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LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES AND POWER RELATIONS IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING: A CRITICAL SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM INTERACTION AND INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSES AT PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN FAISALABAD

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationship between language ideologies and power relations to determine the opportunities available to learn the second language (L2) in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) classrooms in Pakistani private universities in Faisalabad. The study uses classroom interaction in EMI in Pakistani higher education, which is experiencing a rise in dominance of EMI because of the linguistic distinction between EMI and other languages that is linked to academic excellence, employability, and professionalism, in order to investigate how language hierarchy is reproduced or negotiated in classrooms. The key aim is to examine the effects of EMI-related ideologies on participation patterns, identity of learners, and the access to academic legitimacy. The research is placed in the framework of an interpretivist philosophy and critical sociolinguistic paradigm, which merges the language ideology theory, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and poststructuralist view of SLA. A qualitative design based on observations was used to gather data, whereby non-participant classroom observations were conducted in 6-8 EMI classrooms in selected private universities in Faisalabad, which entailed about 10-12 lecturers and 20-25 undergraduate students in the selected classrooms using purposive and maximum variation sampling. Data analysis was done by CDA and interactional sociolinguistic analysis. The results show that English is symbolic capital, which benefits fluent speakers and restricts the involvement of less competent students, whereas translanguaging acts are subtle types of cognitive resistance. The research shows the dual nature of EMI classrooms both in encouraging the growth of English and causing linguistic inequality to be repeated.

Keywords: *English-Medium Instruction, Language Ideology, Power Relations, Classroom Interaction, Linguistic Capital, Learner Identity, Critical Discourse Analysis, Higher Education in Pakistan.*

INTRODUCTION

In higher education in most postcolonial settings, English-medium instruction (EMI) is an influential organising principle, in which English is commonly assumed to be the natural language of knowledge, professionalism and social mobility in academic institutions. However, EMI is not only an ideological endeavor but also a pedagogical one as it defines what is to be seen as legitimate knowledge and whose voices are listened to in classrooms. English has traditionally been an official and elite language in Pakistan, which is associated with power and authority and also a source of social mobility, as well as replicating social inequality (Rahman, 2002; Durrani, 2012). In the Pakistani higher education, the phenomenon of EMI has been highly consistent over decades, and it is usually a continuation of an institutional practice instead of a thought-out model of teaching (Siddiqui, 2022). This sustenance is significant in that it enables the ideology of language, the ideology of what is thought to be good, good academic speech, and classroom behavior to pervade day-to-day teaching, assessment, and administrative discourse.

According to recent scholarship, the language-in-education policies and institutional discourses of Pakistan have been marked by a continued process of linking English to modernity, merit, and global competitiveness alongside the implicit construction of Urdu and regional languages as less appropriate to academic knowledge. These ideological stratifications do not merely exist in the abstract form, but they are converted into the equality/inequality in the participation rights, difference in teacher expectations, and availability of academic success (Ali, 2025). Students with more developed capital in English language in most EMI settings talk more, are rated more positively and have a better academic identity, whilst less fluent students can become shy, quiet or be labeled as weak students regardless of their knowledge of the learning material. This type of stratification is particularly evident in the classroom interaction: in terms of turn-taking, corrective and repair feedback, and the subtle kinds of validation of particular responses and rejection of others by teachers.

Empirical studies of EMI across countries give this issue solid ground. The systematic reviews indicate that EMI implementation is usually accompanied by language-related issues among students and teachers, such as difficulties in comprehension, the decreased engagement of some learners, and the conflict between language acquisition and content learning (Macaro et al., 2018; Rose et al., 2026). Notably, these reviews also imply that the results of EMI are rather unpredictable and contextual, that the story of EMI works cannot be generalized without paying attention to the ideologies of a certain place, pressures of institutions, and interactional realities. This confusion is compounded in the context of private higher education where English is often commodified - being marketed as an indicator of a good education and an indicator of employability - and the students language status is still unequal. According to research in South Asian private higher education, EMI can be seen as helpful in confidence and professional communication, yet the advantages are accompanied by unequality of access and inconsistency in understanding (Karim et al., 2023). These ambivalent results indicate that there is a critical requirement; a study of how EMI is ideologically supported in institutions and how power plays out in classroom discourse to influence the L2 learning opportunities.

The other significant controversy is the question of the multilingual use of EMI space. There are numerous institutions that promote an English-only philosophy, however, classroom practice tends to adopt code-switching and translanguaging to keep meaning and involvement alive. Recent research indicates that translanguaging in EMI may be used as a pedagogic tool, helping to understand, develop rapport, and facilitate construction of new knowledge, but also becoming an object of controversy in the face of English-only policy pressures (Karakaş, 2023). This discussion is directly related to power, in case English-only standards are used as a gatekeeping practice, the use of Urdu/Punjabi can be perceived as the lack of meaning instead of a valid meaning-making designed to facilitate academic language use, which strengthens the effect of linguistic insecurity and exclusion.

