Prospects and Challenges of Bilingual Education in the Light of Pakistan's Language Policy

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Abstract

This research study explores prospects and challenges of bilingual education in the light of language policy of Pakistan. It directs the scholars and policymakers to revisit the notion of language and norms of traditional bilingual education. However, the researcher brings in light that translanguaging as a particular model facilitates for understanding dynamic multilingualism to promote social justice to languages and their speakers. The implementation of this model is viable in both theory and practice. The issue of monoglossic model of bilingual education in Pakistan is yet to be dealt with. Moreover, the researcher employed qualitative empirical method and used secondary data from previous studies to investigate the problem. Additionally, the findings reveal that the subtractive language policy, linguistic hegemony, politicians' monolingual politics are challenges to the dynamic bilingual education. On the other hand, multilingual reality and its practice, speakers' multilingual repertoire, transcultural interaction of students are important prospects of dynamic bilingual education policy in Pakistan. The study also highlights the research gap in Pakistani bilingual classrooms from the latest approach of translanguaging and dynamic model of bilingualism which can direct a multilingual language policy of Pakistan.

Keywords: *Bilingualism, Bilingual education, Language policy, Translanguaging.*

1. Introduction

This researcher paper is motivated from the realistic advantages that dynamic bilingual education model of translanguaging proposed for the multilingual societies. Instructions in bilingual mode will benefit classrooms of Pakistan (Raja, 2014). Moreover, research questions of this study are very important as they inquire to deal with the prospects of bilingual education in Pakistan. Along with it, this research work will encourage research scholars and policy makers to establish dynamic translanguaging bilingual viewpoint for studying the classroom instructions and provide hopes for better language policy. Accordingly, this kind of bilingual policy would boost linguistic performance and socio-cognitive approach of students through translanguaging and multimodalities. Moreover, through translanguaging the dynamic model of bilingual education will enhance the multilingual literacy of students. Additionally, the educational, social gaps between upper and lower class will also reduce if dynamic bilingual education policy is employed positively.

In the arena of educational linguistics and applied linguistics, a lot of researchers will seek help from this study to carry out classroom-based research in bilingual mode of instruction which regrettably lacks in Pakistan (Jabeen, 2010). The bilingual educational models like subtractive bilingualism, additive bilingualism, and recursive bilingualism are not enough to reveal the complex bilingual competence and needs of multilingual societies of the 21st century (Garcia, 2009). In this century, a supplementary heteroglossic notion of bilingual education is much required that can struggle with the expected changes (Garcia, 2009 pg. 180-181). Bilingual education is not linear as it seems, but it is quite dynamic in nature, because it establishes and operates in different situations. In the dynamic model of bilingual education, the categorization of languages as L1 and L2 are no longer helpful. The growing globalization is disregarding the traditional categories (Garcia, 2009). The aforementioned model of bilingual education grips several linguistic practices and regulates the multilingual, multimodal terrain of the communicative act (Garcia, 2009). In the same way, Pakistan highly needs the dynamic, bilingual education system that can facilitate pedagogical process on unusual layers of multimodalities, like text, visuals, printing etc. Furthermore, it dynamically facilitates the individual learners to employ multilingual, complex communicative acts which are not allowed by linear models of bilingual education (Garcia, 2009). Therefore, Pakistan needs dynamic bilingual education policy for making teaching effective through multimodalities and multi-languages' translanguaging practices.

Language policymakers have always neglected the multilingual society and bilingual education in Pakistan since 1947. According to some researches (Channa, et. al, 2016), the subtractive policy of bilingual education, that marginalize local/mother languages, is deficiently crashing socio-cognitive and linguistic performance of Pakistani students. Some effective measures have been taken to promote the linear models of bilingual education. Such models of bilingual education either severely part or flexibly attach the organization of English or Urdu language as medium of instruction. Language policy and planning of Pakistan downgrade dynamic bilingual education which promotes multimodal and multi-lingual instructions. If students do not get education through multimodalities and translanguaging, they will become more debarred eventually, leading to an attrition of linguistic diversity and upholding of socio-economic inequality in Pakistan. This problem, if addressed through dynamic bilingual education, will definitely assist various educational and political advantages for Pakistan.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Bilingual education is generally viewed as the use of two separate, autonomous languages which are the medium of instruction (MOI) for educational goals and gains. An individual using two languages is referred to as bilingual. Bilingual education has conventionally been labeled for education given in two languages to minorities for their linguistic competence and proficiency in the language of power (Baker, 2011). Pakistan has been addressing the issue of bilingual education since its birth in 1947. Various education commissions, plans and language polices have been designed to accomplish educational aims but the objectives have remained unachieved so far. The educational policy of Pakistan is different from the realities on the ground. At the macro level, education policy of Pakistan is designed to promote English and Urdu only, but at the micro level or in classrooms bilingual, multilingual or translanguaging practices are the realities. The policy is not in sync with the multilingual and multicultural reality of everyday classroom life. Therefore, this paper studies the issue of bilingual education in regard to the language policy of Pakistan and multilingual practices on the ground that need to be addressed for a successful bilingual education policy.

