

RETHINKING “SUCCESS” IN EDUCATION: A UNIFIED INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE POLICY FOR PAKISTAN’S MULTILINGUAL LANDSCAPE

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Abstract

Pakistan’s linguistic diversity, with over 70 languages, faces challenges due to the dominance of Urdu and English and inconsistent support for smaller minority languages like Brahui, Khowar, and Torwali. The study employs a self-designed qualitative methodology named Reflective Experiential Policy Synthesis (REPS) to develop the Pakistan Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy (PMILP). This study proposes the Pakistan Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy (PMILP), a comprehensive framework to promote equity, cultural preservation, and linguistic vitality across education, government, public services, media, and technology. Unlike Pakistan’s current policy, which is primarily education-focused and fragmented, PMILP employs a cost effective “3+1” model (major regional language + Urdu + English + optional fourth language i.e. smaller minority language), integrating smaller minority languages through open-source materials, community engagement, and a five-year implementation plan with measurable goals. Aligned with Pakistan’s Constitution and provincial autonomy, PMILP addresses gaps in linguistic inclusion by prioritizing smaller minority languages in curricula, governance, and media, fostering social cohesion and ensuring equitable access for all linguistic communities.

Keywords: language, policy, equity, diversity, mother tongue, culture, multilingual

Introduction

Language policy in Pakistan has been a major topic of study, especially among Pakistani researchers. These scholars examine how policies shape education, identity, social equity, and cultural preservation in a multilingual country. The introduction focuses on key themes, drawing from various studies to provide the background of this study.

Colonial Legacies and English Dominance

Many studies trace Pakistan's language policies to British colonial rule, where English was used for elite control. Rahman (2002) argues that English remains a tool of power, favoring urban elites and creating class divides. Shamim (2008, 2011) notes that policies push English as essential for development, but this ignores local contexts, leading to poor literacy in English and other

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languages. Manan, David, and Dumanig (2015) show how English-medium policies in low-fee schools fail, as they clash with students' linguistic backgrounds. Ashraf (2023) uses a Bourdieusian lens to explain how English symbolizes prestige, while Urdu ties to national identity, but both sideline regional languages. Durrani (2012) calls for decolonizing education by reducing English's dominance and revising curricula to reflect local cultures. Recent works, like Rukhsana Ali (2025), criticize ongoing colonial mindsets that view English as superior, harming indigenous languages.

Multilingualism and Neglect of Regional Languages

Pakistan's diversity, with over 70 languages, poses challenges for policy. Rahman (2006, 2019) highlights how policies privilege Urdu and English, causing the decline of smaller languages and ethnic tensions, such as the Bengali movement leading to Bangladesh's separation in 1971. Pathan et al. (2018) focus on Sindhi in Sindh, showing how Urdu and English dominance threatens its use in schools. Mansoor (2004) notes regional languages' absence in higher education, limiting access for speakers of Punjabi or Balochi. Abbas and Bidin (2022) criticize policies for marginalizing indigenous languages like Brahui, risking cultural loss. Bughio (2014) describes policy confusion in multilingual societies, while Ayres (2009) compares Pakistan to Indonesia, noting Urdu's unifying role but its role in conflicts. Jamshaid and Naqvi (2021) find elite schools discourage regional languages, reducing students' interest in mother tongues.

Literature Review

Education Policies and Medium of Instruction

Policies often shift between Urdu and English as mediums of instruction (MoI), creating inconsistency. Coleman (2010) emphasizes the government's focus on English for development, but notes disadvantages for non-elite students. Channa (2015) traces English's evolution, highlighting compulsory teaching from grade 1 but inconsistent planning. Sikandar (2017) reviews policies since 1947, criticizing the 2009 multilingual shift for poor implementation. Ashraf et al. (2021) find a gap between policy and classroom practices, where teachers ignore regional languages. Akhunzada (2021) discusses frequent changes disrupting learning, while Jabeen (2023) points to the lack of a cohesive policy aligned with the 1973 Constitution. Manan, David, and Dumanig (2016) observe English dominance in private schools, excluding indigenous languages. Ashraf (2018) notes translanguaging practices in classrooms contradict monoglot policies.

Social Inequality, Access, and Poverty

Language policies widen social gaps. Rahman (2008, 2010) links English to elite jobs, excluding the majority. Tamim (2014) argues English and Urdu dominance limits rural access, deepening poverty. Khan (2012) finds English-medium instruction benefits elites but disadvantages others. Gul, N. et al. (2023) show high-stakes English assessments reinforce biases. Ahmad and Guijun (2022) highlight exclusion in elite schools, while Mesti (2020) notes English's role in job barriers. Khan and Zaki (2022) use discourse analysis to reveal ideologies favoring English in policy documents.

