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UCQAR KƏNDLƏRDƏ İNGİLİS DİLİNİN TƏDRİSİNDƏ YARANAN ÇƏTİNLİKLƏR

Xülasə

Dil bizim fikirlərimizi, hiss və emosiyalarımızı ifadə etməyin əsas vasitələrindən biridir. Müasir dünyada dillərin istifadəsi haqqında düşündükdə qətiyyətlə demək olar ki, ingilis dili hal-hazırda dünyada ən çox istifadə olunan dillərdən biridir. Bu dil Azərbaycanda da təhsilin müxtəlif pillələrində ikinci dil kimi tədris edilməkdədir. Şəhər məktəblərindən fərqli olaraq, ucqar məktəblərdə şagirdlər xarici dilin öyrənilməsində böyük çətinliklərlə üzləşirlər. Bunun başlıca səbəbi isə sözügedən məktəblərdə müəllimlərin ingilis dilinin tədrisinə müasir yanaşma və metodikalardan xəbərsiz olması, siniflərdə tələblərə cavab verən tədris materiallarının çatışmazlığıdır. Kurrikulumlar ucqar məktəblərdə təhsil alan şagirdlərin bilik və bacarıqlarını inkişaf etdirmək üçün tələblərə uyğun tərtib edilsə də, statistikaya əsasən, şəhərdə və kəndlərdə təhsil alanların dil səviyyələri arasında böyük fərq var. Bu məqalə ucqar ərazilərdə şagirdlərin fəaliyyətinə təsir edən amillərdən və ingilis dilinin tədrisi zamanı yaranan çətinliklərdən bəhs edir.

Açar sözlər: *ingilis dili, ucqar ərazilər, təhsil, öyrənmə və öyrətmə, səriştə*

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Challenges of teaching english in rural areas

Abstract

Nearly all the schools in Azerbaijan teach English, even those in the country's rural areas, which is crucial to the country's educational system. Therefore, it appears that the educator, students, and facilities are related to the challenges in rural locations. Therefore, the purpose of this essay is to (1) identify the difficulties faced by teachers when instructing English in rural areas and (2) discuss the contributing causes. According to the findings, teachers faced several difficulties related to student motivation, the curriculum, teaching materials and media, student competency, teacher development, and parental support. Furthermore, this research will aid in the professional development of rural teachers.

Keywords: *english language, rural areas, education, learning and teaching, competency*

Introduction

In today's society, English has become the international language which is being widely used all over the world as it serves the language of business, language of diplomacy, language of science and technology and language of finance and commerce in this era of globalization. In view of the growing importance of English, learning English is definitely essential in order to explore knowledge globally and to improve one's competencies in the globalizing world. English is perceived to be very crucial not only for future study and employment, but also to boost one's confidence and widen their social circle through communication with the global citizens (Zefran, 2020: 27). Therefore, it is utmost important for learners or students to be aware of the significance of learning and mastering the language of international communication to expose themselves to more opportunities, upgrade their social mobility and increase their competitiveness in facing the globalizing world. In order to increase English Language competence among students, it is imperative to note that English Language teachers play a crucial role in increasing students'

awareness about the significance of learning English as well as giving them guidance, motivation and encouragement along their language learning journey.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is the practice of teaching English to students who do not speak English as their first language. TEFL is often taught in the student's own country, either in the public school system or in private schools. TEFL teachers might be native or non-native English speakers. The end objective of English courses in schools is to prepare students to speak English in the age of globalization. For the time being, teaching English is more than a commodity since English is recognized as a global communication tool. Teachers are also characterized as professionals who can give students knowledge that will help them grow, recognize, and gain abilities that will assist them to face future obstacles.

Rural is defined as an area marked by isolation in several ways, including significant distance from cities, services, and low population density. Furthermore, du Plessis (Plessis, 2014: 56) mentions several regional characteristics rural areas according to UNESCO 2005, such as rural distances that are generally far from urban centers; unsupportive topographical conditions, such as road conditions, bridges, and so on; access to various information technologies is very limited; and transportation infrastructures such as buses, taxis; access to services and facilities such as electricity, water, sanitation; health, education, and so on. Rural regions are distinguished by common living conditions, lifestyles, and cultural trends. The characteristics (cultural and natural heritage) that have been so carefully maintained in the countryside are being passed on to a modern and highly urbanized individualistic culture. As a result, rural regions as a location to live are becoming increasingly appealing to the metropolitan population. Another characteristic fundamental feature of rural regions is that they are remote from cities and have traditional agricultural management. When considering rural development, difficult access to quality education, healthcare, and other important services becomes an unsolved issue.

Shikalepo (Shikalepo, 2019: 83) state that some challenges faced by teachers in rural area. For example, teachers do not have enough time, limited teachers training and teaching technique/strategy in teaching English, there is a dearth of educated and competent English teachers, and there are insufficient facilities. Teacher training also constituted a danger to teaching student teachers about place-based challenges in rural surroundings, as the majority of students graduating from teacher training institutes are insufficiently taught and equipped to live and teach in rural regions. It can be observed that in many countries, improving teacher training and reforming the rural education curriculum has become a basic strategy to rural education reform.

