

A Comparative Analysis of the Scholastic Achievement of the Students of Government and Private Secondary Schools in English and Urdu Prose

*Farah Deeba*¹
*Kahkashan Anwar*²

Abstract:

This paper is based on a study conducted in 2007 in order to have an analysis of the scholastic achievement of the students of government and private schools in the subject of English and Urdu prose in Tehsil Arifwala (Punjab, Pakistan). The total sample for the study was 280 which was randomly selected. An achievement test was developed for the students. The test was based on multiple choice items, words meanings, matching columns, fill in the blanks and true false statements. The collected data were analyzed by using the statistical techniques of arithmetic means, standard deviation, percentage, z test and co-efficient of correlation. The results of the study showed that overall performance of private schools was better than that of students of government schools. The performance of female students was better in English prose than that of male students. The performance of male students was better in Urdu prose than that of female students.

Introduction:

Language is a system of finite arbitrary symbols combined according to rules of grammar for the purpose of communication. Individuals use language sounds, gestures and other symbols to represent objects, concepts, emotions ideas and thoughts (www.wikipedia.org/wiki/language).

Out of 4,000 to 5,000 living languages, English is the most widely used as a first and second language all over the world (Broughton, 1980).

In countries where English is not an official language, it still has a significant role to play. It is generally taken as an important school subject and it is also necessary to pass an examination in English to enter a university. It is also the language of certain courses at a university or at least of a large percentage of the students' textbooks (Richards, 1995).

Pakistan is a multilingual country. The language of domains of power government, corporate sector, media, education are English and Urdu (www.apnaorg.com).

¹ Lecturer, Deptt of Education, B.Z. University, Multan.

² Ex-student, M.A. Education, Deptt of Education, B.Z. University, Multan.

Schools in Pakistan have either Urdu or English as the medium of instruction. Even in the Urdu medium schools, English is taught as a language from class one up to graduation level. Most university education, especially in science, is imparted in English (www.zackvision.com).

As mentioned above, English is a compulsory subject in National Curriculum from primary level to university level in Pakistan while Urdu is compulsory upto intermediate level. Therefore, it is natural that they have gained great importance in our education system. But the achievement level and performance of students in these subjects is generally poor at secondary level. It is mainly due to poor academic and professional quality of teachers of these subjects (A.I.O.U., 2002).

There are other factors also affecting students' achievement in the subjects of English and Urdu at secondary level. Among these factors following are the most important as described by Mahboob (2002):

1. Parental education, their occupation and guidance.
2. Teacher's guidance
3. Excessive use of mother tongue
4. Lack of motivation
5. Incompetent teachers
6. Problems in examination system
7. Language background of students
8. Unsuitable curriculum

The teaching of any language consists of four aspects:

- Teaching of prose
- Teaching of poetry
- Teaching of essay
- Teaching of grammar

Among these parts, prose is a necessary part of any language and has been defined as "a language not arranged in verse form" (Shahid, 2001).

The word prose comes from the Latin word *prosa*, which means straightforward. Prose writing is usually adopted for the description of facts or the discussion of whatever one's thought is incorporated in free flowing speech (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/prose).

According to Shahid (2002), teaching of prose is the intensive study of language, structures and vocabulary. Its main objective is to develop the language ability of the students. This ability makes the child to understand and use language without any problem.

Shahid, (2002) has further indicated the following objectives of teaching prose:

1. To enable the students to understand the text and grasp its meanings.
2. To enable the students to understand the text by silent reading.
3. To enrich their active and passive vocabulary.
4. To enable the students to enjoy reading and writing.
5. To develop the imagination power of students.

Although in our country, prose and poetry of both languages i.e. English and Urdu are taught but real objectives of teaching of English and Urdu still are not achieved (www.answer.com).

Basically, there are three objectives of teaching English in the secondary schools as mentioned by Singh (2005).

1. To teach students to hear and understand the spoken language.
2. To teach them to understand what they read.
3. To teach them to write it

Basic objectives of teaching Urdu are the same as in English because teaching of each language has these very basic objectives. However, these may vary in case to case in different contexts. For instance, objectives of teachings first language and national language may be different than the objectives of teaching second language. So keeping in view the status of Urdu in Pakistan, Hussain (1976) outlines the following objectives of teaching Urdu at secondary level.

1. To enable the students to read and write Urdu in correct way.
2. Develop interest among students of reading Urdu literature.
3. Increase students' Urdu vocabulary.
4. Improve reading and writing skills.
5. Improve student's Urdu grammar

It is generally noted that the objectives of teaching of both the languages are not fully achieved in Pakistan. There are many causes of un-achieving the above mentioned objectives of teaching English and Urdu like little understanding of curricular objectives, inexperienced teachers, defective teaching methods and lack of supervision (www.saridjournal.org/html).

