# ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

USMAN NOTES
www.usmannotes.com

**Name:**

**Registration No.:**

**Course Code: 964**

**Program: MSc/BS**

**Semester: Autumn 2026**

**ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD**

**Course: Language Skills and Communicative Abilities (964/9266) • Level: MSc/BS**

**Semester: Autumn 2026**

**Assignment No. 1 (Units 1–4)**

**Total Marks: 100 • Pass Marks: 40/50**

**SOLVED ASSIGNMENT GUIDE**

**(For Study & Reference)**

*Note: This guide is prepared for study and reference purposes. Students are advised to read the relevant units of the course book, understand the concepts, and write their assignments in their own words.*

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

## Question 1: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication — A Critical Analysis (20 Marks)

*Critically analyze the relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication in shaping public perception and interpersonal understanding. Support your answer with relevant examples.*

### Introduction

Human communication is never carried by words alone. When a news anchor reports an event, when a politician addresses a rally, or when two friends talk over a cup of tea, meaning travels through two channels at the same time: the verbal channel, which consists of spoken and written words, and the non-verbal channel, which consists of facial expressions, gestures, tone

of voice, posture, eye contact, dress, silence and the use of space and time. Communication scholars generally agree that the two channels cannot be separated in real life; they work as one system. The words tell us what is being said, while the non-verbal signals tell us how it is meant, how the speaker feels about it, and how much of it we should believe. This answer first explains the two channels, then critically analyses their relationship — how they reinforce, complement, regulate, substitute and sometimes contradict each other — and finally examines how this relationship shapes public perception in the media and interpersonal understanding in everyday life.

## Verbal Communication: The Channel of Content

Verbal communication is the use of language — spoken or written — to convey messages. Its great strength is precision: words can name things, state facts, present arguments, describe the past, plan the future and express abstract ideas such as justice, freedom or inflation. A budget speech, a newspaper editorial, a classroom lecture and a text message are all verbal communication. Because language follows rules of grammar and vocabulary shared by a community, verbal messages can be recorded, translated, quoted and verified. However, verbal communication has a serious limitation: words are only symbols, and the same sentence can carry very different meanings depending on who says it, where, and in what manner. The sentence "That is a great idea" can be genuine praise or biting sarcasm; the words alone cannot tell us which. That judgement is supplied by the non-verbal channel.

## Non-Verbal Communication: The Channel of Feeling and Relationship

Non-verbal communication covers all messages sent without words. Its main forms include kinesics (body movements, gestures, facial expressions and eye behaviour), paralanguage (tone, pitch, volume, speed and pauses in the voice), proxemics (the use of physical distance), chronemics (the use of time, such as arriving late or keeping someone waiting), appearance and dress, and the use of objects, images, colour and silence. Research associated with Albert Mehrabian is often quoted to the effect that in face-to-face communication of feelings, words carry a surprisingly small share of the total impact compared with tone of voice and facial expression. Although the exact percentages of that study are frequently misused — they apply only to the communication of attitudes and feelings, not to all messages — the underlying point remains valid: when listeners judge sincerity, emotion and attitude, they trust the body more than the dictionary.

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

## The Relationship Between the Two Channels

The relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication is best understood through the functions the non-verbal channel performs in relation to words. Communication scholars commonly identify the following links between them.

- **Reinforcement and repetition:** Non-verbal signals repeat and strengthen the verbal message. A speaker who says "this is a very serious matter" with a grave face, steady eye contact and a slow, low voice repeats the seriousness in a second code, and the message becomes more convincing.

