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ENGLISH AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

English as a medium of instruction in the education system of Pakistan is a controversial debate throughout the years since the independence of Pakistan, and is still a recurrent issue to be resolved. The purpose of the study is, to critically highlight the drawbacks in the education system of Pakistan resulting in hinderance to the development of the country. The data was collected from the general surveys and discussion, PM's recent speech presenting the idea of One-nation One-curriculum, newspapers and by focusing on the education system of Pakistan as a whole. The study built its theoretical foundation by drawing from discourse analysis and critical theory. It is observed that, Pakistan is a multilingual and multicultural society. It is one of the most diverse societies linguistically as well as culturally. A nation's development and growth depend on many factors out of which its educated people are most important who work for its development and contribute in its prosperity. The asset of a nation's prosperity and developments resides in its educated community. The study suggests that the implication of English as a medium of instruction in the education system equally throughout Pakistan would be a strong factor in the development and prosperity of the nation.

Keywords: Medium of instruction; Education system; English; Multilingual and multicultural Society; Diversity in language; Pakistan.

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INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is a multilingual and multicultural society. It has linguistic diversity in its culture. It has been estimated that there are almost seven thousand languages are spoken all over the world, out of which over seventy plus languages are spoken only in Pakistan. Pakistan has two official languages, one is Urdu which is the national language of Pakistan, spoken by almost 7.57% people of the country and also serves as lingua franca among provinces in Pakistan. The other is English, the foreign language, and also the second official language which, serves as the medium of instruction in the higher education system of Pakistan. In addition to these, there are four key provincial languages of Pakistan, Punjabi (44.15%), Pashto (15.42%), Sindhi (14.10%), and Balochi (3.57%), as well as two district languages are Saraiki (10.57%) and Kashmiri. Other languages spoken in Pakistan include Bengali, Potwari, Kalash, Khowar, Shina, Balti, Buruhi, Hindko, Farsi and the rest. All these others form the rest 4.66% of the total (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 1998). The regional civilizations of Pakistan have a rich heritage. Their languages are vibrant, diverse, and thriving in their respective regions. Many of these languages incorporate a modified version of the Persian-Arabic script. While the various dialects share commonalities, they also exhibit some differences due to geographic distance. Consequently, several major languages have a range of dialects. Each language boasts a rich historical heritage and a wealth of literature. Considering this culturally and linguistically rich background, a dilemma emerged at the time of independence regarding which language should be selected

as the medium of instruction. Additionally, British colonization in the subcontinent left a profound influence of the English community on us, as we were colonized Asians. Moreover, political instability has prevented any government from effectively addressing this issue since independence. Therefore, in order to resolve this issue, a revised policy and planning needs to be proposed which would provide a clear path to follow, and which will prove to be helpful in successfully achieving uniformity in all the education systems nationwide.

This study aims to investigate the role of English language in the development of Pakistan through its education system. The study draws its theoretical basis from the Foucauldian discourse analysis keeping in view the status of English as a language of power. English is not the first language of Pakistani community. It is the language of British Raj, who ruled over sub-continent over years and so over Pakistan as being part of that colonized state. It is the one good legacy of British rule left in the sub-continent so in Pakistan. It is the language of power and prestige. It also enjoys the high status in the whole of education system, law and government. It is the language of science and technology. English for all purposes remains the language of power. "The reasons attributed to this are that English is used by elites in Pakistan, that is, by the upper classes, especially the bureaucracy and the army, who have command over the language due to their English medium schooling" (Raja, 2014).

Proponents of English argue for its continued use as the language of international communication and as a lingua franca among Pakistan's provinces. English serves as the official language of Pakistan and is utilized across all areas of power, including government, bureaucracy, military, judiciary, commerce, media, and higher education and research. "English in Pakistan serves as a gateway to success, to further education and to white collar jobs. It is the language of higher education and wider education and not the home language of the population except in the upper strata of society where it is spoken as a status symbol." (Ghani, 2003).

