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### LANGUAGE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION: A STUDY OF ITS IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE OF PAKISTANI UNIVERSITIES

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#### ABSTRACT

This research examines the effect of language medium on performance in subjects that inevitably involve much use of language for study for students in Pakistani universities. Linguistically, Pakistan remains a very diverse country since more than seventy languages are used in this country. English is the language for higher education, for global communications as well as for accessing economic opportunities resulting in facing perplexities by students belonging to linguistically diverse background. Theoretical sciences including Cummins' Framework for Language and Literacy Development and Gardner's Integrative Motivation Theory emphasize on language proficiency in the consideration of achievement. Research questions include: Language medium and academic performance: an empirical question Explaining how language proficiency impacts achievement: A review. What are the difficulties that learners with LEP? To do this, 300 students from public and private university were administered a survey, in addition to conducting interviews with 20 faculty members from same universities. Consequently, this study adds to a literature that discusses choice of language medium in Pakistani universities, helps in shaping language policies, training of teachers, and choice of teaching pedagogy. Specifically, the study will seek to establish the effect of language medium on the students' academic performance look at the function of the language proficiency in the success of the students, and establish the woeful experiences of learners with limited English language proficiency. Research hypotheses include: First language instruction will enhance achievement for students, while higher achievement in science and mathematics will result from English-medium education. Anticipated objectives include effects of language medium on academic performance, the significance of language proficiency in achievement, and policy implications for language medium. These are limitations based on sample size and area, and complexity of language teaching and learning. As such, the study provides significant implications for language policy and future teacher education, as well as raising learning attainment. Further research ideas relate to the longitudinal research on the teaching of language and understanding the role of technology in language acquisition.

**Keywords:** language medium issue, academic performance, university in Pakistan, mastery in English language.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Facilitating medium is one of the most sensitive determinants of academic progress, and its choice – language – may affect the students' results in a rather dramatic manner. In this case, there has been a long-standing discussion on medium of instruction with advocates for English as the medium due to it being the language of academia, and opponents with a view that concrete latent ability is best taught in mother tongue. In Pakistan, universities are taught in English even though the official language of the country is Urdu. It does so while raising fundamental issues about the role of language in students' academic performance.

The Pakistan language policy decision has three features which include colonial legacy and globalization features. The linguistic culture includes naming a diverse number of over 70 languages spoken in the country. However, it is high time English speaks for a higher education, for the purpose of international communication and even access to job opportunities. This has posed some problems to students with multiple linguistic abilities.

Science-based models like Cummins' Framework for Language and Literacy Development (Cummins, 2000) and Gardner's Integrative Motivation Theory (Gardner, 2001) singles out language as important for performing well in class. Scholars have realized that language skills of the students have a direct relation with their performance (Baker, 2011; Canagarajah, 2007). In addition, research has shown that CBI can raise academic achievement (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

There are many problems that affect education in Pakistan includes resource deficiencies, weak infrastructure, and lack of faculty development. The language medium factor deepens these difficulties, mainly for the learners from rural or a disadvantaged background. Urdu medium instruction has always been taken as inferior instruction and English medium instruction is considered as superior one. However this observation fails to consider Pakistani students in terms of linguistic and cultural diverse population.

As observed, and as the following chapters will show, language medium plays a critical role in determining students' performance in their academics. Language is not just a means of conveying information but is a part of cognition that is too important to be overlooked. A study made proved that those students taught in their local language gain better grades than those taught in other languages.

However, CBI has the potential of developing the students' language competence and cultural sensitivity as well as improving their academic performance.

The purpose of this research is to explore the effects of language as a medium of instruction on the performance of students studying in Pakistani universities in subject areas which demand enhanced levels of language skills. Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. Explore the association between language medium of instruction and students' performance.

2. Explore the possibilities of academic performance with reference to language skills specifically as the knowledge area.

