

Comparison of Students' Achievement taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction

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Abstract

The role of native language is vital in students' learning at elementary level. The theorists and practitioners speak for indigenous language as a medium of instruction (MI). The purpose of the present study was to compare the achievement of students in Urdu medium test (UMT) and English medium test (EMT) at elementary level. Three hundred students (N= 300) from grade 8th were randomly selected from 12 (6 male & 6 female) schools. Students' achievement test (SAT) was used as a research tool. Paired-samples t- test was applied to analyze the data. The results show that students perform better in indigenous language test / Urdu medium of instruction as compared to foreign language test/ English medium of instruction at elementary level. However, approximately 15% students can perform better in English medium-instruction as well as Urdu medium-instruction. Govt. of Pakistan should direct to adapt Urdu as medium of instruction at elementary level. The researchers recommended to meet the international needs, talent sections should be arranged in particular schools of English medium instruction.

Key words: *Medium of instruction, Students' achievement, Elementary level.*

Introduction

Medium of instruction has prime importance in educational system. It plays vital role in the performance of students. The medium of instruction is identified as the language of a teacher used in the classroom to impart teaching (Ahmed, Zarif, & Tehseen, 2013). The medium of instruction has posed serious threats for multi-lingual countries like Pakistan. It is observed that Urdu is national language and English is the language of bureaucrats and elites. Along with Urdu and English, other dominant languages in Pakistan are

Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushto, Sariaeki, Hindko and Blouchi. Since the inception of Pakistan, the problem of medium of instruction is rampant. The testimonial evidences may be concluded from different educational policies, e.g. Educational conference (1947) and National education policy (1959). It was recommended in the policies that provincial languages will be the medium of instruction at primary level and Urdu will be medium of instruction at elementary and secondary level. Higher education will be given in English.

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In National Education Policy (1979), it was recommended that all English medium schools granted by Govt. will use Urdu as a medium of instruction or recommended language by the Provincial Assembly and gradually Urdu will be used as a medium of instruction in higher education (Farakh & Choudhry, 2013). Similarly, in the education policy of (1992), the Government of Pakistan recommended that Urdu would be the medium of instruction at elementary level (Shakoor, Azeem, Dogar & Khatoon, 2011). In National Educational Policy (2009), it has been recommended that English from 1-14 grades will be compulsory subject. Medium of instruction from 1 to 5 for General Science, Mathematics and social studies will be in English. Medium of instruction from 6 to 8 for general Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science will be English. After the National educational policy of 2009, Ahmad et al., (2013) conducted research on the "Role of medium of instruction used in Pakistani classrooms". The results revealed that 78% of the schools are using Urdu as medium of instruction and rests of the schools are using English medium of instruction. Only 29% students replied that English medium of instruction using in Pakistan is not understandable by the students while 46 % of the population

wants their provincial or regional languages as medium of instruction. Thus it may be concluded that currently English medium of instruction using in Pakistani classrooms is not easily understandable for the students and it is barrier for learning in comfortable environment. There are two official languages in Pakistan, Urdu & English. Urdu is more understandable and easier as compare to English for the students. Ahmed (2011) reported in his study entitled "Issue of medium of instruction in Pakistan" that from grade 1-5 mother tongue should be MI and Urdu should be introduced at 4-5. From grade 6-12 there should be Urdu medium. At higher level, English is suitable MI. It should be gradually replaced by Urdu. In the same way, Parveen, Gopang, and Shaikh (2008) inferred in their study that students should be instructed only in the medium of instruction that is familiar to them. As familiar language enhance their cognition and learning.

Experts' views

Educationists have different views on Medium of instruction. Most of the experts are in the favour of mother language as a medium of instruction. Imam Ibn-e-Khaldoon reported that student can better understand the content of the subject only in mother tongue. To educate students by foreign medium of

instruction, is the half education. Through foreign medium of instruction, sightless, captured minded, dumb students are prepared. A several years of life spend in learning and to be skillful in foreign language, a student can not learn knowledge and foreign language at a time. A language which is not practicing in society is an artificial cover over human personality. The children who are not taught by mother tongue, their creative abilities do not develop (Khaldoon, 2001).

But some intellectuals are against to adopt mother tongue as a medium of instruction. According to their views, mother tongue will create biasness among provinces. In our country, such forces are getting strength. Our country already has divided in to tow parts. Due to language, we cannot bear further such incidents. It is empirically proven that regional languages culminate national integrity. According to Kiranmayi and Celta (2010), if the institutions do not adopt one common MI, it will create bias among the regions/states and will ultimately produce regionally minded educated elite. He will not communicate freely with their opposite members in different states. This ultimately weakens the political unity of the country and may even affect its cultural future. If such boundaries are allowed to be constructed by the

