ENGLISH LANGUAGE READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY OF A PAKISTANI PUBLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

by

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TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ..... **ii**

TABLE OF CONTENT ..... **iv**

LIST OF TABLES ..... **ix**

LIST OF FIGURES ..... **xii**

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ..... **xv**

ABSTRAK ..... **xvii**

ABSTRACT ..... **xix**

CHAPTER 1-INRODUCTION **1**

1.0 Introduction 1

1.1 Background of the Study 1

1.2 The Problem 3

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study 7

1.4 Research Questions 8

1.5 Rationale of the Study 10

1.6 Significance of the Study 10

1.7 Limitations of the Study 11

1.8 Delimitations of the Study 12

1.9 Definition of the Key Terms 12

1.10 Conclusion 16

CHAPTER 2-REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE **17**

2.0 Introduction 17

2.1 Formal Education System 17

2.1.1 Education System in Pakistan 18

2.1.2 Private-Public Schools Dichotomy in Pakistan 21

2.2 Medium of Instruction 22

2.2.1 Medium of Instruction in Pakistan 24

2.2.3 Importance of English Language at University Level 28

2.2.4 Relationship between English Language Proficiency and Academic Performance of Students at Various Levels 30

2.3 Reading 33

2.3.1 Purposes of Reading 36

2.3.2 Reading as Constructive Process 38

2.3.3 Types of Reading 39

2.4 Reading among University Students in Pakistan 41

2.4.1 Reading Comprehension Ability 43

2.4.2 Importance of Reading Comprehension Abilities 44

2.4.3 Classification of Reading Comprehension Skills 46

2.5 Assessment 52

2.5.1 Purposes of Assessment 53

2.5.2 Types of Assessment 54

2.5.3 The Examination and Assessment System in Pakistan 58

2.5.4 English Language Assessment 62

2.6 Conclusion and Conceptualizing the Study 67

CHAPTER 3-RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 74

3.0 Introduction 74

3.1 Research Design 74

3.1.1 Research Matrix 77

3.2 Quantitative Research 82

3.3 Methods of Data Collection 82

3.3.1 Data Collection Instruments 83

3.4 Population and Sample size 89

3.5 Method of Data Analysis 91

3.5.2 Data Analysis for Phase 2 94

3.6 Conclusion 101

CHAPTER 4-ANALYSIS OF DATA 102

4.0 Introduction 102

4.1 Phase I - Instrument Screening 103

4.1.1 READS Biasness 105

4.1.3 Usability of the READS 107

4.1.4 The Evaluative Potentials of the READS 108

4.1.5 Summary of Phase- I 109

4.2 Phase 2 – Diagnose PPU Respondents' Reading Performance 110

4.2.1 Overall ESL Reading Comprehension Abilities of PPU Respondents 110

4.2.2 Literal ESL Reading Comprehension Abilities 116

4.2.3 Reorganizational ESL Reading Comprehension Abilities 122

4.2.4 Inferential ESL Reading Comprehension Abilities 128

4.2.5 Comparing PPU Different Majors Reading Comprehension Ability 134

4.3 Phase 3 – Developing a New Matrix and Descriptors for the Adapted READS 136

4.3.1 Determining the Cut Scores for Performance Bands 136

4.3.2 Developing PPU READS Matrix 138

4.3.3 PPU Respondents Reading Ability Descriptor 142

4.4 Phase 4 – Profiling Respondents based on Reading Ability 156

4.4.1 The High Performers' Profile 158

4.4.2 The Average Performers' Profile 160

4.4.3 The Low Performers' Profile 161

4.4.4 Profiling Summary 163

4.5 Phase 5 –Reading Performance Vs Academic Performance 165

4.5.1 Choice of Correlational Analysis 165

4.5.2 Summary 171

CHAPTER 5-DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION 172

5.1 Introduction 172

5.2 Reflection and Contemplation 173

5.3 Synthesis of Findings 176

5.3.1 Appropriateness of the READS 176

5.3.3 Respondents' Reading Ability Profile 181

5.4 Implications and Recommendations 185

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research 190

5.6 Conclusion 191

REFERENCES 192

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 2.1	Purposes of Reading	37
Table 2.2	Revised Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives	51
Table 3.1	Research Matrix	77
Table 3.2	Research Population and Sample for Quantitative Data	89
Table 3.3	Method of Analysis of Close-ended Questions of READS Survey	92
Table 3.4	Method of Analysis of Open-ended Questions of READS Survey	93
Table 3.5	Cut Scores on Z-Score	96
Table 3.6	Data Dictionary for Respondents Biodata	97
Table 4.1	Overall ESL Reading Comprehension Abilities	111
Table 4.2	Literal ESL Reading Comprehension Abilities	116
Table 4.3	Reorganizational ESL Reading Comprehension Abilities	122
Table 4.4	Inferential ESL Reading Comprehension Abilities	128
Table 4.5	Calculating Cut-Score using the Z-score formula based on the Raw Scores	136
Table 4.6	Establishing Bands based on the cut-score	136
Table 4.7	Relationship between PPU Academic Years and Performance	137
Table 4.8	PPU READS Matrix	140
Table 4.9	Working of PPU Performance Standards	140
Table 4.10	PPU Performance Standards Description	141
Table 4.11	Percentage Score Classification of Reading Skills Performance Bands of PPU Respondents	142
Table 4.12	Mean Score Classification of Reading Skills Performance Bands of PPU Respondents	143
Table 4.13	Developing PPU READS Descriptors	144

