International Journal of Global Community
Volume IX No. 3 (November) 2026

From Local Repertoires to Academic Registers: A Multilingual Bridging Model for Diverse School Classrooms

Hafiz Muhammad Israr-ul-Haq and Naushaba Haq

Department of English Linguistics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan

Corresponding Author: israrawan1100@gmail.com

Abstract
Multilingual school systems often separate the languages that carry curricular authority from those learners use to understand lessons. This study examined that separation across public and private schools in rural and urban contexts and developed an educational model for connecting familiar repertoires with academic registers. A cross-sectional mixed-methods design combined questionnaires from 600 students and 80 teachers in 15 schools with 24 classroom observations in 12 schools. Urdu was the most frequently reported language of lesson explanation (M = 4.20, SD = 0.80), followed by English (M = 3.50, SD = 0.95), Siraiki (M = 2.10, SD = 0.90), and Punjabi (M = 2.00, SD = 0.88). Local-language use was strongest for individual scaffolding and conceptual clarification and was more visible in rural classrooms. Observations revealed a recurring movement from English curricular cues to Urdu mediation, Siraiki/Punjabi repair, and formal re-expression in Urdu or English. This sequence is synthesized as the Repertoire-to-Register Bridging Model. The model offers a globally relevant framework for planned multilingual pedagogy while recognizing that the descriptive design does not establish learning effects.

Keywords: multilingual pedagogy; language of instruction; classroom translanguaging; educational equity; teacher development

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

Introduction

Across multilingual education systems, the language in which children understand a concept is not always the language in which schools expect them to display knowledge. English often carries international, curricular, and economic value; national languages organize wider public communication; and regional or community languages remain strongest in everyday interaction. This distribution affects participation, access to disciplinary meaning, and the forms of expression that institutions recognize as legitimate. It is therefore an educational problem, not merely a linguistic preference (Ahmad & Zhou, 2022; Ashraf, 2023; Syed & Shah, 2026).

Pakistan offers a particularly revealing case. English is associated with high-status education and mobility, Urdu functions as the national lingua franca, and regional languages such as Siraiki and Punjabi are widely used in homes and communities but have narrower roles in textbooks, writing, and assessment. Policy documents may acknowledge multilingualism while continuing to privilege English and Urdu as routes to educational advancement (Jabeen, 2023; Khan & Zaki, 2022). The resulting hierarchy is enacted inside classrooms whenever teachers must connect English terminology, Urdu explanation, and students' familiar languages.

These connections vary across institutional and geographical contexts. Private schools may present English-medium status as evidence of quality, although actual instruction can depend heavily on Urdu and brief local-language support. Public schools may permit more multilingual interaction, but they also vary in resources, teacher repertoires, and student populations. Recent analysis cautions that categories such as public, private, rural, urban, and English-medium are internally diverse and should not be treated as causal explanations by themselves (Choi & Poudel, 2024; Pervez, 2025). Rural learners may value English strongly while having fewer opportunities to encounter it beyond school, and school language practices may therefore reflect several interacting influences rather than a simple rural deficit (Sharif & Channa, 2022).

Flexible movement among languages has been studied through classroom code-switching and translanguaging. Code-switching research identifies pedagogical, managerial, and interpersonal shifts among socially recognizable languages (Ferguson, 2003). Translanguaging emphasizes how multilingual speakers mobilize an integrated repertoire to make meaning, participate, and learn (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Li, 2018). Both perspectives are necessary here. Teachers and students use their linguistic resources fluidly, yet English, Urdu, Siraiki, and Punjabi retain unequal institutional values and consequences.

Recent evidence shows that multilingual practices can support explanation, examples, attention, affective connection, and access to disciplinary language (Atta, 2024; Syed et al., 2025; Tai, 2024a, 2024b; Wong & Tian, 2025). However, hearing several languages does not automatically create educational equity. Local languages can become temporary tools for oral comprehension while formal writing and evaluation remain controlled by a dominant language. Selective translanguaging may thus widen

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

immediate access without redistributing academic authority (Sah & Kubota, 2022; Sah & Li, 2022, 2024).

Previous work has examined language policy, English-medium education, multilingual pedagogy, and regional-language marginalization, but fewer school studies analyze rural–urban location, public–private sector, subject area, classroom function, and formal academic production within one triangulated design. This study addresses that gap through questionnaires from students and teachers and direct classroom observations. Its novelty is threefold. First, it compares intersecting school contexts without treating them as homogeneous categories. Second, it distinguishes the languages that provide pedagogical access from those that retain authority in writing and assessment. Third, it extends established scholarship on bridging everyday and academic discourse by synthesizing observed cross-linguistic instructional practices into a Repertoire-to-Register Bridging Model that explicitly considers the unequal pedagogical and institutional roles of English, Urdu, and regional languages.

The study asked four questions: (1) Which languages were reported most frequently in teachers' lesson explanations? (2) How did Siraiki/Punjabi use vary across subjects and classroom functions? (3) What descriptive rural–urban and public–private patterns were evident? (4) How did observed language sequences connect familiar-language meaning-making with formal academic expression?

