ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

OURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL (JALT)
Vol.9. No.1 2026

English Medium of Instruction in Higher Education: A Quantitative Study of English Major Students' Attitudes through the Prestige Planning Lens of LPP

Waheed Shahzad
Department of English, Allama Iqbal Open University and IHA Khwaja Fareed UEIT, Rahim Yar Khan waheed.shahzad@kfueit.edu.pk

Dr. Furrakh Abbas
Center for Languages and Translation Studies (CELTS), Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad
furrakh.abbas@aiou.edu.pk

Abstract
The aim of this study is to explore the attitudes of undergraduate English major students in higher education institutions in the South Punjab towards the use of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in higher education institutions, which is interpreted using the prestige-planning dimension of Language Planning and Policy (LPP). Prestige planning relates to symbolic factors, social visibility and perceived legitimacy of a language. The three dimensions of attitude explored in this study are cognitive (academic usefulness of EMI), emotional (feelings towards learning through English) and behavioral (willingness to participate and willingness to use English in the academic context). One-sample t-test was performed against the neutral midpoint of 3. The results show statistically significant positive differences for all three dimensions: cognitive, $t(461) = 33.717$, mean difference = 1.24170, $p < .001$; emotional, $t(461) = 29.943$, mean difference = 0.89538, $p < .001$; and behavioral, $t(461) = 28.508$, mean difference = 0.85758, $p < .001$. The mean difference reported for each pair of corresponding scale is 4.242, 3.895, and 3.858, respectively for those pairs. The results suggest that generally, the respondents have a positive connotation with the term 'EMI'.

Keywords: English Medium of Instruction; prestige planning; Language Planning and Policy; English majors; higher education; South Punjab; language attitudes

1. Introduction
Higher education has a strong emphasis on English as it is widely used as medium of instruction, for publishing research and professional communication. However, in multilingual societies, the choice of English as the medium of instruction goes beyond the pedagogical choice. It is also a language-planning problem in terms of social value attributed to English, opportunities afforded by the use of English and responses made by students and teachers to its institutional status. In Pakistan, English holds an important role in higher education and students are coming from various educational backgrounds and with varying exposure to English at higher education institutions.

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

Attitudes of stakeholders are important in the study of EMI in these conditions. Attitudes towards English-medium Instruction can influence the attitudes of individuals towards the teaching of English-medium; attitudes towards English in the learning process; attitudes towards using English as a medium of academic practice. The dimensions of attitudes as cognitive, affective and behavioral and relates them to the prestige of English in the academic and social domains. Prestige planning is concerned with strengthening or reshaping the symbolic value and legitimacy of a language (Haarmann, 1990; Baldauf, 2005). In higher education, the prestige of English may be manifested in relationship to academic success, job readiness, international competitiveness, modernity, and institutional legitimacy. It is then possible to infer attitudes to EMI from its study, as it gives indications of students' perception of the prestige of English in the university context.**2. Purpose and Research Question** This study conducted to explain the attitudes of undergraduate students with English major in English Medium of Instruction (EMI) in Higher Education in south Punjab using prestige planning lens of LPP. he present study examines English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in higher education through the prestige-planning perspective of Language Planning and Policy (LPP). EMI has gained considerable importance in higher education, particularly in multilingual societies where English is associated with academic achievement, international communication, professional advancement, and social mobility. In Pakistan, English occupies a prominent position in educational institutions, research, administration, and professional domains. However, students enter universities with different educational backgrounds and varying levels of English proficiency, which may influence their experiences of English-medium education. Language Planning and Policy provides a useful theoretical foundation for understanding these issues because it examines how languages acquire institutional functions, social recognition, and symbolic value (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997; Baldauf, 2005). Within this framework, prestige planning focuses on enhancing the image, legitimacy, and social recognition of a language (Haarmann, 1990; Ager, 2005). English in Pakistani higher education is not merely an instructional medium but also represents a form of linguistic and social capital associated with educational opportunities, professional recognition, and socioeconomic advancement (Rahman, 2002, 2005; Haidar, 2019). Previous research has highlighted both the opportunities and challenges associated with EMI, including academic development, language proficiency, classroom participation, and educational inequalities (Macaro et al., 2018; Haidar & Fang, 2019). Macaro et al. (2018), in their systematic review of EMI in higher education, emphasised the need to investigate the relationship between English-medium instruction, language development, and subject learning rather than assuming that EMI automatically improves academic outcomes. Similarly, research conducted in Pakistan has examined students' perceptions, academic performance, motivation, and institutional experiences, demonstrating that positive attitudes towards EMI may coexist with language-related difficulties and unequal access to English-language resources. From an attitudinal perspective, students' responses towards EMI can be examined through three interrelated dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. The cognitive dimension concerns students' beliefs about the academic usefulness of English, including conceptual understanding, academic achievement, further education, and career opportunities. The emotional dimension encompasses feelings of pride, respect, motivation, confidence, comfort, and nervousness associated with learning through English. The behavioural dimension concerns students' willingness to select English-medium courses, participate in classroom discussions, interact with teachers and classmates, and complete academic tasks in English. These

