



Communication skills among prospective teachers: a need analysis for 21st Century university teachers in Islamabad, Pakistan

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Abstract:

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This study assessed the communication skills among prospective university teachers of the 21st Century. The model of communication skills given by Elizabeth (2009) was selected as a theoretical framework based on seven traits, i.e., building a relationship, opening the discussion, gathering information, understanding students' perspectives, sharing information, reaching an agreement, and providing a conclusion. The researchers used a quantitative approach and a comparative research design. The sample for this research was drawn using a stratified random sampling technique, focusing on a public sector National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad. The sample consisted of 60 teachers from NUML, who were selected randomly. The study assessed the female and male prospective teachers' communication skills. Data has been collected through classroom observations and teacher feedback. For the validity of the research tool, the researchers consulted experts. The findings of this study show that female teachers have better communication skills than male prospective teachers. This research may contribute valuable information for educational institutions seeking to improve teaching methodologies and enhance the overall quality of language education. Training should encompass the effective use of digital tools, online platforms, and multimedia resources to engage students and facilitate interactive learning experiences.

Keywords: Teacher skills, Communication skills, Prospective teachers, University teachers, Interactive learning, Classroom observation, Teacher feedback, Learning platforms.

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1. Introduction

The twenty-first century is the age of literacy and education. As a result, the world has become more difficult, and we live in what is known as the information era. Consequently, the communication domain continues to adopt an infinite perspective, making us think that it is hard to imagine a world in which communication does not exist. Every topic has a connection to the communication's multidisciplinary viewpoint. As such, the literature contains a multitude of explanations with several collective components. As stated by Nural and MacLean (2017). "Sharing emotions or opinions between two or more persons and rendering their meanings common" is what it is defined as. According to Cenani and Cagdas (2016), dialogue among individuals can be characterized as communication. It takes a lot of effort and time to interact. Only by entirely understanding these procedures and developing one's skills would professional communication be possible. According to this viewpoint, the talents that the speaker must influence to establish good communication are referred to as communication skills (Iyamu & Iseguan, 2019).

Therefore, teachers must know how to use interactive communication in the most efficient way to help each student create, organize, and communicate their ideas creatively (Hughes, 2015). Furthermore, when teaching the curriculum, a teacher's communication skills will be optimal for the students, leading to the development of good qualities, according to Yondem and Bicak (2018). But when it comes to instructors, it becomes much more crucial to communicate. In the sphere of education, communication is the cornerstone of efficient teaching methods. Stated differently, the foundation for successful teaching is a teacher's communicative proficiency and education. A key component of students' learning in educational processes is effective teacher communication. A teacher arranges the social and physical environment of the classroom to foster cooperative communication and behavioral change. In a situation like this, effective communication is crucial to the teacher's training. There has been some research on the communication abilities of aspiring teachers in literature (Tozoglu & Bayraktar, 2014; Khalil et al., 2022), but these studies only look at communication skills from one angle. This paper, however, looks at every aspect of communication abilities for aspiring teachers. This study is anticipated to provide a valuable contribution to the field, particularly perspective-based teacher preparation programs. Furthermore, the results of this study will clarify the teacher preparation programs in the universities.

The importance of communication between teachers and students has been shown in numerous studies (Robinson, 2020), and the results of this communication affect the processes of learning. Research has shown that teachers' communication abilities are more successful in teaching-learning growth than their general presentation skills (Van Dalen et al., 1999). Furthermore, education and learning are greatly impacted by a teacher's communication abilities (Iyamu & Iseguan, 2019). Collaboration between teachers and students as well as group communication are two components of representation-efficient education (Kane et al., 2004). According to Kucuksuleymanoglu (2014), communication is the process of exchanging ideas, feelings, and skills to bring about a change in conduct. Every act of communication involves a behavior change.

Students can develop the skills they'll need for further education, the workforce, and life in general through instruction in the twenty-first century (Minaya, 2017). Students will be more engaged in the learning process and graduate from school more equipped to thrive in the

expanding global economy if 21st-century skills are taught in the classroom (Girlando, 2013). For kids to succeed, they need to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative skills. To provide future young adults with these abilities and a better life after high school, education as a whole must work to prepare them (Symonds et al., 2011).

