

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC HINDRANCES IN EMPLOYING ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN PAKISTANI EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

English as an international language, is being used as a medium of communication (EMC) and medium of instruction (EMI) and becoming a central phenomenon for English pedagogy throughout the globe. Even the administration in elite schools of Pakistan compel their teaching staff to use English as EMI as well as EMC. But it is obvious that most of the students and teachers are observed to communicate in their local languages. The current study was conducted at govt. college Okara and University of Lahore to examine what socio-economic factors limit teachers to give instructions and doing communication in English in their teaching-learning process. A quantitative research methodology was employed to explore the hidden socio-economic factors that affect the use of English during their English-only class-rooms. A total of 160 students from both government and private institutions were involved in this study. The participants were students of 2 native speakers (Urdu and Punjabi) with different level of proficiency of English language. A close ended questionnaire using 5-scale Likert scale was employed by the researchers. This questionnaire was generated through Google Form and its link was distributed through WhatsApp and using some other social media apps. For statistical analysis, the researchers used IBM SPSS 26.0.0.0. The researchers demonstrated that students are willing to communicate in English language, but there are some external factors that create hindrance in their use of English in their classroom activities. Some of these external factors are academic, social and economic which are largely dependent on their needs, desires, assumptions and beliefs. The study may give an insight to the education policy makers to work on the solution of problems related to the use of English as a medium of instructions and medium of communication in English-only classes in Pakistani context where most of the language learners' and teachers are native speakers. It may also be helpful for the educators and teachers to understand the common needs of students that compel the students to speak their native languages instead of using English in their English-only class-rooms.

Key Words: under-develop country, socio-economic factors, medium of instruction, medium of communication, hindrance.

1. Introduction:

Pakistan is a polyglot and multiethnic society where 72 languages are spoken (Lewis, 2009). The education system in Pakistan is established on two governing languages: Urdu as a National language with 6% of its native speakers and English as an Official language. English is also regarded as a symbol of prestige in Pakistani society (Ammar et, al., 2015). The system of

education in Pakistan is classified into Public and Private sectors. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) (2023) highlights that 44% on average students are enrolled in private schools (McDowell, 2025). 11% of the population in Pakistan is found to be proficient in using English language as a medium of instruction (Ullah and Khan, 2023). These private schools are further divided into elite and non-elite schools. These private schools charge fee ranging from Rs. 1500 to 20,000. On the other hand, the public schools are at government backed, and charges a fee of almost Rs. 20. (Anrabi et, al., 2006). Even in private schools, prestige is given to English over Urdu language. All the delivered material in private schools are established and published in English and here English serves as the Medium of Instruction (MOI) (Fareed, 2019).

English as a medium of instruction (EMI) is demarcated as the practice of English in teaching academic subjects in states or dominions where the native language of their speakers is not English (Macaro, 2020, p.534). It is a phenomenon in non-Anglophonic world, which has been harmonized by an evolution in research productivity and is an established ground of study. The purpose of EMI is to appeal international students for brain gain and to propose international capabilities to local students to avert brain drain by keeping them in their homelands and institutions (Hebraize, et, al., 2019). EMI became a significant component in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) due to internationalization of higher education. This internationalization of EMI is considered to create the marginalization of the local languages. English is considered as a language of science, technology, education, commerce, and international diplomacy. This standard move is in rise, with weighty influence on policy making with regard to English as a medium of instructions, still English as a Second Language (ESL) has long been a theme of discussion in European and Asian countries. EMI is helpful in improving the proficiency of English language, though they find it difficult to comprehend even English lectures in the classrooms (Tsou, et, al., 2017).

