

## **IMPACT OF MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION ON STUDENT'S LEARNING**

**Tahir Taj\***

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### **Abstract**

The medium of instruction is crucial in transforming education and making it easier or difficult for a student. In Pakistan, there is a considerable gap in the attitudes of the students getting the education in English, Urdu, and Regional languages. The level of understanding among the students differs due to learning in the medium of instruction in national and mother tongues. The study aims to assess the role of mother tongue as a medium of instruction at school/college level in the academic growth of the students in Pakistan. This study will also help us to investigate the merits and demerits of the medium of instruction in the mother tongue, and Urdu and English language. For the research survey design was used, in which 25 participants of 7th four week National Training Workshop on Educational Leadership and Institutional Management were asked questions on the medium of instruction in Pakistan. Most of the respondents think that intellectual development is more in Urdu (mother tongue) as a medium of instruction rather than English or the regional language. It was also found that the English language is the need of the time to cope with international developments in science and technology.

**Keywords:** Medium, instruction, mother tongue, students, learning.

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\* **Deputy Director, Academy of Educational Planning and Management, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Islamabad.**

## **Introduction**

**A variety of factors determines Student's academic success; language is one of them. Language is at the center of all the teaching and learning activities because it is the primary source of communication. Language used to teach and instruct in any discipline, subject and at any level of teaching (primary, secondary, higher, etc.) is called Medium of instruction. The medium of instruction has a very crucial role in transforming education and making it understandable for a student. Language is the fundamental cultural aspect. It is an important tool for cultural transformation.**

**Student's academic success depends on many factors; language is one of them. Since independence, Pakistan is facing the issue of medium of instruction with Urdu and English dominating at present. The issue of medium of instruction is controversial in Pakistan and continues to be a power struggle between different pressure groups. Pakistan is a multilingual country, and at present, there are two parallel mediums of instruction in Pakistan: Urdu medium, and English medium. Today in every province of Pakistan, various languages are used for teaching at various levels. Firstly, each province has a local/regional language which is used as the language of everyday communication. Major Native/Regional languages of Pakistan are Punjabi (Province of Punjab), Pashto (Province of Khyber-Pukhtoonkhaw), Sindhi (Province of Sindh), Balochi (Province of Balochistan), Saraiki (Regional Language) and some other languages like Brohi, Hindko, Burushaski, Shina, Balti, Khowar, Kalash, Wakhi or Xikwor and Bengali etc.**

**Secondly, Urdu is our national language and considered as a symbol of national unity. Lastly, English is the official language, and Pakistan's Constitution is written in English.**

The condition of education in Pakistan is abysmal. We have three parallel education systems: English Medium, Urdu Medium and Mother tongue (Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, and Punjabi). The issue of the Pakistani education system is the different forms of educational institutions which led to different and ethnocentric social classes in Pakistani society. These are presenting an awful picture of the educational system of Pakistan. Every social class has a separate and different educational set up for their children. Upper, upper-middle and middle classes can pay huge fees for their children's education so that they can study in the English medium schools. Whereas, the lower-middle and working classes of Pakistan have Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, Punjabi medium schools for their children because they cannot afford English medium schools. Poor and religious parents send their children in Madrassas. This situation presents the murder of our national integration and uniformity. To understand the issue of medium of instruction in Pakistan, it is vital to have a rich background about the history of the medium of instruction in Pakistan in different eras. In 1947, at the time of independence, the official language of the country was English, as it was before in the sub-continent. At that time, Urdu was the national language of the country.

## **Background**

History of Medium of Instruction in Pakistan since 1947 till Now

Urdu was confirmed as the national language in all of the three constitutions of Pakistan (1956, 1962, and 1973). The national language of a country has two basic roles.

- Representation of the cultural heritage of the country.
- The mean of communication.

When we see the history of different countries, it is found that the native language of the majority countries is their national language of their country, for instance, China, U.K, and U.S.A. Some states have declared the language of their Ex. Masters as their national language such as French. In Pakistan, we found an entirely different situation, where Urdu is neither the language of the ex-masters nor the local language of the population. Here a question arises then, "Why Urdu is declared as the national language even it is the language of only 7.80% of the whole population in Pakistan?" The answer is quite simple and easy to understand. Urdu was born after the Arabic merchants came in sub-continent, who used it to communicate with the people of sub-continent. In other words, Urdu is as old as the advent of Islam in the subcontinent

when Muhammad Bin Qasim came and conquered the Sindh. He laid the foundation of an Islamic state in the sub-continent. During the Muslim ruling times, Urdu got a very influential status in the sub-continent. After that, during the Pakistan Movement Urdu was considered as the symbol of Muslim integration and unity. Thus, it is concluded that Urdu as the National language of Pakistan is nothing but mere emotional attachment.

### **Urdu serves as Lingua Franca in Pakistan**

"A lingua franca is a language used for communication between persons not sharing the mother tongue, usually when it is a third language." In the light of the above-said definition of lingua franca, Urdu can be no doubt considered as the lingua franca of Pakistan. Researchers have highlighted that since independence Urdu was not adopted as the national language of Pakistan which is the primary cause behind the current situation in the country. To some extent, Urdu has been lost among English, regional and native languages.

