

Relationship of Teachers' Professional Skills and Students' Achievement in English at BA Level

Amna Saeed* and Rifaqat Ali Akbar**

Abstract

The study aimed at examining the relationship between teachers' professional skills and students' achievement in English at BA Level. The researchers explored the students' perceptions about their teachers' professional skills required for teaching English and their relationship with students' achievement. Population of the study comprised students of Government Degree Colleges affiliated with University of the Punjab. Twenty percent of colleges were selected through random sampling. Research design was correlational. Students' Questionnaire for Teachers' Professional Skills (SQTPS) was used to collect data. Data analysis was carried out through SPSS. Initially, demographic variables were analyzed. Relationship between teachers' professional skills and students' achievements in English at BA levels was found out through Pearson's product-moment. Weak positive significant relationship was found between teachers' professional skills in assessment and student achievement in English at BA level. It also found that on the basis of gender there is no difference in the teachers' professional skills and students' achievements. Teachers prefer to assess the students individually relying on oral questioning for the comprehension of the students. It is recommended that for the better students' achievement in English there is need to change the assessment system.

Keywords: Teacher's professional skills, students' achievement, teaching methods, classroom environment, professional development.

*Assistant Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore
Email: amna.ier@pu.edu.pk

**Professor, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore

Introduction

The eminence of English language all over the world and in Pakistan has made its successful acquisition as an important requirement for second language (ESL) learners in Pakistan. English is acknowledged as an indispensable tool to sustain in the global arena, therefore, the need for English language over the span of time has increased greatly (Paik, 2009). Indeed, the status of English as an official language or otherwise, has been an important part of the political and official dialogue in Pakistan since its inception. The amplified practice of English in the worldwide scenario has added a meaningful value to teaching-learning of English in Pakistan.

Mueen (2002) elucidates that English is used as an official language in Pakistan since 80 percent of communication is carried out in English language. The knowledge of English permits us to create intellectual, cultural, economic, commercial and political dealings with entire world. This knowledge is essential for higher level legal, technical and scientific education and research in almost all areas of knowledge. Thus, it has been taught as a compulsory subject in Pakistan. Its teaching is mandatory from primary to higher levels of learning. There is a specified curriculum for each level. Higher Education Commission, Pakistan ensured the learning of prose, poetry, grammar and composition at graduation level (Scheme of Studies, HEC, 2012).

The results of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) examination 2011 shows that only 40.55% students passed the English Compulsory subject. In 2012, 52.94% students passed the English Compulsory subject. In 2013, 37.98% students passed the English Compulsory subject. The result of Bachelor of Arts (B.A) examination 2014 shows that only 38.93% students passed the English Compulsory subject. (Statistical Analysis Report, University of the Punjab, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013). These results reflect the poor performance of students in this subject, indicating a problem in the teaching and learning process.

In Pakistan teaching of English at F. A (Faculty of Arts) is like a teaching of language whereas at B. A (Bachelor of Arts) it is supposed to be embracing language and literature. (Behlol& Anwar, 2011; Shamim, 2008). It is not merely conveying information to the learners, rather it empowers them to speak fluently and confidently, read and write (Paik, 2009). Teacher's professional skills give the attention on specific teaching skills and valued student learning outcomes. It is associated with students learning and behavior modification (Timperley& Alton-Lee, 2008).

A research on the teaching skills by Didion, Toste, and Filderman(2020) confers the about importance of professional skills as, "Professional skills are important factor influencing whether learning activities have a positive impact on outcomes for students is the extent to which those outcomes form the rationale for, and on-going focus of teacher engagement." Professional learning of the teacher prospects has great influence on student learning outcomes as its emphases on precise teaching skills.

Professional skills are momentous segment of training and the capacity building process (Prator & Celce-Murcia, 2009). In a broader sense, indicate to the development of a person in his or her professional character. The research finding of Ganser (2009) explain the teacher's professional skills as "Professional skills are the professional growth which teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining their teaching progressively".

As Shulman (2008) said that this comprises the knowledge of student learning difficulties and former origins in the precise domain, knowledge of instructional methods, and domain- specific assessment methods. Baker (2020), said about the content knowledge on the teacher that "effective communication of content knowledge is a hallmark of good language teachers. Command over content knowledge is just one of many vital factors and qualities, which an effective teacher needs to have in order to enhance students learning and achievement".