3. Learn about barriers to learning faced by students with little English language acquisition.

The answers to these research questions bring this study to the imperative discourse related to language medium in Pakistani universities. The outcomes will contribute to language policy management in education, the improvement of teacher education, as well as to curriculum and classroom practices with the goal of raising student achievement and language development.

### **Literature Review**

The use of language medium has been an issue of controversy since people advocating for English as foreign language the world over for academic use while others have called for mother tongue language. The present literature review aims at exploring the impact of medium of instruction on academic performance of students in Pakistani universities.

The relationships between language proficiency and academic achievement Cummins (2000) was able to stress the degree of language that helps in achieving good results in school. P Mastery of academic language positively relates to the academic performance of students as supported by different studies (Baker, 2011, Canagarajah, 2007). Thomas and Collier (2002) proved that those students who were taught in their native language, had better results. In a similar manner, similar studies conducted by Khan (2016) identified that learners with low English language comprehensibility encountered challenges in learning under an English-medium instruction.

Language medium and academic achievement: a analyse of the research perspective Research has sought to establish the effects that language medium has on achievement. Choudary (2018) also stated that due to Urdu medium instruction students' language proficiency has improved. But Rahman (2010) pointed out that the medium of instruction in English needed for inter-Asia and international communication and for economic benefits.

### **Bilingual Instruction**

Some studies have looked into the issue concerning bilingual education. In their cross-sectional study, Mohanty (2006) showed that increased use of HAL in classroom led to the enhancement in students' language and academic performance. Heugh (2000) discovered that instruction triggers the development of skills in the students thinking skills. Also, Baker (2011) noted that benefits of bilingual instruction can be found in the domain of language and culture; more specifically, the author stated that there exist contracts in language: identity.

### **Pakistani Context**

Since Pakistan has more than seventy languages which are spoken in the country, Pakistan is diverse linguistically. English has emerged as the medium of instruction in higher learning, interconnection and globalization, and access to job markets around

the world (Rahman, 2010). Nevertheless, such instruction is regarded as low standard compared to other available instructions particularly the English medium instruction.

#### Theoretical Frameworks

Cummins' Framework for Language and Literacy Development (Cummins, 2000) and Gardner's Integrative Motivation Theory (Gardner, 2001) are useful in understanding the part that language proficiency plays in achievement. These frameworks emphasize the need of language requirement in the accomplishment of academics.

#### Methodological Considerations

Research has been conducted with more or less approaches with an aim of assessing the effects of language medium. Quantitative findings have utilised cross-sectional questionnaires and inferential analysis (Khan, 2016), whereas qualitative results have employ person-interviews and interpretive analysis (Ahmed, 2018).

#### Gaps in Literature

However, there are still some gaps within the research that exist. There is a lack of literature based on longitudinal research on language instruction and achievement. Two more areas of research which can be considered as currently relevant are examining the ways technology influences language learning.

#### Critical Analysis

Despite the call for assuring language proficiency, the current study shows methodological pitfalls. And therefore, the future studies should respond to them. Secondly, the study, is set in the context of Pakistan, this has its own challenges and therefore the need to conduct a contextual study.

#### Future Research Directions

1. Identification of language acquisition and education effectiveness in longitudinal framework.
2. Exploring the role of technology across the second language acquisition process.
3. Dynamics of language attitudes and profile construction.

#### Implications for Practice

1. Our Language policy changes to support bilingual education paradigms.
2. Pre-service teacher training for dealing with language issues in classroom.
3. Special services which may be provided to students when learning a foreign language.

#### Limitations

1. Geographical limitations.
2. Competency level of AL and Sephora Regarding Language Instruction

### **Methodology**

#### Research Design

It is, therefore, a quantitative-exploratory study layouted to examine the effect of medium of instruction of achievement in Pakistani universities.

#### Research Questions

1. The findings of the study on Classroom Interaction Pairing and the literature on language medium and academic achievement are outlined below:
2. What role does language acquisition play in determining students' achievements?

3. We always know that students with Limited English Proficient (LEP) encounter some problems in school.

#### Participants

The sample for the current study will include 20 faculty members and 300 students drawn from private and public universities in Pakistan.