Table 4.14	Calibration of Achievement Based on Band Mean	141
Table 4.15	Calibration of Achievement Based on Percentages of Correct	146
Table 4.16	Mutual Decision Based on Both Tables 4.14 & 4.15	147
Table 4.17	PPU READS' Descriptors	148
Table 4.18	Prescribed Achievement by PPU respondents	149
Table 4.19	Actual Achievement by PPU respondents	151
Table 4.20	Difference in Achievement by PPU respondents	153
Table 4.21	Difference in Achievement by English Major PPU respondents	154
Table 4.22	Enhanced comparison in Achievement by English Major PPU respondents	155
Table 4.23	Demarcating Performance	157
Table 4.24	Profiling the High Performers	158
Table 4.25	Profiling the Average Performers	159
Table 4.26	Profiling the Low Performers	160
Table 4.27	Profiling Summary	162
Table 4.28	Pearson Correlation1 READS Score vs CGPA (ALL; N = 521)	165
Table 4.29	Pearson Correlation2 READS Score vs CGPA (READS Band 5 & 6; N = 97)	165
Table 4.30	Pearson Correlation3 READS Score vs CGPA (READS Band 3 & 4; N = 357)	166
Table 4.31	Pearson Correlation4 READS Score vs CGPA (READS Band 1 & 2; N = 67)	166
Table 4.32	Pearson Correlation5 READS Score vs CGPA (ENGLISH Major; N = 169)	167
Table 4.33	Pearson Correlation6 READS Score vs CGPA (PSYCHOLOGY Major; N=147)	168
Table 4.34	Pearson Correlation6 READS Score vs CGPA (SOCIOLOGY Major; N=99)	168

Table 4.35	Pearson Correlation6 READS Score vs CGPA (EDUCATION Major; N=106)	169
Table 5.1	Using information from READS more effectively and efficiently	186

LIST OF FIGURES

		Page
Figure 1.1	The Problem	5
Figure 2.1	Medium of Instruction in Pakistan	26
Figure 2.2	Comprehension Strategies	38
Figure 2.3	Types of Reading	39
Figure 2.4	Classification of Reading Comprehension Abilities	47
Figure 2.5	Types of Assessment	55
Figure 2.6	Conceptual Framework of Study	69
Figure 3.1	Research Design	75
Figure 3.2	The Profiling Logic	97
Figure 4.1	The Overall Reading Performance of English Majors	112
Figure 4.2	The Overall Reading Performance of Psychology Majors	112
Figure 4.3	The Overall Reading Performance of Sociology Majors	113
Figure 4.4	The Overall Reading Performance of Education Majors	114
Figure 4.5	The Overall Reading Performance of Four Majors	114
Figure 4.6	The Mean Values of Literal ESL Reading Performance of English Majors	117
Figure 4.7	The Mean Values of Literal ESL Reading Performance of Psychology Majors	118
Figure 4.8	The Mean Values of Literal ESL Reading Performance of Sociology Majors	119
Figure 4.9	The Mean Values of Literal ESL Reading Performance of Education Majors	120

Figure 4.10	The Mean Values of Literal ESL Reading Performance of Four Majors	120
Figure 4.11	The Mean Values of Reorganizational ESL Reading Performance of English Majors	123
Figure 4.12	The Mean Values of Reorganizational ESL Reading Performance of Psychology Majors	124
Figure 4.13	The Mean Values of Reorganizational ESL Reading Performance of Sociology Majors	125
Figure 4.14	The Mean Values of Reorganizational ESL Reading Performance of Education Majors	126
Figure 4.15	The Mean Values of Reorganizational ESL Reading Performance of Four Majors	127
Figure 4.16	The Mean Values of Inferential ESL Reading Performance of English Majors	129
Figure 4.17	The Mean Values of Inferential ESL Reading Performance of Psychology Majors	130
Figure 4.18	The Mean Values of Inferential ESL Reading Performance of Sociology Majors	131
Figure 4.19	The Mean Values of Inferential ESL Reading Performance of Education Majors	132
Figure 4.20	The Mean Values of Inferential ESL Reading Performance of Four Majors	133
Figure 4.21	The Overall Reading Performance of Three Levels	134
Figure 4.22	Development of the Cut-Scores and Bands based on Z-Score formula	137

Figure 4.23	Percentages of Respondents Scored Respective Performance Bands	138
Figure 4.24	Performer Categories	156
Figure 4.25	Profiling the High Performers	158
Figure 4.26	Profiling the Average Performers	159
Figure 4.27	Profiling the Low Performers	161
Figure 5.1	Relationship generated by the Adapted READS Instrument	183

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PPU	Pakistani Public University
ESL	English as Second Language
PB	Performance Band
LL	Low Literal
ML	Medium Literal
HL	High Literal
LR	Low Reorganizational
MR	Medium Reorganizational
HR	High Reorganizational
LI	Low Inferential
MI	Medium Inferential
HI	High Inferential
MS	Meeting Standard
BS	Below Standard
AW	Academic Warning
AS	Above Standard
OM	Overall Mean
BM	Band Mean

DIM	Difference in Mean
CA%	Correct Answer Percentage
AC	Actual Achievement
PA	Prescribed Achievement

KEBOLEHAN PEMAHAMAN BACAAN BAHASA INGGERIS DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR UNIVERSITI AWAM PAKISTAN DAN PERHUBUNGANNYA DENGAN PENCAPAIAN AKADEMIK

ABSTRAK

Matlamat utama kajian ini adalah untuk memastikan tahap kebolehan pemahaman bacaan pada peringkat makro dan mikro pelajar dari sebuah universiti awam yang terkemuka di Pakistan. Secara khususnys ia bertujuan mencari kesahan dan kebolehpercayaan instrumen READS, menanda aras kebolehan membaca responden ESL, menprofil responden berdasarkan prestasi bacaan mereka dalam kumpulan keupayaan yang berbeza dan mengkaji perhubungan antara prestasi bacaan responden dan prestasi akademik mereka. Kajian ini merupakan kajian kuantitatif yang melibatkan 521 orang responden dari universiti awam terkemuka di Pakistan yang telah mengambil ujian pemahaman bacaan ESL melalui adaptasi sistem ujian READS dalam talian. Sistem READS yang telah diadaptasi ini boleh menyimpan jawapan dan skor responden dalam resipotori di mana analisis seterusnya telah dijalankan. Sistem asal tersebut telah dibangunkan di USM dan telah digunakan dengan jayanya selama beberapa tahun. Kajian mendapati bahawa READS merupakan instrumen yang sesuai tetapi memerlukan sedikit adaptasi untuk membolehkan ia digunakan sebagai instrumen pengumpulan data. Formula z-skor telah digunakan untuk mendefinasikan 'cut-score' (pembahagian skor) dan band prestasi (Band 1 hingga 6) untuk mengkategorikan tahap pemahaman bacaan responden. Data kuantitatif sekunder bersabit prestasi akademik responden juga telah diperolehi (dengan keizinan) dari bahagian peperiksaan universiti berkenaan dalam bentuk CGPA. Analisis korelasi Pearson telah digunakan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara keupayaan bacaan responden

