



RESEARCH PAPER

Pedagogical Barriers of English Language Teaching at Secondary Level in Azad Jammu and Kashmir

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ABSTRACT

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The reading comprehension skill is considered as one of the four extended fundamental language skills that English language learners are usually required to perform. It is not an easy skill since most of the learners have many reading issues and problems. The study envisaged the reading comprehension barriers at secondary level including teachers' qualification, training in particular field and appropriateness of their training. A survey method with questionnaire as tool was used to collect data from (290) teachers selected through non probable sampling technique. The research instrument addressed the barriers in English language teaching process at secondary education in District Bagh. The results revealed that most of the teachers have difficulties in teaching the reading comprehension, further it was found that the teachers were not suitably qualified in teaching English at this level and to remove this deficiency there were no workshops or seminars to refresh the teachers' knowledge. The study recommended that by holding training courses for the teachers, by improving selection process of teachers and by providing appropriate reading material, so that they reading comprehension could be improved.

Introduction

English language is taught at all levels in Pakistan because it is the language of all competitive examinations but students lack proficiency in all four skills as compared to other south Asian countries. The problems lie with teachers' competence, appropriate qualifications, motivation and skills to teach it effectively. Mohseni & Ahmadi (2017) considered that motivation is the sole factor that effect on

reading comprehension which apparently seems quite right but other factors cannot be ruled out as mentioned above.

Wexler et al (2018) advocated co teaching assistants are required to address the problems of each individual to make correction in articulation and writing that are required skills if the teachers have reasonable number of students and teachers assistants. In this research these issues were not the focal points but here it has been explored the relevant qualifications of the teachers because earlier the studies assumed that the teachers are well qualified and had sufficient knowledge, dispositions and skills.

Nugraha & Suherdi (2017) after conducting experimental research found out that applying scientific approach to English teaching learning was difficult although the teachers were well qualified and appropriately trained for this purpose but they could not meet the standard set by researchers. All this debate pointed out the teachers qualification, skills and knowledge are integral part of effective and smooth teaching and this study basically tried to find it.

Some researchers emphasizes on motivation both on the part of teachers and learner and it is very much true but motivation is associated with passion toward language and passion is associated with commitment while commitment come through knowledge professional training and incentives that are continuously highlighted.

Language is form of sounds, group of words; logical sequencing of them which convey desired meanings. It also provides mutual understanding by the society to shared comprehension and express their feelings. Vann (2012) defined that a synthesis or mixture of the alphabets and words, their utterance and the means they are blended or mixed to connect with the people. According to Webster (2016) the language is a foundation for communicate the ideas, feelings besides signs, symbols, sounds and gestures. It emphasizes on how the words are pronounced and their comprehension of the listeners. It can be called a language if the communication works. Man is a social animal rightly called by people. There is no doubt that the human beings are blessed with a distinct characteristic which is language and this unique ability makes him dominant from other animals. People think, feel, judge and express. Man can articulate and utter some sounds in producing this speech. As common usage of this sound is conventionalized and recognized and organized in such pattern that later it becomes socially understandable.

Presently, not a single subject can be followed whether it is humanities or science without understanding of a language. Human being are associated, connected, bounded and inter related through languages. Commonly language is a social collective coddle that creates connections between people. So it is said that language is a code through which nations around the world present their ideas via systems of signs for communication. Human speech is very complicated and a single source cannot explain it. When a child comes into the outer world, the first

sound he utters is a cry, an activity which requires no reaction. At the point when he cries first run through the child is a sign that he is living being. Regardless of whether it is frustration, lose hope, unhappiness earnestness or cheer that brings forth the source of language. It is a declaration of right on time and fundamental sentiments and feelings. As the youngster influences development his societies to answer whatever he utters or cries and soon he attaches meanings to them. With the course of time the language becomes a tool in his hands.

Certainly English language stands at the top among all languages in the world, hence it enhances all major information, pertaining to literature of arts and humanities, sciences and scientific developments, commercial, economic and technological knowledge because it is published in English. English language is often used to present the official view of national and international events to the world.

