

## Teacher Leadership in English Language Teaching: Perspectives of Pakistani Undergraduate Students

Hafiza Sana Mansoor<sup>1</sup>, Bambang Sumardjoko<sup>2</sup>, Anam Sutopo<sup>3</sup>, Harun Joko Prayitno<sup>4</sup>, Utama<sup>5</sup>, Abdul Bari Khan<sup>6</sup>, Laili Etika Rahmawati<sup>7</sup>

### Abstract

*Teacher leadership has received increased attention as it develops teachers' professionalism and enhances students' learning. Traditionally, studies on teacher leadership have primarily emphasized administrative aspects. The aim of this study was to employ Full-Range Leadership (FRL) to explore teacher leadership in English Language Teaching (ELT) from the perspective of students at university level in Pakistan. A sample of fifteen students was selected through a convenience sampling technique from a private university in Multan city. This qualitative study conducted semi-structured interviews of students to enable content analysis of the data. All participants were contemporarily enrolled in undergraduate program in the Department of English. English language teachers possessed all three leadership aspects of the FRL model—transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire—as shown in the results. The findings revealed that English teachers were generally disciplined, dedicated, and organized, showing a stronger inclination toward the active components of the transactional and transformational leadership in the FRL model. Conversely, English teachers who were perceived as less effective in their interactions with students and teaching practices exhibited higher laissez-faire and passive transactional tendencies. This study suggests that integrating transformational and active transactional leadership in ELT can enhance student achievement and improve teacher-student relationships as these contribute to effective leadership.*

**Keywords:** Full-Range Leadership, Transformational, Transactional, Laissez-Faire, Teaching practices..

### Introduction

Every great teacher possesses leadership qualities that inspire students to achieve their educational goals. However, some teachers are unaware of their own leadership abilities and pay little attention to enhance them. Many teachers have limited knowledge of what teacher leadership truly involves and how it can be effectively applied in classroom practices. Teacher is the group leader in the class and all the students follow him to achieve their educational goals (Baba & Ace, 1989; Bolkan & Goodboy, 2010; Harrison, 2013; Sharar & Nawab, 2020; DeDeyn, 2021). Unlike traditional teaching, teachers in English Language Teaching (ELT) need to be empowered to manage multi-cultural classrooms and diverse learning environments (Banstola, 2023; Christison & Murray, 2023; Vaishnav, 2024). Teacher leadership plays an important role in inspiring students, enhancing instructional skills, and improving learning outcomes, making ELT more effective (DeDeyn, 2021; Erdel & Takkaç, 2020; Greenier & Whitehead, 2016; Khoudri, 2024). Although extensive literature exists on teacher and instructional leadership in general education, the area of teacher leadership in ELT still requires further attention.

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<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia, Jl. Garuda Mas No. 2, Kartasura, Sukoharjo, Central Java 57169, Indonesia, Email: q300249009@student.ums.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia, Jl. Garuda Mas No. 2, Kartasura, Sukoharjo, Central Java 57169, Indonesia, Email: bs131@ums.ac.id

<sup>3</sup> Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia, Jl. Garuda Mas No. 2, Kartasura, Sukoharjo, Central Java 57169, Indonesia, Email: anam.sutopo@ums.ac.id

<sup>4</sup> Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia, Jl. Garuda Mas No. 2, Kartasura, Sukoharjo, Central Java 57169, Indonesia, Email: hjp220@ums.ac.id

<sup>5</sup> Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia, Jl. Garuda Mas No. 2, Kartasura, Sukoharjo, Central, Java 57169, Indonesia, Email: utama@ums.ac.id

<sup>6</sup> Faculty of Language and Communication, University Malaysia Sarawak, Sarawak, Malaysia, Post Office, Tari Khel, Mianwali, Punjab, Pakistan, Email: 17010087@siswa.unimas.my

<sup>7</sup> Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Indonesia, Jl. Garuda Mas No. 2, Kartasura, Sukoharjo, Central Java 57169, Indonesia, Email: laili.rahmawati@ums.ac.id

At the university level in Pakistan, the lecture method is commonly used by teachers across various disciplines. However, English language teachers often adopt different instructional approaches, incorporating more student-centered methods and activities (Khan et al., 2023). This shift is necessary because ELT inherently requires greater student engagement and active participation (Banstola, 2023; Weaver & Qi, 2005). In Pakistan, teaching styles vary significantly between government and private institutions, as well as across different educational levels. At the school level, teachers often focus on teaching grammar and vocabulary, using more structured approaches. In contrast, at the university level, students are expected to take more responsibility for their learning, with teachers emphasizing assignments, projects and independent work. As a result, students meet different leadership styles from their English language teachers throughout their academic journey. Exploring students' perspectives on these leadership styles in ELT is significant, as they have valuable insights into how different styles of teachers impact their learning experiences and engagement.

## Literature Review

Leadership in ELT needs to be developed (Christison & Murray, 2023; Greenier & Whitehead, 2016) because effective leadership has a significant relationship with learning outcomes, as reflected in the literature (DeDeyn, 2021; Pardosi & Utari, 2022; Rodrigues & de Lima, 2024). Different researchers have provided definitions of a teacher leader based on the context and learning environment (Vaishnav, 2024). A great teacher leader is one who motivates others beyond the classroom (Khoudri, 2024; Nugent, 2009), such as by participating in decision-making, contributing to policy development, inspiring colleagues, motivating students, and contributing to the success of the organization.