Although there is an increasing body of research, EMI, policy and multilingualism, a very distinct gap in the city-specific, interaction-plus-institution research in Pakistan, particularly with regard to the private universities where English is intimately linked to market value and institutional branding, exists. Faisalabad is especially a significant location as a big urban and educational hub, with students of diverse socioeconomic and schooling categories coming together, which can enhance linguistic disparity within EMI classes. The available literature, which relates to the topic of Faisalabad, has discussed learner challenges and motivational barriers in ESL settings, although the associated literature lacks the ability to elucidate how the institutional ideologies and power relations in the classroom work together to influence the participation of learners and their sense of identity in EMI higher education (Shehzadi et al., 2024). Besides, recent CDA-oriented Pakistani studies of language policy and power emphasize the larger ideological conflicts among English, Urdu and regional language, but they tend to stay on a macro level and fail to trace the practical implementation of such ideologies in a micro classroom interaction under the context of a personal university EMI environment (Khan et al., 2025).

Thus, the paper explores the ideologies and power relations in the second language learning by relating two levels (1) classroom interaction, where power is exercised through talk, evaluation and participation; and (2) institutional discourse, where EMI is justified, controlled, and sold by policies, official communication and evaluation standards. With the adoption of a critical sociolinguistic approach, the study uses language as a platform of instruction and as a social resource which positions the students as either legitimate or illegitimate speakers, and competent or incompetent learners. By so doing, the study is expected to provide a grounded description of how EMI within the Faisalabad context of the private universities can be both empowering and reproductive of inequality- depending on the mode of ideologies dispersed and management of the interactional space.

Objectives

1. To identify and critically analyze EMI-related language ideologies embedded in institutional policies, academic practices, and official discourse at private universities in Faisalabad.
2. To examine how these ideologies influence power relations, participation patterns, and access to learning opportunities in EMI classroom interaction for L2 students.

Research Questions

1. How are EMI-related language ideologies constructed and circulated in institutional discourse at private universities in Faisalabad?
2. How do these language ideologies shape power relations and student participation in EMI classroom interaction for L2 learners?

Literature Review

Language ideology, power relations and EMI in private universities.

The study of language ideologies and power relations in second language acquisition has progressively moved away from the view of language as a neutral coding to the view of language as a socially positioned resource that allocates opportunity, legitimacy and access to knowledge. Language ideologies in English-medium instruction (EMI) higher education, however, are not merely ideas about language, but also institutionalized ideas about what is and is not regarded as intelligence, professionalism, and academic competence, and the latter usually favors already-privileged learners over others in the daily workings of classroom practice and policy talk. Current EMI research indicates that ideological intensification of these processes is stronger in the case of private universities, where English is often promoted as a way of employability and global mobility, which means that language is a kind of capital that can be purchased and sold, but it is not equally available to all students (Macaro et al., 2018; Siddiqui, 2022).

Trying to think about language ideology and power in SLA.

The language ideologies in critical sociolinguistics have been perceived as socially constructed explanations which connect language with moral value, modernity, class positioning and national identity, which tend to reproduce hierarchies, but sounds like common-sense. Language-in-education is where ideology can be seen in policies, administrative discourses, and assessment norms and interactional practices where the good English becomes the legitimate voice of academic knowledge. The recent discussion on language-in-education policies in Pakistan reveals that the effects of colonial policies and neoliberal globalization are interacting in ways that affirm hierarchies between English, Urdu, and regional languages, how students envisage success, and how institutions justify EMI regimes (Ali, 2025). This macro-level approach is important to the privately-run higher education establishments in Faisalabad since the ideological discourses of English as quality, merit, and modernity, and local languages as competitive obstacles tend to confer legitimacy to the sector.

EMI in Pakistan: growth, arguments and inconsistencies.

The EMI situation in higher education of Pakistan is said to have a long history (historical continuities), to be tolerated by the politics, and economically justified (human capital and employability). A retrospective study on EMI in Pakistani higher education sums up the way English is utilized as an official/high-end academic language and EMI has remained an institutional standard instead of a well-considered pedagogical option (Siddiqui, 2022). Simultaneously, empirical studies constantly document discrepancies between EMI principles and in-practice conditions: the disproportionate proficiency of the students in English, the limited pedagogical opportunities of the teachers, and the use of code-switching/translanguaging in spite of the official English-only requirements (Siddiqui, 2022). Such contradictions play a vital role in your subject since not only does policy constitute power relations, but those relations are also performed in micro moments who gets to speak, whose answers are deemed intelligent and whose involvement is derided as an expression of weak English.

Commodification of English and the private universities.

The most stable rationale in favor of private-university EMI is that English offers market value: it is positioned as the means of employment and movement as well as professional communication. It is supported by evidence on EMI graduates in South Asian private higher education, who report a sense of beneficial outcome in terms of confidence and communication in the workplace, an outcome that can be argued bolsters promotional discourses of the South Asian private university (Karim et al., 2023). Another quantitative study on the topic, conducted in Pakistan (more recent, yet not Faisalabad-specific), also reports comparable comprehension challenges with many students when English is used as the instructional medium, yet also demonstrates perceived effects on confidence and participation in classes, and this represents a two-sided coin where English both facilitates and inhibits (Impact of Instructional Medium, 2025). A powerful opposition to critical scholarship is that EMI in privatized higher education may reinstate stratification: students with Urdu or low-resource backgrounds are at epistemic disadvantage, and fluent students amass symbolic power (Ali, 2025). This is not only concerning the level of language appropriateness, but rather legitimation, how English turns to be a proxy of intelligence and competence. The outcome is that there is a kind of double inequality, where learners who have already acquired English capital receive greater chances to talk and be heard whereas others are placed as less competent even in cases where disciplinary material is being learned.

