

English Language and its Socio-Economic Impacts in the Pakistani Context

Obaid Rehmat, Assistant Director (SW&BM)
Wazirabad, Punjab, Pakistan
Obaidrehmat234@gmail.com

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Abstract

The contemporary era is a new stage of capitalism commonly known as informationalism, where production and distribution are becoming globalized. This new flexible, customized production advantages those who control the technology and media where symbolic information is processed. Furthermore, it creates increasing inequality for those who lack technological access and know-how. This study is organized after a keen observation of the dominance of the English language as a lingua franca or Tyrannosaurus rex. The main purpose was study to the socioeconomic impacts of the English language on the lives of common individuals in Pakistani society. For this purpose, in-depth interviews were conducted within Lahore with professionals related to English language coaching who had a minimum of ten years of experience in their field. The critical social science approach was adopted for this study and the sampling strategy was the critical case sampling to gain an excessive and detailed amount of information from the population. The results were quite unique in their nature as proficiency in the English language provides you with these benefits: excessive job opportunities and high salaries, social mobility, and certification as a well-mannered and intelligent individual in society on the other side absence of this important factor gives you depression, alienation, unemployment, inferiority complex, and low standing in the social fabric of Pakistani society.

1. Introduction

The contemporary era is a new stage of capitalism commonly known as informationalism where production and distribution are becoming globalized. This new flexible, customized production advantages those who control the technology and media where symbolic information is processed. Furthermore, it creates increasing inequality for those who lack technological access and know-how (Warschauer, 2000).

In this era, English is the dominant global and international language. In order to survive in the economic, political, and sociocultural world a better understanding of complex concepts of English is necessary. John Galtung (1971) calls this phenomenon linguistic imperialism for developing countries. Linguistic imperialism is not only giving rise to the fall of native languages but it is also creating a sense of supremacy of English over other languages. This way English is damaging other languages in the global industry- this phenomenon is termed linguistic genocide according to "The Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide" (1984).

The past few decades have seen rapid growth in the English language as being the language of information and scientific knowledge. According to Crystal (1997), 85% film industry and global organizations use English as their official language and most of the academic fields publish articles in the English language where particularly the academic field of linguistics has 90% of publications in English. This trend has been on the rise ever since.

Such an evident and large-scale use of English as an official language creates inequality in job markets. Following this trend, non-native speakers who have a better command of the English

language can avail more and better employment opportunities. Considering the case study of Pakistan, the majority of the private sector focuses on the importance of English within learning institutions as well as in the job market. However, the public sector despite declaring Urdu as the official language conducts all its employment tests in the English language according to PPSC and FPSC website data. For instance, the most prestigious Civil Services of Pakistan job tests are mostly in English and they also have the highest feeling rates in the subject of English essay and English Précis and composition according to the annual report 2016. Similarly, all the posts of commission officers in the Armed Forces of Pakistan put a huge stress on English language skills. Furthermore, communication in English is a common and traditional practice in the Armed Forces of Pakistan. Living conditions and life standards are higher in developed countries based on their Human Development Index (HDI) and Gross National Products (GNP) per capita. The majority of eligible, qualified and skillful people try to secure a job in developed countries. This phenomenon is termed as Brain drain. Developed countries like the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, India, New Zealand, Africa, Singapore, Switzerland, and Japan accept TOEFL as proof of English language proficiency for immigration and education. Similarly, IELTS is also accepted as proof of English language proficiency in the UK, USA, Canada, and Australia. These courses are mandatory for entering the above-mentioned countries for immigration, education, and employment. Furthermore, these courses are very costly and most of the people who already live near the poverty line or belong to the lower or middle class cannot even afford to take these courses or bear the preparation charges for coaching classes. This thing further elaborates on how native language speakers are at a disadvantage and have restricted access to the global market.

2. Literature Review

The national language of Pakistan is Urdu while there are five major indigenous languages including Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Saraiki, and Balochi. On the other hand, English has been used in the domain of power like higher bureaucracy, the officer corps of the armed forces, private schools, and in higher education at the University level since the time of British rule (Rahman, 1997). However, the privileged position of English has always been challenged by those who wanted to replace it with Urdu because it is a power struggle between the Westernized ruling elite and indigenous photo-elite (Rahman, 1997).

