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## Performance of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Graduates of English and Urdu Medium Schools: A Comparative Study

Assad Nisar, Ph.D. Scholar

Saira Ijaz Ahmad, Ph.D. Scholar

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### Abstract

The major purpose of the study was to investigate the difference in performances of students of English and Urdu medium schools at Higher Secondary School Level. All the students enrolled during 2005, 2006 and 2007 in Government Degree Colleges in Rawalpindi constituted the population. Two degree colleges (one male and one female) were randomly selected and 730 students enrolled during 2005, 2006 and 2007 in F.Sc program were included in the sample.

Data were collected through personal visits to the sample colleges. Collected data were tabulated and analyzed by using t-test for significance of mean difference. The results of the study revealed that students of English medium schools performed better than the students of Urdu medium schools in the subjects of English and Physics whereas no significant difference was observed in the subject of Urdu. It was recommended that medium of instruction for science subjects at secondary level should be English.

**Key words:** *Urdu Medium, English Medium, Secondary School Level, Medium of Instruction*

## 1. Introduction

Medium of instruction is the language used in imparting instruction in any subject at any level. The medium of instruction is a controversial issue at all levels, especially in the societies in which various systems of education are followed.

According to Arshad (1997), language is a significant factor affecting education in many countries. After more than six decades of independence, Pakistan and India are still involved in the issue of medium of instruction with Urdu and English dominating at the present time. The medium of instruction controversy in Pakistan continues and is seen as a power struggle between different pressure groups or the elites and the pro elites (Rahman, 1999).

## 2. Language and Education Policy in Pakistan

Throughout Pakistan's history, efforts to oust English and replace it by Urdu by successive regimes have not been successful due to the support it enjoys from the elites, and English continues to remain the language of power and enjoys a high social status. Despite all efforts by the government to replace English with Urdu, the results have been slow. It was expected that by 1989, English would have been phased out of the administration at both the federal and provincial levels, but even today English continues to be the major code in which all official communication is done.

According to Abbas (1998) this may be attributed to ambivalence between government policy and public opinion. There are three choices open to Pakistan: instruction in native language i.e., Punjabi for Punjabis, Sindhi for Sindhis, etc. The second alternative is Urdu, the national official language of Pakistan. The third one is English. It is better to be literate in one language than to be illiterate in two or three (Abedi, 1991).

It is stated in the Constitution of 1973:

- Subject to article 251 any section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture shall have the right to preserve and promote the same and, subject to law, establish institutions for that purpose.(28)
- The national language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day.(251-1)
- The English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacements by Urdu.(251-2)
- Without prejudice to the status of the national language, a provincial assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a provincial language in addition to national language.(251-3)

In order to instill among people a common understanding of its national ideals it is essential to evolve a common national language. National consciousness can only grow through the use of a common language which is spoken by all the different linguistic groups of the country (Quddus, 1979). Pakistan is a multilingual society and it is a fact that Urdu is the only language that is understood in all the areas, so that it is admirably suited to the link language for the entire country (Hussain, 1992).

National language as a medium of instruction has so many advantages such as a powerful force for developing a sense of nationhood; education in a foreign language places an enormous strain on students, forcing them to memorize and to spend a large proportion of their time on learning the language; and with the development of national language and its use at the higher educational levels, the literature produced on various subjects, professions, trades etc., becomes intelligible to the common mind and promotes progress in agriculture, commerce and industry. (Quddus, 1979).

The English language needs to be fostered as means of education and communication and practical tool, not a cultural master or slave driver, as in the colonial period (Ahmed, 1996). Quaid – e – Azam declared in the first education conference that Urdu will be the official language, but he never ignored the importance of English. According to him,

“As regard English while the injurious effects of making an alien language the medium of instruction have been widely recognized, it must for some considerable time to come, retain its pride of place both in the sphere of our University education and as a means of international communication” (Government of Pakistan, 1947).

The major recommendations made by the National Educational commission (1959) were:

- In West Pakistan the medium of instruction from class I to class V is Urdu except in regions of the former N.W.F.P and Sind. Urdu should be made a compulsory language in these two regions from class III onwards.
- Urdu is a medium of instruction from class VI to X in all regions except former Sind. Proper emphasis must be given so that Urdu can be used effectively as medium of instruction from class VI onwards.
- Urdu should be taught as a compulsory subject up to class XII.
- In those schools where English is the medium of instruction, the national language should be taught as a compulsory subject.
- In class XI and XII option may be allowed to use either the Urdu or English as the medium of instruction for arts subjects.
- Arrangements should be made for the training of teachers so that they may learn to teach satisfactorily through the medium of national language.(GOP,1959).

This policy draft (2009) emphasized the importance of English language. The policy actions recommended:

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- The curriculum from class 1 onwards shall include English (as a subject), Urdu, one regional language Mathematics along with an integrated subject.
- The provincial and Area Education departments shall have the choice to select the medium of instruction up to class V.
- English shall be employed as the medium of instruction for science and Mathematics from class II onwards.