The location of ideological reproduction: classroom interaction.

Globally, interactional research in EMI has been able to demonstrate that classroom talk tends to be the process through which ideologies work: teacher questions, feedback moves, repair practices and assessment talk can indirectly rank

students based on English fluency as opposed to conceptual knowledge. Systematic reviews underline that EMI studies report more and more language-specific difficulties, such as a low involvement of certain students, simplified classroom dialogue, and strategy-based switching to local languages to preserve the meaning (Macaro et al., 2018; Rose et al.,2026).

Nevertheless, the critical scholars claim that the latter so-called challenges are neither entirely linguistic, but political nor ideological, as they establish the voice that is considered academic. One of the biggest areas of criticism is that the rules of English only classrooms produce silent classrooms when learners fear face-threat, correction, or ridicule and which make language a disciplinary tool instead of a learning tool. This is in line with the larger Pakistani discourses on English as a currency, which is commonly sought after yet unevenly distributed, to create identity stress and belong to a particular classification (Aijaz, 2024).

Translanguaging: equity menace or equity resource?

Among the most vibrant cross azimuths in recent literature is the debate on whether multilingualism practices are detrimental of the quality of EMI or are beneficial towards learning and inclusion. The conventional institutional ideology tends to be based on translanguaging being a problem (no English discipline), whereas critical sociolinguistics tends to be based on translanguaging as an acceptable meaning-making repertoire that may diminish inequality and increase access to academic text. More recent empirical studies in the field of higher education indicate that the translingual practices of students are tightly connected to their language ideologies and could develop into the critical language awareness, which breaks the monolingual norms (Sun, 2023). Similarly, recent analysis of ideologies of EMI policy and translanguaging on the meso level (teachers and students) notes that there are persistent conflict scenarios between official policies of English-only and real classroom demands (Islam et al., 2024). This discussion is particularly pertinent to the case of Faisalabad private universities, which on the one hand publicly promote the excellence of English-only, and secretly, on the other hand, use bilingual methods to maintain the classroom in operation.

Policy, branding and governance: institutional discourses.

Outside classrooms, the institutional discourse level encompasses admission messages, quality language, assessment regimes and departmental stories that institutionalize EMI. Research on policy in Pakistan suggests that language-in-education policy and discourses still have colonial and neoliberal ideological remnants (Durrani, 2012; Ali, 2025). These ideologies may be amplified in market-driven institutions of higher education: English is a marker of institutional prestige, a marketing tool to parents and students, and an access control to academic membership.

The main lacuna and the contribution of your Faisalabad-based study.

Although there is an increase in literature on EMI and language ideology in Pakistan, there is evident gap in city-specific, university-centered- private, interaction and plus-institution literature. Much of the literature is either macro (critiques of policies), or general (national discussions of EMI). The additional value of your proposed focus, which is the private universities in Faisalabad, is that it combines (a) microanalysis of classroom interaction, in which power is exercised, and (b) mesoanalysis of institutional discourses, in which ideology is justified and reproduced. By doing this, it can be empirically tested how competing claims EMI as empowerment and employability (Karim et al., 2023) and EMI as stratification and exclusion can be tested (Ali, 2025), and English-only as quality assurance versus translanguaging as equitable pedagogy (Sun, 2023; Islam et al., 2024).

Methodology

The research design that will be used in this study is qualitative based on interpretivist philosophy and critical research paradigm. The interpretivist perspective supposes that the realities in the classroom are not objective facts but socially constructed as a result of interactions, discourse,

and shared meanings of reality. Because the topic of the research is the ideologies of languages, as well as the relations of power in English-medium instruction (EMI) classrooms, reality is perceived as plural, dynamic, and influenced by social status. The critical paradigm also directs the study in the sense that language is regarded as a power zone, inequality, and symbolic control. Instead of considering EMI as a neutral pedagogical practice, this study analyses the functioning of English as a gatekeeping resource to organize participation, authority, and legitimacy in classroom interaction. The methodology of the study is a qualitative classroom based observational case study design. It focuses only on the naturally occurring classroom interaction in EMI classrooms at the private universities in Faisalabad. Resorting to classroom observation, the study assigns priority to the authentic discourse since it takes place during the real time and thus the power relations, the rights to participate, the practice of correction and the language option could be studied in their natural setting. The study is not based on interviews, institutional records or audio tapes but rather on non-participant structured classroom observations with the help of detailed field notes. By doing this, it is possible to keep the analysis grounded on observable interactional practices instead of anecdotal beliefs or institutionalized rhetoric.

