

Study of Students' Perception about Bilingual Education Programs at University Level in Karachi

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Abstract

Bilingual education may be considered one of the tools for encouraging education for all. There is the ability to convey the information needed that could be of importance, such as asking questions. Any individual with a bilingual culture has an advantage if ever that student can cope easier when placed in that cultural setting simply because the communication and informational barriers have been eliminated. Additionally, there is less likelihood that a problem will arise as a result of issues with phrases having distinct meanings or words having varied implications when used to describe particular information. The foremost purpose of the study was to find the views of Pakistani students towards multiple aspects of bilingual education and also to ascertain any disparities in how they see bilingual education programs at the university level. A survey was undertaken to determine the significance of bilingual education programs among students as part of this quantitative study. A 5-point Likert scale-based questionnaire was utilized to collect the information from 100 randomly chosen respondents. The data were analyzed using the mean, standard deviation, frequencies, percentages, independent sample t-test, and then one-way ANOVA. According to the findings, the majority of participants supported bilingual education programs at the university level. Moreover, they believed the surroundings promote bilingual education more effectively and such kinds of programs will support all those students who have a great influence on their ways and prestige due to different backgrounds. Therefore, students were more comfortable with the general trends of society by getting content easily and good grades. Teachers may encourage students to concentrate on their studies by promoting bilingual education programs and continuing to reduce their fear of the language. They may help their students to overcome their fear of academic negligence because of the lack of the understanding of English language. This study was restricted only at the Universities of Karachi and where such kind of education is not offered.

Keywords: Bilingual Education; Bilingual programs; Bilingual Culture; Monolingual.

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1. Introduction

Simply put, bilingual education is the use of two languages in scholarly institutions. It would be incorrect to think of "Bilingual education" as a straightforward educational procedure since it depends on several different factors, including the learners, their original languages, the program's linguistic goals, and the educational model chosen for creating the linguistic environment. The first exercise was very simple, but the bilinguals finished the harder tasks much faster [23]. Factors like academic background, contextual factors, and socio-economic factors are imperative in shaping the kind of bilingual education to be adopted in learning surroundings. Reference [22] Investigated that bilingual education is an intricate field happening in several stages and surroundings. Bilinguals can be defined simply as persons who speak two languages, while monolinguals are those who only speak one language. But, being multilingual is more complicated than it would first seem. Before the 1960s, many researchers and educators were adamantly opposed to bilingualism [29]. Speaking two languages was believed to cause immigrants' psychological wellness to suffer, as well as intellectual failure and linguistic confusion, as well as delays in young children's language development [32]. Additionally, bilingualism has been claimed and defined in literature from a variety of angles, including linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural viewpoints. Recent studies have demonstrated how favorable this state is for the child's linguistic and cognitive growth [20]. Bilinguals were described as people who spoke two languages with the proficiency and fluency of the speaker in the early days when bilingualism was widely understood to mean having native-like control of two languages, and being a bilingual meant having the ability to converse in two languages "perfectly" [8]. Bilinguals were thought to only have half the capacity needed to master a second language because the other half was being used to learn and keep up their first language. Such comprehension implied a decrease in first language proficiency and an increase in second language proficiency [4]. As in view of [24], in unambiguous contrast to [8], described a bilingual as someone who demonstrates a minimum level of proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a language other than their mother tongue. Therefore, there is currently no evidence to support the claim that bilinguals are inherently smarter than monolinguals [7]. According to [12] threshold hypothesis, bilingualism cannot benefit or enhance cognitive development until a person has attained age-appropriate proficiency in both languages. In [6] study, young bilinguals performed better than monolinguals at suppressing a response brought on by a habitual cue, such as calling an image of the sun "night" and a picture of the moon "day." Cummins argues that instructors must work harder to improve kids' first-language abilities so they can more quickly switch to a second language as the main instructional language. In other studies, two models were used in which 90-10 and 50-50 patterns. Moreover, according to the 90-10 model about 90% of the time at primary school is spent on teaching a national language. And the 50-50 pattern offers instructions in the majority language for both immigrants and emigrant speakers for improving the language competence of both groups. As compared to two-way models, one-way dual language programs have several merits and demerits [21]. The goal of these models is to improve students' language competence and enhance their understanding of the course materials at the same time. In the United States opponents of bilingual programs often equate the case for bilingual education which existed in the country's schooling system in the 1900s. Therefore, the migrant students were prohibited to speak their local language at school. Another major issue surrounding bilingual education has a basis for unrealistic expectations of immediate results. As [1] stated that the medium of instruction is the biggest problem for teaching science examinations and demands

memorization, so the students have no reason to understand and internalize the subject matter. Moreover, [19] refers all in all, benefits of the bilingual education surpass their proven as well as perceived limitations, for this reason, authorities in increasingly multicultural societies should seriously consider introducing full bilingual education systems or at least slot major factors of bilingual education systems into the accessible monolingual education system.

