

Language Planning in Higher Education Issues of Access and Equity

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Abstract

Pakistan as a multilingual country faces numerous problems in language planning in higher education. As educational standards in higher education decline, there are concerns about student difficulties in English and lack of required materials in Urdu, The research reported here is a nation wide survey of 2136 students, 121 Subject and English teachers of public and private sector colleges and universities from all the capital cities of Pakistan, as well as 63 parents who responded to the questionnaire. The survey examines the learner's background, attitudes to languages and motivational orientation, availability and quality of materials in different mediums, learner difficulties in English, provision of English support programmes, and language outcomes. Results point to the significant differences between private sector and public sector students in terms of socio-economic status, and other variables. The study recommends that public sector students be provided more state support by adopting an 'English for all policy', and strengthening the English programmes through a revision of courses, development of materials, and training of teachers so as to meet the students' learning and target needs.

Introduction

A brief analysis of the present language situation and a historical perspective indicates that the language policy issue in higher education in Pakistan has not been adequately addressed by the various education commissions set up by different governments to look into the problems being faced by students and teachers in higher education. In all Educational Policies and Reports of Education Commissions and Committees set up in this regard (1957-1998), the official policy with regard to language has been to maintain English as the medium of instruction in Higher Education after the country's independence in 1947. This policy is seen as an interim arrangement. The long-term language policy as laid down in all the Reports of Educational Policies as well as Education Commissions and Committees has been throughout to introduce Urdu as the official medium of instruction in Higher

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Education once teaching materials have been developed in the national language. Although Urdu was declared the official medium of instruction for schooling (class 1-12) in the public sector soon after the country's independence, the period assigned to the transfer from English medium to Urdu medium in higher education has varied in various reports, that is fifteen years in the 1950s (Sharif Commission, 1959) and five to seven years in the 1970s (University Grants Commission, 1982). Despite endorsement of this policy by every regime, it has been generally observed by students, teachers and parents as well as other stakeholders that the problems regarding learners' language difficulties in the English medium or developing sufficient and quality materials in Urdu for higher education have not been given adequate attention. The Report of the Education Sector Reforms (2001) and the Task Force on Higher Education (2002) set up by General Musharraf have also not addressed the issue of language policy in higher education.

The question that the present language policy poses is whether Pakistani students involved in higher education receive sufficient linguistic support in Urdu, English, or their mother tongue. This question is a complex one and has to be addressed by not only examining the present language situation in higher education in Pakistan but also against the backdrop of the dilemma that faces Pakistan like other former British colonies, which is whether to promote its national language (Urdu) for ideological purposes, or English in keeping with the demands of the emerging global market where English is seen as a tool of progress and success. The significance of the learner's mother tongue in imparting education especially in the initial years of schooling is also an important factor that cannot be put aside. The choice of a language to be the medium of instruction or a language to be studied is a complex matter. It involves various factors including the aims of the language planners, language needs of learners, parental and teachers' attitudes. In addition, there are practical factors involved, like available economic resources to implement the policy in terms of training of teachers, as well as development of materials in the language so selected. One major problem is the lack of research in the areas of language planning in education in Pakistan. Although there have been a few sociolinguistic surveys involving schooling in Pakistan (Mansoor, 1993; Rahman, 2002), these have been limited to a few institutions or a particular region.

Higher Education in Pakistan

Pakistan with a geographical area of 79.61 million hectares (PST 1999) and a population of 137.5 million (*Economic Survey* 1999-2000) is one of the largest Muslim countries in the world. Almost one third (32.6%) of the population lives below the poverty line (*Economic Survey*, 1999-2000). The

situation is further compounded by the low literacy rate of the country and poor educational standards. The literacy rate in 1999-2000 was estimated at 47.1 percent with 59 % males and 35.4 % females (*Economic Survey 1999-2000*). In higher education (which includes undergraduate and postgraduate studies) the participation rate is a mere 3% as compared to the 50% participation rate in the advanced countries (PST; 1999). The present government of General Musharraf is also attaching a great deal of importance to higher education as seen in the fact that higher education has been allocated 24% of all funds dedicated to the education sector in the ten- year period (Planning Commission *Ten Year Perspective Development Plan, 2001-2011*).

According to the *Economic Survey (1999-2000)*, there are over 789 Science and Arts colleges with an enrollment of 796,000 students working throughout the country. In university education, (here are 27 universities in the public and 16 in the private sector (the numbers have increased in 2002). During the year 1996-1997, the total enrollment in the public universities was 101,308, which is 20% of the total enrollments in higher education. Enrollment in the private universities was 4,910, which was 4.62% of the total university enrollment. A crisis in the educational system of Pakistan is demonstrated by the high rate of failure of students in examinations in the intermediate, graduate and postgraduate levels. Hoodbhoy (1998) laments the fast expansion of universities without paying enough attention to academic quality, high standards, modern methods of teaching and learning, as well as academic freedom or academic ethics.

English Language Teaching

According to Abbas (1998) despite the massive inputs into the teaching of English, the national results are abysmally poor. At the college level, the pass percentage is barely 18-20% and since English is a compulsory subject, failure in English means failure in the entire University examination. At the secondary level, the ratios are almost the same. Abbas (1998) attributes the failure in English examinations mainly to flawed pedagogy and material design and concludes that perhaps the teaching of English is not necessary for all levels of the population. In academic institutions in Pakistan, English is a compulsory language from class VI to BA in all schools, the exception being Sindh and Punjab, where English is compulsory from class 1. This policy is already being implemented and recently the N.W.F.P. government has also announced the introduction of English as a compulsory subject from class 1. At present an emerging graduate has studied English for at least nine years. The importance of English is apparent from the fact that English is a compulsory subject at the graduate level and Urdu is not. According to Malik (1996:12) the weak proficiency of emerging graduates has

led to a lowering of standards of performance at the graduate and postgraduate and equivalent levels where English is the official medium of instruction and assessment. Malik (1996:15) also points out that the “high rate of failure affects students in two ways: it destroys their opportunities for white collared jobs in the country and also destroys their morale”.