In Pakistan, there are three primary education systems in addition to the Islamic education system. The first is state-run Urdu-medium schools. The second consists of non-elite English-medium schools (private). The third category includes elite English-medium schools (both private and state-sponsored). Families from the lower, middle, and elite classes must choose one of these three education systems based on their social, financial, and cultural needs. The children from first two classes mostly choose between state-run Urdu-medium, and non-elite English-medium (private) education systems. Whereas the people from elite class choose proudly and willingly elite English-medium education system to educate their children in highly prestige schooling environment. The state-run Urdu-medium education centers and non-elite English-medium education centers provide textbooks in their respective medium accordingly, which are published by their provincial textbook Boards. The elite English-medium education centers provide books written by foreign writers and published by Oxford University Press (Sultana & Fang, 2024). There is huge difference between these two types of education systems, which are presenting two almost opposite cultures and language as a whole. Almost same is the case with higher education system of Pakistan nationwide. The Western education system is student-oriented, which develop qualities such as creativity, generation of new ideas, and problem-solving skills. This education system is ideal for modern environment because it promotes creativity, and students develop creative and problem-solving skills through creative learning process. In this system the key focus of learning is student but conversely to this in Eastern education system, the main focus in learning is teacher. The focus is more on theory rather than practical work that does not develop creativity. Therefore, children and adults from elite class feel proud in learning from this elite English-medium education system, and same is the case with their parents.

The Objective of this study is, to highlight the lack of policy and planning for achieving uniformity in the education system of Pakistan. To know how far this medium of instruction is useful in the development, growth building and prosperity of Pakistan. And what kind of changes the present education system needs to be proposed to, so to work more significantly.

Research Questions

1. If English is the language of power and rule, development and prosperity, how it can be helpful in the development of Pakistan?
2. How far the implementation of English as a medium of instruction equally in all the education systems of Pakistan will help to educate people nationwide?

Theoretical Framework

The present study aims to focus on the role of English language in the discourse of Pakistan. The study finds its bases in, Foucault (1926) theories about relationship between power and knowledge, and studies through Foucauldian discourse analysis. The British colonials had oppressed during their colonization in the sub-continent through power and by ruling over them with their language. They were the rulers therefore they had left an impression of their language on the oppressed nation. Even after their decolonization long ago, Pakistanis being out of the oppressed ones have strong influence of English language over us nation as a whole. This study works in the domain of Qualitative research method.

The aim of this study is to investigate if the implementation of English as a medium of instruction throughout the education system of Pakistan is favorable. How it can be made useful for the development and prosperity of Pakistan. What are the benefits of Western education system in the domain of modern civilization of Pakistan, which is the elite English-medium education system of Pakistan.

This study, primarily analyzed the role of English language in the discourse of Pakistani society. English language is an essential part of Pakistani social discourses. It is spoken as a mainstream medium of instruction in all the higher discourses in Pakistan. These discourses as Law and Judiciary, Army and Military, Media and Commerce, Education, research at higher levels, Power, Bureaucracy, and Government. The purpose of this study is to propose that, being a strong part of this mainstream discourse, there is a need to implement English as a medium of instruction at lower levels such as in primary and middle education systems. In the discourse of Pakistan, the people who speak pure and fluent English in their daily life, at business level, in educational environment, are considered the highly educated ones. But their part in the development and their contribution to the prosperity of Pakistan is less than required, the reason to this is that, their percentage is very less than the percentage of people who learn in state-run Urdu-medium and non-elite English-medium educational environment. Therefore, these mainstream discourses form a background for implementation of English as a medium of instruction also in the lower educational departments. Advocates of English who voice for its retention as a medium of instruction among the provinces part from Urdu, also find this idea useful.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

Pakistan is a multilingual state, which is running its education system at three levels. The state-run Urdu medium schools are provided with books in Urdu language, even the books of science and math are translated into Urdu. One English book is compulsory for them to read. The non-elite English-medium schools are provided with books in English by Pakistani writers published by Provisional Boards. The elite English-medium schools and higher education centers are provided with English medium books written by foreign writers, and published by Oxford University Press as well as Cambridge University Press. Apart from this textbook medium, the verbal medium of instruction in first two education systems is Urdu. And in the later, the medium of instruction and classroom communication, even in some cases personal communication outside the class, is purely in English. The students from the later school of thought, education system, and class, consider them the most prestige and highest in status among others. The reason to this is, the use of their language and the source of their communication in English. The data was collected through surveys, discussion, view of education system of Pakistan, with the help of previous studies in this context such as journal articles to make my research statement strong.