The English language was induced into the subcontinent by the British rulers in the 16th century long before the creation of Pakistan in 1947 (Mahboob, 2009). Anglicists replaced the Persian language of the Mughal Empire and replaced it with English. The state was going to be the biggest employer of the British Empire and the key to power was the choice of language (Rahman, 1997). The English language gained its political power when the positions of the executive body were only given to Englishmen or to those locals who were very sharp and had complete command over the English language (Rahman, 1997). The English language continued to flourish and gain official political and social status throughout British rule. Initially, the English language spread in the subcontinent because it had economy and social mobility associated with it (Mahboob, 2009). The strict imposition of the English language could have isolated the ruling elite from the natives. So the vernaculars were introduced in high school. However, the higher education was still taught in English medium. This way low-level positions of bureaucracy were given to locals and this vernacularisation started the Urdu Hindi conflict and Hindi was selected over Urdu. The aristocrats of the subcontinent used to send their children to the chiefs' college in order to learn the English language and their traditions (Rahman, 1997). This made use of the English language as the dominant culture of the Indo-Pak subcontinent.

Although, Muslims supported and used Urdu for their separate identity in political spheres before the creation of Pakistan the use of the English language retained its status. At the time of independence, Pakistan inherited English as one of the official languages (Mahboob, 2009; Rahman, 1996). Urdu became the national language but the importance of English can be measured by the fact that the founder of Pakistan Mohammad Ali Jinnah addressed the constituent assembly in English while he was the first Governor General of Pakistan at the time of independence (Mahboob, 2009). By the time of independence the English language was so deeply rooted in the political and social fabric of the region that it was accepted as one of the official languages (Mahboob, 2009; Rahman, 1996).

Pakistan before independence was a British colony where Britain experienced direct control over the local people. However, after the independence in the post-colonial era, the nascent state became

a peripheral state that was dependent on its core (British) state for official, industrial, and constitutional fabric. For this reason, the religious group was against the use of English as an official language. They pointed out that if English as an official language will continue in Pakistan then it will symbolise a new form of colonization. However, the English language couldn't be replaced mainly for three reasons: first, religious parties had little political support; secondly, there was not much material in local languages; and thirdly, a politically neutral language like English was unavailable (Mahboob, 2009).

According to Mahboob (2009), the strongest opposition in the history of Pakistan against the English was witnessed during the reign of General Zia-Ul-Haq after he assumed power with a military coup in 1977. The attitude of Zia's government was manifested in the education policy of 1978 which required all public and private institutions to use Urdu as a medium of education. Still, the institutions where the political influence was evident were exempted from these policies (Rahman, 1996). However, the later government restored the status of the English language and promoted it at all levels because they considered it important for the development of the global economy (Mahboob, 2009).

The English language is considered a colonial legacy in Pakistan by religious parties and people can be heard making statements like English has gone but has left their language that still enslaves us (Mahboob, 2009).

The historical context of the English language in the Indo-Pak subcontinent can be summarized as the British Englishmen brought their language here. Being an advanced Nation in technology they subordinated the locals and used the language to gain proper control over the masses. Language worked as a filter for locals to gain better employment status. This way it flourished through educational institutions. Furthermore, to get the better executive posts the princess or all princely states learn the English language and culture thus making English the dominant culture all over the subcontinent. The literature, technology, political, constitutional and social fabric got lined with the layer of English. At the time of independence, English language was inherited as one of the official languages of Pakistan. However, there has been opposition from religious parties towards the English language but the rest of the elite considered it deeply rooted in society and necessary for development. Hence, English has always flourished in Pakistani society and it has been a source of creating social division among different classes.

To understand the rich north and poor south links there are two competing paradigms: modernization theory and second imperialism theory (Phillipson, Robert, 1992). AIDS that has been granted for the development of underdeveloped countries by retracing the path of Western democracies that guarantees prosperity has not come about. This way imperialism theory discredits modernization theory and the claims of imperialism theory get strengthened which focuses on political economy, class structure, and dynamics of capital accumulation and transformation of pre-capitalist societies by colonial and new colonial capitalism. Galtung (1998) bases his version of imperialism theory on six different types: economy, political, military, communicative, cultural and social. He further states that imperialism is a type of relationship where one society dominates another. According to him, this relationship is propelled by mainly exploitation while other mechanisms are penetration and marginalization. Galtung's point of view explains that imperialism divides the world into two spheres: a dominant centre the powerful, rich and developed Western states and a dominant periphery_ the underdeveloped countries. Periphery is exploited by its relative centre along with the centre. Periphery is also exploited by influential parties from within. The elite in both the centre and the periphery are linked by shared interests and it is claimed herein imperialism that language economy, military, and linguistic norms are dictated by the elite of the centre and are internalized by the elite of the periphery. This way cultural imperialism reproduces the material conditions for exploitation which is legitimate in nature.