1.1. Rational of the study

Educators must possess exceptional communication skills because they always simplify and make things easier to understand. Effective communication is essential for knowledge transfer, classroom management, and relationships with students. The teacher has to use a range of conceptual teaching techniques when instructing the students. To impart the following abilities and skills to their students, teachers must cultivate communication skills that motivate kids to teach (Bee & Gardner, 2012).

Teachers, business executives, and politicians have come to realize in recent years that students need 21st-century skills to succeed in today's world (Rotherham & Willingham, 2009). Without these skills, students will face challenges in their future educational and professional endeavors (Girland, 2013). To succeed as adults in a changing global culture, high school students need to comprehend 21st-century abilities (Kim et al., 2017).

Numerous studies support the need for communication between educators and students (Robinson, 1980), and the outcomes of such communication have an impact on the processes involved in education. Van Dalen et al. (1999) found that for teaching-learning processes, teachers' communication abilities outperform their overall presentation skills. Furthermore, a teacher's ability to communicate is a critical component of both teaching and learning effectively (Iyamu & Iseguan, 2009). Teacher-student interaction and teacher-group communication are two aspects of effective education (Kane et al., 2004). According to Kucuksuleymanoglu (2014), communication is the process of exchanging knowledge, feelings, ideas, abilities, and attitudes to modify behavior.

Effective communication skills are essential for teachers to support their students and accomplish their professional objectives. Technicality is not what determines the success of teaching; rather, it is the teacher's approach to instructing the students. For them to understand their students well and to prevent issues when they are learning from their lectures, teachers must communicate well with their students. Teachers must first understand themselves before they can effectively instruct students. By filling a major research vacuum, the study adds to the body of knowledge on language instruction in academia. The results could advance knowledge in the field by providing a broader grasp of the connection between creative teaching strategies and communication abilities. The study seeks to significantly advance the scholarly conversation on language as well.

1.2. Statement of the problem

This study aimed to determine the communication skills of aspiring teachers. Teachers are always looking for new and creative ways to improve pupils' language skills. Although research on the effects of creative techniques on the language ability of aspiring teachers is lacking, the literature nevertheless highlights the significance of these approaches. The purpose of this study is to better understand and explore the effectiveness of creative teaching strategies in

enhancing the communication abilities of aspiring NUML instructors. For kids to learn, a teacher needs to be able to communicate effectively. Effective communication skills are essential for teachers to support their students and accomplish their professional objectives. The approach a teacher uses when instructing is more important to the success of their lessons than any element. Given the significance of effective communication, the researcher chose this field of inquiry. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the communication abilities of aspiring teachers.

1.3. Significance of the study

This study would be helpful to educators, curriculum designers, teachers, teachers' trainers, and students. This study is notable because it has the potential to impact teacher preparation programs, policy formation, and instructional practices. By attending to the communication needs of 21st-century instructors, the research aims to improve the quality of education by preparing teachers who can navigate the intricacies of contemporary classrooms.

In the end, the study's emphasis on teachers' language proficiency may improve the learning outcomes for students. Improved communication abilities in teachers can lead to improved education, more effective communication, and a more favorable learning environment, all of which can benefit students' language development.

Higher education institutions host a variety of seminars, extracurricular events, conversations, and debates that support the development of effective communication skills in student teachers. The curriculum developer can use this study's findings to include exercises in the curriculum that assist students in strengthening their communication abilities.

The research findings can be used by educational institutions to customize professional development courses for language teachers. This entails training sessions, conferences, and seminars to provide educators with efficient, research-based teaching techniques so they may eventually encourage ongoing development of their student's language skills.

1.4. Research objectives

The research objectives of the study are a) to assess the communication skills of prospective teachers at higher education levels; and b) to compare the communication skills of prospective teachers based on gender at higher education level.

