

English and Urdu as Mediums of Instructions in Commerce College at Hyderabad, Sindh: Qualitative Analysis of the Students' Perspective

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Abstract

This empirical study attempts to examine the perspective of the students of commerce who study at intermediate and graduate levels at college in Hyderabad. The significance of learning in English as a foreign language has been the matter of one of the greatest concerns for the policy makers in the province of Sindh Pakistan. The policies formulated once are rarely revisited for the implementation of productive medium of instructions regardless of the concerns of the students and teachers as key players. In this study attempt, the researcher examines the perspective of different students who received education in English as medium of instructions (EMI) and Urdu as medium of instructions (UMI) separately. The data through semi structured interviews with open ended questions from the selected 13 students revealed the challenges and benefits of learning the subject based knowledge in two different languages as Urdu and English. Many similarities in their opinions were identified. For them, the disciplinary knowledge of English as medium instruction was noticeably less than Urdu as medium of instructions. The study results found that the education in mother tongue at college level is more comprehensive to enhance the performance of students in commerce. A constructive approach to bilingual education must be taken into considerations to redress the challenges for students in commerce at colleges related to the policies of medium of instruction in the education system of Sindh. Moreover, the data based result also displays that the pedagogical success could only be obtainable through the mother tongue in education. This clearly provides the evidence for the native languages as a medium of instructions in colleges.

Keywords: Medium of Instruction, Urdu Medium, English Medium, Bilingual Education

1. Introduction

An education, in the field of commerce, is indispensable to administer a successful firm. The workforce' skill has a direct relation to the commercial success. Individuals try to receive the training they need. They learn the conceptual and management skills. It is necessary to successfully manage an organization through the facility of commerce education. When something complex is learned and studied, it is followed and delivered with the means and medium of instructions. It plays a crucial role in this process of academic achievement (Alam, Md & Ahmad, Arman. 2023).

According to Sachal Magazine (2022), there are several commerce colleges in Hyderabad, Sindh. Almost four decades ago, there were only two notable commerce colleges in Hyderabad such as Govt Sachal Sarmast Commerce College Hirabad and Govt Sachal Sarmast Arts & Commerce College Tilak Incline Hyderabad. The realm of commerce was less considered to be the source of achievement of the high distinctions as doctors and engineers. It was taken to be the learning of the office management as to be a simple clerk and a manager. The world rapidly changed. It changed not only in one sector but also in diverse sectors. Previously, the educational fields like medical and engineering were the priority of the people but now the field of commerce is taken by choice so as to work in the business world. This broader change has escalated the number of public and private commerce institutes in the city. Almost every college of the public sector has initiated the commerce discipline because of the burgeoning number of the aspirants opting for commerce and trade as the career for being foreman; supervisor, general manager and executive officer. All of these career making trends need proper education. They need training to do these jobs well. It becomes very challenging when the learners come across the type of medium of instructions different to the native and local languages such as Urdu and Sindhi in the city. Their understanding in the local languages is appropriate but English has been one of the perennial problems since the beginning of the education at public schools. In the public sector commerce colleges, mostly the students from public sector schools find the easy entrance because of the unaffordability of the cost of private colleges in the city. The state of English in the public schools is like a layman's duck in the presence of pathetic pedagogical and examination tools that demotivate the learners to be proficient in English. They get their works done in schools in Urdu language.

According to Khan (2002) cited in Asif et. al (2020), Pakistan is a diverse state linguistically. It has more than 57 languages. They have 300 different dialects regionally spoken in the different parts of the country. Urdu is the language of 6.8% population in the country. It is prominently spoken in the urban areas of the country. On the contrary, English enjoys constitutionally as an official language of the country from the day of independence in 1947. It is the most prevalent lingua franca in Pakistan. It possesses a strong association with Muslim nationalism. It is simply a religious picture of the state (Harlech-Jones et.al, 2005). In commerce educational institutions in Sindh, the various language speaking students continue to take education. They have commonly to encounter the professional subjects imparted preferably in English. They have fewer efficacies to understand fully in English than Urdu. They apply different means to get the assistance of Urdu to clarify the concept of management sciences and the subjects of accounting etc. Keeping in view this situation, the College Education Department (CED), Government of Sindh has recently tried to pay the attention to enhance the teaching disciplinary courses to the students at colleges with effectively novel means. The series of training sessions for teachers continue to be the priority for the overall amelioration of the teaching and learning practices at colleges because the developing nations are educationally drifting towards knowledge depended economies and finance. This grows the fundamental knowledge for international competition. It, too, develops professionally incredible human beings to elevate economies (Macaro et al., 2018; Kırkgöz & Dikilitaş, 2018)