Phillipson and Robert (1992) explain the phases of imperialism. In the present day neo-colonialism, the first phase includes the elites that belong to the periphery but they have strong links with the centre they have been educated in centre countries and through the medium of the centre language. International organizations and Multinational companies play a key role in this phase of linguistic imperialism. These organizations can be cultural such as film companies, books, and publishers. They can be communication organizations such as news, magazines, shipping and air companies. They can be political organizations or military organizations such as systems of alliances and treaties. They can be economical such as private and governmental transitional corporations. The

second phase of linguistic imperialism includes the communication between the centre and periphery by means of international communication. In the coming years computer technology is going to replace the dependency of the elite of the periphery. The Centre will control people's consciousness through new communication technology. This way they will be able to strengthen control over the means of production. Phillipson says that for this approach to be effective the center's cultural and linguistic penetration of the periphery is required.

Power can be exerted by the centre on the periphery by imposition and force by bragging and also buying ideas here the importance of language is highlighted as the language is the primary means for communicating ideas so the p**** of the language of the centre is essential to communicate its ideas to the message in the periphery instead of using the methods of force and breaking that are less effective and appreciated in global politics (Phillipson, Robert, 1992). Gultang (1998) says that linguistic imperialism is the precondition for cultural imperialism and social imperialism.

The post-colonial era and linguistic imperialism can be summarized in short as the capitalists needed more raw materials and free labour to gain more and more profits. They started manipulating States with their influences on the basis of capital. In this pursuit, they used imperial machinery to subjugate the less developed Nations rich in resources and free labour. They made them their colonies and for holding such territories the language played an important role. First of all, changing the language to the official language marked early scholars as illiterate. Because they knew nothing of the new language. The ideas, thought processes, education and employment were dependent on the British culture. Secondly, the introduction of the new language that was English made its way into the culture of the Indo-Park subcontinent. Furthermore, they restricted high-level English to the princess of the princely states making it the dominant culture. Over the time of British rule English became an important language in the region and it was inherited by both India and Pakistan as one of the official languages.

Acculturation is another common phenomenon another common phenomenon in countries that use a foreign or second language. It has been studied which part of a community is more prone to the process of acculturation the results revealed that the minority group is more prone to new ideas and acculturation is higher. The rationale behind this difference is that they are constantly trying to change their social and economic conditions and in that pursuit, they avail every possible opportunity out there. In doing so they adopt all influential ideas and get command of the language that may lead them towards a better social economic condition (Clement, 1986).

Better communication skills in the English language are required in a competitive employment market. Communication skills in English play a vital role in employment all over the world in which language frequently becomes the decisive factor in those employment opportunities which pay higher salaries and in organizations that aim for higher productivity (Roshid, 2013). Furthermore, incompetency in English causes difficulties in job finding where salaries are relatively high. Apart from difficulties in selection procedure a lack of fluency in English causes loss in potential earnings of employees. Thus proficiency in English language becomes important factor to advance in local and international companies. Furthermore, the skills and technical knowledge can't be improved in such companies if there exist a substantial lack in English language proficiency along with these problem solving and critical thinking skills needed to be coped with rapidly growing and changing environment of global market because most of the information is available only in English language (Roshid, 2013).

Learning and expressing ideas in first language is easier for individuals then it is in the second language. Study in Bangladesh on two groups revealed that there is a significant difference in expression of ideas in first language as compared to second language. They tested to groups with the random sampling and ask them to write essay on a single topic one group was assigned task in first language and the other group has to finish it in second language. The group with the first language produced twice the number of ideas as they were produced by the second language group. The study clearly show that when it comes to abstract ideas the first language should be used and the second language should be used for material ideas with which a person is already familiar.

