Study of Linguistic Components of Pakistani English: An Indigenized English Variety

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study explores the linguistic components of Pakistani English (PakE) and how this English variety has been indigenized in linguistically diverse Pakistan. English is recognized as an official language in Pakistan, but it is often taught without appropriate socio-cultural context. The research aims to highlight the development of PakE through examining factors that influence its evolution, and analyze main linguistic features that draw its distinction from British English. The study uses a qualitative methodology, particularly thematic analysis of audio recorded interviews with two university students. Findings of the study reveal clausal, syntactic and lexical features of PakE that deviate from standard British English variety. The findings also demonstrate how PakE speakers code-mix Urdu and English, use unique sentence formations, and transform declarative sentences into interrogatives in casual talk. Moreover, the results imply the need for greater focus on linguistic diversity and importance of inclusion of native socio-cultural contexts in English language education across Pakistan. Additionally, understanding of common features of PakE can help informing language planning and policies focused on endorsing regional linguistic identity. Further research examining additional social, cultural and linguistic variables influencing ongoing development of Pakistani English as an indigenized variety is needed.

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1. Introduction

The complex linguistic landscape of Pakistan stems from centuries of invasion, cultural intermingling, and imperial hegemony compounding indigenous languages like Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto with those as Persian, Arabic and English colonizers. The national language, Urdu, itself exhibits this hybridity. Most of its vocabulary draws from Persian and Arabic brought into the land by Muslim rulers of subcontinent, while grammatical structures derive from the native Hindi language (Rahman, 2012). The arrival of English language in the subcontinent can be traced back to Britian's colonial enterprise in the 18th century subcontinent. It came as the language of trade and commerce. However, after downfall of the Mughal dynasty and Britian's complete control of undivided states of subcontinent, English served administrative and commercial needs of the British Raj. English language schooling expanded greatly in the mid-19th century under Macaulay's "The English Education Act" aiming to create a class of Anglicized Indian intermediaries. As (Spear, 1965) states Macaulay's aim was to form a group that could identify and refer to the native Indians by their lineage and colour. Thus, it was necessary to shape the attitude and conduct through education in English language. This set the stage for English to become embedded across the subcontinent politically and socially. 1947 brought the departure of British rule resulting in the partition of the subcontinent that gave birth to a Muslim majority country of Pakistan which was already suffused with the linguistic legacy of English. It continued as an official language of Pakistan, stemmed from the practical needs of nationwide governance and international communication. Within some decades, English

became the major component of Pakistan's educational and literary fabric. As it became the language of elite schooling, bureaucracy, commerce, technology and lifestyles of upper/middle class (Rahman, 2010).

However, with the emergence of the concept of World Englishes, Pakistani English (PakE) was recognized in 1980s. The concept initially distinguished between English language and its indigenous varieties in Britain, Canada, United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. Firstly, Baumgardner identified core features of the indigenized variety including loan words and phonological simplification (Siegel, 2012), and Kachru designated Pakistan among the 'outer circle' of emerging English variant that is institutionalized (Raza, 2008). Scholars have since classified lexical, syntactic, semantic and discursive traits distinguishing PakE from Anglo norms (Jilani & Anwar, 2018; Mokal & Abd Halim, 2023; Musarrat Azher, 2016). The complex linguistic landscape of Pakistan has fostered vibrant features of local variety of the English language imbued with multilingual influences. Known widely as 'Pakistani English' or PakE, this English variety with indigenous influence has become a gateway for a sense of success and international communication (Baumgardner, 1995; Mahboob, 2003). Yet very little attention has been paid to PakE in scholarship on language education within Pakistan. Considering it, this research aims to examine linguistic components making PakE a distinct variety influenced by local languages. Kachru (1985) notes that a non-native variety of a language transit from three stages- the spread of English from imperial roots to diverse socio-cultural contexts broods distinct localized varieties like PakE. Pakistani English is held as standard English that makes use of a bulk of words from British English (BrE) having different social structure. Lexical components of Pakistani English (PakE) and their use in semantic structure represent a noticeable shift from British English (BrE) to the form and meaning of Urdu (Talaat, 1993). Mansoor (2002) categorized the non-native local varieties in three classes: a) acro-lect, b) meso-lect and c) basi-lect. The first variety is communicated by and for elite class. The second variety is spoken by and for the middle class or white collar citizens and the third variety is the language of advertisements and used among ill-educated and backward class.