From the above review it can be concluded that the government of Pakistan during the last sixty two years have been unsure about their stand on the issue of the medium of instruction. The initial emphasis on gradual switch over from English to Urdu later in 1979 became totally in favor of Urdu. But in the later government policy, it was again relegated to its previous stance.

### **3. Review of Literature on the Effects of Medium of Instruction on Students' Achievement**

A study was conducted by Marjan in 2005 at Gomal Medical College, D.I.Khan, in order to find out the effect of medium of education during school on performance of students in medical college. The results of the study showed that there was no effect of language as a medium of education during primary and secondary school upon the results of university professional MBBS examinations. Medium of education during primary and secondary school may not be interfered, for better performance in the higher education. It is the talent, not the medium which affects the quality of education in professional institutions.

Genesee (1987) conducted a study on the performance of English taught non immersion students and second language (French) taught immersion students, in Canada. The results of study showed that the average scores of immersion students and English taught (First language) were equivalent. There was no effect (positive or negative) of medium of instruction on the achievements of the students in science subjects.

When these two groups were compared at the end of first year it was found that the performance of experimental group in the French language was same as that of control group. Experimental group showed slightly better performance in Arithmetic. These results showed that early immersion negatively affects the learning of content subjects. (Gfeller and Robinson, 1998)

Willing (1985) compared the performance of students of bilingual programs with those of traditional program where non native English students, were taught exclusively in English in America. Students of bilingual programs performed better than their peers whose medium of instruction was English in all subjects.

Suie et al (1979) conducted a large scale study to investigate the effects of language of instruction on secondary schools students learning and cognitive development. The study involved 9095 Secondary School students in Hong Kong. The students were taught four lessons each of Mathematics, Science and World History either in English or Chinese. The results

showed that the use of Chinese language facilitated the intellectual development of students, and they learned subject matter more effectively than those who were taught by English language.

A study was conducted to find out the effect of teaching in native and foreign language on students conceptual understanding in science courses by Sabri in 2007 in Turkey. The results indicated that students who were taught in a foreign language (English) had more misconceptions than the students who were taught in their native language (Turkish).

#### **4. Applicability of These Studies for Pakistan**

The above studies regarding the effects of Medium of instruction on student's achievement are inconclusive and sometimes conflicting. Keeping in view all the aspects of above mentioned studies, some generalizations can be drawn to guide the policy making on the medium of instruction for schools in Pakistan. As there is an evidence that instruction in English or mixed code has negative effects in learning for low ability students so these negative effects may be decreased if students' English proficiency is improved.

For high ability students who achieved high proficiency in both languages, using English as the medium of instruction may enhance language acquisition, particularly in English. For these high ability students medium of instruction for content subjects may effect to a lesser degree.

#### **5. The Objective of This Paper**

The main objective of the study was to find out the differences in performances of students of English and Urdu medium students in SSC (Secondary School Certificate) and HSSC (Higher Secondary School Certificate) examinations. The study was delimited only to the F.Sc students of Government Degree colleges situated in Rawalpindi who passed their SSC (Secondary School Certificate) in the Years of 2005, 2006 and 2007 under the jurisdiction of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Rawalpindi. Students' results in the subjects of English, Urdu, and Physics at SSC and HSSC examination were analyzed to compare the performance of both English and Urdu medium students.

#### **6. Methodology**

Following methodology was used to execute the study:

##### **6.1 Population**

The population of the study constituted 6253 students enrolled in F.Sc program during 2005, 2006 and 2007 in 21 Government Degree Colleges of Rawalpindi.

##### **6.2 Sample**

Two degree colleges (one male and one female) of Rawalpindi were randomly selected by using simple random sampling technique. Seven hundred and thirty students enrolled in F.Sc program in those two degree colleges during 2005, 2006 and 2007 and passed the annual examinations of SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examination held in 2005, 2006 and 2007 were selected as the sample of the study. Sampling Design of the study was as under:

Year	Group	N
2003-2005	English Medium	127
	Urdu Medium	96
2004-2006	English Medium	122
	Urdu Medium	93
2005-2007	English Medium	150
	Urdu Medium	142
<b>Total Students</b>		<b>730</b>

### 6.3 Data Collection

Data were collected from the admission and examination departments/sections of the sample colleges and office of the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Rawalpindi.

### 6.4. Data Analysis

Collected data were tabulated and analyzed keeping in view the objectives of the study. t-test was applied to find out the significance of mean difference.

**Ho 1:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of English in SSC examination.

**Table1: Significance of difference between mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of English in SSC examination.**

Year	Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-Value
2003-2005	English Medium	127	111	13.9	*2.93
	Urdu Medium	96	105	14.9	
2004-2006	English Medium	122	110	12.2	*2.54
	Urdu Medium	93	105	15.4	
2005-2007	English Medium	150	116	13.5	*4.85
	Urdu Medium	142	107	15.8	

* Significant	for the year 2003-05df = 221 for the year 2004-06df = 213 for the year 2005-07df = 290	t at 0.05 = 1.96
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Table 1 indicates a significant difference between the mean scores of English and Urdu medium students as the calculated t- values are greater than the tabulated value.