1.2. Background of the Study

Pakistan is a plural society with immense linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity where more than 64 languages are spoken nationally and locally (Rahman, 2004). Urdu was declared as a national language of Pakistan right after its birth. Ignoring the linguistic diversity, consistent conscious steps were taken to bring Urdu forth as an official language in the place of English. Owing to these languages imposed from above for political and ideological purposes, the diverse reality of the society suffered at length that ultimately influenced the education of Pakistan. UNESCO conducted a worldwide survey of language education in 1951 and urged governments to take every possible step to promote the use of mother tongue in education while ignoring the prejudices against it (Eastman, 1983), yet the education in mother tongue is entirely ignored and treated as nonessential in Pakistan. In order to form a Pakistani identity while merging the diversity in one nation as Muslim and one language as Urdu, the social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity was sabotaged under the hegemony of monoglossic ideology. According to Census 2017 mother tongue data, Punjabi is spoken 38.78%, Pashto 18.24%, Sindhi 14.57%, Seraiki 12.19%, Urdu 7.08%, Balochi 3.57%, Hindko 2.24%, Brohi 1.24% in Pakistan. Every education policy has been strengthening Urdu and English since the establishment of the Advisory Board of Education in 1948 to the pro-English policy of Ayub Khan; from Z. A Bhutto who gave constitutional recognition to the Urdu along with English as official languages to the Islamization and Urduization policy of General Zia ul Haq with the establishment of the National Language Authority in 1979. The government of Nawaz Sharif did not pay much attention to the issue of language-in-education, but it rather focused on reforming the education structure on the principles of Islam, thus promoting Urdu as an ideologue of Islam. Benazir made an option for using English as a medium of instruction in all subjects from class 1 to higher education for the economic development of the country and gave additional status to Urdu as the national language. General Parvez Musharraf promoted Urdu in state governments and English for economic development (Dilpul, Gill, Azam & Kasuar, 2015). Urdu became the privileged language of Pakistan for political and ideological reasons that aimed to unite the multilingual diversity into monolingual enterprise. However, many English medium schools worked to maintain colonial legacy for elite class to acquire high posts.

This venture of language-in-education division further segregated the educational system and affected the outlook of people towards language and education. It led to divisions on every educational level between national language and English medium schools, between the government school system and the private school system which was also divided into lower class and elite class. It created two different classes: first to reach on high posts and rule and second to serve and be ruled. The schools are out of resources and trained teachers. The result of the language testing system proves that government and private school teachers need proper training in their subjects (PEELI, 2013).

English is treated a second language in Pakistan that needs multilingual language policy keeping in view the linguistic diversity and bilingual education perspective that should meet the needs of the 21st century. Appropriate language policy is required for bilingual education policy in a multilingual society.

2. The Review of Bilingual Education

The term bilingual education refers to the education of those students who speak two languages, and sometimes the term is used for students learning additional languages (Baker, 1998). Some students learn additional languages and already speak the majority languages dominated in their society; sometimes they are native speakers or part of minoritized communities or a member of the majority community to learn an additional or dominant language at school.

Bilingual education does not focus only on learning additional languages, but it also helps students to be responsible citizens locally and globally as they encounter various cultures beyond their cultural borders where traditional education functions (Garcia, 2011). It aims to impart equal and meaningful education to various tribes and cultures across the globe especially in Africa and Asia. Many of the bilingual education policies are either subtractive or additive, these reductive perspective views two languages as 'two wheels or two eyes' (Baker, 2001) and thus becomes monoglossic vision of language(s).

Mehboob and Jain (2017) argue that Pakistan lacks official documentation of language policy which could address the implications for language-in-education. Since most of the government and private schools are directed to use Urdu and English as the medium of instructions (MOI), the mother tongue and regional languages of the students suffer. In the lack of any proper official language-in-education policy, teachers do not have proper training and guidelines in the directed medium of instruction therefore they use the local languages in their classrooms (Coleman & Capstick, 2012).

Raja (2014) conducted a study on the importance of bilingual education in primary schools of Pakistan. According to him, Urdu and English are used as medium of instruction for the students who come from various ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. For them, Urdu or English is either second language or third language respectively. He suggests a sort of additive bilingual education policy as a solution to address the marginalized languages of the students. Similarly, Channa, Memon and Memon (2016) proposed an additive bilingual solution to the problem of medium of instruction in Pakistan. They recommend on adding the mother tongue in education as medium of instruction that helps to develop cognitive and social abilities. However, the additive bilingual model is the monolingual norm of bilingualism that presents each language as a separate autonomous system which does not address the need of bilingualism in 21st century.

