English and the Post-Colonial Ghost: Language Policies vs. Linguistic Realities

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پاکستان کے وجود میں آنے سے لے کر اب تک، اُردو کے ساتھ ساتھ انگریزی بھی پاکستان کی سرکاری زبان کے طور پر استعمال کی جاتی ہے، جبکہ بانی پاکستان محمد علی جناح نے اُردو کو پاکستان کی قومی زبان قرار دیا تھا۔ باوجود اس کے کہ زبانی پالیسی پاکستان کے ۱۹۵۲ کے آئین میں اُردو کا ذکر تو تھا، یہ مکمل طور پر آرٹیکل ۲۵۱ کے تحت ۱۹۷۳ میں بھٹو صاحب کی حکومت میں لکھا گیا۔ آرٹیکل ۲۵۱ نے اُردو کو واضح طور پر پاکستان کی قومی زبان قرار دیتے ہوئے انگریزی سے اُردو میں مکمل تبدیلی کا مطالبہ کیا مگر آج تک یہ قانون پوری طرح نافذ نہ کیا جاسکا ۔ اسکے نتیجہ میں انگریزی پاکستان کے ہر کاروباری، قانونی اور حکومتی معاملات میں غالب ہے۔ اور اس کے ساتھ ساتھ قومی نصاب اور اعلیٰ تعلیم کا بھی اہم حصہ ہے۔

مختلف حکومتوں نے لگاتار یا تو انگریزی زبان کی پالیسی کو نظر انداز کیا ہے یا پھر اس میں غیر مناسب تبدیلی کی ہے جس کا کوئی خاص نتیجہ نہ نکل سکا۔کچھ عرصہ پہلے سپریم کورٹ آف پاکستان نے آرٹیکل ۲۵۱ نافذ کرنے کا حکم دیا جس کے مطابق انگریزی پاکستان کی سرکاری زبان کے طور پر استعمال نہیں کی جائے گی۔ اس وقت کے چیف جسٹس جواد ایس خواجہ کا کہنا تھا کہ انگریزی زبان نو آبادیاتی انتظامیہ کی عکاسی کرتی ہے۔ جو بات چیف جسٹس نے کہی وہ آج تک پاکستان کے تعلیمی نظام میں نظر آتی ہے۔یعنی ہمارا تعلیمی نظام جو انیسویں صدی کے انگریزسیاستدان "مکالے"کا بنایا ہوا ہے، دو طرح کے تعلیمی نظام کی پیروی کرتا ہے۔ ایک اشرافیہ کے لئے اور دوسرا عام عوام کے لئے۔

The abrupt appearance of Urdu text (on the previous page) in an English journal (*Hybrid*) can be interpreted as "interpellation", a term coined by French philosopher Louis Althusser. This is further explained through the following example: A police officer yells out "Hey, you there!" causing a tide of people to turn around, including the one individual for whom the call was intended. Interpellation is explained here as a process of conditioning whereby a moral ideology mediates the relationship between power and its subject. Because the subjects (the people who turn around) have been conditioned to such an extent to automatically respond when a form of authority (the police officer), calls out. This preconceived notion of set semiotics has become engrained within us due to all forms of powerful/authoritative works in Pakistan being presented in the English language such as laws, government policies and documents. As a result, we have been *interpellated* into becoming subjects. The Urdu text in an English publication presents us with the institutionalised demarcations, validating at grassroots level, the authoritative nature of English language as a primary tool of discourse.[1]

The English language has been officially used in Pakistan, alongside Urdu, since the country's inception, even though the country's founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, had declared Urdu as the state language of Pakistan. Although the language policy, establishing Urdu as the primary language of the country, was initially mentioned during the drafting of the 1956 constitution, it was not put into writing until the 1973 constitution—as Article 251—under the Bhutto administration. Article 251 clearly establishes Urdu as the national language of Pakistan and calls for a process to transition from English to Urdu, however, the law has never been put into practice, properly or consistently, to this day. As a result, English continues to dominate business, legal, and government affairs, and remains the medium of instruction of the national curriculum and higher education institutions.

This paper argues that, as the English language has become a form of "linguistic capital"[2] worldwide, language learners in contemporary Pakistan consider learning English essential in order to connect to the larger globalised world and are dispassionate about the post-colonial heritage of the language. It also looks into the failure of the national language policy to draft more detailed and clear implementation strategies, which has led to the proliferation of private schooling in the English language, as well as the increasing disparities between public and private schooling.

