



**FORMAN  
CHRISTIAN  
COLLEGE**  
(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

**The Perceived Impact of Language Barriers on the Academic Performance of  
Ethnic Minority Students in FCCU**

Name: Fizza Daud

Roll no.: 251-694529

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Thesis Supervisor: Tehniyat Fatima

Department of Sociology

Forman Christian College (A Chartered University)

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## **Abstract**

Language is a significant medium to acquire knowledge and ample literature offers how it has been creating hurdles for students to show their potential in an academic environment. The help of cultural capital theory provides a new approach to look at how opportunities and social mobility get limited due to this language barrier. Qualitative research provides a nuanced understanding that language barrier has a direct relation with academic performance and, in addition, it causes social and emotional challenges, responsible for underperforming in assessments. For the research, 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with the ethnic minority students of Forman Christian College (A Chartered University) to be aware of their experiences and perceptions of this language problem. Through the use of thematic analysis, data extends the available information on this issue of language by highlighting its direct and indirect (social and psychological) impacts, affecting their grades and seizing opportunities both within and outside the educational environment. In Pakistan, where English is widely used as an official language, neglecting ground-based reality such as cultural diversity and lack of language-trained teachers, this research hopes to be insightful for the policymakers and scholarly research on one of the prevalent issues of Pakistani students, being refrained from academic success.

*Keywords:* Language barrier, social mobility, ethnic minority students

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## Introduction

Pakistan is a multilingual country in which Urdu is the national language and the mother tongue of only 7.75% of the entire population. Each province in Pakistan has its languages and identities but Urdu is mostly understood by the people (Yasir, Zahid, & Ijaz, 2021, p. 3).

Pakistan's 1973 constitution declares that Urdu would be the country's official language and that the necessary preparations will be made over the next fifteen years for Urdu to be used for other reasons as well as for official purposes (Article 251).

In 2008, English became the official language of instruction in Pakistani schools from grades 1 through 12, but there are still many issues with its implementation because of a lack of qualified teachers, attitudes on the part of students, sociocultural differences, ethnic conflicts, and political concerns (Punjab Education and English Language Initiative [PEELI], 2013). This domination of the English language creates issues related to other ethnic languages, identity, nation, region, religion, power, and personal achievement (Ashraf et Al., 2021).

Research has highlighted that foreign students encounter difficulties comprehending instructors, taking notes in lectures, expressing and sharing their knowledge and insights, and asking questions during lectures (Nazir, 2022). Students belonging to ethnic minorities are in the same boat as international students because of a similar situation. Language is the crucial tool that students need for comprehending and interacting with the immediate environment.

The prestige associated with the English Language and its usage in the educational setting creates a negative impact on the academic performances of students due to the bad language competency among students (Pirzada et al., 2021). The lack of English language skills makes students hesitate to be part of any language-related conversation (Bangash & Zahoor-ul-Haq, 2021).

Qualitative research is skilled at capturing the subjective viewpoints of language obstacles, which can be subjective experiences (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). It assists in revealing the distinct difficulties that each person faces as well as their individualized perceptions of those difficulties. Language is flexible and based on the situation.

### **Research Objectives**

The following are the research objectives of this study:

1. To explore how language barriers affect academic performance among ethnic minority students.
2. To understand the perceptions and experiences of ethnic minority students regarding language-related issues in academic environments.

### **Research Questions**

Research Questions of this are as follows:

1. How do language barriers impact the level of academic performance among ethnic minority students?
2. What are the perceptions and experiences of ethnic minority students related to language problems within academic environments?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is significant due to its association with language which has a pivotal role in communication. The dominance of the English Language in Pakistan, especially in the education sector impacts the academic performances of students. Due to their poor English proficiency, students face trouble acquiring knowledge and showing their full potential (Ashraf, Turner, & Laar, 2021).

This study aims to create a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the challenges that University students face due to the language barrier. The goal is to be able to better comprehend the language barriers, due to the different ethnic languages of students, in acquiring education. It is only possible to address this issue by looking at the different personal perceptions and experiences of language barriers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Bourdieu's social reproduction thesis (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) has focused on the relationship between education, family, and social class. Bourdieu argues that education lasts the reproduction of social inequality and social exclusion. Cultural capital was used as the main theory for this study and possesses central importance in the process of social reproduction because cultural capital inequalities reflect social class inequalities (as cited in Tzanakis, 2011, p. 77).

According to Bourdieu (1977), cultural capital, which is responsible for social mobility in society, consists of a dominant culture and the grip on language that helps in acquiring knowledge and power. Education is an effective tool that is developed by many to upgrade their social standing in society. People should be familiar with the language in which the education is being given, otherwise, they will be deprived of attaining Education and achieving Social mobility (as cited in Sullivan, 2001, p. 894).

How much cultural capital someone possesses can be ascertained by the fact that in which class he/she is. Class possession of cultural capital varies in a society. Class and cultural capital have positive relationships, as the level of the class increases, the cultural capital also increases, in other words, the higher the level of class, the higher the number of cultural capital (as cited in Sullivan, 2001, p. 894).

Bourdieu argues the reproduction of these inequalities is facilitated in schools where teachers' pedagogic actions enhance the cultural capital of the dominant class by rewarding students who have the capital and by penalizing others who do not. Thus, the school becomes a central agent of social exclusion and reproduction (as cited in Tzanakis, 2011).

Teachers in the education system assume that students have skills, such as linguistics etc to comprehend what is being taught to them. There are only a few who can comprehend completely the lectures delivered to them by instructors. This leads to problems in teaching, especially in universities, where students, who lack the required skills to understand lectures, hide their inability to understand by being vague rather than admitting (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990/1977, p. 114, as cited in Sullivan, 2001, p. 894).

Moreover, the education system is designed in such a way that serves the interest of the dominant cultural class by reinforcing inequalities and rendering legitimacy to the cultural advantages enjoyed by the upper class of society. Education renders various justifications in favor of maintaining inequality in a society, while also emphasizing the idea that certain cultural attributes are inherently valuable.

Primarily, education, which should have been the tool for lower classes to utilize for social mobility, rather solidifies the social status quo by upholding existing power structures and norms, which are manipulated in such a way to benefit the upper class (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1974, as cited in Sullivan, 2001, p. 894).



## Literature Review

Pakistan is a multilingual country in which Urdu is the national language, also the mother tongue of only 7.75% of the entire population but this language is mostly understood in the country (Yasir et Al., 2021, p. 3). In the Constitution of Pakistan: “The national language of Pakistan is Urdu, and provisions must be established for its utilization in official and other capacities within fifteen years from the commencing day” (1973, Article 251, para. 1).

Additionally, “English may be employed for official purposes until arrangements are made for its substitution with Urdu, subject to the aforementioned clause” (Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, Article 251, para. 2).

The globalized English language has become the official language of Pakistan, despite low literacy rates and a sizable section of the populace not knowing how to speak this language affect the society (Ashraf et al., 2016). The linguistic hierarchy in post-colonial regions such as Pakistan shows the primacy of English, with regional languages at the bottom and Urdu, the national language, at the top. Language commodification and social class divisions are strengthened by this hierarchy (Anwar & Ali, 2021).

Each province in Pakistan has its own identities and languages spoken by the majority. Urdu is the national language mainly used in educational settings, on the other hand, English is used in many government offices and education. This shift in the use of language causes issues related to language, identity, nation, region, religion, power, and personal achievement (Ashraf et al., 2021).

