

Teaching and Learning English in Sindh Schools



Campaign for Quality Education

 OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS

TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH IN SINDH SCHOOLS



Society for the Advancement of Education

This study is part of a series on language and learning in Pakistan under the auspices of the Campaign for Quality Education (CQE). The first study, "Policy & Practice: Teaching and Learning in English in Punjab Schools" was published in 2013 by the CQE.

The Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE) is a non-governmental organization established in 1982 by a group of concerned citizens and academics. It builds on the belief that educational justice entails not just access to schools, but to quality education, for all children in Pakistan. SAHE works through an extensive network, the Campaign for Quality Education (CQE), to conduct collaborative research and evidence-based advocacy on key issues to influence educational reform. It has sought such evidence in the realm of data related to school inputs and student outcomes, budgetary analysis, public sector reform and privatization, teacher professional development, language and learning as well as citizenship education.

The report has been produced with the support of Open Society Foundations (OSF). The data and the interpretations in the study are those of SAHE and CQE and do not necessarily reflect the views of OSF.

Copyright © 2014 Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE)

The use of any material in this publication is to be acknowledged.

Report Team:
Fatima Dar: Principal author
Amal Aslam
Sacha Aziz
Maryam Akmal

Published by:
Society for the Advancement of Education
65-C Garden Block, New Garden Town, Lahore, Pakistan
www.sahe.org.pk & www.cqe.net.pk

Printers: Balance Publicity
Cover Design: A H Printers
Layout: Mazhar Saleem

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	II
Acronyms	III
Executive Summary	IV
1 Introduction	01
National Education Policy (NEP) 2009	01
Sindh Education Sector Plan 2013-2016	02
Current Mol in Sindh Schools	03
2 Literature Review	05
3 Methodology	09
Research Questions	09
Methodological Approach	09
Data Collection Strategy	10
4. Language Use in the Classroom	11
Teacher talk & Student talk in English classrooms	11
Discussion of Teacher Talk & Student Talk Findings	14
5 Perceptions of Key Stakeholders	17
Perceptions of Head Teachers	17
Perceptions of Teachers	17
Perceptions of Parents	18
Summary of Stakeholders' Perceptions	18
6 Curriculum & Textbook Review	19
Curriculum & Textbook Review Findings	19
Discussion of Curriculum & Textbook Review Findings	22
7 Conclusion & Recommendations	25
8 References	27



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Ms. Sadiqa Salauddin for insightful discussions on the subject of language in classrooms and for facilitating research on this important issue.

We appreciate the efforts of Ms. Huma Imran Khan from Indus Resource Center, Karachi for managing the data collection activity in Sindh. We are also thankful to Mr. Bilal Hasan and other staff members from Indus Resource Center who assisted in the field and with the transcription of classroom observations for detailed language use analysis.

We are particularly thankful to all the parents, teachers, and head teachers who participated in this study.

Abbas Rashid
June 30, 2014

Acronyms

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
GoP	Government of Pakistan
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MA	Master of Arts
MoI	Medium of Instruction
NEP	National Education Policy
NPSTP	National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan
SLO	Student Learning Outcomes
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

In Pakistan, education policies have undergone numerous changes. The policy on Medium of Instruction (MoI) too has been subject to several modifications. This research project stems from the National Education Policy's (NEP's) recommendation to promote English language in classrooms across Pakistan. The NEP 2009 advocates initiating English language instruction from grade 1 and using English as the MoI for teaching math and science from grade 4. This recommendation is also reflected in the Sindh Education Sector Plan 2013-2016. In addition, recent moves by Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to introduce English as the MoI in classrooms inform this study. At present, the Sindh Government has made it mandatory to teach English as a subject in government schools, from grade 1 (though in practice, it is taught as a subject in schools at a much later stage). If English can be taught well as a subject, its adoption as the MoI at some point ceases to be a problem.

The MoI has been a standing issue since the inception of Pakistan. The successive changes in language policies over the years reflect the indecisive stances of the various governments. Ayres (2003) is of the view that despite the diversity of languages and ethnicities in Pakistan, the government has paid little attention to language policies, essentially employing Urdu and English as the preferred languages in the context of education. English has remained dominant in terms of being correctly associated with upward social mobility and power.

The NEP 2009 conveys the perceived supremacy of English and attempts to justify the need to make English compulsory and the MoI in order to remove the "inequitable social structure" (p.12) in our society. The policy endeavors to bridge the gap between the private and public sectors of education. While the decision of the Government of Pakistan (GoP) is well-intentioned, it needs a thorough analysis in light of the prevalent social, academic and structural issues that confront most public schools in Pakistan. The study presents the case of four districts of Sindh by analyzing language and learning in the English classroom and highlights possible implementation issues.

Sindh has a unique educational demography that requires a thorough analysis with reference to the language policy debate. According to the Statistical Bulletin Annual School Census 2009-10 conducted by the Department of Education and Literacy, Government of Sindh, Sindhi is the MoI in 87 percent of the public schools in Sindh. 7.9 percent of the schools are Urdu medium, 0.3 percent of the schools are English medium and 4.6 percent of the schools fall in the category of mixed schools. In light of the available figures, transitioning to an English mode of teaching and learning would bring significant implementation hurdles.

The study gathers information from four districts of Sindh: Karachi, Sukkur, Jamshoro and Khairpur and examines whether the prevailing linguistic, pedagogical and administrative conditions in public schools provide space for the teaching of English as a subject at the primary level and a possible transition towards adopting English as the Mol. Grade 8 has been made the subject of study in order to review proficiency and language use by students and teachers at the final stage of middle school. The grade 8 English curriculum and textbook for English are also reviewed. The review of the documents has revealed inconsistencies among standards set by federal policy documents such as the NEP and the ground realities in the province of Sindh. Firstly, the NEP's recommendation to change the Mol to English in a province where Sindhi is the predominant language of instruction in 87 percent of the government schools is a significant implementation challenge. Secondly, the review of Standard 10 of the National Professional Standards of Teachers in Pakistan (NPSTP) 2009 makes it imperative on teachers to be linguistically competent and pedagogically sound to teach English.

A review of the grade 8 English curriculum and the textbook outlines the discrepancies between the standards and objectives listed in the English curriculum 2006 and their recognition through the textbook. The grade 8 textbook is not written in accordance with the framework of the 2006 curriculum.

The findings from the observations of English classrooms reveal serious flaws. Teacher-centered classrooms are the norm and teacher talk is predominantly in the mother tongue. English is mainly taught through the grammar translation method. Sindhi or Urdu is excessively used in English language classes for seeking clarifications and communicating meanings of difficult words and passages. Reading aloud is the main teaching strategy in English classrooms. English teachers lack the required language skills to teach English. Under the prevailing circumstances, converting the Mol to English will prove detrimental to the teaching-learning environment of the province.

While most parents support using English as the Mol in classrooms, most teachers and head teachers are in favor of maintaining the mother tongue as the Mol. The advocates of English as the Mol essentially put forward the same rationale behind the NEP 2009 and the Sindh Education Sector Plan 2013-2016: raising educational standards and removing social inequalities in society by making English compulsory from grade 1. On the other hand, the proponents of Sindhi and Urdu as the Mol put faith in the mother tongue as the best medium for instructional purposes and an authentic means to maintain their cultural identity. However, all stakeholders stress the importance of teacher training for the initiation of any policy changes regarding Mol.

