State of the Field Review

Towards a University Language Policy: The Case of the Aga Khan University

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Table of Contents

Glossary 4

Abstract 6

Acknowledgements 6

Introduction 7

1. Linguistic contexts and backgrounds of countries where AKU operates 10

1.1 Medium of instruction in Pakistan 10

1.2 Medium of instruction in East Africa 13

1.3 Medium of instruction in the United Kingdom 16

1.4 Similarities between Pakistan and EA 17

2. Key language & communication issues in countries where AKU operates and impact of EMI & working in a foreign language 17

2.1 Language and communication issues in HE in Pakistan and EA 18

2.2 Impact of EMI and working in a foreign language environment 19

2.2.1 What is the impact of EMI on teaching and learning in higher education? 19

2.2.2 What is the impact of language issues in communicating in a foreign language in the workplace (non-academic staff & academic support staff)? 22

3. Testing & competency levels 24

3.1 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages 24

3.2 Language levels for academic study 26

3.3 Use of IELTS by professional organisations 29

3.4 Getting ready for university 30

3.5 Impact of English language levels, preparation and academic performance 31

3.6 Faculty English language competencies 33

3.7 Impact on English language levels through EMI university studies 34

3.8 Workplace communication 35

3.9 Summary 36

4. Ways of addressing language issues in EMI higher education institutions 37

4.1 Needs assessment model for language provision 38

4.2 Language support at higher education institutions 39

4.3 EMI training for faculty 41

4.4 Editing policies at higher education institutions 42

4.5 Multilingual approaches and raising language awareness in EMI higher education 43

4.6 Summary 45

5. Language policy of higher education institutions around the world 45

5.1 English-speaking countries 45
5.2 Europe 46
5.3 Africa 47
Conclusion 48
References 50
Appendix: Common Reference Levels: Global Scale 58
6. About the authors 59
7. AKU Language Policy Thinking Group Members 61

Glossary

AKU	Aga Khan University
Aptis	Test developed by the British Council assessing candidates' English language proficiency in occupational settings by testing grammar, vocabulary and language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening).
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CEL	Centre for English Language
GMAT	Graduate Management Admission Test
GMC	General Medical Council (UK)
EA/EAC	East Africa/East African Community (comprises Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and Burundi)
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL/ESL	English as a Foreign Language/English as a Second Language
ELE_net	Network of English Language Enhancement
ELF	English as Lingua Franca
ELP	English Language Portfolio
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMI	English Medium Instruction
ESP	English for Special Purposes
HEC	Higher Education Commission
IELTS	International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is an English language proficiency test. IELTS Academic measures listening, reading, writing and speaking skills for study and work purposes. It is referenced against the Common European Framework of Reference for languages and uses a nine-band scale (1: non-user; 9: expert).
IGTA	International Graduate Teaching Assistant
ISMC	Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations
LOI	Language of Instruction
LPTG	Language Policy Thinking Group
MMLDP	Multi-layered Model of Language Development Provision
MOI	Medium of Instruction
NHS	National Health Service (UK)

NMC	Nursing and Midwifery Council (UK)
PMDC	Pakistan Medical and Dental Council
PNC	Pakistan Nursing Council
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SES	Socio-economic status
SONAM	School of Nursing and Midwifery (AKU)
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TAST	TOEFL Academic Speaking Test
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language for study purposes. Its paper-based form (TOEFL PBT) measures listening, reading and writing skills while its internet-based version (TOEFL iBT) also includes a speaking element.
UK	United Kingdom
UKVI	United Kingdom Visas and Immigration. It is a division of the UK Home Office responsible for the UK visa system

Abstract

Aga Khan University (AKU) uses English as the medium of instruction (EMI) and communication in the workplace while, with the exception of its campus in London, the vast majority of its students, Staff and Faculty are non-native speakers of English. This document is a second and complete draft of the literature review being developed to support the next phase of the work of the AKU Language Policy Thinking Group. The Group was formed to discuss language issues at AKU and to support the planning for research and data collection that will inform the development of a comprehensive language framework that will address the language challenges the University is currently facing.

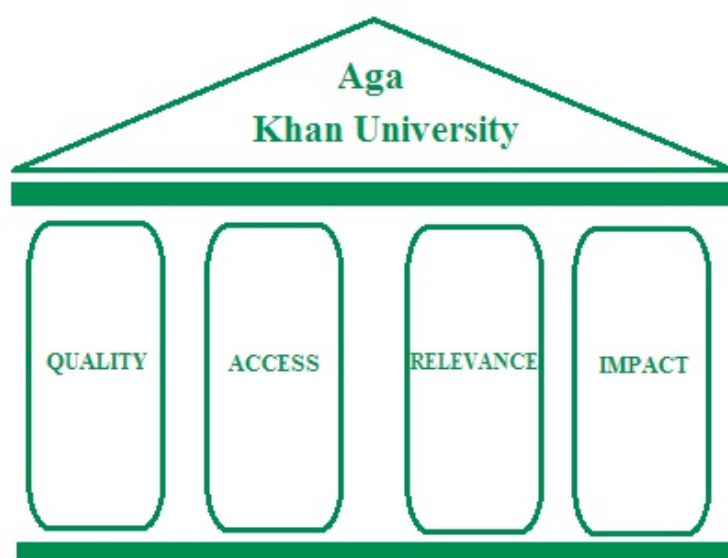
Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to Roger Smith, Director of AKU ELE-net, for his insightful comments both in the development of the literature review and on the text itself. We also extend our appreciation to the AKU Language Policy Thinking Group not only for their keen engagement in our work but also for their insights that have supported the shaping and the analysis in this literature review. We are of course responsible for any inaccuracies that may have inadvertently crept in.

Language Issues in EMI[1] Contexts with Specific Reference to Aga Khan University

Introduction

English is the medium of instruction and the language of official communication at Aga Khan University (AKU) in all its campuses in Pakistan, East Africa (EA) and the United Kingdom (UK). However, 99% of AKU students, Faculty and Staff based in Pakistan and EA and all students and a significant minority of Faculty and Staff at AKU's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (ISMC) in London are non-native speakers of English with many demonstrating a low proficiency in this language (*see* ELE_net 2014; 2016), making operating effectively through the medium of English at times very challenging. The significant language issues at AKU do not merely put in question the University's ability to function efficiently through the English medium but also raise significant concerns over the extent to which the University is capable of fulfilling its Mission and Vision framed along four fundamental principles as shown in the diagram below (*see* Moran 2014, p.2):



1) Quality: AKU is strongly committed to providing tertiary education, research, services and outreach of outstanding quality
2) Access: Access to its high quality education should not be restricted to the wealthiest and should be extended to all factions of the society, including the least privileged
3) Relevance: AKU is committed to providing education, research and services that are relevant to the local communities as it prides itself for being a university 'located *in* the developing world, *for* the developing world'
4) Impact: AKU strives to positively impact on local communities.

[1] EMI: English Medium Instruction

Low proficiency in English at AKU may be seen to compromise the first principle of AKU's Vision, that is, the quality of education, services and research through the use of English Medium Instruction (EMI). In addition, research in Pakistan and EA suggests a strong correlation between students' socio-economic status (SES) and proficiency in English, with students of less privileged backgrounds having lower language proficiency (*see* British Council *in press*; Mahboob *in press*; Shamim 2011), as well as having been schooled through Urdu medium in the case of Pakistan. In EA, those in remote and marginalised communities will have less access to resources in English and are more likely to have limited exposure to English outside of school (Kioko 2015; Tembe & Norton 2011; Williams 2011). As a result, and because higher education in Pakistan and EA occurs mostly through the medium of English, many students of lower household income do not pursue tertiary education, a phenomenon referred to by some researchers as educational or language 'apartheid' (e.g. Shamim 2011, p.10). This has strong implications for Principle 2 of AKU's mission statement; i.e. the extent to which, in reality, AKU education is accessible to all students irrespective of their SES. If AKU education is, in practice, restricted to only a privileged few, then Principle 3, that of relevance, would also be jeopardised. And with the three first principles being compromised, the impact of AKU's education could be restricted potentially if student cohorts are limited to a small privileged elite instead of the entire community the University intends to serve (*see* Kioko 2015; Shamim 2011).

To address the language challenges faced by the University and after a review of the former Centre for English Language (CEL), AKU established the Network of English Language Enhancement (ELE_net) in September 2014. It also recognised that developing an AKU language framework will be a first and necessary step for building an effective strategy that addresses language related issues at AKU as a comprehensive University. In January 2016, ELE-net hosted an AKU symposium and panel discussion on EMI. The main outcomes of this event formed the basis of the English language strategy paper that was subsequently presented at the AKU Board of Trustees meeting in April 2016. One of the major decisions of this meeting was that AKU should set up a Thinking Group to carry out the research required to build an AKU language framework and evaluate the need for developing an AKU language policy. In October 2016, a Language Policy Thinking Group (LPTG) was formed that included senior representatives of University Faculty and Staff in Pakistan, EA and the UK. In addition, AKU invited a number of external members (e.g. from the British Council and expert researchers in EMI, including applied linguists) to participate in this group. At the first LPTG meeting in Karachi (21 October 2016), these stakeholders shared their perspectives on the major language issues in AKU contexts (specifically Pakistan) and agreed on the need to consult the wider literature to answer the following questions (LPTG1 Minutes, 21 October 2016, p.2):

1) What are the language challenges or implications of operating in an EMI environment?
2) What empirical evidence has been gathered and what insights are available to support a relevant AKU language framework (and – ultimately – a Language Policy and an implementation plan to address the language issues and challenges)?

3) What policies have been developed dealing with the language issues in contexts similar to those of the AKU entities?

The LPTG agreed on the five main themes around which the literature review is organised (*see* Table 1 below).

Table 1: Literature review themes

Theme 1	Linguistic contexts and backgrounds of countries where AKU operates
Theme 2	Key language and communication issues in countries where AKU operates and impact of EMI & working in L2
Theme 3	Testing and competency levels
Theme 4	Ways of addressing language issues in EMI higher education institutions
Theme 5	Language policy of higher education institutions around the world

To ensure the development of a language policy that is relevant to the specific contexts in which AKU operates and pertinent to all stakeholders, we describe in Section 1 the linguistic environments and backgrounds of countries where AKU operates (i.e. Pakistan, EA and UK) and outline in Section 2 key language and communication issues in higher education in the relevant countries. In addition, we review the literature on the impact of EMI on teaching and learning in higher education as well as the impact of using a foreign language as a medium of communication in EMI universities. Low levels of proficiency in English appear to compromise teaching and learning and hamper smooth communication amongst staff in EMI universities and, related to these analyses, a need has emerged for a more consistent definition of what is meant by 'low' or 'high' proficiency. Section 3 addresses this issue by describing the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) which is adopted worldwide as a common currency for describing proficiency levels and outline how it has been applied in various contexts. AKU is in the process of building an evidence base of English levels of students enrolled at AKU and the extent to which their English proficiency improves after a period of studying at AKU (e.g. ELE_net 2014; 2016). The intention is to collect similar and/or relevant data for Staff and Faculty and to examine the realistic language progress the University can expect from its stakeholders following the completion of enrichment courses. In the remainder of Section 3, we turn to the literature to address many of these questions through an analysis of the empirical evidence.

AKU is also looking to develop practical strategic solutions to address the language-related challenges that it faces and hence reviewing how other institutions have addressed similar problems will be instrumental for this purpose. In Section 4, therefore, we explore different English language provision structures and enrichment programmes established by various universities around the world to support their students, staff and faculty members. In addition, we describe, in Section 5, a selected number of language policies adopted in higher education institutions in English-speaking countries as well as Europe and Africa. These may be reviewed as potential models that could inspire the Language Policy that will be subsequently

developed by AKU. We conclude this literature review with some key focusing points and main priorities for future empirical research.

1. Linguistic contexts and backgrounds of countries where AKU operates

AKU is considered to be a single integrated university with multiple campuses around the world, all having equal status (Moran 2014). Given the unitary nature of the University, it is essential for AKU to develop a single language framework that is adapted to the countries in which it operates, all of which have distinctive and diverse linguistic landscapes. In this section, we examine the particular linguistic contexts and backgrounds of Pakistan, EA (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) and the UK.

1.1 Medium of instruction in Pakistan

Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world with around 200 million people, the majority of which are of Muslim faith. The country is linguistically highly diverse with over 70 ethno-linguistic groups and a Greenberg Index of 0.802, a value of 1 indicating that no two people in this country have the same mother tongue (Lewis *et al*. 2014). Due to its historical heritage, formerly part of the Mughal Empire and later of the British Empire, Pakistan has adopted a three-language policy with Urdu being the national language often associated with its Muslim identity, English being the official language and considered by many the language of unity, and one regional language recognised for each province (Canagarajah & Ashraf 2013; Mahboob 2002; Mahboob & Jain 2016). This policy has also been adopted in education where the medium of instruction (MOI) in most schools is either English or Urdu with the exception of a few institutions adopting Sindhi or Pushto as MOI (Mahboob *in press*). Recent available statistics indicate that over 68% of government schools have Urdu as MOI while around 10% adopt English (*see* Mahboob *in press,* p.3) and despite a lack of precise statistics, various sources suggest that 70% of private schools in Pakistan use EMI (ASER 2012; Coleman & Capstick 2012). This has led to a two-stream educational system, with Urdu-medium public schools serving students of lower SES while English medium private schools offering quality education to middle class and wealthy groups (Shamim 2011).

The language of instruction in schools in Pakistan has been the focus of many governmental policies dating back to the colonial rule (pre-1947) when Urdu was the MOI for the masses while English was adopted as the language of instruction for the privileged (*see* Mahboob 2002; British Council *in press*). Efforts to make Urdu the only language of instruction in schools, at least at primary level, have failed because of various reasons. For many parents in Pakistan, there is a blurred line between being educated and being proficient in English. Hence, there is a strong belief that sending one's own children to English medium schools is a guaranty for quality education (Shamim 2011). It should be borne in mind, however, that although many schools claim to teach in the medium of English, it should not be assumed that this means students are proficient in English. Indeed, many schools fail to teach through

the medium of English for different reasons including teachers' low English language proficiency. In these cases, students have very little exposure to English within the school context and may rarely hear this language outside of it, although currently on account of globalisation and the spread of the internet there might be some future change in English language exposure for those with access to this type of technology.

