

Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction: Views of Pakistani Stakeholders



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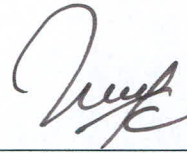
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to children across the globe juggling multiple languages tossed their way, unaware of their true abilities to adapt and learn.

CERTIFICATE

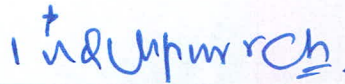
This is to certify that this thesis entitled: “*Mother Tongue as a Medium of Instruction: Views of Pakistani Stakeholders*” submitted by Sheraz Khan is accepted in its present form by the Department of Development Studies, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad as satisfying the requirements for partial fulfillment of the degree in Master of Philosophy in Development Studies.

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ABSTRACT

For any human interaction, the importance of language cannot be denied. Similarly, the importance of language in a classroom is also equally essential as it plays a vital role in classroom interaction and facilitates the process of learning. This study is an attempt to understand the importance of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary schools of Quetta district. It takes into account formal education at the lowest level of schooling in order to analyse the role of language in a child's learning and level of understanding during lectures. For learning outcomes to meet planned and predetermined expectations, it is normally assumed that the medium of instruction is either well-known to or can easily be learned by the students. In cases where this assumption is valid, language can be ignored as a variable when evaluating the effectiveness of education.

Theoretically it is based on the concept of "Submerging" which suggests introducing students to a different language of instruction than mother tongue which is widely used and spoken in the society. This theory of submerging is used to investigate the level of convergence in performance amongst the students whose mother tongue is same as medium of instruction and students from different language backgrounds. Moreover, the preferences of different stake holders are also studied with respect to medium of instruction.

The research relies heavily on empirical data from schools in Quetta, a multilingual and multiethnic hub of the country. Therefore, to scrutinise the data, thematic analysis is used as theoretical approach and framework analysis

as the tool to analyse qualitative data. Topics of convergence and preference of mother tongue are closely observed.

Analysis shows that while there is acceptance of the importance of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in some circles of the society, it proves to be a utopian concept in terms of large scale implementation. Especially considering how, in urban communities, people from multiple ethnicities live in closely knit societies and a similar setup arises in schools. Furthermore, compilation of results showed that there is occurrence of convergence in performance of students with same and different languages as medium of instruction.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Is the medium of instruction important to understand concepts better for students? Does mother tongue as medium help augment and create knowledge, as some studies suggest? Debate over language of instruction has been the center of discussion amongst the academia since long, and this debate has not led to a clear consensus amongst researchers. Hence there is a void in achieving a clear consensus among various stakeholders in the society and has given rise to the need for further research. The general key questions which come to mind are; 1) What is the preferred medium of instruction by parents, students and teachers? 2) What is the impact of change in medium of instruction on educational outcomes e.g. completion of primary education cycle? and 3) What does international research on the subject tell us about?

Linguists and academic scholars argue that children learn best in their mother tongue or first language (Smits, 2008). Researchers like Hawes (1979), Tramell (2008), Dekker (2011), Rwantabagu (2011) and Sreekanth (2011) argue that the best medium for early education is the language a child already knows and to which a child is naturally exposed in his/her social environment. Besides, studies also indicate that children, who learn in native languages stay in school longer, do better on tests, and repeat grades less often than students who do not get instruction in familiar language. Where children cannot learn in their mother tongue or another language which they already speak and know very well, their learning is affected. Furthermore, it is argued that children who are also facing other types of educational disadvantages are often pushed out of school altogether when learning is not in a language they are

already familiar with. Pressure to improve literacy scores is prevalent among governments and academics. However, improved scores are meaningless if children do not understand what they are reading and are unable to generate their own text.

Pakistan has one of Asia's worst systems of government-sponsored education. In 1990 its total literacy rate was 35 percent and its literacy rate for women 21 percent. Primary schools enrolled about a third of eligible students, and of those students only 58 percent completed grade 5. These figures contrast sharply with China and Indonesia, where total literacy rates in 1990 were over 75 percent and enrollment of all and female primary school students reached 100 percent (Academy of Educational Planning and Management, 1988). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has recommended that the governments of low-income countries spend 4 percent of their Gross National Product (GNP) on education. In its first six five-year plans Pakistan fell far short of that figure. The numbers ranged from 0.88 percent of GNP in the first plan (1955–1960) to 2.04 percent in the sixth plan (1983–1988). By 1990 the budgeted figure rose to 3.4 percent of GNP, but that increase did little to solve the problems of enrollment, teacher competence, student learning, and completion. With an annual population growth rate of 3.1 percent between 1980 and 1991 Pakistan could hardly go beyond the set indicators (Mukhtar Ahmed Bhatti, 1986).

Pakistan is not the only country struggling with the medium of instruction controversy. Many countries continue teaching their students in former colonial languages, or in a dominant national or international language, which young children do not speak at home (Rwantabagu 2011). In the case of Pakistan, Urdu and English are made compulsory as the preferred languages of instruction in government and private schools around the country, with adhoc use of regional languages, used

inconsistently across the four provinces. Despite increasingly overwhelming evidence of the value and benefits of early education in a mother tongue, few developing countries, including our own, are paying sufficient heed to making required policy adjustments. There are urban centers where Urdu is as frequently spoken as other native languages. Subsequently there are very few studies conducted in this respect, therefore there is a need to know the parents and teachers' perspective on whether mother tongue should be the medium of instruction or not. Moreover, the theory of submerging has not been tested in Pakistani context especially in a multilingual setup like Quetta

Since Urdu is as widely spoken and understood as other mother tongues it should have similar effects on educational outcomes as that of a native language. Multilingual city like Quetta is characterised by variety of languages and ethnicities. people living in such settings are often fluent at both the national language and their native language. There is a need to explore whether in such settings is there a essential to teach students in mother tongue, and if no, then is there a gap in the performance between the students from various lingual backgrounds. Moreover, other stake holders like parents and teachers are well versed with the advancement in society and the language used in such societies, therefore the question of preferred medium of instruction is vital.

The Millennium Development Goals and Education for All (EFA) programme by United Nations emphasised more on primary education and enrollment. In recent years the focus of governments and donor agencies has shifted towards education in first language(UNESCO, 2011). This is mainly due to the rising question of how, rather than where to provide education. Efforts have been made to improve the quality of education that is being imparted, governments and international donor agencies

have stressed upon the provision of education in its simplest form in order to increase its absorption and efficiency. Topic of this research indicates an attempt to study formal education at primary level, in order to gauge the level of understanding of the students who are being taught in a language that is different from their mother tongue. Moreover, it attempts to find the level of convergence, if any, in student performance among the students from Urdu language backgrounds and those whose mother tongue is different. This study also reflects the personal and collective preferences of teachers and parents regarding the medium of instruction at schools.

1.2 Topic

Most of the countries that favor mother tongue as an education imparting language hold the view that, a foreign language of colonisers is imposed over them. This foreign language is alien to them therefore it affects the learning outcomes of their children (Rwantabagu, 2011). In African case this may be true because English was not even their second language. They had various native languages, the second language was their official language and English came in third. Therefore, African students faced problems in acquiring a third language. For Pakistan, Urdu is a second language which is widely spoken and understood by masses, and English comes in third. School curriculum is taught in Urdu which is widely spoken and understood by the masses, but students belong to various backgrounds. This may result in a difficulty in learning.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The benefits of mother tongue schooling are well presented by researchers (Smits, 2008). It enhances the learning abilities of students and results in better educational outcomes. But is it feasible to invest time and resources in learning the first language?

This type of investment in learning a language from scratch and then shifting towards a second language, which is more widely used in education locally and internationally, may not be practical. Proponents of bilingual education system argue that students should be taught in mother tongue before they shift towards an unfamiliar language. In country like Pakistan the official language is also the language of instruction, but students belong to diverse language and ethnic backgrounds. This may result in language related learning difficulties. There are urban centres where Urdu is as frequently spoken as other native languages. Since there are very few studies conducted in this respect, there is a need to know the parents and teachers' perspective on whether mother tongue should be the medium of instruction or not. Moreover, the theory of submerging has not been tested in Pakistani context especially in a multilingual setup like Quetta where with the exception of a small minority of children who are bilingual even before they begin school, teaching children in a language other than their mother tongue in the early years does them harm, no matter how good their teachers may be.

In an education system like Pakistan, where students from various multilingual backgrounds are submerged into a unilingual education system, there is a need to examine if the student performance converge as the years pass or it leads to a decline in educational performance eventually resulting in students all together leaving the school. Therefore, there is a need to assess whether in a multilingual setup as it exists in Quetta, does teaching in Urdu instead of mother tongue, has an effect on educational outcomes.

1.4 Key Terms

Following text explains the key terms that are used throughout this writing. These technical terms are the concepts that this document will refer to at every stage and in every chapter. Therefore, there is a need to briefly explain them for convenience and to avoid any confusion in the later stages. The terms and concepts used from the literature include:

1.4.1 Submerging

Theory of submerging suggests that if students are introduced to a foreign language as a medium of instruction in school, they will take time but recover in terms of their educational performance in comparison to those whose mother tongue is also the medium of instruction (Walter 2011). Since the area of the study is characterised by multilingualism and the language of instruction is Urdu, students in primary schools are 'submerged' into a unilingual education system where they face difficulties in understanding.

1.4.2 Convergence

Concept of convergence is related to the theory of submerging. It suggests that after the students are submerged into a system of education which is not in their mother tongue, the students tend to cope up with the difficulties during Grade 1 and their performance converges with the students whose mother tongue and schools' medium of instruction are the same. Urdu being the major language of instruction leaves a room to test the convergence levels of the students whose mother tongue is not the same as language of instruction at schools.

