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Capacity Building for Teaching English in Universities of Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

In the 20th and 21st centuries, English became an essential part of the educational curriculum in schools and universities of Afghanistan, particularly after a period of Taliban dominion that had no stable educational system. The educational system took a new turn in schools, institutes and universities to enter a period of progress. Teaching of English language became popular and many institutes started English language programs to teach students. The English language was included in the curriculums of schools and universities as a mandatory subject due to its acceptance as a global language. The study aims to explore and find out the challenges of teaching English as a foreign language in universities of Afghanistan and to provide techniques for capacity building of teachers for English language teaching. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data from Faculty teaching English in Afghanistan to understand their perspectives on the challenges. Likert scale is used in the research questionnaire to measure the scores allotted by faculty on each challenge. Results will be drawn for data analysis using one sample t-test.

INTRODUCTION

English is a global lingua franca language, this language is in demand nowadays. It is the most commonly spoken language in the world one out of five people can speak and at least understand it, more than 20% of world population that is 1500 million people speak and understand English, of whom 375 million are native speakers, in 2015 out of 195 countries in the world, 67 nations are use English as official language and 27 are as second official language that many people by different culture and language to meet that countries and speak to it. (Dylan Lyons, 2017). English is now taught as foreign language in above 100 countries such as China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt, Brazil and Afghanistan and more countries appearing as the primary foreign language in schools and universities. It is the language of media industry and internet if a person is able to speak or understand English, won't need to rely on translation and subtitle anymore to enjoy favorite books, songs, films and TV shows, (Alfitri, 2012). A research proved that in internet more than 80% of the sites use English as the medium language while 20% of the rest use the other languages such as Indonesian, chines and the others, it point out that if people do not learn English they will only acquire less than 20% of the new knowledge. For nowadays the majority of the knowledge sheared through the internet. Afghanistan is the country located in central Asia, surrounded by Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and China. The people are live from different ethnics there are 13 ethnic groups, Afghanistan is a multilingual country which people speak in 40 native languages and 200 different dialects, most Afghans are bilingual they speak both in their native and one or more other language, the official alphabet of Afghanistan is Arabic. Dari, Pashto, Uzbeki,

Turkmany, Pashia and Baluchi are considered as the main six languages.

Afghanistan is observe one of the developing countries and through this English is spreading in different sectors, English play very important rule to expansion and to connect afghan people with world. English in Afghanistan taught as a foreign language and it has its influence from a long period of time, before English was used for social climbing, economic expansion and work

opportunities since it is a part of school curriculum. From 1985-2004 English is taught as a foreign language subject from seventh grade, after dark period of Taliban it was introduced as a compulsory subject and started from fourth grade of school including universities. (M. Alamyar, 2017). With the fall of Taliban, the Afghanistan economy has extend very promptly in last fourteen years, English speaking countries UK, USA, Australia (Z. Alimyar, 2017) and through this interest in English language increased by the arrival of united nations and international non- governmental organizations (NGOs) that they offered lots of work opportunities for Afghans. English in Afghanistan called the language of employment opportunities, it is not required just for foreign NGOs it is also a requirement for governmental jobs, nowadays when one apply for a job they ask how good is you are knowledge in English. (Azami, 2009). English is used as a medium of instruction in academic purpose such as in faculties of computer, engineering and medical science. The government aim of the teaching English is to eligible Afghans in international level of communication relationships and economic development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature highlight capacity building in

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teaching English as a foreign language and evaluate the challenges of teaching English as a foreign language in Afghanistan.

Capacity building strives to find better and more efficient ways for different actors to access and use knowledge in local educational contexts in order to achieve desired outcomes (Warsaw, Polan, 2012). Target group for capacity building can be divided into individual, institutional and social levels, all of which are strongly interrelated. (UN, Economic and Social Council, 2006).

Individual Level

Finding ways to support individuals (parents, teachers, headmasters and local policy makers) as they face the demands of new developments in the local context by building on existing knowledge (human resources and knowledge management).

Institutional Level

Supporting existing institutions in forming policies, effective organizational structures and good management (this includes building learning organizations).

System Level

Finding efficient ways to support system level actors (e.g. policy makers, teacher unions) to be able to fulfil their roles in designing/implementing/evaluating etc. educational policies.

Societal Level

Striving towards more interactive and responsive public administration.

