

## **A Study to Explore Minimum Level of English Proficiency for ESL Teachers at Middle School**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of the study was to explore the minimum level of proficiency required to teach ESL classes at elementary school level. Study was conducted on one of the prestigious private educational institution. The study employed a single case study design. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. The researcher developed the semi structured interviews. The instrument was validated through experts' opinions and pilot study. Ethical considerations were also observed before the data collection by distributing the formal consent form among the participants. The data was transcribed in the first step followed by the process of coding. Similar codes were merged to develop the categories and themes and those themes were interpreted which were relevant to the objectives and research questions. The findings of the study revealed that although this school was facilitating the minimum level of proficiency however there are substantial gaps between the perceived level and the actual level practiced. It was suggested that further steps may be taken by the school administration to improve the acquisition of English language in ESL classes and to reduce the perceived and actual level of proficiency.

**Keywords:** Proficiency, Competency, Communicative Competence, Grammatical Competence, Instructional Strategies, Self-Reported Proficiency.

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## Introduction

English language is the language of two billion people around the world. It is official language in most of the countries. Many people use English proficiency as the measure of intelligence and confidence. It is strict reality of today's world that English proficiency is the basic requirement in education and career development. Countries like China, Japan, KSA, and Turkey did not give much importance to English language, but they have also come to realize that it's dire of survival in this dynamic era. This is the era of technology and research. Thus, English plays an important role in determination of information technology, education and research (Butler, 2004).

Teachers hold a significant role in life of students due to their exquisite expertise. It becomes stupendous responsibility for a teacher to build their students' knowledge in a way that their minds are sharpened, skills are enhanced and polished. The teacher is also responsible for moral and character building of students. Hence, one can't deny the importance and role of a teacher in a society. The teacher prepares future generation. They train students to not only deal with academics but also with daily challenges of life. This significance makes it essential that a teachers' efficacy is measured and determined. It becomes important to examine the skills and capabilities of a teacher to teach in an ESL class. It is important to analyze the perceived levels of language proficiency that teachers think are essential for effectiveness in learning (Nunan, 2003).

In order to examine teachers' English proficiency, the determinants of language proficiency or competence must be explained in a useful manner. Formal linguists see competence in a simple manner that is felicity and ease (Webster). On the other hand, sociolinguists such as Chomsky, view it as a broad thing that matters a lot. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) defines communicative competence as a combined result of knowledge and ability of using a language. Everston (1994) suggested a broader definition of communicative competence. They are of the view that grammatical competence is not the only thing that matters. A linguist also requires competence in sociolinguistics, strategies, and discourse.

Due to Globalization, the teachers think that they have many learners who need to learn English properly. Hence, the number of second language learners has increased quite drastically. The sad reality is that the mainstream teachers are not fully equipped with the skills that are required to teach students that have no background of English language. This brings down the students' ability to learn other academic skills such as analytical and critical thinking. (Richards, 2002). Thus, it has become essential to introduce a set of principles that can work as the base of linguistics for teaching English language learners. There are critics that have worked on this issue. They intended to

design a foundation that will train pre-service teachers to face all sorts of challenges by new language learners (Brown, 1994). Researches reveal that the ESL teachers have to prepare a lesson thoroughly due to mixed ability classes. They have to work really hard to take students of different backgrounds and deal with them in a way that they learn effectively. This also increased the expectations of parents from the teachers. Teachers have to respond to the challenges they face in their daily life through their own strategies. There is a need to work on a framework that provides teachers with solutions in challenging situations. A teacher-centered approach should be the focus with skilled teachers (William & Littlewood, 2007).

According to Jenelle (2010) researchers have worked less on the teachers' behavior towards issue of English-language learners in mainstream classroom. The researcher explored four main categories within teachers' behavior towards English language learners. These include ELL inclusion, coursework modification, professional development for working with ELLs, and perceptions of language and language learning. The results revealed positive attitude towards inclusion and coursework while the attitude towards the latter two was neutral.

