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IMPACT OF MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION ON RESEARCH THESIS WRITING

ABSTRACT

Medium of instruction always plays pivotal role in intellectual development. It is an accepted fact that since immemorial time man adopted several mediums of instruction. Medium of instruction is the controversial issue since the birth of Pakistan. It is an irony of fate that Pakistan is celebrating her 60th anniversary and we are still in dilemma for medium of instruction, as to which medium of instruction is best for the intellectual, social and psychological development of our nation. Sindh is one of the four provinces of Pakistan and historically is home to the Sindhis. Different cultural and ethnic groups also reside in Sindh including Urdu speaking people who migrated from India at the time of independence and partition. Beside, some people also migrated from other provinces after independence. University of Sindh is the second oldest university in Pakistan that was established in 1947. Besides other educational institutions; university of Sindh also imparts education and plays an important role in the socio-cultural and geopolitical life of Sindhi peoples. This university, since its inception, has been giving high priority to teacher education. Faculty of Education offers B.Ed, M.Ed, MA .(Education), M.Phil., and Ph.D. programmes, and in these programmes research thesis writing is the compulsory and basic requirement for the degrees respectively. The students of M.Ed. of Faculty of Education are not only asked but compelled to write the research thesis in English language which is the only medium of

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instruction at this level. The aim of writing this article is to provide knowledge about the impact of medium of instruction on making research thesis as well as to find out the difficulties of students by using English language in writing the thesis. In this connection, descriptive survey type research was conducted and the researcher used interviews as a tool of research. The findings of the study were based on the analysis of interview schedule. In the end, suggestions have been made for the improvement of the impact of medium of instruction, in writing the research thesis.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a dynamic force in the life of every individual, influencing his physical, intellectual, social and emotional development. As defined by Allama. I.I. Kazi (1989, p.7), **"The word education is fundamentally derived from the root "Educe" means to lead one out from darkness to light"**. So, education develops skills through which individuals become capable to survive in the society successfully. The rationality is out come of education which stimulates through research. The epistemology of the word research means "to find out again and again", which confirms the fact of the phenomenon, which leads towards the development of an individual as well as society. Research is a scientific method of probing into a problem arising from any field of life such as social, cultural, economic, psychological and educational. Educational Research, as quoted by Travers (1958, p.05) is, **"that activity which is directed towards development of a science of behavior in educational situation. The ultimate aim of such science is to provide knowledge that will permit the educator to achieve his goals by the most effective methods."** While, the goal of educational research explained by Donald Ary (1979, p.11) is, **"Its goal is to discover general principles or interpretations of behavior that can be used to explain, predict and control events in educational situations"**. However, the events, which predicted, controlled and explain by the researchers are needed to be expressed in the language in which he or she holds commands. Sharma .Y.K (2004, p.225) says, **"Language symbolizes human development. It is a gift to man as the best living being of the world. Without it, a**

man is the most superior animal with limited expression. Language is the power of the human race through which he is able to express himself well and understand the expressions of others. On its basis, man utilizes the experiences of the past for the present and secures present successes as a basis of future development. As a wonderful discovery of man, language has enriched him tremendously. It has saved the world from man using signal sounds like those used by the dumb. Its development is a sign of social and national development. It is a vehicle of human expression." Thus, it is revealed that language is a tool through which man gains education and expresses his knowledge skilfully in the language in which he /she has fluency. In our country, most of the students get education in mother tongue / national language at secondary level, but at higher level/ university level they are asked to do their research thesis writing in English language, which creates great hurdles for them and it drags them towards unfair means for the completion of their masters. "Unfair means", according to Wehmeier. Sally (2005,p1416) is, **"not right or fair according to a set of rules or principles."** Therefore, this research article describes the impact of medium of instruction in research thesis writing and points out the difficulties of students in this connection. It also suggests measures which should be taken on the bases of the findings.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study has been specifically designed to,

1. Describe the impact of medium of instruction on research thesis writing.
2. Find out the difficulties of students by using English language in writing research thesis.
3. Give suggestions for the improvement.

DELIMITATIONS

This study was delimited only to the students of M.Ed level and the teachers of faculty of Education, University of Sindh.

METHODOLOGY

Before conducting this study, the researcher, as a first step, made exhaustive study of the related literature to gain a clear vision and understanding about medium of instruction and the problems related to it. For collecting data two separate interview schedules (Appendix I and II) were developed for students and teachers. In all 50 interviews were conducted, 20 with teachers and 30 with students of Faculty of Education, Elsa Kazi Campus, University of Sindh, Hyderabad. They were randomly selected. The collected data was analyzed through qualitative assessment. At the end, suggestions were made for improvement.