Researchers have made contributions with regard to the importance of teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge to student performance. Stoop (2011) has shown that effective teachers have comprehensive pedagogical and content knowledge of subject matter and the learning process that influences student achievement. Jones and Moreland (2003) explain through synthesis of literature and the work of Shulman (1987) that, teachers content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, curricular knowledge and the knowledge of education ends and context provide distinct bodies of knowledge for teaching which every teacher must possess if effective teaching has to take place. Other research findings support the same view and shows that teachers who pursue professional development and learning results in improved student learning. In English, literacy studies show the large contribution of teacher effects on students learning (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar& Fung, 2007).

A study undertaken by Japanese International Co-operation Agency (2007) has shown that capacity development results in building capacities of individuals, institutions and countries. According to JICA, capacity development is "the on-going process of enhancing problem solving abilities of developing countries by taking account of all factors at the individual, organizational and societal levels". Capacity in the education sector is vital

for supporting effective and sustainable development. Educators need to be conversant with complex adaptive systems thinking and be able to make effective decisions under different strategic and risk scenarios. (Ruchika Singh Malyan*, Lokesh Jindal (2014)

The training of teachers is one of the pillars of sustainable development and national capacity building in any country in the world. Quality in teachers education for teaching future citizens, in the long run contribute to alleviation of poverty, promotion of equity, democracy, professionalism, ethical conduct and good governance. (University of Oulu, Finland, 2011).

Building teacher capacity imply investing human capital to enable teachers teach effectively (Kastin& Me Davis, 2005). Building teacher's capacity enables teachers to acquire teaching skills and knowledge, share teaching experiences and collaborate with peers, gain access to career opportunities. For professional development and enhances teachers teaching quality. Capacity building forums exposes teachers to variety of professional development opportunities that includes: curriculum support and study group and mentoring and induction programs. (Jaquith, Dan, Wei, and Darling-Hammond, 2010).

This evidence shows that professional development makes a difference in teachers teaching skills, increases learning quality in the classroom, assisting students who could otherwise be at risk, hence enhancing students learning. (Cooter, 2003; OECD, 2009).

The position of the teacher in the process of education is substantial. Dembele (2005) shared the premise that unless teachers provide effective instruction and create classroom environment conducive to learning, students will not achieve at high levels, even when essential material inputs are available and the curriculum is relevant.

He argued that a good knowledge of demonstrably effective instructional practices is necessary but not sufficient condition for improving instructional practice without teachers who are able and ready to adopt and adapt such practices.

Successful quality improvement in education will remain an impossible dream until the teacher is able to transfer knowledge in a most effective way. The need for capacity building of the teacher to equip him with the necessary skills to impact knowledge and have confidence in his profession to lace global competitiveness is very critical. Evidence from industrialized countries suggests that students of teachers with no professional preparation for leaching learn less than students who have fully prepared teachers (Darling-Hamond and Post, 2000).

Development or capacity building is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically (Glatthorn, 1995).

Capacity building of teachers should be a life-long process. Years back capacity building of teachers was in-service training consisting of short-term courses that would offer teachers new information on a particular

aspect of their work. Only in the past few years has the professional development of teachers been considered a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

21st century is the era of technology, knowledge and investigation for this university considered the main center. unfortunately in Afghanistan universities students still using materials of 20th century. However some lecturers have written, translated and published books in their fields. Hence it is exceptional and is done in poor fields. Not a systematic work has been done for delivering substitute touchstone textbooks. Nevertheless, the ministry of higher education issued a curriculum in several volumes for 50 fields in 2014, unfortunately it is not being practicable in each field. (Dr. Wardak, 2016. P3). Curriculum is the main point of education that can determine the goals of education, how the teaching learning process be held, and how a teacher has to do in the classroom. Curriculum is the set of plan and systematization about the goals, content, material and method that used as a guideline to implement in teaching learning process for achieving the educational goals. (DiahKusumaningrum, 2016).