Literature Review

1. Language Hierarchy, Policy, and School Context

Language-in-education policy is enacted through more than an official medium. Textbooks, assessment, teacher proficiency, parental aspirations, and institutional branding all influence which language appears at which pedagogical moment. In Pakistan, English retains symbolic and material power, while Urdu often becomes the practical language through which English curriculum content is orally mediated. Regional languages occupy an ambivalent position: they are central to identity and interaction but remain less visible in formal academic production (Ahmad & Zhou, 2022; Ashraf, 2023; Syed & Shah, 2026).

This nested hierarchy complicates comparisons among schools. Pervez (2025) demonstrates that English-medium private schools cannot be treated as a single type because fee level, locality, resources, leadership, and pupil intake shape practice. Choi and Poudel's (2024) study of under-resourced multilingual schools in Nepal similarly shows that English-medium policy is adapted through local constraints and translanguaging. These findings suggest that sector and location should be interpreted as interacting contexts, not independent causes. The distinction also guards against treating visible English as a direct measure of instructional quality.

Recent Pakistan-based research strengthens this policy–practice interpretation. Teachers at the elementary level report adapting formal English-teaching expectations to

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

learner proficiency and classroom conditions (Imran et al., 2024). Karim and Harwood (2026) identify gaps between intended and enacted ELT pedagogy, while Saleem et al. (2026) show that teachers may rely on translanguaging but conceal it within English-only institutional cultures. Atta (2024) reports broadly favorable student attitudes toward translanguaging alongside concern about excessive first-language dependence. Together, these studies support a planned approach that treats familiar languages as instructional resources while maintaining explicit pathways toward academic Urdu and English.

2. Pedagogical Functions and Movement Toward Academic Registers

Classroom code-switching research distinguishes knowledge construction, classroom organization, and interpersonal relations (Ferguson, 2003). Own-language use may make explanation more efficient, reduce anxiety, and support relationships (Hall & Cook, 2012). Translanguaging extends this functional view by examining how a whole repertoire is coordinated during meaning-making (Li, 2018). Yet planned multilingual pedagogy must do more than allow spontaneous switching: it should connect familiar-language reasoning with the disciplinary language students need for reading, writing, and assessment.

The movement from everyday linguistic resources toward specialized academic discourse has also been examined through classroom mediation and systemic functional linguistics. Gibbons (2003, 2006) conceptualizes bridging as an interactional process through which teachers support learners in moving from context-dependent, everyday expressions toward more specialized academic language, including movement along a spoken–written mode continuum. Similarly, Halliday and Martin (1993) and Schleppegrell (2004) demonstrate that academic registers involve distinctive linguistic and disciplinary demands that require explicit pedagogical support. The Repertoire-to-Register Bridging Model builds on these established perspectives rather than claiming to introduce the concept of linguistic bridging. Its particular contribution is to identify how English curricular terminology, Urdu instructional mediation, Siraiki/Punjabi clarification, and formal academic re-expression are functionally organized within the observed multilingual school contexts. Unlike accounts primarily concerned with movement between everyday and specialized discourse, the present framework additionally foregrounds the unequal institutional authority assigned to different named languages during explanation, participation, and assessed academic production. The proposed stages therefore represent a context-sensitive interpretive framework rather than a universal or experimentally validated developmental sequence.

Recent classroom studies illustrate that connection. Pakistani science teachers reported translanguaging for explanation, elaboration, translation, humour, discipline, and attention (Syed et al., 2025). Tai (2024a, 2024b) shows how multilingual, multimodal, and technological resources can mediate mathematical meaning and reshape student responses into academic expressions. Wong and Tian (2025) likewise found that planned translanguaging can support both content and language development when

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

teachers design transitions deliberately. These studies shift attention from whether a local language is used to how its use advances participation and disciplinary expression.

A critical perspective remains necessary. Sah and Li (2022) show that multilingual interaction can preserve unequal language hierarchies, and their later work argues that selective translanguaging may exclude learners whose languages do not match the resources privileged in a classroom (Sah & Li, 2024). The educational issue is therefore one of access and recognition. A language may help a learner understand but still be denied space in authorized knowledge production. Formal local-language curricula can offer stronger institutional recognition, as Al-Akmam and Adela's (2026) study of Sundanese local-content education demonstrates. Where full curricular inclusion is not immediately available, teachers still need structured bridges between familiar repertoires and formal academic registers.

3. Analytical Proposition

The literature supports an analytical proposition rather than a causal hypothesis: multilingual instruction is most educationally productive when movement among languages is purposeful, visible, and connected to academic re-expression. The present study examines whether the reported frequencies and observed sequences support that proposition. It also investigates a potential pedagogical-necessity–institutional-authority gap: local languages may become necessary for access while Urdu and English retain authority over evaluated performance.

Method

1. Design and Setting

The study used a cross-sectional, descriptive mixed-methods design. Questionnaire data provided item-level estimates of reported language frequency, and non-participant observations documented how teachers and students moved among languages during ordinary lessons. The strands were integrated during interpretation: observation patterns were used to explain, qualify, or complicate the numerical results rather than to generate a separate inferential dataset.