Many English language teachers are concerned regarding their accountability with respect to students' progress as measured by standardized test. It is clear that ESL teachers need proper training that makes them capable of teaching language proficiency. Some researchers reveal that there are teaching methods to work with language learners. At present, on various points of teacher preparation, certification, and evaluation, there is less information on what should be the minimum level of efficacy required by ESL teachers to teach at Elementary level.

### **Significance of the Study**

Teachers' level of proficiency and performance and its relationship with students learning is a very critical and important topic to study because of the introduction of innovative 21 century skills in ESL teaching. In the institutions in which English is taught as a foreign language where teachers are not themselves capable of achieving that minimum proficiency, it's a matter of great concern for the institution; hence its performance might be adversely affected. This study would benefit the course designers of teacher training programs. After going through this study, they could design a course that could work on the competency according to the teachers' perception. The course would focus on the target skills that teachers think they need the most. The research would also benefit other researchers who want to research further in this particular topic.

## **Literature Review**

In order to understand the gaps between the teachers' present proficiency level and the level they perceive as important for English language teaching, this study focused on the gaps recognized by teachers. This is made possible through teacher self-assessment. Self-assessment and Self-reflection have become an interest of teachers and educationalists after the importance of teaching and education has increased in the past few decades. Teachers themselves consider self-assessment as important as any other assessment. Also, self-assessments are relatively effective and less time consuming. This is due to the constant emphasizing of experts on learners' autonomy (Patri, 2002).

Many researchers have pointed out that self-assessments have moderately acceptable correlation with other measures. On the other hand, there are studies that tell the coefficient of correlation varies widely. Many determinants appear to impact their validity which also includes self-assessors (Ross, 1998). Self-assessment was chosen for this research to observe teachers' perceived proficiency in English and the proficiency they think is essential for English teaching in the elementary level. The study of teachers' perception is focused in this research because this gives them an opportunity to self-reflect and avail opportunities through which they can increase language efficiency and competence. The main aim of the study was to determine the gap between what competencies actually is and what teachers perceive it as.

### **Proficiency as a Multiple Construct**

On the other hand, some other researchers argue that proficiency consists of multiple constructs (Oller, 1979, 1997). Many experts have tried to look for substitutes for division of proficiency on the basis of the four skills i.e listening, speaking, writing, and reading. At present, the concepts of proficiency include elements of language competence or context of a language. Bachman and Palmer (1996) attempted to cover language use along with the physiological and neurological processes that are included in use of language. Their model elaborates the composition of language competence. They are of the view that language competence includes organizational competence, pragmatic competence, illocutionary competence this also includes illocutionary competence sociolinguistic competence.

### **Self-Reflection for Teachers**

Practice of teaching is a crucial facet of teacher education that gives chances for teachers to self-reflect on their developed teaching traits and put them into action. This manner helps teacher to fulfill the gap between theory and practice. This could be done by stepping into the professional teaching surroundings by sharing, collaborating, and spending more time with other teachers of English language. Changes that are occurring

in the modern education system of the world has made the training and professionalism of teachers compulsory. That is, enhancement of teachers' professional competence. The main aim of modern education is to meet present and future needs of the individuals, society, and countries. This requires a training of multi-developed personality of a resident of the country who is able to adapt social changes. A teacher who is open-minded, and determined to meet the educational requirements is more likely to succeed in competition.

### **Professional Competence**

The term 'professional competence' was first used in 1990. Many researchers studied on this subject thoroughly such as Rudnev, Crookes, Freeman, and Stein. The concept of professional competence can help researchers and educationalist understand the set of professional and behavioral skills required by a language teacher. It wouldn't be wrong to state that the teachers who have good communication skills, high level teaching activities. Creative ideas, appropriate attitude towards students, and great knowledge are proved to be best in achievement of goals. The development of professional competence refers to creative individuality, educational innovation, adaptation to new changes in education, flexibility, and command over language.

