

“Role of Technical Colleges in Developing English Language Skills among Students in Rawalpindi District, Pakistan”

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Abstract

This paper introduces the role of technical colleges in developing English language skills among students in Pakistan. The trend of English language is increasingly flourishing in Pakistan. The topic has been taken up to throw light on working of technical colleges working on training their students in specialized technical fields. These colleges have been mushroomed all over the city to make up deficiencies of learners. The research is qualitative as it is descriptive. In order to assess the quality of these colleges, Questionnaire and Observations as a tool were selected. Colleges located in different areas of Rawalpindi district were focus of this research. The feedback of research reveals a very dismal picture. A lot needs to be done to raise the standard of these centers. In the recommendations, it has been suggested that our government role is very important in this regard. Our government should play a role to improve the working of these colleges. The role can be more effective if the inducted teaching staff would be well versed and competent. Teachers should follow the latest trends, methodologies and be conscientious in performing their role. The researcher is very optimistic that the work initiated by him would be useful to raise the standard of English in Pakistan. With this hope this research work will continue in future to increase efficiency of these colleges in order to promote English language in Pakistan. The research concludes in the paper.

Introduction

No one can deny the importance of English, especially in this competitive world. One who wishes to attain success has to be proficient in English language skills. Pakistan is a multilingual country, where the standard of English is not up to the mark, there is no uniformity in the medium of instruction, which has led to the split the society into different segments. In the modern era, the paradigm shift in the language teaching has made revolutionary changes. All over the world, there has been done a lot of work to meet the challenges in this competitive world regarding English language skills. Internet in the modern era has become a key to knowledge. Learning in a true spirit is based on curriculum which means the totality of activities and experiences planned by the school with the view to achieve the objectives of education, and provide a justification for the various curricular activities that are normally provided in the school. It is based on which the subjects, activities and experiences are planned. “All the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school.” (Kerr, 1968). The computer’s novel features such as its versatility in handling information and

ability to execute a task at a faster speed has made it an invaluable source in the teaching and learning process (Higgins. J (1988) *Language Learning and Computers*). There are also wonderful sites to get benefit for language learning and teaching –activities for classroom use. Computer assisted language learning (CALL) is gaining the recognition in the learning and teaching of English as a Second language (ESL).

Planning a lesson around an activity requires the teacher to first consider the scope of a particular lesson. Once the content of a lesson is decided, the teacher can then consider if the use of a certain computer based activity meets the desired objectives of the lessons (Kenning, M.J and M.M. Kenning 1983). Curriculum is main factor which is Syllabus is another factor which plays a vital role. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 80) define syllabus: “At its simplest level a syllabus can be described as a statement of what is to be learnt. It reflects of language and linguistic performance”. Evaluation is another process that helps us to judge the effectiveness of any program. Heathcoat (1982, p.132) defines it in such words. “[The] process that relates to the identification, description and appraisal of the effects and effectiveness of all aspects of teaching”.

Hypothesis

The inability of the educational institutions to impart proper knowledge of English language has led to the rise of numerous technical colleges. They are mushroomed all over the district. The present effort will be fruitful to raise the standard of English language in Pakistan. If the latest and modern techniques of teaching are adopted in the language institutions, second-language learners would definitely improve their ability to correctly use English language.

Research Methodology

This research is based on Qualitative paradigm, as population or samples have a role to play in imparting information. Qualitative research uses the natural setting as the source of data. Material selection should be specific to cater the needs of the learners. Therefore researcher needs to evaluate these on the basis of modern trends. The focus of attention is the learners and their expectations. The purpose behind the research was to get the feedback and come to a logical conclusion so that some ways would be suggested to improve existing conditions. There are many things which need to be studied. What is the role of teachers? What is the standard of teaching? Is learning taking place? One has to go in depth to find the facts and come to a right conclusion. The research was carried out in Rawalpindi city. It was difficult to conduct research in all the cities of Punjab. Therefore Rawalpindi district was chosen for this purpose. It is one of the main cities of Pakistan. It is very populous and is also known as educational center as well. Being living in Rawalpindi it was convenient for the researcher to make an in-depth study and reveal the true picture. The study was confined to ten different technical colleges located in different areas of the Rawalpindi District.

Participants: The researcher had taken up the task of evaluating the working of technical colleges, which are mushroomed all over the city. The main purpose behind was to find out the

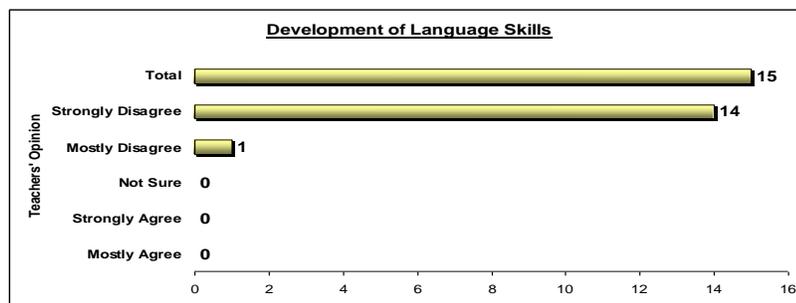
methodology used in these colleges, whether it matches with the latest trends or not. For this study I intended to elicit the participation of a maximum 30 students drawn from different colleges. These students were drawn from three ability levels, beginning, intermediate, and advance.

Sample: Technical colleges in Rawalpindi city were the focus of study. The researcher also observed the physical conditions of these colleges, whether these are well equipped to cater the needs of language teaching or not.

