

TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT THE ROLE OF LOCAL LANGUAGES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: A QUALITATIVE STUDY IN UNIVERSITIES OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA, PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This paper discusses the perceptions held by teachers in university on the use of local languages in teaching English language in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. It focused on the way in which teachers reasoned about the use of local languages in ELT and found out what they viewed as the advantages and disadvantages of such use, and how such beliefs influenced classroom use and language selection in multilingual universities. The research was based on two theory frameworks that were complementary in nature: teacher cognition, which described how pedagogical decisions were made based on the beliefs, assumptions, and past experiences of teachers, and pedagogical translanguaging, which perceived the entire range of linguistic repertoire of learners as a resource in learning but not a problem. An interpretive design of qualitative nature was taken. A purposive sample consisting of fifteen university teachers, who teach courses related to English in selected public universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, was chosen due to their first-hand experience with multilingual classrooms. The data were gathered using semi-structured interviews (each took around 30 to 45 minutes). The transcripts of the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis. The researcher read the transcripts over and over again, created initial codes, arranged similar codes into themes and finally created broad themes. The results showed that teachers on the whole had neutral and context-specific beliefs. They neither advocated strict English only teaching nor the use of local languages freely. Rather, they considered local languages as pedagogical and affective aid, particularly in explaining challenging ideas, alleviated anxiety, enhancing engagement, and creating rapport. Simultaneously, they raised the issues of excessive dependence on translation, the decreased exposure to English, and disparity in linguistically diverse classrooms. The research proposed that there should be more explicit pedagogical orientation, teacher education, and language-sensitive policies in the higher educational institutions.

Keywords: Teacher beliefs; local languages; English language teaching; pedagogical translanguaging; multilingual classrooms.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

In Pakistan, English is a key factor and is connected with the education, working place and social status. It is also the most commonly used medium of instruction in universities and therefore associates with it much of the symbolic and scholarly significance in the country (Mansoor, 2003; British Council, 2015; Mahboob, 2017). Meanwhile, Pakistan continues to be a multilingual nation and the pupils do not arrive at the classroom as monolingual English speakers. They bring Urdu and other local languages to them, and it results in a severe break between language policy and language real practises in the classroom. The use of more than one language is common, despite the use of English or Urdu as the formal policy (Ashraf, Turner, and Laar, 2021; Mansoor, 2003).

This multilinguisticity is most particularly evident in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where the students in the universities speak Pashto, Hindko, Saraiki, Kohistani, Urdu and English. In this regard, the use of language will be beyond policy issue, but will be a quotidian pedagogical issue. The

teachers should determine how to introduce complex concepts, establish rapport and interact. These decisions are necessarily linked to the beliefs and mental images of teachers (Borg, 2003; Burns, Freeman, and Edwards, 2015; Kubanyiova and Feryok, 2015).

Empirical evidence has also been provided on teacher cognition that the thinking, knowledge and beliefs of teachers have effects on classroom behaviour. Borg (2003) has come up with teacher cognition as a significant means of making classroom practise. Another aspect of the correlation between teacher beliefs and classroom practises manifested through the study of Basturkmen (2012), these two factors do not necessarily correspond in an ideal way. Later research by Burns et al. (2015) and Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) also helped to further confirm the importance of internal theories, assumptions, and experiences of teachers as a material influence on the own pedagogical decisions.

The existing literature has eroded the dogmatic paradigm of the English-only teaching in the area of language education. The research on translanguaging presupposes that full language repertoires of students might be useful to the learning process. According to Cenoz and Gorter (2021), pedagogical translanguaging is a planned teaching method that makes use of the complete language repertoire of the learner to enhance language and content acquisition. Cenoz (2019) as well says that English can be acquired using multilingual pedagogies rather than lapsed. This overall overview by Bonacina-Pugh and colleagues makes it clear that translanguaging has taken a feature stage in the research of multilingual classes (Cenoz and Gorter, 2021; Cenoz, 2019; Bonacina-Pugh et al., 2021).