Parents' resistance is not the only reason for why Urdu was not successfully adopted as a MOI in primary schools in Pakistan. Shamim (2011, p.4) describes "major drivers for the felt need for English". These consist of political and economic gains, in addition to the previously described dual stream educational system (public Urdu medium versus private English medium education). The strong conviction of most people in Pakistan (including parents) that English is necessary for their upward social mobility[2], economic development and better job opportunities, especially with the expansion of information technology, has placed pressure on politicians who could not but pledge to provide equal opportunities for learning English if they were to win any elections (Mahboob 2002; Shamim 2011).

At tertiary level, and with the exception of a few institutions adopting Urdu or a provincial language as MOI, higher education in Pakistan operates through the medium of English (Mahboob *in press*). EMI is rarely contested at higher education level with most university students believing that their career success is highly dependent on learning (in) English or as expressed by a freshmen student at a University in Karachi: 'No English, No Future!' (Mahboob 2002, p.31). While some researchers raise questions about this deeply entrenched belief (that a successful career is highly dependent on proficiency in English), there are enough arguments to support the value of learning English and its strong relationship to development at a personal and a national level (*see* Appleby *et al*. 2002). There is, however, great misalignment between government schools MOI (Urdu) policy and universities' EMI policies. Many students graduating from public schools have had a low exposure to English and hence have a low proficiency in this language. Indeed, a recent report by the British Council (*in press*) reached similar conclusions: the performance of a sample of students (n = 1,161) selected from public and private universities in Pakistan on the Aptis[3] language proficiency test was strongly correlated with students' SES and in particular with mothers' level of education. The low(er) proficiency in English of students from Urdu-medium schools is likely to compromise their ability to pursue higher education studies. This has been referred to as 'education apartheid' in the literature (e.g. Mahboob *in press*; Shamim 2011) as higher education has become restricted to those who have good English language proficiency to cope with EMI education at that advanced level. This in practice means that university education has become largely only accessible to those who have the financial means as they are likely to have had the opportunity to develop higher language proficiency through attending private fee-paying EMI schools. This unequal opportunity to access quality higher education is a national issue in Pakistan and presents significant challenges to AKU's commitment to widening access to education. The higher the AKU's standards, the more restrictive the University becomes.

[2] These attitudes are pervasive in many parts of the world including East Africa (*see* Rea-Dickins *et al*. 2013)

[3] Test developed by the British Council assessing candidates' English language proficiency in occupational settings by testing grammar, vocabulary and language skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening).

In addition, the variation in the exposure to the English language means that students who are admitted to university evidence a range of language proficiency levels. Indeed, the results of the Aptis test outlined in the British Council report referenced above suggest that, when compared against the CEFR, the English proficiency of students in the participating universities in Pakistan spanned all three proficiency levels (A: basic user; B: independent user; C: proficient user), with the majority of students placed in the intermediate band (B1: 36%) or the upper intermediate band (B2[4]: 36%) (British Council *in press*). A B2 level corresponds to a 6.5 on the IELTS[5] test and is considered to be an acceptable international standard; however, these results should only be indicative as the degree of validity of using Aptis in EMI contexts has not yet been examined.

Similarly, empirical evidence from a pilot study carried out across AKU in which a sample of 130 graduate students completed the Password Knowledge[6] test suggests that most students (85%) had a B2 proficiency level with 10% having a B1 proficiency level and only 5% having a C1 or above proficiency level (ELE_net 2014)[7]. When breaking down these results by University context, results from AKU Pakistan suggest that most students had a proficiency level in the lower to mid B2 level. As outlined elsewhere in this report, the lower B2 band (i.e. a score of 5.5 on IELTS) is considered by the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to be the *minimum* English proficiency requirement for candidates to be granted a visa for degree study and British universities often require an even higher level of English proficiency for admissions to academic studies. If AKU is to adopt admission language proficiency requirements that are comparable to the international standards, based on the results of the pilot study, many AKU students in Pakistan would not be accepted. This places the University in a challenging position where it has to balance providing wide access to higher education to students from a variety of SES and language backgrounds while not compromising the quality of its world-class education.

The language challenge is particularly prevalent at AKU's School of Nursing and Midwifery (SONAM) in Pakistan. ELE-Net (2016) conducted a study with second year BSc Nursing students enrolled at SONAM. Despite an improvement in students' mean score on the Passport Knowledge test from a previous attempt a year earlier (*see* ELE_net 2014), the increase was small (3.63%) and the proficiency level in English of as many as 30% of students remained lower than the minimum requirement for admission to an undergraduate nursing programme in English speaking countries such as the UK (i.e., B2 band). English language proficiency is highly emphasised by Pakistan Nursing Council[8] (PNC) which

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[4] A score in the higher B2 band is around IELTS 6.5, which is an acceptable international standard for university entry.

[5] International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is an English language proficiency test. IELTS Academic measures listening, reading, writing and speaking skills for study and work purposes. It is referenced against the Common European Framework of Reference for languages and uses a nine-band scale (1: non-user; 9: expert).

[6] Password Knowledge Test: Test developed by the UK-based company, English Language Testing Ltd., and assesses candidates' knowledge of English language (namely grammar and vocabulary) within higher education domains, i.e. English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

[7] Thus evidencing somewhat higher levels of English language proficiency at AKU, as compared to other Pakistani universities, as measured against the CERF benchmark

[8] http://www.pnc.org.pk/

requires English as a compulsory subject in its four-year Bachelor's of Science in Nursing (*see* HEC 2011). It is also necessary for enrolment in the *Medicinae Baccalaureus, Baccalaureus Chirurgiae* [Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery] (MBBS) and Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) programmes for foreign, dual nationality or overseas Pakistani students who need to score a minimum of 500 on TOEFL[9] or 5.5 on IELTS (PMDC 2016, p.3130). The website of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council[10] (PMDC) does not explicitly mention any minimum requirement of English proficiency for local Pakistani students wishing to enrol in the MBBS and BDS programmes. Also, English is an optional subject in the MBBS programme and does not appear in the BDS syllabus. Do the admission regulations assume that prospective medical and dentistry students, who have done their schooling in Pakistan, would inevitably meet minimum English language requirements? This seems to be consistent with the observation made by the Dean of AKU Medical College in Pakistan in the first LPTG meeting (Minutes LPTG1, October 2016). However, empirical data might be necessary to back this observation and have a more nuanced proficiency level profiling of students.

The English language proficiency of students is not the only challenging aspect of EMI in Pakistan. Mansoor (2003) investigated the language proficiency of 121 subject and English teachers of public and private higher education institutions in Pakistan and found that teachers' proficiency scores were around 61%; a level that Mansoor considered insufficient for teachers to be efficiently teaching in English. The author did not provide any interpretation of this percentage in terms of widely known benchmarks (e.g. CEFR); hence, it is difficult to build conclusions using it and the small sample of teachers tested limits the extent this finding can be generalised to Pakistan. However, this study provides for AKU a reminder of the importance of investigating the levels of English proficiency of teaching staff to design targeted language enrichment programmes that can support their professional development. It is also important for AKU adopt a minimum English proficiency requirement, expressed in terms of a shared currency such as the CEFR, for recruiting qualified Faculty that can teach efficiently through the medium of English.

1.2 Medium of instruction in East Africa

AKU operates in three of the six East African countries[11], Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, with large populations ranging between 44 million and 50 million people. All three countries are highly diverse linguistically with over 120 indigenous languages spoken in Tanzania, 68 in Kenya and 63 in Uganda, most of which belong to two main language families (Bantu and Nilotic). All three countries have been colonised at some point in their history by the British Empire and have therefore had English as an official language alongside Kiswahili, a legacy

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[9] Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)
[10] Website of Pakistan Medical and Dental Council: http://pmdc.org.pk/
[11] Note that in this report East African countries refer to the ones where AKU operates: i.e. Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda.; also that students enrolled in AKU courses may come from other EAC or SADC (Southern African Development Community) countries, namely: Angola, Botswana, DRC, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe)..

more contested in Tanzania than in Kenya or Uganda[12]. This also meant that English was introduced as a language of instruction in private schools in these countries.

Whilst the MOI at university level across EA is officially English, there is variation in policy in basic and secondary education. Most notably, Tanzania has Kiswahili, a Bantu language with a strong Arabic influence and some English borrowing, as the language of instruction for the duration of primary level and English for formal secondary education (Ministry of Education and Culture n.d.; United Republic of Tanzania 2014[13]). Uganda has adopted EMI beyond lower primary (Kioko 2015; Jones 2014; Tembe & Norton 2011). In Kenya, Kioko (2015) mentions 'overt and covert' language of instruction policies to describe the inconsistency between policy and practice in Kenyan schools. In theory, the first three years of primary school in Kenya are supposed to be in the 'language of the catchment area' (i.e. the local indigenous language). However, the failure of the government to implement the language policy and indirectly support the development of curricula and learning material in English as well as in teacher training indicates that in practice English is the MOI in primary schools in Kenya.

Historically, since its independence Kenya has consistently allocated a greater proportion of its budget to education and, thus, at one level it has the strongest educational infrastructure and foundations across the EAC. Admission into postgraduate university programmes is contingent upon fulfilling minimum English language proficiency requirements (Mukhwana *et al*. 2016, p.25) and National Policy requires universities in Kenya to provide institutional support for postgraduate students to develop communication skills and academic paper writing in English (Too *et al*. 2016, p.25). Both Tanzania and Uganda, the former in particular, have faced significant economic challenges (e.g. the liberation war of Uganda supported by Tanzania), that have impacted on the allocation of resources available for education. Other issues, such as the huge increase in school numbers through UPE (Universal Primary Education) and compulsory basic and secondary education have all impacted on the quality of educational provision more generally and on levels of attained English language and communication skills more specifically.

In reviewing the literature of language use in education and language policy prevailing in the respective EA countries, we may note, firstly, that by far the most research into language use in education has been conducted in the school sector, at primary and at secondary school, with very little reported for the higher education sector (in the primary section, *see* for example multiple references in Jones 2014; Muthwii 2004; Pearson 2014; the edited collection of Coleman 2011; the review of literature by Rea-Dickins *et al*. 2010). Indeed, a recent systematic review on EMI in higher education carried out by Macaro *et al*. (*forthcoming*) draws attention to the scarcity of empirical research into EMI in higher education in sub-Saharan African. Secondly, as aptly expressed by Trudell and Piper (2014) in the context of literacy standards in primary schools:

[12] It is interesting to note that SADC has adopted a trilingual language policy (English, French, Portuguese) but this decision has created challenges for the community, in particular with respect to translation – an expensive process (Mooko 2009).

[13]Although in 2016 the Ministry indicated that either English or Kiswahili could be used for secondary education. School examinations are available in either English or Kiswahili

> "Language policy is generally seen as a national-level decision regarding which language the state will support, and in which public domains. However, the reality is that language policy plays out at regional and local levels as well. […] it can be argued that the most important instantiations of language policy are those which directly determine local-language behaviours in institutions such as schools, government and civil society (p. 4)."

The complexity of selecting one or more local languages as medium of instruction has supported the use of EMI in Africa (Kioko 2015; Tembe & Norton 2011; Williams 2011). Often local languages are associated with tribal conflicts and for this reason English is considered as the language of unity. In addition, there is a strong conviction amongst African parents that EMI provides better prospects for their children and is therefore a pre-requisite for social mobility (Kioko 2015; Tembe & Norton 2011). Indeed, African parents do not see any value in having their children learn through the medium of any indigenous language and believe that acquiring local languages happens 'at home' and not in school (Tembe & Norton 2011). They perceive English is the 'language knowledge' (Kioko 2015; Tembe & Norton 2011) and many of them equate knowing English with learning (Tembe & Norton 2011). Research highlights negative attitudes towards local languages and the preference for EMI (e.g. Namyalo & Nakayiza 2015; Rea-Dickins *et al*. 2005).

Nevertheless, as pointed out earlier in this section, EMI is only offered in private fee-paying schools and is therefore only accessible to a privileged few who are capable of paying the tuition while most other students go to public Kiswahili-medium schools (except for Kenya where English is the official medium of instruction in primary schools) (Kioko 2015; Tembe & Norton 2011; Williams 2011). This has led to a two-stream school system, compared in the literature to educational /language apartheid, which restricts access to higher education to a limited privileged few.

In addition to the above complexities, there are some practical issues with adopting any local African language as a medium of instruction in higher education. There is a lack of learning and teaching materials in indigenous languages (*see* Tembe & Norton 2011) although with reference to translanguaging (*see* Section 2.2.1), Blommaert (2012) asserts that a translanguaging approach does not require additional resources as "the languages are already available in the classroom … all the teacher needs to do is regulate and use them in the best possible way for the benefit of all learners". Also, it is worth noting efforts of intellectualising African languages (*see* for example the work of Russel Kaschula in South Africa[14]). Equally, there is a shortage of qualified teachers who are proficient in English and of instructional resources in English.

AKU is committed to providing prospective and current students in EA with the best opportunities to build a prosperous future and aims to contribute to the development of EA communities and economies by building capacity locally. However, English seems to be a barrier for many in this complex linguistic environment where a large gap between students'

[14] Intellectualisation of African Languages, Rhodes University: https://www.ru.ac.za/africanlanguages/research/

proficiency in English and the expected level for university admission leaves many behind. Building a language framework that takes into account the particularities of each country and proposes language support and remediation for students could be one step to widen access to quality higher education and develop capacity.

