
9-23-2019

Top-Down English Policy and Bottom-Up Teacher Take: An Interview-Based Insight from the Balochistan Province of Pakistan

Liaquat A. Channa

Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS), Quetta, channauga@gmail.com

Sania G. Panezai

National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Quetta, saniapanezai@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), and the [Language and Literacy Education Commons](#)

Recommended APA Citation

Channa, L. A., & Panezai, S. G. (2019). Top-Down English Policy and Bottom-Up Teacher Take: An Interview-Based Insight from the Balochistan Province of Pakistan. *The Qualitative Report*, 24(9), 2281-2296. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2019.3841>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Qualitative Report at NSUWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Qualitative Report by an authorized administrator of NSUWorks. For more information, please contact nsuworks@nova.edu.



Qualitative Research Graduate Certificate
Indulge in Culture
Exclusively Online • 18 Credits
LEARN MORE

NSU
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN
UNIVERSITY

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN

Top-Down English Policy and Bottom-Up Teacher Take: An Interview-Based Insight from the Balochistan Province of Pakistan

Abstract

Provinces in Pakistan have initiated teaching English as a compulsory subject in Grade 1 onwards in their government schools by following the latest National Education Policy (NEP) of 2009. The policy states that the measure shall develop the students' English proficiency that would later help them compete. In this study we intended to understand whether the policy was implemented successfully in the province of Balochistan. By drawing upon the language planning framework proposed by Kaplan, Baldauf, and Kamwangamalu (2011) and applying convenient sampling technique, the researchers conducted thirty-one semi-structured interviews with urban and rural male and female teachers who teach in Grades 1 to 5. We found that issues such as limited teaching time for the English subject, lack of qualified teachers, inappropriate English textbooks, teachers' customary teaching methodology, paucity of resources, and gap between policymakers and practitioners impacted the policy. The study offers recommendations that could help the Pakistani policymakers to align the policy with practice, research, and the teachers' voices in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

Keywords

English in Pakistan; Language Planning, Government Primary School Teachers, National Education Policy 2009 of Pakistan, Qualitative Research, Semi-Structured Interviews

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Top-Down English Policy and Bottom-Up Teacher Take: An Interview-Based Insight from the Balochistan Province of Pakistan

Liaquat A. Channa

Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences
(BUIITEMS), Quetta, Pakistan

Sania G. Panezai

National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Quetta, Pakistan

Provinces in Pakistan have initiated teaching English as a compulsory subject in Grade 1 onwards in their government schools by following the latest National Education Policy (NEP) of 2009. The policy states that the measure shall develop the students' English proficiency that would later help them compete. In this study we intended to understand whether the policy was implemented successfully in the province of Balochistan. By drawing upon the language planning framework proposed by Kaplan, Baldauf, and Kamwangamalu (2011) and applying convenient sampling technique, the researchers conducted thirty-one semi-structured interviews with urban and rural male and female teachers who teach in Grades 1 to 5. We found that issues such as limited teaching time for the English subject, lack of qualified teachers, inappropriate English textbooks, teachers' customary teaching methodology, paucity of resources, and gap between policymakers and practitioners impacted the policy. The study offers recommendations that could help the Pakistani policymakers to align the policy with practice, research, and the teachers' voices in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Keywords: English in Pakistan; Language Planning, Government Primary School Teachers, National Education Policy 2009 of Pakistan, Qualitative Research, Semi-Structured Interviews

Introduction

English language has occupied a dominant position in Pakistan since the establishment of the country on August 14, 1947 (Rahman, 1996, 2002). Currently, English functions as the governing language in multiple domains such as commerce, bureaucracy, judiciary, armed forces, and higher education (Channa, 2015, 2017; Channa & Manan, 2015). Since English is the dominant language, it plays a highly critical role in determining the future of Pakistani students (Aftab, 2011; Channa, 2014, 2015, 2017; Mahboob, 2002; Panezai & Channa, 2017). Channa (2015, 2017) and Shamim (2008, 2011) have documented the dominant status of English in various domains of Pakistan and shown that English is considered to be a key to success in all the realms such as personal, academic, professional, and social in Pakistan.

In terms of learning English, Pakistani educational setup is divided into two broad types such as Urdu/vernacular medium government schools—where English is taught as a compulsory subject—and English medium private schools, which claim to teach in English medium (Channa, 2017; Manan, David, & Dumanig, 2016). Parents who are affluent and can afford send their children to the English medium private schools; whereas, those who are underprivileged enrol their children in the government Urdu/vernacular medium schools—the schools which are poorly-funded and underperforming (South Asian Forum for Education

Development, 2016). The affording parents believe that an early exposure to English through English medium shall provide to their children advantages in their upward mobility. The poor parents do not have the choice for their children; they heavily rely on what and how government decides to teach to their children in the underperforming Urdu/vernacular medium government schools (Mansoor, 2004, 2005).

In the latest Nation Education Policy of 2009 of Pakistan (Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, 2009), the policymakers have highlighted the poor quality of education in the government schools of Pakistan. Furthermore, they have clearly stated that the children who graduate from the government schools often fail to achieve white-collar jobs in Pakistan. The students do not have sound English proficiency that is required for the globalized job market of Pakistan. Due to the existing factors in the Pakistani society such as (a) the large majority of Pakistani children are poor and their parents cannot afford providing to them with the private English medium education, (b) English is a lifeline to upward mobility in the Pakistan society, and (c) as long as the majority of the poor students will not be English proficient, they will not be able to play their role in the development of Pakistan, Pakistani policymakers have devised a new language in education policy for their government schools in the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2009.