According to Hernandez-Nanclares & Jimenez-Munoz (2017) colleges generally have educational functions. They provide students with education to acquire the first-rate qualification. They are essential bodies for contributing to the global effectiveness and financial prosperity.

The Challenge and Mission Statements of colleges give extreme importance to get brilliance in teaching (Kamaşak et al., 2021). Accomplishment of good performance in learning coincides firmly with the better training procedure and timetable. It needs more help and dedication to get substantial disciplinary understanding for students. The effective measures will be of utmost importance regarding the achievement of understanding through college education. The superiority in academic activities stands to be the main agenda. For the accomplishment of this, the policy

framers extend their dedication to professionally higher disciplines for the young graduates. Consequently, the relation between college and knowledge is and will remain of paramount importance (Ghazal et al., 2014; Sultan & Javaid, 2018; Köksal & Tercan, 2019; Curle et al., 2020). Government and Private Colleges in Sindh perform the role of the foundation of knowledge. The timely needed vital thing for the students in commerce is to understand the disciplinary knowledge not only in their mother tongues but also in English language in combination with contemporary macro-language uses. The policies at small scales have been in vogue for the students in the specific subjects like commerce before graduating from higher education (Norton & Kamal, 2003; Yasmin et al., 2016).

Relatively applicable literature on English as the language of instructions is reviewed so as to buttress the base of this study. The relevance of English and Urdu as languages of instructions is assessed as productive means to accomplish the goal of seeking knowledge in the college context.

2. Literature Review

English stands to be the instruction of human technological communication around the globe. It influences the professional activities and enterprises of the world economy and politics. This internationally distinguished position of English has largely influenced the non-native countries like Pakistan to formulate wide ranged policies of the indulgence of English into every sphere of the country to stand as an effective stakeholder in the world. This standing of English has influenced not only the political arena but also the educational sectors. These sectors of educations are the work force providers to promote the affair of nation as an independent country through excelling in the economic, political and technological walks of the nation (Fareed et al., 2021). Pakistan geographically lies at the cross road of Asia and Europe. The all-inclusive foreign policy is of the utmost importance for Pakistan to engage both sides of the cross roads fallen between Europe and Asia. According to Altay (2020), in the pursuance of such goals of technological and political connectivity of the world through Pakistan depends on English which is considered to be one of the most productive educating machines for the worldwide impacts. Such types of implications worldwide have necessitated for the language policy makers in the country to provide a vital space to English in the formulation of language policy as education instruction (Fareed et al., 2021).

According to Bhatti and Memon (2016), the geographically and internationally positioned condition of the country has been one of the fundamental bases to integrate English prominently as one of the major mediums of instruction in the educational sectors. In 1980, favorable ameliorations were made as per policy for English as MI in the higher education of the country. Since then, the position of English as MI has been debatable when the researchers and learners started confronting the issues in the process of learning and researching through English. The graduates and bachelors at educational institutions in the country considered EMI as one of the bars to the achievement of the comprehensive cognition about the valuable aspects of education such as medical, engineering and technological sectors. Amidst such widely raised dissenting voices against English as MI, it has become an unavoidable aspect of the research and education. Abandonment of English as MI will lead to the less possibility of competing in the world (Bhatti and Memon, 2016).