Systematic classroom observations are used in data collection in 6-8 undergraduate EMI classroom in various disciplines (e.g., business, social sciences, and sciences) in the selected private universities in Faisalabad. The institutions to be sampled to carry out the study through purposive sampling include those where English is the main language of instruction and those in which students are diverse in terms of their linguistic and educational backgrounds. In these institutions, the maximum variation sampling is used to gain variability in classroom dynamics in terms of discipline and proficiency level. The observable classroom is repeated several times so as to have depth and reliability of interpretation. In the course of observations, the researcher takes extensive field notes where he pays attention to patterns of participation, distribution of turn taking, teacher questioning, practices of feedback and correction, instances of code-switching, instances of student silence, and visible identity positioning. Memos written to oneself are also kept to record new tendencies and analysis.

The analysis of the data is an iterative theory-based approach guided by the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and interactional sociolinguistic analysis. Field notes are initially sorted and coded by topic to unify a common ideological trend including English-only norms, standard language expectations, fluency-based assessment and legitimacy marking. These themes are discussed then under the critical prism to study the way the power relations are performed in the discourse at the micro-level classroom. Close consideration is given to the speaker, the muted speaker, whose answers are legitimate, and how the power to speak is decentralized. Interaction patterns are seen in terms of larger ideas of language ideology and symbolic capital. By applying such an interpretive but systematic method of analysis, the paper shows how the interaction process in EMI classrooms becomes a key location in which ideology, power and chances of second language learning are replicated or negotiated.

Data Analysis

Power, participation and language hierarchy in EMI classroom interaction.

The section describes the findings of observation of non-participants in classrooms of EMI in the scenario of private universities in Faisalabad. The analysis is based on the naturally occurring interaction, namely, the distribution of participation, turn taking patterns, teacher evaluation strategies, and the observable performance of the language ideology through the English-dominant discourse. This section illustrates how English is not only a medium of instruction in the application that employs the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and interactional sociolinguistic analysis to show how English is a symbolic resource that organizes authority, legitimacy and positioning of the learner.

1. Lack of Equality in Sharing of Speaking Rights.

Unequal participation was one of the most consistent patterns that was observed in the classrooms. The classroom interaction was dominated by a few fluent English-speaking students with others either being quiet or speaking minimally.

Sample Interaction 1

Teacher:

What is meant by market equilibrium?

Student A (fluent speaker):

Market equilibrium exists when the demand matches the supply and there is neither a shortage nor a surplus.

Teacher:

"Excellent. Very good explanation."

Later a fellow student tried to answer:

Student B:

Matlab jab demand and supply barabar ho jaye, sir, jab demand matlab jab supply barabar ho jaye, sir, sodangi demand matlab jab supply barabar ho jaye, sir, sodangi demand matlab jab supply barabar ho jaye, sir, sodangi demand matlab jab supply barabar ho jaye, sir, sodangi demand matlab jab supply barabar ho jaye, sir, sodangi demand mat

Teacher (interrupting):

"In English please."

Analysis

This short dialogue indicates the working of an English-only ideology. The student A with the fluent English response was rightly checked to be positive in its evaluation (Excellent). Student B, on the contrary, making an attempt to explain the same concept in Urdu ("matlab jab demand aur supply barabar ho jaye") was interrupted and redirected. The break is noteworthy~it heralds that form of language has a priority over the meaning.

This instance, through CDA shows the manner in which the English language is used as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Fluency in English gives an instant legitimacy and authoritative power, whereas even clarification using Urdu is viewed as a disrespect. The participation is thus not equally distributed, but it is determined by the proficiency in language.

This trend created apparent reluctance on the less fluent students. The silence itself was a protective move, strengthening unequal rights to the right of speech.

2. The English Language as a Measuring Rod.

The other theme that kept repeating was the implicit connection between the English fluency and intelligence.

Sample Interaction 2

Student C:

Sir, I believe that the company failed in its strategy as the management failed to analyse the consumer behaviour.

Teacher:

"That's a very mature analysis."

Later in the same class:

Student D:

woh company ne planning sahi nahi ki thi hey unhone customers ko samjha nahi.

Teacher:

Okay... but see to improve your English. Your idea is okay."

Analysis

The ideas expressed by both students were similar. Students C and D were, however, intellectually and linguistically validated respectively (very mature analysis) and corrected (try to improve your English). This is an ideology of good English = intelligence. There is a difference in the authority and competency in language of evaluation as expressed by the teacher depending on the language of delivery. Even though the conceptual understanding of Student D was correct, the focus had been directed on a language deficiency.

Using the interactional analysis, we can see that sequences of evaluation emphasize linguistic form. The modality of the teacher (try to improve) makes the student linguistically incompetent, and implicitly equates the academic value with the performance in the English language. Linguistic hierarchy is replicated in such micro-level events. Repeated positioning can lead to changes in identity and confidence of learner over time.

3. Turn Allocation and Teacher Control.

It was also noted that teachers had very high control on turn giving, mostly asking questions to the fluent students.

Sample Interaction 3

Teacher:

"Ali, can you answer this?"

Ali:

"Yes sir..."

After Ali responds fluently.

Teacher:

"Very good. As always."

At the same time, some of the students did not look at the general questions.

