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Curriculum-Making and Development in a Pakistani University

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Abstract

Despite frequent calls for increased teacher engagement in curriculum-making and development, there are still many English language teachers worldwide who are required to work with materials that are either culturally inappropriate or inadequate. A related concern is that such materials may deprive teachers of their creative and professional capabilities to address students' needs and interests, so that, weighed down by contextual challenges, the teachers then simply deliver the materials, adhering to the textbook closely. Contextual challenges faced by teachers may be more acute in the developing world. However, it is unclear to what extent teachers in under-resourced contexts cope. In this qualitative case study, we explore approaches to the curriculum (curriculum-making, development or transmission) adopted by three English language teachers at a Pakistani university; we draw on observations, pre-observation interviews and stimulated recall discussions. Our study highlights considerable differences in the teachers' approaches and explores reasons for these differences, including the beneficial effects of experience and professional development opportunities. Implications include the need for greater professional development opportunities in an under-resourced context such as this, as well as mentoring and curriculum renewal involving teachers.

Keywords

qualitative case study, curriculum-making, curriculum-development, English language teaching, Pakistan, higher education

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Despite frequent calls for increased teacher engagement in curriculum-making and development, there are still many English language teachers worldwide who are required to work with materials that are either culturally inappropriate or inadequate. A related concern is that such materials may deprive teachers of their creative and professional capabilities to address students' needs and interests, so that, weighed down by contextual challenges, the teachers then simply deliver the materials, adhering to the textbook closely. Contextual challenges faced by teachers may be more acute in the developing world. However, it is unclear to what extent teachers in under-resourced contexts cope. In this qualitative case study, we explore approaches to the curriculum (curriculum-making, development or transmission) adopted by three English language teachers at a Pakistani university; we draw on observations, pre-observation interviews and stimulated recall discussions. Our study highlights considerable differences in the teachers' approaches and explores reasons for these differences, including the beneficial effects of experience and professional development opportunities. Implications include the need for greater professional development opportunities in an under-resourced context such as this, as well as mentoring and curriculum renewal involving teachers. Keywords: Qualitative Case Study, Curriculum-Making, Curriculum-Development, English Language Teaching, Pakistan, Higher Education

The Need for Curriculum-Makers and Developers

If language teachers are able to design curricula to suit their own contexts, this is ideal, since then they may achieve optimal harmony between their learners' needs and the learning objectives, the materials available, their perceptions of appropriate pedagogy for the situation, their wish to focus on the target language, and their own individuality and preferred teaching styles (Tomlinson, 2012). However, the reality is that in numerous English language learning contexts around the globe many teachers have insufficient options with the materials they are required to use; the way the materials have been designed can make it harder for the teacher to interpret them in original ways (McGrath, 2013). Such materials can deskill teachers and deprive them of their abilities to think creatively and professionally about addressing their students' needs (Crawford, 2002). The teachers' lack of involvement in developing curricula can contribute to their sense of alienation and frustration (Banegas, 2011). A consequence can be teachers feeling themselves reduced to mere implementers of the external curriculum and then failing to even use that effectively in class.

There are strong arguments for involving teachers in curriculum policy. Teachers are well-placed to identify their learners' needs through their observations of the language learning process and their familiarity with their learners' contextual profiles (Tomlinson, 2011). If they

are allowed to fulfill their potential as autonomous professionals, able to make instructional decisions informed by complex, practical, personal and context-specific dimensions of knowledge, thoughts and beliefs (Borg, 2003), then they can bring their practical knowledge gained from classroom experience to the curriculum. This might be as curriculum-makers or in curriculum-development (Shawer, 2010).

These are two of three approaches to the curriculum highlighted by Shawer (2010); the third is curriculum-transmission. In Shawer's qualitative case study of ten college English as a Foreign Language teachers in a Western context, employing classroom observations and interviews with the teachers and their students, several teachers' practices corresponded with each of the three categories. The curriculum-makers avoided textbooks, distinctively generating themes and topics at the start of each semester in consultation with their students, after conducting needs analyses with them. They treated the curriculum as a living, evolving thing, reflecting on what seemed to work with particular groups of students, what seemed worth emphasizing, and designing the curriculum accordingly. They used authentic materials, including newspapers and video recordings, as well as realia, such as food in one observed lesson, and devised their own handouts to be used with these materials. In interview, they also demonstrated pride in their curriculum-making, with one explicitly indicating disdain for curriculum-transmission.

