

# The Policy and Practice of English Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Pakistani Universities



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By

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Dedicated to my parents, husband, daughters and sisters



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## ABBREVIATIONS

AmE	American English
BrE	British English
BE	Bilingual education
BSU	Bulle Shah University
CS	Code switching
ELF	English as a lingua franca
ELT	English language teaching
EMI	English as the medium of instruction
ESL	English as the second language
FLA	Foreign language anxiety
GTM	Grammar translation method
L1	First language
L2	Second language
MAE1	MA Education first year
MBE	Master's in Business Education
MEd	Master's in Education
MEML	Master's in Educational Management and Leadership
MT	Mother tongue
NL	National language
NS	Native speaker
NNS	Non-native speaker
PakE	Pakistani English
QVU	Queen Victoria University
SAsE	South Asian English
StBrE	Standard British English
UMI	Urdu medium of instruction
VMI	Vernacular medium of instruction
WEs	World Englishes

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 delineates the scene for the current research with a concise description of the linguistic profile of Pakistan, along with the context, framework, research questions and the significance of the study. My personal experience of observing and teaching postgraduate students at a Pakistani university induced me to reflect on their language-learning difficulties which I presumed were outcomes of using English as the medium of instruction (EMI). This reflection stimulated me to work on the perceptions of policy and practice of using English-medium instruction which is intimately interwoven with the academic and interactive uses of English along with the type of English being used in Pakistani universities.

### **1.1 The Linguistic Profile of Pakistan**

My learning journey's first destination was an appraisal of the country's linguistic, cultural and ethnic scenario. The introduction of the study would be incomplete without a brief description of the languages spoken in Pakistan. Figure 1.1 shows that Pakistan is a pluralistic society; each region in Pakistan, i.e. Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkawh (former North West Frontier Post) and Baluchistan has its own language, cultural heritage and ethnic diversity (Akhtar, 1989, p.8).

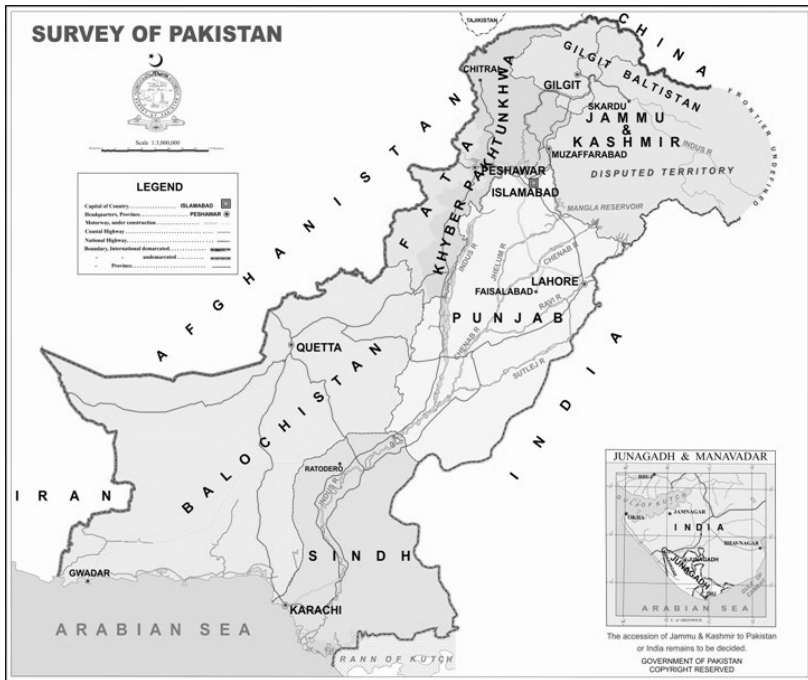


Fig. 1.1 Surveyor World Map of Pakistan, 2012

Punjab has Punjabi and Seraiki, Sindh has Sindhi in rural Sindh, Urdu in urban Sindh and Gujarati among influential minorities. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pashto is the language of the majority of the population, though one district, Hazra, uses Hindko. Baluchistan has multiple languages, such as Balochi, Brahui, Pashto, Seraiki and Punjabi (Haque, 1983). Many educated Pakistanis speak at least three languages; their mother tongue, Urdu and English (Rahman, 2006).

