

A Study of Innovative Practices in Teaching of English Language at Elementary Level in Punjab

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Abstract

The research titled as A Study of Innovative Practices in Teaching of English Language at Elementary Level in Punjab aims to investigate the types of teaching techniques employed in teaching of English as a second language in Government institutions. It has been observed that the teachers use conventional techniques like grammar translation method or lecture method in teaching English language and scarcely go for innovative practices due to several reasons. So, the objective of current research is to analyze the common practices of teaching English in institutions and to draw the attention of the teachers to the usefulness of innovative trends in English language class rooms. The present study is descriptive in nature and has quantitative approach. The data has been taken from one hundred female teachers who are teaching English language at Elementary level in Punjab. In order to get the response from the participants, Likert scale questionnaire is used with the random sampling techniques and the collected data is analyzed using SPSS. This research will be helpful in bringing new insights in teaching of English language. It further aids to policy makers of the elementary institutions and paves way for further research in the area.

Key Words : *Innovative Practices, new trends, teaching practices, interactive learning*

Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language is the requirement of survival in this global community because it is widely used as a communicative language in the world. In Pakistan, English language has received a significant place in all academic fields. The present study has explored the ways of teaching English language at elementary level in government schools. Elementary school teachers usually have one class to teach where the curriculum is structured around the various fundamental subjects. The focus is on the completion of curriculum. The students in

elementary schools are all at different phases of educational development rather than on the subject of English only, and their needs vary greatly. The teachers are expected to engage students actively, creating fun and enthusiastic atmospheres within their classrooms and adapting to meet the needs of their students. The innovative methods of teaching English language is necessity of every language class room as the curriculum demands the use of multimedia to teach English language and to lay emphasis on the speaking as well as listening skills of students. But the scenario is that the English language teachers hardly go for activity based teaching.

The present study has also explored the strategies of teaching English language at elementary level and has focused on to what extent the teachers use conventional methods such as reading text books or let the students listen to one teacher. Furthermore, the study investigates if teachers use modern trends to teach the students by engaging them into activities such as taking them outside of class room for outdoor games and using technology in class rooms.

Literature Review

The present research aims to explore innovative methods of teaching English language at elementary level in Punjab. Richard(2005) has found in his research that experienced teachers have variety of approaches to teach whereas those conventional teachers do not use variety of activities but they stick to outdated methods. He defines innovative teaching as the use of imagination in class room to encourage students for creative writing and critical thinking. Tamkeen (2019) has conducted research in teaching English language and literature in class room with new trends by making comparison between Grammar Translation Method with Audio Lingual Method. She has also explored through her research that web based learning has become need of the time in English language teaching class rooms..

Hussain (2010) illustrates the effective learning by using new technology and presents a case study by collecting data from students of different schools. He has focused on the outcomes of using computer in classroom and his area of concern was students and their learning and further explored that the use of new technology in teaching English would be more helpful for teachers.

Innovative strategies such as group based tasks, role play, incorporating audio- visual material and use of social media have become the part and parcel of every English language class room.

English language teachers at elementary level are expected to encourage activity based learning. Sarwar(2001) in her article has mentioned project base learning and its stages. She further says that in Pakistan due to unlimited syllabus, teachers tend to pay more attention to completing syllabus rather than working on the active involvement of students. Abudur(2009) has carried out research in the field of teaching methodology and learning ICTs. He has conducted interviews of various secondary school teachers and presented his research that supports present research and illustrates the current situation of teaching in government schools. His study has located the questions of barriers in the use of ICTs at school level. The study explains the increasing importance of English language, specially in the context of Pakistan. It also presents how students face hard time to memories vocabulary of foreign language and their struggle to be fluent in English language. It has been generally observed that students in Pakistan face

problems in academics due to their poor performance in English. Mohammad et al(2018) point out that the teaching method in government schools is teacher centered in which students are given less opportunity to practice language skill in class room. Moreover, they have discovered the reason behind this approach is overcrowded class room, teacher's workload and poor infrastructure.

Bilal et al (2013) conducted a research about the problems of learning English language in Pakistan. To them, the students are studying English since grade one yet they are not able to speak properly. They learn English to reproduce the given text such as explanation of poems or making sentences. Hassan and Sajid (2013) have explored the use of ICT in learning language in Punjab. However, this study has revealed that participants have good perception about integration of ICT in learning English language yet the issues with practicing of this innovative method remain unattended. This problem is the root cause of all the issues in the acquisition of language in government school.

