

A Comparative Conversation Analysis of Peeli- Trained and Untrained English Teachers

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Abstract: PEELI (Punjab Education and English Language Initiative) was a training initiative that aimed to improve the education and English language skills of the primary school teachers employed at the public schools of the Punjab. The purpose of the study was to observe teacher-student interaction and any significant change in the quality and amount of teacher talk (Trained Teacher) within the class of grade 5 in the public schools of elementary level in Tehsil Arifwala. The population of this study consisted of all the PSTs (primary school teachers) of all the public schools of Tehsil Arifwala. It was qualitative study in nature as it involved observation to seek the data. Six classrooms of 5th grade were selected for observing students and teachers' interaction. To gather qualitative data, an observation schedule, based on Flander's (1970) student-teacher interaction categories, was used as an instrument. The study recommended Standardized training programs such as PEELI may be offered to the remaining PSTs to strengthen teacher-student interaction which determines the success or failure of the entire teaching-learning process.

Keywords: Display Questions, Interaction, PEELI, Student-talk, Teacher-talk, Training

INTRODUCTION

The significance of English language cannot be denied (Mushtaq, 2021) for being an international language. It is regarded as the language of 'development at both the individual and national levels. Nadeem, Saadi & Sahar (2020) termed it as the medium towards the way of progress. They further suggest that Pakistan needs to take English at top priority. But teaching this language is a process that is hindered by countless barriers. For instance, as Ababneh (2012) puts forth, ESL classroom management characteristically demands the use of English language along with other skills. Not only that, an ESL classroom is different also because of special attributes such as interaction patterns, use of the target language and teaching methodology too. The barriers in teaching ESL persist because the teachers 'lack

competency and training to teach the students of various socio-economic backgrounds in the educational settings' (Akçay & Doymus, 2014). Punjab Education and English Language Initiative (PEELI) was a collaborated project between the British Council and the Government of the Punjab (Naz, Jabeen & Rashid, 2020). It aimed to 'provide high quality education in English language to all the children registered in primary and middle schools in Punjab province' (Mushtaq, 2021) by 'familiarizing the teachers with the content and the tools to implement child-centered instruction with activity-based lessons' (Bashir & Batool 2017). Such content and skills included 'English language skills, teaching methods and leadership skills of the teachers' (Nadeem, Saadi, Fatima & Sahar, 2020). For this purpose, various modules such as understanding lesson planning, understanding thinking skills, understanding assessment for learning and understanding how primary children learn were covered in the training sessions delivered to the PSTs of the Punjab.

Flander's (1970) Categories of Teacher-Student Interaction

Flander (1963) developed a method for analysis, called Flander's Interaction Analysis. Flander Interaction Analysis has become a widely used coding method for assessing and developing teaching knowledge and skills. This observation framework was designed to classify the type and number of a classroom verbal dialogue. Then the outcome shows who spoke in a classroom and the type of conversation that took place.

Flander (1970) classified teacher and pupil interactions in classrooms. The system boasts ten categories. Seven categories are allocated to teacher talk and two to students talk and the tenth category classifies distracting or disruptive delays, short periods of silence and conversation.

All activities in the classroom are divided into three main divisions using this ten-category system:

- i. Teacher-talk
- ii. Student-talk
- iii. Silence or confusion

Both portions are segmented to make the teacher-student interaction pattern more focused. The teacher's speech is separated into two components, each of which has an indirect and direct influence. There are four sorts of observations that make up the indirect effect:

- i. Accepting feeling
- ii. Praising or encouraging
- iii. Accepting ideas
- iv. Asking questions

Dividing direct influence into three categories:

- v. Lecturing
- vi. Giving directions
- vii. Criticizing or justifying authority

Student talk is composed of just two categories:

- viii. Responding to teacher
- ix. Initiating talk

And the last type that is silence or confusion is used to handle anything else that is neither teacher nor student talking.

Ahmad, Siddique & Arshad, (2020) view that a teacher should act as a guide in a meaningful interaction and refrain from being the frontal speaker. PEELI training too has emphasized this aspect of classroom interaction through its Continuous Professional Development (CPD) framework for teachers which includes Using Inclusive Practices as one of the twelve indicators. It laid special focus on inclusiveness, and child-centeredness. Thus PEELI intended the teachers to plan interaction types that focus more on learners talking than on the teacher talking as reported in Project Report 2017-2020 by British Council.