Anbreena (2015) explores how learning English as a foreign language shapes the identities of Pakistani students. It indicates that identity is dynamic and can evolve. Educators

and policymakers develop policies that promote students' identities and encourage them to see themselves as faithful Muslims, proud Pakistanis, and positive participants in the global community. Language education policy causes many problems in Pakistan such as disparities between Urdu- and English-medium schools, a lack of sustainable strategies, and the absence of a balanced national language policy. Without solving the aforementioned problems, efforts to promote English literacy may worsen educational disparities and overall illiteracy rates (Shamim, 2008).

Some studies claim that learning English helps with academic and professional development, while others contend that it impedes advancement and clarity (Haidar & Fang, 2019). Varied school systems cause unequal access to English in Pakistani schools, despite the fact it's necessary for education and professions (Haidar, 2017). Elite school kids benefit from English, but the rest of the school pupils may struggle because of insufficient English teaching (Haidar & Fang, 2019).

Academic factors have a strong influence on learning English at the secondary level. Teachers mainly use English in the classroom but rarely interact with students in English outside the classroom, which hinders their language progress. Social factors also play an important role in hindering English learning at the secondary level (Bangash & Zahoor-ul-Haq, 2021).

A quantitative correlational study evaluates academic achievement by CGPA scores and language competency through an English language test and finds a strong positive relationship between academic achievement and language competency, indicating that language is a major factor in raising students' academic success at Mehran University (Sadia, 2021).

Another study done by Bangash & Zahoor-ul-Haq shows an English Language performance among students. This research shows a significant difference in Private school

students who outperformed public School students, especially in listening and speaking. However, many students hesitate to participate in listening and speaking tests (2021).

According to the National Education Policy of Pakistan, "People in Pakistan are linked to each other by the use of Urdu language as it is the national language of Pakistan. At the same time, English is an international language and its knowledge is equally important to compete in the global world. Local languages exist in all the areas of Pakistan in addition to the national language Urdu. The students must get adequate knowledge of the languages to compete nationally and internationally" (p. 57) (2009, as cited in Yasir, Zahid, & Ijaz, 2021, p. 3).

Furthermore, the policy states, "There are some ground realities which need to be addressed to take sufficient steps to solve the problem. There is a marginal difference between the Cambridge-based elite schools (Providing a Cambridge-based System) and the government schools. Curriculum, medium of teaching, salaries Cambridge-based, etc. are entirely different in Cambridge-based Examination System Schools as compared to the public schools. The rich children get education in the costly schools offering Cambridge-based education and the public schools are filled with poor as they cannot afford to pay hefty fees. The English language competence of the students studying in private schools is far superior to the students of public sector schools" (National Education Policy of Pakistan, 2009, p. 82) (as cited in Yasir, Zahid, & Ijaz, 2021, p. 3).

Having addressed the issue by the National Education Policy, English still prevails in the education system. The literature on language planning and policy highlights the struggle between elites and the rest of the population (Anwar & Ali, 2021). The idea that English is a Sophisticated language and the desire to engage on a national and international scale motivate the emphasis on English in education and society. Those with access to high-quality education

gain more from this emphasis on English, which leads to further increases in the divide between the powerful and less powerful elements of society (Ashraf, 2015).

Khalid (2016) examines the attitudes of Pakistani students in his research in which students have a positive attitude towards learning English mainly for practical reasons, such as gaining access to international markets. But they value Urdu as a symbol of national integration. In general, Pakistani students are open to learning English as an additional language without degrading their mother tongue. Haidar & Fang recommend promoting regional tongues like Urdu and minimizing inequalities in English instruction to provide every student with equal chances (2019). Moreover, Ashraf, Turner, & Laar (2021) suggest that policy practices for the English language in education need careful planning, considering local conditions, to get effective results in multilingual societies.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The study uses a qualitative research methodology taking semi-structured interviews for data collection from respondents. Semi-structured interviews, guided by an interview guide (Appendix D) are chosen due to their ability to gather detailed information and make a thorough understanding of the topic (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). These interviews offer a platform to delve deeply into the experiences and perspectives of ethnic minority students regarding language barriers and their impact on academic performance.

Furthermore, the semi-structured interview format enables the researcher to not only capture verbal responses but also observe and record participants' non-verbal reactions, which can offer valuable insights into their experiences with language barriers (Olenik & Adeoye-Olatunde, 2020).

Interviews were used as a primary data-gathering method to collect information from participants about their practices, beliefs, or opinions. These are helpful to gather information on past or present behaviors or experiences (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

The research aligns with the interpretive paradigm approach, as it emphasizes the understanding of individuals' personal views and experiences (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). The study will provide insight into how ethnic university students perceive and navigate language barriers. This methodological framework prioritizes the voices and perspectives of the participants to understand their experiences comprehensively.

## Operational Definitions

### *Language Barrier*

The following are the aspects that turn a language into a communication barrier:

1. “The listener does not know the speaker’s language.”
2. “The reader does not know the language of a written text.”
3. “The difference of culture between the teacher and student or the reader of the text would cause hurdles in the way of understanding and communication” (Faisal, Raza, & Ishaq, 2022).

### *Academic Performances*

Student's marks obtained in exams determine the academic performance of university students (Shyiramunda & Bavugirije, 2020).

### *Ethnic Minority*

According to the United Nations Human Rights Office (n.d.), “An ethnic, religious or linguistic minority is any group of persons which constitutes less than half of the population in the entire territory of a State whose members share common characteristics of culture, religion or language, or a combination of any of these.”

For this study, ethnic minorities are defined as non-Punjabi students belonging to other provinces of the country.

### **Access and Sampling**

The population for this study consisted of undergraduate students belonging to ethnic minorities. Each participant met the inclusion criteria to participate in this study:

1. The participant is currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree program.
2. The participants belong to ethnic minorities.
3. The participant is a student of FCCU, Lahore.

To recruit participants from the University, a "Snowball Sampling" technique will be utilized. This method involves initial participants with the characteristics of Ethnic minorities leading to individuals with similar backgrounds and experiences to form stages. Each nominated individual then nominates more, continuing until each stage has enough participants and Saturation is reached, indicating when further participants add little new insight (Goodman, 1961). As many interviews as possible were conducted with the specified population with a tentative target of achieving 15-25 interviews within four months.

To access the ethnic minority students at Forman Christian College University Lahore, I reached the relevant population through Social media pages of the ethnic societies of the university, and later the selected participant helped me to reach out to the rest of the population of my study.

An information sheet (see Appendix A) was shared with the participants to explain the purpose of the research so an informed choice could be made. By doing so, every respondent will receive the same description of the study and the same explanation about why and how he or she was selected as a respondent. This will ensure consistency across interviews (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

## **Findings**

The findings of this research are based on the perceptions and experiences of ethnic minority students, currently enrolled in Forman Christian College University. For this qualitative study, 15 interviews were conducted and the sociodemographic information of participants is provided in Table 1. With the help of thematic analysis, the findings suggest five major themes:

1. Direct impacts of language barrier on academic performance
2. Indirect impacts of language barrier on academic performance
3. Experiences related to language barrier
4. Perception related to language barrier
5. Suggestions to reduce the language barrier