1.4.3 Mother Tongue

In the context of formal education, the term mother tongue is normally used to refer to the language a child learns first and usually speaks best. Since the major ethnic groups of the locale are Pashtuns, Brahvi and Urdu speaking settlers, the mother tongues considered are Pashto, Brahvi and Urdu.

1.4.4 Bilingual Education

It involves teaching academic material in two languages i.e. the mother tongue or a native language and a secondary or foreign language. Pakistani public sector schools included in the study use Urdu as a medium of instruction. Additionally, the schools in the city center have students from various language backgrounds, therefore the medium of instruction is strictly Urdu. Hence the education system in the locale is unilingual at primary level.

1.4.5 Educational Achievement

Here educational achievement refers to the grades a student acquires in the final examination at school. This may vary in bilingual education system and mother tongue based education system. In the context of this study, educational achievement is measured year wise through a final examination designed to test the learning ability of students for respective subjects taught.

1.4.6 Course Material

Course material refers to the tools that are used to teach students. These may include text books, experiments, guides, visual or oral aids etc. Course material in this study would include text books approved by the government of Pakistan, for primary school (grade 1-3) three text books are used for math, general science and Urdu respectively.

1.5 Research Problem

In a multilingual city like Quetta students belong to a variety of ethno-linguistic backgrounds therefore there is uncertainty on stakeholders' part over medium of instruction and the efficacy of teaching in Urdu. This research intends to expisit the preference of medium of instruction from different stakeholders. Additionally, it also aims to explore if there is convergence in the performance of Urdu and other language speakers. In this research I have operationalised research problem into following research objectives and research question:

1.6 Research Objectives

Urdu is used as a medium of instruction in Pakistani schools, as per the government policy, but students belong to various multilingual backgrounds. There is a need to explore if the existing language of instruction is proving to be helpful in student understanding or is it a hurdle for students from multilingual backgrounds. The objectives of the study are:

To understand the perspectives of teachers and parents on mother tongue being medium of instruction in schools where the knowledge is being imparted in Urdu language.

Since teachers and parents are directly related to student performance in school and at home. Teachers measure the student performance in class room while parents observe the change at home, it is necessary to know their account on the language of instruction being used.

To examine if the student performance converges in grade 2 with respect to mother tongue not being the medium of instruction.

Comparing the class participation among the students of Urdu, Pashto and Brahvi mother tongue. Class participation through different components which would include frequency of student answers, questions and contribution in class discussion.

1.7 Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are teacher and parent perspectives about mother tongue being the language of instruction?
- 2- Does the performance of students from diverse language backgrounds converge in Grade 2?

1.8 Limitations

The limitations of this study that have been outside the researcher's control are:

- 1- Time constraint.
- 2- Lack of access to girl's schools due to cultural restrictions.
- 3- Time taken at each school varied corresponding to the enrollment of classroom, access and mobility.

1.9 Significance of the Study

This study has attempted to observe the preference of stakeholders with respect to mother tongue as a medium of instruction and occurrence of convergence regarding student performance pertaining to the difference of language of instruction. A study of this nature has not been conducted in Pakistan more specifically in Balochistan. Since, population of Balochistan in general and Quetta in specific, is diverse in language and ethnic terms, therefore there is a need to observe if the language of instruction has a

considerable effect on the learning outcomes of the students and that the student performance converges if students are taught in Urdu language.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review of Literature

There are two schools of thought with respect to mother tongue being the medium of instruction. On one hand Hawes (1979), Tramell (2008), Dekker (2011), Rwantabagu (2011) and Sreekanth (2011) argue that bilingual education system is an aid to better understanding and has a positive effect on the learning outcomes of the students in primary school and later stage of education.

On the other hand Chu-Chang (1980), Chamot (1988), Baker (1988b), Cleghorn (1989) and Akinnaso (1993) argue that it is the other facilities and infrastructure that has a considerable effect on learning outcomes of the students rather than the bilingual approach to literacy.

Linguists argue that mother tongue (Bilingual) education system is superior to the unilingual system. This argument is built upon various premises. Some propose the concept of “full literacy” to increase the learning outcomes of children, which contends that literacy is not only recitation and copying; rather in its broader meaning literacy is reading with understanding (Pinnock, 2009). To enhance understanding skills in reading a child has to study five components of literacy which include; alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, fluency to read, vocabulary building and comprehension skills. These skills are taught to students one at a time over a period and then tested against the set benchmarks (Donald N. Langenberg et al, 2000). Furthermore, bilingual education system is considered as a way to improve socio-economic conditions of marginalised communities, as well as to bring them under nationalism project (Rwantabagu, 2011). Others put the argument that mother tongue

being the medium of instruction promotes a participatory effort towards the upbringing of the communities and minorities, and it provides them the opportunity of self-expression. Following one official language has the danger of excluding the group which cannot read and write the official language, this may result in isolation of expression from different minorities and in some cases majorities as well.

The cross country data from Africa show that despite independence, the educational system in many former colonies maintained European legacies and accorded secondary place to their native languages. This was considered to be the major reason behind reduced performance of students in early ages of schooling and caused underperformance of the educational system in many African countries. This over reliance on foreign languages which were unfamiliar to the majority of children resulted in semi-literacy, school failure and massive educational wastage (Rwantabagu, 2011). In the wake of fading nationalism in Africa, educational reforms and innovations were attempted to make school systems more Afro-centered in order to serve the interests of majority. In a meeting of African Education Ministers in Lagos in February 1976 regarding the educational reforms, it was concluded that:

“An approach of this kind should lead to the revival of the national languages as vehicles of scientific and technical progress; it will enable our societies, freed from all the effects of foreign domination, to contribute in their own unique way to the fruitful dialogue upon which the full development of the various civilizations depends” (UNESCO, 1976).

In addition to the African countries, France also declared French as the only language of instruction in schools in 1880. Before this policy shift, 60% of population could not

speak French, but currently French is spoken across the country with only 5% of population speaking other languages (Tangerås, 2008).

A similar account on language and politics is given by Tariq Rehman in his book “Language Policy, Identity and Religion: Aspects of the Civilization of the Muslims of Pakistan and North India” where he argues that it is in the interest of elites to teach a few in foreign language and not the local languages. If the medium of instruction changes it will ultimately change the power equation of the country like Pakistan (Rehman, 2010).

Furthermore, using mother tongue as a medium of instruction in early school age lays the foundation for future learning and attainment as it reduces the mental process linking learning in school with observations in daily life (Sreekanth, 2011). Literacy and education in mother tongue has its cognitive advantages, children who learn reading and writing in their mother tongue are able to grasp the oral and written skills of foreign language more easily (Glanz, 2005). Research in various parts of the world such as from Africa (Rwantabagu, 2011), shows that cognitive ability develops rapidly with mother tongue as the medium of instructions in primary school for example a study from Nigeria, Tanzania and Ethiopia shows that teaching in mother tongue yielded better outcomes than other foreign languages (Webb, 2002).

A study by Hawes (1979) on African primary schools revealed that using mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary schools has a positive impact on the expertise in reading, writing and creativity.

Dekker (2011) carried out a controlled study in rural area of the Philippines to examine the effects of language of instruction on educational outcomes. The study

concluded that there was a gain of approximately 40% in educational outcomes through assessing test scores of students in the school. Similar study by Tramell (2008) in Cameroon noticed a gain of 200% in educational outcomes for grade 1 students being instructed in mother tongue.

However, Chu-Chang (1980), Chamot (1988) and Akinnaso (1993) suggested to factor curriculum changes, course material updates, teacher experience and trainings, alterations in activities carried out in class, and more attention than usual in order to have better casual understanding of educational achievements. Furthermore, Akinnaso (1993) claims that it is not useless to spend on mother tongue, but in order to ripe the maximum benefits of it, teachers need to be trained and facilitated. Confirming to these concerns, Baker (1988a) warns that in an attempt to develop relationship between mother tongue and the educational achievements tied to it, researchers must not ignore various other variables like teacher training, curriculum and school infrastructure that mediate the learning outcomes.

China, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia, have enrollment rates of 100 percent for children of primary school age (World Bank, 1993). In 1990 the rate for Pakistan was only 37 percent for all eligible children and 26 percent for female children. In that same year India had 97 percent of all eligible students and 83 percent of female students enrolled in school. Bangladesh had enrollment figures of 73 percent for all students and 68 percent for female students. These differences cannot be explained by Pakistan's low income. Among the three countries Pakistan ranked first on Gross National Product (GNP) per capita, India second, and Bangladesh third. The main reason that 63 percent of all eligible students and 74 percent of female students do not enroll in Pakistan's schools is the shortage of school buildings (Reimers, 1995). This clearly

indicates that other than medium of instruction, the access to schools is also an important factor that influences in the attainment of education.

In the 1970s Indonesia, with strong leadership from President Suharto, undertook a massive expansion of opportunities for children to attend primary school. Two key elements in this policy were the construction of new government school buildings across the country and the reconstruction of buildings used by Islamic schools. With adequate funding from the government's own budget and strong backing by Suharto that reform led to a substantial increase in educational standard (Reimers, 1995). Moreover, Reimers (1995) argue that besides access to schools, factors like teachers, class size and textbooks also contribute towards student enrollment and their learning. Although students differ in their general ability to learn and in circumstances, such as social class, that may affect their chances to learn. Their achievement also depends on whether their teachers know the material they are teaching, how they present it in the classroom, whether or not students have textbooks and other conditions. Analysis of the Pakistan survey showed that, in principle, about half of the differences in student achievement could be explained by student background and other conditions within the school and half by conditions that differed across schools, such as teacher education, methods of teaching, and whether the school is urban or rural (Reimers, 1995).