**Table 1.1 Languages in Pakistan, Coleman Report, 2010, p.16**

No	Language name	Speakers (millions)	Percentage of population
1	Punjabi, Western	60.6	38.3
2	Sindhi	18.5	11.7
3	Seraiki	13.8	8.7
4	Urdu	10.7	6.8
5	Pashto, Northern	9.6	6.1
6	Pashto, Central	7.9	5.0
7	Balochi, Southern	2.8	1.8
8	Brahui	2.0	1.3
9	Hindko, Northern	1.9	1.2
10	Balochi, Eastern	1.8	1.1
11	Pashto, Southern	1.4	0.9
12	Balochi, Western	1.1	0.7
13	Punjabi, Mirpur	1.0	0.6
	Sub-Total	133.1	84.8
	58 other languages	24.0	15.2
	Total	158.1	100

Table 1.1 shows that there are seven major languages in Pakistan (Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, Brahui, Seraiki and Urdu) which are spoken by nearly 133 million people (85% of the population). The remaining 15% of the population speak 58 different languages (Coleman Report, 2010, p.16). This scenario portrays a complex situation for the formulation and implementation of policy on which language to use in education.

## 1.2 The Context of the Study

The next move of my voyage was an exploration of literature that is relevant to the context of the study to investigate these perceived language-learning difficulties which might be outcomes of using English as the medium of instruction (EMI). Briefly, after independence in 1947, like other post-colonial countries, Pakistan was confronted with the issues of decolonisation, globalisation and other economic and socio-political constraints within the country (Canagarajah, 2006). These issues contributed to establishing a firm foothold for English in the new country (Mahboob, 2009). Moreover, unlike Urdu, English had no rival among the regional languages and thus served as an impartial language in the country.

Urdu was in competition with the dominant regional languages but managed to surpass them because it was used as a symbol of Muslim unity for political and religious purposes (Tickoo, 2006). However, at the same time, the government intentionally prevented Urdu from becoming the only language of the country because the spread of English was indispensable for the country's progress (Haque, 1983). This conflict between Urdu as the national language and English as an international language represents the tension between tradition and modernity. Urdu was needed to uphold cultural and traditional values whereas learning English was obligatory for enlightenment and economic prosperity.

Steering along the path, it became clear that religious parties endeavoured to reduce the status of English in the country but influential political, social and economic groups supported English for the development of the country. Also, it would be inconceivable to eradicate the English language from the scene because of its impenetrable historical roots in the country (Mahboob, 2009). Above all, English has rapidly gained prestige and popularity as its use has become a universal phenomenon in all superior domains of public life (Tickoo, 2006, p.173).

Going deeper into the issue, we can see that diverse streams of education were categorised in accordance with English as the medium of instruction (EMI), Urdu as the medium of instruction (UMI) and the vernacular as the medium of instruction (VMI) because there were insufficient resources to extend the uniform use of English language teaching services to such a large population (Rahman, 2002a). Regarding the use of EMI at the higher education level, it is noted that all policies on language in education in Pakistan state that EMI is compulsory at the university level but no policy has been considered to address the important issue of helping students to overcome their language-learning difficulties at university level. The only recommendation worth mentioning to deal with this problem was presented in the 1979 education policy and suggested that after some years Urdu could be the medium of instruction at university level (Mansoor, 2004).

While exploring the different phases of history, I ran into a significant opinion that English should not be looked upon as merely the tool of hegemony since it is a beneficial global language representing modernisation and opportunity (Crystal, 2011). It is perceived that English has gradually resulted in uses and forms that diverge from a single standard because there are multiple Englishes within and across cultural

discourse practices (Jenkins, 2007). Some scholars (Kachru, 1992a; Moag, 1992; Schneider, 2003) consider that a non-native variety passes through three phases. In the first phase, the very existence of the local variety is not recognised; in the second, it is considered sub-standard; and in the third, it is slowly accepted as the norm. Some research on Pakistani English (PakE) shows that it is in the process of evolution (Baumgardner, 1993).

### 1.3 The Framework of the Research

With that as the context, we move on to establishing the framework of the study. Figure 1.2 illustrates that language policy and practice in Pakistan are shaped by various factors: national ideology, multiple languages, cultural diversity and politics in policymaking (Rahman, 1996).