History of Pakistan's National Language Policy

Urdu language is considered a part of ancient Mughal culture and continues to be a symbol of "Muslim identity", especially in light of the Hindi–Urdu controversies that marked much of the last century. This one major element fuelled the Partition movement and thus held "emotive value" for Muslims especially when they gained their independence from India.[3] Jinnah established a language policy elevating Urdu as the state language at the inception of Pakistan, believing that it would encourage the unification of people post-Partition and become the first language of all "Pakistanis"—thus serving as a mark of Pakistani identity.[4]

Urdu was, and still is, the mother tongue of the people who migrated to present-day Pakistan from Northern India, and are known as *Muhajirs* (refugee or immigrant); they make up only 8 percent of the Pakistani population.[5] Nevertheless, the government continues to promote Urdu as an "urban language" and requires it to be spoken nationwide.[6]

In 1948, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, during his first and last visit to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) declared:

> ...let me make it clear to you that the state language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no

other language. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan. Without one state language, no nation can remain tied up solidly together and function....[7]

From the strong words used here (*in* English), it is clear that the Urdu language policy was one of ideology and seemed to completely overlook the multiple ethnicities already present in Pakistan, not to mention the former East Pakistan. The fact that speeches like this were and are made in English reifies the language's position of privilege and authority, even when the content of what is being said suggests otherwise. The coercion and intensity with which Urdu became the "national language" of Pakistan led to much conflict, especially in the context of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) where Bengali has a long and rich history.

The first language teaching policy of Pakistan was discussed during an educational conference in Karachi (27 November–1 December 1947), which laid the foundations that are still used today. The crucial parts of this policy were to make Urdu the "lingua franca" of Pakistan and to teach it as a compulsory language in schools.[8] Ordained under Article 214 (Section 251) of the 1956 constitution,[9] provincial governments (namely West Pakistan and East Pakistan) were to replace English with Urdu or Bengali, but the clause did not specify a time limit and/or implementation process.

When Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan took over as head of state in 1958, he proclaimed his preference for English. The Sharif Commission in 1959 issued a report stating that primary and secondary public schools in the public sector would change to the Urdu medium but Higher Education would continue to be in English, completely disregarding the large segment of the nation that spoke Bengali. The imposition of Urdu on the people of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), constituting 55.6 percent of the union, led to a resistance movement known as the Bengali Language Movement (1948–1952).

During Yahya Khan's era (1969–1971), Nur Khan's *Proposals for a New Educational Policy* recommended that Urdu be the medium of instruction in the West and Bengali in the East; with a target date for establishment set to 1974. The idea was to phase out English as it created a "caste-like distinction between those who felt at ease...in English and those who do not."[10] This was then reproduced as the New Education Policy (1970), which delegated the phasing out of English to a commission that never came into being, as the country then collapsed into civil war resulting in the dissolution of East and West Pakistan.[11]

The subsequent president, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, ignored this report entirely and put Article 251 into the then re-drafted 1973 constitution. The Constitution of 1973 is the only official written document in which Urdu is named as the "National language of Pakistan", and mentions that "arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen

years from the commencing day."[12] This article came into being just before the establishment of Ziaul Haq's military dictatorship in 1977. Under Ziaul Haq's rule, Urdu was further legitimised as a part of the "Muslim identity" and became integral to his regime's "Islamisation" process, in which he sought to increase Islamic values in Pakistan.[13] Urdu became a compulsory subject in all schools (public and private), alongside Pakistan Studies and Islamiat.[14] Without passing these subjects, students wishing to pursue a higher education in Pakistan would not be able to gain admission at any university, regardless of their religion or citizenship. In addition to this, the National Language Authority was established for the development of Urdu and the language became more commonly used in official government meetings and circles during Ziaul Haq's time.[15]

Therefore, from 1979, all schools (except cadet colleges and some elite schools) were asked to adopt Urdu as a language of instruction from Grade 1. However, the decision was reversed in 1989[16] and the language policy reverted to part 2 of Article 251, which allows for English to be used for "official purposes".

From 1989 to Present Day

Successive governments have changed the language medium of schools many times through government announcements or notices, but without offering implementation strategies or infrastructure. For instance, when Benazir Bhutto came to power in 1989, she declared that the medium of English would be implemented from Grade 1 onwards (previously taught from Grade 4).[17] Due to lack of planning, little change was made. Nawaz Sharif's government policy (1998–2010) towards language was indifferent, and private English medium schools continued to flourish as a result. Finally, General Pervez Musharraf took over from Sharif's government in 1999 via a coup, during which he introduced an age of "Enlightened Moderation" alongside his pro-American policies, which meant that English became an urgent priority, and was to be taught to students from Grade 1 onwards.[18] However, once more there was little done in terms of implementation to provide access to English education for the masses.