This report attempts to draw a parallel between the core expectations of the language policy outlined in NEP 2009 and the provincial sector plan and the ground realities in Sindh. In order to bridge the existing gaps between the expectations set out by the policy and the current educational situation in Sindh, the project provides some key insights and recommendations. It is recommended that the textbooks should be written keeping in mind the curriculum standards and the developmental needs of the learners. Languages should be considered as skills and not as subjects. Textbooks, therefore, should have a skill-based approach. Sindhi should continue to be the Mol as it is the language that the majority of teachers and learners feel most comfortable with. The same principle should apply to the

Urdu medium strand. English being taught as a subject from grade 1 should be taught as a skill and not as a subject if the objective is to make students fluent in its usage. It should be taught with an emphasis on communication by utilizing interactive modes of language learning. However, this aspect will depend greatly on the professional development of teachers, which various stakeholders have identified as the biggest implementation hurdle in the province. Ample opportunities should be provided to teachers so that they become abreast with the latest trends in language pedagogy in particular. Moreover, English teachers should be proficient in English. Only then can they successfully impart English language skills to the students.

Introduction

The history of education reform in Pakistan shows varied language policies. The changes in language policy started surfacing before the creation of Pakistan when the British declared Urdu as the language for the masses and English as the lingua franca for the elite. However, addressing the All Pakistan Education Conference in 1947, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan declared Urdu as an official language. In 1959, the Commission on National Education declared Urdu as a national language. Moreover, the first democratically elected parliament through the 1973 Constitution (Article 251) reiterated the importance of Urdu and announced Urdu as the national language and English as the official language. When martial law was imposed by Zia-ul-Haq's military regime in 1977, a sudden surge in the importance of Urdu was seen. Urdu was declared as the Mol in all the government schools of Pakistan. The teaching of English was to start from grade 4. In 1989, under a democratically elected government, another change in language policy emerged and teaching of English was made compulsory from grade 1. This was further reiterated in 2007 through a white paper on education policy. The NEP 2009 has further affirmed the policy of English as the Mol. Furthermore, it recommends making the teaching of science and math in English compulsory from grade 4.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2009

The NEP 2009 provides guidelines to policy makers, classroom practitioners and administrators regarding educational reform in Pakistan. The NEP 2009 aimed to reform the education system and to remove the "inequitable social structure" (p.12) which the education system was perceived as promoting. The need to bring forth a new education policy arose because "very few people from the public sector educational institutions could move up the ladder of social mobility" (p.12). The policy argued that the imbalance in socio-economic opportunities for the students of private and public sector schools contributed towards an unequal society with repercussions for the stable economic growth of the country.

The policy identified the structural division of education into sectors (private, public and *madrassas*) as one major cause of societal inequalities. The public and private sectors were further bifurcated in terms of elite and non-elite schools. The policy stated, "The bulk of lower middle class to poor children study in the non-elite low-quality private and public schools. Most of these schools fail to produce students who can compete for high-end jobs to allow vertical social transition." (p.27)

The NEP argued that students who were products of non-elite low-quality private or public sector schools were unable to compete in the white collar job market as proficiency in English language was a major requirement for these jobs. However, most

private and public schools did not have the capacity to develop the requisite proficiency levels in their students (p.27). As a result, these students were unable to benefit from various employment opportunities. The inability of students to compete in the open job market raised the importance of learning English in the country. In light of this situation, the Ministry of Education outlined several objectives in the policy. Among the objectives outlined, objective 6 pointed towards the provision of “equal educational opportunities to all citizens of Pakistan” (p.18) and objective 10 reaffirmed the revival of confidence in “public sector education system by raising the quality of education provided in government owned institutions” (p.18). The Ministry of Education set forth the following policy actions to fulfill its vision and objectives:

Box 1: Clauses pertaining to English language instruction in NEP 2009

The curriculum from grade 1 onwards would include English (as a subject), Urdu, one regional language, math along with an integrated subject.

English would be employed as the Mol for science and math from grade 4 onwards.

For five years, provinces would have the option to teach math and science in English or Urdu/official language, but after five years the teaching of these subjects would be in English only.

A comprehensive school language policy would be developed in consultation with provincial and area governments and other stakeholders.

Source: NEP, (2009). National Education Policy. Islamabad: Government of Pakistan

In this research study, we investigated the assertions of the policy in light of the current practices in schools in the province of Sindh and the existing English language competence levels of students and teachers. This study is preceded by another research study conducted in Punjab by SAHE in 2013, *Policy and Practice: Teaching and Learning in English in Punjab Schools*. In Sindh, we take an overview of the language preparedness of teachers and students to switch to English as the Mol. Moreover, this study gains further insights into the Mol issue by gathering perceptions of head teachers, teachers and parents about the stated policy and its implementation.

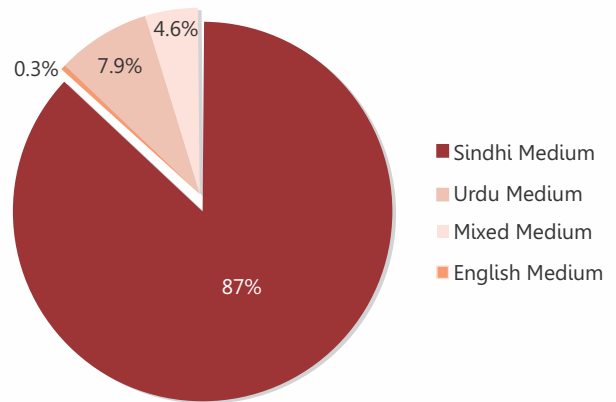
Sindh Education Sector Plan 2013-2016

The Sindh Education Sector Plan dwells briefly on language policy in the schools of the province. It notes that “debates about medium of instruction grow more extensive and heated” (p.134) and identifies the key challenge in the development of a language policy for Sindh schools to be the achievement of a creative balance between use of mother tongue and other languages that have national (Urdu) or international relevance (English) (p.131-132). The province's current policy on language in schools remains ambivalent. While English is meant to be taught as a subject from grade 1 onwards in public schools in Sindh (and while textbooks have been developed for English at the primary level) it is, in effect, taught as a subject often at a much later stage (at the start of middle school in grade 6). The sector plan notes that there is a shortage of subject specialists, in particular for English, but recommends the preparation of a comprehensive plan to implement English language policy and to develop strategies to use English as the Mol for math and science from grade 4 onwards (in line with the NEP 2009 recommendation). The sector plan also recommends carrying out a detailed assessment of the existing capacity to teach English as a language by 2015 and to develop a plan to enhance the system's capacity to teach English as a language by 2016 (p.137-139).

Current Mol in Sindh Schools

At present, according to the Statistical Bulletin Annual School Census 2009-2010 conducted by the Department of Education and Literacy, Government of Sindh, 87 percent of the schools in Sindh are Sindhi medium, 7.9 percent are Urdu medium, 0.3 percent are English medium and 4.6 percent of schools employ a mixed Mol (see Figure 1). Moving towards an English language policy in public schools would, therefore, demand a significant shift in the educational landscape of the province.

