

Effects of Teacher Training on English Language Teaching

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Abstract:

The notion of good teaching is associated with theorizing about what good teaching might represent. Teachers' concept about language learning effects their teaching methodology and what they do in class to teach a language. The twentieth century has witnessed the demand of professional teachers who, besides having subject knowledge, must be equipped with professional ethics and pedagogical skills to be an effective teacher. This study is specifically aimed at analyzing the effects of training on English language teachers teaching at intermediate level. This research was carried out at two colleges in Lahore. The paper will demonstrate that teacher training has positive effects on teaching methodology, techniques and attitude of the English teachers. The paper will conclude that to maintain good standard in English language teaching, teacher training can play an effective role at college level.

Introduction

Language teaching involves the use of an appropriate methodology, techniques as well as teaching of skills. Planned learning is one of the important invocations of the 20th century in the teaching-learning process, and 'Classroom success depends on planning rather than charisma', (Wright, 2005). An unplanned lesson often results in a failure and involves a waste of time and energy. An effective professional education can bring excellence raising the standard of education. However, there are different notions regarding teacher training. Those who have great faith in training think that an organized training must produce effective teachers. The others say that training does not make a person more effective (Chowdary et al, 2004).

English language occupies the status of second as well as foreign language in Pakistan. Master degree in English literature is the minimum qualification required for appointment as a lecturer in English. Training, however, is not required for selection. Higher Education Commission offers courses in teaching methodology to college and University teachers from time to time. However, some of the teachers teaching at college level are untrained. The present study investigates the difference

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in teaching standards of the trained and the untrained English teachers teaching at two colleges of Lahore.

Statement of the Problem

English is taught as a compulsory subject from class 1 till graduate level in Pakistan. Major English language needs of the students are for employment, academic purposes and communication. Unfortunately, students find themselves unable to communicate in English even after studying it for ten years of their life. A lot of research over the issue of problems and need of training regarding teaching English as a second or a foreign language has been carried out. Various teacher training courses are being offered by the government and the private institutions. It is the researcher's intention to see the difference in teaching methodology of the trained and the untrained teachers at both colleges.

Research Questions

This paper will explore the following research questions:

1. Is there any difference between the teaching methodology, teaching style and use of skills of the trained and the untrained teachers teaching at intermediate level?
2. What kind of attitude and motivation level is demonstrated by the trained and the untrained teachers teaching intermediate classes at government and semi-government institute?

Significance of the Study

The purpose of this study is to research the effects of teacher training on teaching methodology and motivation level of the English language teachers. This study will also highlight the difference in the teaching techniques of the trained and untrained English teachers at both colleges.

The findings of the present study will indicate whether teacher training has any role in effective English language teaching. If yes, then to what extent. The comparative study will also explore policies of the institutes regarding English language teaching at the government and semi-government colleges of Lahore.

Literature Review

Training is a process which aims to follow some clearly defined parameters. It is a journey of self-awareness and self-discovery, leading to growth and development in the personality of the teachers. The aim of training is to infuse scientific thinking, planning and working methodically and efficiently (Agochiya, 2002). Training emphasizes specific knowledge, skills and attitude for efficient performance in teaching. Chowdary et al (2004: 316) define training as a 'systematic development of attitude, knowledge, skill, behavior patterns required by an individual in order to perform adequately a given job or task'. For successful teaching, reorientation of teachers' roles is required. The successful teacher, according to Williams and Burden (1997) besides providing specific learner training tasks, is aware of the strategy implications of every language learning task that they give. Another important

consideration in teacher teaching is about the class environment which is build up by the teacher's attitude, strategy and organization in class. 'The best results are likely to occur when there is a combination of warm and supportive relationships, an emphasis on specific academic tasks and accomplishments and a reasonably clear, orderly and well structured milieu'(ibid: 197). Apart from these, motivation is the very heart of the teaching-learning process. Motives energise and direct learning. Awareness of the techniques to motivate the learners should be established. Panda (1999) suggests the teachers to provide suitable psychological environment and apply various devices in the classroom to motivate the children.

Training can be categorized as pre-service and in-service. Both types of training have different objectives to follow. Pre-service training is also referred as non-formal or continuing education. It aims at developing new skills and orienting new incumbents with their responsibilities and equips them with various methods of performing the assigned tasks effectively. In-service training aims at assigning new role parameters, introducing new strategies and working methods in the organization and enhancing productivity and effectiveness (Agochia, 2002).