**Table 1**  
*Sociodemographic information of participants*

	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Household Income</b>	<b>Year of Study</b>	<b>Overall CGPA</b>	<b>Provincial belonging</b>	<b>Regional Belonging</b>
1.	22	Male	Other: Chitrali	Between 100,000 and 200,000	Senior	3.590	KPK	Urban
2.	21	Male	Pashtun	Between 100,000 and 200,000	Junior	3.27	Balochistan	Urban
3.	23	Male	Pashtun	Above 200,000	Junior	2.8	Balochistan	Urban
4.	26	Male	Pashtun	Between 50,000 and 100,000	Senior	2.7	KPK	Rural
5.	20	Female	Brahvi	Prefer not to say	Freshman	-	Balochistan	Urban
6.	19	Female	Brahvi	Prefer not to say	Freshman	-	Balochistan	Urban
7.	22	Male	Pashtun	Between 50,000 and 100,000	Junior	2.7	Balochistan	Rural
8.	20	Female	Saraiki	Between 100,000 and 200,000	Sophomore	3.3	Punjab	Rural
9.	22	Female	Saraiki	Above 200,000	Senior	3.1	Punjab	Rural
10.	23	Male	Pashtun	Between 100,000 and 200,000	Junior	3.3	Balochistan	Rural
11.	21	Female	Gilgit	Prefer not to say	Freshman	3.3	Gilgit Baltistan	Rural
12.	20	Female	Saraiki	Between 100,000 and 200,000	Sophomore	3.5	Punjab	Rural
13.	20	Male	Pashtun	Between 100,000 and 200,000	Freshman	-	KPK	Rural
14.	22	Male	Pashtun	Between 50,000	Senior	3.2	Balochistan	Rural

				and 100,000				
15.	23	Male	Chitrali	Between 100,000 and 200,000	Senior	2.8	KPK	Rural

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### **Direct Impacts of language barriers on Academic performance**

Students from ethnic minorities reported that their inability to speak English resulted in many challenges such as being unable to answer questions, fear of participating in discussions, securing low grades in Presentations, and struggling with both English and Urdu pronunciations. All challenges have a detrimental influence on the student's academic performance. Both Presentation and Participation contain a good percentage of overall grades of a course that hinder ethnic minority students from scoring well grades.

#### ***Speaking***

In their previous schooling background, where English was not used as a medium of instruction, students face challenges, at this last stage of their education, due to an unfamiliar language environment, and knowing this language plays a vital role in being academically successful.

“However, after coming to university I faced some difficulties due to the standard here being speaking in English, giving presentations in English, and class participation, which is important to get marks, all of it is done using English, so I had some difficulty” (P11).

Almost every student mentioned their difficulties in academia due to the language barrier in the starting semesters. Their adaptability to the new language environment took time and their focus shifted to learning the academic language.

“In my first semester, there were a lot of presentations that went badly due to my English not being fluent so because of that my grades also came down” (P11).

They found themselves in a shell when presentations were assigned, coming out of this shell was only possible by giving a Presentation. One of the students used the “Cramming” (P14) method to get through this assessment but as they faced unexpected questions, they found themselves in trouble. A student said this did not represent his lack of knowledge and preparation for the topic but the obligation of using only the English language made it hard for him to convey his thoughts.

“After my presentation, I was unable to understand what they (students) asked me hence I could not answer back and tell them something” (P8).

This speaking hurdle continued for the participants in the position where they were supposed to ask questions from teachers and students. Here, their process of learning was affected by not telling the teachers where they could not understand the lecture.

“One of the sirs, only speaks in English, so often it happens that most of my questions never make it out of my mind because I am unable to understand how to speak out about those questions. Because it is hard to speak and understand, there is a language problem” (P14).

Students’ inability to speak in English discouraged them from participating in activities inside and outside the classroom. Most of the students agreed on how their low language eloquence refrained them from sharing their opinions, asking questions, and telling the teacher about their confusion. Ultimately, their grades were affected due to non-participation. Their non-participation was not limited to academics but to their extra-curricular activities as well. These activities known for building confidence, teamwork abilities, and so on in students require specific language speakers; these opportunities lessen for ethnic minority students.

“I had this fear that if I became CR, then how would I talk to ma'am? So due to this thought, I never even tried to propel” (P7).

Similarly, one of the participants said: “She did not talk to the president of the society, who was an international student, speaking in English. He might have considered me an arrogant person, but in reality, I wanted to talk but due to this hesitation that was overcome by language inadequacy”(P). Another problem relevant to the language they faced was accent. Their lack of interaction with the English language, particularly in the speaking module, made it difficult for them to produce some of the sounds that were absent in their mother tongue.

“Above all, there is this issue of accent. In our tongue, our people do not speak the alphabet ‘F’, instead they use ‘P’, so this created a lot of complexities as well because, from the start, you have been speaking the word wrong, for example, if I say ‘Pizza’ instead of ‘Fizza’, so it's wrong” (P7).

### ***Reading***

Many students mentioned stressfully about the problem of reading faced by them, as they were well aware of how much reading plays a role in achieving high academic performance. They argued the main sources of knowledge were books and the internet, which could be accessed only if they could understand their language. They viewed the importance of the English language in their academia as “All the books, journals, articles [are] written in English and almost every book [is] translated into English” (P). Some students mentioned how they sought help through the Internet in their studies.

“Many online courses are taught in English. So, that is why my academic performance gets more affected” (P5).

They showed their enthusiasm for performing well, taking assistance in every possible way required of them. More hurdles waited to stop them from excelling as much as the students

with good language proficiency.

“Sometimes the words [are] difficult to read, we [have to] highlight them. And then we [have to] find their meaning from the dictionary or mobile, etc. This [takes] more time for us to read the book” (P9).

Given assignments, which involved reading books and journals, took a lot of time to prepare for the students. Moreover, these assignments were supposed to be submitted in a specific period and their late submission had an adverse impact on the grades. Similarly, Students faced problems with writing assignments. One student shared her experience of how she started working on the assignments as they were given but some students, with a good grip of language, took one day to complete it.

### ***Writing***

All the participants told their command on one or two modules of language out of four, and one of them said: “I don't have good English writing and speaking skills. But I have good English listening skills” (P1). The writing was the most common one among students with low command of it. They moved towards alternative tools to write assignments to avoid the deduction in marks.

“Well, there are language-related challenges, of course, but writing assignments, thesis, and research papers in English is a rather difficult task and even writing 400-500 words on your own is a big challenge without using chat. GPT” (P8).

One of the respondents mentioned how feeble writing costs them not just to convey their thoughts but to transfer the knowledge, collected through their experiences and studying.

### ***Listening***

Out of all the language modules, this one was the essential one for gaining knowledge.

Language barriers made it harder for students to comprehend the subject-specific jargon, regardless of the effort of the instructors to explain them as simply as possible.

“To understand physics, first a student [needs] to learn Urdu and sometimes they [have] to learn English and then they [can] understand Physics” (P2).

Another statement of a student showed his frustration that deprived him of the opportunities of learning: “We [can't] understand things properly, we [are] unable to understand so we [decide] to leave it and [move] forward. So just like that, so many points [get] missed as well” (P14).

## **Indirect Impacts of Language Barrier on Academic Performance**

### ***Emotional Impacts***

Language barriers also indirectly impacted students' academic performance beyond the direct challenges such as communication and comprehension difficulties. Students reported their psychological challenges due to the language barrier, affecting their performance in assessment-based activities and academic development. Many students shared the emotional impacts that blurred their ability to express themselves, share knowledge, and perform well. These barriers made it difficult for students to participate in class discussions.

“I had good ideas, studied the given material, and knew the history of the topic but I could not participate in class discussions due to the hesitation.” (P1)

There was a common issue of fear of presenting among participants, one stated it like this: “In my first four semesters, I couldn't give good presentations due to my lower language skills. I was afraid of presentations. I could speak but not in a good way” (P1). Some highlighted

that this non-participation and bad presentation skills were based on the fear of Judgment for their bad eloquence.

“Due to these insecurities (developed through the language) I [don’t] participate in class activities anymore because I think my professors, or my colleagues [are] judging me, or they [will] not give me marks for it. If I [miss] pronouncing anything or if I [say] anything wrong in Urdu too; these [are] the issues that are being faced” (P15).

This language barrier impacted far beyond the assessment activities, students shared fraught self-esteem consequences on socializing and mental health.