dan pencapaian akademik (CGPA). Dapatan kajian menunjukkan terdapat perhubungan positif yang konsisten tetapi agak lemah. Kekuatan korelasi menunjukkan kepelbagaian dari r = 0.223 (lemah) hingga r = 0.559 (sederhana) pada α = 0.01 atau 99 % tahap keyakinan. Profil pembaca juga telah dibangunkan berdasarkan data prestasi mereka dalam ujian READS (lemah, sederhana, baik), pencapaian akademik dan butiran demografik. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa prestasi pembacaan ESL oleh pelajar Pakistan perlu diperbaiki kerana keseluruhan prestasi adalah dibawah jangkaan. Kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa READS boleh digunakan sebagai instrument ujian diagnostik, formatif juga sumatif untuk mengenal pasti kebolehan membaca para responden. Guru-guru dan pelajar-pelajar dapat memantau kemajuan mereka berdasarkan informasi yang disimpan di dalam repositori READS. Dengan menggunakan instrumen baru ini kita dapat mengumpul data pemahaman bacaan, merekod dan mentaksir respon pelajar secara automatik dan daripada bilangan yang besar berdasarkan ujian yang serupa tetapi tidak sama (system READS boleh menjana ujian serupa tetapi tidak sama). selain itu kita boleh mengubah data daripada respositori READS ke pakej statistik seperti excel dan SPSS untuk menjalankan analisis berikutnya. Dapatan kajian ini dapat memberi manfaat dan mempunyai implikasi yang tinggi untuk kegunaan Kementerian Pendidikan, institusi akademik, pihak berkuasa universiti, guru dan pelajar ESL serta pembuat dasar dan pihak berkepentingan.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY OF A PAKISTANI PUBLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study was to ascertain the reading comprehension abilities at the macro and micro levels of undergraduates from a major public university in Pakistan. Specifically, the validity and reliability of the established READS instrument, benchmark of ESL reading abilities of the respondents, profiling of the respondents based on their reading performance in different ability groups, and investigation on the relationship between respondents' reading performance and their academic performance were carried out as part of the present study. This is basically a quantitative study, where 521 respondents from a large leading Pakistani university sat for an ESL reading comprehension test via the Adapted READS online test system. The Adapted READS stored their respondents' responses and scored them in its repository where subsequent analysis was conducted. The original system was developed in USM and has been successfully used for a number of years now. The study found that READS was a suitable instrument but needed a little adaptation to enable it to be used as a data gathering instrument. Furthermore, the z-score formula was used to define the cut-score and performance bands (Bands 1 to 6) to categorize respondents' reading performance. Secondary quantitative data of respondents' academic performance were also obtained (with permission) from the target university examination department in the form of CGPA. Pearson correlation analysis was used to investigate the association between respondents' reading ability and academic achievements (CGPA) indicated a weaker but consistent positive relationship. The strength of correlations varies from $r = 0.223$ (weak) to $r = 0.559$ (moderately strong) at $\alpha = 0.01$ or 99 % confidence level. Readers'

profiles were also developed based on data related to their performance on READS (weak, moderate and strong), academic achievements and demographic particulars. The results indicated that the ESL Reading performance of Pakistani undergraduates needed to be enhanced as their overall performance was below expectation. This study has also shown that READS can be used as a diagnostic, formative as well as summative instrument to identify the reading capabilities of the respondents. Teachers and students can monitor their progress as their information is kept in the repository permanently. Through using this novel instrument to gather reading comprehension data, it is possible to automatically score responses from large number of respondents on similar tests besides transforming the data to other statistical packages such as Excel and SPSS for further analysis. The findings of this study will be beneficial and has strong implications on Ministry of Education, academic institutions, university authorities, ESL teachers and students, policy makers and stakeholders.

CHAPTER 1

INRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter acts as a kind of preview of what is to be expected in the next few chapters, beginning with a brief description of the problems which led to this study, followed by its rationale, its significance, its objectives and research questions, and the limitations and definition of terms used throughout the study. A preliminary understanding of the research topic and its significance will, in this way, be established.

1.1 Background of the Study

It goes without saying that education plays a crucial role in the advancement of any state and that eradicating illiteracy and reforming the quality of education for all citizens is a priority for any government. Pakistan's education system is governed by its Education Ministry of the Government of Pakistan through provincial governments. The federal government mainly supports and advances educational programs and is responsible for the funding of innovative projects (Khatoon & Usmani, 2014). The education system in Pakistan is, for the most part, separated into six distinct stages:

1. Pre-primary education (preliminary classes)
2. Primary education (grades one to five)
3. Middle school (grades six to eight)
4. Secondary School Certificate (grades nine and ten) also known as Matriculation or *Matric* in short (SSC)
5. Higher Secondary School Certificate (grades eleven and twelve), also known as

Intermediate Exam or HSSC

6. University education (graduation and higher studies)

The importance of English language education and English proficiency for many nations is, today, an undeniable fact, whether in regard to its importance for careers, welfare or globalization and the common desire for citizens to operate on an international stage. English is, therefore, a widely-spoken second language (ESL/ EFL) in various Asian countries and is used as the preferred second or foreign language in Pakistan, Hong Kong, Bangladesh, Singapore, India, and the UAE (Choi & Lee, 2008).

In Pakistan, the English Language is not just a distinct subject, it is actually supposed to be the official medium of instruction from grade 1 to university (Coleman, 2011), a system derived from its distinct colonial legacy. This arrangement is, in fact, enshrined in Pakistan's Education Policy. While English language proficiency is regarded as a key enabler of an individual's welfare or career, it is also seen by the government as vital for Pakistan's modernization. Upgrading students' proficiency in English is, therefore, a recognized need if the overall quality of education in Pakistan is to improve (Norton, 2015).

