

Problems of Teachers and Students due to Implementation of English as Medium of Instruction at Primary Level in Punjab

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Abstract

The Punjab Government Education Department has chosen English as a medium of instruction. The proclamation further declares that all the books except Urdu and Islamic studies will be published in English language by The Punjab Text Book Board, without considering the problems of multi languages children in Punjab. Pursuing the targets it has been made essential to follow the instruction. The study was descriptive in nature and survey method is used to collect data. The population of the study was primary schools of District Rawalpindi selected as twenty seven schools from Rawalpindi district were the sample of the study. The research tool was questionnaire by student and teacher to explore their difficulties. This study finds out the problems of teachers and students studying and teaching in the schools of province of Punjab where English has been made a medium of instruction.

This study also the capabilities of teachers in primary school of district Rawalpindi in Punjab. It is recommended that the measure to overcome the issue by taking remedial steps Punjab government needs to change the medium stepwise and systematic way. It should not be changed in hurried manner. The teachers must be provided training on monthly basis for the new syllabus of English. Interest of students could be increased by teaching it in Urdu according to teachers viewpoint. Teachers were in favor of Punjab government in changing of medium. Overall conclusion is that teachers, parents and students like and want English as medium of instruction.

Keywords: Problems, Teachers and Students, Medium of Instruction, Elementary Level Punjab

Introduction

The language used in teaching is called medium of instruction. It helps to enhance the quantity of experience and ability for communication of the learners. Often mother tongue is used as an impressive tool to teach and communicate in any country. *Crystal (2005)* describes it as mother tongue which is no longer alive gives me a sense of death and it is true to all of us.

This sentence is enough to understand the importance of mother tongue in any society similarly in Pakistan Urdu language is loved to be a medium of instruction of education. If language is not taught well; it puts the students and teachers in difficulty. Struggle to teach any subject in particular language that the students have no working of, if not mastery, would be inviting trouble. If the teachers of any country are good in medium of instructions, standard of teaching and learning is observed as an extraordinary. In Islamic perspective education means understanding of what makes of man a soul: and learning something without putting it into practice is meaningless. One should therefore know how to distinguish between right and wrong in regard to both this world and hereafter, and should choose the right conduct, so that misguided intellect may not lead him astray, and consequently Allah's wrath may fall on him. Miller & Sadker (1995) defined that education invests human resources and produces service to humanity and produce educated people for different fields.

Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition means learning of any language other than mother tongue which could be helpful for learning or any other purpose. In the whole world second language acquisition is adopted for different purposes. Developing countries adopt English as second language mostly because English is an internationally recognized language which helps the English speaker in almost every aspect of life. Nobert (2011) says that a knowledge of Second Language acquisition may help educational policy makers set more realistic goals for programs for both foreign language courses and the learning of the majority language by minority language children and adults.

Primary Education

Initial and basic part of study of any student starts from primary education from the age of 6 to 14 years. During this period of study a student understands reading, writing and communicating basic ideas of education. He learns to understand basics of languages and different subjects like math, basic rules/grammar of language of study and basic science. Main structure of his study is normally prepared in this period of study. For giving a child

strong and positive start for building up in the field of education, schools, homes and society all play their critical role.

Naseem (1990) advocated that the Primary education provided bases for further education. During the important formative period of six to fourteen years, there should be closed integration between the school and the home or the community. This leads us inevitably to a consideration of the role of the home and the community in education. This is also significant from the sociological point of view.

Medium Of Instruction

Medium means the source language used to devliever the contents in the class. It is the language used by teacher to transfer knowledge,skills and values in the classroom. Both teacher and learner used the target language to communicate with each other and to interact among themselves.

Every nation selects a medium of instruction for study of children in their country. This selection is made keeping in view the mother tongue of the children of the country and the other language familiar to them as second language. This is the most important step towards building of a nation because whole education system depends upon medium of instruction. All syllabus books, research, teacher's training and environment of teaching would totally depend on the selection of the medium of instruction. For this most important job every nation has selected its own convenient language as medium of instruction.

