

Pedagogical skills of Teachers for Improving Students' Learning Capabilities in the English Language: A Challenge or opportunity

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Abstract:

The purpose of the study was to investigate Pedagogical skills of Teachers for Improving Students' Learning Capabilities in the English Language: A Challenge or opportunity. For appropriate results and understand phenomena, an exploratory research method was used. 200 participants were selected on random basis from the population. A questionnaire is used as a data collection tool and SPSS-20 was used for data analysis. It is found that majority of teachers still do not consider its importance. There is also found difference of proper application of skills between teachers teaching English in urban areas and rural areas. It shows that there is a strong need to focus the English teaching in rural areas for improving students' learning capabilities. It is also diagnosed that most of teachers having qualification in other subjects are also assigned to teach foreign language English which affect the desired learning outcomes.

Keywords: Pedagogical skills, Students' Learning Capabilities, English Language

Introduction:

English Language holds a prestigious position throughout the world. It is very important to have command on English language for survival and success in the global world (Alamyar 2017). The main cause of the prominent place of English language is the political dominancy of English speaking countries (Bamgboşe 2019). In Pakistan, English is considered a compulsory language and taught as a compulsory subject because it is the need of time to focus the English language keeping in view the point of utility putting aside the cultural aspect. Therefore, the main objective of teaching English in Pakistan is to enable our learners use the English language actively by having command on basic four skills i-e listening, speaking, reading and writing to compete in the world (Jabbarova 2020).

According to Mahboob (2020), in Pakistan, failure ratio of students in English subject is alarming and increasing with passage of time. Most of the students completely lack communication skill even at secondary level. For improvement in learning process, the basic competency of the students can be developed by promoting the skills of the students (Clarke and Braun 2013). It is very important for effective learning that application of teaching skills should also be effective and relevant. It is

imperative for concerned teacher to have full knowledge of pedagogical skills in addition to subject knowledge to make the process of English language learning effective and successful.

Teacher applies his skills and uses the various methods and strategies to make the process of learning effective (Clarke and Braun 2013). Therefore, this study is being conducted to analyze the current gaps in application of pedagogical skills from teachers' perspective for improving the students' learning capabilities in English language. In Pakistan, the importance of secondary education cannot be neglected as the quality of education at higher level relates to effective education at secondary level. So the study also focuses the teachers teaching English to grade 8, 9 and 10.

Literature Review:

According to Bredeson (2000), in the process of teaching-learning, the role of teacher is very influential. According to Loughran, the teacher has a very vital role in what they perform and the way they perform to develop their professional skills (Loughran 2006). It is usually believed that teachers are the people with deep knowledge and skills of their specific domains. But, it is necessary to know that something is even more important than their knowledge and skills to enable them teach successfully (Villegas, Saiz de La Mora et al. 2018). It is also strongly needed that they should have pedagogical skills (Taimalu and Luik 2019). We can define pedagogical competence as the specific ability of teacher that make them prominent and distinguished from other different professions (Meschede, Fiebranz et al. 2017). Pedagogical competence actually shows the skills of teachers that how they use their material to make the process of learning effective (Muleya, Magasu et al. 2020).

Role of a teacher:

The personality which can determine the achievement of the students in the classroom is definitely a good teacher (Hargreaves 2000). Therefore, the success of a student can be analyzed by observing command of the teacher on teaching abilities. For a competent teacher, it is very important to have command on four basic skills. The two main elements, competence and performance, play very vital role in making classroom teaching successful (Sahlberg 2010). So, it is very important to analyze the pedagogical skills of teachers for improving the learning capabilities of students.

Teaching English at secondary level is not an easy task. There are some main competencies that should be owned by English teacher of secondary classes. He should have enough English language capability and he must develop his abilities constantly. He should have command on variety of teaching skills and methods. He should have the ability of management of classroom. The personal qualities of an effective teacher like professional behavior, innovation and creativity, also play an important role in making the learning fruitful. Mustafa has mentioned five requirements for teaching English at secondary level. The teacher should know who students are; how students learn; how students learn language; how students learn foreign language and how to facilitate students' learning (Kanno and Stuart 2011).

Pedagogical Skills:

Competence can be defined as the ability to perform a task keeping in view the requirements of job by using the skills, attitudes and knowledge (Garavan and McGuire 2001). We can define it as the basic qualities of a person which can become a cause of effective performance in the concerned job. It is absolutely needed by the teachers to master the pedagogical skills. It is possible through pedagogical competence that a teacher can manage the education process of the students. It mainly

deals with basic aspects like implementation of teaching and learning process, planning of lesson and assessment of students' learning (Hatton and Smith 1995).