Unlike these curriculum-makers, the curriculum-developers in Shawer's (2010) study tended to follow a textbook, but they did so critically, being prepared to use it as a skeletal framework but only in so far as they found the material engaging; as they explained in interview, they were quite prepared to explore other resources if the textbook material did not appeal to them personally or if they felt it would not interest their students. Classroom observations then confirmed that they used the textbook flexibly, frequently supplementing it or changing the order of activities. As with the curriculum-maker cited in the paragraph above, one curriculum-developer was quite dismissive in interview of over-adherence to the textbook, suggesting this practice resulted in poor teaching.

In contrast, the curriculum-transmitters in Shawer's (2010) study followed the sequencing of their textbooks closely, adhered to the teacher's guides and enacted their lesson plans, as was evident in numerous observed lessons. The materials these teachers used were exclusively from the textbook, with variation very rare, for example to add a mock exam, and students confirmed that the textbook was the single source of input. Interestingly, though, Shawer's findings offer no explanations as to why these teachers approached curricula in this particular way.

Shawer's (2010) research was conducted with teachers who all had teaching qualifications and were experienced (3-20 years), and who taught small classes (each of between 11 and 14 students). However, while most of the curriculum-developers in Shawer's study worked in a college where some textbook use was expected, but where they were free to adapt, the curriculum-makers worked in a college environment in which they had more freedom. So, curriculum policy may have had some effect. Curiously, though, the curriculum-transmitters worked in both of the above types of environment; they were not expected just to transmit the curriculum, but nevertheless did so.

Other studies have cast light on the effects that factors such as experience and education, as well as curriculum policy and contextual constraints, can have on teachers' approaches to the curriculum. In Shawer (2017), for example, which is a case study of UK-based college teachers, curriculum-transmitters ascribed heavy workloads and rigid exams as reasons for following the curriculum closely. Meanwhile, curriculum-developers in the same study highlighted that with experience they had moved away from curriculum-transmission and the textbook, which had initially anchored their work. Teachers in other studies, e.g., in Gray (2000) and Wyatt (2011), have similarly reported moving away from curriculum-

transmission on becoming disenchanted with the apparent limited impact of the curriculum on learning outcomes and on gaining self-confidence over time in adapting materials. A teacher in Wyatt (2011) reported that his capacity to adapt materials to better meet learners' needs had been greatly enhanced by in-service teacher education, which, he felt, through engaging him in practical design tasks, had accelerated his development.

In some contexts, progress away from curriculum-transmission may be inhibited. For example, in Forman's (2014) Thai university context, the academics observed apparently lacked linguistic confidence and perhaps consequently maintained a fairly rigid adherence to the curriculum, despite it not being entirely suited to their context. Such a scenario is much less likely to be an issue in second as opposed to foreign language contexts, such as Pakistan, where linguistic competence amongst university teachers may be greater. Nevertheless, there may be other constraints in a country such as Pakistan.

As this review of the literature has highlighted so far, practices consistent with curriculum-making and curriculum-development are encouraged by researchers such as Tomlinson (2011) and McGrath (2013) for the positive impact they can have on teaching and learning. Nevertheless, it is unclear to what extent the kind of innovative engagement with the curriculum these authors advocate is realized in practice in many contexts since language teacher cognition studies investigating approaches to the curriculum and drawing on Shawer's (2010) model are still rare. Moreover, while the few studies available have tended to utilize stimulated recall interviews, which can be invaluable for eliciting cognitions situated in teachers' actual practices (Walsh & Wyatt, 2014), they also tend to have been conducted either in English-speaking Western contexts (e.g., Shawer, 2017) or in English as a foreign language contexts (e.g., Forman, 2014), with second language contexts such as Pakistan neglected. This study sets out to address the gap by exploring English teachers' approaches to the curriculum in an under-resourced Pakistani university context; we are particularly focusing on whether there is evidence of curriculum-making and development in teaching, and reasons for any apparent differences in approaches we identify. We now describe the context.