Policy Implementation, Gaps, and Teacher Roles

Implementation remains weak due to resources and training shortages. Rafique et al. (2018) find teachers in rural areas struggle with English policies. Shahzad et al. (2018) critique the 2017

National Education Policy for vagueness. Ammar et al. (2015) discuss medium-of-instruction issues, proposing surveys and culture-based teaching. Khan et al. (2019) suggest bilingual methods for Urdu and English but note challenges including regional languages.

Historical and Political Dimensions

Historical events shape policies. Musa (1996) examines early Urdu promotion, ignoring Bengali, leading to tensions. Bangash (2018) studies 1947–48 debates, showing Urdu's imposition sparked conflicts. Ahmad and Khan (2017) explore provincial autonomy's potential to strengthen regional languages. Jalal (2004) links policy to power dynamics. Zaidi and Zaki (2017) note English's growth despite past controversies. Yang and Du (2024) trace English policy evolution due to globalization. Ali and Kasi (2025) recommend decentralizing policy for inclusion. Javed (2017) provides a historical view of shifts.

Proposed Solutions and Reforms

Scholars propose multilingual or trilingual models. Rahman (1995, 2004, 2008) suggests mother tongues in primary, Urdu in secondary, and English in higher education, applied uniformly. Mansoor (2003, 2005) recommends Urdu and English as options, with regional languages compulsory. Shamim (2017) calls for context-specific curricula and community involvement. Ammar et al. (2015) propose a three-language formula: English and Urdu to master's level, regional to secondary. Khan et al. (2019) advocate bilingual Urdu-English with translations. Roistika (2019) suggests learning from India's three-language formula. Siddiqui (2011, 2012, 2020, 2022) emphasizes pedagogy and local languages in early education. Ahmad et al. (2020) recommend trilingual policies. Tsui and Tollefson (2017) urge supporting regional languages for cohesion.

Similarities and Differences

The studies share strong similarities. Most criticize English dominance and colonial legacies, agreeing they cause inequality and cultural erosion (e.g., Rahman, Shamim, Manan et al.). There is consensus on multilingual solutions, like mother-tongue education in early years, Urdu for unity, and English for global needs (e.g., Rahman, Mansoor, Ammar et al.). Historical links to politics and identity are common, often referencing 1971 events (e.g., Musa, Ayres, Bangash). Implementation gaps, such as teacher training and resources, are repeatedly noted (e.g., Coleman, Rafique et al.).

Differences exist in focus and scope. Some emphasize specific regions, like Sindh (Pathan et al.) or Quetta (Manan et al., 2016), while others are national (Rahman, Shahzad et al.). Historical studies (Musa, Bangash) contrast with contemporary ones (Gul et al., Ali & Kasi). A few compare internationally (Ayres, Roistika, Tsui & Tollefson), but most are Pakistan-centric. Proposals vary slightly: some favor trilingual (Ahmad et al., Mesti), others bilingual (Khan et al., 2019), reflecting debates on including regional languages.

The current study offers a comprehensive language policy for preserving cultural diversity and providing equal opportunities to all language speakers. It introduces cost effective measures like open source resources, teacher training and community driven services and resources. It provide five year plan that addresses gaps in current approaches. It supports provincial autonomy as charted in the constitution (Article 251, see links) of Pakistan.

Methodology

The study employs a self-designed qualitative methodology named Reflective Experiential Policy Synthesis (REPS) to develop the Pakistan Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy (PMILP). I devised the Reflective Experiential Policy Synthesis (REPS) methodology for this study to address shortcomings in previous methods (Lewin, 1946, 2007; Borda, 2001), which often depended on external data or brief surveys, neglecting the deep insights gained from long-term field experience. Traditional approaches, such as action research or participatory methods developed by Paulo Freire (cited by Campos & Anderson, 2021) and Fals-Borda (1987) typically underutilized the researcher's personal expertise, limiting their ability to capture nuanced, context-specific patterns. REPS is unique as it prioritizes the researcher's extensive personal experience—such as my 15 years in education—integrating it with stakeholder input and official policies and document analysis to inform the Pakistan Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy (PMILP), thus filling a critical gap in qualitative research method and policy development.