### **Self-Reported Proficiency and Pedagogical Strategies of Language Teachers**

According to a study by Chacon (2005) along with management, engagement, and instructional strategies, there is a need of two other scales which need to be introduced i.e. self-reported proficiency and pedagogical strategies. Due to trends of globalization, many studies took place which studied the importance of keeping English as a compulsory subject throughout the school. This created the need of EFL teachers and hence gave rise to determining their efficacy as well.

Professional competence development is a vigorous procedure of collaboration and modernization of professional experience which leads to teachers' development. This refers to the development in competency, professional experience, engaging development, knowledge, self-reflection, and improvement. Professional competence development is dependent on environment. Hence, the environment around the teacher needs to be energetic and motivated. It should be learning oriented environment which encompasses the teacher.

Teachers always need motivation to move forward. The literature suggests that there have been studies on competence and professional development, but there is still need of some specific methodologies that helps teachers to deal with mix ability and mix ethnicity classrooms. Teachers need a broad spectrum when it comes to their professional competence. They need to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses. Lastly, this can't

be made possible without the help and support of seniors, and educationalists that are responsible for making education policies. The teachers need to be trained according to the classes they are going to teach. There must be teacher training courses which train teachers for the challenges they are facing every day in ESL classrooms.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of the research was to explore the minimum level of proficiency required to teach to ESL classes at Elementary school level. The nature of the present study was qualitative. The single case study research design was employed for the present study.

A formal consent was taken from the participants. The researcher analyzed the interview and observations data manually as it was a single case study. The interview data was transcribed into English and different codes were identified. Categories were formed merging the codes generated after the transcription of the data. These themes were identified in relation to teachers 'focus on minimum level of proficiency of ESL teacher to teach at middle school. Findings and results were drawn after keeping the focus on to purpose, objectives and research questions of the study.

### **Results**

#### **Demographic Characteristic**

The teachers selected for this study included male and female teachers. All of them were experienced in their field. One male and two female language teachers were interviewed.

Table 1

*Demographics of Language Teachers*

English Language Teachers	Gender	Position	Age	Qualification	Experience
LT1	Male	Grade 6 ELT	63	Masters	6years
LT2	Female	Grade 7 ELT	38	Masters Economics	9 years
LT3	Female	Grade 8 ELT	55	Masters (ELT)	20 years

LT1 was teaching grade 6, fully cooperated, he was comfortable when I observed him and he gave the interview with ease and comfort but he was unable to exactly figure out the strategies and activities for enhancing particular skill however, his speaking skills are quite polished as he had international exposure .He lived in England for about 10 years. The other language teacher teaching grade 6 refused to give observations even the researcher explained her the purpose of this research.

LT3 was teaching grade 8 fully cooperated when approached and observed by the researcher during class observations and semi structured interviews. The other language teacher teaching grade 8 was a newly appointed teacher who refused to be part of the research. She had her major in Global perspective. Semi structured interviews of three language teachers out of six language teachers of middle school and two education managers out of five working at middle school LGS Paragon were taken when this research took place. Language Teachers Interviews

### **Minimum Level of English Proficiency**

LT1 was of the opinion that teachers must be ESL trained as only speaking and writing English was not enough but how to teach middle school student was really important therefore teachers should be trained for that, a degree alone is not enough. At the time of admission students level of proficiency should be gauged through checking their skills. If a child met that level he should be brought into the system. In a group of mixed ability class where the number of students was 25 what would be the strategy which comes with training and experience a new teacher usually takes couple of weeks in the beginning of the session to figure out each student's level of proficiency. Through collaboration, he figured out their level and by looking at the improvement the students had shown over a year.

LT2 shared her views like, "I believe that the minimum level should not be less than the masters level in education because if you are not masters, a teacher is not able to teach efficiently, language teachers should be equipped with the basic skills of knowledge like they should know the language and they should also know how to teach that language and the ways, it could be through reading, it could be through writing, it could be observations and it could be through any other means through media. Skills and experience does matter more than the proficiency, you need to have the skill and the experience-the experience in a particular field, is very important. Proficiency comes with experience; if they are proficient enough to impart these skills and knowledge into their students then they become capable language teachers in a better way."

