

Teachers' Role in Implementation of English Language Teaching Policies in Public Primary Schools of Rural Area in Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

Pakistan is a multi-lingual country, and the national language is Urdu while officially focused language is English. In Pakistan, Govt. is trying to implement English as a medium of instruction from class one to graduation. For this purpose, several policies were formulated from first language policy in 1958 to date. The basic motive behind such policies is to make the students proficient in English language and its fluent usage to compete with the worldwide challenges. That is why parents prefer to send their children to good English Medium Schools instead of public schools, so that they can learn good English as it's perceived as a passport for better opportunities in life. Descriptive method is opted to analyze the implementation of language policies in rural schools of Punjab. The data is collected with the help of questionnaires, surveys, interviews and classroom observations from 20 English language teachers and their students, currently teaching at primary levels in various rural public schools. The current study finds that English medium policy proves to be a counter-productive as the students show very poor performance in language proficiency. The factors which involved are lack of trained teachers, socio-cultural dynamics, poverty, weak pedagogies and overall atmosphere of the schools especially in public sector play vital role in the failure of language policies. The present study proposes that English language policy at early schooling is good but it should be monitored for a long time in schools.

Keywords: Punjab, Pakistan, Language policy, Implementation, proficient, counterproductive, teachers, medium.

1.1 Background of the Study

Language policy is a set of instructions to follow in schools (Olson 2007). It expresses the national direction set for language and their roles in education and national life. According to Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangs (1996) language policy is a product that determines language related to task, rights, functions, and access but in Pakistan objectives of Language policies are not clear and they lack direction. As a result English is an interest of elite class only; the non-elite schools are not at par with the elite schools (Rehman, 1997). Nowadays Education

department in Pakistan is trying its best to implement English language policy as recruitment of highly educated staff in primary schools and provision of training to plan lesson before teaching in the class providing teacher's guides to teachers. Almost, all private and public schools use English as a medium of instruction for teaching in Punjab province, Pakistan. English is the second language in Punjab and it is difficult for teachers and students to understand concepts in English because they have a multilingual background. English is the language of science and technology as well as it is more integrating, all over the world, into the education, that's why it is considered essential for progress. Although English has a recognized place in the world, but in the case of subcontinent British have greatly influenced the colonized parts of the world after World War II. They dominant many Asian countries and English became lingua franca among people whose first language was different from each other.

Presently, the English language is perceived as a language of worldwide business, trade, science and technology, diplomacy, training, prominent media in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. So, the English language has taken the important position in the education of nations. Other than this, English is utilized as an instrument of correspondence among countries nowadays. Not just correspondence it has been recognized tool having complex purposes as it is called onion due to its numerous layers (Ricento and Hornberger, 1996).

Language policy in Pakistan experiences numerous changes with the progression of time particularly, realizes the impacts of political changes on language policy and status. Accordingly, English is extraordinarily appreciated as a medium of instruction sustains because of political and social restructuring after the political autonomy. In Pakistan Education conference was held in 1947, soon after independence. It was settled by Government of Pakistan that Urdu will be medium of instruction, in state-funded schools.

On eleventh May 1949, it was decided that Municipal Corporation of Karachi will adopt a resolution prescribing the prompt selection of Urdu in the majority of its proceedings and English will get the status of the social language. There were two purposes for this decision; one is to make the student proficient in Both English and Urdu to improve their understanding of main idea provided by teachers utilizing translation method.

Another ground behind the educational policy was to increase political support as language has always been the impression of one's culture and values, adored and followed by him. Instruction frameworks are of unique significance, working as social implies that prompts control their nation, with instructive establishments filling in as vehicles for the transmission of norms and values (Adan 1976). Ayub Khan's language policy was additionally reinforcing the situation of Urdu and Punjabi (Rehman).

There was some changes observed on the entry of commission on student's welfare and issue, called Hamood-ur-Rehman Commission (1966) that protects English medium schools and promotes the pattern of English language in the education system of Pakistan however, it was not for a long period of time as Bhutto's policy was additionally having the same political purposes.

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Language approach isn't about language, however fundamentally about languages, about the useful connection between languages in this way. In multilingual nations policy must not rely upon one language dominance but then utilization of one language moves toward becoming need to speak with others and one language is favored not withstanding learning numerous languages which is likewise unrealistic. Surveying these realities with the progression of time, English was given the official status and it was additionally decided that all official agreement would be moved into English within fifteen years. It was chosen that English would be the medium of instruction in three principal subjects Science, Mathematics and Social Studies in the curriculum of 2016.