Analysis

The use of the term as always implies habitual awareness. It builds Ali as a person who is always competent as an English speaker. Nomination of the same students severally results in hierarchy of participation. Such patterns indicate normalization of inequality through CDA. Educators can use the unintentional dependence on fluent students as a way of continuing with the lesson. Nevertheless, such dependence supports linguistic stratification. There is a low rate of interactional development in students who are linguistically challenged because they are rarely nominated. The safe English production and not inclusive participation becomes a structure of the classroom.

4. The Strategy of Self-Protection by Silence.

An apparent trend among observations was long silence following teacher questions.

Sample Interaction 4

Teacher:

What causes inflation?

(10 seconds silence)

Teacher:

"Nobody? This is very basic."

One of the fluent students responded to question after more silence.

Analysis

Silence does not mean lack of knowledge in this case but linguistic insecurity. Unstructured observation records showed that other students whispered their answers in Urdu to fellow students:

And I know,But English mein bolne darr lagta hai.

This quote (I know it, but I am afraid to say it in English) shows that the norms of English-only become anxiety-inducing. CDA uncovers that, when the teacher states that this is very basic, she indirectly builds students as incompetent. Competency is however assessed using spoken English. Silence is therefore a kind of self-defense against correction or embarrassment or negative judgment. This restricts the possibilities of learning and strengthens power inequality.

5. Corrective Feedback and Linguistic Policing.

The corrective feedback was mostly centered on grammar and pronunciation as opposed to conceptual accuracy.

Sample Interaction 5

Student E:

Sir, increase in inflation due to print more money by the government.

Teacher:

Nobody says that inflation is rising... rise. Use proper grammar."

No other interaction with the explanation ensued.

Analysis

The teacher focused on the grammatical correction rather than enlargement of concept of economy. Linguistic policing changes the focus on meaning-making to linguistic performance.

In another instance:

Student F:

Sir, you policy ka impact negative hai.

Teacher:

"Speak English."

Analysis

The order to speak English is a punitive action. It strengthens monolingual ideology and sends the message that Urdu cannot be regarded as academic. Such corrections tend to be viewed through a critical lens as symbolic regulation of a kind. They train students to conform to English culture and exclude multilingual resources.

6. Multilingual Whisper Zones

There was always peer-to-peer exchange in the use of Urdu, even in the presence of English-only enforcement.

Sample Observation

During group work:

Student G:

"Samjha kya usne kya kaha?"

Student H:

Haan woh keh raha tha ke demand curve shift hoti hai jab income change ho.

These were fast and low volume exchanges.

Analysis

Translinguaging is exhibited in these zones of whispers as a survival mechanism. The students use Urdu to co-construct meaning. These practices, though unofficial, are what keep learning going.

Nevertheless, they are still concealed, and as such, they are not institutionally legitimate. English has an overt power whereas Urdu has an underground power.

The two-system represents ideological conflict between practice and policy.

7. Building of Academic legitimacy.

The teachers gave a high compliment to students with English fluency as their evaluation measure.

Common phrases included:

"Professional answer."

"Very confident."

"Good English."

Contrary, struggling students were provided with:

"Work on your English."

"You need to improve fluency."

Analysis

Linguistic indices of confidence and professionalism. Fluency equaled competence. This helps in the development of identity with academic authority being internalized by the fluent students and inadequacy being internalized by others. The distribution of participation, evaluation and legitimacy is disparate in terms of fluency. Teachers do not necessarily exclude students, but the common practice of interaction recreates the linguistic hierarchy. The norms governing speaking rights are English only, linguistic boundaries are enforced through corrective feedback and silence is a defence mechanism. Multilingualism is practiced but it is unofficial and marginalized. In this way, the classroom interaction in itself is the key location where language ideology and power relations determine the opportunities of second language learning.

The Identity of learners, linguistic capital and power positioning in EMI classroom interaction.

The classroom observation helped to realize that the EMI classes are not just the instructional ones but the identity shaping spaces where students are constantly assigned (and assign themselves) the roles of competents, deficient, confident, hesitant, good, or weak learners depending on their performance in English. This section explores language ideology as internalized by the patterns of interaction using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and poststructuralist SLA perspectives.

1. Good Speakers as Role Models.

In the observed classrooms, some students became so-called model EMI students. Such students were often nominated, complimented, and given complicated questions.

Sample Interaction 1

Teacher:

Could you please explain this theory, Hassan?

Hassan:

"Yes sir. According to the theory, economic growth is pegged on capital accumulation and technological development.

Teacher:

"Very articulate. This is what you are to talk in university.

Analysis

The term This is how you should speak in university creates a normative language standard. Hassan is not just commended, he is put up as a model. His performance in English is an academic standard of legitimacy.

This statement presents a kind of hierarchy through CDA:

Accurate English fluency = university level.

Non-standard is deviation of fluency.
Symbolic capital is built through the repeated recognition on the part of the public. Hassan attains power not only in the language but in the society as well. Peers start to look at him and then, the peers respond. He turns into a semi-authoritarian figure in the discussion in the classroom. This is a manifestation of Bourdieu linguistic capital: fluency is translated into recognition and recognition in turn reinforces power.

2. Indecisive Lecturers and Self-Downplaying.
Conversely, less proficient students often downplayed theirs.
Sample Interaction 2
Teacher:
"Anyone else?"
Student I (softly):
"Sir... maybe I am wrong but..."
Teacher:
"Go ahead."
Student I:
I believe... company should lower price since... customers not making purchases.
Teacher:
"Customers are not buying. Okay."