LT3, "Basically it's the dynamics of the language teachers who should be fully aware of the requirement of the student in the mixed ability group. Some are from the background which is strong enough, and they can easily understand the dynamics of the language and some are absolutely not aware, so they are incapable of attaining any working English therefore a teacher has to plan a lesson in a way that address both the levels. Generally, we have average and weaker students in the class. Some just need a little push, and then a probing is asked by the researcher.

LT3 said, “A teacher should be well equipped in the skills: Speaking skills, grammar language dynamics and of course vocabulary and grammar structure so she needs to be well equipped. Another probing question was asked by the researcher about the qualification requirement. Participant 3 opined that not only the degree would suffice if one wanted to be a skilled teacher as you couldn’t jump into the pool and then learn to swim, and the proficiency level school can offer for an assistant teacher to become a good language teacher but initially will look for the spoken skills. The one who has the command to turn out to be a good teacher as well but then there are some practical areas where they might not be practically equipped different school offer in service trainings and teacher should be enchained with the coordinator so she can always improve to come to the level required to teach ESL classes.

### **Students Level of Language Proficiency**

LT1 said, “I don’t usually assess the level of proficiency in my students, in my class there are 25 students with different level of English proficiency but my suggestion is that at the time of admission there must be a criteria to follow and it should be followed in true letter and spirit.”

LT2 expressed, “If you ask me to grade their proficiency because mostly the students that come to our school are not proficient enough and help them in the acquisition of all skills majority of the students at an average level. I can give credit to the one who can write well can, deliver their thoughts into writing and they must be aware of many of good vocabulary words and they are able to use it into the criteria that is a point that I look into a particular child that is proficient in writing can also speak well If they build their confidence .

LT3 replied, “Actually, we follow the Cambridge checkpoint assessment level, according to the given criteria and train them according to that. This is a relevant criteria and this could be the answer and here you give extra information which is not needed. When we have written test in front of us then there is no need for any other assessment for them. When I ask them to complete their work through route learning, we have mixed ability groups, we have mixed pedagogical strategies in the class. To write the gist, to write the summary and we train them to know the basis of all these techniques.”

### **Acquisition of Receptive Skills**

LT1 said, “What I do is, varies from class to class, I try to gauge the level of comprehension in the class, I explained stories and novels in two or three ways to check students comprehension level. I take their feedback to figure out who is at the better comprehension level in the class. Try to make sure everyone hears what I am saying to them. Going into more detail of what they are saying. Make sure that comparatively weaker one is listening.”



LT2 answered, “We know that some students do not practice reading at home so I give them the task of reading. Whatever we read in the class either one student stands up and read for the whole class the best thing the teacher can do is that to make them read in the class so that they know what is being taught to them so we make them read and answer the question themselves in the class, according to the given exercise. It could be a writing or reading is a must in the class, and it should be done by other means in which parents can play important role by making them read at home or by reading the bill boards, so I think that if we motivate them only few of them respond because reading habit should be developed at an early age. At this age it can't be developed, so parents should monitor them and sit with them to make their reading a habit. Some of the students are very bright because they make the efforts themselves in order to go beyond their level but schools has to pay their important role into it there are many rewarding experiences in which a weak student has tremendously improved himself . I have observed a really tremendous change into them which is really commendable, and I felt good about it because the results were not due to my efforts but the students’.

LT3 said, “I am flexible in my teaching methodologies, I change my strategy according to the need of the class, if I quote my current experience for example, when I go in a girl's section I teach above the level that I teach to boys because the boys are naughty, not focused, they tend to distract teachers, but girls are interactive, they respond and try to write in their own words, they are more responsible than boys. However, girls are focused and bring in their own interpretation too, so I taper down my strategies according to my needs, make suitable changes that are worth applying. I focus on their listening skills first, because whatever they hear they can interpret. This improves their written output, they do a lot of reading but actually they don't, they only flip the pages which tell me that they didn't in fact read the text, as they didn't comprehend it well.