The research was conducted in Tehsil Yazman, District Bahawalpur, Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The setting includes rural and urban/peri-urban communities in which English, Urdu, Siraiki, and Punjabi perform different educational and social roles. Fifteen public and private primary and elementary schools participated. The sample was non-probability and geographically bounded; therefore, the findings describe the participating schools and do not statistically represent Southern Punjab or Pakistan.

2. Participants and Data Sources

Participants were 600 students in Grades 4–8 and 80 teachers. Students were approximately 9–16 years old; approximately 51% were female and 49% male. About

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

52% attended urban/peri-urban schools and 48% rural schools, while 58% attended public schools and 42% private schools. The percentages are rounded values retained in the study record and describe respondents, not the exact number of schools in every cross-classified category. Siraiki was the most frequently reported home language, followed by Punjabi; approximately 7% of students reported regular multilingual home use.

Among teachers, approximately 61% held a bachelor's degree and 39% held a master's degree or higher qualification. Mean teaching experience was approximately 14.5 years. Twenty-four lessons were observed in 12 schools, with two lessons per school. The observation set was selected to include variation in location, sector, and subject and was used for analytic comparison rather than population estimation.

Table 1 *Sample and Data-Collection Profile*

Component	Category or indicator	Reported value
Students	Total	600
	Female / male	≈51% / ≈49%
	Urban/peri-urban / rural	≈52% / ≈48%
	Public / private	≈58% / ≈42%
	Grades	4–8
Teachers	Total	80
	Bachelor's / master's or above	≈61% / ≈39%
	Mean teaching experience	≈14.5 years
Schools	Questionnaire sites	15
Observations	Schools / lessons	12 / 24

Note. Percentages are rounded and should not be converted into exact subgroup counts. Urban and peri-urban respondents were combined for the location comparison.

3. Instruments

Student and teacher questionnaires collected background information and frequency ratings on five-point scales ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). Students rated Urdu, English, Siraiki, and Punjabi in teachers' lesson explanations and rated combined Siraiki/Punjabi use in Social Studies, Islamic Studies, Urdu, English, Science, and Mathematics. Teachers rated four distinct uses of local languages: individual scaffolding, concept clarification, rapport and humour, and classroom management. These were interpreted as separate instructional functions, not as a single psychometric scale; no composite reliability claim is therefore made.

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

The observation schedule recorded languages used for terminology, extended explanation, comprehension checks, individual assistance, peer interaction, classroom management, humour, written work, and formal response. Field notes also documented language order. The observations did not quantify every utterance. Their purpose was to identify recurrent configurations and triangulate item-level questionnaire patterns.

For the lesson-level descriptive analysis, each observation was classified according to the identifiable stages of instructional language movement. A complete sequence required all four stages within a connected instructional episode, a partial sequence involved two or three identifiable stages, and an absent sequence indicated that no qualifying progression could be established. Each lesson was assigned to one mutually exclusive category. The classification summarized instructional patterns rather than individual utterance frequencies and was not used for inferential analysis.

4. Procedure, Analysis, and Ethics

Questionnaires were administered in participating schools, and observations were conducted during regular lessons. Means and standard deviations summarized language, subject, and function items. The rural–urban comparison used approximate subgroup means retained in the study record. Because subgroup dispersion estimates were unavailable, no confidence interval, significance test, or causal interpretation is reported. Sector-specific means and a complete school-by-location cross-tabulation were not retained; public–private findings are therefore qualitative and based on convergent questionnaire descriptions and observations.

Observation notes were organized around language sequence, subject, instructional/interpersonal function, and formal versus informal academic activity. Recurrent patterns were compared across urban private, urban public, rural private, and rural public configurations. The four configurations summarize tendencies within the observed lessons and are not rankings of all schools in each category.

The research formed part of an academic thesis under departmental supervision. School access was authorized, participation was voluntary, and consent and assent procedures appropriate to school-based research were followed before data collection. Reporting removed school and participant identifiers. Only aggregate questionnaire results and non-identifying observational patterns are presented.

Results and Discussion

1. Instructional Language Hierarchy and Urdu Mediation

Student ratings showed a clear hierarchy in lesson explanation. Urdu received the highest rating ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 0.80$), followed by English ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 0.95$), Siraiki ($M = 2.10$, $SD = 0.90$), and Punjabi ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.88$; Figure 1). Urdu was therefore the most regular oral instructional resource across the sample even though English remained prominent. The similar aggregate means for Siraiki and Punjabi do not indicate

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

identical patterns within every school.

Observations explained the ordering. Teachers frequently presented textbook wording or specialist terms in English, developed the main oral explanation in Urdu, and used Siraiki or Punjabi when further clarification or a locally grounded example was needed. Students sometimes reasoned with peers in a local language before responding in Urdu or English. The result corresponds with Pakistan's nested language hierarchy: English carries curricular prestige, Urdu mediates everyday institutional access, and local languages enter responsively (Ashraf, 2023; Syed & Shah, 2026). It also demonstrates why an official English-medium label cannot describe enacted pedagogy adequately (Karim & Harwood, 2026; Pervez, 2025).