Figure 1:
Percentage of Schools in Sindh by Mol



Source: Statistical Bulletin Annual School Census 2009-2010

Literature Review

Language acquisition is a process which, according to Krashen (1981), develops slowly. According to him, for language acquisition, “the best methods are those that supply *comprehensible* input in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are ready, recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production” (p. 6-7). Wolfaardt (2001) elucidated the importance of exposure to target language and is certain that successful language acquisition takes place through exposure to the target language. Krashen's views are corroborated by Ellis (2005) who also claimed that if learners do not receive exposure to the target language, they cannot acquire it. In general, the more exposure students receive, the faster they will learn. It is, therefore, imperative to maximize the use of L2 (i.e., the foreign or target language) inside the classroom. Ideally, this means that L2 needs to become the medium as well as the object of instruction.

There are differing opinions on the use of L1 (mother tongue) and L2 in classrooms where English is a second or foreign language. Atkinson (1993) agreed with the need to maximize L2 usage, and he states that “every second spent using the L1 is a second not spent using English—and every second counts” (p.12). However, he also described how to achieve a proper balance of L1 in the learning process, which can be done without depriving learners of valuable L2 input. This balance is achieved by measuring out L1 use in carefully considered doses according to four factors: the students' previous experience, the students' level, the stage of the course and the stage of the individual lesson. Atkinson (1993) realized this vital link between this mixed interplay of native and second language and remarks that, “the L1 can be a vital resource, and there is certainly no reason why any teacher of monolingual classes should feel that it is somehow wrong to make use of it” (p. 13). Nation (2003) noted that whenever a teacher feels that a meaning based L2 task might be beyond the capabilities of the learners, a small amount of L1 discussion can help overcome some of the obstacles. Garrett et al. (as cited in Mattioli, 2004) further argued that in countries where English is seen as having an imperialistic role, the use of the mother tongue is a signal to the children that their language and culture have value, which has a beneficial effect on self-perceptions, attitudes, motivation and achievement.

It is, however, seen that the complex exchange between L1 and L2 is further open to debate when L2 is taught through translation in L1. Duff (1989) expounded on the merits of translation as a language learning activity and described how translation can help develop flexibility, accuracy, and clarity. Nation (2001), on the other hand, devised

a strategy to use L1 translation in combination with the use of word cards for the initial learning of vocabulary. This makes the learners learn vocabulary speedily. On the contrary, Murrah (2001) suggested that there is evidence that if translation is used to facilitate comprehension, it becomes a signal of a communication breakdown. Murrah mentioned what Polio and Duff (1994) also confirmed that these moments are "genuine opportunities for students to negotiate meaning in the (target) language and to develop strategies to correct and adjust their communication" (p. 7). Polio and Duff (1994) stated that if teachers resort to translating difficult target language items, students will be less likely to attend to the target language forms.

In countries where English is taught as a second or foreign language, there is a strong inclination to teach it through what Larson-Freeman & Long (1991) referred to as a form focused approach. Ellis (2005) too argued that traditionally, language instruction has been directed at developing rule-based competence (i.e., knowledge of specific grammatical rules) through the systematic teaching of pre-selected structures. Myles (as cited in Ellis, 2005) reported that curriculum designers and teachers need to recognize that this type of instruction is as likely to result in students learning rote-memorized patterns as in internalizing abstract rules.

There is a need to formulate strong language policies to mitigate ambiguities in language teaching and learning. Blake and Kramsch (2007) preferred to "use a language policy where students are able to use another language in addition to their native language and also achieve an international, intellectual identity as well as a national one" (p.249). Lo Bianco (as cited in Pufahl, Rhodes and Christian, 2001) reported that in Australia, one of the most successful aspects of foreign language education relates to the National Policy on Languages which provides a framework for language education. This policy has initiated pluralism in the languages being offered, supported projects for indigenous and first language education, led to policy development in each Australian territory, and introduced near universal introduction of languages at the primary level. Pufahl et al. (2001) further reported that "one of the most influential policies with respect to foreign language learning is the status of languages within the school curriculum. In all European countries as well as in Canada, Kazakhstan, Morocco and Thailand, at least one foreign language is compulsory for all students" (p.12). Therefore, there is strong advocacy for teaching more than one language from the primary grades except for in the US where, according to Phillips (2007), 92 percent of the college going students do not study a world language.

Research supports teaching more than one language from the primary grades in order to produce an educated citizenry that is aware of the role of language and culture in the world and in human cognition (Brecht, 2007). At the same time, research strongly advocates indigenous or heritage language to be employed as the Mol in schools. Cantoni (2007) argued in favour of adopting the mother tongue as Mol by saying that "the arguments given for mother tongue as Mol in schools were more linked to the child and his/her needs, the individual and the local context, factors such as concept formation, cultural identity, closer relation between school and home and practical use after primary school" (p.5). Christian (2007) reiterated: "Students who enter our schools with native-like proficiency in a language other than English suffer academically because they receive instruction only

in English. Research shows that these students could have benefited from continued development in their native language (both academically and cognitively), because they could develop high levels of proficiency in their native language" (p.271).

Cantoni (2007) claimed that the use of English as a MoI hinders the full participation of the pupils because it does not seem to provide comprehensible input and it does not seem to work as a tool for constructing knowledge in the content subjects.

While the focus of MoI should remain the mother tongue, English can still be taught from the primary level but with a different pedagogical focus. Pufahl et al. (2001) advocated a communicative focus for the teaching of a second language. They added that in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, and Spain, a focus on communicative and intercultural learning has not only stimulated a productive discussion of teaching objectives, methods and underlying rationales that are now reflected in curricula and textbooks, but has also resulted in increased oral and written proficiency for their students. De Bot (2007) campaigned for another approach towards the teaching of a foreign language. According to him, "a foreign language has to be acquired as a by-product of some other activity, not as the central focus of the subject matter" (p.276). Christian (2007) put faith in mother tongue instruction and strongly recommended recognition through awards for those who study heritage languages. Olsen et al. (as cited in Christian, 2007) referred to the practice of offering diplomas to students to recognize their bilingualism. They claimed that such incentives motivate students to maintain and develop their heritage language skills. Christian (2007) claimed that a language policy that values languages would generate incentives of many kinds, both material and attitudinal.

Coupled with the need to stick to mother tongue instruction, the crucial factor of well-trained teachers giving second or foreign language instruction goes a long way towards the successful development of language skills among students. Blake and Kramsch (2007) pointed out that student learning is directly related to the quality of teaching and to their teachers' level of professional preparedness. According to Pufahl et al. (2001), English teachers in Morocco are among the best trained teachers in the country. After a four-year degree in English from a university or teacher training college, including one year of specialization in literature or linguistics, students spend a year studying language teaching methodology and getting practical training. Ellis (2010) emphasized the need to have solid teacher training programs for English teachers and expressed the need to have topics in such courses which consist of ideas rather than models. Zhao and Morgan (2004) summed up the principles of language instruction by stating that it should be concerned with the learners' level, and engage the learners in activities or situations that require adaptation, by using teaching methods that actively involve students and present challenges, taking into account each individual's own preferences over method and style. This may also require a consideration of how languages are taught in schools. This may mean a shift towards teaching English as a skill and not a subject. Cabera and Bazo (2002) argued that the implementation of English has brought along the need to establish clear objectives that are different to the ones traditionally assigned to schools. Rather than having a focus on formal aspects of the language, i.e., grammar, teachers should adopt a

different approach that focuses on the development of four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The way a language is taught, therefore, determines the way a language is acquired and put to larger use.

Methodology

The purpose of the study was to gain insight into the use of the English language in English classes in Sindh. Exploring how English is taught as a subject in public schools of the province makes it possible to make a broad assessment of the readiness of Sindh to adopt English as the mode of teaching and learning as per the NEP 2009 and Sindh Education Sector Plan 2013-2016 recommendations.