To teach at intermediate level, masters' degree in English literature is the minimum criteria for selection as a lecturer by the Provincial Public Service Commission and the Federal Service Commission in Pakistan. Pre-service training in language teaching is not a pre-requisite. As a result, teachers are not equipped to teach a language. In fact, masters in English literature does not equip them to teach English language competently. The majority of emerging post graduate students in Pakistan today lack proficiency in English, as the majority of them has their schooling in Urdu-medium institutions.

English Language Teaching in Pakistan was given serious consideration as a field for specialization for English Teachers in the mid-eighties. Now there are teacher training programmes offered by different universities such as diploma and MA³ in TEFL⁴ are offered by A.I.O.U⁵ and NUML⁶. Karachi University, BZU⁷, NUML and UMT⁸ offer M.A, M.Phil⁹ and P.hD¹⁰ in Linguistics. M.A, M.Phil and P.hD in English literature are offered by PU¹¹, BZU, NUML, UMT, GCU¹², many post graduate colleges and various other private institutions. ELT¹³ program is offered by PU, BZU, NUML, UMT, Kinnaird College, FC¹⁴ College, LCWU¹⁵, GCU

³ Master in Arts: MA.

⁴ Teaching of English as a foreign language: TEFL.

⁵ Allama Iqbal Open University: AIQU.

⁶National University of Modern Languages: NUML.

⁷ Bahauddin Zakariya University: BZU.

⁸ University of Management and Technology: UMT.

⁹ Masters in Philosophy: MPhil.

¹⁰ Doctorate in Philosophy: PhD.

¹¹ Punjab University: PU.

¹² Government College University: GCU

¹³ English Language Teaching: ELT.

¹⁴ Foreman Christian: FC.

¹⁵ Lahore College for Women University: LCWU.

and various other private institutions. Rahman (1997) commenting on this issue says that private bodies like SPELT¹⁶, The Teacher's Resource Centre (Karachi) and the Agha Khan University, NUML and UMT have shown their concern for courses in English language teaching. Moreover, the semi-government institutions like AIOU, the University of Karachi, the English language Centre at Balochistan University, the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and the International Islamic University have also shown same concern. There are other teacher training programs also as B-ed and M-ed level which are offered in Colleges of Education and AIOU also offers these courses. In these courses, students may opt for the subjects according to their interest such as teaching of English.

If we review in-service training programs offered for the college teachers, we find that there is no independent training section of colleges in Education block of Secretariat Punjab (Additional Secretary Higher Education Punjab, PC¹⁷). However, the Directorate of Staff Development and Higher Education are awarded with the responsibility to conduct training courses for the in-service college teachers. Though in the past, Directorate of Staff Development has been offering short courses in English language to college teachers after every three years and the training was compulsory for all the teachers but there was no follow up and there was no stamp of these courses in A.C.R¹⁸s. In 2001, Directorate of Staff Development attached to University of Education. From that time onward the process of training for college teachers stopped. Even when Directorate of Staff development de-linked with the University of Education in 2004, but the training courses are not planned for the college teachers (Director DPI Colleges (W) Punjab, PC). Moreover, Directorate of Staff Development has not saved any data about the previous training provided to college teachers. However, HEC in accordance with Non Government Organizations as UNICEF¹⁹, SAF²⁰ and others offer refresher courses in English as well as teaching methodology in general.

A review of education policies shows that in the education policy of 1959, it is stated that refresher courses for the teachers are a necessity. Teachers must equip themselves with latest teaching techniques by attending refresher courses at least once in 5 years and their increments should be withheld if they do not so. In the education policy of 1969, it is recommended to launch in-service training of teachers to upgrade their qualifications and effectiveness as teachers. (Education policies: 2002). But no proper and consistent strategy is practically applied regarding teacher's training. Moreover, the description of teacher training in the above mentioned policies does not specify or point out the subjects for training. The system provides limited incentive to teachers to seek higher qualification. Government has announced to pay 5000 rupees monthly as an incentive to a teacher who teaches at university or any research institute, if he/she qualifies PhD. But general incentive for other teachers who qualify PhD is 1500 monthly (Rizwi: Director DPI girls' colleges

¹⁶ Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers: SPELT.

¹⁷ Personal Communication: PC.

¹⁸ Annual Confidential Report: ACR.

¹⁹ United Nations Children Fund: UNICEF.

²⁰ Science and Arts Foundation: SAF.