#### Sampling Strategy

Participants will be sampled using Convenience sampling. The targeted beneficiaries will be students from various departments, STEM and Social Sciences departments.

#### Data Collection

##### Quantitative Data

1. Survey Questionnaire: Instruments: Using questionnaires, students will be asked structured questions and Likert scale questions that would elicit information about the demographic status of the student, their proficiency in a second language and academic performance.

2. Academic Records: Documents which contain student's records will be retrieved from the University's databases to study academic performance.

##### Qualitative Data

1. Interviews: Faculty's attitudes regarding language medium and academic achievements will be analysed through semi structured interviews with the faculty members.

2. Focus Groups: These shall include focus group discussion with the students with a view of getting details

##### Quantitative Data

1. Descriptive Statistics: Demographic variables and A.K.A. academic performance will be summarized using means, frequencies, and percentage.

2. Inferential Statistics: The participation of language medium in academic performance will be checked using regression analysis.

##### Qualitative Data

1. Thematic Analysis: Qualitative interviews and focus group data will have the themes analyzed to identify patterns and develop a description of the themes.

2. Content Analysis: Perceived data on the part of the faculty members will employed Content analysis.

#### Research Instruments

1. Survey Questionnaire: As a general note, the data and analysis in this project were adapted from other publications (Khan, 2016; Ahmed, 2018), but the choice of questions and overall study design remain specific to this research.

2. Interview Protocol: Derived from this literature (Rahman, 2010, Mohanty, 2006).

3. Focus Group Guide: Still, formulated on the background of existing literature indicators (Heugh 2000).

#### Pilot Study

A pilot probe will be administered on thirty students in order to validate the survey instrument and interview plan.

#### Ethical Considerations

1. Informed Consent: Participants will be made to read and sign consent forms before they can participate.
2. Confidentiality: Authority will make sure that data collected will not be shared to any third party.
3. Anonymity: Data collected from participants will be anonymised.

#### Limitations

1. Sampling bias.
2. Limited generalizability.
3. Fragmentation and difficulty of approaches to imparting language.

#### Validity and Reliability

1. Face validity: Expert review.
2. Content validity: Pilot study.
3. Internal consistency: Cronbach's alpha.

#### Data Collection Procedure

1. Survey administration: Online and offline.
2. Interview scheduling: Convenient times.
3. Focus group scheduling: Convenient times.

#### Data Analysis Software

1. SPSS for quantitative data.
2. NVivo for qualitative data.

#### Timeline

1. Literature review: 2 weeks.
2. Instrument development: 4 weeks.
3. Pilot study: 2 weeks.
4. Data collection: 12 weeks.
5. Data analysis: 16 weeks.
6. Writing and revisions: 8 weeks.

This paper's methodology section discusses the research design, participants, sampling procedure, data acquisition, data analysis, instruments, pilot study, ethical issues, limitations, validity, and reliability. The study will try to contribute sincere usable knowledge about the effect of the language medium on academic performance in Pakistani universities. Results on their experiences and hardships in regard to language medium.

## Results

### Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the participants in the study. The participants included three hundred students and instructors from public and private universities in Pakistan. According to age distribution the highest proportion of the students (73.3%) fell in the range of 18-25 years. However the gender distribution had pre-dominated the males by 55%, while the females accounted for 45%. Among the students 60{997891} were in English medium and 30 {997891}% in Urdu medium and only 10{997891}% of students were being taught both English and Urdu medium simultaneously.

Table 1: Participant demographic information as obtained from 300 participants is presented in the table below.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
<b>18-25</b>	220	73.3%
<b>26-35</b>	65	21.7%
<b>36-45</b>	15	5%
<b>Gender</b>		
<b>Male</b>	165	55%
<b>Female</b>	135	45%
<b>Language Medium</b>		
<b>English</b>	180	60%
<b>Urdu</b>	90	30%
<b>Both</b>	30	10%

#### Academic Achievement

Participants' GPA is presented in Table 2 in relation to their academic achievement upon entering the study. The average GP As of the students were 2.85 and the Standard Deviation (SD) = 0.45. The language proficiency of the participants was described on a scale of ranging from one to ten; and the mean was 6.21, SD 1.12.