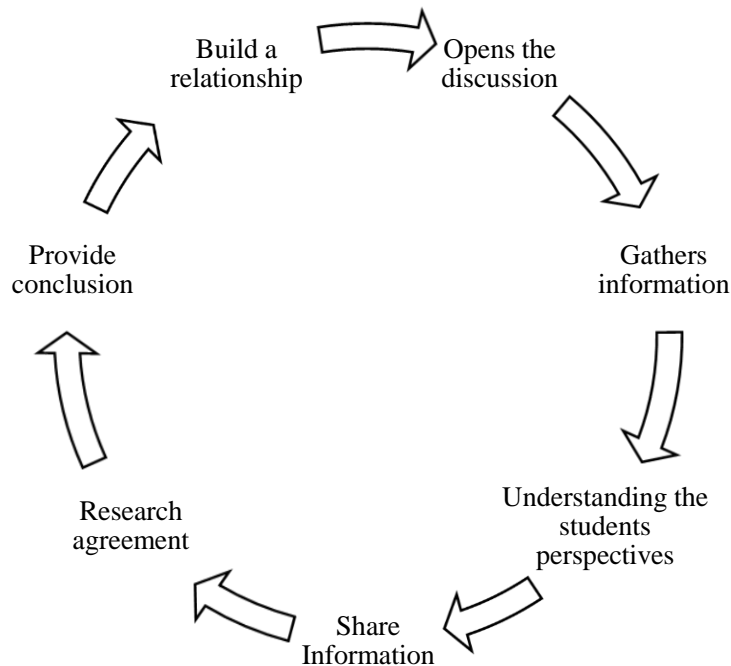
1.5. Null Hypotheses

The null hypothesis was tested in this study: H_0 1 There is no statistically significant difference in communication skills among prospective teachers at the Higher Education level.

1.6. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework was based on the communication skills model given by (Elizabeth, 2009). There were seven dimensions of communication skills: build a relationship, opens the discussion, gather information, understanding the student's perspectives, share information, research agreement, and provide conclusion.

Figure 1.1: Theoretical framework of communication skills



Source: Elizabeth (2009)

2. Literature review

The 21st century is the era of information and technology. Accordingly, the current era is referred to as the "information age" (Karadag & Caliskan, 2009). The features of our environment and the periods we live in have led to an increase in the complexity of the characteristics related to classification. As a result, the area of communication continues to embrace an infinite perspective, such as the one that leads us to conclude that it is impossible to envision a world without communication (Erkan & Avci, 2014). Every field can relate to the trans-disciplinary concept of communication. As a result, the literature contains a wide variety of definitions with numerous commonalities (Tozoglu & Bayraktar, 2014). "The method of sharing emotions or opinions between two or more persons and rendering their significance" is the definition of communication.

Studies demonstrate how crucial it is for teachers and students to communicate with one another (Robinson, 2020), and how this communication affects the learning processes. As stated by the investigators (Van Dalen et al., 1999). In the teaching-learning process, teachers' communication skills outperform their overall presentation abilities. Furthermore, successful teaching and learning are influenced by a teacher's communication skills (Iyamu & Iseguan, 2009). Effective education involves communication between teachers and between teachers and students (Kane et al., 2004).

Kucuksuleymanoglu. (2014) defines communication as the act of sharing thoughts, feelings, information, perspectives, attitudes, and skills to influence behavior, whether consciously or unconsciously. Every communicative act causes a behavior change. As a result, educators know how to have the most effective one-on-one interactions with students through interpersonal communication (Hughes, 2005), which helps them formulate, arrange, and

communicate their ideas creatively. Apart from imparting knowledge outlined in the curriculum, teachers' effective communication abilities serve as an example for their students, fostering the growth of desirable character traits (Yondem & Bicak, 2008). However, the need for communication skills becomes much greater when it comes to teachers.

Cagdas (2006) points out that not every discussion between two people qualifies as communication. It takes a lot of effort and time to communicate. The only way to use communication processes effectively is to gain a proper comprehension of them and develop your skills. According to Iyamu and Iseguan (2009), communication skills here relate to the capacities that the speaker must manage to establish successful communication.