The Status and Role of English

The spread of English language in the twentieth century has been phenomenal. The number of speakers in English has increased ten fold since 1900 and a rough estimate tells us that the number of speakers is between 700 million to one billion (Pennycook, 1994). The rise of English has been a matter of much debate in sociolinguistic circles. It is estimated that within a decade or so, the number of people who speak English as a Second Language will exceed the number of native speakers (Graddol, 1997). The full implications of this spread of English in the field of education is best understood in terms of second or foreign language instruction. Research into English in primary and secondary education and the use of English as a medium of instruction as well as the teaching of English as an additional language shows that there is little doubt that at present there is a great demand for English language instruction, and this demand will continue to grow in the future (UNESCO *Statistical Year Book*, 1974). Graddol (1997) also suggests that the highest number of courses offered in second or foreign languages around the world are in English. In many parts of the world, English is regarded as the language of power, success, and prestige. In many countries English has become implicated in social and economic mechanisms that structure inequality, linking poverty not only with region, class, gender and ethnicity but also with access to the lingua franca of the global elite - English. In post-colonial countries like India and Pakistan, English medium schools provide one of the mechanisms of distributing social and economic power. Parents and children in these countries often see English-medium education as a means to economic success. It is also argued that where teachers themselves are not fully proficient in the English language and are not aware of the full implications of teaching English as a second language, there is a danger of students being condemned to a second rate education.

Language Attitudes and Motivation

Research on attitudes and motivation (Ryan in Gardner, 1979) has mainly focused on two important areas that include; 1) the effects of language attitudes to second language acquisition; and 2) the effects of second language acquisition on attitudes. Most of the research makes a contrast between integrative and instrumental orientations. An integrative orientation refers to an interest in learning a second language in order to facilitate interaction with

the other language community. An instrumental orientation, on the other hand, focuses on the utilitarian aspects of learning a language like a means to "higher education" or "a good job", Paulston in Spolsky (1998) points out that the major linguistic consequence of ethnic groups in prolonged contact within one nation is language shift of the subordinate group to the language of the dominant group. Though there is little research data to identify the kinds of incentives, the two major ones are: 1) economic advantages, and 2) social prestige. In Brudner's terms (1972), jobs select language-learning strategies that whenever there are jobs available that demand knowledge of a certain language, people will learn it.

English Language Programmes

An issue of central concern for educationists these days is that if English language learning is so much in demand presently then what would be the best courses incorporating the most updated approaches and methods to teach English, keeping in view the underlying socio-political aspects. What is required is also an understanding of the relationship between language proficiency and academic achievement as well as what should be the exit criteria of ESL/ EFL programmes. A key problem in the effective teaching of English in schools internationally is that of teacher supply. As Graddol (1997) points out, an important educational trend world- wide is the teaching of a growing number of courses in universities through the medium of English. There is a growing need to teach some subjects especially Science in English rather than the national language so as to access updated text- books and research articles. In addition, the influx of foreign students to the first world for higher education through the system of "distance education" courses from "mega universities" such as the British Open University and "virtual universities" are leading to a rapid rise in teaching courses in the English medium.

The Study

The study was designed so that it would focus on some of the key areas in language planning and language education. Both approaches namely quantitative and qualitative were considered to examine which would be more suitable for the research study and it was seen that it was more helpful to use a 'combined approach' suggested by Robson (1993), since the main purpose was not only to find out how many numbers and percentages of respondents held the same or different attitudes, values, opinions and beliefs, but also the reasons for this. In this study Language Education in Pakistan was the CASE and the methods of data collection were: 1) questionnaire survey, 2) interviews, and 3) documentary analysis. The present research was designed to be a "real world enquiry" mainly concerned with contributing to both language policy

and practice in higher education in Pakistan. Our concern in this article is with the first source. The 'sociolinguistic survey', suggested by Kaplan and Baldauf (1997:110) was seen as a good model to adopt in this regard.

The Questionnaire

Four types of data collecting instruments were developed for conducting the survey. These included: a) three structured survey questionnaires divided on the basis of the following populations: students, parents and teachers, b) one English language test to gauge the English language proficiency of students and teachers. The research questions in our study revolved around collecting information on: the background of learners (demographic and language), facilities in English, attitudes to languages in education and motivational orientation, parental support for learning English, availability and quality of materials in different mediums, learner's language difficulties in English, English language support programmes, English language competency of subject and English teachers, and language outcomes. The views, attitudes, beliefs and opinions of students, parents and teachers were elicited through a pre-coded student questionnaire and a teacher questionnaire that were filled in the educational institutions in the presence of the researcher. A separate questionnaire was also designed for the parents of the students, and this was sent through the students with a letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire and requesting them to cooperate in this regard. All questionnaires were bilingual (Urdu and English) except the section pertaining to the English assessments.