Punjab, PC). Now government offers study leave with full pay to those who qualify HEC²¹ scholarship for PhD. Moreover, in the framework for training prepared by Directorate of Staff Development (2006), it is stated that fellowship/scholarships (payment of tuition fee or lump sum payment including tuition and living expenses) will be offered to allow teachers attend certified courses organized by institutions, public or private, both national and international. Thus the incentives currently provided for the trained teachers are still limited and need to be reinforced. Moreover, another discouraging fact is that those who wish to join any training or short course related to their subjects privately are not provided with any T.A, D.A²², though they are provided with study leave, but study leave is also awarded once in the job.

Methodology

I used qualitative method in this research. The data was collected by using the observation and interview techniques. I observed six sessions of four English language teachers each teaching at FA (humanities group, part 1 & part 2) and FSc (pre-medical group, part 1 & part 2) i.e. twenty four sessions each at the two girls' colleges of Lahore district. By session, I mean period which is of forty minutes duration at the government college and sixty minutes duration at the semi-government college. I interviewed the same teachers who I observed. For reasons of confidentiality and anonymity, I have assigned numbers to both colleges. The semi-government college for women is labeled as College 1 and the government college for women as College 2. In this connection Creswell (2003: 66) states, 'inquirers use aliases or pseudonyms for individuals and places to protect identities'.

At both colleges, it was a non-participant as well as semi-structured observation. Although I had a prepared observation sheet but I noted down the whole practices in class. I observed eighteen to twenty days at each college. Semi-structured personal interviews were taken by each teacher individually. It took me forty to sixty minutes to interview each teacher which I noted down.

Comparative Analysis of Observation of English classes

English language teachers at both colleges have masters degree in English literature. One of the English teachers at College 2 is diploma holder in English language teaching. Three of the English teachers at College 1 have received HEC teacher training courses related to teaching methodology in general (the length of the courses ranged between two weeks to three months). On the whole, one English teacher at College 1 and three at College 2 are untrained. The following figure explains it.

²¹ Higher Education Commission: HEC.

²² Traveling Allowance, Daily Allowance: T.A, D.A.

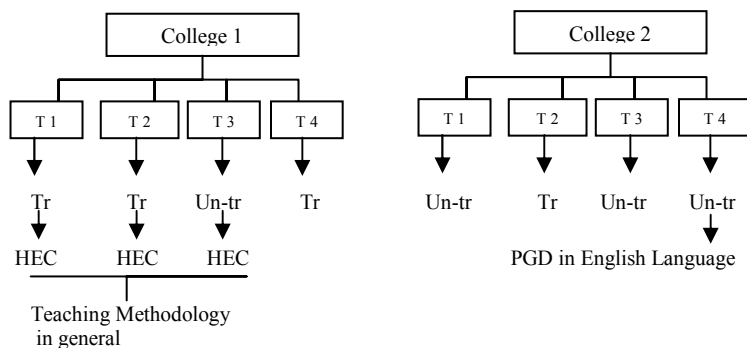


Figure 1 : Training received by the teachers

		ET1 (Tr)	ET2 (Tr)	ET3 (Un-tr)	ET4 (Tr)	ET1 (Un-tr)	ET2 (Tr)	ET3 (Un-tr)	ET4 (Un-tr)
1. Teaching Methodology and technique	1. GTM					Yes		Yes	Yes
	2. Direct			Yes			Yes		
	3. Communicative				Yes				
	4. Audio-lingual								
	5. Eclectic	Yes	Yes						
	6. Any other								
2. Presentation	Novel illustrations	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
	Variety of activities	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
	Communicative use of language	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
3. Use of language learning material	Textbook	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Any other material	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
4. Use of language skills	Listening comprehension	A little control-ed	A little control-ed	A little control-ed	A little control-ed	No	No	No	No
	Speaking accurately and fluently	Yes through question-answer technique	Yes through question-answer technique	Yes through question-answer technique	Yes through question-answer technique	No	A little use of question-answer technique	A little use of question-answer technique	No
	Reading comprehension	Reading aloud	Reading aloud & silent reading	No	No	A little practice of aloud reading	No	No	No
	Writing skill	Monthly, December, Annual tests	Monthly, December, Annual tests	Monthly, December, Annual tests	Monthly, December, Annual tests	December, Annual tests	December, Annual tests	December, Annual tests	
	Any other skill	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Teaching of grammar	1. Deductive method	1. Yes	1. Yes	1. Yes	1. Yes	1. No	1. No	1. No	1. No
	2. Inductive method	2. No	2. No	2. No	2. No	2. Yes	2. Yes	2. Yes	2. Yes
Activities for teaching grammar	1. Text based activities prepared by the teacher	1. Yes	1. Yes	1. No	1. Yes	1. No	1. No	1. No	1. No
	2. Activities in the exercises given in the text	2. Yes	2. Yes	2. Yes	2. Yes	2. Yes	2. Yes	2. Yes	2. Yes

Table 1: Methodology employed by the teachers.