The study reviews previous and existing research on Pakistan's language policy to identify strengths and weaknesses, focusing on the use of Urdu, English, and minority languages such as Brahui, Khowar, and Torwali across education, government, and other sectors. Personal observations, shaped by approximately 15 years in the field of education, guided this study, providing opportunities to engage with local communities, educators, and policymakers across different provinces. As an Assistant Professor at Quaid-i-Azam University, a federal university in Pakistan, the study benefited from interactions with students from various regions of the country, offering exposure to a culturally diverse population. Data collection involved consulting local communities, educators, and policymakers across provinces to understand linguistic diversity and regional needs, along with reviewing available official resources. These resources include: 1) the Constitution (Article 251), which designates Urdu as the national language, allows English for official use until replaced, and permits provinces to promote regional languages; 2) the National Education Policy (NEP) 2009, which promotes Urdu, English, and a regional language in early schooling with provincial choice for the medium of instruction; and 3) provincial initiatives, such as Balochistan's 2014 policy making regional languages compulsory at the primary level.

Reflective Experiential Policy Synthesis (REPS): A Methodology Design

The study develops the Pakistan Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy (PMILP) using a systematic method “Reflective Experiential Policy Synthesis” (REPS).

Core Principles

REPS is grounded in five key principles to ensure rigor, ethics, and applicability:

1. **Experiential Centrality:** Insights from extensive field experience (e.g., over 5 years) are treated as primary data, rigorously scrutinized to mitigate biases and ensure validity.
2. **Inclusivity and Participation:** Engaging diverse stakeholders—communities, educators, and policymakers—is essential to validate and enrich expert insights, promoting equity.
3. **Evidence Integration:** Experiential data are triangulated with scholarly literature, policy documents, and qualitative inputs to create a balanced foundation.
4. **Ethical Reflection:** Researchers must transparently address biases, conflicts of interest, and ethical considerations, such as informed consent, to uphold accountability.
5. **Action-Oriented Outcomes:** The methodology delivers practical solutions, such as policy frameworks or amendments, with mechanisms for iteration and evaluation.

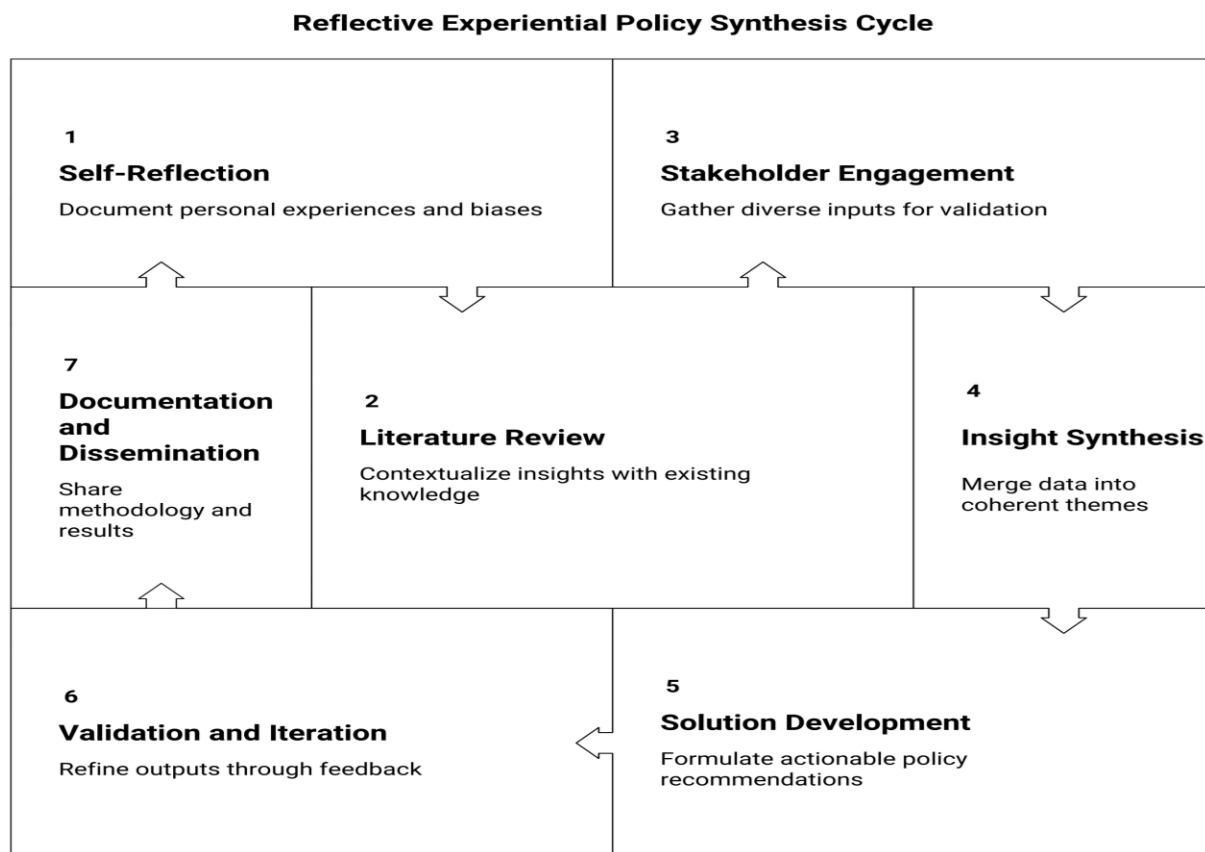


Figure 1. Shows step by step process of Reflective Experiential Policy Synthesis (REPS)

Step-by-Step Process

REPS follows a seven-step iterative process, designed to be flexible for individual or collaborative use. Each step includes objectives, methods, and outputs to guide implementation.