The purpose to include a short language proficiency assessment was to supplement the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires. The results helped the researcher to establish a correlation between the respondents' academic background and the developed language skills as well as their language needs. The test comprised two components: Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary and Structure. The section on reading comprehension was taken from Cambridge Practice Tests for IELTS (1996), compiled by Jakeman and McDowell, while the second part on vocabulary and structure was adapted from Michigan English Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP: 1985).

Sample Size

The sample size of the testing of hypothesis for the prevalence of students regarding their opinion about the role of English in higher education in our population was calculated by taking a proportion of 50% with level of significance α of 5%, a power of 80%, the bound on error (the absolute difference between actual and hypothetical prevalence) of 4% and design effect

of 2 (because of two stage cluster sampling). The minimum sample size of 2,450 students was required for this study. The sample of the colleges and universities from Private and Public (Government) as well as General and Professional was taken from the list of degree colleges and universities as listed by the Handbook Colleges of Pakistan University Grants Commission (1999). A decision was taken by the researcher to select only the colleges and universities from the capital cities of Pakistan and the federal capital Islamabad.

In this study, each degree college or university was considered as a cluster. At the first stage, 30 clusters (Professional & General degree colleges) were selected at random from the list of degree colleges from capital cities of Pakistan proportionate to the number of degree colleges in each city. Then at the second stage, around 80 students were chosen at random from the total number of students who were to be present on that day in one cluster (Degree College). The rest of the students were chosen from five randomly selected universities of Pakistan (2 General i.e. 1 Private and 1 Public, as well as 1 Professional). From each cluster a group of 5-10 teachers (Subject Teachers and English) was also taken.

The Staff

Since the data was to be collected on a large scale (nation wide study) a team comprising two faculty who assisted with the data collection, a Statistical Advisor of the University, as well as an editor and two data entry operators was put together. Since all the team members were already trained and had been involved in previous research projects, no formal training was required. The research project had the support of the University Seed Money Grant Award, and hence all expenses related to the study were borne by the award.

Results

The questionnaire responses were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 6.1.3) and analysed by the Statistical Advisor of the University and the author of this article. The results of the study were looked at various divisions such as socio-economic status, gender and public and private sectors categories. The analysis of all quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires was done at a descriptive and inferential level (see Kinnear and Gray, 1999).

Background Characteristics

The sample comprising 2,136 students was predominantly from Punjab (Lahore and Taxila) and Sindh (Karachi and Hyderabad), Balochistan (Quetta),

followed by the Federal Capital (Islamabad), and the N.W.F.P (Peshawar). The study was able to collect data from 121 subject and English teachers from all provinces except Balochistan. Only 63 parent's questionnaires were received from Punjab and Sindh. The profile of the students by different characteristics of institute shows that the majority of them were from colleges (84%) and a smaller number from universities (16%). Also, around two-thirds (66 %) of all students in the study were from the public sector (colleges and universities). The majority of the students reported Urdu as their mother tongue (42%), followed by Punjabi (30%), Pushto (14%), Balochi (5%), Sindhi (4%) and others (5%). The results of the study show that the students involved in higher education in Pakistan belong to various socio-economic backgrounds (income groups, divided into quintiles). Students studying in the private sector (Mean income = Rs. 30,361; standard deviation=Rs. 45,736) have significantly (p-value=0.000; independent samples t-test; $t = 7.95$; $df = 573$) higher monthly household income as compared to students studying in the public sector (Mean income = Rs. 13,718; standard deviation = Rs. 16,701). It is worth noting that one fifth (20%) of all students and one fourth (25%) of public sector students reported a household monthly income of Rs 5,500 (\$ 90) and less (see Table 1).

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Students Household Monthly Income (in Pak. Rs.) by Public and Private Institutions

Monthly Income (in Rs.)	Public %	Private %	Both %
Below 5,500	25.2	8.7	19.8
5,500 – 9,999	20.7	11.6	17.8
10,000 – 14,999	20.4	19.5	20.1
15,000 – 24,999	20.5	22.2	21.0
25,000 & above	13.3	38.0	21.3
Total students*	1,056	508	1,564

*After excluding 208 private and 364 public students who did not specify household income.

Facilities for English

As far as the facilities for English in the two sectors are concerned, the results do not depict a good picture at any stage of schooling both in the public & private sectors (see Table 2). The students from the public sector report insufficient facilities at the primary (10%), secondary (19%), intermediate (26%), and graduate levels (36%). The significant difference (confidence interval for the difference in proportions used; p-value was obtained using chisquare with $df = 1$) between public and private sectors in the facilities for English at different stages proves the general perception of the public that the facilities for English are much better in the private

schools. Overall, students involved with postgraduate studies from both the public and private sectors report that there are hardly any facilities for English (2%-9%) available to them.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Students Reported Facilities (a lot) for English by Public & Private Institutions

