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DIFFICULTIES OF TEACHING ENGLISH AT PRIMARY LEVEL IN RURAL AREAS OF PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This study highlights the difficulties of teaching English at primary level in rural areas of Punjab in Pakistan. The sample population was from Tehsil Minchinabad in District Bahawal Nagar. Data was collected from 90 primary teachers including both male and female of government schools and was analyzed on SPSS version 16. A questionnaire was given to the teachers to express their views about difficulties of teaching English at primary level in rural areas. The teachers described their difficulties related to grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary; linguistic devices i.e. rhyme scheme, alliteration, assonance, consonants, syllable, diphthong, digraph, etc. The teachers were found to have English teaching training and the teachers also showed a keen interest for trainings in order to learn new methodologies of teaching for making English teaching easy, interesting and effective at primary level in rural areas.

Keywords: Teacher, Teaching English, Difficulties.

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INTRODUCTION

English is, beyond doubt, an international language with a relatively wider scope. It is being taught in almost all of the Pakistani schools. It is the effective source of communication with the foreign countries. In many countries it is taught as a second language. Native speakers learn it as a first language. Teaching is an important task. A teacher is a nation builder. He plays a model role for his pupils. A teacher is like a lamp who spreads its light everywhere. So a teacher has many responsibilities. He must have grip on his subject and must be ambitious as well as a positive thinker. His personality should be flexible. He should respect others opinions, suggestions and views. He must change his mind set up according to the needs of society. He conveys his knowledge in such a way that he may see a glimpse in the minds of the students. It would be a successful teaching. If teacher fails to convey his ideas, concepts of knowledge in his students then his knowledge will become a stagnant pool. So teaching is a process which continuously needs vibration in the knowledge pool of a teacher. He always tries to learn more and more at every step of life. In the English teaching class room at primary level the teachers face many difficulties especially in rural areas. The reason is that in rural areas learning environment does not match English learning. Students consider English a difficult subject because it is not their mother tongue. They have to

learn it as second language. To set their mind they learn second language complexity in their minds. They are unable to understand its rules because their mental level is not enough to understand or learn it easily. So they consider English a tough subject. Their family background is anti-English. In Pakistani rural areas the students first learn Punjabi or some other local languages as their mother tongue. In schools, they learn Urdu as a national language after this English is taught. Students' difficulties in learning English are closely related to the teaching difficulties.

Literature Review

Following review of literature explored gape to work on the current study. Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011) found out difficulties in Teaching and learning Grammar in an EFL Context. According to them grammar is known as a bone in the process of learning a second language. It is taught to the students from the early classes. The teaching of grammar is normally seems a hard task for the teachers it also becomes necessary to teach grammar in the English teaching and learning classrooms. This study describes the teaching difficulties of the teachers as well as the learning difficulties of the students during learning another language. The focus of the study was to indicate the differences of difficulties related to the different levels of teaching. The conclusion of the study

revealed the importance of grammar teaching in EFL classrooms for making English an easy subject. Haboud (2009) conducted a study on Teaching Foreign languages: A challenge to Ecuadorian bilingual Intercultural Education & The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights in 1996 and described the importance of quality education. The study of language and culture are the main domain of the quality education which is a worldwide phenomenon. This study showed the importance of languages first the mother tongue and then a foreign language. For teaching a foreign language policies were defined. There is also a comparison between native and non-native language during the process of teaching a second language. In the end some suggestions were given for teaching a second language in the non-native environment of study. Kannan, (2009) researched on difficulties in learning English as a Second Language. He explained that English is known as the world language due to its wide scope. The Indian people treated English as a awful subject because when they very first time hear it, they are unable to understand it especially in rural areas .So the conclusion revealed that the English teachers have to cope with the difficulties while teaching English in rural areas. Students also faced difficulties in the learning English. The reasons of learning English difficulties and some reasonable solutions were mentioned. This study concluded that the problems can be solved if some steps be followed which are helpful to make English learning easy. Wiriyaichitra (2001) conducted research on the present situation of English language teaching and learning Thailand.

language teaching. Naseer (2010) defined the problems of English language teaching at primary level in the Northern Districts of Pakistan. The purpose of the study was to search the problems of both English language teachers and learners. Its objectives were to know about the language teachers' qualification problems faced by the teacher in the English teaching classrooms; some measures were designed to overcome the teaching difficulties.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

- To find out teachers' difficulties at primary level in rural areas
- To find out teachers' perception towards available sources of teaching English
- To find out teachers' satisfaction about measures taken by the government to improve teachers' performance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was based on survey method. A questionnaire was used as survey tool and the consistency of the collected data was checked through SPSS version 16. The population of the study was primary school teachers teaching in government schools of district Bahawal Nagar tehsil Minchanabad 90 primary teachers both male and female were

Table 1. showing results about teachers' difficulties at primary level in rural areas.