The Research Context

We conducted this study at a new technological university in a remote Pakistani province. The university has a department of English, which offers 4-year Bachelor of Studies (BS) degrees in English Language and Literature, and also supports students in other departments to develop workplace-related skills through courses such as *Functional English, Business Communication* and *Communication Skills*. While classes tend to be large, each containing 40-60 students, these students do generally appear to be well-motivated towards learning and using English (Ali, Wyatt, & Van Laar, 2015). Though resources, for example photocopying, tend to be limited, teachers can gain access to the Internet.

As is typical in such universities, teachers have master's level degrees in English Language or Literature, and lack pre-service teacher education. In the view of Mansoor (2005), a consequence of such lack of training is the prevalence of flawed, outdated and lecture-oriented teaching methods; she suggests that many teachers appear to teach in the way they were likely taught. It has also been highlighted that opportunities for peer support and mentoring are lacking, partly because opportunities for immersion in a culture of dialogic learning are limited (Hassan, 2016). Consequently, support for professional development can depend on opportunities to attend short training courses, such as those offered by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan and by donor agencies such as The British Council and the US Consulate. Such courses cover topics such as teaching methods, classroom management, testing and evaluation, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), curriculum and materials development. While anecdotal evidence suggests that such courses

can be highly beneficial, they tend to be short and scarce, since the availability of places is limited. Furthermore, informal reports provided by past participants suggest these courses are not always tailored to the specific context.

While the HEC provides curricula for courses run by English Language and Literature departments in Pakistan, it also offers a free curriculum policy, allowing the individual universities to design their own. This might be desirable since it has been suggested that there are limitations with the curricula of courses they provide, such as *Functional English* and *Pedagogical Grammar,* both BS level. Indeed, contrary to their titles, these courses appear to present a very traditional treatment of grammar, with limited focus on the functional and pedagogical aspects. Moreover, the suggested readings/resources seem outdated and are mostly unavailable. Another limitation appears to be the imbalance of local and international materials, in favor of the latter, with teachers, anecdotal evidence suggests, then complaining about culturally-inappropriate materials. A further major limitation of the HEC curricula seems to be the absence of a communicative dimension, even in courses that aim to develop students' communicative abilities. The *Communication Skills* course, for example, apparently neither anticipates teachers being able to use different kinds of activities nor offers guidelines on how to exploit the materials for different communicative purposes. Meanwhile, for teaching *Effective Oral Presentations*, the curriculum suggests delivering a lecture on the topic, and there is no advice provided on engaging students in practical activities. Anecdotal evidence further suggests that the HEC curricula are also deficient in other ways. For some courses, too little content seems to be provided for the stipulated hours, while for others there appears to be too much, which can make it very challenging for a teacher to finish the course. This might be a serious issue, particularly for a novice teacher who joins the profession without training. Such an issue was a concern for the first researcher (hereafter "I"). I had been a member of this department before embarking on study leave in the UK, where I was supervised by the second researcher. During the course of my studies, I developed a deep interest in language teacher cognition research (Borg, 2003), and returned to Pakistan to collect data, with a view to better understanding language teacher cognition in my own context.

Research Methodology

Interpretive Design: Qualitative Case Study

The research reported in this paper is part of a larger qualitative study, which we introduce first, before reporting on how the current study, presented here, grew from it. For the initial research, without any predetermined notions or theories to verify or confirm, I followed an intrinsic case study approach (Stake, 1995) to explore Pakistani English as a Second Language teachers' cognitions and practices. Based on the understanding that reality is not "out there," but rather is subjective, multi-faceted and constructed in teachers' minds, I adopted an evolving interpretive paradigm using multiple kinds of data (Robson, 2011) to gain an insider view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) of teachers in their natural context (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

After gaining ethical approval for the research from the Institutional Review Board of the British university where I was studying and then permission from the Pakistani university, described above, to proceed with data collection, I approached all ten teachers working in the Department of English, sharing with them the purpose and relevance of the study. Seven teachers agreed to participate voluntarily, by giving informed consent which guaranteed them confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw at any time. In the initial study, I explored the Pakistani teachers' "idealized" cognitions (Borg, 2006) about different aspects of their teaching, the presence and characteristics of any gaps between such cognitions and their

observed classroom behaviors, and possible explanations for these gaps, focusing on groups of teachers within the sample-set in relation to each issue in my thesis.

