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Exploring Discursive Practices and Power Dynamics in Teacher-Student Interactions in the Department of English, Kohat University of Science and Technology, KPK, Pakistan

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Abstract
This study examines how discursive practices construct, sustain, and occasionally contest power relations in teacher-student interaction in university English language classrooms in Pakistan. Using Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (text, discursive practice, sociocultural practice), the study draws on non-participant observation of five English-medium classrooms (five teachers, twenty-five students) in the Department of English at Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST). Data were analysed thematically and then through Fairclough's framework. Findings show that teacher talk was organised overwhelmingly around the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequence, display questions, high-modality directives, and evaluative feedback that positioned teachers as the primary holders of institutional and linguistic authority. Code-switching, code-mixing, and translanguaging between English, Urdu, and Pashto served pedagogical functions such as concept clarification, classroom management, and rapport-building while simultaneously reproducing a language hierarchy in which English indexed academic legitimacy and local languages were relegated to management or affective functions. Students were not wholly passive: peer code-switching, selective silence, hedged responses, and occasional topic-initiation constituted forms of micro-resistance and negotiated agency. The study argues that classroom discourse at KUST both reflects and reproduces broader sociocultural hierarchies rooted in Pakistan's colonial linguistic history

and teacher-centred pedagogical tradition, while also revealing openings for more dialogic, multilingual, and equitable pedagogy. Implications for teacher development, institutional language policy, and future classroom-discourse research in Pakistani higher education are discussed.

Keywords: Classroom Discourse, Critical Discourse Analysis, Power Relations, Code-Switching, Translanguaging, Teacher-Student Interaction, Pakistan, Higher Education

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1. Introduction

Classroom discourse is never a neutral vehicle for transmitting information; it is a social practice through which relationships, identities, and hierarchies of authority are built, sustained, and occasionally challenged (Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 2025; Hassan et al., 2023). In departments of English, where language is simultaneously the medium and the object of instruction, teacher-student talk becomes a particularly revealing site for examining how power is discursively enacted. Discursive practices such as code-switching, code-mixing, and translanguaging are integral to how teachers and students communicate, learn, and negotiate meaning. At Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST), English is the formal medium of instruction, assessment, and interaction, yet the surrounding linguistic ecology is markedly multilingual: students and teachers routinely draw on Pashto and Urdu alongside English. In Pakistani universities, where teacher-centered instruction is common, understanding how power operates in classroom talk is crucial for promoting inclusive and participatory learning (Shamim et al., 2011). This study addresses this context by examining teacher-student interaction in the Department of English at KUST through Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, attending specifically to code-switching, code-mixing, and translanguaging as sites where pedagogy and power intersect. Since the discursive choices teachers and students make in the classroom shape both learning outcomes and the wider language hierarchies of

Pakistani higher education, it becomes necessary to examine these choices closely in order to inform more equitable and dialogic pedagogical practice.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Although the relationship between discourse, power, and education has been extensively studied internationally (Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 2025; Kang, 2017), micro-level analysis of everyday classroom interaction in Pakistani higher education remain comparatively scarce. In Pakistani universities, where teacher-centered instruction is common, understanding how power operates in classroom talk is crucial for promoting inclusive and participatory learning (Shamim et al., 2011). While studies have examined language policy and code-switching functions in Pakistani ESL classrooms generally (Fareed et al., 2015; Jabeen, 2018; Gul et al., 2023), few have applied a systematic CDA lens to real-time university classroom interaction, and fewer still have focused on English departments which are sites of particular interest because English is simultaneously the medium and the object of study. Without close, systematic attention to how discourse enacts power in these classrooms, institutions risk perpetuating rigid, teacher-centred, English-only norms that may not serve the multilingual realities and learning needs of students.

1.2. Research Questions

1) What discursive practices do teachers and students employ during classroom interaction in the Department of English at KUST?
2) How do power dynamics embedded in these discursive practices influence teacher-student relationships and learning outcomes in English language classrooms?

