



## THE DOMINANCE OF ENGLISH IN PAKISTANI EDUCATION: ANALYZING STUDENT AND TEACHER PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS LANGUAGE POLICY

**Wahid Ud Din**

PhD Scholar IELL University of Sindh, Jamshoro

[Sidiqui823@gmail.com](mailto:Sidiqui823@gmail.com)

**Momina Hashmi**

M.Phil, NCBA&E, Rahim Yar Khan

[momnahashmee@gmail.com](mailto:momnahashmee@gmail.com)

**Dr. Muhammad Akram (correspondence author)**

Assistant Professor of English, Department of English Linguistics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan Campus, [Muhammadakramw@gmail.com](mailto:Muhammadakramw@gmail.com)

### Abstract

*The study explores the perception of students and teachers in district Bahawalpur, Pakistan, regarding the use of English as a medium of instruction. The English language has become a cultural phenomenon, with students and teachers expressing its benefits in career opportunities and global opportunities. However, concerns have been raised about the potential compromise of cultural heritage and identity. The research used a quantitative questionnaire to survey 400 students and 30 teachers from two universities and three colleges. The findings suggest that some students perceive English as a vital tool for professional and academic growth, while others worry about cultural identity and linguistic equity. The study underscores the need for educational institutions to consider both students' and teachers' perspectives when developing language policies.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

English has been a crucial language in education and policy since colonial times, especially in underdeveloped countries like Pakistan. It is the primary language for science courses, corporate and governmental sectors, and is essential for advancements in science, technology, and global access. Over 70 countries have adopted English as their official language, and over 100 countries teach it as a foreign language. English's widespread appeal in various nations emphasizes its international standing. English's global dominance has heightened its importance, as proficiency in the language is crucial for employment and cross-border communication. This has influenced educational and linguistic policies, necessitating changes in language education policies in response to globalization. Pakistan has over 72 native languages, but many belong to the same family. Urdu is the official language, spoken by less than 8% of the population, and is chosen for public education and private education. English is the primary language for Pakistan's scientific and economic progress, but Urdu has received less attention. English medium instruction is a contentious issue in Pakistan, with some arguing it is difficult for competitive tests but provides valuable knowledge across various subjects. Pakistan is a plural society with multilingualism, ethnicity, and multiculturalism. Its provinces include Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. English and Urdu are the official languages, and its widespread use has led to a reconsideration of language policies in education. English is taught as a foreign language and a medium of instruction, similar to countries like Britain and the United States. Despite reverting to regional languages, English remains a primary language in education. After Pakistan gained independence in 1947, the government decided to use Urdu in public schools, aiming for deeper comprehension without translation. English was made the official language, and English-medium schools were funded by Christian missionaries. Both Urdu and English courses were offered, but science courses were taught in English. This led to students from Urdu-medium environments having better job prospects and university access.

The study examines the perception of English as a medium of instruction and its impact on teachers and students at BS level in Pakistan's universities. It aims to critically evaluate educational language planning policies and understand the requirements of educationists for language usage in offices, institutes, and homes. The research will visit universities to gather feedback on language policies and attitudes. The study aims to address linguistic diversity issues in future language planning policies and promote harmony among multilingual societies in Pakistan.

### **1.1 Research Objectives**

1. To explore how students and teachers perceive English as a medium of instruction in language policies of Pakistan.
2. To analyse the perception of the students and teachers for the use of English in comparison of their mother tongues.
3. To investigate the perception about marginalization or empowerment of social groups on the basis of language.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

1. How do students and teachers perceive English as a medium of instruction in Pakistan?
2. What is the perception of students and teachers for the use of English in comparison of their mother tongues?
3. What do students and teachers perceive about marginalization or empowerment of social groups on the basis of language?

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The study explores students' perceptions and beliefs about speaking in native and target languages in English-language contexts. It aids educators and policymakers in making informed decisions about English as a medium of instruction, promoting a diverse environment and providing a conceptual model for using one's native tongue in English language training.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Language shapes our ideas, interactions, and worldview, making it an essential part of the human experience. Research on language attitudes looks at language changes in multilingual communities and highlights problems with the marginalization and extinction of non-dominant languages. Researching community language perceptions offers information about usage and sustainability patterns as languages perish worldwide. Language attitudes are the subjective beliefs that person have about any language, which may be used to determine if a language is being neglected or becoming less important. Since people often pick up languages from their surroundings and social circles throughout time, language development and proficiency are entwined with surrounding linguistic contexts.

