Willingness of Teachers to Use English as Medium of Instruction at Secondary Level

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore willingness of secondary school teachers to use English as medium of instruction and communication with the students while at school. It also aimed to determine the significance of gender, age and qualification - as demographic factors - in predicting the willingness. The study was delimited to the public sector schools of rural Punjab (province of Pakistan). A survey was conducted in 6 districts of Punjab selected systematically from a list based on Human Development Index (HDI). A self-designed questionnaire was used as a data gathering tool while quantitative techniques were employed to analyze data. SPSS version 21.0 was used for this purpose. It was found through analysis, using descriptive and inferential statistics, that teachers were not much willing to make use of English for the said purpose. Moreover, qualification was found to be a positive indicator of willingness while gender and age remained almost insignificant.

Keywords: Willingness, EMI, Motivation, Rural, Teachers, Proficiency

1. Introduction

This study was conducted to discover the willingness of teachers of public sector high schools to use English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) in the classes while teaching content subjects to the students. It was in the wake of a decision of introducing English as medium of instruction in all the public sector schools by the Government of Punjab (a Province of Pakistan). This step had a crucial importance and different implications for different stake holders. Consequently, it met with confused response ranging from perfect appreciation to vitriolic critique. The key stakeholders in all this were the teachers who had to play pivotal role in its success or failure. The ground realities, regarding teachers' proficiency in English and skills to use it for the purpose specified in the policy, were to play crucial role and bear directly on the motivation or willingness to practice the policy.

With this background, current study was designed to measure the willingness of teachers to use English practically as medium of instruction in the classes while teaching in particular and while interaction with the students in general. Moreover, the aim was to find the differences in willingness on the basis of three demographic factors i.e. gender, age and qualification. Willingness to Communicate in English (WTCE) was chosen in view of its authenticity in predicting actual use of target language in a given situation of communication. Thus the results of this study provide very significant insight into not only the prevalent situation but also the future prospects of its use. It provides a kind of evaluation of the policy of introducing English as medium of Instruction (MOI).

1.1 Objectives of the Study
1.   To know the possibility of using English as MOI by the teachers while teaching

2. To determine the significance of gender as predictor of willingness to use English as medium of instruction in the class while teaching.
3. To assess age as predictor of willingness to use English as medium of instruction in the class.
4. To explore qualification as predictor of willingness to use English as medium of instruction in the class while teaching.

1.2 Research Questions
1. How far are the teachers of public sector secondary schools willing to use English as medium of instruction and communication with the students while at school?
2. To what extent does Gender indicate Willingness of the teachers to use English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) in their classes while teaching?
3. To what extent does Age indicate Willingness of the teachers to use English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) in their classes while teaching?
4. To what extent does Qualification indicate Willingness of the teachers to use English as Medium of Instruction (EMI) in their classes while teaching?

2. Review of Literature

The origin of the construct of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) can be traced to the literature on interpersonal communication, more specifically, to the work of Burgoon (1976) giving idea of unwillingness to communicate. The idea was then followed by McCroskey and Richmond (1987), who assumed a regular pattern existing in the avoidance of communication and other tactics through which an individual devalued the act of communication. They traced the causes of avoidance of communication to both the social and individual factors. However, the major contribution was yet to be made by Macintyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels (1998) who conceptualized WTC in his famous heuristic model more typically known as pyramid model. In this model he organized the diversity of factors influencing WTC in the second language. The model captures a wide range of intrapersonal, intergroup, communicational, linguistic and situational factors which contribute in the ultimate decision to either communicate in second language or desist from it (MacIntyre 2007).

After entering into the arena of language studies WTC was used primarily as a construct related to communication in L1. It was seen as the tendency of individuals to involve in or keep from communication in L1 in case of free choice (MacIntyre, Babin & Clement, 1999). It was believed that people generally differ in their communication behavior regardless of the language. Some are very talkative while others reticent and also that people vary in their communication behavior while talking to different people, an individual feels free and talks much with some while to others he is reserved. It was conceived that WTC is a construct based on personality which happens to be very consistent with an individual so far as his communication behavior is concerned (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991, Cao, 2011).