Sampling

Subsequently, to further explore topics of interest that emerged from the initial research, such as curriculum-making and development, I have employed deeper levels of theoretical sampling (Silverman, 2009); this entails selecting cases according to their relevance to emerging theory, while considering balance and variety, so that the topic of interest is explored from different perspectives. For the focus of the current study, for which we have refined the research questions of the original study and examined the evidence afresh, we draw on data relating to three of the seven teachers (Maria, Raheem and Sana, all pseudonyms). To introduce them briefly, while Maria and Raheem were in their late-thirties, having 13 and 14 years' teaching experience respectively, Sana was in her mid-twenties and had only two years' experience. All three had similar qualifications (MAs in English Language and Literature) and professional responsibilities – teaching across different departments at the university, besides the English department, where they taught literature as well as language courses.

Research Questions

To explore these teachers' cognitions and practices in relation to the chosen topic, our research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What evidence is there of curriculum-making and development in their teaching?
2. What factors might explain any apparent differences in their approaches to the curriculum?

Data Collection

To address these questions, we are drawing on data gathered by the first researcher for the initial study. Several research methods were used together for this, including pre-observation interviews that offered me (the first researcher) the opportunity to gain an initial understanding of the participants' lived worlds from their points of view before I developed any scientific explanations. To allow these interviews to be construction sites of knowledge (Kvale, 1996), they were semi-structured, so that I used the interview schedule as a guide and supplemented it freely with follow-up questions. Through these interviews, I developed pictures of the teachers' educational backgrounds, teaching experiences, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs about English language teaching and learning in the Pakistani context. However, these beliefs would have included "idealized" cognitions (Borg, 2006), i.e., beliefs about what they felt they ought to do, and which might, of course, have had little semblance to the reality of their practices (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). To address this widely-acknowledged weakness of interviews, I also employed observations.

Classroom observations were also crucial since I was primarily focused on developing deeper understanding of teachers' actions rather than of their thoughts in isolation (Borg, 2003). These observations were unstructured, so that I could benefit from serendipity (Whyte, 1984). To minimize the reactivity of participants (Holliday, 2007), I was a "non-participant" (Robson, 2011) and shared only the main aims and objectives of my study with the teachers to avoid the unnatural behavior that full disclosure could have encouraged (Cowie, 2009). I subsequently developed narrative pictures of the observed lessons.

Besides pre-observation interviews and classroom observations, I also used stimulated recall interviews (Gass & Mackey, 2000), during which, after establishing a positive rapport and sense of trust (Holliday, 2007), I reminded teachers of episodes that had occurred in the observed lessons. In stimulating recall, I drew on my observation notes.

Various quality procedures underpinned my use of these various methods. For example, to reduce any possible pressure felt by participants, I ensured that interviews were conducted in a friendly environment in a location of their choice. I chose my words carefully, having reflected on what I had learned from previous interviews with the same participants, and sought elaboration at times as well as confirmation by rephrasing ideas in different ways. Furthermore, to help me maintain a critical distance during observations, each time I observed I requested one of my colleagues (from another department) to sit in the classroom with me, a procedure Padgett (2008) recommends. This procedure permitted "investigator triangulation" (Stake, 1995), as I spoke afterwards about the lesson with my fellow observer, before I discussed it subsequently with the teacher. Moreover, I engaged in "member checking" (Stake, 1995), with interviews audio-recorded, transcribed and subsequently presented to the participating teachers for verification. Several rounds of data collection permitted both "data source triangulation" and "methodological triangulation" (Stake, 1995), with teachers observed three times.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data for the original research, I followed inductive-deductive techniques of content analysis, as described by Galli and Vealey (2008). Drawing on data generated through pre-observation and stimulated recall interviews, I grouped together different concepts, categories and themes, including some general themes I had anticipated (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015), while making use of my previous research experience and reading of the literature. This combination of generalized (deductive) themes and inductive procedures enabled me to link various concepts within themes, which I could then amend or use to identify new sub-themes from the data. During this process, I was mindful not to impose any predetermined categories on the data, but rather allow themes and concepts to emerge through the constant comparison (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) of the teachers' observed actions and interview statements. Some of the initial topics which emerged as a result of this process included "affect in language learning," "communicative language teaching," "teacher-students' interaction," "curriculum materials," "continuing professional development," and "teachers' use of their learners' first languages (L1)." I then narrowed down the study's focus, given its qualitative nature, and concentrated on developing a few topics sufficiently rich and thick in descriptions (Holliday, 2007) for my original study; these selected topics included "teachers' use of their learners' L1," which has since been written up (Imran & Wyatt, 2015), and the focus on "curriculum materials" presented in the current work.