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

dimensions provide a comprehensive understanding of students' attitudes because they explain what learners believe, how they feel, and how they report their willingness to engage in English-medium academic activities. Moreover, the prestige of English can be understood through its instrumental, integrative, and institutional significance. Instrumental prestige relates to employability, professional advancement, and academic competitiveness; integrative prestige concerns identity, modernity, and belonging to the international academic community; and institutional prestige reflects the legitimacy of English as a language of university instruction. Although previous studies have investigated EMI from educational, linguistic, and sociolinguistic perspectives, relatively limited attention has been given to interpreting undergraduate English major students' attitudes through the specific lens of prestige planning, particularly in South Punjab. Therefore, the present study addresses this research gap by examining the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural attitudes of undergraduate English major students from four universities in South Punjab towards EMI. By connecting students' attitudes with the perceived academic, social, and institutional prestige of English, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of EMI as both an educational practice and a language-planning phenomenon.

3. Theoretical Framework: Prestige Planning

Language Planning and Policy is about intentional attempts to shape the role, application, development and acquisition of languages in society. This is based on Baldauf's conceptual model and one aspect of LPP. Prestige planning is about the symbolic significance of a language and its attitudes to its social legitimacy. It is closely related to status planning: status planning involves assigning functions to a language while prestige planning involves assigning prestige and recognition to a language.

For the South Punjab universities, prestige can be seen as the belief of the respondents that English helps them understand the material, improve their assessment skills, proceed with further learning, advance their careers, and compete at the national or international level. It may also manifest in a sense of pride, respect, motivation and confidence, and the willingness of learners to choose courses in English, to make an active contribution to lessons, to engage with teachers and to communicate with each other.

The study structures the questionnaire evidence into three dimensions for operationalization of the attitudes. The cognitive aspect is related to beliefs regarding usability and efficiency of EMI in learning and achievement. The emotional aspect relates to emotions like pride, motivation, confidence, comfort or nervousness. The behavioral dimension relates to students' self-reported willingness to undertake academic activities related to EMI. The dimensions serve as the analytical framework for the present article.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research design

Quantitative method was used in this research. Data was collected through questionnaire.

4.2 Setting and population

This study was conducted in 4 university English departments of South Punjab, namely Bahauddin Zakariaya University (BZU), Multan; Khwaza Fareed University of Engineering & Information Technology (KFUEIT), Rahim Yar Khan; Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan and Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB).

4.3 Sampling

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

A multi-level stratified proportional sampling technique was used, where district stratification is based on Human Development Index ranking, as well as the Education Index ranking and the selection of respondents is from the English departments of the four universities. The 72 students from BZU, 170 students from KFUEIT, 59 students from Ghazi University and 161 students from IUB (TOTAL: 462).