Research Questions

This research study sought to answer the following questions:

- Does the teachers' use of English in English classrooms conform to best practices for teaching and learning of English in the early grades, as identified in the relevant literature?
- What are the perceptions of the head teachers, teachers and parents about using English as a language of learning and teaching in the classrooms?
- How does the English Curriculum (2006) align with the English textbook in use?
- What insights can we develop about the effects of a possible shift in policy (in the light of recommendations made in NEP 2009 and the Sindh Education Sector Plan 2013-2016) promoting English as the language of learning and teaching in Sindh?

Methodological Approach

In order to answer the research questions, a situational analysis of schools in four districts of Sindh was conducted along with a review of the English curriculum and textbook in use. The purpose was to assess the level of preparedness of schools to teach English from grade 1. The research design that guided this study was qualitative in nature.

The study reached out to approximately 241 students through 9 English classroom observations, 8 head teachers, 22 teachers and 16 parents. Details of data collection methods used are given below:

Classroom Observations

Grade 8 English classrooms were observed to assess how English is taught in Sindhi and Urdu medium schools.

Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews of head teachers, teachers and parents were conducted to

gather their opinions on the Mol issue.

Curriculum and Textbook Review

The grade 8 English curriculum and textbook were reviewed to see the alignment between the two.

Data Collection Strategy

Data was collected in December 2013. The sample design is discussed in detail below.

District Selection

Out of the 23 districts of Sindh, four districts including Karachi, Sukkur, Jamshoro and Khairpur were selected as the focus of the study. These four districts were chosen in order to reflect a mix of both urban (Karachi and Sukkur) and rural (Jamshoro and Khairpur) areas. The purpose was to see whether the difference between urban and rural set ups had any impact on the readiness of schools to adopt English as a language of teaching and learning.

School and Grade Selection

Within the districts, nine schools were selected for the purpose of the study. The sample reflected a mix of boys and girls schools. In addition, the sample included a mix of Sindhi, Urdu and mixed-medium schools (which are the three types of schools that dominate in Sindh). The purpose was to see whether the differentiation in terms of gender or current policy on Mol brought any significant differences to the teaching and learning contexts and the readiness to adopt an English mode of teaching and learning. Within the schools sampled, grade 8 classrooms were identified as the focus of the study. Grade 8 was selected for the purpose of this study for the reason that it represents the final stage in the middle school cycle by which time students are expected to have developed some level of competency in the use of English. The following districts and schools were selected for data collection:

Table 1: Summary data for schools sampled in the study

No.	District	Rural/Urban	Gender	Medium of Instruction in Schools
1	Karachi	Urban	Boys	Sindhi / Urdu
			Girls	Urdu
2	Sukkur	Urban	Boys	Sindhi / Urdu
			Girls	Sindhi / Urdu
3	Jamshoro	Rural	Boys	Sindhi
			Girls	Urdu
4	Khairpur	Rural	Boys	Sindhi
			Girls	Sindhi

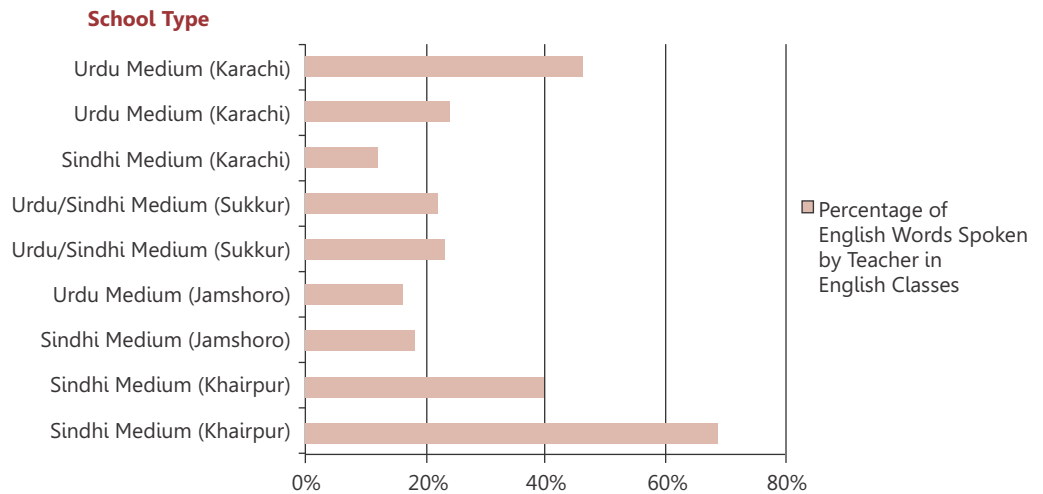
Language Use in the Classroom

This section of the report discusses findings regarding teacher and student talk in the 9 English classrooms observed (one in each of the schools visited) in this study. In particular, it explores the frequency of English language usage in English classrooms and the quality of this usage on the part of both teachers and students.

Teacher Talk & Student Talk in English Classrooms

The study found that in the English classroom, English was hardly used by teachers and students. The percentage of English language use by teachers in English classrooms observed varied from 12 percent to 69 percent. The former was observed in a school in Karachi while the latter was in a school in Khairpur. This is surprising considering that Karachi is an urban district while Khairpur is a rural district and one would expect better trained teachers to be available in a metropolis. Percentage of English used by teachers in classes observed was as follows:

Figure 2: Percentage of English words spoken by teachers in English classrooms¹



The above percentages include reading out loud passages from textbooks and using words, phrases, sentences and grammar items from texts for translation. The results are similar to those from an earlier research study conducted by SAHE, *Policy and Practice: Teaching and Learning in English in Punjab Schools*, where the average use of English language by teachers in 42 English classrooms averaged at 36 percent. This amounts to one third of English language use by teachers in English language classrooms. In Sindh, the average use of English language by teachers in English classrooms was 30 percent.

¹The percentage use of English in the English classroom was calculated by dividing the number of words spoken in English by the total number of words spoken by the teacher.

Even where a higher percentage of English was spoken by the teacher in the English classroom (as was the case in a rural Sindhi medium school in Khairpur where 69 percent of the exchanges were in English and in an Urdu medium school in Karachi where 46 percent of the lesson was conducted in English), usage was mostly restricted to reading aloud from the textbook or when the teacher was asking close-ended questions for which answers were short and explanations were not necessary (as shown in Excerpt 1). Interaction in English in the classroom also consisted of safe talk which constitutes routine prompts by the teacher such as “sit down” or “read.” Safe talk does not indicate quality teaching and learning as teachers primarily use English to read textbooks and give simple directives; it does not encourage students to use English to express themselves or solve problems. Such exchanges do not constitute meaningful interaction between the teacher and the student in English and make it difficult to assess the student's level of understanding.