The main concern of the Pakistan policymakers in the NEP (2009) has been to remove the division that currently exists between the private English medium schools and the public Urdu/vernacular medium schools by providing to the poor students with an access to the English language as early as possible. The policymakers have aimed to provide equal opportunities to every single student to advance in his/her academic as well as professional domain. They have recommended to all the provinces of Pakistan to initiate teaching English as a compulsory subject in Grade I onwards in the NEP 2009. Channa (2017) noted that English as a compulsory subject started in Grade 6 onwards in the government schools of Pakistan in past. Additionally, he showed that the measure of teaching English as a compulsory subject was, in effect, initiated in 2003 when Pakistan undertook mega Education Sector Reforms in 2002; the NEP of 2009 has just perpetuated the decision.

English is now being taught as a compulsory subject in all the government schools of Pakistan in Grade 1 onwards. English curriculum of Grade 1 to 12 has also been revised and updated in 2006 (Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad, 2006). Textbooks for teaching the subject have also been designed that are offered to the students free of cost in Grades 1 to 5. How the policy is impacting the students in terms of developing English proficiency; and, how the government primary school teachers implement the policy in the early grades of the students' education is largely under-reported area. This ethnographic interview-based study intends to contribute in filling the gap by understanding how the teachers implement the English compulsory subject policy in their government primary schools. By using Kaplan, Baldauf, and Kamwangamalu (2011) as conceptual framework, this study intends to figure out the factors that hamper the effective implementation of the policy. It suggests implications that need focus at the policy level as the policy could successfully be realized in the government schools of Pakistan in general and Balochistan in particular.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Scholars have defined language policy and language planning as separate entities (Ferguson, 2006; Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2004). For instance, Ferguson (2006) discussed *language policy* as referring to “the decision-making processes and setting of goals” and *language planning* as “the implementation of plans for attaining these goals” (p. 16). Ricento and Hornberger (1996) showed that the language planning has, further, been divided into three types such as *status planning*, *corpus planning*, and *acquisition planning*. Channa (2015) held

that status planning “refers to the functions that are allocated to any language in any society” (p. 66), corpus planning “deals with the form and code of language to meet the requirements of time that emerge in language(s) (p. 70), and, acquisition planning “refers to planning done for teaching and learning any language(s) in any country” (p. 71). Channa (2015) discussed that *acquisition planning* has also been called as *language in education planning* and *language education planning* in the literature on language policy and planning. This study draws upon the acquisition planning aspect in terms of identifying the factors that hinder implementing the English as the compulsory subject policy in the government schools of the Balochistan province of Pakistan.

The area of language in education planning has been studied from various vantage points. Not only has it been explored how language in education policies that are designed by the people in power at the top level are negotiated and implemented at the bottom in schools (Menken & Garcia, 2010) but it has also been investigated in the context of what needs to be done to implement the policies successfully (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997; Kaplan et al., 2011). For instance, Canagarajah (2006) and Menken and Garcia (2010) have argued that the bottom up analysis of the language in education policies must inform the top down policies as the policies could yield positive results. They have underlined that the policy formation processes should be dynamic and dialectic in the sense that mismatch should not occur between policy and its implementation.

Nunan (2003) presented the language planning profiles of the countries in the context of how they were placing English in their early grades and argued why the countries faced problems in implementing the English language planning. He figured out multiple factors that he deemed are essential for a successful implementation of any language policy at classroom level. For instance, he stated that a successful language policy planning and implementation involve enormous amount of funds, necessary primary or early age language instructors’ training, teachers who have sound command over the English language skills, and, better quality course books including teaching resources and curriculum. Unless language policies are not properly funded and their requirements met in their planning and implementation phases, the policies are doomed to the failure and waste of time and resources.

Kaplan et al. (2011) also echoed Nunan and presented a comprehensive framework on why educational language policy and planning failed. They critically analysed policy and planning case studies of eight countries and presented various factors due to which language policy makers often failed to achieve desired plans in their respective countries. Kaplan et al. (2011) mentioned that a language in education policy usually fails because (we mention here the factors that are important in our context): (a) Time dedicated to a language policy tends to be inadequate; (b) Indigenous teacher training is not appropriate or sufficient for properly implementing the policy; (c) education materials such as textbooks are not sufficient or appropriate; (d) teaching methodology is not appropriate to desired outcomes; (e) resources are not adequate for students’ population needs; and (f) instruction may not actually meet community and/or national objectives.

Kaplan et al. (2011) held that taking the factors into account can increase the chances of effective implementation of a language policy of any polity and ignoring them can lead to failure by wasting time and misusing resources of the polity. Since the factors are indispensable and comprehensively cover the areas and agentive behaviours of teachers that play their decisive role in implementing a language policy at local classroom level, we take the issues as our conceptual framework for this study. We aim to understand through the features how the compulsory English language subject policy is implemented in the government schools of Balochistan, Pakistan.