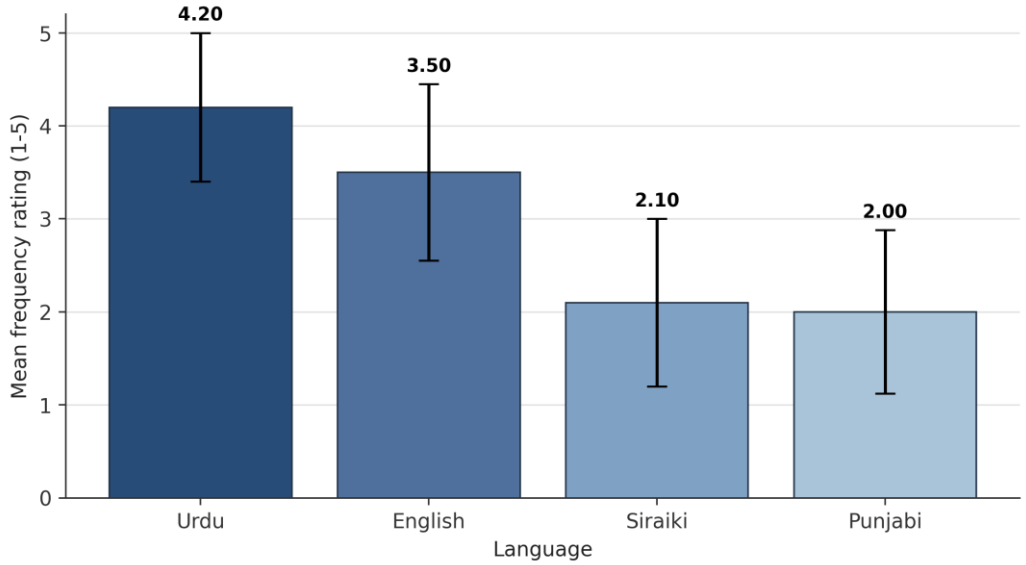

Figure 1 *Mean Reported Frequency of Languages in Teachers' Lesson Explanations*

Note. Error bars show ±1 *SD*. Ratings used a five-point scale (1 = never, 5 = always); *N* = 600 students.

2. Subject, Function, and Responsive Multilingualism

Combined Siraiki/Punjabi use varied by subject (Figure 2A). It was highest in Social Studies ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 0.95$) and Islamic Studies ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.98$), followed by Urdu ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 0.90$), English ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 0.88$), Science ($M = 1.90$, $SD = 0.85$), and Mathematics ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 0.80$). Social Studies and Islamic Studies offered more opportunities to connect curricular ideas with local places, agriculture, moral experience, and community narratives. Mathematics and Science more consistently retained English terminology and Urdu explanation. The lower technical-subject means should not be interpreted as evidence that local languages cannot express technical concepts; they show the institutional specialization of languages within the sampled schools.

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

Teacher ratings showed that relatively infrequent general use could still have substantial educational value (Figure 2B). Individual scaffolding for learners requiring additional support received the highest rating ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.80$), followed by concept clarification ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 0.85$), rapport and humour ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 0.88$), and classroom management ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.90$). All were above the scale midpoint. Observations confirmed that local languages commonly appeared in short, targeted interventions after a whole-class Urdu or English explanation had not produced an adequate response.

This pattern is best described as responsive multilingualism: teachers activated local resources when a learner, concept, or relationship required repair. The functions closely resemble those identified in code-switching research (Ferguson, 2003; Gibbons, 2003, 2006; Hall & Cook, 2012) and recent Pakistani evidence on science teaching (Syed et al., 2025). Responsive practice can widen participation and reduce interpersonal distance, but it remains fragile if it depends entirely on individual discretion or must be hidden under English-only rules (Saleem et al., 2026). The educational challenge is to convert an improvised response into a planned transition toward disciplinary language.