James MacGregor Burns, a political historian, introduced the concept of transforming leadership in 1978, which later known as transformational leadership, and this inspired numerous researchers to publish studies on leadership throughout the 1980s. Burns (1978) stated that transactional leadership is based on a give-and-take relationship between the leader and their subordinates. For example, in politics, a leader may ask for votes and, in return, offer incentives; similarly, in a classroom, a teacher as leader may offer rewards for improved student performance. This contrasts with transformational leadership, which emphasizes collaboration and cooperation between the leader and his/her subordinates, where both parties work together to achieve goals through high motivation and enhanced performance. Bass (1985) modified Burns' transformational-transactional model, which later led to the development of the Full-Range Leadership (FRL) model by Avolio and Bass (1999). The FRL model comprises three main components: transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles. FRL model is the most suitable model for exploring teachers' leadership in ELT classrooms.

Transformational leadership is given greater attention in the current study; however, transactional leadership is vital to understand the effectiveness of teacher leadership in classrooms. Numerous studies examined the supporting components of transformational and transactional leadership in FRL model (Avolio et al., 1999; Avolio & Bass, 2001; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Bass & Bernard, 1985; Pounder, 2005). According to Bass and Avolio (1990), the FRL model addresses three main dimensions of leadership: the effectiveness of leadership, the satisfaction of subordinates with their leaders, and the extent to which subordinates put in additional effort. Previous literature on organizational leadership (Avolio et al., 1999) and instructional leadership (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2010; Harrison, 2013; Noland & Richards, 2014; Pounder, 2004, 2005, 2008; Rodrigues & de Lima, 2024) has identified a favorable relationship among these three dimensions and transformational leadership.

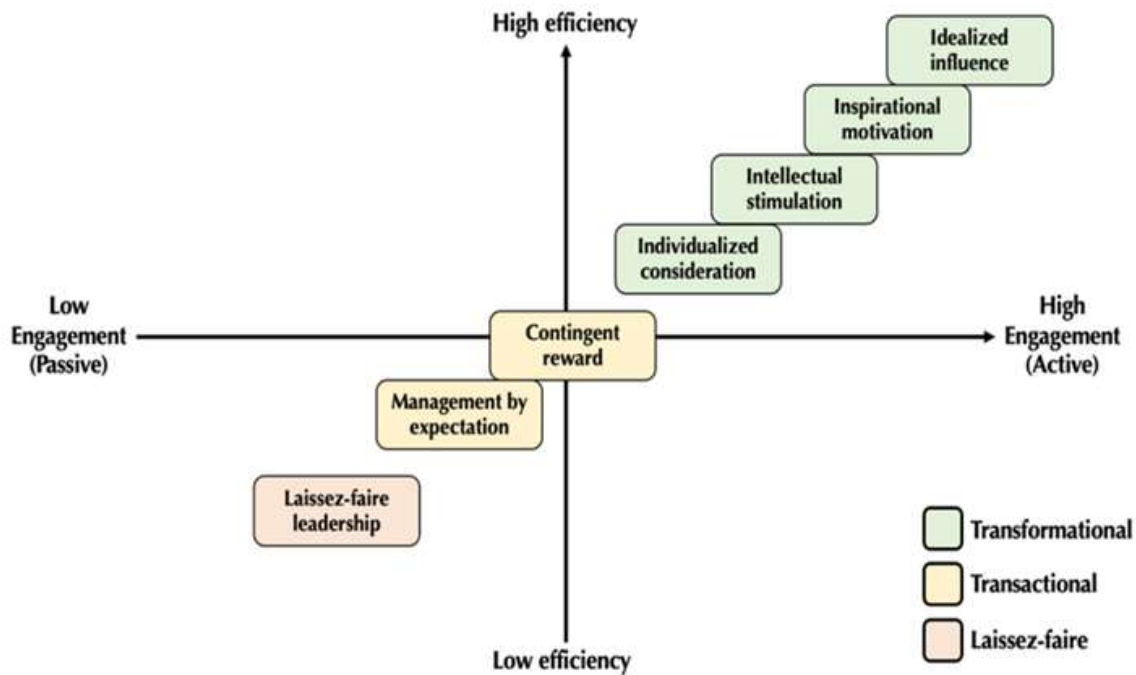


Figure 1. Full-Range Leadership Model (Bass & Avolio, 1990)

Previous research (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2010; Kim, 2012; Noland & Richards, 2014) on the FRL model have revealed that commitment, motivation, enthusiasm, communication, inspiration, and empowerment are some of the commonly cited terms that describe transformational leadership. Furthermore, 21st century teacher is regarded as a facilitator who adapts instruction to meet the needs of individual students, making language teaching more student-centered (Christison & Murray, 2023) which actually in line with the principles of first component of FRL model (Banstola, 2023). Teacher leadership notion in ELT is still vague due to limited research on actual classroom practices and a lack of understanding of how students perceive leadership in their teachers (Christison & Murray, 2023). Teacher leadership has been explored from both students' and teachers' perspectives in general education across various countries (Rodrigues & de Lima, 2024), and from teachers' perspectives also in Pakistan (Sharar & Nawab, 2020; Khoso et al., 2023). However, understanding teacher leadership from the learners' perspective is essential, particularly in enhancing engagement and motivation in English language learning (Greenier & Whitehead, 2016). Therefore, this study aims to explore effective teacher leadership qualities in ELT as perceived by Pakistani higher education students.