Among the four language skills, reading is considered to be the most important, particularly for English as Second Language (ESL) learners (Zhao, 2015) in any academic situation, while also being useful for constructing an individual's language in general terms (Marx et al., 2015). Reading is also, naturally, an indispensable skill for ESL students in higher level education in Pakistan, on the grounds that most courses, textbooks and, basically, all sources of academic knowledge are normally distributed in English in Pakistan (Abdul Rashid Mohamed, Lin, & Shaik Abdul Malik, 2010). Good reading ability is also a foundation of higher studies, as courses require textbooks

and online reading competency, as well as the ability to access different types of reading materials outside the classroom (Vernon, 2015). It is established in the literature that students who have troubles with their English language reading skills are also very likely to underperform in their academic studies (Aina, Ogundele, & Olanipekun 2013).

1.2 The Problem

As noted above, a key feature of Pakistan's educational policy for decades has been the insistence on the English language as the official medium of instruction in schools, colleges, and other educational institutions. In spite of this, the reality is that Urdu and many local dialects have been used to convey lectures, guidelines, instruction, and correspondence (Tamim, 2014). School and college teachers have reverted to using these local dialects as a supplementary medium for instruction, effectively executing bilingual practices for teaching in the no doubt well-intentioned belief that students learn better when their local dialects are utilized (Badshah, Kausar, & Khan, 2017). This situation is compounded by the poor quality of ESL provision in local schools and colleges, with widespread reports of unsatisfactory conditions (M. Ali, Wyatt, & Van Laar, 2015). In fact, in addition to Urdu, a wide range of local dialects (formal and informal) are being informally used as a medium of instruction in the classrooms of schools, colleges, and universities to facilitate learning and teaching (Fareed, Jawed, & Awan, 2018). It is, therefore, unsurprising that after studying English in schools and colleges for as many as ten or twelve years, Pakistani students are far from proficient in English and find themselves unprepared for further study or communicating in the workplace in this medium (Khan, Sani, & Shaikh-Abdullah, 2016). This is particularly the case for students from a rural background, perhaps because in some regions where students use regional dialects as a first language (L1), Urdu is effectively their second language (L2), rendering English as their third language (L3) (Mahboob & Jain, 2016).

Naturally, such students do not have a full command of all the major linguistic skills, particularly reading, which, as stated above, is the most important skill for university level students (McKenna & Stahl, 2015).

This situation has not gone unrecognized in Pakistan. Numerous studies have attempted to address the issue of the medium of instruction in Pakistan. For example, Mushtaq, Alam, and Bukhari (2015) have observed that after many years of instruction in the English medium, Pakistani students still faced challenges from their reading comprehension abilities. Reading comprehension is a necessary ability for students to succeed at tertiary-level study (Wallot, O'Brien, Haussmann, Kloos, & Lyby, 2014). However, the variance in the levels of English which Pakistani students bring to universities is striking (Taj, Ali, Sipra, & Ahmad, 2017). It would not be unreasonable to remark that those coming from small villages in very rural areas tend to have a lower ability in the language (Bilal, Rehman, Rashid, Adnan, & Abbas, 2013). That being said, almost all entering into university for higher education after finishing their college level face considerable difficulties in coping with this new phase of education, particularly in their ability to comprehend English textbooks, notes, tests, lectures, presentations, assignments, and exams. They also suffer from a lack of confidence to participate and present their concepts in class because of the teachers' exclusive use of the English language (Channa, Nordin, & Abassi, 2018). This situation naturally gives rise to a sense of alienation, disappointment, and lack of self-worth among incoming university students, which will ultimately affect their academic performance. Unfortunately, this 'open secret' in Pakistan is unaddressed, with, for example, no efficient intervention program (from Urdu to the English language) being established for students to improve their ESL reading proficiency.