1. Self-Reflection and Expertise Mapping

Objective: Document the researcher's experiential foundation to inform policy development. **Methods:** Create a reflective journal or timeline capturing field experiences, stakeholder interactions, and key observations (e.g., challenges in implementing language policies). Use self-reflective queries like, "What linguistic inequities have I consistently observed?" Conduct a self-audit to identify biases. **Outputs:** An expertise profile (e.g., 5-10 pages) summarizing insights, such as patterns of minority language marginalization in education.

2. Literature and Document Review

Objective: Contextualize experiential insights with existing knowledge to identify gaps. **Methods:** Review key sources, including academic literature and policy documents (e.g., Pakistan's Constitution Article 251, National Education Policy 2009). Compare these with personal observations to highlight discrepancies or opportunities, focusing on a manageable set of relevant sources. **Outputs:** A gap analysis matrix comparing documented policies with experiential realities.

3. Stakeholder Engagement and Data Collection

Objective: Gather qualitative inputs to validate and complement experiential data.

Methods: Conduct semi-structured interviews, focus groups, or observations with 10-20 stakeholders (e.g., educators, community leaders, policymakers), selected purposively from the researcher's networks. Ensure ethical practices, including anonymity and informed consent.

Outputs: Thematic summaries or transcribed notes integrating stakeholder perspectives with experiential insights.

4. Insight Synthesis

Objective: Combine experiential, documentary, and stakeholder data into cohesive themes.

Methods: Apply thematic analysis or mind mapping to identify patterns (e.g., synthesizing observations of language marginalization with policy gaps to propose the “3+1” language formula, which balances three regional languages with one national language).

Outputs: A synthesis report (e.g., 10-15 pages) outlining key themes and preliminary policy ideas.

5. Solution Development

Objective: Formulate actionable policy recommendations or frameworks.

Methods: Develop proposals, such as PMILP's five-year implementation timeline, ensuring alignment with provincial autonomy and cost-effective strategies (e.g., leveraging open-source resources). Justify solutions based on synthesized insights.

Outputs: Draft policy documents or implication statements with clear rationales.

6. Validation and Iteration

Objective: Refine outputs through external feedback to enhance credibility.

Methods: Share drafts with 5-10 experts or stakeholders for review, conducting 2-3 iteration cycles. Adjust based on feedback (e.g., incorporating cultural preservation measures), using criteria like feasibility and inclusivity.

Outputs: Revised policy outputs with a documented feedback log.

7. Documentation and Dissemination

Objective: Share the methodology and findings to encourage adoption and impact.

Methods: Compile a comprehensive REPS report with templates (e.g., reflection guides) and publish through journals, workshops, or online platforms. Track impact via metrics like policy adoption rates.

Outputs: A methodology guide and case study (e.g., REPS application to PMILP).

REPS offers a robust, reflexive framework for crafting PMILP, blending experiential wisdom with empirical rigor to address Pakistan's linguistic diversity. Its adaptability makes it a valuable tool for policy development in other multilingual contexts.

Pakistan Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy (PMILP)

This study contributes in research on language policy by presenting a multilingual inclusive language policy for Pakistan that is aligned with the constitution (Article 125, see links) of Pakistan. Unlike prior studies, it focuses on education, government, public service, media and technology.