## Methods

The current research employed a qualitative approach using the FRL model to explore students' perspectives on the effectiveness of leadership demonstrated by their university English teachers. It is suggested that in general interview research, the participants should be around ten to fifteen (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Fifteen undergraduate students from the English Department of Linguistics and Literature at a private university in Multan, Pakistan, were selected using the non-probability sampling. Their ages ranged from 19 to 24, with 9 female and 6 male participants. These students had considerable experience learning the English language from English teachers and were mature enough to comprehend and respond appropriately to the interview questions. Since the sample was easily accessible to the researchers, a convenience sampling technique was applied (Etikan et al., 2016). All selected participants were currently studying Functional English, Communication Skills, Academic Writing, and Report Writing courses from English lecturers.

Nine questions based on the FRL model were designed for a semi-structured interview. These questions were piloted with three undergraduate students from English departments to assess the validity and clarity of the questions. This process helped refine the interview questions and ensured a smooth and effective data collection experience. Following this, the actual interviews were conducted via Zoom, with participants' consent obtained previously. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of how students perceive their teachers' leadership roles in developing effective learning environments. Zoom video calls were used for the interviews, as this platform is considered cost-effective, user-friendly and confidential for data collection. This tool allowed the researchers to observe both verbal and non-verbal communication, offering a richer understanding of the participants' responses compared to phone calls (Archibald et al., 2019). To ensure participation, reminder emails were sent to students prior to the scheduled interview times. Data collection was taken over a fifteen day period, accommodating the availability of both the interviewer and interviewees. Each interview, focusing on teacher leadership in ELT from the students' perspective, lasted between 25 and 40 minutes.

To analyze the data, the interview translations were conducted where needed while recordings were listened to repeatedly to ensure accuracy and consistency. After thorough cross-checking of the transcripts, the data were coded and organized. Consistency-checking formula (Miles & Huberman, 1994), shown below, was applied to ensure coding reliability.

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Number of Agreement}}{\text{Total Number of Cases}}$$

According to the formula, the researchers first determined the codes for agreement and disagreement. To check reliability, the total number of agreements was divided by the sum of agreed and disagreed codes. In this study, the coding percentage was 86% reliable, which exceeds the threshold of 80% typically considered reliable (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The content analysis method was used to analyze the data collected from the interviews, as it helps derive meaning from unstructured data (Creswell & Inoue, 2024). Content analysis is defined as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use” (Krippendorff, 2018). This method of data analysis enables researchers to achieve realistic findings by organizing and extracting meaning from the raw data (Bengtsson, 2016). To protect confidentiality and maintain anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned to all students alphabetically as S1, S2, and so on, throughout the analysis.

## Results

### *Theme. 1. Idealized Influence*

To explore students' perceptions of their teachers, they were asked questions about the image they have of their teachers, their feelings toward them, and their sharing relationship with them. The categories and codes presented in Table 1 were derived from the students' responses.

**Table 1. Category and Codes about Idealized Influence**

Category	Code	Response (N)
Favorable traits	Motivating	6
	Positive	5
	Encouraging	5
	Persuasive	3
	Understanding	4
	Friendly	8
	Communicative	2
	Dedicated	5

	Impressive	1
	Good looking	3
	Well-prepared	3
Unfavorable traits	Commanding	7
	Rigid	2
	Monotonous	5
	Discriminatory	1
	Narrow-Minded	1
	Inflexible	6
	Confused	1
	Unenergetic	2
	Disorganized	2
Positive impression	Thankful to him/her	6
	Make learning fun	4
	Explain things clearly	13
	Encourage discussion	6
	Push us to improve writing	4
	Give constructive feedback	3
	Makes lesson interesting	1
	His/her enthusiasm inspires me to do my best	1
	Like his welcoming attitude	5
Negative impression	She/he plays favoritism	1
	He/she is conservative	1
	More irrelevant teaching	1
	Over emphasize on assignments and quiz	5
	I am afraid of his/her harsh criticism	4
Reciprocal sharing	His/her success stories	12
	Experiences with former students	3
	New opportunities for students	1
	Do not share personal problems	1
	Gossip about colleagues	1
	Do not share confidential information	4
	Share tips to improve language	9

The responses indicate that students value teachers who foster supportive and approachable environment. Most of the students responded positively about their teachers when asked to describe them. S13 responded, “*Well-prepared; it shows his dedication and helps us stay organized.*” S8 stated, “*Encouraging, motivating, positive, but inflexible.*” Except for *inflexible*, all the traits are favorable regarding the teacher. Another student stated, “*Understanding and persuasive, especially when we struggle with difficult topics.*” Similarly, another student responded positively, saying, “*Their enthusiasm and impressive teaching style keep me engaged in learning.*” Eight students described their teachers as friendly, while six students described them as motivating. Students also expressed less favorable comments about their teachers, describing them as commanding, rigid, monotonous, discriminatory, narrow-minded, inflexible, confused, unenergetic, and disorganized. S9 stated, “*Unenergetic, which affects my own motivation to engage in the class.*” S1 shared, “*Sometimes too rigid; there’s no flexibility in deadlines or discussions.*” Another student commented, “*A bit narrow-minded about alternative viewpoints, which discourages open discussion.*” These responses reflect students’ frustrations when teachers exhibit less flexible or dynamic leadership traits.

