



A Proposed Language Policy for Education in Pakistan

¹Tariq Khan, ²Itbar Khan, ³Aziz Ahmad

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Malakand, Pakistan.tariqkhan1975@gmail.com

² Lecturer, Department of Education, University of Malakand, Pakistan.

³ Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Malakand, Pakistan.

ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
<p>History <i>Revised format: 30 Nov 2019</i> <i>Available Online: 31 Dec 2019</i></p>	<p>The 72-year nascent history of Pakistan reflects a vacillating picture of language planning, policies and practices (for education) at all levels, that can, in turn, potentially pave the way for viable future (in the current context) only if reformed pragmatically. The present position paper attempts to explore and examines the pestilent plight of dated language planning, policies and practices for education in Pakistan. For that matter, strategies outlined and practices espoused have contributed the least to bring about a transformational change in language for the education system of Pakistan in a futuristic milieu. Thereby, resultantly, creating a language hodgepodge in the Pakistani education system. The existing research recommends the Bilingual Method of Comparative Language Learning and Teaching, in which both of the languages (e.g., Urdu and English) are coped with, creatively, so that both develop equally. Translation and Translation Studies would become integral to such an integrated method and approach. For that to happen, Pakistan largely needs English, to be materialized, as an Instrumental International Language (EiIL), rather than Literature or Linguistics. Thus, the said prospective way out may dissipate the existing dilemma of language policy in the education system of Pakistan—that lacks a workable and practicable means of instruction—for disseminating education as enlightenment. The existing study (while examining the aforesaid issue) pursues The Pakistan Futuristic Foundation and Institute (PFI), Islamabad, as an educational role model and mentor. Since the need and importance of language in education is seminal to the holistic-integrative growth and development of overall education system at all levels, that is why the researchers have probed and examined the current language impasse in education while observing, studying and experiencing it, objectively. In this connection, the current study is qualitative, experiential, holistic-integrative, and characteristically futuristic.</p>
<p>Keywords <i>Bilingualism, Education System, English Language Teaching, Futuristic-Integrative-Holism, Multilingualism.</i></p>	
<p>JEL Classification: <i>P36, P37</i></p>	

© 2019 The authors, under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0

Corresponding author's email address: tariqkhan1975@gmail.com

Recommended citation: Khan, T., Khan, I. and Ahmad, A. (2019). A Proposed Language Policy for Education in Pakistan. *Review of Economics and Development Studies*, 5 (4), 809-816

DOI: 10.26710/reads.v5i4.897

1. Introduction

Today, the English Language has its own acquired, rather than originally inherent, important as a popular International Language. Its importance lies both in its diversity as well as its versatility. Its diversity or

variety is global, as engineered by past British imperialism-cum-colonialism, and current '*globalism-globalization*' in the post-colonial period (Crystal, 1990; Howard, 1990; Potter, 1990; McArthur, 1998; AcArthus, 2003). Thus, English is an ever-escalating linguistic means of interactive international communication, verbal and written, formal and informal. It is a language of Education, Science and Technology, of Research and Development; of Diplomacy and International Relation; and of the Political economy in terms of trade and commerce, international and regional. If not local-national.

Or all of these reasons—and many more—like creative, research and journalistic writing, and media-use—English is being wooed and pursued (in 'hot pursuit'?), used, misused and abused currently, as perhaps never before in its long, interesting and continuing history from Old English, through Middle English to Modern English, and beyond, post-Modern, and even "Futuristic" English, because any language which seeks longevity in the future, needs must be Futuristic, developmentally—in adaptive language change, according to life change and social change (Copley, 1961; Barfield, 1965; Barber, 1982; Dixon, 1997). And so the contemporary phenomena termed "*Englishes*" (in the plural) by world-level linguists like David Crystal and Tom McArthur—because of its many myriads of manifestations worldwide.

The above is a realistic portrayal of the current baseline situation. It is also a pragmatic plea for English—but with plentiful pragmatic caveats, as recorded below in this paper.

