

LINGUISTIC HEGEMONY IN STATE INSTITUTIONS: A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLICY IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This study attempts to explore the issue of hegemony of English in the state structures of Pakistan, such as in the domains of education, law, and banking from a post-colonial perspective, especially focusing on the language policies of Pakistan. This research focuses on four important goals that include the sociopolitical implications of English hegemony; impacts of English on institutions; ways in which English as an institutional language contributes to the shaping of society; and hidden imperialistic/capitalistic power of English in the globalized world. This current research study will use a mixed methods design which involves three aspects. Firstly, a sector-wide survey will be conducted to gain insights from stakeholders about English's role in institutions; secondly, a corpus-based analysis of English hegemony in official documents will be carried out at lexico-phrase level; thirdly, semi-structured interviews will be taken to understand the experiences of professional practitioners of English as a medium of institutional communication. The results of the corpus analysis indicate the significant conformity of the education discourse with policy-related orientations in English medium due to the predominance of the regulatory and academic lexicon. The banking discourse involves intensive use of highly specialized technical and functional lexicon, reflecting such policy-related values as efficiency, standardization, and financial management. In the legal discourse, the combination of regulatory vocabulary with the official style ensures the precision of communication and adds authority to the content. Thus, the qualitative results illustrate the fact that English remains the main medium for all types of discourse under analysis in terms of formalization, policy, and legitimacy. This research comes to the conclusion that English works as the hegemonic language resource in state institutions, which ensures linguistic stratification in Pakistani society.

Keywords: *English Hegemony, Pakistan's state institutions, education, legal, banking*

Introduction

The language policy of Pakistan since its creation in 1947 is still significantly influenced by its colonial legacy. Despite the constitutional obligation to favor Urdu and regional languages, Pakistan continues to experience English hegemony in its governmental structures, educational systems, legal procedures, governance, and financial systems. This indicates a wider problem wherein the colonial power structures have been perpetuated through institutional channels that serve the interests of English-speaking elites at the expense of the linguistically diverse masses (Rahman, 2004; Ashcroft et al., 2002). The current research seeks to explore this contradiction from a critical postcolonial perspective, highlighting the role of English as an instrument of institutional domination, social discrimination, and ideological manipulation (Phillipson, 1992; Mignolo, 2012).

1.1 Language, Power, and Postcolonial Continuity

Language is much more than just a mere vehicle of communication because it is an important tool for power politics, and an important part of the process whereby individuals acquire power through linguistic ability (Ashcroft et al., 2002; Jalal, 2014). The power dynamics around language are clearly seen when considering English as a medium of communication. Linguistic capital and fluency in English are correlated with power and upward social mobility (Rahman, 2004; Abbas & Bidin, 2022). This issue regarding English language as a means of securing socio-political advantages in Pakistan has been studied widely, where it is considered crucial for accessing higher education and governance structures and securing professional success (Mahboob & Zafar, 2023; Zeeshan, 2025).

This is not because of the usefulness of English as a global language or its prestige as a language. Instead, it stems from the continuation of the institutional reproduction of the colonial system, which was never deconstructed when Pakistan became independent (Ashraf, 2023; Manan et al., 2022). The colonial administrative system that made English a language of control continued even after 1947 (Jalal, 2014). It was not just under colonial rule but even afterwards that elites considered English as the language of prestige and power. This pattern of English domination has been continued and reinforced through the process of globalization, which views English as a crucial language for economic success and global integration (Ehsen & Abbas, 2023; Sheikh et al., 2025). As a result, a multilingual country like Pakistan continues to operate within the post-colonial framework in which English acts as the means of accessing institutional power and prestige.