As university teachers in the province of Balochistan, we both the researchers of this study are expected to conduct research in addition to teach various undergraduate and graduate

courses and offer our services for our community. We both share our interests in sociolinguistics in general and language policy and planning in particular. Since we believe English is considered as a key to upward mobility in this country, we wanted to qualitatively explore how the province was implementing the policy measure of English as a compulsory subject in its government primary schools. We both had the intentions to understand the phenomenon in question well and come up with certain policy recommendations as the province could better be able to teach the English subject.

Method

We employed ethnographic semi-structured interviews from qualitative research for understanding the policy measure as implemented in the government primary Urdu/vernacular medium schools of Pakistan (McCarty, 2011). Ethnographic semi-structured interviews not only emphasize one-on-one in-depth conversation but also provide with an opportunity to study the dynamics of the target phenomenon within an actual context (Kvale, 1996; Roulston, 2010). Dornyei (2007) held that ethnographic interviews are recognised as a commonly used method for data collection in the fields related to applied linguistics and sociolinguistics.

Due to the accessibility of our location, we particularly focussed upon the government primary schools of the Balochistan province of Pakistan. Through convenient sampling technique (Patton, 1990), a total of thirty-one participants were interviewed of whom 18 were female and 13 were male teachers. By taking maximum variation into account in the sampling (Patton, 1990; Seidman, 1998), we selected the teachers from different districts of Balochistan in order to deeply understand the implementation of the language in education policy. Twenty teachers—9 males and 11 females—were interviewed from the urban areas. Eleven participants—four males & seven females—were interviewed from the rural areas. All the participants were born and raised in the province. They spoke Balochi, Persian, Pashto, and Urdu as their first languages. Moreover, a total of fourteen teachers had an experience of teaching English in various private English language academies too. Ten teachers had the experience of teaching English as a compulsory subject in the government primary schools since the year of 2003, when the English subject policy was implemented in the year in Grade 1 onwards in the province. We sought the permission of relevant, immediate education officers and the teachers' headmasters and headmistresses before requesting the teachers to participate in the study. We ensured the participants that we would use their interview data anonymously and only for research purposes. We told them that the data would be securely stored and destroyed after meeting our research purposes. Before we started tape-recording the interviews, we informed them their rights as research participants and sought their consent for recording. Since we only had the intention to understand how the teachers implemented the English compulsory subject policy and what challenges or problems they faced, we did not indulge in any conversation divorced from our intent.

The time of the interviews varied from 35 to 45 minutes. The interviews that we conducted were semi-structured in nature. Roulston (2010, p. 15) held that in semi-structured interviews "interviewers refer to a prepared interview guide that includes a number of questions. These questions are usually open-ended, and after posing each question to the research participant, the interviewer follows up with probes seeking further detail and description about what has said." We had an interview guide that guided our conversations. For instance, the guide included questions or prompts such as: 'How do you see the recently introduced English as a compulsory subject initiative?'; 'What are the challenges that you face in teaching English?'; 'Please take us to your class and tell us how you teach the English subject.'; 'Have you been trained for teaching the English subject?'; and others. We also probed after every question to know in detail about the issue in question.

The researchers asked the participants if they wanted the interview conversation to be in Pashto, Urdu, or English. All the teachers held that they were more comfortable in sharing their experiences of teaching the English subject with Urdu and Pashto. Thus, we conducted the interviews in Urdu and/or Pashto. The interview recordings were transcribed-cum-translated by following Halai's (2007) suggestions of transcribing bilingual interview data. Scholars such as Kvale (1996) and Roulston (2010) believe that the analysis of interview data begins the moment interviews are conducted and transcribed. After the data was transcribed, we could observe main patterns in the data. However, the transcriptions were, later, analysed in detail too by following the six steps suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) for conducting thematic analysis of interview data. For instance, their first step requires researchers to acquaint themselves with data. At this stage, we read the transcripts several times to familiarize with the data. The second step is about conducting initial coding. At this stage, we indulged in initial coding by underlining and writing on the sides of the pages of the transcription. Their third step includes finding out themes from the initial coding. At this phase, we connected the dots—initial codes—and found out the themes. The fourth and fifth steps involve examining and refining the themes. Since we had the theoretical underpinnings in our mind, we not only examined but also refined the themes in these fourth and fifth steps. Their last sixth step includes producing a report. We wrote the analysis report under the heading of “Findings”—that follows below. It must be mentioned that although we were open for the new themes to emerge from the data since the emergent nature of qualitative research binds us as such, we analysed the data through the relevant factors that Kaplan et al. (2011) offered that we discussed above.

Findings

We discuss below the findings of the thematic analysis of our data.

Inadequate Time Dedicated to Teaching English

One of the themes that emerged in the analysis was that the teachers held that the time that was allotted to teaching the English subject was insufficient. The participants held that each teacher was the sole teacher in a class who taught all the subjects to their students. There were 3 subjects in each Grades 1 and 2 and 7 subjects in each Grades 3, 4, and 5. All the subjects were taught in the Urdu medium. All the teachers complained that they faced challenges in achieving the main aims and objectives of the English language policy. In this regard, for instance, Participant 7 said,

The English subject is given only 30 to 35 minutes in a school day. In this limited time, it is difficult for teachers to meet the learning demands of their learners. In that short time, teachers fail to teach the subject well and achieve the desirable goals of the English language course.

Participant 7 held that time for teaching the English subject was insufficient. Another teacher, Participant 4, added,

The education department and the school administration want us to teach the major subjects such as science, mathematics, social studies, etc. These all the subjects are in Urdu. They do not relatively prioritize the English subject and this subject is in English. In a single period of only 35 minutes a day with an overcrowded class of the students with varying capabilities, it is challenging

task for the teachers to teach every language related skill of the English language to their students.