Excerpt 1: Discussion in classroom comprising close-ended questions and answers

Teacher	When was Allama Iqbal born?
Student	Allama Iqbal was born on 9 November
Teacher	Sit down. شہاباش
Teacher	Where was Allama Iqbal born? Who tell me?
Student	He was born at Sialkot
Teacher	It's right. Sit down
Teacher	اچھا How many kinds of noun?
Student	There are five kinds of noun.
Teacher	Name بتاؤ؟
Student	Common noun, proper noun, material noun, collective noun, abstract noun
Teacher	شہاباش Very good
Teacher	What is noun?
Student	Noun is name of person, place
Teacher	اچھا کون بتائے گا؟ شیراز اٹھو
Student	Noun is name of thing, place or person.
Teacher	How many kinds of noun?
Student	There are five kinds of noun: common noun, proper noun, material noun
Teacher	جو اس نے چھوڑے تم بتا دو
Student	Collective noun, abstract noun
Teacher	Very good! What is common noun? Common noun
Student	جو سب کے لیے common noun ہوتا ہے۔ وہ use ہوتا ہے۔

Teachers also resorted to a language other than English in the English classroom in order to explain grammatical concepts to students. This resulted in a high level of code switching as indicated in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2: Code-switching in order to explain grammatical concepts

Teacher	Important rules First of، Rules form of the work جو خاص کے Present Indefinite Tense all first جس میں جو ہے verb کی first form استعمال کی جاتی ہے۔ Present Indefinite کی جو definition ہے جو وہ its rules۔
	Present Indefinite جو ہے وہ روزمرہ کی زندگی کے جو معاملات ہوتے ہیں۔ اس کے لیے استعمال کر سکتے ہیں۔ اس کے ساتھ ساتھ آپ جو ہے Habit میں استعمال کر سکتے ہیں۔
	Grammar کے کہتے ہیں؟ قائدے، قوانین، Rules Regulation، کسی بھی زبان کو سیکھنے کے لیے جو قائدے قوانین ہوتے ہیں جو Rules, Regulations ہوتے ہیں اسے ہم English میں Grammar کہتے ہیں قواعد کی پابندی۔
	English Sentence میں Verb ہمیشہ Subject کے بعد آتا ہے۔ یعنی Subject, Verb, Object ٹھیک ہے؟ جیسے میں آم کھاتی ہوں۔ ابھی اسی کو Urdu میں Translate کرو۔
	English Sentence میں Verb ہمیشہ Subject کے بعد آتا ہے۔ یعنی Subject, Verb, Object ٹھیک ہے؟ جیسے میں آم کھاتی ہوں ٹھیک ہے نا؟ Subject پہلے آیا، Eat verb بعد میں آیا۔ میں آم کھاتی ہوں۔ ابھی اسی کو Urdu میں Translate کرو۔

Teachers switched to the mother tongue when building the vocabulary of students. In the excerpt below, the teacher explains the meaning of the word "ancient" in the English classroom in Sindhi.

Excerpt 3: Code-switching in order to explain meanings of words

Teacher	جي معنيٰ ڇا آهي؟ پرتل، پراڻو، قديم، شاباش، ها پڙه Ancient
---------	-----------------------------------------------------------

Teachers switched to the mother tongue (i.e., Sindhi) in the English classroom in order to explain to students what topic they would be covering in class as indicated in Excerpt 4.

Excerpt 4: Code-switching in order to explain topic

Teacher	اسان جو ٽاپڪ Now our topic is, today our topic is Moenjadaro today topic؟ آڻي ڏري بابت آ؟ مونن جي ڏري بابت آ؟ we will learn more about مونن جي بابت اسان ڪجهه وڌيڪ پڙهندا سين مونن جو تاريخي ها يا Moenjadaro ڪنهن اسان کي ڄاڻي ٿي ڇو آهي، ته خواتني ڪنهن ڪئي. پهرين بابت اسان وڌيڪ پڙهندا سين. نيڪ، اسان جو ٽاپڪ ڇا جو، مونن جو ڏرو. هاڻي مونن جو ڏرو سبق جيڪو آهي تون شوعات ڪر بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
---------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Teachers also switched from English to a local language when giving instructions and explaining group activities to students, indicating that students understood better in a language other than

English. This is illustrated in Excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5: Code-switching in order to give instructions

Teacher	Formula-Must be apply formula-کام آگروپ میں کرنا ہے۔ apply کو Formula she, He-میں جملے بنانے ہیں تو یہ formula apply کریں۔ They, You, I اور میں جملے بنائیں تو یہ Formula apply کریں۔ Start writing-سب کو بولانا ہے۔
---------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Students were not comfortable using English in English classrooms. As illustrated in the excerpts below, English was predominantly used by students when reading aloud from textbooks and responding to short factual questions posed by the teachers. There was limited meaningful communication taking place in English between the student and the teacher.

Excerpt 6: Use of English when reading aloud from textbook

Student	Visiting ancient cities of Pakistan, Moenjadaro, Umer where shall we go in coming winter vacation, mother well, Umer we have plan to see some of the cities such as Moenjadaro and Makli hills
---------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Excerpt 7: Use of English when responding to close ended questions

Teacher	Which name of city near Larkana? پڈانی
Student	Moenjadaro is near Larkana
Teacher	How old is?
Student	Near five thousand, about, about five thousand year ago

Discussion of Teacher Talk & Student Talk Findings

Weak classroom strategies are used for the teaching of English

Teachers in English classrooms observed were using weak strategies to teach English to students. These are discussed below:

Textbook reading

Most of the English usage in classrooms comprised reading aloud of text by teachers and students. It was also observed that reading aloud was considered to be the only method employed by teachers to ensure comprehension of the text by the students. However, reading aloud is not necessarily a strong indicator of comprehension. Scott and Ytreberg (1990) considered reading aloud to be an inefficient way to use class time. They found it to be "a way of training and checking rhythm and pronunciation" (p.58). Reading comprehension is ensured through silent reading. Scott and Ytreberg (1990) advised the teachers: "Use the textbook to concentrate on conscious language development, but let your pupils read books for understanding and for pleasure." (p. 60)

Inadequate classroom activities

Most classroom discourse was centered on a question-answer dynamic where close-ended questions did not encourage meaningful use of the English language. Classroom activities also often consisted of students writing spellings of new words in notebooks and writing definitions of English vocabulary words in the mother tongue.

Use of translation method

Using a language other than English to teach English in the classroom is problematic. Most teachers taught English through translation into the mother tongue. Grammar rules and difficult vocabulary were often explained in the mother tongue.

Subject-based versus skill-based approach to English

Classroom observations revealed that teachers had adopted a subject-based approach to teach English rather than a skill-based approach. Teaching English grammar through translation, explaining difficult words in the mother tongue and writing definitions of new words in the mother tongue confirms the language inadequacy of both the teachers and students. Moreover, they reflect the inability of the teacher to teach language through a skill-based approach where various skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are used in a cohesive manner to augment language skills. The emphasis seems to be on reading and writing, which indicates the use of the grammar translation method for teaching English. According to Yule (1996), the grammar translation method involves learning of grammar rules and this “leaves students quite ignorant of how language is used” (p.193). Krashen (1981) further argued that the grammar translation method provides little opportunity for language acquisition. According to Krashen (1981), language acquisition does not require extensive use of grammar rules and it does not occur overnight. Real language acquisition develops slowly.

Teachers lack the competency and training to teach English

Teachers in this study were found to be instructing classes not relevant to their field of specialization. Teachers with specializations in other subject areas were instructing English classes. Among the nine English classes observed, none of the teachers had a degree in English. Three of the nine English teachers had completed their Masters in Islamic culture or Islamiyat, another three had completed their Masters in economics, one had a Masters in Sindhi and the remaining two had completed their Bachelors. One teacher with an Master of Arts (MA) in English and economics was available in one of the schools visited but taught the subject of science and not English. This has been noted in the Sindh Education Sector Plan 2013-2016 which states that there is a shortage of subject specialists for English and also outlines a more generalized problem in Sindh: the majority of teachers with degrees in the Arts have a Master's degree in Sindhi language (p.65).