2. Research objectives

1. To identify the perceptions of students towards bilingual education at the university level in Karachi.
2. To find out the difference in the perceptions of students towards bilingual education based on the demographic variables of gender, age, faculty, department, student position, and semester.

The matter of bilingual education programs may have a contrary influence on the standing of an institution. Learners who do not involve themselves in such learning processes or activities feel unpleasant by observing others students with more consideration. Here [31] investigated the numerous drawbacks of using English as a language of education in non-English speaking nations. Educational programs and policies are not available clearly in many contexts. According to [26], conceptual understanding refers to strategies for dispelling myths. There is an acute need of establishing policies, platforms, rules, and standards in educational institutions to promote bilingual education programs. In the view of [25], educators are legally responsible for dynamic in dealing with singular problems inside or delivering them as per strategies and systems to facilitate those students who are facing problems due to the language barrier. According to [28], during the teaching and learning process, the learner and teacher should be on the same page and speak the same language. Moreover, [10] looked at the lack of quality control and checks and balances for improvement in service delivery. This study attempted to explain to stakeholders' i.e. policymakers and teachers why bilingual education is not common in institutions and why bilingual education programs are not encouraged to spread awareness. Moreover, this study may enable those stakeholders to explore the cause which is frequently used by the students and to make decisions that might minimize the occurrence of these differentiations. Therefore, it may help the directors of Pakistani academic institutions understand and figure out the approaches to energize bilingual education in classrooms among their students. As a result of bilingualism research pointing to the advantages of speaking two languages, bilingual education has been widely offered at schools in countries with high populations of immigrants such as Australia [33].

3. Research methodology

A quantitative method research design has opted and the opinion of the participants about bilingual education was gathered through a questionnaire. There are five categories on the measurement scale. (From 1 to 5, where 5 strongly disagree), It had six components: the respondents' demographic information made up the first section, statements regarding their native tongue, a socioeconomic status made up the second and the third part had the statements about Institutional vision, next part about Collaboration and communication on how to enhance bilingual educational, next was about linguistic objectives of Programs, and the last part of the questionnaire consisted of bilingual education and the literacy skills. The scale's reliability and consistency were examined

throughout the pilot testing. Expert validation was provided through their opinions. To evaluate the questionnaire's reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was determined.

Table 1

Reliability of the scale	
Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
.938	25

There were 25 items in the questionnaire about bilingual education. The value of the reliability index was 0.938, which is statistically significant. Data was collected by sending a google form to each university through their faculty members. They sent on their students’ groups. The return rate of the questionnaire was 99 percent. After data collection, the data was entered into SPSS for analysis. The data were cleaned before applying different tests for analysis. In descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were obtained. In inferential statistics, an independent sample t-test was used to see the difference between the perception of male and female students, and one-way ANOVA was used to find the difference among demographic variables.

4. Data Analysis

A detailed description of data analysis is as under:

Table 2: Demographic information of students

Variables	Demographic	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	38	38.0
	Female	62	62.0
	Total	100	100.0
Sectors	Private	81	81.0
	Public	13	13.0
	private/public	6	6.0
Age	18-25	48	48.0
	26-30	12	12.0
	31-35	13	13.0
	36-40	8	8.0
	40 years and above	19	19.0
Language Courses	Trained	48	48.0
	Untrained	51	51.0
Experience	1-5	55	55.0
	6-10	14	14.0
	11-15	11	11.0
	16-20	11	11.0
	20 years and above	9	9.0
Prof. Qualification	B-Ed	65	65.0
	M-Ed	19	19.0
	M.Phil.	11	11.0
	PhD	1	1.0
	Other	4	4.0

The table shows the demographic information of selected students. The sample of the study had different

demographic characteristics (Gender, Sectors, Age, Language courses, Experience, Professional Qualification, and districts). The total sample of the study was 100 students from five Universities.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics Mean and Standard deviations based on Native language.

