson. The next step is production to know how much students understand the lesson, and you're evaluating it individually and collectively to see how much they've benefited from it. I'm going to give every student a test for the day after to know whether he has listened to me and how much s/he has understood me. If they were not good, you must know whether the reason is that you or the student him/herself has not listened." Leader teacher interviewee: "The best way to learn English is to not allow students to use another language in the class but to use English completely and completely, even for many basic things such as drinking water and going to the bathroom. There are many techniques, but if you start from a strategy that is 100 per cent using English in the class, techniques will be reduced to using gaming fight, action, role-playing, or playing in English because the child likes to play and likes to win, and they have to use English to win. For example, in using role play, your role is to show that you are in America, choose a child, give them an English name, make up a story for them, and do it as a play that increases her/his interest as well as a very good technique to help the child learn English."

- c. This school contains what equipment or necessities that help students develop their English language skills? And what equipment needs to be added? Dilan's teacher interviewee: "We have several utilities, like the book itself and the speaker, and this year we have data showing that the students like it so much that it attracts them, but as I said, we have electricity problems. The most important part of the school is an English laboratory, which is very necessary for schools so that the students can sit down and listen to the lesson with headphones and then participate, which is absent in our school." Leaders student interviewee: "Basic things like data shows and speakers are very helpful, because we are in a generation where we need video and games because the child himself or herself doesn't like to have a book put in front of him/her and be told to learn through it, except for those authentic things that you bring from home, and sometimes we have them in school. Also, using flashcards with books makes for visual techniques that can be used. In my opinion, the school needs to have more posters in every class that is special to their curriculum and more flash cards because there are some stages they don't have with their books."

4.2. Discussion of the Data

This chapter presents a comprehensive discussion of the key findings from the research, focusing on participants' background information, responses to fifteen questionnaire statements, and insights from interviews. The analysis aims to address and clarify the central issues identified in this research, with a particular emphasis on the English language learning challenges faced by students in public and private primary schools.

4.2.1. Background Information of the Participants

The research includes a total of 102 student participants and two teachers from Dilan Public School and Leaders Private School. In Dilan Public School, the student sample comprises 28 boys and 22 girls, while in Leaders Private School, the sample includes 27 boys and 23 girls. The teaching staff consists of one female teacher at Leaders Private School and one male teacher at Dilan Public School. Participants are evenly distributed between the third and sixth grades.

4.2.2. Discussion of Research Question One

This section addresses the first research question: "What factors contribute to some students being more proficient in learning English than others?" The analysis synthesizes the results from the questionnaire and interviews, grouping related statements to provide a cohesive answer.

Analysis of Statements (1, 2, 3, 4, and 5)

Statement One: "The English language is an important language to learn." At Dilan Public School, 47% of students strongly agreed, compared to 38% at Leaders Private School. This indicates a higher consensus on the importance of English among public school students.

Statement Two: "I'm not good at one of these skills (reading, listening, writing, or speaking), so it creates problems for me to learn the English language." At Dilan Public School, 17% strongly agreed, whereas 21% at Leaders Private School strongly disagreed. This suggests that more students at Leaders Private School feel less hindered by skill deficiencies.

Statement Three: "In my opinion, books, phones, and pads are suitable for improving the English language." 34% of Dilan Public School students strongly agreed, while 27% of Leaders Private School students agreed. Public school students are more likely to see these tools as beneficial.

Statement Four: "I speak in English with my classmates." Only 19% of Dilan Public School students disagreed, while 26% of Leaders Private School students strongly agreed, indicating a higher frequency of English use among private school students.

Statement Five: "When I'm not understanding the lesson, I will ask my teacher without being shy." 38% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, compared to 32% at Leaders Private School. Public school students are more proactive in seeking help.

Interviews revealed that students at Dilan Public School primarily use academic books and mobile phones to enhance their English, while those at Leaders Private School engage more with English through stories and videos. Teachers noted that in public schools, family illiteracy and lack of English exposure at home contribute to weaker English skills. Conversely, private school students benefit from a more supportive language environment at home. The results align with research suggesting that students' motivation and family support are crucial for language acquisition (Ames, 1990; Wentzel, 2020).

4.2.3. Discussion of Research Question Two

The second research question, "How do teachers influence students' success in learning English?" is explored through the analysis of questionnaire responses and interview data.

Analysis of Statements (6, 7, 8, 9, and 10)

Statement Six: "I like the style of my English teacher." 47% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, compared to 30% at Leaders Private School. Public school students express greater satisfaction with their teachers' styles.

Statement Seven: "My teacher is helping me to learn and improve my English language." 42% of Dilan Public School students strongly agreed, while 32% of Leaders Private School students did. Public school students feel more supported in their learning.

Statement Eight: "My teacher uses both English and Kurdish to teach the lessons." 38% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, compared to 18% at Leaders Private School, suggesting that public school teachers are more likely to use both languages in instruction.