In the model forwarded by MacIntyre et al. (1998) linguistic, social-psychological and communicative variables were synthesized and were used as precursors of real communication behavior of the individuals or their actual language use. It was assumed that L2 communication was dependent both on situation-specific as well as enduring influences. This phenomenon is understood in existing literature as a state-trait dichotomous nature of this construct (see e.g. Peng

2014, Zarrinabadi, & Tanbakooei, 2016 etc). WTC was conceptualized as "a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (MacIntyre et al. 1998: 547).

In the evolution of WTC studies a transition of approach from its conceptualization in biological perspective to social situational conception took place. It was considered as a feature of personality that related to individual factors of variation such as extroversion and introversion (McCroskey and Richmond, 1991). Self-esteem was identified as an important factor having a positive causal relation with WTC (McCroskey and Richmond 1991; MacIntyre et al.1998). In the same way some other constructs grounded in individual differences were found to have causal relationship with WTC. Among these self-perception of communicative competence, motivation and attitude were demonstrated to be a positive causes of WTC (MacIntyre and Doucette 2010; MacIntyre, Burns, & Jessome, 2011) whereas communication apprehension was discovered to be the negative cause((Díaz-Pinto 2009). Cultural background also performed very important role (Cao and Philp 2006; Peng 2007a).

WTC, as a predictor of the probability of L2/FL use by the interlocutors in any real situation, has been demonstrated by a sizable literature (Hashimoto, 2002). Moreover, WTC has been discovered as one of the strong predictors of learners' achievement in the target language (see for example Hashimoto, 2002; Pourjafarian, 2012 & Lai, Chen, Jong, & Hsia, 2012). In these studies students with greater propensity/willingness to involve in communication using target language were found to be more successful on the basis of their academic results/grades. It proved the reliability of WTC in predicting possible achievement of the learners.

Situational aspects of WTC have been emphasized in more recent studies. WTC, in these studies, been shown as a phenomenon that varies from situation to situation. It is not a fixed predisposition or a permanent personality trait (Kang, 2005). Kang's model (Kang, 2005) conceives WTC as a composite of psychological and situational factors. For example excitement, security and responsibility are viewed as psychological whereas conversational context, interlocutors and topic are viewed as situational factors. It has been corroborated by other studies wherein WTC has been seen as varying across situations and time (MacIntyre et al. 1998 & Kamprasertwong 2010).

MacIntyre and his colleagues developed a heuristic model in which both personality traits and the social context (situational aspects) were taken into account. They explained the concept by tracing its relationship with linguistic, communicative and social psychological factors. These factors were found to be important by them in case of an individual, a social group as well as a L2 community. In their model six layers have been made in which the top three layers in the pyramid present situation-specific constructs while the lower three present more enduring and trait like construct which influence the WTC behavior while remaining in the background. WTC has been given at the second level from the top after L2 use which stands for actual language use in any situation. Thus WTC in this conceptualization has been seen as readiness to use language as shown later by Yashima and colleagues in their study (Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004). The desire to communicate with a particular person and the state of communicative self-confidence emerged as the most immediate antecedents to WTC. Thus in the figure the constructs placed in the upper layers are the effects for which the causes are provided by those placed in the lower layers. This model has been followed for theoretical underpinnings in this study.

3. Methodology

The study was based on survey design involving quantitative methods. The survey was conducted across the Punjab province of Pakistan. Six districts were selected purposively from the list provided in a report published by SPDC (Social Policy and Development Center) wherein all the districts were ordered on the basis of their HDI (Human Development Index). For the purpose of selection the list was divided into three groups i.e. the top 11, the middle 11 and the bottom 12. Then, two districts were selected from each of the group following the convenience technique to conduct the survey. Survey was conducted with the help of six research assistants who distributed survey questionnaires among the participants and then collected from them.