Importance Of Medium Of Instruction

Medium of Instruction in education is of great importance. No study can be real and fruitful unless it is combined with first hand observation and experimentation. Medium of instruction is always suggested after observations and experimentations and these suggestions are taken from the scholars, psychologist and teachers are the agents of changes in any society and medium of instruction is chosen keeping in view the process of learning and teaching according to academic qualifications of teachers, their language and mother tongue of the children is always given importance. We have politicized the language question in education to such an extent that now we don't know how, when and where to teach a language. We can't decide which languages should be taught as the core subject or which language should be used to teach a student other subjects. We have ethicized the language question that learning or not learning a language is now taken to be a political statement.

Then one wonders why our eminent policymakers and educationists are so confused and ill-advised in taking a conclusive decision on the medium question. This is partly because there are many factors related to education interwoven into the medium of instruction question. To name a few, the quality of education (that includes the standards of textbooks and teachers), the applicability and need of the language he learns in the life of the child when he becomes an adult, and the social and political accessibility provided by a language that is taught in school.

There is also the misconception that the only way of making a child fluent in a language is to use it as the medium of instruction. But from our own experience and that of other countries we know that these are separate issues that must be dealt with in their own right and not be confused with the language issue. Thus it is widely believed that English medium schools in Pakistan are doing a better job of educating the child.The major objectives of the study are:-

- To assess the problems faced by the teachers and the students due to change of medium of instruction in Government Schools of Punjab.
- To compare the views of teachers and students about the difficulties due to English as medium of instruction.
- To suggest measures to solve these problems.

Language

Language is a collection of meaningful sounds adopted by the people of any region to understand and communicate their feelings to other people. Encyclopedia Britannica (2012) define language as combination of the alphabets and words, its articulation and the way they are combined to interact with the community.

Webster (2011) defines language as a source for communication of ideas feeling apart from signs, sounds and gestures. It focuses on the pronunciation of the words and their understanding of the listeners if the communications works then it can be called a language

Naseem (1990) claimed that it is the simple truth that thought and language are so closely related that thought gets itself the more sharply defined as one begins to seek its articulation through language. The growth of thought and growth of language is an index to the growth of nation unity of thought and common aspiration.

Sapper (1994) considers that language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols.

Chaika (2008) advocated that human language is multilayered. It is composed of a system of meaningless elements that combines by rules into meaningful structure.

Venkateswaran (1995) argued that there is no doubt that a language contains kind of codes which developed an imperative arbitrary relationship of different symbols and the concept behind them. He further added that usually language keeps very complex and highly versatile codes that make communication of thoughts and feelings, experiences and desires to other people and persons. Language is the principal vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge and the transmission of acquired skills. There are many languages being spoken in Pakistan but most widely Urdu is spoken and understood. English is used as office language in almost all Government Departments, but after regional languages Urdu is the only language which is commonly spoken and understood in the whole country.

Language Theories

With the birth of a child, he needs attention and progressively he invites attention of elders by different means. He uses the methods/language which he did not learn from anyone.

John (1978) commenting on Chomsky confirmed that children had built in ability for language learning, the language structures they used unknowingly seems that they have already imprint of it in their minds. He further added that they had a “language acquisition device” that usually encodes the principles and grammatical structures in their brains. It was opposed that they learn it by imitation alone because adults language carries different parts of speech in a complex way.

Yasnitsky (2012) commenting on Vygotsky concluded that children learn by solving problems sometimes taking help from elders or peers and language is developed more. Their skills are improved by practicing or modeling language behaviors by hearing and viewing around them. Language development is closely tied with behaviors and interactions.

Skinner (1938) suggested that language development depends on core behaviourism that is result of reinforcement. It may takes various forms as it was given in examples. One of the example is if any of the parent asked him to pronounce a word and the child responded accordingly and they provide positive reinforcement they will learn more rapidly.

Piaget (1936) focused on study of knowledge claimed that language development is connected to their cognitive development. As it is observed that a child passes through different cognitive development stages like sensorimotor, pre-operational, concrete operational and formal operational these stages develop his language skills with different pace, initially they start grasping the existence of things which they see and later they become able to think about unseen and non-present things.