The School Education Department of Punjab has a few issues in the implementation of the decision but we can see Punjab with the progression of time, this policy is step by step advancing and a few schools were selected to practice above mentioned three subjects in English (SED 2013).

British Council had conducted research to know about the facts that were hindering the ways to apply English as a medium of instruction overall in schools. The National Education Policy (NEP) and National Curriculum Documents (NCD) serves as a primary source of information about language policy in Pakistan. Knowledge of language policy can be taken in sense of teacher's performance, as a decision to teach certain accent, vocabulary and spellings are directly purposed the status planning in language policy formation (Bionco, 2010). Council had unveiled that teachers were not fully transistorized to teach in the English language. So as to acquire great outcomes from students it is extremely important for teachers to become capable in English as it is basic because language assumes an indispensable part in thinking, conveying and furthermore a device for exchanging thoughts between people. (Aziz, 2003)

Pandian (2002) declares that what educators know and can do, to influence all the center undertaking of teaching. Furthermore, various investigations have underlined the part of instructors impacting the conduct of the student. Hence to compete for the task fully; teachers were given proper guidance, on how they can teach effectively in schools. As induction level training from Quid-e-Azam Academy and PEELI (Punjab Education and English Language Initiative) training from British Council were conducted for newly recruited educators of 2017. DTE's (District Teacher Educators) were assigned to inspect schools and teachers to know the condition of education, as well as they, trained the teachers for playing an effective role in the implementation of English language policy.

DTE's reports were considered important as a result of their observation teachers trained for the continuity of their job. According to the survey of British Council as they interviewed many teachers about the role of a teacher in the implementation of policy " While only 13% of teachers in our survey aged over 50 years believed English should be the main medium of instruction, this rose to 30% among 21-35-year-olds. Young teachers are especially keen to receive more training in English teaching methodology – 82% of those in the younger age group defined English training as a high priority for them, compared with 69% of the older teachers"

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(2008). Therefore they suggested and taught in Both English and Urdu. Students revealed the instruction in the first language doesn't impede the improvement of the second language. On the other hand, 31 % teachers considering English as a proper medium of instruction without using mother tongue because of reliance on mother tongue or translation effect language improvement of students and discourage them from utilizing the second language.

Therefore to find out the facts it is important to uncover the attitude, views, perception, and willingness of teachers toward teaching students of primary schools in English medium. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the factors behind the non-implementation of English Language as a medium of instructions or why the English language is not implemented properly? And the benefits that students will get after the implementation of policy.

1.2 English in Pakistan and Teachers' Attitude

Main features of Pakistan's policy are that it's a bilingual policy which requires children to learn both English and Urdu. The medium of instruction at primary school level is Urdu in rural public schools of Pakistan, but education department still failed to implement English at primary level although the government is taking certain steps. There are certain facts behind this as the children who are provided Urdu as a language at primary level they can get weaker in concepts because concepts conveyed in English in which they are not competent is not comprehensible for them. So, teachers prefer to deliver a lesson in Urdu instead of English as they find it more relax and easy to convey concepts to students otherwise English requires great efforts (Stern 1983).

Quality of English teacher has always been a point of great concern not only in Punjab but all over Pakistan (Govt. of Punjab).Quality of English language teacher is directly proportional to English language regards to students' teaching (Alderman et al., 2001). Teachers' language quality is also a reason of poor economic conditions in Pakistan (Mamon,2007) as parents consider education in Pakistan as a mean of handsome opportunities for economic success. This is a fact it cannot be denied and latest policy (2009) has introduced National accreditation council for teacher's education and professional standard for English language teacher have been set.

All language policies are putting stress on the need of proficient English language in Pakistan but there is a considerable gap between commitment and implementation of policies. There are certain reasons behind this attitude like availability of facilities, attitudes of parents towards English language, clarity in objectives; status of learners is very low. It is due to allocations of insufficient funds, awareness about policy, deficiency to handle the situation and take immediate decisions; external pressure on authorities consumes their time for departmental need. Teachers must be trained to handle and overcome such difficulties within a low budget.

English is the second language in Pakistan and students face difficulties in learning of verb forms, narration, conjunction, preposition, articles, sentence, arguments, and comprehension. Viewing this, teachers should be aware of the students' needs and problems

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because teachers are the way to success for students. Different methods of teaching should be followed by teachers that may play a progressive role in the promotion of English language. Students must be provided with proper syllabus and examination system and motivation to communicate in English at school and home.