1.3. Research Objectives

- To explore and analyse the discursive practices employed by teachers and students during interactions in the English classroom at the Department of English, KUST.
- To examine the power dynamics embedded in these discursive practices and their impact teacher-student relationship and learning outcomes in English language classrooms.

1.4. Rationale of the Study

Classroom discourse research provides a lens onto how power is enacted not through overt coercion but through recurrent, often unremarkable, discursive choices — who asks questions, who evaluates answers, and who is permitted to speak and when (Rachmawati, 2022). English departments in multilingual, postcolonial contexts such as Pakistan present a particularly revealing site for this kind of analysis because English is simultaneously the medium and the object of instruction, and because English retains disproportionate prestige and institutional legitimacy relative to Urdu and regional languages such as Pashto (Rahman, 2004; Kachru, 1986). English as the language for development has dominated the political and official discourse in Pakistan as in other developing countries for a long time now. More recently, the discourse of 'Education for All' and the increase in the use of English in the global market have added a universalistic dimension to the teaching-learning of English in Pakistan, thus making it a complex policy issue particularly for resource distribution and achieving quality in English language education (Shamim et al., 2011).By applying Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional CDA framework to sustained classroom observation at KUST, this study builds on, and extends beyond, the largely macro-level, policy-oriented Pakistani scholarship on language and power (Shamim, 2011; Fareed et al., 2015; Jabeen, 2018) to the moment-to-moment discursive work of the classroom itself.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. Academically, it contributes to CDA-informed classroom research by demonstrating specifically how discursive choices in English department simultaneously perform pedagogical and ideological work. For teachers, the findings offer a basis for reflecting on questioning style, feedback practices, and the pedagogical use of code-switching and translanguaging in their own classrooms. For institutions, the study offers evidence relevant to professional development planning and to language-in-education policy, particularly regarding the treatment of multilingualism as a resource rather than a deficit. For researchers, the study offers a replicable analytic model that is grounded in Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional framework for examining discourse and power in other departments and institutions across Pakistani higher education. Ultimately, the findings hold the potential to inform more dialogic, multilingual, and equitable classroom practice.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Discourse, Ideology, and Power in Education

Discourse is language use shaped by social, cultural, and institutional circumstance; it is never ideologically neutral (Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 2025). In classrooms, power is rarely exercised through overt coercion but through recurrent, often unremarkable, discursive choices — who asks questions, who evaluates answers, who is permitted to speak and when (Rachmawati, 2022). Teachers typically hold expert, legitimate, and reward power (Rachmawati, 2022), articulated through directives, evaluative feedback, and control of topic and turn. Yet power in classroom talk is not unidirectional: students negotiate, resist, or reposition themselves through silence, code-switching, and selective participation (Tian & Dumlao, 2020; Taylor et al., 2018). Teachers' identities affect their

discursive practices, while students' identities can either validate or resist these practices, creating a reciprocal influence (Eye, 2024).

2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis and Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

CDA treats language as social practice and examines how discourse produces and sustains dominance and inequality (Fairclough, 1992). Fairclough's (1989, 1992) three-dimensional model analyses discourse at the textual level (linguistic features), the discursive-practice level (production, distribution, and interpretation of texts), and the sociocultural level (institutional and societal context). Discourse analysis helps educators understand language in its social context and demonstrates its value for analyzing classroom interaction and improving language teaching (Alsoraihi, 2019).

2.3. Classroom Discourse Structure: IRF, Questioning, and Turn-Taking

The Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequence (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) remains the dominant structural pattern of teacher-fronted classroom talk internationally and in Pakistan (Seedhouse, 2004; Badash, 2024). Teacher-student interactions and turn taking are crucial elements in the classroom learning that makes it effective (Fenyi & Nyarkoh, 2022). Turn Taking Analysis also uncovers aspects of power, participation and voice within the classroom. Such patterns can support classroom management but constrain sustained student reasoning and critical engagement (Nassaji & Wells, 2000; Deji-Afuye, 2024). According to Walsh (2006, 2014), analyzing classroom discourse provides valuable insights into the dynamics of communication patterns and offers opportunities to enhance teaching quality. Teacher's questioning patterns, feedback styles, and turn-taking control can empower or marginalize students (Sundari, 2017; Walsh, 2006).

