

ASSESSING CONTENT KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH OF STUDENT TEACHERS IN TEACHER EDUCATION COLLEGES: A STATUS STUDY

Dr. Anjusha J.Gawande

Asst. Professor,
MIT World Peace University, Pune

ABSTRACT

Considering the importance of teacher education, the State of Maharashtra had formed a committee to review about teacher education. NCTE (2001) reported about it as "In year 1965, a committee on teacher education in Maharashtra state was set up by State Government to review the problems and pattern of teacher education in the state. The committee considered comprehensively different aspects of teacher education and made recommendations on Content and Method of school education, Examination and evaluation of teacher training courses & Curricula for Teacher Education"

In this context, the teaching of English teacher education is at large extend influenced by different components and subcomponents of English education system. These components are interrelated with each other. Here researcher has studied the curriculum factors of teacher Education Colleges to assess the level of English content knowledge of student-Teachers. The purpose of this paper was to identify the problems regarding English content and to provide suggestions thereof. The researcher prepared content knowledge test for Student-Teachers to assess their knowledge. To overcome the problems faced by student-Teachers regarding English communication, the researcher conducted the interview of Subject Experts of English Subject. By using descriptive survey method and status study. In this study, sample selected for this study was student-Teachers of English education from State of Maharashtra. After conducting the study, the researcher found very useful results in assessing level of content knowledge of student teachers. The English content knowledge of pupil teachers of English education was satisfactory. Ultimately this leads to the problems for teacher educators of English education.

Key Words: English, Content knowledge, Teacher Education, Student teacher

INTRODUCTION

Initially it was assumed that a graduate student has mastery over content therefore only method of teaching was taught in the B.Ed. course without content. However, with time this situation changed.

Waje and Patil (2004) clarified this as "This situation changed in 1978 after N.C.T.E. published, "Teacher Education curriculum - A Framework." In this framework for the first time in India the concept Content-cum methodology was started but as there were no guidelines for implementing the programme, the teachers could not understand the exact meaning of the concept. And because of this, in some of the universities, teacher training colleges started teaching the content separately and methods separately. The expected integration of content and method was not there in these activities.

In 1990 SBTE stated that the teacher training colleges should start workshops on CCM and the structure for the same was suggested."

In B.Ed. course a pupil teacher has to select two methods for detailed study. The selection of methods depends upon university rule. This course comprises of different schooling subjects like languages and social science etc. English Education (English methodology) aimed at how to teach English.

English Education:

The teaching of English education is comprised of different components and subcomponents of English education system. In the B.Ed. Curriculum, along with pedagogy, there was emphasis on the mastery over content knowledge of student teachers. In this study researcher has studied Curriculum factor.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study was an endeavour to study the various issues faced by the student-teachers of English. In order to identify those, the study aimed to investigate the status of the level of content knowledge of the student-teachers of English methodology in Marathi medium B.Ed. Colleges in Maharashtra State and the suggestions there of. The level of content knowledge was assessed by Content Knowledge Test also the suggestions were given by the Subject Experts to improve the content knowledge were documented.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Content Knowledge of English: Grammatical mastery over the content knowledge of English Education of student teachers of teacher education colleges.

Status study: Description of the present status of level of content knowledge of English Education student teachers from teacher education colleges.

Teacher Education College: Marathi Teacher training colleges in Maharashtra

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

Status study: The situation at a particular time during a process.

Content Knowledge of English: Generally refers to the facts, concepts, theories, and principles that are taught and learned in English subject

Teacher Education College: Refers to the policies, procedures, and provision designed to equip teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Despite various positive efforts in teacher education, many aspects are far from satisfactory like improper implementation of curriculum, academic, unavailability of modern instructional materials, inadequate library & internet facility, problems associated to practical work and content knowledge of pupil teachers at large. Methodology of teaching English and the literature of English, these two aspects are very imperative for teacher educator and pupil teachers too. Pupil teachers who do not have the requisite motivation and completed prior education in native language or language other than English, and especially from rural area, face problems while learning English education in B.Ed. colleges.

Generally most of the pupil teachers of B.Ed. come from different academic background. And very few pupil teachers of B.Ed. complete post-graduation. Moreover number of postgraduate pupil teachers in English is very less. In most of the Education colleges content knowledge is neglected to some extent. The emphasis is only given to teaching methodology; ultimately pupil teachers with poor content knowledge are not encouraged to enhance content knowledge.

Tapkeer (1986) expressed the significance of English content knowledge as “Unless B.Ed. has a sound background of English, he can’t and should not proceed further with the study of English methodology. Different educators and experts of English have pointed out the need of good content knowledge for the person who wishes to become teachers in English.”(p.15)

Most of the pupil teachers’ lack of content knowledge of English like sentence patterns, vocabulary, tenses, question formation, transformation parts of speech, articles, preposition, direct and indirect speech, active and passive voice, figures of speech, composition etc.