1.3 Methodology

The proposed study is descriptive in its nature and thus employs the mixed method approach for the development of the report. Through observational checklist, the quantitative approach of research was required to identify classroom practices during teaching English as a second language, while interview protocol was administered to find out the reasons behind these instructional practices as the qualitative approach of research to check the implementation of language policy. From this perspective, 20 primary teachers were selected in the district but during the selection of these teachers, it was ensured that sample should be representative of the whole population. Hence, two schools were selected from the district. The data was collected during personal visits to schools using checklist containing objectives to follow for teaching in a class given by British council. During the process of teaching and learning, two lessons were observed by employing classroom observation checklist followed by an interview to each participant (teacher). The collected data was arranged and analyzed accordingly.

1.4 Results and Discussion

After classroom observation it was discovered that teachers were not fully prepared while entered in class to deliver a lesson. Previous old and traditional style has opted as it was teacher-centered class and students were as usual passive and obedient to say yes. It's teachers' responsibility to involve students in lesson asking different questions or performing different actions because students get attracted with interesting activities. Activities in English learning class were based on reading and translation method from textbooks. Students were guided to learn Urdu meanings of words and are not directed to clear their concept of difficult words after using in their communication or in sentences during writing. Mostly students in schools were even failed to pronounce words properly. There are certain reasons behind these problems as teachers at primary schools are overburdened with multi-grade teaching so, they find no time to correct students or involve them in different activities to overcome their problems. For better pronunciation and cramming students read aloud and repeatedly.

It is observed in classrooms that there is only focus on reading instead of writing and listening. Reading is considered a way to get knowledge and new ideas. Although other skills are important to express thoughts and ideas in a conventional way, unfortunately, students are headed to swat up grammar rules. For communication Urdu was preferred in classrooms and students had not any exposure to English at school and home. Dobinson says English must be taught as a language, not a subject. Teachers can implement Language policy by changing their attitude towards its effectuation if they will move to the direct method and the use of activities to involve students in learning. Students must be provided with feedback on assessment. According to Nikolov (1999) in the teaching and learning of English language students have to involve in

practical activities, learners could be motivated in learning a second language if they would be engaged in interesting activities and material.

The research was conducted through questionnaire and interviews. Only 5% people agreed that teacher is responsible for the non-implementation of English language policy in Punjab. 10% people have given their point of view that Govt. Of Punjab is taking serious steps to implement English Language policy in Punjab. Only 2% people were of the view that the sources provided are suitable in class room during lesson, while 5% said that the provided syllabus is suitable for the students to meet their needs of becoming proficient in English, 7% agreed that students are interested in English language to learn and use it in daily routine, 15% said that Urdu is major obstacle in the implementation of English Language, 6% said that atmosphere of Govt. schools is suitable for learning English while 14% were in opinion that atmosphere is not suitable for the implementation of English policy. 30% people agreed on the importance of teachers' role, 6% gave their opinion that Govt. of Punjab is not sincere to implement language policy in Punjab government schools.

1.5 Conclusion

Teacher's behavior towards the implementation of English language policy at primary school level is not serious as it should be but on the other hand, we can't consider them responsible at all for the implementation of language policy and poor existing system because parents, environment, and facilities provided at schools are also not sufficient and play a role in learning. Teachers must be provided with training to learn teaching skills and to get awareness about language policy as well as its importance. Although Govt. of Punjab is taking serious steps for the implementation of policy Govt. is not aware with the ground realities faced by teachers as they can't prove themselves efficient and elite character to follow the lines given by the government to imply suggested method in classrooms for better results. Students in Government Primary Schools are from poor and socially deprived families because they are not even supposed to get equal status with the so-called honorable families. This is also the reason that students' parents have not interested in education so they do not spark their children to get the education. Parents are more concerned with income earned by their children in spite of buying notebooks and pencils for their children. Teachers are now guided, trained and inspected in government sector although this training can't compete for the private sector as in private sector sincerity level is better due to personal benefits as compared to government. One major problem is that there is no one at home to encourage or guide students at home and they are waited to perform so many tasks after school. Certain factors involved in the failure of implementation of English language policy in Punjab, Pakistan are waiting for the solution which is impossible without the proper counseling of parents and the betterment of their social life.

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