**Ho 2:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of English in HSSC examination.

**Table 2: Significance of difference between mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of English in HSSC examination**

Year	Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-Value
2005-2007	English Medium	127	119	17.8	*3.58
	Urdu Medium	96	110	20.4	
2006-2008	English Medium	122	122.8	21.7	*1.98
	Urdu Medium	93	116.6	25.4	
2007-2008	English Medium	150	60.1	10.8	*4.75
	Urdu Medium	142	53.4	13.3	
* Significant	for the year 2005-07 df = 221 for the year 2006-08 df = 213 for the year 2007-08 df = 290		t at 0.05 = 1.96		

Table 2 indicates a significant difference between the mean scores of English and Urdu medium students as the calculated t- values are greater than the tabulated value.

**Ho 3:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of Urdu in SSC examination.

**Table3: Significance of difference between mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of Urdu in SSC examination.**

Year	Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-Value
2003-2005	English Medium	127	104	9.17	0.39
	Urdu Medium	96	104	9.79	
2004-2006	English Medium	122	100	9.49	1.63
	Urdu Medium	93	102	9.99	
2005-2007	English Medium	150	104	10.4	0.47

	Urdu Medium	142	104	10.3	
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\* Significant for the year 2003-05df = 221  
for the year 2004-06df = 213  
for the year 2005-07df = 290 t at 0.05 = 1.96

No significant difference was found between the mean scores as the calculated t-values are less than the tabulated values.

**Ho 4:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of Urdu in HSSC examination.

**Table4: Significance of difference between mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of Urdu in HSSC examination.**

Year	Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-Value
2005-2007	English Medium	127	117	16.9	0.22
	Urdu Medium	96	116	16	
2006-2008	English Medium	122	104	15.3	1.20
	Urdu Medium	93	105	14.3	
2007-2008	English Medium	150	57.6	8.99	1.86
	Urdu Medium	142	59.5	8	

\* Significant for the year 2005-07 df = 221  
for the year 2006-08 df = 213  
for the year 2007-08 df = 290 t at 0.05 = 1.96

No significant difference was found between the mean scores as the calculated t-values are less than the tabulated values.

**Ho 5:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of Physics in SSC examination.

**Table 5: Significance of difference between mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of Physics in SSC examination.**

Year	Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-Value
2005-2007	English Medium	127	74.4	10.5	1.54
	Urdu Medium	96	72	12.5	
2006-2008	English Medium	122	112	15	0.13

	Urdu Medium	93	112	13.1	
2007-2008	English Medium	150	74	11.3	1.63
	Urdu Medium	142	71.6	13.2	

\* Significant for the year 2005-07 df = 221  
for the year 2006-08 df = 213  
for the year 2007-08 df = 290 t at 0.05 = 1.96

No significant difference was found between the mean scores as the calculated t-values are less than the tabulated values.

**Ho 6:** There is no significant difference between the mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of Physics in HSSC examination.

**Table 6: Significance of difference between mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of Physics in HSSC examination.**

Year	Group	N	Mean	S.D	t-Value
2005-2007	English Medium	127	126	29.7	*2.05
	Urdu Medium	96	117.6	31.3	
2006-2008	English Medium	122	111	14.3	*3.20
	Urdu Medium	93	104	15.3	
2007-2008	English Medium	150	49.5	28.4	*2.78
	Urdu Medium	142	43.9	33.6	

\* Significant for the year 2005-07 df = 221  
for the year 2006-08 df = 213  
for the year 2007-08 df = 290 t at 0.05 = 1.96

Table 6 indicates a significant difference between the mean scores of English and Urdu medium students as the calculated t- values are greater than the tabulated value.

## 7. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

Medium of instruction plays an important role in the teaching of any subject. In Pakistan there are two parallel systems of Education i.e. English and Urdu medium schools. The study was conducted to find out the effect of medium of instruction during school on the performance of students in HSSC (Higher Secondary School Certificate) examination.

The results obtained from the statistical analysis showed the following conclusions:

1. In SSC and HSSC examinations, a significant difference was found between the mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of English. Performance of English medium students in the subject of English was better than the Urdu medium students.
2. No significant difference was found between the mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of Urdu at SSC and HSSC level examinations.
3. There was no significant difference between mean scores of English and Urdu medium students in the subject of Physics at SSC level examinations, while at HSSC level examination, the difference was significant.

The results of this study show that the students taught through English medium at school level performed better than the students taught through Urdu medium at HSSC level examination, the main reason for this difference may be due to the fact that the medium of instruction in colleges for science subjects is English. Therefore it is recommended that the medium of instruction for science subjects at school level should be English.

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Assad Nisar, Ph.D Scholar  
Department of Education  
International Islamic University Islamabad  
Islamabad, 44000  
Pakistan  
[asadnisar75@gmail.com](mailto:asadnisar75@gmail.com)

Saira Ijaz Ahmad, Ph.D Scholar  
Department of Education  
International Islamic University Islamabad  
Islamabad, 44000  
Pakistan  
[sairajaz@ymail.com](mailto:sairajaz@ymail.com)