- **Complementing:** Non-verbal behaviour adds information that words leave out. A doctor who holds a patient's hand while explaining a treatment complements the verbal reassurance with warmth and care, completing the emotional side of the message.
- **Substitution:** Non-verbal signs can replace words altogether. A traffic policeman's raised hand, a nod in a meeting, a thumbs-up sign, or silence in response to a proposal all communicate complete messages without a single word being spoken.
- **Regulation:** Non-verbal cues manage the flow of conversation. Eye contact, nods, raised eyebrows and changes in posture signal who should speak next, whether the listener is following, and when a topic should change. Without these regulators, conversation would be a series of collisions and awkward silences.
- **Accenting:** Non-verbal behaviour underlines parts of the verbal message, like italic type in writing. A teacher bangs the desk lightly while saying the key word of a definition; a newsreader stresses one figure in a report by pausing before it and raising the pitch.
- **Contradiction:** Most importantly for critical analysis, non-verbal signals can contradict words. A manager who says "I am not angry" through clenched teeth, or a public figure who announces "full confidence" while avoiding eye contact and fidgeting, sends two opposite messages at once — and audiences almost always believe the non-verbal one.

## Shaping Public Perception

In public and media communication this relationship has powerful effects on perception. Television is an audio-visual medium, so political leaders, anchors and celebrities are judged as much by appearance, voice and body language as by the content of their speeches. A leader

who reads an apology from a paper, without looking at the camera, is widely perceived as insincere even if the wording of the apology is perfect; the contradiction between the verbal text and the non-verbal delivery destroys credibility. Conversely, confident posture, controlled gestures and a calm voice during a crisis make the same words sound authoritative, which is why media training for politicians and spokespersons concentrates heavily on delivery, dress and camera behaviour. Visual symbols work the same way at the collective level: the national flag behind a speaker, the uniform of an officer at a press briefing, or the red "breaking news" band on a television screen all frame how the audience receives the spoken words. In Pakistan, the televised addresses of national leaders during floods or security crises are discussed in drawing rooms and on social media as much for tone, dress and visible emotion as for policy content; a leader photographed wading through floodwater communicates solidarity before a single sentence is heard.

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

## Shaping Interpersonal Understanding

At the interpersonal level, non-verbal communication is the main carrier of relationship messages: liking, respect, dominance, trust and intimacy are communicated mostly through distance, touch, eye contact, facial expression and tone rather than through words. A student understands a teacher’s real attitude from encouragement in the eyes and patience in the voice, not merely from the words "well done". Misunderstandings frequently arise when the two channels are mismatched across cultures or situations. In Pakistani and broader South Asian culture, avoiding direct eye contact with elders is a sign of respect, but in a Western interview the same behaviour may be misread as evasiveness or lack of confidence. Similarly, a

close conversational distance that is normal and friendly in Pakistan may make a European visitor uncomfortable. Interpersonal understanding therefore improves when people learn to read both channels together and to check culturally different non-verbal codes before judging intentions.

## Critical Analysis

A critical view must note that the relationship is not always harmonious, and non-verbal communication is not automatically "more truthful". First, non-verbal cues are ambiguous: crossed arms may indicate defensiveness, cold temperature, or simple habit, and tears may express grief, relief or manipulation. Skilled performers, actors and some politicians can deliberately manage their body language, so non-verbal signs can also deceive. Second, non-verbal behaviour is largely culture-bound; gestures that are polite in one society — the thumbs-up sign, for example — are offensive in another, which creates serious risks in international and intercultural communication. Third, the digital age has disturbed the balance between the channels. In text messages, emails and social media posts, the non-verbal channel is almost entirely missing, so tone is easily misread; users have responded by inventing substitutes — emojis, capital letters, voice notes and video calls — which shows how necessary the non-verbal channel is to complete verbal meaning. Finally, in modern mass media the non-verbal element can overpower the verbal content altogether: a short video clip of a facial expression may go viral while the full speech is ignored, so public perception is formed by fragments of body language detached from the argument they accompanied.

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

### Conclusion

To conclude, verbal and non-verbal communication form one integrated system in which words carry the content and non-verbal signals carry the feeling, the relationship and the credibility of that content. They reinforce, complement, regulate, substitute and accent each other, and when they contradict, audiences trust the non-verbal message. Because of this relationship, public perception of leaders, anchors and institutions depends heavily on delivery, appearance and visual framing, while interpersonal understanding depends on reading body language accurately and sensitively across cultures. The effective communicator — whether a media professional or an ordinary citizen — is therefore one who keeps both channels consistent, because a message is finally believed not when it is merely well-worded, but when word and body speak the same language.