E.Mulyasa (2007:38) quotes that according to Gordan, six following domains can be included in the competence:

- 1) The knowledge of teacher about the needs of learner and focus the learning keeping in view the needs.
- 2) Teachers' understanding or comprehension of the cognitive abilities, characteristics and circumstances of the students.
- 3) Teachers' ability to provide easy learning to the students by adopting simple way.
- 4) Teachers' values and behavior in teaching and learning process.
- 5) Teachers' attitude or reactions to different kind of actions.
- 6) Teachers' interest to perform the job

It is also very important for the teacher to have the awareness of their responsibilities. They should have the ability to develop their personality according to the challenges. The teachers should also modify and improve themselves in accordance with the changing scenario.

English Teaching at secondary Level:

English teaching at secondary level is not an easy task. The students at this age are usually named as young learners. At this level, learners get bored very easily and also demand innovation. So, it is very important for learner to not only focus on teaching but also focus on psychology of students. Young students are full of motivation and curiosity to know the things around them (Lightfoot and Harmer 2007). They possess qualities of imagination and inquisitive. They have very poor self-control. As their physical energy is very high, it would be very effective to make physical movement as a part of their learning (Pangrazi and Beighle). A teacher is always a live example for a student and the students at young age learn very easily through examples (Carpenter, Witherby et al. 2020). The students take learning as an adventure at this stage.

It is claimed that the characteristics of young learners are quite different from all other type of learners (Babiarz and Zapała-Kraj 2019). Their concentration is very limited and they lose their interest very soon. They don't like criticism at all. They need guidance at each step. They give very positive response to appreciation and get motivation for further success (Haimovitz and Dweck 2017). It is agreed by many researchers that learners at young stage are very demanding. It is very important for the teacher to understand the thinking process of his students and how he operates (Jabbarova 2020). For effective teaching, there should be no favourism at all and treatment should be equal. For better motivation, teacher should also focus current interests of his students (Bal-Taştan, Davoudi et al. 2018).

Keeping in view all above characteristics of young learners, the pedagogical skills of teacher are very important for organized learning. It is needed that teachers should have skills in organization and techniques of teaching to handle different situations in classroom (Jabbarov 2020). A teacher performs as a leader and he should have confidence and control in professional life (Nolan and Molla 2017). A teacher performs two types of role, as a provider of information and a facilitator. It is necessary for the teacher to apply his pedagogical skills to have a comprehension of learners' needs and learning styles (Teo 2019).

To complete the literature review, it will be good to mention some previous studies to find the gaps in the recent study. An important study in this regard is of EYL teachers' based on their performance in teaching and academic background (Setyaningrum, Sabilah et al. 2020). This study compared the teaching performance of the two different groups having different academic background and the

study did not find much difference in the performance. The study was conducted on four teachers of English belonging to different schools. The participants of study were named as EFL teachers.

Another study was conducted in Indonesia. It involved the English teachers at primary level. The main objective of the study was to explore the competency of English teachers teaching at primary level focusing their competency regarding pedagogy and profession (Gudmundsdottir and Hatlevik 2018). The tools of open question and test were used to get the required data about competence of both pedagogical and professional level. The study also recommended the ways to improve the competence of English teachers of primary schools. It was found from data received in the study that the competence of English teachers at primary level is poor and even below the intended level both in profession and pedagogy. It was strongly recommended that the professional trainings should be a part of service to continue development at professional level.

Another study of EYL teachers was conducted about their performance and competence. The study explored that either the requirements of English teaching are fulfilled or not (Leo 2021). The study involved participants from elementary schools of Bandung (eastern part).

All the above studies clearly reveal that competency and performance are the points of research to explore in many ways. So, many further studies are required to improve teaching English to young learners.

Methodology:

The current study is exploratory in nature in which researcher tried to explore the pedagogical skills of teachers for improving students' learning capabilities in English language. The main objective of the study is to explore the pedagogical skills of teachers either as a challenge or an opportunity. Questionnaire is used as a data collection tool and SPSS-20 was used for data analysis.

Population:

Population of the study comprised 200 teachers teaching English to Grade 8,9 and 10 in government schools of district Rahim Yar Khan.

Sample:

The sampling process was combination of random sampling and snow-ball sampling. At first stage, a group of 50 participants was selected on random basis from the population. To save the time, it was requested to informants to snow-ball it to other concerned informants by forwarding it into different educational groups of teachers and head teachers. This helped in the generation of a sample of 200 participants which was rich and diverse in nature.

Research tool:

For the study, a questionnaire having 19 items exploring pedagogical skills of teachers was prepared and data was collected on five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA). After piloting and modification, it was used for data collection. It was very important to design the items of the questionnaire that could help in getting the required data. It was shared as a Google form to the groups of teachers on random basis. The recipients responded by clicking the link and submitted the response. It made very easy to record the responses by an automatic process.