In Pakistan, almost all public and private colleges use English as a foreign language as their medium of instruction. It is equally difficult for both teachers and students to comprehend ideas and concept in English. English language is considered as a trademark in science and technology as well as in higher education institutions. Nearly all private and public colleges use English medium of instructions for science subjects in Punjab Province, Pakistan. As English is foreign language in Punjab, it is difficult for teachers and students to understand concepts in this language. It is considered that English language is essential for progress in science and technology as well as in higher education. Therefore, this research is undertaken to determine the perceptions of teachers and students about English medium instructions for teaching Science. In public schools, where Urdu language is used as a medium of instruction, there is also laid an emphasis on the use of English language. Elite universities in Pakistan such as LUMS and Beaconhouse National university, they rigorously use English as EMI. Even though, the salary package of public sector university teachers is about four times higher than the salaries of private university teachers. But the quality of education provided by public universities is below the average, and the teachers due to their Urdu medium schooling face problems in English Language competency (Andrabi et al. 2006).

Teacher's language competence plays a crucial role in policy makings, brining innovations and affecting the change in all types of educational institutions. This competence also confirms the quality education. In classroom management, the language learners prefer teachers with proficient English language (Mahboob, 2002). There is also given a preference by the parents that their children learn English language (Nel and Müller, 2010). Though, a teacher with significant English Language proficiency in Pakistan is deliberated as an unpredictable service at college level.

Although they show expertise in their foci and disciplines, but also they have to deal with English Language related multiple challenges in classrooms (Gul and Aziz, 2015). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to measure the impact of EMI and to explore the hindrances that Pakistani college teachers and students face, while teaching and learning their respected courses and at the end, the stratagems they use to flabbergasted the language barriers.

1.2. Research Questions:

Research questions of this study are;

1. What is the impact of using English as a medium of instruction in Pakistani colleges?
2. How impactful are social and economic factors on EMI?
3. How can EMI helpful for teachers and learners to improve their teaching and learning process?

1.3. Research Objectives:

Research objectives of this study are;

1. To find out the impact of EMI in Pakistani college.
2. To find out the social and economic impact on EMI.
3. To find out the tendency of EMI in improving the teaching and learning process.

2. Literature Review:

In Pakistan, the education ministry designated Urdu as a medium of instruction in all the public educational institutions. On the other side of the coin, the private educational institutions neglected Urdu and are using English as their medium of instruction. It was for the first time in 1980s in the history of Pakistan that the government supported English to be taught from class 6, while the main focus was on the use of Urdu language in educational institutions. Though in 1988-1989- and 1993-1996, the emphasis was changed as it was declared to teach English from class 1 in all fully government-supported schools (Rahman, 1997). This change in language policy was not implied in educational institutions until the new government took the charge in 2001, and later it supported and formulated the National Education Policy 2009 (Rahman, 1996).

English has gain the status of extensively read, taught and spoken language of the world. English as a medium of instruction gain a central position in pedagogy. In Pakistan, English is used along with Urdu but its learning is viewed as a need of society (Mansoor, 2003). He conducted a nation-wide survey of private and public sector colleges and universities from the capital cities of Pakistan. This survey observed the learner's educational background, language attitudes, accessibility and quality of materials, learner's difficulties and establishment of English-support program and the language outcomes. The results revealed a marked difference between public and private sector's students in relation to socio-economic status and other factors. According to the research report of British Council (2013), teachers are not fully equipped to deliver their lectures in English language.

Saeed, et, al., (2012) designed a study to investigate teachers and students' perception about English as a medium of instruction while teaching and learning Science and Mathematics. The findings suggested that though the teachers experience problems in EMI because of their language inefficiencies and students' lack of required language skills, there is a need for change in the use of medium of instruction. But these language inadequacies must not disturb the teacher's aptitude to convey the subject matter and student's ability to comprehend it. Tahir, el, al., (2017) investigated the influence of EMI on students' failure in elite schools of Lahore. The main purpose of conducting this research was to explore that how change in medium of instruction actually

affects the academic accomplishments of students? The results revealed that the change in medium of instruction actually works in increasing or decreasing the students rate of dropout.

Asif, et, al., (2018) conducted a study to examine the variables that narrow down the ability of students and teachers to communicate in English. For this purpose, they employed a qualitative research method to find out the variables that effect on the students and teachers' cognitive ability of using English in Only-English classrooms. The respondents were both teachers and students of four mother tongues having different level of proficiency in English language. The results confirmed that students mostly like to connect in English, however they admit some crucial elements that prohibited them from interacting in English language in their classrooms. For this, there are some essential factors like linguistic competency, individual, social, emotional and established principles, conventions, needs, and desires.