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

## Question 2: Language as a Source of Power and Identity (20 Marks)

*Language is not only a tool of communication but also a source of power and identity. Discuss this statement with reference to media and society.*

### Introduction

We usually describe language as a tool for exchanging information, but this description is incomplete. Language also decides who is heard and who is ignored, who appears educated and who appears ignorant, who belongs to a group and who is treated as an outsider. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called this the power of "legitimate language": the variety of language approved by schools, courts, offices and the media brings its speakers prestige, jobs

and authority, while other varieties — however rich — are devalued. At the same time, language is the strongest marker of identity: we announce our region, class, religion, generation and nation every time we open our mouths or choose a language in which to write. This answer discusses how language works as power and as identity in society, with particular reference to the media, and draws examples from the Pakistani setting.

## Language as Power in Society

Language becomes power when control over it gives some people advantages over others. In Pakistan, English is the clearest example. English is the language of the higher courts, the bureaucracy, the corporate sector, officer-grade examinations and elite education. A person fluent in English can address a press conference, argue in the superior judiciary, or sit in a television talk show as an "expert"; a person with equal knowledge but only Urdu or a regional language is often pushed to the margin. This is not a judgement about intelligence — it is a structure of power built into institutions. The same pattern appears in employment advertisements demanding "excellent English communication skills" for jobs whose actual work may be done in Urdu. Language here acts as a gatekeeper: it filters who may enter powerful spaces. Historically, colonial rulers understood this perfectly; English was promoted in the subcontinent precisely to create a class that would mediate between the rulers and the ruled. Even today, debates about the medium of instruction in schools are really debates about who will hold power in the next generation.

## Language, Identity and Belonging

If language gives power over others, it also gives identity to the self. Our mother tongue is learned with our earliest memories and carries our family, our humour, our proverbs and our emotions. To speak Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, Saraiki or any other mother tongue is to declare membership of a community with a shared history. Urdu occupies a special place in Pakistan: it is the national language and a symbol of unity, the language in which the Pakistan Movement was popularly mobilised and in which people from all provinces can meet on common ground. Religious identity is also carried by language — Arabic words in everyday Urdu speech, Quranic quotations in sermons, and religious vocabulary in media programmes all signal a shared faith identity. Identity through language can be a source of dignity and solidarity, but it can also harden into division: the language movements in Sindh, the demand for recognition of Saraiki, and the historical tragedy that the refusal to recognise Bengali contributed to the separation of East Pakistan in 1971 all show that when a community feels its language — and therefore its identity — is being denied honour, the political consequences can be enormous.

## The Media: Where Linguistic Power Is Exercised Daily

Nowhere is the power of language more visible, or more continuously exercised, than in the media. First, the media choose the language of public debate. The choice between English-language and Urdu-language newspapers and channels divides the audience into classes: English media speak to policymakers, diplomats and the corporate elite, while Urdu media speak to the mass public — and both set different agendas for their respective publics. Second,

journalists exercise power through naming and framing. Whether an armed group is called "militants", "insurgents" or "terrorists"; whether a price rise is reported as "inflation", "economic adjustment" or "a bomb dropped on the poor"; whether a crowd is a "mob" or a "gathering of protesters" — each word directs the audience's judgement before any argument is presented. Third, media language creates and stereotypes identities. Dialects of regional languages are frequently used in television dramas and comedy shows to portray comic, foolish or criminal characters, which teaches the audience to rank identities: the standard Urdu of the newsreader is "cultured", while regional accents are presented as objects of laughter. Fourth, those who control media language control visibility itself: communities whose languages have no newspapers, channels or digital presence — speakers of smaller languages such as Brahui, Shina or Hindko — remain nearly invisible in the national conversation, however important their issues may be.

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

## Language as Resistance and Empowerment

A balanced discussion must also recognise that language power can be challenged and reversed. Regional-language media, community radio, and now social media have given ordinary people publishing power that the gatekeepers of print and television once monopolised. A farmer in Sindh can record a video in Sindhi, a student in Balochistan can write a thread in Balochi or Brahui, and a Pashto poet can reach millions on YouTube without permission from any editor. Political movements consciously use language as resistance: slogans in the mother tongue, poetry and songs in local languages, and even deliberate code-switching — mixing English with Urdu or a regional language in talk shows — allow speakers to

claim both modern authority and authentic identity at once. The huge popularity of mixed-language ("Roman Urdu") communication on Pakistani social media shows citizens creating a linguistic identity of their own, outside the control of both the English-speaking elite and the purists of standard Urdu.