Idealized influence in leadership is weakened by perceived rigidity or lack of adaptability. Students view effective teacher leadership as both organized and inspiring; thus, the presence of disorganization or lack of enthusiasm can detract from teachers' influence, making it harder for students to fully engage or find inspiration in the lecture (Young & Shaw, 1999). Idealized influence is reflected through teachers who

inspire students with favorable traits that make learning enjoyable. Such traits contribute to building a favorable learning atmosphere and supporting teachers' leadership. When students were asked about their impressions of their English teachers in relation to the attributed aspect of idealized influence, most expressed that their teachers explain concepts with clarity, suggesting a strong confidence in their teachers' knowledge and instructional methods. For example, S13 stated, "*The way they explain things is very clear; it makes difficult concepts easier to understand.*" Additionally, students highlighted that their teachers promote classroom discussions; as S10 commented, "*They encourage us to discuss our ideas, which builds my confidence in expressing thoughts.*" Four students mentioned that their teachers make learning enjoyable, as noted by S6, "*I really appreciate that my teachers make learning fun and engaging for us.*" Three students emphasized the constructive feedback they receive on assignments and other class tasks, as described by S14: "*They give us constructive feedback that actually helps me improve my overall English language skills, especially in writing.*" Only one student specifically noted the enthusiasm of their teacher, as S2 stated, "*I feel inspired by their enthusiasm; it motivates me to do my best in the course.*"

Students also reported some negative perceptions of their teachers that they found discouraging and demotivating. One student expressed concern about favoritism shown toward more active and high-achieving students. S8 noted, "*I don't like how they show favoritism; it makes me feel left out.*" S7 highlighted a conservative attitude among some teachers toward student attire, stating, "*I don't understand why some teachers are so conservative and narrow-minded about how I dress. I feel judged and less confident because of it.*" Another student criticized the tendency of some teachers to over-explain concepts in the local language, which they found irrelevant and unhelpful. S11 commented, "*Some lectures often go off-topic, covering irrelevant information in the local language that doesn't help me.*" Additionally, five students mentioned feeling stressed by the frequency and emphasis on assignments and quizzes, as S15 described: "*Most of our teachers emphasize assignments and quizzes too much, which adds a lot of stress.*" Four students expressed a fear of being criticized by teachers in class; as S4 stated, "*I'm afraid of harsh criticism, so I'm hesitant to share my thoughts in class.*"

The positive impressions promote an environment where teachers encourage growth, understanding, and intellectual stimulation. Through effective Idealized influence, teachers not only provide clarity and constructive feedback but also foster students' intrinsic motivation. By creating an enjoyable and stimulating learning atmosphere, teachers cultivate a deeper respect and positive perception, ultimately enhancing students' educational experience. Negative impressions point to areas where teachers' influence can unintentionally discourage students or create a tense environment. When teachers are perceived as biased, overly critical, or inflexible, it may hinder students' willingness to engage or feel valued. Idealized influence requires teachers to remain approachable and fair, so a sense of favoritism or harshness undermines the leadership role they could otherwise embody, potentially impacting student morale and confidence.

In the category of reciprocal sharing, students frequently reported that teachers share success stories and language improvement tips. S12 described how teachers share examples from their own achievements and the success stories of former students, stating, "*They often share how they improved their language skills during their student years, as well as success stories of past students, which motivates us to aim high.*" Students appreciate the guidance and extra tips provided by their teachers to improve language skills. For instance, S3 remarked, "*I appreciate that my teachers share effective and simple methods for improving our language skills without becoming overly personal.*" When asked if teachers share personal or professional issues in class, all students except one responded negatively. For example, S11 stated, "*They never share their personal problems or confidential details, which makes me respect their professionalism.*" One student mentioned that teachers occasionally discuss other teachers in class; S7 commented, "*A very few teachers sometimes gossip about colleagues with students, which makes me feel uncomfortable.*" Additionally, students acknowledged that teachers share valuable opportunities with them. As S3 stated, "*They often talk about new opportunities we can explore, like internships or competitions, and encourage us to take part.*"

Reciprocal sharing reflects teachers' balance between encouraging openness and maintaining professional boundaries. When teachers share motivating stories or guidance, they promote Idealized influence, reinforcing their role as mentors. However, gossiping about colleagues or oversharing can blur professional boundaries, potentially compromising respect. Students value leadership that maintains a focus on educational support and constructive advice, enhancing their perception of the teacher as a role model (Baba & Ace, 1989). Idealized influence in teacher leadership is enhanced when teachers maintain a

supportive, inspiring, and respectful environment, which positively impacts students' attitudes and learning experiences. In contrast, perceived negative traits or behaviors, such as favoritism or lack of flexibility, can weaken this influence, leading to a disconnection in the teacher-student relationship.

### *Theme. 2. Individualized Consideration*

In alignment with transformational leadership style, the theme of individualized consideration explored how teachers, as leaders, addressed the individual needs of students. From student responses, three categories were identified: customized teaching, individual meetings, and student satisfaction, along with the relevant codes detailed in the following table.