Both English and Urdu languages have importance in our educational institutions but as indicated earlier, achievement of students in both languages is poor. Students do not perform equally better in these languages as they perform good in English they do not perform good in Urdu or vice versa.

The teaching of all components of a language like comprehension, essays etc are equally important but it may be difficult to include all those aspects in one piece of research. So in this situation, the present study was delimited to prose only, and it investigated comparative achievement of students of government and private secondary schools in English and Urdu prose.

The Present Study:

The present study aimed at the comparative analysis of the scholastic achievement of the students of government and private Secondary Schools in English and Urdu prose.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study were:

1. To compare as the whole achievement of students of government and private secondary schools in English and Urdu prose.
2. To compare the achievement of male and female students in English and Urdu prose.
3. To compare the achievement of government and private female students in English and Urdu prose.

4. To compare the achievement of government and private male student in English and Urdu prose.
5. To compare the achievement of private female students in English and Urdu prose.
6. To compare the achievement of male students in English and Urdu prose.

Delimitation of the Study:

The present study was delimited to:

1. Both male and female high schools.
2. Ten secondary school in private and ten secondary schools in government sector.
3. Five male high schools of government and five female high schools of government.
4. Five private male high schools and five private female high schools.

Procedure of the Study:

All the students of 10th class in government and private secondary schools for girls and boys in Tehsil Arifwala were taken as the population. Out of the whole population, two hundred and eighty students were selected through simple random sampling technique. The details of the sample are as under:

Ten boys secondary schools and ten girls secondary schools were selected from the list issued by District Education Officer, Pakpatan. In view of the availability and proportion of the respondents, 167 government and 113 private school students were selected as sample. The number of students from government and private high schools in different sample were as under:

Government male	=	74
Government female	=	93
Private male	=	65
Private female	=	48
Total sample	=	280

An achievement test of English and Urdu having multiple choice items words meanings matching columns, true false and fill in the blanks were constructed. The test was based on understanding of English and Urdu. The items were based on the textbooks of English and Urdu for 9th class prescribed by the Punjab Textbook Board. There were 50 items in each test of both languages. The test was got validated by the experts available at Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan and it was improved in view of their suggestions. The tests were personally administered by the researchers.

The data were analyzed by using the statistical techniques of arithmetic mean, standard deviation, z test and co-efficient of correlation.

The following findings and results were drawn from the study.

1. The combined mean of sample of government and private school students in English is 36.60 and in Urdu is 37.18 and combined standard deviation (S.D) in English is 7.77 and in Urdu is 5.48 respectively as shown in table No.1. which indicates the overall performance.

Table No.1
Overall Performance of Sample Students

Total (N)	Subject	$\bar{X} Com$	S.D. Comb
280	English	36.60	7.77
	Urdu	37.18	5.48

2. In comparison of sample students' achievement in English prose, the critical value (c.v) (4.68) is greater than the table value (t.v.) (1.96). It means that the difference of achievement between the male and female sample students in English prose is statistically significant. Moreover, the difference of mean shows the better performance of female sample students respectively as shown in table No. 2.

Table No.2
Comparison of Sample Students' Achievement in English Prose (Male and Female)

Category	Subject	Mean	S.D.	C.V.
Male	English Prose	35.84	7.53	4.68
Female		37.34	7.88	

t.v. = 1.96
c.v. = 4.68

3. In comparison of sample students' achievement in Urdu prose the c.v. (1.92) is less than the t.v. (1.96). It means that the difference of achievement between the male and female sample students in Urdu prose is statistically insignificant. However, the difference of means shows the better performance of male sample students respectively as shown in table No. 3.

Table No.3
Comparison of Sample Students' Achievement in Urdu Prose (Male and Female)

Category	Subject	Mean	S.D.	C.V.
Male	Urdu Prose	37.44	4.76	1.92
Female		36.92	6.13	

t.v. = 1.96
c.v. = 1.92

4. In comparison of achievement of private and government female sample students in English prose the c.v. (10.75) is greater than the t.v. (1.96). It means that the difference of achievement of private female students and government female students in English is statistically significant. Moreover, the difference of mean indicates the better performance of private female sample students respectively as shown in table No.4.

Table No.4
Comparison of Achievement of Private and Government Female Sample Students in English Prose

Category	N	Mean	S.D.	C.V.
Private Female	48	40.75	8.01	10.75
Govt. Female	93	35.59	7.38	

t.v. = 1.96

c.v. = 10.75

5. In comparison of achievement of private and government female sample students in Urdu prose the c.v. (7.81) is greater than the t.v. (1.96). It means that the difference of achievement between Government female and private female sample students in Urdu prose is statistically significant. Moreover, the difference of means indicates the better performance of private female sample students respectively as shown in table No. 5.