Kareva, et, al., (2018) studied to evaluate the social and economic effect on students' proficiency of using English in English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms in Dubai. This study measured the impact of 3 independent variables such as parents' education, their financial status and occupation on dependent variable- English language proficiency at secondary level. The findings revealed that theses independent variables exert an impact on English language enactment.

Fareed, et, al., (2022) designed a study to explore Pakistani teachers' problems and strategies employed by them to tackle the challenges regarding English as a medium of instruction. They found that the teachers of Science subjects face teething troubles in teaching because of the glitches connected with their basic English skills. To overcome these problems, they often use dictionaries, synonyms and sometimes consult with their seniors and use some subject-related footings in Urdu for the better understanding of their students. The lack in English language skills, the more will be trainings arranged for the development of English language skills to improve the didactic process. Noori, et, al., (2025) conducted a case study to determine the social and economic factors that effect on students' enthusiasm to learn English. The finding highlights that the overall encouragement of learning English is low and in this case the least stirring factors are parental reassurance and the supposed affluence of learning. The use and liking of English through technologies is considered the moderate motivation. The key obstructions in this regard are economic dependency, lack of sufficient resources and delimited opportunities.

Till now, there is no study which actually scrutinized the impact of social and economic factors on using English as a medium of instruction in Pakistan. The only related studies are conducted by Kareva, et, al., (2018), Fareed, et, al., (2022), Noori, et, al., (2025) which laid emphasis on social and economic related factors to bring changes in English language skills. Though their studies are conducted in different geographical contexts, no such study is done in Pakistani context. Therefore, this study will fill the research gap by examining the social and economic factors that cause obstacles in using English as a medium of instructions in Pakistani educational institutions.

3. Theoretical framework:

In this study, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposed by Ryan and Deci (2017) is used as a theoretical framework to give an insight about how social and economic factors effect on students' learning behavior when English is used as a medium of instruction. It categorizes three major universal psychological demands such as autonomy, linguistic competence and optimal impetus across the cultures to make it appropriate for understanding the relation between social and economic factors in Pakistani context.

The theoretical framework gives an in-depth consideration of the energetic relationship between social and economic constrictions. This study offers an insight to interpret the variables that pose

hindrances in students' leaning when employ English as a medium of instruction. Furthermore, it gives endorsement for policymakers of language to generate conditions that enhance these requirements, which in turn enlighten students' learning consequences in Pakistan.

4. Research Methodology:

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) formulated by David Marsh in 1994 is employed as a research model. CLIL is a way to embroil different methods where English is used as a medium of instruction for non-native speakers of English language. It exerts its impact on learners' language acquisition, academic enactment, and societal inconsistencies.

This study is of descriptive nature where information is gathered from students of public and private colleges of District Okara and District Lahore through survey technique. The study engaged a simple random sampling method, pursuing the available students' population due to the viability of comprising all available students at the time of data collection. This method enhanced involvement and guaranteed an appropriate sample size, even though the perplexing educational environment in Pakistan. The selection of these two universities was based on their diverse students' population and their role as major educational institutions in Okara and Lahore respectively. Due to their multicultural configuration, and students' belongings from different social and economic backgrounds, the findings provide a valuable insight on using English as a medium of instruction on their learning. As the study highlights two institutions, one is public and the other is private, the results should be generalized to other regions, especially those with different educational organizations or with different social and economic settings.

The population for this study were 160 post graduate's students whose major subject is English Language and Literature at the department of govt. college Okara and University of Lahore. The researcher delivered 160 copies of questionnaire along with consent form but only 140 copies were returned. The respondents were 50% male and 50% female students of University of Okara and University of Lahore. The respondents' ages at the time of data collection were ranging from 22-25, 26-29 and 30-33.

Table 4.1. Sample of Universities and Students.