Teaching Techniques and Style of Teachers

All of the English teachers at College 1 use innovative techniques in class. As far as their teaching style is concerned, they move around the class and keep eye contact with the students and two of them make use of white board also. Only the untrained English teacher at this college has traditional style of teaching that is giving lecture in authoritative voice. She keeps standing at fixed place and does not make use of blackboard in class. Accent and pronunciation of all the four teachers at College 1 is fine. Teacher-student interaction is strong in the classes.

At College 2, all of the English teachers have routine and traditional style of teaching. They speak English with Punjabi accent and two of the teachers pronounce words wrongly in English class. Teachers neither move around the class nor make use of blackboard. There is a little teacher-student interaction in class.

Figure : 3

		College 1				College 2			
		ET1 (Tr)	ET2 (Tr)	ET3 (Un- tr)	ET4 (Tr)	ET1 (Un- tr)	ET2 (Tr)	ET3 (Un- tr)	ET4 (Un- tr)
1. Attitude of the teacher	Stimulates the students	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
	1. Encourages the students 2. Strict/frank behaviour	1. Yes 2. Frank	1. Yes 2. Frank	1. Yes 2. Frank	1. Yes 2. A little strict	1. No 2. Strict	1. No 2. Strict	1. No 2. A little strict	1. No 2. Frank
	Provides opportunities for outcome/ feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	A little	No
	Involves (intellectually, emotionally) the students in class	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
	Accepts criticism	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
2. How do students feel in class	Comfortable	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
	1. Confident 2. Less confident	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes
	1. Relaxed 2. Anxious	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes
	1. Motivated 2. Less-motivated	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes
	1. Freely express 2. Remain reserved	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes
3. Teacher's attitude towards learners	Brilliant learners/ Dull learners	Equal	Equal	Equal	Equal	Equal	Equal	Equal	Equal
	Fast learners/ Slow learners	Equal	Equal	Equal	Equal	Equal	Equal	Equal	equal
4. Strategy to motivate learners	Question-answer activity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	A little bit	No	No
	Presentation of students	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
	1. Individual work 2. Group work	1. Yes 2. Yes	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No
	1. Competition 2. Test (oral)	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. No	1. No 2. No	1. No 2. No	1. No 2. No	1. No 2. No	1. No 2. No
	1. Reward 2. Punishment	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. Yes 2. No	1. No 2. Yes	1. No 2. No	1. No 2. No	1. No 2. No

Table 2: Attitude and motivation

Attitude and Motivation level of teachers

English teachers at College 1 are more friendly and motivated. They use different activities to stimulate and to maintain interest of the learners. As a result, students feel more relaxed and participate in class discussion. The use of innovative activities to involve the students continuously during teaching indicates their personal involvement and high motivation. Though the untrained teacher does not make use of innovative techniques but she involves the students through class discussion. She also treats the students friendly and it is because of her friendly attitude that she is the most favorite teacher of students.

However, English teachers at College 2 behave strictly and one of the untrained teachers threatens the students of punishment. All the teachers at the college ask students about the page numbers and the chapter before starting teaching.

Comparative analysis of the results of interviews taken by the English teachers at both colleges:

Methodology, skills and techniques in language class

According to responses of the teachers, English teachers at College 1 use English as a medium of communication in class. Sometimes they use Urdu to explain the abstract or difficult words. The English teachers at College 2 use Urdu as a medium of instruction. The use of English is restricted only for reading the textbook in class. One of the English teachers says, 'if a teacher tries to impress the students and tries to scare them by using English that is wrong. I try to reach the standard of students and for this I use any language to explain'. During observation, she uses code-mixing of Urdu and English language as she says, 'to avoid all wo sare jo us ke age the' (to avoid all those who were marching before him), 'mera inside ka head tha' (I had brain in my head). The trained teacher uses English as medium of communication and to teach the text. Sometimes she uses Urdu while explaining difficult words and phrases.