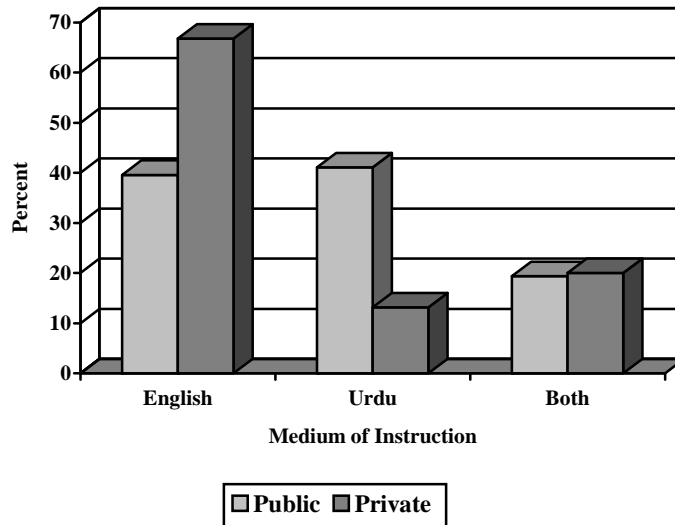
Stages of Schooling	Public %	Private %	95% C.I. for the difference in percentage
Primary	10.2	23.7	(-17.1, - 9.9)**
Middle	12.8	28.5	(-19.6, -11.8)**
Secondary	19.3	32.2	(-17.0, - 8.8)**
Intermediate	25.7	35.6	(-14.1, - 5.7)**
Graduate	35.8	42.0	(-10.6, - 1.8)**
Post graduate	6.8	11.1	(- 7.0, - 1.6)**
Professional	2.0	9.0	(- 9.3, - 4.7)**
Total Students	1,420	716	

* Significant at p-value<0.05; ** Significant at p-value<0.0

Medium of Instruction at Graduate Level

As seen in Figure 1 the result shows a significant difference between public and private institutions regarding their medium of instruction ($\chi^2 = 187.341$; $df = 2$ & $p\text{-value} = 0.000$) as reported by students. The majority of private institution students reported English medium (65%) and Urdu Medium (15%), while the majority of public institution students reported Urdu medium (40%) and English medium (40%) as their medium of instruction. About one-fifth of private as well as public institute students (20%) reported both (English and Urdu combined) as their medium of instruction; a significant difference was found between public and private institutions regarding their medium of taking examinations ($\chi^2 = 59.96$; $df = 2$ & $p\text{-value} = 0.000$; after excluding those who did not specify) as reported by students. The majority of private sector students took their examinations in English (68%), whereas the majority of public sector students did so in Urdu medium (50%) or both Urdu and English (35%).

Figure 1: Medium of instruction in Public & Private Institutions Reported by Students



Attitudes to Languages in Education and Motivational Orientation

As seen in Table 3, an overwhelming majority of students male or female from all provinces (both public and private sectors), teachers, and parents show highly positive attitudes to English as seen in their preference for English as a medium of instruction in higher education (88%-97%) that is much higher than preference for Urdu (40%-71%), regional languages (6%-17%), or Arabic (0%-8%). However, more students from public institutions prefer Urdu as compared to private students ($\chi^2 = 9.69$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value} = 0.0018$), while more students from private institutions prefer English as compared to public students ($\chi^2 = 11.87$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value}=0.0006$). As far as parents were concerned more parents whose children were studying in public institutions preferred Urdu as the medium of instruction when compared with parents whose children were studying in private institutions ($\chi^2 = 8.23$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value} = 0.004$). The majority of students, teachers and parents show a preference for English medium education at all levels. At graduate levels, for both Arts and Science, the preference by all respondents ranges from 72%-94% in both public and private sectors. However, the preference for regional language though low for all levels is slightly higher at primary levels (6%-23%). The preference for Urdu as medium of instruction follows the preference for English and keeps decreasing from primary levels (31%-42%) to graduate levels (9%-28%). The main reasons for preference of English as the medium of education at various levels by students, teachers and parents are mainly instrumental, as studying in English is seen as useful for students in studying abroad (78%) and getting good jobs (63%). The reasons given by all subjects for studying in Urdu are mainly

integrative. Students see Urdu as the main link language (67%) and also for its role in promoting the national language (67%). The main reasons for studying in the Regional language are related to learning and it is felt by the students that study in the regional language is helpful in the first few years of schooling (60%), and also because students can learn better in their mother tongue (58%). The majority of all students, teachers and parents (59%-97%) also show a preference to study English as a compulsory subject at all levels followed by Urdu (8%-50%). The preference for Urdu as a compulsory subject becomes lower at higher levels. Very few subjects show a preference for study of the Regional language as a compulsory subject even at primary levels (0%-22%).

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Students, Teachers and Parents by Medium of Instruction Recommended at any Level of Education by Type of Institution

Recommended Language	Public	Private	Both
	%	%	%
<i>Students</i>			
Regional Language	12.7	11.3	12.3
Urdu	51.1	44.0	48.7
English	89.3	93.9	90.8
Arabic	6.1	4.3	5.5
Total Students	1420	716	2106
<i>Teachers</i>			
Regional Language	20.0	12.2	17.4
Urdu	40.0	56.1	41.3
English	88.8	87.8	88.4
Arabic	6.3	0.0	4.1
Total Teachers	79	42	121
<i>Parents</i>			
Regional Language	6.3	19.4	12.7
Urdu	87.5	54.8	71.4
English	100.0	93.5	96.8
Arabic	12.5	3.2	7.9
Total Parents	32	31	63

Students from all institutions gave more weight to instrumental reasons compared to integrative reasons for learning English. Students from private institutions gave more weight to different instrumental as well as integrative reasons compared to public students except acquiring new ideas and

broadening one's outlook, and acquaintance with people in touch with latest trends in the West. In instrumental reasons, coping with college / university classes, traveling abroad, access to information technology, enabling access to international books and journals and as the working language of a future career were found to be significant between public and private institutions. In integrative reasons living and behaving like English-speaking Pakistanis, becoming more modern and improving social status were found to be significant (see Table 4).