1.2 English as a Hegemonic Institution

In the institutions of Pakistan's state, the language resource that dominates is English. In the educational sector, English-medium education is perceived as superior and necessary for development while other languages like Urdu and others are devalued (Rahman, 2011; Saba & Siddiqui, 2023). This policy has brought about what researchers have referred to as "guilty multilingualism," an emotional situation whereby multilingual learners feel ashamed about their native languages and anxious regarding their level of proficiency in English (Manan, Channa & Haidar, 2022). These include identity loss and knowledge marginalization.

Likewise, in the legal and banking domains, English reigns supreme as the dominant language used for official documentation, policy statements, and institutional power (Ahmad et al., 2020; Rizvi, 2015). The discourse in law involves the use of highly formalized language associated with regulations alongside authoritative language, which emphasizes precision and institutional power. The discourse of banking entails the use of technical terms and operational jargon that highlights efficiency and financial management through English-based channels. These institutional roles are supported discursively by virtue of their being linked with professionalism and expertise (Ali & Umar, 2021; Rashid & Waqar Ali, 2025). Ordinary citizens who do not speak English are unable to access these institutions, thereby forming a language barrier that favors English-speaking elites at the expense of the majority.

The gatekeeper role played by English goes beyond mere access to institutions. It also produces a class hierarchy in Pakistan that privileges those who speak English, allowing them to accumulate educational qualifications, employment prospects, and even political influence (Khan et al., 2024). The formation of the English-speaking upper class, formed on the basis of exclusive access to education, implies very unequal distribution of power. At the same time, the effects of

the dominance of English create a sense of linguistic and cultural insecurity among non-English speakers (Khan, 2023), who feel that their culture is an impediment to their success.

1.3 Policy-Practice Gap and Postcolonial Performativity

One contradiction that clearly exists in relation to language policy in Pakistan is that although language policies and constitutional provisions promote Urdu and regional languages, the practice within institutions revolves around the dominance of the English language (Tamim, 2021; Bazai et al., 2023). The contradiction between language policy and practice indicates that mere policy pronouncements without institutional changes render any policy ineffective. Language policies do exist but are implemented poorly, with English being used as the working language in all institutional spheres.

This paradox stems from what can be described as postcolonial performativity—that is, the inadvertent perpetuation of colonial linguistic traditions via institutional frameworks that are unaware of their own colonial origins (Manan, Tajik, Hajar, & Amin, 2023). The use of policies that seek to encourage indigenous languages is carried out through institutional systems that are still built around the primacy of the English language as the *lingua franca* of power, documentation, and expertise.

1.4 Globalization and Neoliberal Imperialism

To explain why English continues to dominate in Pakistan, it is crucial to consider the present-day phenomenon of globalization along with the neoliberal form of capitalism. English is presented as nothing but a crucial credit card in today's world, with knowledge of English becoming the linguistic currency required for achieving success and taking part in the process of globalization (Manan, 2024). The above-mentioned idea associates linguistic skills in English with economic prosperity and personal development (Ehsen & Abbas, 2023; Sheikh et al., 2025). Globalization has been reinforced by international development agencies, multinational companies, and transnational non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Through the postcolonial reading of the English-language domination in the modern world, one can see the phenomenon of linguistic imperialism, or the dominance of English not through the means of colonial domination but through the economic system and through the acceptance of the language's prestige within postcolonial societies (Phillipson, 1992; Mignolo, 2012). As a result, English becomes the means through which formerly colonized nations retain their status within global hierarchies and become subordinate to them. This leads to epistemic displacement and, consequently, cognitive dependence of postcolonial societies on the intellectual output in English.

1.5 Research Problem and Significance

Though there have been constitutional commitments toward linguistic pluralism, the use of English in Pakistani state institutions remains prominent (Rahman, 2004; Zeeshan, 2025). The continued existence of such linguistic domination despite constitutional policies toward the use of indigenous languages is a fundamental issue that needs critical attention. In addition, English continues to be seen as a natural language associated with modernity and development, and hence its inevitability is taken for granted (Ali & Umar, 2021).

