The Use of Pakistani English (PakE) as the Model Variety in Pakistani Universities

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ABSTRACT*: Pakistani English (PakE) is a member of World Englishes (WE) family. Prior research findings investigating Pakistani English (PakE) have generally indicated that the variety has undergone substantial change and continues to evolve. However, much of the previous research has tended to concentrated solely upon such investigations of specific linguistic features of PakE. This paper investigates faculty and postgraduate students (N=12), working and/or studying within a large university in the Punjab, perceptions of Pakistani English in terms of the acceptance, intelligibility, appropriacy of use in university domains and potential model variety. In order to identify examples of lexical nativisation, a small-scale corpus analysis of 5 English-language newspapers in Pakistan as well as a number of emails, circulars and newsletters from the selected university in Pakistan was also undertaken. Analysis demonstrated both lecturers and postgraduate students tended to perceive Pakistani English (PakE) as a legitimate and intelligible form of English. Analysis of the Pakistani English newspapers indicates a large degree of lexical deviation from written forms employed within British English newspapers, mostly especially as a result of nativisation of lexis from Urdu and Arabic with political, religious and cultural undertones. The textual analysis of emails, circulars and newsletters also denotes syntactic variation. In light of the findings, a discussion of the role of Pakistani English within teacher education programmes in Pakistani universities as well as broader implications for policy makers and Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan is offered.*

Keywords: World Englishes (WE), lexical borrowing, syntactic variation, acceptance of PakE as a model variety

Introduction

There is a plethora of World Englishes (WE) for communication in the globalized context. It means that uses and forms of English language deviate from a single standard (Crystal, 2003). Research on World Englishes (WE) has demonstrated the legitimacy of post-colonial Englishes, or 'New Englishes' as they explore people's specific attitudes and identities (Kachru, 1985, 1992). Hence, WE studies have produced 'new paradigms and perspectives for linguistic and pedagogical research and for understanding the linguistic creativity in multilingual situations across cultures' (Kachru, 1985, p. 30). Recent research on WE has, in turn, led to the study of English

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as a lingua franca (ELF), which explores the fluidity and dynamicity of English and, in particular, has generally found that the use of English is not based on forms but on functions in practice (Irfan, 2017). Thus, ELF and WE approaches legitimate the use of English in different contexts (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Mahboob & Liang, 2014). Relating to World Englishes paradigm, as elsewhere, the Pakistani population use and create certain distinctive expressions to demonstrate their specific identities in their local contexts (Mahboob, 2018; Irfan, 2012; 2017a).

Previous research has concentrated on English in education (Rahman, 1996, 2007; Mansoor, 2005); the power and status of English (Haque 1983; Abbas, 1993); indigenization and Urduization of English (Baumgardner, 1993), linguistic description of PakE (Rahman, 2011), English as an Islamic language (Mahboob, 2009) and preference for PakE (Irfan 2017a).

English in Pakistan

Pakistan is a pluralistic country as it comprises a multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic population. It has 65 living languages (Rahman, 2007). However, Ethnologue (2015) counts the total number of languages as 77. English is an official language while Urdu serves as the national language (Rahman, 2007). English is an emblem of power as used in 'administration, judiciary, military, education, media, etc.' (Rahman, 1996, p.9). The politics and self-interests of the leaders determine the language hierarchy and status of each language in a multilingual country (Mansoor, 2005). English symbolizes empowerment; Urdu represents cultural hegemony; and mother tongues are regional languages (Rahman 1996). It is observed that 4% of the total population of Pakistan is proficient in English (Rahman, 2007). English is the language of power because it provides the privileged class of people an access to higher education opportunities and well-paid employment in the national and international job markets (Irfan, 2017b). Generally, English is perceived by the government as essential for 'modernization, scientific and technological development, and economic advancement' (Shamim, 2008, p.236).

Globalization has perforated the nation-state borders and reiterated the position of English language for all societies; principally through multinational marketing relationships and products, contemporary and global pop culture, cyber space, and digitalization (references?). Historically English has had dominant position in Pakistan (Bamgbose, 2001) . Indeed, 'it has deeply permeated in the national set

up radically. English is the lingua franca of the international business community. It seems that even if it is de-emphasized for political reasons, it will continue to occupy pride of place in critical and intellectual sectors of national life' (Haque, 1982, p.5). The Coleman Report keeping in sight the language situation in Pakistan (2010, p.3) also views that 'the British Council has recognized the importance that the Government of Pakistan confers on English, as an instrument of national and individual progress'. Furthermore, Mansoor (2009, p.47) believes that English is the key to personal and professional success, promotes social and economic standing and develops broadmindedness and modernity having an access to latest ideas of the west (Mansoor, 2009, p.47).