## Critical Discussion

Critically, the statement should not be read as meaning that language is only about domination. Language is also the medium of law, rights and justice: a citizen who cannot understand the language of the police station, the court or the hospital form is effectively denied rights, which is why translation, plain language and mother-tongue education are democratic demands. The critical task for society is to enjoy the identity-giving gift of language without letting its power function become a system of exclusion. For the media, this means professional responsibility: choosing words that inform rather than inflame, giving space to marginalised languages and voices, avoiding dialect-based mockery, and remembering that every label printed or broadcast quietly distributes honour and shame among real communities.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, language is far more than a neutral tool for exchanging messages. In society it operates as power — deciding access to education, employment, courts and public platforms — and as identity — binding people to their families, regions, faith and nation. The media intensify both functions: they decide which language speaks to the nation, which words describe events, and which identities appear respectable or ridiculous. To understand language in this fuller sense is the first step towards using it justly: honouring every speaker’s mother tongue,

widening access to the languages of power, and holding media language to ethical account. A society that treats language only as a tool will keep missing the politics and the belonging that every sentence carries with it.

## Question 3: Sentence Structure and the Role of Clauses (20 Marks)

*Define sentence structure and critically examine the role of different types of clauses in constructing effective written and spoken communication.*

### Introduction

Every act of writing or speaking is built, sentence by sentence, out of smaller units arranged according to the rules of grammar. How a speaker arranges these units — what is placed first, what is subordinated, what is joined and what is left as a fragment — determines whether the message is clear or confusing, forceful or feeble, formal or conversational. At the centre of this architecture stands the clause, the basic building block of the sentence. This answer defines sentence structure, explains the main types of clauses, and critically examines the contribution each type makes to effective written and spoken communication, including the weaknesses that appear when clauses are mishandled.

### Sentence Structure Defined

Sentence structure refers to the way words, phrases and clauses are organised within a sentence according to the grammatical rules of a language so that a complete meaning is expressed. In English, the basic pattern rests on the subject (who or what the sentence is about)

and the predicate (what is said about the subject, containing the verb). Around this core, a writer may add objects, complements and modifiers. A phrase is a group of words without a finite verb that functions as a single unit — for example, "in the morning" or "the old library building" — while a clause is a group of words containing its own subject and finite verb. On the basis of how clauses are combined, sentences are traditionally classified as simple (one independent clause), compound (two or more independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction), complex (one independent clause with one or more dependent clauses) and compound-complex (a combination of both patterns). Sentence structure is therefore not decoration; it is the machinery by which thought is packaged for a reader or listener.

## Types of Clauses

Clauses are first divided by their independence. An independent (main) clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence: "The university announced the results." A dependent (subordinate) clause also has a subject and a verb but begins with a subordinating element — such as because, although, when, who or that — and cannot stand alone: "because the checking was complete". Dependent clauses are then classified by the job they do inside the main sentence, as the following table summarises.

**Table 1: Types of dependent clauses, their functions and examples**

| Type of clause | Function in the sentence | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Noun clause | Works as a noun: subject, object or complement of the sentence | What the committee decided surprised everyone. / I know |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | that the train has left. |
| Adjective (relative) clause | Describes or identifies a noun or pronoun, usually beginning with who, which, that or whose | The reporter who covered the flood won an award. |
| Adverb clause | Modifies the verb: shows time, reason, condition, contrast, purpose or result | Although it was raining, the rescuers continued the search. |

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

Each type answers a different communicative need. Noun clauses allow us to report thoughts and statements ("She said that she would resign"), adjective clauses allow precise identification without starting a new sentence, and adverb clauses allow us to connect events logically — showing why, when, on what condition or in spite of what something happened. A language user who commands all three possesses a complete toolkit for building meaning.