Content knowledge benefits the teachers to endure the professionalism. Blend of content and pedagogy make them more proficient in their field. Content knowledge is the significant element to the establishment of teaching as a profession. Teaching includes the conveying of knowledge, skills and attitudes to learners. According to Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow (2002), teacher' professional skills include preparation of teaching and learning, content knowledge, teaching experience, transmitting the information to the students in understandable manner. The role of teachers' content knowledge has great impact on students' achievement (Begle 2009). Understanding the subject matter strengthens teachers' powers and improves the possibilities of their teaching art. When teachers are proficient of explaining their lessons well, the possibility of students to understand their lesson is high. Teachers' subject matter knowledge triggers in their supremacy and become their asset as pedagogues.

Graham, Harris, Fink, and MacArthur (2001) emphasized that language evaluation should allow the students to select the project topic of their own choice related to the course, this stimulated them to show their own diverse opinions. A well-designed discussion enables meaningful cooperation among students. In language learning students should allow to choose the topic for the discussion by their own, use of target language is a powerful tool to boost up their language enhancement. Positive student-teacher relations help the students to involve positively in academic and social activities. It will increase the productivity of the students (Hamre & Pianta, 2010). Positive teacher-student relations are formed in presence of closeness, warmth, and positivity. It provides the secure base to students so they can perform better in the classroom and school situation both academically and socially. They take academic challenges and can work on social-emotional developmental features as well (Hamre & Pianta, 2010). It encompasses

peer relationships and develop self-esteem and self-concept. In positive relationship students learn socially acceptable behaviors and achieve academic expectations. Positive student-teacher relations are more beneficial for the students with low socio-economic background. It boosts them to get more from the teacher (Murray & Malmgren, 2005).

Teacher-student relationships are very imperative for school academics. Strong student-teacher relationship has a great influence on student performance and help the student to improve both academically and socially. Students learning and their academic achievement is associated teacher professional skills of classroom conditions and assessment procedure. It has been observed that teaching contributes towards the development of students' caliber. The teachers' professional skills affect student learning and make their learning more effective (Cawelti & Gordon, 2010). Teachers' professional skills may be imbedded in subject matter and focused on student learning. It has a significant influence on student achievement.

Hence, teachers' skills and students' achievements are related to each other. There is an urgent need to determine the relationship between teachers' professional skills and students' achievement at college level in Pakistan. Teachers' professional skills have been the center of discussion in the recent era. There is an urgent need to pursue the relationship among teachers' professional skills and students' achievement at college level in Pakistan. Professional skills are the core of teaching-learning process. Thus, this research aims to explore the relationship of teachers' professional skills and student's achievement in English at B.A level.

Literature Review

According to Earley and Porritt (2013) teacher's professional skills are those that teacher required to succeed in professional teaching.

These range from highly specific ones related to their teachings field(s) to more general, transferable ones such as communications, planning and organization of lessons, managing creative learning environment. Effective teachers establish their classroom according to the students' requirements and set of rules. It helps them for creating optimistic and warm learning environment, it enhances the learning of the students. According to Hammond (2007), teachers' professional skills includes preparation of teaching and learning, content knowledge, teaching experience, transmitting the information to the students in understandable manner. The role of teachers' content knowledge has great impact on students' achievement (Begle, 2009). Understanding the subject matter strengthens teachers' powers and improves the possibilities of their teaching art. When teachers are proficient of explaining their lessons well, the possibility of students to understand their lesson is high. Teachers' subject matter knowledge triggers in their supremacy and become their asset as pedagogues.

Smits and Janssens willen (2020) explain the classroom environment as: classroom management which seem to be a high priority for novice and experienced teachers. However, management is not parallel to strict rules; in fact, management is to anticipate students' needs, and then prepare a suitable year plan, procedures, activities, assessment, evaluation criteria, and above all, clear instructions to the students to promote students' motivation, enthusiasm and learning.