1.3 Medium of instruction in the United Kingdom

English is the MOI in almost all higher education institutions in the UK with only a few exceptions (e.g. foreign language courses, some courses offered in Welsh in Wales). Like all higher education institutions in the country, ISMC is regulated by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)[15], an independent body which oversees standards and quality of higher education in the country. The QAA does not specify any minimum English language proficiency level for student admissions. It however urges higher education providers to be clear and transparent about the recruitment, selection and admission process and be explicit in defining academic and non-academic requirements for admissions and success for every programme they offer (QAA 2016, Indicator 6). One of these relates to English language requirements for international students from countries for whom English is not their first language. UK universities impose different English language requirements that also vary across disciplines (subject) and degrees but they are never lower to the levels stipulated by the Home Office for student visa applications. Evidence of English language proficiency can be provided by sitting the IELTS certified by the UKVI.

With the UK's aim to draw students from all ethnicities and SES backgrounds, the QAA clearly states that admission requirements should in no way impose 'unnecessary barriers' for prospective students to access higher education (QAA 2016, Indicator 7). This is the spirit of AKU's admission policy. However, striking the right balance between setting minimum language requirements to widen participation in higher education is challenging when trying to ensure that students are indeed provided with the opportunity to reach their full potential and not just simply 'get by' (e.g. Rea-Dickins *et al*. 2013).

Various universities in the UK have recognised the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) needs of their students and have developed various enrichment programmes to support students in acquiring the necessary level of English proficiency and EAP skills to scaffold their studies. These may also be offered to students for whom English is their first language, i.e. to those who lack the requisite proficiency in EAP or who wish to improve their study skills. The literature relevant to these issues is addressed in more depth in sections 4 and 5 of this review.

Given that AKU trains medical doctors, nurses and midwives in Pakistan and East Africa, we have consulted the language requirements imposed by the General Medical Council (GMC)[16] and the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)[17] in the UK on medical and para-medical

[15] http://www.qaa.ac.uk

[16] http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/registration_applications/language_proficiency.asp

[17] https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/registration/registering-as-a-nurse-or-midwife-from-outside-eu-or-eea.pdf

professionals not trained in the European Union (EU). The guidance on language requirements specifies that all doctors, nurses and midwives trained overseas wishing to be licensed to work within the National Health Service (NHS) must demonstrate satisfactory English language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) in addition to their professional knowledge. For instance, prospective UK registered nurses must achieve an overall score of 7.0 or above on the IELTS and score at least 7.0 on each of the test sections. The rationale behind such a requirement is to ensure that medical care is not compromised because of a language barrier and that doctors, nurses and midwives working in the NHS can operate effectively and safely in an English medium environment.

1.4 Similarities between Pakistan and EA

In this section, we described the linguistic landscapes and language backgrounds of countries where AKU operates. The UK seems to present the least challenges as compared to Pakistan and EA. Whilst Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda have distinct histories and their language policies took different paths, the three countries converge on a number of themes that resonate strongly with Pakistan and are therefore particularly relevant to this review:

(1) AKU operates in highly multilingual countries, often torn by tribal conflicts where English appears to be the language of unity with Urdu and Kiswahili playing this role to greater or lesser extent.

(2) English is perceived by the people as the ‘language of knowledge’.

(3) EMI provides an opportunity for a better future and is a pre-requisite for social mobility.

(4) There is lack of learning and teaching materials in indigenous languages and a shortage of qualified teachers proficient in English and of instructional resources in English.

(5) Educational/Language apartheid: Access to EMI private schools is restricted to a privileged few who are capable of paying the tuition while most other students go to public Urdu or Kiswahili-medium schools. This leads to inequality in the opportunity of accessing university for the few who complete upper-secondary education, as higher education in Pakistan and EA operates through the medium of English.

(6) While Pakistan seems to have a more developed higher education infrastructure, the three ‘drivers’ outlined by (Shamim 2011) in the Pakistani context hold true in the East African one. The political instability and the perceived economic value, in addition to the two-stream school system (private: English and public: Kiswahili) supports the use of EMI at university level.

2. Key language & communication issues in countries where AKU operates and impact of EMI & working in a foreign language

In the previous section, we examined the various linguistic contexts in which AKU is embedded and have outlined some historical and political underpinnings for the socio-economic divide associated with adopting EMI in these countries at school and at university

levels. In addition to appreciating the history and the linguistic diversity of the contexts in which AKU operates, it is also important to examine the language and communication issues that have been identified in the literature as issues and challenges in higher education in Pakistan and EA. This allows for the development of a well targeted language framework that addresses the particular needs of the specific communities that AKU serves. In this section we therefore first highlight key language-related issues experienced by students, staff and faculty in Pakistan and EA and then, second, review the wider literature on possible impact of using English as a medium of instruction and communication in the workplace in higher education institutions around the world.

2.1 Language and communication issues in HE in Pakistan and EA

Language issues in higher education in Pakistan and EA are similar in many ways. The literature reviewed so far described issues related to learning and teaching. The section below outlines the challenges that were emphasised most:

a. Multilingualism: The multilingual nature of Pakistan and EA makes adopting a single indigenous language as a medium of instruction in each country very contentious (Shamim 2011; Williams 2011). English seems to be the language that the majority of people agree on. However, because it is none of the communities' native language, learning and teaching through this medium brings along many challenges that ought to be addressed by policy makers and higher education providers such as AKU.

b. Language apartheid: The historical divide between fee-paying EMI private schools and free Urdu or Kiswahili public schools limited access to quality higher education to the privileged elite (Kioko 2015; Mahboob *in press*; Shamim 2011). Moreover, the low proficiency in English especially for students coming from public schools made teaching and learning at higher education problematical (Mahboob, *in press*).

c. Poor English language provision: In addition to the low English proficiency of most first year university students in Pakistan, there seems to be a lack of effective English language provision and support to help students improve their English language proficiency and support them in their courses (British Council *in press*; Mahboob *in press*; Mansoor 2003; Shamim 2011). Shamim (2011) indicates that English is often taught in large classes where the possibility of developing academic literacy is nearly absent. What makes things more critical is the lack of awareness of students and teachers of the poor quality of English language courses (*see* British Council *in press*; Shamim, 2011).

d. Lack of professional development of English language teachers and teachers of English as a foreign language. In both Pakistan and EA, the literature suggests that there is a shortage of qualified English teachers, in particular of teachers of English as a foreign language (TEFL), who are trained to teach reading, speaking, listening and writing skills for students for whom English is not the native language (British Council *in press*; Kioko 2015; Mahboob & Talaat 2008; Shamim 2011). There is also a lack of

training programmes that develop TEFL capacity in Pakistan and EA (Dearden 2016; Kioko 2015; Mahboob & Talaat 2008; Shamim 2011).

e. Low levels of English proficiency amongst faculty members and lack of professional development programmes that train university academics in EMI (British Council *in press*; Dearden 2016; Mansoor 2003; Shamim 2011). In her report on EMI in the world, Dearden (2016) also indicates that some teachers feel that it is not their responsibility to improve students' academic literacy in English.

f. Low proficiency in English amongst administrative and academic support staff with significant communication challenges within the workplace (writing memoranda, emails or formal letters, managing and taking part in conference calls, etc.) and with external groups and institutions (e.g. establishing partnerships with other universities). This point has not been raised within the Pakistani and EA literature but has been pointed it out in the international literature as will be more elaborated in Section 2.2.2.

g. Lack of effective professional development programmes, such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), that provide language support for administrative and academic support staff (*see* Elder *et al*. 2012).

2.2 Impact of EMI and working in a foreign language environment

The issues described in the previous section often impact on teaching and learning in higher education in many ways and affect the quality of communication in the workplace. The section below elaborates on these points with reference to Pakistan and East Africa. Having a clearer understanding of how the impact of EMI and working in foreign language manifests itself in practice in AKU contexts will support the development of a better informed and more targeted language framework.

2.2.1 What is the impact of EMI on teaching and learning in higher education?

Due to their low proficiency in English, students attending EMI universities in Pakistan and EA often fail to meet the language demands of higher education studies and therefore face a number of challenges (British Council *in press*; Mahboob *in press*). In this subsection, we will describe a number of these challenges based on literature from Pakistan and EA. For instance, university students in Pakistan are reported to struggle in understanding lectures (Mahboob *in press*). Indeed, based on the results of IELTS (Academic) 2015 presented in the British Council (*in press*, p.19) report, students in Pakistan have a relatively low proficiency in listening in English; for instance, their IELTS Listening mean band score (6.2) was below the global mean (6.3). Listening is crucial for successful engagement in lectures and low ability in this skill will inevitably limit students' chances of following lectures and learning. The British Council (*in* press, p.19) report also points to students' significantly poor proficiency in reading (e.g. IELTS Reading band mean score was 5.9 compared to the global average of 6.2). Poor reading skills at university level impact strongly on students' ability to engage with textbooks and therefore compromise their access to important learning resources.

Moreover, low reading proficiency is likely to affect students' ability to read instructions and successfully complete assignments (Din 2015).

Whilst there are data available on language levels both in Pakistan and East Africa, it is observed that the analysis of the data, with exceptions, is frequently hard to interpret, in the absence of clear benchmarks. As indicated elsewhere, an upper B2 is around the 6.5 IELTS level and a solid B2 is equivalent is an IELTS 6. Such levels would not be categorised as 'poor', 'low' or 'weak'. However a result below B2 should be a cause for concern as it is on the weaker side, i.e. it is low.

The British Council *(in press)* report highlights the poor listening and reading skills of higher education students in Pakistan; however, this does not mean that students are highly proficient in writing and speaking. Based on the IELTS (Academic) 2015 results cited in this report, the mean band scores in writing and speaking are 5.9 and 6.3 respectively; these are just above the global average for these skills (5.7 for writing and 6.2 for speaking). Very often, university studies require proficiency in writing in particular to be higher than average. Weak writing proficiency has been reported to affect students' ability to complete writing tasks successfully in universities in Pakistan (Din 2015). Concern has been expressed about the inclination of some faculty members to test students using multiple choice questions (or 'student friendly assessments') while deliberately avoiding essay type assessments thereby risking dumbing down assignments (*see* Mahboob *in press*). This is particularly problematic as exposing students less frequently to writing tasks limits their opportunities of developing or improving their writing. The high incidence of plagiarism[18] in Pakistan universities (*see* British Council *in press*; Mahboob *in press*) is a likely consequence of students not having the opportunity to develop their writing skills through the assessment tasks they are given.

In addition to the negative impact of poor writing skills on learning, low proficiency in speaking can also hamper students' learning by reducing their level of engagement in the classroom and the extent to which they can ask questions during lectures. This has a very negative impact on students' agency in the learning process and can encourage passive knowledge acquisition. This passive attitude can sometimes be evidenced through students resorting to rote-learning as reported in Mahboob *(in press)*. Indeed, some faculty members encourage students to learn facts by heart without worrying about the language element as they believe language and knowledge can be separated (Dearden 2016; Mahboob *in press*) – a phenomenon Mahboob *(in press)* refers to as 'dichotomisation'. This strategy is built on a conceptual fallacy - that language and knowledge can be separated; a statement that is strongly contested by mainstream scholarship in applied linguistics.

Dichotomisation can be argued to be more of a pedagogy that some faculty members adopt as a response to their students' low proficiency of in English. However, some faculty members could themselves lack an appropriate level of proficiency in English that would allow them to deliver lectures or teach using sound English (Mahboob *in press*). This is a more significant challenge with more serious implications on the quality of education provision that feeds into an endless self-perpetuating cycles where current students become the next teachers with

[18] Of note here is the clear AKU policy on plagiarism and the use of Turnitin (http://turnitin.com/).

poor English language proficiency. In addition to poor teaching quality, Mahboob (*in press)* also indicates that academics with a relatively low proficiency in English experience considerable difficulties in publishing research in international journals that require submissions to be written in immaculate English. These challenges are reflected in the low number of peer-reviewed quality journals published in Pakistan. Indeed only 11 out of 14,000 journals included in the International Science Information (ISI) listing are published locally. Low proficiency in English does not only impact academics' research productivity and international visibility, it is also likely to be at the source of challenges faced in forging international partnerships and research collaborations with other universities where English is likely to be adopted as the *lingua franca*. This has direct implications in some institutions on academic tenure paths, the quality of scholarship and university accreditation.

The points raised in the above subsection relate to the negative impact of EMI on learning and to a lesser extent on teaching in higher education in Pakistan and EA. It would be useful to investigate the extent to which AKU students share similar (or different struggles) and whether some inappropriate teaching and assessment practices are also taking place at the University.

In addition to the points made above, the literature also describes two phenomena that are often observed in multilingual settings where a foreign language is widely used as a language of instruction: code-switching and translanguaging (*see* Canagarajah & Ashraf 2013; Ashraf *et al*. 2014; Kioko 2015; Mahboob & Jain 2016). Code-switching is the use of two or more languages (codes) in a conversation with a certain consistency in the choice of language used. Translanguaging, however, refers to 'a pedagogical practice in bilingual classes in which input is provided in one language and tasks are performed in another' (Ashraf *et al*. 2014, p.34). Code-switching and translanguaging are common phenomena in Pakistan (Ashraf *et al*. 2014; Kioko 2015; Mahboob & Jain 2016) with the latter being much less researched (Mahboob & Jain 2016; *see* also in the Sub-Sahran context, Botswana and SADC[19] countries, the work of Bagwasi 2012; 2016). In their review on code-switching in Pakistan and India, Mahboob and Jain (2016) highlighted the mixed attitudes amongst teachers and experts in English language teaching towards the effectiveness of such practice with some experts only recommending code-switching with students of low language proficiency. In contrast, other studies reviewed by Mahboob and Jain (2016, p.7) suggest a number of positive functions of code-switching as indicated by a survey of over 400 teachers. These functions included: clarification, giving instructions effectively, translation, socializing, checking understanding, repetition, and creating a sense of belonging. It is clear that further research is needed in this area and that it would be worthwhile examining whether and the extent to which pedagogic practices such as code-switching and translanguaging occur at AKU in its Pakistani and EA contexts and whether teachers and students believe these practices are helpful or harmful for learning and teaching at AKU.