2. The Present Pak. Position: A Critique

The present picture in Pakistan is a pitiable misuse and abuse of English, rather than of its sensible proper use. The civil society and media present a hodge-podge of linguistic pollution, which is neither English nor Urdu, nor yet any other Pak. Language. In fact, we are continuously violating all the three Universal Codes of one's visible Identity: the Dress Code, Language Code, and Behaviour Code. We have retained English in Pakistan, officially and academically, but sadly, the quality of English teaching and learning has deteriorated decade by decade with every generation, if not every year. That applies also to Education, generally. The numerical proliferation, partly, if not wholly, because of the population explosion, is obvious. So is the menacingly mushrooming so-said "*English*" (Medium) School System for the microscopic minority alienated elite—alienated socio-culturally, linguistically, educationally and even religiously. The Self-Financing Privatization of Education has caused corrosive commercialization. Education has also become "*bazari*" or "*street-smart*", in that even universities are housed in hired commercial buildings and markets. One misses miserably the campus culture and academic milieu of educational institutions of the pre-and post-independence periods.

Thus, the pernicious political economy and socio-politics of Elitist Education—a malevolent minority—is manipulating and marginalizing Mainstream Education, by impoverishing it qualitatively and quantitatively as financial outlay on state-sponsored and funded education for Pakistan's majority—the poor people and middle-class masses. National resources are being frittered away on cultural alienates, many, if not most, of whom will go and settle abroad, to serve greener pastures. If some return, they will do so only on their own terms as agents and instruments of International Imperialism, through Indigenous Imperialism. If it sounds cynical or pessimistic, one has only to review and analyze conscientiously, Pakistan's pestilent history ever after the death of its Founding Father, the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, on 11th September 1948.

All of the above tensions, trends and issues need to be resolved in favour of the abiding national needs and interests if Pakistan is to move ahead. It can do so the best, Educationally, because Education is the key to the Future of any nation, and indeed, humanity, itself: a future in the sovereign peace of fraternal freedom which is, minimally, sustainable, if not ideally perennial. Language is, in turn, the key to Education, because Education as an act of interactive and interpersonal communication, is in Language, essentiating Language Use and Usage (Crystal, 1984).

Another issue of critical concern is that in Pakistan, the core concerned policies and practices—concerned with societal Education and filial Upbringing or Nurturing—or the lack of them—run at cross-purposes. These are:

- Education and Economic Policies and Practices.
- Education and Language Policies and Practices.
- Ideology and Culture Policies and Practices.
- Education and Media Policies and Practices.

The reason for this confusion and misdirection is that we have really lost sight of our creative visionary Ideology—Islam—and pay it only hypocritical lip service on ceremonial occasions. One's Ideology inspires and serves doubly, integratedly and holistically, the national interests and human interests, through Moral Values Education and Integrated Family Studies (Azam, 2005). The focus is on Basic Life Skills, which enable one to seek Moral-Spiritual-Secular Self-Realization, and lead a successful, useful and fulfilling life. For this to be possible, it is essential that the four life-long intergender and intergenerational sociological processes of family nurture and societal education, acculturation and socialization, are well-integrated (Azam, I., 2006, 2007; Azam, Z., 2006).

Creativity is central to such a reformed plan and programme of true Education as Enlightenment (“*Irfan*”), which serves the triple Perennial Primary Purposes of Education as such:

- (i) Moral-Spiritual.
- (ii) Secular-Economic.
- (iii) Integrative-Holistic.

Creative-Critical-Synthesizing Thinking Skills create Creative Societies, which shun war and terrorism and help to create and sustain Peace. Moral Values Education is what motivates them to such noble ideals and action (Azam, I., 2004, 2007; Azam, Z., 2005).

The foregoing general psycho-Social and moral-spiritual-secular principles must inspire Pakistan's National Policy, Planning and Practice—including Education and Language—if it is to sustain its sovereignty in the 21st century, and develop on its own and into its own, in full-flowered Self-Realization.