Cho, Mansfield, and Claughton (2020) explicated the learning environment as; "effective teachers take time in the beginning of the year and especially on the first day to school to establish classroom management, classroom organization and expectations for student's behavior". According to Rezaeian and Abdollahzadeh, (2020), inefficient teachers maintain the discipline of their classrooms with threats and punishments and threats. Discipline has effect on the performance, action and behavior of the students in the classroom. Classroom environment consist of: the teacher's approbation or approval; use of students' ideas; and teacher- student interaction.

These factors effect in empowering student classroom behavior and learning. Teacher admiration and approval of the work help the students to meet the acceptable standards. Students want to be specific about their performance and clear feedback that boosts student learning. Every person has an urge to achieve the success and teacher believe that every student is skilled enough to achieve his educational goals, and they use their efforts to find ways of making every student successful. According to Graham et al. (2001), a respectable way to the transmission of high expectations is through challenging chores, involving students with real- world problems. According to Vattøy (2020), language teachers can use assessment as an efficient learning process. They can use variety of evaluation methods, unbiased practice, and a good and fair assessment system. Timely feedback reassures students to take healthier responsibility for their own learning. The students know about the aims and objectives of the learning program and how those were assessed, what the right choice to achieve the success was and how they can do self-evaluation. It helps them in their better learning. Language learners get more benefits from learning environment, peer tutoring, collaborative learning, questioning summarization techniques and concerted reasoning also very effective techniques for language assessment. A well-designed discussion enables meaningful cooperation among students. In language learning students should be allowed to choose the topic for the discussion by their own, use of target language as a powerful tool to boost up their language enhancement (Warsi, 2004).

Content planning is obligatory to ensure the success of the institution; it focuses on future objectives, vision and goals. Organization and planning of content is crucial to clarify objectives and the means to achieve those objectives. Thus, it decreases the trial and error process, decreases the chances of disappointment and foster the success.

Planning help scrutinize the possibilities resources of substitute uses and optimum utilization of limited assets. Richardson (2008) explains the importance of the planning and organization of the content for the language teachers. It ensures the success of the teacher and institute as well. It takes into consideration important issues, conditions, constraints and the factors in language learning. It focuses on the future objectives, vision and goals of the language teaching learning process. It eliminates trail-and-error process, reduce chances of failure and ensure success. In other words provides intelligent direction to the language teaching-learning process. Effective and efficient planning saves time, effort and money.

Well-organized planning saves time, energy and money. Planning and organization of content is a coordinated means of attaining pre-determined purposes (Shulman, 2008). Worthwhile content knowledge is not valuable with unplanned lesson. A well-prepared lesson help the content delivery as more thought-provoking and informative. Good planning enables the teacher in making clear descriptions, and it provides a wide range of material facilitate students in better learning. It help out the effective use of oral questioning, providing guidelines, being supple and stimulate students' interest and participation (Didion et al, 2002). Besides, all these teachers must adopt suitable methodology and resources to the level and content to be taught. Organization of the content help the teacher to increase own knowledge, methodology and learning environment of the class.

Students of the present era are facing with many challenges in their learning, professionally sound teachers can address these challenges through their skills and knowledge. Effective planning, implementation and proper feedback system help teachers' professional developments which ensures the responses to the learners' needs. Student attainments are supported by teacher knowledge and classroom teaching and teachers' professional development effects this process. High teaching standards, motivating curriculum, system-wide accountability and evaluation are necessary for student learning (Borko, 2004).

Teachers' collaborative actions have great impact on the improvement of the student achievement, and it changes the teacher perception as well (Timperley & Alton-Lee, 2008). Collaborations allow teachers to get benefit from the large number and discrepancy of theories to check own expertise and especially when the community have diversified views and cultural change (Ladson-Billings & Gomez, 2001). Professional learning of teachers effects the students' academic aspiration in the different way. Highly inspired students give more responses to teachers' effort. They can complete their task on their own. Teachers play a significant role in constructing positive teacher- student relations this empower students to feel safe and protected in their learning environment

and support for indispensable social and academic skills (Baker, 2020; Connor, Dearing, & Collins, 2011). It is imperative for their societal and academic outcomes and it is vital for long-term trajectory of institutions. Learning environment has positive impact on learner's social and academic outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of research were, to:

1. Find out the students' perceptions about their teachers' professional skills based on gender.
2. Examine the relationship between students' perceptions about their teachers' professional skills and their achievement in English at BA Level.