[19] SADC: Southern African Development Community

2.2.2 What is the impact of language issues in communicating in a foreign language in the workplace (non-academic staff & academic support staff)?

Non-academic personnel and academic support staff are constitutive of any higher education institution. For any language framework to be comprehensive and successfully implemented, the linguistic complexity of this non-academic body needs to be considered. In EMI institutions, non-academic and administrative staff are expected to operate efficiently in English. They should be able to communicate effectively verbally and in writing through the medium of English amongst each other, with students, academic staff and external people from the same country or overseas. This means that staff ought to have 'appropriate' levels of English proficiency and have adequate reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Staff will need differentiated language competence levels depending on the nature of their job. For instance, a high writing proficiency is expected from the personal assistant of the Dean of the Medical College. As part of his/her job, the Dean's personal assistant will often be required to compose detailed minutes of meetings and write professional emails addressed to high ranking officials in the university or overseas whereas a receptionist, for example, will possibly need to have good speaking skills in English as well as the local language. Therefore, defining the nature and levels of English language proficiency needed for each stakeholder group including non-academic staff will be essential to build a coherent and successful language framework. It would be ideal if this level is characterised using an international currency such as the CEFR as will be further discussed in Section 3.1.

The impact of using English for communicating in the workplace in EMI universities has not been explored thoroughly in the literature; however, from research on effective communication in corporate organisations and hospitals, we can infer that low language proficiency of administrative staff is likely to result in the deterioration of communication making it largely ineffective. According to Gazzola and Grin (2007) ineffective communication in the workplace is permeated by turbulence and suffers substantial loss of meaning. It also hampers the attainment of shared goals and is unsuccessful in persuading others to adopt specific approaches for the common good. Research carried out with migrant construction workers in Australia suggests that ineffective communication in the workplace has significant implications on the cohesive relationships between staff of varying levels of English proficiency with the dominance of the voice of more proficient staff (Trajkovski & Loosemore 2006). Moreover, poor communication in the workplace can also lead to significant health and safety accidents in cases where workers cannot read or understand safety guidelines because of poor language proficiency.

There is also a vast literature on doctor-patient/practitioner-patient communication skills, medical and nursing discourses researched by both medical practitioners and applied linguists. One such study is Cameron and Williams (1997; but *see* also Sarangi & Roberts 1999) who highlight some of the communication breakdowns between practitioner and service user, how language miscommunication can impede appropriate professional decision making with several potential serious consequences including loss of life. Research in this area thus points directly to the role of languages in different professional contexts (*see* also Ehrenreich 2010; Lehtonen & Karjalainen 2008) outside the EMI teaching and learning

milieu and has implications for decisions at AKU on language policy. For example, should there be a focus on competency in more than English, i.e. English and in the majority language of the professional/target workplace?

The role of EMI remains largely uncontested for the medical and nursing studies; for instance, proficiency in English is highly emphasised by the PNC where the set up of any Nursing Educational Institution requires 'administrative officials to be fluent in English' (PNC 2009, p.21). Nevertheless, it would appear that scant attention has been given to the role of other languages in medical and nursing workplaces. Nearly all nursing programmes in Pakistan include modules on communication skills and the ability to interact with medical doctors using clinical language and to use emphatic language to talk to patients[20]. While it can be argued that nurses might be expected to use English with medical doctors, how useful would their English proficiency be when interacting with local patients?

Albeit focused on expatriate doctors practising in Malawi, Kamwendo (2008) reports that the Medical Council of Malawi has as one of its conditions for a practitioner license to work "the practitioner's ability to speak and write fluently" (p. 317). He goes on to argue this policy is mis-guided given that:

> "a minority of the population is competent in English. The national language (Chichewa), and other indigenous languages remain the main medium through which much of the health service provider-patient communication takes place." (p. 317).

Based on research at a major referral hospital in a largely Chitumbuka-speaking town, Kamwendo goes on to suggest that a more appropriate policy for expatriate practitioner licensing would be to evidence competence in both "English (the main international language of medicine) *and* [our emphasis] at least one indigenous language (the lingua franca of the area in which a particular hospital is located (p.317)."

In general, across AKU's campuses in Pakistan, EA and London, the proficiency levels of non-academic staff and academic support staff is variable with some reports of staff unable to operate effectively in the medium of English, especially when writing is required (*see* Minutes LPTG October 2016, p.5). Also, there have been instances where poor written English has led to miscommunication amongst certain members of the AKU Networks of Quality Assurance and Improvement and Teaching & Learning located in Karachi and Nairobi (personal communication). In addition, the poor writing skills of administrative staff of the university and academic support staff at the Medical College impose editing burdens on English-proficient staff, often being the directors of a particular network or the dean of a faculty. While verbal communication issues are less prominent at ISMC because of the nature of the context and the ability to recruit administrative staff that are native-speakers of English locally, academic support staff could sometimes need help with written English.

In the AKU context, recruiting staff with appropriate English language proficiency locally seems to be very challenging because of the scarcity of the supply. In addition, the limited

[20] Curriculum of Nursing Educational Programmes in Pakistan can be accessed using this link: http://www.pnc.org.pk/Curriculum_of_Nursing_Educational_Programs.htm

competence in English stifles the career progression of many staff members as they are incapable of performing routine administrative tasks without the intervention of more senior staff. For instance, low proficiency in writing for professional purposes amongst administrative and academic support staff has been identified to be a main issue at AKU (Minutes LPTG1, October 2016). Senior academic and administrative staff mentioned having to perform extensive editing before any written text could be shared internally or externally. Hence, it is important for AKU to evaluate the level of language proficiency of its staff, identify their language needs and consider whether to offer a language enrichment courses tailored to their different needs. In all cases, for the purpose of developing a well targeted language policy, AKU needs to set clear and reasonable English language proficiency levels it expects its staff to demonstrate while making a clear distinction between different levels of administrative staff. Indeed, carrying out a university-level survey to investigate the language proficiency of staff in English (and perhaps in the local languages) could be a first step for design appropriate language support programmes for staff.

3. Testing & competency levels

This section of the literature review provides central background information to underpin a university language policy. It starts with a brief synopsis of the CEFR in 3.1 and how it has been implemented to later provide an overview of key areas of research that relate to core language issues as they impact on students, staff and faculty at different stages in their university careers, from the early phases in the university admissions process when they are preparing their applications, through to their point of graduation. The first set of studies (3.2) examines language levels and the requirements for admission to academic programmes of study and in 3.3 these are reviewed with specific reference to the requirements of some professional organisations. This is followed in 3.4 by an analysis of pre-university admissions' language enrichment programmes (referred to as in-sessional and pre-sessional programmes in the UK context) in which issues such as how much improvement can be realistically expected from intensive courses aimed at getting students ready for university study through EMI are addressed. Section 3.5 analyses the relationships between English language levels, preparation, and success in university studies, with 3.6 focusing on faculty and other teaching staff in respect of language levels and their needs for effective classroom instruction. Section 3.7 investigates issues of impact on English language levels from EMI university studies. In 3.8, facets of workplace communication and language proficiency levels are raised. This is followed by a summary highlighting implications for AKU.

3.1 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages is an international framework used as a benchmark for comparing language proficiency levels across languages in Europe and one that has been benchmarked for many national and international language proficiency tests such as IELTS. It has been developed in Europe to provide:

> "a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively. [...] The Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners' progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. [...] It provides the means for educational administrators, course designers, teachers, teacher trainers, examining bodies, etc., to reflect on their current practice, with a view to situating and co-ordinating their efforts and to ensuring that they meet the real needs of the learners for whom they are responsible."

(CoE 2001, p.1)

The CEFR encompasses six language proficiency levels with A1 and A2 levels describing a 'basic user', B1 and B2 levels describing an 'independent user' and C1 and C2 describing a 'proficient user' (*See* Appendix). It has been applied in various contexts, mostly in post-secondary and adult education, and has been rated highly in terms of its usefulness, teacher-friendly description and clearer instructions by teachers, teacher trainers, test developers and material writers (CoE 2005).

One of the strengths of the CEFR is that it can be extended to other languages. This is in no way a simple matter; however, with proper support and training it can be achieved. An example of this is the 2002 *Asset Languages* project, which was launched as part of the UK *National Languages Strategy* in order to promote foreign language learning in the UK. Though insufficient funding for the project meant it was, unfortunately, short lived, the research available from its development remains useful in present times. In preparing for the project, it was found that 'existing qualifications in languages were confusing and uninformative about the levels of competence they represented'(NLP 2002). There was a need for a 'ladder of levels which would identify broad equivalences with existing qualifications, and which would at the same time seek to define each level in operational terms which would be readily understood by learners and the wider world'. Basing their work on the CEFR, researchers developed the *Languages Ladder*, a "proficiency framework to organize learning and interpret learning outcomes" (Jones & Saville 2009, p.56). Like the CEFR, language proficiency could be estimated on a 6-level scale, and included the four sub-skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), and was developed for 25 languages. Languages included various European languages as well as Japanese, Arabic, Russian, Turkish, Bengali, Mandarin, Panjabi, and Urdu, among others (Procter n.d.). The developers of the *Language Ladder* emphasise that this tool was not for facilitating cross-language comparability. Rather, any comparisons made are 'between the exam and the CEFR reference levels, as described by the scales'(Jones *et al*. 2010, p.229).

The fact that the CEFR is an international framework is of high relevance to AKU. Indeed, there is an increasing need to have a common currency with which to describe the language levels (overall and in specific skills) of students, Staff and Faculty as well as benchmark individual progress against international standards. Moreover, the adaptability of the

Framework to other languages including Urdu offers possibilities of examining proficiency levels in other languages (e.g. Urdu and Kiswahili).

The Council of Europe has introduced the European Language Portfolio (ELP) to support the learning of languages. ELP (a) 'supports the development of learner autonomy, plurilingualism and intercultural awareness and competence', and (b) 'allows users to record their language learning achievements and their experience of learning and using languages' (Council of Europe n.d.). The ELP is divided into three parts:

- Language Passport – an overview of languages learnt and their proficiencies
- Language Biography – goals and self-assessment can-do checklists
- Dossier – select materials which showcase achievements or experiences noted in the Language Passport or Language Biography

The ELP is linked directly to the CEFR. However, unlike the CEFR, which might be considered a tool for specialists, as was discussed, the ELP has been developed specifically for users, and it maintains a strong focus on communication. User-friendly information in the form of videos, example portfolios, country-specific examples, and other documentation is plentiful, accessible, and easy to navigate. Through the provided links, language learners can learn how to create a portfolio of their various languages to present the proficiency levels they have attained, both overall and for each sub-skill. It would be worth exploring whether ELP can be adopted as a tool in language enrichment programmes provided to students, Staff and Faculty at AKU.

3.2 Language levels for academic study

By far the most frequently used university admissions tests of language proficiency are the IELTS and the TOEFL iBT[21]. It should be noted however that these tests are expensive and beyond the means of the majority of potential students within the context within which AKU works Inadvertently, therefore, if these tests are used as a measure of language proficiency, they could act as a barrier to university applications and exclude some very good applicants on financial/SES rather than academic grounds, a consideration of relevance to AKU's access aspirations. Issues of subsidy may be relevant should AKU decide to select one of these tests in place of its current English test as part of its entrance requirements.[22]

The IELTS language proficiency measure has 9 reporting bands overall, and these are reported separately for the 4 language skills, i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as well as a total (combined) level. There is an expectation that students should achieve at least 6, 6.5 or 7+ to be considered for university entry. This does however vary from institution to institution in the UK and elsewhere. Golder *et al*. (2009) found that 6.5 was judged an

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[21] Test of English as a Foreign Language internet Based Test (includes a speaking element in addition to reading, writing and listening measures)

[22] To date, AKU uses Passport as a test of English language which is calibrated against the widely used and internationally recognized Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR); *see* Section 3 for further details of the CEFR.

appropriate overall IELTS band score for study in Canada, but added that the reading score should be at least band 7, and that writing and listening should each be at least 6.5; only speaking was recommended a 'pass' level of 6.0. The importance of language proficiency levels may also differ by field. For example, O'Neill *et al*. (2005) argued for at least a score of 220 on TOEFL (the version that pre-dates the 'new look' revised TOEFL iBT) for entry-level nursing work in the US. What is clear from the research more generally is the importance of looking at sub-scores for each of the language skill components on language tests such as IELTS, noting additionally that different courses may well require a higher band level on one skill than another. For example, at the University of Bristol UK, the university minimum of IELTS entry level is 6.5, with several departments adhering to this threshold level, noting however that four of the 13 programmes in Education opted for a higher entry level of 7 (Rea-Dickins *et al*. 2007; 2011).

Of particular relevance to Pakistan are the following two studies. Using a test and instruments designed by the researcher, Mansoor (2003) surveyed students and teachers from public and private colleges and universities in all Pakistan's capital cities, the majority of whom sat an English proficiency test. The results suggested that the average English language score of university students (n = 1,928) did not exceed 47%, with students from private higher education institutions scoring significantly higher, with a mean of 54.5% and a standard error (SE) of 0.73, as opposed to a mean of 43.0% and a SE of 0.49 for students attending public institutions. Given the higher mean score for the private sector sampled, this suggests that despite the significant difference between both groups, students in public and private institutions in Pakistan have relatively poor English language proficiency. However, what this study lacks is a common benchmark for talking about levels of language proficiency, nationally or internationally. In spite of its limitations (*see* for example Little 2011), the CEFR provides a very strong currency for developing shared understandings when talking about language proficiency and it is also benchmarked to a huge international literature and body of work. For these reasons, the CEFR levels have been used in the testing and research at AKU and the CEFR was also discussed as the currency for determining English language levels at AKU (*see* Minutes LPTG1, 20 October 2016)

In 2014, a study of English language levels was also carried out at AKU with 130 graduate students. The findings suggested that 85% of the test takers possessed a level of English proficiency equivalent to B2 (upper intermediate) level on the CEFR[23] (ELE_net, 2014) with 10% placed in band B1 (intermediate). It should be noted at this stage that (i) B2 is a wide band, albeit a category that describes an 'Independent user' of English, with an equivalence ranging from 5.5 – 6.5 on the IELTS and (ii) quite a few of the sample were a the low B2 level. It would be valuable to investigate further whether a B2 level is 'enough' for AKU students to complete their studies successfully and reach their full potential, as opposed to just 'getting by'. This would appear to be a seminal issue for AKU if the University wishes to maintain the highest quality standards of its education. The ELE_net (2014) report also stated that based on current language proficiency levels of AKU students, a significant third of them would not meet the minimum language admission requirements of most UK universities. This

[23] http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf

is significant as AKU aspires to benchmark itself on a par with other international universities. We may also note that if AKU were to go for C1 as the entry level, we would decimate if not eliminate our student intake for many programmes at AKU.