The NPSTP, developed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with UNESCO and USAID in 2009, hints at professionalization of teaching through development of skills in English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL). Through Standard 10, the NPSTP document expects teachers to understand pedagogy of ESL/EFL and effectively communicate in English language. The NPSTP

document elaborates these expectations through the following aims:

Box 2: Aims of the NPSTP

Teachers should develop knowledge and understanding of English language to realize the status of English language in Pakistan, aims behind teaching English as a subject at the national level and using it as a medium of instruction.

Teachers should be able to address all specific needs related to ESL/EFL.

Teachers should engage in activities to analyze and address specific learning difficulties in English, gradually enable students to communicate in English through the natural process of language development, i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing and apply EFL/ESL learning theories, rules and pedagogies.

Source: Ministry of Education, Govt. of Pakistan. (2009). National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan

The NPSTP emphasizes the improvement of English language skills and pedagogy among teachers. However, the manner in which this objective is realized remains to be seen.

Perceptions of Key Stakeholders

In order to gain insight into the thinking of key stakeholders about language policy and practice in the classrooms, 8 head teachers, 22 teachers and 16 parents were interviewed in this study.

Perceptions of Head Teachers

8 head teachers were interviewed. While 7 head teachers recommended that the mother tongue should be the Mol, one head teacher from Sukkur recommended instruction in English along with the mother tongue. The head teachers considered Sindhi to be a language of identity and thought that education could best be given in the mother tongue.

“When the child reaches grade 6, English aside, his knowledge of Sindhi is bad... students don't even know the mother tongue.”

Another head teacher noted that students could learn better in the mother tongue, however, the greater issue was regarding the method of teaching, especially in the case of older teachers who may be reluctant to adopt new methods of teaching.

The head teachers felt that existing circumstances are not conducive to a shift from mother tongue to English due to lack of teacher preparation as well as dearth of human and other resources. Head teachers also highlighted issues such as political interference in the hiring of teachers, weak primary education structure, lack of innovative strategies to teach English, high rate of student absenteeism (43.8 percent on average in all classrooms observed), lack of parents' interest in the child's education, all of which hamper effective teaching and learning of English in schools.

Perceptions of Teachers

Out of the 22 teachers interviewed, only 3 believed that English should be the Mol. Proponents of English as the Mol felt that English is the language of progress and development despite recognizing that students may learn better in the mother tongue.

“We need to keep up with the progress in other countries. Here if you say something in Sindhi, it is not given any importance. If you say the same thing in English, it is given importance... it is better if it is in English.”

“They will learn better in their mother tongue, yes, but it is necessary to learn in English because that is a global language... it's an excellent idea to implement English as the Mol but it should be from primary grades.”

Furthermore, they felt that adopting English as the Mol in schools would help students in colleges where the Mol is English. Teachers felt that students from Sindhi and Urdu medium backgrounds suffer academically because of their lack of proficiency in the language later on. Teachers who were in favor of mother tongue instruction voiced the same concerns as head teachers with respect to the lack of teacher training to teach English and lack of ability amongst students to learn in it.

“Teachers used to have refresher courses in English before... this is not the case now... the environment is not conducive to implementing an English system of instruction.”

“Even if teachers who know English are available, when they speak in English, the students will not understand them, so what is the point? Better to teach in another language.”

Perceptions of Parents

Out of the 16 parents interviewed in this study, 12 parents strongly recommended adopting English as the Mol. Interestingly, the 4 parents who advocated the mother tongue to be the Mol were from the urban center of Karachi. Parents cited better job opportunities, better prospects abroad, improved chances of doing well in college and the prestige and power associated with English as reasons why English should be implemented as the Mol in the province. Parents noted that English is taught in private schools. One parent interviewed noted that English is what the “children of the rich” learn and is not an option that is available to children from poor backgrounds.

Summary of Stakeholders' Perceptions

A high percentage of parents (75 percent) wanted schools to adopt English as the Mol. Most parents were convinced of the role English plays in greater access to opportunities and upward social mobility. However, a majority of teachers and head teachers (approximately 87 percent) favored the mother tongue as the Mol. They were concerned that using a language other than the mother tongue would impede learning in the classrooms. They also cited lack of trained teachers and resources as a hindrance in adopting English as the main Mol. The results coincided with the interview findings of the earlier study conducted by SAHE (2013) where a majority of parents approved of the Punjab Government's policy to introduce English as the Mol in Punjab classrooms, while a majority of the head teachers and teachers disagreed with the policy.

Therefore, while a large majority of parents in Sindh conflate using English as Mol at an early stage of schooling with learning of English and consequently better opportunities, a majority of teachers and head teachers who are familiar with the actual situation in classrooms do not endorse a shift away from the mother tongue.

This study, additionally, looked at the textbook in use in the English classrooms observed. The English textbook was juxtaposed with the curriculum for grade 8 in order to assess the degree of alignment between the two. The national curriculum for English (grades 1-12) was put forward in 2006 with the aim to “provide holistic opportunities to the students for language development and to equip them with competencies in using English language for communication in academic and social contexts” (p.1). The curriculum was prepared with the intention to make instruction of English compulsory from grade 1 and the MoI for various subjects. Advocates of the policy to make English compulsory from grade 1 and the MoI for other subjects, believed that learners had “few opportunities to absorb the language from the environment” (p.1) and it was therefore the responsibility of the state to provide this opportunity to students.

Teachers must see the important link between the curriculum document and the textbook, which has not taken place yet. Teachers seldom see the curriculum and are generally not aware of the expectations conveyed by the document.

The curriculum lays out ambitious expectations in the form of competencies, standards, benchmarks and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). Moreover, the curriculum, in its current form, is a challenging document for most teachers as well as textbook developers to comprehend. Furthermore, the stated expectations do not align well with the language competence of the teachers and students. In the province of Sindh where 87 percent of schools are Sindhi medium, there are significant challenges in terms of understanding and implementing the curriculum.

In Pakistan, the main source through which the curriculum is communicated to the student is the textbook. The curricular philosophy, aims, goals and objectives are mainly met through textbook development. Dar (2012) reported: “In the public sector, textbook boards are primarily responsible for material development from grades 1 to 12. The textbook board constitutes committees of authors and editors for textbook development. The authors strictly follow the national curriculum prescribed by the government for various subject areas and develop lessons and activities on the objectives, benchmarks and themes set by the curriculum” (p.112).

The curriculum and textbook should complement each other in order for the student to successfully accomplish the aims set forth by the curriculum.

Curriculum & Textbook Review Findings

A review of the English language curriculum (2006) and the grade 8 English textbook (published in 2009) found extensive gaps in the textbook with regard to the standards

set by the curriculum. The following table highlights some of the competencies, benchmarks and SLOs outlined for grade 8 and the existing gaps between the English curriculum and textbook of grade 8.