“I [can’t] socialize because my insecurities increase due to the lack of language eloquence. I [am] getting more and more insecure, and all of these things are affecting my mental health too” (P15).

They found themselves “alienated” (P12) in the unusual speaking environment and having felt like misfit their emotional capacity made it difficult to concentrate on studies.

“In this environment, I [need] to speak more English, and due to the language barrier, my confidence level [decreases] due to which I [cannot] focus on my studies” (P7).

### ***Social Impacts***

There was a social constraint due to the language barrier, limiting students’ interaction with diverse ethnic communities and thus affecting their academic success. Many students noted their inclination towards peers belonging to the same ethnic groups.

“I feel like, since I [am] Saraiki, only they [attract] me, and if you talk about me then, 95 percent of my friends [are] Saraiki. We [engage] mostly with those people, and our

interests [are] towards those people mostly. I [have] very few Punjabi friends, and they [are] hardly 5 percent” (P14).

This hindered their knowledge about other ethnic students and limited their interaction in the classroom due to the lesser presence of these groups. One student mentioned how her priority was “to fit in” (P12) with her classmates, while “excelling in education” (P12) was not her preference.

“I [don’t] have any friends so even if I [need] any help in my studies to whom I ask? If any difficulty or confusion [happens] we [are] supposed to take friends' help” (P15).

Feelings of inability to socialize with students and teachers due to the language barrier prevent ethnic minority students from participating in extracurricular activities. Thus, these activities were mostly taken up by the students who possessed good language skills. Regarding this one of the students stated: “They (possess good language skills) [are] given better positions such as CRs and TA (Class representatives and Teacher’s assistants) as they [are] more confident and then [get] more appreciated. Conversely, we [avoid] all these activities due to the language barrier (P15).

## **Experiences related to language Problems**

### **Language Transitions**

Students shifted their focus from the consequences to their past experiences that were responsible for the construction of the language barrier. They told how having different past experiences and language learning environments produced inadequate language skills. Their shared experiences provided a nuanced understanding of their multilingualism and constant switching between languages within the academic environment. As they moved from their



hometowns, their journey to learn new languages started for their “survival” (P4). Some students said that both outside and inside the classroom the same local language (Pashto) was used, while other students had the converse experience. For all the participants, their interaction with the academic language English happened after getting admission into university.

“My mother tongue is Khowar, and Urdu and English are taught in schools and then I learned Pashto after going to Peshawar. I am a multilingual person due to speaking four languages and I have a strong grip on no language” (P1).

Participants mentioned they “improved both Urdu and English languages” (P3), as they had been communicating in their local languages since childhood. Their teachers did not use the subject-specific language which hindered their language-learning ability.

“I studied at one of the few best schools in Chitral. The teachers did not use the language of the subject they were teaching. They used Khawar, in both English and Urdu subjects. We learned those two languages but not too much” (P1).

One of the major problems developed due to multilingualism was the lack of vocabulary. The lesser the interaction with language, the lesser the memorization of its words and pronunciation. This led to the expressing problem, mentioned below in one of the participants’ remarks:

“We [have] a lot of ideas to share, but we always [find] it difficult to express them. Because we [don't] have the words to express our ideas” (P9).

Due to their lack of command of academic languages, students faced cognitive load issues while listening to instructors. On account of the cognitive load, they could not comprehend and take notes of what was taught in the class. They showed their disappointment

because they could not exceed their knowledge after coming to the best universities in their country.

“I [convert] what the teacher [says] into Khawar which takes time. I [convert] sentences into English in my mind and a student with good language proficiency in the class [speaks] before me. Mostly, I [know] better answers to the questions asked by teachers than the other students but I lost my chance due to this language barrier” (P1).

So far, the multilingual aspect of students stopped them from showing their potential but one of the participants pointed to her personality change.

“In an academic environment, my social life [is] really bad due to the language barriers. I [can’t] socialize which [has] turned me into an introverted person. It [is] really hard to build communication skills” (P15).

### ***Limited language learning opportunities***

Students shared the stem factors of their lack of language proficiency. All responsible factors for creating language barriers started in their hometowns. Both their intra-regional and inter-regional mobility were influenced by the lack of quality educational facilities in their underdeveloped hometowns. The education they attained in the past did not help them to learn the necessary language skills due to the absence of academic language instruction.

“I [face] difficulty with both Urdu and English. Students, including me, who [come] from the northern areas of Pakistan generally [face] this problem due to inaccessibility to quality education” (P1).

A respondent, belonging to the Pashtoon ethnic group, raised concerns about his parents’ practices of not sending their children to school at an early age. The early age of a child, crucial to learning a language, was spent in a Pashto-speaking environment, provided at home and then in school teachers also delivered their lectures in the Pashto.

“A seven or eight-year-old child learned the basics of all subjects in the local language till the fifth class. This kind of environment [was] not good for me, to learn a language, who spoke Pashto in the streets and at home. In one class, where only alphabets [are] taught, you [can not] make me able to learn this language” (P2).

Having mentioned their imperfect pronunciation, students disclosed their reasons for it. A major reason was the teachers, back in their hometown, who belonged to the same ethnic group, showed their imprecision in language. Students “imitated” (P3) their teachers and developed the same mistakes in their articulation. Likewise, “cramming” (P14) introduced another major experience of their lives that enabled them to enhance their language skills. Students mentioned the importance of learning academic languages for their education, particularly the English language that had been used in universities and would be “demanded later while applying in the job market” (P12). They showed an interest in learning this language, simultaneously pointing to the expensiveness of it.

“The university offered me an IAP course (Intensive English Academic Preparation) and set a condition to learn English to enrol in the university. So, I spent ample money on it before enrolling” (P7).

### ***Role of instructors***

Teachers played a significant role in addressing and developing the language barrier of students. Students mentioned in the interviews the negative attitude of teachers which contributed to their poor academic performance. Teachers' choice of instruction reflected their attitudes. Their multilingual instruction in class was helpful for the students to comprehend the lecture and it demonstrated their awareness of students' language-related problems.

“I am from the political science department, in which teachers didn't discourage us but appreciated our participation regardless of the language we used. They encourage us to use both English and Urdu to make our points in any discussion” (P4).

On the other hand, some teachers strictly follow the instructions given by the administration to use only English in the classrooms. Students described such practices of teachers as unsupportive.

“In other general courses, especially English, they asked us to speak only in English. This was very difficult for us to understand and communicate” (P4).

All the participants raised their concerns, sharing their experiences that their teacher's assessment was solely based on language proficiency, neglecting their subject-based knowledge. This made it difficult for ethnic minority students to perform well and caused them to lag behind the students with better language skills.

“Language skills, which [is] an edge for a few students, impress the teachers. Teachers [relate] our hard work and knowledge on the subject with the language that affects our performance” (P1).

While following the administrators’ instructions to maintain a monolingual classroom environment was problematic, discriminating against students based on language proficiency had a significant impact on both academic performance and mental health. Students experienced this language-based discrimination almost in every class.

“There [are] a few instructors who [are] for no reason against or not very nice to those students who [are] not very good at English. Yes, it happens that teachers do pick and choose between students. Teachers [are] not nice to us and give favour to those students over us who [are] good at the English language” (P10).

### ***Coping strategies***

Students adopted various coping strategies to overcome language barriers so that they performed well academically. They shared how they needed to take individual steps without depending on instructors. When asked for the reason, they explained that at the university level,

teachers' roles were restricted to delivering lectures on the topic, not worrying about students' challenges and poor grades. A few students turned to self-taught language learning.

“I [work] on my weak points and face language-related challenges. As I [have] already told you, I learned from my mistakes, after being trolled and being told about my mistakes by the students” (P3).