A study of language policy in Kenyan primary schools by Cleghorn (1989) indicated that the use of mother tongue as a language of instruction does not guarantee successful educational achievement.

Hassan (2001) examined Malaysia's growing interest in English rather than the local language. The study concluded that the students demonstrated a positive attitude

towards learning English as compared to Malay and exhibited high self-esteem in speaking English language.

Taking on the argument of Hassan (2001) the question arises that is it suitable to shift towards the mother tongue instruction? Gajendragadkar (1968) assessed the higher education system of India and concluded that it is difficult to switch over from mother tongue in pre-collegiate towards a second language (English in this case) in University Education. He argues that such a switchover can affect the education quality and may hamper the cognitive skills of the students as they enter university. The basic purpose of education is to have effective contact with knowledge, and to maintain this contact it is necessary to gain that knowledge in the language it is produced. Gajendragadkar (1968) extends the argument by adding that in contemporary world this knowledge is dominated by English language, thus shifting away from the language of knowledge may not be a wise decision.

This concept of reverting from mother tongue poses a question i.e. how would the student's cope up with a language that is different from their native language (earlier put forward by Dekker, Rwantabagu, Trammell, Hawes and Sreekanth)? An alternate to teaching in mother tongue is the concept of "submerge" proposed by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) in his book. This concept entails that learners are taught in the language they do not speak. He is of the view that if the children are submerged into the system where second language is taught from the beginning in schools, student's catch-up sooner or later. In support of Skutnabb-Kangas, Moullton (1968) contends that when a student is set out to learn a new language, he/she is willing intellectually to accept the fact that it is different and that he/she must learn some new and unfamiliar sounds to speak it properly. Furthermore, he says that at the same time

he/she is so trapped within the world of his/her native language that learning these new sounds can be a very difficult task indeed. So, this way the child mentally prepares him/herself to overcome this language problem to carry on with studies properly and thus overcomes the language difficulty eventually.

Supporters of submersion believe that if a student is surrounded by other students from majority language (language of instruction), he or she will quickly learn that language. They believe that allowing a child to use mother tongue only delays the learning of majority language. Since the teacher and the majority language students act as role model for the children from different language backgrounds, it is believed that the latter group will quickly acquire fluency in language of instruction. Such students thus, should be placed in multilingual schools so they learn the language of instruction. Therefore, the supporters of submersion regard it as the quickest way to learn majority language for children from different language backgrounds (Baker & Jones, 1998).

Thomas and Collier (2002) in their study has criticised the concept of submerging by arguing that submerging is similar to throwing the student in water without teaching them how to swim, therefore submerging makes learning more difficult.

Walter (2011) in his study in Cameroon and Eritrea found out that grade 1 children who are taught in mother tongue have better comprehension skills than the students who are taught in second language (Submersion), but their performance in reading fluency and comprehension are not impressive in the years to follow. Walter's experimental study in Cameroon consisted of 24 schools, 12 had mother tongue as a medium of instruction while the other 12 were taught English. He assessed grade 1 to grade 4 for fluency in English, mathematical skills and arts. The study concluded that

students who were taught in mother tongue performed well in grade 1, but the difference of performance between them and English medium schools was not statistically significant after the 1st year.

Walters study points out that if a group of two students begin the school, one in mother tongue and other in second language, the performance of students in mother tongue school would surpass that of the ones in second language school in first year. From first year onwards the difference begins to reduce and by third year it becomes minimal. This shows a trend of convergence between student performances of mother tongue schools and second language schools, therefore there is a room to investigate whether this type of result can be generalised for other developing countries or not.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theory of ‘submerging’ given by Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) suggests that if students are introduced to a language they are not familiar with, they will take time but recover in terms of their performance. However, Thomas and Collier (2002) have criticised this theory as it makes learning more difficult for children. Theory of submerging was further taken up by Walter (2011) and applied in Cameroon and Eritrea, where he selected a sample of 24 schools, 12 with mother tongue instruction and 12 with second language instruction. The study concluded that the students in mother tongue schools only perform well in grade 1. Afterwards performance of both the groups starts to converge and by grade 3 the difference is statistically insignificant. Basing the concept of this study on Walters investigation, an attempt is made to examine whether the same trend in educational outcomes exist for students who belong to different language background but study in Urdu.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter entails the research design of the study, including the methodological underpinnings. It describes the locale of study and informs about the informants' selection and data collection and analysis. Strong consideration has been given to ethical issues concerning data management and have been presented in this section in detail.

3.2 Locale

Quetta district is located in the north-west of Balochistan province. It is the capital of the province having an estimated population of 759,941 (Census 1998) and projected population of 1,235,066 by 2010 (Planning and development department, 2011). Quetta district is multi-cultural and multi linguistic area. The principal ethnic groups in the district are Pashtun, Baloch, Brahvi, Hazara and Punjabi. Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto, Balochi, Brahvi, Sindhi, Siraiki, Hindko and Persian are the languages spoken in the district, whereas Urdu is spoken by all ethnic groups. For a province that takes up 44% of the country's land space and yet remains the least populated the unique mix of local languages makes it the ideal candidate for a study in literacy and mother tongue as a medium of instruction. The overall literacy rate of district Quetta is 67% and the enrolment rate in primary schools is 65% (35% students out of school) (Balochistan Education Department, 2014). Locale of the study majorly consists of schools from multilingual areas and schools that operate under unilingual education system. Population in selected area is ethnically diverse and will serve the purpose of observing the students from selected languages. Government Boys Primary School

(GBPS) Yut Road, GBPS Shaldara No.1, GBPS Shafi Shah Street and GBPS Special School are located in the city center, whereas GBPS New Nichari, GBPS Haji Rahim and GBPS Killi Khan Mohammad are relatively new settlements. These areas mostly consist of Brahvi, Pashto and Urdu speaking population.

Schools in the city center which include GBPS Yut road, GBPS Shaldara No.1, GBPS Shafi Shah street and GBPS Special School are relatively the older schools in the town. Facilities at the schools are uniform which includes class room for each grade with a high student to teacher ratio. Population surrounding these schools consist of mostly middle class families which are government servants, work in private firms or small traders. As far as education level is concerned, population of city center is literate and middle or low income class therefore cannot afford to send their children to private schools. Downtown area mainly consists of settler inhabitants thus it is linguistically diverse place where the families belong to various ethnic backgrounds including Pashto, Brahvi, Persian, Urdu, Sindhi, Balochi and Hindko.

On the other hand, schools that are out of the city center include GBPS New Nichari, GBPS Haji Rahim and GBPS Killi Khan Mohammad and are relatively new settlements. The population majorly consist of local people with a minority of settlers and Afghan immigrants. Families in these areas are indulged in low income earning activities like daily wages and private jobs. Most of the population is semi-literate. Schools in these areas have minimum facilities for students which are barely sufficient.

3.3 Research Design

According to Bryman (2012) a research design represents ‘a structure that guides the execution of a research method and the analysis of the subsequent data’. According to

this definition research designs function as framework for data collection and analysis. Choosing a particular research design also guides about prioritising the dimensions of the research process which include: building relational associations between social variables; generalising findings which are extracted from specific cases or units of data collection to larger groups or population; outlining research problem, research questions and objectives; understanding human behaviour and situating it in specific social contexts and providing temporal explanation of social phenomena. Young (2003) conceptualises research design as a plan of study. This plan is guided by the desire of the researcher to gain knowledge or urgency to provide a scientific answer to the question/s under consideration. This plan can be vague in the beginning which may undergo modifications with the progression of the research as new insights and dimensions are explored and become known to the researcher. Nevertheless, this plan comprises identifying and outlining certain decisions defined along the axis of: the nature and scope of research study; the types of data to be needed; the rationale of research; the socio-cultural, socio-temporal and locational contexts of research; the tools for data elicitation; the units or cases of data collection, and the analyses of the data elicited (Young, 2003). Hence the decisions regarding ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘how’, ‘by what means’ and ‘regarding what’ are the important constituents while designing a plan of the research.

There are different types of research designs including though not limited to: experimental design; cross-sectional design; longitudinal design; case study design; comparative design; explanatory design; exploratory design; descriptive design; narrative design and comparative design. I have used exploratory research design for this research. Exploratory research, as the name states, intends merely to explore the research questions and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions to

existing problems. Conducted to determine the nature of the problem, this type of research is not intended to provide conclusive evidence, but helps us to have a better understanding of the problem. When conducting exploratory research, the researcher ought to be willing to change his/her direction because of revelation of new data and new insights. Exploratory research tends to tackle new problems on which little or no previous research has been done. Unstructured interviews are the most popular primary data collection method with this type of research (Majumdar, 2005). This kind of research design play an instrumental role in terms of identifying reasons behind a wide range of processes as well as assessing the impacts of changes. Since there was no research conducted in this respect, this helped in identifying the complex relationship between the language of instruction and student performance. Moreover it also helped in comparing the responses of students of different language backgrounds. Qualitative research methods (mostly in the form of observational data extraction tools) facilitated in making these comparisons in-depth and multi-dimensional.

3.4 Research Methods

Research methods are tools used for the extraction of data which may include survey or interview schedule, informal interviews, group discussions, informal conversations and observational techniques (Bryman, 2012). In this research data was collected through, observation, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. In the following text are mentioned the details of each research method which was used in this research.