The British Council and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) have issued reports and/or published papers regarding the language issues in the education system of Pakistan[19] so that an effort could be made to teach students in their own native languages. Apart from charity schools in certain provinces, this has not yet been implemented in the national system. There are very few documents on language policy, and most of them only detail stances and ideologies issued by the government and detailed in the constitution. The National Education Policy (NEP)[20] was created to offer guidance on the national curriculum and the materials used. The NEP reiterates the sentiments of strengthening the Urdu language as students' main language.

In 2007, a white paper was published on education, which also advocated that students should begin learning English from Grade 1 and that the medium of instruction should be English for Science and Maths from Grade 6,[21] when appropriate teachers are available. This led to further revisions in the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2009.

Although the NEP nominally addresses the language policy in Pakistan, it does not address the issue of language in minute detail. In fact, the only mention of language was in relation to students learning Maths and English, which needed to be "improved in less-developed areas".[22] In terms of the positions of Urdu and English languages in the country, it says:

> English is an international language, and important for competition in a globalized world order. Urdu is our national language that connects people all across Pakistan and is a symbol of national cohesion and integration. In addition, there are mother tongues/local vernaculars in the country that are markers of ethnic and cultural richness and diversity. The challenge is that a child is able to carry forward the cultural assets and be at the same time, able to compete nationally and internationally.[23]

It is clear from this that the national language is still in place to "connect" people across Pakistan and that it is a "symbol of national cohesion and integration". However, the mention of the approximately 70 other mother tongues/vernaculars is limited and is marked as "cultural richness" and "diversity". While this is true, without explicitly acknowledging all of the languages that exist in Pakistan, the policy subtly reflects the same dismissive attitude towards Pakistan's many linguistic minorities as previous policies have. English, Urdu, and Bengali have been the main languages explicitly mentioned in language debates in Pakistan, despite the prevalence of many others.

This brings us to the judgment of the former Chief Justice Jawwad S. Khawaja in which he expressed the "need to wean ourselves off the colonial bosom" and do away with English altogether.[24] The directives cited in the judgment included assigning the inactive National Language Authority the duty of establishing a new language policy. It remains to be seen whether future governments will take action.

English has continued to persist, as an official language in Pakistan, due to an undetailed, impracticable national language policy and the continuous changes in government stances on both Urdu and English. As a result, non-state institutions have greater agency and control over how they teach languages.

Language Planning Policies vs. Linguistic Realities

The national language policies are not the only way to give "value" or status to languages in a society. This can be analysed by exploring the actual interpretation and practicability of existent policies in schools. In addition, language policy research and theory—focusing on ground realities—can reveal how language policies actually work and affect the linguistic minorities, by uncovering covert and overt practices used by agents and/or social actors in institutions and schools, which produce major complexities.[25]

Within the field of Language Policy Planning (LPP), studies place at the core specialised policymakers' perspectives and their policies, which focus on linguistic behaviour of a community, externally. The study of LPP tends to be mostly from the "top down" rather than from the "bottom up".[26] The crux of this criticism is that it underestimates human agency[27] and does not capture the processes of language planning[28] such as how school members act on behalf of the state.

Cultural theorists such as Richard Baldauf, Bernard Spolsky, Harold Schiffman, and James Tollefson believe that language policy is a social construct[29] or a socio-cultural process,[30] indicating that it is important to look at how language is taught and learnt on the ground, which is often overlooked. Further to this, Suresh Canagarajah states that the use of ethnographic methods to examine language by focusing on groups of people and how they use language as it is practiced in localised contexts can reveal what "is" happening rather than what "ought to be" happening in the classroom.[31]

The research conducted by myself across three schools in Karachi and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) in 2016 revealed just how powerful human agency can be in the learning of language and how crucial the experiences of language learners should be as part of language policy planning.