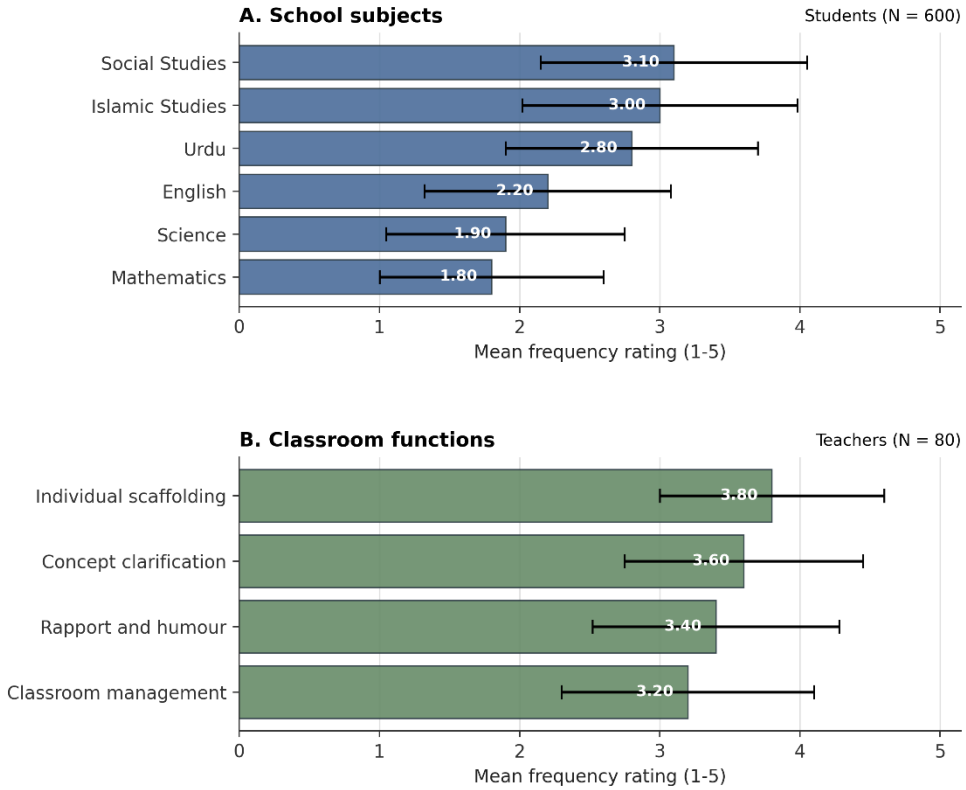

Figure 2 *Reported Siraiki/Punjabi Use Across Subjects and Classroom Functions*
Note. Panel A presents student ratings ($N = 600$); Panel B presents teacher ratings ($N =$

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

80). Error bars show ±1 *SD*. Items were rated independently on a five-point scale and do not form a composite measure.

3. Rural–Urban and Public–Private Contexts

Rural respondents reported more frequent Siraiki/Punjabi explanation than urban/peri-urban respondents. The approximate mean was 3.10 in rural schools and 2.30 in urban/peri-urban schools, a descriptive difference of 0.80 scale points (Table 2). Because subgroup standard deviations were not retained, this is not evidence of statistical significance or a causal location effect. Observations supported its direction: rural teachers and learners more often shared local-language repertoires, and movement into Siraiki or Punjabi appeared relatively routine during clarification, peer assistance, and informal management.

The public–private result could not be estimated numerically. In the observed lessons, private schools displayed more visible English, especially in technical subjects and institutional presentation, while Urdu remained central to extended explanation. Public schools generally showed more regular alternation among Urdu, local languages, and English terms. Practices nevertheless overlapped. Some urban public classrooms used local languages flexibly, and rural private schools did not simply reproduce either urban private or rural public patterns.

Crossing location and sector produced four contextual configurations (Table 3). This intersectional description is more informative than a single sector comparison and aligns with evidence that English-medium schools are internally diverse (Pervez, 2025). The pattern also resembles under-resourced EMI contexts in which local repertoires compensate for gaps between policy and classroom feasibility (Choi & Poudel, 2024). It must not be converted into a hierarchy of school quality: the study measured frequency and function, not achievement or English proficiency.

Table 2: *Descriptive Rural–Urban Comparison of Local-Language Explanation*

Location	Approximate mean	Difference from urban/peri-urban
Urban/peri-urban	2.30	—
Rural	3.10	+0.80

Note. Means refer to reported Siraiki/Punjabi explanation on a five-point frequency scale. Subgroup standard deviations were not retained; no inferential claim is made.

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

Table 3: *Qualitative Language-Use Configurations by Location and School Sector*

Configuration	Observed instructional tendency	Role of Siraiki/Punjabi
Urban private	Strong English/Urdu orientation; English visible in technical subjects	Brief clarification, humour, and peer interaction
Urban public	Urdu dominant; English terminology present; teacher-level variation	Context-dependent explanation and interaction
Rural private	English symbolically prominent; Urdu used for extended explanation	More visible oral scaffolding than in observed urban private lessons
Rural public	Flexible movement among Urdu, local languages, and English terms	Routine clarification, peer support, and relationship work

Note. The configurations summarize qualitative instructional patterns across 12 observed schools and 24 lessons, with two lessons observed per school. In this illustrative distribution, urban private schools contributed eight lessons from four schools, urban public schools contributed six lessons from three schools, rural private schools contributed four lessons from two schools, and rural public schools contributed six lessons from three schools. The configurations represent descriptive instructional tendencies rather than statistically representative estimates. Differences in configuration sample sizes should be considered when interpreting the qualitative comparisons.

4.The Pedagogical-Necessity–Institutional-Authority Gap

The classroom observations revealed a recurrent four-stage instructional sequence involving an English curricular cue, extended explanation in Urdu, clarification or peer negotiation through Siraiki/Punjabi, and formal academic re-expression in Urdu or English. In the lesson-level classification of 24 observations, the complete four-stage sequence occurred in 10 lessons (41.7%), partial sequences involving two or three identifiable stages occurred in 11 lessons (45.8%), and no identifiable bridging sequence was recorded in 3 lessons (12.5%). These descriptive frequencies illustrate how the proposed sequence may vary across classroom contexts rather than representing a uniform instructional practice.