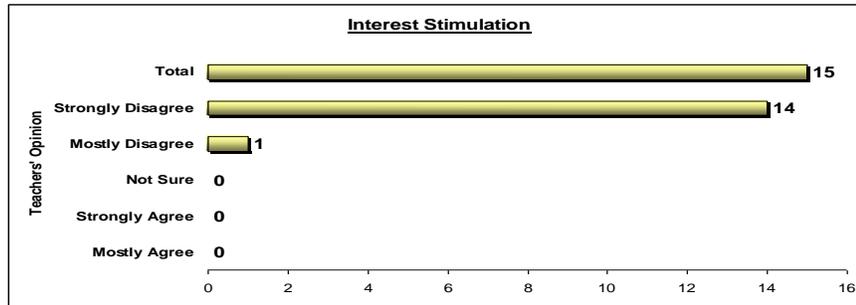
Tools: To evaluate the working of these colleges, the researcher devised a questionnaire and observation as tools. One questionnaire for the teachers and one for the learners was prepared to get their feedback. In order to make the conclusion more authentic, the researcher personally observed these centers so that an authentic conclusion could be drawn about the efficiency of these colleges. This tool is also effective to make evaluation in a better way.

Materials and Data Analysis

In order to get the accurate result of the research, the researcher devised a Questionnaire and Observation as material. The percentage of the feedback played a key to determine the result. Each question was taken into account separately and analyzed to bring-forth the true picture. Similarly, observation was conducted by sitting in the classroom and evaluating teacher's role in the class and also by checking the physical condition of these technical colleges. In the first phase 15 teachers working in different colleges were asked about teaching methodology. They were requested to comment on activities/exercises enclosed in the prevalent syllabus. Do these exercises encourage students to think or develop their language skills? The feedback got is shown below.

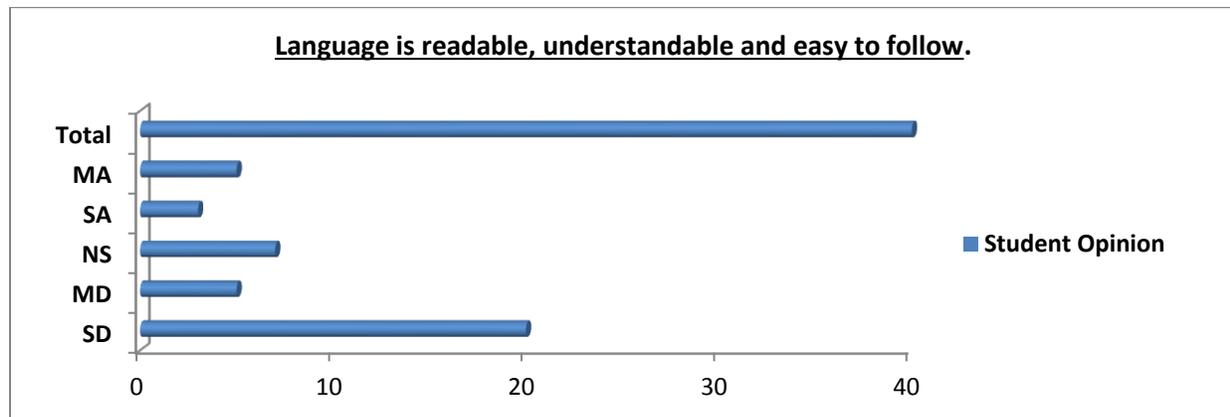


The graph documents that majority of the teachers strongly reject this statement. It shows that the activities/exercises included in the syllabus do not provide a chance which would further help them to develop their language. Another statement was raised regarding prevalent syllabus. The results are as under.



The above mentioned graph reveals that the current syllabus does not stimulate interest in students which would let them to further study. Instead of creating interest these activities and exercises bore students. Similarly, another questionnaire was prepared for learners and the miserable results were found.

Same procedure was also adopted in term of students. In the second phase another questionnaire was devised for them. All students were not satisfied with teaching methodology as well as with teaching staff hired to make them proficient in foreign language. Students were asked about the language used in the classroom i.e. how much a language is effective for them to raise their proficiency level. The feedback is shown in the form of following graph.



The graph shows that majority of the students are not satisfied with the present prevalent system in these institutions. Forty students were selected from different institutions to comment their views on subject issue. The feedback shows that they are also not satisfied with the language used in classrooms as well as the use of language in a syllabus is not readable, understandable and easy to follow.

Findings

Research on the subject issue not only dismay the researcher but it also helped to draw a certain conclusion. The main root of this problem is the mushroom growth of language institutions which is an ample proof that we as teachers are not performing well. As a result learners suffer. They go to different colleges to make up their deficiencies of language. A great responsibility lies on the shoulders of English language teachers to realize the fact. A visit of different institutions chalked out the reality. With the exception of two or three, the rest are just minting money. Some of colleges give a gloomy picture as they do not have any student at all. Neither the teachers are properly qualified nor are the centers well equipped to cater the needs of the learners.

Recommendations

Based on the results, it is suggested that role of our government is very important to promote English language society. One remedy to this problem is that the government should start monitoring these centers making a strict policy. A constant check by the government can rectify the situation and raise the standard of English in Pakistan. The teacher is the most important figure in the teaching-learning process. If the teacher is not competent then there is no use of providing ideal environment. If these centers realize this fact and hire dedicated, devoted and passionate teachers, then these can play a vital role to raise the standard of English. One of the important steps before starting teaching is to evaluate the learners and find out their needs and go accordingly. Without planning and chalking out teaching plan, it becomes difficult to achieve ultimate goal. One important suggestion is that teachers should do refresher courses and attend workshops to update their teaching skills and competence. Evaluation is another process through which one comes to know about deficiencies in the language learning and teaching. It should be according to latest, modern lines. Through evaluation process, a teacher can perform in a better way to fill up deficiencies of learners.

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