Nature of the Data

The data was based on medium of textbooks, medium of instruction in the education systems, surveys and discussions. All the main types of education systems differ in the medium of textbooks provided to them. Surveys showed that how the education systems differ in their medium of instruction and what kind of books they use. Discussions were simple based on the use of language among different education systems as well as the use of English language and its benefits. The main idea emerged from data such as, journals articles in the similar domain of this study, surveys, recent speech by PM on the idea of One-Nation and One-Curriculum, and newspapers writing provide insight into the education system of Pakistan and lack in its educational policies. This gives the platform to study about the importance and role of English, as a language of power, in the prosperity of Pakistan.

Data Analysis

The theoretical framework lay down the basis for analysis. The study at first, finds out about the percentages of major regional language of Pakistan and Percentage of Urdu speakers, the National as well as first official language of Pakistan. At the second stage, the types of education system of Pakistan, flaws in language policy and drawbacks in the educational policy of Pakistan, through surveys. This study, analysis the importance of English language in the discourse of Pakistani society and its role for the upbringing, development and growth of Pakistan economically, educationally and politically. Furthermore, the study explains the kind of changes needed in education policy so it could promote literacy rate as well as promote uniformity among educated population throughout the country

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As shown in the figure 1 below, the comparison among the three types of education systems. And the similarity between elite education system and higher education system in Pakistan. The children from state-run Urdu-medium schools when promote to the higher education, it become difficult for them to cope up with the situation and in gaining excellence in studies. Also, for the non-elite English-medium school children, difficulty arise in getting the concepts through pure English medium-of-instruction totally. But there does not arise any or no little difficulty for the children from the elite English-medium schools. The diversity in Primary, middle and higher education systems make it difficult for the children to drive their brain according to the requirements of the education system, and henceforth, they become unable to present their best and in having a maximum output of their learning throughout the learning process.

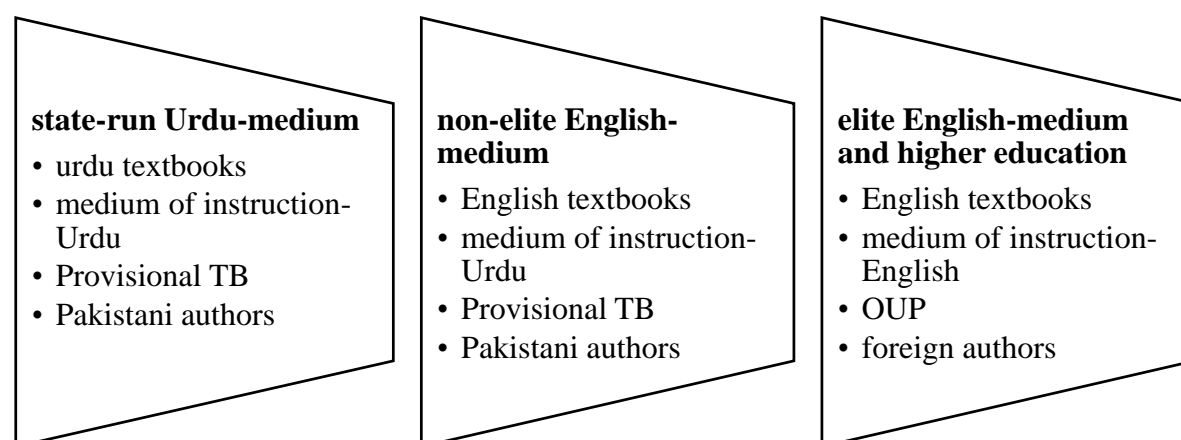


Figure 1. Comparison among education systems of Pakistan.