During discussion with the research participants regarding their mother tongues, it became clear that the participants had very mixed and, sometimes, difficult experiences reconciling their home languages with English and Urdu at their schools. For instance, Nausheen in a Karachi school was the only participant who believed that her mother tongue, Punjabi, was important mostly due to her family's staunch belief that it was an important part of their lives:

> Researcher: Okay so when your teacher told you to leave your language at home, how did you feel about that?
>
> Nausheen: When I was told that, I felt strange as to why he/she said this to me. Then I came and told my mother, she said that the teacher is in a way right and in a way wrong as well. He/

she did not tell you to leave your caste. He/she just said to leave it at home, talk in English and Urdu in a clear manner. She said speak in all languages where you find it necessary [...]. In school, I speak Punjabi minimally; all my friends speak in Urdu and not in English. I started mixing words up at home with Urdu words and used to get shouted at for it [...]. I felt that once I am out, I can learn to speak in Urdu and English and can get rid of Punjabi from my life. When I use to speak in Punjabi people use to laugh at me so now I have stopped to speak it completely and now I only speak directly in Urdu and when we are in a mood to joke around; I also speak in English.

The above conversation highlights, what was likely part of the teacher's practice to ensure students spoke Urdu or English in the classroom. However, the teacher was, if not via the school, inadvertently acting as an agent of the language policy by positioning Urdu and/or English as languages for education, and Punjabi as a local language for home, hence, not important in the learning sphere.

In the ICT schools, none of the participants believed that their mother tongue of Potohari/Punjabi was important enough to be spoken and/or mentioned outside of their home and local surrounding areas. It is important to note here that Nausheen (who valued her Punjabi heritage) was at a school in the middle of Karachi, a metropolitan and very ethnically diverse city, whereas the ICT participants were located near the political centre of the country. Their anti-Punjabi/Potohari attitudes can be attributed to geo-political location if nothing else. Nevertheless, both Nausheen and the ICT participants had received direct and indirect messages and/or instructions from either teachers and/or peers not to speak their native languages in school.

The power given here to the Urdu and English languages is perpetuated from the "top down" on a macro-level. However, language specialists such as Hornberger and Hymes want us to consider the voices of language learners in a "bottom up" fashion, looking to combine learners' experiences with the study of education systems and policies. The behaviour exhibited by teachers and peers in these schools, positions Urdu and English not just as important languages but perhaps the "only" ones worth knowing.

One set of ICT participants (Mina and Shaheen) spoke of "messing around" in class by speaking in Potohari/Punjabi when their teacher was out of earshot. While another set of ICT participants (Isra and Shaheen) who were head girls, would tell their peers off for speaking in their native languages in school. The participants, taking teachers and superiors/head students as role models, effectively became agents of the language policy by further demoting their native languages in school. It is unclear whether this ultimately influenced the extent of usage of native languages among other students and/or the consideration that their mother tongues are less important than Urdu and/or English. Evidently, however, they understood that it was not to be used for acquiring education and/or in their schools.

The participants primarily considered Urdu as important, because they perceived it to be a necessity for speaking to their fellow Pakistanis. This is the "imagined community" they understand their nation to be, which possibly has about 72 dialects and languages, and not all of these people will speak Urdu and/or wish to speak Urdu due to their own linguistic ethnicities and identities being seen as unimportant. When pressed about their own mother tongues, there were only two participants (Asad and Nausheen) in a Karachi school who felt, inadvertently, that it would be appropriate for their own local language to be given some national status. However, Nausheen felt that Punjabi was equally important as Urdu, whereas Asad had a more extreme perception and did not see any other language being as important as Urdu.

Pakistan's language policy has always been very straightforward: Urdu is a vehicle to unite the nation and a symbol of "Muslim identity". However, the "standardised form of language", for "nation-building purposes" would be predominantly in print form, according to Anderson and Hobsbawm. Thus, the ideological process whereby Urdu symbolises the state as a "nation" also attaches ownership, membership, and authority of this language to the Pakistani people. This standardised form of language would alter once it is disseminated through vernacular mediums, amongst the "uneducated people", leading to derivations or dialects, which could be considered anti-nationalistic in theory.[32] This means that if Urdu was not spoken in a specific dialect, then a language learner may perceive it as an "inferior" form of Urdu and not accept any non-standardised versions of Urdu. This goes further to the "linguistic capital" theory whereby Bourdieu explains how an "accent" and/or "specific way of having been taught a language" goes further in rendering it a form of "linguistic capital".

Scholars such as Schiffman, discuss the "status" of languages and the perceived value of a named language. A language's value usually relates to its social utility, which encompasses its so-called market value as a mode of communication of a society's linguistic culture.[33] However, Schiffman goes on to state that the value(s) attached to a language does not depend exclusively, or even necessarily on any official or legal status conferred by a state through its executive, legislative, or judicial branches. The official change then from English to Urdu (as argued here) may have very little effect on the way people perceive the English language in Pakistan due to its global hegemonic value and perhaps the linguistic culture it has already created within Pakistani society. In short, national language policies are not the only way to give languages "value" or status in a society. Although, the value of provincial and/or local languages of Pakistan are clearly affected by the national language policy, the value of English in Pakistan is independent of it.