Statements	Mean	SD
Native language proficiency is favorable at the university level.	2.76	1.240
There are lots of immediate benefits of learning a second language.	2.01	1.381
Universities discourage the use of native language in class	3.06	1.347
Learners feel comfortable in the class by knowing only their native language.	3.05	1.424

Universities that discourage the use of native language within the classes have the highest mean score (M=3.06, SD=1.347). It means universities discourage the use of native language within the classes and it causes discouragement to bilingual education. Learners feel comfortable in the class by knowing only their native language has the second highest mean score. It indicates that students are more comfortable in bilingual education for content understanding in the learning process. There are lots of immediate benefits of learning the second language has lowest the mean Score (M= 2.01, SD= 1.381) but this score is opposite to the researcher’s observation i.e. the use of bilingual language creates good effects on understanding which will help in future progress.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics Mean and Standard deviations of Socio-Economic Status

Statements	Mean	SD
Bilingual fluency raises the opportunity for economic benefits.	2.25	1.250
The social-economic background has a strong impact on language acquisition.	2.49	1.141
Institutions encourage ethnic diversity.	2.76	1.138
Institutions allow the incorporation of bilingualism in teaching.	2.75	1.113

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics Mean and Standard deviations of Institutional Vision

Statements	Mean	SD
Institutions bridging the gap between home and school cultures.	2.72	1.349
Bilingual implementing plans help to enhance students' second language skills.	2.17	1.128
Institutional programs create linguistic, cultural, and social growth in the students	2.23	1.108

Institutions that encourage ethnic diversity have the highest mean score (M=2.76, SD= 1.138).It means that faculty of higher educational institutions are allowed to deliver their lectures through bilingualism to facilitate the different community students. However, Institutions allow the incorporation of bilingualism in teaching which supports the provision of a quality teaching process.

Institutions bridging the gap between home and school cultures have the highest mean score (M= 2.72, SD= 1.349).It means that institutions have clear goals for bilingual programs and high expectations for the learners by incorporating the learner’s original culture.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics Mean and Standard deviations of Bilingual Education

Statements	Mean	SD
Bilingual education provides support in perceiving curriculum information.	2.14	1.025
Bilingual education enhances understanding of the course materials.	2.13	1.031
Bilingual education improves working memory.	2.12	.997
Bilingual education provides learners with future opportunities.	1.96	1.043
Bilingual education elevates the literacy skills and the content knowledge of	2.11	1.144
the learners.		
Bilingual education is providing and experiencing language proficiency.	2.08	1.011

Students agreed that bilingual education provides support in perceiving curriculum information. This statement has the highest mean score (M= 2.14, SD= 1.025) in this factor. Provision of future opportunities has the lowest mean score and students are not relying on bilingual education only for future opportunities.

Table 7: An independent Sample t-test for differences in students’ perception of bilingual education based on Gender

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	t-value	df	Sig
Native Language	Male	38	2.7697	.86872	.450	98	.652
	Female	62	2.6895	.86210	.450	77.926	
Socio economic factor	Male	38	2.6382	.74139	.743	98	.561
	Female	62	2.5161	.82961	.763	85.160	
Institutional vision	Male	38	2.4912	.93236	.943	98	.873
	Female	62	2.3011	1.00583	.960	82.996	
collaborations	Male	38	1.9868	.90035	-.323	98	.643
	Female	62	2.0444	.84267	-.318	74.389	
Linguistic program	Male	38	2.1974	.86046	1.159	98	.402
	Female	62	2.0040	.77683	1.131	72.262	
Bilingual language	Male	38	2.1798	.87712	.817	98	.733
	Female	62	2.0349	.84991	.811	76.476	

Overall, there was no significant difference related to Bilingual education between male and female students. This implies that both males and females have similar tendencies related to bilingual education provision. Similarly, there may be no difference in the contextual and psychological factors causing their interest in

bilingual education.

Table 8: One Way ANOVA for the difference in the mean scores of students, based on their Age

Variables	Age	SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Native language	Between	3.100	4	.775	1.047	.387
	Groups					
	Within	70.310	95	.740		
	Groups					
	Total	73.410	99			
Socioeconomic factors	Between	1.452	4	.363	.563	.690
	Groups					
	Within	61.220	95	.644		
	Groups					
	Total	62.672	99			
Institutional vision	Between	1.651	4	.413	.421	.793
	Groups					
	Within	93.078	95	.980		
	Groups					
	Total	94.729	99			
Collaborations	Between	3.836	4	.959	1.310	.272
	Groups					
	Within	69.551	95	.732		
	Groups					
	Total	73.387	99			
Linguistic programs	Between	2.416	4	.604	.916	.458
	Groups					
	Within	62.671	95	.660		
	Groups					
	Total	65.087	99			
Bilingual language	Between	3.576	4	.894	1.223	.306
	Groups					
	Within	69.447	95	.731		
	Groups					
	Total	73.023	99			