**Table 2. Category and Codes about Individualized Consideration**

Category	Codes	Response (N)
Personalized Teaching	same lesson for all students	11
	give constructive feedback	5
	interaction during lecture	4
	grouping as per students need	2
	teacher-centered classrooms	2
	regular assignments	12
	irregular feedback	2
Individual meeting	do not give time for individual meeting	4
	answer individual questions in class	5
	encourage for self-learning	3
Students' feelings	overcrowded classrooms	4
	do not study student profile	5
	heavy teaching schedule	1
	we can learn independently	3

The results in Table 2 indicate that most English teachers do not customize their lessons, instead using the same lecture for the entire class regardless of students' intellectual levels and individual needs. S1 remarked, *“Most of my teachers use the same lesson for every student. Sometimes, I struggle to understand difficult terminology due to limited vocabulary knowledge, but I also feel hesitant to ask for clarification because of a fear of embarrassment and criticism.”* Twelve students reported that teachers assign regular assignments, as S7 noted, *“Regular assignments keep me on track, but I rarely receive feedback on my progress.”* Two students also mentioned a lack of consistent feedback on their assignments. In contrast, five students stated that they receive constructive feedback from their teachers, as expressed by S14: *“They often provide face-to-face constructive feedback in class, which helps me improve in areas where I struggle.”*

Lecture method being the predominant method used in Pakistani universities, two students indicated that most classes are teacher-centered. For example, S3 commented, *“It feels like only teacher is active in most classes, so we don't get many opportunities to engage.”* Conversely, four students reported positive interactions with their teachers during class, with S10 remarking, *“I am really satisfied with the way my teachers engage with us, interact with everyone during the lecture, and address our questions.”* Additionally, two students mentioned that their teachers form groups based on student needs during class activities. S11 commented, *“Sometimes, they group us according to our strengths and weaknesses, which makes learning together comfortable and fun.”* The responses reveal a range of experiences regarding teachers' individualized consideration. Many students report experiencing standardized lessons with minimal personalization, highlighting a potential gap in meeting diverse learning needs. While regular assignments help maintain learning continuity, inconsistent feedback may hinder students' sense of progress (Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2012). Constructive feedback and interactive lectures are appreciated but appear infrequent, suggesting that effective individualized strategies are not consistently applied across the board.

The responses regarding individual meetings suggest that while teachers address students' questions in the classroom, they are generally unavailable for one-on-one meetings to provide private guidance. S4 commented, *"I've never had a chance to meet my teacher in the office or outside class for guidance, even though it would be helpful. Maybe they are too busy."* Conversely, S5 remarked, *"During class, all the teachers answer every single question from students, which is encouraging for us."* Additionally, three students mentioned that their teachers support and encourage autonomous learning, as S15 stated: *"They always motivate us toward independent learning even they provide materials and guide us to try self-learning, which helps build my confidence."* These responses indicate that students have limited access to individual meetings, with most individualized support occurring within the classroom. This approach suggests a form of individualized consideration by providing in-class support, though it lacks the depth of personalized attention that one-on-one meetings could offer (Waldeck, 2007). Furthermore, teachers' encouragement of self-learning reflects an effort to promote student independence, although through general guidance rather than customized support.

When students were asked how well their teachers respond to their individual needs, such as strengths and weaknesses, they noted certain limitations in individualized consideration due to contextual challenges. S12 remarked, *"With overcrowded classrooms, it's hard for the teacher to give personal attention to each of us."* Five students expressed concern that their teachers may not take the time to understand their individual profiles. S9 added, *"I don't think my teachers even know our individual strengths or weaknesses."* Meanwhile, three students expressed confidence in their ability to study independently; as S6 stated, *"I can learn independently, but I think some students need more support."* This feedback suggests that students are aware of the limitations in individualized assistance and recognize structural factors that may contribute to these challenges (Waldeck, 2007).

### Theme 3. Intellectual Simulation

Students were asked about their perceptions regarding how teachers respond to their language learning and English course studies. From these responses, two categories were identified related to the theme of Intellectual Stimulation: Enhancing Critical Thinking and Not Enhancing Critical Thinking, along with the specific codes outlined below.

**Table 3. Category and Codes about Intellectual Simulation**

Category	Codes	Response (N)
Enhancing Critical Thinking	facilitate discussion	3
	gives additional material to read	5
	encourage students to reflect thoughts	1
	allow students to analyze text critically	1
	promote autonomous learning	3
	give research articles to review	2
Not Enhancing Critical Thinking	focus only on textbooks	1
	intolerant of language errors	1
	expect to explore ideas independently	3

The responses in the Enhancing Critical Thinking category highlight teaching practices that encourage students to engage with material beyond passive memorization. S2 remarked as, *"They often provide extra articles that go beyond the textbook to help us understand topics more deeply, and sometimes we get links to online articles or papers which make learning feel more extensive."* Three students also mentioned that their teachers facilitate discussions; S4 stated, *"Teachers always encourage us to discuss different ideas in class. It helps me see topics in a new way. They open up discussions where everyone can share their opinions, which makes the class much more engaging."* Teachers who promote discussions, provide supplemental materials, encourage reflection, and foster critical text analysis appear to cultivate a more autonomous and dynamic learning environment. Students appreciate these opportunities for reflection, analysis, and independent exploration, which align well with the concept of Intellectual Stimulation in transformational leadership. Such practices are viewed as beneficial, contributing to a deeper understanding of language learning.