However, the body of literature on English in Pakistan has traditionally been limited to either sociolinguistic descriptions or educational issues (Begum, 2022; Anwar & Rauf, 2023). The neglected dimension is the aspect of English as an instrument of power, the use of English in governmental organizations to manage institutional discourses, control the access to power, and

perpetuate social disparity. In addition, the postcolonial perspective has not been explicitly incorporated into the literature (Ashcroft et al., 2002; Phillipson, 1992). This paper seeks to fill these research gaps by integrating the postcolonial approach with the linguistic imperialism paradigm and critical discourse analysis.

2. Literature Review

There have been significant changes to Language Policy and Planning (LPP) during the last thirty years from its technocratic nature to a critical and multi-disciplinary approach. While early approaches viewed language policy in terms of managing linguistic diversity using a non-value judgmental perspective, modern scholars view it within a wider sociopolitical framework and see language policies as part of maintaining the status quo through the reinforcement of existing structures (Al-Zoubi & Abunawas, 2025). This literature review draws upon theoretical, historical, and empirical studies in the disciplines of sociolinguistics, postcolonial theory, and critical language policy. Specific focus is paid to Pakistan as a country influenced by its colonial linguistic history.

2.1 Conceptualizing Language Policy and Planning

Language policy means either explicit policies about language usage or hidden ideologies about language usage, whereas language planning involves intentional activities regarding language status, structure, and acquisition (Channa, 2015; Dilawar et al., 2022). The two concepts are interconnected, as language policy takes shape during the process of language planning along three main components, namely, status planning, corpus planning, and acquisition planning. Status planning in Pakistan has favored the usage of English and Urdu languages, corpus planning has standardized dominant languages without paying any attention to the regional languages, and acquisition planning has promoted the English medium of education (Channa, 2015).

According to the technocratic approach to LPP, the issues surrounding languages would be solved through rational planning; nevertheless, this theory has received much criticism due to its failure to address the political dimension of language policy-making. The critical approach has viewed LPP from an ideological perspective and considers language policies as a reflection of the existing power structures (Al-Zoubi & Abunawas, 2025). Language ideology, which refers to the beliefs and assumptions related to language, has gained prominence as a theoretical tool in analyzing language policies (Abbas & Bidin, 2022; Hassan et al., 2024). Ashraf (2023) provides evidence showing how even equity-driven institutions perpetuate English hegemony because of the belief that it is a high-quality language.

Language is considered symbolic capital from a Bourdieusian standpoint, whereby mastery of dominant languages, including English, ensures socio-economic benefits (Anwar & Ali, 2021). Within the Pakistani context, there is an uneven distribution of educational opportunities for learning English, which allows the elite to transform linguistic capital into more socio-economic benefits. Moving beyond that, Manan (2024) views English as a type of neoliberal currency, or a “credit card,” through which opportunities become accessible.

2.2 Language Policy in Postcolonial Contexts

According to postcolonial discourse, colonial languages continue to be used as tools of domination even years after gaining independence. Such continuation becomes naturalized via discourses that claim English to be either neutral, modern, or international, and hence, fail to acknowledge the language’s perpetuation of inequalities (Kazmi, 2024; Rashid & Waqar Ali,

2025). In contrast, Zeng and Yang (2024) state that the hegemony of English is neither natural to the language nor to its native speakers.

In this sense, Pakistan serves as an example. Even though there have been attempts at promoting Urdu, the use of English continues to prevail in the realm of administration, education, and legislation (Ahmad et al., 2020; Channa, 2015). Such a trend is highly dependent on the interests of elites, whose education in English-speaking schools gives them a competitive advantage in preserving the language's dominance (Zeeshan, 2025). Globalization processes further strengthen the position of English, as it has become indispensable in economic interactions on the international stage (Ehsen & Abbas, 2023; Sheikh et al., 2025).

