

University Academia's Perceptions about Using Mother Language or Foreign Language as Medium of Instructions

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Abstract

The language is the utmost necessity for the survival of the races. In broader view, language may not be confined to any territory or nation. The main objectives were to explore the opinions of university faculty members in selection of medium of instructions during lectures, indicators responsible for as key motivators and to investigate the academic confidence among university students when they learn through specific medium of instructions. The perceptions from the universities' faculty members were collected as the use of national and foreign language is most applicable in teaching learning environment. The simple random sampling technique was used for selection of one hundred university teachers from University of Education and GC University Faisalabad. The Self-developed tool, about mediums of instructions and Faculty Preference Survey (MIFPS) was used. The findings of the study showed that faculty members are more willing to use foreign language during their class lectures. They said foreign language is necessary to explain international terminologies while delivering the lectures. Male students were more optimistic to use foreign language as medium of instruction than that of female students. The learners showed positive attitude when national language is used. The male students' confidence level was high when teachers use national language as medium of instruction as compared to foreign language. Students revealed to be much creative in using national language for learning purpose. It is suggested that both languages should be used at higher educational level to compete internally and the rest of the world.

Keywords: *National language, medium of instructions, confidence building, academia*

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Introduction

Language is the basic requirement of human society. People living in one part of the world may coordinate with each other using specific type of language. There are approximately 6500 languages are being spoken in the current world. English is considered the world's most spoken language with 1132 million users (Klappenbach, 2019). In Pakistan, English is used as co-official language with Urdu (McArthur, 2002). The efforts to improve the use of English lacks behind even the basic reading and writing skills are poor. The question of speaking is out of discussion. The proficient use of English language seems a dream. The grammar is most confusing part in using English language as medium of instruction (Marsden, 2017). The speaking skills are hard to practice and learners need extra intention and work. The students find it difficult while speaking. In teaching foreign language, the teachers delivered their lectures in bilingual method and it affects students' performance about that language. While teaching the English language, mother language cannot be denied and it remains an issue for many decades (Koucka, 2007).

There are multiple factors associated with natural dialect during the classroom. The teachers should have both language proficiencies for the uplift of society. The submersion is the term when students are unable to communicate (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). It is likely to teach students when submerged without showing them how to swim. The poor teachers' training, insufficient resources, incomplete educational programs and lack of learning environment are the hurdles (Abbas, Ashiq, & Abrarul Haq, 2018). It makes teaching and learning environment troublesome. Primary language abilities are based on bilingual projects utilized by the students on the base of first language known as L1. The L2 second language is steadily exchanged aptitude from well-known dialect in new language. Bilingual practices and models improve their outcomes. The mother language in early years of learning may secure students' involvement, social abilities and cultural identities and classroom participation (Savage, 2019).

According to Sinha, Banerjee and Shastri (2009), monolingual pupils have better English receptive vocabulary, deep understanding and fair written skills. The English syntax, phonological expression, expressive vocabulary, and quality words are mostly confusing to students during the use of language. The bilingual scholars are capable in using two dialects (L1 and L2). The multilingual students have better language aptitude (Thompson, 2013).

Kavaliauskiene (2009) revealed that students generally depend on their first language in learning the second language like English. The process of back translation

exercise helps students more aware about primary language and its encourages semantic environment.

Review of Related Literature

At national level, English language is considered as second language and it helps the learners to communicate in English language at global level (McArthur, 2002). The language improvement has been turned out more imperative in arranging of second language instructors (Midobuchea, Benavidesb, & Kostina-Ritchey, 2011). The language proficiency performance, quality, and principles improves verbal and non-verbal learning of students. The use of language practices encourages students in learning the language with advance methodology (NCATE, 2010). The medium of instructions has allowed competitors in removing unsuitable barriers, hazardous, and hardships responsible in learning the language and to achieve desired goals (Talbert-Johnson, 2006).