Pakistan Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy

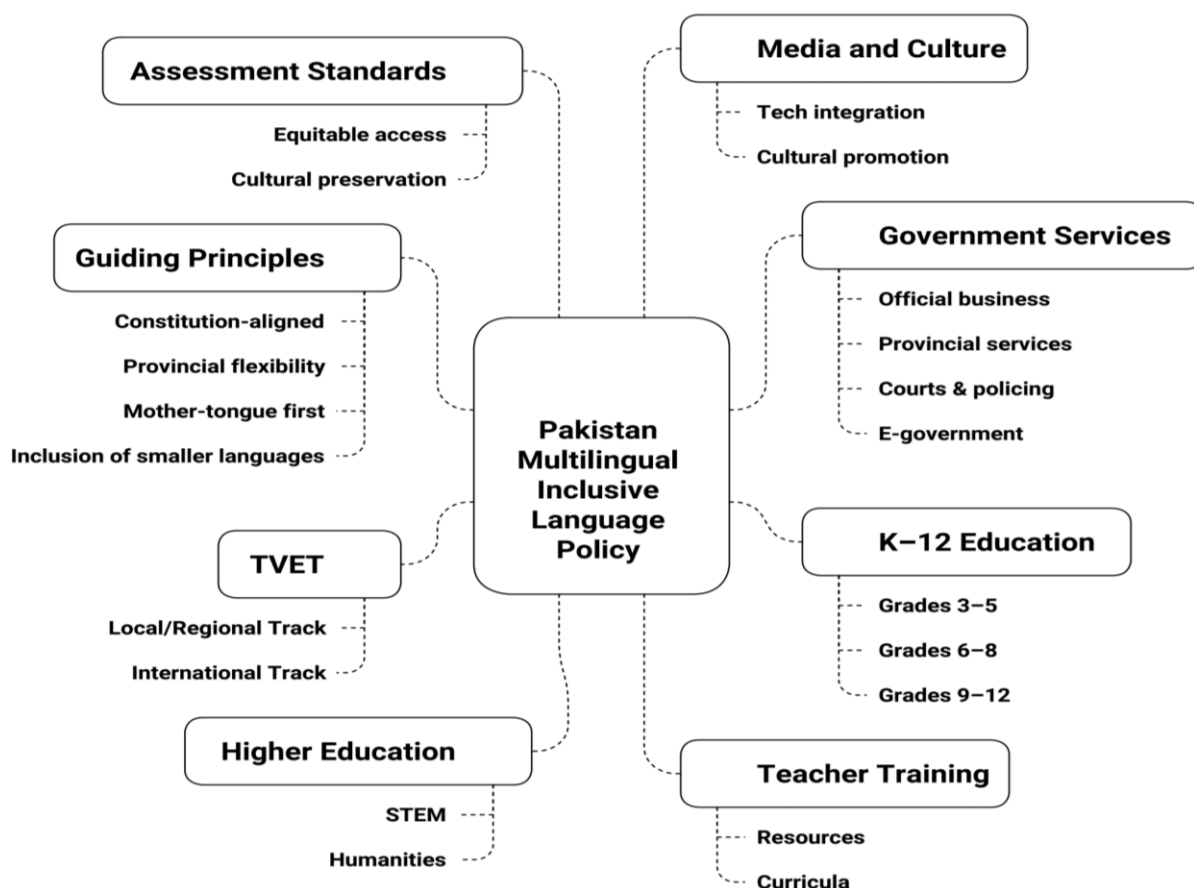


Figure 2. Shows components of Pakistan Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy

1. Pakistan Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy (PMILP)

1.1 Guiding Principles

- **Constitution-aligned:** Urdu remains the national and primary official language; English continues for official use where needed; provinces promote major and smaller minority languages (e.g., Brahui, Khowar, Torwali, Wakhi, Kalasha, Gujjari, Kohistani).
- **Provincial flexibility:** Education is devolved; provinces map and prioritize major and smaller minority languages per district/tehsil, building on initiatives like Balochistan's 2014 mother-tongue bill (see links).
- **Mother-tongue first, then add Urdu + English:** Prioritizes smaller minority languages in early schooling, followed by Urdu and English, to preserve linguistic diversity.
- **Inclusion of smaller languages:** Develops resources and curricula for smaller minority languages to ensure equitable access and cultural preservation.
- **Parity of prestige:** Builds academic registers and materials in Urdu and all regional/minority languages alongside English to prevent domain loss.

1.2 The K–12 “3+1” Formula (Major regional language + Urdu +English + Optional Fourth i.e. Smaller Minority Language)

1.2.1 Pre-primary–Grade 2

- Medium of Instruction (MoI): Major regional or smaller minority language (M/SML) based on district/tehsil linguistic mapping.
- Subjects:
 - Urdu as a daily subject from Grade 1.
 - English as oral/early-literacy subject from Grade 2.
 - Math and Environmental Studies (EVS) taught in M/SML with Urdu reinforcement.
- Materials: Community-developed big-book readers and graded primers in M/SML + Urdu, using open-source templates to reduce costs.

1.2.2 Grades 3–5

- MoI: Bilingual M/SML + Urdu (gradual transition).
- English: As a subject with A1→A2 targets (CEFR-aligned).
CEFR (The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)
- Optional 4th language: Another regional or minority language (e.g., Khowar in Chitral, Torwali in Swat) to support local diversity.
- Assessment split: 60% content mastery (any approved MoI), 40% language-aware rubrics, including M/SML proficiency.