adaptation of the regional medium at all levels of educational institutions, the activities of the intellectuals of different state will confined to the regions/states and their relation with worlds' scholars will come to an end. It will also lose intellectuals of the society (Gejendragadhar, 1967). Some intellectuals give third option. They say that there should be a national language or common language as medium of instruction that may be combination of all regional / mother / provincial languages (Moyo, 2002). According to Maudoodi (1963), it is dangerous that English as a medium of instruction may remain continue in our educational institutions. Moreover, it is said, if there are some hurdles in adopting national language as medium of instruction, it is the duty of intellectual to seek out the solution of those problems. Without any delay, we should adopt national language Urdu as a medium of instruction from elementary classes to the higher classes. English should be a part of curriculum as a compulsory subject. The students who want to learn other modern subjects and science subjects, for those English may be compulsory, but its continuation as a medium of instruction is an unjustified and wrong act. This idea has further strengthened by the deep insight study of

Pinnock (2009), in which the researcher analysed that in Pakistan 91.62% student's use mother language at home where as the medium of instruction at schools is Urdu or English. This discrepancy between home used language and school used language resulted in poor education in Pakistan.

It is empirically proven that without adopting national language as a medium of instruction, a nation will remain disperse (Khan, 2006). He further says, in our institutions, students have become habitual of rotting due to English medium of instruction because foreign medium of instruction encourages the rotting and culminate the mental waves and creativity. It is the dilemma of present age in Pakistan that what would be the medium of instruction for schools. Thus the researchers tried to find out either students in Pakistan perform better in Urdu medium of instruction or English medium of instruction.

Statement of the problem

Pakistan is multilingual country. Medium of Instruction has become an issue whether indigenous language may be Medium of Instruction or foreign language. Some people favour Urdu and some support English as a Medium of Instruction. The problem to be studied in the study is to evaluate the impact of

English medium of instruction on students' achievement so that decision may take which language should be adopted as medium of instruction, Urdu or English at elementary level.

Objectives of the research

The objectives of the study are:

1. To evaluate the impact of medium of instruction on students' achievement.
2. To compare the achievement of students taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction.

Research Questions of the Study

Research Questions of the study is:

1. Is there difference in academic achievement of students taught through English and Urdu as medium of instruction?
2. Does rural students' achievement differ taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction?
3. Does urban students' achievement differ taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction?
4. Does male students' achievement differ taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction?
5. Does female students' achievement differ taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction?

Research Design

The study was descriptive in nature and survey technique was used.

Population of the Study

The target population of study was comprised of 8th class students enrolled at secondary schools in Sahiwal Division.

Sampling of the Study

It was not feasible for the researchers to survey the whole population. Accessible population of the

study was the 8th graders enrolled at Govt. schools in District Okara. Multi stage random sampling technique was used to collect the data. District Okara comprised of three Tehsils viz. Tehsil Okara, Tehsil Depalpur and Tehsil Renala Khurd. Four schools (2 Male and 2 Female) from each Tehsil were randomly selected. Later on, researchers randomly selected 50 students from each school. The following table represents the overall sampling picture.

Table No. 1

Bifurcation of Selected Sample

Sr. No.	Name of Tehsil	Type of School	Numbers of Respondents
1	Okara	Male	50
		Female	50
2	Renala Khurd	Male	50
		Female	50
3	Depalpur	Male	50
		Female	50
4	Total	Male & Female	300

Research instrument

To evaluate the impact of medium of instruction on students' achievement, a bilingual Student Achievement Test [SAT] was developed for 8th class students in the subject of English. Prior to actual implementation the researchers piloted the instrument. In the piloting process, the experts' opinion was sought out from the experts of the relevant field. The researchers made certain changes in the instrument, as suggested by the experts.

The reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) was also measured which was 0.82.

In EMT (English medium test), there was a context in English about hockey game and in the end of context 15 questions were raised. The students were asked to read the context and answer the questions. Thus in UMT (Urdu medium test), there was the same context in Urdu about hockey game and in the end of context 15 questions were raised. The students were asked to read the context and answer the

questions. The questions were the same, the content in the both contexts was the same, only medium was different.

Data collecting procedure

To collect data about the impact of English medium of instruction on students’ achievements, the test was administered at the spot. The students were asked to sit into two rows. English medium test was given to the students,

after collecting the test, Urdu medium test was given to the students at the same time. Both tests were collected and scored by the researchers. The test was administered in 12 schools.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed through SPSS by applying paired samples t-test. Category wise results have been presented in the forms of tables.

Table: 2 Comparison of students’ achievement taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction

Students’ achievement taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction

Scores of the students	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value
Urdu medium test	22.85	4.98	299	21.00**	.000
English medium test	17.01	5.97	299		

**P<0.001

Table: 2 exhibits that there is significant difference between scores of students in UMT and EMT. Mean of the scores indicates that scores in UMT are greater

than scores in EMT. Thus on the whole, students performed better in UMI (Urdu medium of instruction) than that of EMI (English medium of instruction).