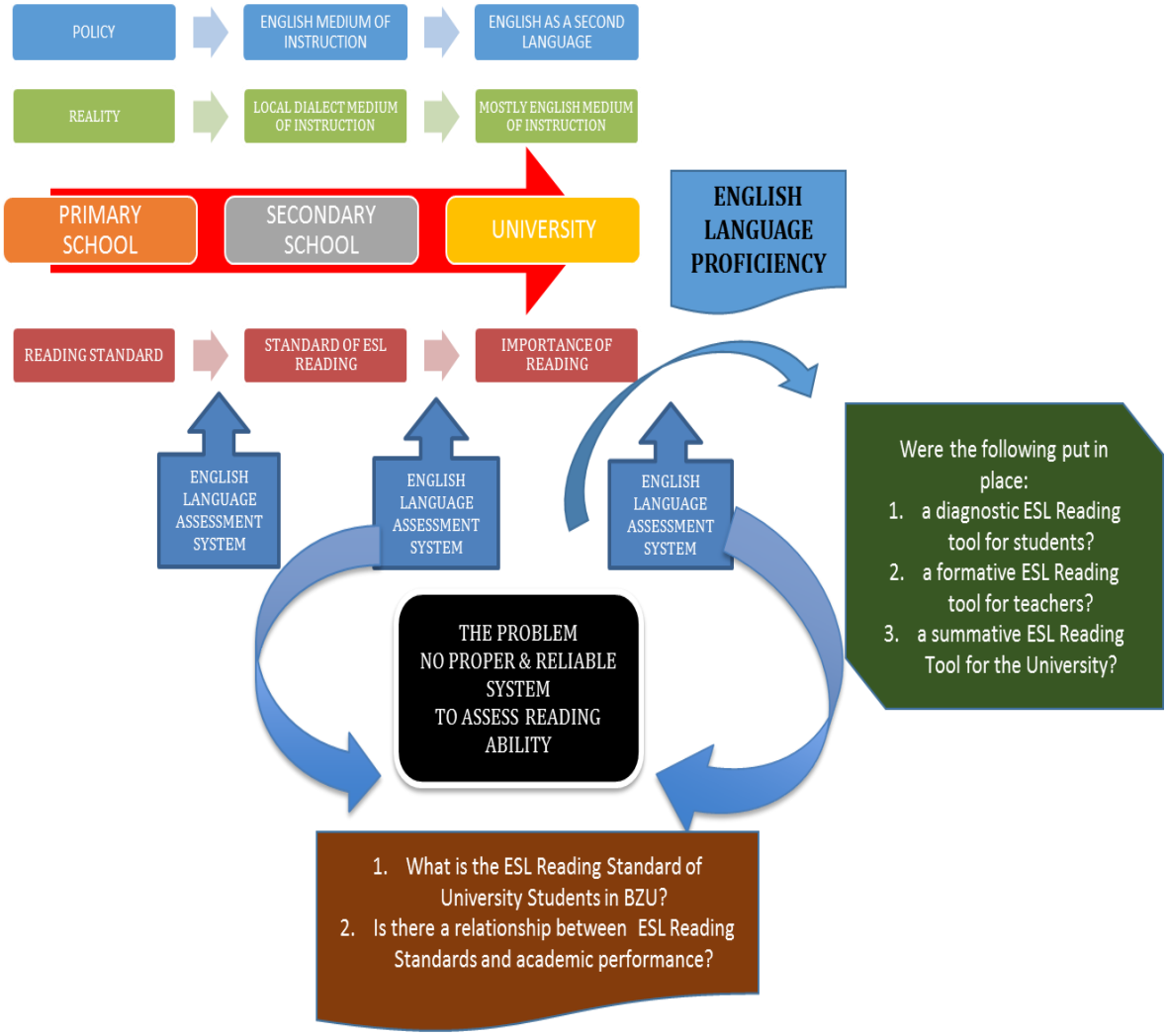


Figure 1.1. The Problem

From the writer's own experience, students suddenly find themselves overloaded with different English texts to read, including lectures, notes and prescribed texts (Amur, Butt, & Malik, 2015), but the absence of good ESL reading comprehension ability often causes the loss of a number of students from their courses when they 'drop out'. For those who do complete their courses, there is the suspicion that they could have achieved higher grades if they had come to university equipped with proficient ESL reading abilities (Iqbal, Noor, Muhabat, & Kazemian, 2015). It is widely agreed, therefore, that ten years of school study and two years of college education do not contribute much to the learner's mastery of ESL reading comprehension in Pakistan

(Mubashir Iqbal, Noor, Muhabat, & Kazemian, 2015). English language support is only given to students based on their major disciplines, with no provision for improving their general ESL proficiency, especially their reading skills.

This is all compounded by the fact that universities offer admissions without any testing of a student's ESL reading level, university administrations apparently assuming that their students are fully equipped for any challenges in regard to their degree programs, including the crucial skill of reading comprehension. It is, therefore, left to the lecturers to evaluate the progress of their students' ESL reading ability and adapt their teaching methodologies to make their classes understood and effective (Hassan & Janjua, 2015). It is important for lecturers left with this situation not only to know about their students' ESL reading benchmarks but also to investigate the relationship between their students' ESL reading ability and their academic progress. It is the contention of this study that universities, above all, need a reliable and proper summative ESL reading tool through which they can determine and evaluate the reading standards of outgoing university students in their final years of their degree.

Currently, there is no such reliable and proper assessment system which could be used as a diagnostic, formative and summative ESL reading tool for incoming and graduating students, lecturers and universities (Taskeen, Habib, & Tarar, 2015). This study addresses these problems by proposing an effective form of assessment to establish the English reading comprehension ability of these students. It also offers recommendations by means of ways in which they might be assisted in the improvement of their English reading comprehension ability.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to investigate the level of ESL reading comprehension ability among the university students of the Pakistani Public University (PPU) Multan. It is also to investigate whether there is any relationship between their reading comprehension performance and their academic performance. Specifically, the objectives of this study are;

Phase 1- Instrument Screening

1. Based on the needs of the PPU for a valid and reliable instrument to assess their students' ESL Reading Comprehension ability, to conduct a screening process of the Original READS (Reading Evaluation and Decoding System), specifically to measure
    a. Biasness
    b. Scoring criteria
    c. Validity test - face validity
    d. Diagnostic, formative, and summative testing potential
    e. Usability
2. To adapt the READS based on the findings of the evaluation process in 1 (above).

Phase 2 – Diagnose the PPU Respondents' Reading Performance

1. To diagnose the respondents' ESL reading comprehension performance of PPU respondents from different disciplines and years using the adapted READS system, particularly their;
    a. Overall reading comprehension performance
    b. Literal reading comprehension performance

c. Reorganizational reading comprehension performance

d. Inferential reading comprehension performance

Phase 3 – Development of a New Matrix and Descriptors of the Adapted READS

1. To calibrate the matrix and descriptors of the Adapted READS based on the findings in phase 2 to develop the Adapted READS matrix and descriptors.

Phase 4 – Profiling the Performance of Respondents

1. Using the Adapted READS Matrix and descriptors, to profile the PPU respondents with a view to classifying them as
    a. High Performers
    b. Average Performers
    c. Low Performers

Phase 5 –Establishing the Relationship between Reading and Academic Performance

1. To establish the relationship between respondents' ESL reading comprehension performance and their academic performance (CGPA).

1.4 Research Questions

Phase 1-RQ 1. How suitable is the Original READS to be used on PPU respondents?

1. Is the READS encoder biased?
2. What is the level of face validity of the READS encoder?
3. What is the level of usability of the READS system?
4. What are the evaluative potentials of the READS system?

Phase 2 –RQ 2. What is the Reading Standard of the PPU Respondents?

1. What are the overall ESL reading comprehension abilities of the PPU respondents?
2. What are the Literal ESL reading comprehension abilities of the PPU respondents?
3. What are the Reorganizational ESL reading comprehension abilities of the PPU respondents?
4. What are the Inferential ESL reading comprehension abilities of PPU the respondents?

Phase 3 -RQ 3. What is the new matrix and descriptors of the Adapted READS?

1. What are the cut-scores for the different bands to identify accurately the different ESL reading comprehension abilities of the respondents?
2. What are the descriptors for each band?

