



ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
ਪੰਜਾਬੀ
ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

Bilingual Curricula for Equity Literacy in Punjab, Pakistan



Sunaina Asher
Ball State University, Muncie IN

ABSTRACT

Pakistan is a multilingual and multiethnic country where regional languages are not given equal status. A dual system of education (English/Urdu medium) creates gaps in the learning and performance of students. The regional language in the Province of Punjab is not used at all in schools. This is an endeavor to explore the possibilities of using L1 (Punjabi), as an asset for enhancing learning of the materials.

BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is a multilingual country that suffers from inequity in education. It has a three-tier language system, with English at the top, the local and regional language at the bottom, and Urdu the official and national language in the middle. The elitist English medium schools are at the top, locally and privately owned English medium schools in the middle and government run Urdu medium schools at the bottom. It is an unequal system of education with the elitist English medium private institutions at the top and Urdu medium government run institutions at the bottom. This gives rise to inequity in education in the province of Punjab. The students in the rural areas suffer the most from this system.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Engage in dialogue with the educators about:

- Improving the research design and methodology.
- Using Punjabi as a medium of instruction along with Urdu and English in the province of Punjab.
- Propose a change in the educational policies of the state to make this a possibility
- Devising means/plans to adapt existing curricula to meet the challenge.

It is proposed that if the materials are taught using the home language of the learners (especially in the rural setting) it will result in better understanding, comprehension and retention of the materials and these learners will be at the same level as the other privileged students in regard to what they know.

Research Questions

- To what extent do the educational policies in Pakistan allow the introduction of the regional language (Punjabi) to be taught in schools in the province of Punjab?
- What is the opinion and perception of the school administrators, principals and teacher about the use of Punjabi in rural and Urban schools in Pakistan?
- How does the Eastern Punjab (in India) use Punjabi in educational context and how can it be incorporated in Pakistan's Punjab?
- Design a bilingual curriculum for a private sector primary school in the Province of Punjab and compare the student performance on tests and assignments before and after the implementation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- Argues for the effectiveness of mother tongue in instruction
- Punjabi is spoken by 44% of the population and is the biggest language group of the country (studysols.pk, 2017).
- Not used in schools or offices and is considered as the language of the illiterate and uncivilized. This attitude suppresses the linguistic and cultural identity of the people (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015).
- Bilingual instruction is helpful for language learners (Agirdag, 2009)
- It would be interesting to look into the educational policies of the country to see how far they support the use of the local languages at school. If not, then it would be interesting to propose changes in the educational policies (Gorski, 2013), that could permit the use of the learner's L1 in schools along with the teaching of Urdu and English. Hence, an additive approach would be adopted (Banks, 1989).
- According to a sociolinguistics research done by John (2015), the rural women of Punjab feel that if Punjabi language is used in offices and government institutions it would raise the socio-economic status of the poor people of the province of Punjab, giving rise to better jobs for them.
- Hence, introduction of this language in schools can be seen as the beginning of this change in the positive direction.
- Such kind of equity literacy would be beneficial for the privileged and the underprivileged students and they would be fully trilingual learners (Gorski & Swalwell, 2015).
- Government and administrative support is important to bring about such a change (Wilson, 1997). Perhaps this would also lead to an elevation of the status of Punjabi language and raise the self-esteem of the people who use it (Wilson, 1997).

METHODOLOGY

Paul Gorski has done significant research on multicultural education, equity literacy and the use of bilingual curricula. In his *Case Studies on diversity and social justice education* (2014), he has outlined seven steps which can be followed for investigation and the formation of a plan of action.

1. Identify the problem/problems posed by the case
2. Take stock of the varying perspectives
3. Consider possible challenges and opportunities
4. Imagine equitable outcomes: differentiate between equality and equity
5. Brainstorm immediate term responses
6. Brainstorm longer term policy and practice adjustments
7. Craft a plan of action

Surveys and interviews would be used with administrators, school Principals and teachers in the rural and urban settings regarding the existing curricula and student success and their opinion about the possibilities of a Bilingual curriculum and how technology can be used to promote a bilingual curriculum.

REFERENCES

Agirdag, O. (2009). All Languages welcomed here. *Supporting English Language Learners*, 66(7), pp. 20-25. Retrieved from [http://www.edchange.org/publications/edchangejournal/66\(7\)from/20-25-All-Languages-Welcomed-Here.pdf](http://www.edchange.org/publications/edchangejournal/66(7)from/20-25-All-Languages-Welcomed-Here.pdf)

Banks, J.A. (1989). Approaches to multicultural curriculum reform. *Trotter Institute Review*, 3(3), pp.17-19. Retrieved from <http://www.trotterinstitute.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Approaches-to-Multicultural-Curriculum-Reform.pdf>

Gorski, P.C. & Swalwell, K. (2015). Equity Literacy for all. <http://edchange.org/publications/Equity-Literacy-for-All.pdf>

Gorski, P. (2014). Excerpt: Case studies on diversity and social justice education. *Teaching Tolerance*, (48). Retrieved from <http://www.teachingtolerance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Case-Studies-on-Diversity-and-Social-Justice-Education.pdf>

Gorski, P. (2013). Poverty, class and the cultivation of economically just education policy: The role of ideology. <http://www.edchange.org/publications/Equity-Literacy-for-All.pdf>

John, A. (2015). Ideology, language attitudes and status of Punjabi in Pakistan. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from <http://www.proquest.com/docview/1150000000>

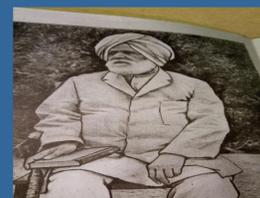
Languages of Pakistan <http://www.languagesofpakistan.com/>

Studysols.pk. (2017). <http://www.studysols.pk/pakistan-most-spoken-languages-by-number-of-people/>

Tiwana, R.K. (2013). Punjabi heritage language schools in the United States. *Heritage Languages in America*. <http://www.hlaa.org/HeritageLanguagesinAmerica/HeritageLanguageSchoolsintheUnitedStates.pdf>

Wilson, K. (1997). Multicultural education. Equity Literacy Institute and Edchange Project by Paul C. Gorski. <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/papers/keith.html>

PSALM 66 (VERSES 9-16) in Punjabi



IMAM DEAN
SHAHAZ
1845-1921