Within Pakistan, English fulfils interactive, communicative and academic needs (Mansoor, 2005). It functions as a link between speakers of various languages and dialects in linguistically and culturally pluralistic societies (Kachru, 1992, p.58). English provides 'a code that symbolizes modernization and elitism' for educated Pakistanis (Kachru, 1992, p.58). English is also used as an emblem of class identity for urban elites (Rahman, 1996).

Pakistani English (PakE)

Irfan (2017) has uncovered postgraduate students' positive views about the use of Pakistani English (PakE) in two public sector universities (located in Lahore, Pakistan). Irfan also found these students were willing to use PakE within university domains. This study indicates that evolution of Pakistani English has happened. She perceives that distinctive syntax is constructed through thinking in Urdu and the translation of thoughts in English. Sometimes, insufficient vocabulary leads to borrowing of words from Urdu to communicate meaning. Also, they use blended form of American and British Englishes. The participants have disposition for using PakE and consider that it should be used for curricula and assessment in universities. The universities should endorse PakE because it has made Pakistan a multilingual community. However, a few realistic drawbacks are also discussed which obstruct the growth of PakE, such as, fewer creative and research writers in PakE, financial restraints, relation with British colonialism and heterogeneity in PakE. The PakE needs codification, grammar books and dictionaries for recognition and widespread use in professional fields.

English use in Pakistan is a colonising language but echoes Islamic values, principles and norms and signifies South Asian cultural and religious sentiments and

beliefs (Mahboob, 2009, p. 175). Mahboob (ibid.) has stressed that linguistic and content analyses of the topics relating to Islam, Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) and Hajj (pilgrimage) in English textbooks demonstrate the close association between Pakistani English and Islamic and cultural values. Examples include semantic and lexical characteristics of PakE, greetings (e.g., 'Assalam- o –Alaikum') and words of praise and gratitude (e.g., 'Maasha-Allah' and 'Alhumd-o-Lillah' (see Mahboob, 2009, p. 182). With regards to Pakistani English use, Baumgardner et al (1993) classified borrowed lexis from Islam into 44 groups, such as, governmental posts (amir, nazim), theories (hadith, zina), education (iqra, maqtab), and marriage (halala, nikah). Furthermore, research has also indicated PakE pragmatics reflects Muslim values, culture, traditions and customs. For instance, Insha-Allah (God willing) is used as polite denial or a 'non-committing promise' (Mahboob, 2009, p. 183). It is also been found that Islamisation of English in Pakistan is also employed within textbook prefaces, and MPhil and PhD theses frequently begin with 'bismi-llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm'(in the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful) in Arabic (Mahboob, 2009, p.184; 2017).

Models of Englishes

There is a long standing debate amongst researchers regarding whether and, if so, the extent to which local forms of English can employed to aid the teaching odf the English language to non-native speakers (Ferguson, 2006, p.161; Widdowson, 1994). Quirk (1985, 1988, 1990), for example, refutes this notion, maintaining L2 forms of English cannot be used as models, most especially since they generally lack standardisation, are uncodified and non-institutionalised. Quirk (1985, p.6) contends that 'a single monochrome standard form', such as the BBC World Service, All India Radio or The Voice of America should be adopted as models for English teaching across the world. Seidlhofer (2004,) and Kachru (1985, 1988, 1991, 1992a, 1992b) take the opposite stance, and maintain that since English is as an international language, native English speakers should accept the reality that they 'have lost the exclusive prerogative to control its standardisation' (Kachru, 1985, p.30). In turn, Ferguson (2006, p.162) believes that WE approaches should have greater standing and worth for the teaching of English in specifically outer circle contexts.

Other linguists have examined issues of identity, acceptability, intelligibility, practicality and codification with regards to World Englishes, again in relation to the

potential employment of new varieties of English as teaching models. Jenkins (2000, p.79) maintains that intelligibility is not inherent in a speaker's linguistic forms but, instead, is a dynamically negotiable phenomenon between speaker and listener. Jenkins (2000, p.79) further considers that within specific communicative contexts it is not relevant to 'instil L1 pronunciation norms into learners who are rarely likely to communicate with a L1 speaker of English'.