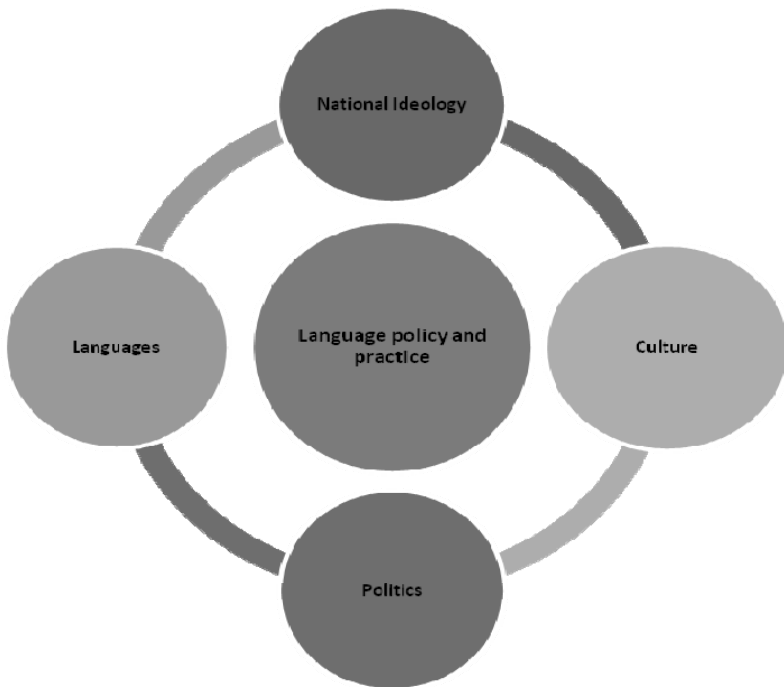


Fig.1.2 Main influences on language policy and practice in Pakistan

As stated above, EMI is compulsory for higher education subject to the availability of reading material in English (Mansoor, 2002) but national education policies have not ensured its implementation because of other linguistic, cultural and socio-political priorities (Howatt, 2004). Some writers claim that the government has never given importance to ELT theories or its practice in the classroom with appropriate methodology, curricula and assessment (Mehrun Nisa, 2009; Siddiqui, 2007). Thus, based on language policies and educational infrastructure in this multilingual country, there are difficulties with students' learning at all levels and especially at the higher education level.

The study hypothesises that the following model of research will enable me to present the various stages, decision-making roles, and products for ensuring the implementation of EMI in universities. The policymakers determine the place of EMI in the policy document but, in order to achieve this aim, the services analysts of need, methodologists and material writers are ideally required to ascertain the use of EMI in the classroom, curricula and assessment. The teacher-training programme could also be supportive in the successful implementation of EMI through competent teaching and learning in classroom (see Table 1.2). The purpose of this model is to act as a tool for investigation of the students' and teachers' perceptions of the extent to which each of these establish the fact that the partial exercise of these crucial aspects is related to the stated policy of EMI in universities.

**Table 1.2 Stages, decision-making roles and products in implementation of EMI**

<b>Developmental planning</b>	<b>Decision-making roles</b>	<b>Products</b>
policy document	policymakers	EMI in universities
specification: ends means	analyst of need methodologists material writers	curricula uses of English in classroom assessment
programme implementation	material writers teacher trainers	teaching materials teacher-training programme
classroom implementation	teacher learner	teaching acts learning acts



Hence, in accordance with this brief description of the linguistic profile, context and framework, the study sets out to investigate the relationship between the policy and practice of EMI in Pakistani universities.

## **1.4 Research Questions: Aspects of Investigation**

Keeping in view the above scenario, the following research questions have been constructed:

1. To what extent does the policy and practice of English medium of instruction (EMI) affect the perceptions of first year MA Education students (MAE1) about their learning situation in Pakistani universities?
  - (i) What are the perceptions of university teachers and students about the importance of the English language in Pakistan?
  - (ii) What are students' opinions about using the English language in universities?
  - (iii) What are teachers' views about using the English language for teaching and interactive purposes in Universities?
  - (iv) What are perceptions of the type of English being used in Pakistani universities?