3.4.1 Access to Closed Social Setting

According to Bryman (2012) access to a social setting that is relevant to the study under consideration is crucial. The tools used to access a social setting and the social actors situated in it are contingent upon two factors; whether that social setting is closed or open. Among the closed social settings are included organisations There are urban centers where Urdu is as frequently spoken as other native languages. Since there are very few studies conducted in this respect, there is a need to know the parents and teachers' perspective on whether mother tongue should be the medium of instruction or not. Moreover, the theory of submerging has not been tested in Pakistani context especially in a multilingual setup like Quetta such as firms, research incubators, social movements and policy and academic institutes. Van Maanen and Kolb (1985) explain the factors which help in gaining access to closed social settings easier. These factors are criteria based defined along the dimensions of 'strategic planning, hard work and dumb luck' (Bryman 2012; 435). Bryman (2012) also outlines the dimensions which can be considered practical and relevant for gaining access to a closed setting. Along what Bryman (2012) calls 'a range of tactics' are included the access to the study participants through top management, frequent visits to the organisation one wants to research on, clear explanation of the study's objectives, and negotiations. In this study I have employed all the above-mentioned techniques. The access to top management (principals of the schools) helped in gaining access easier. My ethnic positionality (Pashtun) also played an instrumental role in accessing to places and Units of Data Collection (UDCs) I wanted to research on for this research. Besides that, in order to minimise confounds, I used native language of the respondents as the medium of conversation with them. Before entering into the field to collect primary data a formal No Objection Certificate

(NOC) was obtained from education department of Balochistan to facilitate the process of data collection.

3.4.2 Observation

“Observation is a qualitative method with roots in traditional ethnographic research, whose objective is to help researchers learn the perspectives held by study populations. As qualitative researchers, we presume that there will be multiple perspectives within any given community. We are interested both in knowing what those diverse perspectives are and in understanding the interplay among them.”¹ Observing adults involve different strategy. The dynamics of a similar activity done with school children are totally different. Prior experience with children of a similar age group has yielded some best practices which are discussed as follows:

i) Settling in with the children

Prior experience of working with primary school children has taught me to give children time to settle down in the presence of a stranger. For this it is necessary to be introduced by the class teacher who also explained the purpose of my visit. A friendly gesture and tone was adopted in self introduction before I sat in the last row of the classroom. Furthermore, to remain inconspicuous, local attire was worn and no recording gadgets were displayed to minimise the children’s apprehensions. This is specifically the case with populations in Balochistan and KPK. The teacher was previously asked for number of Pashto, Brahvi and Urdu speaking backgrounds to avoid stereotyping and thereby flawing the data collection process.

ii) Timing

Early morning visits were made to ensure children were at their highest energy levels. This again was learned from previous field experience.

¹<https://assessment.trinity.duke.edu/documents/ParticipantObservationFieldGuide.pdf>

iii) *Data collection*

Tables were made for each aspect of observation namely Class participation, Responses to teacher's questions and Questions asked by students.

Observation, for many years, has been a hallmark of both anthropological and sociological studies. In recent years, the field of education has seen an increase in the number of qualitative studies that include observation as a way to collect information (Kawulich, 2005). Observation is the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities. Schensul and LeCompte in their book "Essential ethnographic methods: observations, interviews, and questionnaires" define observation as "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting" (Schensul & LeCompte, 1999). For this purpose, observational techniques were used to observe the convergence of the students. This method was used to obtain the viewpoint of participants rather than the researcher. Participants in such settings behave as they normally do, therefore the validity increases. In the following are mentioned the occurrences which were observed about the students in a classroom setting:

- 1- The frequency with which the students answer to questions asked by a teacher.
- 2- The frequency of question that a student asks during the lesson.
- 3- Participation of the student in general class discussion.

In order to observe these occurrences observation was used as a data extraction tool. The observations in which the observer observes a social setting but does not take part in it are non-participatory. Observation is non-participatory and observer is usually a non-participant. In observations, observers are in the social setting being observed but

rarely do they participate in what is happening. Bryman (2012) also calls this technique systematic observation in which the researcher frames and maintains observation schedule which comprises rules for observing and recording of human behaviour in a social setting. These rules help observers in making decisions on what to, how to, and when to observe. For this research, the social settings were classrooms and the participants were teachers and students who were observed for a specific period of time (class hours). The categories of behaviours observed were pre-determined in the observation schedules which are mentioned as above. I used to focus on an entire group under consideration that was observed and within that group the observer observes and records the participants who are involved in a particular type of behaviour. In the observation schedule I made three behavioural categories; first the responsiveness of the students to the questions asked by the teachers, second the questions posed by the students to the teachers, and the class participation of students. I observed the class as whole and located students within these categories according to their variant behaviours as mentioned above. A total of fourteen observations were recorded in seven schools. Grade 1 and grade 2 students were observed from every school. Tables below show the number and language composition of students observed in grade 1 & 2:

	Total students
Pashtun	79
Brahvi	40

Table:
Grade 1

Urdu speaking	87
Total	206

Cumulative

A total of 206 students were observed from grade 1 of the seven selected schools. Out of 206 students 79 belonged to Pashtun background, 40 from Brahvi and 87 from Urdu language background respectively.

Table: Cumulative Grade 2

	Total students
Pashtun	85
Brahvi	35
Urdu speaking	103
Total	223

A total of 223 students were observed from grade 2 of the seven selected schools. Out of 223 students 85 belonged to Pashtun background, 35 from Brahvi and 103 from Urdu language background respectively.

3.4.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Interviews can be classified as structured, unstructured and semi-structured. In semi-structured interviews an interviewer is allowed freedom to probe far beyond the answers to the structured questions. Bryman (2012) defines semi-structured interview as the data extraction technique in which interview guide helps researcher to follow a series of questions that are in general form but also enables researcher to change or modify the sequence of questions asked, the formulation of questions (use of prompts and probes), and the researcher positionality. The use of open and closed-ended questions in semi-structured interviews enables researchers to ask questions in response to ‘what are seen significant replies’ (Bryman, 2012; 716) from the respondents.

Berg (2001) calls semi-structured interviews as semi-standardised interviews. In semi-standardised interviews the use of topic or interview guide keeps the flow and tone of conversation smooth and each interviewee is asked questions (as specified in the topic or interview guide) in a systematic order but the interviewer is expected to ask questions using unscheduled probes in addition to those specified in the interview guide by the researcher. This technique of interviewing is data-driven, context specific, participatory and multi-vocal (Berg, 2001)

In this research semi-structured interviews were designed to draw information using a set of predetermined questions and open-ended questions that are expected to gather the interviewees’ thoughts, experiences, opinions, information and attitudes about study-related issues. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were used to make the process in-depth and efficient. In addition to that, this method also allowed the

respondents to give more detailed, richer and comprehensive responses on the topics relevant to the study's objectives and important for respondents. Questions were asked on the efficacy of mother tongue as a medium of instruction and whether 'submerging' a student in a foreign language medium of instruction led to convergence of performance or not.

3.4.4 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

'Surveys assume that people know how they feel. But sometimes they really don't. Sometimes it takes listening to the opinions of others in a small and safe group setting before they form thoughts and opinions. Focus groups are well suited for those situations. Focus groups can reveal a wealth of detailed information and deep insight. When well executed, a focus group creates an accepting environment that puts participants at ease allowing them to thoughtfully answer questions in their own words and add meaning to their answers.'² FGD is a tool to yield qualitative data that provides a deeper understanding of the attitudes and practices of the participants. FGD is a group interview technique which is designed for small groups and enables the researcher to learn through discussion about social, cultural, economic, political and religious characteristics, processes and orientations among various groups (Berg, 2001). Bryman (2012) defines focus group as a form of group interview in which there is a topic on which discussion is centered, there is a moderator or facilitator who moderates or facilitates the discussion, there are more than one group participants who take active part in discussion, and the tone of the discussion is contingent upon maintaining interactional dynamics within the group to extract joint construction of meaning.

²https://assessment.trinity.duke.edu/documents/How_to_Conduct_a_Focus_Group.pdf

In this research focus groups were conducted with the parents of the students of grade-1 and grade-2. Students spend most of the time at home and interact with parents. It is important to know the parents' point of view on language of instruction and whether or not their child's performance had converged as per their observation, after being submerged into a system of different language of instruction. Focus groups facilitated in collecting data from parents of all the students in the sample to discover how parents think and feel about mother tongue as a medium of instruction and why they hold these opinions. Since reaching out to individual parents was not feasible, FGDs were chosen in gathering a group of parents at one place and collect qualitative data in a limited amount of time.

The following steps were taken to ensure the best outcomes of FGDs in this research:

i) Clear objectives

The objectives of the study were clarified to the participants to keep intervention from the researcher to a minimum during the session. Local languages were used to avoid any confusion.

ii) Setting stage

Prior to the start of every FGD, ground rules for discussion were set by the participants to avoid problems. Mostly these included regular meeting etiquette such as turning off cellphones, avoiding discussions.

iii) Time management

To contain the discussion within the confines of the research topics a time limit of 1 hour was set at the beginning. However, discussions with larger groups lasted up to 1 hour 30 minutes. Participants were told of the time at 15 minute intervals.

iv) Pilot testing to avoid leading questions

A week prior to FGDs /a trial run of FGDs was carried out to help frame questions better. Volunteers were requested to simulate an FGD. The purpose was to rehearse the role of a facilitator and foresee ways in which the discussion could be steered to remain focused on the research topic at hand. Emphasis was laid on the appropriateness of questions and phrasing to ensure they remained as open-ended as possible.

v) Identification of a neutral venue

Given the tribal nature of the communities and the multicultural nature of the research, efforts were made to identify a more neutral venue for everyone. Preference was given to school buildings or areas of community gathering. Keeping in mind local cultural norms, arrangements for refreshments were also made to provide a friendly environment.

vi) Consent

Verbal consent from all the respondents was taken before starting the FGD. The purpose of research was explained and permission was obtained to note down the responses.

