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Perceptions and Problems of Teachers and Administrators Regarding Implementation of English Language Curriculum at Secondary Level

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the perceptions and problems of teachers and administrators regarding the English language curriculum implementation at secondary level. The study was based on the purposive sample of 10 administrators and 40 teachers of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The responses of school administrators and English language teachers were gathered through interview. The course content of English language was analyzed in the light of curriculum guidelines. Finding revealed that overall teachers are believe that loud reading and extensive writing helps in the acquisition of English language. For better English language teachers should use new teaching styles and methods in their classes. Teachers encourage students to think in English because if a child starts thinking in a particular language then it becomes easy for them to communicate in that language. Major drawback is that even after having a good syllabus of English language at secondary level many students do not have proficiency in speaking because of the clash in the mother tongue and the foreign language.

Introduction

Curriculum implementation is a systematic procedure to develop program of studies, projects or courses offered to the students (Onwuka, 1996, Oloruntegbe, 2003 and Oloruntegbe and Daramola, 2007). Generally curriculum implementation takes place in two different situations. First, when new programmer is launched or curriculum is introduced when there is no prior curriculum. Second situation is when curriculum innovations are introduced during ongoing programs. In both situations curriculum implementation take place in different ways. Both situations may be affected by similar factors or would have specific factors relevant to each other situatio.http://interesjournals.org/ER/pdf/2010/April/Phuthego.pdf(visited 24 Feb 2012).

Procedure of assessment is helpful for bringing changes in curriculum so it is better to consider that for innovations. If teaching methods and learning styles are changed but syllabus and assessment procedures are not change accordingly then it can create problems for curriculum stakeholders (Reinmann-Rothmeier and Mandl 1999, p.294). Role of teachers is to develop the personality of child that's why teachers have given importance in the modern world (FGN, 2004). Teachers create the base for nations (Okeke, 2004) success of curriculum implementation is possible only if teachers follow the instructions for implementation as given. In case teachers do not implement the innovated curriculum honestly then the results will be negative then this. http://interesjournals.org/ER/pdf/2010/April/Phuthego.pdf. The quality of any innovation depends on teachers capabilities towards change. If they accept changes and welcome these then this would be was for them to implement. (E.g. Purkey and Smith 1991; Eder and Altrichter 2005).

Teachers and principals are main elements in curriculum implementation; they are the only source to enforce the curriculum in classrooms. They should combine their efforts to evaluate whether required goals and objectives have been achieved or not. Teachers adopt two approaches to implement the curriculum:-Laissez-faire approach is a position where teachers are free to implement the curriculum. They do not follow the others instructions. They implement the curriculum on their own instructions. They teach only those lessons to the students which they think best for pupils but there is no monitoring system. http://www.linguisticsjournal.com/December_2009_hw.php.

Authoritarian approach is the one in which teachers are monitored time by time. They follow the directions and orders of their heads. In teaching lessons to the students, teachers' vision is very important, they should follow rational attitude in implementation of curriculum process. They should follow the given syllabus as it is and avoid missing any part of syllabus. To follow the required instructions show the loyalty with their profession. Teachers should identify the difficulties and important topics to emphasize on them. Good approach to implement is to follow instructions as given exactly.

Principals play a pivotal role in running any school. It can be said they are the main tool to keep the learning process on track with high standards (Dillard, 2003). As Mitchell & Sackney (2000) stated, principals play a leadership role in school so they remain busy in implementing curriculum reforms on day to day basis. Organizational structure of a school can never be ignored in implementation process. Head persons, principals and managing committee can never individually run organization so as the curriculum implementation. As principals are the leader of game so they have to remain connected with relevant people and there should not be communication gap

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among them. This is collective effort of all these to achieve the goal. As principals play leadership role so he has to organize all relevant people, set necessary conditions, decide shared goals and procedure of evaluation (Fullan 1994, p.2842). Moreover there are variety of roles played by school principals such as a managers, administrators, instructional leader and curriculum leader. They always try to keep balance between these roles, among these roles, managerial and administrative roles are given more attention as compared to other ones. Principals' role as instructional leader is not considered important even though main business of a school is teaching and learning. The role of "instructional leader" is a new concept, emerged in 1980's. This is a great shift from administrative and managerial role to academic role. It resulted in principals of high ranking schools stress on the importance of instructional leader (Brookover and Lezotte, 1982).