Phase 4 – RQ 4. What are the profiles of the different levels of the performers?

1. Who are the high performers?
2. Who are the average performers?
3. Who are the low performers?

Phase 5 -RQ 5. What is the nature of the relationship between ESL reading comprehension performance and the respondents' academic performance?

1. Is there a significant relationship between ESL reading comprehension performance and the respondents' academic performance (CGPA)?
2. How strong is the relationship between ESL reading comprehension performance and the respondents' academic performance (CGPA)?

1.5 Rationale of the Study

The rationale of this study is based on the significance of finding a suitable and reliable assessment tool to assess the ESL reading ability of the PPU students. It is rationalized that benchmarking the students' reading comprehension abilities and standards will definitely provide the English language teachers with useful information about each student's progress. It will also serve as a guideline for these teachers to adjust and prepare reading lessons, e-teaching instructions, and other materials appropriately according to the students' reading needs. Additionally, it will be proposed that administering a reading assessment once a year will effectively offer a regular checkup on the students' English reading comprehension abilities.

In fact, a comprehensive reporting system could also allow students to know in-depth information regarding their abilities, in addition to providing teachers with useful information. Such an assessment package, if fully utilized, could act as a diagnostic, formative, and summative instrument and serve as a comprehensive assessment system for reading comprehension evaluation. A 'repository' of this kind could act as a bank for the lecturers to monitor their students' progress and for researchers to mine the data for the purposes of ESL reading comprehension improvement. Possessing such a valid and reliable tool would facilitate determining the relationship between ESL reading performance and the academic progress of students.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it has the potential to reveal a number of essential findings. Reading assessment is very significant as it provides educators with the information they need to help learners to become fluent readers. Reading problems are discovered through the assessing of learners so teachers can meet learners' needs

and provide intervention when essential. According to Johnston and Costello (2005), any assessment system must incorporate a feedback mechanism which facilitates future progress in performance, since the assessment has implications for what is learned.

The Adapted READS system applied in the present study is a standardized test which can be applied to Year 1 to Year 4 of the BS(Hons) program students at PPU. It is designed as a wide-ranging test which could be applied to assess the reading abilities of the students from different cohorts based on a common standard. The test score will provide teachers and lecturers with simple diagnostic information about what the students can or cannot do. The scores obtained will determine where the students are placed in terms of their overall reading comprehension abilities.

Benchmarking the student's ESL reading abilities and performance standards will properly indicate whether they perform well or need further improvement, while providing substantive information to aid the educational professionals, the faculty, and the institute in understanding the effectiveness and weaknesses of the students in their ESL reading comprehension abilities, thereby enabling the university to make better decisions for curriculum and instruction improvement.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Limitations are those occurrences, events and matters that arise in a study, which are out of the researcher's control. They restrain the extensity to which a study can go, and sometimes influence the conclusions and end result that can be drawn. It goes without saying that each study, regardless of how well it is conducted and developed, has specific limitations and restrictions. Similarly, this study was not without its impediments, but they were not of such significance to undermine its validity.

Firstly, the current research only considered a clearly determined population

and specific setting for the sampling of students at a PU, located in the southern part of Pakistan. Different settings may have produced diverse outcomes, so naturally, the outcomes of this study cannot be generalized to make conclusions about the performance of Pakistani university students generally.

This study also utilized an online test (READS) to gather the data, which has the advantage of the capacity to achieve responses quickly, easily, and economically, however, this also became one of the limitations in this study, due to technical reasons. Because some of the selected departments were without a stable Internet connection or correct settings in their computer labs. A lot of problems were faced during all this data collection phase.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The present study is delimited to the BS (Hons) Social Sciences Degree courses of the Pakistani Public University (PPU), which offers its courses at different sub-campuses, although this research was only to be located only at the main campus of the in Multan city. Also, the sample population was restricted to the four selected departments: English, Psychology, Sociology, and Education, under the faculty of Social Sciences, PPU. Finally, the primary concern of this study was to determine ESL reading standard of PPU students and further to investigate its relationship with students' academic performances.

1.9 Definition of the Key Terms

It is important, at this stage, to establish this study's specific understanding of some common terms and to define them according. The following terminologies were used in this study:

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is an active procedure in the development of meaning; the ability to sense the content of text by utilizing various processes (Snow, 2002). Naturally, a large component of reading comprehensions is word knowledge (vocabulary), as well as reasoning. Reading comprehension is usually measured from readers' capabilities to react to comprehension questions accurately. While the reader effectively engages with the text to build meaning, this dynamic engagement includes the utilization of prior knowledge while drawing inferences from the words and expressions that a writer uses to convey data, thoughts, and perspectives.

Assessment

Assessment is a process of collecting information with a specific purpose, which is concentrated on educating, learning, and results. Assessment essentially provides data for instructing and learning (Falchikov, 2013). It is an interactive procedure between learners and faculty which, put simply, updates faculty on how well their learners are learning what they are teaching. The data provided serves two purposes: it is utilized by faculty to improve the learning environment and it is shared with students to enhance their learning and study skills (Angelo & Cross, 1993). There are three types of assessment; diagnostic, formative, and summative.

a. Diagnostic Assessment

Diagnostic assessment is frequently undertaken at the starting phase of any session/class/unit of study/ in the academic year to recognize and evaluate the skills, interests, capabilities, and experiences of an individual learner and a complete class (Huhta, 2008). This type of assessment is actually used to determine learners' qualities

and shortcomings in order to better design learning content and improve how to teach it.

b. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment gives quick and meaningful feedback to monitor learners' ongoing progress (Bennett, 2011). The prime focus of formative assessment is to give helpful feedback to students by recognizing and highlighting areas that may require improvement.

c. Summative Assessment

Assessment usually happens after the learning has been completed, for instance, at the end of a course, semester, unit, project, or year of study, with comments made on a learner's achievement in any particular learning procedure or unit of study (Conderman & Hedin, 2012). For the purposes of this study however, assessment refers to the performance of the respondents after completion of the READS test.