3.1 Sampling

Multi-stage sampling technique was followed in this study. At the first stage, districts were divided into three groups on the basis of their HDI ranking systematically. Then following convenience technique two districts were selected from each of the groups. After that, schools were selected from the rural areas of these districts again on convenience basis. In the last stage purposive sampling technique was followed in selecting only those teachers who were either teaching through EMI at the time of this study or had had the experience of teaching through EMI. One hundred questionnaires were distributed among teachers from each of the selected districts. Thus a total of 600 questionnaires were distributed out of which 407 were returned by the participants. Thus the sample size for this study was 407 participants. All the teachers of secondary school level in the rural areas of Punjab who were teaching or had taught through EMI were considered the population of this study.

3.1.1 Subdivision of the Sample:

The selected sample was divided into sub-groups as under;

On the basis of Gender
- i.   Male
- ii.   Female

On the basis of Age
- i.   Group 1 = < 30
- ii.   Group 2= 30 -50
- iii.   Group 3= > 50

On the basis of Qualification
- i.   Under Graduates (UG): with qualification less than Bachelor's
- ii.   Graduates: With Bachelor's as qualification
- iii.   Post-Graduates (PG): With qualification above Bachelor's

3.2 Instrumentation

Theoretical basis and operational principles of WTC measurement scale (MacIntyre 1998) were followed while designing the questionnaire. Traditionally, in the development of this scale, an exhaustive list of possible situations of communication is prepared which involve linguistic choice for the communicant. The choice happens to be among various languages the communicant can use including the target language.

For this study, after identification of possible situations of communication where the teachers/participants could make a choice in the use of differentially acceptable languages (i.e. English, Urdu and Punjabi), a statement eliciting possibility of making use of the English language in each of the given situations was framed. In this way, 13 characteristic situations were identified where these teachers were expected to face such a linguistic choice.

Moreover, WTC scale was adapted by converting anticipated frequency of using English to communicate from percentage scale to 7-point likert scale. The percentage scale ranged between 0% chances to 100% chances of using English while the scale constructed for this study ranged between chances of using English 'always' to that of using it 'never'. The reliability coefficient of the designed questionnaire was determined as 0.85 on Cronbach Alpha scale.

4. Data Analysis

SPSS version 21.0 was used for statistical analysis of the survey data. Two types of statistical experiments (descriptive and inferential) were performed for the analysis of data in keeping with overall purpose of the study.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

This part is divided further into two types of analyses.

4.1.1 Central Tendency and Dispersion

Analysis in this part included mean, median, minimum, maximum, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis. It was used to know important trends of data for its validity and significance.

Table 4.1: **Descriptive Statistics**

Indicator	Mean	Median	MIN	MAX	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
WTCE	56.88	57.00	17	178	14.684	1.756	15.354

The value of standard deviation shows moderate dispersion of data. Skewness value reflects that the distribution of data is positively skewed and that of kurtosis indicates high peak of its distribution.

4.1.2 Percentages

In this part two types of percentage analyses were performed. In one percentage value of each response category against each of the 13 questionnaire items was found and presented separately in tables (see appendix 1). In the other, response categories of frequency, provided in likert scale questionnaire, were divided into three categories of High Frequency, Average Frequency and Low Frequency. Percentage of each of the given categories were measured which provided the ground for interpretation as to how far the teachers were willing to use English, thus, providing answer to the research question number 1. Response categories in the questionnaire were divided into three categories of frequency as under;

Response Category	Frequency Value
Always and Usually	High Frequency
Frequently and Sometimes	Average Frequency
Occasionally, Rarely and Never	Low Frequency