2.4. Code-Switching, Code-Mixing, and Translanguaging

In multilingual classrooms, code-switching (alternation between languages across utterance or clause boundaries), code-mixing (blending elements of two languages within an utterance), and translanguaging (the fluid, integrated deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire) are pervasive (Myers-Scotton, 1993; Poplack, 1980; Wei, 2018). In Pakistani classrooms the teachers are found to switch code for translating grammatical points and to make the lesson easier for the students (Gulzar, 2010). Chowdhury (2012) found that the students with minimum exposure to English face great difficulty in adjusting at tertiary level therefore they can easily be helped by the teacher's switching to mother tongue. Research suggests that code-switching, code-mixing, and translanguaging can support learning by bridging linguistic gaps and making content more accessible. Mateus (2014) highlights that translanguaging can facilitate comprehension and student engagement, particularly in linguistically diverse classrooms. Translanguaging challenges traditional monolingual ideologies and promotes inclusive learning environments (Bonacina-Pugh et al. (2021). From a critical perspective, however, these practices also reveal power relations. Teachers often regulate when and how languages are used, reinforcing linguistic hierarchies. According to Conteh (2018) translanguaging can either empower students or reinforce teacher dominance, depending on how it is implemented. Translanguaging, however, is a broader concept that views bilingual speakers as drawing from an integrated linguistic repertoire to make meaning (Wei, 2018). These discursive practices position teachers as controllers of interaction and students as passive respondents (Walsh, 2011; Seedhouse, 2004). These practices serve both pedagogical and social functions, enabling comprehension, inclusion, and engagement. These practices can support comprehension, rapport, and inclusion but they also index language hierarchies: in postcolonial contexts such as Pakistan, English retains

disproportionate prestige and institutional legitimacy relative to Urdu and regional languages such as Pashto (Rahman, 2004; Kachru, 1986), a hierarchy Bourdieu (1991) frames in terms of unequally distributed linguistic capital.

2.5. The Pakistani Context and Research Gap

Pakistani classrooms are widely characterised as teacher-centred, reflecting both institutional structures and broader cultural norms of deference to authority (Shamim, 2011; Lodhi & Shamim, 2018). While studies have examined language policy and code-switching functions in Pakistani ESL classrooms generally (Fareed et al., 2015; Jabeen, 2018), few have applied a systematic CDA lens to real-time university classroom interaction, and fewer still have focused on English departments which are the sites of particular interest because English is simultaneously the medium and the object of study. This study addresses that gap through sustained classroom observation at KUST.

2.6. Theoretical Framework

Theoretical Lens: Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model: This study is anchored in Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis, which examines discourse at three interconnected levels: textual level, discursive practice level and sociocultural level. The textual level focuses on features such as vocabulary, modality, and directive forms and the discursive practice level examines how texts are produced, distributed, and interpreted through practices such as the IRF sequence, questioning styles, and turn-taking. The sociocultural level considers the wider institutional and societal contexts in which classroom talk is embedded, including Pakistan's colonial linguistic history and teacher-centred pedagogical traditions. Read alongside Bourdieu's (1991) concept of linguistic capital, which explains why English retains disproportionate prestige relative to Urdu and Pashto, this framework allows the analysis to move

from describing what is said in KUST classrooms to explaining how and why particular discursive patterns recur, and whose interests they serve (Figure 1).