Conversely, responses in the Not Enhancing Critical Thinking category indicate limitations in teaching approaches that may hinder intellectual stimulation. Teachers who adhere strictly to textbooks or emphasize error-free learning without allowing exploration may unintentionally discourage students from experimenting with language. S5 remarked, “*Our teachers don’t tolerate mistakes, which makes me afraid to try new ways of speaking and creative writing. I feel like there’s too much focus on perfection, so I don’t experiment with language.*” Additionally, expecting students to explore ideas independently without sufficient guidance can leave students feeling unsupported in trying new learning strategies. S8 commented, “*Teachers expect us to study on our own and rarely give guidance on exploring ideas. I feel like I’m on my own when it comes to trying new approaches, as the teachers don’t give much feedback.*” This approach limits students' engagement and restricts their willingness to take intellectual risks, which are essential for developing critical thinking skills.

#### *Theme 4. Inspirational Motivation*

To gather data on the final component of transformational leadership in FRL model, students were asked questions regarding how their English teachers motivate them to learn English. Based on the students' responses, three categories, verbal, non-verbal, and demotivating attitudes, were identified, along with their corresponding codes listed below.

**Table 4. Category and Codes about Inspirational Motivation**

Category	Codes	Response (N)
verbal	appreciating remarks	2
	regular feedback	1
	friendly remarks	2
	motivational talk	3
non-verbal	shows excitement	1
	involve students in activities	4
	individual guidance	1
	encourage teamwork through class discussion	2
Demotivating attitude	teacher-centered learning	3
	irregular feedback	3
	less energetic	1
	distant	1
	favoritism	2

Three students reported that their teachers use motivational strategies. For example, S15 mentioned that teachers sometimes discuss the benefits of learning English and how it can create opportunities; they also share success stories of students who have excelled in English, which inspires continued effort. Similarly, S9 highlighted the impact of teachers' encouraging remarks, saying, “*The teacher always compliments me when I put in effort, which boosts my confidence, and frequently acknowledges my progress, making me feel proud and motivated.*” Additionally, two students reported that friendly comments from teachers enhance their motivation. S7 shared, “*They often use humor and friendly comments, so I don’t feel nervous about making mistakes, which makes me feel comfortable.*” Four students mentioned that their teachers' efforts to involve them in activities and group discussions are motivating. As S13 added, “*They promote teamwork in discussions and encourage us to work in pairs or a small group, which helps me feel connected, motivated, and enables me to learn from others.*” Another student highlighted the positive impact of teachers' enthusiasm, stating, “*My teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is contagious; it makes me look forward to learning and makes the class enjoyable.*”

Irregular feedback was commonly reported as a source of demotivation among students. For instance, S3 remarked, “*Feedback is so inconsistent that I don’t know how I’m doing or where I need to improve. My teacher rarely gives feedback on time, so it’s hard to stay motivated.*” Additionally, three students indicated that passivity in class contributed to their lack of motivation. As S10 explained, “*Teachers mostly lecture without asking for our input, so I don’t feel engaged. It feels like the classes are entirely focused on the teacher talking, which makes me lose interest.*” Moreover, two students identified favoritism in class as a cause of demotivation. One student commented, “*It seems that teacher gives more attention to certain students, which makes me feel unimportant. I feel demotivated when the*

teachers favor some students over others.” The responses highlight a spectrum of teacher behaviors that either promote motivation or contribute to a demotivating atmosphere. Verbal appreciation, motivational discussions, and friendly interactions help foster an inclusive and supportive environment (Andersen & Andersen, 2008), while non-verbal strategies such as enthusiastic teaching and interactive activities enhance student engagement and motivation (Nugent, 2009). Conversely, teacher-centered approaches, inconsistent feedback, low energy, and favoritism can undermine students' motivation, creating an environment in which students feel less inspired and disconnected from their learning goals.

#### Theme 5. Contingent Reward

For this theme, students were interviewed regarding their teachers' responses to their progress, achievements, and successes. From the students' responses, two categories of contingent rewards—through verbal remarks and through behavioral actions—were identified, along with the codes listed below.

**Table 5. Category and Codes about Contingent Reward**

Category	Codes	Response (N)
verbal Remarks	acknowledgement in and outside class	1
	encouragement through feedback	1
	no verbal response	1
Behavioral Actions	bonus score	1
	future opportunities	2
	more attention in class	1
	opportunity to assist other fellows	2
	flexibilities in assignments deadlines	1

The recognition of students' successes, both within and outside the classroom, creates positive reinforcement, enhancing students' confidence and sense of accomplishment. In this regard, S6 shared, “My teachers often acknowledge my good scores by appreciating me during class discussions. Once, he even mentioned my position in an essay writing competition in front of the whole class, which motivated me.” This suggests that teachers who openly recognize students' efforts foster a supportive learning environment that encourages hard work and achievement (DeDeyn, 2021; Nugent, 2009; Pardosi & Utari, 2022). Another student, S1, highlighted the impact of teacher feedback, stating, “When I show my classroom written task, my teachers gave detailed feedback and highlighted the strengths of my writing. It made me feel appreciated and motivated to keep improving.” One-on-one feedback that includes positive reinforcement can effectively motivate students, underscoring how feedback serves not only as an assessment tool but also as a means of promoting progress and morale.