The teachers are willing to improve the language skills of the students but the academic, social and administrative indicators are strong barriers in achieving the objectives and the efforts performed by the teachers and sufficient planning during their lectures (Akram, 2017). The protocols, mind change in learning the language, the barriers responsible for poor language learning, and learners' attitude all are significant predictors of poor language (Cline & Necochea 2006). According to Major and Brock (2003), the learning compassion, readiness of mind, proper knowledge, and teaching methodologies are fundamental attributes when teaching to students. Research has recommended that appreciation with neighboring cultures, pedagogical framework and preparation in showing English learning strategies impact how teachers are seen by pupils (Rao, 2010). The teachers may confront challenges when teaching to students in varying teaching styles and multiple languages (Rao, 2010; Rao, 2002b). Many challenging in learning the language are:

1. The concept that teaching English as a subject and not as a language of communication and interaction.
2. Most of the students fail to learn how communication happened during the practice of proficient language learning.
3. The current curricula and textbooks fail to accommodate students when they use different languages.
4. The curriculum obstructions make the learners' self-assess in the education system (Tepav, 2013).

There are distinctions in linguistics, grammatical use and phonetics. In the nations like Nigeria, Malaysia, Singapore, Namibia, Pakistan and Iran have using many

languages. Two hundred languages are being used and spoken in single country like India has an example of extreme case (Atio, 2002; Canagarajah & Ashraf, 2013; Hanafi, 2014; Kishore, 2015; Wharton, 2000). The Indian national language, Hindi needs to resist with English as second language and it deserves an equivalent chance of learning English with Hindi speakers (Manivannan, 2016). In India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, as an example, English contends positively, assumes uncertainly, with national dialect of Urdu and Hindi. The primary language has both negative as well as positive outcomes. It serves as intellectual and social capacities (Carless, 2008). It is sure that the pupils working in groups don't communicate in English language constantly. The first language use identifies with scholars' personality. The adverse effect of native language use is an excessive level of dependence on first language and it may undermine English language. Most of the researchers proved that the scholars should teach in their mother language for better performance (Cline & Necochea, 2006).

The attitude and intention of students in using the mother language is linked with social interaction and the basic passion for demands of the society. The medium of instructions is connected with students' perceptions and communication abilities of students and teachers. English with medium of instructions has gained top position among existing languages in Pakistan. On the opposite, Urdu is our national language and students educated with mother language in primary years demonstrated better learning performance (Farooqi, 2015). When instructors deliver their lectures in English, the learners become confused and their performance get suffered. They need to help from Urdu language for explanation. Many languages are being spoken and used in Pakistan; the English language leads the way among all. Supreme Court in September 2015 has proclaimed to use Urdu as official language according to Pakistan Constitution, 1973 (Article 251). They are encouraged to translate their statutes, acts, and notification in Urdu to English. The situation is as yet worrying with regard to the implementation. The fact is that role of mother language is very significant in attaining the anticipated objectives of education (Farooqi, 2015). The higher educational institutions where English language is the sole medium of instruction is often deliver their lectures in scholars' mother language. The current paper is an intention to investigate the role of university academia's perceptions about using mother language or foreign language as medium of instructions.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of current study were:

1. To explore the opinions of university teachers for selection of medium of instructions at University.

2. Find out the indicators responsible for selection of the medium of instructions at university.
3. Investigate the significant difference in the opinions among university teachers when they used medium of instructions.

Research Questions

The objectives were achieved under designing the following research questions:

- RQ 1: What are the opinions of university teachers about selection of language as medium of instructions at University?
- RQ 2: What are different indicators responsible for implementation of national language as medium of instruction?
- RQ 3: What is the difference among the opinions of male and female university teachers about the use of language during lectures as medium of instruction?

Design of the Research

The current study was descriptive by nature. The survey technique was applied for the purpose of data collection.

Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The university teachers teaching in University of Education and GCU Faisalabad were population of present study. The random sample techniques were used for proper representation of university teachers. There are 700 university teachers working in GC University Faisalabad and 45 teachers were working in University of education Faisalabad campus. Eighty teachers from GCU were selected conveniently. Among them, 50 were Males (35 PhDs and 15 MPhil), 30 Females (20 PhDs and 10 MPhil). Twenty teachers from UoE [13 males (5 PhDs and 8 MPhil) and 07 females (2 PhDs and 5 MPhil)] were selected conveniently for this study.