Effective communication is essential to the development of learning-teaching processes in the field of education. Put another way, the foundation of effective teaching is the teacher's communication skills and training. For pupils to learn, effective teacher communication during instructional procedures is essential. A teacher sets up the classroom's social and physical environment in a cooperative communication system to effect behavioral change. In this situation, teaching instructors to communicate effectively is crucial. Some research on the communication abilities of aspiring teachers has been published in the literature (Yalman & Hamidi, 2014). However, this study only looks at one aspect of communication proficiency. This research, however, looks at every aspect of communication competency for aspiring teachers. It is anticipated that this research will make a significant contribution to the field, particularly to holistically oriented teacher preparation programs. Furthermore, the results of this study will provide insight into teacher preparation. Additionally, the study's findings will provide educators with a comprehensive understanding.

In the classroom, teachers give students more directions verbally. Students' inability to learn and advance academically may be the result of teachers with inadequate communication abilities. The ability of students to discern between right and wrong is contingent upon the communication strategies that teachers employ in the classroom (Morreale et al., 2000). Effective communication reduces the possibility of hurt feelings arising throughout the teaching process. During the lecture, the student needs to pay close attention to their teachers to improve their learning. Loss (2000) advised educators to communicate in an intelligible and unambiguous manner.

According to McCarthy and Carter (2020), the transmission of a message involving a shared understanding between the contexts in which the conversation takes place is referred to as communication skills. In addition to reading and writing, communication skills also include speaking and listening. A teacher must possess advanced knowledge in each of these areas to Proficiency in communication is an essential requirement for both students' academic and professional success in the workplace.

Effective communication requires both mental and physical fortitude to address the other person and effectively deliver one's message. When we convey the information understandably and clearly, the communication process is successful. A communicator must be able to express and receive their message in a variety of contexts. Effective communication is widely regarded as a crucial instrument for success in the teaching profession wide range of abilities are required of both teachers and good instruction. According to a study by Ehindero and Ajibade (2019), a teacher needs to have strong communication skills to teach effectively. These abilities include

preserving personality, managing the classroom well, and keeping up with current information. Without these fundamental teaching abilities, no one can instruct students effectively.

The method one uses to share one's opinions with others is called communication. Effective communication skills are essential for teachers to ensure that their pupils are learning effectively. Sang (2022), effective communication skills are essential for teachers to support their students and accomplish their professional objectives. Technicality is not what determines how effective a teacher is; rather, it is the approach they take with their students. For them to understand their students well and to prevent issues when they are learning from their lectures, teachers must communicate well with their students. Teachers must also learn for themselves before they can instruct students.

3. Methodology

The study's methodology covers the following topics: population, sampling strategy, sample size, research equipment, data collecting, and data analysis. The present study employed a quantitative technique, which is a research methodology that depends on the gathering and examination of numerical data to derive findings and inferences on a phenomenon of interest. This method's focus is on measurement, statistical analysis, and the collection of data using structured tools like experiments, surveys, and pre-existing databases define it.

3.1. Research design

The researcher used Comparative Research design, a comparative research design to determine the differences between the two groups using numerical data. According to Cantrell et al. (2011), this is also appropriate in studies that involve the description of differences between groups without the use of any manipulation techniques in research. Comparative analyses were carried out to find whether there is a notable variation in their communication skills scores if grouped based on their gender, socio-economic status, and program.

3.2. Delimitation

Due to limited time and resources, the study was delimited. This study focuses exclusively on public universities in Islamabad city, and the findings may not be generalized to private institutions or universities in other regions. The research study was conducted on students of BS level. The study was conducted on prospective teachers of the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, Pakistan.

3.3. Population

The enrolled learners of future instructors served as the research population in 2022 for Bachelor of Science Education at the National University of Modern Languages Islamabad. The total number of students enrolled in Bachelor of Science in Education was 60.

3.4. Sampling technique

The researchers used a stratified random sampling technique, which allows researchers to obtain a sample population that best represents the entire population being studied.

3.5. Sample size

A Stratified random sampling technique was used to pick the study's sample, which consisted of 60 selected instructors from Islamabad City's public universities. Only NUML was included in the sample.