The table shows that one-way ANOVA was used to explore the difference among the mean scores of bilingual education, socioeconomic factors, Collaboration and communication, institutional vision, and Linguistic program through perceptions of university students. Perceptions were collected in six areas i.e. native language: $F(4, 95) = 1.05, p = 0.387$; Socio-economic factors: $F(4, 95) = 0.563, p = 0.690$; Institutional vision: $F(4, 95) = 0.421, p = 0.793$; Collaboration and communication: $F(4, 95) = 1.310, p = 0.272$; Linguistic programs: $F(4, 95) = 0.916, p = 0.458$.

(4,95) = 0.916, $p = 0.458$; Bilingual language: $F(4,95) = 1.223$, $p = 0.306$. There was not a significant difference in the results of all the factors based on age. It means that university students of different ages had almost the same perceptions about bilingual education.

5. Discussion

The study lends extensive support to the views of [24] who uncovered the trend of the usage of bilingual education in classes at the university level is ever-present. The current study proves that students are more comfortable in bilingual lectures. The researchers, as professional teachers have also observed, in their daily routine, that a lot of students are usually in favor of bilingual education and related programs. Moreover, they consider a bilingual person as someone who has a basic level of proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a language other than their mother tongue. This study does not show any significant difference based on the different demographic factors. Most students are more in favor of bilingual education. They do not resist the implementation because universities have no strict policy on linguistic programs. This thing shows a lack of confidence in authorities to implement. The results of this study also show that students are more comfortable and quality learning is possible through bilingual education. Moreover, there is currently no evidence to support the claim that bilinguals are significantly more intelligent than monolinguals [7]. According to [12] study, the threshold hypothesis postulates that before bilingualism can benefit cognitive development, speakers of both languages must have attained age-appropriate proficiency in each language. This cause of bilingualism leads us to think that most of the education systems in the world focus on one medium of instruction at a time or monolinguals. Therefore, students aim to focus on one language to understand the content even by having lots of hurdles to clutch major courses. Moreover, this study discovered that multilingual education is the most effective strategy to enable students in the future generations to get ready for the diverse societies and environments in which they will ultimately participate [16]. It's critical to realize that multilingual education encompasses much more than just one teaching approach and one learning method. It is about helping students comprehend how education can be utilized to bridge any potential gaps between nations and about comprehending and acknowledging the many cultural viewpoints present around the world.

6. Conclusion

This study was directed to explore university students' perceptions of bilingual education programs in Karachi. The study confirms that students favor bilingualism for the sake of a quality teaching process. Some individuals said they favor it because they do not have time to learn a second language from different institutions rather than they would be facilitated during the teaching process. The results of the research indicated that different contextual factors may affect students' performance through bilingualism. Putting the concluding remarks that males and females had the same perceptions regarding bilingual education. There was not a significant difference between bilingual education used by students in the classes not based on their age and university respectively. The professional qualifications difference did not affect the perceptions of students. It was noted that there was no significant difference in all five areas, i.e. native language, socio-economic factors, Collaboration and communication, institutional vision, and Linguistic program. It is assumed that students favor bilingual education for academic benefit. They also do not feel hesitant to emphasize bilingualism because they

know there are no strict rules and policies in universities. Additionally, affecting how and why monolinguals, mono-literate bilinguals, and bilinguals differ from one another in terms of the benefits they enjoy and potential difficulties they may encounter is the social context. Moreover, institutions may also arrange counseling sessions to encourage students to share their problems related to language and study to help them overcome all fears. If higher authorities do not take it seriously, it will affect the performance of the institutions.

Lastly, research on biliteracy may continue to use the cognitive advantage framework and further investigate if writing for bilinguals, mono-literate bilinguals, and monolinguals have any other consequences. Future research on the mediating effects of social, environmental, and cultural factors on monolinguals and bilinguals may also be beneficial. Additionally, it's critical to keep in mind that the bulk of the population's native speakers must also acquire the modern language that is gaining in popularity.

7. Recommendations

Finally, it is recommended that the policies encouraging bilingual education programs be effectively and thoroughly implemented.

By introducing vocabulary words and having students translate those words into their native tongues, other languages should be employed in the classroom.

Books authored in students' native tongues should be added by teachers to their classroom libraries.

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