



RESEARCH PAPER

Students' Learning Issues in Pakistan: A Study on English Language

¹Wakeel Ahmed Otho*, ²Dr. Shagufta Shahzadi, ³Dr. Asia Khatoon

1. B.Ed., Department of Education, Hamdard University Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan
2. Dean Faculty of Education, University of Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Shaheed Benazirabad Sindh, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author** ahmedwakeel7788@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines students' English language learning in Pakistan, where it is widely spoken. English is taught as a mandatory subject at all educational levels in Pakistan, where it is utilized as both an official language and a foreign language. This study examines the elements that influence students' adoption of an English language. Students struggle in school and college, resulting in a lack of understanding of many subjects since they must complete all of their studies in English. This exploratory study aims to determine the factors influencing learning another language among students in government schools. Students representing all levels of variables impacting English language acquisition were included in the data sample. The study's findings recommended that students should focus on linguistic factors when learning another language. It is considered that someone's motivation, attitude, age, IQ, aptitude, cognitive style, and personality all have a significant effect in how successfully they learn a second language.

Keywords: Cognitive level of Student, English Teaching, Language Learning, Second Language Learning

Introduction

Since each person interprets language differently, there is no one definition that applies to everyone such as language is a social practice through which the world is represented (Anonby, Mohammadirad, & Sheyholislami, 2019). This is used in a variety of meanings in daily life, which linguistics is cautious to separate. In Pakistan, English is regarded as an official language and is utilized as a foreign language (Vessey & Sheyholislami, 2020). The use of English has risen during the last many decades. It was estimated that between 250 and 380 million individuals spoke English as a second language in 1985. Between 320 and 380 million individuals spoke English as their native language (Mahboob, 2017). English has been categorized as a second language since it is frequently an official language in Pakistan or a language that is widely used in society and essential for basic requirements such as employment and education. Members of minority groups and immigrants who speak a foreign language as their first language are more likely to learn it (M. Akram, 2017). The cognitive learning style distinction between field independent and field dependent learners is the main topic of M. Lightbown and Nina Spada's study. This has to do with a person's preference for viewing things more holistically or for separating details from the larger context (Gopang, Bughio, & Pathan, 2018).

English language in Pakistan

When the British began exerting influence in Mughal India under the cover of the British East India Company, English language was brought to South Asia. From then on, English language became more widely used and more prestigious. English language was incorporated into the nation's legal, educational, and other systems when the Mughal Empire—and the use of Persian as the language of the arts, sciences, and governance—was

neutralized and India joined the British Empire (Rasheed, Zeeshan, & Zaidi, 2017). There is one recognized language for each province, and English is the official language. This approach has also been implemented in the field of education, with schools offering instruction in English, Urdu, or, in certain cases in Sindh and KP, the province language as the medium of instruction. However, in the context of universities across the nation, English is the predominant language of teaching (although Urdu may be used in select departments at some institutions, particularly in undergraduate arts and humanities programs (Haidar & Fang, 2019)). For a long time to come, English language remains the predominant medium of instruction (MOI) at Pakistan's education establishments. Although, since Pakistan's independence in 1947, the government's stance on MOI in schools has undergone a number of changes. The English language has mostly maintained its position. But this does not mean that there is no controversy around the use of English language as a medium of instruction (EMI) at Pakistani educational sectors. There are several problems with EMI in Pakistani higher education, some of which addressed about Pakistan's MOI policies in HE (Gopang et al., 2018). For more than a century before to the formation of the nation, English language was an integral element of the regional educational and governmental systems. In a situation like this, the local discussions center on which language(s) ought to be the MOI rather than just how EMI may be made better (Asif, Bashir, & Zafar, 2018).

English Language and Students learning

Learners have clear preference for how they go about learning new material. The term, learning style has been used to describe an individual's natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing and retaining new information and skills. It's often said that knowledge cannot be acquired unless it is observed. This type of learner would be classified as a visual learner. Conversely, those who may be referred to be aural learners appear to just need to hear a concept once or twice in order to understand it. Learners must include movement into their education (Zaidi & Zaki, 2017). According to Piaget, beginning at the sensory-motor stage, children go to the intuitive and concrete-operational phases, and finally reach the formal operational stage, when abstraction starts to become more realistic (Fareed, Jawed, & Awan, 2018). In order to support a kid who has reached the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where they are prepared to learn new things, Vygotsky highlighted the need of social connection in development as well as the function of a "knower" supplying "scaffolding." A significant number of similar experiences from which to choose. Expectations for the learning process are part of the learning pattern. Provides instructors with a wealth of knowledge that enables them to include children in a variety of activities (H. Akram, Yang, Ahmad, & Aslam, 2020). The capacity to pick information up quickly is what distinguishes aptitude. The majority of the research on the aptitude factor has been conducted by scientists who wish to develop assessments that can identify whether a person would be a competent foreign language learner in a classroom (Manan, 2019). Because choices concerning language policies in schools are influenced by the needs of parents as well as the belief that English is the language used to produce knowledge in these subjects, pupils must acquire it in order to learn science and math.