English in Azad Kashmir Education System

English language is the one of the superior second language which is taught in the institutions of Azad Kashmir since 1947. It has been introduced as a compulsory subject to the school syllabus from one to twelve grades, and it is regarded as one of the main subjects and it has a very prominent and distinguished position in the education system of this region. One of the important aims of teaching a language is enabling the learners to adorn themselves with knowledge and get them acquainted with all the aspects of life. So as an international language English is taught to the students that in future may connect with the outdoor world. It has been a compulsory subject at primary, secondary and even tertiary level. The teacher recruitment is made as general line teachers', junior teachers and sciences teachers where there is no space for English language teachers. The basic qualification is B.A/ B.Ed which does not provide sufficient knowledge and skills for them to teach appropriately.

Importance of Reading Skill in English

Reading is a very familiar activity that "everyone" has known what is reading. Hardly anyone could fully explain the comprehensive meanings of reading. After many definitions it seems easy but it proves to be complex and more difficult. Many people define reading in simple language. Grabe (2009) stated that English has great importance in global village and because of its world wide exposure global village stress on world and literacy rate and capability in English is concerned for the progress in the modern society it is needed to be skilled full and fluent reader for the progress in their academic skill development.

Therefore, reading is a major component in learner's education since it is a main component towards success in learner educational chase. A student must learn second language in any institution under the guidance of the school after acquiring

his/her first language. Developing reading skill requires intensive, extensive reading and critical thinking simultaneously.

Ur (2012) described that reading skill can translate what is on paper. It is open form of conveying message but dissimilar to speaking and writing in a comprehend activity. It is a discerning procedure, which includes sounds and understanding signs. Acquiring reading aptitudes demonstrates not just the ability to distinguish and articulate the words so any one might hear the words composed on a page yet additionally to discover the importance. The primary phase reading is the exotic inspire which is either visual or verbal. The listening sense is likewise extremely huge on the grounds that at starting level reading is connected with composed signs with language. At third reading is related process in light of the fact that figure out how to read subject to some of the sorts of connections. The kids start guessing how to connect things and musings with talked words. This demonstrates reading is ability subject to realistic letter acknowledgment. Kannan & Munday (2018) focused on ICT, computer assisted learning and mobile assisted learning to enhance the language skills of the students because now this is the time to move from traditional teaching to IT based teaching. It is imperative as observed during COVID19 outbreak, the schools and colleges were closed and all the teaching learning activities were carried out through online worldwide. Although there were some serious issues faced by the teachers and students because they were not ready and the teachers were not trained for it. Now is the time to move forward and train teacher on these lines.

Limbong (2017) concluded that some of the language learning issues may be removed if the school leaders and principals enhance their knowledge skills and values by showing commitment, allocating resources and incorporating ICT.

Singhavi & Basargekar (2019) stated that there are certain barriers to remove while teaching and ICT incorporation is of one them and recommended that training programs, sufficient investment and development of academic contents are imperative to overcome these barriers

Graham, Courtney, Marinis & Tonkyn, (2017) conducted a study in France concluded that the teachers had sufficient knowledge skills and disposition to teach English, they had enough time expertise and training and appropriate teaching approach but they do not pay much attention to the age of learner which may have a barrier for learner

Ding, Ottenbreit, Lu, & Glazewski, (2019) concluded in their studies as content specific pedagogical beliefs with ICT integration could be improved by using simple software's and teachers could get maximum benefit out of it but the questions in our local context are very serious as there is no elasticity no alternate solution so ICT is can only be incorporated when there is power availability.

Areas in Reading Comprehension

Wibowo, Syafrizal, & Syafryadin (2020) concluded that teachers mostly used nine strategies for teaching reading comprehension that included questions generating, questions answering, dictionary use, predicting, summarizing, scanning, monitor comprehension, skimming and generating text. Some teachers used modified strategies to make their teaching effective and they were successful also. These strategies were to improve reading comprehension although material or text they used matters a lot but even then they were successful.