Table 4: Distribution of Students by Reasons for Learning English and Type of Institution

Reasons for learning English	Public %	Private %	95% C.I. for the difference in Percentages
Instrumental Reasons:			
Getting good job	79.1	82.6	(-7.0, -0.04)
Coping with college/university classes	74.7	79.3	(-8.3, -0.9)*
Traveling abroad	74.9	82.3	(-10.9,-3.9)**
Access to Information technology	83.1	89.8	(-9.6,-3.8)**
Getting access to international books and journals	77.8	87.1	(-12.5,-6.1)**
It is the working language of future career	74.4	86.6	(-15.5,-8.9)**
Integrated Reasons:			
Living and behaving like English-speaking Pakistanis	42.0	35.8	(1.9, 10.5)**
Becoming more modern	58.0	52.0	(1.5, 10.5)**
Acquiring new ideas & broadening one's outlook	75.4	78.1	(-6.5,1.1)
Becoming friendly with English speaking Pakistanis	59.4	55.6	(-0.7, 8.3)
Acquaintance with people in touch with latest trends in the West	56.6	60.6	(-8.4, 0.4)
To improve my social status	66.2	59.9	(1.9, 10.7)**
Total Students	1,420	716	

* Significant at $p < 0.05$ and ** Significant at $p < 0.01$ **Language**

Language Needs of Learners

As seen in Table 5 an overwhelming majority of all students, male or female display a far higher need for English than any other language for the purpose of higher education (79%), employment (77%), and information

technology (82%). This trend was similar when looking at private and public institutions and by gender as well. Urdu was reported as the second language needed by students but was far behind English for the purpose of higher education (39%), employment (33%), and information technology (22%). The parents reported a similar trend for English, Urdu and other languages for the purpose of higher education, employment, and information technology.

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Students and Parents by Language Needs of Students for Higher Education, Employment and Information Technology by Type of Institution

Issues eliciting views on language needs of students	Public %	Private %	Both %
<i>Student</i>			
Higher Education:			
Mother tongue	29.5	20.6	26.5
Regional language	9.9	7.7	9.2
Urdu	39.3	38.8	39.1
English	74.6	86.5	78.6
Employment:			
Mother tongue	24.4	15.2	21.3
Regional language	8.0	8.8	8.3
Urdu	33.2	33.5	33.3
English	72.9	84.4	76.7
Information Technology:			
Mother tongue	20.6	11.5	17.5
Regional language	6.0	5.0	5.7
Urdu	24.5	17.3	22.1
English	78.5	88.3	81.8
Total Students	1,420	716	2,136
<i>Parents</i>			
Higher Education:			
Mother tongue	21.9	25.8	23.8
Regional language	3.1	3.2	3.2
Urdu	56.3	35.5	46.0
English	87.5	90.3	88.9
Employment:			
Mother tongue	15.6	29.0	22.2
Regional language	0.0	16.1	7.9
Urdu	56.3	25.8	41.3
English	81.3	74.2	77.8
Information Technology:			
Mother tongue	9.4	25.8	17.5
Regional language	0.0	3.2	1.6
Urdu	21.9	9.7	15.9
English	87.5	93.5	90.5
Total Parents	32	31	63

Parental Support for Learning English

As seen in Table 6, the majority of the parents (77%-87%) thought that they try to help children with their English, and no significant difference was found between private or public institution of the students ($\chi^2=0.060$; $df=1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.807$). The majority of the parents thought that students should devote more time to their English studies, and no significant difference was found between private or public institution of the students ($\chi^2=0.463$; $df=1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.496$). Parents also stressed the importance that English will have for students when they leave college/university, and no significant difference was found between private or public institution of the students ($\chi^2=0.901$; $df=1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.343$). Similarly, the majority of the parents encouraged their children to seek help from their English teacher, and no significant difference was found between private or public institution of the students (Using χ^2 ; $p\text{-value} = 1.00$).

In the students' view, the majority of the parents (71%-86%) thought that the student should devote more time to his/her English studies, which is significantly higher among students studying in public institutions ($\chi^2=43.613$; $df=1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$). The majority of the students reported that their parents' have stressed the importance that English will have for the student when he/she leaves college/university, which is significantly higher among students studying in public institutions ($\chi^2=6.144$; $df=1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.013$). Similarly, the majority of the students reported that their parents encouraged them to seek help from their English teacher, which is significantly higher among students studying in public institutions ($\chi^2=43.709$; $df=1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.000$).

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Students and Parents with their Agreement on Parental Support by Gender

Agreement on	Male %	Female %	Both %
<i>Students</i>			
Parents thinking that I should devote more time to my English studies	79.2	84.7	82.0
Parents have stressed the importance that English will have for me when I leave college/University	78.3	83.0	80.7
Parents encourage me to seek help from my English teacher	75.7	83.1	79.5
Total Students	1,030	1,088	2,118
<i>Parents</i>			
Try to help students with their English	75.6	85.7	78.0
Think that students should devote more time to their English studies	93.3	100.0	95.1
Have stressed the importance that English will have for students when they leave college/university	87.0	100.0	90.3
Encourage students to seek help from their English teacher	93.3	100.0	95.1
Total Parents	47	16	63

Availability and Quality of Materials in Different Mediums

As seen in Table 7, the results of the study show that the students report that the required materials for their courses in higher education is not fully available in English, Urdu, or Regional languages. The materials mostly available to them are in English and Urdu ($\chi^2 = 42.7$; $df = 2$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$). This holds true even in the private sector ($\chi^2 = 77.5$; $df = 2$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$) as well as for the public sector ($\chi^2 = 33.9$; $df = 2$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$). The availability of materials in English as reported by students is much higher (58%) than materials in Urdu (31%) in both public and private sector institutions. Similar results were obtained from teachers in which they also report the same that the required materials for their courses in higher education are mostly available to them in English and Urdu ($\chi^2 = 60.4$; $df = 2$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$). This holds true even in the private sector ($\chi^2 = 97.2$; $df = 2$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$) as well

as for public sector ($\chi^2=47.9$; $df=2$; $p\text{-value}=0.000$). Again, the availability of materials in English (66%) as reported by teachers is twice as much than materials in Urdu (25%) in both public and private sector institutions.