A nation's educational system depends heavily on the medium of instruction since it enables real and effective learning. To choose the teaching medium, it is advised to employ learners' firsthand perceptions, observations, and experiments. An important part of studying these features is done by academics, psychologists, and educators. The examination of instructors' academic strengths and mother tongues determines the use of language which can be used in the process of learning and teaching. The decision on which language to teach in Pakistan has become contentious since some in positions of authority view it more as a political than an educational problem. Multilingual cultures frequently give distinct languages different levels of prestige, with dominant languages enjoying preferential treatment due to governmental recognition or socioeconomic standing. Disincentives to use underprivileged languages might lead to its encroachment and even extinction. Evaluations of language attitudes have an influence on community linguistics, cultural sustainability, and diversity by revealing if a given language is still widely used or needs official support to stay relevant. (Arshad, 1997)

Choosing which languages to teach as required subjects or as elective courses is proving to be a difficult task for policymakers. Education specialists and lawmakers are confused because the tongue issue has turned into a political issue. The type and caliber of instruction, the need for and application of the language acquired in a child's life, and the political and social environment of the language used in schools are some of the variables that impact the choice of medium. It can be challenging for politicians and education specialists to reach a consensus when it comes to language choices since they are frequently viewed as political issues. (C. Benson, 2005). Numerous academics have undertaken numerous studies on students' preference for instruction medium in English language schools. Given that each study focused on a different feature of the education medium, the diverse conclusions from these investigations were produced. Here is an overview of a few earlier research projects that support the current investigation.

At Puerto Rico University, (Studer & Konstantinidou, 2015) examined the benefits of teaching in the native tongue (Spanish) of the students. The information gathered showed that most teachers and students felt positively about speaking Spanish in English classes. Teachers and students agreed that using L1 to clarify new terminology, assess understanding, and explain complex ideas was appropriate. Burden conducted another significant study (2001). It looked at the question of whether or not teachers and students thought that Japanese should be as language of English lessons. It is concluded that instructors and students generally agreed on the significance of using L1 in target language sessions. (Burden, 2001)

According to (Du, 2016) both educators and learners have favorable opinions about speaking Chinese in English classes. They recognize that speaking Chinese is beneficial for debating complex grammatical concepts, elucidating terminology, and learning new expressions. Additionally, (Sukarni et al., 2020) discovered that students' mistakes in grammar, difficult vocabulary, and language abilities are explained in Indonesian. This is done both before and after classes to establish a relaxed learning environment, make sure that the material from earlier classes is understood, and give instructions for homework or assessments.

Both teachers and their students had good attitudes on use of Arabic in (E First L) classes, according to (Al-Nofaie, 2010) study on teachers and their students' attitudes toward using Arabic in English as a learning aid. The study emphasized the significance of utilizing Arabic in English classes sparingly and wisely. Studies on instructors' attitudes and views about using the Indonesian language in English language classrooms and its results on students' English language learning were carried out by (Indriyani, 2020). They discovered that as pupils advance, the use of the Indonesian language should rise significantly. According to (Rahmadani, 2016) research, the majority of students concur with the way that English teachers primarily use English Medium Instruction. By implementing English as medium of instruction, students can become more fluent in English, gain confidence, be more motivated, and better grasp English-language materials and textbooks as well as global culture.

According to (Gusrianti, 2019) students in the English department have a positive outlook on the language and think it will open up more employment chances because it is an international language. (Putri, 2018) discovered that in oral communication and classroom activities, students frequently utilize Bahasa Indonesia rather than English. According to (Beisenbayeva, 2020) motivation concerns, self-trust issues, fear of making mistakes, and teacher criticism are the main reasons why pupils avoid using foreign languages. The most significant issue that kids have when learning a foreign language is ridicule from peers, which has a detrimental effect on the oral language's growth. Because it gives them greater freedom to express themselves, students prefer to speak in their original tongue.