Table: 3 Comparison of rural students’ achievement taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction

Rural students’ achievement taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction

Scores of the rural students	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value
Urdu medium test	23.38	4.25	149	13.48*	.000
English medium test	18.10	5.72	149		

**P<0.001

It is evident from table 3 that there is a significant difference between scores of students in UMT and EMT of rural students. Mean of the scores indicates that

scores in UMT are greater than scores in EMT. So, the achievement of rural students in UMT was better than that of EMT.

Table: 4 Comparison of urban students’ achievement taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction

Urban students’ achievement taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction

Scores of the urban students	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value
Urdu medium test	22.40	5.05	149	9.34**	.000
English medium test	17.60	6.24	149		

**P<0.001

Table 4 reveals that there is a significant difference between scores of students in UMT and EMT of urban students. Mean of the scores indicates that scores in UMT

were greater than scores in EMT. So, urban students also perform better in UMI than that of EMI.

Table: 5 Comparison of male students' achievement taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction

Male students' achievement taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction

Scores of the male students	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value
Urdu medium test	23.28	4.86	149	16.76**	.000
English medium test	16.59	5.55	149		

**P<0.001

According to table 5, there is significant difference between scores of students in UMT and EMT of male students. Mean of the scores indicates that scores in UMT

were greater than scores in EMT. So, male students showed better achievement in UMI than that of EMI.

Table: 6 Comparison of female students' achievement taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction

Female students' achievement taught through English and Urdu as medium of Instruction

Scores of the female students	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	p-value
Urdu medium test	23.37	4.25	149	13.12**	.000
English medium test	18.24	5.75	149		

**P<0.001

The table 6 describes that there is significant difference between scores of students in UMT and EMT of female students. Mean of the scores indicates that scores in UMT were greater than scores in EMT. So, female students showed better achievement in UMI than that of EMI.

The analysis of the data shows that students perform better in Urdu medium than that of English medium, because Urdu is our national language and it resembles with native languages. There is significant difference between scores of UMT and EMT because t-value = 21.00 at P .000< 0.001. There is t-value = 9.48 at P < 0.001 between scores of rural students and t-value = 9.15 at P.000< 0.001

Results of the study

between the scores of urban students. Similarly, there is t -value=11.09 at $P .000 < 0.001$ between scores of male and t -value = 7.50 at $P.000 < 0.001$ between the scores of female. Thus all the students perform better in Urdu medium. There is t -value = 8.684 at $P.000 < 0.001$ between scores of intelligent students ,however mean of the scores shows that approximately 15% students can perform in English medium as well as Urdu medium. To promote proficiency in English, talent sections should be arranged in particular schools and medium of instruction should be English.

Findings of the Study

1. On the whole, students perform better in Urdu medium than that of English medium.
2. Performance of rural students in Urdu medium test is better than that of English medium test.
3. Urban students also perform better in Urdu medium than that of English medium.
4. Male students perform better in Urdu medium than that of English medium.
5. The scores of female students in Urdu medium test are greater than that of English medium test.

6. 15% students can equally perform in English medium as well as Urdu medium.

Discussion

The cited literature has empirically proven that students perform better when only instructed in their indigenous language. Parveen et al., (2008) found that students should be instructed only in the medium of instruction to which students are familiar. This is the only way of enhancing their cognitive development and learning. The current study also reveals that students perform better in Urdu medium because Urdu language is similar to their regional languages. Its script is resembled with native languages. Environment plays significant role in developing language skill. Our almost news papers publish in Urdu and our electronic media casts mostly programs in Urdu. In our society, schools and homes, Urdu and regional languages are used in daily affairs of life, whereas English is a foreign language. It is only language of content matter or books and not language of teachers. In the history of Pakistan, English has never been used as sole medium of instruction. Its script is not resembled with Urdu and other regional languages. Thus, English language is difficult for the students for reading, comprehension and analyzing as well as

writing. In obtained scores in English medium test, errors of grammar and spellings were ignored. In spite of this, performance of the students in English medium test is weak than that of Urdu medium test. So, the students perform better in Urdu medium. Urdu language is suitable to the Pakistani students as a medium of instruction. Ahmed et al., (2013) concluded that there are two official languages in Pakistan, Urdu and English. Urdu is more understandable and easier as compare to English for the students.

The results of the study at hand are also compatible with the results of the study of Ahmed et al., (2011) in which it is suggested a model of MI (medium of instruction) for the educational system of Pakistan. From grade 1-5 mother tongue should be MI and Urdu should be introduced in 4-5. From grade 6-12 there should be Urdu medium. At higher level, English is suitable MI. It should be gradually replaced by Urdu. To meet international needs, we require individuals who are proficient in English, talent sections may be arranged in particular schools where medium of instruction should be English.

For the average students, Govt. of Pakistan should direct to adopt Urdu as medium of instruction at elementary level.

Scientific terms should be presented in English as well as Urdu.

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