## **1.5 Aims and Objectives**

The following aims and objectives have emerged from the research questions:

1. To discover students' perceptions of the reasons which inhibit them from expressing themselves confidently in English in and outside the classroom
2. To explore teachers' and students' views about using English language for academic and co-curricular activities in universities

I decided to use mixed-method research which includes both quantitative and qualitative methods because an investigation cannot entirely rely on observation. Thus, I constructed questionnaires and focus-group interviews for MA Education students and the university staff. Minor amendments were made to both questionnaires after the pilot study. Distinctly, the research is exploratory and encompasses two case studies as

I gathered the data from two large-scale public sector universities located in Lahore, Pakistan.

In a nutshell, I had a well-defined mind map to embark on a journey to investigate the issues, but from the beginning, I felt intensely that the voyage was endless in the sense that the issues I was exploring had bottomless roots to be explored. However, keeping in mind the short period of time, I restricted myself to concentrating specifically on the perceptions of the university teachers and the postgraduate students about English as the medium of instruction and the issues related to it so that the problem could be effectively negotiated in order to formulate some pragmatic recommendations for its resolution in the future. Aply, it can be claimed, if I cannot change the direction of the wind at the moment, at least I can adjust my sails to arrive at my destination.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study can inform universities that English as the medium of instruction (EMI) is practised only partially in universities. The analysis of the perceptions and worries of the postgraduate students about the English language can be of practical value for designing a remedial English language proficiency course. This could be put to language policymakers to consider the academic needs of postgraduate students joining universities from diverse linguistic, cultural, ethnic, socio-economic and educational circumstances. The perceptions of pedagogical challenges can be helpful in the organisation of workshops and teacher-training courses, which will be specifically structured from the perspective of teaching the use English as the medium of instruction in universities. The description of the notion of World Englishes in language policies could be positive in accommodating the acceptability of Pakistani English (PakE) for academic and assessment purposes in universities.

## CHAPTER TWO

# POLICIES ON LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION AND THEIR IMPACT ON PAKISTAN

### Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced the research questions deduced from the context of the study and this chapter largely includes discussion of factors influencing policies on language in education. It concentrates in particular on the issue of English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in language policies and attitudes towards various languages in higher education in Pakistan.

### 2.1 The Policy on Language in Education

It is necessary to describe a few characteristics of policy before making the switch over to education policy and then to language-in-education policy. It is claimed that ‘policy is a deliberative process of forming practical judgements and deliberative judgement emerges through collective and interactive discourse’ (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003, p.21). At the same time, it is believed that policymaking in a modern, complex and pluralistic society is often unwieldy, unscientific and irrational (Ball, 2006). Besides the complexity associated with the process of policymaking, it is considered that policies are generally the ‘operational statements of values’ or, more appropriately, ‘statements of prescriptive intent’ (Kogan, 1975, p.55). In addition, it is suggested that policy is a matter of the ‘authoritative allocation of values’ and that the notion of authority spontaneously draws our attention to the centrality of power and control in the concept of policy (Prunty, 1985, p.136). Above all, policies create circumstances in which options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed (Hamilton and Hillier, 2007).

Education policy and values interact with the moods and circumstances of their periods (Kogan, 1985). Education is a social artefact and is, therefore, prone to change as social and economic circumstances change

(Kogan, 1985, p.11). Education policy clearly has enormous implications for several of the ‘basic myths’ which comprise the legitimating function of the state and of the education system (Dale, 1989, p.31; Reynolds and Hargreaves, 1989). The educational system may also contribute to the ‘achievement of those aims, needs and purposes of capitalism’, but this is done through the medium of the solutions it constructs to deal with its internal control and order (Dale, 1989, p.13).

Language policy as a field of inquiry, rather than as a human activity, dates from the mid-point of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when researchers began to study the effects of language planning, which had gone on long before scholars turned their attention to it (Schiffman, 2012). Language-in-education policy refers to laws and policies, and also customs and traditions, many of which are unwritten (Kaplan, Baldauf and Kamwangamalu, 2011). Language policy may take the form of unconscious preferences or conscious implementation of judicial and political decisions (Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997). It may be negative and reactive or positive and promotional, directed at a government level or guided by private institutions. It may be sustained by constitutional clauses, parliamentary enactments and judicial interpretations (Powell, 1998).

More importantly, Kaplan (1990) points out that all language policy models that he is aware of insist that language-in-education policy is subsidiary to national education policy, and is rooted in the highest levels of government (Egginton and Wren, 1997; Hornberger, 2006; Kaplan, 2009). In other words, it can be reasonably stated that language policymakers face the difficult task of planning goals and strategies that are ultimately linked to and affected by larger issues of political, social and ideological frameworks. So, to implement effective language policy, unique sociocultural, political, economic and historical aspects must be taken into account. This issue will be discussed in section 2.2 in the context of language policy and practice in Pakistan.