3. Methodology

A critical perspective has been adopted to do this research. The social research must be reflexive and necessarily political. The goal of social research is to uncover and demystify ordinary events (Pierre Bourdieu: A Theory of Practice 1977). It is the approach to conducting social research that emphasizes combating surface-level distortions, multiple levels of reality, and value-based activism

for human development. Critical social science (CSS) adopts critical realist ontology that views reality as being composed of multiple layers: the empirical, the real, and the actual replication is a phenomena that describe the detachment of humans from their full potential to do anything in their capacity. CSS blends determinism and volunteerism to emphasize bounded autonomy or how agency and structure cooperate. This is useful method when they are in insufficient funds. Critical case sampling is used to collect data and it can be very beneficial to develop logical generalization from the rich evidence produced when studying a few cases in depth. Critical case sampling is process of selecting a small number of important cases-cases that are likely to yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge (Patton, 2001, p: 236). Qualitative research strategy is a "logic in practice" a "nonlinear search path" to explore the reality about the dominant language of global culture that is English according to the current objective as well as subjective realities. This approach is non-probabilistic and focuses mainly on research objectives and the characteristics of population. Lahore City is choose for this study mainly because of the presence of most diverse population from all over the Pakistan the city host majority of English language institutions in both public and private sector for the more teachers of these institute have background changing from ruler Urban and international. Covering the whole city wasn't feasible due to monetary and temporal constraint so those institutes were selected which was specialized in English language courses teaching and training. Interviews were conducted at the institutions to make it easy for respondents to give us their maximum time out of their busy schedule. 20 In depth interviews were conducted. All the inevitable factor that must be observed in data collection process are practiced in which informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, ethical considerations, data security and protection are included. About an hour to one and half hour interviews were recorded and then transcribe them without any modifications or exaggeration. Theoretical framework is based on interdisciplinary approach and major theories which are included are Realism, Dependency theory, and neo-colonialism.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Language of ruling elites (National or International)

Respondent: The chances of learning the English language are rare for the common because the ruling elites have created bias and they tend to use the language more than others. If we exclude these elites from our society we will be left with the same type of people as far as language is concerned in both ruler and urban areas.

Respondent: there is a huge difference between students which belong to poor and Middle-class families because they don't have access to grammar books and mostly they don't have an English medium of education which is the main reason for the lack of basic English knowledge within poor/middle class where the leads have access to all these tools from their childhood.

4.2 Language of knowledge

Respondent: To be very honest let me give you a very open analysis on it. The way I think about all these things we can see that English and Arabic both are kind of international spoken languages but what we see happening is quite different if I go somewhere and start speaking Arabic it wouldn't matter that much to others on the other hand if I speak English I will be considered as a qualified person and people will actually listen to me with more respect and rather label as an intelligent person.

4.3 Tool of globalization

Respondent: I think it is better to learn English because the English language is a tool of globalization if we want to communicate with other societies we can't do so just by speaking Urdu or Punjabi English can be very effective in taking ideas from local to global level your actually increasing your reach and limits if you are adopting English as a means of communication this is the main reason Republic things in English so that every individual can have access to our thoughts.

4.4 Environment

Respondent: For me the language came to my life as a gift I used to struggle with the language like all other native Pakistani but one thing changed it for me a friend of mine came from England and I just had to be in her company it totally change the way I received English I was able to learn the language with nor extra effort the point is that our understanding of any language greatly depends on our environment.

4.5 Economic back ground

Response: it is obvious that children who belong to socially deprived families have a lot of issues to learn the English language because they don't have much facilities to learn the language in an easier way.

4.6 English proficiency demands the exclusion of L1

Response: there is no barrier to learning the English language for me because I was born in Manchester City in the UK in Pakistan there are a lot of barriers to learning English because people who are teaching English are not good speakers and usually these problems are faced by a large number of people students from ruler background struggle to learn English because they have never been exposed to better facilities to learn English.

4.7 English as commodity

I have been in an administrative post since 2013 where I have to come across hiring people for English language coaching those people had different backgrounds some women qualified up to master and even some PhD all these professionals leg basic command over language and due to such response from people with professional degrees with hiring process was very difficult on the other hand some applicants had diploma or had done short courses for linguistics but the case was the same when it came to hearing because they also command over the English language.