As students mentioned, their past experiences were limited to academic languages, which caused inadequate language skills. Similarly, increasing the interaction with friends in English was beneficial for overcoming hesitation and improving language skills. This was a common coping strategy that students adopted with their friends from the same ethnicity.

“I [have] worked on my English speaking skills. In my early semesters, I was completely mute but now I [am] better. Due to friends, I overcame this problem by speaking in the English language without the fear of being judged but in the class, we [don't] have friends so I [feel] hesitant” (P1).

Another common strategy used by students is to shift their entertainment to the English language. They were aware that the more they interacted with language, the more learning of that language would happen.

“To improve language skills, I [watch] English movies, documentaries, and newspapers which [will] also help to develop a vast vocabulary for the students” (P2).

Students sought help in learning languages in all the given ways such as via social media, online lectures, and language centres available at their university.

“I also joined the writing centre. Because I [want] to improve myself as I [am] still lacking especially in the speaking part as speaking is important. There [should be] language courses and a centre” (P9).

## **Perceptions Related to Language Problems**

### ***International language***

Having faced bad academic performances, emotional and social challenges, and unpleasant experiences of their past students came out with their perceptions regarding the language and barrier of communication it created. They called it an international language that made it important for them to reach out to worldwide opportunities in the “globalized world” (P3).

“English [is] an international language due to which it influences everything. No matter where you [go], English [is] spoken everywhere, be it offices, academia, etc” (P6).

Their experiences made them realize how opportunities inside and outside the academic environment were grounded in English language skills. They mentioned the “language proficiency exams such as GRE, IELTS, TOFEL, etc to go abroad for further education” (P11), and good grades for the scholarships were required for which they must have enhanced their language skills.

“Corporate jobs [consider] English-speaking people good and other jobs as well. If a boy [knows] and [can] speak in English, then he [can] progress otherwise he [cannot]” (P7).

### ***Social status***

These opportunities, given based on language, were responsible for changing their social class. Students shared the given social status by the society to the English language, observable everywhere. They clearly stated how students with good language skills were treated respectfully and considered well-behaved and knowledgeable.

“Due to these language proficiencies, students [are] judged. Students who [have] good English skills mean they [hold] a different status” (P1).

Due to this given social status, they (ethnic minority students) were neglected which diminished their confidence, involvement in any activities, and class participation. For them, the

hierarchy created due to the social status associated with language was prominent. Already, unequal opportunities to learn the language in the past and later being discriminated against further provided them an uneven playing field.

“I [think] those students [have] more confidence who [are] proficient in the English language more because our society and education system [are] set up in such a way that the English language [is] everything so on that basis” (P15).

### **Suggestions to reduce language barriers**

#### ***Structural changes***

Students shared their suggestions for structural changes so that all the ethnic students accessed quality education. These changes were considered a necessity to address this language barrier. Their different suggestions created a point of debate about which approach to favour to cope with the language challenge. Some students advocated the monolingual and one curriculum all over the country.

“I [will] not say that the language of different cultures [should be] added to our curriculum. I [do not] support that idea because that would be an extra burden on the student. The curriculum [should be] converted into one, English, language” (P13).

Conversely, some students advocated adding multiple languages to make it easier for the students like them whose minimum interaction with academic languages at early ages made it difficult to propel their academic performance. In other words, their support was that teaching and books used their local languages.

“If teachers [teach] students Physics in Pashto directly then it [can] be understood easily. If we [teach] a Saraiki student in their language then they [will] learn only Physics” (P2).

There was a suggestion on which every participant agreed to provide access to quality education to all the students. They mentioned the differences in the education system, one belonged to the elite class, other belonged to the lower and middle classes. They proposed the

availability of education, given to the elite class, should have been made sure for all ethnic students by the government.

“Another thing that a government [should] do [is] to extend the access of these schools (Beaconhouse schools) to all social classes because as of now it [is] only limited to the elite and ruling class” (P8).

### *Non-structural changes*

All the above structural plans needed time, so after asking to mention the quick step to take. They answered that the teachers' compensation would be an immediate help to them. They added teachers should have understood their language problems “who come from Balochistan, Gilgit, and KPK backgrounds” (P1) and provided compensation either in terms of marks, extending deadlines for the assignment, and lenient towards the usage of language.

“I [feel] like students who [are] weak in English [should be] provided with a comfort zone by teachers so they [can] express their opinions as well. Because they [keep] their valid points to themselves out of fear of speaking in English” (P14).



## Discussion

Ethnic minority students, in the findings section of this study, mention that language plays a main role in their academic performance. Having a weak grip on the English language results in poor performance in all four modules which are writing, reading, listening, and speaking. All these skills are required on the part of students to have good proficiency for completing various tasks given by professors, based on which grades are awarded, hence determining academic performance.

Language has been proven a barrier to learning (Pokhrel & Gautam, 2021) and causing problems of “poor performance and non-attendance” (Grubb, 1974, p. 55). Many types of research conducted all over the world propose that students who are raised in a linguist environment where students attain education in a second (English) language cause adverse effects on their capabilities, freedom, and intellectual growth and it persists throughout their academic journey (Mohanty et al., 2009).

A Language barrier is not just responsible for performing poorly in given tasks but it also has emotional and social impacts, indirectly influencing the academic performance, claimed by students. Emotional and social impacts in the shape of hesitation and interaction difficulty with teachers and class fellows, etc translate into low participation and deprivation of learning from other students. Consequently, students cannot fetch scores for class participation and improve their academic performance through socialization. Language barrier causes emotional instability such as feelings of inadequacy and alienation after being discriminated against and neglected (Dawson & Williams, 2008). Mental health interferes not just with accomplishing dreams but also limits their social mobility and access to opportunities (Partida, 2007; Tashakkori et al.,

1999, as cited in Consoli et al., 2012). While describing the reasons behind the language barrier students face, they go into the past and point out various factors that contributed to the development of it. In their hometown, educational institutions with poor facilities taught in their native language rather than in English and expected them to cram the written material. Students spend a lot of time at school where interaction with teachers plays an influential role in acquiring language skills (Corson, 2001; Macías, 2004; Nieto, 2002, as cited in Lee & Oxelson, 2006). Teachers' language imprecision and not using subject-specific language created an ineffective language learning environment due to which students still struggle with vocabulary. A study conducted in Pakistan provides similar factors, causing this language barrier: unavailability of English-speaking environment and trained English teachers, poor listening facilities, low family education background, and using the local language (Bilal et al., 2013).

Assessments solely based on language usage, simultaneously facing discrimination by teachers on the language basis show their unsupportive attitude towards ethnic minority students. Students spend a lot of time at school where interaction with teachers plays an influential role in acquiring language skills. Similarly, Lanehart (1998) mentions how students infer that teachers consider their native language insignificant, imposing the English language on them. Teachers who deliver bilingual lectures, regardless of the English language restriction, are called supportive.

Students adopt various options to cope with the challenge of the language barrier. Such options include joining a language centre, reading books, consuming English-based entertainment, and securing help from intra-ethnic friends. Neil Postman competes for television in the school curriculum because both serve the purpose of teaching, influencing, and training

students. Using visual simulation, neglecting reading and writing assignments entertains students (1986). These neglecting modules, speaking, reading, and writing, through the English-based entertainment need to be coped with as well.

Students perceive that those who possess good English Language skills in Pakistani society are deemed to have higher social status. People, including teachers, wrongly believe that someone speaking English must be giving rational arguments, even though English speaking has no link with knowledge. The perception regarding English language skills opens up various opportunities for students and such opportunities are not confined to the domestic market, but it also includes international markets. Students also want to preserve their mother tongue, learning the international and academic English language simultaneously.