	Sectors	Universities	Students (female)	Students (male)	Total students
Okara	Punjab	University of Okara	40	40	80
Lahore	Public	University of Lahore	40	40	80
	Total	2	80	80	160

For this purpose, a close ended questionnaire served as the main tool for data collection. The questionnaire was comprised on getting information about English teachers and their teaching methodologies, language curriculum, English language learning related books and attitudes towards it, personal interest and management issues of universities, as educational factors, whereas English fretfulness, family and societal influence as well as financial constancy, access to educational assets served the function of social and economic variables. The proclamations of research questions were arranged on five point Likert scale ranging from 1=Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neutral, 4= disagree to 5=strongly disagree.

Table 4.2. classification of items in Questionnaire.

Variables	No. of Items
Educational Factors	
Demographic Information	i-ix
English teachers and teaching methodologies	1-5
Course books and Language Curriculum	6-8
Attitudes towards English Language	9-11
Innate Ability	12-14
Social and Economic Factors	
English Discomfort	15-17
Family Encouragement	18-20
Societal Inducement	21-25
financial stability	26-28
access to educational resources	29-30

The data were analyzed by using SPSS 26. The data were then scrutinized by means of Mean and Standard Deviation and Cronbach Alpha. The data were then scrutinized by means of Mean and Standard Deviation. The Chronbach's coefficient alpha (α) is used to measure the internal consistency between the variables. Overall, our variables presented values ranging between 0.664-0.963. Questionnaire has enough internal consistency and the alpha value is greater than the acceptable value ranging from 0.60-0.70.

Table. 4.3. Variables internal consistency of student's questionnaire

Factors	Items	Chronbach's Alpha	Status
Academic Factors	14	.664	Acceptable
Social factors	10	.926	Acceptable
Economic factors	10	.919	Acceptable

Bartlett's test of sphericity was statistically significant, as the chi-square is approximately 2564.463 with 231 degrees of freedom, which is significant at 0.05 Level of significance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, KMO=.892, was also larger than 0.50. Hence factor analysis is considered to conform the factorability of the matrix.

Table. 4.4. KMO and Bartlett's Test of Student's questionnaire

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.892
Approx. Chi-Square		2564.463
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	231
	Sig.	.000

5. Data Analysis and Findings:

Data collected through closed ended questionnaire is analyzed and interpreted which get information about public and private Universities of Okara and Lahore and their students enrolled in (2024-2026).

Table 5.1. Academic factors

Questionnaire Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig	0.05 P	Prediction
English is used by the teacher during class	2.59	.695	10.56	.000	<0.05	Sig
Urdu language is allowed by the English teacher	2.00	1.069	.070	.936	>0.05	Not sig
Students are encouraged to speak English in class	1.79	1.016	-2.00	.048	<0.05	Sig
English is used outside the classroom by English teacher	1.92	1.025	-.723	.462	>0.05	Not sig
English teacher motivates the students to involve in discussion in English language	1.69	1.034	-3.24	.000	<0.05	Sig
Language curriculum give power to students speaking skills	1.59	1.029	-3.76	.000	<0.05	Sig
Language curriculum has exercised to students speaking skills	2.26	1.010	2.85	.003	<0.05	Sig
Language curriculum give same level of importance to English writing/reading	2.23	1.040	2.86	.006	<0.05	Sig

I like my English classroom	1.75	1.030	2.79	.000	<0.05	Sig
I like to improve my English language	2.24	1.025	2.76	.002	<0.05	Sig
I feel excited when I hear English language	1.69	1.033	2.72	.004	<0.05	Sig
I am fluent in speaking English	2.27	1.01	2.86	.003	<0.05	Sig
I can speak English but reluctant to speak it in public	1.76	1.03	2.82	.000	<0.05	Sig
I can express my opinion in English during class discussion	2.26	1.02	2.77	.002	<0.05	Sig

The above table demonstrates some academic factors that exerts its impact on using English as a medium of instruction at post graduate level. These factors are teachers teaching techniques, learning curriculum, syllabus, student's personal ability and learning attitudes towards English. The value of $p > 0.05$ indicate that these factors are not significant while the value of $p < 0.05$ is highly significant.