Table 7: Percentage Distribution of Students & Teachers Reported Language in which Required Material is Mostly Available by Type of Institution

Type of Institution	Required material mostly available in		
	English %	Urdu %	Regional Language %
<i>Student</i>			
Private	72.3	20.5	3.8
Public	50.6	36.0	6.3
Both	57.9	30.8	5.5
<i>Teacher</i>			
Private	80.5	17.1	5.0
Public	59.0	29.5	5.1
Both	66.4	25.2	5.0

Table 8: Percentage Distribution of Students & Teachers Reported Language in which High Quality Required Material is Available by Type of Institution

Type of Institution	High/Excellent quality required material available in		
	English %	Urdu %	Regional Language %
<i>Student</i>			
Private	57.9	25.7	6.9
Public	46.2	41.7	12.4
Both	50.1	36.3	10.6
<i>Teacher</i>			
Private	48.8	19.5	2.4
Public	42.9	19.3	6.4
Both	44.9	19.3	5.0

The results of the study as seen in Table 6 show that students are not satisfied with the quality of the materials available to them for higher education in terms of their relevance, up datedness and appropriateness in either English (50%) or Urdu (36%) or regional languages (11%). This holds true for the public as well as private sector, although most of the quality material available to them is in English. Similar results were obtained from teachers as seen in Table 7, in which they also report that the quality of required materials mostly available to them in English (45%) and Urdu (19%) is not very high for their courses in higher education ($\chi^2 = 35.8$; $df = 2$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$). This holds

true even in the private sector ($\chi^2 = 47.5$; $df = 2$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$) as well as for the public sector ($\chi^2 = 31.1$; $df = 2$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$).

Learners' Language Difficulties

Overall the results regarding student's language difficulties while coping with their higher studies in English show that students from the public sectors face more difficulties than their counterparts from the private sector as reported by students and teachers. Similarly, female students face more difficulties than male students as reported by students and teachers.

A significant difference was observed between public (15%) and private students (9%) when asked whether they faced difficulty while listening to teacher's lectures and other students talking in English ($\chi^2 = 19.06$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value}<0.001$), between public (17%) and private students (10%) in reading comprehension of texts / materials in English ($\chi^2 = 20.64$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value}<0.001$), between public (25%) and private students (8%) when speaking to teachers and making presentations in English ($\chi^2 = 13.8$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value}<0.001$), between public (20%) and private students (13%) while writing notes/assignments in English ($\chi^2 = 16.4$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value}<0.001$), between public (23%) and private students (12%) while taking tests/examinations in English ($\chi^2 = 31.4$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value}<0.001$). Similarly, teachers responded for the same questions regarding students and found the following significant results in students facing difficulty while speaking to teachers and making presentations in English ($\chi^2=4.77$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value}=0.0289$), writing notes/ assignments in English ($\chi^2=9.43$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value}=0.00213$), taking tests/ examinations in English ($\chi^2=10.88$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value}<0.001$), and getting anxious when taking tests / exams in English ($\chi^2 = 4.92$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value}=0.02654$).

English Language Support Programme

Despite the fact that English is a compulsory subject of study in the graduate classes, a fair percentage of public sector (60%) and private sector students (40%) and public sector (48%) and private sector students (30%) teachers responded that English courses are not offered at institutions (See Fig. 2). The results of our study regarding the courses of English offered at the institution show a significant difference between public and private institutions ($\chi^2=79.6$; $df =1$; $p\text{-value}=0.000$) when responded to by students. The overall quality of English courses reported by students and teachers are also very low (see Table 9).

Table 9: Percentage Distribution of Students & Teachers by Quality of English Language Courses by Type of Institution

Quality of English language Course	Private %	Public %	95% C.I. for the difference in percentage
Students			
High/Excellent quality in terms of:			
Courses/Syllabus	45.9	30.5	(11.2, 19.6)**
Texts/Materials	45.6	29.6	(11.8, 20.2)**
Teaching Methods	46.6	37.7	(4.5, 13.3)**
Test/Examinations	59.3	32.5	(22.4, 31.2)**
Overall Quality	48.3	31.7	(12.3, 20.9)**
Success of the courses in preparing for:			
Higher Studies in English	17.5	18.5	(-4.5, 2.5)
Communicating in work place	20.0	16.7	(-0.1, 6.7)
Agreement to courses be made available if are not offered	82.9	89.5	(-9.5, -3.7)**
Type:			
General English	13.4	11.6	(-1.1, 4.7)
English for Specific Purposes	12.3	11.9	(-2.5, 3.3)
Both	67.4	72.1	(-8.8, -0.6)**
Agreement to:			
English Courses should emphasise the communicative use	56.1	51.8	(-0.2, 8.8)
English Teachers should be trained in the latest methods	76.6	76.8	(-4.0, 3.6)
Literature should be a component of English course	41.2	42.8	(-6.0, 2.8)
Total Students	716	1420	
Teachers			
High/Excellent quality in terms of:			
Courses/Syllabus	34.1	34.2	(-19.0, 18.8)
Texts/Materials	29.3	34.6	(-24.1, 13.5)
Teaching Methods	36.6	28.2	(-9.8, 26.6)
Test/Examinations	29.3	30.8	(-19.8, 16.8)
Overall Quality	24.4	25.0	(-17.8, 16.6)
Success of the courses in preparing for:			
Higher Studies in English	29.3	29.1	(-17.9, 18.3)
Communicating in work place	22.0	25.4	(-20.6, 13.8)
Agreement to courses be made	70.0	77.2	(-24.3, 9.9)

available if are not offered

Type:

