



RESEARCH PAPER

English as Language of Instructions or a Blend of Urdu at Public Secondary Schools: Perceptions and Practices

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive study is a critique on such decisions towards language of instructions for the teaching of English and sciences subjects at secondary level. It was conducted on 30 male and female public secondary schools and their teachers to know whether English has been used as language of instructions while teaching of English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics at grade 10 as perceived or with a blend of Urdu. An opinionnaire and a classroom observation checklist, as tools, were administered on 30 teachers teaching English, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology to grade 10 to know their opinions and practices. The results of the study show that a majority of teachers prefer mixture of mother tongue and English as a foreign language for the teaching of English, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology in the classrooms. There are some instances of using English which are made when the teacher is supposed to explain scientific terminologies. Even English, as a subject, has been taught either in mother tongue or mixture of English and Urdu where Urdu remained dominant. The study found gap in between the decisions taken and the prevalent practices and suggests that teachers and students' comfort zone may be considered before devising drastic policies for the language of instructions. The study concludes that without the proficiency of teachers in English language skills sweeping policies should not be made, as in the past, so that content knowledge could be easily transferred to students to further their skills

Introduction

Guilherme, 2007 opines that the English language definitely cuts across national boundaries more than any other language and is an icon of the contemporary age. It is undoubtedly the language of the cosmopolitan/global

professional elites, but it has also been a tool for the citizens of the developing countries, mainly those colonized by the English. Further, it is generally accepted that teachers of English play a leading role in providing learners with the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to read, write, speak and listen effectively (Arkoudis, 2003).

Governments always take generalized decisions with regard to the language of instructions, an instance of 2009 (Appendix-A), that declared English as language of instructions at hundred of Public sector schools to provide equal opportunities to thousands of school going students so that they may have same access to English language which the students of private sector schools enjoy. Hence, this study was conducted to find out whether the perception with which the decision was taken was realized or the prevalent instructional practices are different as perceived. To determine this objective two tools have been used to collect data.

Research question and objectives of the study

The study aimed to find out whether or not the decision taken by the Government of the Punjab regarding the application of English as medium of instructions (2009) to teach English, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology at Public secondary schools has been realized or not. The study was conducted by keeping in view the following objectives:

1. Know the rationale of the decision taken by the Government of the Punjab to use English as medium for the teaching of English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics at Public secondary schools.
2. Determine the current practices/medium applied for the teaching of English, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology at secondary level.

Material and Methods

The study is a descriptive research and has been conducted on six male and female public sector secondary schools by including one teacher of each subject, i.e., English, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology in Lahore district. An opinionnaire, regarding the decision of making English as medium of instruction as well as pedagogical information, was administered on 30 teachers teaching English, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology to secondary classes followed by a classroom observation checklist (containing 15 items each), used in grade X, to experience real classroom proceedings. The collected quantitative data were qualitatively discussed for conclusion.

Literature Review

The reception of English (Marsh, 2006) as a mode of guidance may bring about sure or negative instructive results. Scathingly alluded to as the language of guidance, if not every so often annihilation, appropriation of English as the vehicle of learning is liable for boundless school wastage in different landmasses. In the absolute most unfortunate nations on the planet, the utilization of an unknown dialect, for example, English as the mechanism of guidance in schools is straightforwardly connected to instructive avoidance and disappointment (Tatlah, 2014). In certain landmasses, endeavoring to learn through English has prompted disarray, sadness, and high dropout rates. In others it has been presented utilizing proper instructive standards prompting fruitful and reasonable results.

Mureen (1992) portrayed that in Pakistan, the utilization of English is very much settled in. It is regularly a pre-essential for work in general society and private area. It is a language of science and innovation. Accordingly, to stay in sync with the extending boondocks of human information, the utilization of English in Pakistan should be effectively supported by the informed and disparaged by the approach creators. Essentially (Taimurie, 1999) referred to that, almost certainly, Urdu is the public language of Pakistan, yet English is the language of science and innovation, notwithstanding the accentuation on Urdu, Pakistan can't disregard English. Further Shahid (2002) depicted that unintentionally of history and by the quick spread of modern improvement of science, innovation and worldwide exchange; English has become the world language.