Difficulties of learning English

Learners are required to have huge vocabulary of words to understand their usage so that they could enhance their learning experiences. The vocabulary set the foundation of result oriented reading. Tomlison (2007), stated that the vocabulary of words that is used in reading called oral vocabulary and children who have this vocabulary may have great problems in reading words in print if they are aware of very little about it.

Sudarto, Nadrun, & Naniwarsih (2020) stated that the difficulties are based on students learning attitude as their research findings show that 71% students do not pay attention to reading text and similar number of students responded that they do not focus on grammar while reading a text, that proves that their attention were not driven toward these things which is the sole responsibility of the teachers. Torppa at el (2020) found that reading difficulties are linked with learning motivation while reading comprehension is associated with lower task focused behavior which provides as enough challenge to develop and design such strategies that could cater the need of the learners in focusing their attentions.

Difficulty of Pronunciation

Pronunciation is also a great difficulty. It required a great struggle for the student to get command of the skill for getting maximum level of pronunciation in English. Kaur (2006) stated that many news skills especially recognition skill play a great role for learning to achieve the pronunciation habits of English language. Kelly (2006), explained that two difficulties come across with pronunciation, one which has produced in the class rather than being nicely planned. He added that pronunciation suffers from neglect, but it may not be because of lack of teachers' interest but a doubt which suffers it. Mumtaz (2006), stated that a teacher makes a great effort and struggles to teach the text book and used different methods for the improvement of the pronunciation of the reading abilities of the student and deliver lesson to student in stages. Bajwa (2007), stated that spelling mistakes is a great problem for the Pakistani students, though it is very difficult to deal with. In many areas the words are not spelled as they are pronounced and our students makes many mistakes because of this variation but also because of American and British Varieties of English. The less the knowledge of grammar the more the problems for students in reading, but it can be overcome by reading story books. Compbell (2002), explained that majority of the children have the facility of stories books at home

which they read. They may have told stories, or they may begin to tell their own happening and events which came across to them and it increases their knowledge of English. With this the students become familiar with the knowledge of grammar and syntax, reading with speed is very essential in present era as it is the age of increasing knowledge. Many things are written every day and reader with low speed cannot run with the present. Bajwa (2007), tells that readers who read the text very slowly or greater speed cannot comprehend the text. The reader has to adopt moderate speed according to the nature of the text. Hashmi (2007), explains that pace is a valuable factor in reading. The reader whose speed is low not an able reader. Reading is of no use if he does not get what he has read. The teacher should assist the child in getting over these common reading mistakes. Bajwa (2007), describes that skimming and scanning mean to get the main idea and a special information respectively. These techniques save our time in looking unnecessary things. Hywel (2003), Scanning is a skill in which a particular point or information is found out. It is used to look up a word in telephone book or dictionary. The reader is aware of that what he is going to search. Reading skill can hardly be separated from other language skills because all skills are integrated, interdependent and interconnected but here the study explored one of the aspects of reading skill that is reading comprehension

Material and Methods

The population of this study included to Govt. Secondary Schools in district Bagh. A non probability sampling technique was used for the data collection. A sample of 200 teachers respondents were selected from district Bagh. Data collected through self designed questionnaire developed keeping in view of the objectives of the study. Questionnaire comprises of 10, multiple types of items for teacher and administered to as small portion of the population. The purpose of pilot study was conducted to confirm the reliability by Crone Bach Alpha which was significant at .86. When the main sample was drawn the pilot sample excluded from the population. The tool was validated by taking expert opinion who pointed out some minor topographical errors which were corrected and them questionnaire was finalized.

Results and Discussion

Data Analysis

All data collected from the teachers were prepared according to the study objectives. The responses were placed in categories based on the closed ended items. Frequency tables were also used for data presentation and analysis.