3. Language and Education: L1, L2, etc.

Language is an essential means of Education, oral and documentary. The post-colonial period contracted in confusion with the clarity of vision in the colonial period: the Vision of Sovereign Fraternal Freedom. Educationally and Linguistically the confusion was, and continues, over the relative role and importance of L1, L2, etc., i.e., one's mother/father tongue or national language, (L1), or the Second Language, preferably indigenous (L2), and a third elective, rather than imposed, foreign language, English, for the Third Muslim World former or former British Colonies. The confusing, if not conniving, controversy in Pakistan has been: whether to retain English as a second, logically third language, or impose it as the first language. The history of the disintegration of Imperialism and collapse of Colonialism amply proves that nothing alien, be it language, culture, education, values, or a politico-economic or social system can be imposed on indigenous peoples, stay on and succeed for long—unless it is indigenized, internalized and assimilated willingly by them, and integrated into the mainstream of their own psyche. So is the case with English as Language and Literature. But the presently prevalent English School system is bending backwards to work an impossible miracle of cultural and Linguistic hybridization reminiscent of the Anglo-Indians of the British days in South Asia. The teacher of English—foreign or native—recommends the “*Direct Method*” of teaching English to Pakistani children, as the best method. But at what cultural cost and loss? The result is simply shocking, to say the least. The foreign teacher of English may be excusable, because of the person's ignorance of Pakistani languages. But what excuse has the Pakistani teacher to ignore or neglect our own rich multilingual heritage and tradition? Above all, the “*Direct Method*” may work in English medium institutions, but it does not work in the mainstream Mixed Media

and Seminary (*Madrassa*) System.

What is the way out? Simply, to turn to Educational Psychology, Expertise and Experience, for Guidance, as under (Winch, 1990; Beare & Slaughter, 1994; Doherty, 1994; Iqbal, 1996; Isani & Virk, 2005). The consensus even at the highest level of the UNESCO is that Creativity and Education as essentially integral to each other as one's critical life support system, and are the best in one's own language, especially basic or foundational, formative education. Therefore, the venturesome Classification of Languages, as epitomized below, suggestively, succinctly:

4. Classification of Languages

4.1 “Zaban-e Mun”: My Language: L1 – L2

We are fortunate in Pakistan to be multilingual. The classification of our own languages as ‘*local, provincial, regional and national*’, is erroneous. It smacks of imperialistic exclusion and divisiveness. All of our languages being Pakistani are equally national—and nationalistic. All merit, intrinsically, equal treatment—at all levels—state, governmental and private; socio-cultural, educational and linguistic. We must cater to all of our languages, in order to promote national integration, socio-culturally, linguistically and educationally. The federal and provincial governments should take the lead and set the example—by adopting the Pakistani languages for popular and official use.

4.2 “Zaban-e-Yaar”: My Friends’ Language

In the case of Pakistan, they are, essentially, the *Islami* languages like *Araby, Farsi* and *Turki*. We have a rich historical heritage in them, which needs to be revived. While Pakistan's spiritual *Kaaba* is the (Muslim) Middle East, its cultural *qibla* is South-West-Central Asia. We need to return to these robust roots and messianic moorings and benefit from their Geosociological blessings (Azam, 2004). Our Urdu language reflects this legacy in the most lively and creative manner. *Araby* is essential for understanding the Holy Quran and following it faithfully to be a true Muslim. It needs to be introduced right from the beginning, both at home and school.

4.3 “Zaban-e-Ghair”: An Alien or Foreign Language

The global multiplicity of languages is a rich tribute and testimony to human thought and wisdom, culture and civilization. A Bilingualist is a more fluent, articulate and communicative person than a Unilingualist. A Multilingualist is even more interactive, socio-culturally than a Bilingualist. Such a person's circle of friends is wide and varied. One can befriend an ‘alien’ or ‘foreigner’ by means of the person's language. It is the fulsome facilitator of the friendship factor. Pakistanis being natural or born multilingualists are skilful at learning foreign languages. The National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, (NUML), is a tribute to Pakistan's flair for languages. Pakistan needs to encourage foreign language learning as a matter of persistently practised policy, to cover all of the main and major languages of the world, North and South, East and West—so that they all become “*Zabaan-e-Yaar*”, the Friends' Language, in order to build bridges of friendship and peace with all peoples of the world, through their languages, literatures and cultures, by mutual understanding and appreciation, and reciprocal respect.