Learner identity can be rooted in both L1 and L2 languages (Irfan, 2018). Joseph (2004, p.161), for instance, views that 'identity is expressed in the language'. English as L2 progresses towards developing a sense of ownership, therefore, the peculiar features of a local variety cannot continue to be regarded as 'errors' (Ferguson, 2006, p.168). At the same time, Bamgbose (1998, p.12) writes, 'codification is essential for standardization of indigenous varieties of English because the teachers would be uncertain to what is correct and what not in its absence'. This study therefore intends to answer following research questions:

1. What are Pakistani Faculty and postgraduate students' perceptions of the legitimacy and intelligibility of Pakistani English as a model variety for academic use in universities?

2. Within a corpus of Pakistani English language newspapers, as well as a number of emails, circulars and newsletters from the selected university, what are the most frequently employed lexical and syntactic features of written Pakistan English?

Research Methodology

This study is qualitative in design, and employs a mixed methods approach, involving qualitative content analysis and focus group interviews. The research site constitutes a public university, with nine campuses, located within the province of Punjab, Pakistan. The selected university offers several multidisciplinary programs and over 23,000 enrolled students.

Study 1

Instruments

A small-scale content analysis, to identify the most frequent lexical and syntactic nativisation, of a corpus of 5 English-language newspapers as well as a sample of emails and other official documents from the selected university in

Pakistan was carried out. As the 5 most widely read English newspapers that in Pakistan, The Express Tribune, The News, The Nation, The Dawn and The Daily Times were selected. The researchers also gained permission from the the university to examine emails, newsletters and circulars of Higher Education Commission (HEC), Punjab Government Higher Education Department. Borrowings from the national language (Urdu) were subsequently classified into three categories

Study 2

Participants

The researchers invited 12 Faculty members and postgraduate members of the universities 2 Education Departments for voluntary participation in focus group interviews. Those staff members (*n=6*) who were found to be most informed regarding World Englishes and PakE were subsequently requested to participate in the interviews. BS Education Semester VIII students from both campuses were invited to participate in the focus group interviews. The researchers randomly selected 6 student participants.

The focus group interviews involved asking participants a series of questions regarding their perceptions of Pakistani English in terms of the acceptance, intelligibility, appropriacy of use in university domains and potential model variety.

The participants firstly completed consent forms before the recording of the focus group interviews. Each focus group interview lasted 30 minutes. All focus group interviews were recorded within the university. Following data collection, the focus group interviews were fully transcribed. The researchers then selected the chunks for analysis. All data was anonymised.

Data Analysis

Study 1

This section provides analysis of the data collected from the newspapers, newsletters, emails, circulars and focus group interviews.

Lexical Differences

Table 1
Lexical Groupings from the Selected English newspapers

Sr.No	Religious Lexis	Cultural Lexis	Political Lexis
1	Fatwa (decision)	Surma (eye liner)	Naya Pakistan (new Pakistan)
2	Kafir (non-muslim)	Burqa (black gown)	Awam Dost (friend of pubic)
3	Ulema (scholar)	Jerseeys (sweaters)	Tabdeeli (change)
4	Shirk (avoid)	Ghairat (ego)	khidmat (service)
5	Qari (one who teaches Holy Quran)	Paanagah (shelter home)	vote ko izat do (respect vote)
6	Imam (mosque scholar)	Halal Ghost (meat as allowed to eat in Islam)	Ek ta (unity)
7	Majlis-e-Shoora (congregation on occasion of Muharram)	Benami (unknown)	Ja Bhutto (long live Bhutto)
8	Mujahdeen (muslim soldiers)	Sahib (Officer)	Tehrik-e- insaf (movement of justice)
9	Madrassa (islamic school)	Laadla (favourite)	Sitar-e-Imtiaz (medal)
10	Maghrib Azaan (evening prayer announcement)	Zaalims (cruel people)	Roti, Kapra aur Makan (wheat, clothes and shelter)