Information about social status is recognized by the voice of speech (Ellis, 1967, as cited in Brown & Lambert, 1976). Philips (2004) states that some languages are valued more than others which creates another relation that the ideas expressed through it are being more valued as well (p. 474). Bourdieu (1977) argues that cultural capital, language, holds prestige and an individual who holds it can later convert it into material capital (as cited in Philips, 2004, p. 475).

In linguistic anthropology, some theoretical contributions introduce a way of persuading others with the use of prestigious forms of talk. Furthermore, the concept of “authoritative speech” (Bloch, 1975; Hanks, 1987; Parmentier, 1993; Duranti, 1994; Gal; Woolard, 1995) refers to the idea that by speaking in a prestigious language, associated with the authoritative people, make a speaker persuasive and convincing ( Philips, 2004).

Overcoming this language barrier has some solutions, according to students, that include developing mono linguistic curriculum (English) from schooling, giving education to the mother

tongue, and ensuring quality education accessible to all social and cultural groups. All these suggestions are time-consuming so compensation from teachers in the form of giving marks, excessive time for assignments, and easing this language restriction in the classrooms. Grubb (1974) mentions harmonious development and positive self-image can be maintained by bilingual teaching, which according to educational theorists prevents the diminishing of interests and self-worth among students. Likewise, Gándara and Escamilla (2017), unsupportive to mono linguistic instructions, highlight that using bilingual instruction is the most effective way to enhance the academic performance and psychological and social well-being of students.

The theoretical framework of cultural capital theory, given by Bourdieu, argues there is a hierarchy of language codes, favouring some languages used by the higher social class (Philips, 2004). Education has a role in upgrading the social standings in society (as cited in Sullivan, 2001, p. 894), comparatively maintaining the hierarchy (Philips, 2004) by teaching, and appreciating the prestigious English language. Pedagogic actions reproduce these inequalities by rewarding students who have the capital and by penalizing others who do not (as cited in Tzanakis, 2011).

This underscores the issues in teaching where ethnic minority students, possessing inadequate language skills, cannot acquire education due to their inability to comprehend and communicate due to the language barrier. When an education system and state promote a specific language through education, it develops a system that Bourdieu calls: an "integrated market" (as cited in Philips, 2004). This market supports the prestigious language due to which ethnic minority students cannot avail of opportunities within and outside the academic environment.

This paper has some limitations such as the population was limited to the specific geographical backgrounds due to which generalization is impossible to ethnic groups of other countries. This research focuses only on the language barrier, overlooking the other factors responsible for low academic performance. Furthermore, it does not encapsulate the insights of teachers on how they mitigate this problem to create an inclusive environment for students.

## **Recommendations**

The findings of this paper suggest that ethnic minority students don't attain equal learning opportunities due to the language barrier that as a result affects their academic performance.

Their shared experience points out that their early education in their hometowns is responsible for creating this language barrier. Students imitate the language used by instructors in their early classrooms which makes it essential for school and college teachers to use it accurately.

As stated in the Unicef report in the early stages of education, the language with which students are familiar should be used so that they achieve fluent reading, along with the comprehension of the text, and develop spoken and written skills of language as well. Bilingual instructions for oral and written communication can be used if teachers have English language proficiency. This strategy aims to empower students' participation in society (CECED & CARE, 2016, as cited in UNICEF, 2019). English should be taught from grade three according to Ball (2011, as cited in UNICEF, 2019), but the government ensures good language skills by providing training to teachers.

The English language usage of University instructors makes students unable to comprehend the lectures. Martin-Blaker and Hardman (2001, p. 7) argue if instructors and students don't have a shared communication language, then using bilingual instructions becomes necessary 'if the teacher is unable to communicate with the learners at anything above a very basic level, [then a basic level of understanding] will be the most likely result of their teaching' (as cited in Lee & Oxelson, 2006). To address this, Lee & Oxelson (2006) emphasize training helps instructors to better understand the background of students and the challenges due to an unfamiliar language environment.

The language hegemony in higher educational institutions in the multi-diverse country should be changed with bilingual education. Researchers on bilingual instructions show its positive outcomes, including “bilingual-educated students having higher cognitive flexibility, working memory, and executive functioning” (Bialystock, 2001, as cited in Gándara & Escamilla, 2017).

For undergraduate students, English learning courses should be arranged at the university level with the use of solid bilingual instructions to develop cognitive ability, reading and writing skills, social integration, and enhance attendance ratio (Gándara & Escamilla, 2017). However, every student needs to show interest in enhancing their language skills because regardless of the availability of language learning facilities at some universities, they don't take any advantage of it.

## **Conclusion**

This research offers a detailed understanding of the influence of language barriers on academic performance among ethnic minority students, drawing insights from their perceptions and experiences. The cultural capital theory used in this research reflects how the English language is responsible for students' academic success and determines their access to opportunities and social mobility. The findings provide insights into how their early education in their hometown, with limited exposure, developed inadequate language skills and later lagged behind their undergraduate class fellows. Structural changes are needed to eliminate this barrier, but immediate inclusiveness of students requires compensation from instructors, using bilingual instructions and language learning courses at universities.



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## **Appendix A: Information Sheet and Consent Form**

### **Information Sheet**

Title of Research: The Perceived Impact of the Language Barriers on Academic performance in undergraduate Ethnic Students in Lahore

Researcher: Fizza Daud

Institution: Forman Christian College (A Chartered University)

Researcher Contact: 251694529@formanite.fccollege.edu.pk

Supervisor: Professor Tehniyat Fatima

Supervisor Contact: tehniyatfatima@fccollege.edu.pk

### ***Invitation***

You are invited to participate in the research study aimed at investigating the perceived impact of language barriers on students belonging to ethnic minorities on their academic performance. You need to understand the purpose and scope of the study before deciding to participate in it. Read this information sheet carefully and move on to the next part only after you have completely understood the given information. If you have any questions in your mind then feel free to ask the researcher and discuss it in detail to ensure clarity. If there are any doubts in your mind regarding privacy then share your concerns with the research. You may take your time to make your decision on whether you want to participate in the research or not.

### ***What is the purpose of the study?***

This study aims to explore the impact of the language barrier on the academic performance of students belonging to ethnic minorities. It will help explore how language barrier affects the learning outcomes of students studying in a non-native language. For the scope of this study,

undergraduate university students of FCCU belonging to ethnic minorities will be interviewed to explore how the language barrier has affected their academic performance. The researcher will interview 15 to 20 university students about how their ethnic and linguistic background has impacted their learning experiences and academic performance.

***Why have I been chosen?***

You have been chosen as a participant for the research because you fit the criteria of the participant for the study.

***Do I have to necessarily take part in the study?***

No, the choice to participate in the study is completely yours. If you choose to participate, then you will be provided with the information sheet and consent form. Even after you decide to participate in the program, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any given time if you do not want to be part of it anymore.

***What kind of interview would it be?***

The interview will be centered around a semi-structured interview format. You will be asked questions regarding your thoughts on your ethnic and linguistic background and how it has impacted your learning and your academic performance as a student in an English-medium university.

***How would be the study helpful for other students from ethnic minorities?***

The study will contribute to the existing debates on the issues surrounding linguistic barriers and education. By shedding light on the connection between language and academic performance, the study will help promote a deeper understanding of the issue and encourage debates on it.

Will my information be kept confidential?



All of your information will be kept strictly confidential throughout the interviewing and publication process. You will not be identified in any reports or publications for your name will be replaced with aliases.

***Who is organizing the research?***

The research is organized by an undergraduate student as part of her mandatory thesis requirement with the supervision of her Research Supervisor who is a lecturer at the Department of Sociology, Forman Christian College University.