While developing this article, we re-analyzed the data as explained below. We narrowed down to three participants with a view to showcase three cases to correspond with the three approaches to the curriculum (i.e., curriculum-making, development and transmission), which are identified in the literature (Shawer, 2010). Unlike in the original study, which entailed data analysis from three perspectives to correspond with the three research questions (i.e., concerning teachers' beliefs, possible gaps between their beliefs and practices, and explanations for these gaps), we examined the data anew and revised the research questions accordingly; these research questions, presented above, focused on exploring which curriculum approaches the teachers followed and which factors may have influenced their orientations towards these approaches. Moreover, while the original analysis substantially focused on offering insights into these teachers' reported beliefs, which were then critically analyzed against their actual practices (through separate research questions), here we re-examined the

data to offer a holistic perspective on their beliefs and practices (through one research question) and present these data as evidence for the curriculum approaches we associated with each teacher (to interrogate through the second research question). We were able to adopt this analytical strategy for this particular topic "curriculum materials," since the gaps between reported beliefs and actual practices regarding curriculum materials were much less evident to us, when we re-examined the data, than were the gaps between idealized cognitions and classroom practices we had identified in other dimensions of research participants' work, such as in "teachers' use of their learners' L1" (Imran & Wyatt, 2015).

Rigor and Trustworthiness

As indicated above, I (the first researcher) followed various quality procedures during data collection and analysis to support rigor and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, my insider role (i.e., as a lecturer at the same university but on study leave for a PhD), presented certain challenges, including my ideology, objectivity and positioning. Initially I found it challenging to question my prior knowledge about the teachers and the classroom culture. However, supported by the supervisory team at the university including the second researcher, and through utilizing member-checking and observer triangulation, I attempted to resist my personal temptations (Padgett, 2008). This enabled me to achieve greater levels of reflexivity as well as to question and reduce personal prejudices and ideological biases (Holliday, 2007). Although as a cultural insider I cannot claim complete impartiality and neutrality, I attempted to deal with these issues reflexively throughout the process.

Reporting

Regarding data presentation for this study, we focus on the three teachers (Maria, Raheem and Sana) introduced above. We have used data related to their classroom observations and pre-observation interviews predominantly to address our first research question and data related to the stimulated recall interviews to address our second research question. We present these data in the form of "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) to facilitate vicarious understanding. In developing this thick description, we set out to help the data star (Chenail, 1995), carefully juxtaposing examples and analytic commentary, and transitioning rhythmically in the manner of the "Tarzan process" Chenail recommends. We punctuate the narrative below by indicating the sources of our data. The following exemplifies the key employed:

> MI.1 = Maria Interview 1
> RO.2 = Raheem Observation 2
> SSR.3 = Sana Stimulated Recall 3

Findings

Research Question 1: What evidence is there of curriculum-making and development in their teaching?

The three teachers appeared to adopt three broadly different approaches to the curriculum. Maria seemed to be a curriculum-maker. Firstly, from an ideological perspective, she indicated feeling sceptical about the value of textbooks, arguing they "restrict the students' quest for learning" (MI.1). Her practices were more in line with curriculum-making. She preferred negotiating the curriculum with students at the start of each semester, subsequently

freely sequencing, supplementing, dropping and experimenting with syllabus topics, according to her perceptions of students' needs and interests (MI.2). She felt this approach was beneficial to students. Maria reported she believed in offering students "multiple materials input," including natural and authentic materials, to engage them both affectively and cognitively (MI.2). This curriculum-making approach was evident in materials she had prepared for her observed teaching. For example, in a *Phonetics and Phonology* BS English class, she used her own pre-prepared posters and worksheets with diagrams about the anatomy of speech production, English vowels and consonants; these materials seemed attractive and engaging and appeared to arouse the students' curiosity (MO.2). Maria reported believing in the value of using online resources, including English language videos from YouTube to offer students authentic practice, particularly so while teaching phonetics (MI.1), and in one of her classes she made extensive use of multimedia (MO.1). Only in one of the three observed lessons did Maria consult one of the recommended books, and this was to read a few passages from it to supplement her own pre-prepared materials (MO.2). So, curriculum-making seemed to very much characterize her work.