## Role of Clauses in Written Communication

In writing, clauses are the instruments of clarity, emphasis and cohesion. First, subordination creates hierarchy: by placing the main point in the independent clause and background information in a dependent clause, the writer tells the reader exactly what matters most. Compare "The bill was passed. The opposition had walked out" with "The bill was passed after the opposition had walked out" — the complex sentence shows the time relation and the relative importance of the two facts in a single, economical movement. Second, variety of clause structure gives written prose its rhythm and maturity; a text of only simple sentences

reads like a children's primer, while skilful alternation of short and long sentences holds attention. Third, relative clauses make description precise in reports, research and journalism, where "the vaccine that was developed locally" conveys in one clause what would otherwise need a separate sentence. Fourth, adverb clauses carry the logic of argument — cause, concession and condition — which academic and professional writing depends upon: "Unless enrolment improves, the campus may be closed" compresses a whole warning into one conditional structure. Examination answers, office reports and editorials are all judged, consciously or not, on this clause-level control.

## Role of Clauses in Spoken Communication

In speech, the demands are different but clauses remain central. Spoken language is produced in real time and cannot be revised, so speakers rely heavily on short independent clauses joined by and, but and so, because the listener must process meaning instantly. Skilled speakers, however, use dependent clauses strategically: a lecturer uses adverb clauses of reason and condition to build an argument step by step ("If we accept this premise, then..."), a newsreader uses relative clauses to pack background into a bulletin without breaking its flow, and a lawyer or debater uses noun clauses to quote and challenge statements ("The witness claims that he was absent"). Pausing at clause boundaries also helps the listener: the breath groups of natural speech follow clause divisions, so a speaker who organises speech into clear clauses is easier to follow and sounds more confident. In conversation, incomplete clauses and ellipsis are normal and even efficient — "Coming?" is perfectly clear between friends — which shows that spoken

effectiveness depends on shared context, whereas written effectiveness depends on clauses being fully and correctly built.

## Critical Examination

A critical examination must acknowledge that clauses can damage communication as easily as they can build it. Over-subordination — sentences carrying four or five dependent clauses — buries the main idea and exhausts the reader; much bureaucratic and legal writing in Pakistan suffers from exactly this fault, where a single official sentence runs to eighty words and the citizen cannot discover what is actually being ordered. The dangling or misplaced clause produces unintended comedy or dangerous ambiguity: "Walking to the office, the rain soaked my files" makes the rain walk. Sentence fragments, acceptable in advertising and dialogue, become errors in formal writing when a dependent clause is punctuated as a complete sentence ("Because the fees were increased."). There is also a stylistic warning for media writing: broadcast news deliberately restricts clause complexity because the ear cannot re-read, while print journalism may use richer subordination. Finally, second-language writers — including many Pakistani students writing in English — often translate clause patterns from Urdu, producing misplaced relative clauses and missing subjects; recognising clause structure explicitly is the surest remedy for such errors.

## Conclusion

To conclude, sentence structure is the organised arrangement of words, phrases and clauses by which a complete meaning is expressed, and clauses are its load-bearing units. Independent clauses state main ideas; noun, adjective and adverb clauses report, describe and reason; and

their combinations produce the simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences from which all discourse is built. Used with control, clauses create clarity, hierarchy, precision and rhythm in writing, and intelligibility and persuasiveness in speech. Used carelessly, they produce ambiguity, heaviness and error. Mastery of clause structure is therefore not a grammar-book luxury but a practical condition of effective communication in study, professional life and the media.

## Question 4: Parts of Speech and Grammatical Accuracy in Professional and Media Writing (20 Marks)

*Discuss the functional importance of parts of speech in professional and media writing. How does grammatical accuracy influence communication effectiveness?*

### Introduction

Every sentence a professional writes — an office memorandum, a business proposal, a news report or a press release — is assembled from words performing different jobs. Grammar classifies these jobs as the parts of speech: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection. To a casual reader this classification may look like a school exercise, but in professional and media writing it is working knowledge: each part of speech performs a function that the others cannot, and weakness in any one of them produces a characteristic kind of failure — vagueness, confusion, flatness or error. This answer explains the function of each part of speech with reference to professional and media writing, and then discusses how grammatical accuracy as a whole influences the effectiveness of communication.