Robert (1997) commented that children are usually born with innate knowledge of language. The rules are similar and universal in all human languages. Any two language that seems very different but both have nouns and verbs even their place may be different but they do exist.

Bruner (1978) stated that the language development is result of both biological endowment and social positive reinforcement. A child who starts speaking mostly uttered wrong words in the beginning but with passage of time he learns somewhat better understandable words and in this way their language is developed and it is imperative for school teachers to use encouragement for provision of necessary support as the child develops linguistically.

Chhaya (2004) analyzed that the matter becomes clear when we recognize the range of forms in which education is provided that covers formal and non formal learning of the children. The school is definitely a place for formal education so language structures and functions provided him are usually remembered by for a long time.

Iqbal (2007) says that the basic objective of education in the framework of Islamic culture is discharging the prophetic functions for educating the people in the religion of Islam; to instill them with the strength of mind and ideals of this religion and to prepare them for a complete and comprehensive Islamic life.

Adoption Of Medium Of Instruction In Pakistan

In almost all policies and commissions it was discussed and concluded that medium of instruction should be Urdu which is National Language and familiar to primary level students. One step further it was discussed and reviewed that medium of instruction at primary level can be mother tongue like in Sindhi in Sindh, Pushto in NWFP (now KPK) and Balochi in Bluchistan. This was concluded only after discussing for months keeping in view the result of standards of other countries and experiences of the implemented policies that results of mode of instruction have drastically outcome positive in understandable and familiar language of students at primary level to keep their interest intact in the study and relation with schools and education.

Medium Of Instruction In Government And Private Schools

In Pakistan, there have been two medium of instructions, in government schools Urdu was medium of instruction and in private schools English was medium of instruction. This practice was applicable till 2010. Now Government of Punjab has changed medium of instruction as English from Urdu from Primary level. Before this English was taught as subject but now English has been adopted as medium of instruction. All syllabus has also been changed and newly printed for implementation of policy. Teachers & students are two direct

associates who are involved in the process of education. Change of medium of instruction has affected both teachers and students at primary level. Children of any region of the world learn language according to their region and environment with ease and they prove themselves better communicators with the passage of time. If in this early stage, they are given a task within the environment fully facilitated to learn any language other than their mother tongue they would learn this second language very quickly and easily as compared to any elder person either he is literate or illiterate.

Change Of Medium Of Instruction As English In Punjab

Government of Punjab has adopted English as Medium of Instruction in the province of Punjab from April 2010. This has been done keeping in view the importance of English as a whole in worldwide. It is pertinent to say that English is one the most commonly spoken language in the world and research work in the fields like science and technology, health, agriculture, fine arts and economics is available in English which is helpful and keeps the reader/learner up to date with the latest inventions and researches. Government of Punjab very rightly selected the medium of Instruction keeping in view the standard of education in the long run. In the old system of education in Pakistan, students study in early levels of schools in Urdu or their regional languages and after passing primary level they start learning English as a subject. In Secondary and Higher Secondary level of education science subjects are totally available in English which is very difficult to understand with this standard of English learning.

This has been done without doing homework, as this should have been done partially instead of full change at once. Both teachers and students are facing some problems adopting this new change in spite of the efforts of Government of Punjab to provide help and guidance.

Positive Steps Of Government Of Punjab To Support New Medium Of Instruction

Government of Punjab is trying its best to facilitate teachers and students of primary level to make this new syllabus of English medium of instruction easy to teach and understand. Government of Punjab has appointed new District Training Educators (DTE) who are well educated and qualified. One DTE responsible to guide and supervise eight schools. These DTEs visit their concerned schools on monthly basis and provide full guidance and help required to teachers and students of these schools. To check the implementation and grooming of the students, a questionnaire prepared at head office (Lahore) is served to the students of these schools by the DTEs and in their presence this is solved by the students and returned to Head Office immediately for checking and analyzation. Keeping in view the progress of the students and teachers in these schools new proposals are issued to DTEs for help, support and guidance of teachers and students. These steps are supporting a lot and it is hoped that these would be fruitful and beneficent in the long run. Students of the first classes are feeling more comfortable than the students of upper classes. The reason is that students of upper classes have studied their early classes in Urdu but all of a sudden the medium of instruction changed.