5. The English Language Today

While for its native speakers/users, the English Language is the first language for many, and the second language for some, for the preponderant global majority of its non-native users, it is simply an Instrument Language, and so its classification as: EIIL:

5.1 English: An Instrumental International Language

This is its net worth and basic reality which needs to be recognized and respected. Only then can it be put to the best use. English needs to be acquired not to become personally British, American, Canadian, Australian or NewZelandian, etc. —unless one really wants to move abroad—otherwise one becomes a misfit in one's own country and culture. English should be required for its pragmatic, secular benefits: educational and economic. That essentiate teaching and learning English well. The English teacher's role

is virtually vital. Established English Teaching Departments and Institutions like the NUML, should be able to serve the purpose of standard English Teaching. What Pakistan largely needs is English as an Instrumental International Language, rather than Literature or Linguistics. Of course, these options should be available at the tertiary level of Education, to those truly interested in them—along with Research and Creative Writing but for the majority at the school and college level, EIIL, should do, and be catered to effectively (Faure, et al., 1972; Jennings & Cornish, 1982; Delore, et al., 1996; Talati, et al (Eds), 1998; Rahman, 2004).

Thus, while conceding that the English Language may be our national need—an education need—indeed, it is well-nigh a global instrumental need—let us not turn it into an obsessive-compulsive psychological issue. Let it remain a worldly need—“*dunyavi zaroorat*”—and not become a paralyzing “*mujboori*” (constraint or compulsion).

There should never be any compromise on quality, criteria and standards: culture as well as educational. The objective should be excellence for those who aim high, command or mastery for those who come next, and finally, fluency and flow for others—both students and teachers, especially the latter.

5.2 English Language Teaching: Bilingualism

Based on the researchers’ experience at tertiary level of education (M.A.; M.Phil.; and Ph.D.), and interaction at all levels, they recommend the Bilingual Method of Comparative Language and Literature Learning and Teaching, in which both of the languages (e.g., Urdu and English) are coped with, creatively, so that both develop equally. Translation and translation studies would become integral to such an approach. The core caveat is for the teacher to be competently and creatively Bilingual (if not Multilingual). For that to happen, Pakistan must tap its Multilingual potential and promise, creatively. The stress in Language Teaching should be on the Four Basic Language Skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. A teacher is expected to be a triple Role Model, as: (a) a Moral Person; (b) a Competent Communicator; and (c) and Expert Subject Specialist. The dangerously disturbed balance between Science and Technology Education, and the Arts, Humanities and Languages/Literatures, needs to be restored in our System of Education at all levels (Rope, et al., 2001).

Policy, Planning and Practice

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

(Azam, 2001, 2007; Rahman, 1990, 1996; Mansoor, Meraj & Tahir (Eds), 2004)

- Education as Enlightenment (“*Irfan*”) needs to be Perennialized as living tradition: Modernized and Futurized.
- There should be complete coordination between the Economic, Education, Language, Culture and Media Policies, to serve the abiding National Interest as subservient to the National Ideology.
- Basic Education (primary) needs to be in the mother/father tongue or a Pakistani language.
- Bilingualism may be introduced right from the start, in relation to other Pakistani Languages.
- The Mixed Media system is more pragmatic, depending on the subject being taught, and the availability of teaching texts and materials in a particular medium or language.
- The Mainstream state system of Education ought to be prioritized for the poor and middle classes.
- English may be introduced at an apt school level (class V, e.g.).
- It may be taught Bilingually.
- Multilingualism needs to be encouraged, vis-à-vis the Pakistani languages, and other *Islami* and international languages.
- English need to be adopted as an Instrumental International Language.
- It also needs to be adapted for indigenization as “*Pakistani English*”.
- Above all, the state and government policy, planning, programming and practice must be indigenized—Pakistanized.

In the final analysis, Self-Reliance is the seamless secret of Sovereign Survival: in thought, word and deed. That is the meaning and message of Creativity and Originality.