English Curriculum Grade 8				English Textbook Grade 8		
No.	Competencies	Benchmark	Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)			
1	Reading and thinking skills	Analysis of text organization, functions of various devices used in paragraphs	Analysis of paragraph for topic sentences & supporting details	No analysis, only paragraph writing		
			Recognition of pronoun-antecedent relationships, anaphoric-cataphoric references, transitional devices	No		
		Application of reading and thinking strategies	Pre-reading strategies	Yes		
			Skimming, scanning, inferences, drawing meaning from context, critical thinking	No		
			Summary skills	Only summary writing, no mechanics taught		
			Post reading	Yes		
			Question types	No types		
		Interpret information from a visual cue or graphic organizer	Analysis of information through flow charts	Occasional, used for vocabulary only		
		Study skills	Dictionary skills	No		
			Syllable/stress division	No		
			Library skills	No		
			Use of textual aids	No		
		Standard: Analysis of literary texts				
		Analysis of short stories and poems	Analysis of story, plot, character, theme	No		
			Figures of speech	No		
		2	Writing Skills	Analysis of written discourse	Pre-writing strategies	Occasional
					Paragraph and Composition writing	Only paragraph writing
Writing descriptive, expository and narrative texts	Expository composition Descriptive and narrative composition Free writing			Only paragraph writing for all, no essay development		
Writing interpersonal and transactional texts	Formal letters and applications			No		
	Informal and formal dialogues			Yes		

English Curriculum Grade 8				English Textbook Grade 8	
No.	Competencies	Benchmark	Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)		
3	Oral Communication Skills	Standard: Use of appropriate social & academic conventions			
		Use of selected linguistic exponents	Express opinions, satisfaction/dissatisfaction, agreement/disagreement, personal needs	No, only use of polite form, "Could you please?"	
		Panel discussions	Use conventions and dynamics of group discussions	No	
4	Formal and lexical aspects of language	Standard : Pronunciation			
		Pronounce words appropriately	Use pronunciation key	No	
			Consonants, diphthongs, triphthongs, consonant clusters, syllable/stress division		No
		Standard: Vocabulary			
		Build vocabulary	Transitional devices	No	
			Similes & metaphors	No	
			Phrasal verbs	No	
		Standard: Grammar			
		Recognition of grammar functions	Noun, nouns phrases & clauses, pronouns, gerunds		Nouns & gerunds only
			Articles		Yes
			Verbs: transitive/ intransitive, modal, infinitives		Verbs: infinitive, regular, irregular, 2nd & 3rd forms
			All tenses		No
			Adjective & adjective phrases		Simple Adjectives
			Adverbs & adverbials		Simple adverbs
			Prepositions & prepositional phrases		Only prepositions
			Transitional devices		No
			All punctuation marks		No
		Sentence types	Sentence structure		No
			Sentence types		No
			Active/passive voice		No
Direct/indirect speech			No		

English Curriculum Grade 8				English Textbook Grade 8
No.	Competencies	Benchmark	Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)	
5	Ethical and social development	Recognition of values such as tolerance, humanism, patience, equity, justice, honesty, empathy		No
		Recognition of sense of importance of individual worth		No
		Development of global awareness		No

Discussion of Curriculum & Textbook Review Findings

Table 2 above outlines the missing links between the curriculum and the textbook. It is clear that the textbook does not align well with the objectives prescribed by the curriculum. Unless this divide is narrowed, effective use of language among students may not occur. Furthermore, the textbook and curriculum need to be understood by other stakeholders in education, especially the teachers and textbook developers. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) claimed that materials played a crucial role in exposing learners to the language. The textbook under discussion, however, does not adequately expose learners to the language.

Analysis of findings reveals that the grade 8 English textbook affords:

Limited opportunities for meaningful communication

There were very few instances of the textbook facilitating the communicative use of language. In the "Listen and Speak" sections of the activities, instructions simply stated, "practice the given conversation with your teacher" (p.64). There were rarely any opportunities created for independent use of language. Most of the activities were guided and controlled by the teacher. Such instances inhibited autonomous use of language.

Inadequate learning activities

The textbook contained monotonous activities. Some of the activities that were a part of most lessons were words-meanings, questions-answers, words-opposites and true-false. The textbooks did not contain variety in terms of text selection and lesson exercises and provided less language practice. In addition, the mechanics of the language were covered without proper explanation of language types. For example, paragraph and summary writing, letter and dialogue writing and descriptive writing exercises were given without appropriate explanations. Likewise, phonics was touched upon without explanation of the phonic chart. Without the phonic chart, phonemic awareness could not take place. This gap was left unaddressed in the textbook.

Some activities had no language focus at all. For example, Activity 3.2.6 on page 15 was a vague activity with no language output. Some instructions given for exercises were ambiguous. For example, "write down your opinion of boys and girls or sisters or brothers" (p.38) and "write a paragraph of 5-7 on a memorable day of your life" (p.44) were vague instructions, lacking a direct language focus. Furthermore, the grammar presented through some activities lacked a grammatical

sequence that could aid the child's learning. For example, verbs, prepositions and gerunds appeared before nouns. Verbs were given more weightage than other parts of speech. Many of the grammatical items given in the curriculum were not taken up by the textbook.

Lack of variance in text types

Out of the 23 texts in the book, 16 appeared in the form of dialogues, 3 as descriptions, 2 as poems, 1 as a letter and 1 as a narrative. This was an inequitable distribution of genres. On the contrary, the curriculum advised the use of all forms of text types.

Repetitive themes

Approximately 10 texts dealt with places and travel, 7 texts dealt with personalities, 4 texts discussed health and fitness and 2 texts dealt with science and technology. The curriculum stated that, "the reading texts would comprise a variety of text types, e.g., interpersonal and transactional, expository, descriptive and narrative with literary texts comprising 25 percent of the reading material" (p.11). This was not realized in the textbook.

The observations revealed that the English textbook for grade 8 was restrictive in scope and the materials and activities used obstructed successful application of language skills.

Ample localized examples

A positive feature of the textbook was that most of the material used in the textbook was localized. Localized matter presents culture which learners can identify with. This could encourage more learner participation in class which may result in language learning. Brown (1994) was of the same view and opined that localizing materials was based on the idea that relevant contexts naturally encouraged students to show interest, which allowed the teacher to deliver more effective lessons. Similarly, Dat (2003) supported using localized English teaching materials because they presented students with real life and culturally familiar language contexts. However, the material developers were unable to make materials and the adjoining exercises interesting enough to augment and facilitate language learning.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Retain the mother tongue as the Mol in schools

The mother tongue should remain the primary Mol in Sindh schools. Even though the province of Sindh supports Sindhi, Urdu and mixed medium schools, Sindhi medium schools dominate the education landscape. The teaching and learning conditions in these schools are not conducive to a transition from the mother tongue to English as the Mol. Children also learn better in the mother tongue. As noted by Mustafa (2014) "it is better still that children begin schooling in a language they understand, i.e., their home language. In this way, their cognitive development is facilitated and they also learn how to think" (p.9).

Box 3: Required enabling conditions to transition towards English as the Mol

- Arrangements are made to strengthen the primary education system
- Better trained teachers are employed to teach all subject areas
- Teachers with fluent and accurate English language skills are employed in schools
- Schools are equipped with better structural and linguistic resources
- Libraries are well-resourced with books and interactive language learning materials

Align the Curriculum and Textbooks

The review of the curriculum and textbooks reveals lack of alignment between the English textbook and the curriculum. A review of the curriculum may also be in order as the curriculum 2006 is considered too difficult and daunting for middle school students. The SLOs presented in the curriculum are extremely challenging for them. Once the curriculum is simplified, textbooks that are easier for students to follow will be developed and circulated. English textbooks with proper skill representation should be developed for middle school students.