1.2.3 Grades 6–8

- MoI: Trilingual model by subject:
 - STEM: Increasing English exposure (open-source dual-language glossaries; English textbooks with Urdu/M/SML support).
 - Social studies & Islamiyat: Urdu (with M/SML readings where available).
- Targets: Urdu B1, English A2–B1, M/SML B1+ (reading & writing).
- Electives: Literature and culture in smaller minority languages (e.g., Wakhi poetry, Kalasha history).

1.2.4 Grades 9–12

- Student track choice (with common core):
 - A) National Track: MoI Urdu for social sciences/humanities; English for STEM.
 - B) International Track: MoI English across subjects; Urdu compulsory; M/SML elective.
 - C) Heritage Track: Selected subjects in M/SML (e.g., Brahui literature, Kohistani history), STEM in English, civics in Urdu.
- Exit benchmarks: Urdu B2, English B2, M/SML B1 minimum.

1.3 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

- Student route choice (with common core):
 - **A) Local/Regional Track:** MoI in major regional language or smaller minority languages (e.g., Brahui, Khowar, Torwali) or Urdu, designed for students seeking training to serve within Pakistan or their local region. Training focuses on practical skills for local industries (e.g., agriculture, livestock, small-scale manufacturing) with materials in local languages to ensure accessibility.
 - **B) International Track:** MoI in English for students aiming to work abroad, aligning with global industry standards (e.g., IT, hospitality, engineering). English medium materials and certifications (e.g., National Vocational Qualifications Framework) support international employability.

- Common elements: Both tracks include Urdu as a compulsory subject to maintain national cohesion; optional electives in smaller minority languages (e.g., Kalasha culture, Gujjari crafts) to promote cultural preservation.
- Materials: Open-source, community-developed dual-language glossaries and training manuals (Urdu↔major/smaller minority languages; Urdu↔English) to minimize costs and ensure relevance.
- Assessment: Knowledge based assessments to accommodate both tracks.

1.4 Higher Education

- STEM, professional schools and federal universities: English MoI retained for global employability and access to international literature, ensuring alignment with international academic and industry standards.
- Humanities and social sciences in provincial universities: Universities will continue offering existing programs, such as English literature, sociology, international relations, and anthropology, with English as the medium of instruction. Alongside these, new 1-2 year programs in the same subjects will be offered with a flexible medium of instruction, prioritizing Urdu, for students weak in English. These programs will include supplementary materials in major languages (e.g., Punjabi, Saraiki, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi) and smaller minority languages (e.g., Brahui, Khowar, Torwali, Wakhi, Kalasha, Gujjari, Kohistani), tailored to the languages spoken in each province. These programs are designed for students pursuing local careers, promoting inclusivity and behavioral change through education
- National Translation Fund: Translate 150 core texts into Urdu and priority M/SMLs over 5 years, using crowd sourced and open-source platforms to minimize costs.

1.5 Government, Justice and Public Services

- Official business: Urdu-first with authenticated English versions where required.
- Provincial services: Include major and smaller minority languages on forms, signage, and helplines (district-wise mapping), using digital templates for cost efficiency.
- Courts & policing: Train community volunteers as interpreters for M/SMLs; translate key documents (e.g., FIR summaries, court notices) into local languages.
- E-government: Websites toggle between Urdu, English, and district-specific M/SMLs; use open-source translation tools for plain-language standards.

1.6 Teacher Training and Resources

- Pre-service: B.Ed. programs include multilingual pedagogy, early literacy in M/SMLs, and STEM-specific English, with modules co-developed by local communities.
- In-service: Online bridge modules for MoI transitions, leveraging free platforms (e.g., YouTube, Moodle) to train teachers in M/SMLs.
- Resource hubs: Provincial boards collaborate with local linguistic communities to create low-cost, open-source graded readers and glossaries (Urdu↔M/SML; Urdu↔English).

1.7 Assessment and Standards

- National Proficiency Framework (NPF-PK): CEFR-mapped levels for English descriptors for speaking, reading, and writing. However, Language-Independent Assessment will be

used for National Language (Urdu), a major regional language or smaller minority language.

- Exams: Knowledge based assessment exams; separate proficiency exams for M/SMLs reported on transcripts (e.g. Language-Independent Assessment).
- School quality audits: Verify MoI fidelity, use of M/SML materials, and inclusive pedagogy, conducted by trained local educators to reduce costs.

1.8 Media, Culture and Tech

- Broadcast quotas: Minimum 30% content in major and smaller minority languages on public broadcasters; use community-driven subtitling/dubbing to lower costs.
- Ed-tech: Free digital libraries of M/SML readers; open-source text-to-speech tools for Urdu and M/SMLs; community-developed keyboards/fonts for local scripts.
- Cultural funds: Micro-grants for children's literature and science explainers in M/SMLs, prioritizing endangered languages like Kalasha or Wakhi.