After taking all the above considerations into account FGD's were conducted in seven selected schools. The table below shows the details of the FGDs conducted:

Table: Details of FGD's

BEMIS code	Name	Date Scheduled	Number of Participants	Urdu speakers	Brahvi Speakers	Pashto Speakers
4813	GBPS Killi Khan Mohammad Kotwal	8-Aug	13	4	3	6
4970	GBPS Yut Road, Shakra-e-Iqbal	9-Aug	5	1	1	3
4980	GBPS Shaldara No.1, Liaquat Bazar	10-Aug	7	2	2	3
4995	GBPS Shafi Shah Street, Dial Bagh	11-Aug	6	3	1	2
5010	GBPS Haji Rahim-ud-Din, Kotwal	12-Aug	9	2	3	4
4808	GBPS New Nichari, Jail Road, Hudda	13-Aug	7	3	2	2
4988	GBPS Special School	14-Aug	5	1	1	3
Total	52					

A total of 52 parents took part in FGD's. It was taken care that parents of all the selected languages participate in the group sessions. Following table shows the attributes of the participants of FGD's which include level of education, occupation/profession, number of children and language skills.

Table: Participant Attributes FGD

Attribute	Statistics
Level of education Participants were asked about their highest educational degree	5 participants had no formal education 10 participants had completed 5 th grade 13 participants had a 10 th grade diploma 7 participants had cleared 12 th grade

	<p>9 participants had a bachelor's degree</p> <p>8 participants had a master's degree</p>
<p>Profession</p> <p>Participants were asked the nature of their employment</p>	<p>22 participants were self-employed (landlords, business persons)</p> <p>9 participants were school teachers</p> <p>5 participants were government employees</p> <p>6 participants were employed in local companies</p>
<p>Number of children</p>	<p>10 participants had 2 children</p> <p>42 participants had 4 or more children</p>
<p>Language skills</p>	<p>17 participants were Urdu speaking</p> <p>17 participants were Brahvi speaking</p> <p>18 participants were Pashto speaking</p> <p>All participants were bilingual and fluent in Urdu as well as their mother tongue.</p> <p>participants could read and write in English</p>

Diversity of respondents helped in getting the account and point of view from a range of parents. The details of these have further been discussed in detail in themes that emerged from data in chapter 5.

3.5 Units of Data Collection (UDCs)

In this research three Units of Data Collection were chosen which included; teachers, parents and students. Teachers are directly related to student performance and educational outcomes, and their inputs determine the level of understanding of the students. At the primary level students are taught all three subjects by the same teacher, therefore grade-1 and grade-2 teachers were questioned on the domains mentioned earlier from the selected schools.

Children spend considerable portion of time at home, therefore it is necessary to take parents account on their child performance. For this purpose, Focus Group Discussions were carried out with the parents. Participants of FGDs were selected on the basis of linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, they were the representatives of the three languages selected in study i.e. Urdu, Brahvi and Pashto respectively.

To collect data from students, observation was used. This was carried out with the students of grade-1 and grade-2 to see the difference between educational outcomes of the students from Urdu, Brahvi and Pashto mother tongues.

3.6 Sampling

Laws, Harper and Marcus (2003) assert that data cannot be collected from everyone the researcher might be interested in. For this reason, the researcher selects a sample which is representative of the larger group. They also signify that in the context of research conducted on topics related to Development Studies, the researchers are usually interested in individuals, groups or communities who are not listed in surveys, records and documents, who may not be geographically accessed because of unavailability of their permanent addresses or for reasons defined along these dimensions. For this research the sampling frames (a list comprising all the units in the population) only existed for students, whereas no sampling frame existed for parents and teachers for the primary schools in the chosen locale. Using simple random sampling seven primary schools were selected from multilingual area of the city which are operative under unilingual education system and cater to students from all language affiliations. Simple random sampling is used when the population is

uniform or has common characteristics. In context of this study all the primary schools were uniform (had same language composition of students, infrastructure and other facilities). The data for sampling of school was obtained from Balochistan Education Management Information System (BEMIS). The schools selected through simple random sampling are given in the table below.

Table: List of Selected Schools

BEMIS code	Name
04813	GBPS Killi Khan Mohammad Kotwal
04970	GBPS Yut Road, Shakra-e-Iqbal
04980	GBPS Shaldara No.1, Liaquat Bazar
04995	GBPS Shafi Shah Street, Dial Bagh
05010	GBPS Haji Rahim-ud-Din, Kotwal
04808	GBPS New Nichari, Jail Road, Hudda
04988	GBPS Special School

Source: <http://emis.gob.pk/>

Since the sampling frame did not exist for the teachers and parents, purposive sampling was used to deduce the sample size. Purposive sampling is a non-probability and criteria driven sampling technique in which samples are drawn based completely or partly on the judgement of the researcher (Laws, Harper and Marcus, 2003). The criteria used behind purposive sampling were purely based on the language composition, level of experience of teachers, educational level of parents and occupational background.

The study only focuses grade-1 and grade-2 students. Since the number of students in the classrooms is low, therefore all the students were observed. Frequencies obtained were compiled in a tabular form and a descriptive analysis of the data was done. Teachers of grade-1 and grade-2 were interviewed through semi-structured interviews. The teachers were selected purposively who had at least two years' experience of teaching the same class in order to ensure that the teacher personally knew the students' performance. Parents of all the under-observation students were

selected for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Keeping in mind the diversity, parents were also selected purposively from different educational, linguistic and occupational backgrounds. They were approached through school management and invited for FGDs at a venue in the community.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

All educational researches must be heedful of ethical issues (Creswell, 2012); ethics have been the forefront agenda of this research stretching from the origins of the study to its final completion. As Lincoln (2009) relays ethical consideration for research being involvement of stakeholders, attaining free consent of participants and to respect the culture of your research place.

For data collection, the researcher has been respectful to the sites of the study. A formal written permission was taken from Balochistan Education Department and their entry requirements were fulfilled, as pertaining to the security concerns. Moreover, permitted timings were respected and efforts were made not to disturb the respondents or any regular activities taking place in the schools. Similarly, in case of FGDs care was taken to set timings and duration in consultation with the members beforehand to ensure minimum disturbance of their regular schedules. A formal consent was obtained from parents before the commencement of FGDs. Each participant of this study has been fully informed about the purpose and nature of the research. Also, those who asked have been ensured of and confidentiality of responses is practiced. In final reporting names of participants were omitted to avoid any personal identification issues for them.

It is equally important to show respect to the audiences of your research (Creswell, 2012) therefore data has been reported honestly, without any alterations to suit prior predictions or any interest groups.

3.8 Analysis

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003) analysis is a continuous and iterative process. There are two stages which characterise its course; managing the data and making sense of the evidence through accounts which can be explanatory or descriptive. In iterative process, however, interpretation and the assignment or interpretation of meaning take place simultaneously. Ordering or categorising data on the method or tool being used is not the only defining factor while analysing data, it also depends on the ‘analyst and the rigor, clarity and creativity’ of the researcher (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Hence analysis of the qualitative data not only focuses on the tools used, but also on the conceptual and intellectual processes the researcher is involved in.

For this research I have used thematic analysis as the theoretical approach to analyse qualitative data and framework analysis as the tool for qualitative data analysis. In thematic analysis voluminous data collected through research methods such as interviews (individual or group), informal conversations, observation, documents and images (still and moving) are organised into themes. The tools used in thematic analysis to manage, synthesise, organise and theme data can be framework analysis, content analysis and grounded theory method. In this research I have used framework analysis technique. The method framework, developed in 1980s, is a matrix based analytic method which facilitates management of raw data which is now widely used in research. It also allows the research analyst to employ iterative procedure to analyse qualitative data which gives researcher an edge to move back and forth to reflect on the qualitative data by transcribing, categorising and organising it.

According to Ritchie and Lewis (2003), the term *framework* comes from the term *thematic framework*. Construction of a thematic framework is the most important constituent of thematic analysis. This framework is used to classify and organise data with respect to key themes, concepts and categories. Construction of a thematic framework is specific to a research study and study's objectives and questions. A study's thematic framework consists of a series of main themes which may be subdivided by a succession of related subtopics. These themes and subtopics are refined through following a procedural manifestation which starts with the familiarisation with the raw data followed by cross-sectional labelling and tagging. Once a theme is decided, then each theme is displayed in its own matrix. After having displayed a theme, every respondent is allocated a row and each column is allocated a separate subtopic. Data from each case is then synthesised within the corresponding part/s of the thematic framework. Framework analysis consists of five steps including: data transcription; familiarisation with the data; data indexing followed by data coding; construction of thematic framework, and generation of themes. After generating themes data organised into themes is interpreted.

The data collected through observations was noted down in the observation schedules only to be analysed in the latter stages. The daily activities, additional information and necessary details were noted down in a field diary in which daily logs were also maintained regularly. In the next chapter titled discussions and findings are described the themes of the data extracted through observation, interviews and focus group discussions

Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This research uses thematic analysis as a theoretical approach to analyse data. For this purpose, framework analysis was carried out as a tool to organise voluminous data into themes that emerged from the raw data collected through primary techniques. This data included interviews from the class teachers of grade 1 and 2, observations carried out in the class rooms and the focus group discussions conducted in the communities with parents. This chapter focuses on the themes that emerged from the data. These themes are discussed in detail in the following text

4.2 Level of Understanding

According to Pinnock (2009), literacy is not only recitation and copying; rather in its broader meaning literacy is reading with understanding. In a system of unilingual education, students are taught in a language that is different from their mother tongue. Therefore, it is ascertained that children taught in a different language have lower levels of understanding. However, the data collected from the field suggest otherwise. Though it can be argued that in the 1st grade children do face problems regarding understanding the lectures which are in different language than they speak, but the level of understanding increase as they advance to later stages of grade 1 and then to grade 2. Children try and learn the new language for their development and further understanding of the course material (Moullton,1968). In addition to that teachers put in efforts by translating the content into the language children already know so they can grasp the lecture in a better way. Comparing the frequencies of class participation among the students from different language backgrounds in grade 1, it can be clearly

seen that the Urdu speaking students performed better than their other peers (Figure2). Same is the case with frequencies of questions asked and answers given by the students in grade 1 under observation (Figure 3&4). This is primarily associated with the level of understanding since the lectures delivered were in Urdu therefore the students from Urdu language background had better level of understanding as compared to Pashto and Brahvi speaking students. However, the data collected from observations show that the level of understanding of all the students increased in grade 2. This can be analysed through the frequencies obtained. The difference between frequencies of class participation among Pashto and Urdu speaking students was 34 and between Urdu speaking and Brahvi students it was 78, this gap in frequencies reduced to 11 and 23 in grade 2 respectively. Likewise, the frequencies of questions asked and answers given by the children also showed an improvement.