International policy directions also help in this change. According to the UNESCO guidelines of 2025, multilingual learning is a way of increasing inclusion and allowing students to learn in the language that they understand. UNESCO also maintains that multilingual education is no longer an issue at the periphery but must now be incorporated in the mainstream education planning. The advice is particularly pertinent to the instruction of the English language in the linguistically diverse setting, such as in Pakistan (UNESCO, 2025).

Based on the study carried out in Pakistan, one can now say that translanguaging and multilingual pedagogy are the issues of local education systems that are actively pursued. Ashraf et al. (2021) discovered that Pakistani education is multilingual, yet policy and classroom practises frequently vary. Atta (2024) notes that the range of opinions regarding translanguaging in Pakistan is very broad, as moderate views of educators and students about English only lie on the one end and more pro-multilingual views on the other. These results show that the issue is still debated and active and controversial.

The research on the issue of media of instruction in Pakistan also implies a protracted conflict. Fareed, Ashraf, and Mushtaque (2020) discovered that the issue of language is still an issue of concern among teachers and students. The need to use English-medium at the tertiary level results in a similar report by Haq (2023) who asserts that there are viable concerns of classroom learning and classroom engagement. Mahboob (2017) also mentions that the area of English-media teaching in the system of higher education of Pakistan is interlaced with significant policy and perception and classroom practicability issues.

The issue is not just a language selection, it is especially ideology. Research on English-medium instruction indicates that teachers tend to recreate ideologies of language via ideologies and classroom choices. The research conducted by Sah (2024) has shown that the bigger ideologies of teachers in EMI classrooms shape their language beliefs, and they prevail over the classroom needs. This has an implication on ELT, as the teaching of English usually bears a more conspicuous monolingual penetration than in other regions, consequently subjecting the local languages to either a resource or a threat.

Therefore, the beliefs of teachers as far as local languages are concerned deserve first-hand research. The issue is most pertinent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa wherein the region is very multilingual and yet English remains dominant in education. Multilingualism, translanguaging, medium of instruction and language policy are some of the current studies that have been covered in Pakistan. Nevertheless, not much qualitative studies have been conducted directly to the teachers of English in the university level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and their perceptions in respect to using local languages in ELT classrooms. This gap provides the topicality of research to both theoretical and practical levels (Ashraf et al., 2021; Atta, 2024; British Council, 2015; Mansoor, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

The expectation of English medium is a key characteristic of English language teaching in the Pakistani universities, whereas the classrooms are multilingual. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, students rely on the local language and can be understood and used, which form a contradiction with the institutional language policy and the reality on the ground (Mansoor, 2003; British Council, 2015; Ashraf et al., 2021). Despite this fact, the importance of the local languages in ELT is obscured and more frequently not proven. In their day to day choices regarding the utilization of language, teachers do not arrive at their choices guided by clear pedagogical prescriptions but on the contrary, personal convictions guide them. It has been observed that beliefs held by teachers have a significant impact on classroom practises, but there is limited qualitative evidence on how university teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa think about and implement local languages in their English teaching practises (Borg, 2003; Basturkmen, 2012). Hence, study of how the teachers believe in teaching role of local languages in ELT and the effects of the beliefs on the practices in the classroom at university level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is urgent.

1.3. Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. To explore university teachers' beliefs about the role of local languages in English language teaching in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
2. To find out the perceived advantages and difficulties of local languages use in English language classes.
3. To investigate the impact of beliefs of teachers on classroom practices and language choices.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do the teachers of university in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa believe that local languages should be used in teaching English language?
2. What are the advantages and obstacles of instructing English language in the local languages?
3. How do teachers' beliefs influence their classroom practices and language choices?