On the contrary, it is indicated in some of the notable studies conducted in the context such as Imtiaz (2014) and Sarfraz et al. (2015) that Pakistani teachers and instructors at different colleges and school encounter the difficulties to let the learners learn the disciplines of science in EMI. The study conducted through eight colleges indicated that the teachers apply UMI so as to let the learners understand the science content material clearly and easily. The instructors also grapple with problems to teach in EMI to the speakers of local indigenous languages of the country. The

teachers and students of the 3 colleges out of the total 7 colleges in the study preferred UMI as a productive tool to acquire the desired results in the understanding of the content concept with lucidity and precision. They denied to have a proficiency in EMI and it diminishes the power of creativity that sounds unwell for the self-acceptance. The pivotal aspect to consider is that there was a pervasive realization among the students about the effectiveness of EMI as a way to success. They realized that the use of UMI for the time being to understand the content but this is educationally not affirmative to excel ahead in future effectively. In the remaining 4 private sector colleges studied in the context revealed a different result. The minimum number of the students preferred UMI to EMI. Majority of the students revealed that the learning in EMI paves more ways to success in life. It fulfills the aspirations to have a solid self-recognition in all walks of life. It enhances not only competence but also confidence to march ahead in the formation of the sound career. The 41% of the student participants studied in the context strongly affirmed and agreed for MI as a sole medium of instructions whereas the teacher participants with differed views vehemently glued to the point that the EMI de-accelerates the pace of learning and debar the creative power of the local students.

Additionally, some of the notable studies conducted in the similar context to view the effectiveness of MI such as (Irfan, 2017) and (Khoo, 2003). The researchers viewed the perceptions of the student participants about UMI. The researchers observed the class session to see the impacts of EMI on UMI as an easy medium to understand the content. The 108 student participants of different colleges took the part in the study. Majority of them faced a type of anxiety of EMI which was less during UMI in classes. They indicated that anxiety affected the achievement of educational purposes and there existed a relation between learning in EMI and UMI. They concluded that the pace of learning in UMI is larger and more significant than that of EMI.

The most relevant study to the present one: Hussain and Amanat (2021), conducted in the context of the province of the Punjab, Pakistan. The study viewed the perspectives of the two groups of the students favoring separately UMI and EMI in their specific disciplinary subjects of Arts and Commerce. There was a unanimity and similarity of the perspectives on various issues related to a viable MI to gain a productive knowledge. The qualitative study indicated that EMI was less effective as MI than UMI as a more preferable tool to acquire the desired outcome of gaining knowledge. The study recommended for the formulation of very solid format of bilingual medium of instructions to curb the emerging requirements of the students at college level so as to move ahead

The research study such as Cankaya (2017) was also conducted only to view the perspective of the students about EMI at colleges. This revealed that the collaborative approach should be the main focus to formulate the MI policy based on the amalgamation of EMI and UMI. However, the comprehensive review of the existing literature about the context indicates that there is gap to research in the particular commerce college students' perspective on MI. The following research questions are tried to be answered in the present study:

- 1) How do the students of intermediate and AD commerce perceive the medium of instructions at college?
- 2) Which MI is preferable for them to gain the commerce subjects knowledge easily?

3. Methodology

This study about English and Urdu as mediums of instructions in the subjects of commerce at college level in Hyderabad concentrates on the perspective of the students who have different disciplines of commerce to study such as Finance, Banking and Accounting at intermediate level and Taxation,, Managerial and Statistical Sciences and Economics at post intermediate level called AD(B.Com). The study attempts to find out the perception and experiences of the students about

the use of MI in which the subjects are taught and delivered in classes. The nicely suited format of the study at this level seems to be a qualitative one which provides the vast stock of the data from the students in the form of their spontaneous viewpoints regardless of being selective in expressing the point. Therefore, the qualitative approach is followed to garner the data about effectiveness of the use of EMI and UMI to grasp the concept of the prescribed subjects so as attain the educational distinctions. For this format of the study Creswell (2014) rightly says that the qualitative approach gives a very comprehensive description of the participants' behaviors in the purely original background. This study focuses on the divergent experiences of the students at college level; they are the real exponents of the experiences. They expose the situation either in affirmation or negation about MI they encountered in comprehending the content knowledge. This matter of MI is of great concern especially for the students at colleges who have different linguistic backgrounds. The slight insufficiency in the comprehension of the content is liable to affect the overall educational achievement.