Table 1
Teacher Qualification

Options	Percent
B.A	22.4
M.A	43.1

M.A IN ENG	10.3
Other	24.1
Total	100.0

Table no.1 shows that the teachers who had degree in English as a subject to teach English at secondary level is only 10% which is an alarming. The teachers who had degree of M.A in other subjects is 43% and the teachers who had degree of B.A is 22% while other qualification is 24%.

Table 2
Teaching Experience at Secondary Level

Experiences	Percent
1-10	70.7
11-20	27.6
more than 21	1.7
Total	100.0

Table no.2 shows that 70 % teachers were teaching English for 1-10 years while 27 % teachers were teaching for 11-20 year and 3% teachers who were experienced more than 21years.Its mean majority teachers have 1 to 10 years experience and out of them not many have relevant degree.

Table 3
Diploma in Teaching of English as Foreign Language

Choices	Percent
Strongly agree	12.1
Agree	13.8
Un decided	3.4
Disagree	43.1
Strongly disagree	27.6
Total	100.0

Table no 3 shows 70% disagree that they have diploma in TEFL while13.8% agree that they had a diploma, 3% were undecided. This indicates that mostly teachers are disagreeing that they have diploma or any professional qualification to teach English

Table 4
Training (workshop or seminar) to teach reading on secondary level

Options	Percent
Yes	37.9
No	62.1
Total	100.0

Table No 4 demonstrates that 62.1% respondent believed that training workshop or seminars are not held at school while 37.9% agreed that such type of activities were held at schools. It shows how much importance is given to short term trainings in the schools.

Table 5
Suitability of Curriculum of English language

Test Statistics	
Suitability of Curriculum of English language	
Chi-Square	26.421 ^a
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Df=4 χ^2 at .000=26.421^a

The table no 5 shows suitability of curriculum as indicated by value of χ^2 was 26.421^a at P=.000 which is significant. Most of the teachers disagree that curriculum was suitable for learning English which indicates revision and reorganizations of the contents.

Table 6
Mother Tongue Interference as a Barrier

Test Statistics	
Mother Tongue Interferences as Barrier	
Chi-Square	16.596 ^a
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.002

Df=4 χ^2 at .002=16.596^a

Table 6 shows that the value of χ^2 was 16.596^a at P=.002 is lower than the table value which is not significant. Majority of the teachers agreed that mother tongue interference was a barrier.

Table 7
Sounds Create Difficulty for Students in Reading of English

Total	SA	A	UND	DA	SDA	X ²	P
290	74	86	50	44	36	30.759	.000

df=4 χ^2 at .022=30.759

Table no 7 show the value of χ^2 was 30.759^a at P=.022 is not significant. Students were agreed that difference between letters and sounds created difficulty for students in reading English.

Table 8
Students Learn English only to Pass Examination

Total	SA	A	UND	DA	SDA	X ²	P
290	78	60	41	53	58	12.379 ^a	.015

Df=4 χ^2 at .015=12.379^a

Table no 7 indicated that the value of χ^2 was 12.379^a at P=.015 which is significant. Students agreed that they learned English only to pass examination.

Findings

Table No.1, shows the teachers who had degree of English subject to teach English at secondary level is only 10% which is an alarming. Teachers had no knowledge about English as a subject. Teachers had general education but they were given English to teach by authorities who create difficulties for teachers as well as learner

As shown in table No.2, the teacher who had been teaching English at secondary level for 1-10years were 70%.It's showed majority of the teachers have enough experience for teaching English at secondary level. So teachers cannot teach well and transfer knowledge to their students because either they were not motivated or trained to teach. This create hurdle for teachers and students to learn English.

Table No.3, showed that the teachers who had no diploma in TEFL were 70%.Which indicated that mostly teachers did not have language diploma. It was found out that the teachers had no knowledge about English language and linguistic like phonology, phonics, morphology, syntax etc. So they did not guide their students about English language reading.

Table No.4, demonstrated that training workshop or seminars were not held. The teachers who disagreed were 62% it means mostly teachers agreed that there are no seminars or workshops held in district level. This created difficulties in teaching learning process.