Different scholars and researchers have viewed bilingualism from a monolingual perspective which calculates languages as one plus one two. The need of the hour is to look at language from the perspective of the language users than the language itself. The subtractive, additive and recursive bilingualisms are insufficient to highlight the complexity of bilingual competence in 21st century, as these conceptions view bilingualism as linear, but it is rather dynamic and should be looked from heteroglossic perspective (Garcia, 2011).

2.1. Research Questions

Following are the research questions that guide this study.

- Q1: How have the scholars and policymakers engaged so far with the question of bilingual education in Pakistan?

- Q2: What is the possible way to create harmony between monolingual language policy and multilingual practices in bilingual classrooms of Pakistan?

3. Methodology

The researcher used the desk review qualitative pattern for the collection and analysis of the data. The researcher samples the secondary data from previous studies that guide the analysis of the study. The secondary data analysis is used to re-analyze the research data that is already analyzed. Hakim (1982) defines secondary data analysis as an additional investigation of the already researched data to present interpretations, results or information that adds to or differs from those found in the first report on the investigation.

This sampling and methodological technique is justified on the grounds that the sources of information for desk review are already identified and the focus then lies on qualitative elements of bilingual education challenges in the light of language-in-education policy of Pakistan. The researcher proposes a new framework for analyzing previous data and constitutes it as justification for desk review.

3.1. Theoritical Framework

This study conceptualizes around translanguaging as an emerging debate in language and bilingual education. Translanguaging is an approach to bilingualism that is based on the multilingual and multimodal discourse practices of bilinguals (Poza, 2017). These practices are not seen as novel, but as the common practice of communication around the globe. Unlike, structuralist and mentalist approaches to language, translanguaging points to a trans-semiotic system that has different signs mainly linguistic that join together to form a semiotic and linguistic repertoire of speakers. Translanguaging does not view languaging of bilinguals as two independent languages in education, but it takes translanguaging as a discursive practice where bilinguals make sense of their bilingual world (Garcia & Wei, 2014).

Translanguaging liberates and gives voice to those languages which are marginalized and kept away from discursive practices under monolingual hegemony. It encourages the use of mother tongue/local/common/regional languages in education that helps in developing critical and cognitive skills of bilinguals. This approach goes beyond translation and code-switching which believe in independence of languages as autonomous with different grammatical patterns and, ultimately, fall in the monolingual notion of language.

4. Discussion

4.1. Political Influence

After the analysis of the data, many challenges and facts regarding language and bilingual education policy in Pakistan have come to the light. It is found that Pakistan is a multilingual country with the monolingual education policy that is also used as a tool for marginalization of linguistic diversity. It suppresses the linguistic diversity for Islamic ideological posture and follows the notion of one-state one-language. Pakistan's bilingual education policy promotes Urdu as a national and academic language and adopts English as a colonial legacy for socioeconomic development in the wake of globalization and neo-liberalism that has become a main hurdle in the implementation of bilingual policy. It serves as the state's main excuse for continuing with monoglossic education policy at the exploitation of multilingual regions and groups (Rahman, 2004).

4.2. Monolingual Policy and Multilingual Practices

It was also found that some scholars merely supported bilingual education (Raja, 2014), some have argued against subtractive bilingualism (Huizinga, 1994), (Rahman, 2003), (Mansoor, 2004), (Zaidi & Zaki, 2017) others have supported additive bilingualism for bilingual education policy in Pakistan (Karim & Haq, 2013), (Channa, Memon & Memon, 2016), (Manan, Dumanig & David, 2017). These types of bilingualisms have also monoglossic view about language. They see bilingual education as education within two autonomous languages and support either the inclusion of the mother tongue or the exclusion of it from education. They ignore the reality that bilinguals have their multilingual and multimodal linguistic repertoire which they use for communication. Such dynamic system of languaging is common in everyday life and also in bilingual classrooms where local languages are frequently spoken. There is lack of studies to suggest that students, irrespective of their age, gender, social and political background, engage in plurilingual codes in their classrooms (Ashraf, 2018). Therefore, the challenges are to conduct studies about bilingual classroom linguistic practices and create accordance between the policy (that is English, Urdu/ a monolingual convention) and multilingual practices of people in everyday context.

4.3. Translanguaging as a way of Life

Moreover, the study found that the linguistic landscape of Pakistan also proposes translanguaging practices (Ashraf, 2018). There are many sign boards, bill boards, advertisements etc that does not use only linguistic signs but they employ multimodal and multilingual trans-semiotic signs to communicate to the viewers (Gorter & Cenoz, 2015), (Shah, Pillai & Sinayah, 2019). There are various shops and shopping malls and daily text messages through smart phone and social networking sites show that the scripts of Urdu or any other local language is used for English and vice versa.