### **Acquisition of Productive Skills**

LT1 answered, “I only speak in English and don't use any other language the books as personally I feel that if teachers persist it will happen, that we recommend to read to enhance their understanding of the language and suggest to them to watch movies and also animated movies, but basically any language that they listen, writing part come later but first comes the sounds and understanding, there is a lot of work to be done before they learn writing skills.

Collaboration has its limited benefits, I did three different experiments in that, comprehension, creativity and critical thinking comes at the end, as it's a higher order skill. First comes the communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking. Talk in English, fight in English, Grade 8 has critical thinking but we started inculcating these things at grade six too. I think it's a great step to come to middle school from primary school. They are struggling in the first few months. It's really challenging for the middle school teachers especially grade six teachers, when probed by the researcher, with experience each year teacher is improving.

LT 2 replied, "Writing and speaking you need to give them thought, and then you let them do their own work. I don't believe that a line should be given to them. One can only tell them how to elaborate their idea in a freeway and let them write on their own. Only the starting won't help because the stage and the level at which I am teaching, students should be writing on their own. I am teaching seven graders, till 6th grade vocabulary can be given to the students and by the time they should be competent in using proper vocabulary. I believe that vocabulary can be acquired by other means; through novels, and comprehension passages done in the classes.

LT2 said, "I try to develop their vocabulary and I encourage use of this vocabulary in their creative writings. When students are using a certain genre, they can link their creative writing with it .I have experienced that if I go beyond that point, students just copy or use the exact same idea which would not help them in developing their receptive skills."

LT3 said, "For polishing students" production skills, students listen to the teacher, they have the ability to store it in their repertoire. They can answer when asked verbally, but when it comes to writing skills independently, they lack skills. On probing, she said, "at middle school it is the most challenging for example if we are doing question answer from some literature work, one answer is given to them as a sample answer because they can use it as a reference. I give them the vocabulary and the character traits and then they are asked to write a paragraph about it, and I help them in composing it. Some really do well but still some are struggling, when I was correcting, I ask them to read and according to my feedback, they can correct their mistakes."

### **Challenges in Teaching English Language**

LT1 said, "Well! The basic problem they have is that students don't think in English as it's their second and sometimes 3rd language. They think in their mother tongue and then they translate it into other language. As we know English grammar is all muddled up as it is totally different from Urdu and Punjabi; the structure and grammar.

LT 2 answered, “There are a lot of language problems, and the language problems are that the English language is not their first and even their second language. Most of the parents are not well educated they can’t teach basic language skills to their children. When researcher asked the interviewee to specify these problems. She said, “As parents don’t know the language, it’s really difficult for them to teach their children. It’s a big challenge for us to teach them the language that they are unfamiliar with. So it’s the biggest challenge for the teachers. Their comprehension is weak so when we talk to them, we have to train them to comprehend well.’

LT3 said, “In language learning they are some common problems, nothing new and with `passage of time I learnt how to tackle such problems. When researcher asked her to specify such problems she said that when I come to the class for the first time when I make them read ,they don’t understand because their language is weak then participant elaborated her point of view, because the students have very non serious, casual attitude towards learning, Moreover students language is weak, spellings are weak, their structure of the sentence is weak so we have to work upon it and what distracts me most is that when I give them some structure to follow ,they don’t follow this shows that they are habitual for taking instruction, they are not trained enough to take instructions.

### **Role of the Parents in Language Acquisition**

LT 1 said, “Most of the parents said no, but of the concerned mothers as they take out time, they sit and learn ways to improve their child’s language learning, they want extra help or extra work for them. Good students who take A s, their mothers are caring, but the parents of middle lot of students, their parents are least concerned.”