References

- AcArthus, T. (2003). *Oxford Guide to World English*. London: OUP.
- Adler, J. M. (1997). *How to Speak, How to Listen*. New York: Touchstone: Simon & Schuster.
- Ahua, C. J., & Ahuja, P. (1995). *How To Read Effectively and Efficiently*. New Delhi, India: Sterling.
- Aitchison, J. (1992). *Language Change: Progress or Decay?* Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Azam, I. (2001). *Learning to Live Creatively: Education As Enlightenment ("Irfan")*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Azam, I. (2004). *Geosociology and the Future*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Azam, I. (2004). *Creativity, Life and the Future*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Azam, I. (2005). *Moral Values Education: An Islami Futuristic Vision*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Azam, I. (2006). *Futuristic Education and Creative Thinking Skills*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Azam, I. (2006). *Life: Self, Ideology; People and Communication*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Azam, I. (2007). *Discourse With Allah; Global-Spiritual Self-Realization (Being, Becoming and Belonging)*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Azam, I. (2007). *A Pakistani Paradigm of Futuristic Education*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Azam, I. (2007). *Creativity: Seven Symbolic Symphonies*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Azam, I. (2007). *Securing the Future Now!*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Azam, Z. (2005). *Islam, Women, Education and Social Change*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Azam, Z. (2006). *Education and the Future*. Islamabad: The PFI.
- Barber, L. C. (1982). *The Story of Language*. London: Pan Books.
- Barfield, O. (1965). *History in English Words*. London: Faber & Faber Ltd.
- Beare, H., & Slaughter, R. (1994). *Education for the Twenty First Century*. London: Routledge.
- Copley, J. (1961). *Shift in Meaning*. London: OUP.
- Crystal, D. (1984). *Who Cares About English Usage?* London: Penguin Books.
- Crystal, D. (1990). *The English Language*. London: Penguin Books.
- Delore, J., et al. (1996). *Learning: The Treasure Within. Report to UNESCO*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Devito, A. J. (1997). *Human Communication*. Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Dixon, W. M. R. (1997). *The Rise and Fall of Languages*. Cambridge: CUP.
- Doherty, D. G. (Eds.). (1994). *Developing Quality Systems in Education*. London: Routledge.
- Faure, E., et al. (1972). *Learning to Be*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Fieumara, C. G. (1990). *The Other Side of Language: Listening*. London: Routledge.
- Gronbeck, et-al. (1994). *Principles and Types of Speech Communication*. USA: Harper Collins College Publishers.
- Hopson, B. & Scally, M. (1994). *Communicate: Time To Talk*. New Delhi, India: Sterling.
- Howard, P. (1990). *The State of English*. London: Penguin.
- Iqbal, Z. M. (1996). *Teachers Training: The Islamic Perspective*. Islamabad: Inst. of Policy Studies.
- Isani, G. A. U., & Virk, L. M. (2005). *Higher Education In Pakistan: A Historical and Futuristic Perspective*. Islamabad: The NBF.
- Jennings, L., & Cornish, S. (1982). *Education and the Future*. USA: The WFS: World Future Society.
- Mansoor, S., Meraj, S., & Tahir, A. (Eds), (2004). *Language Policy, Planning and Practice: South Asia*. Karachi: Agha Khan Uni. & OUP.
- McArthur, T. (1998). *The English Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- McGregor, G. & White, S. R. (Eds). (1990). *Reception and Response: Hearer Creativity and the Analysis of Spoken and Written Texts*. London: Routledge.
- Miller, A. M. (1987). *Reading and Writing Short Essays*. New York, USA: McGraw Hill.
- Pope, R. (2001). *The English Studies Book*. London: Routledge.
- Potter, S. (1990). *Our Language*. London: Penguin.

- Quible, K. Z., Johnson, H. M., & Moti, L. D. (1997). *Communication Essentials*. USA: Univ. of Phoenix.
- Rahman, T. (1990). *Pakistani English*. Islamabad: NIPS, QAU.
- Rahman, T. (1996). *Language and Politics in Pakistan*. Karachi: OUP.
- Rahman, T. (2004). *Language and Education: Selected Documents (1780-2003)*. Islamabad: NIPS: Q.A.U.
- Reid, S. (1998). *The Prentice Hall Guide for College Writers*. NJ, USA: Prentice-Hall.
- Rost, M. (1994). *Introducing Listening*. London: Penguin English.
- Talati, J., et al (Eds). (1998). *Higher Education*. Karachi: The Agha Khan Univ. OUP.
- Venkatauyer. (1995). *Dynamic Reading Skills*. New Delhi, India: Sterling Wilkinson, J. (1995). *Introducing Standard English*. London: Penguin English.
- Winch, C. (1990). *Language, Ability and Educational Achievement*. London: Routledge.
- Yule, G. (1998). *The Study of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.