1.9 Inclusion of Smaller Minority Languages

- Community engagement: Partner with local linguistic communities to map and prioritize smaller minority languages in education and services.
- Digital resources: Develop open-access M/SML materials (e.g., primers, apps) through crowd sourcing and partnerships with NGOs to minimize costs.
- Endangered language preservation: Support electives and cultural programs in smaller languages (e.g., Gujjari, Kohistani) to promote vitality.

1.10 Implementation Timeline (Illustrative, 5 Years)

- Year 1: Map major and smaller minority languages by district; issue NPF-PK; pilot Grade 1–2 M/SML materials in 20 districts using open-source platforms.
- Year 2–3: Scale to all districts for Grades 1–5; implement bilingual MoI; train teachers via online modules; launch micro-grants for M/SML literature.
- Year 4: Increase English in middle school STEM; pilot dual-track higher education courses; deliver 60 translated texts via crowdsourcing.
- Year 5: Align exam boards with NPF-PK; enforce multilingual civil service standards; deploy nationwide multilingual portals and forms.

1.11 Accountability and Costs

- KPIs: Proportion of schools using M/SML materials; reading fluency in M/SML & Urdu by Grade 3; English A2 by Grade 5; literacy in smaller minority languages; community satisfaction.
- Cost-effective levers: Redirect textbook subsidies to open-source M/SML readers; use federal-provincial co-financing for translation fund; leverage NGO partnerships and community volunteers for material development and interpreter training.

1.12 Why This Fits Pakistan's Policy Reality

- Maintains Urdu's constitutional primacy and English's role while empowering provinces to promote major regional language and smaller minority languages.

- Builds on NEP 2009’s trilingual direction (see. links) and provincial initiatives (e.g., Balochistan 2014, for details see links) by prioritizing smaller minority languages in education and services.
- Addresses Urdu/English dominance (for details see. Ashraf, 2023) by creating protected spaces and low-cost resources for smaller languages, ensuring cultural preservation.
- Provides a unified, cost-effective national framework with provincial flexibility, closing the gap in Pakistan’s fragmented language policy.

Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy (PMILP) does not explicitly specify a fixed fourth language for the “3+1” model (a major regional language or smaller minority language, Urdu, English, and an optional fourth language). The policy mentions the “3+1” model as consisting of a major regional language or smaller minority language, Urdu, English, and an optional fourth language, but it leaves the choice of the fourth language flexible. It suggests examples like another regional or minority language (e.g., Khowar in Chitral or Torwali in Swat) depending on the local context, as seen in sections like the K–12 “3+1” Formula (e.g., under Grades 3–5 with the optional fourth language). This flexibility allows provinces or districts to decide the fourth language based on their linguistic diversity and needs, rather than assigning a specific one. The policy’s focus is on adaptability, letting communities select a language that best supports local culture and education goals alongside the core three languages.

Analysis of PMILP’s Scope

The Pakistan Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy (PMILP) is a broader language policy for Pakistan, extending beyond education to encompass government, public services, media, and technology, while prioritizing the inclusion of smaller minority languages (e.g., Brahui, Khowar, Torwali, Wakhi, Kalasha, Gujjari, Kohistani). Below, I analyze whether PMILP is primarily an educational language policy or a comprehensive national language policy, using simple academic English to align with the study’s focus. This analysis clarifies the policy’s scope and provides a rationale for its design, addressing its specificity.

Educational Components

- Core Focus: PMILP’s “3+1” formula (major regional language + Urdu + English + optional fourth language i.e. smaller minority language) structures language use in K–12 education, with specific guidelines for medium of instruction (MoI), subjects, and assessments. For example, smaller minority languages are prioritized in early grades (Pre-primary–Grade 2), with bilingual MoI in Grades 3–5 and trilingual tracks in Grades 9–12 (National, International, Heritage).
- Higher Education and TVET: The policy includes dual-track teaching in humanities (Urdu/English) and micro-grants for course packs in smaller minority languages, ensuring educational support for linguistic diversity.
- Teacher Training and Materials: PMILP emphasizes multilingual pedagogy, cost-effective open-source resources, and community-developed materials for smaller languages, reinforcing its educational focus.
- Assessment: The National Proficiency Framework (NPF-PK) and knowledge based assessments support proficiency in smaller minority languages, aligning with educational goals.