3.1. Population

This study is based on English and Urdu as mediums of instructions in the subjects of commerce at college level in Hyderabad where the students are exposed to different learning realities. Therefore, the population of the study includes the students of different classes at college who experienced diverse tests and challenging tasks to gain the comprehension of the content knowledge in the subjects of commerce in EMI. They originally are at ease with UMI because Urdu is one of the easily understandable and widely spoken languages in the country. Although, they studied EMI during their schooling at the public sectors schools. They took it for granted and were far from complete comprehension in EMI. This is resulted owing to the passive inclination of the teachers at public schools towards EMI as most of the teachers possess the unsound background to English.

3.2. Sampling

The researcher employed the purposive sampling to collect the data. The study relates to English and Urdu as mediums of instructions at commerce college level in Hyderabad. The base of the student participants is on their perspective about the use of EMI and UMI to obtain the knowledge. The characteristics of the participants for interviews are tabulated as under:

Serial	Participants	Gender	Age	Education
1	S1	Male	16 years	I Com-I
2	S2	Male	19 years	AD-I
3	S3	Female	16 years	I Com-I
4	S4	Male	17 years	I Com-II
5	S5	Female	17 years	I Com-II
6	S6	Female	20 years	AD-II
7	S7	Male	19 years	AD-I
	S8	Male	16 years	I Com-I
9	S9	Male	19 years	AD-I
10	S10	Male	18 years	AD-I
11	S11	Female	19 years	AD-I
12	S12	Male	19 years	AD-I
13	S13	Male	18 years	AD-I

of the content in commerce. Thirteen participants were identified to interview. The students who took part in the study were considered to be better with their satisfactory class performance. They were vocal. Their number was comparatively less and meager. They study at Governemnt Sachal Sarmast Commerce College, Hirabad, Hyderabad. The majority of the students felt coy and ignored to ensure their availability because of their perceived fear and anxiety caused by inappropriate competence and confidence to take the interest.

All thirteen participants were very keen to take part in the study. The classes were rare then and their presence at the college was compulsive for the submission of exam forms and other matters of taking the attendance from the teachers. The information regarding the participants is tabulate. They study in different classes of commerce at college. A sufficient amount of data through interviews was taken. It was then thematically analyzed by following the paradigm of Braun and Clark (2006).

4. Tools of Research & Analysis of Data

This study is intended for analyzing the students' perspective on English and Urdu as mediums of instructions at the college level. In this connection, a more responding way was to conduct the semi structured interviews. It gathered experiences of the participants. Interview practice is a helpfully suitable way to take the detailed responses of participants (Rossman and Rallis, 2003) It finds out an insiders' viewpoint about the different experiences about the use of medium of instructions at college level. Thus, thirteen student participants were selected for conducting semi-structured interviews in this study. At beginning, the researcher started asking common questions emerged from students' responses. The formal consent was initially taken from the college principal to engage the participants and then the college librarian was requested to use the space in the library for engaging the students. They were informed of the study along with its academic value. The assurances were also given to the students that their produced data through interviews will neither be disclosed nor be misused at any stage. As per the procedure of the qualitative thematic analytical study, different codes were assigned to the student participants. This is entitled to keep the personal identity hidden. The main points in the interviews were initially noted down in the diary. The time period for every interview was 10 to 20 minutes for their perception about English and Urdu as medium of instructions.

The collected data through semi-structured interviews was coded and categorized.

The themes and sub-themes were produced after a thoroughly comprehensive analysis. The identity of all participants was kept undisclosed with S1... S13).

5. Findings

5.1. Perceived Benefits of EMI at College

The interviews conducted revealed that the substantial majority of the students in commerce are well aware of the importance of EMI. They believe that there performance in understanding the content material is inappropriate but there engagement with EMI ameliorates their skills in English vocabulary and other communicative paraphernalia. The participants as S3, S9, S12, S5 and S7 were unanimous on this perspective. The jargons and terminology like FIFO and LIFO in Accounting, Banking and Economics upgrade the understanding in commerce which will surely assist them to success in making the career. The participants such as S6, S11, and S8and S1 indicated that the contemporary world is technologically advanced. All sectors of commerce in the world are interconnected through technology with English. They stressed the application of EMI as a validated means to compete in the world.