Participant 4 not only shared the views what the Participant 3 held but also added that the English subject was the least prioritized in terms of allocation of time in a school day. The officials wanted the teachers to only focus upon teaching a few subjects. English, thus, did not get its due time. Overall, all the participants viewed that the time that is devoted to teaching the English compulsory subject was unsatisfactory. They all held that more than one classes should be devoted to the subject as the policy could better be implemented. However, they could not do so because they had to teach other subjects too.

Inappropriate and Insufficient Teacher Qualifications and Training

Another theme that developed from the analysis of the interview data was that the majority of the participants took their qualifications highly inadequate for properly implementing the English as the compulsory subject policy in their schools. Most of the participants stated that due to their insufficient qualifications and training, they faced hurdles in teaching the English subject. For instance, one of the participants, Participant 5, believed,

The primary school teachers have education hardly up to Grade 10 and/or 12. After they graduated and got job as government primary school teachers, they did not find opportunities for improving their English language skills. They have not been trained how to improve their English and/or teach the English subject. Moreover, their cultural and social backgrounds did not give to them plentiful exposure to the English language. In their informal settings, they preferred to converse in their local languages such as Pashto, Balochi, Persian, and Urdu; while in formal school settings, they preferred using Urdu language. Resultantly, they have had very limited exposure and knowledge of the English language. It is not now possible for them to use English as language of instruction for the English subject in an academic setup. Due to insufficient training, we neither know English nor are we capable enough to teach the subject well through the English textbooks that the government of Balochistan has provided to us.

Participant 5 depicts a gloomy picture about the primary school teachers' abilities and skills for teaching English. S/he confesses that they cannot teach the subject well and underlines the need of trainings. Participant 11 agreed with Participant 5 and affirmed that due to the absence of teachers' in-service or professional trainings they faced problems in understanding the difficult aspect of the English language textbooks. In this regard, Participant 14 recommended,

The Department of Education of the Government of Balochistan must initiate training courses and workshops for the professional development of the teachers. These teachers are unfamiliar with advanced methods of teaching English language. They still rely on out-dated method of teaching and learning English language. The workshops and training courses would make them familiar with the updated practices of language teaching and learning.

Participant 14 demanded that their relevant department must arrange trainings as they could better be able to teach the subject. In sum, all the participants complained that due to the scarcity of trainings, fresher courses, and workshops on how to teach the English subject

through the English textbooks the government had provided to them, they faced severe problems in teaching the English subject. They held that the government primary school teachers were not qualified enough to teach the English subject. They lacked in necessary skills of teaching English. They suggested their higher authorities to start professional trainings and workshops for their professional development in English, as they could be able to teach the subject.

Inadequate English Textbooks

A theme appeared in the data analysis related to the inappropriateness of the English textbooks that have been produced for implementing the English as a compulsory subject policy in the Grades 1 to 5. As discussed above, the main purpose of initiating the English subject in Grade 1 onwards has been to develop the English language skills among the poor students as they could compete in the Pakistani society. The participants held that the English textbooks that have been designed for teaching English to Grades 1 to 5 are not appropriate for developing the English language skills. For instance, one of the participants, Participant 01, stated,

The assigned textbooks are not suitable for teaching English to the students of primary level. The activities and exercises of the books lack continuity. For example, a single chapter/unit/lesson introduces diverse grammatical aspects that have the least connection with each other. It seems that the authors of the books have just wanted to teach grammar out of context and randomly. Furthermore, the activities and exercises in the textbooks are not congruent with easy to difficult pattern. Thus, both students and teachers suffer. The English textbooks are inadequate and need refinement.

Participant 01 held that the English textbooks that the Government of Balochistan has provided were inadequate in their content and thus needed refinement. Participant 21 echoed the same views and stated,

The English learning activities of course books are more abstract in nature. These activities do not provide opportunity to the students to use grammatical aspects in their oral or written discourse. Thus, students are unable to build grammatically correct sentences in English.

The other participants too concurred with the above participants that the English textbooks often proved as ineffective source of developing English language skills of the students. Majority of the participants suggested primary school teachers also be taken on board as textbook authors or reviewers because they better know the level and sociocultural environment of their students than do the hired authors from different sectors of Pakistani society who write the textbooks.

Improper Teaching Methodology

Data analysis also showed inappropriate teaching methodology for the English compulsory subject. In a classroom context, methodology is generally marked as an important mean of achieving aims and objectives of a course. If it is incongruent with the aims and objectives of a course, it will not render the desired outcomes. All the participants held that they taught the English subject as they taught any other subject such as science and

mathematics; whereas, teaching a language, in effect, should technically be different from teaching a content subject. The thematic analysis found that inappropriate teaching methodology hindered the implementation of the English as a compulsory subject policy in Grades 1 to 5. For example, one of the participants, Participant 20, held,

We teach English the way we teach any other subject. This may be due to the lack of proper professional trainings that we the primary school teachers are not capable enough to deliver lessons of a language course different from the lessons of a content subject. We do not know the methods of teaching English. We overwhelmingly rely upon the traditional methods of teaching English wherein we ask students to memorize their lessons, develop their handwriting, and remember the grammar rules. We keep them repeating their English lessons because this is how they will be able to learn English.