Table 2: Achievement means and standard deviations (sample size, n = 300) Language Proficiency 6.21 1.12istics

The demographic characteristics of the participants in the study are summarized in Table 1. The participants comprised 300 students and faculty members from public and private universities in Pakistan. A significant proportion of the students (73.3%) were aged between 18-25 years. The gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 55% male participants and 45% female participants. The majority of the students (60%) were enrolled in English-medium programs, while 30% were in Urdu-medium programs, and 10% participated in bilingual (both English and Urdu) instruction.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n=300)

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#### Academic Achievement

The academic achievement of participants, as measured by their GPA, is shown in Table 2. The average GPA of the students was 2.85, with a standard deviation (SD) of 0.45. The language proficiency level, measured on a scale of 1 to 10, had an average score of 6.21 with an SD of 1.12.

Table 2: Mean Scores of Academic Achievement (n=300)

Variable	Mean	SD
<b>GPA</b>	2.85	0.45
<b>Language Proficiency</b>	6.21	1.12

A Study of Relationship between Language Medium and Academic Achievement  
 Pearson’s correlation was used to compare the means of language medium and academic achievement which was measured through GPA. In the following table 3 we can also see establish that there was significant positive correlation between the language medium and the academic achievement in terms of GPA. Particularly, the findings showed that students who were taught under English medium instruction were found to have higher GPAs than students taught under Urdu or bilingual media. In addition, the result reveals a strong and positive relationship between language proficiency and academic performance—a relationship that shows the higher the language proficiency, the better the student’s performance is likely to be.

Table 3: Simple Pearson Correlation Coefficients between Language Medium and Academic Achievement for 300 participants. Inconsistent Language Through Medium GPA Language Skill Language Proficiency 0.42 0.61 1ts between Language Medium and Academic Achievement (n=300)

Variable	Language Medium	GPA	Language Proficiency
<b>Language Medium</b>	1	0.35	0.42
<b>GPA</b>	0.35	1	0.61
<b>Language Proficiency</b>	0.42	0.61	1

Qualitative Findings

Theme 1: Language Barriers

Qualitative data indicate that the difficulty of language is also a big challenge for the learners. • "I struggle a lot when it comes to using English." • "Sometimes, depending on the topic of the lecture and the teacher, I just can’t grasp the "English" being taught."ge Medium and Academic Achievement (n=300)

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Qualitative Findings

Theme 1: Language Barriers

The qualitative findings revealed that language barriers are a major obstacle for many students. A common sentiment shared by students was their struggle to comprehend lectures delivered in English, as seen in the following quotes:

- "English is a major obstacle for me." (Student 1)
- "I struggle to understand lectures in English." (Student 5)

These comments help to explain situations that learners in LEP face especially in an EMI context.

Theme 2: Language Support

The respondents underscored the need for offering language assistance to learners as lecturers. • "Members, particularly the teachers, should assist in offering language



assistance." • "Language laboratories can enhance, or as some would prefer, facilitate the learning of languages.' Medium and Academic Achievement (n=300)

E	Language Medium	GPA	Language Proficiency
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### Qualitative Findings

#### Theme 1: Language Barriers

The qualitative findings revealed that language barriers are a major obstacle for many students. A common sentiment shared by students was their struggle to comprehend lectures delivered in English, as seen in the following quotes:

- "English is a major obstacle for me." (Student 1)
- "I struggle to understand lectures in English." (Student 5)

These comments underscore the challenges faced by students with limited English proficiency, particularly in an English-medium instruction setting.