As this paper told earlier that English is the language of Power and rule. And these textbooks from two different settings show two different cultures. So, this indicates the learning in two different cultures, the lower and middle classes learn in the indigenous culture and the elite class learn in the western culture

and civilization. The difference in the culture study divides the nation into diverse and totally different cultures from each other. So, in this way the power is restricted to one class of the nation which is the elite class. It gives the view to the people that power is the heritage of only one class, the elite-class (Manan et al., 2022). Everywhere in the country the elites are given advantage over use of power and social activities like jobs etc. In this way, this division shows that power is restricted to one particular class, the elite-class, through the means of controlling education system specifically the textbooks. In this context, Pakistani curriculum policy makers are dividing the country, linguistically and culturally in two different nations. In Pakistani context, this is made possible by establishing different schools with different textbooks presenting and teaching two different cultures, ideologically, it is a controlled process of disseminating cultural values (Dildar et al., 2015).

Keeping in view the diversity in language and culture, and rich historical heritage, it is obvious that both Urdu and English are not the first languages of the people of Pakistan. The children in all the education systems belong to different cultures and society. They differ in their provincial as well as regional languages. It is difficult for most of the children to learn in a new language system at primary level, but with the passage of time they become able to drive their brain in that system of language and study through practice. Therefore, there is a need to reset the curriculum to make a one good step towards the development of Pakistan. There is a need to educate the people of all social classes equally. There is a need for some kind of addition in policy and planning of curriculum and education system so to make the lower and middle class, equal to the elite system so they could also become able to work in the privileged ones. Prime Minister Imran Khan voiced, in the same context that, uniform syllabus was indispensable to become one nation and so that everybody got equal chances to progress and flourish. He said in his speech that, "We have to make effort in this regard very cautiously as it may take time because Muslims were very systematically destroyed" (Dialoguepakistan, 2015). Pakistan as a Muslim nation has been destroyed willing and systematically in parts, with the agenda of not letting it rise as One-Nation ever.

The people from elite-class learning in the elite English-medium education system of Pakistan are considered the most educated ones. They are given more privilege and are favored in almost every social discourse in Pakistan. For this reason, they look down upon less privileged and lower class of the society, the people of their own nation and religion, color and creed. So, for the development of the country at larger level than it is today or it was in the past, there is a need to implicate English as a medium of instruction, both verbally as well as through textbooks, equally in all the education systems of Pakistan, same as there is in the elite English-medium schools and in higher education centers. At initial level it seemingly difficult or impossible. The language policy makers of education system are willingly dividing the nation into two opposite cultures. The policy makers need to address this issue which, is the core behind the division of nation linguistically and culturally. The reason behind different school of thought and attitude of elites being most privileged towards lower-class and middle-class. "Since English is a tool for admissions in good colleges and for securing better employment opportunities, it is essential to provide English language learning opportunities to the masses and not restrict it to the privileged class only." (Kazi & Iqbal, 2011).

English is the language of law and judiciary. It is the language of media and communication. The language of science and technology. It is the language of army and military. Ultimately the language of power and rule. This is the language that is enjoying high status all over the world in Education system (Anwar et al., 2024). The education system is the prime and ultimate source of development of a country. The asset of development and prosperity of a nation resides in its educated people. And children who study in elite English-medium schools are considered most educated ones. In this context, it seems that there is no policy for lower and middle class to become educated, and to enjoy the favors in the social discourse, experienced by elites.

The Nation newspaper writes that, English is the first language of advanced countries of the world. And Pakistan is a developing country. Therefore, English language is very significant for generating international relations of Pakistan with the developed countries of the world. In this way, Pakistan must need to focus on the English language for the advancement of the country. Moreover, people of the Pakistan who are English speakers are given more advantages and opportunities for the best jobs both in private and government sectors. In the same context, society give upper hand to those who speak English than the speakers of other languages. As well as, society also give difference to those individuals who speak fluent English. Furthermore, the students of our country who go abroad for study purposes and individual who go for jobs, they should be experts of English language for their safe survival in the foreign countries. The author of, the article English in Pakistan, said that, "our government should take strict actions to improve our education system. So, that every individual can get education in the Pakistan and work for the betterment of the Pakistan." (Khan, 2018). Furthermore, Farhan Uddin Raja said in his journal article, that "English is seen as a passport to success and prosperity as the best jobs in the governmental, non-governmental and international bureaucracy are reserved for those who are fluent in English." (Raja, 2014).