The shortage of English Language teachers has always been a persistent problem faced in English Language education in rural schools. Many English Language teachers are reluctant to teach in rural schools due to several reasons such as low welfare and being underpaid. The lack of English Language teachers in rural schools has caused teachers who are not expert in English resort to teaching English. Their lack of profession and experience in teaching English has negatively impacted the academic performance of English Language among rural students. It is noteworthy that many English Language teachers in rural schools struggle to teach English given their lack of quality and professional trainings. One of the main obstacles pertaining to insufficient professional development among English Language teachers is the inability to use effective teaching strategies, methods or approaches in teaching English to rural students which is liable for rural students' limited competence in English Language. Without the knowledge and skills regarding to lesson preparation and teaching methodologies, it is deemed difficult and challenging to teach English to rural students especially when it comes to teaching the four English Language skills (Milon, 2016: 32).

English Language education in rural settings is characterized as disadvantaged due to inadequate facilities and infrastructure to support teaching and learning of English Language. According to Garder (Garder, 2006: 182), some rural schools are supplied with basic facilities and equipment but they could not be fully utilized given the challenges in accessing to electricity. Other than that, it is found that many facilities and equipment in rural schools are in poor condition or can

no longer be used. In addition to that, the lack of internet access has been one of the prominent issues faced by English Language teachers in English Language education which amounts to difficulties in getting access to various kinds of interesting teaching and learning materials. The shortage of teaching aids and instructional materials has posed a great challenge to enhancing the process of English Language teaching and learning. For example, the shortage of English books and materials. Many English textbooks or printed books are the old editions which are not related to the current English curriculum. The lack of supports from schools and administrators in providing necessary teaching resources has also significantly slackened English Language teachers' motivation in teaching English and affected the efficiency and efficacy of English Language education in rural settings.

Rural schools should not be deprived of offering quality English education due to the global expansion of languages. The need for English for rural students in order to excel in life and stay up with technological advancements. English language educational facilities in rural areas continue to be a challenge for English teachers to satisfy the expectations of the curriculum. The curriculum idea is extremely difficult to implement in the classroom. This is owing to the students' poor health and insufficient facilities to facilitate its implementation. According to the interviews, English teachers believe that their schools' facilities/resources are insufficient to meet their demands. Their teaching and learning processes are sometimes hampered by inadequate facilities. One of the schools visited for this investigation had only one book for teachers. When teachers assign homework to students, they must rewrite the homework in their books. In the teaching and learning process, this becomes a difficulty. Furthermore, based on the interview, a teacher at one school believed that the information in the government-supplied book was inappropriate for rural schools. He also stated that developing content was challenging owing to a lack of resources.

The issue of students' limited competence in English is prevalent in rural areas which is inevitably related to minimal language exposure (Brown, 2000: 56) and this would lead to countless issues and challenges in teaching English among them. English Language is only used during English lessons, but not outside the classroom and thus, rural students rarely get the opportunities to practice the language in their daily life which results in low level of English proficiency among rural students. Students are poor in mastering the four English Language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Besides that, students' limited vocabulary mastery has rendered them to difficulties to understand English Language. Moreover, rural students are also found to have problems in pronouncing and memorizing English vocabularies. The strong first language interference among rural students are liable for students' appalling behavior towards English Language which results in their lack of interest and motivation in learning English.

Based on the quotations, it is possible to deduce that English teachers experience challenges due to their students' limited English vocabulary. This inhibits students' comprehension of the material because vocabulary is essential for developing all language abilities. According to Quist (Quist, 1991: 128), vocabulary is one of the domains of knowledge in language that is highly essential for the success of language learning since individuals cannot utilize the structure and function of language without vocabulary. As a result, students' lack of vocabulary knowledge prevents them from participating effectively in class.

Based on the statement above, it is apparent that good training is required for the development of teaching abilities in order to become a creative and innovative teacher. English teachers found themselves teaching English to students, particularly those from rural areas, without proper English training. Teachers may struggle to properly implement teaching strategies if they simply have minimal training in theory and practice. Teachers also face challenges when applying the theory given during training to be applied to teaching and learning activities (Gardner, 1985: 376).

It has also been a great concern over the lack of parental support in English Language education in rural areas. It is believed that parents' educational background has an impact on their children's English Language education in rural schools. Many rural parents are not educated and therefore, they are not acquainted with the importance of learning English. Consequently, they are less

supportive towards English Language education. Low socioeconomic status among rural families has brought about poverty and financial difficulties, exacerbating the issue of English Language education among rural students. Parents are found to be financially burdened to provide their children with learning resources and educational materials which hinders the learning of English. Owing to poor economic condition in many rural families, many parents do not have enough time and motivation to supervise their children's learning due to prolonged hour of working. Other than that, the lack of parent-teacher communication has instigated parents to be unaware of their children's performance and attitude in schools (Cheng, Yunus, Mohamad, 2016: 226), making it hard to monitor their children's learning progress and behavior.

Conclusion

Since English is the foreign language to the people of Azerbaijan, students of our country find it complex task in their education. It is a matter of great sorrow that effective implementation of English curriculum is still far away. Especially in rural areas of Azerbaijan, English is yet the matter of fear for students. Urban students are comparatively adroit in English language because school teachers are skilled in English language teaching and they get support from parents and house tutors. But in rural areas, most of the parents are not educated and unable to spend money for private tutor. If teachers become qualified and conscious to teach students, it will be helpful for rural students to learn English effectively. To emancipate the fear of English language learning among the rural students and to achieve the curriculum goals and objectives, government and non-government organization, whose are trying to improve English language skills of area students, should take some short and long terms plan by considering existent condition of English language learning and the prevailing problems which are hindrances for implementing English curriculum.

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