The role of language teachers and instructors is important as they teach English language as a non-native mode and mean of communication in Pakistan. They eventually come across hard tasks. This includes the general confusion that needs to be responded about the instruction and direction for communicative proficiency in English language. Teaching merely grammar, vocabulary and punctuation of a language is inadequate. Pragmatic and cultural competence is needed more than only teaching grammar, vocabulary and punctuation to the foreign language learners. Thus, it is vital to recognize the cultural and social variables that influence the communicative competence and performance. Above all, learners should know varieties that are not only their local varieties but the process of interaction of other varieties also with a foreign language. This knowledge of similarities and dissimilarities can help the learners to use the foreign language within socially and culturally suitable way. Nonetheless, teaching of English in Pakistan often disregards linguistic diversity and background of the students. Students primarily study British English norms without exposure to the features of PakE influenced by Pakistan's multilingual heritage that includes Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi and Pashto languages. This scarcity of scholarship and teaching materials on the indigenized English variety prevalent in student's own communities hampers their communication and identity needs. By examining common lexical, syntactic and clausal characteristics of PakE through analysis of natural speech samples from Pakistani university students, this study reveals the gap between standardly codified English literacy instruction and the organic linguistic reality of the society.

2.   Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research focuses on problems in their actual contexts and tries to build sense of the contextual problems through interpretation of phenomena made meaningful by the people (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It refers to investigate the lives of people, their lived experiences, sentiments, feelings, behaviors, functions of organizations, social and political movements, cultural conducts and trends as well as interactions between nations (Charan, Keerio, Rasool, Kokeyeva, & Kanyika, 2024). Thus, it is suited for profound exploration of linguistic features and speech patterns in their natural contexts. Focusing on thematic analysis that provides an apt interpretive lens for

coding common lexical, syntactic and semantic tendencies reveled in casual PakE discourse (Charan et al., 2024; Halo, 2021, 2022; Khatti, Rasool, & Keerio, 2023). To obtain natural speech samples, the research adopted purposive sampling. The reason behind selecting two participants, both native Pakistani university students from different gender and varied sociolinguistic backgrounds-one rural and one urban, one boy and one girl, lies in the fact that they are English graduation students who study standard codified English language and literature and are familiar to the researchers, thus were readily available for the research. This captured a breadth of colloquial PakE while keeping the small sample size. The data comprises recorded 20-minute interviews with both participants on formal topics to elicit casual conversation.

The researchers transcribed interviews and used manual open-coding to identify frequently occurring linguistic features diverging from standard British English norms. These salient lexical, grammatical and semantic patterns formed the basis for thematic analysis to reveal core structural characteristics of colloquial Pakistani English based on concrete examples from the data. The researchers followed all the ethical formalities. The participants were informed about their confidentiality and were asked for their consent for this research. They were assured and notified that the data will be in privacy. The purpose of taking consent from the participants imply informing them about the overall purpose of the research (Kvale, 2007). Therefore, it was thoroughly explained that the study aims on interpreting linguistic components of Pakistani English variety. While insightful patterns emerged through the small talk of educated youth that warrants caution regarding over-generalization of the standard English over PakE's diversity across Pakistani contexts. Though the researchers identify the limitations of the study as it is small data sampling, yet the research provides valuable preliminary themes for further investigation. As English continues rapidly evolving in Pakistan, larger scale sociolinguistic surveys need to track changes across demographic variables like age, ethnicity and gender. The findings of this research offer ground for such further examination through identification of salient linguistic features distinguishing PakE discourse.

3.   Data Analysis
The English variety emerging in Pakistan absorbs syntactical, lexical and phonological elements of the dominant indigenous languages, particularly Urdu. This data analysis reveals a multitude of linguistic markers exemplifying Pakistan's localized development of English through code-mixing of English and Asian language structures.

3.1.   Syntactic Variation
Pakistani English speakers use several characteristic grammatical structures unlike those of standard English rules, but it rather reflects common patterns in South Asian languages (Charan et al., 2024). The identical interrogative phrase order in PakE, as it is with Urdu or Hindi in which questions retain nearly the same word order as a statement but end in the question 'kya,' like its standard English equivalent 'Do you know?'. Whereas standard English requires inversion of the subject and auxiliary verb. For example, the PakE question: "do you know where we stay?" is deviated from the standard English: Where did we stay? This sentence is interrogative in its meaning. In BrE, local speakers state: "Where did we stay" for past, but in PakE its rule is deviated from the BrE. The aforementioned phrase is considered substandard, but in PakE it is normal to use interrogation in affirmative form. Moreover, we see the structural difference in the second sentence from British English. The use of auxiliary before subject in double question is normal in BrE, but in PakE it is contrary.