Speaking about teacher’s effectiveness, James H. Stronge (2018) emphasised that teacher must have mastery on content knowledge of his subject. A strong background in content knowledge assists teachers in planning of lessons that are sequential and interactive which also helps in construction of knowledge on students’ part. Many of the researches has been done on the positive relationship between teacher’s content knowledge and students’ achievement.

With insufficient content knowledge of the above components, pupil teachers often commit mistakes during speaking, interacting and especially while writing lesson note. The researcher herself is also a teacher educator of English education and in her experience; she too has come across various educational problems. Such problems could also have been faced by other teacher educators of English. Hence the researcher decided to investigate these problems.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

1. It has importance in exploring various educational problems of student-teachers of English by collecting information from sampling elements.
2. This study has identified the level of English content knowledge of student-teachers of English education. It is useful in understanding the need of special programmes for pupil teachers.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of content knowledge of the student-teachers of English education.
2. To suggest proper suggestions for the improvement of student-teachers of English education.

ASSUMPTIONS

Unless B.Ed. pupil teacher has a good content knowledge of English, he can’t and should not proceed further with the study of English methodology. (Tapkeer ,1986)

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the level of English content knowledge of student-teachers of B.Ed. colleges?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Method of Research: Descriptive research (quantitative) was adopted in the present study.

Status study and survey study was done in the present study. Singh and Bajpai (2008) elaborated it as, “Descriptive research (quantitative) uses quantitative methods to describe what is, describing, recording, analyzing, and interpreting conditions that exist. It involves some types of comparison or contrast and at tempts to discover relationships between existing non-manipulated variables. Some form of statistical analysis is used to describe the results of the study.”(p.52)

Similarly the researcher used descriptive (quantitative) research method for the present study to describe systematically the present situation of educational problems of English teacher educators by collecting data from sampling elements. The survey method was adopted for data collection from sampling elements i.e. teacher educators & pupil teachers of English education and principals with the help of various research tools like questionnaires, checklist, interview etc. Survey method is a systematic technique for gathering information from a sample of entities for the purpose of constructing quantitative representation of the attributes of a larger population. Particularly survey method is very useful when a researcher desires to collect on phenomena that

can't be directly observed. Consequently, large samples are feasible, making the results statistically significant even when analyzing multiple variables.

Population

Student-teachers of English education from B.Ed. colleges in Maharashtra State

Sample –

Student-teachers of English education were selected to be surveyed by stratified random method of Marathi medium B.Ed. colleges in the State of Maharashtra. The researcher applied stratified random sampling for selection. And next section explains stratified random sampling method briefly.

Sampling Method

Stratified Random Sampling method was chosen to collect significant data from targeted population in the present study. As stated earlier, the list of B.Ed. colleges was retrieved from the web portals of MKCL and Maharashtra Vinaanudan Adhyapak Mahavidyalaya Sansthalak Association. For the process of data collection, Pupil-teachers of English were classified as per the university their colleges were affiliated to and samples were collected from each university covering rural and urban area. The samples were collected equally from each stratum.

Sample Size

558 pupil teachers of English education selected for the study

Sample Characteristics: Regions of Maharashtra were kept in mind while selecting the Samples. Pune Region, Konkan Region, Vidarbha Region and Marathwada Region. Maximum number of pupil teachers of English education belonged to the rural area and had completed prior education in Marathi medium. Very few pupil teachers of English education were post graduates. However those who completed post-graduation were in English Literature.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS- For data collection the researcher had used, English content test & Interview as tools to collect information from targeted population. All these tools were selected relevant to the objectives of the research.

Research tools used in this study

Sr. No.	Tools	Information collected from	Objectives
1	English content Knowledge Test	Student-Teachers of English education	Objective no. 1
2	Interview	Subject Experts of English education	Objective no. 2

Interviews

According to the objectives of the study, the researcher conducted the interviews Subject Experts of English education to suggest their views to improve level of English content knowledge.

Content Test

English content test was designed for pupil teachers to evaluate the content knowledge of English language. Initially the researcher prepared the blue print for the test, and then according to the blue print the test was prepared for 25 marks and then questions were reviewed by the guide. The questions were divided into two parts i.e. grammar and composition. An idea behind this test was to assess the level of English content knowledge of pupil teachers.

DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS-

Mean and Standard Deviation -

These tools were used to find out,

1. The level of English content knowledge of pupil teachers of English education.
2. The researcher has made use of the following statistical tools in the present study

SCOPE: This study aimed to investigate the present status of the level of content knowledge of the pupil teachers of English methodology in Marathi medium B.Ed. Colleges in Maharashtra State and suggesting the recommendations there of.