Statement Nine: "My teacher uses pictures and necessary utilities to explain the methods." 36% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, whereas 21% of students at Leaders Private School did. Public school teachers are more likely to use visual aids.

Statement Ten: "When I'm not understanding the lesson, my teacher gives me time to ask a question." 31% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, compared to 29% at Leaders Private School. Both groups of students appreciate the opportunity to seek clarification.

Interviews with students revealed that Dilan Public School teachers use data projectors effectively, while Leaders Private School students benefit from multimedia resources. Teachers at Dilan Public School emphasize engaging students through interactive methods, whereas Leaders Private School teachers focus on immersive English environments. The findings support the idea that effective teaching methods are crucial for

student engagement and language development (Hargreaves, 2016; Shabiralyani et al., 2015).

4.2.4. Discussion of Research Question Three

The third research question, “How does the educational environment impact students’ ability to learn English?” is addressed through the analysis of responses related to classroom conditions.

Analysis of Statements (11, 12, 13, 14, and 15)

Statement Eleven: “I like the environment of my classroom in the English lecture.” 35% of Dilan Public School students strongly agreed, while 25% at Leaders Private School did. Public school students are generally more satisfied with their classroom environment.

Statement Twelve: “My classroom contains coolers and heaters so I don’t feel cold in winter or hot in summer.” 35% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, compared to 39% at Leaders Private School, indicating that private school students feel more comfortable with classroom temperature.

Statement Thirteen: “Our chairs and tables are new and not broken, so I can sit comfortably in the classroom.” 23% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, compared to 24% at Leaders Private School. Both schools report similar levels of satisfaction with classroom furniture.

Statement Fourteen: “There is no noise in my classroom during teaching, so I can listen to my teacher well.” 22% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, whereas 16% of students at Leaders Private School strongly disagreed, suggesting that noise is a more significant issue in private schools.

Statement Fifteen: “My classroom has lights, curtains, and other necessary facilities.” 40% of students at Dilan Public School strongly agreed, compared to 36% at Leaders Private School. Public school students are generally more satisfied with classroom facilities.

Interviews indicated that while Dilan Public School has essential equipment like data projectors, electricity issues sometimes hinder its use. Leaders Private School, on the other hand, has a more stable supply of electricity and additional resources like libraries and flashcards, though they also face some gaps in classroom materials. The data highlight that a well-equipped and comfortable learning environment positively impacts students’ language learning experiences (Gilavand & Jamshidnezhad, 2016; Popcornfurniture, 2015).

5. Conclusion

This research explores English language instruction across various primary schools in Sulaymaniyah City / Iraq, comparing public and private schools. It underscores the pivotal role of teachers in delivering effective and innovative teaching methods and examines the challenges students face in learning English. Additionally, the research also considers how the school environment influences both student learning and teacher effectiveness. The key findings in this research reveal that student success in learning English is influenced by multiple factors including individual motivation, family background, and educational setting. It shows that effective teaching methods and teachers’ expertise significantly enhance student learning experiences. Furthermore, a conducive learning environment, characterized by minimal noise and adequate facilities such as comfortable furniture and essential teaching resources, greatly supports the educational process. These comparisons between

public and private schools highlight notable differences. Since private schools often provide a more supportive learning environment and resources, leading to better educational outcomes. In contrast, public schools, despite having their strengths, often face challenges that need addressing to bridge the educational gap. These could be counted as the main findings of the research after the analysis of the data.

The findings indicate that while private schools offer a more favourable learning environment, public school students still exhibit a positive outlook, emphasizing the need for improvements in public school resources and teaching methods to enhance English language learning outcomes. Furthermore, private schools benefit from modern resources, better classroom conditions, and more effective teaching methods, contributing to higher student engagement and better language skills.

Furthermore, to enhance English language learning, the following recommendations are proposed by the researcher:

- a. For Families: Support children by staying informed about their academic challenges and providing assistance beyond the school environment.
- b. For Teachers: Implement engaging and varied teaching strategies that cater to students' needs, identifying and addressing areas where they may struggle.
- c. For School Administrators: Invest in creating an optimal learning environment by upgrading facilities and resources to better support both students and teachers.

Besides, future research should include a comprehensive review of existing literature on English language learning challenges in primary schools, with a focus on ESL instruction, teacher qualifications, and classroom resources. Additionally, studies should investigate the specific difficulties faced by primary students, including the impact of teaching strategies and available materials.

However, the research encountered several limitations during the research writing and data collection. At Leaders Private School, despite having modern facilities and teaching materials, students still expressed dissatisfaction and suggested improvements. Conversely, students at Dilan Primary School, despite facing issues such as outdated furniture and insufficient materials, showed contentment with their current situation. These observations highlight the disparities between perceptions and actual resources available in different school settings. Another limitation of the research is taking two schools, one public and one private, as models and generalized over all the other schools due to time limitations. In addition, problems like salaries, class and school openings, administrators and school teachers, boycotting in many public schools, and many other district problems occurred while this research was written.

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