4.4 Instrument

The study uses a structured questionnaire with Likert scale questions to gather quantifiable responses from the university students. In the Objective, constructs under consideration are prestige of English in higher education and attitudes towards EMI. The prestige construct is using instrumental prestige (upward mobility, employability and competitiveness), integrative prestige (identity, modernity and belonging to the global academia) and institutional prestige (legitimacy of English as a university language of instruction). The three dimensions of attitudes towards EMI are cognitive, emotional and behavioral. The questionnaire was expert reviewed and amended based on experts' feedback.

4.5 Data collection and analysis

The data was collected through questionnaires for the quantitative answers related to English use, EMI, and language policy. The analysis was descriptive analysis of items responses and one sample t-tests between the obtained score and the test value of 3 which was used as the neutral point. Reported tests are used to determine if the average attitude scores are significantly different from the neutral score. P values < .001 are considered statistically significant.

5. Results

5.1 Overall attitudes toward EMI

All three attitudinal dimensions were significantly higher than the neutral value of the test, which is 3. The largest mean difference was obtained in the cognitive dimension, as well as the emotional and behavioral dimensions. The pattern shows that the respondents' positive perception of the academic value of EMI was highest, with their emotional and behavioral responses also being positive.

Dimension	N	Mean	SD†	t(df)	Mean difference	95% CI of difference
Cognitive	462	4.242	0.792	33.717 (461)	1.24170	[1.1693, 1.3141]
Emotional	462	3.895	0.643	29.943 (461)	0.89538	[0.8366, 0.9541]
Behavioral	462	3.858	0.647	28.508 (461)	0.85758	[0.7985, 0.9167]

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

All three tests had a significant $p < .001$. The academic usefulness of EMI is generally well accepted as shown by the cognitive mean with 4.242. Emotional mean value is 3.895, which shows that overall, English language learning is perceived as being a positive experience. The behavioural mean of 3.858 indicates a positive attitude towards participation and the use of English in the academic activities. The results corroborate the interpretation that education and symbolism are perceived as high among the respondents for the learning of English.

5.2 Cognitive attitudes

The cognitive items are related to students' beliefs regarding the role that EMI plays in the understanding of concepts, improved assessment outcomes, readiness for advanced academic study, career preparation, national and international academic competition, and advanced academic knowledge of the discipline. There are positive mean differences of 1.182 to 1.297 points higher than the neutral point of 3, with t ranging from 25.465 to 31.613 and $p < .001$ for all items. The maximum mean difference value reported (1.297) was for understanding advanced academic knowledge in the respondents' fields. The findings indicate that the respondents connect EMI with academic growth and further educational and career prospects.

5.3Emotional attitudes

Emotional dimension: respect, pride in studying in the EMI classes, motivation, confidence, comfort in doing assignments in English, nervousness. All of these positive mean differences are statistically significant ($p < .001$), with the most significant mean difference being in respect (1.206), pride (1.221), motivation (1.182), confidence (1.165), and comfort English assignments (1.253). For the item nervousness, the mean difference was -0.654, $t(461) = -10.570$, $p < .001$, which showed that the respondents felt generally negative about feeling nervous in EMI classes. It is important to understand this is a reaction to the negatively worded item and not as a negative emotional response.

5.4 Behavioral attitudes

The behavioral items refer to the preference of the course, the participation in the course, the interaction with the teachers, the interaction with teachers' class during group work, the completion of academic tasks, and the avoidance of answering questions in English. Respondents significantly preferred courses taught in English (mean difference = 1.290; $t(450) = 31.211$; $p < .001$), reported active participation (1.149; $t(461) = 26.699$; $p < .001$), interaction with teachers (1.123; $t(461) = 24.830$; $p < .001$), communication with classmates (0.965; $t(461) = 19.399$; $p < .001$), and ease in completing academic tasks (1.197; $t(461) = 29.315$; $p < .001$). They also disagreed that they did not answer questions in English (mean difference = -0.569; $t(461) = -9.134$; $p < .001$). Also, the course-preference item does not have a df value of 461, but of 450, meaning that there are 451 valid responses to this item, which must be reported.