Vaughan and Hand (2003) have insisted on use of computer at secondary level in teaching of English.. They have also discussed learning outcomes in general but they did not talk about language learning particular. Teaching through games is one of these modern methods. In order to teach vocabulary or parts of speech, the English language teachers can conduct vocabulary games, puzzles, parcel game and board games. With these games teachers can teach synonyms, antonyms and idioms. Further, by assigning students roles to perform and use sentences in their performance, teachers can ensure the correct use of language in daily routine. Using radio broadcast in remote area where internet is less accessible is one of these modern methodologies. Other than these innovative trends use of multimedia, cell phones, LED and many other technologies make learning effective. Furthermore, interactive learning in language class room ensures the practice of skill to learn language quickly. Now a day, technology has made language learning easier and it enables the students to practice it in class rooms.

Statement Of Problem

The study intends to explore the status of teaching English language in government schools and ensures the practice of innovative methods while teaching of English language elementary level in Punjab.

Significance Of The Study

This research study is significant in the way that many researches have been carried out in this field yet teaching English at elementary level is unexplored as none of the researchers has ensured the practice of innovative methods of teaching English language at elementary level before. This research study aids in the field of language teaching as well as learning. It aids further researches in teacher's training institutes, professional development and in the field of education.

Research Methodology

This research study is descriptive in nature and has quantitative approach. The population of the study consists of female school teachers of English language at elementary level in the district

Dera Ghazi Khan of Punjab Province. The study is further delimited to the D G Khan city. The sample of this research study comprises of one hundred female teachers of English language at elementary level in government schools. Likert scale questionnaire is used as research tool. In order to collect data random sampling technique is used and the collected data is analyzed by using SPSS.

Data Analysis

The statistical results of the data are presented in tables and the description is also provided.

Table 1: Responses about qualification

Q1	Frequency	Percentage
Masters	44	22.0
MPhil	56	28.0

Out of 100 female school teachers, 22% have done masters, while 28% are Mphil scholars.

Table 2 :Ratio of respondents regarding trainings

Q2	Frequency	Percentage
One	21	10.5
More than 1	2	1.0
Not at all	77	38.5

The 38 % of the total respondents have said that their department does not arrange training specifically for teaching English; only 1% have said their department has arranged training specifically for teaching of English language more than one and 10.5% respondent have answered that their department had arranged one training for teaching English language.

Table 3: Responses about attending training for teaching English language

Q3	Frequency	Percentage
One	22	11.0
More than one	20	10.0

Not at all	58	29.0
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The 11% teachers have attended training specifically for teaching of English language; 10% teachers have attended more than one training particularly for teaching English whereas, 29% have never attended any training for teaching English .

Table 4: Responses for satisfaction level of trainings

Q4	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	7.5
To some extent	59	29.5
No	26	13.0

The teachers who are satisfied with the training their department has arranged for them about teaching methodology are 7.5% and 29.5% have said that to some extent they are satisfied with the trainings, while 13% are not satisfied with the training their department has arranged for them

Table 5: Respondent's ratio of practicing various teaching methodology

Q5	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	5.0
To some extent	14	7.0
No	76	38.0

5.0% of participants have said that they use variety of methods to teach English language; 7.0% participants have mentioned that to some extent they use variety of methods, while 38% have said that they do not use variety of methods to teach English language.

Table 6: Responses of Using AV aids

Q6	Frequency	Percentage
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Yes	14	7.0
To some extent	13	6.5
No	73	36.5

7.0% respondent claim that they use AV aids in teaching of English; 6.5% respondent have said to some extent they use AV aids, whereas 36.5 % respondents have mentioned that they do not teaching English with the help of AV aids.

Table 7: Responses of using Multimedia

Q7	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	14	7.0
To some extent	20	10.0
No	66	33.0

7.0% teachers mention that they teach English with the help of Multimedia;10.0% teachers say to some extent they use Multimedia in their class room , while 33% teachers claim that the do not use Multimedia in class room to teach English.

Table 8 :Ratio of using Radio Broadcast

Q 8	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	4.0
To some extent	17	8.5
No	75	37.5

37.5% teachers are found not using Radio Broadcast as source of teaching English in their class rooms; 8.5% teachers do use Radio Broadcast to some extent, while only 4.0% use Radio Broadcast to teach English language in their class room.