Significance of the Study

The study has a number of implications. First, it is significant to teachers. It reveals the impact of beliefs in classroom. It can get teachers to consider their own views with regards to the local languages and the teaching of English. Second, it is significant to students. Inclusion and effectiveness of learning can be enhanced when teachers acknowledge the significance of linguistic backgrounds of students. It may assist pupils to feel more self-confident and more interested in the classroom. Third, universities and policymakers should be concerned. The study will be in a position to provide evidence of the locality of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It can help institutions to develop better instructions to multilingual

classes. It could also help in teacher training and teaching in a language-sensitive manner. Finally, this study is important scholarly. It will add to the literature on teacher beliefs, multilingualism, and English language teaching in Pakistan. It also fills a gap since it is addressing university educators in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Literature Review

The use of the local languages in the teaching of English language is a subject of numerous discussions. There is no agreed-upon position. One is the advocate of English only teaching and the other is the one who advocates the concept of multilingual pedagogy. It is between these positions and these decisions that the teachers get to make practical decisions in the classroom which are brought about by the belief and context (Borg, 2003).

The problem of English-only is not a new one. It believes that the exposure to English as much as it can be is ideal to enhance learning and based on this perception it is believed that the use of local languages will result in less practise and less speed in acquiring fluency. This status still has an impact on the higher education systems where English is accorded prestige in academics and in social circles. The status, mobility and success in studies are closely related to English in Pakistan (Mansoor, 2003).

This has however been disputed. As it has been demonstrated, the monolingual policy is not compatible with the reality in the classroom. Teachers and students continue to use local languages as a way of explaining and comprehending things, thus it can be said that English-language education is more ideological than practical (Hall and Cook, 2012).

This difficulty is enhanced in the multilingual theory. Translanguaging research asserts that learners do not divide up languages into set systems, but they use a complete linguistic repertoire to create meaning. Local languages in this respect are not a barrier but resources of learning (Cenoz & Gorter, 2021).

In this way, a definite tension is created. Proponents of English-only are interested in exposure, whereas multilingual scholars are interested in the understanding and participation. The one is the worth of the linguistic purity; the other that of communicative reality. It is not solely a linguistic, but a pedagogic and ideological discussion.

Such tension is more apparent in the postcolonial contexts. This is what is happening in Pakistan with higher education taking over in English, and students operating in a bi or multilingual environment. This leads to a policy-practise gap and English acts as a barrier to access and involvement that can limit it (British Council, 2015).

The debate becomes all the more complex in the English-media instruction (EMI) that is most often justified by the necessity to enhance the global competitiveness. But, according to the research, EMI can lead to learning difficulty; students report high cognitive load, low confidence in using English as the sole language, which disproves the assumption that the more the amount of English is used the more successful learning is reached (Abdullah et al., 2025). The disjunction between theory and practise is also pointed out in the research in classroom. Educators are supposed to apply up-to-date pedagogies and it is observed that a significant number of them still make use of translation-based practises, which means that the multilingual practise has already been established but has not been appropriately incorporated into pedagogy (Abdullah et al., 2026).

Classroom interaction is another dimension that is important. Voice and participation are influenced by the use of language. Power relations and social identities influence classroom practises, which implies that language choice is not neutral and has an impact on who speaks at the same time as well as who is included and who is silent (Abdullah et al., 2026).

The issue of teacher cognition comes into the limelight here. Teacher beliefs influence the style of language use in the classroom that influences the decisions on the explanation, interaction

and participation. Nevertheless, there is often incongruency between beliefs and practise beyond institutional pressures and contextual constraints often restrain the activities of teachers (Basturkmen, 2012).

This is of particular relevance to the area, which is extremely multilingual, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The students use Pashto, Urdu and local languages in their daily life, though in the English classes, the teachers must choose whether to place other languages in the secondary place or not. This type of decisions affects learning, confidence and the participation, yet the dearth literature is on the specifics of the beliefs of teachers within the context itself.