LT 2 answered, “Parents can’t play any role in their acquisition, most of the parents are not aware of the language that we are teaching to them. We as teachers have to be really good in that we teach as parents do not know the language ,because it’s their second or sometimes third language even students have to pay a lot of attention in the acquisition of this language because they don’t know the language and their parents too, so teachers have to put in a lot of effort in it

LT3 told, “It depends - most of the parents in my opinion are not, they are actually playing their part because they simply induct the child in to the system and accept the teachers and school to teach their child right from the beginning. Home teaching is very important for them if they give them the foundation and then it is really take them from there. There are only few parents (hard to find) who really take interests into their studies according to our experience. It is always a triangle from which school can nourish them well, when asked about parents making their children do their homework.

**Activities to Develop Reading Skills**

LT1 said, "It's been a negative experience so far, with the concept of reading books, students switch on their brains, but when you read some interesting text from other source like newspaper and magazines." LT2 answered, "I suggest them to read books, some acted on it some did not, and ones who acted show a great deal of progress in their comprehension skills, the role of parents is really important in it."

LT3 told, "The part of the comprehension, I give them background, like why this topic has been chosen and what is special about this passage. Then I ask them relevant answers. I ask them to, do silent reading and then I read and discuss but sometime I don't read .I just ask them to read on their own to answer the question and when I give them feedback I tell them that these are your mistakes."

**Activities to Practice Writing Skills**

LT1 &LT2 replied, "There are no activities as such as writing comes with practice, you ask them to write." LT3 told, "This year I have changed the strategies because this year we have given them a lot of phrases and expressions, words because the students who we expect won't do a lot even they did well, there are certain students, moments where I myself is really surprised to see the progress, expressions and vocabulary, they have done wonders . Weaker students were motivated, they remembered and tried to use it in their expressions whether right or wrong, but he made an effort. On probing she shared an experience; there are certain cases in which I myself was really surprised, there was a new comer and initially when I checked his sessional exams, he didn't seem to be a good student, quiet, but he asked pertinent questions but he was very quiet. He started writing really well, he listens and made a pretty good story and came up with his ideas which were really heartening to know that my students tried."

**Activities to Practice Listening Skills**

LT1 said, "I pronounce particular words in the class and I read literature passages in the class to help them acquire correct pronunciation to my students. We make them watch movies to improve their listening skills." LT 2 expressed, "Through listening to the teacher, listening to the text, watching movies that are related to the topic given to them that can really help the students, a fun part for them, like watching English movies, in that way they learn about different accent too, as American accent is different from British accent, they are able to comprehend it and they would be able to communicate abroad –listening through media, watching movies of the books read in the class as we are watching them the movie of Tom Sawyer after the novel will be finished. We take them to cinema to watch movies; if they listen carefully they learn a lot from them."

LT 3 answered, “No, I don’t have audiovisual aids and I miss i.e. should have, it should be provided by the coordinator. We should make them listen to mimes so that they can infer from it, they just know simple answering questions but not the inference ones which is not their fault ,it’s the fault of the system. In 8th grade we are preparing them for O levels but in 7 and 6 grade there must be proper planning, as far as teachers are concerned they are doing well but this planning needs a lot of time so it is better to plan it in summer vacations .There is a lack of planning at administrative level. Or teachers should be given target to complete their planning and curriculum development in the vacations and let be very honest.

We should make a flexible plan and teacher should coordinate with each other so they can justify their teachings, this year we have a better lot than last year, on asked when a new teachers enters a system how they work, she said, hire in the beginning of the academic year so teachers should be at same pace with the experienced teacher too.”

### **Activities to Practice Speaking Skills**

LT1 said, “We do arrange speaking sessions for students through role play and through arranging declamation but unfortunately only the fluent students get the chance to speak in those sessions.” LT2 answered, “I believe that the students who can write have enough knowledge in them that if given chance to speak they can develop good speaking skills but we don’t usually focus on that, our focus is reading and writing.”