In contrast, the second teacher, Raheem, appeared to be a curriculum-developer. While Maria indicated being wary of textbooks, Raheem presented a much more positive view of them. He argued that they are more reliable than other kinds of materials, for example Internet-based materials, as they are "prepared by experts" (RI.1). However, he also indicated he was cautious of over-using textbooks, concerned about "over-feeding, if the materials couldn't be digested or assimilated by students" (RSR.3). So, for him, textbooks had a place, but only in so far as they clearly served learning. He reported that the learners' developmental needs were of paramount importance. Raheem emphasized that students' "sense of curiosity must be instigated; they should feel the thirst, the urge to learn" (RSR.3). While textbooks could create this curiosity, they were not alone in doing this. Indeed, Raheem reported feeling that supplementing textbooks with a range of materials from, for example, newspapers, magazines and the Internet, would increase students' curiosity and raise their motivation (RI.1). Such materials could also be employed with learner-centered pedagogy; in Raheem's view, such authentic materials could usefully involve students in "tasks and activities and engage them in conversation" (RI.3), thus promoting communicative competence. Observations then revealed that these views about the value of authentic materials within a curriculum-development approach seemed to be reflected in his teaching. For example, in his *Academic Reading and Writing* BS English class, after providing a book-based lecture, he engaged the students in group reading of newspaper editorials; from the observers' perspective, this group work activity utilizing authentic materials appeared to motivate the students as they actively participated in the subsequent discussion (RO.2). As well as using authentic materials in this way within a curriculum-development approach, Raheem was observed to engage in materials' modification, simplification and adaptation, for example with a story text he had downloaded from the internet, to teach seven types of paragraph writing (RO.1). He had made this text useable by cutting down some lengthy paragraphs in line with curriculum-development. He was also observed to add speaking activities to his classes, for example short talks on topics assigned in the previous lesson (RO.2-3). So, he was clearly practicing the curriculum-development approach he argued, in interview, was necessary to increase students' curiosity and motivation, and to provide opportunities for communicative interaction.

Unlike Maria, the curriculum-maker, and Raheem, the curriculum-developer, Sana appeared to be a curriculum-transmitter. In contrast to the other two, she seemed to have a heightened sense of the value of textbooks, arguing that they "are very important" (SI.1). She also stressed that they were central to her teaching practice; she reported insisting that her students "make sure they've got them prior to her lecture" (SI.1). In class, she was then observed to follow textbooks closely, which tallied with her belief in the value of textbooks

and her self-reported practice in using them. For example, in a *Communication Skills* BS English class, the topics and sub-topics of the lecture, which she wrote on the whiteboard, were drawn directly from the textbook; she then followed the textbook contents faithfully, employing the examples provided in the published materials (SO.1). Strict adherence to the textbook in this case may have curbed creativity. Indeed, this observed class seemed to be dominated entirely by teacher talk, with the students apparently just taking down notes that related to textbook language (SO.1). This was a pattern observed on other occasions. For example, her lesson in a *Functional English* BS English class stayed very close to the textbook content, with the teacher in a dominant role; Sana focused on explaining rules for adverb-formation with examples drawn directly from the textbook, without otherwise appearing to attempt to contextualize the language or engage the students in any way (SO.2); so the lesson was again textbook-oriented and teacher-centered. In three observed lessons, the only time that Sana was observed to depart briefly from the textbook was while using a photocopied short story to teach vocabulary; she asked the students to read their handouts silently and underline difficult words, which they subsequently discussed in small groups (SO.3). This provides an indication then that not all of her teaching was characterized by curriculum-transmission. Indeed, in interview, Sana claimed to sometimes facilitate students' language learning through use of "visual resources, like pictures and multimedia" as well as the internet, CDs and online sources (SI.1); this self-reported practice suggests approaches followed by Maria and Raheem: curriculum-making and development. However, there was a lack of evidence of such creativity in the three observed lessons in this study, which suggests such practice may have been comparatively rare.

In summary, the three teachers in this study appeared to adopt very different approaches to the curriculum, which map, to a large extent, on to Shawer's (2010) framework. We now turn to our second research question, seeking to explore factors which may have influenced their self-reported beliefs and practices, idealized cognitions and observed practices. To address this question, we draw on data from the stimulated recall interviews to augment that from the pre-observation interviews and observations.