Some universities accept students at levels that might be considered to be on the 'margins of acceptability' and whom they consider to be in need of further academic language skills support. Various universities globally provide excellent opportunities for English language enhancement and have developed a wide range of resources (*see* Section 4). Unfortunately, not all students in fact get the language support they need for successful university study. Mazdayasna & Tahririan (2008), for example, found that Iranian nursing and midwifery students were dissatisfied with their single English for Special Purposes (ESP)[24] course as their expectation was to receive linguistic support throughout their studies. The students' professors agreed, arguing that their students needed higher reading and speaking abilities, and a better knowledge of vocabulary. Saudi nursing students, reported in Suliman and Tadros (2011), were of a similar view explaining their fear of English communication due to challenges of pronunciation and a lack of general fluency.

In terms of the appropriateness of the recognised language proficiency measures available to assess English language levels for university study, some researchers have questioned the suitability of certain measures with reference to specific audiences. Sedgwick *et al.* (2016), for example, have queried the suitability of IELTS for nurses, suggesting that one solution might be for the UK to assess the English of international nurses with a test similar to Australia's Occupational English Test. For AKU, similarly, decisions had to be taken as to which is the most appropriate measure and reporting scales to use for its language research and for its admissions processes. Whilst not necessarily the best test *per se*, the first pilot using Password went to Academic Council, where the recommendation was made for it to be used as a common AKU language admissions test was approved. Password provides a good fit for AKU purposes in terms of cost, reliability, widening access, and is benchmarked to the CEFR.

Interpreting English proficiency test scores is an important consideration, not only for research studies and university admissions but also for language enhancement decision making. Relating to discussions of using the overall band score or the individual sub-skills scores on university admissions tests, it has been suggested that one solution to observed mismatches between proficiency test scores and ability might be to focus primarily on the most relevant scores to the academic work of the students. Kokhan (2012), for example, has suggested that overall score and writing score on the TOEFL iBT are most relevant to academic work.

From the above, it is observed that there are several issues to be kept in mind:

(i) entry level requirements for the different programmes of study;

(ii) identification of students who meet the other admissions criteria but are viewed to need ongoing language support once at university;

[24] English for Special Purposes: In this case it is for nursing studies but it could be related to engineering, medicine and so forth.

(iii) the nature of the in-sessional enrichment programmes; the suitability of the available language proficiency measures for different student groups, and

(iv) Password Knowledge Test, the entrance test currently used at AKU, does not assess the 4 language skills and it will be important to discuss whether the University should move to a four skills test that is within cost, accessible etc.[25]

(v) In the event of a four skills tests, account should be taken of the individual skill scores rather than relying on the overall (single) total level (as some university administrators do, e.g. Rea-Dickins *et al*. 2007).

3.3 Use of IELTS by professional organisations

The section above related to language levels for academic studies more generally. Here we examine the language requirements stipulated by the professions. Currently, the minimum English IELTS requirements for various professional organisations in the UK are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: IELTS requirements of UK professional bodies

	Minimum score	Exceptions
Health and Care Professions Council[26]	7.0 overall; no skill element below 6.5	Speech and language therapists minimum 8.0; nothing below 7.5
General Medical Council[27]	7.5 overall; no skill element below 7.0	
Nursing and Midwifery Council[28]	7.0 overall; no skill element below 7.0	
General Pharmaceutical Council[29]	7.0 overall; no skill element below 7.0	
General Dental Council[30]	7.0 overall; no skill element below 6.5	

Merrifield (2008) explained that reasons behind the standards for these medical professionals include the potential for harm to patients both when communicating directly to patients and when handing over patients (e.g. after shifts). It is to be noted here that the context is the UK where English is used for professional communication. One question therefore of relevance

[25] The providers of Password Knowledge Test (English Language Testing Ltd.) have also developed a four skills test which would be approximately 20% of the cost of IELTS or TOEFL iBT. However, this test is delivered online, which would present huge logistical challenges to run as a common admissions test across AKU.

[26] http://www.hcpc-uk.co.uk/apply/international/

[27] http://www.gmc-uk.org/doctors/registration_applications/13680.asp

[28] https://www.nmc.org.uk/registration/joining-the-register/trained-outside-the-eueea/ielts/

[29] https://www.pharmacyregulation.org/sites/default/files/guidance_on_evidence_of_english_language_skills.pdf

[30] http://www.gdcuk.org/Dentalprofessionals/Applyforregistration/Documents/GDC%20Guidance%20on%20English%20Language%20Controls%20(September%202016).pdf

to AKU is: what are the implications for university trained professionals at AKU who will be working in contexts where, for example, the medium for professional-patient/client communication is Kiswahili or Urdu? Further, since part of the AKU proposition is to build human capacity (especially in the health services) to an international standard, a tension arises to the extent that we are *de facto* contributing to an individual's opportunity for mobility with potential 'brain drain consequences.

In addition, pharmacists require communicative competence with a wide range of customers they are likely to meet in the course of their work. Research results suggest that writing skills often present the most problems, but that speaking and reading skills are considered the most important, particularly for doctors. Language proficiency is undoubtedly essential, but improving medical professionals' approachability and ability to convey empathy are also important in the medical community (Dahm & Yates 2013).

One task for AKU could be to investigate and determine the importance of both English language and other language skills as they are used in academic and workplace settings as the basis for setting minimum language competence levels for these contexts.

3.4 Getting ready for university

As mentioned above, many universities, in recognition of the language support needs of its students, provide enrichment courses for its students once they have gained university admission and commenced their study programmes. The terminology requires some clarification here, noting that 'enrichment' is generally used at AKU to mean full-time or part-time study prior to starting an academic programme. These will usually cover English as well as other areas (e.g. IT, Maths). In the UK, however, pre-sessional generally refers to full-time preparatory course in English for Academic Purposes, with in-sessional referring to programmes once a student has gained university admission.

Various studies have investigated the relationships between the number of hours of intensive language support and score gains on language tests, most notably IELTS and TOEFL. Ling *et al*. (2014) evidence that students can improve their language test results (TOEFL iBT in this case) after undertaking an intensive course. Their participants showed improvement in as little as six months, and this improvement was observed regardless of whether the students were taking courses for specific test preparation or for general English. Other research has suggested that improvement of one band (on the nine-band) IELTS scale is possible. However, Green (2005) explained that this might be optimistic, though he accedes that lower-level students might enjoy faster test score gains than students at higher levels of English language proficiency. This last point, i.e. the different levels of student language proficiency, is of high relevance to AKU in respect of the spread of observed CEFR band levels B1 – C1 (ELE_net 2014; 2016) and the need to differentiate between language levels in any future AKU language proficiency research studies. Elder & O'Loughlin (2003) more realistically, perhaps, have suggested a gain in the order of ½ band on the IELTS after 200 hours of intensive study (e.g. an increase from, say, band level 6 to 6.5). Their participants were not only studying in language centres in Australia and New Zealand but we should also note that

they had access to an English speaking environment outside the classroom which may be considered a potentially key factor in the language improvement process.

Of particular note, albeit discouraging, Elder and O'Loughlin reported that even when students were able to improve their scores to meet the minimum standard necessary for academic study in New Zealand, minimum-level IELTS scorers once at university reported struggling with the demands of EMI. Whilst Liu (2014) found that preparation courses did not necessarily result in improved IELTS scores, this study suggested however that test-taking strategy instruction could be useful; a finding also replicated by Motallebzadeh & Mamdoohi (2011), who identified that being explicitly taught learning strategies could be beneficial to Iranian students preparing for TOEFL iBT in their home country. There are several points to tease out here: firstly students may achieve the 'pass level' on a language test and yet still find it difficult to cope with their academic programmes, partly explained by the fact that the test demands and the study context are vastly different. Secondly, coaching or 'teaching to the test' can raise test scores but on the other hand do not provide the skills for negotiating the demands of an academic programme of study. Whilst an enrichment programme is expected to make a difference in test scores, it is key to be mindful of the purpose for the test in relation to identifying students who will be better able to benefit from a course of study, rather than just scraping through – possibly rather 'painfully'.

In their analysis of the use of IELTS as an admission tool, the role of pre-sessional language courses in university admissions and of student identity, Rea-Dickins *et al*. (2007; 2011) identified a variety of issues relevant to this analysis, summarised as follows:

- "Equity issues became apparent in our data, with acceptance on some programmes for students with similar IELTS profiles more likely than others
- Accommodation for pre-sessional [aka enrichment] programmes may also be dependent on the strength of the application overall
- Considerable ambiguity prevailed over what constitutes a successful outcome from pre-sessional language training, revealing diversity within and across departmental practices
- Queries were raised over the actual impact possible of pre-sessional language training in raising an IELTS score by 1 band level in 10 weeks
- Different individual student learning experiences may be linked more closely to their IELTS profile than to 'success' in the pre-sessional training." (2007 p. 48).

The next section focuses further on research that has explored relationships between university entry language levels, preparation courses and academic performance.

3.5 Impact of English language levels, preparation and academic performance

It is overly simplistic to suggest that higher English language proficiency scores necessarily result in better performance at university, but there seems to be a dearth of such research in AKU contexts. We note, however, decades of research examining the correlation between

English language proficiency and GPA in different parts of the world, some dating from the early TOEFL studies in the 1960's, and whilst English has been identified as one of the predictors of successful university outcomes, such findings need to be interpreted cautiously. For example, whilst Feast (2002) and Maleki & Zangani (2007) asserted that higher IELTS scores were correlated with higher academic performance in an Australian university setting, Bridgeman *et al.*'s (2016) results suggest this may be problematic. Focusing on international students at a US university, the researchers found that different sections of the test correlated differentially with the academic performance of students from, for example, different first-language backgrounds and even with different majors (*see* also Hill *et al.* 1999; Cho & Bridgeman 2012). Krausz *et al.* (2005) found that for international accounting majors at a US university, GMAT is a better predictor of academic performance than TOEFL. Further, studies by Yen and Kuzma (2009) and by Zhengdong (2009) both indicate that while high language proficiency scores might result in an initial advantage, lower-scoring students seem to be able to catch up. Zhendong suggested that lower-proficient participants in Hong Kong were able to catch up and finish their degree programmes on a par with their initially higher-scoring peers with the help of an IELTS preparation course.

Perhaps surprisingly, typing (keyboard) skill seems not to correlate to TOEFL iBT[31] scores (Barkaoui 2014), but research has suggested that some skills are useful for test preparation, for example quality note-taking (Song 2012), discussion and presentation skills, and describing illustrations and graphs (Ockey *et al.* 2014). More recently, uses relating to the effects on test performance of different test administration platforms are being researched.

The research of Rea-Dickins *et al.* (2007; 2011) also highlighted other facets of the relationships between student test performance and 'success' in academic studies. In their research summary, a number of points were highlighted pointing to the struggles experienced by students who had been successful in their university admissions, i.e. they had achieved university places:

- Significant struggles on the part of students emerge consistently throughout data:
  - (i) Some of these appear to be language related, with 'problems' explained by, for example, a deficit in one or more language skills, having non-native speaker status, or different previous study experiences
  - (ii) Some of these are likely to be challenges faced by all students engaging in postgraduate study; in terms of identity theory they are likely to characterise all learning in terms of negotiating membership of … the post-graduate teaching and learning community
  - (iii) These dimensions of struggle … from an identity perspective … require attention as part of *managing learning* [our emphasis] as opposed to *managing admissions*

[31] TOEFL iBT is the internet-based form of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) which assesses English language proficiency for study purposes and measures listening, reading, writing and speaking skills.

(iv) Establishing the validity of IELTS from a predictive/correlational validation perspective does not and cannot take into account the mix of factors that exert an influence on students' effectiveness in study contexts (2011, p. 74).

3.6 Faculty English language competencies

Of relevance to the AKU context in which significant numbers of faculty do not have English as their first language is the situation in which universities induct their doctoral and post-doctoral students to teaching. However, students are not alone in their language struggles; faculty also report facing a number of challenges and, as one example at AKU, it is reported (personal communication) that Residents on the hospital side have specific language challenges.

Mansoor's (2003) study reported in 3.1 also investigated university teachers' overall English proficiency, reporting scores as low as 61%, (although as noted above in 3.1 these percentage scores are problematic as we do not have a recognised benchmark against which to equate these marks). This study noted that low Faculty English proficiency levels could exacerbate the language challenges faced by university students, in turn impoverishing education provision by faculty not being able to support students effectively in the ways needed. Ultimately this will impact on the quality of education provision in terms of support for the students' academic studies as well as their English language proficiency development. A similar scenario could prevail at AKU and, thus, it would be instructive for subsequent language policy decision making within AKU to identify further the specific language needs of faculty and their language levels.