Participant 20 shows how a language course is taught by repetition and memorization techniques that they normally apply for other content subjects. Additionally, the majority of the teachers held that government primary school teachers still favoured teacher centred approaches for teaching the English compulsory subject. In teachers centred approaches, teachers control students' learning practices and students rely upon their teachers for their learning. For instance, Participant 2 viewed,

In our schools, teachers are widely considered as the epitome of knowledge. Thus, they are taken to be sole authority of knowledge in the schools. They decide how students should learn. This approach fails to encourage students' independent learning. This approach also stops students from developing their critical and analytical skills.

Lack of Resources

The dearth of appropriate resources for teaching the English subject in the primary schools appeared as an important factor that hindered the successful implementation of the English compulsory subject policy. Not only the theme identified the scarcity of basic facilities in schools such as drinking water, boundary, toilet, desks and teachers' chairs, and an adequate number of qualified teachers in a school but also specific resources for teaching the English subject. For example, the teachers held that the English textbooks were the only resources that their government had provided to them for teaching the subject. The government did not provide to them with any teachers' manual or guide for teaching the textbooks. Whatever they understood in the textbooks, they taught. The government did not provide any audio-visual aids, dictionaries, and/or other material in the shape of charts that could have helped the teachers to teach English to their overcrowded classes. One of participants, Participant 7, complained about the dearth of resources and held,

We are not provided with any sort of teaching and learning resources. Neither teaching guide and/or manual for teaching the English textbooks nor audio-visual material such as charts, games, and/or English to Urdu dictionaries for understanding and teaching the meaning of difficult English words. Our classroom teaching and learning practices are confined by what we already know about English, which is quite unsatisfactory. Due to the lack of resources and limitations, we fail to teach the textbooks and the English subject well.

Participant 7 viewed that the teachers were not provided with adequate resource to teach the English subject. Majority of the participants concurred with the above complaint. Participant 26 not only echoed the above reservations but also pointed out other issues that the primary schools suffered from. S/he said,

Not only we suffer from the lack of resources such as charts, manuals, and dictionaries for teaching specifically the English subject but also there are many schools that are one-room-one-teacher schools. Only one teacher is supposed to teach all the subjects of all the grades. How can a single teacher do that? In addition, there aren't proper basic facilities for both teachers and students. There are not any desks, boards, chairs, toilets, drinking water, and buildings and/or boundaries of a school.

Participant 26 shows that the primary schools not only run short of basic facilities but also the required number of teachers for teaching subjects well. Participant 8 was one of the teachers who had experience of teaching in private schools too. S/he compared the plight of government schools with private schools and stated,

Teachers are provided with extra teaching and learning resources such as books, charts, models, and audio-visual aids for teaching English in the private schools; but government schools do not offer as such to them. The extra teaching and learning resources helped language instructors in the private schools in enhancing students' reading, listening, and speaking skills. Students enjoyed learning new lessons. But, in the government schools, students are only provided with textbooks to learn English. These books fail to develop students' interest towards learning English.

Participant 8 paralleled private and public schools and holds that private ones are better in terms of providing to the teachers with adequate resources for teaching effectively. Overall, all the participants shared the complaints that the government primary schools and their teachers lacked proper infrastructure, qualified human capital, and appropriate resources for implementing the compulsory English subject policy.

Misalignment of English Instruction with National Objective

The thematic analysis of the interview data revealed that the teachers' instruction and implementation of the English subject in Grades 1 to 5 does not meet the national objectives—the reasons for which the English subject was actually initiated in the government primary schools of Pakistan. The government has mandated teaching English as a compulsory subject in Grade 1 onwards because it wants to reduce the gap between the poor students who study in public schools and the rich ones who study in private English medium institutions (Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, 2009).

However, the situation is different as the analysis shows. Neither are teachers qualified enough to teach English adequately nor are their teaching methodologies adequate. Thus, their students cannot develop their English proficiency, which could later help them compete with their counterparts graduating from private schools. There has been incongruity between policy and practice. Thus, due to the lack of proper pedagogical skills, the teachers often fail to implement the language policy in an effective way. The participants held that the policy and curriculum designers were ignorant of their needs. In this context, for instance, Participant 9 said,

The policymakers designed the policy, curriculum, and syllabus of the English subject according to the current demands of global world. Consequently, they asked us to teach the English as compulsory subject in Grade 1. We understand that they want us to improve and better our students' lives. But, why are they not taking any necessary measures to resolve the problems that we are facing in implementing the language policy and teaching the English textbooks? They seem to be unaware of the needs and demands of the teachers.

Participant 9 believed that initiating English as a compulsory subject was important for helping students to win upward mobility chances. However, s/he believed the authorities were oblivious of the teachers' needs for training and resources for teaching the subject well. Participant 3 held,

Due to the yawning gap lying between the English language in education policy and its implementation, our overall education setup in encountering serious problems. The policy makers are not aware of the problems the school administration and the teachers are facing in their educational institutes and we cannot do what they direct us to do due to our poor skills and qualifications. Resultantly, what is conceived in the policy is not achieved in practice. Our relevant departments and authorities should try to consult with the teachers and should try to come up with more reliable and practical solutions. This can be only possible when the policymakers and teachers are on the same page.