Thus, a gap in the literature is left. Instruction in English-only is still powerful, and multilingual pedagogy is becoming more popular. Empirical research indicates that the existence of practices of multilingualism already exists but policy and ideology continue to determine dominance of English. This conflict is in teacher beliefs.

The gap in the research still remains. The existing literature on the issue of local languages in teaching English is quite diverse since most studies focus on students, policy or theory but few studies focus on the meaning and rationale of using local languages by university teachers in teaching English in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This is a broad gap since teachers are the ones who put policy into practise.

This is the reason why the current study is warranted. It attempts to answer the assumption of the teachers about the role of the local languages in English language teaching and how the local language beliefs impact the classroom practise in a multilingual classroom.

Two complementary views will be used in the study; teacher cognition and pedagogical translanguaging. Teacher cognition is useful as it puts beliefs, knowledge and assumptions held by teachers in the central position in the classroom practise, and it aids in understanding why teachers may or may not embrace the use of local languages and how the beliefs can be converted into pedagogy.

Pedagogical translanguaging is the reflection of a second lens. It takes into account the whole linguistic repertoire of learners as the resources of learning but not as a barrier. The framework is of special use to the KP, where multilingual classes are common and local languages could help to comprehend, engage, self-confidence, and learn concepts during the English classes.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

The current research is a qualitative interpretive research. The qualitative research is considered appropriate in the exploration of beliefs, meanings, and experiences since it does not entail numerical measures in the quest to comprehend the perspectives (Creswell, 2014). It follows an interpretive approach in an effort to discuss how teachers make sense of the local use of language in the context of the English Language Teaching (ELT). Teacher beliefs are known to be contextual and experience based; indeed, they cannot be adequately measured using quantitative approaches (Borg, 2003). A quantitative design is therefore not adopted since it would not be in a position to get into the deep thinking, decision-making in the classroom or lived experiences.

3.2. Research Setting

The research was carried out in selected Khyber Pakhtunkhwa university of Pakistan, namely: Younger students can also enrol in the university via the collaboration of a higher education institution with secondary schools or independent secondary schools.

- University of Peshawar, Pakistan.
- University of Hazara, Mansehra, Pakistan.
- Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan.

The rationale of selecting these institutions is that they offer higher education within the government sector in the area and that they have multilingual pupils. Pashto and Urdu with other local languages are also used regularly by the students, along with English. It is believed to be suitable because the usage of language in classrooms is a sociolinguistic real-life scenario (British Council, 2015).

3.3. Population

The sample involves teachers in universities that teach courses related to English i.e.:

- English language courses
- Communication skills
- Academic writing
- Linguistics
- Literature

The teachers are selected to act as the key decision-makers of the language applied in classrooms and their ideologies directly impact on pedagogical practises (Borg, 2003).

3.4. Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling is used in the study. The selection of the participants will be done on the basis of their relevance to the issue of study. The type of sampling that is deemed adequate in qualitative study is purposive sampling, which helps to select rich cases of information (Creswell, 2014). Random sampling is not used since the study is not aimed at generalisation but depth and understanding are aimed.

3.5. Sample Size

The study is carried out on fifteen respondents. It is considered that this number is adequate when conducting qualitative research to allow collecting the data in-depth, data saturation is possible. The researches have indicated that small samples suffice when you desire to delve into details and not statistical reflection (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson, 2006).

3.6. Inclusion Criteria

The participants will be considered as those who:

- Teach courses in English in one of the universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa;
- One year experience in teaching;
- Willing to take part in an interview.

All these requirements are necessary to guarantee the participants have the applicable experience and can make valuable contributions.

3.7. Data Collection Tool

Semi-structured interviews were used as the instruments to be used to collect the data. This tool is adaptable and it allows guidance, such as guiding questions, and probing. It upholds stealing of good experiences and beliefs. The research on teacher cognition has typically employed the semi-structured interviews as it avails the thoughts and rationale of the teachers (Borg, 2006).