Results:

Table 1 Teachers' Perception about Pedagogical skills of Teachers for Improving Students' Learning Capabilities in the English Language

S no.	Level of Agreement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
S1	F	20	22	40	87	31
	%	10	11	20	43	16
S2	F	9	15	39	101	36
	%	5	8	19	50	18
S3	F	42	78	26	38	16
	%	21	39	13	19	8
S4	F	7	32	59	80	22
	%	4	16	29	40	11
S5	F	4	12	36	105	43
	%	2	6	18	52	22
S6	F	14	15	20	91	60
	%	7	8	10	45	30
S7	F	3	13	15	93	76
	%	2	6	8	46	38
S8	F	4	10	11	93	82
	%	2	5	6	46	41
S9	F	20	22	40	87	31
	%	10	11	20	43	16
S10	F	9	15	39	101	36
	%	5	8	19	50	18
S11	F	42	78	26	38	16
	%	21	39	13	19	8

S12	F	7	32	59	80	22
	%	4	16	29	40	11
S13	F	4	12	36	105	43
	%	2	6	18	52	22
S14	F	14	15	20	91	60
	%	7	8	10	45	30
S15	F	3	13	15	93	76
	%	2	6	8	46	38
S16	F	4	10	11	93	82
	%	2	5	6	46	41
S17	F	14	15	20	91	60
	%	7	8	10	45	30
S18	F	3	13	15	93	76
	%	2	6	8	46	38
S19	F	4	10	11	93	82
	%	2	5	6	46	41

The results of Table 1 show descriptive statistics of every statement revealing participants views about pedagogical skills of teachers as a challenge or opportunity and role in improving students' learning capabilities in English language. About (43+16) 59% agreed that they have proper knowledge of different methods of teaching English. About (50+18) 68% agreed that they are able to enhance all the four skills of students. About (19+8) 27% agreed that they have taken enough courses for teaching English after initial training. About (40+11) 51% agreed that they use English for teaching in classroom. About (52+22) 74% agreed that they have the ability to use the material of textbook for interactive teaching / learning. About (45+30) 75% agreed that the best way to teach grammar is through communication. About (46+38) 84% agreed that there is no need of lesson planning in foreign language teaching. About (46+41) 87% agreed that they give importance to written work of students to analyze errors. About (43+16) 59% agreed that they give chance to the students to correct their errors for effective learning. About (50+18) 68% agreed that the students must be involved in oral grammar practices. About (19+8) 27% agreed that they motivate the students to ask questions in the classroom. About (40+11) 51% agreed that that they advise students to use dictionary for improving vocabulary. About (52+22) 74% agreed that they encourage the students for speaking English in the classroom. About (45+30) 75% agreed that repetition and practice are an important element of foreign language teaching. About (46+38) 84% agreed that they share their knowledge with the students. About (46+41) 87% agreed that they give feedback to the

students to improve their performance. About (45+30) 75% agreed that they promote critical thinking among students. About (46+38) 84% agreed that they try to make concept clear by giving examples from daily routine. About (46+41) 87% agreed that they try to teach English through innovative tasks.

Table 2

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	P-Value
Urban	74	70.54	7.285	.847	3.947	.000
Rural	126	35.400	12.580	1.121		

In table 2 The significant p-value 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) shows that there is a significant difference between the mean score of urban English teachers ($M=70.54$, $SD = 7.258$) and rural English teachers ($M=35.400$, $SD = 12.580$). On the basis of this significant difference, it can be said that pedagogical skills of teachers teaching English in rural areas are a challenge and not playing an effective role in improving students' learning capabilities in English language.

Table 3

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	P-Value
Male	99	67.08	11.125	1.118	.643	.521
Female	101	66.05	11.548	1.149		

In table 3 the significant p-value 0.521 ($p > .05$) shows that there is not any significant difference between the mean score of male ($M=67.08$, $SD = 11.125$) and female ($M=66.05$, $SD = 11.548$). Both male and female teachers are applying their pedagogical skills equally to improve the learning capabilities of students in English language.

Table 4

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	P-Value
English-Teachers	110	68.60	.761	.761	2.86	.005
Others	90	64.07	1.480	1.480		

In table 4 The significant p-value 0.005 ($p < 0.05$) shows that there is a significant difference between the mean score of proper English teachers ($M=68.60$, $SD = .761$) and other subject teachers teaching English ($M=64.07$, $SD = 1.480$). The teachers who have degrees in English subject are applying their skills more effectively as compared to those who have degrees in other subjects but are assigned to teach English.

Discussion and Conclusion:

It was an exploratory study and main objective was to explore the pedagogical skills for improving students' learning capabilities in English language. After analyzing the data, the conclusions are derived on the basis of findings of the questionnaire. The data reveals many important findings for further improvement in pedagogical skills and effective learning.

It is analyzed from the data received that lesson planning, training of teachers and motivation of students are still a challenging factors of pedagogical skills in English language teaching. Lesson

planning is an important element for effective learning. However, it is found that majority of teachers still do not consider its importance. Teaching of foreign language also requires time to time training of teachers for proper implementation of pedagogical skills. There is also found difference of proper application of skills between teachers teaching English in urban areas and rural areas. It shows that there is a strong need to focus the English teaching in rural areas for improving students' learning capabilities. It is also diagnosed that most of teachers having qualification in other subjects are also assigned to teach foreign language English which affect the desired learning outcomes.

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