"Linguistic Capital" Breeding "Imagined Identities"

English, as a world language has been a hegemonic force particularly in developing countries including Pakistan where it is considered a type of "linguistic capital".[34] Stemming from colonial legacy, it has now become a pervading factor in political economy and an accepted effect of globalisation. Learning English is largely considered a path to social mobility within Pakistan, but it also affects interaction with international communities, science, and advancement, and maintaining ties with the West.

In 1986, Bourdieu defined "linguistic capital" as an aspect of his concept of "cultural capital" that can subsist in an "embodied state" or a "long-lasting disposition" through a process of education and cultivation.[35] In the institutionalised state, for example, when authorities appoint certain languages as national and/or official ones for predominant use by its citizens, the language becomes a mode of "cultural capital" within that social context. He focuses on both the symbolic (hegemonic power) and materialistic (i.e. currency and exchange value) power that languages yield.[36] The power that language brings in terms of cultural capital comes in the form of acquired skills, knowledge, and qualifications that can be used in the labour market. Therefore, it is accumulated over time and costs money and is invested in by individuals and public institutions, giving it economic capital. This ties in well with Norton's explanation of "investment" in learning a target language, such as English, to form an "imagined identity", which she has developed from Benedict Anderson's theory on "imagined communities".

In 1983, Anderson published his book, *Imagined Communities*, which challenged centuries-old notions of nationalism, nation, and national identity. In the book, he explains how "even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion".[37] The idea being that there is an "imagined" bond with citizens across time and space and thus has a sense of community. Anderson emphasises language as essential to national identity, in that it is a clear unifying factor for nations and "appear[s] rooted beyond almost anything else in contemporary societies", and connects people to the dead through a "ghostly intimation of simultaneity across homogenous, empty time".[38] National anthems are offered as an example of a manifestation of linguistically-rooted national identity: people who have no knowledge of each other's existences sing the same verses at the same time as one another, and are therefore able to feel an "echoed physical realization of the imagined community", or "imagined sound".[39] We see that national language and/or other taught languages, in education particularly, is clearly a major aspect of how nations preserve their identity and/or foster it.

Norton[40] furthers the concept of "imagined communities" by proffering a theory of "imagined identities". She links language and identity[41] in order to explore how learners' affiliation with "imagined communities" might affect their learning trajectories.[42] Norton explains her conceptualisation of identity as:

> How people understand their relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future…Identity references desire—the desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation, and the desire for security and safety.[43]

It is argued by Norton and other collaborators (namely Kanno, Pavlenko, and Gao) on her works that in many language classrooms, the target language community—may be, to some extent—a reconstruction of past communities and historically constituted relationships. It may also be a community of the imagination, a desired community that offers possibilities for an enhanced range of options in the future.[44] As a result, Norton makes the case that when language learners begin a programme of instruction, they may be "invested" in communities that extend beyond the four walls of the classroom.[45] The crux of her argument is that a learner's imagined community invites an "imagined identity", and a learner's investment in the target language may be understood within this context.[46]

In the research data collected from three schools across Karachi and ICT, Bourdieu, Norton and Anderson's theories can be seen working in tandem with one another. The English language was consistently associated with "being educated", and being a necessary skill in order to travel "outside". Half of the participants also believed that being schooled in English symbolised being "educated" and/or more "knowledgeable". Bourdieu's "linguistic capital" is evident here, as the participants believed that they would gain socio-economic value in the Pakistani labour market if they were educated in English and that their social mobility would also improve.

The participants from ICT schools also mentioned that the reason they attended their school was that the natural sciences were taught in English. This further added to their notion of English as the international language of science and, therefore, advancement and progress. Two participants, Nausheen and Mina, also mentioned that the Internet was predominantly in the English language, tying what they saw as "progress" and "advancement" once more to the English language.

The participants from a school in Karachi also noted that English was important for travel and being able to communicate with people outside of Karachi and/or Pakistan. They used the word "outside" quite often, adding to the idea that these students wished to "invest" in the learning of English in order to be able to communicate with communities outside of their own. Norton's "imagined identities" presents itself once more here, in that the participants evidently believe that through learning English, they would be able to connect and communicate with people

they had not met but may meet one day.