According to Oplatka 2004, in the developing countries main role of principals is administrative while in developed countries principals contribute enough time to improve student achievement necessary for their development. This is the reason that they are expected to concentrate more on instructional tasks. N. Ira, H. Yenal and S.Erol 2005 Principals should have up to date knowledge about new program to guide teachers regarding implementation. They should provide a congenial atmosphere to teachers to successfully establish the new curriculum. As Middle wood (2001) said that the school administrator is a curriculum manager so he should have up-to-date knowledge about the pros and corns of curriculum and be able to deal with it. Generally it is found that head persons do not like to bring changes in school systems of which they are used to of same routine and if they introduce changes time by time then this require hard work on the part of them since many years. Workshops or coaching classes are introduced for principals and school managers to overcome this problem and successfully achieve the implementation. (Altrichter and Posch, 1999

Marsh and Willis, 2003 have given the leadership roles that must be must be followed by school principals in managing curriculum. understanding of basic curriculum procedures, help teachers in changing their curriculum, motivate teachers to get knowledge of curriculum practice and skills, encourage teachers to critically examine the similarity between their philosophy of teaching and learning and their own behaviour. Principals, help teachers to get necessary knowledge of curriculum and guide them in its implementation by analogy, like an orchestra conductor, principals are expected to create harmony among the whole parts of the curriculum. They promote "horizontal and vertical curriculum articulation" to help students have a holistic curriculum experience. Since students' experience with the curriculum is based on what they received as individual learners when they leave school, it is necessary to make all students experience a holistic and quality curriculum experience D. Tanner & L. Taner (2003).

Curriculum experts generally identify five concepts of curriculum that are present within most schools. These concepts are, The Official curriculum is documented. The Operational curriculum is implemented in classrooms; The Hidden curriculum includes the unwritten norms and expectations of the school, both social and academic. The Null curriculum consists of subjects that are consciously omitted from the school's Official and/or Operational curriculum. The Co-curriculum includes all of the experiences engaged in by students and teachers, before, during, and after the regular school day. The

school administrator can play an important role in the development and interpretation of all these curricular areas. While it is important that principals have a basic knowledge of curriculum and learning theory, it is even more important that they have a clear understanding of the school culture and are able to establish strong working relationships with teachers. The well established schools always have clear goals and have great expectations from students. Teachers understand these goals and expectations and implement them in the operational curriculum. Finally, the hidden, null, and co-curricula all function to support, not undermine, the official and operational curricula. Administrators play important role throughout the curriculum implementation process. Principals should have a basic knowledge of curriculum and learning theory. Along with this, they should know what the culture of school is and there should not be communication gap between administrators and teachers. Principals are to some extent like an orchestra conductors. Curriculum is the score and teachers are musicians. Blend of pieces of music is like blend of grade levels, subject areas to complement one another to create the overall effect. Conductors help the musician to interpret and refine their performance just like principals support teachers in curriculum development and implementation http://www.prel.org/products/Products/Curriculum.htm (visited 19 Feb 2012).

Purpose of the Study

Majority of teachers and administrators found teaching of English language is a difficult task at secondary level; study was design to investigate the perception of teacher administrators regarding the implementation of English language curriculum at secondary level.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the relevance of English language curriculum at Secondary level.
2. To weight the teachers perception and problems regarding English language teaching at secondary level.
3. To access the present curriculum is sufficient enough for Secondary level students to enter in professional life and higher education

Method

Sample

With the help of qualitative and quantitative approach a purposive sample of 10 school heads (administrators) and 40 English teachers (of level 9 and 10 from different schools) was collected from Rawalpindi and Islamabad through interview with the help of structured research questionnaire.

Procedure

In this study for the exploration of teachers and administrators perception regarding the implementation of language curriculum structured interviews of 50 respondents were carried out, with the help of 29 structured questions. Questions were developed with a view to know the competencies of teachers of English language at Secondary level and to analyze the curriculum of English language at Secondary level is according to the needs of students. Moreover questions were related with to access the present curriculum deficiencies for secondary level students.

Results

Findings

English is not only leading international language but official language of our country as well. Students should be taught in a way that they can easily communicate in it.