Two hypothetical classroom scenarios further illustrate the sequence. In a Science lesson, a teacher introduces an English scientific term, explains its meaning in Urdu, draws upon a familiar Siraiki/Punjabi example when students experience difficulty, and subsequently guides learners toward an academically appropriate response in Urdu or English. In a Social Studies lesson, a teacher introduces the concept of irrigation using

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

English textbook terminology, explains the concept in Urdu, encourages discussion of familiar agricultural practices in Siraiki/Punjabi, and then asks students to summarize the concept in formal Urdu or English. Together, they demonstrate the proposed connection between familiar-language meaning-making and formal academic expression.

This creates a pedagogical-necessity–institutional-authority gap. Siraiki and Punjabi helped learners reach curricular meaning, yet Urdu and English generally retained authority over notebooks, board work, expected answers, and assessment. The distinction refines a simple translanguaging-versus-monolingualism debate. Multilingual talk may improve access to participation without ensuring that all repertoires receive equal curricular recognition (Sah & Li, 2022, 2024). Formal local-language curriculum can narrow this gap by moving a regional language from optional support into planned learning, as shown in the Sundanese case studied by Al-Akmam and Adela (2026).

Figure 3 synthesizes the observed sequence as the Repertoire-to-Register Bridging Model. Stage 1 introduces the curriculum cue in the language of the text or expected terminology. Stage 2 mediates it through a widely shared institutional language. Stage 3 repairs meaning through familiar-language explanation, peer reasoning, or interpersonal alignment. Stage 4 supports re-expression in the academic language required for formal participation. Comprehension monitoring can return the class to an earlier stage, so the model is iterative rather than rigidly linear.

The model is an analytically derived pedagogical framework, not a tested intervention. Its global relevance lies in the functional roles rather than the particular language names. English may be replaced by another international or curricular language, Urdu by a national lingua franca, and Siraiki/Punjabi by community languages. This makes the sequence potentially useful in multilingual settings across South Asia and in other systems where children's familiar repertoires differ from the languages of textbooks and assessment.

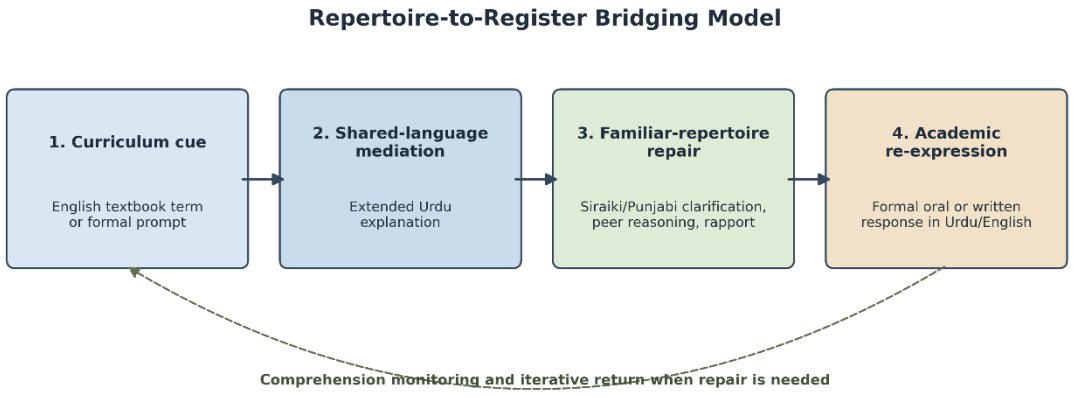

Figure 3 *Repertoire-to-Register Bridging Model*

Note. The model synthesizes a recurrent observational sequence. It is an interpretive and

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

pedagogical framework, not a causal pathway or an experimentally validated intervention.

5. Implications for Teaching, Curriculum, and School Policy

The first implication is that language policy should distinguish the long-term goal of developing academic Urdu and English from the immediate need to make new content understandable. Strategic familiar-language use need not reduce exposure to high-value languages when it is followed by explicit academic re-expression. Schools should therefore replace punitive local-language rules with guidance specifying when and how multilingual support connects to curricular outcomes.

Second, teacher development should focus on routines rather than a general endorsement of translanguaging. Teachers can elicit prior knowledge in a familiar language, compare everyday and disciplinary terms, use paired peer explanation, jointly construct an academic formulation, and require a final oral or written response in the target register. These steps operationalize the bridging model and reduce the risk that local-language talk becomes disconnected from assessed learning. Recent work on planned translanguaging similarly emphasizes intentional design for content and language development (Tai, 2024a, 2024b; Wong & Tian, 2025).

Third, implementation should be subject-sensitive. Social Studies and Islamic Studies provide immediate opportunities for locally grounded examples and narratives. Science and Mathematics require concise multilingual glossaries, visual supports, teacher notes, and structured comparisons among familiar explanations, Urdu formulations, and English technical terms. Context-responsive materials can strengthen learners' connection with content; Ecca's (2025) findings on locally grounded teaching materials provide a relevant parallel. Materials should be piloted rather than assuming that literal translation alone resolves conceptual difficulty.