Table social factors

I get confused when I speak English in University	1.77	1.02	2.90	.000	<0.05	Sig
I think my friends laugh when I speak in English	1.78	1.30	-2.46	.002	<0.05	Sig
My classmates speak English better than me	1.89	1.70	-1.20	.012	>0.05	Not sig
My parents are educated and speak English	1.18	.970	-.088	.046	>0.05	Not sig
My parents discuss family matters in English	1.90	1.05	-.088	.056	<0.05	Not sig
My parents watch English	2.0.	1.36	-2.82	.839	>0.05	Not sig

news channels like BBC and CNN						
My family and friends encourage me to speak English	3.00	.281	-2.90	.938	>0.05	Not sig
My neighbors speak English	2.87	1.56	-2.88	.876	>0.05	Not sig
My neighbors think English an obscure Language	1.75	1.022	2.89	.000	<0.05	Sig
My neighbors believe in speaking native language can preserve my culture	1.79	.957	-3.30	.001	<0.05	Sig
My friends get surprised when I used to speak English	1.77	1.011	2.79	.000	<0.05	Sig

The above table demonstrate the social factors that exerts its impact on using English as a medium of instruction at post graduate level. These social factors are anxiety, digital and technological devices to improve language proficiency, family and societal influence. The value of $p > 0.05$ indicate that these factors are not significant while the value of $p < 0.05$ is highly significant. These results show that personal and societal factors are significant for imposing obstructions while family influence is un significant for providing hindrance in the implementation of English as a medium of instruction at college level.

Table Economic Factors

My college do not allocate funds for English language program	1.70	1.011	2.22	.004	<0.05	Sig
My college do not provide me with highly trained English faculty	1.73	.876	-2.99	.001	<0.05	Sig
My college do not provide me essential teaching materials	1.77	1.01	2.70	.000	<0.05	Sig

I am unable to afford advanced English learning materials	1.56	1.023	2.98	.005	<0.05	Sig
I have no access to BBC and CNN	1.74	1.21	2.78	.000	<0.05	Sig

The above table demonstrate the economic factors that exerts its impact on teaching and learning English at post graduate level. These economic factors here lack of accessibility of learning materials. All these factors have the value of $p < 0.05$ and indicate that this economic factor is highly significant for creating obstructions in implying English as a medium of instruction.

6. Conclusions:

The core purpose of the present study was to investigate the socio-economic factors that affect English language learning when English is used as a medium of instruction in public colleges. The educational factors were also analyzed in relation to social and economic factors. The educational factors which affect English learning consist on English teachers and teaching methodologies, course books and language curriculum, attitudes towards English language, and innate ability. The outcomes of this study is equivalent to the belief of Hoodbhoy (1998) who found out that because of weak acquaintance of contents, and lack of operative teaching provisions and techniques, English as medium of instruction is failed to operate for maximum learning of English language. To give the answer to the second research question, English discomfort, family encouragement, societal inducement is taken as social factors. The findings for these factors overlap with the result of Crosnoe et al., (2004) that the society has negative significance on learning English language when English is used as EMI. The present study also highlighted the effect of economic factors on English language learning where the economic factors are financial stability and access to educational resources. The economic variables are significantly important in learning English language. The results of economic factors reveal that this study run parallel to the study of Ryan and Deci (2021) who conducted a research nearly on the same topic unlike in highly income settings, social and economic variables determine the student's behavior about learning English language. To give answer to the third research question, it is

7. Future Recommendations:

Private schools in Pakistan often adopt English as a medium of instruction and medium of communication. It is emerged throughout the current research that both the teachers and the students face come hindrances while delivering and perceiving the lecture due to some socio-economic factors. The sample of the study demonstrated that college professors pay much attention to develop English speaking skills in their students instead of using Urdu in English only classrooms. Besides this, this study may give insight the policy designers to work on the issues of employing English as a medium of instruction in educational institutions. This research is very helpful in diluting the socio-economic barriers among the students in English language class.

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