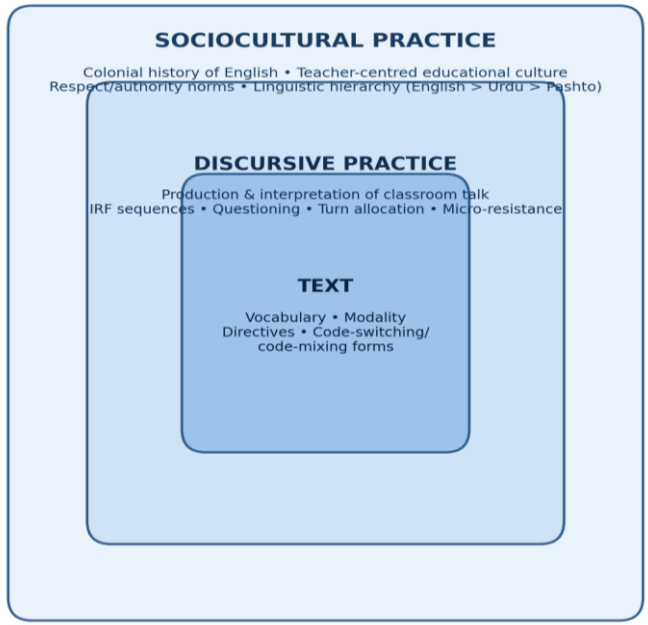

Figure 1. Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis applied to KUST classroom discourse

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study design (Yin, 2018), suited to the detailed, context-sensitive analysis of complex social phenomena such as classroom discourse and power. Qualitative research as described by Creswell (2013) and Shakeel et al., 2025 is used to explore and understand the meaning that individuals or groups attribute to social phenomena. Data collection relied on non-participant classroom observation, which allowed the researcher to record naturally occurring interaction without disrupting normal teaching and learning (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2002; Angrosino, 2007).

3.2. Setting and Sample

The study was conducted in the Department of English at Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST). Using purposive sampling, five English-medium classrooms were selected, comprising five teachers (each holding at least an MPhil/MS, several with doctorates) and twenty-five BS English students drawn from diverse linguistic backgrounds across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, predominantly Pashto and regional Urdu speakers for whom English functioned as a third or fourth language. The five classrooms spanned language-skills, literature, and linguistics courses to capture variation in discourse patterns across course types (Table 1).

3.3. Data Collection instrument

The primary data collection tool used in this study is non-participant classroom observation. Observation is selected because it allows the researcher to study natural classroom behaviour without direct interference. Field notes were recorded during each observation session. Observation as a qualitative tool helps uncover subtle and complex aspects of communication that may not be easily captured through other data collection methods (Angrosino, 2007).

3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

Analysis proceeded in two stages. First, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) was used to identify recurring discursive practices from the field notes through the stages of familiarisation, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, and theme naming. Second, each theme was examined through Fairclough's (1992) three levels of analysis: text, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice, to identify the power relations embedded in the observed language use. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Department of English; participants gave informed consent, and pseudonyms are used throughout to preserve anonymity.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the findings from the five observed classrooms, examined thematically and then through Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model, to surface how discursive practices in the Department of English at KUST construct, sustain, and occasionally contest power relations between teachers and students. Particular attention is given to the ways in which teachers exercise authority through classroom discourse, instructional practices, questioning, and control over participation. The findings also explore how students respond to, negotiate, and sometimes challenge these established patterns of authority. Thematic analysis highlights recurring patterns of interaction, participation, and power across the observed classrooms and maintenance of power relations.

4.1. Classroom Profiles

Table1 summarises the five observed classrooms, which varied in course type, size, and the dominant languages in circulation, providing a basis for comparing discourse patterns across contexts.

Classroom	Course Type	No. of Students	Dominant Language(s)
C1	Communication Skills	25	English, Urdu, Pashto
C2	Literary Studies	22	English, Urdu
C3	Applied Linguistics (Semantics)	28	English, Pashto, Urdu
C4	Stylistics	20	English, Urdu
C5	Academic Writing	24	English, Urdu

Table 1. Profile of observed classrooms

4.2. Code-Switching in Teacher and Student Talk

Code-switching between English, Urdu, and Pashto was the most pervasive discursive practice across all five classrooms. Teacher-initiated switching served identifiable functions — most frequently conceptual clarification, followed by

classroom management and discipline, rapport-building, reiteration of key content, and, least frequently, identity signalling (Table 2). Critically, the functional distribution of languages was not neutral: For academic purposes the English language teachers switch code for emphasizing important points, to give examples in mother tongue when an appropriate term or word is absent in the target language, to give instructions, clarification, comprehension, which have also been reported by Gulzar (2010). English carried academic and formal content, while Urdu and Pashto were reserved largely for management, discipline, and informal rapport a pattern that positions local languages as socially useful but academically secondary. Code-switching and code-mixing are explicit evidence of the massive spread of English in Pakistan (Rasul, 2013).