4.8 Prestige

In this respect always important experiences were the same but those who got more respect and value were those who were good at English it is everywhere in this society let me explain with an example whenever I go to a market or a bank I normally use the English language as mod of communication because people give more weightage to the language because it defined your social status automatically.

4.9 Economic development

It is a reality in any field of life if you want to survive you have to have a good command over the English language for example if you are applying for a job and even if you clear the written test but if you don't speak fluently during the interview then your chances of getting that job become we lesser than those who are better speakers compare to you.

From my personal experience whenever I go seeking a job there is one factor that is always considered to extend the command over the English language plays a vital role in my hiring not only that but it also lets me get paid higher than others with the same experience even if I am applying for Islamic studies social studies courses the factor of English helps there to it is becoming a friend that if you are good in English you are going to do great in your life in general.

4.10 English language is the certification as an intelligent civilized person.

Respondent: I have observed that if you are on the road and you come across any kind of accident the way people react after greatly depends on the way you talk to them if you say sorry then they are most likely to accept your apology but if you use native or regional language to say sorry you are mostly likely going to be treated rudely your harshly this is because of the perception of people about language for them the English language give you certificate to be civilized or respectful.

Respondent: From my personal experience I have realized I am always concerned about my promotion and increments because I work for American people and to them, command over English matters more than anything else it is more likely that other colleagues of mine who have a better understanding of English then I do are going to be promoted before me because I can't communicate the messages towards peoples better than them. So English plays a major role in your career path I am not getting a bonus or other advantages just because I am not able to excel in the English language it creates biases among colleagues with the same skills but differences in English language qualification are causing a great deal of complex among working people as well as normal people who can't speak and understand English.

4.11 Restriction against creativity

For example, I gave an essay to all my students about how Facebook is minimizing face-to-face interaction and they came up with great ideas the only hurdles that they faced were related to their English language so great ideas are being killed because of language barriers it is very hard rendering seen especially that students have to face.

5. Conclusion

The research shows that English language is the dominant and ruling power in international order. In contemporary world where every institution of social system is interconnected. Now the dominant culture is global culture and its basic element of symbols for communication is English language without source of communication human culture can't sustain, develop, or eventually can be collapsed and human culture whether it is material or non-material is developed through specific discovered symbols which are used by human beings. The data shows in international order the post-colonial countries or under developed countries are dependent on developed ones who provide them economic, social, and military assistance even Pakistan had been received 67 billion US dollar between the period of 1952-2011. For this purpose English is the only dominant instrument to teach the values and patterns of the developed world and realize the path which covers them to achieve their destiny. Every country wants to develop and become a powerful state that can retain a luxurious life and security from its enemies. However the theorist suggests that the post-colonial world is facing miseries more than the phase of colonialism. The present study has been conducted to analyse the theory of linguistic imperialism in the metropolitan city of Pakistan the results explain that the English language has a great impact on individual life due to the present structure of the society. English is the language that increases our social status, and development in our economic conditions, makes us superior, integrates us globally, defines us as a well-mannered and civilized person in society and creates a general perception that you are very knowledgeable human. In short, the language of survival which owns all the walks of your life whether it is economic, social or political develops your personality makes you confident in front of the people and presents you as a leader among the people who lack any kind of incompatibility with the English language. This means, the English language gives the standard way of living to an individual and it is the reality of the present structure. But this ideology that the English language only gives you well socio-economic status is totally wrong and an illusion. English language on the other side is very destructive for those who don't know this dominant way of communication it forces them to learn if they want to survive in the present structure of the social system it provides them motivation and also punishes those who don't learn it. It creates hurdles in the way of creativity labels them as inferior makes them depressed and restricts their employment and social status. Even though it makes them helpless they can't even express their emotions clearly their intelligence, creativity, or spirit of life. They feel alienated from their own specie and relate them with their socio-economic and psychological vulnerabilities. All founded knowledge is reality because knowledge is always checked dialectically and propositional logic claims that if p is true q is always true. It means the English language has positivity hence it must have something negative in its nature. The question is what should be the solution? After analysing the reality of the English language the researcher critically suggests that there must be a new system for English language to save the masses and this system should be the Communism of the English language where the distribution of the English language would be equally among the masses and this phenomena will be helpful to eradicate poverty, suicide, and crime from the society.

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