LT3 told, “Basically, We don’t have regular Oracy classes in here that I think we are lacking in, I ask them to read something and ask them to give a gist of that story. Reluctantly, hesitantly they express their views, they try though they were not complete but it is really heartening that they tried. They must be given a topic every fortnight to improve speaking skills. We can give them debatable topics but we have to come up with the written syllabus, my suggestion is to use library lesson for this, hire a more trained I mean ESL teacher should be hired as a librarian, I have a friend who is really a good ESL trained teacher who bring in a tremendous change into the speaking skills of the students.”

### **Assessment of Level of Proficiency in Students by Teachers**

LT1 said, “I don’t usually assess the level of proficiency in my students, in my class. There are 25 students with different level of English proficiency but my suggestion is that at the time of admission there must be a criteria to follow and it should be followed accordingly in true letter and spirit.” LT2 expressed, “If you ask me to grade their proficiency because most of the students who come to our school are not proficient enough and help them in the acquisition of all skills, majority of the students at an average level .I could give credit to the one who could write well can express their thought into writing and they must be aware of many of good vocabulary words so they

are able to use it according to the criteria given that is a point. I look into the particular child that is proficient in writing could also speak well if they build up their confidence because I believe that they had enough competency to write their ideas in words if they could write well it means they can speak well also but the only hindrance is their confidence. They must be shy, may be they were not proper about it but I mean that they had knowledge they should have skills and if we give them a chance to enhance their confidence they could express themselves well.”

LT3, “Actually, we follow the Cambridge checkpoint assessment level, according to the given criteria and train them according that this is a relevant criteria this could be the answer and here you give extra information which is not needed. When we have written tests, then there is no need for any other assessment for them .when I ask them to complete their work through rote learning. We have mixed ability groups, we have mixed pedagogical strategies in the class –to write gist, to write summary and we train them to know the basis of all these techniques.”

### **Teachers’ Trainings**

LT1 said, “This is what keeps me aware and moving, otherwise you lack behind, remain stagnant, have to refresh yourself to keep abreast, they are lot of material on the internet, I attended recently, advance level course from Cambridge, and the other one is the training on 21st century teaching skills by ITI .” LT2 answered, “I attended spelt and other courses for teaching language not many but few which really benefit me in my teaching.”

LT 3 told, “Yes, of course absolutely yes, right from the beginning 20 years back when I joined the school, they sent me for training which worked miraculously, overnight it changed my thinking –I made myself more productive and constructive which enlightened my students in a better way –my teaching pedagogical strategy. I attended ‘SPELT ‘and under it there are many umbrella terms, as far as I remember I attended 20 such training workshops.”

### **Findings and discussion**

There are Forty Five teachers in the middle School, but only six of them are teaching English language to six, seven, and eight classes .There are two language teachers for each level. However, the researcher interviewed three language teachers.

The discussion suggests that all teachers need basic knowledge of the forms of English and the different ways that language is used in school i-e the functions of academic languages-grammatical, semantic, syntactic and phonological competence.

It could thus be inferred from the above findings that proficiency in English language is required for all teachers. The findings in this research therefore agreed with the findings that proved in his work that competency in English significantly determines performances in intelligence and various skills including learners characteristics, linguistic factors, medium of instruction, context, and purpose of language acquisition.

Succinctly, it is true to opine that lack of proficiency in English language is one of the factors contributing to poor performance in academic field. The findings separately asserted that a lack of adequate mastery of English language (language of instruction) is a major problems relating to inadequate understanding of the teacher's speech (listening problem) that results from poor vocabulary and syntactic knowledge (note-taking problem), deficient language background and resulting in poor performance in their field.

Researcher found that there is substantial L2 interference because of which students could not follow the sentence structure of English language which language teachers also mentioned in their interviews. Vehemently, English language proficiency could go a long way in affecting students' academic performance for English language is the gateway to educational advancement.

Teachers who teach only English at elementary schools, including some who were specifically trained as English teachers and others who were substitute English teachers without certification. The ESL trained teachers rated their current proficiency levels higher on average than did the homeroom teachers. However, to conclude that special English teachers are better at teaching English than the untrained teachers who are unwarranted because English proficiency is only one aspect of a teacher's qualifications. Even teachers themselves perceived sizable gaps between their current proficiency levels and the minimum levels that they believe are necessary to implement current and desired level. As the goals and objectives of English education at the elementary school level, as well as the frequencies and types of English classes offered vary tremendously from school to school. It also varies in the school under study.