3.6. Instrumentation

The researcher created an instrument to meet the study's goals. It was an observation sheet, the researcher independently observed the prospective teachers at the National University of Modern Languages Islamabad. The researcher finalized the tool after the experts' opinions.

3.7. Data collection

A five-point Likert scale observation form for prospective teachers was used to gather study data. The researchers personally observed the university's prospective lecturers to gather data.

3.8. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to evaluate the data that the researcher had obtained. The Independent Sample T-test method, percentages, and scores were used in the collection, tabulation, and analysis of the data. The researcher utilized SPSS version 16 software to examine the information gathered.

4. Results and findings

The data was collected to assess the communication skills of prospective teachers at higher education levels. Table 1 indicates the level of communication skills of prospective teachers, these levels are categorized into three categories Low, Moderate, and High. Scores from 35-81 was named as Low, scores from 82-127 were named as Moderate, and scores from 128-140 were named as High. Results show that the majority of prospective teachers fell in the High level (71.3%). (28.7%) fell in Moderate and no prospective teachers fell in Low level of communication skills.

Table 1: Communication Skills of Prospective Teachers (n=60)

Sr. No.	Score	Level of communication skills	N	Percentage
1.	35-81	Low	-	-
2.	82-127	Moderate	20	28.7%
3.	128-140	High	36	71.3%

Data was also collected to compare the communication skills of prospective teachers based on gender at higher education levels. Table 2 revealed that the communication skills t value (6.87) was found to be statistically significant at the 0.00 level. There, the mean score for aspiring female teachers was (100.43), whereas the mean score for male teachers was (47.57). Which held that there would be no statistically significant variation in communication skills between higher-level prospective instructors, the null hypothesis was not accepted.

Table 2: Communication skills of prospective teachers on a gender basis

Variables	Groups	n	Means	T	df	Sig.
Communication skills	Female	28	100.43	6.87	54	0.00
	Male	28	47.57			

P<0.00

Communication skills among prospective teachers: a need analysis for 21st Century university teachers was the target of the research study. The initial goal was to evaluate the higher education candidates' communication skills as potential teachers. It was discovered that the majority of aspiring educators possess excellent communication abilities. The study by Tutkun (2015), which found that prospective teachers' communication abilities were average, supports this conclusion. Strong communicators can assist individuals in strengthening their ability to manage conflict, coordinate social interactions, share responsibilities, identify proper behavior, cope with inappropriate behavior, and communicate more effectively with others (Bar-On, 2017). Comparing the gender-based communication skills of aspiring teachers at higher education levels was the study's second goal. When compared to male teachers, the mean score of aspiring male teachers of females was higher. According to the findings of Malik & Hina's (2012) study, prospective college and university professors were aware of the importance of communication skills. According to the Jayanchitra (2020) research, the majority of teachers are still not very aware of life skills. Therefore, it is essential to incorporate courses like these into teacher education programs that can aid in enhancing teachers' life skills in general and their communication abilities in particular.

6. Conclusion

To assess the communication skills of prospective teachers at higher education levels; most prospective teachers fell in the high level (71.3%) and 28.7% fell in moderate and no prospective teachers fell in Low level of communication skills. To compare the communication skills of prospective teachers based on gender at higher education levels, it is concluded that the mean score of Females was (100.43) and the Mean score was (47.57) the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference in communication skills among prospective teachers at Higher Education levels was rejected. As communication skills are essential to effective teaching, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on teacher education. The findings suggest a gender-based difference in communication skills among prospective teachers, highlighting the importance of tailored training programs to address specific needs. Ultimately, the research aims to contribute to the improvement of teaching methodologies and the overall quality of language education at institutions. Recommendations of the study are:

- Teacher education programs should incorporate modules to enhance prospective teachers' technological communication skills.
- Training should encompass the effective use of digital tools, online platforms, and multimedia resources to engage students and facilitate interactive learning experiences.
- To train future teachers to connect and collaborate in team settings and to improve their communication skills, educators can also assign group assignments to them.
- The university should hold seminars and workshops and ensure prospective teachers can attend, as this is the greatest way to hone their communication abilities.

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