3.8. Data Collection Procedure

Firstly, the universities were contacted to give permission. Contacts with the participants will then be made. Face to face interviews will be done or online depending on availability. The interviews will be between thirty and forty-five minutes. Permission will be obtained to audio-tape interviews. All the interviews will be transcribed to be analysed. This process is accurate and reliable of the data.

3.9. Data Analysis

The thematic analysis was adopted as the tool of the interview data analysis since the research objectives were to investigate the beliefs, meanings and experiences of teachers about the role of local languages in teaching English language instead of quantifying it.

Following data collection, all the semi-structured interviews were transcribed word-to-word in order to preserve as closely as possible the views of the participants. The researcher then read the transcripts a few times to get acquainted with the data as well as to determine repetitive ideas, concerns, and patterns related to the beliefs of teachers, classroom practices, perceived benefits, challenges and language choices. In the second step, meaningful units of data were then turned into initial codes and similar codes were merged into larger groupings. These groups were further broken down into themes that demonstrated common patterns among the responses of the participants. The theoretical frameworks in the study of teacher cognition and pedagogical translanguaging were used to inform the analysis. The use of teacher cognition served to explain how teacher beliefs, assumptions and prior experiences influenced classroom decisions and pedagogical translanguaging served as an aid to understand how local languages were perceived as a potential source of learning in multilingual ELT classrooms. The analysis especially paid attention to the beliefs of teachers regarding the use of local languages, their pedagogical and affective worth, the tensions associated with overreliance and limited exposure to English, and how these beliefs impacted a real classroom practice. By doing so, the key themes were drawn out of the data in a systematic and interpretive way so that the researcher could generate a rich and context sensitive interpretation of the views of the teachers in multilingual university environment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

4. Findings and Discussion

This part shows the results and discussion of the interview data.. The sample size was 15 university teachers of English-related courses in some of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa universities. The participants belonged to Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, the University of Peshawar and Bacha Khan University Charsadda. The thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Repeated reading of the answers was done. First codes were created. Like codes were clustered together. These groups were then created into themes.

The results indicated a definite general trend. The interviewees did not favor outlawing local languages altogether. Neither did they support free use. Their opinions were a moderate one. Local languages were viewed as aiding tools, but not the alternatives to English. Three major themes emerged from the data. They included: (a) local languages as pedagogical and affective help, (b) the conflict between help and dependency, and (c) controlled multilingual pedagogy in practice.

4.2 Findings: A Thematic Analysis of Teachers' Beliefs about the Role of Local Languages in ELT

Table 4.1

Thematic Map of Findings adopted from Shahabullah et al., (2025)

Superordinate Theme	Sub-themes
4.2.1 Local Languages as Pedagogical and Affective Support	Clarifying difficult concepts and instructions
	Reducing anxiety and increasing participation Building rapport and recognizing linguistic identity
4.2.2 The Tension Between Support and Overreliance	Dependency on translation
	Reduced English exposure and weaker fluency development
	Unequal access in multilingual classrooms

4.2.3 Controlled Multilingual Pedagogy in Practice Selective code-switchingLanguage choice shaped by proficiency, subject, and classroom diversity

4.2.1 Local Languages as Pedagogical and Affective Support

Support was the strongest and the first theme in the data. The majority of respondents saw local languages as helpful in the teaching of the English language. They however did not refer to them as alternatives to English. They referred to them as temporary aids that enable students to grasp hard material, become less stressed and more engaged.

4.2.1.1 Clarifying difficult concepts and instructions

One of the key trends in the answers was the opinion that local languages enhance understanding. The areas that students need support in were repeatedly mentioned by teachers grammar, vocabulary, abstract ideas, complex texts, and classroom instructions. A brief introduction in a language understood was perceived as an effective and convenient means of eliminating confusion.

Participant 1 explained:

A short use of Pashto or Urdu assists the students to make the grammar, vocabulary and instructions more straightforward and clear. These responses show that teachers view local languages as scaffolding tools. They use them to bridge unfamiliar English input and students' prior linguistic knowledge.