Academic Performance

Academic performance refers to the actual outcome of the instruction; the degree to which an educator, learner or any educational facility has met their teaching and learning targets, as reflected in the percentage of marks secured by the learner in the university exam of any particular course (Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003). In the present study, academic performance is measured in the form of the CGPA of each semester, which was collected from the selected disciplines' examination cells of the PPU.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking refers to the method of identifying the learners' ESL reading abilities and standards (Burquel & van Vught, 2010). For this study, a standardized reading comprehension examination was administered to benchmark the students' ESL reading abilities.

Reading Standard

The reading standard refers to the reading comprehension skills of the learners (Howe, Thames, & Kazelskis, 1997); specifically, for this study, it refers to their ability to answer literal, reorganizational, and inferential comprehension questions.

Cut-Score

Cut scores indicate specific points along a test scale, used to measure test scores for diagnostic purposes (Giraud & Impara, 2005). In English language testing, cut scores are typically used to categorize students into different levels, from beginner or elementary to proficient or advanced. In this present study, cut-scores are used to classify student levels based on a z-score.

Encoder

In the present study, an encoder refers to test content; in this case consisting of 60 multiple-choice reading comprehension questions from different difficulty levels.

Matrix

In the present study, the matrix is considered an analyzer which determines the reading abilities of students enrolled in a particular year of University study (from Year

1- Year 4). A new matrix was effectively developed for this study's adapted READS system, described in chapter four, following an analysis of the reading abilities of the PPU respondents.

Decoder

In the present study, the decoder refers to the analyses of the reading abilities of the PPU students. It is also known as the READS system analyzer.

Descriptors

In the present study, the descriptors refer to the reading ability of the students, based on their test performance. In other words, the reading characteristics of readers; what they can or what they can't do at different levels.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the fundamental entities of this study. The goal was to lay out all of the basic components of the research for this study in one place, while also acting as a guide for what is to come in the following chapters. The next chapter covers the background literature related to this field, before presenting the conceptual framework of this present study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed on the principles and rudiments associated with the present studies. The main aim of the review of the literature was to make an assessment of the gap that was attempted to be filled up, which had been outlined in chapter 1. The topics in this review of literature should reflect the problem and background of the problem that had been discussed in chapter 1. A number of pertinent literatures have been cited based on the gap in the area of study that was attempted to be fulfilled.

2.1 Formal Education System

Education plays a vibrant role in the formation of human capital. It serves as the management and guidance in the society (Brown & Lauder, 1996). Numerous writers highlighted the significance of education in their works over the time. One of the experts on education, Hallak (1991) stated that education – an integral activity in the knowledge-based society has performed and is still performing a compelling role in rising and training the individual during his existence. The Romanian Encyclopedia Dictionary (1996) explains that there is a close linkage between education and advancement. The purposes of the educational institutes are to flourish the people socially, mentally, physically, spiritually and psychologically. It advances and promotes the societal, cultural, political, and economical values of a nation. The Larousse dictionary (1995) states that education fosters the capacity and efficacy of individuals and therefore creates trained manpower, which is efficient of commanding the economy leading to sustainable economic development. Education as a dynamic

activity has not seen much change although there were some innovative approaches and contemporary models introduced to the present educational system despite the fact that some differences were attained in terms of transformation of society (Behrman & Stacey, 1997).

2.1.1 Education System in Pakistan

Education System of Pakistan comes under the wings of the country's Ministry of Education which is subdivided into federal government and four provincial governments namely Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. Federal government primarily contributes towards curriculum development, authorization, sponsorship and advancement of research field (S. M. Ali, 2008). The Educational System in Pakistan is generally categorized as a three-tier system (Saeed, 2007) which is explained in detail in the following sub-chapters.

2.1.1. a Basic Education

In Pakistan, basic education is comprised of primary and elementary schools. It is further divided into 3 levels.

i. Pre-Primary Level

A child may start his/her schooling at the age of 3 by attending preparatory lessons known as 'Kachi' Class among the public schools. On the other hand, private schools classify pre-school education with various names such as nursery, pre-junior, Montessori and play group. Pre-primary education of 2-3 years is available in schools located at respected provinces of a region.

ii. Primary Level

This level is supposed to be the beginning of formal education in Pakistan, which includes grades 1 to 5. Children normally get registered at the age of 5-9 years old. Students automatically get promoted from one grade to the following upon clearing the mandatory examination. However, at the completion of 5th grade, students are required to sit for Primary Board Examination hold by the Provisional Boards in order to move on to the next grade.

iii. Middle Level

Middle level consists of grade 6 to 8 that constitutes the duration between primary and secondary education. Promotion from one class to the next is automatic after clearing the required annual examination. The syllabus and medium of instruction is customized according to the province and institution. Generally, 7 compulsory disciplines (English, Urdu, Mathematics, Arts, Science, Social Studies and computer science depending on the availability of computer labs in school) will be taught in schools at this level. Students are required to pass the Board Examination upon completion of 8th grade.

2.1.1 b Secondary Education

Secondary education is a 4-year affair extended from 9 to 12 grades. This level of education is catered in government secondary and higher secondary schools. It is further divided into 2 stages.

i. Secondary School Certificate Level

Students enrolled into this level after successfully completing middle level education. Secondary School Certificate is commonly named as High School (10th

grade) in Pakistan. The secondary school students will be at school bench for 2 years to complete class 9 and 10. At the end of every secondary school years, it's made compulsory for the students to pass national examination conducted by a regional Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (or BISE). Students are then granted a Secondary School Certificate (or SSC) which is locally known as "Matriculation Certificate" or "Matric". The structure of the curriculum combines eight compulsory disciplines (such as Pakistan Studies, English, Urdu, Mathematics, and Islamic Studies) as well as electives (such as Chemistry, Biology, Physics and Computer).

ii. Higher Secondary School Certificate Level

After successfully finishing SSC level, students will enroll into 12thth grade which is also known as intermediate college in Pakistan. It is a 2-year university preparatory stage, whereby students will be trained for higher degree education in universities. The syllabus is categorized into 4 specific programs namely pre-engineering, commerce, pre-medical, and arts & humanities. Each program is equipped with 3 elective and 3 compulsory courses of Urdu, English, Islamic Studies (for grade 11) and Pakistan Studies (for grade 12). Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education (an examination administration body) will award Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) to successful students.