Whilst linguistic ability is undoubtedly important, as clarity in the classroom is essential to learning (e.g. Li *et al*., 2011), other studies have suggested a somewhat different perspective in that difficulties may stem more from practical and pedagogical causes than linguistic ones. Albeit with a different target audience from that at AKU, Zhou's (2014) study of International Graduate Teaching Assistants (IGTA) in a US university found that support and resources for IGTAs to be severely lacking, and that IGTAs require training in pedagogy, such as facilitating classroom discussion and employing effective questioning techniques. It will be important to investigate this interrelationship between language and pedagogical skills in the context of AKU faculty. Other training might include provision of quality feedback to students and the effective use of non-verbal communication[32] (Kim 2016). Another suggestion for easing the burden felt by IGTAs was to make their role clear both to students and to faculty to reduce opportunity for misunderstanding. While some universities pair IGTAs with experienced faculty for mentoring, it was suggested that such arrangements should be made with caution; Twale *et al*. (1997) found that experienced faculty were under time constraints that prevented them from being effective mentors. They also highlighted that there are many research faculty who lack the pedagogical training necessary to mentor teaching assistants. More generally, i.e. beyond the teaching assistant context, there are

[32] *See* also for a study by AKU SONAM faculty on giving written feedback http://ecommons.aku.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1031&context=pakistan_fhs_son

implications here that can be applied to AKU Residents and Faculty generally, specifically the synergies between the ELE_net and the Teaching and Learning Quality Network and the role of each in respect of research findings such as these.

Attitudes of faculty to EMI are also relevant to the AKU context. Researchers have suggested that EMI settings require special consideration. Although faculty and students alike are often English-language learners, faculty have been found to have reasons for preferring EMI over other language arrangements, such as majority-language instruction or English-assisted instruction (Sert 2008). For example, faculty at a Turkish institution reported in Zare-ee & Gholami (2013) expressed a preference for EMI because of a) the status it confers on the university, b) the loss of meaning that occurs during translation, i.e. from English to the first language of students, and c) the increased opportunities to benefit from and produce international research. Additionally, Turkish lecturers in Başıbek *et al*. (2014) using partial EMI in their institution were agreed on the value of EMI but, given the range of language abilities of their students, they argued for a flexible application of EMI. Faculty in Korean EMI higher education settings have also echoed the call for a similar flexibility (Byun *et al*. 2011). Faculty attitudes and resistance towards EMI and also in respect of English language development have been surveyed, with Dearden (2016) a key reference here.

3.7 Impact on English language levels through EMI university studies

Another set of studies have addressed issues of English language improvement once students have joined their university courses. This is of relevance to the discussion at AKU around whether there is and/or should be the expectation that students should improve their English levels by the end of their programmes through EMI and whether there should be some form of exit level English language certification, or similar.

One study conducted by Humphreys *et al*. (2012) focused on international undergraduates in Australia. They found that writing scores remained stable over the course of one semester, although the four language sub-skills related to speaking improved statistically significantly during this time. Although it appears a common expectation that students are likely to improve throughout the course of their studies, this is not always borne out by research. For example in Craven (2012), of those students who entered an Australian university with the minimum 6.5 on IELTS, only a minority were found to be able to raise their overall and sub-skill scores to 7.0. One caveat suggested by the author is that those most likely to achieve this increase were younger students. Again, this finding has implications for any further AKU language research and the need for relevant differentiation between student profiles in the population as a whole.

In relation to students' reported 'struggles' once within their academic programmes, the research of Rea-Dickins *et al*. (2007) identified that speaking in one-to-one tutorials was considered problematic by some students (e.g. status, anxiety and academic terminology), in contrast to participating in peer group discussion, as they attempted to negotiate relationships essential to academic community membership. These authors also found (i) that the amount of reading and the associated time demands were perceived for some students as a source of

difficulty rather than actual text content or textual features and (ii) areas where students appeared to experience significant challenges were related to reading, writing and reading into writing (i.e. reading for assignment writing): e.g. strategies to read the right/important stuff and time management; learning how to produce academic-like assignments through reading the work of others, relying on tutor feedback. It will be important for AKU to ascertain what the perceived difficulties and challenges students experience in their learning through EMI are.

Findings from research at AKU, in SONAM and through ELE_net and other surveys, have highlighted that students made little progress in terms of improving their English language proficiency level from the outset of their studies (i.e. Year 1) to the start of their Year 2 programme (ELE_net 2016). There has been discussion at AKU as to whether there should be an expectation that one of the outcomes from studying at AKU is increased levels of English language proficiency and for this reason the planned research to follow up on these same students as they move into their Year 3 programmes should prove illuminating and highly relevant to the work of the LPTG. This follow up is due to take place in week beginning February 17th 2017.

The research of O'Loughlin and Arkoudis (2009) is also relevant to this issue. The authors examined students' entrance and exit IELTS scores to see how international students improved throughout the course of a degree at an Australian university without giving any focus to English test preparation. They found that while students' listening and reading scores on IELTS had increased on the exit exam, their writing scores were the least improved. For them, this indicated that a special focus is needed on writing in order to improve this skill. More generally, this raises issues (as noted in 3.2. above) as to whether some language skills are more 'coachable' than others and whether they develop at the same rate.

3.8 Workplace communication

Turning next to issues of language proficiency in workplace settings, it may be more difficult to estimate which skills are most needed in the workplace, as the relevant skills will differ from field to field, with varying degrees of specialisation. Although many English classes emphasise formal presentation skills, research suggests that other skills might be even more important and that the focus of English language enhancement will be dictated by setting in alignment with need. Some studies emphasise the need for improved writing skills, such as for emails and various kinds of reports (Moore *et al.* 2015; Knoch *et al.* 2016); others, focusing on engineers, call for more attention to oral communication skills (Kassim & Ali 2010). Realising this, perhaps, a number of researchers, for example, Arkoudis *et al.* (2009) call for post-secondary education institutions to connect English classes to specific fields of study. For business settings, Ehrenreich (2010) calls for the ELT industry to focus on mastering business conventions, or 'communities of practice', rather than on improving general English skills. For example, communication repair is an essential skill (Mauranen 2006), as is the ability to make 'small talk' (Pullin 2010), and to be able to give and take instructions and work as part of a team (Crosling & Ward 2002). Lehtonen & Karjalainen

(2008) propose that linguistic skills are a necessary but insufficient factor in the workplace; they also emphasise the importance of having cross-cultural awareness – knowing how to behave in business settings in various cultures, an implication for any enrichment programme.

In another study, engineers in Pakistan were found to use ineffective strategies when faced with communication challenges in the workplace, for example, abandoning the message, code-switching, and using fillers to stall for time (Kakepoto *et al*. 2013). Qian (2009)recommends that engineers focus on mastering formal communication skills, such as those for conducting meetings or meeting with clients. Even more importantly, though, he emphasised the need for strong written communication skills – reports of different kinds (technical, progress, business trip, specification, accident). There is perhaps reason to focus on written communication. For example, Firth (2009) found that in non-native to non-native speaker interaction, speakers tended to support each other effectively, with the implication that the so-called 'native-like English' need not be the gold standard; indeed the relatively recent and considerable body of applied linguistics research in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)[33] strongly contests the value and necessity of the 'native speaker norm'.

In terms of implications for AKU, issues of the relative importance of language skills, and in which language, matched to individual need as measured by a reputable language tests are important here.

3.9 Summary

In this section, we have explored a range of factors through research that has focused on different facets of language tests and competency levels. In particular, we have raised awareness of language levels needed for academic courses of study, including professional organisations, and highlighted the importance of having a shared currency for research into and discussion of language levels. We have identified some of the different findings around progress through enrichment programmes, both pre- and post-university admission, as well as the complexities and impact around students struggling in their studies through EMI in spite of having gained a 'pass' grade on a reputable university entrance test. We have included research on Faculty English language competences and, whilst we have been unable to do justice to the literature on workplace communication due to time constraints, addresses some pints with respect to the importance of good/adequate communication skills in professional contexts, having noted elsewhere (e.g. Kamwendo 2008; Neke 2005) that there is the potential for serious consequences in clinical contexts arising from 'poor' communication.

It has become clear that a mix of factors exert an influence on student effectiveness in academic studies through EMI. The studies and discussion above raise a number of implications for AKU, for students, Staff and Faculty. These include:

[33] *See* for example the work of Jenkins (2009; 2012)and Seidlhofer (2001).

1. Differentiating between language tests as an admissions tool and language test results for managing students' language learning issues
2. The need for a common reference for speaking about and researching levels of language competence across the 4 language skills as well as general English language proficiency. This is applicable across all stakeholders: staff, Faculty and students
3. Students may struggle in their studies even if they have 'passed' the university admissions test(s)
4. The need to identify the uses of both English and other languages in AKU academic EMI contexts and professional workplaces/settings
5. On the bases of the previous point, consider establishing minimum competency levels in relevant languages
6. Achieving consistency in practices across the university in relation to opportunities for enrichment programmes and referral to pre-session or foundation enrichment programmes and for EMI awareness programmes for Faculty and staff
7. Capturing perception data across the university in relation to, as examples, the language difficulties of students, Faculty and staff, to EMI and other relevant issues, some of which have already been identified through ELE-net surveys
8. Establishing clear goals for enrichment programmes and procedures for student assessment both pre- and post-enrichment programmes
9. Researching the extent to which AKU students progress in their English language proficiency and skills from the start to their completion of studies and identify realistic exit levels
10. Clarifying the role of the Teaching and Learning Quality net in supporting ELE_net and create a closer working relationship between the two networks with specific reference to pedagogical training for faculty and tutors, support for EMI as well as increasing language awareness at AKU.

4. Ways of addressing language issues in EMI higher education institutions

The studies reviewed in Section 3 suggest that even when students meet the minimum admissions requirements for English language proficiency set by universities, they struggle with their studies. Empirical evidence also indicates that expectations of progress following enrichment programmes should be reasonable and realistic and that even when provided with effective language instruction, individuals need a considerable amount of time to move up the proficiency scale. AKU has recently compiled data on the impact of enrichment programmes and it would be worthwhile investigating the extent to which the findings of these studies resonate with what has been published so far in the literature.

In addition to examining research on students' proficiency levels in Section 3, we also reviewed the literature on the language competence of academic and non-academic staff and highlighted that both groups of university staff could make use of English language support

that is well targeted and relevant to their job. Indeed, for any language provision to be effective, it needs to be based on a needs analysis of the learners, be they students or staff members. In subsection 4.1, we describe a particular model for developing language provision that takes into account the specific needs of the learners and match them against the logistics and resources available at the university institution in question. In the rest of Section 4, we describe forms of English language support provided by some higher education institutions to students (4.2) and faculty members (4.3). We later highlight (in 4.4) editing policies in some universities and consider briefly multilingual approaches adopted by some institutions that encourage a higher level of language awareness (4.5 and 4.6).

4.1 Needs assessment model for language provision

University students acknowledge that they struggle with language and need support from their institutions (Hurst 2015), and yet, when programmes are provided, students often fail to take advantage of them (Reinders 2005). Hence, it is essential that the offered programmes target students' needs directly and explicitly. One way of addressing the gap in services offered to students is to conduct a needs analysis (Cheng *et al*. 2004). Unfortunately, students might struggle to identify their precise needs and they suggest how these needs might be met. Briguglio and Watson (2014) propose a Multi-layered Model of Language Development Provision (MMLDP), which takes into consideration both what it is that students need and what higher education institutions can reasonably be expected to provide. The authors concede the advantages of fully embedded language support that is completely integrated into the content of the classes, but also point out that such intensive support will be difficult to implement on a large-scale basis. Therefore, they propose a four-level model. The first level is self-access materials. These are electronic materials that students can use for basic help, either generalised help that could apply broadly to academic work (e.g. how to write a topic sentence), or more specific help that focuses on a particular course or even an individual assignment. The next level is institution-wide centres that offer language support via classes and workshops. The next level requires collaboration between the support centres in level 2 and the various faculties and disciplines across the university. Together, materials, workshops, and tutorials can be designed and tailored for students in each faculty. At the fourth level, language development goals would, if at all possible, merge completely with course content.

The fourth level is, the authors concede, idealistic. Nonetheless, it seems that by following this model by ensuring that high-quality lower-level resources are available, experts working in the higher levels of support would be less burdened and more able to provide the type of support that students would find useful enough to seek out independently. This is highly relevant for AKU where senior stakeholders have mentioned being often encumbered with substantial editing of students' dissertations and theses as well as official letters, emails and minutes (Minutes LPTG1, 20 October 2016). Also, it would be useful to consider a model, similar to the MMLDP described above, that AKU could adopt for a solid foundation of its language support programme. In the first LPTG meeting, the interest in providing language support which is flexible enough so that learners could readily incorporate into their timetable

was expressed (Minutes LPTG1, October 2016). The model described earlier addresses the integration of the language support provision with the content studied at university but does not tackle the flexibility issue which, according to members of the LPTG, is behind a high rate of dropout from language support courses. One suggestion for maintaining students' attendance rate was to make language provision available online. This could be a very good solution but before worrying about flexibility, it might be worth considering different forms of language support that could be adopted at AKU.

4.2 Language support at higher education institutions

Given the substantial language challenges that students may face in their university studies, many higher education institutions in English-speaking countries as well as EMI universities provide various structures of language support. In this subsection, we provide examples of English language support provision in different higher education institutions in Turkey, Hong Kong, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, UK and Pakistan.

In Turkey, EMI in higher education has been on the rise like everywhere else in the world (*see* British Council 2015). Bilkent University in Ankara offers limited English writing support for non-English majors. This includes one-to-one consultations where the student can meet with an expert and receive general advice on 'overall organization of the paper, clarity, coherence, language structure and word choice, and whether it meets the requirements of the task', but students are warned not to expect proofreading or specific grammar correction services[34]. Hong Kong University[35] and Lund University in Sweden[36] both offer general language support courses and self-access materials. The University of Auckland offers diagnostics tests, self-access materials, workshops, learning groups, and subject-specific advising services[37] and English *bootcamps* as well as weekly sessions, workshops, and formal cultural and language exchanges are organised at the University of Western Australia[38]. English for Specific Purposes, Language for Specific Purposes programmes are very common offerings in universities and language centres worldwide. Issues of language use across the curriculum have been on the agenda for a considerable time but predominantly with specific reference to primary and secondary schooling (*see* for example Lin 2016; Mohan *et al*. 2001).