It is intriguing to take note of that even the financially smothered nations like Ethiopia have received English as the mode of guidance and in this reference (Marsh, 2006) remarks that English has been presented in Ethiopia as a mechanism of guidance halfway to counterbalance the issue of kids showing up in school with various first dialects. (Ingram and Sasaki, 2003) say straightforward actuality is that English has become the primary worldwide language. The purposes behind English to have become so prevailing are different: expansionism, military force, business, industry, exchange, innovation, media, the film and different expressions, well known music, while, all the more as of late, English has become the dominating language of the web with some 80% of the net being led in English.

There is no denying the way that in the present instructive situation each bilingual or multilingual nation has begun embracing English as mode of guidance at schools undoubtedly. There could be discussion whether to receive English as medium as guidance mode in bilingual circumstances which do have its different disadvantages as we find in the Turkish instructive setting which is set apart by a significant contention between the steadily expanding interest for schools giving unknown dialect medium guidance (Mainly Anatolian High Schools (AnadoluLisesi) and tuition based schools.), which alludes to the educating of science-related subjects (e.g., physical science, science) and arithmetic in an

unknown dialect., from one viewpoint, and a developing worry about the impacts of such guidance on kids going to unknown dialect medium guidance schools on the other. In any case, more as of late, it has been discovered that bilingualism is, all things considered, an incredible resource for the youngster. It has been noticed that the bilingual youngster has a superior attention to language contrasts, is better at learning new dialects, and has significant preferences in knowledge and intellectual development (Murray and Kouritzin, 1997; Grosjean, 1982; Roseberry-McKibbin and Brice, 2000; Hawson, 1997; Gonzales and Yawkey, 1994).

Utilizing displaying methods, scientists, for example, Graddol (2005) predicts that English will turn into a second language for some, if not most, of the world's residents by 2050. Regarding number of speakers, English is estimate to be in fourth spot by 2050, following the Chinese, Hindi/Urdu and Arabic dialects. In any case, in an undeniably interconnected and related world, its first situation as a most widely used language for financial improvement over the course of the following 100 years is in little uncertainty. It is seen as a fundamental switch for accomplishment in the globalizing economies, and subsequently it conveys the mantle of 'the language of force', similarly as others, for example, Latin, have done as such in specific areas before (Tatlah, 2015). For certain individuals, the words globalization and Englishisation are indivisible.

We additionally locate that new monetarily positive nations like Malaysia embraced English for the educating of Mathematics and science and accomplished great outcomes as a result of the utilization English by keeping in view the developing global need of this language. For instance in 2003 Malaysia made a striking stride in re-embracing the English language as a mode of guidance for science and math. This adjustment in strategy was considered significant to guarantee that Malaysians can stay up to date with logical and innovative advancement that is generally recorded in the English language. Simultaneously, this move is conceived to give freedoms to understudies to utilize the English language and along these lines increment their capability in the language (Ministry of Education, 2002a).

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Findings in percentage (Opinionnaire)

Sr. No	Opinion point	Agree	Agree somewhat	Uncertain	Disagree	Disagree some what
1	Teachers receive terminal degree after having been taught in English language at advanced level.	76.66	6.66	3.33	6.66	6.66
2	The decision of making English medium at secondary level is right and according to educational needs of the present century.	60	16.66	6.66	10	6.66
3	English has become the need for today's educational world.	63.33	10	3.33	16.66	6.66
4	Knowledge of English language paves	56.66	13.33	6.66	10	13.33

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	way to professional market.					
5	Theoretical knowledge of English language is equally important for Science and Arts teachers at school level.	60	10	6.66	13.33	10
6	Using English as medium of instruction is comparatively easier for teachers.	53.33	10	6.66	20	10
7	Teacher's own language proficiency is enhanced when English is used as medium.	70	6.66	6.66	10	6.66
8	Teaching strategies required for the teaching of schools subjects in English are not easier to adopt as a professional teacher.	56.66	13.33	10	10	10
9	English generates interest among the students when used as medium.	53.33	10	3.33	13.33	20
10	Science teachers are more comfortable to adopt English as medium of instruction.	60	6.66	6.66	10	16.66
11	Scientific concepts, when translated in mother tongue, are difficult for students to comprehend.	70	10	6.66	10	3.33
12	Students are unconsciously trained for tertiary studies when taught in English language at school level.	73.33	3.33	3.33	10	10
13	English as medium is an effort to make public school students to become socially and academically confident.	70	6.66	6.66	6.66	10
14	Students may face language problems at college level while studying science related subjects, if not taught in English at secondary level.	73.33	3.33	10	6.66	6.66
15	Making English as medium is socially important decision in the light of growing international education demands of English language.	70	6.66	6.66	10	6.66