Participant 6 also shared the same information saying:

A short explanation in Urdu or Pashto is enough to eliminate confusion.

Participant 14 further explained:

Grammar is facilitated when students are able to make comparison of English structures with the Urdu or Pashto structures.

These reactions demonstrate that educators see the local languages as means of scaffold. They apply them to fill the gap between not known English input and the previous knowledge of students.

4.2.1.2 Reducing anxiety and increasing participation

The second pattern was the affective support. Numerous respondents associated the local language use with confidence, the level of fear, and increased participation.

Participant 2 discussed:

The use of the mother tongue helps to diminish fear and invites participation.

Participant 4 found:

Local languages to form a sense of comfort and belongingness within the classroom.

Participant 7 reported:

Students feel less anxious and more receptive to interact when teachers permit the use of limited local language.

Participant 11 also talked about:

The local languages that they have a pedagogical and emotional value.

This demonstrates that teachers do not consider the language of classrooms as a strictly cognitive issue. They relate it with confidence, comfort, and student involvement.

4.2.1.3 Building rapport and recognizing linguistic identity

Other participants associated the use of local language with the rapport, respect, and identity. In these answers the local languages were brought out not merely as a means of teaching but as a means of social resources as well.

Participant 7 reported:

Minimal use of local languages make students feel respected since it acknowledges the language they speak.

According to participant 11:

Local languages help students to feel closer to the teacher.

Participant 15 referred:

Local languages as a resource and not a problem, particularly in multilingual in university settings.

Such reactions indicate that the use of local languages has the potential to enhance relationships between teachers and students and provide a more inclusive classroom setting.

4.2.2 The Tension between Support and Overreliance

Though the participants were aware of the importance of local languages, they also raised serious concerns. There was an evident tension in their answers. Local languages were viewed as useful, but they could be too risky to be used extensively.

4.2.2.1 Dependency on translation

Dependency was the most prevalent issue. Some of the respondents were afraid that when the use of local languages becomes too frequent, students might cease to work hard in English.

Participant 1 responded:

Other learners are addicted to translation and put less effort in thinking in English.

Participant 6 said:

Students can begin to demand that everything be translated.

Participant 9 cautioned:

Students can give up their attempt to derive meaning based on the context of English when they are aware of translation.

This is an indication that teachers do not oppose local languages per se. They are worried about excessive dependence.

4.2.2.2 Reduced English exposure and weaker fluency development

The second issue of concern was less exposure to English. Some of the participants had the view that excessive use of local language may undermine English listening, speaking and fluency development.

Participant 2 added:
excessive use of local language can result in less exposure to English, particularly in speaking classes.

Participant 5 thought:

That overuse may hamper the development of English listening and speaking.

Participant 8 was against the use of the local language in speaking and presentation activities saying:

Students require immersion and practice. Participant 12 also contributed: that excess use of the local language in communication skills classes can disrupt the development of fluency.

These reactions demonstrate that support and practice are different in the eyes of teachers. They tend to use the local language when explaining, but rather use English when carrying out communicative activities.

4.2.2.3 Unequal access in multilingual classrooms

The third issue was equity in multilingual classrooms. Other participants have mentioned that a support language can be beneficial to certain students but not to others.

Participant 4 added:
in a classroom where there are various local languages, not all students will be equally benefiting. This participant thus favored Urdu as a common support language where need be.

Participant 11 also raised the same and added:

There are those learners who may be left out in one local language.

This observation is significant in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where classrooms in universities can bring students of other language backgrounds.

4.2.3 Controlled Multilingual Pedagogy in Practice

The third theme depicted how the teachers converted their beliefs into classroom practices. The evidence indicated that the language selection by teachers was selective, intentional and contextual.

4.2.3.1 Selective code-switching

The majority of participants talked about a selective pattern of language use. Throughout the lesson, they did not speak local languages. They would apply them when there was a pedagogical necessity.