S.No	Question	no. of Yes	no. of No
1	Do you use different strategies for the increase of reading speed and students' comprehension level? Discussion: A majority of teachers believed in using different strategies for the increase of reading speed and comprehension level. As such 70% responded affirmatively in this regard.	35	15
2	Do you agree that good reading does not mean reading aloud or learning of new words? DISCUSSION: Generally it was observed that good reading means reading aloud or learning all the new words but it was found that teachers have different point of view. 76% teachers agreed with this.	38	12
3	Does syllabus of secondary classes help in developing reading and thinking skills? DISCUSSION: When a child starts thinking in a particular language, it becomes easy for him to communicate in that language. 50% teachers were of the opinion that syllabus of secondary classes was helpful in developing reading and thinking skills	25	25
4	Do all students can discover and understand variety of text types through multiple reading and thinking strategies for comprehension, fluency and enjoyment? DISCUSSION: A mixed opinion and reply was received for this question. Almost half of the teachers believed that students can discover and understand variety of text types through multiple reading and thinking strategies for comprehension, fluency and enjoyment.	24	26
5	Can students interpret the situation in a visual cue and with the help of mind map? DISCUSSION: In new teaching methods, mind mapping is used for language proficiency and it really works. 66% teachers agreed that students can interpret the situation in a visual cue and with the help of mind map.	33	17
6	Do the students have ability to consult dictionary? DISCUSSION: - Use of Dictionary is very important in enhancing vocabulary so that students become habitual in using it. It was found that 72% of teachers agreed that students have ability to use dictionary while 28% disagreed with this argument.	36	14
7	Can the student locate entry words? DISCUSSION: 72% confirmed that students can locate the entry words while only 28% are not agreeing with this statement.	36	14
8	Can students write paragraphs using correct parts of speech? DISCUSSION: No one can be good in any language unless he/ she is perfect in using correct parts of speech. So the stage of learning parts of speeches is very important. Teachers should give sufficient time to students in learning this. It was found that 54% teachers accepted that students can write paragraphs using correct part of speech.	27	23
9	Do the teachers' guide provided to you, help to teach text and extend activities by keeping contextual realities in view? DISCUSSION: Teachers' guide is a key book for teachers to get help from it for teaching. 76% teachers agreed that it helps them while 24% did not agree.	38	12
10	Can teachers' guide provide various teaching strategies rationale for suggested teaching? DISCUSSION: Understanding and using teacher's guide is very important for teachers. It was found that 58% teachers believed that teachers' guide does not provide various teaching strategies rationale for suggested teaching.	29	21
11	Is the text book of English language related to the goal of the curriculum? DISCUSSION; It is so common in our country that text books are not relevant to the goals of curriculum. It was found that 64% teachers are satisfied with the course of English language that this is related to the goal of curriculum.	32	18
12	Is layout of text books attractive, appealing and user friendly? DISCUSSION: Presentation matters wherever it is. If books are attractive and colorful then students will love to study. 58% teachers were of the view that layout of text books is attractive, appealing and user friendly.	29	21
13	Do the illustrations (map, drawings, and pictures graphs) help students to understand the content better? DISCUSSION: Illustrations such as maps, drawings and pictures are important constituents of books. Their attractive designs and proper finishes attract the attention of students. 78% teachers believed that such types of illustrations help students to understand the content better.	39	11
14	Is the course content of English is accurate, authentic and up to date? DISCUSSION: Government tries its best to make the content accurate, authentic and up to date but even then some people have reservations about this. 66% teachers were agreed with this while 34% were not satisfied.	33	17
15	Is the content relevant to the needs, age and levels of understanding of the students? DISCUSSION: - Recent curriculum is student centered: so every educational activity is structured keeping in view the students' interest. 72% teachers agreed with this while 28% disagreed.	36	14
16	Do you help the students in character building?	40	10