As far as the place of English in language-in-education policy is concerned, policymakers have encouraged the role of English in relation to the educational, social and economic benefits of globalisation (see Chapter 3). Successful economies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are increasingly knowledge-based, and the bulk of the world’s knowledge is in the English language (Rajagopalan, 2005). The language is no more a linguistic phenomenon but a socio-political reality, of which the economy is an integral part

(Mahboob and Tilakaratna, 2012). English also plays a particularly hegemonic role in most post-colonial communities including Pakistan and endangers other languages through its link to globalisation, it is especially important to bear these factors in mind when considering the socio-political influences that language policy and practice have in maintaining, developing and promoting local languages including minority languages (Kaplan, Baldauf and Kamwangamalu, 2011).

Hence, the 'processes of language use create, reflect and challenge particular hierarchies and hegemonies' (Creese and Martin, 2008, p.i) as in the case of English, which has been hailed as a global lingua franca, it is increasingly important to identify and acknowledge the power imbalances that emerge as English acquires an advantaged and superior position. Regarding this aspect of language policy, Pennycook (1989, p.589) remarks, 'policy espouses a particular view of the world and can be articulated in the interests of unequal power relationships'. Mansoor (2005) views that explicitly or implicitly policies regarding the status of the official or standard language by their mere existence affect the stability or viability of other languages used in the community. It should also be noted that languages that serve important societal functions for their speakers survive, regardless of what the policies of the government may be. Any decrease in a language's functions may be related to urbanisation, increased economic mobility or powerful societal forces. In such cases, majority languages or languages of wider communication replace minority languages in important registers and no amount of education planning or intervention is likely to help them.

The policies are considered political in character because the powerful languages serve the interests of particular political parties (Ramanathan and Morgan, 2007; Ricento, 2000; Tollefson, 1991, 1995, 2002, 2006). Grin (2003, p.5) also reckons that language policymaking is fundamentally a political process because non-market values, such as matters of identity and culture attach to languages individually and collectively. Economics, though important, can never be central, only complementary, as an instrument assisting decision-making. Tollefson (1991, p.87) expresses his view that language policies serve the interests of dominant groups in maintaining their power and prestige while marginalising, excluding, and even exploiting minority groups and speakers of other languages. Besides, there is a reciprocal relationship between political changes and changes in language policies. Daoust (1997, p.440) states:

‘Language planning policies sometimes seem to develop as an afterthought following a period of socio-political turmoil such as when a country gains independence or when a political party is overthrown.’

Thus, language-in-education policy is a complex issue. The following paragraphs briefly discuss the steps involved in the formulation of language-in-education policy and practice. Ferguson (2006, p.16) suggests that it is preferable not to overplay the discreteness of planning and policy as separate categories but instead to regard them as so closely related that they can profitably be brought together for the purposes of exposition and analysis. Language-in-education policy and planning involve six stages: the preplanning stage; the survey (or data collection stage); the policy formation stage; the implementation stage; and a recurring evaluation stage. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) believe that the education sector is involved with official language policy activity and has to take a number of language policy decisions:

- ✚ To determine which language(s) will be taught within the curriculum, at what stage the instruction will occur, what the duration of the instruction will be, as well as to determine what sort of proficiency would be necessary to meet the needs of society.
- ✚ To define the teacher supply, that is, who will teach the language(s) included in the curriculum as well as to take decisions regarding which group in the education sector they will be taken from. This would also involve the nature of the pre-service and in-service training required for the teachers to achieve and maintain the required language proficiency, as well as incentives and rewards for language teachers on the basis of equity.
- ✚ To determine what segment of the student population will receive language(s) education and how they will be motivated to undertake language instruction, as well as to devise strategies to get parental and community support to implement the plan in order to make it a success.
- ✚ To determine what methodologies will be employed in the system and what materials will be developed to support these methodologies. Also, how these materials will be prepared and used throughout the system.
- ✚ To define the assessment processes that will be used for selection and placement of students and formative and summative testing. It will also need to develop an evaluation system necessary to measure the performance of teachers and the system, so that