On the other hand, the use of present continuous tense in PakE as "how are you spending" instead of "how do you spend". Likewise "I am missing those days" instead of "I miss those days" reflects such common use of the tense in Pakistani English. Lexical items such as need, want, like, miss etc are used in present simple form in British English (BrE). PakE drops or replaces complicated tenses, aspects and modals inequivalent in South Asian languages. Past participles like 'been' routinely disappear: "you must have to go". In British English it is either 'you have to go' or 'you must go'. Similarly, the present perfect 'have/has+ past participle' pose complexities, thus PakE uses more accessible present progressive constructions for completed actions: "I am watching movies." Moreover, assertion of questions has also a unique pattern in use: "what you have learnt from that movie?". This sentence asserts the question as a statement, which is characteristic of commonly used Pakistani English. Similarly, "You remember we were taking tea after class?". This sentence is an interrogation stated in

affirmative statement. BrE expresses such sentences like: "Do you remember we were taking tea after class?" Such assertion of question into statement demonstrates the Pakistani variety and such usages are normal in everyday conversation among Pakistanis. In addition to this, PakE speakers normally use short sentences to respond the questions related to their current engagement of Assembly (Khatti et al., 2023). The example "Taking tea" sentence is a part of Present continuous that is indigenized form of BrE: "I am taking tea." Another example of short sentences "Quite fine" deviated from the BrE "I am quite fine". Also in the sentence "my last trip was about visit of Punjab." In this sentence preposition 'about' is used unnecessarily as compared to the BrE norms. The phrase itself is deviated from the standard structure. In British English, native speakers state the same in active form: "I visited Punjab last time" but in PakE we find the use of the same in passive as quoted in aforementioned sentence.

3.2. Lexical Variation

A rich array of hybrid anglicized expressions permeate Pakistani day-to-day speech. The vocabulary constitutes the most visible imprint of Pakistan's regional languages and the influence of Islamic identity on PakE. These arise through different mechanisms:

1. Direct translation from native phrases gives a subcontinental flavor through formal greetings and valedictions: "Allah Hafiz" wishing divine protection translates the essence of 'Khuda hafiz for 'goodbye'. It becomes more meaningful than just a goodbye. Similarly 'Assalamualaikum' for 'Hello' imbues peace onto the recipient which is customary etiquette in its standard counterpart.
2. Substitution with cultural equivalents like references of Islam in PakE, instead of Biblical terminology persisting in standard English, is evident in the word choice "Inshallah" retaining Arabic conjugation which invokes divine will where its standard English counterpart 'hopefully' falls short. Also "badshai" or "shahi" evokes Mughal majesty more prominently than the BrE 'royal'. Such latent connotations signify the cultural resonance.
3. Along with it, borrowing less translatable lexis are quite common in PakE, particularly lexis for Pakistani cuisine, attire, monuments and rituals find no parallel in the standard English. Therefore, indigenous vocabulary fills semantic gaps to accurately imply reference for cultural touchstones like customary titles regal fort for "shahi qila" cannot be rendered a mere 'royal fort' without erasing history. The tomb "Data Darbar" loses Sufi lineage as 'saint shrine'. Similarly, the multipurpose cooking staple 'chai' means more than any single English tea vaiety.

Moreover, there are certain words which do not occur together in British English, but in Pakistani English, "I went there at the season of winter which made our trip full enjoyable", they are used together: "full enjoyable." It is less observed in BrE, but appears normal in Pakistani English. Most of the Pakistani English vocabulary deviates from British English words on religion basis. There are many nouns borrowed from Urdu in Pakistani English. According to Talia (1988), these borrowed words when spoken by any Pakistani bilingual speaker during his/ her communication in English reveal Urduised allusion that is influence of Urdu. Sometimes, it becomes important to use Urdu words for Pakistani speakers to deliver their message correctly that refers to some religious or socio-cultural objects. The issue arises with the use of Urdu words when Pakistani speakers lack particular choice of words in English. Most of the words are cultural and religion-specific terms. Thus, it becomes difficult to find the parallel word within English language due to variation in context. Few examples of the words are: masjid, badshahi, shahi, kila, inshallah and darbar. These words explicitly contribute as demanded in the context. Such lexical and semantic engagement mirrors antecedent English indigenization patterns across global contexts evident in words like 'typhoon' or 'tornado' permeating linguistically diverse native soil. Thereby PakE vocabulary developments implies linguistic diversity scholarship (Olagboyega, 2009) viewing the speedy acculturation of English and showing discontent over homogenizing global tongues.