Analysis
A self-doubt in speech is indicated by the phrase maybe I am wrong but. This self-downplay occurred among those students who had a shaky command of English. The student is expecting to be inadequate even before correction. This is internalized ideology: English errors are intellectual errors. Conceptual expansion is interrupted by the correcting grammar of the teacher right away (Customers are not buying). It is not cruel but strengthens the language deficiency as the primary one. Using poststructuralist theory of SLA, identity is not constructed but negotiated through interaction. In this case, Student I puts himself in a position of being incorrect before appraisal. Such frequent repositioning can become a strong speaker identity.

3. Social Correction and Face-Threat.
The correction moments were usually public and instant and enhanced linguistic anxiety.
Sample Interaction 3
Student J:
Sir, globalization render states more reliant.
Teacher:
"Makes. Not make. Please pay attention to subject-verb agreement.
(Class laughs softly.)

Analysis
The correction is academic, but due to the publicity of correction and circulation of face-threat by peers, face-threat exists.
A whisper followed, which was noted:
Yaar English galat ho jaye sab hans dete hain.
(It is because English is going wrong everyone laughs.)
This is the social cost of linguistic errors. English errors are both visible in society and reputationally dangerous. CDA shows that grammar correction is a disciplinary regulation. It also follows English standards but can be counterproductive to attendance. In the long term, students who are corrected publicly are less likely to attend, which strengthens power inequality.

4. Code-Switching as Negotiating Identity.
Although there was dominance in English, there were students who were able to employ Urdu strategically to claim knowledge.
Sample Interaction 4
Student K:
Sir, yeh baire words, agar company profit maximize karna chahti hai, to usko cost kam karni hogi.
Teacher:
"Yes, but explain in English."
Student K (rephrasing):
It needs to minimize the cost in order to maximize the profit of the company.

Analysis
The student then provides conceptual clarity in the Urdu language. Urdu in this case serves as a means of cognitive scaffolding. But legitimacy is awarded on post English reformulation.

This communication shows a stratified identity negotiation:
Student claims to possess knowledge in Urdu.
English is required by institutional norm.
To be a student is to be recognized.
The legitimacy change takes place at the English articulation point.
Urdu is a means to an end rather than a proper academic language. English is still the language of recognition.

5. Confidence and Linguistic Performance.
They exhibited the signs of visible confidence by fluent students:
Strong eye contact
Extended responses
Use of academic vocabulary
Sample Interaction 5
Student L:
In macroeconomic terms, inflation may alter the purchasing power and raise income inequality.
Teacher:
Excellent academic language.

Analysis
Excellent academic language is a phrase that directly links the sophistication of vocabulary and academic excellence. The confidence is mediated linguistically. Students who control academic English play the role of authority.
At the same time, the less fluent students tended to evade eye contact or whisper.
Observation note:
Student M evaded talking though aware of answer; explained in Urdu to peer evidently.
This depicts the lack of articulation of the English language. Nevertheless, performance without speaking English in front of the class is not seen anywhere in the classroom hierarchy.

6. Building of Weak English Identity.
The repetitive corrective pattern slowly builds some students to be linguistically weak.
Sample Interaction 6
Teacher:
Your English should be improved. Good ideas, bad language, that is all you have got.

Analysis
Although this assessment appears accommodating it breaks down identity into:
Good thinker
Weak English user
In EMI, poor English restricts classroom power. Although intellectual capacity might be there, linguistic framing determines the chances of involvement. Other students also ceased volunteering with time. The fact that they were not mainly involved was not likely because of their ignorance but it was fear of being exposed to the language.

7. Peer Hierarchies, Informal Authority.
Sometimes peer discussions were mediated by fluent students.
Sample Observation
During group task:
Student N (fluent):
"Let me explain. Basically, what sir means is..."
Peers listened attentively.
Later whisper:
Uski English achi hai, bi gee usko prefer karta hai, teacher.
(His English is fine, that is why the teacher likes him most.)

Analysis
Fluency in English is used as a source of peer power. Hierarchy is reproduced and identified by students themselves.
Legitimacy structures are supported by the perception that teachers favor fluent speakers.
This demonstrates that ideology is not merely a teacher-construct, but it is absorbed in peer culture.

8. Anxiety of Linguistic Participation Withdrawal.
The visible patterns of withdrawal were a result of repeated correction, comparison against peers and English-only enforcement.
Observed behaviors:
Avoiding raising hands
When teacher sweeps room, looks down.
Answering the questions whisperingly in Urdu but not speaking publicly.

One overheard statement:
Mujhe concept samajh ata hai, English mein bolne se darr lagta hai ke galti na ho jaye.
(I know the principle, I am scared I will speak English and not knowing how to say it correctly.)

Analysis
Conceptual confidence is dominated by fear of linguistic mistake. English is made judgemental sieve. This is a subliminal way of power. There is no explicit discrimination that is necessary. The landscape of participation developed in routine interactional norms is unequal.