Table 9: Responses of taking students outside of class room

Q9	Frequency	Percentage
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Yes	16	8.0
To some extent	23	11.5
No	61	30.5

30.5% teachers have been found not taking their students outside of class rooms for teaching English; 11.5% do take their students outside for learning English, while 8.0% take their students out of class room to teach English language.

Table 10: Ratio of conducting outdoor activities

Q10	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	10	5.0
To some extent	14	7.0
No	76	38.0

38.0% teachers have not been found conducting outdoor games for students to teach them English language; 7.0% do conduct outdoor games but to some extent, whereas only 5.0% teachers conduct outdoor games for students for teaching English.

Table 11: Responses of conducting interactive activities

Q11	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	4.0
To some extent	25	12.5
No	67	33.5

33.5% teachers do not teach English by conducting interactive activities in their class room; 12.5 teachers claim to some extent they arrange interactive activities in class room, while only 4.0% teachers have mentioned that they arrange interactive activities in class room to teach English

Findings

The practice of innovative teaching methods such as use of Multimedia, Radio Broadcast and conducting interactive activities in teaching English language is the key to quick acquisition of language. The present research has observed that teachers in government schools scarcely use the

modern methods of teaching language and use outdated methods as reading of text only or to answers the questions and listen the teacher only. At elementary level students are learning quickly and are improving their skills rapidly, so they need more attention specially learning a foreign language. It has been studied that teachers in government schools do not focus on language skills of students rather they are more concerned with curriculum.

As the performance of students learning is the reflection of teaching methods applied to them, so it is necessary for teacher to focus more on students learning language. In government schools the students turn into passive learners, and it is due to the over emphasis on the completion of syllabus within the stipulated time. According to the collected data in this regard, 70 to 80% teachers use conventional methods of teaching and conduct activities once in a blue moon in class to teach English language. Furthermore, the results have shown that teachers hardly take their students out of class room for outdoor games to enhance their gross and motor skills. The present study shows that 60% teachers have not attended trainings related to English language teaching, while the rest of 40 have not attended any training at all. Therefore, they are not aware of interactive teaching and learning in language class room and they do not consider teaching English language as a separate subject from other subjects.

Owing to the incompetency of English language teachers and the unavailability of facilities to teach language skills in government school at district DGKhan, students get hardly an opportunity to practice language skill in class room. Most of the time teachers engage students in reading or writing tasks whereas the part of listening and speaking with rest of fellows remain ignored. 73% Teacher claim that they do not use AV aids in their class to teach English language, 13 % are found on using AV aids but only charts or pictures to teach English, while 14% teach with the help of AV aids such as motion pictures and playing rhymes. Similar results are found in use of multimedia, teaches least use projector of multimedia; 20 % teachers occasionally use it for teaching English language ,while 60% teachers have never used it. The same response is received when teachers are asked about the use of Radio broadcast. Few teachers use this technology in their English language class room and instruct their students listen to news or some story and reproduce in their own words. The study has revealed that teachers tend on using conventional methods in teaching English as they encourage reading text books and listening to teacher only in class room , they hardly go for conducting activities such as group discussion, role play or let the students to mimic the dialogues.

The results of the study revealed that teachers in government school tend to use conventional methods and hardly practice for innovative methods in teaching of English language. These results present significant response of teachers in application of innovative methods to teach English language and also to alarm other researchers to focus on teaching methodology in English or in other subjects at elementary level.

Conclusion

Findings of this research study have drained the significant conclusion that the teachers in govt schools of District D.G.Khan are in the habit of employing lecture method in classroom and

create no space for innovative methods of teaching because they are not trained enough to teach English language as individual subject. Some of them are given training about teaching methodology in general, so they are unaware of the methods to teach English particular. The analysis of the data suggests that the teachers hardly use modern technology in teaching of English language due to the unavailability of modern equipment, shortage of electricity and overcrowded classes as well.

It is recommended that the teachers are provided enough space and less number of students to conduct activities in class room. The teachers must be not be restricted to a single class room only, they should be allowed to use the natural environment like play grounds etc for effective teaching of English language. In this way excessive use of conventional methods is discouraged and chances of innovative teaching methods will be maximized.

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