## The Parts of Speech and Their Functions

**Table 1: Parts of speech — function and importance in professional/media writing**

| Part of speech | Function | Role in professional and media writing |
|---|---|---|
| Noun | Names a person, place, thing or idea | Carries the factual content: names, institutions, figures and subjects of reports and documents |
| Pronoun | Stands in place of a noun | Avoids repetition and maintains reference; unclear pronouns are a major source of ambiguity |
| Verb | Expresses action, event or state | The engine of the sentence; strong active verbs make news and business writing direct and credible |
| Adjective | Describes or limits a noun | Adds precision and colour; in media writing it must be used honestly, not as exaggeration |
| Adverb | Modifies a verb, adjective or another adverb (how, when, where, how much) | Supplies manner, time and degree; answers the reader's how/when questions in reports |

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Preposition | Shows relation between a noun/pronoun and another word (in, on, by, with, between) | Fixes time, place and logical relations; small errors change facts ("trial in Lahore" vs "trial by Lahore" is impossible) |
| Conjunction | Joins words, phrases and clauses | Builds logical links — addition, contrast, cause — that hold arguments and reports together |
| Interjection | Expresses sudden feeling | Rare in formal writing; appears in quoted speech, features and headlines for human effect |

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

The noun is the anchor of factual writing: professional documents are judged by whether the right names, designations, dates and quantities have been recorded, and all of these are nouns or noun phrases. The verb determines the energy and honesty of a text. News writing prefers strong, specific, active verbs — "the cabinet approved", "the river flooded", "protesters demanded" — because the passive or a weak verb ("was done", "was seen") hides the actor and weakens accountability. Adjectives and adverbs supply the descriptive layer, but professional ethics restrain them: a business report that calls every result "outstanding" and every problem "shocking" loses credibility, while a precise adjective — "a 14 percent decline", "the third consecutive loss" — informs. Pronouns keep a text flowing but demand discipline, because a pronoun with two possible antecedents ("The manager told the clerk that he had made the mistake") leaves the reader guessing who erred. Prepositions and conjunctions, the

smallest words, carry the logical skeleton: the difference between "talks between the government and the union" and "talks with the government against the union" is carried entirely by prepositions, and conjunctions such as however, therefore and although signal the turns of an argument to the reader.

## Functional Importance in Professional Writing

In professional writing — reports, proposals, minutes, emails, applications and agreements — the parts of speech together guarantee three qualities. The first is precision: correct nouns and verbs record exactly who did what, which matters when documents become evidence in audits, inquiries and courts. The second is economy: a writer who commands verbs and conjunctions can compress a page of loose sentences into a paragraph of connected prose, saving the reader's time, which in business is money. The third is tone: pronoun choice (we, the department, I), verb mood and adjective selection together create the courteous, firm or apologetic tone a situation requires. A complaint answered with careless pronouns and aggressive verbs escalates conflict, while the same facts expressed with controlled grammar resolve it.

## Functional Importance in Media Writing

Media writing intensifies these demands because it is public, fast and competitive. Headlines are built almost entirely from nouns and verbs, with articles and auxiliaries stripped away — "Cabinet approves relief package for flood victims" — so a headline writer's grip on parts of speech is directly visible to millions. News leads must answer who, what, when, where and why in one or two sentences, which is possible only through exact noun choice, active verbs and

prepositional phrases placed in the right order. In broadcast writing, adverbs and conjunctions guide the ear through the story ("Meanwhile, in Karachi...", "However, officials deny..."). Feature and opinion writing allows adjectives a larger role, but even there the respected columnist is the one whose adjectives judge accurately rather than merely decorate.