ZabiAlimyar(2017) highlighted major challenges and problems that appeared in teaching English in Afghanistan: He mention, that are the lack of expert, proficient instructors, insufficient campuses, libraries, keeping students passive, old version of textbooks, lack of language lab, lack of awareness of new methods and developed methodology to teach English language. In Afghanistan one of the main objectives of the higher education development project(HEDP) is to modernize the teaching and learning methods in the public universities of

Afghanistan, there is a growing a trends and outcome based education in the higher education (Hamdard. M, 2015). The quality of teaching matters in higher education, the MOHE has therefore taken a series of initiatives including short-term and long-term training for teachers of public universities on outcome-bases education and student-centered learning and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for improved pedagogy and student-teacher interaction (Samsor. J, 2016). Higher education plays a major role in building a nation's intellectual capital required for poverty reduction sustainable development and positive engagement in the global knowledge economy. (Lorna Power, 2015).

MOHE has layout a strategy that will pave ways for the implementation of modern teaching and learning approaches in public universities, to employ innovative evaluation instrument so that the impact on the quality of learning outcomes could be measured (Habibi. E, 2017). To improve student learning, a program is helping instructors modernize teaching methods through a "train the trainer" program that promotes student participation, group activities and critical thinking skills, the program

is supported by the Higher Education Development program (The World Bank, 2018).

Objective of the Study

Following are the two study objectives identified after the review of literature

1. To evaluate the challenges of teaching English as a Foreign Language in Afghanistan.
2. To suggest techniques to faculty for capacity building in teaching of English as a foreign language in Afghanistan.

Hypothesis

Stemming from the objective of study the following hypothesis was derived:

Ha: There is a significant challenge in teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Afghanistan.

Ho: There is no significant challenge in teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Afghanistan.

METHODOLOGY

The empirical research used a mixed method approach using both quantitative and qualitative method for analysis. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire that has been designed on a 7 point Likert Scale of Agreement. The link was sent through email to more than 50 respondents from different Universities of Sar-e-pul, Shbegan and Balk provinces of Afghanistan who filled it through Google Form.

The questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and close-ended questions related to concerns of faculty teaching English as a foreign language. The size of sample is 50 questionnaire sent to teachers in universities of ELT among which 29 have responded which become 60% of the sample size. For analyzing data, the study used one sample t-test to find out most significant reasons for teachers not able to inculcate English language skills in Afghanistan. SPSS Version 25 was used for data analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from 29 faculties of English Language in Universities of Afghanistan, revealed in Table.1. Some reasons were rated highly as mean values to a large extent in the ability of students not being able to use English. They are stated as: Use of traditional teaching methods like memorization and root learning with no practical (M=5.97, SD=1.180), Students are not exposed to English language except in class(M=5.93, SD=1.163), Teachers are not trained in using instructional media(M=6.03 SD=1.117), Unavailability or Low usage of technology during lecture(M=6.07, SD=1.132), Use of first language much more than English in the class(M=5.83, SD=1.227), More theory than practical in English language teaching(M=5.93, SD=1.223), Lack of practice outside classroom(M=6.14, SD=1.187) and Absence of appropriate curriculum in Afghanistan universities for teaching English(M=5.79, SD=1.082).

The results of One Sample t-Test in Table 2 revealed

Table 1: One-Sample Test Statistics

Statement	N=29 Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. Students overly dependent on teacher for learning English	3.93	1.771	0.329
2. Use of traditional teaching methods like memorization and rote learning with no practical.	5.97	1.18	0.219
3. Students not exposed to English language except in class.	5.93	1.163	0.216
4. Teachers do not consider about students needs and interest while papering lectures.	3.79	1.698	0.315
5. Teacher not trained in using instructional media.	6.03	1.117	0.208
6. Unavailability or Low usage of technology during lecture	6.07	1.132	0.21
7. Focus of teachers on reading and writing skills rather than speaking and listening.	3.86	1.941	0.36
8. Use of first language much more than English in the class.	5.83	1.227	0.228
9. Teacher talking time is more than the students talking time.	3.97	1.822	0.338
10. Large class size so difficult to involving students in language teaching.	3.83	1.853	0.344
11. More theory than practical in English language teaching.	5.93	1.223	0.227
12. Mismatch between teaching style and learners expectation.	4.07	1.58	0.293
13. Lack of practice outside classroom.	6.14	1.187	0.22
14. Teaching for the purpose of passing test and examinations.	3.69	2.072	0.385
15. Absence of appropriate curriculum in Afghanistan universities for teaching English.	5.79	1.082	0.201
16. Teachers English language skills require improvement.	3.97	2.061	0.383

significant effect at $\alpha = .05$ of Use of traditional teaching methods like memorization and rote learning with no practical ($p = .003 < .05$), Students not exposed to English language except in class ($p = .002 < .05$), Teacher not trained in using instructional media ($p = 0 < .05$), Unavailability or Low usage of technology during lecture ($p = 0 < .05$), Use of first language much more

than English in the class ($p = .001 < .05$), More theory than practical in English language teaching ($p = .002 < .05$), Lack of practice outside classroom ($p = 0 < .05$) and Absence of appropriate curriculum in Afghanistan universities for teaching English ($p = .006 < .05$).