Table 1

Table showing the students satisfaction with English as medium of instruction

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	222	70.3	70.3
Neutral	10	3.2	3.2
Disagree	84	26.6	26.6
Total	316	100.0	

Table 1 shows that more than 70 percent students are satisfied with the decision of making English as medium of instruction. That is a significant result to prove it as a wise decision.

Table 2

Table showing the students who can read text in English easily.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	215	68.0	68.0
Neutral	19	6.0	6.0
Disagree	82	25.9	25.9
Total	316	100.0	

Table 2 shows that 68 percent students could read text in English easily while 6 percent were neutral and 25 percent were unable to read the text.

Table 3

Table showing the students understand the text.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	283	89.6	89.6
Neutral	12	3.8	93.4
Disagree	21	6.6	100.0
Total	316	100.0	

Table 3 shows that more than 89 percent students understand text when teacher explain it to them while 3.8 percent were neutral and 6.6 disagreed to the statement.

Table 4

Table showing the students who can read English easily.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	220	69.6	69.6
Neutral	17	5.4	75.0
Disagree	79	25.0	100.0
Total	316	100.0	

Table 4 shows that 69.6 percent students could read English easily where as 25 percent disagree that they could not read English easily, only 5.4 were neutral in the statement response.

Table 5

Table showing the students who can write English easily.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	246	77.8	77.8
Neutral	9	2.8	80.7
Disagree	61	19.3	100.0
Total	316	100.0	

Table 5 shows that 77.8 percent agreed that they can write English easily while 19.3 percent show that are not able to write English, only 2.8 percent were neutral.

Table 6

Table showing the students liking of English as medium of instruction.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	222	70.3	70.3
Neutral	12	3.8	74.1
Disagree	82	25.9	100.0
Total	316	100.0	

Table 6 shows that more than 70 percent students like English as medium of instruction which quite reasonable while 25.9 percent do not like English as a medium of Instruction, only 3.8 percent were neutral.

Table 7

Table showing the students understand social studies in English easily.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	114	36.1	36.1
Neutral	40	12.7	48.7
Disagree	162	51.3	100.0
Total	316	100.0	

Table 7 shows that more than 36 percent students understand social studies in English but a large majority of 51.3 percent disagree that they do not understand it easily, a small number of students were neutral.

Table 8

Table showing the students understand science in English.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	184	58.2	58.2
Neutral	19	6.0	64.2
Disagree	113	35.8	100.0
Total	316	100.0	

Table 8 shows that more than 58 percent students could understand science in English but 35 percent disagree that they could understand science in English, other 6 percent were neutral.

Table 9

Table showing the students understands mathematics in English easily.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	240	75.9	75.9
Neutral	15	4.7	80.7
Disagree	61	19.3	100.0
Total	316	100.0	

Table 9 shows that more than 75.9 percent students could understand Mathematics in English while 19.3 percent disagree that they do not understand it in English, a small number of respondent were neutral in the case.

Table 10

Table showing the students satisfaction by their teachers in new medium of instruction.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	246	77.8	77.8
Neutral	29	9.2	87.0
Disagree	41	13.0	100.0

Total	316	100.0	
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Table 10 shows that more than 77 percent students agreed that they are satisfied with teaching of their teachers in new medium of instruction, only 13 percent disagreed and 9.2 percent became neutral.

Table 10

Table showing the students considering text in English is difficult to understand.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	152	48.1	48.1
Neutral	48	15.2	63.3
Disagree	116	36.7	100.0
Total	316	100.0	

Table 10 shows that more than 48 percent students agreed that the text in English is difficult to understand, 35 percent disagree with the statement and it is quite reasonable of percentage while 15.2 percent were neutral in this case.

Table 11

Table showing the students' parents liking of English medium of instruction.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	207	65.5	65.5
Neutral	51	16.1	81.6
Disagree	58	18.4	100.0
Total	316	100.0	

Table 11 shows that more than 65.5 percent students' parents agreed that they like English medium of instruction for their children, 18.4 percent disagree and 16.1 percent were neutral in this matter.