In contrast to the above mentioned results, the data of teacher interviews and focus group discussion (FGD) with parents revealed their preference about medium of instruction. A mix of responses was seen by teachers and parents. Some argued that the child's level of understanding enhances as the child is taught in his own mother tongue but some teachers and parents emphasised the importance of other facilities which help in better understanding. These facilities included upgraded curriculum, better teaching methods and teacher training. Some parents in focus group discussion highlighted that if the teaching material is revised the level of understanding would automatically increase rather than changing the language of instruction. In addition to that, some of the teachers also argued that children do not live in isolation, they have friends in school and at home who belong to other ethnic and language communities. They further argued that in a multilingual and multi ethnic city like Quetta this

segregation helps children in gaining knowledge of other languages which in turn facilitate them in enhancing their understanding of the mainstream language.

4.3 Convergence in Student Performance

Researchers such as Walter (2011) believe that for developing countries it is difficult to afford infrastructure where mother tongue is taught in early ages and then the students are shifted towards mainstream language. Therefore, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) and Walter (2011) suggest that children should be taught in the mainstream language (which is different from their mother tongue) from the primary level. Once the students are submerged in a system of different language of instruction, the students themselves overcome the difficulty and their performance converges with the students whose mother tongue is the same as medium of instruction. Although Thomas and Collier (2002) oppose the idea of submerging with an argument that it makes learning difficult, but my study contradicts their argument. While the difference in overall performance of grade 1 students varied greatly among the Pashtun, Brahvi and Urdu speaking students, it can be deduced that Urdu speaking students outperformed their counterparts due to the edge of language. However, the difference in performance amongst the students shrank in grade 2. Urdu speaking students participated 127 times during a lecture as compared to Pashtun being 93 and Brahvi being 49 times. Urdu speaking children more likely participated in class due to the medium of instruction while children of other backgrounds took time to decipher the teachers' instructions and follow them. Detailed probing into the data, obtained from the observations in classroom, revealed that the student's performance converged along the three set criteria of observation. Keeping the Urdu speaking students as performance benchmark, the difference among the frequencies of answer given and the questions asked by student during the lecture showed convergence. The

gap between the frequencies of Pashtun and Brahvi students in answering teacher was 35 and 52 respectively as compared to the Urdu speaking students. However, this gap reduced to 4 and 26 for Pashtun and Brahvi in grade 2. Moreover, the gap of frequency in questions asked reduced from 8 and 19 to 3 and 6 for Pashtun and Brahvi respectively. All three criteria of the class observation showed a convergence to greater extent in grade 2 as compared to grade 1.

Similarly, exploring the other units of data collection including teachers and parents, it was identified that convergence do persist in multilingual settings like Quetta. Most of the teachers who had vast experience in teaching primary classes argued that convergence not only occur in grade 2 but the results can also be seen even in grade 1. On further questioning it was learnt that convergence mainly take place due to a mutual effort of the child and teacher. The teacher knowing the disadvantage of the students from different language background puts in extra effort with them so they can compete with their other class mates. On the other hand, the student, while facing difficulty, realises that he has to cope up with the difference and puts in effort to learn the new language of instruction. According to a parent the student in a multilingual city like Quetta does not have to put in a lot of effort to learn the mainstream language since he lives amongst other children who speak Urdu. When talking about convergence grade 2 teacher from Government Boys Primary School (GBPS) Killi Khan Mohammed Kotwal highlighted a case of an Afghan immigrant enrolled in the school. He mentioned the child came from a Pashtun background and knew no other language. Kindergarten was tough for the child, the teacher stated, especially because of the language barrier in dealing with peers of non-Pushto speaking background. “By the time he was about to finish second grade the child had

developed adequate skill in Urdu to be able to communicate and actively participate in class”.

4.4 Preference of Medium of Instruction

The third theme that emerged after scrutinising the data highlighted the preference of teachers and parents about the medium of instruction to be used. Previous studies regarding preferred medium of instruction reveal that developing countries prefer the mainstream languages like English and national language as their medium of instruction. Hassan (2011) in his study concluded that students and parents prefer English as a medium of instruction as it results in better market placement regarding attainment of jobs. Moreover, students show a positive attitude towards learning English as compared to mother tongue and exhibit high self-esteem in speaking English language (Hassan 2011). After analysing the data, it was learnt that although few of the teachers agreed that mother tongue does help initially in lower grades to simplify the lectures for students, but it gets difficult if the students are from varied language backgrounds. Grade 1 teacher from GBPS Yut road, Shahra e Iqbal added that “there need to be one uniform language since Quetta is a multilingual city and teaching in 2 to 3 languages simultaneously to different group of students would further increase the confusion among teachers and students and not attain the desired results”. Shifting from the present language of instruction also poses some problems. Grade 2 teacher from GBPS Yut road, Shahra e Iqbal shared that changing the curriculum into mother tongue would fail since all the languages are not as developed as Urdu, teachers would face problems teaching subjects like Math and Science since they themselves do not have command over the native language. Furthermore, medium of instruction should be the language in which the knowledge is produced, translating the knowledge into another language may lose its essence and real

meaning. He referred to one such effort by Government of Balochistan in 1992 where the policy makers shifted from Urdu to mother tongue as a medium of instruction which failed and the policy had to be reverted. Moreover, some of the parents argued that in order to keep up with the pace of the outside world their children need to learn and communicate in the mainstream language. This would result in overcoming communication hurdles, better job opportunities and an overall inclusion of their children into society. Alongside the medium of instruction, teacher training holds a vital position in child's performance. A parent from Dial Bagh community argued that "it is the teacher training which enhances the child's ability rather than the language", thus preferring Urdu over mother tongue. Cleghorn (1989) indicates that the use of mother tongue as a language of instruction does not guarantee successful educational achievement.

4.5 Convenience for the Child

Convenience for the child with regards to language of instruction is closely related to the understanding and comprehension of the study material. It is convenient for the child to learn in own mother tongue as it reduces the mental process linking learning in school with observations in daily life (Sreekanth, 2011). Children not only learn and attain knowledge at school but also from the surroundings and at home. Perceiving things as they are and adding it into the knowledge bank requires simplicity which can be assured if it is learnt in the language child already knows. Reflections from the data shows that some teachers and parents consider mother tongue to be the convenient language for children. For teachers who have the same mother tongue as the children it is convenient to teach in mother tongue as the child does not have to learn a different language to acquire knowledge. Parents also highlighted that grandparents were also able to contribute to the child's education if

the medium of instruction were in the mother tongue. Upon further questioning and detailed discussion over the convenience of child, it was discovered that teaching in mother tongue is convenient for the child but it raises the question of future mainstreaming into the society. Grade 1 teacher from GPBS Shafi Shah Street argued that ‘‘using mother tongue in daily life is convenient for the child but in formal education the student has to learn the language of instruction since it is difficult for the teacher to take along all the students at the same time who belong to different language backgrounds’’. Few of the parents referred children as ‘‘playing dough’’ and preferred future convenience over present convenience, therefore argued that children in their early ages can be moulded to perform any task, thus they should be taught in mainstream language so it is convenient for them in future. On the other hand, some parents and teachers held the view that in order to make things interesting for the child, it is necessary to make them convenient for the child. Grade 1 teacher from GBPS special school was off the view that if things are difficult for a child in the beginning he loses interest in studies which may lead to drop out.

4.6 Preserving Local Languages

Alongside the discussion over child’s individual learning and understanding, one of the emerged themes catered for the broader spectrum of the society. Language is not only a tool to communicate and learn but also proves as a binding force among the speakers. People relate language to the sense of belonging and togetherness in a community and consider it as a unifying agent. Some researchers consider mother tongue instruction as a tool of strengthening nationalism. Rwantabagu (2011) argues that countries which were colonised follow the language of their masters as a legacy even after getting independence. This, he argues results in fading nationalism and new generation being distant from their roots. Following one official language has the

danger of excluding the group which cannot read and write the official language, this may result in isolation of expression from different minorities and in some cases majorities as well. Further analysis of the data collected revealed that some of the parents think modern languages including Urdu and English were a threat to indigenous languages as newer generations will pay little heed to their mother tongue. Parents from Urdu speaking backgrounds showed some discontent over inclusion of English however didn't see it as a threat. On the other hand, teacher interviews showed a mix of responses. Some of the teachers were of the view that promoting mother tongue would act as a tool to bond the different communities living inside Quetta, it will include the minority communities like "Hazara" into the mainstream, while others thought that teaching in different language will strengthen the ethnic boundaries and less tolerance for others. Grade 2 teacher from GBPS Special school argued that teaching in mother tongue promotes negative nationalism rather than preserving local languages, it encourages "Intolerance and hatred" "Nafrat aur Taasub ziada hota hai". He further exemplified Urdu as a national language which proved to gather the nation on one platform after independence.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

In country like Pakistan people belong to a variety of ethno-linguistic backgrounds which raises the question of medium of instruction. Focus of the government and policy makers has been the mere provision of education rather than quality of education. This study has attempted to know the perspective of different stakeholders about the efficacy of mother tongue, its potential benefits/drawbacks as a medium of instruction and the possibility of convergence in student performance using the official language as medium of instruction. Despite the acknowledgement of those who are responsible for education sector planning and funding that children learn better when they understand the language they are taught in, questions and concerns arise about the feasibility of operationalizing mother tongue as a medium of instruction. Providing instruction at schools in mother tongue or additional language often lead to stakeholder concerns about the necessity of mother tongue based instruction especially where the demand is high for non-indigenous language such as Urdu or English in Pakistan.