Table 1 indicates the lexis in column indicate the borrowing from Arabic lexis. It seems Arabic lexis has deeply permeated into the daily lives of people. These words are frequently found in people's writings. The people use Arabic words deliberately because of these words' persuasive impact on the public. For example, the word *fatwa* transmits more compelling impression on the reader than "decision". The words *kafir* and *shirk* imply deep connotations depending on the context. The other words such as, *ulema, qari, mujahdeen, imam, Majlis-e-Shoora, madrassa* and *maghrib azaan* are commonly used as nouns. They are incorporated into Urdu and English

languages. The use of Arabic lexis impregnably represents people's association with their religion Islam. The words in 2nd column stand for Pakistanis' cultural identity. The words *surma, burqa, jerseeys, paanagah, halal ghost, sahib and laadla* are frequently used in scripts and speeches. However, the words *ghairat, benami* and *zaalims* are purposely used to signify the culturally entrenched meanings in texts and conversations. They make an appeal to senses and are supportive to recognize the underlying meaning of the texts in the newspapers. They have become the symbols of society. The *naya Pakistan*, *awam dost*, *tabdeeli*, *khidmat*, *vote ko izat do*, *tehrik-e- insaf* are newly acquired political lexis of the current government which have been intentionally disseminated to manipulate the agenda of the leading political party Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI). The purpose is to convince people to give vote to that party because it revolves around justice. It is observed that the political parties use different lexis that implies individual agenda of the political movements. For example, the common words of Pakistan People Party (PPP) are "je Bhutto" and "roti, kapra and maqan".

Syntactic Variations

As detailed below, PakE exhibits distinctiveness with regards to the omission of articles, lexical repetition, specific use of prepositional verbs, and the avoidance of complex tenses and novel phrases (surely this is a conclusion/summary – why place prior to results?)

Omission of article 'the'

Analysis uncovered a general absence of prerequisite articles. This may be because many Pakistani writers think principally in Urdu, where the articles are not used, and thus tend to transfer from their L1 when writing in English. Indeed, since most people in Pakistan tend to learn English through the grammar translation method (Irfan, 2018), it is perhaps unsurprising evidence of L1 transfer has been uncovered. Examples include:

(i) Ensuring active participation of newly hired faculty in the Faculty Development Programs of the university and allowing them to replicate the same in their area of posting. ('the' should be placed before newly hired faculty).

(i) Short term training of senior management in collaboration with Punjab Higher Education Commission ('the' should be placed before senior management).

(ii) Plagiarism Free Policy by providing wide access to Turnitin software ('the' should be placed before wide access).

Repetition of certain phrases "held on"

The following examples of PakE have been taken from a Newsletter which has a wide circulation across the selected university. It is noted that the verb 'held' is frequently used. It is assumed that the way meaning is conveyed through 'held' can't be done through other synonyms.

(i) The session was held on Tuesday 5th March, 2019

(ii) A mesmerizing evening was held on 28th February 2019 by the Department of Botany.

(iii) A training workshop was held on 7th March 2019 by the Student Counseling Centre, regarding Leadership and Management Skills.

New use of prepositional verbs

The examples presented below show substantial deviation from the prepositions frequently used in written forms of British Standard English (BrStE). This divergence is perceived to be an outcome of mother tongue/national language transfer.

(i) Both Urdu and English are official languages u*nder* the constitution of Pakistan

(ii) The Nature has bestowed the wisdom *to* human beings without any discrimination

Avoidance of complex tenses

Analysis also indicated that complex tenses, and particularly the past perfect aspect, were often avoided in written forms of PakE. For example:

'A 4 day Women Leadership Program was organized in collaboration with "The Career Buzz". The workshop was attended by a large number of female students, national and international resource persons' (MU Newsletter, May 2019).

Use of novel phrases

The extracts given below also indicate considerable divergence from sentence structures employed within written forms of British Standard English (BrStE):

(i) 'Request you to ensure the circulation of letters inviting applications for the aforesaid posts/positions to all the officers/employees and all the relevant concerned of your organization' (Punjab Boards, 2019)

(ii) 'Therefore, each and very Higher Education Institution should ensure that a minimum of one day is contributed to Muhammed Dam Fund' (Higher Education Commission, 2019).

(iii) In pursuance of Higher Education Department, competent authority has been pleased to announce that the university shall remain closed on account of Eid Milad-un-Nabi' (MU, 2019).

The selected literature has substantiated that English in Pakistan has undergone transformation through contact with national and regional languages. Therefore, it can be interpreted that above given examples about syntactic deviancy are not interlingua and intralingua errors but demonstrate the syntactic innovations embedded in PakE.

Study 2

Perceptions of PakE as the member of WE family

'*PakE blends English and Urdu words*' (SCS3). '*The purpose of the language is to communicate the meaning*' (SCT2). '*Pakistani English newspapers use different English*' (RCS2). It is construed that PakE represents local people's '*culture and has become a reality*' (RCT4). Some participants commented '*they think, talk and write in Pakistani English*' (SCT5). Pakistani English is one of the languages of Pakistanis as it fashions out Pakistan into a multilingual community. It is asserted that PakE has acceptability and intelligibility and can be used as the model variety in academia.