Participant 8 referred to this: *as the best method and termed it as selective code-switching.*

Participant 3 responded:

the local languages must be minimally used, primarily to clarify and support.

Participant 9 reasoned: *scaffolding should be done in local languages, not as the primary teaching tool.*

Participant 1 also pointed out:

the local languages must be applied with caution and only when it is necessary.

This indicates that there is no random code-switching in these classrooms.

4.2.3.2 Language choice shaped by proficiency, subject, and classroom diversity

Another key aspect of language use that participants highlighted is that it is a matter of classroom context. The teachers tailored their activities based on the student ability, type of course, level of the semester, and classroom diversity.

Participant 10 explained:

The language used by teachers should be modified depending on the level of proficiency among the students.

Participant 12 indicated:

The subject taught should be a factor in determining the extent of local language use permission.

Participant 13 identified:

local language support to students with rural backgrounds who tend to possess weaker English background.

Participant 7 found:

local language support particularly helpful during the first semesters when students are acclimatizing to university English.

Participant 14 explained:

It is easier to translate certain things like grammar explanation rather than other things like idioms, pronunciation and communicative use.

Such reactions indicate that the actions of teachers are context-sensitive and flexible.

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Local languages as pedagogical support

The results indicate that in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, teachers have a predominantly positive perception of local languages as facilitators but not barriers to pedagogy. This finding correlates with the review conducted by Hall and Cook (2012) to reveal that the use of own languages by learners remains prevalent in language classrooms in terms of explanation, classroom management and understanding. It also conforms to the pedagogical translanguaging model in which the comprehensiveness of the linguistic repertoire of learners is viewed as a tool of enhancing language and content learning (Cenoz and Gorter, 2021). In this research, participants utilized Pashto and Urdu to describe grammar, vocabulary, instructions, and challenging ideas. This implies that their classroom actions are guided by the student understanding, and not by the rigid monolingual ideology (Hall and Cook, 2012; Cenoz and Gorter, 2021).

4.3.2 Local languages as affective support

The results also indicate that local languages are affective. They were associated with lower levels of fear, comfort, inclusion, and higher levels of willingness to participate by teachers. The EMI study in your uploaded files strongly supports this pattern, indicating that language barriers, lack of confidence, and pedagogical scaffolding and flexibility are experienced by students in Pakistani higher education. The same study revealed that participation can be suppressed in case of English as the sole medium and language load is high (Abdullah et al., 2025). The existing evidence thus indicates that, teachers resort to local languages in not only explaining the content, but also in an attempt to make the environment less threatening to the learning process.

This meaning is also aligned to the argument by Cummins that multilingual pedagogies can enhance both engagement and learning by means of allowing the extant linguistic resources of the learners to contribute to classroom meaning-making (Cummins, 2019).

4.3.3 The tension between support and overreliance

One of the main findings of this research is the conflict between support and overreliance. The teachers accommodated the local languages but on a conditional basis. They were afraid that

students would get addicted to translation, would not make inferences out of the English context and would work less in English. This hesitant endorsement is similar to the bigger Pakistani image. Atta (2024) discovered that the perceptions of teachers and students about translanguaging in Pakistan are ambivalent but not completely positive. In a similar manner, Ashraf et al. (2021) demonstrated that in Pakistan, the educational environment is characterized by numerous multilingual practices, yet the policy and ideology continues to privilege English and Urdu in a manner that continues to destabilize multilingual pedagogy (Atta, 2024; Ashraf et al., 2021).

The current results are in that trend. In this research, local languages were not rejected by teachers. But they did not desire that their use should not be occasional, and therefore had an end.