In addition to that, Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and is as frequently spoken and understood by masses as any other native language. It is not an alien language for students, they communicate in it inside and outside school. An alien language for students at primary language would be the third language i.e. English. Understanding the third language unknown to students might affect the understanding and comprehending abilities of a student but with a language like Urdu that might not be the case.

This study observed the preference of stakeholders with respect to mother tongue as a medium of instruction and occurrence of convergence regarding student performance pertaining to the difference of language of instruction. Level of understanding of students within classrooms differed initially but as the students advanced to a higher grade their level of understanding clearly increased. In addition to that students tend to put in effort along with the teachers to overcome the difficulty of learning in a different language.

Teachers and parents foremost concern about their child being taught in mother tongue is its future usefulness. Since the world has become globalised and foreign languages are the main players in communication and knowledge, every parent wants their child to be competitive enough to keep up the pace with outside world. Moreover, putting effort in learning own language and then shifting towards the other language and again putting all the hard work to learn a new language from scratch consumes time and requires twofold effort.

In a resource deficient country like ours there is a need to focus and concentrate over the quality of education. Emphasis should be laid over making the existing system more efficient rather than moving towards a new policy shift which could have undesirable consequences. Strengthening the present education system would rather reap more benefits than all together shifting towards a new strategy putting teachers and students into further confusion.

5.2 Recommendations

Education shapes generations therefore it is a collective responsibility of the society to work towards its betterment. A serious effort towards the provision of better education in real terms can bring about long lasting and sustainable change in the

society. Therefore, it is needed that all the stakeholders including parents, teachers and the policy makers work hand in hand to enhance the quality of what is being imparted to their children. Rather than diverting our effort towards introducing a new system of imparting knowledge there is a need to strengthen the existing one.

In a country like Pakistan where the budget allocation towards education is meagre, there is a need to utilise it efficiently to reap maximum benefits. Instead of operating parallel systems of imparting knowledge in different languages, it would be feasible to spend over enhancing the quality of existing one. Since there is already a system in place, putting all the effort in teaching in Urdu language may not be an unwise decision. This use of a uniform language would act as a binding force amongst people from different ethnicities and lingual backgrounds, in addition to that it would help in overcoming the problem of diverse class room composition. Since schools in most of Quetta city are multilingual, it is near to impossible to teach students in their own mother tongue which requires more teachers, classrooms and well thought out and developed curriculum along with literacy materials.

Furthermore, curriculum changes can also help in achieving the targets of better comprehension and understanding within the class room. For example, revising the curriculum and making it more localised with respect to geographical area and culture or using child friendly materials will help enhance students understanding. This will not only help student in grasping the knowledge quicker but will also help him overcome the difficulty more rapidly.

Besides all this, teacher training can be an excellent tool to enhance child performance. Training over the course material, friendly behavior, and lectures over child psychology will prove to be of great help.

Instead of spending the already minimal budget over devising a new system, funds can be channelised towards providing better infrastructure and study material to students.