Instrumentation

The self-developed questionnaire, Mediums of Instructions and Faculty Preference Survey (MIFPS) was applied for data collection. The indicators used in questionnaire were, Teachers' Attitude toward using language, Students' Attitude toward understanding language, Academic performance (reflection in the form of classroom discussion, question answers, presentations, content clarity) and Students' learning confidence. The instrument was validated by four university teachers. They ensured the

content and construct validity. Among thirty statements, twenty items were approved valid by the experts. Cronbach Alpha reliability was commuted as .891 being excellent for research.

Analysis of Data

The data were analyzed using statistical tests, descriptive (standard deviation and mean) and inferential statistics (t-test).

Results

RQ 1: To what extent, the voice of intellectual community justifies the language as medium of instruction?

Table 1

Teachers' Opinions about Language Preference (M = 63, F = 37)

S#	Indicators	Male Teachers' opinions about	Female Teachers' opinions about
	Gender of Students	Male students	Female students
1	Students' Attitude toward understanding foreign Language	30% (19)	70% (44)
2	Students' Attitude toward understanding mother Language	60% (38)	40% (25)
3	Teachers' Attitude toward using foreign Language (In opinions of teachers)	67% (42)	37% (23)
4	Teachers' Attitude toward using mother Language (In opinions of teachers)	47% (30)	53% (33)
5	Academic Achievement in English	30% (19)	70% (44)
6	Academic Achievement in Urdu	60% (38)	40% (25)
7	Learning Confidence in using English Language	51% (32)	49% (31)
8	Learning Confidence in using Urdu Language	57% (36)	43% (27)

In table 1, according to teachers' opinion, with respect to students' attitude toward understanding foreign Language, both male (70%) and female (65%) university

teachers have stated that majority of female students prefer to learn lectures in foreign language than that of male students. On the other hand, male students prefer to learn lectures in mother language than that of female students as perceived by male (60%) and female (70%) university teachers.

With respect to teachers' attitude toward selection of language; in the opinions of male teachers, (67%) male students and in opinions of female teachers (70%) of male students prefer that teachers should deliver the lectures in foreign language. On the other hand, in both the opinions of male and female teachers with (53%) and (60%) values respectively revealed that majority of female students prefer that teachers should deliver the lectures in mother language.

The teachers told that female students' achievement in foreign language is better than that of male students 70% perceived by male teachers and 60% performance perceived by female teachers. This achievement is reflected in the form of classroom discussion, question answers, presentations, and content clarity. According to the opinions of male (60%) and female (58%) teachers, the male students are more proficient when they are given a chance to reflect their achievement in the form of classroom discussion, question answers, presentations, content clarity in their mother language. When teachers perceived the students' learning confidence, male teachers told that for foreign language (51%) males have learning confidence and female (54%) teachers said that females have learning confidence. In mother language, male students in both groups (males 57% and females 61%) have high learning confidence.

RQ 2: What are different indicators responsible for implementation of national language as medium of instruction?

Table 2

Factors responsible for Medium of Instructions Preference

Descriptive	Teacher Attitude	Student Attitude	Achievement	Confidence
Mean	3.86	3.76	3.70	3.65
SD	1.08	1.81	.67	1.78

Table 2 revealed the top indicator responsible for selection of medium of instructions during their lectures was university teachers' attitude (mean=3.86, sd= 1.08). The students' attitude toward understanding the language was placed in second level (mean=3.76, sd= 1.81). The third factor was achievement of students (mean=3.70, sd= .67) and the last factor responsible for selection of language preference was students' learning confidence (mean=3.65, sd= 1.78).

RQ 3: What is the distinction among the opinions of male and female university teachers about the national language as medium of instruction?

Table 3

Gender Perceptions about Medium of Instruction

Indicators	Group	N	X	sd	t	p
Teachers Attitude	Males	63	3.87	1.08	1.264	.004**
	Females	37	3.45	1.42		
Students' Attitudes	Males	63	3.84	1.48	1.234	.001**
	Females	37	3.51	1.27		

**P<0.01

The table 3 revealed a noteworthy difference between males and females' university teachers on the factors of students' attitude toward understanding the language and teachers' attitude toward using the language. Male teachers have higher mean score ($M=3.87$, $SD=1.08$) than that of female ($M=3.45$, $SD=1.42$, $p<0.01$) university teachers with regard to teachers' attitude. With concerned the students' attitude toward the understanding of language, male teachers have higher mean score ($M=3.84$, $SD=1.48$) than that of female ($M=3.51$, $SD=1.27$, $p<0.01$) university teachers.