As far as the use of teaching method is concerned, English teachers at College 1 believe in the use of communicative method or eclectic approach in class. They also believe in student-centered approach. On the other hand, English teachers at College 2, while answering the question about using teaching methodology, start describing the process of teaching. However, I drew from their responses that they believe in using grammar translation method. A trained English teacher has some knowledge about teaching methods and explains that she uses direct method to teach. In response to the question about lesson plan and teaching of language skills in class, English teachers at College 1 say that they do not plan their lesson daily rather they think it impractical to do so. Yet during observation of their classes, their use of techniques and activities indicate their preparation of the lesson. They, according to them, try to pay attention to teaching of language skills but it more depends on the lesson and number of students. The teachers at both colleges claim that writing skills are most neglected in class. Two of the teachers at College 2 claim that they plan their lesson. However, during observation, they asked the students about the page number and the paragraph of the text before starting teaching in class. All the

teachers at the college think it impossible to teach language skills in such a limited period to a large class. One of the teachers gets irritated over the question related to use of skills and techniques to be applied to teach skills and declares it discussion of a 'Utopian world'. In fact, responses of the teachers exposed that the teachers at College 2 are not aware of the techniques to be used to teach language skills. Though the trained teachers at College 1 used innovative techniques, during observation, to teach speaking reading and writing skills but they could not explain it in their interviews.

Attitude and Motivation level of the teachers

According to the trained English teachers of College 1, they use question-answer technique, discussion, role-play method, quizzes and make use of real objects to motivate the learners in class. The untrained English teacher points toward the use of question-answer technique and discussion. The trained teachers also use charts, maps and give the students assignment on using internet to search material related to the topic they are studying. But the untrained English teacher is not in favor of use of any audiovisual aids to motivate the students at this level.

All the teachers at College 2 do not believe in using audiovisual aids rather they regard the government responsible for not providing them any facility. During observation of their classes, all the teachers at the college did not use even the blackboard which is provided to them in class. Attitude of the untrained teachers is strict and all the teachers say that they do not use any activity to motivate the learners.

Training

The response of the English teachers at College 1 about pre-service training is not positive during their interviews. In fact no one amongst them has received any pre-service training. However, two of the trained teachers at College 1 are in favor of in-service training. One trained teacher believes, 'one should be first a good human being'. The untrained teacher at the college is not in favor of in-service training.

All the teachers at College 2 are in favor of in-service training although they have not received any in-service training.

Conclusion

The analysis shows a transparent difference in teaching methodology of the trained and the untrained teachers. There is one untrained English teacher at College 1 and three at College 2. The trained teachers at College 1 believe in communicative and eclectic approach. The overall teaching process as the use of innovative techniques, teaching of language skills, positive attitude and high motivation of the teachers in class indicates their belief in student-centered approach. On the contrary, the trained teacher at College 2 applies direct method in class. She focuses on giving practice in speaking skills to the students. But she does not make use of novel techniques to teach in class.

The untrained teacher at College 1 makes use of direct method in class. She tries to keep the students involved through class discussion. Due to positive attitude

towards the students and high motivation, she is a favorite teacher amongst the students. But she is not aware of the techniques or activities to be applied to teach language skills. On the other hand, the untrained teachers at College 2 teach through grammar translation method. They are not aware of teaching language skills rather they take it a time-consuming activity. The teachers behave strictly with the students rather their behavior is very critical to them. Motivation level of the teachers is low.

Higher Education provides courses to college teachers which are not held on regular basis. These trainings are most of the time held by the Directorate of Staff Development at any teacher training institute or at their own institute. These courses are offered on teaching methods in general. However, this training, provided to the teachers, improves their teaching methodology, presentation skills and classroom management. To enhance the quality of English language teaching, the teaching of language skills and techniques is required which can only be achieved through training related to English language teaching. Moreover, these courses offered by HEC have not been attended by many teachers of the government college, whereas majority of the English teachers at the semi-government college have attended these courses. The mark difference in the policy of the government and that of the semi-government institute is observed which indicates the difference in the level of interest, priorities and standards set by the private and public sectors in Pakistan.

Another interesting point is that all the English teachers at both colleges are appointed by the Commission or by the University Board also in case of the semi-government college which is a chartered University. All the teachers have masters degree in English literature. But teaching methodology of the trained teachers is much better than that those who are untrained which symbolises that it is the training not the degree which has polished attitude, teaching and presentation skills of the teachers. Secondly, academic qualifications increase ones' competence but the training adds to the significant effects on performance level of the person. Teaching does not require only the competence rather it demands professional attributes also.

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