Statements	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
In rural areas student are very lazy towards learning English	91	3.51	.117	1.11	1.25
Students do not like English		3.22	.142	1.35	1.84
Students have anti English background		4.09	.089	.85	.72
Schools are not provided with information and communication technologies		3.70	.128	1.22	1.50
Teachers do not use AV aids in class room		2.79	.131	1.25	1.56
Mostly teachers are unable to teach English		3.20	.129	1.23	1.51

Table 2. Showing results about teachers' perceptions towards available sources of teaching English

Statements	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Teachers are not properly trained for teaching English	91	3.40	.121	1.15	1.33
Syllabus of English is very difficult for student capacity to understand		3.88	.113	1.07	1.15
Latest teaching methodologies are not applied in the Class		3.63	.112	1.071	1.14
Parents of the students are illiterate which creates unfriendly environment for the students		4.30	.099	.949	.90

Table 3. Showing results about teachers' satisfaction on the behalf of Government to improve teachers' performances

Statements	N	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Trainings are conducted to train English teachers	91	3.35	.111	1.058	1.119
The trainers who conduct teacher training are Expert, trained and have good grip on their subject		3.47	.122	1.168	1.363
Training material is according to the objective of syllabus.		3.49	.115	1.099	1.208
Teachers' guides are a good source to enhance the teachers' knowledge.		4.37	.069	.661	.437
Teachers training fulfill the training outcomes		3.59	.109	1.043	1.088

His main focus was to find out the problems of teaching English language in Thailand. Some suggestions were given for the improvement of English language teaching. There was a sharp contrast between the previous and the present developments that were practiced for improving English

views about difficulties facing during teaching English. The results of the survey show that the mean score about the first objective goes up from 2.79 to 4.09 with minimum standard error while std. deviation has been from .852 to 1.356. the

results reveal that there are many problems and difficulties for the teachers at primary level in rural areas. The above table shows that the mean score about the first objective goes up from 3.40 to 4.30 with minimum standard error while std. deviation has been from .099 to .121 the results reveal that there are many problems and difficulties for the teachers at primary level in rural areas. The above table shows that the mean score about the first objective goes up from 3.35 to 4.37 with minimum standard error while std. deviation has been from .069 to .122. The results reveal that there are many problems and difficulties for the teachers at primary level in rural areas.

DISCUSSION

During the data collection semi structured interviews were conducted to know the ground realities as well. Some students and teachers were interviewed and the results of these interviews show the causes and effects regarding scored results. The data collected through interviews was analyzed thematically. Hence the data were separated according to themes related to the research objectives. The study revealed that the learning conditions at primary schools level are pitiable. Most of the teachers face the various troubles from learners. In many Govt. primary schools there is only one teacher who has to teach more than one classes. The government is equally responsible for this sad spectacle. The situation goes on worsening. With regard to the topic Difficulties in teaching English at Primary level in rural areas, first research question shows that the students are very lazy towards learning English and in this way teachers face many difficulties in teaching English in Rural areas. The process of their learning is very slow hence the teacher is in great problem. Mostly teacher complain that the books which are taught in school are very difficult so students find no interest in English books so they become very lazy towards learning English and creates troubles for the teacher.

Teacher Guides are considered valuable source to enhance the knowledge of teacher for teaching English. They are now using it for better results. This is a remarkable advance from the situation that existed in the past. But it is also revealed during survey that in mostly schools, teachers do not use teacher guide as they think that they are very difficult to comprehend. Another thing highlighted by teachers of the Govt. School was that there is lack of facilities in Govt. Schools there is no suitable language learning environment and they have to work in a limited range. In many Primary schools there is only one or two class rooms for six classes and have no facilities of pure water, electricity and washrooms etc. On students' part, an interesting situation was found during the interview in a Govt. Primary Schools when the student argued that there should be no English subject at all and all other subjects should be taught in Urdu and some also have antifamily back ground where their parents do not want to teach their children English in Rural areas. During interview it was also found that due to some religious point of view, many families do not want to adopt English language.

Secondly, the socio economic and socio cultural differences of the children are also main features. The rural people have no English back ground, almost all the families of the rural are very far from English language learning and this is a major hindrance in teaching English at primary level in rural areas. To some extent media is playing a vital role in developing the language interest in the people. In this way, now there is a trend shift and people are becoming interested in English language. So there are many people who want to learn English themselves and they also want to educate their children in English. Furthermore, trainings are also conducted for different categories. During survey it is highlighted by the teachers that in training they are not properly trained for teaching English and also complain that the trainer who are invited for the trainings have no sound knowledge in their subjects, but on the other hand it is also observed that some teachers are not capable of teaching English at primary level in rural areas due to low qualification.

Conclusion

This study concluded that primary teachers face a numbers of difficulties while teaching English at primary level in rural areas. It can make easier if teachers use the direct method, no doubt traditional method is also the essence of teaching. So both methods should be applied side by side. Trainings should be given to the teachers so that they may teach English with interest consequently students may show better results.

Suggestions

Teaching is an important task. A teacher must have grip on his subject. He should be of progressive mind and ambitious and always be ready to learn something new mold himself according to the need of society. Try to learn more and more because knowledge has no limits. According to this research, a condition under which English is taught in Pakistan is critical condition.

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