It may be fair to say that, based on our search of different websites of universities around the world, English language support offered in these institutions often falls short of the extensive resources offered by UK institutions. The Higher Education Academy offers advice on how to best offer language support to students, starting before students begin their studies. HEA recommends that lecturers provide readings that students can do in advance of their arrival,

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[34] Bilkent University writing support: http://bilwrite.bilkent.edu.tr/
[35] Hong Kong University language support: http://caes.hku.hk/
[36] Lund University Language support: http://www.lunduniversity.lu.se/current-students/academic-matters-support/the-academic-support-centre
[37] English language support at University of Auckland: https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/for/current-students/cs-academic-information/cs-english-language-support.html
[38] English language support at the University of Western Australia: http://www.student.uwa.edu.au/learning/studysmarter

create glossaries of relevant terms, and upload sample lectures and example assignments[39]. After students arrive, it is recommended to assign texts that vary in difficulty, and to include questions on the readings that students can use to gauge their understanding[40]. Annotated reading lists can also be helpful, especially if they are clearly divided into essential and additional lists. Some students will find it helpful if the lecturer models reading skills, such as skimming to determine a text's value and to understand the overall point being made, and making use of titles and sub-headings to aid in understanding. They also recommend offering students templates which can help them extract the most meaningful information from texts, something which can assist in the development of note-making skills as well. HEA (2014) also recommend focused writing development, especially with the support of language specialists.

Universities in the UK have developed a variety of support structures, usually referred to as 'in-sessional' provision, which benefit international students and in some cases this support is extended to home EL1 speakers, offering credit and non-credit modules, which can be taken on- or offline. The examples we provide here are from four institutions known to provide substantial language assistance to students (Leicester University[41], Oxford Brookes University[42], Nottingham Trent University[43] and Southampton University[44]) but the list is in no way exhaustive of all language support available in UK institutions. In these institutions, the assistance offered to students can be tailored to the needs of both under- and post-graduate students, with the latter receiving more research-focused topics. Students can schedule one-to-one consultations to discuss their work or get feedback on their writing. There are podcasts and freely available online resources; some universities have organised personalised guidance to help students select and work through online courses. Workshops are offered at some universities which cover a variety of academic topics such as citations and plagiarism, essay structure, academic language, report writing, academic vocabulary and grammar, academic presentations, and writing for exams.

In Pakistan, the International Islamic University in Islamabad offers language courses through its English Language Centre[45] (e.g. basic to advanced level English course, communication skills, speaking, academic and creative writing). It also provides preparatory courses for IELTS, TOEFL and other admission tests as well as ESP courses such as English for Lawyers, Business English and English for Executive ad Officials which includes

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[39] HEA Pre-arrival and pre-sessional support: Teaching International Students. Retrieved from https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/pre-arrival_and_pre-sessional_support.pdf
[40] HEA Language: Teaching International Students: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/language.pdf
[41] English language support at Leicester University: http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/handbook/academic/eltu
[42] English language support at Oxford Brookes University: https://www.brookes.ac.uk/students/support-services/english-language-support/
[43] English language support at Nottingham Trent University: http://www4.ntu.ac.uk/student_services/study_support/study_skills_workshops/
[44] English language support at Southampton University: http://www.studyskills.soton.ac.uk/
[45] English language support at the International Islamic University in Islamabad: http://www.iiu.edu.pk/index.php?page_id=111

presentation skills and minutes taking sessions. The duration of these courses ranges between two to six months.

As mentioned in the Introduction, ELE_net was set up to develop a university-wide approach to enhancing English language capacity across AKU. The current provision consists of a mix of English language resources and courses for AKU staff, students and Faculty. This provision is mostly online, and web pages have been developed for each of the targets groups on the AKU website[46]. A threefold increase in this provision is planned in 2017, with around 2,500 places on courses or other support services being offered. Without a more detailed assessment of the overall English language needs across AKU, however, it is currently not possible to assess whether this provision is sufficient to close the gap between existing English language competencies and those needed to function effectively at the standard required.

4.3 EMI training for faculty

It seems that part of the challenge of improving the quality of EMI is first ensuring that lecturers agree with the need for training; experienced faculty might underestimate the role of language in course delivery (Klaassen 2008). Further supporting the need for this initial step is a survey of higher education institutions in Europe, which asked about the minimum English proficiency required to deliver EMI courses. It revealed that a surprising 44% of responding institutions felt that B2 was a sufficient minimum standard (O'Dowd n.d.). Various attempts have been made to increase the ability of faculty members to provide content with EMI. Such measures include diagnostics and testing (Kling 2013) and, depending on proficiency level, short-term and long-term English language courses which focus on teaching (Ball & Lindsay 2013). Other strategies are to create and use in-house resources and certification programmes to increase the quality of EMI. Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg (ALUF) offers a wide variety of resources for faculty, from specific pedagogical skills, such as providing feedback and engaging learners, to broader skills, such as lecturing and presenting research in English[47]. This university is not alone in providing such training for their faculty; O'Dowd reports that almost 68% of 79 surveyed higher education institutions in Europe reported offering similar services, mostly in-house (O'Dowd n.d.). As called for in O'Dowd, ALUF extend beyond merely offering training to also offering formal certification in EMI[48]. Nonetheless, any trainings or certifications offered will be limited in effectiveness if the faculty are not first persuaded of the need for them.

Outside Europe, EMI universities also provide EMI training for their academics. For instance, Bilkent University offers support for faculty at their Centre for Instruction, Education, and Research (CIDER)[49]. The centre focuses on developing faculty teaching skills

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[46] AKU website: https://www.aku.edu/ele-net/Pages/home.aspx
[47] English language support provision at Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg: https://www.sli.uni-freiburg.de/english/emi/courses
[48] EMI certification at Albert-Ludwigs University of Freiburg: https://www.sli.uni-freiburg.de/englisch/emi/quality?set_language=en
[49] EMI training for faculty at Bilkent University: http://buselcider.bilkent.edu.tr/index.html

through events offered through the centre, such as workshops, discussions, and presentations. The centre also offers expert advice and resources which can be accessed either in-person or online.

In Pakistan, the English Language Centre at the International Islamic University in Islamabad does not offer any specific courses to its faculty (*see* subsection 4.2). However, the Centre welcomes anyone wishing to improve their English language skills[50]. Depending on individual needs, faculty members may find some of the courses offered of use to them such as academic writing.

AKU has started to provide a systematic approach to enhancing teaching skills across AKU. The main initiative to date is a compulsory Teaching and Learning Enhancement Workshop for Faculty that have worked for less than five years at AKU. Although this course does not explicitly follow an EMI approach, much of the course is aligned to such an approach. ELE_net has also recently piloted two online courses in EMI. The number of participants taking the course was limited to 14 participants in total). Those who completed the courses (five in total) reported very positively about the courses. It should be pointed out that the participants were self-selecting volunteers for the pilot courses.

4.4 Editing policies at higher education institutions

Higher education institutions have different policies regarding the extent to which students' written assignments such as essays, dissertations and doctoral theses can be edited. For instance, in the Chinese-speaking world, such as China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Macau it seems to be taken for granted that students will require editing services and team up with professional companies that provide these services[51]. This might help explain the difficulty in finding specific editing policies on their websites. Lund University provides professional editing for their staff; as at the institutions above, students are directed to select external providers of professional editing services[52]. This mirrors the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in South Africa which supplies students with a list of vetted providers[53]. Institutions in countries where English is the primary language seem to have more specific guidelines on editing and proofreading. For instance, University of Leicester has a very strict and clear policy on what can be edited and the requirement for students to acknowledge that they have used an editor and abided by the policy[54]. Not only are recommended professional editing companies not listed on the websites, but the rules about what can and cannot be edited are more strictly outlined – an exception to this is the University of Essex in England, which simply instructs the students to consult with their supervisors before seeking

[50] English Language Centre of the International Islamic University, Islamabad: http://www.iiu.edu.pk/index.php?page_id=111
[51] Centre for Applied English Studies, Hong Kong University: http://caes.hku.hk/
[52] Translation and language services at Lund University: http://www.staff.lu.se/support-and-tools/communication-and-graphic-profile/translation-and-language-services
[53] Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. (2016). Language Editing and Proofreading. Retrieved January 3, 2017, from http://rcd.nmmu.ac.za/Master-s-and-Doctoral-Student-Funding/Language-editing-and-proof-reading
[54] Proofreading policies at University of Leicester: http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/assessments/proof-reading

professional editing services. Australia seems to have coherent guidelines for all of its institutions, formalised in a document[55] (IPEd 2013). These guidelines for third party editors limit the work of editors to, e.g., clarity, tone, spelling and mechanics, and formatting[56]. Institutions in other countries, such as New Zealand, formalise their policies item by item, specifying in detail what is and is not permitted, e.g. grammar, punctuation, spelling, and in what format these suggestions be made (i.e. in comments rather than tracked changes)[57].

From our review of English language support provision in various higher education institutions, we noticed that universities which offer extensive language support tend to have more strict editing policies. In contrast, in institutions where the use of professional editing services is encouraged, there seems to be less in-house language support – at least, less that is advertised on the web pages of the institution. AKU has strict regulations regarding plagiarism; however, editing policies remain vague and are inconsistently applied. It will be very important that these policies become clearly defined for both students and faculty and incorporated within the University's Language Policy when developed.

4.5 Multilingual approaches and raising language awareness in EMI higher education

In addition to in-house English language support provided at EMI universities, the use of multilingual and plurilingual approaches has been advocated as a way to address language issues in EMI higher education institutions in Pakistan (Ashraf *et al*. 2014; Canagarajah & Ashraf 2013; Shamim 2011) and Africa (Bagwasi 2012; 2016). Multilingualism and plurilingualism are two approaches of using different languages in a single context. Note that while the two terms are often considered interchangeable, with the former being more common, they are different concepts. The Council of Europe defines the Council of Europe defines multilingualism as 'the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society' (CoE 2001, p.4). Plurilingualism goes beyond this,

> "build[ing] up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact [which allows language users to] call flexibly upon different parts of this competence to achieve effective communication with a particular interlocutor" (CoE 2001, p.4)."

Although there are critics of plurilingual approaches (e.g. Flores 2013) (e.g. Flores 2013), plurilingual they have been widely encouraged in Europe and are nonetheless often deemed beneficial (Jeoffrion *et al*. 2014; Moore & Gajo 2009; Silver & Bokhorst-Heng 2013).

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[55] Australian standards for editing practice: http://iped-editors.org/site/DefaultSite/filesystem/documents/ASEP flat onscreen version.pdf

[56] Guidelines for third party editing in Australian universities: https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_000407

[57] Third party editing regulations at the University of Auckland: https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/about/the-university/how-university-works/policy-and-administration/teaching-and-learning/postgraduate-research/undertaking-your-research/third-party-editing.html

Multilingual approaches have been encouraged by many researchers including scholars in the UK, Pakistan and Africa (e.g. Ashraf *et al*. 2014; Bagwasi 2012; 2016; Canagarajah & Ashraf 2013; Shamim 2011). For instance, Baker (2011) has drawn attention to the quality of learning through the use of different languages within the context of the language in education policy in Wales. And, in a SADC country, Bagwasi (2016, p.9) critiqued Botswana's language in education policy[58] by referring to Baker's position:

> '… when learners are taught and then answer questions in the same language they may not demonstrate understanding, however when they read and discuss a topic in one language and then write about it in another language or respond to the teacher in a different language, they are forced to process and digest the subject matter at a much deeper level.'

Bagwasi continues:

> 'This suggests that using more than one language actually promotes fuller and deeper understanding.'

Rea-Dickins *et al*. (2007) have also reported similar findings in relation to the use of native languages in education in addition to English.

As we know, AKU operates in multilingual countries, as described in Section 1. Multilingual approaches are of particular relevance to AKU because of the specific linguistic contexts in which the University operates. As revealed through the previous sections, a discussion of whether AKU needs to reconsider the use of local languages (e.g. Urdu in Pakistan and Kiswahili in EA) alongside English would appear timely and relevant. This seems to be specifically pertinent in the case of SONAM students who may need to develop strong communication skills in the local languages to interact with their patients in outreach centres. The University may benefit from introducing multilingualism, where appropriate, and a first step could be raising stakeholders' awareness of the linguistic landscape in which the University operates. A good example is the University of Johannesburg which has adopted a language policy asserting the need for actively promoting multilingual awareness, targeting both students and staff[59]. To accomplish this, the policy states that opportunities for learning the four common languages of the region (English, Northern Sotho, Zulu, and Afrikaans) are to be made to staff and students alike in order to promote language awareness in the university. Signage around campus has been made available in all four languages and books translated into all four languages in order to promote a view of equality between these four languages.

[58] This excellent critique related mainly to the use of translanguaging in Botswanan schools rather than in the HE context.

[59] Language policy at the University of Johannesburg: https://www.uj.ac.za/about/Documents/policies/Language Policy - Council approved - 3 April 2014.pdf

4.6 Summary

This section has described some of the ways in which higher education institutions have addressed language issues for students, faculty and staff. The suggestions above are indicative of the types of issues and strategies of high relevance to inform any language policy and subsequent strategy that AKU would like to develop. What comes across of high relevance and key in the literature, is that any support system should be based on a language needs' assessment of all stakeholders and should also take into account the university's available resources and channels of support. On this way, a support programme can be appropriately shaped, one that is realistic and targeted to the stakeholders' specific needs. Multilingual approaches have been encouraged in higher education in many countries that share a similar linguistic complexity to the contexts in which AKU operates. An open dialogue with stakeholders is needed to evaluate the extent to which the use of languages alongside English support or compromise AKU's Mission, in terms of access, quality, relevance and impact. If the inclusion of national languages in Pakistan and EA (i.e. Urdu and Kiswahili respectively) are thought to be beneficial, then it would be necessary to examine the extent to which students, Staff and Faculty have sufficient proficiency to operate in these languages. At some future point, AKU might wish to initiate research that investigates the use of other languages, the proficiency levels of AKU users in these languages, and the impact on communication in professional contexts.