Following bar-graph has been used to show percentages of the High, Average and Low frequency values.
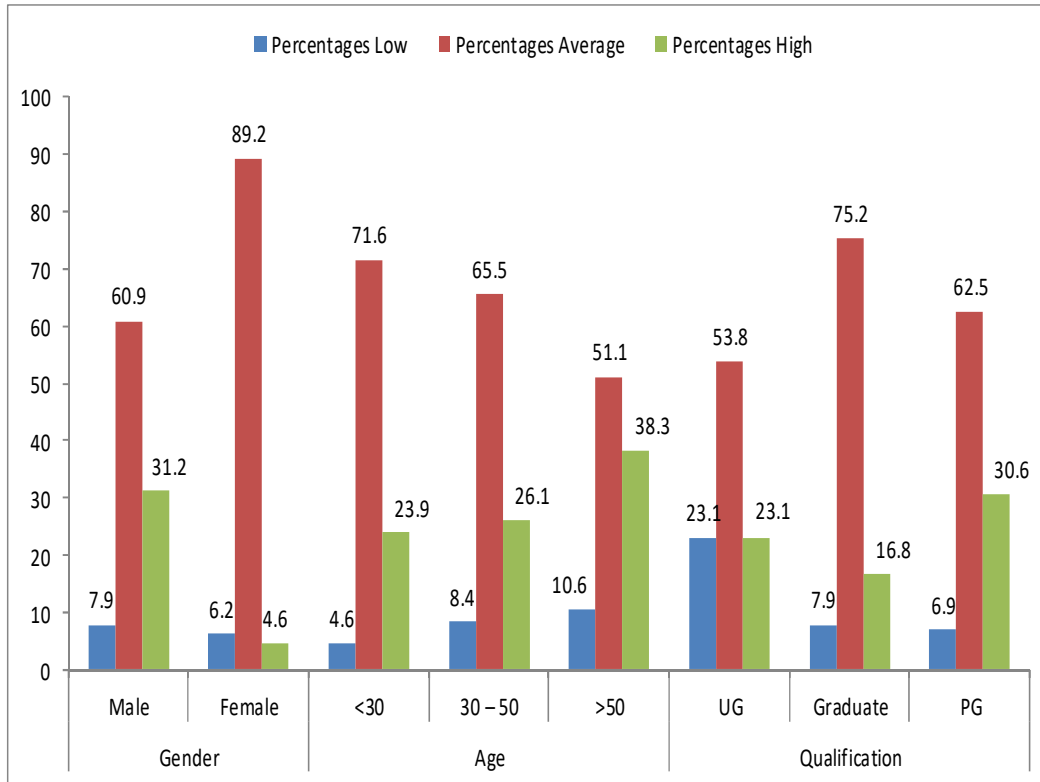

Figure 4.1: **Willingness to Communicate in English (WTCE)**

It can be seen from the graph that 31% of males show high level of willingness to communicate in English against 5% of females. In the average level, however, females have a higher percentage i.e. 89 than that of males i.e. 61. The highest percentage in high level of willingness is that of the age group 3 i.e. 38% while in average the highest percentage is that of group 1. On the basis of qualification postgraduates show highest level of willingness with the percentage as 31 while in average level of it the graduates touch the top with 75 as percentage.

4.2. Inferential Statistics

Chi-square has been used for this purpose. It demonstrates the relative significance of the demographic factors in predicting Willingness of teachers to use English as medium of instruction and communication with the students while at school. Pearson Chi-Square has been used to know the significance of the differential value of the demographic factors in predicting the dependent variable i.e. willingness to use English as medium of instruction and communication. Significance of the difference among various independent factors in predicting dependent variable is indicated by the value of **Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)** as given in the following table;