### **Multilingualism in Pakistan**

Pakistan is said to be a multilingual country because more than one language is spoken by the masses in the country. Urdu is the native language of only 7.57 percent of the whole population whereas Pakistan's official language is English. Apart from this, Pakistan has five major Provincial/Regional languages and 58 other local languages.

### **Governments and Review of Policy Documents in Pakistan**

The issue of national and official language is with us since independence. This issue is highlighted by all the policy documents formulated by almost all the Governments of Pakistan since 1947. In 1947, it was proposed in the Pakistan Educational Conference that provincial languages should be used as medium of instruction in the government institutions. The primary point highlighted in the report of this conference was the acceptance of the status of Urdu as the lingua franca of Pakistan and teaching of this language as a compulsory subject in the institutions of the country. During Ayub Khan's Martial Law, Sharif commission (1959) recommended that Pakistan's national language Urdu should steadily and gradually be replaced with English, Urdu was suggested as the medium of instruction for grade five to ten and at the upper level of education, it was realized that there was not sufficient staff and material available, so it was

proposed to adopt English or Nation language as medium of instruction at 10-12th grade. This option was given up to the preparation of necessary material and books in Urdu. In 1969, General Yahiya's government appointed a committee under the supervision of Air Marshal @ Nur Khan to give recommendations for the betterment of the education system of Pakistan. The committee suggested that English should not be continued as the medium of instruction in Pakistan and Urdu and Bengali should replace English by 1975. Under the Government of Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-1977), the lobby in support of Urdu was much more active, and it served as a platform of anti-PPP. Infected Bhutto government did not do anything special to encourage the use of Urdu in the institutions of Pakistan. General Zia-Ul-Haq laid the foundation of the MUQTADRA QAUMI ZABAN (The National Language Authority) in 1979. Urdu was supported by announcing that by April 1979, students in all English medium schools would be taught in Urdu or in any provincial language. The major drawback of our nation is that we make the policies and start implementation without any prior consideration and research. Due to that reason, all of our plans go into the wastage soon after the implementation and brings no fruitful results. There is another major reason for the failure of our plans is policy paralysis. This was a great decision, but it was also failed.

In 1983, one more assertion came and it permitted the schools to conduct A and O level examinations. This was nothing but the murder of Urdu as medium of instruction. After Zia, every Government has adopted a bendable of attitudes towards medium of instruction in Pakistan. The Musharraf Government declared English as a compulsory subject from grade-1, and the adaptation of English as the medium of instruction for all of the other subjects such as science, mathematics, computer science in all schools gradually.

### **Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973**

In all of the three constitutions of Pakistan, there are clear statements available about the language of Pakistan. In the constitution of Pakistan 1973, the statement about language polity in Pakistan is as under:

- 1) "The National language of Pakistan is Urdu and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day.
- 2) The English language may be used for official purposes until replaced by Urdu.

3) Without prejudice to the status of the National language, a Provincial Assembly may make law for the teaching, promotion, and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study was designed to investigate the impact of the medium of instruction on students' learning and achievements. Following are the objectives of the study:

- To evaluate the medium of instruction on students learning at the school level.
- To see the effect of medium of instruction at school level in teaching-learning process.
- To find out the role of students' home environment at students' learning.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study could be beneficial for all stakeholders of the education system such as policymakers to know the real-time situation of the effectiveness of medium of instruction in the different context of Pakistan. This study can help the teachers, head teachers, school administrators, student, parents and community to know the importance of medium of instruction and its effects on students' learning.

### **Research methodology**

The study was quantitative, and descriptive research design was used in this study. Due to the limited sources and time, the study was delimited to the 25 participants (Head Teachers of Secondary/Higher Secondary Schools) of Four weeks National Training Workshop on Educational Leadership and Institutional Management conducted by the Academy for Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM), Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Islamabad.

### **Sample and sampling Technique**

By using census sampling technique, all the participants of the training program under ELIM (Educational Leadership and Institutional Management) Project conducted by APEAM Islamabad were selected as a sample of the study. These participants were gathered (both male and female) from all over the Pakistan.

### Research tool

A Questionnaire was used as the instrument of the study which was developed on the basis of review of literature related to the topic of the study.

### Data Collection

Data was collected personally. The questionnaires were distributed among the participants with the request to respond up to the next day. The topic “Impact of the medium of instruction on students Learning” Nine questions were asked from the 25 trainees of the workshop from all corners of Pakistan who were attending the National Training Program. The province/region-wise numbers of participants were as under:

S#	Province	No of Participants
1	Sindh	4
2	Punjab	6
3	Baluchistan	6
4	KPK	3
5	FATA	2
6	Gilgit- Baltistan	2
7	Islamabad ICT	1
8	AJK	1

### Validation and finalization of the instrument

The instrument of the study was validated through experts’ opinion. Opinion from three experts working in AEPAM as research faculty was taken and on the basis of their recommendations, the questionnaire was finalized concerning the language correction, item relevancy, and face validity.

### Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by using statistical techniques, i.e. frequencies, percentage and mean score.

## Results

On the basis of survey responses following results were obtained.

Merits and Demerits of Adopting Urdu/English/Mother tongue as a Medium of Instruction.

### Urdu as Medium of Instruction

#### Merits:

- From the time of independence Urdu became the National language of Pakistan, though Pakistan inherited no land where this language was a local language, but now people can speak Urdu at home and workplaces. It is a widely understood language of Pakistan.
- Urdu provides cohesion among all the communities of Pakistan irrespective of their mother tongues.
- In the case of Pakistan, Urdu is preferred as it contains a considerable fund of religious knowledge and national literature.
- Urdu plays a crucial role in creating love, respect, and national integrity.
- It removes cultural diversity among people.
- Teacher and Students can easily understand it.

#### Demerits:

- Urdu language is not a well-developed and advanced language in comparison to English.
- Urdu medium students find it difficult to understand the latest advancement in the areas of research and technology.
- Research work is not produced in Urdu language.
- Urdu medium students feel inferiority complexes.
- It is difficult for the students of Urdu medium schools to get maximum job opportunities.

### English as Medium of Instruction

#### Merits:

- English medium students are able to understand the latest advancement in knowledge.
- Advance research and literature is in English.
- It is a rich language. It has thousands of words and phrases.
- English is used as the language of Science and Technology.



- Employment opportunities are more for English medium students.
- It is necessary for the Internet and Computer usage.
- It is the gateway to Higher Education.
- At a higher level, all the books are published in English language.
- We can read all the newspapers, magazines, research papers, etc. of foreign writers and researchers.

**Demerits:**

- English medium students are proud of themselves and have a sense of superiority about their own language and culture.
- English is the second language of the country which makes it hard for students to exchange ideas.
- To get full command on that language is a hard task for the students.
- It doesn't reflect our culture, values, and traditions.
- English is the foreign language, and education in foreign language places an enormous strain on students, forcing them to memorize and to spend a large proportion of their time on learning the language.

**Mother tongue as Medium of Instruction****Merits:**

- Teaching in the Mother tongue enhance the understanding of the learner.
- It is a natural phenomenon to teach a person in his/her Mother tongue.
- The findings of the latest researches show that a person thinks in his/her mother tongue. So, Mother tongue as a medium of instruction removes the confusions.
- A student possesses a rich vocabulary in his/her mother tongue. So, he/she can easily express his/her ideas/views and language does not become a hurdle.
- Local languages promote and reflect the culture of the different regions of the country.
- Education in the mother tongue enables the learners to gain fluency and confidence in speaking, reading, and writing and to participate fully in, and contribute, to national economic and social development.

**Demerits:**

- Mother tongue as medium of instruction gives birth to cultural diversity.
- It becomes a danger for national integrity.
- Different parallel systems of education may introduce in the country.
- It is challenging to provide all the necessary literature and required material to the students in their mother tongue.

**Problems Faced by the Teachers and Students in adopting other Medium of Instruction except Mother tongue especially at lower level in Pakistan**

At lower level especially in elementary classes, our teachers and students are facing a lot of problems, which can be eliminated by adopting mother tongue as a medium of instruction. The issues are:

- Teacher and Students both face difficulty in exchanging ideas due to poor vocabulary. It is tough to get command over a non-native language.
- Level of understanding decreases. Students could not understand effectively. They are compelled to memorize knowledge. Concepts of the students remain unclear.
- Students fail to integrate the knowledge, which the teacher is imparting in their minds, with their natural setting. It makes their minds get confused.

**Conclusion**

On the basis of these findings, it is concluded that in the respondents' point of view, the students' academic achievement develop through Urdu as a medium of instruction rather than English or local language. For language as a medium of instruction, most of the participants perceived English as the need of the time. Furthermore, the English language was considered easier for teaching the science subjects. Also, English can support at the higher level of education. whereas, Urdu can improve communication skills. The respondents felt that Urdu is more helpful for mathematics' concept clarity. The respondent felt that Urdu is more helpful for theoretical subjects such as concept for Grammar. For attitude modification, the local language was found more helpful than English or Urdu language. It was concluded that Urdu as a medium of instruction develops confidence in the students as compared to English or local languages. Urdu is more helpful to transform the culture from one generation to other.

## **Recommendations**

From the above-mentioned findings and conclusion, following recommendations are suggested.

- Curriculum developers should focus on such development of a curriculum which can be imparted Urdu as the medium of instruction.
- Basic concepts of science subjects should be in the English language.
- English should be as a second language of instruction so that the students can feel comfortable at a higher level of their education.
- Concepts of other subjects should be easily clear in the Urdu language such as Mathematics, Islamiat, and Social studies.

It is, therefore, recommended to the teachers, schools, administrators, and policy-makers to devise and implement workable policies for the medium of instruction to facilitate the students for the growth of their academic career.

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