## Grammatical Accuracy and Communication Effectiveness

Grammatical accuracy influences effectiveness through at least four channels. First, accuracy creates clarity: subject–verb agreement, correct tense and rightly placed modifiers ensure that the reader receives the fact the writer intended. A tense error in a news report — reporting that a suspect "is arrested" when he "was arrested last week", or that a scheme "will launch" when it "was launched" — misinforms the public on facts, not merely on style. Second, accuracy creates credibility. Readers and viewers judge the reliability of information by the reliability of its language: a press release or news ticker full of spelling and agreement errors makes the audience doubt the facts it carries, just as a bank's grammatically broken notice would shake confidence in the bank. In the age of screenshots, a single grammatical blunder by a channel or an institution circulates on social media as evidence of incompetence. Third, accuracy prevents costly ambiguity. Contracts, tenders, examination instructions and medical directions have all produced disputes because a pronoun, a preposition or a missing comma changed the meaning; the professional world pays for grammar in currency. Fourth, accuracy widens reach: internationally intelligible standard English (or standard Urdu, in Urdu media) carries a message across regions and generations, while heavily erroneous language confines it.

At the same time, a critical point should be kept in view: grammatical accuracy is a means to effectiveness, not an end in itself. Language that is technically correct but lifeless, overloaded with passive constructions and nominalisations — "the implementation of the decision was effected" instead of "we implemented the decision" — communicates poorly despite its correctness. Effectiveness requires accuracy joined to clarity, simplicity and appropriateness to audience and medium. Nor should minor accent or dialect features in spoken communication be confused with inaccuracy; a reporter's regional accent does not reduce the truth of a report. The professional standard is therefore double: be correct enough never to distort or embarrass the message, and be simple enough never to obstruct it.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the parts of speech are the functional components from which all professional and media writing is built: nouns and verbs carry facts and actions, adjectives and adverbs describe, pronouns connect, and prepositions and conjunctions supply the logical frame. Command over them produces precision, economy and appropriate tone in professional documents, and sharpness, speed and clarity in journalism. Grammatical accuracy, built on this command, protects meaning, earns credibility, prevents expensive ambiguity and extends the reach of a message — provided it is combined with simplicity and audience awareness. For the media professional and the office worker alike, grammar is not ornamentation; it is the difference between being understood and being doubted.

# Question 5: Language Skills and the Credibility of Media Professionals in Pakistan (20 Marks)

*How do language skills influence the effectiveness and credibility of media professionals in Pakistan? Discuss with suitable examples.*

## Introduction

Pakistan's media industry is one of the most vibrant in the region: dozens of television channels, hundreds of newspapers and FM stations, and a fast-growing digital sector compete for the public's attention in Urdu, English and several regional languages. In this crowded field, the asset that most clearly separates the trusted professional from the forgotten one is language skill — the combined ability to listen, speak, read and write accurately, fluently and appropriately. A journalist may have courage, contacts and cameras, but if he cannot question precisely, write clearly or present confidently, his reporting will neither inform the public nor earn its trust. This answer examines how the four language skills, together with grammar and vocabulary, shape the effectiveness and credibility of media professionals in Pakistan, with suitable examples.

## The Language Environment of Pakistani Media

The Pakistani media professional works in a multilingual environment unlike that of most countries. Urdu is the language of the mass media and national conversation; English is the language of the superior courts, government documents, diplomacy, business and the prestige press; and Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi and Saraiki are the languages in which much of the

population actually lives, feels and gives interviews. A district reporter in interior Sindh may receive information in Sindhi, file the story in Urdu, and quote an official notification written in English — three languages in a single news item. Language skill in Pakistan therefore means multilingual skill, and weaknesses at any point of this chain leak into the final product as mistranslation, distortion or omission.

## How Language Skills Create Effectiveness

Effectiveness means achieving the purpose of communication: informing accurately, questioning searchingly and presenting engagingly. Each language skill contributes distinctly. Listening skill is the foundation of reporting: in press conferences and interviews, the follow-up question that exposes the real story is born from exact listening. A reporter who half-listens to a minister's statement will ask the question the minister wants; one who listens to the precise wording — noticing, for example, that the minister said the project would be "considered" rather than "approved" — asks the question the public needs. Speaking skill governs interviews, live reporting and anchoring. The respected talk-show host controls a heated discussion because he can summarise, interrupt politely and rephrase in both Urdu and English; the weak host loses the programme to shouting guests, a sight familiar enough on Pakistani screens to have become a subject of public criticism and regulatory concern. Reading skill matters because journalists consume wire copy, court judgements, budgets and research reports, mostly in English; a business reporter who reads the budget document itself, rather than depending on handouts, reports figures others miss. Writing skill is where all the others are finally judged: the news story, script, ticker and social media post are written objects, and it is written clarity —

short sentences, correct grammar, exact vocabulary — that decides whether a viewer understands the event or merely watches it.