Table 4.2: **Chi-Square Test**

Items/Situations	Demographic Factor	Value of Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
1. While answering students' questions	Gender	11.027*	.088
	Age	34.968***	.000
	Qualification	23.312**	.025
2. While explaining difficult concepts to the students	Gender	13.553**	.035
	Age	15.614	.210
	Qualification	8.854	.715
3. During a routine lecture in the class	Gender	6.607	.359
	Age	11.173	.514
	Qualification	19.428*	.079
4. While asking questions from the students	Gender	9.230	.161
	Age	16.941	.152
	Qualification	12.745	.388
5. While advising the students in the class how to improve their study skills in different subjects	Gender	5.539	.477
	Age	22.698**	.030
	Qualification	17.691	.125
6. While joking with the students in the class	Gender	11.946*	.102
	Age	16.449	.287
	Qualification	14.815	.391
7. For general chit chat with the students in the class	Gender	7.201	.303
	Age	16.001	.191
	Qualification	37.613***	.000
8. While giving instructions to the students in front of other teachers	Gender	5.799	.446
	Age	24.030**	.020
	Qualification	19.181*	.084
9. While teaching to a class where all the students are strangers	Gender	5.935	.431
	Age	16.311	.177
	Qualification	25.788**	.011
10. While advising the students in general	Gender	10.191	.178
	Age	18.566	.182
	Qualification	27.494**	.017
11. While admonishing the students in the class	Gender	10.940	.141
	Age	7.939	.892

	Qualification	25.372**	**.031**
12. While talking to the students out of the class in the school	Gender	16.505**	**.036**
	Age	24.409*	**.081**
	Qualification	13.384	**.645**
13. While addressing the students during assembly in the morning.	Gender	12.240*	**.057**
	Age	25.537**	**.012**
	Qualification	15.772	**.202**

i.   > .10 is Insignificant
ii.   * shows significant at > .05 and < .10
iii.   ** shows highly significant at > .01 and < .05
iv.   *** shows significant at < .01

As per the values of chi-square in the given table gender is found to be significant predictor of willingness to use English as medium of instruction in only 5 (WTCE1, 2, 6, 12, &13) out of 13 items with their p value as .088, .035, 0.03, .102, .057 respectively. Age is shown to be significant in 5 items (WTCE1, 5, 8, 12 & 13) with p value as .000, .030, .020, .081, .012 respectively while qualification is found to be significant in seven items (WTCE1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11) with p value as .025, .079, .000, .084, .011, .017, .036 respectively.

5. Discussion and Findings

Willingness to communicate in target language shows the probability of an individual to use that language in that particular situation. It expresses willingness specific to the given situation as it is assumed in the literature on willingness to communicate that a person may be motivated in different ways but still not willing to use given language to communicate in a particular situation. This makes willingness a construct distinguished from other motivational constructs used in this study and also more action biased as it focuses on potential readiness for an actual situation of communication identified clearly as they happen to be in it many a time in real life on daily basis.

The highest percentage of those who expressed average level of willingness to use English as medium of instruction and communication demonstrates simply that the teachers are not ready to do so at least in the given circumstances. The most important reason for this is none other than inadequate proficiency of these teachers. They were provided a training of one week only. It is not sufficient a language training for those whose proficiency, in most of the cases, is in no way above the level of a beginner (PEELI, 2013) especially when it comes to Oracy (Wilkinson, A. 1965).

Among other factors lack of students' response resulting from their failure to understand anything said in English is no doubt another very important factor. Overall, the situation is not very simple and numerous academic, socio-cultural and socio-economic factors can be seen playing critical role in possibility of implementing English as Medium of Instruction (EMI).

Among the selected demographic factors qualification has been found to be the most important predictor of willingness to use English as medium of instruction and communication. A positive relationship between qualification and willingness can be inferred from the chi-square values. The variance on the basis of qualification has been shown significant in most of items. The percentages show that postgraduates have surpassed in demonstrating 'high' level of willingness while the

undergraduates stand at the bottom in this regard. Thus the trend shows that higher the qualification higher the willingness.

