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Teaching of Urdu: Experiences and Practices at Primary School Level

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Abstract:

Main purpose of the study is to explore the experiences and practices of Urdu teachers regarding teaching of Urdu language teaching. Nature of the study is qualitative and descriptive phenomenological research design is used to describe Urdu teachers' teaching experiences and practices at primary school level. Sample of the study is included 10 Urdu teachers teaching in five Government Primary Schools (GPS) located in Sheikhupura district. There are two teacher educators who are teaching Urdu subject (Grade 1-5) are selected as a sample from five Government Primary Schools (GPS) located in Sheikhupura district by using purposive sampling technique. A semi-structured interview protocol is utilized to gather significant data from the participants. Significant information and evidence received from the participants are analyzed by using thematic analysis technique. The results of the study indicate that most of the teachers viewed those goals of Urdu teaching is to develop different skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is also revealed from the informants Urdu textbooks play a pivotal role in teaching and learning proposed content and themes at primary school level. They provide a pathway to success for students' academic achievement. Most of the teachers viewed that Urdu curriculum has great importance in teaching of Urdu. Its existence in school is just like a constitution in the country.

Keywords: **Keywords:** ***Teaching of Urdu, experiences, practices***

Introduction

It is a well-known truth that national language of Pakistan is Urdu. It is also spoken by many local Indians. According to (Riaz, 2008) it is estimated that there are 11 million Urdu language speakers are in Pakistan and more than 300 million lies in the world. In the world recognized countries like Pakistan, India, USA, UK and Canada Urdu is spoken by many people with fluency. The origin of Urdu language can be traced from Indo-European, Indo-Iranian, and Indo-Aryan (Humayoun, *et al* 2007). The scriptural style of Urdu language is followed by right to lift. Many other languages like Arabic and person also follow the same scriptural style as of Urdu. In Pakistan, Arabic language is given prime importance due to its versatile and Semantic characteristics. The origin of other languages spoken in Pakistan like Dari, Punjabi and Persian (Farsi) can also be traced from Proto Indo Iranian languages. By and large these languages are spoken in South Asia and follow the same scriptural style as of

Urdu. These languages have similarities but there is need to focus with more endeavors because the stemming strategy for one language will not work the same as other language work (Riaz, 2008). Dari, Punjabi, Pashto and Persian (Farsi) have a spot with Proto Indo Iranian languages. Moreover, they follow right to left coordinate making style and are by and large spoken in South Asia region. These languages have similarities but there is need to focus for most endeavors for instance a stemming strategy for one language likely will not work excellently for other language (Riaz, 2010).

The basis of Urdu has lies in Arabic, Persian and the similar languages spoken in the regions of South Asia. For instance, similarities of regional languages exist in the context of absence of upper and lower case, absence of capital and small letters and words characteristics. According to (Ahmad & Haulti 2010; Visweswariah *et al*., 2010). Urdu language has fundamental similarities with Hindi language. However, differences lie in the writing style of both languages for example Hindi style of writing follows Devanagri scriptural style while Urdu Follows Peso-Arabic scriptural style (Riaz 20100). According to Adeeba and Hussain (2011), Urdu is multidimensional language in terms of its grammar and syntax structure and is aligned with Persian, English, Turkish and Arabic languages.

Teaching of Urdu

Urdu is national and public language of Pakistan. It is being spoken and observed by everybody and all through in the five provinces of Pakistan. However, it's everything except an issue of major concern that still it has not procured the best status. The standard justification behind showing Urdu is to encourage the abilities of listening, speaking, reading and writing among the adolescents in light of the fact that as public language it could be useful in making respectability and sociability among individuals of the country. By and large, there is not uniformity among these skills. Listening skill is ordinarily disregarded while on the other hand speaking skill is given little importance. On the whole, prime importance is given to the reading and writing skills (Zaidi & Khatoon 2018).