5. Language policy of higher education institutions around the world

A key purpose of this literature review has been to provide a solid foundation and rationale for any subsequent empirical research to be carried out AKU-wide which, in turn, will inform the development of a language policy at a later stage. Having explored various ways of addressing language issues in EMI higher education institutions in the previous section, we turn now to examine examples of language policies in different countries around the world (English-speaking countries, Europe and Africa).

5.1 English-speaking countries

It is noteworthy to mention that language policies are also developed by institutions in English-majority countries. For example, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David has campuses in various regions, some of which use more Welsh than others[60]. The university policy aims to promote the use of Welsh particularly in regions where Welsh is used less than in the region of the main campus. The university applies a bilingual policy when dealing with external communications, i.e. when the preferred language (Welsh or English) of the recipient is known, that language is used; when the preferred language is not known, correspondence is bilingual. When speaking on the phone, staff are to state, when relevant,

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[60] Strategies and Policies at University of Wales Trinity Saint David: http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/about/strategies-and-policies/

that they are bilingual and let the caller choose which language to use. All internal communication is delivered bilingually, but attachments may be left un-translated in the original language. For students, free Welsh language courses are available to non-Welsh speaking students who wish to take them. The language of classroom teaching is not specified, but it seems that there are some opportunities to take Welsh-medium classes, which the university promotes with advertising during Freshers' Week and other events, and it seems there are financial incentives to take these classes. At the University of Aberystwyth[61] all correspondence and documentation for prospective and incoming students is in both languages: Welsh and English. In Canada, McGill University, in majority-French Montreal, has a very short language policy, stating only that the main language of instruction is English, though students can write essays, examinations, and theses in either English or French, unless one of the course objectives is a given language, in which case work must be completed in that language[62].

5.2 Europe

One example of a basic, flexible language policy is that of the Faculty of Humanities and Education at Mondragon University, which they explicitly state is a multilingual one[63]. That which is described actually suggests a policy of plurilingualism. As *plurilingualism* and *multilingualism* are often used interchangeably by non-specialists, with the latter being the more common term, it is possible that use of the term *plurilingualism* was not considered at the time of writing. That they contrast multilingualism with bilingualism – with no mention plurilingualism – further supports the interpretation of the policy as a plurilingual one. The policy explains that teaching is to be carried out in the three languages of the region (Basque, Spanish, English), but the policy allows for flexibility by allowing the educational designers of each degree to determine how to use each of the three languages most effectively. Notably, the institution aims for its graduates to complete their education with proficiency in all three languages. Acknowledging that the majority of faculty and students are speakers of Basque, the policy aims to promote Basque as the language used in personal relationships, working to normalise the use of this language throughout the faculty.

The University of Akureyri in Iceland offers a more specific, detailed example of a language policy[64]. The institution recognises Icelandic as the official language, and as such, all documents produced by the university are to be written in Icelandic. Any document in another language is deemed a foreign-language translation, and the original Icelandic one is to be used in cases of dispute. Meetings are to be conducted in Icelandic; if another language is to be used, then prior notification of this is to be given. Teaching is to be carried out, where practicable, in Icelandic, but even if another language is used for the delivery of a course, the policy states that students must still learn to discuss the concepts of that course in Icelandic.

[61] University of Aberystwyth: https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/
[62] Language Policy, University of McGill: https://www.mcgill.ca/study/2016-2017/university_regulations_and_resources/undergraduate/gi_lang_policy
[63] Language Policy, Mondragon University: http://www.mondragon.edu/en/huhezi/about-us/language-policy
[64] Language Policy, University of Akureyri, Iceland: http://english.unak.is/about

Foreign faculty members are given support and five years to achieve knowledge of Icelandic that allows them to carry out administrative and personal communications within the university in this language. For domestic faculty, linguistic support, such as proofreading, translations, and language courses, is offered for Icelandic, English, or for other languages being used. Foreign students are provided with Icelandic language and culture courses.

The Norwegian University of Science and Technology has a detailed policy which echoes many of the statements found in those of the University of Akureyri, but there are some interesting differences as well[65]. For example, while Norwegian (including its variants) is considered the official language, all Scandanavian languages are given equal status to Norwegian, and all non-Scandanavian languages, including English, are classified as foreign languages. Norwegian and English are to be used together in university documents, both internal and external, rather than only in Norwegian. Scientific and academic works in Norwegian are to be promoted where possible. In practice, this means that even if a class is given in a foreign language, students are to be informed of any relevant literature in Norwegian. Unless the syllabus states otherwise, students can write their class assignments or master's theses in any Scandinavian language or in English, but Scandanavian-language theses are to have abstracts in English (or other relevant language). Doctoral dissertations can be written in English or in Norwegian, with abstracts in both languages. For researchers, the policy does not stipulate language skills for individual members, but academic *groups* are to have competence in Norwegian as well as relevant foreign languages. Foreign faculty are given three years in which to attain 'a certain level' of Norwegian language skill.

5.3 Africa

Stellenbosch University in South Africa puts forth a policy of multilingualism[66]. The policy acknowledges the use of Africaans, English, and IsiXhosa at the university, though it seems to suggest that these are not, and cannot be, equal, particularly since IsiXhosa is a language still developing for use in academia. For teaching, the university promotes "parallel-medium teaching and real-time interpreting where practically feasible and affordable", but the policy gives no indication of how this might work in classrooms. Students' development in Africaans and English are to be developed 'systematically' but, again, specifics about how this should happen are not given. Internal university documents are produced in both Afrikaans and English; 'where feasible', external documents are also produced in IsiXhosa.

Also in South Africa, the University of Kwazulu-Natal differs from Stellenbosch in that the dominant language of instruction is only English[67]. The other language mentioned in the policy is IsiZulu, which, like IsiXhosa above, is developing for use as the medium of instruction. The policy states that the university will promote curriculum development in English and in IsiZulu and will encourage research in IziZulu, but it is not clear how this is to

[65] Language Policy, Norwegian University: http://www.ntnu.edu/strategy/language-guidelines

[66] Language at Stellenbosch University: http://www.sun.ac.za/english/about-us/language

[67] Language policy of the University of Kwazulu-Natal (2006): http://registrar.ukzn.ac.za/Libraries/policies/Language_Policy_-_CO02010906.sflb.ashx

take place. Campus signage is to be in both languages, and both languages are used in university administration and ceremonies (e.g. graduation). Language courses for both English and IsiZulu are provided for faculty, but the document does not indicate that these courses are mandatory. Staff and faculty hired after the language policy was implemented are expected to have knowledge of both languages, but the university will support the development of language skills which are weaker than desirable. The language policy at Rhodes University, also in South Africa, largely resembles that of the University of Kwazulu-Natal, except that it specifies that English is the only official language at the university, though they are experimenting with measures intended to encourage the use of Afrikaans and IsiXhosa (e.g. campus media, radio station, etc.)[68].

North-West University is a university in South Africa with campuses in multiple regions where various languages are used, thus making the linguistic situation more complex[69]. Official languages are English, Africaans, and Setswana, and at the Vaal Triangle Campus, Sesotho also has working-language status. The language of research is left up to individual researchers. The issue of languages used for teaching is not specifically addressed, but the various campuses are encouraged to consider the needs and wishes of their students in their decision making.

Conclusion

The majority of AKU students, Faculty and Staff[70] are non-native speakers of English yet they are expected to operate effectively through the medium of English. With many of them demonstrating low proficiency of English, the University has been facing significant language challenges in functioning efficiently through the English medium. In an effort to tackle this complex challenge, a Language Policy Thinking Group comprising key AKU stakeholders as well as EMI and language experts, was put together to conduct the necessary research that will potentially lead to the development of an AKU-wide Language Policy. As a first step, a literature review was carried out to provide a solid scholarly foundation for possible empirical studies the LPTG may decide to conduct at a later stage. The literature review covered five broad themes: (1) Linguistic context and backgrounds of countries where AKU operates; (2) Key language and communication issues in countries where AKU operates and impact of EMI & working in a foreign language; (3) Testing and competency levels; (4) Ways of addressing language issues in EMI higher education institutions; (5) Language policy of higher education institutions around the world.

While AKU is not the only EMI institution facing language issues, it is worth noting that the complexity of the multilingual contexts in which the University operates renders the task of addressing these challenges highly intricate. There appears to be a hunger for learning English and a conviction that operating through EMI guarantees a better future in Pakistan

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[68] Language Policy, Rhodes University, South Africa: https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/institutionalplanning/documents/Language%20Policy.pdf

[69] Institutional Language Policy of the North-West University (2012): http://www.nwu.ac.za/opencms/export/NWU/html/gov-man

[70] All students and a significant minority of Faculty and Staff at AKU's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (ISMC) in London are non-native speakers of English.

and EA; however, there is no empirical evidence to back this claim at AKU. It is therefore important to survey attitudes towards EMI amongst students, Staff and Faculty.

The literature review outlines a number of language-related issues in EMI universities in Pakistan and EA; namely the low English language proficiency of students, staff and faculty members. ELE_net is developing an evidence base on language levels of students. However, the data is still incomplete and more evidence needs to be collected in relation to the proficiency levels of AKU students, Staff and Faculty and their language needs. The literature review also points to the use of local languages alongside English in EMI institutions (e.g. code-switching and translanguaging). It would be worthwhile for AKU to survey the extent to which other languages are used by students, Faculty and Staff in learning, teaching and communication in the workplace. Indeed, a needs assessment should underpin any language support strategy that AKU develops for it to effectively support the various stakeholders.

In this literature review, the need for a shared framework to indicate more consistently what is considered by 'high' or 'low' proficiency has been highlighted and the CEFR has been described given that the Framework is widely used and provides international benchmarks. Empirical studies covering various aspects of language tests and competency levels have been reviewed. A number of findings have been outlined including the need to define the minimum competency levels for students, Faculty and Staff that are sufficient for operating through the medium of English and the amount of realistic gain that can be expected from enrichment programmes and by the end of their studies. Answering these questions within the AKU context is of prime importance.

Evident throughout this literature are a number of tensions; for example, between achieving and maintaining quality on the one hand and maximising access to those most marginalised who would benefit from a quality university education. As a university that benchmarks itself internationally and aspired to reach the highest standards, tensions also arise. On the one hand research quality assurance exercises in many countries, especially North America, Europe and Australia, (e.g. the *Research Excellence Framework*, UK) recognise publications in high index journals as an important criterion in determining the esteem of a particular university and its faculty. And, AKU for its part uses this standard in its promotions guidelines. On the other hand, consider the impact of a midwifery manual, written in Kiswahili or Urdu that was the main text for a whole region or country of midwives. Being able to communicate specialist clinical knowledge and skills in a language other than English has the real potential to make a difference, albeit in a different way to an academic publication, to many more professionals and, in turn, their patients. Recognising the power of languages to impact on the communities to whom AKU reaches out is a factor that, too, should be considered in the rationale that may underpin a Language Policy for AKU.

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Appendix: Common Reference Levels: Global Scale

Proficient User	C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Table reproduced (Council of Europe 2001, p.24)

6. About the authors

Yasmine El Masri

Yasmine El Masri is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Educational Assessment at Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment (OUCEA). Yasmine is involved in a number of projects at OUCEA and is currently leading an ESRC GCRF-funded project entitled 'Using Technology in Science Tasks: Reducing Language Barriers for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon'. She is currently the Research Coordinator and Secretary Member of the AKU Language Policy Thinking Group project, funded by Aga Khan University. Yasmine also teaches modules on the International Large Scale Assessment (ILSA) course. Her research interests include task difficulty and demands, language in educational assessment, science education and assessment, differential item functioning, Rasch modelling, international large-scale assessments.

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Pauline Rea-Dickins

Professor Pauline Rea-Dickins joined OUCEA in January 2016 where she is research consultant, advising on research and publication in the department, and a research fellow at St Anne's College. She is working on the *ESRC-funded project, Assessment for Learning in Africa*. Prior to joining Oxford, she has worked at the Aga Khan University, Tanzania, and the Universities of Bristol and Warwick. Specialising in Applied Linguistics in Education, her research focuses on school-based assessment, language testing and programme evaluation, language in education, in particular in multilingual and development contexts. She is currently Chair of the Aga Khan University Language Policy Thinking Group.

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Roger Smith is the founding Director of the Network of English Language Enhancement at the Aga Khan University (AKU). Prior to joining AKU, he had worked for nearly twenty years at universities in the UK in the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Roger's main profession interests are teaching EAP, quality assurance in English language teaching, and English as a Medium of Instruction. He has served as the Chair of the BALEAP Accreditation Committee and as a member of the British Council's Accreditation UK Scheme. He is currently serving as the Vice-Chair of the AKU Language Policy Thinking Group. Roger has a PGCE (TESOL), an MA in Applied Linguistics and an MBA.

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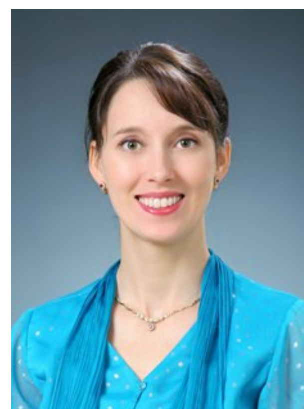
Jill Boggs



Jill Boggs is currently a doctoral researcher at the University of Oxford, researching the writing of second language learners. Her research is a mixed-methods study focusing on how teachers might provide corrective feedback in a way that improves learners' grammatical accuracy in writing. Of particular interest to her are university learners who are taking compulsory language courses where the language being studied is not the majority language (such as English in South Korea). In addition to her doctoral research, she is also lectures on the Department of Education's MSc TELUS course and works as a research assistant in the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment (OUCEA).

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