General English	14.6	16.5	(-16.5, 12.7)
English for Specific Purposes	2.4	7.6	(-15.0, 4.6)
Both	63.4	62.0	(-17.9, 20.7)

Agreement to:

English Courses should emphasize the communicative use	68.3	72.2	(-21.9, 14.1)
English Teachers should be trained in the latest methods	70.7	81.0	(-26.6, 6.0)
Literature should be a component of English course	46.3	48.7	(-22.3, 17.5)

Total Teachers	35	79	
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**Significant at p-value<0.01

The responses revealed a significant difference between private (46%) and public institutions (30%) students for high/excellent quality in terms of course / syllabus of English courses ($\chi^2=49.14$; $df = 1$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$), a significant difference between private (46%) and public institutions (30%) students for texts/materials ($\chi^2 = 53.58$; $df = 1$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$), a significant difference between private (47%) and public institutions (38%) students for teaching methods ($\chi^2 = 15.6$; $df = 1$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$), a significant difference between private (59%) and public institutions (32%) students for test/examinations ($\chi^2 = 140.9$; $df = 1$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$), overall quality ($\chi^2 = 56.1$; $df = 1$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$) and agreement to courses be made available if not offered ($\chi^2 = 18.7$; $df = 1$; $p\text{-value} = 0.000$).

English Language Competence of Subject and English Teachers

As reported by students from public as well as private institutions, although the competency of subject teachers in English speaking and writing is not very high, a significant difference is found in public and private sectors with high proficiency in the private sector. For example, the students report subject teachers' spoken proficiency as ($\chi^2 = 4.58$; $df = 1$; $p\text{-value} = 0.032$) and written proficiency as ($\chi^2 = 5.63$; $df = 1$; $p\text{-value} = 0.018$). It is worth noting that the spoken competency of around one third of all English teachers in both public (43%) and private institutions (38%) as well as written competency of public (37%) and private (32%) teachers was not seen as high as reported by students.

Language Outcomes (Test Scores)

A vast majority of students and teachers attempted the English test. A significant difference between students from public and private institutions was observed ($\chi^2=23.65$; $df=1$; $p\text{-value}<0.001$). As seen in Table 10, although the test scores for the students in public and private institutions are not good, the students from private institutions have significantly higher scores as compared to public institutions ($t\text{-value}=12.99$; $df=1280$; $\text{Mean difference}=11.5$; 95% ; C.I. for the mean difference= $9.7, 13.20$; $p\text{-value}=0.000$). The test scores among teachers in public ($\text{Mean}=59.9$; $\text{Standard Error}=1.81$) and private ($\text{Mean}=62.7$; $\text{Standard Error}=2.54$) institutions are not significantly different ($t\text{-value}=0.913$; $df=106$; $\text{Mean difference}=2.82$; 95% C.I. for the mean difference= $-3.3, 8.9$; $p\text{-value}=0.363$). In the overall proficiency scores of students and teachers as measured by the English test, results show that teachers scored better in structure of the language (70%) as compared to application of the language. Overall the teachers' proficiency scores were only 61%. The students' performances were low in both structure and application of the English language with an overall score of 47%.

Table 10: Percentage Distribution of Students and their English Test Scores by Public and Private Institutions

Scores (%)	Public %	Private %	Both%
<33	32.4	14.9	26.2
33-40	10.0	6.6	8.8
40-50	22.0	18.3	20.7
50-60	18.6	19.2	18.8
60-70	11.9	18.7	14.3
70-80	4.7	17.1	9.1
80 & above	0.4	5.2	2.1
Mean Score (Standard Error)	43.0 (0.49)	54.5 (0.73)	47.0 (0.43)
Total Students	1,250	678	1,928

Issues of Access and Equity

Results point to the significant differences between private sector and public sector students in terms of socio-economic status, facilities for English, medium of instruction, language difficulties in English, availability

of English support programmes, English language competence of subject and English teachers, and the resultant language outcomes. The results of this study reveal that there are two streams entering our higher education institutions (colleges and universities). The language policy in education in schools is that of a dual medium policy where the students from the government sector study in Urdu medium with English as a subject from class 6 (the new policy proposes English from class 1), and the students from the private sector who study in English medium with Urdu as a subject from class 1. As seen in our study, despite the official policy of English medium in higher education, actual classroom practice shows that the two mediums (English and Urdu) continue to be used depending on the types of institutions (public sector and private sector).