Teachers who provide constructive feedback in this manner are perceived as invested in students' long-term success. However, S14 noted, “Sometimes, after doing well, my teachers do not give any feedback, so I'm not sure if I am doing well or not.” This lack of response can create uncertainty and may impact students' motivation. Students also reported specific teacher behaviors that serve as motivation. For instance, S12 mentioned, “When I performed well on the midterm, my teacher awarded me a bonus point on my final grade as an incentive.” This demonstrates that material rewards can function as effective motivational tools in academic settings (Nugent, 2009). S5 also remarked positively, “One of my teachers recommended me for a conference because of my performance in class, which was a great learning opportunity.” Such opportunities reflect teachers' leadership that extends beyond immediate results to foster students' future professional and personal growth. Additionally, S9 commented on a teacher's flexibility: “When I was sick, my teacher extended the deadline for my next assignment because I had consistently submitted previous assignments on time. I'm sure she valued my effort and wanted me to continue doing well.” This form of contingent reward enhances trust between teacher and student, creating a balanced environment that accommodates individual needs while promoting high performance.

#### Theme 6. Management-by-Exception

This section focuses transactional leadership, which includes two subcategories: active management and passive management. Additionally, the third dimension of the FRL model, laissez-faire leadership, was

incorporated within the active and passive categories under the theme of Management-by-Exception within transactional leadership. The theme of laissez-faire leadership was explored through two questions: the first addressed the teacher's role in student failure, and the second examined how teachers monitor and intervene in students' learning progress.

**Table 6. Category and Codes about Management-by-exception**

Category	Codes	Response (N)
Active	correction of language errors	12
	regular feedback on assignments	1
	instant feedback in class	1
Passive	delayed feedback	1
	incomplete feedback	2
	guidance only in challenging assignments	2
	additional support around exams	1
	assistance when requested	1
	high degree of autonomy	7

When students were asked about their teachers' correction of language errors, twelve students reported that their teachers provide immediate correction and maintain high standards regarding language accuracy. S14 commented, *"Our teachers correct our grammar mistakes immediately in class, which helps me avoid repeating the same errors."* Providing instant feedback demonstrates a commitment to active management, ensuring that students receive immediate guidance. Similarly, S3 shared, *"Whenever I make a pronunciation error, my teacher stops me right away and helps me with the correct way to say it."* This approach highlights an active strategy in which teachers address mistakes as they occur, a method generally appreciated by students as it reinforces learning and enables quick error correction. However, only one student mentioned receiving regular feedback on assignments, which helps students stay informed about their progress and areas that need improvement.

In contrast, delayed feedback indicates a more passive management approach, as it may prevent students from regularly improving their work. S10 remarked, *"Sometimes it takes a while for our assignments to be graded, and by the time I get the feedback, I've already moved on to other topics."* Furthermore, S1 commented, *"My teachers only point out that there's an issue in my assignment but don't tell me exactly how to fix it."* Incomplete feedback limits students' ability to fully understand their mistakes which leads to missed learning opportunities. S3 also responded, *"They only step in when we have complex tasks; otherwise, we don't get much help. They are more available and helpful when exams are near, but during regular classes, we manage on our own."* Selective guidance, particularly around exam, may impact overall engagement and consistency in learning.

A high degree of student autonomy reflects a laissez-faire leadership style, in which students are largely responsible for their own learning (Erdel & Takkaç, 2020). S8 mentioned, *"It seems that our teachers expect us to take charge of our own studies, which gives me freedom but sometimes leaves me confused."* Similarly, S4 stated, *"Every teacher reminds us that students learn independently in universities. We are expected to work independently most of the time, which can be challenging but also makes me feel responsible for my own learning."* This approach can foster self-directed learning, it may leave students feeling unsupported if not balanced with random guidance.

## Discussion

The analysis of students' responses regarding their teachers' Idealized Influence reveals a mix of positive and negative qualities that impact their learning experience. Positive qualities that enhance Idealized Influence include enthusiasm, clarity in explanations, organization, and approachability. Students value traits such as motivation, encouragement, confidence, friendliness, and preparedness in their teachers. However, students also highlighted certain negative traits such as a commanding nature, inflexibility, rigidity, and favoritism which can hinder Idealized Influence and affect the learning environment. Research by Nugent (2009) supports these findings, showing that teacher enthusiasm plays a crucial role in effective teaching, as it motivates learners to reach their goals both individually and collectively. They also suggest that a teacher's commitment is essential for facilitating the educational process. The current findings are

consistent with those of Baba and Ace (1989) who explored students' perceptions of their teachers and found that well-directed, organized teachers are more effective in their teaching practices. Similarly, Young and Shaw (1999) identified that well-organized teachers have a greater impact on student learning. A related study in a Zimbabwean university conducted by Chireshe (2011), compared qualities of effective and ineffective teachers from students' perspectives. The study found that effective teachers are characterized by punctuality, organization, and thorough preparation. These findings underscore the importance of specific personal and professional qualities in fostering a positive teacher-student dynamic and enhancing Idealized Influence in the classroom.