Function	**Frequency (C1–C5)**	**Typical Switch**	**Example Context**
Conceptual/idea clarification	Very High	English → Urdu/Pashto	Explaining discourse theory, grammar rules, literary terms
Classroom management & discipline	High	English → Urdu/Pashto	Disciplinary instructions, group organization
Rapport building	Moderate	English → Pashto	Informal jokes, personal anecdotes
Emphasis / reiteration	Moderate	English → Urdu	Reiterating exam content or assignment instructions
Identity signalling	Low	English → Pashto	Shared ethnic/cultural references

Table 2. Functions of teacher code-switching across five classrooms

Student code-switching served different, though related, ends: primarily compensating for gaps in English proficiency, and facilitating peer collaboration in Pashto during group work even immediately after being instructed to use English before reverting to English when the teacher approached. This pattern

indicates that Pashto functioned for students as a language of thought and solidarity, while English remained the language of institutional display.

4.3. Code-Mixing and the Ideology of English

Code-mixing, the embedding of elements of one language within the grammatical frame of another, was pervasive in both teacher and student speech, often taking the form of Urdu or Pashto matrix sentences carrying English academic terms (e.g., 'thesis statement', 'semantic fields'). Consistent with Kachru's (1986) concept of Englishization, this pattern reflected both the absence of precise equivalent terminology in Urdu/Pashto and the historical association of English with legitimate academic knowledge (Rahman, 2004). Read through Fairclough's (1992) notion of orders of discourse and Bourdieu's (1991) linguistic capital, code-mixing in this setting is not merely a communicative convenience but a marker of a linguistic hierarchy in which English signals academic credibility, Urdu occupies an intermediate position, and Pashto is positioned at the periphery of legitimate classroom knowledge.

4.4. Translanguaging: Pedagogical Resource and Site of Contestation

Translanguaging is the fluid, non-compartmentalised use of the full linguistic repertoire (Wei, 2018) was most visible during group discussion and peer feedback, where reduced teacher supervision allowed students to draw on English, Urdu, and Pashto simultaneously to explain, reason, and support one another. Teacher responses to this practice diverged sharply: instructors in Classrooms C1 and C5 gently redirected students toward English ("let's say that in English") and rewarded English-medium performance more visibly, while teachers in C3 and C4 actively validated students' use of Pashto and Urdu as legitimate resources for meaning-making, consistent with what Case (2017) terms pedagogical translanguaging. This divergence suggests that teachers' individual language

ideologies, not institutional policy alone, substantially shape whether multilingualism is treated as a resource or a deficit (Blackledge & Creese, 2010).

4.5. Classroom Interaction Structure: IRF, Questioning, and Turn-Taking

Across all five classrooms, the Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) sequence (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) was the dominant organisational pattern, most rigid in Classrooms C1 and C2 and slightly more open in C3, C4, and especially C5, where longer dialogic exchanges occasionally emerged. Display questions with predetermined answers dominated over referential, open-ended questions across all classrooms, with referential questions somewhat more frequent in C3 and C5 (Table 3).