4.3.4 Reduced English exposure and fluency concerns

The anxiety of the teachers that excessive use of the local language will inhibit exposure to English and lead to the loss of fluency is also indicative of a broader discussion in English-medium and second-language teaching. The subjects were able to differentiate between performance and explanation. They were inclined to permit the use of local language when explaining, yet they used English when speaking, presenting and communicating. This stance aligns with British Council news about higher education in Pakistan indicating that English carries great academic prestige but also imposes access and participation barriers in the absence of support (British Council, 2015).

The same issue is also reflected by your EMI study where students also shared the positive and negative sides of the English-medium instruction. Although the use of English provided an opportunity to access academics, it produced cognitive load and low confidence in the absence of flexibility (Abdullah et al., 2025). This tension, as observed in the current study, is being dealt with by the teachers by selective application of local languages.

4.3.5 Teacher beliefs and classroom practice

The results also indicate that beliefs of the teachers affect the classroom practice, albeit not strictly. Their teaching was differentiated based on student achievement, course and semester level as well as classroom diversity. This substantiates the position of Borg (2003) that teacher cognition plays the core role in making decisions in the classroom. It further confirms the finding by Basturkmen (2012) that the connection between the expressed beliefs of teachers and their practice is real but mediated by the context and institutional restrictions, as well as the realities of the classroom (Borg, 2003; Basturkmen, 2012).

The teachers in the current study favored local language use in lower level classes, courses with higher concept load and courses that had less competent learners. They limited it further in terms of communication and speaking. This demonstrates that their practices were adjustive as opposed to rigid.

4.3.6 Multilingual classroom reality and policy-practice tension

The problem of inequality of benefit in classes with multilingualism is also a relevant issue. According to some teachers, a local language can accommodate all students, but leave some others behind. This is indicative of the multilinguality of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa classrooms. It also helps to substantiate the argument of Ashraf et al. (2021) that educational practice in Pakistan tends to be closer to social reality of multilingualism than formal language policy (Ashraf et al., 2021).

The current research demonstrates that educators approach this fact in a pragmatic way. As an example, in mixed classes some use Urdu as a common support language. This implies that language choice in classrooms is usually pragmatic to diversity and not necessarily an ideological decision.

4.3.7 Need for pedagogical guidance and teacher training

Another important finding is that teachers want clearer pedagogical guidance. Several The other significant observation is that the desire of teachers is to have a more definite pedagogical direction. Some of them emphasized that limits, balanced use and education on the proper time and use of local languages should be given. Your uploaded classroom based study on intercultural competence in KP provides very strong evidence on this point, indicating a persistent disconnect between pedagogical theory and practice in the classroom and prescribing

teacher training, systematic reflection and more robust curriculum support (Abdullah et al., 2026).

The current results indicate that the question of whether local languages must be used in English classrooms is no longer. They already do. Of greater concern is how they can be encouraged to use them in principled and pedagogically informed practices by teachers.

5.1 Conclusion

This research examined the perceptions of the teachers regarding the use of local languages in teaching English language in selected universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The results indicate that educators perceive local languages as useful, but scarce, resources in English classroom. Educators had the view that the local languages facilitate understanding, decrease anxiety, and enhance engagement. They were particularly handy in explaining hard concept, instructions, and with the weaker students. Meanwhile, teachers did not want to overuse it. They believed excessive use of local languages would decrease exposure of the English language and dependency on translation by students would occur. Another finding of the study is that the teachers do not adhere to a single rule. Their language selections are based on the level of the students, type of course and classroom. In general, the results indicate that the local languages play a facilitative role in ELT, although English is the primary language in the classroom.

5.2 Study implications.

The study has some important implications. To start with, the local languages should be used by teachers in a conscious and cautious way. They are to be used in support and not as the primary instructional tool. Second, teacher training programs ought to teach teachers how and when to exploit local languages effectively in the English classes. Third, universities need to acknowledge that multilingual classrooms are a fact. They ought to offer adaptable and pragmatic advice on how to use language in instruction. Lastly, the research recommends that the classroom language choices ought to correspond to student needs, lesson objectives, and course requirements.

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