## How Language Skills Create Credibility

Credibility is the audience's belief that a journalist and his organisation are competent and honest, and language is its most visible daily evidence. First, accuracy of language signals accuracy of fact: viewers reason, quite fairly, that a channel careless with words may be careless with truth. Pakistani audiences routinely screenshot error-filled news tickers — wrong spellings of names, mixed-up titles, absurd translations — and circulate them as comedy; each such screenshot quietly withdraws trust from the channel. By contrast, the long public affection for precise broadcasters of the classical PTV and BBC Urdu tradition rests substantially on their flawless Urdu diction and pronunciation, which audiences experienced as the sound of reliability itself. Second, language skill protects against manipulation. A journalist with weak English who depends on summaries of an IMF statement, a court verdict or an international report must trust intermediaries; a journalist who reads the original can detect when a press release or a political spokesperson has twisted it, and this independence is the substance of credibility. Third, appropriate language builds professional standing with sources: an interviewer who addresses a judge, a general, a tribal elder and a flood victim each in the register the situation demands will be given time and truth; one who uses the same casual tone everywhere will be given neither.

USMAN NOTES www.usmannotes.com

## Illustrative Examples

Concrete patterns from the Pakistani media illustrate both sides. On the positive side, court reporters of the major channels and newspapers earn their authority because they can read English judgements and translate legal language into accurate, simple Urdu for viewers — an act of bilingual skill performed under deadline pressure every day. Election transmission teams that command terminology correctly — distinguishing a lead from a result, and a projection from an announcement — protect their channels from the embarrassment of declaring wrong winners. On the negative side, the rush to be first has produced repeated instances of channels airing unverified "breaking news" phrased in exaggerated language, later withdrawn; the error is remembered as a language of sensationalism — superlatives, absolutes, "biggest", "final", "confirmed" — used before the facts justified the words. Similarly, entertainment and morning-show hosts who use language carelessly with guests have drawn public backlash and PEMRA notices, demonstrating that weak linguistic judgement carries institutional consequences. At the regional level, correspondents who report for national Urdu channels from Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or Sindh add real value precisely when their regional-language skill lets them hear grievances in the people's own words rather than in official translation.

## Challenges and the Way Forward

The challenges are structural. Journalism in Pakistan has historically recruited through contacts and courage more than through language training; many reporters learn on the job, copy-editing desks have weakened as channels chase speed, and the economic pressure on regional correspondents leaves little room for training. The results appear as translation errors from

English wire copy, tickers written in haste, and anchors promoted for voice and screen presence before their language is ready. The remedies are equally clear: news organisations should restore strong copy desks and style guides; universities, including open and distance programmes such as those of Allama Iqbal Open University, should keep language skills at the centre of mass communication curricula; working journalists should treat reading — in Urdu, English and their regional language — as professional duty, because vocabulary and judgement grow only from reading; and regulators and media houses together should reward accuracy over mere speed in breaking news. Digital media raises the stakes further: the journalist is now also his own publisher on social platforms, with no editor between his language and the public, so individual language competence has become the last line of professional defence.

## Conclusion

To conclude, language skills are not an accessory to Pakistani journalism but its working instrument. Listening produces the real question, speaking produces the real interview, reading produces independent understanding, and writing produces the story the public finally receives. Where these skills are strong, reporting is effective — clear, accurate and engaging — and credibility follows as the audience learns that this voice can be trusted. Where they are weak, the results are visible daily: garbled tickers, sensational phrasing, dependence on handouts and avoidable humiliation. For media professionals in Pakistan's multilingual, high-speed environment, investing in language is investing in the only capital journalism ultimately possesses — the public's trust.