Perceptions the use of PakE as a model variety

It is unequivocally argued that PakE has deeply seeped into the fabric of the region and is implicitly used in the current'*education system*' (SCS5). One participant reported that Pakistani English is 'useful for students' (RCS1) Furthermore, other participants noted a need is to produce '*ample literature in Pakistani English*' (SCT4) for introducing it '*to world* '(RCT5). It should be used for '*instruction, curricula and assessment*'.

Suggestions about the Development of Pake as the Model Variety

A number of participants reported that PakE is confronted with several challenges in its use as a model variety for teaching purposes. For instance, one participant said that '*if we want to cultivate PakE as a standard variety then the problems must be resolved*'(SCT2). Others observed that PakE as the model variety are '*teacher education*' (RCT6).However, the teacher education will need adequate '*trainers to develop it*' (SCT3). Further, '*HEC and national policy developers should be persuaded to develop PakE as an acceptable model variety*' (RUT4).

Findings and Discussion

As indicated above, PakE is a member of the WE family. English in Pakistan is an official language and a symbol of elitism, power, progressive outlook and prosperity (Mansoor, 2005). In relation to Study 1 present study, analysis of the written texts indicated ta number of instances where English in Pakistan is divergent from British Standard English (BrStE).

Pakistan is a a multilingual and multiethnic nation and Pakistanis generally think in Urdu and other local languages and communicate their ideas through translation into English. The frequent use of translation as the strategy has resulted into language variation. This practice naturally eliminates the feelings of alienation and dislocation for a foreign language. The language variation is a complex phenomenon and a slow process. This research evidently illustrates existing language variation (see Table 1). The lexical borrowings from the national and regional culture represent cultural and ethnic adaptation. The translation of Urdu words such as '*surma*','*burqa*' will not be able to convey the meaning appropriately. Similarly, muslims purposefully deploy Arabic lexis in their writings and conversations. Although, Arabic is not the language of Pakistan but people have natural disposition towards Arabic as it is the language of Quran and Islam. The infusion of Arabic lexis with English demonstrates people's faith in Allah (God) and Islam (Mahboob, 2009). Significantly, language in Pakistan has been used as the political tool to achieve radical agenda of certain political parties since partition (Rahman, 1996). This fact is exemplified with the political rhetoric of some parties such as, '*Je Bhutto*'. Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the founder of Pakistan People's Party and Ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan. The agenda of his party was '*Loti, Kapra aur Makan*'. The agenda of the current government is 'Tehrik-e-Insaf' (see Table 1). The politicians intentionally use political lexis to convince people so to meet their party's specific

objectives and interests. Thus, these techniques i.e. code switching and borrowing enable people to own English as their own language to use it unflinchingly and confidently. English is not a foreign language but one of the languages of Pakistan that has catered the needs of education, commerce and administration since centuries. Further, the language variation is reinforced through textural analysis of selected corpora. The samples are selected from the university emails, circulars and newsletters. These samples validate that how syntactic novelties are improvised in the text through code-mixing maneuvers and transliteration strategies to make it comprehensible and appealing to meet the needs of the local population.

It is argued that PakE is persistently reiterated in newspapers and Higher Education official circulars, emails and newsletters. The evidence extracted from these sources is juxtaposed with the perceptions of the university faculty and postgraduate students. A number of participants' comments pointed to their use of PakE within higher education contexts in order to communicate successfully. Some participants also reported that they think, converse and compose their thoughts in PakE. It is a socio-linguistic and cultural reality and an essential aspect of Pakistani education system. The researchers should draw the attention of policy makers and HEC official towards this emerging variety that is being naturally used by the students and faculty. These agencies should work in collaboration with the writers to develop PakE as an academic model variety. However, it is important to overcome the challenges that impinge upon this much desired aspiration as Irfan (2017) has discoursed in her research.

Conclusion

The present study consisting of study 1 and study 2 investigated that PakE is on the verge of standardization and is representative of Pakistanis' socio-linguistic and cultural identity. PakE is used for communication by an educated class of Pakistan and might be adopted as the model of English for use in academia. The reasons for using Pak E as the model variety have been logically inferred from the findings. The majority of the 12 participants in the study generally perceived Pak E to exhibit high levels of acceptance, intelligibility, appropriacy of use in university domains and, thus able to function as a potential model variety. However, it is recommended that codification and standardization are essential elements of indigenised varieties of English.

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