Previous studies have shown a significant relationship between transformational leadership instruction and teachers' friendly behavior in classrooms (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2010; Harrison, 2013; Noland & Richards, 2014). English language teachers' friendly and engaging attitude makes teaching more effective, strengthens teacher-student relationship, and promotes a positive dynamic in the classroom (Rodrigues & de Lima, 2024). Furthermore, Banstola (2023) found that in the context of English language learning, students' overall well-being, particularly their self-confidence and readiness to learn, improves when teachers demonstrate respect and active involvement in their students' progress. Additionally, Young and Shaw (1999) suggest that effective communication by teachers contributes to a productive learning environment. A friendly and trustworthy attitude, combined with professional knowledge and personal competence, supports both learning outcomes and a positive teacher-student relationship. Additionally, Andersen and Andersen (2008) emphasize that teacher' actions and words help to establish a welcoming and friendly classroom environment.

ELT is also linked to a transformational leadership dimension known as individualized consideration. Current findings reveal that teachers often lack time for individual meetings with students and typically deliver standard lectures to the entire class, which may fail to address students' personal needs. Research by DeDeyn (2021) and Waldeck, (2007) indicates that students improve their learning outcomes when they feel their education is personalized to their specific needs. Additionally, previous studies have demonstrated that student motivation and learning outcomes improve when teachers attentively address students' personal needs and focus on them individually (Khoudri, 2024; Nugent, 2009; Pardosi & Utari, 2022). Engaging students in classroom activities and discussions enhances their motivation to achieve learning outcomes, aligning with the fourth dimension of transformational leadership: inspirational motivation. Teachers should foster an environment that boosts students' motivation (Braskamp, 2009; Bolkan & Goodboy, 2010; Khoudri, 2024; Noland & Richards, 2014). Prior research also underscores the effectiveness of active engagement, demonstrating that when students actively participate in lessons, they retain information better and develop stronger critical thinking skills (Weaver & Qi, 2005). The ability to engage students in classroom activities is thus an assurance of effective teaching (Chireshe, 2011).

The current study confirms that students are demotivated by teachers' use of traditional, uniform teaching methods that do not consider individual learning needs. As Waldeck (2007) found that neglecting students' specific learning requirements and relying on monotonous or inadequate teaching methods is an ineffective aspect of instruction. Furthermore, Erdel and Takkaç (2020) suggest that teachers who employ various instructional methods are regarded as more effective in delivering knowledge. Similarly, all participants in the study by Christison and Murray (2023) disapproved of the traditional teaching methods used by their English teachers, as the researchers aimed to identify effective teaching qualities.

Contingent reward and management by exception are two themes derived from transactional leadership. In contingent rewards, participants reported that their teachers motivate them through verbal praise and supportive actions, enhancing their drive to perform well. Effective teaching requires teachers to foster motivation and positive emotions in students. Appreciation, motivation, and rewards are vital for meeting students' emotional as well as educational needs (Nugent, 2009). This study found that teachers encourage high-achieving students by offering bonus points and flexibility in assignment deadlines, though this approach primarily supports extrinsic motivation. Further discussion in the ELT context is needed to address intrinsic motivation, which is essential for sustained academic achievement. However, rewarding students positively impacts learning outcomes across disciplines, beyond just ELT.

Correction of language errors and a high level of autonomous learning are among the most commonly reported responses from students under the active management-by-exception section. Numerous studies support that correcting language errors through feedback is closely linked to effective teaching (Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 2012). Teacher feedback is a key aspect of classroom interaction as Ellis (2009) and Ferris (2012) suggest it enhances accuracy in language through error correction. The findings also indicate that teachers emphasize autonomous learning, a characteristic of laissez-faire leadership within the theme of passive management-by-exception. Language teaching has shifted from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach that promotes greater autonomy (Banstola, 2023; Erdel & Takkaç, 2020; Vaishnav, 2024), enabling students to take responsibility for their learning and assess their own strengths and weaknesses. However, an excessive focus on autonomous learning can lead to feelings of isolation, confusion, and lack of support (Erdel & Takkaç, 2020).

## Conclusion

ELT teachers exhibit a variety of leadership behaviors representing transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles within the FRL model. A key finding of this research is that all three leadership styles of the FRL model are practiced by English language teachers, though with some limitations. Teachers who foster interest, provide encouragement, and positively inspire students demonstrate transformational leadership in their classrooms. However, certain behaviors, such as favoritism, inconsistent feedback, and traditional teaching methods, detract from the effectiveness of transformational leadership, though students generally appreciated most of its aspects. Transactional leadership practices, in contrast, were less effective in engaging and motivating students compared to transformational approaches. Students felt less valued and more distant from their teachers, which weakened the impact of transactional leadership. Additionally, a high level of autonomous learning reflects the application of laissez-faire leadership in teaching. However, some students reported that excessive independence led to feelings of confusion and lack of support. A balanced approach, integrating transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership according to students' needs, is essential to maintain student motivation and engagement. To address this, Pakistani universities should provide teacher training on the FRL model through workshops and sessions focused on its effective application in language teaching, considering the diverse backgrounds of students. Teacher leadership in ELT classrooms in Pakistani universities has been largely unexplored; this study is among the few that investigates the FRL model in this context, using a qualitative approach from the students' perspective. Future research could employ quantitative methods with teachers in varied educational settings to expand the knowledge base in this area.

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