Table 2
Findings in percentage (Classroom Observation Checklist)

Sr. No	Observation Point	To some extent	To great extent	Not at All	Always	Occasionally
1	Teacher appears to be using English without making extra efforts while starting classroom proceedings.	16.66	10	50	3.33	20
2	Teacher manifests the importance of English language by using it at the outset in the classroom proceedings.	10	6.66	56.66	10	16.66
3	Teacher tries to generate sense of liking for English among the students by teaching his/her subject in English language.	13.33	6.66	60	10	10
4	Teacher seems to have theoretical knowledge of English as a professional.	6.66	3.33	76.66	6.66	6.66
5	Teacher reflects his/her theoretical knowledge of English language during while teaching stage.	3.33	3.33	76.66	10	6.66
6	Teacher spends maximum time to use English as medium of instruction.	6.66	3.33	70	3.33	16.66
7	Teacher shows comfort while using English as medium.	6.66	6.66	66.66	10	10

8	Teacher applies different teaching strategies required for the teaching of his/her subject with the help of English language.	10	6.66	70	10	3.33
9	Teacher tries to engage students in classroom proceedings by the help of English language as medium.	6.66	6.66	63.33	6.66	16.66
10	Teacher appears to be more comfortable to adopt English as medium of instruction.	6.66	10	73.33	6.66	10
11	Teacher clears scientific concepts to students with the help of English language.	10	10	66.66	6.66	6.66
12	Teacher unconsciously enables the students like English language for academic and social use.	6.66	6.66	80	3.33	3.33
13	Students seem to be interactive and participate in classroom activities when taught in English language.	6.66	3.33	83.33	3.33	3.33
14	Students appear to face no language problem when taught subject/s in English language.	6.66	6.66	80	3.33	3.33
15	Students like to interact with peers in English language.	3.33	3.33	86.66	3.33	3.33

Discussion

The study was conducted by focusing the below mentioned objectives with the help of two instruments: table 1 & 2:

1. Know the rationale of the decision taken by the Government of the Punjab to use English as medium for the teaching of English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics at Public secondary schools.
2. Determine the current practices/medium applied for the teaching of English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics at secondary level.

There's no denying the fact the English language is a globally required language which plays various roles even sometimes as lingua franca. As a language of academics it has gained its further significance but in reality the school education in the Punjab is not so successful in having teachers fluent in English language which ultimately can affect students' learning. In the light of the results we can also infer that the subjects also accept the reality of English language's importance but professional do not adopt English as a complete language of instructions because of different reasons. A majority feels that teaching strategies required for the teaching of schools subjects in English are not easier to adopt as a professional teacher because the subjects are not comfortable to adopt English as language of instructions even those engaged in the teaching of English as a subject at secondary level. Subjects' theoretical knowledge appears to be sound but there seems a gap in between the perceptions and practices so far as giving instructions in English language are concerned. Majority subjects do not spend maximum time to use English as medium of instruction and explaining different concepts in Urdu language; applying a mixture of Urdu and English languages which is the easiest

approach for the transfer of content knowledge to the students. As the results, table 1&2, highlight the overall application of language of instructions, which is not English, despite the fact that teacher possess appropriate academic and professional qualification but they lack English language skills. At the same time the subjects are conscious about the possible impact of such practices during the tertiary education of the students but are practicing both the languages, Urdu, and English, for the teaching of English, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology. This leaves some questions for policy makers who, without need analysis, promulgate policies which do not match the existing state of affairs at the secondary education level.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Knowledge and skills in English language teaching pave way to professional market but English, as language of instructions, does not generate interest among the students and teachers when used as sole medium as using English as medium of instruction is comparatively not easier for teachers. Making English as a medium could be socially important in the light of growing international education demands of English language but it may not be made the only way for academic instructions at the secondary level rather a mixed approach, combination of Urdu and English, may also be encouraged for better understanding of the content knowledge of the students.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings the study recommends that:

- 1) Urdu and English languages combination may be allowed for the teaching of Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and Biology, however, for the teaching of English maximum efforts should be made to teach in the target language.
- 2) Teachers should be engaged in regular teachers' training program and for secondary school teachers special tailored programs may be devised.
- 3) Instruction manuals for secondary school teachers should be prepared so that they could overcome methodological difficulties.
- 4) Lockstep technique of teaching at secondary level should be discouraged and interactive teaching/learning be promoted so that it could help them tertiary education despite being taught with a mixed medium of instruction.

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