As considering a basic language due thought isn't provided for the preparation of educators in teaching this of Urdu language. A large part of the teachers teaching Urdu at primary school level are not qualified and well prepared mentally for the teaching of Urdu language. They do not know even the basic rules of native language of Urdu. Due to that, students face problems in understanding the basics of Urdu language in their classes. They do not be able to write a letter or application even after passing the secondary school examination (Zaidi & Khatoon 2018).

Basic Skills of Teaching of Urdu at Primary School Level

Literacy, numeracy and manual capacities are major abilities at primary school level Glatthorn (1997) portrayed that school should give prime importance to show fundamental capacities to the students at primary school level. According to his point of view, coordinated and integrated educational program and curriculum is suggested for primary schooling. All fundamental abilities and skills for example listening, speaking, reading and writing are identified with each other. Any inability in one skill antagonistically influences different other abilities. For example, the reading inability influences spelling. However, according to Punjab Curriculum for Urdu for Grade I-VIII 2019 following basic skills are necessary to inculcate among students during teaching of Urdu at primary level:

1. Listening
2. Speaking
3. Reading
4. Writing
5. Speech
6. Creative writing skills
7. Language cognation skills
8. Appreciation and criticism skills
9. Life skills

Teaching of Urdu in Pakistan

Urdu is national and public language of Pakistan. It has an astoundingly advanced Arabic substance it also has significant resemblance with other native region languages. There is a large part of literature is written in Urdu language. In Pakistan Urdu as a compulsory subject is taught from primary to higher secondary school level and as an optional subject at degree level. As for written text books matter of concern, they are also written in Urdu language from primary to higher secondary school level. However, students of Arts and Humanities and language can take on Urdu as mode of education. In every year books are published and distributed in Urdu language are higher than that of those books which are published and distributed at provincial and regional languages of English (Ashraf, 2008).

Only few of students after intermediate level can write Urdu in true sense. Regardless to that only 8 % people of Pakistan get Urdu s their first language. According to the CIA World Fact Book (2004) the level of huge languages as nearby language or first language in Pakistan is as follow: Punjabi 48%, Sindhi 12%, Siraiki10%, Pushto 8%, Balochi 3%, Urdu 8%, Hindko 2%, Barohi 1%, Others 19%. Also, as time passes by, a steadily expanding number of people of Punjabi and different foundations are conveying in Urdu as their first language. It is evident that locals of Urdu speakers are expending in surroundings rural and metropolitan areas (Ashraf, 2008).

Research Objectives

The research objectives of the study were to:

1. Explore experiences and practices of Urdu teachers about their teaching at primary school level
2. Describe basic learning skills and goals of teaching of Urdu at primary school level
3. Explain the role of Urdu textbooks in teaching of Urdu and its proposed themes
4. Elaborate methods and activities of teaching of Urdu
5. Describe the role of Urdu curriculum in promoting Urdu language and teaching

Research Questions

Following research questions were posed to achieve the above objectives of the study:

1. What are the experiences and practices of Urdu teachers about their teaching at primary school level?
2. What are the basic learning skills and goals of teaching of Urdu at primary school level?
3. What is the role of Urdu textbooks in teaching of Urdu and its proposed themes?
4. What are the methods and activities of teaching of Urdu?
5. What is the role of Urdu curriculum in promoting Urdu language and teaching?

Research Methodology

The study was qualitative in nature. The design of the study was descriptive phenomenological research in order to portray Urdu teachers' teaching experiences and practices at primary school level. The research site of the present study was included public sector primary school of district Sheikhupura. Sample of the study was included 10 Urdu teachers teaching in five public area primary schools of district Sheikhupura. Two educators from primary area (grade 1-5) who are teaching Urdu subject were selected as a sample from five boys' public area primary schools of district Sheikhupura by utilizing purposive sampling strategy. A self-created semi-structured interview protocol was utilized to gather significant data from the participants. The instrument was approved from two specialists having experiences in regards to Urdu teaching. Subsequent to getting professional feedback from the experts and specialists, the instrument was improved. The researchers personally collected all the data from Urdu teachers. Information and data received from the participants were analyzed by using thematic analysis technique.