Table No.5 the value of chi square significant which indicated that the curriculum is suitable for English learning

Table No.6 the value of chi square is significant. Due to exposure of mother tongue students feel difficulty in learning second language. Student's home and peers group did not use English as a language. This put negative influence on learner for learning second language.

Table No.7 the value of chi square is significant. Students face difficulty to recognizing the letters and its sounds. Teachers also had limited knowledge about English as a subject so they do not guide their students

Table No.8 the value of chi square is significant. Mostly respondents were agreed that they learn English only to pass examination and ignore the reading comprehension skill.

Discussion

Greene (2020) stated that teacher students relationship is very important factor to boost language learning but neither teachers nor students strive for learning with skills but they focus on grades, pass percentage and certificates as token of learning but genuinely there is no learning at all. It seems very much true in our situation additionally state and parents are also added to it although it was said for the individuals but here at the state level proper focus and concentration is not being given to teacher recruitment and training which resulted in poor performance at all levels.

Nahaiciuc (2020) conducted research on barriers and focuses on memorization and utterance of the language pattern that seems to be the same problem here is Azad Jamu and Kashmir so vibrant approach is required to handle the situation technically.

Wexler et al (2018) believed that teaching assistant can solve the problem but my concern here is the appropriate qualification of the teachers because in our schools teachers are generally assigned subjects not on the basis of their academic knowledge or qualification but with their availability.

Mohseni & Ahmadi (2017) considered motivation as sole agent that runs the class with great vigor and excitement but the question is there has to be a motivation in the part of the teachers which is directly linked with expertise of the subject and additional knowledge of pedagogy that may develop motivation among students. The sample and population taken in this study clearly demonstrate another aspect which is qualification of the teachers so until and unless appropriate qualification is not provided the motivation could not be generated in the class. Troyan, Sembiente, & King, (2019) suggested that foundation for language teacher need to be broadened with linguistic competence by certain organizations that seems very much appropriate as competence is one of the major source to improve teaching learning while in this study this competence is associated with their qualification. Further they concluded that additional knowledge is required not for one time but continuously to enrich and enhance the teachers competence and performance which seems me most appropriate as recommended in this study. The above discussion show that there are certain gaps in our education system and systems of the other people of the world, the world is focusing on different things but our priority is to provide basic information which could make teachers and learner aware of the fact of language neither it is functional nor practical. It is imperative to change this policy and right person for right job policy should be promoted and adopted.

Conclusions

The problem of improving reading skill remains a task of the teachers throughout the years in Govt. schools because the students do not have literate background they start language and 6 grade where spelling of words and sounds are

difficult for them. This article shows that there are some weaknesses in teachers. The qualification of teachers is not according to teaching of English at secondary level. They have no qualification of teaching English. They have no knowledge about phonology of English language. It is very much apparent that the training of teachers that link them with ICT enhanced teaching method and broadened their knowledge focusing on text books of the schools need to be initiated that may result in improving reading comprehension of the students. Students face difficulties in English pronunciation due to spelling variation. In Pakistan English language pattern is slightly different from RP students are not motivated by teachers or parents to learn second language. Because the parents of students are not so educated they cannot guide their children to learn English. Reading activities like reading drill, reading competition were not conducted at schools; therefore, reading skill of the students remained weak. They only learn English to pass the examination. They have no interest to learn the English language skills.

Recommendations

The instructive officers should organize session, seminars and workshops focusing the curriculum at secondary level. The state may empower the administration of the schools to direct and monitor reading tests in English. Regularly they need to oversee the method for giving English training in schools. By the method for supervision, they can give recommendations for improvement in the educational programs. They have to motivate the teachers to imbibe the culture of referring dictionary among the student

Although the medium of instructions is officially English which could expose students to target language by listening and speaking it they may become proficient in all four skills and reading comprehension is one of them. Technically they should be taught functional English first and the measurement should also be based on four language skills that would definitely help out the students and teachers to overcome this issue

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