Question Type	**Frequency**	**Typical Pattern**	**Effect on Interaction**
Display (closed)	High — dominant across all classrooms	Short, predetermined, single-word/phrase answers	Reinforces teacher authority; limits elaboration
Referential (open-ended)	Low — more frequent in C3, C5	Extended, multilingual, example-based	Increases engagement, code-mixing, and critical reasoning

Table 3. Question types and their effects across classrooms

Turn-taking was tightly controlled by teachers in every classroom, with students rarely self-selecting to speak; unsolicited contributions were somewhat more frequent in C3 and C4, suggesting growing academic confidence among more advanced students. Moreover, an exploratory observation regarding gender emerged from the data, indicating more balanced participation in a female-instructed classroom, whereas participation appeared more male-skewed in a male-instructed classroom. However, given the limited sample, this observation should be interpreted cautiously and warrants dedicated future investigation rather than being considered a firm conclusion.

4.6. Feedback and Evaluation as Mechanisms of Power

Feedback practices diverged in ways that mapped onto broader patterns of power distribution (Table 4). In Classrooms C1 and C3, feedback was frequently thin, consisting of brief evaluative markers such as "Good. Sit down." with little elaboration. This pattern is consistent with what Hattie and Timperley (2007) identify as low value process level feedback. In Classroom C4, by contrast, feedback was elaborated and feed-forward, linking a student's response to theoretical concepts and inviting further development, a pattern associated with deeper engagement and student confidence. Correction of language form (e.g., grammatical accuracy) was common and typically prioritised over communicative success, and enforcement of English-only norms during group work functioned as a further, often implicit, evaluative mechanism privileging English over Urdu and Pashto.

Feedback Type	**Example Classroom(s)**	**Characteristic Pattern**	**Likely Effect**
Thin/evaluative-only	C1, C3	"Good. Sit down"; brief right/wrong marking	Limits elaboration; reinforces teacher as sole evaluator
Feed-forward/elaborated	C4	Links answer to theory; invites further development	Builds confidence; supports deeper learning
Form-focused correction	C1	Corrects grammar without acknowledging communicative success	May discourage risk-taking in English use
Language-policing	C1, C5	"Speak English" / "No Pashto" during group work	Marginalises students more fluent in Urdu/Pashto

Table 4. Feedback and evaluation patterns across classrooms

4.7. Textual Markers of Power: Vocabulary, Modality, and Directives

At the textual level, teachers consistently used advanced, subject-specific English vocabulary (e.g., 'discourse', 'pragmatics', 'epistemic modality'), While students' English vocabulary remained comparatively basic, this gap narrowed substantially when they responded in Urdu or Pashto, suggesting that the difference partly reflects linguistic proficiency rather than conceptual understanding. Modal choices further indexed asymmetry: teachers favoured high-modality forms (must, should, have to) projecting certainty and authority, while students relied on hedged, low-modality forms (maybe, I think, I'm not sure) even when their understanding was accurate. Directive language was overwhelmingly generated by teachers, ranging from direct imperatives such as "Open your books" to more softened forms such as "I'd like you to think about." In contrast, students rarely issued directives or challenged instructions (Table 5).

Textual Feature	Teacher Pattern	Student Pattern	Power Implication
Vocabulary	Advanced academic register	Basic; narrows in Urdu/Pashto	Positions teacher as expert authority
Modality	High modality (must, should)	Low/hedged modality (maybe, I think)	Teacher speech reads as authoritative; student speech as tentative
Directives	Frequent, direct and mitigated imperatives	Rare; mostly compliance	Teacher controls behaviour and interaction flow

Table 5. Textual-level markers of power asymmetry

4.8. Student Agency, Participation, and Resistance

Participation was unevenly distributed: a small subset of students accounted for most speaking turns, with participation gaps narrowing somewhat in more

advanced courses. English proficiency was the strongest apparent predictor of participation, though gendered patterns of participation also emerged in specific classrooms and merit dedicated future study. Despite pervasive teacher control, students exercised agency through micro-resistance: sustained Pashto use among peers despite English-only instructions, occasional unsolicited questions that redirected discussion, and, in a few notable instances, students who extended a topic with outside knowledge or connected content to lived sociolinguistic experience, prompting visibly more expansive teacher responses. These moments, while infrequent, indicate that classroom power at KUST is negotiated rather than fixed.