Results and Findings

This part of research provides the results from Urdu teachers who are teaching Urdu at primary school level in district Sheikupura. The results have been presented in the context of following themes:

- Basic learning skills and goals of Urdu teaching at primary school level

- Role of Urdu textbooks in teaching of Urdu and its proposed themes
- Methods and activities of teaching of Urdu
- Role of Urdu curriculum in promoting Urdu language and teaching

Through these themes the researchers have explored the experiences and practices of Urdu teachers at primary school level.

1. *Basic learning Skills and Goals of Urdu Teaching at Primary School Level*

The predominately male Urdu teachers responded to the semi-structured interview questions. Concerning the basic learning skills and goals of teaching of Urdu at primary school level, most of the teachers viewed that goals of Urdu teaching is to develop different skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. Word recognition is also a goal of teaching of Urdu. They further said that content of Urdu subject also helped to reach these goals. The respondents viewed that they give 50 to 80 percent of the whole time to students to learn these basic skills in the classroom. One of the informants said in this way:

> *The goals of teaching of Urdu include different skills like letter recognition, manipulation, developing the ability to read, write, understand and speak Urdu. Moreover, content of Urdu subject also helped in gaining, learning and reaching these goals. It is because of importance of learning of basic skills of Urdu.*

While contrary to these responses, some of the respondents argued that the goal of teaching of Urdu is to give introductory knowledge to students about national language (Urdu).

The primary purpose of teaching of Urdu at the primary school level is to acquaint children with the national language (Urdu).

The findings of this category revealed that majority of Urdu teachers' perceived different learning skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing as goals of Urdu teaching. However, to be acquainting with national language (Urdu) is also a goal of Urdu teaching.

2. *Role of Urdu Textbooks in Teaching of Urdu and its Proposed Themes*

According to majority of the respondents, Urdu textbooks play a pivotal role in teaching and learning proposed content and themes at primary school level. They (textbooks) provide a pathway to success for students' academic achievement. In response to the question, how much extent Urdu textbooks are helpful in teaching of Urdu and its proposed themes? Information revealed that Urdu textbooks are much more helpful in teaching proposed themes of Urdu. They are according to the need and nature of the students. The recommended Urdu textbooks of Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board at primary school level are 80 to 100 percent helpful in teaching and learning proposed themes and content. There is a reflection of life in these recommended Urdu textbooks. Urdu textbooks are understandable and students

can learn the content of every unit and chapter easily after going through these textbooks. A respondent had this to say in this regard:

> *Urdu textbooks are quite helpful as they relate to the content and the lesson. After reading the content theses textbooks make a lot of sense about every unit and chapter. In addition, they (textbooks) have a glimpse of life. Urdu textbooks help in understanding 80 to 90% of the proposed topics.*

Another participant perceived textbooks as:

> *Urdu textbooks are 100 percent key to success in teaching of Urdu and its proposed themes.*

All the aforementioned incorporations reveled that Urdu textbooks play a key role in teaching of Urdu and its proposed themes at primary school level.

3. *Methods and Activities of Teaching of Urdu*

The teachers revealed their responses regarding methods and activities of teaching of Urdu. Majority of the teachers viewed that they use different teaching method like lecturer method, activity-based method, oral listening, discussion method, questioning and answering method, dialogue method, and paly way method of teaching, individualized and group instructional method of teaching in their teaching at primary school level. Informants pointed out that they teach students by keeping in the view of their interests. They precede their teaching from easy to difficult concepts. They teach in mother tongue for comprehensive understanding of concepts. An Urdu teacher stated his views in this way:

> *While teaching of Urdu, I explain the meanings of specific words to the students and use the activities according to the daily situation. In addition, oral questioning, discussions method, dialogue style, easy to difficult teaching method, explanatory teaching methods, individual teaching methods, group teaching methods and traditional teaching methods are used.*