Literature Review

The literature review emphasizes how important language learning aspects are for improving learners' performance and efficiency, especially when it comes to learning a second language. It highlights how crucial it is to comprehend students' age, aptitude, learning preferences, and drive in order to enhance their performance and general language learning success.

The Framework of English language in Pakistan

Because English is the official language of the state, the language of the military, and the higher education system, it plays an increasingly diverse role in Pakistan. English is a

language of power and has historically been used by an elite class to shape the nation from its founding. There is a unique English dialect spoken in Pakistan that is being standardized (Hassan, Kazi, & Asmara Shafqat, 2020). There are conservative groups around the country who oppose English. Over time, a variety of linguistic issues and language legislation have pushed Urdu to become the official language. It has proven difficult, however, to dethrone English from its rule. With certain amendments, Article 251 of the 1973 constitution remains in effect in 2016, designating Urdu as the national language. Clause 1: Within fifteen years of the beginning date, measures shall be implemented to adopt Urdu, Pakistan's native language, for official and other uses. Section 2: English may be used for official purposes, subject to section (1), unless Urdu is planned to be replace it (Hussain, Salam, & Farid, 2020). In accordance with the constitution and taking into account how globalization affects every country, Pakistan's educational strategy supports making English a required subject starting in grade 1. The Higher Education Commission is likewise in favor of English being the medium of instruction. Despite their effectiveness, the policies can't provide favorable results in every area of English language use. Individuals, particularly Teachers lack the necessary tools to provide the effective results that are needed (Yasmin & Sohail, 2018).

The Language Geography of Pakistan

Pakistan's geographical distribution is determined by the languages spoken throughout the nation as well as the contour lines on the map. Pakistan's language environment is neither expansive nor restrictive. In Pakistan, there are 73 languages spoken. Of them, 8 are non-indigenous and 65 are indigenous. Together with English, which is also the official language of Pakistan, Urdu also has official status. Pakistan is comprised of four provinces, one federal-capital territory, two autonomous and disputed regions, and a collection of tribal areas under federal administration. Every province recognizes only one language, in addition to Urdu. Numerous minority languages are still unacknowledged. Language death and disloyalty are being caused by Pakistan's continued disregard for regional languages (Ahmed, Pathan, & Khan, 2017). As the two hyper-central languages, Urdu and English have a distinguished standing. Urdu, as the national language, carries patriotic connotations, while English, as the co-official language, is now seen as essential to success. In comparison to the other languages they coexist with, both of these languages have a high standing. The prestige of the other two languages is diminished by their coexistence. Therefore, the provincial languages that have formal status inside a province are the Super-central languages. Alongside them are additional languages that are classified as Central languages, meaning they are not in risk of passing away soon (Aziz, Hassan, Dzakiria, & Mahmood, 2018). Such nonlinguistic and extra linguistic strategies show a purposeful shift in the distribution of local language usage that serves no linguistic function. 69 years after English control ended on the subcontinent, the English language continues to grow and thrive as a satirized or indigenized variant with regional mixing, use, and variations. In a same vein, as it was under British control, Even now, proficiency in English is necessary to get into highly bureaucratic prominent social and governmental positions.

Material and Methods

This study conducted Semi-structured interviews with multilingual instructors at a government school in Karachi were conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach. Questioned new hires and faculty at a large public institution in Karachi Sindh, Pakistan. The respondents were enrolled in a freshman English language course, which was a mandatory course. During the semester in question, 315 students registered in the English language programs, representing a variety of majors. Which information was gathered, and students were requested to fill up the survey voluntarily. The survey was completed by 245 students, or around 78% of the total number enrolled in the course. The 10 English language teachers who were in charge of these classes were also invited to take part in the study. There were

no statistically significant discrepancies between the students' and instructors' replies. Thus, for the sake of this study, the two groups were mixed.

Result and Discussion

Given that the majority of subjects are taught in English in urban areas rather than rural areas, and that data were gathered from students and teachers at English-speaking educational institutions, it is not surprising that many respondents thought English was very important in many ways. To gain a more complete knowledge of the issues, researchers look at the viewpoints of those who do not work in major cities, do not attend college, and do not have English reading skills. Research derived from a more representative sample of Pakistani citizens will aid in identifying the issues with the country's current laws and policies and inspire ideas and activities that will increase Pakistani citizens' involvement in higher education. The research discussed above have a participant selection bias that distorts the results and hence (perhaps incorrectly) supports Pakistan's existing HE policies and practices.