4.9. Discussion

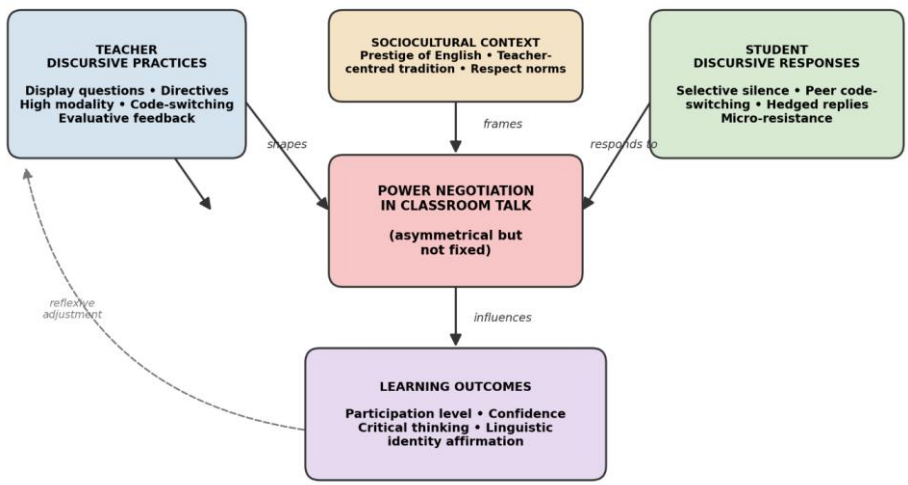

Figure 2. Conceptual framework linking discursive practices, power negotiation, and learning outcomes

Read together, the findings show that power in KUST classrooms is produced cumulatively across all three of Fairclough's (1992) levels. At the textual level, vocabulary, modality, and directive forms consistently favour teacher authority. At the discursive-practice level, the IRF sequence, display-question dominance,

and tightly controlled turn-taking limit space for sustained student reasoning, even as micro-resistance and translanguaging create pockets of negotiated participation. At the sociocultural level, the prestige of English is rooted in Pakistan's colonial history and reinforced by assessment practices. Combined with a broader cultural ethos of respect for teacher authority, reflected in the *ustad–shagird* relationship, these factors naturalise these patterns and make them appear normal rather than the product of ongoing social negotiation. The study also shows that these dynamics are not monolithic: variation between classrooms C1/C5 and C3/C4 indicates that individual teachers' language ideologies and feedback styles substantially moderate how rigidly institutional hierarchies are enacted. This is consistent with international findings that teacher-centred discourse can simultaneously enable and constrain learning (Sapkota, 2024; Chen et al., 2024), and it suggests that discourse-aware professional development, rather than wholesale institutional overhaul, may be an efficient lever for change.

These findings extend prior Pakistani scholarship, which has largely addressed language policy and code-switching functions at a general level (Fareed et al., 2015; Jabeen, 2018), by demonstrating specifically how discursive choices in a university English department simultaneously perform pedagogical and ideological work, supporting comprehension while reproducing a hierarchy in which English remains the primary marker of academic legitimacy.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has shown that classroom discourse in the Department of English at KUST both reflects and reproduces broader sociocultural power structures characteristic of Pakistani higher education, while also revealing meaningful, if constrained, space for student agency and more inclusive pedagogical practice. Three sets of recommendations follow from these findings.

For teachers: treat code-switching, code-mixing, and translanguaging as deliberate pedagogical resources rather than deficits; increase the proportion of referential questions and feed-forward feedback; and create structured opportunities for student-initiated talk.

For institutions: offer professional development on classroom discourse and multilingual pedagogy; recognise multilingualism as an institutional asset rather than a policy problem; and review rigid English-only norms in light of students' linguistic realities.

For future research: extend this design across departments and institutions for comparative analysis; triangulate observation with interviews or video/audio recordings to capture participants' own interpretations; and investigate gender as a distinct dimension of classroom power.

Ultimately, attending closely to the discursive texture of everyday classroom talk offers a practical, evidence-based route toward more dialogic, equitable, and linguistically inclusive higher education in Pakistan.

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