RQ 3b: What is the distinction among the opinions of male and female university teachers about the national language as medium of instruction?

Table 4

Gender Perceptions about Medium of Instruction

Indicators	Group	N	X	sd	t	p
Academic	Males	57	3.81	.76	1.267	.019*
	Females	43	3.41	.83		
Learning Confidence	Males	57	3.78	.54	2.571	.032*
	Females	43	3.45	.95		

*P<0.05

The table 4 revealed a significant difference between males and females' university teachers on the factor of achievement. Male teachers have higher mean score ($M=3.81$, $SD=.76$) than that of female ($M=3.41$, $SD=.83$, $p<0.01$) university teachers with regard to students' achievement. With concerned to learning confidence in using language, male teachers have higher mean score ($M=3.78$, $SD=.54$) than that of female ($M=3.45$, $SD=.95$, $p<0.01$) university teachers.

Conclusion

1. According to teachers' opinion, with respect to students' attitude toward understanding foreign Language, majority of female students prefer to learn lectures in foreign language than that of male students. On the other hand, male students prefer to learn lectures in mother language than that of female students as perceived by male and female university teachers.
2. With respect to teachers' attitude toward selection of language. In opinions of male teachers, male students and in opinions of female teachers of male students prefer that teachers should deliver the lectures in foreign language. On the other hand, in both the opinions of male and female teachers with and values respectively revealed that majority of female students prefer that teachers should deliver the lectures in mother language.
3. The teachers told that female students' achievement in foreign language is better than that of male students. This achievement is reflected in the form of classroom discussion, question answers, presentations, and content clarity. Male students are more proficient when they are given a chance to reflect their achievement in the form of classroom discussion, question answers, presentations, and content clarity in their mother language. Male teachers told that for foreign language males have learning confidence and female teachers said that females have learning confidence. In mother language, male students in both groups have high learning confidence.
4. The top indicator responsible for selection of medium of instructions during their lectures was university teachers' attitude. The students' attitude toward understanding the language was placed in second level. The third factor was achievement of students and the last factor responsible for selection of language preference was students' learning confidence.
5. A noteworthy difference between males and females' university teachers on the factors of students' attitude toward understanding the language and teachers' attitude toward using the language. Male teachers have higher mean score than that of female University teachers with regard to teachers' attitude. With concerned the students' attitude toward the understanding of language, male teachers has higher mean score than that of female University teachers.
6. A significant difference between males and females' university teachers on the factor of achievement. Male teachers have higher mean score than that of female University teachers with regard to students' achievement. With concerned to learning confidence in using language, male teachers have higher mean score than that of female University teachers.

Discussion

1. According to teachers' opinion, with respect to students' attitude toward understanding foreign Language, that majority of female students prefer to learn lectures in foreign language than that of male students. This study supported the findings of Noack, 2015 who claimed that females outperform males. On the other hand, male students prefer to learn lectures in mother language than that of female students as perceived by male and female University teachers. The studies of Taqi, Al-Darwish, Akbar, & Al-Gharabali, (2015) showed that female teachers are better English teachers for students.
2. A significant difference between males and females' university teachers on the factor of achievement. Male teachers have higher mean score than that of female university teachers with regard to students' achievement. With concerned to learning confidence in using language, male teachers have higher mean score than that of female university teachers. The study supported the findings of Madrid and Hughes (2010) that female teachers are more associated with democratic learning environment than male teachers

Recommendations

1. As the medium of instruction in universities most of the universities is English language, the teachers should use both languages as medium of instruction while explaining their lectures for better understanding for students.
2. The most spoken language in the world is English, the teachers should inspire and encourage the students who want to use foreign language to compete in international community.
3. The academia, parents, society and media should play positive role to highlight the sanctifications and motivations of using national language. However, it is dire need to accept the role of foreign language and it should be used at university level.

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