Participant 3 clearly states that there is mismatch between policy and practice. S/he believes the mismatch or the gap can only be reduced when the policymakers and teachers are aligned. The theme showed that the language-in-education policy failed to achieve its intended objectives due to the gap between policymakers and schoolteachers. The policymakers designed policies and curricula without realizing the fact that whether teachers were qualified or trained enough to implement them in their contexts; and, whether the English syllabi were suitable to meet the learning demands of the target student population.

Discussion

Guided by Kaplan et al. (2011), in this study we investigated qualitatively the factors that hampered the effective implementation of the English as the compulsory subject policy in government primary schools of the Balochistan province of Pakistan. The study found that the policy was not implemented adequately because the teachers who implemented the policy faced the following issues. For instance, the teachers did not have enough school time for teaching the English subject well to their overcrowded classes. They did not feel they were qualified and trained enough to implement the policy and teach the English subject in an efficient manner. They held that material such as English textbooks were not sufficient or appropriate for teaching the English subject. In terms of methodology, they taught the English subject as they taught any other content subject by more focussing on rote learning and memorization than allowing students to learn creatively and interactively. They complained that they did not have adequate resources such as audio-visual aids for teaching English. Finally, they held there was a mismatch between what policy recommended and what they taught because those who devised the policies did not take the teachers—who implement the policies—on board. Thus, their instruction did not meet the national objectives.

The findings of the study reverberate that researchers have discussed for a successful implementation of a language in education policy of any polity. For instance, Hayes (2017),

Baldauf Jr., Kaplan, Kamwangmalu, and Bryant (2011), Kaplan et al. (2011) and Nunan (2003) have underlined that the polities that are introducing the English as a foreign language subject in their educational systems as early as possible believe that the early teaching of English as a subject is sufficient. The policy will not only help to develop their citizens' English proficiency but also later assist the citizens to fruitfully reap the benefits of globalization and productively contribute in their countries. These scholars have noted that research has been showing conflicting findings to the policymakers' beliefs. For instance, they have shown that the earlier or younger the better for a child to learn a foreign language without providing with required affordances is unsubstantiated to a large extent. On the contrary, literacy in a child's first languages has been shown to benefit the child in a long run. In this context, Nunan (2003) stated that "Underlying the shift [to teach a foreign language as early as possible] is an assumption on the part of the governments and ministries of education that when it comes to learning a foreign language, younger is better. This view seems to be firmly entrenched in popular opinion, which influences policy decisions, despite its controversial nature in the professional literature" (p. 605). Additionally, Hayes (2017) identified that "research in education has long confirmed that children learn best when taught in their first languages" (p. 187). The research suggests to the Pakistani policymakers to reconsider their misplaced priorities about the early start of a foreign language (Mansoor, 2004, 2005).

Hayes (2017), Baldauf Jr., Kaplan, Kamwangmalu, and Bryant (2011), Kaplan et al. (2011) and Nunan (2003) have also argued that only making populace proficient in English or proficiency in a language does not prosper a country. For instance, Hayes (2017, p. 180) discussed that

There is a great deal of rhetoric concerning the need for high levels of English in a country to enable it to compete in the modern, globalized economy and also regarding its concomitant role in enhancing socio-economic mobility for individuals.....However, the evidence-base for these claims is limited and recent econometric analyses indicate clearly that "widespread competence in a dominant language such as English is in no manner associated with a higher level of economic development, when the latter is measured by its most common incarnation of GDP per capita." (Arcand & Grin, 2013, p. 262)

The Pakistani policymakers need to understand that English is not only *the key* to success both in Pakistan and abroad (Majhanovich, 2014).

Additionally, Hayes (2017), Baldauf Jr., Kaplan, Kamwangmalu, and Bryant (2011), Kaplan et al. (2011) and Nunan (2003) have contended that the polities ignore their ground realities and problems of infrastructure and resources when devising as well as implementing language in education policies in their polities. For instance, Baldauf Jr., Kaplan, Kamwangmalu, and Bryant (2011) stated, "primary teaching requires a different type of training for all teachers, including language teachers. The rapid expansion of primary programmes has meant that there are not enough teachers, not to mention appropriately trained teachers" (p. 317). They have pointed out that adequate number of qualified teachers, appropriate textbooks, and other relevant resources are the keys to a successful implementation of a language policy that the Pakistani policymakers need to rethink about in order to effectively implement a language policy.

The findings of our study also echo the findings of cases of Vietnam (Nguyen, 2011), Bangladesh (Hamid, 2010), and Nepal (Phyak, 2010) where a similar to the Pakistan's policy measure of teaching the English as a foreign language subject was implemented and teachers in the countries were not adequately trained and qualified enough to properly realize the policy. Thus, similar to our case, the policies in the countries bore no fruits. In terms of the textbooks,

the findings of our study also reiterate what Chen (2011) and Nguyen (2011) found that the English textbooks that were developed for teaching English in Taiwan and Vietnam respectively were questionable in terms of whether or not they developed communicative competence. Moreover, our findings also retell what Hamid (2010) found in Bangladesh in terms of the availability of necessary resources for implementing the English as a foreign language subject in primary school. Discussing the lack of resources for such policy measures, Kaplan et al. (2011) stated that

All schools in developing polities lack funds that can be spent on purchasing teaching and learning aids, library facilities, and other resources. For example, in a country such as Bangladesh, financial and educational initiatives aimed at helping the indigenous population are extremely slow in implementation. Indeed, whether any government initiatives such as constructing new classrooms and their maintenance—have, in fact, benefited indigenous communities remains an open question. (p. 112)

The Pakistani policymakers have to provide proper resources in order to warrant an effective implementation of a language policy.