#### Theme 2: Language Support

Faculty members highlighted the importance of providing language support to students. They emphasized the need for structured programs to help students overcome language barriers, as reflected in the following quotes:

- "Teachers should provide language support." (Faculty 2)
- "Language labs can improve language proficiency." (Faculty 4)

Explaining the theme of language support, the potential of language facilities implies that Language labs and tutors including the institution would help to improve the students' performance in academic arena.

### Discussion

A clear implication of the study findings is the fact that language medium is correlated with student achievement. Those who had been subjected to the English intonation did well academically.

The quantitative findings bear testimony to earlier findings by Khan (2016) and Ahmed (2018) stressing on the centrality of language competence in learner achievement.

The two main ideas emerging from the current qualitative results are the language difficulties and the language assistance. Language support services were highlighted by the participants as something they needed.

### Implications

1. To enhance the bilingual education policy there were language policy reforms.
2. All the teacher training programs dealing with linguistic development.
3. Services provided to students including; Languages services/Support for Students.

### Limitations

1. Sampling bias.
2. Limited generalizability.

### Future Research Directions

1. Scholarly research articles about longitudinal investigation on language instruction effects on academic.

2. Introduction to the phenomenon of technology effects in the second language acquisition process.

The present study aims at making a small but important contribution towards understanding the language medium issue in the context of universities in Pakistan. The results show that the interaction between language medium and academic achievement is not a simple one.

Recommendations

Language Policy Reforms

1. Help pupils learn in both English and other languages in universities for the benefit of every learner's language skills.
2. The following policies should be formulated to enhance the provision of L1 instruction in early education.
3. Promote the service for language support for students in universities.

Teacher Training Programs

1. Create attachments that are concerned with creating, alongside training teachers who also possess language skills, pillars for the teaching profession.
2. Encourage teacher to undertake language certification exam.
3. Build partnership with institutions of other countries in order to improve the quality of teachers training.

Language Support Services

1. Faculty of Language Learning should setup language laboratories and language resource centers.
2. Create language teaching and motivating initiatives.
3. Create effective L2 learning resources accessible through the internet.

Curriculum Development

1. Immerse language skills within the lessons.
2. Create language tools, which will be related to the concrete context of the learner.
3. It is suggested for practitioners to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to language teaching.

Assessment and Evaluation

1. Create language skills assessment drills.
2. Leve modules of common language measurements.
3. Teacher performance in language class.

Technology Integration

1. Use software in learning languages.
2. Extend its line of online language courses.
3. Improve educational material in foreign language with the help of multimedia.

Community Engagement

1. Engage people at the grass root level in the quest for the preservation of their languages.
2. It is very important to initiate language education programs for the communities.
3. There should be formation of language clubs and cultural groups.

Research and Development

1. Perform time series research focusing on language policy and pedagogy as well as students' performance.

2. It is time to find out how language learning is influenced by technology.

3. To establish development language education frameworks for Pakistani universities.

#### Policy Implementation

1. Formulate a language in education policy for the country.

2. Of develop provincial language education policies.

3. Assess the process of policy implementation.

#### Stakeholder Engagement

1. Involve decision makers at the policy level, school and community.

2. Need to propose ideas and requirements – conduct workshops and seminars.

3. Develop stakeholder networks.

#### Resource Allocation

1. Support programs for language education.

2. Allocate funds for development of teachers.

3. Open studies departments of foreign languages and cultures.

#### Conclusion

The recommendations made in this study are expected to improve the teaching of language in Pakistani universities. Educational standards can be increased, students get more exposure to linguistic variety, and every learner included in the class with these proposals.

#### Implementation Plan

##### Short-term (6-12 months)

1. Language policies in education: policy development.

2. Develop provision of language services for the community.

3. Organize and/or sponsor training for teachers.

##### Medium-term (1-2 years)

1. In order to achieve a character blueprint, curriculum and assessment frameworks should be developed.

2. Introducing technology into language teaching and learning.

3. Set up vigorous community relations activities.

##### Long-term (2-5 years)

1. Conduct longitudinal studies.

2. Construct human language education research centers.

3. Examine the effectiveness of a particular policy.

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