The Karachi school was also affiliated with an American exchange programme known as "I earn", which taught the students English, "in order to communicate in other countries", where they did not speak the language. The study Norton carried out in another Pakistani school found that participants considered English a "language of possibility",[47] as they could access resources that would enrich their lives. Similar to this study, the participants in my study believed that English was an important tool for social, economic, and political advancement within and outside of Pakistan. Norton's "investment" concept also comes into play here, especially in terms of the Karachi school where the participants invested time and money in learning the language, in what Norton would describe as an attempt to add and/or alter their own identities. Sarah spoke about a programme known as "Access" run by a corporation called "I earn" and how this programme would enable learners to go "outside" the country:

> Sarah: The 'I earn' people created 'Access,' a program where they teach you English for two years in different schools. Our school is part of the program [...].
>
> Sarah: We use Urdu in everyday life. But we only use English when we go out or travel. Then we use English, but I would say that about 75% to 80% of the times we use Urdu and about 20% 25% we use English.
>
> Researcher: Did they tell you anything about English?
>
> Sarah: Yes, our teacher told us that if we go to a different city or country we wouldn't be able to speak Chinese, Spanish or Portuguese, but we can use English there. We can communicate with people and understand them and get our point across. He said that we should learn English so that we don't experience any problems in the future.
>
> Researcher: So this is the reason to learn English?
>
> Sarah: Yes [...]. What other reason could there be?

It is clear, that in Sarah's opinion, communicating with people outside Pakistan is the main objective for learning English. Clearly, the talk that the teacher in this programme gave these students reflects a form of "linguistic capital" especially considering they use examples of different languages, but emphasise the fact that the learners "will not be able to speak them", and therefore, English is a useful substitute. While this is realistic, it perpetuates the idea that these students can be successful in any country if their English is strong enough. To further enforce and/or reward this desire to learn English, "Access" has a scholarship-funded student exchange programme where students live in the US for a year with a host family and attend an American high school. Hence, this added incentive for learning English is also ever-present through the teaching and dissemination of the English language happening in many nations like Pakistan, through the investing of more power to NGO agencies (e.g. the IMF, UNHCR, and UNICEF) who promote the English language as a development measure. In this context, the English language would only be accepted if it is in its standardised form, i.e. through the teaching practices established and reflective of practices in the West. Having conducted research on the economics of languages, which demonstrates how language variables affect economic variables, Sandhu and Higgins[48] found that a person's earnings in India would be increased if they had attended an English medium school and spoke English like an English person rather than a local. Therefore, instead of it being a social and/or elite status language for the few chosen people, it has become one that is coveted by all in the hopes of improving their socio-economic abilities.

Conclusion

The English language—a post-colonial divisive tool—has become a "linguistic capital" and is now an important skill required for those who wish to be socially mobile and/or improve their socio-economic status. It is clear that Urdu continues to be the language that unites Pakistan and invokes Anderson's "imagined community" with its pro-military, Islamic sentiment, and nation-building narrative. The continued neglect of the national language policy itself, has led to successive governments changing the language of instruction to further their own agendas as opposed to helping literacy in the country.

Language learners feel conflicted about their mother tongues/local languages due to their absence in the national language policy and general public areas of discourse. The schools in Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (formerly the North-West Frontier Province) who teach their provincial languages are an exception. It is to be noted that schools and teachers have the power to influence language learners' perceptions of not just English and Urdu but their own mother tongues as well. The positioning of the importance of languages, therefore, does not necessarily flow from language policies, but the implementation by multiple forms of agencies (schools, teachers, and language learners). This needs to be considered more closely when planning the national language policy.

The ongoing debate regarding the "linguistic apartheid", in Pakistan due to two-streamed schooling and English still being considered a language "of the elite" is still valid. However, as reported by the BBC news, "Nearly every village in Pakistan has at least one privately run English medium school these days".[49] The demand and requirement by higher education institutes, office

professions, and government jobs would need these language learners to at the very least read and write in English due to official documentation being in the language.

Overall, it is clear, that it may be time to move away from perceiving the English language as a colonial language, which continues to divide people in Pakistan, but as a language continuing to connect it to the global community and in the words of the students "progress" and "advancement". The perception that people have of learning English, as an element of a "good" education has spread too far within Pakistan to be abandoned now.

Notes

1. The author credits Syed Ammad Tahir for the Urdu text and Sara Pagganwala for creative feedback.
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