The majority of the eight grade pupils at Banyubiru 1 State Junior High School who

participated in (Yandi, 2015) study had good attitudes regarding learning English. Comparing English- and Turkish-medium pupils, (Utku Yurdakul, 2015) found notable disparities in the students' perceptions of motivations, tactics, the nature of language acquisition, and anxiety/difficulty. To determine the similarities and variations in language acquisition processes between the two groups, both researches employed qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The general patterns of beliefs in both groups were comparable, stemming from the students' realization of how important it is to study English in the modern world.

There are few concepts of different scholars about language policy and practices. According to (Prunty, 1985) the policy incorporates governmental control and power and policy views as an official distribution of values and principals. According to (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997) language in the policy of education should secondary to a nation's national education policy. Only those language flourished and evolved who served important social political and cultural roles. Due to force of society, modernization and economic mobility the languages which are regional surrender to the dominant languages. In Pakistani context the dominant languages are English and Urdu. And in regional languages no other language gain much importance except Sindhi.

The attitude of the university students that either it is positive or negative about English language. (Irfan, 2017) discusses that attitude is very important for the development and decay, degradation and survival of any language. The position of any language can be determined by its attitude which can analyzed globally. There would be positive and negative attitude towards language based on the individual perspective about it. Additionally learning any language depends on attitude as well as motivation. The student who is motivated and who are not don't have same opinions about language. They have different opinion about instructors. Peers and curriculums the same opinions make their believes about language attitude either they have positive attitude which leads towards constructive behavior and negative attitude which leads towards negative impressions towards language.

Another research conducted by (Irfan, 2020) that how students feel about the language which is used in their universities. the study explores the policies of language and their understanding and not understanding attitude of university students about their using language which is English. For the purpose of collecting data, she chooses two universities located in Lahore. Population of students is 451 and teacher are 35 respectively. In conclusion she finds out that universities face problem in confidently speaking English which leads towards negative attitude. However, they wanted to improve their skills about language to get better jobs in future.

The research on the two language one is English and the other is Punjabi studying in Faisalabad Pakistan. The diglossia situation is here because of the two distinct language is spoken in a single speech community. Both languages are different according to their function, prestige and status in the society. Which can divide them into high and low prestigious language. So according to this English gain the status of high-level language and Punjabi language have low prestige because it is informal language. So, the researcher discovered the attitude towards both language one is official, formal and the language of education and the other is informal, local and the colloquial language. The situation is weird here because of no native speaker of English in Pakistan and still it gains prestige contrary to this a lot of native speakers of Punjabi language in Pakistan but still less prestige language. The study conducted through the close ended questionnaire 42 students participated from different educational institutes. At the end it is concluded that the students of the Faisalabad have positive perceptions for the dominant language: English and less towards Punjabi because of the difference in their status, function and structure. (Akram & Yasmeen, 2011)

Ahmed researches on the basic level of difficulties in learning English in Pakistan at





secondary level. He conducted a quantitative comparative survey research of provisional and federal government schools at secondary level in K.P.K. the basic focus of the study is to search out the difficulties of secondary students of government and federal level. The researchers find the level of difficulties at basic level like tenses. Active and passive sentences, direct and indirect sentences, conjunction, prepositions, articles and the building of sentences reading and comprehending. For this research the researcher selected 654 students through random sampling from 24 schools of govt and 22 schools federal govt in KPK. At the end it is concluded that the students of provisional schools facing more problem than the students of the federal government schools. (Ahmad, 2011).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research design

The study investigates teachers and students' perceptions of instruction mediums using descriptive, quantitative research, analyzed using SPSS for numerical data. This study utilized a questionnaire survey to investigate language attitudes and motivation. The closed-ended questionnaire aligned with Suresh Canagarajah's theory, allowing for easy data collection from a large number of informants. The Likert Scale items were used to rate participants' reactions to comments about the medium's instruction. The questionnaire was shared via WhatsApp and divided into three sections, each with five questions, ensuring efficient and clear conclusions.

#### 3.2 Population of study

The research focused on BS level teachers and students with four years of experience in English study and usage.

#### 3.3 Sampling

In private the selected universities were Superior university and NCBA&E. In Public universities Islamia university and KFUEIT. Private colleges were Punjab group of colleges, Concordia college and NICE college. In public colleges Govt. Khawaja Fareed college, Government Degree College (W) Bahawalpur, Government S.E College, (M) Bwp.