The School Education Department (SED), Punjab has invested huge amounts of budget in the PEELI Project. In order to evaluate the appropriateness of this program, it is needed to ascertain the impact of this project on teacher talk (TT) of the teachers. The current study aims at comparing (both amount and the quality) of TT of the teachers who received PEELI training and the ones without it from the public schools of tehsil Arifwala to see if the PEELI training had any positive influence on the TT (Teacher-Talk) of the teachers and to what extent.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

- identify the impact of PEELI training on interaction between students and PEELI trained teachers in primary classes of public schools.
- investigate the interaction between students and PEELI untrained teachers in primary classes of public schools.
- find out the comparison between PEELI trained and untrained teachers regarding teacher-student interaction in primary classes of public schools

Research Design

This research was qualitative in nature. In order to examine the Student Teacher Interaction within class of 5th graders, observation schedule was used to collect the qualitative data.

The population of this study consisted of all the PSTs (primary school teachers) of all the public schools of Tehsil Arifwala.

Data Collection

To gather qualitative data, an observation schedule, based on Flander's (1970) student-teacher interaction categories, was used as an instrument. The researcher carefully read the Flander's categories and made the observation schedule. Observation schedule consisted of 10 categories of Flanders. The sub categories were used to observe student-teacher interaction in classroom. The observation was made in 7 intervals and each interval was comprised 5 minutes. The researcher observed the teacher-student interaction in six classrooms of 5th grade. Researcher personally visited each class and observed the lesson to record student teacher interaction. Observations were made from 6 classes of grade 5 of randomly selected public schools of Tehsil Arifwala.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analysis the data through observation

Results

Following were the main findings of the qualitative data of the study:

The researcher along with two other observers visited a class of a PEELI-trained PST and the following observations were made:

Category 1 - Acceptance of Feelings All three of the observed PSTs with PEELI training greeted their students. But two of them including one female PST asked them about their previous day routine too. All of them demonstrated acceptance of feelings as they listened to the students and asked the other students to pay attention and respect to others speaking. The teacher 2 (a female PST) accepted a small paper rose from a student and thanked her. All three of them teacher maintained good rapport as they had a relaxed composure and smiling face while responding to the students during the session.

The 3 untrained PSTs who were observed during their classes also greeted the students. However only one of them asked the students about their previous day which was to enquire whether they had written their homework or not. Flander's category 1 (acceptance of feelings) was not observed to be followed in a satisfactory way as none of the three PSTs shared any lighter moment. No particular act of acceptance of feelings was observed.

Clear evidence of category 2 being followed was found when the trained teachers praised and encouraged the learners by drawing stars on the good performer's cheeks, writing 'excellent', and asking the other students to clap for them. The untrained teachers too showed observance of the second of Flander's categories as they used expressions of praise for the learners. But none drew any star on the learners' faces. However, one teacher used the expression 'good' for one student. For the third category (accepting ideas), it was noticed that the trained teachers remained positive while accepting ideas from the learners. They elicited from the students and gave constructive feedback to the learners by say, 'well said', 'that's right' and 'good'. But the untrained teachers used fewer encouraging expressions.

During observing category 4 (asking questions), the trained PSTs asked 16, 11 and 18 display questions and 21, 19 and 25 referential questions respectively. Whereas the untrained teachers asked 17, 20 and 23 display questions respectively. The referential questions asked by the untrained PSTs were 8, 11 and 9. During observing Real life examples were quoted by the trained teachers. Two (a female and a male) trained PST made use of different classroom objects as examples. The teacher mentioned the learning outcomes and asked about the previous day lesson. One of the untrained teachers gave examples from the rural life foods which somehow indicated him observing the category five. But neither of the other two followed this category.

All the trained teachers used gestures and body language while giving instructions to make it easier for the learners to understand. Two of the teachers used imperative sentences in English language to give directions for group and individual activities in the class. The untrained teachers introduced to evident activities for pair work or group work. Therefore, no observable directions were given except one teacher clarifying how to attempt the exercise by the end of the class. Only one untrained teacher exerted his authority in the class when two students were found busy doing another subject's homework in the class. No evident impressions of justifying authority were observed in any other class while observing category 7 (criticizing or justifying authority).