Table 12

Table showing the students' parents who can teach them at home.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	240	75.9	75.9
Neutral	21	6.6	82.6
Disagree	55	17.4	100.0
Total	316	100.0	

Table 12 shows that more than 75.9 percent students' parents could teach them at home which is quite reasonable number of parents, only 17.4 were not able to teach them at home while only 6.6 percent were neutral in this matter.

Summary

English medium of instruction is suitable and acceptable to the students of first classes. These students will pick it easily as compared to the students of upper level classes. Students already studying Urdu medium of instruction have studied their books in Urdu and this sudden change has brought difficulty for them to understand syllabus of English for second, third, fourth and fifth class. For fourth class student, standard of English to understand the syllabus may be gained after four years of study in English but for the last three years he studied in Urdu and now all books changed into English. Most of the students and not capable to understand and study the syllabus books. Second problem for maximum

of the students is that they relate to poor families of villages and their families are illiterate. They have no opportunity and homes for guidance and help to do their home works.

Thirdly these students have limited time in school for understanding and learning new syllabus. Untrained teachers are also not fully helpful to guide and teacher properly as they were skilled to teach in Urdu. These difficulties are resulting into drop out of students of higher classes. To cope up with these difficulties trained teachers can play a significant role to adopt English as medium of instruction. Present study was aimed to investigate the problems faced by the teachers and students English as medium of instruction at primary schools of district Rawalpindi in Punjab.

The population of the study comprised of all the students and teachers of primary level in twenty seven Provincial government schools located in district Rawalpindi Punjab. Three hundred sixteen were randomly selected from each school system by applying simple random sampling technique. Three hundred sixteen teachers were selected from twenty seven schools for the purpose of Questionnaire based survey. A Questionnaire of this study was administered to the sample students and sample teachers of the study.

The data obtained was tabulated and analysed through SPSS-20 software to compute percentage and T-test. T-test was applied to measure the significance of difference between means of both teachers and students. Significance was seen at 0.05 levels as the criterion for the rejection or acceptance of the hypothesis. The Questionnaire based survey was analyzed keeping in view the objectives of the study.

Findings

The main findings of study were:

1. The T-test of students and teachers showing the calculated value of t is 2.59 while table Value at 0.05 levels is 1.96. Calculated value is higher than the table value it means that there is significant difference in the views of teachers and students. Students have more positive attitude towards English medium of instruction.
2. The percentage of the students and teachers of Province government schools on the problems of the teachers and students due to implementation of english as medium of instruction at primary level in district Rawalpindi Punjab are
 1. Responses of students show that 70 percent students are satisfied with English as medium of instruction
 2. Responses of students show that 68 percent students are able read text easily.
 3. Responses of students show that 64 percent students are able to understand text easily.
 4. Responses of students show that 77 percent students could write English easily.
 5. Responses of students show that 70 percent students liked English as medium of instruction.
 6. Responses of students show that 58 percent students could understand science in English.
 7. Responses of students show that 75 percent students could understand mathematics in English.
 8. Responses of students show that 77 percent students are satisfied with teaching of their teachers in new medium of instruction.

9. Responses of students show that 48 percent students could think that text in English is difficult.
10. Responses of students show that 65 percent students' parents liked English medium of instruction.
11. Responses of students show that 75 percent students' parents could teach them at home.
12. Responses of students show that 84 percent students' parents or anybody at home could easily read English.

Suggestions

In light of the finding and conclusion of the study, the following suggestions were made. Following are these; the teachers may improve their teaching techniques by preparing systematic materials. The teachers may provide maximum time to the students for teaching their subjects. The Ministry of Education may arrange in-service training and refresher course regularly for teachers. Provincial government may revise the selection criteria and need to recruit qualified teachers well versed with the skill of language and its teaching. The audio-visual aids and other study material may be provided to Provincial government schools by the department of education. Provincial government may offer extra incentives for teachers and their salary structure need to be in conformity with their qualification and teaching experience. The teachers of Provincial government schools of Punjab may be formed about the findings of the study in order to convince them to give more time to the students in proper understanding of English medium instruction.

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