#### 3.4 Theoretical Framework

- Suresh Canagarajah is a Tamil born Sri Lankan, linguist and a scholar in the field of applied linguistics currently he is a professor in Pennsylvania State University. He proposed theory of critical language policy analysis (CLPA) in 2005. In his theory he emphasized on the importance of language policies that how language policies, marginalized and empower groups. He is one of the leading figures in critical language policy analysis (CLPA) and made significant contributions to understanding of the relationship between language, power, and social justice.
- Canagarajah's work is characterized by its focus on the experiences of marginalized communities, particularly those who are affected by language policies that promote linguistic imperialism and inequality. He has argued that language policies are not neutral, but rather reflect and reinforce existing social hierarchies.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Critical Language Policy Analysis (CLPA) Framework</b></li> </ul>
Ideological analysis
Power and social Relation

Language identity and culture
Discursive Strategies and practices
Social Justice and Transformative Potential

#### 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are 15 males and 15 females' teachers who gave their responses as a result for each statement.

- The first statement was “the implementation of English as a compulsory language in education reflects the dominant ideologies in Pakistan?” the statement received 90% teacher’s approval.
- The second statement is “Teachers and students' resistance or acceptance of the compulsory English policy can influence its implementation in schools.” For this statement 96.7% teachers agreed.
- The next statement “Teachers' ability to effectively communicate and engage with students was affected by the compulsory English policy.” Majority 86% of the teachers agreed to the statement.
- The next statement was “Many students code-switch between their regional language and English in everyday conversations” the statement received 86.7% affirmative responses.
- The next statement “The use of English language impact my ability to participate in discussions of classroom” this statement was approved by 83.3% teachers.
- The next “There was a lack of quality educational resources available in regional languages” this statement received 60% approval from teachers.
- The next statement “regional languages are not given enough importance in the education system. The statement was approved by 86.7% teachers.
- The next statement “The compulsory English policy affects access to educational opportunities for students from regional language-speaking communities.” Most of the teachers agreed with the statement with 70% in favor.
- Incorporating regional languages in the classroom can enhance students' understanding of complex concepts. In this statement 73.3% teachers agreed.
- The next statement was “English as a compulsory language in education impacts language practices and interactions among students and teachers.” For this statement 70% teachers agreed.
- The next statement “The compulsory English policy marginalizes students who are not proficient in English.” The statement received strong support from teachers with 90% in favor.
- “The compulsory English policy impacts the negotiation of multilingual and multicultural educational contexts.” The statement received 90% support from the teachers.
- “English proficiency was prioritized over content knowledge in academic assessments.” The statement was strongly supported by the teachers with 80% rating.
- “Students from English-speaking backgrounds have an advantage over others due to language.” This statement received 76.7% teacher’s support.

- “Students who are not fluent in English may feel a sense of exclusion or isolation in educational settings.” Majority of teachers 86.7% agreed with the statement.
- The response of the students for the first statement, “The implementation of English as a compulsory language in education reflects the dominant ideologies in Pakistan. The statement was supported by 80% of the students.
- The statement " Teachers' and students' resistance or acceptance of the compulsory English policy can influence its implementation in schools” majority of students 89.5% agreed with this.
- The statement "Teachers' ability to effectively communicate and engage with students is affected by the compulsory English policy." The agreement rate was 78.5%.
- The statement "Many students code-switch between their regional language and English in everyday conversations in my province." A significant portion 81% students were agreed.
- the statement "The use of English language impact my ability to participate in discussions of classroom” the survey result indicated that 78.3% of the students agreed.
- The statement "There is a lack of quality educational resources available in regional languages." The data revealed that 59.3% students agreed.
- The statement "Regional languages are not given enough importance in the education system. The significant portion of students 81% were agreed.
- The next statement "The compulsory English policy affects access to educational opportunities for students from regional language-speaking communities." The agreement rate was 58.8%.
- "Incorporating regional languages in the classroom can enhance students' understanding of complex concepts." The survey results demonstrated that 71.5% agreed with this.
- The statement "English as a compulsory language in education impacts language practices and interactions among students and teachers." The data revealed that 67.5% students expressed concurrence.
- "The compulsory English policy marginalizes students who are not proficient in English." The result of this statement showed that 84.3% students agreed with statement.
- "The compulsory English policy impacts the negotiation of multilingual and multicultural educational contexts." The significant number of students 83% agreed with the statement.
- "English proficiency is prioritized over content knowledge in academic assessments. The statement was agreed by 66.8% students.
- "Students from English-speaking backgrounds have an advantage over others due to language. The statement was supported by 66.8% studnets.
- "Students who are not fluent in English may feel a sense of exclusion or isolation in educational settings." The result shows that 72.8% of the respondents agreed to the statement.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The research indicates that both teachers and students agree that students in universities and colleges face challenges due to partial support and a preference for English as the medium of instruction. Improved English command leads to more positive perceptions of English as a medium of instruction (EMI). Education policies often reflect public views on language usage, and teachers' and students' attitudes towards mandatory English policies influence