Research Methodology

Research Design

Correlation research method under the umbrella of quantitative approach was used in this research to find out the relationship between teachers' professional skills and students' achievement at B.A level.

Participants of the Study

The population of the study were students of 4th year (session 2014-2015), who dispersed over 206 Degree Colleges in Punjab affiliated with University of the Punjab and situated in 36 districts in the province of the Punjab. Twenty percent of colleges and 1330 students were selected through random sampling.

Research Instrument

Students' Questionnaire for Teachers' Professional Skills (SQTPS) was developed after review of related literature and with consultation of five experts in the field of teaching English. Questionnaire was comprised of factors i.e. learning Environment, planning for teaching, origination of content and Assessment factors. Five-point Likert scale was developed by the researcher. Scale was developed after the through literature review and expert opinion. Panel of five experts had assured the content validity of the instrument. Experts were experienced teachers and researchers. They rated instrument as useful, easy to understand and valid for problem under study. Cronbach's Alpha: Learning Environment = 0.719; Planning for teaching = 0.692; Organization of Content = 0.666; and Assessment = 0.684.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Descriptive statistics [i.e. mean, standard deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis] and inferential statistics [i.e. independent samples t-test and Pearson product moment correlation (Pearson r)] were applied to investigate the variation based on demographical variable and relationship between students' perceptions about their teachers' professional skills and their achievement in English at BA Level.

Descriptive Statistics of Teachers' Professional Skills

Table 1

Organization of Content

Statements	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Teacher follows the content order outlined in the textbook.	3.68	1.25	-0.59	-0.63
Teacher asks students about the prior knowledge of the lesson in the beginning of the class.	3.72	1.29	-0.70	-0.59
The content provide you adequate practice in vocabulary and grammar.	3.78	1.21	-0.68	-0.48
The teacher teaches easy topic first then difficult one.	2.36	1.49	0.56	-1.16
The teacher links the lesson from the text to real-life situations.	3.67	1.45	-0.67	-0.94
The teacher provides you with functional material like newspaper cutting.	4.24	1.10	-1.30	0.69

The perception of the students about the teacher provides the functional material like newspaper cuttings (Mean = 4.24, SD=1.10) which is highest among ten teaching skills while the perception score of students about the teacher teaches easy topic first then difficult one (Mean = 2.36, SD=1.49) is the lowest among the ten teaching skills. The rest of the mean scores of four items of organization skill vary from 4.24 to 2.36.

Table 2

Planning for Teaching

Statements	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
The teacher comes with a lesson plan/class notes in the class.	3.67	1.45	-0.67	-0.94
The teacher gives clear instructions and explanations before start of the lesson.	4.24	1.10	-1.30	0.69
The teacher shares the objectives of the lesson with the class.	3.97	1.16	-0.88	-0.12
The teacher plans the activities according to the available class time.	3.55	1.34	-0.50	-0.90
The teacher arranges all teaching resources before coming to the class according to the needs of topic.	3.53	1.36	-0.51	-0.96
Direct and on-spot corrections of student' errors by teacher.	3.79	1.33	-0.73	-0.67

The perception of the students about the teacher gives clear instructions and explanations before start of the lesson (Mean = 4.24, SD=1.10) is the highest among ten teaching skills while the perception score of students about The teacher arranges all teaching resources before coming to the class according to the needs of topic. (Mean = 3.53, SD=1.34) is the lowest among ten teaching skills. The rest of the mean score of four teaching skills vary from 4.24 to 3.53.

Table 3

Assessment

Statements	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Teacher check your communicative ability of the target language	3.18	1.36	-0.17	-1.07
Teacher organizes the quiz in the class.	2.80	1.43	0.08	-1.33
Assessment of students based on Knowledge about grammar and vocabulary.	3.60	1.25	-0.53	-0.67
Teacher asks you to write an essay on assigned topic.	3.51	1.23	-0.48	-0.62
Teacher recognizes the misconceptions and clears them up.	3.69	1.27	-0.57	-0.76

The perception of the students about the teacher recognizes the misconceptions and clear them up (Mean = 3.69, SD=1.27) is the highest among six teaching skills while the perception score of students about the teacher organizes the quiz in the class (Mean = 2.80, SD=1.43) is the lowest among six teaching skills. The rest of the mean score of four teaching skills vary from 2.80 to 3.69.