On asking teachers about evaluation of students' performance most of the teachers have shown strong commitment towards the usage of aforementioned methods of teaching for performance evaluation. They argued that they assess students' performance by using formative and summative assessment techniques. They also use different audio-visual aids like white board and models to assess students' performance. A participant had this to say in this regard:

> *We use different audio-visual aids for example white board, models, slides, posters, flash cards and digital tablet to assess students' performance and this makes the teaching and learning process easy and fruitful. It is effective to learn Urdu language by using these audio-visual aids.*

The findings in this category clearly indicate that most of the Urdu teachers use different methods and activities in their teaching. They also use these different methods of teaching to assess students' performance and evaluation.

4. *Role of Urdu Curriculum in Promoting Urdu Language and Teaching*

In interviews informants were asked to explain the role of Urdu curriculum in promoting Urdu language and teaching. Most of the teachers viewed that Urdu curriculum has great importance in teaching of Urdu. It is back bone in teaching and learning process. Its existence in school is just like a constitution in the country. For teachers' point of view, it guides and directs towards the right direction in teaching and learning process. Urdu curriculum meets the teaching needs of Urdu teachers. For instance, a respondent argued in this way:

> *The curriculum determines the route and destination of students. The Urdu curriculum is one of the ways to develop and promote the Urdu language. Therefore, it is of fundamental importance in the education system. The Urdu curriculum has a roadmap that can improve the learning process by following the curriculum guidelines in real sense.*

In addition to above responses some counter responses were also noted by the researchers. For instance, an informant shared his views in this way:

> *The role of Urdu curriculum in Urdu language education at primary level is to some extent not complete. It does not meet the teaching needs of teachers. Therefore, it should be in line with the teaching needs of teachers.*

Findings of this query indicate that Urdu curriculum has key importance in teaching of Urdu language. It determines the route and destination in teaching learning process. For some of the respondents' point of view it should be in line with students' age, personality, interests, societal needs and practical in nature.

Conclusion

The study urges to explore the experiences and practices of Urdu teachers regarding teaching of Urdu at primary school level. Based on results and findings it is concluded that goals of Urdu teaching are to develop different skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. Word recognition is also a goal of teaching of Urdu. Most of the Urdu teachers viewed that they give 50 to 80 percent of the whole time to students to learn these basic skills in the classroom. While contrary to these responses, some of the respondents argued that the goal of teaching of Urdu is to give introductory knowledge to students about national language (Urdu).

According to majority of the respondents, Urdu textbooks play a pivotal role in teaching and learning proposed content and themes at primary school level. They provide a

pathway to success for students' academic achievement. Information revealed that Urdu textbooks are much more helpful in teaching proposed themes of Urdu. There is a reflection of life in these recommended Urdu textbooks.

Majority of the teachers also viewed that they use different teaching methods like lecturer method, activity-based method, oral listening, discussion method, questioning and answering method, dialogue method and paly way method of teaching individualized and group instructional method of teaching in their teaching at primary school level. On asking teachers about evaluation of students' performance most of the teachers have shown strong commitment towards the usage of aforementioned methods of teaching for performance evaluation. The researchers have analyzed that most of the teachers viewed that Urdu curriculum has great importance in teaching of Urdu. It is back bone in teaching and learning process. Its existence in school is just like a constitution in the country. It determines the route and destination in teaching and learning process.

Recommendations

Based on results and findings, following recommendations are suggested:

1. Subject specialists of Urdu language should be haired to teach students at primary school level.
2. There should be much focus on activities-based teachings and it should also be in line with students' interests and needs.
3. Teachers should help and encourage students to learn Urdu grammar for better understanding of Urdu language.
4. Curriculum of Urdu should be in line with students' age, personality, interests, societal needs and practical in nature.
5. Pre and in-service teacher training institutions must focus on Urdu teachers' training at primary school level.

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