Research Question 2: What factors might explain any apparent differences in their approaches to the curriculum?

In Maria, who seemed to be a curriculum-maker (Shawer, 2010), there appeared to be a synergy between beliefs and practices. Indeed, her practices seemed driven by highly-principled beliefs, for example, in the need for materials that foster learner autonomy (MI.1) and reflect a communicative orientation to language teaching (MI.2). While this suggests prior exposure to public theory in these areas, Maria reported she was also inspired by the impact of her innovations on learning processes. Her self-prepared materials were well-received, and Maria acknowledged that students' positive responses towards the materials she created, evident in all three observed lessons (MO.1-3), were a source of motivation to her (MSR.1&3). As well as having the internal drive to constantly re-make the curriculum because it seemed a principled thing to do and was valued by learners, Maria also reported enjoying creating materials out of "professional interest" (MSR.1), so it was additionally a kind of hobby. She reported benefiting greatly from the university's curriculum-free policy, which had facilitated her creativity with materials (MI.2) and was consequently thankful for this. If there had been restrictions on her curriculum-making, she indicated she may have been unhappy, since she was really quite dismissive of some locally-produced textbooks for their lack of conceptual clarity (MI.3). Despite now feeling secure as a curriculum-maker, Maria confessed, however, that it had not always been easy to implement her ideas. For example, she recalled difficulties when transitioning to the university several years earlier, when contextual challenges, such as

time shortages and students' orientations towards the textbook, had seemed a threat (MSR.3). Nevertheless, prior teaching experiences, including 10 years in a school, had given her the self-confidence to work to overcome these challenges (MSR.3). Consequently, she was now able to express herself as a curriculum-maker in a curriculum-free environment, supporting well-motivated students in accordance with principled beliefs.

Raheem, whose beliefs and practices seemed characteristic of curriculum-development rather than curriculum-making (Shawer, 2010), nevertheless shared with Maria certain core beliefs, for example in the need to support learner autonomy (RSR.2), which could map onto either a curriculum-making or a curriculum-development approach. Raheem was very conscious of how his cognitions and practices had developed. Indeed, he recalled a time when he had over-supported students, aiming to "impart total knowledge about a topic" (RSR.2), an approach which suggests curriculum-transmission. Now, though, his perspective was that the students "can be given tasks, they can be made independent, they should work on their own" (RSR.2), a view that would fit with curriculum-making or development. Raheem reported that the catalyst for change had been an in-service professional development course provided by a donor agency; this had helped him make "an immense departure" from his previous approach (RSR.2), which was, as we have noted, closer to curriculum-transmission. Raheem had then built on this initial impetus to change, for besides gaining inspiration from the in-service professional development course, like Maria, Raheem had experienced success. He reported that he had gained positive feedback from students regarding his curriculum innovations, which was encouraging him to continue supplementing the curriculum to meet their needs (RSR.3). This focus on "supplementing" underlines that he saw himself as a curriculum-developer.

In contrast to the other two, Sana, whose beliefs and practices seemed characteristic of a curriculum-transmission approach (Shawer, 2010), provided fewer theoretical justifications. She explained her heavy reliance on textbooks, when this was drawn attention to in stimulated recall, by reporting that she preferred them for being "comprehensive" and "student-friendly" (SSR.1). Her choice of the term "comprehensive" suggests a perceived need to prioritize covering the content of instruction; observations suggested she did do this (SO.1-3). From the perspectives of the observers, though, the textbook materials did not appear to be "student-friendly." That Sana thought they were may hint at a possible lack of self-awareness. Sana indicated a willingness to adapt the curriculum, but also highlighted multiple contextual challenges that inhibited her from doing so; these contextual challenges included limited time, a heavy workload, students' low English proficiency, examination requirements, large classes and the requirement to teach across the university (SSR.1). Reflecting on these issues, Sana indicated that she had received very limited support in working with materials thus far in her short teaching career and was conscious of the need for more help, explaining that she wished "to attend a training session on materials development to learn how different types of materials are used and exploited in the classroom"; she hoped the university or the HEC could arrange this training session for her (SSR.2).