3.3. Phonetic Variation

Along with syntactic and lexical variation, phonetic simplification is also evident in Pakistani English. Two friends discuss taking 'chai' in English missing the dental stops and fricatives characterizing standard British pronunciation. Like Korean speakers, PakE phonology minimizes tricky sounds by substitution or omission. Thus: "the" becomes 'duh' or is entirely

omitted, "that" simplifies into nearly homophonic 'dat' and insertion of vowel separates "film" into 'filum'. Such phonetic nativization can increase accessibility for the new learners. This analysis of different variations observes concrete examples of the Pakistani English language features which distinguish it as a distinct post-colonial variety. The characteristic word choice, syntactic deviations, and interrogative simplifications evident in these speech samples affirm (Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Mahmood, 2009) identification of structural patterns nativizing English within multilingual Pakistan.

Moreover, the Anglicized hybridity, whether in valediction like "Allahhafiz" or borrowings like "masjid", tie directly to Baumgardner (1995); Mambos and Hmar (2004) findings on lexicosemantic adoption of regional essence into Pakistani English. Thereby, these micro-level patterns crystallize (Kachru & Nelson, 2006) level theorization situating Pakistani English on the dynamic trajectory of acculturating. In that spirit, documenting the de facto linguistic reality of Pakistani English as it is spoken and heard counters assumptions of linguistic homogeneity that marginalizes native varieties in favor of external standardized norms. Therefore, appreciating PakE's fluidity in education in Pakistan and adopting local influence may inform language policy makers and language instructors to derive inclusive policy for identity expression of the local population which can empower Pakistan's multilingual terrain. The choice of south Asian vocabulary and phrasings incorporates local sensibilities which makes PakE's authenticity within Pakistan. Thus, this study joins calls advocating the legitimization of diverse, functional Englishes adapted organically for local contexts versus insisting on native Anglo norms in post-colonial societies (Ashcroft, 2001; Halo, 2021, 2022; Khatti et al., 2023; Parakrama, 2015).

4.   Conclusion

This qualitative study on linguistic components of Pakistani English provides vibrant insights into the indigenized variety of English emerging in Pakistan's multilingual context. The analysis of speech patterns among Pakistani university students reveals the gap between standardized English teaching models and the social practice of Pakistani English. The data shows core syntactic, lexical and phonetic tendencies distinguishing PakE from BrE. These include interrogative simplification, tense deviations, cultural greeting phrases, lexical borrowings and phonetic substitutions and omissions which reflect Urdu and other regional influences on the English variant used in casual discourse. Accordingly, the study affirms theoretical perspectives on post-colonial English indigenization and the pragmatic functionality influences by localization (Kachru & Nelson, 2006). As this diverse "World Englishes" paradigm notes, relocating native linguistic needs organically necessitates adaptation that suits local contexts. Consequently, it is important to document examples of Pakistani English corresponding with the cultural and linguistic heritage of the country.

In multilingual Pakistan, the persisting gap between standardized English literacy practices and students' indigenous reality prevents inclusivity in education and society. Therefore, the findings carry implications for pluralistic educational policies, language planning, teachers' training and teaching approaches aligned to diversification globally and socio-cultural affiliation and needs of local students (Parakrama, 2015; Siegel, 2012). Firstly, curriculum designers and textbooks publishers must acknowledge Pakistani English patterns to affirm students' needs of self-expression and identity correspondence. Secondly, English language teachers require training to promote linguistic diversity and leverage code-switching for pedagogical needs through translanguaging techniques accommodating multilingual learners' contexts. Such attunement of fluid bi- or multilingualism within English classrooms counters the marginalization of indigenous codes, thus furthering inclusion and accessibility to many English language learners.

4.1.   Delimitations

The researchers identify certain delimitations of the currents study that bounds its scope. Firstly, the small sample size of two undergraduate university students, although balanced for gender and urban/rural background, does not claim representation for the linguistic diversity across various socioeconomic and ethnic groups comprising complete population of Pakistan. Secondly, the interview duration of twenty minutes just provides a snapshot of everyday speech which limits the examination of morphological complexity. Finally, the manual coding process risks inconsistencies as compared to computational analytic techniques. These conditions affirm cautious gathering of observed variability trends to draw broader conclusion on the patterns of Pakistani English speech nationwide. However, the study

offers valuable insights as a precursor for large scale survey research on this rapidly developing post-colonial English variety in linguistically diverse Pakistan.

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