Table No.5
Comparison of Achievement of Private and Government Female Sample Students in Urdu Prose

Category	N	Mean	S.D.	C.V.
Govt. Female	93	35.73	4.93	7.81
Private Female	48	39.25	7.47	

t.v. = 1.96

c.v. = 7.81

6. In comparison of achievement of private and government male sample students the c.v. (3.20) is greater than the t.v. (1.96). It means that the difference of achievement between private male and government male sample students in English prose is statistically significant. Moreover, the difference of means indicates the better performance of private male sample students respectively as show in table No.6.

Table No.6
Comparison of Achievement of Private and Government Male Sample Students

Category	N	Mean	S.D.	C.V.
Private male	65	36.61	7.02	

Govt. male	74	35.17	8.00	3.20
t.v.	=	1.96		
c.v.	=	3.20		

7. In comparison of achievement of private and government male sample students in Urdu prose the c.v. (10.00) is greater than the t.v. (1.96). It means that the difference of achievement between government male and private male sample students in Urdu prose is statistically significant. Moreover, the difference of means indicates the better performance of private male sample students respectively as shown in table No.7.

Table No.7
Comparison of Achievement of Private and Government Male Sample Students in Urdu Prose

Category	N	Mean	S.D.	C.V.
Govt. Male	74	35.82	4.46	10.00
Private Male	65	39.29	4.48	
t.v.	=	1.96		
c.v.	=	10.00		

8. In comparison of achievement of female sample students in English and Urdu prose there is a slight difference between the mean performance of female sample students in English and Urdu prose. However, mean indicates the better performance of female sample students in English prose than Urdu and standard deviation indicates the greater spread of score in English prose as shown in table No.8.

Table No.8
Comparison of Achievement of Female Sample Students in English and Urdu Prose

Category	N	Urdu		English	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Female	141	36.92	6.13	37.34	7.96

9. In comparison of achievement of male sample students in English and Urdu prose, there is a slight difference between the mean performance of male sample students in English and Urdu prose. However, mean indicates the better performance of male sample students in Urdu prose than English and standard deviation indicates the greater spread of score in English prose as shown in table No.9.

Table No.9
Comparison of Achievement of Male Sample Students in English and Urdu Prose

Category	N	Urdu	English
----------	---	------	---------

		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Male	139	37.44	4.78	37.44	4.78

10. Through co-efficient of correlation, it was found that there was weak relationship of female sample students in English and Urdu prose and weak relationship of male sample students in English and Urdu prose.

Conclusions and Discussion:

Apparently, the performance of female sample students was better in English prose than that of male sample students. The performance of male sample students was better in Urdu prose than that of female sample students. The performance of students of private schools was better in English prose than that of government school students. The performance of students of private schools was better in Urdu prose than that of government school students.

The results of the study did not show very significant indicator to determine the achievement. For instance, generally, people believe that the private school students perform well in English and Urdu because they have better facilities like qualified and trained teachers individual attention, up to date curriculum and educated parents. These factors affect their achievement. Specially, they have better facilities and atmosphere for English teaching and learning like direct method of teaching English. But in some cases, situation is totally different and some government schools, student perform very well. On the whole, however, the study showed the better performance of private school students. But the study also indicated that the performance of students of remote areas and villages like Tehsil Arifwala was poor than Urban areas. The results also suggested that if some facilities provided to these areas, the students may perform well.

References

Allama Iqbal Open University, (2002), English Compulsory of B.Ed., Islamabad: Allama Iqbal Open University.

Broughton, G. (1980), Teaching English as a Foreign Language, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Hussain, S.S. (1976), Urdu Aur Uske Tadreesi Tariqy, Karachi: Kifayat Academy.

Mahboob, A. (2002), No English, No Future: Language Learning Policy in Pakistan, New York: Nova Science.

Richards, C.J. (1995), The Content of Language Teaching, Cambridge: University of Cambridge

Shahid, S.M. (2001), Teaching of English, Lahore: Majeed Book Depot.

Shahid, S.M. (2002), Teaching of English, Lahore: Z.A. Printers.

Singh, Y.K. Dr. (2005), Teaching of English, New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.

www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/language (Retrieved on 20.02.2007)

www.apnaorg.com.html (Retrieved on 07.04.2007)

www.zackrision.comhtml (Retrieved on 08.09.2007)

www.answer.com.html (Retrieved on 14.04.2007)

www.saridjournal.org (Retrieved on 18.10.2007)