9. English as a Symbolic Capital in Real Time.
In the classrooms, the level of English proficiency was directly correlated with:
Teacher trust
Speaking opportunities
Positive reinforcement
Peer admiration
Students who had good English proficiency had cumulative benefits. Their personalities became assured and independent students.
Other people had grown protective silence, wary speech, or relied on whisper translation.
EMI is therefore like a symbolic economy in which English proficiency is academic currency.

Ideological Reproduction, Micro-Resistance and Inequalities in learning opportunities in EMI classes.
This section goes a step further to analyze how EMI classrooms can be viewed as arenas of ideological reproduction- in which English-only ideals are made into common sense- and also finds some form of resistance in multilingual practices. Above all, this segment examines the direct influence of these ideological processes on the opportunities of second language (L2) learning, inclusion, and access to education.

1. English-Only Ideology Naturalization.
Throughout observations, English dominance was hardly explained, it was taken as self-evident.
Sample Interaction 1
Teacher:
In college, we have to speak English.
Student O (quietly to peer):
Yahan Urdu bolna lai hi nakhai lagta.
("It does not appear to be allowed here to speak Urdu.)

Analysis
The statement by the teacher puts the use of English in the context of institutional need (must). There is no negotiation. The language English is built up as the natural language of higher education. Obligation and authority through CDA is indicated by modality (must). This is not presented as policy but as a norm of academia. The invisibility of English as ideology is due to the lack of concern arising. The whisper of the student shows that he/she is aware of being restricted. Urdu is seen as not permitted, not prohibited, but not allowed to interact.
Therefore, it is through repetition of discursive reinforcement that ideology is internalized and not by explicit rules.

2. Linguistic Legitimacy and the Language Gatekeeping.
A number of observation instances showed that English is a gate keeping mechanism of academic validity.
Sample Interaction 2
Student P:
Poverty, sir, one makes because government jobs make it.
Teacher:
"Explain properly in English."
Student P (hesitant):
Government will create jobs and poverty will reduce.
Teacher:
"Yes, now it sounds academic."

Analysis
The most important saying is that now it sounds academic. Academic legitimacy is indexed linguistically. The concept remained the same, the words not.
This is an example of linguistic gatekeeping: the pronunciation of the English language defines the knowledge as accepted.

Urdu language is considered to be informal or incomplete even when the meaning it conveys is accurate. The same idea is converted into the discourse acceptable to academics through English translation.
Therefore, EMI classrooms recreate ideological superiority among languages.

3. Translanguaging Cognitive Resistance.
In spite of the domination of English, translanguaging continued to be used as a survival mechanism in pedagogy.
Sample Observation 3
During group work:
Student Q:
Yeh demand curve left shift kami giye jab income kam ho jaye.
Student R:
Hagan, phir equilibrium price change hoga.
At a later time, on reporting to school:
Student Q (in English):
When the income is lower, the demand curve shifts to the left.

Analysis
The building of an understanding was done in Urdu. Performance of knowledge publicly was done in English. This is the dual-language approach, which is a mental opposition. Students do not abandon English, on the contrary, they complement it. Translanguaging facilitates the making of meaning but it is unofficial. It works under the overwhelming English ideology. Layered participation is demonstrated through this pattern by means of interactional sociolinguistics:
Multilingual negotiation privately.
Monolingual performance in the public.
This organization maintains education yet maintains English power.

4. Standard language Ideology Teacher reinforcement.
Teachers tend to focus on academic requirement such as proper English.
Sample Interaction 4
Teacher:
"Avoid mixing languages. It reduces professionalism."
Student S (later whispering):
Professional banna hai English perfect honi chahiye.
(English must be perfect in order to be professional.)

Analysis
In this case, the professionalism is directly associated with linguistic purity. Code-mixing is positioned as incompetent. This supports mainstream language ideology the view that there is one right form of English and it should be followed. This belief is internalized in students. The perfection in English is a condition of professional identity. This type of reinforcement reinforces symbolic inequality since not all students have near-standard fluency.

5. Disproportionate Learning Opportunities.
It was observed that the students that had better English proficiency were given more interactional space.
Sample Interaction 5
Teacher:
Is it possible to analyze this case study?
Student T (fluent):
Provides 2-minute explanation in English.
Teacher:
Excellent critical thinking.
In contrast:
Student U:
Sir, company apni strategy change karni chahiye.
Teacher:
"Explain more clearly."
Student U remains silent.

Analysis
Student T is given more time and validation. The conceptual relevance is considered inadequate in the case of student U because of the lack of elaboration in English.
This generates unequal learning processes:
Extended discourse is practiced by the fluent students.
Weaker students give brief answers and move away.

With time, prolonged speaking gains additional fluency. Narrowing down of speaking impairs development. In such a way, inequality is replicated.

EMI classrooms serve as the place of ideological reproduction in which English-only standards are naturalized and associated with professionalism, smartness, and academic legitimacy. English is a system of gate keeping through which recognition, power, and visibility are established. Meanwhile, students resort to subtle multilingual opposition by translanguaging, whisper negotiation, and humor. These practices pay off learning yet they are not official.