Table 4

Learning Environment

Learning environment	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
The teacher provides opportunities to student to express themselves.	3.95	1.25	-.96	-.13
The classroom environment is accessible for students with any disability.	3.47	1.33	-.50	-.86
The teacher provides equal opportunity to all the students in the class.	3.85	1.20	-.81	-.27
Classroom environment promotes teacher-student interaction in English	4.09	1.21	-1.14	.19
The teacher keeps in mind the individual differences while communicating with students.	3.64	1.32	-.61	-.78
The classroom environment is language friendly.	3.64	1.35	-.58	-.87

Learning environment has six items. The perception of the students about classroom environment promotes teacher-student interaction in English (Mean = 3.95, SD=1.25) is the highest among six teaching skills while the perception score of students about the classroom environment is accessible for students with any disability (Mean = 3.47, SD=1.33) is the lowest among six teaching skills. The rest of the mean score of four teaching skills vary from 3.47 to 3.95.

Inferential Statistics of teachers' professional skills

Table 5

Comparison of Male and Female Students regarding Teachers' Professional Skills

	Male (n=318)		Female(n=1012)		<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Organization of content	20.97	4.69	21.23	4.21	487	0.91	.366
Planning of teaching	21.59	4.86	23.06	4.81	1328	4.74	<.001
Assessment	20.77	4.83	20.46	4.90	1328	0.99	0.323
Learning environment	21.41	4.76	23.01	4.94	1328	5.10	<.001
Overall Professional skills	211.24	39.96	214.9	34.59	1.97	1328	0.043

To compare the perception of students about teachers' professional skills on the basis of gender, independent sample t-test was applied. Result of t- test shows that that there was significant difference in the perception of male and female students on teachers professional skills, $t(1328) = 1.97, p = 0.043$. Further result of t- test shows that that there was no significant difference in the perception of male and female students about teachers' skills for organization of content and assessment ($t = 0.91, p = .366$).

Table 6

Relationship of Teachers' Professional Skills and Students' Achievement

Variables	<i>r</i>
Organization of content	0.021
Planning for teaching	0.041
Assessment	0.107**
Learning Environment	0.009
Overall professional skills	0.057

To find relationship between teachers' professional skills and students' achievements in English at BA level, Pearson's coefficient of correlation was computed. Results indicate that there was a significantly mild relationship of achievement scores in English at BA level with Assessment ($r = -.107$).

Discussion and Conclusion

The study explored the relationship of teachers' professional skills and students' achievement. It is concluded from the results about organization of content that students consider the provision of functional material to them like paper cutting as the top whereas the discussion of easy topic was found to be the first priority and the discussion of the difficult topic is the last priority. With respect to planning for teaching, student's perception was that provision of instruction before the start of class had a very positive effect on teaching where-as the use of resources according to the needs of the students occupied the lowest position. Results of assessment show the students' perception about clearing up misconceptions at the top and organizes the quizzes in the class at the bottom. With respect to the learning environment, classroom environment promotes teacher-student interaction in English was found at the top and the classroom environment is accessible for students with any disability at the bottom. The results revealed that student achievement correlated by the assessment, organization of content and overall teachers' professional skills. Such emerging concept is supported by the studies whose findings indicated that professional skills of teachers have great impact on the students' academics (Bain, 2004; Chelo, 2010; Eggen & Kauchak, 2001; Khan, Khan, & Khan, 2017). Students' achievement can be raised with the change in assessment system at B.A level.

The male and female teachers have been found to be, significantly different in planning of teaching. Results also revealed that there is difference of teachers' professional skills on the bases of gender. Results depict that assessment techniques and planning in content effect students learning. Their achievement scores can be enhance with better assessment techniques and good planning of content organization. This result was in line with studies conducted by various researchers (Alkharusi, 2011; Baker, 2020; Connor, Dearing, & Collins, 2011; Liakopoulou, 2011).

Recommendations

Teachers need training for the better use if instructional material to enable the students the students to organize the contents at their end. Teachers may be made to realize that the presentations of instructional material and resources in a well and progressive way regarding planning. Switch on variety of assessment according to students, situation and market needs. Make the classroom environment more participative and interactive.

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