Pakistani nation lack uniformity, the reason for this is lack is different school of thought, learning in two opposite cultures dividing the education system in two parts. Furthermore, the percentage of population learning in elite English-medium schools, which present a Western civilized atmosphere, is very less as compared to the state-run Urdu-medium and non-elite English-medium education system's population. Therefore, their participation in the building, growth and development of the country is not much significant. In order to present us voice to the world, to ask for the Nation's rights as an independent state, to voice our view worldwide, to tell the western world that we are as equal human as they are, we need to learn and teach in their language as fluently as they speak, as correctly as they speak. In addition to this, to present us as one-nation, we first ourselves have to struggle and work for becoming one-nation. One-nation through education system. One-nation through one syllabus, and one same curriculum. Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mahmood says the government is committed to implement uniform curriculum throughout the county. Addressing a ceremony in Islamabad, he said, we are heading towards one nation one curriculum and efforts are being made in this regard (Timeofislamabad, 2019).

Strategy

In the setting of curriculum change, efforts are required and are being made to some extent in past few years but those weren't proved effective because the medium of verbal instruction apart from textbooks and communication among teacher-student is still not fruitfully in English. In this study, it is advised that for development of Pakistan as One-Nation, one syllabus, one curriculum must need to be introduced nationwide in all the education systems among all social classes throughout Pakistan. This one curriculum must be the one that is considered highest in status, which is the one that is being used in elite English-medium education centers. In this way the difficulty that learners face when they are promoted to higher education centers reduced to minimum or no difficulty they would find when they were already have been taught in English-medium curriculum published by OUP, as is the case with elite schools. This is way through which the difference among social classes of the country reduce to less, or might be there would no difference left in the context of education. This one-nation one-curriculum is the base for the development of Pakistan and its rise as one-nation. The oxford curriculum can be copied to make use of it in the state-run and non-elite private schooling systems of Pakistan. The digital medium, projectors and access to inter in the class room can be made useful in this regard. The teachers and instructors must need to strongly advise to present lecture and have in-class communication purely in English. The instructors are advised to appreciate in-class communication among learners. In this way, it seems that, learners from all social classes would become able to learn English language and context purely and correctly. In this regard, the government have to handle the economic consequences for the

children from lower-class and to some extent for middle class, as they are unable to pay as much as elite English-medium schools charge for the textbooks they provide and for the environment they present like the Western civilization. The government, the National Education policy makers, the Ministry of Federal Education need to handle the economic consequences and must present a policy planning, which would provide the same kind of education like the elite English- medium is providing but in relatively less economic charges. It would be beneficial both for the people of the nation as well as nation itself in the development. In this way this nation would prosper like a giant power to the world hopefully in the near future.

CONCLUSIONS

This study helps to learn about the three main types of education systems of Pakistan, apart from the Islamic education system. This study helps to know about the prevailing medium of instruction used in these education centers. The medium of textbooks they teach through and their publication. The difference among these schooling systems and their part in the prosperity and development of Pakistan. The problems which learners from the different settings, with diversity in language and cultures, belonging to the lower-class and middle-class, face while they are promoted from primary and middle education system into the higher education centers. The role of English as a medium of instruction and as a part of textbook language in the elite English-medium education centers. The role of English language, being considered as the language of power, in the growth and development, and in the rise of Pakistan as one-nation. This study also tells about the one-nation one-curriculum concept given by Prime Minister in his recent speech and its most significantly useful way could be the implementation of English as a medium of instruction in the whole education system at all levels as, it is prevailing in all the social discourses of Pakistan. This study advises the policy makers to propose English as a medium of instruction and its implementation in all the education systems at all levels equally throughout the Pakistan.

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