While observing the category 8 (Student Talk Response) in the classes of the trained teachers, the responses from the learners indicated that they were fully engaged in the lesson and they demonstrated

interest in the activities through their interaction. The students were interactive and actively participated in classroom interaction. Lesser interaction and talk initiation was observed by the students in the classes of the untrained teachers. A weak response was observed by the untrained teachers on category (student talk initiation). No vivid evidence was found in the classes of the untrained teachers encouraging their learners for asking questions. In contrast with that, the trained teachers' students asked various questions which showed category 9 being observed in the classes. For category 10 (silence or confusion), it was observed that the untrained teachers' classes quitted a little confused at certain intervals. The trained teachers conducted different activities in the class and showed more interactive classes.

Conclusion

The topic of this study was impact of PEELI training interaction on teacher-student interaction: A comparative conversation analysis of PEELI trained and PEELI untrained English teachers of the public schools of Arifwala. Observation schedule was used to collect the qualitative data.

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the impact of PEELI training on interactions between students and PEELI-trained teachers in primary classes of public schools of Arifwala. It was found that the PSTs with PEELI training observed the core indicators of positive teacher-student interaction in the class as they maintained good rapport with the learners, gave constructive feedback, accepted ideas positively, asked more referential questions than the display questions and used body language while giving directions.

The second objective of the study was investigating interactions between students and PEELI untrained teachers in primary classes of public schools. It was found that the PSTs without receiving any PEELI training showed a less pleasant and learner friendly environment in the class. They asked more display questions than the referential questions. The PEELI-untrained teachers used more TT and offered less student-talk time to their learners. The third objective of the study was comparing the PEELI-trained and untrained teachers in primary classes of public schools in terms of teacher-student interaction. A significant difference was observed between PEELI-trained and PEELI-untrained PSTs of the public schools of Arifwala.

Discussion

The researcher undertook six class observations of Primary School Teachers in total, for the study in 6 different public sector schools of tehsil Arifwala. The primary objective of these observations was to identify the impact of the PEELI training on the PSTs of tehsil Arifwala. The findings of the study indicated that there was a significant difference in the teacher-student interaction in the classes of PEELI-trained and PEELI-untrained PSTs. The comparison between trained and untrained PSTs helped the researcher to determine the level of change which can be felt in both groups regarding their classroom interaction with their learners.

The trained PSTs exhibited better language proficiency and used English language more appropriate to the level of the learners. Furthermore, they followed the Flander's (1970) categories for teacher-student interaction model more strictly as they praised their learners on an appreciable response from them. They gave directions in clearer way with using gestures, asked more referential questions than the display questions, accepted the learners' ideas and feelings and allowed them more margin to talk in the class. It was further observed that the trained PSTs demonstrated improved lesson planning and assessment skills. However, the PSTs without receiving any PEELI training used more display questions, talked more than their students and left impressions of confusion and silence with frequent intervals (Yanfen, & Yuqin, 2010).

Irfan (2016) favored the findings of this study as they proved that PEELI trainings positively changed the language behavior of its participants who have more child-centered approach and exert to promote interactive-learning. The same has been validated by Naz (2020) who proved that PEELI training elevated the teaching approach. According to Mushtaq (2021) too, PEELI has left a positive mark on the trainees as it helped teachers to develop excellent pedagogical expertise. Ahmad & Rao (2012) further proved through her survey that

majority of the trainees agreed to the fact that PEELI training had positively changed their attitude towards teaching.

Recommendations

In the light of the debate and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Standardized training programs such as PEELI may be offered to the remaining PSTs to strengthen teacher-student interaction which determines the success or failure of the entire teaching-learning process.
2. Student talk can be increased by encouraging the learners to interact in the class. Thus, positive or constructive feedback may be given to the learners and better rapport should be built between the teacher and the learner. Standardized training programs such as PEELI may be offered to the remaining PSTs to strengthen teacher-student interaction which determines the success or failure of the entire teaching-learning process.
3. In future training programs, there may be more content on asking questions and giving instructions because questions with inappropriate grammatical structure and vocabulary do not prove fruitful unless they are aligned with the principles of the modern pedagogy.

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