The hypothesis is partially accepted as some reasons

Table 2: One-Sample t-Test

Statement	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
1. Students overly dependent on teacher for learning English	-0.21	28	0.835	-0.069	-0.74	0.6
2. Use of traditional teaching methods like memorization and rote learning with no practical.	8.973	28	0.003	1.966	1.52	2.41
3. Students not exposed to English language except in class.	8.943	28	0.002	1.931	1.49	2.37
4. Teachers do not consider about students' needs and interest while papering lectures.	-0.656	28	0.517	-0.207	-0.85	0.44
5. Teacher not trained in using instructional media.	9.804	28	.000	2.034	1.61	2.46

6. Unavailability or Low usage of technology during lecture	9.845	28	.000	2.069	1.64	2.5
7. Focus of teachers on reading and writing skills rather than speaking and listening.	-0.383	28	0.705	-0.138	-0.88	0.6
8. Use of first language much more than English in the class.	8.023	28	0.001	1.828	1.36	2.29
9. Teacher talking time is more than the students talking time.	-0.102	28	0.92	-0.034	-0.73	0.66
10. Large class size so difficult to involving students in language teaching.	-0.501	28	0.62	-0.172	-0.88	0.53
11. More theory than practical in English language teaching.	8.505	28	0.002	1.931	1.47	2.4
12. Mismatch between teaching style and learners expectation.	0.235	28	0.816	0.069	-0.53	0.67
13. Lack of practice outside classroom.	9.7	28	.000	2.138	1.69	2.59
14. Teaching for the purpose of passing test and examinations.	-0.807	28	0.427	-0.31	-1.1	0.48
15. Absence of appropriate curriculum in Afghanistan universities for teaching English.	8.927	28	0.006	1.793	1.38	2.2
16. Teachers English language skills require improvement	-0.09	28	0.929	-0.034	-0.82	0.75

stated above were found to be significant in teachers not being able to inculcate English language skills in students. Lack of capacity building of faculty in usage of technology, students being passive learners, traditionally obsolete curriculum and teaching pedagogy and lack of regular practice in Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing in English were reasons identified by the research study that have effected Afghanistan students even after completing higher education for their not being able to communicate in English.

CONCLUSIONS

The results show that teaching English Language in Afghanistan is a major hurdle as not enough emphasis is placed on its importance for career building. English is not used as a medium of communication but given preference as a second or third language. As students do not get enough practice in contextual usage they are not comfortable in using the language for communication effecting its viability. As the study shows, the English language status in Afghanistan suggests the following techniques to teachers of EFL to apply on their teaching methods for an appropriate result:

1. Updating of course curriculum and syllabus as per internationally accepted standards based on all students requirement and interest;
2. Incorporating technology driven techniques of imparting English language skills through TELL: Teaching Assisted Language Learning; CALL: Computer Assisted Language Learning; WELL: Web Enhanced Language Learning; MALL: Mobile Assisted Language Learning; TALL: Teaching Assisted Language Learning;
3. Train students in English as a foreign language

from the school where they are young and enthusiastic to learn. The school curriculum should also be updated and teachers also should be trained in new methods of language teaching with emphasis to use English as a medium of instruction to prepare students for university;

4. Capacity building of faculty for usage of technology in their teaching through workshops or short term courses and conferences to upgrade their skills in teaching the language resulting in improvement of teaching approaches in the classroom

5. Faculty should emphasize that students enhance LSRW(Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) skills to master English language usage;

6. Teachers should update their teaching materials by new language textbooks and should consider interest and needs of students for an outcome based learning;

7. Faculty of teaching English should perform as: Learner, Facilitator, Assessor, Evaluator and Guide for improving students learning and overall academic success;

8. Teachers should avoid speaking first language in teaching English classes and expose students to practice in class and outside the class;

9. Teachers need for improving their capacity for meticulous training through practical exercises, module assessments, classroom observation etc.

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