Discussion

As we have noted, the three teachers in this case study (Maria, Raheem, and Sana) appeared to adopt approaches to the curriculum largely consistent with curriculum-making, development and transmission (Shawer, 2010) respectively. So, while Maria's match with curriculum-making is evident in her negotiating the curriculum with students and avoiding textbooks, Raheem reflected a curriculum-development approach through using textbooks flexibly, frequently supplementing and adapting them. Sana's practices relate to curriculum-transmission, in that she followed the prescribed curriculum closely.

As to the factors that shaped these approaches, the free curriculum policy allowed by the HEC seemed to help Maria chiefly rather than the others. However, beliefs, levels of experience, exposure to professional development opportunities and a range of contextual factors all appeared influential in shaping the various teachers' practices. For Maria and Raheem, experience and training were important. These are critical factors enabling teachers to move away from prescribed curricula and respond more to their students' needs and wants (Crawford, 2002), as other studies have underlined (e.g., Shawer, 2017; Wyatt, 2011). Sana's approach underscores that, in the absence of much experience and training, contextual factors, such as a heavy workload and examination requirements, can make alternatives to curriculum-transmission less feasible (Shawer, 2017).

In drawing these conclusions, we recognize that the findings from this small-scale qualitative case study cannot be generalized. Nevertheless, we would emphasize that we did adopt certain quality procedures with a view to achieving comparability and transferability (Cohen et al., 2007). For example, I (the first researcher) incorporated "investigator triangulation" and "member checking" (Stake, 1995) in my original research to increase impartiality and neutrality. Furthermore, through relatively prolonged engagement in the research setting, I was able to develop a trusting relationship with the research participants, which would have helped to decrease reactivity and participants' bias (Robson, 2011).

With the above points in mind, we wish to highlight several implications that this small-scale qualitative case study raises. First, the benefits that Raheem reported gaining from in-service professional development focused on materials demonstrate the value of providing this in the Pakistani higher education context. Such professional development can raise awareness of how various types of materials might be developed, adapted and exploited in the class (Tomlinson, 2012). Moreover, such educational opportunities can equip teachers with skills and strategies to tackle contextual challenges, including heavy workloads and time shortages (Shawer, 2017).

Second, given that novice teachers like Sana are likely to depend on the curriculum provided to a certain extent, at least initially, the HEC curricula could be improved. This suggests not only perhaps providing more professional development opportunities for local curriculum designers and textbook writers (though investigating the cognitions of these groups was outside the scope of this study), but also creating space for teacher participation in curriculum policy (Banegas, 2011).

Third, given the very different approaches to the curriculum observed in this study from teachers in the same small department, it seems unfortunate that none of the participants indicated they had benefited from mentoring. As Hassan (2016) argues, there tends to be a lack of mentoring in Pakistani higher education contexts. It is likely that Sana, given her current level of development, could, in particular, have benefited from it here. There are implications, then, for the management of the English department in this university, and perhaps for others like it; all new teachers could be assigned mentors, and mentors could be trained (Arnold, 2006).

If students' needs and interests are to be addressed adequately through the curricula they are provided with, it seems crucial to work to develop teachers' creative and professional capabilities, so that these teachers are then able to respond to their students' needs, as curriculum-makers and developers. In our view, Shawer's (2010) framework could be consulted by in-service teacher educators seeking to gain a deeper understanding of the cognitions of teachers regarding curricula in the different contexts they work in. This deeper understanding amongst teacher educators could inform their awareness of the developmental stages of the teachers they work with and their own teacher education practices; it could also inform any practitioner research they conducted exploring the effectiveness of interventions designed to support teachers' engagement with curricula.

Nevertheless, these recommendations should be set against the limitations of the scope of this study. First, our research design aimed to be cross-sectional, and hence did not extend investigation to pre- and post-professional development data to examine specific effects of professional development sessions on the cognitions and practices of teachers. Accordingly, this insight offers direction to future studies to explore teachers' cognitions before and after different formal and informal professional development activities.

Second, contrary to the limited focus of this study (i.e., on one university), a multiple case study, comparing and contrasting cognitions of teachers in different universities, could provide a detailed picture of the contextual factors, within different higher education institutes, that influence the development of teachers' cognitions. Comparisons could be made between public and private universities, newer and older universities, smaller and larger universities (as categorized by HEC), and rural and urban universities. Such a multiple case study would provide a fuller picture of language teachers' cognitions within Pakistani higher education and could benefit policy-makers accordingly.

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