Teach English as a subject with a focus on communication from grade 1

Findings from parents' interviews reveal a strong desire amongst them for their children to learn English. Some teachers also highlight the benefits associated with learning English. The NEP 2009 and the Sindh Education Sector Plan 2013-2016 also emphasize English instruction as a way to remove social inequalities in the country. It is, therefore, recommended that English be taught as a communicative function from grade 1. The major problem lies in teaching languages with a form focused approach and stressing the development of language accuracy alone. Ellis (2005) too argued that language instruction has been directed at developing rule-based competence (i.e., knowledge of specific grammatical rules) through the systematic teaching of pre-selected structures, what Larson-Freeman & Long (1991) referred to as a focus-on-forms approach. Through this approach, learners stand a low chance of using the

language proficiently. In order to ensure prolific language use, it is important that it is taught with a communicative focus in initial years. The form can be stressed in later years.

An approach that advocates language fluency in the initial years followed by accuracy later will ensure a more meaningful and expressive use of language. In order to develop language fluency among students, the government may have to fulfill some vital preconditions regarding the provision of adequate language learning resources, trained teachers with adequate knowledge of the required skills and a stimulating learning environment. In the earlier grades, English needs to be competently taught as a subject or a skill so that it can be employed as a MoI at more advanced levels of schooling.

1. Atkinson, D. (1993). *Teaching monolingual classes*. Harlow: Longman Group UK Ltd.
2. Ayres, A. (2003). The Politics of Language Policy in Pakistan. In M. E. Brown & S. Ganguly. (Eds.), *Fighting Words: Language Policy and Ethnic Relations in Asia* (p. 51-80). Massachusetts: Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs
3. Blake, R. & Kramersch, C. (2007). The Issue: National Language Educational Policy. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91: 247–249
4. Brecht, R. D. (2007). National Language Educational Policy in the Nation's Interest: Why? How? Who Is Responsible for What?. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91: 264–265.
5. Brown, H. D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.
6. Cabera, M.P. & Bazo, P. (2002). Teaching the four skills in the primary EFL classroom. *The Internet TESL Journal*. Vol. VIII, No. 12. Retrieved from: <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Bazo-FourSkills.html>
7. Cantoni, M. (2007). *What role does the language of instruction play for a successful education? A case study of the impact of language choice in a Namibian school*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Växjö University: Sweden.
8. Christian, D. (2007). Charting a path to bilingualism: Policy and practice support. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(2), 271-273.
9. Dar, F. (2012). Textbook materials and their successful application in the classroom: Implications for language development. *Journal of Educational and Instructional Studies in the World*, 2 (4) Article 13, p. 109-114.
10. Dat, B. (2003). Localizing ELT materials in Vietnam: A case study. In W.A. Renandya (Ed.), *Methodology and materials design in language teaching: Current perceptions and practices and their implications*. Anthology series 44 (p. 170-191). Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.
11. De Bot, K. (2007). Language Teaching in a Changing World. *The Modern Language Journal*, 91: 274–276.
12. Dudley-Evans, T. & St John, M.J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multidisciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
13. Duff, A. (1989). *Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
14. Education & Literacy Department, Government of Sindh. (2013). *Sindh Education Sector Plan 2013-16*. Retrieved from: http://www.asepakistan.org/document/learning_resources/2014/Sector_Plans/Sindh%20Sector%20Plan%202013-2016.pdf
15. Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh. (2010). *Statistical Bulletin Annual School Census 2009-2010*. Retrieved from: <http://www.rsu-sindh.gov.pk/semis/Profile2011-12/Statistical%20Bulletin%202009-10.pdf>
16. Ellis, R. (2005). Principles of instructed language learning. *System*, 33, 209-224.

17. Ellis, R. (2010). Second language acquisition, teacher education and language pedagogy. *Language Teaching*, 43(2), 182-200.
18. Krashen, S.D. (1981). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. English Language Teaching series. London: Prentice-Hall International (UK) Ltd.
19. Larson-Freeman, D. & Long, M.H. (1991). *An Introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research*. London: Longman Group UK Limited.
20. Mattioli, G. (2004). On Native Language Intrusions and Making Do with Words: Linguistically Homogeneous Classrooms and Native Language Use. *English Teaching Forum*. 42 (4), 20-25.
21. Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan. (2006). *National Curriculum for English Language Grade I-XII*.
22. Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan. (2009). *National Education Policy 2009*.
23. Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan. (2009). *National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan*. Retrieved from: <http://unesco.org.pk/education/teachereducation/files/National%20Professional%20Standards%20for%20Teachers.pdf>
24. Murrah, S. (2001). *To use or not to use L1: Does native language have a role in the foreign language classroom?* (Unpublished dissertation). Georgia State University: USA.
25. Mustafa, Z. (2014, March 19). Rethinking the medium. *Dawn.com*. Retrieved from: <http://www.dawn.com/news/1093997>
26. Nasir, A. (2009). *Everyday English Book-8 for Class VIII 1st Edition*. Sindh Textbook Board, Karachi: Sindh Offset Printers & Publishers.
27. Nation, I.S.P. (2001). *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
28. Nation, P. (2003). The role of the first language in foreign language learning. *The Asia TEFL Journal*. 5(2). Available at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/publications/paul-nation/2003-Role-of-L1-Asian-EFL.pdf>
29. Phillips, J. K. (2007), Foreign Language Education: Whose Definition?. *The Modern Language Journal*. 91, 266–268
30. Polio, C. G. & Duff, P.A. (1994). Teachers' language use in university foreign language classrooms: A qualitative analysis of English and target language alternation. *Modern Language Journal*. 78, 313–326.
31. Pufahl, I., Rhodes, N., & Christian, D. (2001). *What we can learn from foreign language teaching in other countries*. ERIC Digest. Retrieved from: <http://www.finchpark.com/courses/grad-dissert/articles/models/What.pdf>
32. Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE). (2013). *Policy and Practice: Teaching and learning in English in Punjab schools*. Lahore: SAHE
33. Scott, W.A. & Ytreberg, L.H. (1990) *Teaching English to children*. New York: Longman.
34. Wolfaardt, D. (2001). *Facilitating learning: An investigation of the language policy of Namibian schools*. (D.ed thesis). University of Western Cape: Cape Town.
35. Yule, G. (1996). *The study of language*. (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
36. Zhao, A. H. Q. & Morgan, C. (2004). Consideration of age in L2 attainment - Children, Adolescents and Adults. *Asian EFL Journal*. 6 (4), 1-13.

What is the language in which we should educate our children?

The Medium of Instruction (Moi) has been a long standing issue since the inception of Pakistan. The successive changes in language policies over the years reflect the indecisive stances of the various governments.

The NEP 2009 conveys the perceived supremacy of English and attempts to justify the need to make English compulsory and the Moi in order to remove the "inequitable social structure" in our society. The policy endeavors to bridge the gap between the private and public sectors of education. While the decision of the Government of Pakistan (GoP) is well-intentioned, it needs a thorough analysis in light of the prevalent social, academic and structural issues that confront most public schools in Pakistan.

The study presents the case of four districts of Sindh by analyzing language and learning in the English classroom and highlights possible implementation issues.



Society for the Advancement of Education

SAHE is a non-governmental organization established in 1982 by a group of concerned citizens and academics. It builds on the belief that educational justice entails not just access to school, but to quality education, for all children in Pakistan. SAHE works through an extensive network, the Campaign for Quality Education (CQE), to conduct collaborative research and evidence-based advocacy on key issues to influence educational reform.