5.2. Perceived Benefits of UMI at College

The participants revealed that they are good at Urdu language. It is easily comprehensible. They can understand the content material. The task regularly delivered in commerce classes in UMI lasts a shorter span of time to complete than that of EMI. The delivered content knowledge in UMI remains active in memory and they are in this enabled to answer all the quires related to the statistical and economic analysis as our part of professional study. One of the participants S11 studying in B.Com-I went on the extent of saying that one of the teachers delivering everything in class in EMI is less contacted and less mixed up with the students. Although, he is highly efficient, the students feel a bit apprehensive to interact with him.

5.3 Perceived Difficulties and Challenges of EMI

Most of the participants indicated that the degree program in EMI is a way to earn a widely accepted professional recognition around the globe. This wide recognition of the professional credential is not far from challenges and difficulties. There appears for many of the participants a difficulty in the comprehension of the content material in EMI in the core aspects of commerce. This is because of their personal insufficiency of English language owing to a non-serious and passive EMI public sector school educational background. They believe that it retards the creativity (S9, S5, and S11). They express that they fail to decipher the text in EMI and struggle a lot to interpret even the literal meaning far from the contextual meanings. For most of the participants, this is very confusing and perplexing for them to prepare tangible material for the commerce subjects. Moreover, they feel to have a less lucidity in the topics. Their disappointment escalates when they think about the tedious professional jobs in future. They always seek extra help and references to understand the core concepts in the content material delivered through EMI. They indicated that they lack the solid writing skills to attempt the exam papers and follow as a result the pattern of parroting the core material. It sounds unwell for our educational and academic nourishment. Many participants as S3, S8, S11 and S13 believed that it becomes a time consuming tasks to translate the content material into Urdu to understand it. Some time, they jostle for extra coaching classes for help which add more burden to their academic cost. The agony, they indicated, becomes more when some questions in the exam question papers demands a chalk and they talk about a cheese in the answers owing to the complexity in EMI.

5.4 Perceived Difficulties and Challenges of UMI

Majority of the student participants indicated that the learning in commerce through UMI is a preferable tool for acquisition of the content knowledge to UMI but it causes to emerge numerous challenges and difficulties in the long journey of career making process. The participants S6, S7 and S13 believed that UMI restricts proficiency. It limits the possibility of publication in English. They also expressed that their insufficient English communicative abilities will surely decrease the chances of getting desired outcomes of success in the job interviews.

6. Discussion

This study tries to explore the perspective of the commerce college students about EMI in line with UMI. It investigated the attitudes of the students battling at various fronts in seeking the job orientated degrees at college. The all-inclusive perspective of the students about EMI was confidently optimistic. The proficient excellence in EMI has some long lasting consequences on their professional standing. They can be recognizable and easily adjusted to the emerging demands of the world of commerce and business. EMI demands more struggle and hardship from the nonnative students. It multiplies endeavors for not only understanding the content material but also

being exposed to various uses of English language. EMI forms the globalized business professionals whereas UMI restricts to a localized workers.

.7. Recommendations

The teaching and learning practices in EMI and UMI are possibly set for more enhancements. The language policy framers should empower the teachers who are the key players to make the macro decisions through the implementations of the well-focused approaches for the students. It can be helpful for the students in commerce to learn not only the content material but also elevate the level of communication. It should be ensured that how the knowledge is made easily accessible to the understanding of the all language speakers through the comprehensive presentation of the tasks.

8. Conclusion

This study examines the perspective of the students in commerce at college about English and Urdu as mediums of instructions. The fundamental purpose of the implementation of commerce at college is to produce skillful and professional workforce. The students in UMI are at ease to understand but the dire need of time is to prepare them rigorously in EMI. Proficiency in communication skills is a productive expertise of the modern world. It demonstrates timely fluctuations in the language policy so as to make it student-cum-market friendly.

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