Above all, EMI is a determinant of disparate L2 learning opportunities. By being participants of a longer period, students who have fluent experience amass both symbolic and linguistic capital, whereas less fluent students internalize hesitation and retreat out of view. Therefore, it becomes the classroom interaction, the main place of meeting between ideology, identity, and learning. EMI does not simply impart content, it organizes the access to academic voice.

Conclusion

This research paper aimed at exploring the dynamics of language ideologies and power relations in English-Medium Instruction (EMI) classrooms in the settings of the Pakistani city of Faisalabad and centered its attention on natural classroom observations only.

The critical sociolinguistic perspective and the analysis of the daily practices of interaction proves that EMI is not a neutral pedagogical option but a highly ideological and power-organized practice. In addition to being used as a medium of instruction, English is symbolic capital governing entry, forming identities of learners, and organizing access to academic legitimacy.

The results show that the main location where language ideology is manifested and put into action is used in classrooms. Inequalities in participation behaviors were also regularly noted, including those fluent in the English language, who took up longer speaking turns, were frequently nominated and received positive assessments. Conversely, the less fluent students tended to downplay their answers, to introduce the answer with doubt on themselves ("I am not sure now, but…), or to go silent. These patterns were not established rules but they happened as a result of interactional practices that were subtle like allocation of turns, corrective feedback and evaluative language. These micro-level processes saw English fluency more closely connected with intelligence, professionalism, and academic maturity. Consequently, the language knowledge was directly converted to the symbolic power.

The research also indicates that the English-only ideology is exercised more by normalization and not enforced. The utterances of teachers like the one about having to speak English in university made English a natural and undisputable academic standard. Urdu on the other hand seemed informal, auxiliary or unfit in the production of knowledge that was of a formal nature. Instances where the students started giving explanations in Urdu, such as sir, agar profit maximize karna chahti hai, were stopped and they were told to paraphrase in English. More importantly, conceptual correctness was frequently recognized only when reformulated in English, which shows the mediation of academic legitimacy by language form. This process is an indicator of linguistic gatekeeping: the knowledge was known as such only when it was expressed in English.

At the identity level, the EMI classrooms were strong spaces of positioning. Fluent students amassed linguistic capital and were implicitly being made into model university students. Their authority and self-confidence were supported by the recurrence of words like very articulate or excellent academic language. On the other hand, the linguistic insecurity was internalized by the students who either underwent being corrected publicly or laughed at by peers in case of grammatical errors. Words heard in the course of observation, such as Mujhe concept samajh ata hai, lekin English mein bolne se darr lagta hai, demonstrate the effect of fear of linguistic error that was limiting the participation. With time, there seemed to be stabilization in repeated interactional positioning of classroom identities: assertive speaker, uncomfortable participant, quiet

onlooker. Therefore, EMI influenced not only the speaker, but also the one who has the right to speak.

Notably, coexistence of ideological reproduction and subtle resistance is also mentioned in the findings. Although English was used as the official language in classroom, translanguaging was still used in the peer communication. During group discussions, students tended to employ Urdu in order to negotiate meaning, explain concepts and construct meaning together. These are the whisper zones that were used as cognitive scaffolding processes that maintained understanding and cooperation. But these practices of multilingualism were still informal and of low volume meaning that English still enjoyed explicit institutional power. The awareness of linguistic pressure was also evident in humor and mumbled reproaches like the one about the test of English grammar: Lagta hai English grammar ka exam chal raha hai. These practices imply that learners do not receive ideological norms passively; instead, they debate them in a bid to negotiate them in the confines of the classroom power structures.

One of the key conclusions made by the research is that EMI provides differentiated L2 learning experiences. Extended discourse practice, positive reinforcement, and greater trust of the teacher are the advantages of the fluent students and further enhance the linguistic capital of students. Although, less fluent students have fewer chances of public speaking, more anxiety, and less interactional development. This process of accumulation runs the risk of recreating inequality in the classroom. Importantly, such inequalities are not always the consequence of the purposeful exclusion, but rather a consequence of routine normalized practice that gives greater emphasis on English performance and less emphasis on multilingual meaning-making. Power, therefore, flows indirectly, like within ordinary pedagogies.

The research is significant to critical EMI scholarship as it provides a localized and classroom-based approach based on the context of private higher education of Faisalabad. Instead of basing on the policy documents or interview information, the entirely focus on classroom observation shows how the ideology is put into play in real time through talk, correction, praise, and silence. The results indicate that the language ideologies on a macro-level are only meaningful when analyzed using micro-level interaction. By so doing, the study fills the gap between theoretical debates of language, power, and identity and the realities of EMI classes.

To sum up, EMI classes in privatized universities of Faisalabad are structured linguistic economies where the language of instruction is English, and it serves as academic money. Participation, legitimacy and identity are negotiated by English performance with the outcome of unequal access to visible academic voice. Even though multilingual practices are still held and facilitate learning, they are still on the periphery of formal discourse. It is thus argued in the research that there is a need to pedagogically reflect on how EMI can be utilized to balance academic English development and inclusion practices. By accepting the use of multilingual resources as valid, reconsidering the corrective feedback approach, and providing safer environments to take linguistic risks can alleviate symbolic inequality. Finally, it is important to realize EMI as an ideological and power negotiation location to facilitate more fair second language learning in Pakistani higher education.

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