LIMITATIONS

Conclusions of the present study were completely dependent on the responses given by sampling elements i.e. pupil teachers & teacher educators

DELIMITATIONS

1. This study was restricted to Marathi medium B.Ed. colleges in Maharashtra.
2. This study was restricted to pre-service teacher education.
3. The deemed universities and Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik were excluded in this research.
4. This study was conducted during 2007-2010.

Analysis of Content Knowledge Test Solved By the Student Teachers

Table English Content Knowledge Test solved by the Pupil Teachers of English methodology N=182

Sr. No	Areas of Content Knowledge Test	Total Marks	Marks obtained by Pupil Teachers		
			Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Percentage
1	Grammar Section	15	8.40	3.02	55.99 %
2	Composition Section	10	5.46	2.17	54.65 %
	Total	25	14.01	4.22	56.04

Very Poor	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
0-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25

Observation & Interpretation In the above table, pupil teachers could secure an average 56.04% of marks in the content knowledge test attended by them. One can understand from the above table that the pupil teachers had almost same performance in grammar (55.99%) and composition section (54.65%). The English content knowledge of pupil teachers of English education was just satisfactory. Because of this they faced difficulties during lesson note writing and delivering lessons. Eventually this leads to the problems for teacher educators of English education. To assess the level of content knowledge, researcher prepared the scale for it. According to the Scale, content knowledge of pupil teachers of English education was satisfactory.

ANALYSIS BASED ON SUBJECT EXPERTS INTERVIEW

Measures to improve the content knowledge for learning and teaching English language

Dr. Mrs. Jagtap Anupama had standpoint that opportunity need to be provided for reading and speaking for the development of English vocabulary of pupil teachers. As well she stressed use of IT to create interest.

Prof. Gurabe Manohar articulated that the teacher educators need to involve pupil teachers in English communication; and use simple English language by the teacher educators is expected initially and more use of teaching aids.

Prof. Rajput Kesarsingh was of same opinion as Dr. Mrs. Jagtap Anupama had; communication and listening skill have high importance in the process of learning English language.

Prof. Kesarkar Krishna articulated, the basic knowledge of structure should be specified and general discussion in English need to be held with the pupil teachers.

Mrs. Pawar Shobha admitted the importance for seminars and workshops for pupil teachers; as well competitions like essay writing, elocutions play huge role in creating interest in the mind of pupil teachers. As Essay writing improves the writing skills and writing is a good way to stimulate learning and critical thinking.

Dr. Rajhans S.S. echoed with Dr. Mrs. Pawar V.U's view of arranging the writing activities for pupil teachers and along with this referring book of grammar would transform better result from perspective of English language.

Dr. Mrs. Tidke Sangeeta urged for thinking in English and communicating in English and for ensuring this the teacher educators play crucial role to motivate pupil teachers.

Prof. Paithankar Sanjiwani believed that self-motivation is the best approach rather than the teacher educators motivating pupil teachers. She said that reading English literature and reading English newspaper would be fruitful for pupil teachers to get incline towards English language.

INTERPRETATION

Subject Experts have suggested the measures to improve the content knowledge of English like opportunity need to be provided for reading and speaking for the development of English vocabulary, Communication in English, group discussion, organizing competitions like essay writing, elocutions etc, reading of English literature and reading of English newspaper would be fruitful for pupil teachers.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Objective 1 - To assess the level of content knowledge of the pupil teachers of English methodology.

The English content knowledge of pupil teachers of English education was just satisfactory. Due to this they faced difficulties during lesson note writing and delivering lessons. Ultimately this leads to the problems for teacher educators of English education.

The above conclusions illustrate that pupil teachers of English education, those who would be tomorrow's English teachers had just satisfactory command on English content knowledge. The researcher thinks that measures to enhance the content knowledge of English of the pupil teachers are essential to build tomorrow's competent English teachers.

Objective 2: To suggest proper suggestions for the improvement of student-teachers of English education.

Experts those who were interviewed, believed that English content knowledge can be enhanced through computer assisted programs, innovative methods and techniques, use of modern technological instructional material, pair work, conducting healthy competition among pupil teachers.

Subject Experts have suggested the measures to improve the content knowledge of English.

1. Opportunity should be provided for reading and speaking for the development of English vocabulary.
2. Motivate student-teachers to Communicate in English
3. Conduct group discussions
4. Organize competitions like essay writing, elocutions etc, reading of English literature and reading of English newspaper would be fruitful for pupil teachers
5. Emphasis should be given on teaching grammar along with the teaching of methodology

CONCLUSION

The English content knowledge of student-teachers of English education was just satisfactory. Due to this they faced difficulties during lesson note writing and delivering lessons. They face problems in communicate in English with each other or while conducting lessons in the classroom.

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