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

In all 50 interviews were conducted with teachers and students of the Faculty of Education. A summary of the detailed discussion of their views is given as under:

a) The views of teachers

Q. No.1 How much research experience do you have as a guide?

Most of the respondents have 10 to 15 years experience as a guide at B.Ed/ M.Ed level.

Q.No.2 What language will you prefer for the research thesis writing and why?

90% respondents said that Urdu and Sindhi (regional languages) were the most appropriate languages for research thesis writing because majority of students come from Urdu/Sindhi medium and have proper command in these languages. They express their views in Urdu and Sindhi very well. Therefore they suggest that these languages should be allowed for writing research dissertation. Some of the teachers were also in support of using English as a medium of research thesis writing because it was the need of time, they stress that students at the lower level of their schooling must be prepared to read, write and speak English with interest.

Q.No.3 Do you think that the students have efficiency to express their views well in English?

95% of teachers expressed negative views in this regard. They agreed that most of the students did not have proper command to express their views well in English language that led them towards unfair means. They again said that at the time of viva-voce students were not able to give the right answers related to the research thesis.

Q.No. 4 Do you think that there is difference in quality of research thesis writing after the compulsion of English language?

89% of the respondents said that the quality of research thesis writing was not up to the mark due to the compulsion of English. They said that English language generated lot of problems to make students inefficient for the utilization of their potential with full confidence.

Q.No.5. As a teacher/ guide give suggestions for the improvement of quality of thesis.

The respondents have given valuable suggestions in this regard. These suggestions have been summarized and discussed in the end.

b) The views of students

Q.No.1. Do you have any theoretical knowledge about thesis writing?

85% of respondents said that they had sufficient theoretical knowledge about the methods and techniques of research as well as writing research thesis.

Q.No.2. In which language you want to express your knowledge related to the research easily?

90% respondents responded that they belonged to Urdu/Sindhi medium schools and they had been taught English as a subject during their academic life, therefore they had poor background of English. Besides, they agreed that they had very

poor communication skills in English. Few of them belonged to English medium schools so they had some how better communication skills in English. However, therefore, they all wanted to express their ideas and knowledge according to their interest and the medium in which they had interested so far.

Q.No.3. Does your inefficiency in English language effect the quality of research thesis writing? How?

80% respondents gave their answer in positive terms. They said that most of them belonged to Sindhi/Urdu medium and few had experience of English medium so it was quite difficult for them to express views about the research topic in a technical way. While the techniques of research in itself was difficult process so the compulsion of English made it impossible.

Q.No.4 Which type of unfair means you used for research writing?

87% respondents said that they used different means according to their convenience. Sometimes they bought research thesis from Photostat shops, they copied their seniors' thesis or they borrowed persons to write their thesis. While those who were interested in research, they wrote their research thesis in Urdu/Sindhi language after that they got it translated by some research oriented personnel.

Q.No. 5 Give some suggestions for the improvement of quality of research thesis writing?

In response of this question, students gave suggestions and these will be discussed in the end.

FINDINGS

- 90% teachers were of the opinion that Urdu/ Sindhi was the most appropriate languages for writing research thesis.
- 95% teachers said that because of compulsion of English language, most of the students at the time of viva voce were unable to give proper responses.

- 89% respondents replied that the quality of writing thesis was not up to the mark due to the compulsion of English language.
- 85% students had enough theoretical knowledge about the research techniques and writing thesis.
- 90% students said that they could express their views about research topic in Urdu/ Sindhi in better manner as compared to the English language.
- 87% students reply that because of compulsion of English language they used unfair means to complete their thesis.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Language is a tool by which individuals communicate with each other and express their ideas in accordance with the need i.e. writings, debates and speeches. However, it becomes effective when one expresses in the language in which he/she has command. Mother tongue or national language is a medium by which a child acquires knowledge and develops skills. This research confirms that students want to complete their research reporting in national language or in regional languages. It is because their intellectual attainment has been very much familiar to this medium since the very beginning of their academic education. Therefore, students should be left at their liberty to choose any medium for writing research thesis according to their choice and interest. In this context, the Holy Quran has also highlighted the importance of mother tongue as "Thus we have revealed their (Qur'an) to you in your own tongue so that they may take heed" (44:58). In this connection Quran argues that, "Thus we have revealed to you the Qur'an in your own tongue that you may thereby proclaim good findings to the upright and give warning to a contentious nation" (19:97). Thus a purposeful education depends on the correct knowledge and its comprehension which may be minimized by appropriate medium of instruction. Keeping in view all these facts, the following suggestions are made for improvement. As our society is not research oriented one, so it needs to be motivated and compelled

to do so. The main hindrance in research is found its medium. Therefore it, i.e. English as a medium of thesis writing should be removed so that letter number of youngsters from our society may inclined to take responsibility of writing research thesis.

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