6. Discussion

The results show that the overall attitude of the respondents in the questionnaire analysis was quite positive toward EMI. The cognitive dimension stands out as the strongest, indicating that EMI is most highly appreciated for its perceived academic value. The respondents relate English-medium learning to conceptual understanding, assessment performance, further study, career development and academics competitiveness. These beliefs are consistent with the prestige-planning interpretation, which states that if a language is connected to access to education and professional opportunities, it acquires symbolic value.

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

This is all strengthened by the emotional findings. The themes of pride, respect, motivation, confidence and comfort indicate that learning in English is not viewed solely as a practical instructional method, but may also have a social and identity component. These affective responses include measures of the legitimacy and symbolic status given to English in the university context in prestige planning terms. The nervousness item had a negative result, which does not mean that the participants generally disagreed with being nervous the wording indicates the opposite.

Reported willingness to engage in EMI-related practices corroborates the behavioral results, indicating that positive beliefs and feelings correlate with willingness to engage in EMI-related practices. Students say they choose to take courses in English, attend classes, engage with teachers, and talk with other students. The abstract beliefs are not the only ones that capture the prestige of English; it is also seen in the reported academic decisions and involvement.

However, a positive attitude cannot be interpreted as an assurance that EMI is equally accessible, pedagogically effective for all students, and without language barriers. The one-sample tests do not show differences between teachers and students, objective learning gains, or differences from the neutral midpoint, only that the reported means differ from the neutral midpoint. Nor does it constitute a claim that all the universities or, all English major students of South Punjab have the same views.

7. Conclusion

The prestige-planning dimension of LPP was studied in this article by analyzing the reported attitudes of the higher education institutions of South Punjab towards EMI. The results of the questionnaires available indicate significantly positive patterns in cognitive, emotional and behavioural attitudes, as compared with the zero point. The academic value of EMI was especially appreciated and its implementation was reported to have generated positive feelings and willingness among the respondents to engage in English-medium academic activities. Viewed in the light of prestige planning these findings indicate that English is seen as a language of academic legitimacy, educational progression and professional opportunity.

The results confirm the value of students' voices in the process of formulating EMI policy. Positive attitude is a valuable asset for universities and it is necessary to provide enough language development, teaching methods, and participation in the classroom to help English-medium learners. These implications should be discussed as policy considerations rather than as results of the present one-sample analyses.

References

Arranged alphabetically by the first author's surname, with duplicate and incomplete entries removed.

Ager, D. (2005). Image and prestige planning. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, *6*(1), 1–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/14664200508668270

Baldauf, R. B., Jr. (2005). Language planning and policy research: An overview. In E. Hinkel (Ed.), *Handbook of research in second language teaching and learning* (pp. 957–970). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Haarmann, H. (1990). Language planning in the light of a general theory of language: A methodological framework. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 86,* 103–126. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.1990.86.103

Haidar, S. (2019). Access to English in Pakistan: Inculcating prestige and leadership through instruction in elite schools. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 22*(7), 833–848. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2017.1320352

Haidar, S., & Fang, F. (2019). Access to English in Pakistan: A source of prestige or a hindrance to success? *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 39*(4), 485–500. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2019.1671805

Kaplan, R. B., & Baldauf, R. B., Jr. (1997). *Language planning: From practice to theory*. Multilingual Matters.

Macaro, E., Curle, S., Pun, J., An, J., & Dearden, J. (2018). A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. *Language Teaching, 51*(1), 36–76. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000350

Rahman, T. (2002). *Language, ideology and power: Language-learning among the Muslims of Pakistan and North India*. Oxford University Press.

Rahman, T. (2005). The Muslim response to English in South Asia: With special reference to inequality, intolerance, and militancy in Pakistan. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education, 4*(2), 119–135. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327701jlie0402_4