Swain (1995) has argued that trying to communicate in a second language requires a level of engagement with the language different for simple listening environment with minimum anxiety about performing and a second language is essential for ELLS to learn.

To be effective, today's teachers need a broad range of knowledge and skills, including deep content knowledge, knowledge of how children and adolescents learn in a variety of settings, skills for creating a classroom community that is supportive of learning for diverse students, knowledge about multiple forms of assessment, and the ability to reflect on practice (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). To be successful

with ELLS, however teachers need to draw on established principles of second language learning Brown and Lee (1994). Therefore, language cannot be separated from what is taught and learned in school for the lesson; a teacher, who has ELLS in his or her class is best equipped to teach them if he or she has knowledge of some key component of language.

Education differs from school to school and can be based on multiple factors, such as the availability of resources or other means of support, the initiative taken by motivated teachers, and pressures from the community served by the school. It is reasonable to assume that for the case elementary school teachers, regarding overall current proficiency levels. There are substantial perceived gap between the teachers' current and desired proficiency levels. Although the literature on second language learning is vast, we have distilled six principles that are highly relevant to teachers of ELLs. They are listed in Table 1, and we discuss them in turn below.

### **Level of Proficiency According to Language Teachers**

Teachers strongly believe that not only the degree in language taught is essential but the training to teach ESL classes must be the pre-requisite for teaching language classes, there was a dire need felt for Case school to strictly determine the level of proficiency at the time of admission and also follow it religiously so that all the students in the language class should fulfil the minimum level of language proficiency which would help teachers to teach effectively with minimum challenges in a mixed ability class.

Differentiated tasks should be planned and executed effectively in this way. A teacher should be well equipped of the requirement of the students in the mixed ability class, a teacher should be well equipped in spoken skills, grammatical structure, vocabulary, language dynamics, and teacher should be equipped with 21st century innovative skills to teach language effectively to bring in the higher order thinking skills in their learners.

### **Level of Proficiency as Practiced by the Language Teachers in their Classes**

Interestingly in the informed observations most of the things were planned and the classes were well managed but in uninformed observations some disruption was noted as observer had noticed that some students were looking out of the classes in instruction time which showed their indifference to learning.



Thus, It had been proved that the lessons were not well planned, and moreover the teachers were unable to motivate students to be focused in the classes. Hence, students lacked training for following instructions .All the teachers were not ESL trained and the teachers with masters in other subjects were teaching ESL classes and some with the degree in English language were teaching other subjects. The language teachers did not use audio visual aids in the classes to polish learners' skills in the acquisition of L2 effectively.

### **Six principles Highly Relevant to Teachers of ELLs**

- 1 Vocabulary development
- 2 Guided interaction-incorporating all four skills for language acquisition
- 3 Metacognition and authentic assessment
- 4 Direct teaching of concepts
- 5 To use real life examples in teaching
- 6 Use of visual graphics and technology

As the above discussion suggests, all teachers need basic knowledge of the forms of English and the different ways that language is used in schools (i.e. the functions of academic language) - structure and usage. Such knowledge gives them important tools for making the disciplines they teach accessible to their students-especially, those who are learning academic content (productive and receptive skills) in a second language.

### **Recommendations**

In light of the findings and discussion it would be suggested that:

1. It may be suggested that language teachers at the secondary and college levels develop their skills to the “advanced plus” level for listening, speaking, and reading skills and the “advanced” level for writing skills.
2. It would be suggested that administration may provide more systematic support for teachers to achieve and maintain the desired standard and competencies.
3. Output structured activities would be practiced through which teachers can address to differentiation effectively.
4. Course designers may work on effective and efficient training programs for language teachers.
5. Teachers can use digital technologies in their lesson to improve their teaching methodology and become reflective practitioners.

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