The results of the questionnaires show that the students from the public sector face more problems than the private sector students due to various reasons. Foremost is the fact that a large number of the students (49%) from the public sector belong to low socio-economic status with a total household income of Rs 9,900 and less and a quarter (25%) with Rs 5,500 and less. The majority of these students report an Urdu medium school background (52%) and that they have received very few facilities to learn English in their schools than their counterparts from private sector institutions (26%). Also, despite the fact that they show a strong desire to study in English medium (90%), they continue to study in either Urdu medium or a 'mix' of English and Urdu medium in higher education. In addition, less than half of these LEP (Limited English Proficiency) students report that they are provided with adequate English language programmes (39%). Despite the fact that English is a compulsory subject at graduate levels, many of the students report that there are no English language support programmes available to them. The present English courses have very heavy literature content and so become an additional subject of study for the students and a burden, rather than provide language support to the students, or help them become proficient in English. The students and teachers from the public sector (46%) also show more dissatisfaction with the quality of materials available to them in English. In addition, they have limited access to materials in English (51%). As reported in the questionnaires, some of these LEP students from the public sector institutions who have studied in Urdu medium face a great deal of difficulty while speaking, following lectures in English, reading with understanding, and also while writing notes and taking examinations (23%) when they join the private sector institutions, or the professional universities in the public sector that are English medium. As a result many of them resort to guide books or poor translations in Urdu, and 'rote learn' their English texts, resulting in poor language outcomes as seen in the low proficiency scores in the English test and performance in their examinations.

The results of the study show that the student's performance in the English test keeps getting higher as the household income also rises, and that there may be a link between household income per month and language outcomes. The results also inform us that in all the groups of students with various household income groups, the students from the private sector institutions perform better than students from the public sector institutions who come from a lower socio-economic background. It appears therefore that the public sector students are 'disadvantaged' as compared to the private sector students, and need additional support from the state to cope adequately with their higher studies.

Discussion

The study found that Pakistanis consider English important for national development. Pakistan has lagged behind other South Asian countries in the availability and quality of education, particularly higher education. Pakistani students do not see the study of English as detrimental to their culture but rather as necessary for Pakistan to become a modern and progressive state. The students want to study English for instrumental reasons and English is seen as synonymous with progress and prosperity. On the other hand Urdu is seen as important for integrative reasons such as national unity and identity, as well as a link language. This study points out that English allows access to the Western, liberal-humanist and cosmopolitan world-view, and resists the spread of Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan (Rahman, 2002). Pakistani students see English as discussed earlier as a gatekeeper of the domains of "power and control" (Tollefson: 1991). The very positive attitudes of parents and their support to their children to learn English is indicative of the societal attitudes where parents want their children to be fluent in the dominant language, English so as to access higher education and white collared jobs. Many students also see English medium education as improving their social status. These are some of the most important reasons for the large majority of students wanting to study in English as a compulsory subject and as a medium of education at all levels of schooling. Pakistanis also see English as a business lingua franca and the only international language available to them that can facilitate international communication and boost trade with countries across the globe. English is part of the colonial legacy of the sub-continent and the findings of the study, particularly the qualitative data from the interviews, inform us that making use of English is seen as advantageous.

The findings of the study provide support to an earlier study by Mansoor (1993) that attitudes of Pakistani students have changed radically from ambivalence and hostility to English as a colonial rule during the first

few decades after independence to an enthusiastic acceptance of English today. The “generation gap” between the students and parents who struggled for independence from colonial rule gives the students a different perspective of English. The present study does not bear witness to the “love-hate” relationship to English that Haque (1983) refers to. The Urdu medium students and English medium students from both the public and private sector, as well as from all socio-economic strata of society desire to learn English for its utilitarian value. As far as studies in English are concerned, all the stake-holders in the study do not see English as associated with imperialism (Pennycook, 1994) but rather as an international language having a strong favourable impact on their own growth and that of the country’s economy and business. The findings thus lend support to Kachru’s observations (1986) that “the colonial association of English and the western values are now underemphasized. Instead, what seems to be stressed is the power of English as an instrument of individual and societal transformation”. English is desired by Pakistani students because of its great instrumental value in higher education, international communication, and for economic gains and progress. Language policies, despite trying their utmost to oust English and replace it with Urdu, have failed because of the continued role of English in the official sphere as well as education and the institutional supports, especially from the media. The students want English education and feel cheated if they are deprived of it. The results of our study display that Pakistani students are opting for an instrumental / functional approach to English as opposed to the previous emphasis on cultural transmission. The desire for English is therefore not difficult to understand keeping in view that the global trends in politics, economics and culture show that English as well as regional languages will play a significant role in the twenty first century (Graddol, 1997).

Keeping in view the favourable attitudes to English of all stake holders in higher education for instrumental reasons, and to allow effective participation from the public sector where English acts as a gate-keeper and a powerful means of inclusion or exclusion from further education, employment, or social positions (Tollefson, 1991; Pattanayak, 1981; Rajah, 1990), it would be important to consider a language policy in education where all students are empowered by being fluent in English. This seems to be the best solution to a very complex and problematic issue. By removing the barrier of English, students from the public sector institutions and lower socio-economic strata would be able to access higher education and white-collared jobs. The challenge of working on the notion of “English for development” is that it would have to take into account not only the concept of sustainable development (see Pennycook, 1994) and linking it with “notions of local involvement, continuity, and ecological soundness,”

but also to ensure that development does not only “imply a linear path of development that is easily conflated with notions of modernization, and westernization”. This would involve that post-colonial countries such as Pakistan develop an indigenous model for English language teaching that is suitable in its own context.

The study reveals that despite favourable attitudes and the high motivational intensity of learners, their English language proficiency to cope with their higher studies, and future work requirement is far below desired levels. The intervening variable is seen as the low quality of the English courses that are outdated and inefficient. Results of the study draw attention to the need to strengthen the English language teaching programmes through a revision of courses, development of local materials, and training of teachers so as to meet the students’ learning and target needs.

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