2.1.1 c Tertiary/Higher Education

After earning their HSSC, students can enroll into universities in their related disciplines as part of higher degree programs. In Pakistan, higher education begins after completion of 12 years of school-based education. Higher education is offered by universities which are independent academic institutions but are recognized by

provisional governments and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan. The duration of degree programs varies from 4-5 years depending on the discipline.

2.1.2 Private-Public Schools Dichotomy in Pakistan

Schools in Pakistan are widely categorized into public and private sectors. However, the educational structure remains similar in both types of schools: 2-3 years of pre-primary, 5 years of primary, 3 years of middle, 2 years of SSC (Matriculation or O level) and 2 years of HSSC (FA/FSc, A level). All schools follow the national curricula at all levels. Nonetheless there are some selected private schools which follow their own curriculum (Coulson, 2009). These selected private schools also prepare students for alternative qualifications which is managed and conducted by London University whereby Ordinary Level (or O Level) and Advanced Level (or A Level) were introduced to substitute SSC and HSSC respectively.

2.1.2. a Public Schools

Amjad and MacLeod (2014) defined public school as a school which is sponsored, administered and owned by government along with teachers and other supporting staff at the school being workers of government. Generally, in developing countries like in Pakistan, the public sector performs a dominant role in order to provide and establish education to the society (Muhammad Iqbal, 2012). Public schools mainly emphasize on equity, and broader access for the masses in a country. That is why these public schools are accessible nearly everywhere all over the country; in both urban and rural localities (Asghar, Awan, & Rehman, 2012). These are the various reasons that majority of the parents send their children to public schools.

2.1.2. b Private Schools

Private schools are owned by private organizations and supervised by NGOs, trusts, sole-proprietors, or other types of administration (Hathaway, 2005). These private schools are required to be registered with their respective province's Education Department (Aslam & Siddiqui, 2003). These schools are considered largely as profit-oriented institutions because they charge high tuition fees (Tooley & Longfield, 2015). The medium of instruction is mainly English in private schools especially in urban private schools (ul Islam, Mushtaq, Alam, & Bukhari, 2015). It is widely accepted that the quality of education is far better than the government-run schools. Hence, fairly a big number of private schools have mushroomed in the last few years in Pakistan (Sarwar, Awan, & Nazeer, 2014; Manan, Dumanig, & David, 2017).

Private schools largely cater students of middle and elite class due to heavy fees structure which is normally not affordable by lower class. Such type of educational infrastructure creates class discrimination and inequalities at various stages (Shabbir & Song, 2014). Amjad and MacLeod (2015) investigated that during 1990s and 2000s private schools mushroomed and became a pivotal source of educational services in Pakistan both in absolute terms and comparative to the public sector. From the available data relevant to numbers of Pakistani private and public schools in 2000, the private sector was serving about 7 million children's educational needs. This number enlarged to 16 million in 2009 to 2010 which was equivalent to 37% of total enrollment.

2.2 Medium of Instruction

According to Mushtaq et al. (2015), the language used by the instructor to deliver and transfer the lecture, knowledge, values, content and other skills in a classroom is labeled as medium of instruction. Both learners and instructors use this

language in order to interact with each other as well as to communicate among themselves. It also contributes to improve the quantity of experience and capability for interaction of the learners (S. Graham, Gillespie, & McKeown, 2013).

Medium of instruction upholds pivotal position in an education field. A genuine and productive study shouldn't be linked to one-time observation and experimentation. The process of selecting medium of instruction should be suggested following several observations and experimentations. These suggestions are collected from the psychologists, academics, and teachers, because they serve as the tool for the transformations in every society.

All the countries of the world choose a medium of instruction to educate their children. A language is chosen by considering the mother tongue (L1) of the children of a state and another language which is familiar to them as a second language (L2). This step of selecting medium of instruction is the most essential and critical step because entire education system depends upon this medium of instruction, which contributes to the building, and development of a nation. Furthermore, mainly all the research, curriculum, books, teachers' training and mode of instruction will completely rely on this selection of the medium of instruction (Tsui, Tollefson, Tollefson, & Tsui, 2004). Hence, a nation should select its own appropriate and suitable language as medium of instruction based on these reasons.

Medium of instruction is selected by considering the phenomenon of teaching and learning based on academic qualifications and experiences of teachers, their language and children's mother tongue (L1). We have politicized the issue of language particularly in the field of education to an extent that currently we have no idea about the method, timing, and level to teach a language. Hence, we are confused to make a

decision on which language be picked to teach compulsory and other disciplines. Nowadays, the discussion on learning or not learning a language has become a political statement. This ongoing issue confuses the leading educationists and policymakers to decide on a medium of instruction. This is due to the various elements relevant to medium of instruction in the field of education such as the standards of education, the quality of textbooks, the level and teaching style of teachers, the use of a language during adulthood and the accessibility of a language in political and social terms.

2.2.1 Medium of Instruction in Pakistan

Pakistan is a multiethnic and multilingual country. Ethnologue, Paul, Simons, and Fennig Charles (2014) estimated that there are 77 languages in Pakistan whereby 72 are supposed as indigenous meanwhile the remainder 5 languages are labeled immigrant. The hierarchy of language depends on authority. English observed to be the most powerful language and Urdu language occupies 2nd position meanwhile the remaining major and minor indigenous languages occupy the lowest position in the language hierarchy ladder (Mansoor, 2004; T. Rahman, 2006, 2008).

English being the official language of Pakistan is used and plays significant role in various sectors of power such as government, law and order, corporate, research, education, and media. Proficiency in English language is considered as gateway to social privilege and socioeconomic mobility (Mansoor, 2005). Mahboob (2002) explained that English symbolize supremacy and higher social status. Furthermore, there is no future in Pakistan without proficiency in English language. Urdu language holds second position in language hierarchy following English and performs the function of wider communication language in metropolitan centers of the country. As a symbol of national unity and as an identity marker, Urdu also performs the ideological aims (T. Rahman, 1997).