Fourth, schools should monitor enacted language practice instead of relying on medium-of-instruction labels. A classroom language map can record the languages used in terminology, explanation, questioning, peer work, writing, and assessment. This would show whether an English-medium claim is supported by meaningful instruction, whether Urdu is functioning as an unacknowledged bridge, and whether all learner groups can access familiar-language support. It can also help leaders plan professional learning without stigmatizing teachers for practices that already sustain comprehension.

Finally, adaptation must remain inclusive. A teacher's preferred local language may not be shared by every learner. The bridging model therefore requires repertoire mapping, multiple peer configurations, multimodal explanation, and sensitivity to minority-language students. Planned multilingualism should expand access to academic registers without making one community language a new gatekeeper.

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

6. Limitations and Future Research

The study was conducted in one tehsil and cannot be generalized statistically to Southern Punjab or Pakistan. The sample did not retain the school-level cross-tabulations required for multilevel location-by-sector analysis. Rural–urban subgroup means were approximate and lacked dispersion estimates, while sector-specific means were unavailable. The context comparisons therefore generate bounded educational propositions rather than statistically tested effects.

Most quantitative results were self-reported and may reflect memory, social desirability, or institutional language expectations. Twenty-four observations provided triangulation but were not a complete utterance-level corpus. The study did not measure proficiency, concept learning, or achievement and cannot establish that local-language use caused better outcomes. The Repertoire-to-Register Bridging Model is consequently a theoretically informed synthesis that requires prospective validation.

Future research should retain exact classroom and school identifiers, use stratified sampling, and analyze learners nested within schools. Recorded classroom discourse could test the frequency and order of bridging stages, while intervention studies could compare planned bridging with usual practice using subject-specific learning and language outcomes. Research should also examine which learners benefit, whether minority repertoires are represented, and how teachers adapt the model when they do not speak every language in the classroom.

Although the observed schools and lessons were classified by location and sector, the relatively small and unequal configuration sample sizes limit the strength of comparisons between school types. These contextual descriptions should therefore be interpreted as exploratory qualitative patterns rather than representative or causal estimates.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The participating classrooms were multilingual but institutionally unequal. Urdu was the main language of oral explanation, English retained curricular prestige, and Siraiki/Punjabi became most visible when teachers clarified difficult content, assisted individual learners, built relationships, or connected lessons with local experience. Rural classrooms reported more local-language explanation, while qualitative sector patterns suggested stronger English/Urdu orientations in private schools and more flexible multilingual interaction in public schools. These tendencies overlapped and should not be treated as universal school-type effects.

The study's central contribution is the identification of a pedagogical-necessity–institutional-authority gap and its synthesis into the Repertoire-to-Register Bridging Model. Familiar languages helped learners reach curriculum content, but Urdu and

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

English generally controlled formal display and evaluation. The model responds by making the transition explicit: introduce the curriculum cue, mediate it through a shared language, repair meaning through familiar repertoires, and support re-expression in the required academic register.

Schools are recommended to recognize strategic local-language use, train teachers in planned bridging routines, develop subject-specific multilingual supports, and document actual language practices across oral and written activities. These recommendations preserve access to Urdu and English while treating learners' existing repertoires as educational resources. Because the model has not yet been tested experimentally, its next step should be classroom piloting with learning outcomes, discourse evidence, and equity indicators.***

Acknowledgements
The authors thank the participating schools, teachers, and students for their cooperation.

Declarations
Ethics and consent: The study formed part of an academic thesis under departmental supervision. School access was authorized, participation was voluntary, and consent and assent procedures appropriate to school-based research were followed. No school or participant is identified.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding: The research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability: Deidentified supporting materials may be requested from the corresponding author, subject to institutional requirements and participant confidentiality.

Author contributions: Both authors contributed to the conception, analysis, interpretation, drafting, critical revision, and approval of the manuscript.

Declaration of Generative AI Use
During manuscript preparation, the authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) to assist with language editing, manuscript organization, preparation of the Indonesian abstract, refinement of figures, and articulation of the Repertoire-to-Register Bridging Model from the authors' data and interpretations. Generative AI was not used to collect, fabricate, or alter empirical data or numerical results. The authors critically reviewed and revised all AI-assisted content, verified the statistics, interpretations, and references, and accept full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of the manuscript.