***Has the project been ethically reviewed?***

This research project has been ethically reviewed by the researcher's supervisor, the Head of the Sociology department, and the Internal Review Board (IRB), at Forman Christian College University.

**Consent Form**

1. I confirm that I have completely read and understood the information sheet explaining the purpose and scope of the research.
2. I have utilized the opportunity to ask questions about the research and have had detailed discussions with the researcher.
3. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary, and I am free to withdraw from the study at any given point without specifying any reason. I am completely free to decline or refuse to respond to questions I do not want to answer.

4. I understand that the confidentiality of my responses will be ensured, and my personal information will not be used in the research materials. My identity will be kept secret and I will not be identifiable in any information in the research report.
5. I allow the researcher to access my responses and use them in her research.
6. I agree that the data collected from my interview may be used in future studies after any information regarding my identity has been removed.
7. I agree to take part in the above research.
8. I understand that a copy of all signed sheets including the consent form and the information sheet will be provided to me and will also be available with the researcher for record.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (optional for Data Validation purposes):

## Appendix B: Urdu Translation of Informed Consent Form

معلوماتی شیٹ

تحقیق کا عنوان: لاہور میں انٹرگریجویٹ ایتھنک طلباء کی تعلیمی کارکردگی پر زبان کی رکاوٹوں کا تصور

شدہ اثر

محقق: فزا داؤد

(ادارہ: فارمن کرسچن کالج (ایک چارٹرڈ یونیورسٹی

محقق رابطہ

251694529@formanite.fccollege.edu.pk

نگران: پروفیسر تحنیات فاطمہ

تہنیاتفاطیما@fccollege.edu.pk: سپروائزر سے رابطہ کریں

دعوت نامہ

آپ کو اس تحقیقی مطالعہ میں شرکت کے لیے مدعو کیا جاتا ہے جس کا مقصد نسلی اقلیتوں سے تعلق رکھنے والے طلباء کی زبانی رکاوٹوں کے ان کی تعلیمی کارکردگی پر اثرات کی تحقیقات کرنا ہے۔ اس میں حصہ لینے کا فیصلہ کرنے سے پہلے آپ کو مطالعہ کے مقصد اور دائرہ کار کو سمجھنا ہوگا۔ اس معلوماتی شیٹ کو غور سے پڑھیں اور دی گئی معلومات کو مکمل طور پر سمجھنے کے بعد ہی اگلے حصے پر جائیں۔ اگر آپ کے ذہن میں کوئی سوال ہے تو بلا جھجھک محقق سے پوچھیں اور وضاحت کو یقینی بنانے کے لیے اس پر تفصیل سے بات کریں۔ اگر رازداری کے حوالے سے آپ کے ذہن میں کوئی شکوک و شبہات ہیں تو تحقیق کے ساتھ اپنے خدشات سے آگاہ کریں۔ آپ اپنا فیصلہ کرنے میں اپنا وقت لے سکتے ہیں کہ آیا آپ تحقیق میں حصہ لینا چاہتے ہیں یا نہیں۔

**مطالعہ کا مقصد کیا ہے؟**

اس مطالعہ کا مقصد نسلی اقلیتوں سے تعلق رکھنے والے طلباء کی تعلیمی کارکردگی پر زبان کی رکاوٹ کے اثرات کو تلاش کرنا ہے۔ اس سے یہ جاننے میں مدد ملے گی کہ زبان کی رکاوٹ غیر مقامی زبان میں پڑھنے والے طلباء کے سیکھنے کے نتائج کو کس طرح متاثر کرتی ہے۔ اس مطالعہ کے دائرہ کار کے لیے، نسلی اقلیتوں سے تعلق

کے انڈر گریجویٹ یونیورسٹی کے طلباء سے یہ جاننے کے لیے انٹرویو کیا جائے گا کہ زبان کی FCCU رکھنے والے رکاوٹ نے ان کی تعلیمی کارکردگی کو کیسے متاثر کیا ہے۔ محقق یونیورسٹی کے 15 سے 20 طلباء کا انٹرویو کرے گا کہ کس طرح ان کے نسلی اور لسانی پس منظر نے ان کے سیکھنے کے تجربات اور تعلیمی کارکردگی کو متاثر کیا ہے۔

### مجھے کیوں منتخب کیا گیا ہے؟

آپ کو تحقیق کے لیے بطور شریک چنا گیا ہے کیونکہ آپ مطالعہ کے لیے شریک کے معیار پر پورا اترتے ہیں۔

### کیا مجھے لازمی طور پر مطالعہ میں حصہ لینا ہوگا؟

نہیں، مطالعہ میں حصہ لینے کا انتخاب مکمل طور پر آپ کا ہے۔ اگر آپ حصہ لینے کا انتخاب کرتے ہیں، تو آپ کو معلوماتی شیٹ اور رضامندی کا فارم فراہم کیا جائے گا۔ پروگرام میں شرکت کرنے کا فیصلہ کرنے کے بعد بھی، اگر آپ مزید اس کا حصہ نہیں بننا چاہتے ہیں تو آپ کو کسی بھی وقت مطالعہ سے دستبردار ہونے کا حق حاصل ہے۔

### یہ کس قسم کا انٹرویو ہوگا؟

انٹرویو ایک نیم ساختہ انٹرویو فارمیٹ کے ارد گرد مرکوز ہو گا۔ آپ سے آپ کے نسلی اور لسانی پس منظر کے بارے میں آپ کے خیالات کے بارے میں سوالات پوچھے جائیں گے اور یہ کہ اس نے انگریزی میڈیم یونیورسٹی میں بطور طالب علم آپ کی تعلیم اور آپ کی تعلیمی کارکردگی کو کیسے متاثر کیا ہے۔

### یہ مطالعہ نسلی اقلیتوں سے تعلق رکھنے والے دیگر طلباء کے لیے کس طرح مددگار ثابت ہوگا؟

یہ مطالعہ لسانی رکاوٹوں اور تعلیم سے متعلق مسائل پر موجودہ مباحثوں میں حصہ ڈالے گا۔ زبان اور تعلیمی کارکردگی کے درمیان تعلق پر روشنی ڈالنے سے، یہ مطالعہ اس مسئلے کی گہری تفہیم کو فروغ دینے اور اس پر بحث کی حوصلہ افزائی کرنے میں مدد کرے گا۔

### کیا میری معلومات کو خفیہ رکھا جائے گا؟

انٹرویو اور اشاعت کے پورے عمل کے دوران آپ کی تمام معلومات کو سختی سے خفیہ رکھا جائے گا۔ کسی بھی رپورٹ یا اشاعت میں آپ کی شناخت نہیں کی جائے گی اور آپ کا نام عرفی نام سے بدل دیا جائے گا۔

### تحقیق کا اہتمام کون کر رہا ہے؟

اس تحقیق کو ایک انڈرگریجویٹ طالب علم نے اپنے ریسرچ سپروائزر کی نگرانی کے ساتھ لازمی مقالہ کی ضرورت کے حصے کے طور پر ترتیب دیا ہے جو فارمن کرسچن کالج یونیورسٹی کے شعبہ سوشیالوجی میں لیکچرر ہے۔

### کیا اس منصوبے کا اخلاقی طور پر جائزہ لیا گیا ہے؟

اس تحقیقی منصوبے کا اخلاقی طور پر محقق کے سپروائزر، شعبہ سوشیالوجی کے سربراہ، اور فارمن نے جائزہ لیا ہے۔ (IRB) کریسچن کالج یونیورسٹی میں انٹرنل ریویو بورڈ