5. Conclusion

Lastly, the current paper deals with a suggestion to make the dynamic, bilingual education policy. The scrutiny of secondary data clearly exposes that the dynamic, bilingual education can improve socio-cognition and linguistic performance of students and can provide social equality and justice to the other local languages. Moreover, it also has the potential of resolving language problems of Pakistan as it has worked out for the language problems of other countries. Though there are various challenges to the dynamic bilingual education and political influence is the major one, but there are prospects that ensure the enforcement of bilingual instruction policy in Pakistan. Moreover, the researcher collected data from the previous studies through desk review and thus contributed to the field of bilingual education and policy planning on the new emerging model in bilingual education. This research paper is important as it will facilitate policymakers and policy planners to recognize the advantages of the dynamic bilingual education policy to be implemented in Pakistan. Likewise, this research will also set the way for applied linguists to do more investigation in the field of the bilingual education through diverse research designs.

6. Recommendations and a Way Forward

The political monolingual hegemony of English and Urdu on the multilingual diversity of Pakistan can only be challenged through demystifying the political hegemony and through framing a new education policy that correspondence to the cultural and linguistic diversity in the country. A multilingual language-in-education policy should resist the monolingual hegemony to pave the way forward to a proper and successful bilingual education in Pakistan. At the micro-level, a multilingual education policy should be implemented at all the levels of education right from the primary up to higher education. It is not a unique choice that is proposed here; according to UNESCO (2003), many countries of the world adapt multilingual education policy as multilingualism is their way of life than a problem to be addressed. They adapt complex realities in terms of learners' needs in education policy with the connection to their cultural, social and political order. Therefore, Pakistan should also implement a multilingual education policy to address the challenges of bilingual education.

Scholars, educators, language policy makers and language teachers should rethink about the notion of language and bilingual education, as language does not come in terms of either and or, it is both the medium and the subject taught at bilingual schools. Languages do not structure themselves, but they are shaped within social practices. Bilingual education engages educating only in languages of prestige and power. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the reasons behind power that certain languages have acquired. Scholars should question the particular linguistic codes and their standardization for academic purposes and support the fluid ways in which children involve their language practices today (Garcia 2011). There is more complexity in heterogeneous language practices of students in the classroom than merely one or two languages that bilingual schools teach in isolation which students rarely use at home.

The existing understanding of language was developed by states that yearned to secure their political power by ascertaining grammars, dictionaries, language academies to standardize particular varieties of languages (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007). State is commonly associated with a single language: Spanish is spoken in Spain, Swedish in Swedan, and Italian in Italy etc. Since the multilingualism has become a common practice around the world, it has questioned the notion of one state one language. Grimes (2000) investigated and listed that there are 6,809 languages in 200 countries.

As argued above globalization has strengthened the use of English all over the world, but simultaneously globalization has developed a consciousness that languages are not confined within nation borders, they are rather the part of the lives of people who speak different languages in different geographies internationally. Mobile phones, the internet and various social media networks have made a way to communicate across state borders. People do not communicate through different languages there but they use different modalities that include audio, video and organized semiotic systems that represent time and space like gifs, emoticons and memes. This proves that today our daily contacts are bilingual by nature which scholars and policy makers have to rethink in the context of Pakistan to develop a proper bilingual education policy.

Studies on the language use in the classroom suggest many teachers use local languages in their classrooms (Coleman & Capstick, 2012); however, they are not trained for using those languages for pedagogy purposes. In the context of Pakistan, there is lack of research from the perspectives of new debates in language learning and bilingual education. Pakistani scholars should conduct studies from translanguaging perspective on the dynamic linguistic practices for pedagogy in Pakistani bilingual classrooms.

Translanguaging is an opportunity for so-called minority languages to flourish and develop. It enriches our understanding of the language itself. Traditionally, language has been seen as a grammatical structure

detached from the society. Language is seen independent standing on its own. The identity of speakers is associated with the language they speak. Current debates in bilingual education from the perspective of the translanguaging urge to view language from the perspective of its speakers.

The aforementioned findings suggest that despite monolingual education policy, the reality on the ground is multilingual. Speakers communicate through their developing language repertoire and are unaware of the conscious classification and distinction of lexical or syntactic differences as usually attached to any language with a name. Speakers do not use purely Urdu or English or Sindh, as a traditional view of language classifies with names, but their communicative practices are multilingual and multimodal. The monolingual language policy and monoglossic bilingual education policy do not harmonize with the translanguaging discursive practices on the ground. Therefore, policy makers should create a bridge between the language policy and multilingual discursive practices in order to develop a successful bilingual education policy.

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