Finally, with respect to the mismatch between policy and its practice, the findings of our study reiterate what Canagarajah (2006) and Menken and Garcia (2010) underlined that the local schoolteachers must be engaged in devising the language policies. As long as the main stakeholders such as the teachers are not taken on board, the language policies cannot be sustainable and cannot help in attaining the national objectives that the policies hope to achieve. In sum, our study finds the similar factors and challenges for the policymakers of Balochistan, Pakistan that have been found in other polities for viable language policies and their fruitful implementation.

Conclusion and Implications

Pakistan decided to initiate teaching English as a compulsory subject in Grades 1 to 5 in its government primary school in its recent National Education Policy of 2009 (Ministry of Education, Islamabad, 2009). The researchers in this study aimed to understand the problems and challenges that the government primary school teachers of the Balochistan province of Pakistan faced in implementing the policy measure. By conducting semi-structured interviews with the thirty one teachers from various urban and rural areas of the Balochistan province, the study found that the issues such as teaching time for the English subject was inadequate, the teachers were not trained and/or qualified to teach the English, the English textbooks were not sufficient or appropriate, the teachers' teaching methodology for the English subject was not appropriate to desired outcomes, the available resources were not adequate and sufficient for implementing the English policy measure, and there was mismatch between policymakers and its practitioners; therefore the practitioners' instruction did not meet the national objectives of creating English proficient students. The study claims that the English as a compulsory subject is not implemented successfully. Thus, it is not achieving its desired outcomes as mentioned in the National Education Policy of 2009.

By following Baldauf Jr., Kaplan, Kamwangmalu, and Bryant (2011), Canagarajah (2006), Hayes (2017), Kaplan et al. (2011), Menken and Garcia (2010), and Nunan (2003), the study suggests these implications. Firstly, the policymakers need to re-examine their beliefs about the early start of English and the role of English for the development of any polity. They need to align their beliefs with the research in the field of language planning and work accordingly. In this regard, they may seek consultations as well with the relevant researchers

to formulate workable and contextually sound language policies. Secondly, teachers are the main actors who implement the policies, sustainable measures must be undertaken to properly train them and hire the qualified ones as language policies could fruitfully be realized. Thirdly, the relevant ministries and departments must allocate proper funds to the cause of education and provide the vital resources such as audio-visual aids, dictionaries, teachers' manuals and guides as teachers could cope up with the challenges they face in teaching the English subject in their local contexts. Finally, the teachers must be involved and engaged with the process of formulating language policy, developing curriculum, and designing syllabus as there could not be yawning gap between those who decide and those implement the decisions. In sum, the study finds that the policy measure of English as a compulsory subject in Grades 1 to 5 is not implemented adequately in the province of Balochistan, Pakistan. It recommends that the implications need to be regarded as the policy and alike measures could be productive in future.

The study has limitations as well that the researchers want the readers of this to keep in mind while interpreting the findings. The researchers only interviewed primary school teachers of the government schools of the Balochistan province of Pakistan. Such studies also need to be conducted in other provinces to get a comprehensive picture of the policy measure across Pakistan. Students' perspectives regarding classrooms activities in the English subject can also be explored, which could further help us discover more effective points about the English policy. This would help researchers in future to investigate students' and teachers' relation in classroom context. Furthermore, in future studies the government teachers of other sectors can also be included. Above all, despite these limitations we believe that this study shows a snapshot about how English is implemented as a compulsory subject in the province of Balochistan and offers invaluable suggestions to the Pakistani policymakers.

References

- Aftab, A. (2011). *English language textbooks evaluation in Pakistan* (Doctoral thesis). University of Birmingham, Alabama, USA.
- Baldauf, R. B., Jr., Kaplan, R. B., Kamwangamalu, N., & Bryant, P. (2011). Success or failure of primary second/foreign language programmes in Asia: What do the data tell us? *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 12(2), 309-323.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Canagarajah, S. (2006). Reconstructing local knowledge, reconfiguring language studies. In S. Canagarajah (Ed.), *Reclaiming the local in language policy and practice* (pp. 3-24). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Channa, L. A. (2014). *English medium for government primary school teachers of Sindh, Pakistan: An exploration of government primary school teachers' attitudes* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Georgia, Georgia, USA.
- Channa, L. A. (2015). English in the language policy and planning of Pakistan. *Kashmir Journal of Language Research*, 18, 65-77.
- Channa, L. A. (2017). English in Pakistani public education: Past, present, and future. *Language Problems & Language Planning*, 41(1), 1-25. doi:10.1075/lplp.41.1.01cha
- Channa, L. A., & Manan, S. A. (2015). Developing Pakistani university students' English proficiency: A five-point agenda for the Pakistani language policymakers. *Buitems Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 89-101.
- Chen, H. (2011). Parents' perspectives on the effects of primary EFL education policy in Taiwan. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 12(2), 205-224. doi: 10.1080/14664208.2011.606783

- Dornyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Ferguson, G. (2006). *Language planning and education*. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.
- Halai, N. (2007). Making use of bilingual interview data: Some experiences from the field. *The Qualitative Report*, 12(3), 344-355. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol12/iss3/1/>
- Hamid, M. O. (2010). Globalisation, English for everyone and English teacher capacity: Language policy discourses and realities in Bangladesh. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 11(4), 289-310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14664208.2011.532621>
- Hayes, D. (2017) Fallacies affecting policy and practice in the teaching of English as a foreign language in state primary schools in Asia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 37(2), 179-192. doi: 10.1080/02188791.2016.1240660
- Kaplan, R. B., & Baldauf, R. B. (1997). *Language planning from practice to theory*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Kaplan, R. B., Baldauf, R. B., & Kamwangamalu, N. (2011). Why educational plans sometimes fail. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 12(2), 105-124.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. New York, NY: Sage.
- Mahboob, A. (2002). No English, no future: Language policy in Pakistan. In S. Obeng & B. Hartford (Eds.), *Political independence with linguistics servitude: The politics about languages in the developing world* (pp. 15-40). New York, NY: NOVA Science.
- Majhanovich, S. (2014). Neo-liberalism, globalization, language policy and practice issues in the Asia-Pacific region. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 34(2), 168-183. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2013.875650>
- Manan, S. A., David, M. K., & Dumanig, F. P. (2016). English language teaching in Pakistan: Language policies, delusions and solutions. In R. Kirkpatrick (Ed.), *English language education policy in Asia* (Vol. 11, pp. 219-244). Springer, NY: Springer International Publishing.
- Mansoor, S. (2004). The status and role of regional languages in higher education in Pakistan. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 25(4), 333-353.
- Mansoor, S. (2005). *Language planning in higher education: A case study of Pakistan*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press.
- McCarty, T. L. (2011). *Ethnography and language policy*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Menken, K., & Garcia, O. (2010). Introduction. In K. Menken & O. Garcia (Eds.), *Negotiating language policies in schools: Educators as policymakers* (pp. 1-10). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. (2006). *National curriculum for English language: Grades I-XII*. Retrieved from [http://www.itacec.org/document/nep09/Textbook and Learning Materials Policy and Plan of Action280607.pdf](http://www.itacec.org/document/nep09/Textbook%20and%20Learning%20Materials%20Policy%20and%20Plan%20of%20Action280607.pdf)
- Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. (2009). *National education policy*. (August, 2009). Retrieved from http://www.moent.gov.pk/userfiles1/file/NEP_2009.pdf
- Nguyen, T. M. H. (2011). Primary English language education policy in Vietnam: Insights from implementation. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 12(2). doi:10.1080/14664208.2011.597048
- Nunan, D. (2003). The impact of English as a global language on educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region. *TESOL Quarterly*, 37(5), 589-613.

- Panezai, S. G., & Channa, L. A. (2017). Pakistani government primary school teachers and the English textbooks of Grades 1–5: A mixed-methods teachers'-led evaluation. *Cogent Education*, 4(1). doi:10.1080/2331186X.2016.1269712
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. New York, NY: Sage.
- Phyak, P. B. (2011). Beyond the façade of language planning for Nepalese primary education: Monolingual hangover, elitism and displacement of local languages. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 12(2). doi:10.1080/14664208.2011.584203
- Rahman, T. (1996). *Language and politics in Pakistan*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press.
- Rahman, T. (2002). *Language, ideology and power: Language learning among the Muslims of Pakistan and North India*. Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press.
- Ricento, T. K., & Hornberger, N. H. (1996). Unpeeling the onion: Language planning and policy and the ELT professional. *TESOL Quarterly*, 30(3), 401-427.
- Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective interviewing: A guide to theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Shamim, F. (2008). Trends, issues, and challenges in English language education in Pakistan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 28(3), 235-249.
- Shamim, F. (2011). *English as language for development in Pakistan: Issue, challenges and possible solution*. Retrieved from <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/Z413%20English%20Development%20Book.pdf>
- Shohamy, E. (2006). *Language policy: Hidden agendas and new approaches*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- South Asian Forum for Education Development (S.A.F.E.D.). (2016). *Annual Status of Education Report National (Rural) 2016*. Retrieved from <http://aserpakistan.org/document/aser/2016/reports/national/Annual-Status-of-Education-Report-ASER-2016.pdf>
- Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language policy*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Author Note

Liaquat Ali Channa currently serves BUITEMS, Quetta as an Associate Professor in the Department of English. He received his PhD in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and World Language Education at the University of Georgia, USA. He is a Fulbright alumnus. He teaches courses related to research and practice in applied linguistics. His research areas of interest are Educational Linguistics, Language Policy and Planning, Second/Foreign Language Learning and Teaching, Bilingual Education, and English as a/the Medium of Instruction. His research papers are published on these areas in various journals. He can be reached at: channaliaquat@yahoo.com, liaquat@buitms.edu.pk.

Sania Gul Panezai is a Lecturer at the Department of English at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Quetta. Her research interests include English language policy and planning, mixed methods research, applied linguistics, and curriculum and instruction. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: saniapanezai@gmail.com.

Copyright 2019: Liaquat A. Channa, Sania G. Panezai, and Nova Southeastern University.

Article Citation

Channa, L. A., & Panezai, S. G. (2019). Top-down English policy and bottom-up teacher take: An interview-based insight from the Balochistan Province of Pakistan. *The Qualitative Report*, 24(9), 2281-2296. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol24/iss9/13>