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

References

Ahmad, N., & Zhou, G. (2022). Inclusion or exclusion: Language ideology and language-in-education policies in Pakistan. *European Journal of Language Policy, 14*(2), 181–203. https://doi.org/10.3828/ejlp.2022.11

Al-Akmam, M., & Adela, D. (2026). Pelestarian budaya Sunda melalui kurikulum muatan lokal di sekolah dasar [Preserving Sundanese culture through the local-content curriculum in elementary schools]. *Scholaria: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 16*(2), 204–215. https://doi.org/10.24246/j.js.2026.v16.i2.p204-215

Ashraf, H. (2023). The ambivalent role of Urdu and English in multilingual Pakistan: A Bourdieusian study. *Language Policy, 22*, 25–48. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-022-09623-6

Atta, A. (2024). Prospective prognostication: An examination of translanguaging in Pakistan's educational landscape through the lens of teachers' and students' perceptions. *Language Teaching Research*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688241259640

Choi, T.-H., & Poudel, P. P. (2024). Enactment of English medium instruction in under-resourced educational contexts: A case of multilingual public secondary schools in Nepal. *System, 121*, 103223. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103223

Creese, A., & Blackledge, A. (2010). Translanguaging in the bilingual classroom: A pedagogy for learning and teaching? *The Modern Language Journal, 94*(1), 103–115. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2009.00986.x

Ecca, S. (2025). Desain modul ajar berbasis kearifan lokal untuk memperkuat karakter pelajar Pancasila [Designing local-wisdom-based teaching modules to strengthen the Pancasila student profile]. *Scholaria: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 15*(1), 23–32. https://doi.org/10.24246/j.js.2025.v15.i1.p23-32

Ferguson, G. (2003). Classroom code-switching in post-colonial contexts: Functions, attitudes and policies. *AILA Review, 16*, 38–51. https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.16.05fer

Gibbons, P. (2003). Mediating language learning: Teacher interactions with ESL students in a content-based classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 37*(2), 247–273. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588504

Gibbons, P. (2006). *Bridging discourses in the ESL classroom: Students, teachers and researchers*. Continuum.

Hall, G., & Cook, G. (2012). Own-language use in language teaching and learning. *Language Teaching, 45*(3), 271–308. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444812000067

Halliday, M. A. K., & Martin, J. R. (1993). *Writing science: Literacy and discursive power*. Falmer Press.

Imran, M., Almusharraf, N., Abdellatif, M. S., & Ghaffar, A. (2024). Teachers'

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

perspectives on effective English language teaching practices at the elementary level: A phenomenological study. *Heliyon, 10*(8), e29175. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e29175

Jabeen, S. (2023). Language planning and policy, and the medium of instruction in multilingual Pakistan: A void to be filled. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 20*(2), 522–539. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718 .2020.1860064

Karim, S., & Harwood, N. (2026). Alignment between intended and enacted pedagogies: A study of ELT curriculum innovation implementation in Pakistan. *System, 136*, 103872. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2025.103872

Khan, M. A., & Zaki, S. (2022). Corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis of Pakistan's language education policy documents: What are the existing language ideologies? *SAGE Open, 12*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221121805

Li, W. (2018). Translanguaging as a practical theory of language. *Applied Linguistics, 39*(1), 9–30. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amx039

Pervez, S. (2025). Problematising school classifications in Pakistan: The case of English-medium private schools. *International Journal of Multilingualism, 22*(3), 1179–1201. https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2024.2347946

Sah, P. K., & Kubota, R. (2022). Towards critical translanguaging: A review of literature on English as a medium of instruction in South Asia's school education. *Asian Englishes, 24*(2), 132–146. https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2022.2056796

Sah, P. K., & Li, G. (2022). Translanguaging or unequal languaging? Unfolding the plurilingual discourse of English-medium instruction policy in Nepal's public schools. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 25*(6), 2075–2094. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2020.1849011

Sah, P. K., & Li, G. (2024). Toward linguistic justice and inclusion for multilingual learners: Implications of selective translanguaging in English-medium instruction classrooms. *Learning and Instruction, 92*, 101904. https://doi.org/10.1016 /j.learninstruc.2024.101904

Saleem, T., Azam, S., & Saleem, A. (2026). 'We use it, but we hide it': Translanguaging and teacher emotion in Pakistani English-only classrooms. *Language Teaching Research*. Advance online publication. https://doi.org/10.1177/ 13621688261444231

Schleppegrell, M. J. (2004). *The language of schooling: A functional linguistics perspective*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Sharif, S., & Channa, L. A. (2022). Lived narratives: Female investment and identity negotiation in learning English in rural Pakistan. *Linguistics and Education, 72*, 101119. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2022.101119

Syed, H., & Shah, W. A. (2026). Dissecting the dominant framings of multilingualism in education in Pakistan: A southern perspective. *Language in Society, 55*(2), 304–327. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404525000016

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®

Syed, H., Waseer, N., & Kumar, A. (2025). Investigating science teachers' translanguaging practices and ideologies in Pakistan: A mixed methods study. *Bilingual Research Journal, 48*(3), 278–299. https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2025.2509712

Tai, K. W. H. (2024a). Classroom interactional competence in an English-medium-instruction mathematics classroom: A creation of a technology-mediated translanguaging space. *Learning and Instruction, 90*, 101849. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2023.101849

Tai, K. W. H. (2024b). Shaping student responses into academic expressions: Analysing an English-medium instruction history classroom from a translanguaging perspective. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 27*(4), 550–580. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2023.2232089

Wong, C. Y. C., & Tian, Z. (2025). Maximizing students' content and language development: The pedagogical potential of translanguaging in a Chinese immersion setting. *Learning and Instruction, 95*, 102023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2024.102023

RIKSAWAN INSTITUTE®