their implementation. Supporting policies empower instructors to enhance their approaches, while opposing policies can hinder learning results and student engagement. English language competency is crucial for developing dynamic learning environments, but unsettling language can cause a divide between educators and students, negatively impacting learning. Students' confidence and involvement in conversations where English is the primary language may also be impacted by their code-switching between regional languages and English. Acknowledging and appreciating students' linguistic backgrounds is essential for creating a more inclusive atmosphere.

Pakistan's education system often neglects regional languages, limiting their cultural significance and access to educational materials. The compulsory English policy creates barriers for students from regional language-speaking communities, leading to feelings of inadequacy and exclusion. Incorporating regional languages into the classroom can enhance students' understanding of complex concepts, foster better comprehension and critical thinking skills, and enrich interactions between students and teachers. This approach values linguistic diversity and promotes a deeper connection to the material, leading to a more effective educational experience in Pakistan. The English curriculum often marginalizes students who don't speak English well, hindering their academic progress and causing feelings of loneliness and exclusion. This can negatively impact confidence and academic performance. Teachers argue that the focus on English proficiency in tests often prioritizes language skills over understanding the topic, disadvantaging students from regional languages and enhancing those from English-speaking backgrounds. This can make it challenging to navigate multicultural environments and the richness of regional languages. However, adding regional languages to the curriculum could make the classroom more welcoming and equal.

### **Recommendations**

It is important for both teachers and students to recognize the role of cultural context in learning any language. Teachers should encourage the students to explore and learn English through the lens of their own cultural experiences. This will make them to learn language more easily. Teachers can relate local and cultural examples into daily based lesson to enhance student's understanding with their cultural and Language as well. Lastly creating the curriculum that balances subject knowledge as well as proficiency in English language while valuing the native languages.

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### Questionnaire

Please circle a number that best states your opinions (1–5). 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= Neutral 4= agree, 5=strongly agree		SD	D	N	A	SA
<b>Ideological Analysis</b>						
1	The implementation of English as a compulsory language in education reflects the dominant ideologies in Pakistan.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Teachers' and students' resistance or acceptance of the compulsory English policy can influence its implementation in schools.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Teachers' ability to effectively communicate and engage with students is affected by the compulsory English policy.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Many students code-switch between their regional language and English in everyday conversations in my province.	1	2	3	4	5
5	The use of English language impact your ability to participate in discussions of classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Power and Social Relations</b>						



6	There is a lack of quality educational resources available in regional languages.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Regional languages are not given enough importance in the education system.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The compulsory English policy affects access to educational opportunities for students from regional language-speaking communities.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Incorporating regional languages in the classroom can enhance students' understanding of complex concepts.	1	2	3	4	5
10	English as a compulsory language in education impacts language practices and interactions among students and teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Language culture and identity</b>						
11	The compulsory English policy marginalizes students who are not proficient in English.	1	2	3	4	5
12	The compulsory English policy impacts the negotiation of multilingual and multicultural educational contexts.	1	2	3	4	5
13	English proficiency is prioritized over content knowledge in academic assessments.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Students from English-speaking backgrounds have an advantage over others due to language.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Students who are not fluent in English may feel a sense of exclusion or isolation in educational settings.	1	2	3	4	5