Appendix 1

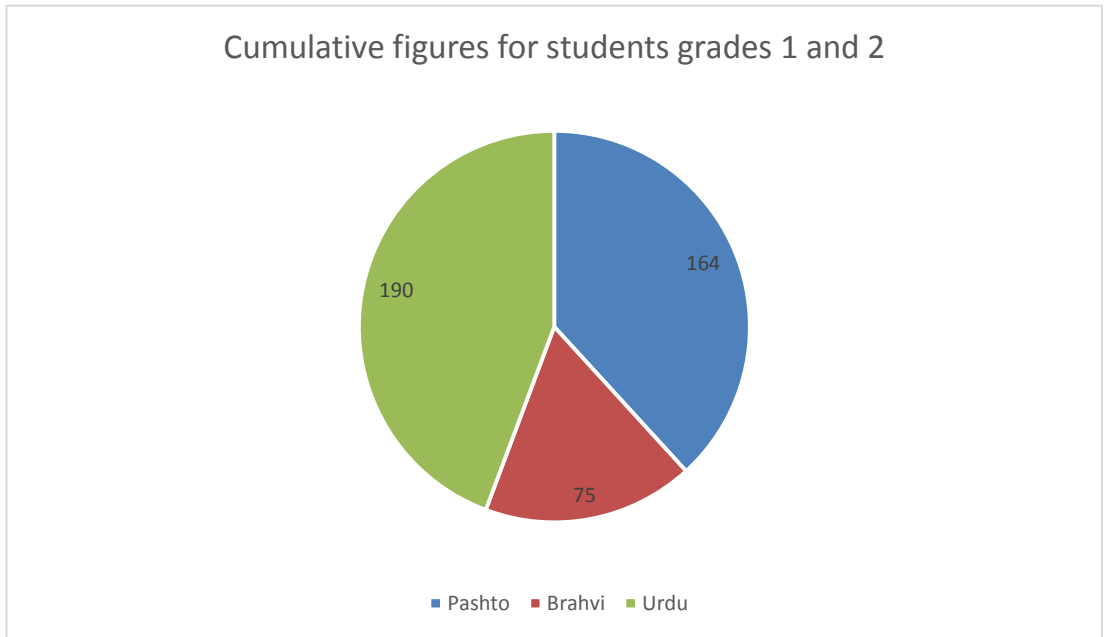


Figure 1

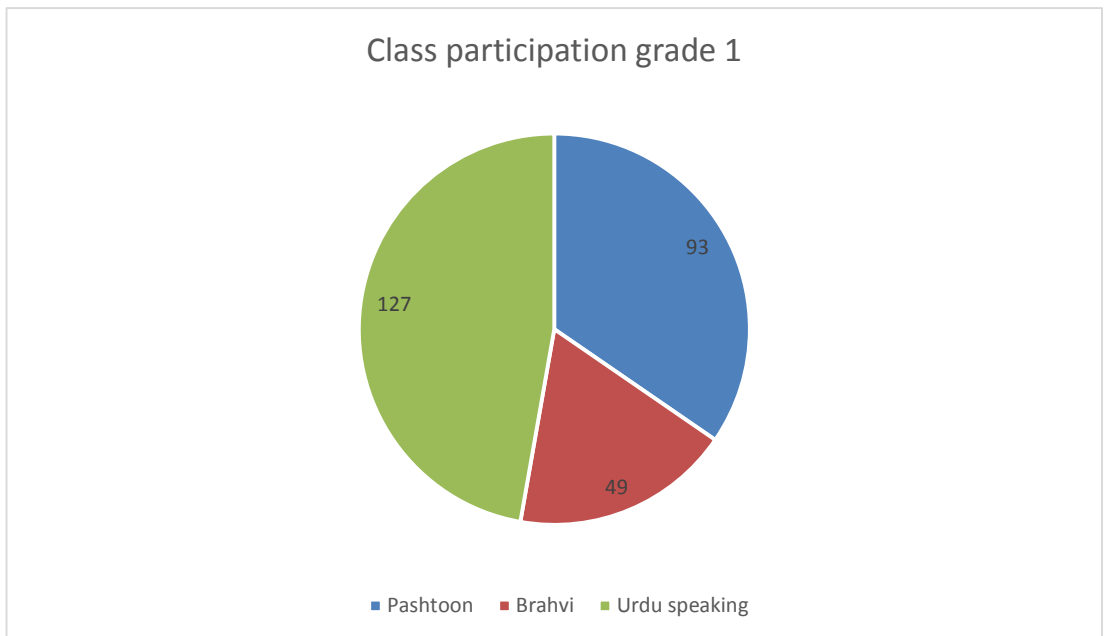


Figure 2

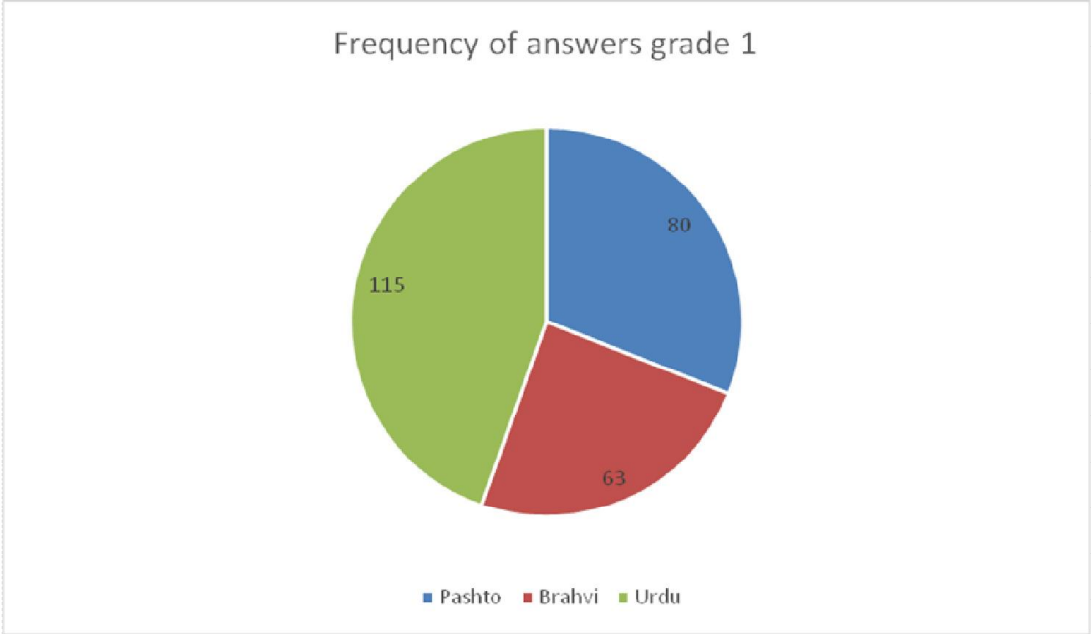


Figure 3

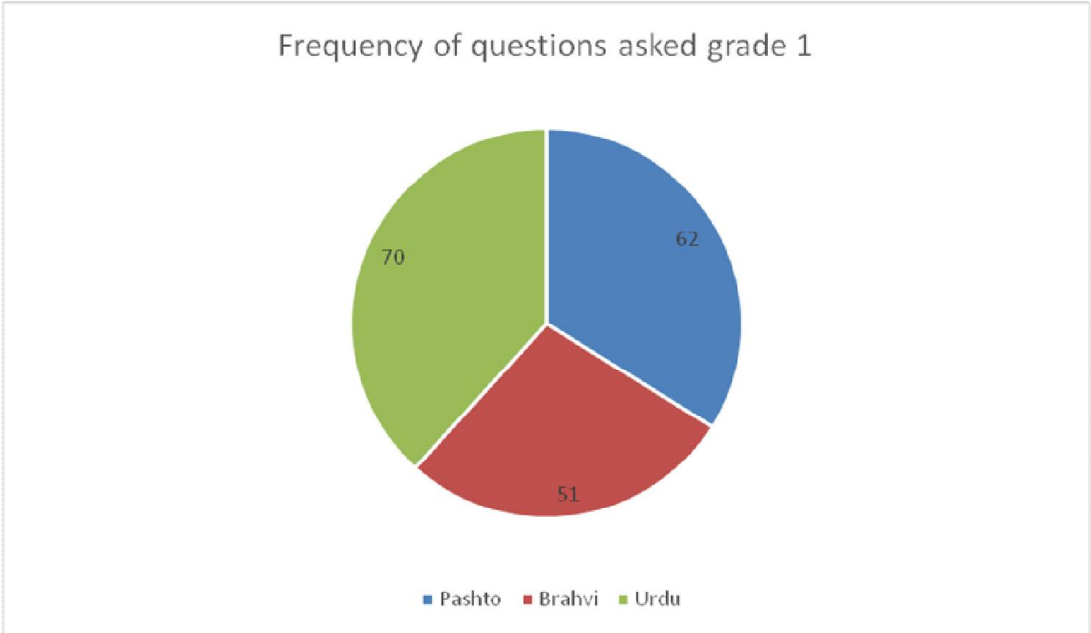


Figure 4

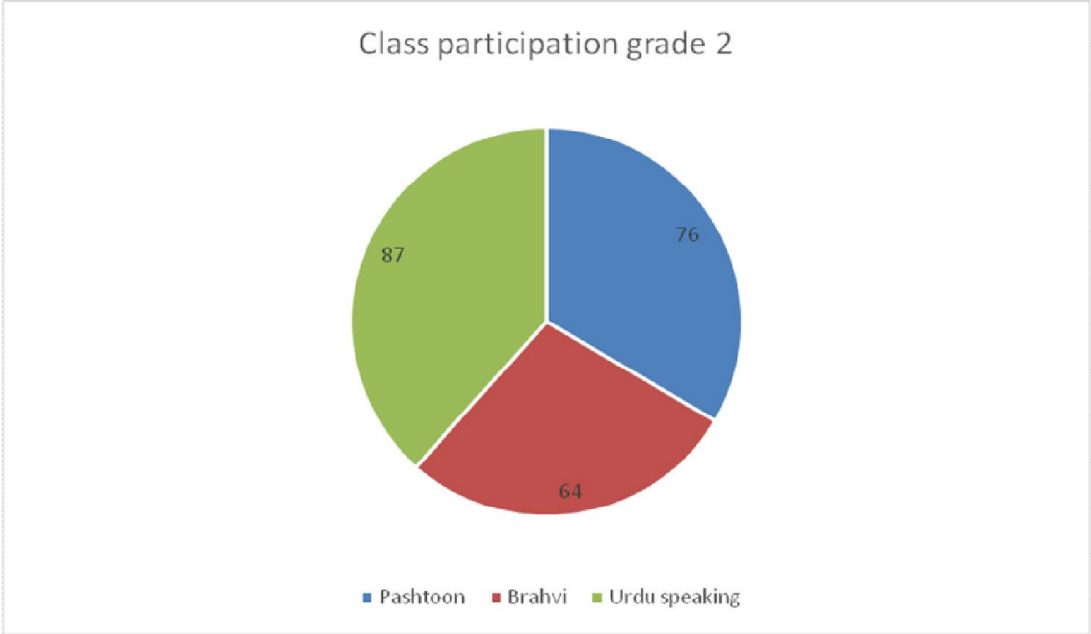


Figure 5

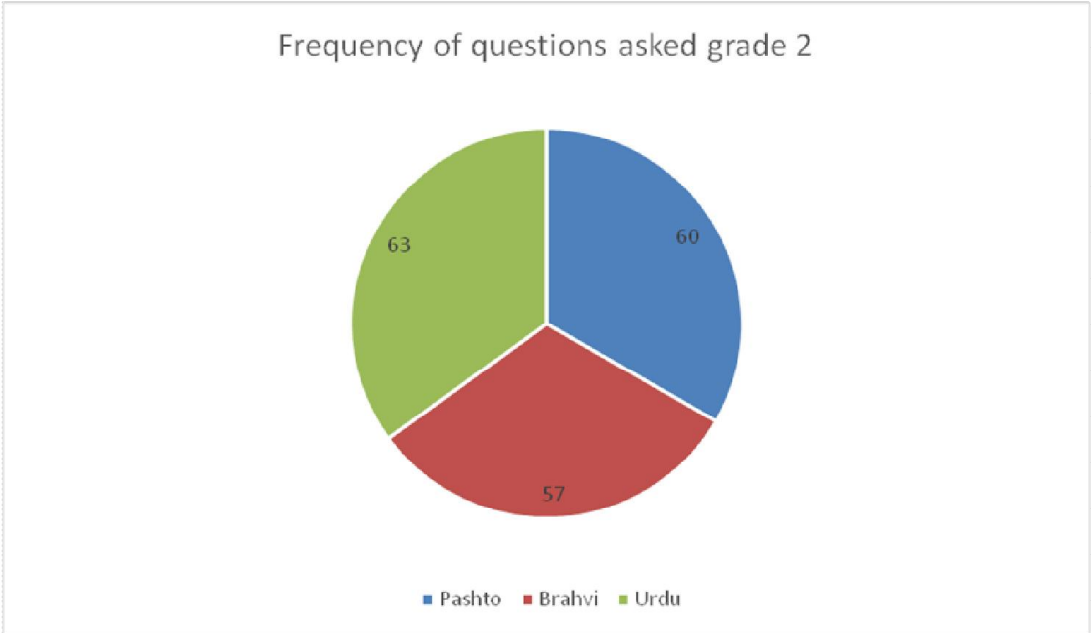


Figure 6

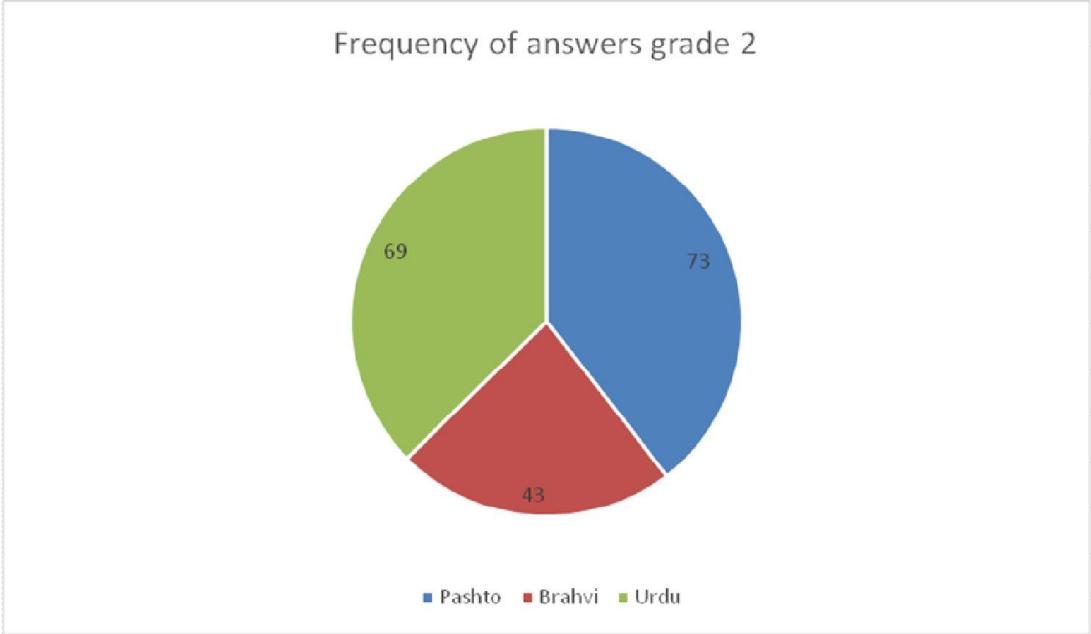


Figure 7

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