Broader Policy Components

- **Government and Public Services:** PMILP extends to official business (Urdu-first with English where needed), provincial services (forms, signage, helplines in major regional language /smaller minority languages), and e-government (websites toggling to district-specific languages). Community volunteers serve as interpreters in courts and policing, ensuring accessibility for smaller language speakers.
- **Media and Culture:** The policy mandates a 30% broadcast quota for major regional language and smaller minority languages on public broadcasters, micro-grants for cultural content (e.g., children’s literature, science explainers), and open-source ed-tech tools (e.g., text-to-speech, keyboards) for smaller languages.
- **Inclusion of Smaller Minority Languages:** A dedicated section promotes community engagement, digital resources, and cultural programs for endangered languages, addressing linguistic diversity beyond education.
- **Implementation and Accountability:** The 5-year timeline and KPIs (e.g., literacy in smaller languages, community satisfaction) apply across sectors, ensuring a cohesive national approach.

Comparison to Pakistan’s Current Policy

Current Policy: Pakistan’s language policy, per Article 251 and NEP 2009 (see links), primarily focuses on education, advocating a trilingual approach (mother tongue, Urdu, English) but with inconsistent implementation and limited support for smaller minority languages. It has minimal provisions for government, public services, or media, and no clear mechanisms for smaller languages like Brahui or Torwali. Inclusivity and Cost-Effectiveness are its key features. Additionally, this multi-sector approach contrasts with Pakistan’s current policy, which is primarily educational and fragmented, lacking support for smaller languages in non-educational domains. It further extends to: 1. **Government and Public Services:** By integrating smaller minority languages into forms, signage, helplines, and e-government, PMILP ensures linguistic access in civic life. 2. **Media and Culture:** Broadcast quotas and cultural funds promote smaller languages’ visibility and vitality, addressing cultural preservation. 3. **Technology:** Open-source tools (e.g., digital libraries, keyboards) support smaller languages in modern contexts. 4. **Inclusion:** Community engagement and targeted support for endangered languages ensure equitable representation across all sectors.

Conclusion

The Pakistan Multilingual Inclusive Language Policy (PMILP) offers a comprehensive and inclusive framework to address Pakistan’s linguistic diversity, moving beyond the limitations of the current English-centric and education-focused language policy. By integrating major regional languages (e.g., Punjabi, Saraiki, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi) and smaller minority languages (e.g., Brahui, Khowar, Torwali, Wakhi, Kalasha, Gujjari, Kohistani) across education, government, public services, media, and technology, PMILP promotes equitable access and cultural preservation for all linguistic communities. In higher education, PMILP retains English as the medium of instruction for STEM and professional schools to ensure global employability, while introducing new 1-2 year programs in humanities and social sciences in provincial universities, prioritizing Urdu to support students weak in English. These programs, supplemented by open source materials in major regional languages and smaller minority languages tailored to provincial diversity, use knowledge-based assessments to prioritize critical thinking over language proficiency. Cost-effective strategies, such as community-developed resources, online teacher

training, and crowd sourced translations, ensure the policy's feasibility. By aligning with Pakistan's constitutional commitment to linguistic diversity and provincial autonomy, PMILP fosters transformative education that drives behavioral change, ensuring that language is a tool for inclusion rather than a barrier. This policy sets a foundation for a more cohesive and equitable society, empowering all Pakistanis to engage meaningfully in education and public life.

If we accept that the main goal of education is to bring about transformation, encourage critical thinking, and develop new behaviors rather than focusing solely on mastering English, then language should serve as a tool rather than an obstacle. A system that supports learning in multiple languages while also providing opportunities to improve English aligns better with the true purpose of education. The solution is not a choice between "English or Urdu" but rather flexible, multi-layered systems that offer education in local languages, gradually introduce English, and adjust the teaching language to match students' goals, whether they aim for global or local careers. **Policy-Level Innovation** encourages the creation of dual-medium higher education institutions, where some programs are taught entirely in English and others in Urdu or regional languages based on student needs and career outcomes. While national research can continue to prioritize English for global impact, teaching for inclusivity can effectively use local languages. **Rethinking "Success" in Education** recognizes that not all students aspire to become teachers, professors, or work abroad; some seek practical, local applications. Institutions could allow students to submit work in Urdu or regional languages, especially in applied fields, social sciences, teacher training, and technical programs, while providing English pathways for those pursuing global opportunities.

List of links (PMILP)

1. Constitution (Article 251): Urdu as national language; English for official use until replaced; provinces may promote regional languages.
<https://pakistanconstitutionlaw.com/article-251-national-language>
<https://republicpolicy.com/article-251-of-the-constitution-a-protection-for-national-and-regional-languages/>
<https://cppg.fccollege.edu.pk/language-under-constitution/>
2. NEP 2009: Urdu, English, and a regional language in early schooling; provincial MoI choice.
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3. Provincial initiatives: Balochistan (2014) compulsory regional language at primary level.
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