### رضامندی فارم

میں تصدیق کرتا ہوں کہ میں نے تحقیق کے مقصد اور دائرہ کار کی وضاحت کرنے والی معلوماتی شیٹ کو مکمل طور پر پڑھ اور سمجھ لیا ہے۔

میں نے تحقیق کے بارے میں سوالات پوچھنے کے موقع سے استفادہ کیا ہے اور محقق کے ساتھ تفصیلی بات چیت کی ہے۔

میں سمجھتا ہوں کہ اس مطالعہ میں میری شرکت رضاکارانہ ہے، اور میں بغیر کسی وجہ کی وضاحت کیے کسی بھی موقع پر مطالعہ سے دستبردار ہونے کے لیے آزاد ہوں۔ میں ان سوالوں کے جوابات دینے یا انکار کرنے کے لیے مکمل طور پر آزاد ہوں جن کا میں جواب نہیں دینا چاہتا۔

میں سمجھتا ہوں کہ میرے جوابات کی رازداری کو یقینی بنایا جائے گا، اور میری ذاتی معلومات کو تحقیقی مواد میں استعمال نہیں کیا جائے گا۔ میری شناخت صیغہ راز میں رکھی جائے گی اور تحقیقی رپورٹ میں کسی بھی معلومات میں میری شناخت نہیں ہوگی۔

میں محقق کو اپنے جوابات تک رسائی حاصل کرنے اور اسے اپنی تحقیق میں استعمال کرنے کی اجازت دیتا ہوں۔ میں اس بات سے اتفاق کرتا ہوں کہ میرے انٹرویو سے جمع کیا گیا ڈیٹا میری شناخت سے متعلق کسی بھی معلومات کو ہٹانے کے بعد مستقبل کے مطالعے میں استعمال کیا جا سکتا ہے۔

میں مندرجہ بالا تحقیق میں حصہ لینے سے اتفاق کرتا ہوں۔

میں سمجھتا ہوں کہ تمام دستخط شدہ شیٹس کی ایک کاپی بشمول رضامندی فارم اور معلوماتی شیٹ مجھے فراہم کی جائے گی اور ریکارڈ کے لیے محقق کے پاس بھی دستیاب ہوگی۔

دستخط: \_\_\_\_\_

تاریخ: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Guide**

### **The Impact of the Language Barriers on the Academic Performance of Undergraduate Ethnic Students in Lahore**

1. Have you experienced any language-related challenges in your academic studies?
2. Can you describe specific instances where language barriers influenced your academic performance?
3. Do you believe that English proficiency has a significant role in success academically?
4. What is the teacher's attitude towards the low proficiency in the English language of students?
5. How do you overcome language-related challenges in your studies?
6. What should be done to reduce language-related academic issues?

## Appendix D: Urdu Translation of Semi-Structured Interview Guide

- کیا آپ نے اپنے تعلیمی مطالعے میں زبان سے متعلق کسی چیلنج کا تجربہ کیا ہے؟
- کیا آپ مخصوص مثالیں بیان کر سکتے ہیں جہاں زبان کی رکاوٹوں نے آپ کی تعلیمی کارکردگی کو متاثر کیا؟
- کیا آپ کو یقین ہے کہ انگریزی زبان کی مہارت کا تعلیمی طور پر کامیابی میں اہم کردار ہے؟
- طلباء کی انگریزی زبان میں کم مہارت کے بارے میں استاد کا رویہ کیا ہے؟
- آپ اپنی پڑھائی میں زبان سے متعلق چیلنجوں پر کیسے قابو پاتے ہیں؟
- زبان سے متعلقہ تعلیمی مسائل کو کم کرنے کے لیے کیا کیا جانا چاہیے؟

### Appendix E: Socio-Demographic Survey Instrument

1.	<b>Age (In years)</b>	2.	<b>Gender:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female, <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Binary, <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say, <input type="checkbox"/> Other
3.	<b>Ethnicity:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Pashtun, <input type="checkbox"/> Sindhi, <input type="checkbox"/> Baloch, <input type="checkbox"/> Saraiki, <input type="checkbox"/> Muhajir, <input type="checkbox"/> Kashmiri, <input type="checkbox"/> Gilgiti, <input type="checkbox"/> Other	4.	<b>Household income:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Below 50,000, <input type="checkbox"/> Between 50,000 and 100,000, <input type="checkbox"/> Between 100,000 and 200,000, <input type="checkbox"/> Above 200,000, <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
5.	<b>Year of Study:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Freshman, <input type="checkbox"/> Sophomore, <input type="checkbox"/> Junior, <input type="checkbox"/> Senior, <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to	6.	Overall CGPA: <input type="checkbox"/>
7.	<b>Provincial belonging:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Sindh, <input type="checkbox"/> Balochistan, <input type="checkbox"/> Azad Kashmir, <input type="checkbox"/> Gilgit-Baltistan, <input type="checkbox"/> Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, <input type="checkbox"/> Islamabad Capital Territory	8.	<b>Regional belonging:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Urban, <input type="checkbox"/> Rural, <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban, <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say



### Appendix F: Thematic Analysis (Themes, Sub-Themes, and Codes)

	Themes	Sub-themes	Codes
1.	Direct Impacts of language barriers on Academic performance	Speaking	Unable to answer Non-participation Avoid asking questions Low grades due to Presentation Accent problem
		Reading	Excessive time requirement Language of texts
		Writing	Need of AI Tools Feeble writing skills Nontransferable knowledge
		Listening	Subject-specific Jargon Comprehension difficulty
2.	Indirect Impacts of language barriers on Academic performance	Emotional Impacts	Hesitation in Participation Fear of presenting Fraught with Self-esteem challenges Fear of Judgment Losing focus in academics Feeling alienated
		Social Impacts	Intra-Ethnic socialization Social integration problems Barriers to extra-curricular activities
3.	Experiences	Multilingual Problems	Language Transition

			<p>Cognitive Load</p> <p>Lack of subject-specific language use</p> <p>Learning two languages of instruction</p> <p>Lack of vocabulary</p> <p>Change the personality</p>
		Role of teachers	<p>Language-based discrimination</p> <p>Language-based assessment</p> <p>Language of instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Multilingual instruction</li> <li>- Monolingual instruction</li> </ul>
		<p>Limited language Learning opportunities</p>	<p>Underdeveloped Hometowns</p> <p>Teachers' language imprecisions</p> <p>Ineffective language-learning environment</p> <p>Cramming</p> <p>Expensive language courses</p>
		<p>Coping Mechanism</p>	<p>Self-taught</p> <p>English based entertainment</p> <p>Supportive friends</p>
4.	Perceptions	<p>Perception on Language</p>	<p>Social Status</p> <p>International language</p> <p>Opportunities via language skills</p> <p>Preservation of mother language</p>

5.	Suggestions to reduce the language barrier	Structural changes	Monolingual curriculum Education in the mother tongue Language improvement courses Quality Education Access to all social classes
		Non-structural changes	Teachers' support



**FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE**  
(A CHARTERED UNIVERSITY)

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**  
**APPROVAL CERTIFICATE**

IRB Ref: IRB-627/01-2024

Date: 04-06-2024

Project Title: The Perceived Impact of Language Barriers on the Academic Performance of Ethnic Minority Students in FCCU

Principal Investigator: Fizza Daud

Supervisor: Tahniyat Fatima

The Institutional Review Board has examined your project in the IRB meeting held on 04-06-2024 and has approved the proposed study. If during the conduct of your research, any changes occur related to participant risk, study design, confidentiality or consent, or any other change then IRB must be notified immediately.

Please be sure to include the IRB reference number in all correspondence.

Dr. Sharoon Hanook  
Convener-IRB  
Chairperson Department of Statistics  
Forman Christian College  
(A Chartered University)  
Lahore