Descriptive Analysis

According to the data, 76% of respondents preferred English in primary schools, while 94.4% said it should be used in high schools and universities. In comparison, only 65.4% said Urdu should be taught in primary schools, 37% in secondary schools, and 26.5% at the university level. Of the informants who spoke a language other than Urdu as their first language, only 10% felt it should be taught in primary schools, 4% in high schools, and none in universities. Respondents overwhelmingly supported Urdu, followed by regional languages. The findings also revealed that, when compared to instructors and pupils, a much higher proportion of parents favored Urdu but not regional languages. Finally, the results demonstrate that regional languages receive more support than other languages. However, these figures remain low when compared to Urdu and, particularly, English. Mansoor's study also found that English is preferred as the medium of instruction across the three stakeholder examined. English language proficiency is essential for Higher Education in Pakistan was a statement that the participants either agreed with or strongly agreed with. This figure is in line with the findings of the other two investigations that were previously described. Additionally, this survey contained questions that probed participants' perceptions of and usage of Urdu and English in their unique situations. The findings indicate that a mere 66.5% of the participants expressed agreement or strong agreement on the usage of English in an MA education program, which is the program in which they were enrolled. Moreover, the findings imply that, in spite of the official policy, the programs are multilingual in Urdu and English: respondents reported using both Urdu and English, with Urdu being utilized more frequently. English has not only caused linguistic rivalry in Pakistan; as previously noted, it has also created a range of social strata based on one's level of proficiency in the language. Local indigenous speakers' efforts to improve their social position are aided by these classes.

The response instructor claims that many staff members struggle with similar issues, in addition to pupils who lack fluency in the English language. Like their present pupils, many of the staff members are graduates of nearby institutions and experienced language-related difficulties while they were students. This frequently leads to a vicious cycle in which students with little English proficiency "manage" to graduate, join the faculty, and then instruct another set of students who have similar language difficulties. This sustains, among other things, academic research productivity issues related to language. Data reveals that of the 162 research participants 76% of whom attended private schools, around 67% self-reported having a "good" comprehension of the English language, and while 19% indicated they had a "very good" understanding. Students from wealthy families have higher English language proficiency scores, get admitted to higher education institutions mostly in metropolitan areas, and perform well. In contrast, kids from lower

classes have weaker English language proficiency, are admitted into less prestigious disciplines and/or universities. English education creates chances for pupils from diverse origins, contributing to socioeconomic class differences in society. This reinforces the socioeconomic class differences through education.

Case Study

According to Asafer, he is having trouble understanding English. He believes that immersion is the only way for her to acquire a language, and she is currently attempting to study English throughout the day. He expresses that participation is not possible in this work atmosphere. He believes that dealing with things and traveling to the countryside are among the finest methods to learn the language. He admits that time to properly prepare herself to learn the language. In an attempt to counter this, she is trying to learn English by using a communicative grammar and phrase book that he has noticed some teachers who, unfortunately for various reasons, don't make any effort to deal with factors affecting second language learning, and because he sees it as a lack of respect towards the locals, it noticeably bothers him. When questioned, participants often reply that it is a lack of motivation that prevents them from trying harder. Although, interestingly enough, no one participant admitted laziness was a factor. Because it is widely used, despite the disregard it receives from its speakers, and because it is spoken by several prominent and powerful persons not only in Pakistan but also in the Indian, it has a good chance of surviving. The fact that it is the language of personal pleasure as it is employed is much more significant. In jokes and songs. Given how frequently it's used in this way, it doesn't seem to be in any serious and imminent risk.

Conclusion

The huge growth of English across the world, as well as its effect on Pakistan and its regional languages, has put a significant strain on all other languages, whether as a result of globalization or the government's intention to preserve colonial legacy. However, this circumstance has increased language awareness and led to breakthroughs in language preservation efforts. This has led to a rise in the number of English learners in Pakistan. Such a circumstance implies that the financially insecure masses are under more strain than ever. They cannot afford pricey English-medium schooling. While it may appear unfeasible to halt or reverse the march of globalization, additive bilingualism may be promoted and subtractive bilingualism debunked. This idea encourages studying many languages and expanding one's understanding of them, as opposed to dropping one language in favor of another. The aptitude and proficiency of one's Language must be preserved, and we must feel proud of our own tongues. While acquiring additional language for self-benefits such as power. To ensure that to do this, the government and our educational system ought to advance the idea of linguistic rights. It's time to acknowledge the importance of our languages and the fact that, in Pakistan, language promotion rights are actually necessary. In addition to a fair, equitable, and balanced educational system that supports equality in the delivery of education and that teaches Urdu and English to all students equally—which is obviously different and superior from the way it is finished at this point. By using these precautions, we may avoid developing and forming unstable policies, as well as from the negative linguistic and extra linguistic consequences of them. The study's findings suggest that a better degree of cross-cultural understanding will go a long way toward avoiding dissatisfaction with the language and culture, which most participants have experienced at some point. Being more tolerant, forgiving, or easygoing typically results in an easier time absorbing the aspects that influence second language learning.

Recommendations

It's time to highlight the need for promotion-oriented rights for Pakistani languages. Along with this, a balanced and equitable educational system that encourages equality in

education and teaches English and Urdu equally to all students, rather than as it is currently done-very well to the elite and very poorly to the others. Taking these actions can help prevent shaky policies and damaging language. This is encouraging and shows that some of the new guidelines and procedures that HEC created are effective. Until higher education and research in Pakistan reach a tipping point, more persistent investigation, effort, and devotion are required.

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