	DISCUSSION: Education is to develop the personality of the student i.e character building of them. 80% teachers confirmed that they help students in character building.		
17	Have you ever try to develop sense of individual and public responsibility in your students? DISCUSSION: One of the important responsibilities of teachers is to develop sense of individual and public responsibility in students which makes them effective citizens. An overwhelming majority of 88% teachers responded with affirmation that they develop such qualities in their students.	44	6
18	Secondary education is a terminal stage for those who enter in job after it. Do you think English taught in your school is up to the mark for such students? DISCUSSION: English is the international language and official language of our country. The students who want to enter in any job should be proficient in English language. 58% teachers were of the opinion that English is not of that level which help students get jobs easily after secondary education.	21	29
19	Secondary education is the stage to develop personality of the students. Do you agree? DISCUSSION: Personality development is the main theme of education. Personality development means all spheres of personality i.e physical, emotional, spiritual, philosophical, economical intellectual etc. It was found that 74% teachers agreed that Secondary education is the stage to develop personality of the students.	37	13
20	Does the content of English language curriculum provide exposure through variety of spoken and written language forms (both formal and informal)? DISCUSSION: Content plays a vital role in guiding learners on the right and easy path. Language learning is based on right and proper content. Almost half of the respondent teachers believed that the content of the English language learning is helpful in providing exposure to the students.	26	24
21	Do you arrange such activities to encourage students to think in English? DISCUSSION: Innovated curriculum introduced by government is activity based. 80% teachers say that they arrange such activities to encourage students to think in English.	40	10
22	Majority of English language teachers in Pakistan have limited proficiency in English in general and low proficiency in oral skill or in speaking English. Do you provide such training program in which teachers improve English proficiency? DISCUSSION: This is a major drawback of Pakistani education system that in spite of having a good syllabus of the subject of English, even then students do not have proficiency in speaking. Resultantly schools have shortage of teachers who can fluently speak English. Government has introduced English medium of instruction but do not provide in-service teacher training program. It was found that 58% teachers replied that they are not provided any teacher training program in this context.	21	29
23	Can students introduce themselves and others? DISCUSSION: With regards to the ability of students to introduce themselves properly, 74% teachers were confident that their students are able to introduce themselves & others in a good manner.	37	13
24	Can they compile the oral responses of the interview in written form? DISCUSSION: Compiling oral responses of the interviews is another important skill especially when the interview is being held in English language while English is not the first language and memory is needed to be tested. 66% teachers confirmed that their students can compile oral responses of the interview in written form.	33	17
25	Does the recent curriculum helpful in enhancing vocabulary for effective communication? DISCUSSION: Rich vocabulary is very important for learning any language. It is found that 54% teachers are satisfied that recent curriculum is helpful in enhancing vocabulary for effective communication.	27	23
26	Do students have clear concept about grammatical functions? DISCUSSION: A mixed opinion and response have been observed with regards to clear concept of students about grammatical functions. About half the teachers believed that their students have this ability.	26	24
27	Do they use the principles of grammar, punctuation and syntax for developing accuracy in their spoken and written communication? DISCUSSION: The situation for this question is also somewhat similar where almost half of the teachers believe that their students use the principles of grammar, punctuation and syntax for developing accuracy in their spoken and written communication.	27	23
28	Do students utilize appropriate informational sources including encyclopedia and internet? DISCUSSION: Use of informational sources like encyclopedia and internet is becoming more popular these days. 56% teachers confirmed this trend.	28	22
29	Can students write an argumentative essay on a given topic? DISCUSSION: One of the results of good language learning is the ability to write different types of essays. Only 54% teachers confirmed that their students are able to write an argumentative essay on a given topic.	27	23

Secondary stage of education is a terminal stage for both who enter in to professional life after it and for those who continue their education further. It shows that proficiency in English language is necessary for both the students and the teachers. It was found that teachers of English language at secondary level are hard working and qualified. They are satisfied with the curriculum of English language. They are agreed that loud reading and extensive writing helps in enhancing language of students. New teaching styles and methods have been emerged and teachers are using those in their classes. Teachers encourage students to think in English because if a child starts thinking in a particular language then it becomes easy for them to communicate in that language. It was found that mind mapping is very helpful for students to enhance English language. Major drawback is that in spite of having a good syllabus of English language at secondary level even then students do not have proficiency in speaking because of the clash in the mother tongue and the foreign language. Resultantly, schools have shortage of teachers who can fluently speak English. As for as senior and experienced English teachers are concerned, most of them are from traditional education system where language proficiency was not emphasized so they are not proficient enough. Content plays a vital role in guiding learners on the right and easy path. Language learning is based on right and proper content. It was found that teachers are satisfied with the content of English language of Secondary classes. They are of the opinion that syllabus is as much extensive as required and sometimes it becomes hard for teachers to cover it. But even then teachers try their best to divide the curriculum throughout the year considering time management.

Suggestions

It was found that teachers were qualified but not proficient in spoken language so it is suggested that at the time of appointment their fluency in English speaking should be given weightage. As for as senior experienced teachers are concerned, school managers may arrange English spoken classes for them and should be encouraged to attend these classes. Government may update the English language curriculum time to time and arrange training classes for relevant teachers for its real implementation. Dictionary searching habit is also one of the major aspects of improving vocabulary so if schools encourage students for dictionary.

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