Gender and age are found to be almost insignificant predictors of willingness. This is because of two reasons: first because chi-square values show them significant in too less number of items to be taken seriously and second the trend is against circumstantial evidence. The trend showing male to be more willing to use English is not reliable. It is because of the biases of the respondents. The male in this socio-cultural environment are more prone to take such things as providing data for casually. They can even do so out of fun. Still, after having said that, they can be given benefit of doubt and further investigation, with greater care to avoid such biases, may be conducted to know the real situation. The trend demonstrated by age, whereby, the highest percentage of those belonging to age bracket of 'above 50 years' have expressed 'high' level of willingness needs to be seen in almost similar light as the trend based on gender. People belonging to this age could possibly have done so as a face saving act because they are mostly aware of their being known for rigidity and lack of competence especially in English.

5.1. Findings
1. The percentages in the graph show a certain level of ambiguity can be found with clear indication of lack of willingness in quite a few items. It can be noted that out of 13 situations in only three (i.e. WTCE1, 3 and 4) there is clear indication of making use of English by the teachers. With regard to all the rest of the situations the trend is either vague or clearly against its use. The division is noted to be almost even between willingness or the otherwise so that in 5 (i.e. WTCE 2, 5, 10, 11, 13) out of rest of the 10 situations there is ambiguous trend while in the remaining 5 (i.e. WTCE 6, 7, 8, 9, 12) the trend is clearly against use of English. Thus the level of willingness of the teachers is very low.
2. Gender has emerged as significant basis of difference in only 5 (i.e. WTCE1, 2, 6, 12, &13) out of 13 items. All the five items show males to be more willing to use English in the situations specified than the females.
3. Age has also been found significant in 5 items (i.e. WTCE1, 5, 8, 12 & 13). In three items age group 1(<30) is at the top while in rest of the two it is age group 2. Thus, age group 3 shows lowest level of willingness. Overall, age cannot be considered as an important indicator because it is found to be insignificant in most of the situations.
4. Difference on the basis of qualification exists only in case of seven items (i.e. WTCE1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11) while the rest of six show it to be insignificant as an indicator of willingness to communicate in English. Out of the seven items of difference two (3 & 8) show minor difference on the basis of qualification while five others show a highly significant variation. However, it is important to note that in only one item (i.e. WTCE 1) the graduates are the most willing while in all the rest of the six it is the postgraduates.
5. A very important trend is the frequency of response category *'Sometimes'*. It has been found that this response category has highest frequency in 10 out of thirteen items while out of the rest of three (i.e. WTCE1, 3 & 5) two (i.e. WTCE 3 & 5) have the second highest and only one (i.e. WTCE 1) has the third highest frequency. 'Sometimes' is a response that provides the respondents a sort of cushion against the threat of getting exposed. Therefore, choice of sometimes as a response is used by the respondents to sensor their lack of willingness to communicate in English.

6. Conclusion, Recommendations and Suggestions

The teachers of public sector schools of Punjab are not ready to use English with their students while teaching them in particular and while talking to them in general. There is no significant difference among them in this regard on the basis of gender and age. However, qualification has been discovered to be very important indicator of willingness. It means that the more qualified teachers are willing and ready to make use of English for instruction and communication while the less qualified, on the converse, are a hurdle in its implementation. The most important reason is, by and large, their low proficiency in English especially in oracy skills.

Some recommendations are made in the following on the basis of findings of this study.

1. Government should arrange intensive language training of long duration for the teachers. It should mainly focus on their oracy skills. However, pedagogical skills suitable to the use of EMI should also be made part of such training.
2. Steps should be taken to change the evaluation method in English. Oracy can be introduced with nominal credit in terms of marks as a first step towards this end. It can be started with 10% or even 5% of the total marks of the subject of English.
3. Corresponsive to what is stated in point 12, GTM (Grammar Translation Method) should be abandoned in favour of DM (Direct Method) step by step.
   An important area for future research can be the effectiveness of training being provided to the teachers of public sector schools of Punjab to answer three broad questions:
   a) How far have such trainings been successful in equipping the teachers with adequate skills to be able to use English as medium of instruction effectively?
   b) How far have these trainings been successful in motivating the teachers to use English as medium of instruction?
   c) What are the possible reasons in case of failure of such trainings?

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