Linguistic imperialism theory proposed by Phillipson (1992) provides a useful approach to analyze this problem. According to the linguistic imperialism theory, the global dominance of English language is used to serve certain structural and cultural advantages of dominant countries while often ignoring local languages and their importance. The empirical research conducted in Pakistan shows how the English language dominance maintains epistemic injustice as western epistemology gets prioritized over the local one (Javed & Kamran, 2021; Sheikh et al., 2025). This phenomenon is termed as “epistemic displacement” when knowledge acquisition is done using a non-native language.

Furthermore, CDA also helps to understand how linguistic hierarchies are established and reinforced via institutional texts. According to recent studies, the language of English has been discursively depicted as being modern and authoritative, whereas languages like Urdu and regional languages have been portrayed as being limited or informal (Hassan et al., 2024; Hussain et al., 2024).

2.3 English in Postcolonial Societies

English hegemony can be understood from its colonial origin, especially the Minute of 1835 by Macaulay, which made English the language of higher education and administration. The objective was to create an intermediary class that would have colonial sympathies. Linguistic hierarchies were thus created that continued even after independence because new states adopted colonial administrative systems (Yang & Du, 2024).

In the Pakistani context, the English language remains a symbol of power, modernization, and upward social mobility. It has been viewed as indispensable to success, thereby adding to its value (Mahboob & Zafar, 2023). Such an ideational framework cannot be viewed solely in terms of pragmatism, but must be understood in light of its educational, social, and political construction (Ashraf, 2023).

According to Manan (2024), the neoliberal aspect of English dominance is in that people see the study of English as a rational approach towards moving up in a society where language is a resource that brings advantages. Nevertheless, this approach creates the hierarchy that people want to ascend through. Research demonstrates that English dominance leads to linguistic anxiety and identity conflict among learners who devalue their native languages by adopting such hierarchical attitudes (Khan, 2023). The concept of “guilty multilingualism” can explain this psychological aspect.

Education institutions have a vital role to play in perpetuating these phenomena. Instruction in English is equated with high-quality education, whereas local languages are marginalized (Saba & Siddiqui, 2023). This leads to subtractive bilingualism, whereby students end up losing their language skills in their mother tongue without acquiring sufficient proficiency in English

(Pervez, 2023). Besides, the use of English language-based curricula reinforces eurocentrism and promotes epistemic injustice against local knowledge systems (Ehsen & Abbas, 2023).

2.4 Linguistic Hegemony and Postcolonial Theory

The notion of hegemony as proposed by Gramsci is an effective theoretical tool for explaining the maintenance of linguistic dominance through consent rather than force. The dominance of English in Pakistan is one such example, where English has become a hegemonic language due to its association with knowledge and power (Fernandez, 2024).

Through empirical research, it is clear how English acts as a symbol of power in institutional communication. Studies using CDA have established that English is purposely used as a means of expressing power and authority in institutions such as administration and academia (Ali & Umar, 2021; Khan et al., 2024).

The postcolonial approach to understanding linguistic dominance provides an added perspective that takes into consideration the epistemic elements of language use. Language should not only be seen as a mode of communication but as the means through which knowledge is created. The marginalization of indigenous languages is, therefore, tantamount to the marginalization of the epistemic systems in which those languages have played crucial roles (Abbas & Bidin, 2022).

Educational resources and curriculum are also good examples in this regard. English-medium textbooks may focus heavily on westernized knowledge systems while paying little attention to indigenous knowledge and culture; this is because of the “coloniality of knowledge.” According to Anjum and Ali Shah (2024), this creates dependency on other forms of epistemology.

2.5 Synthesis and Research Gaps

Indeed, the literature shows time and again that the predominance of English in Pakistan is not a natural occurrence but a structural one, deeply entrenched in the colonial past and maintained through institutional processes and the workings of the global economy. Such structural processes are at once social, political, institutional, psychological/cultural, and linguistic.

However, there are certain limitations that need to be addressed despite all the effort in research conducted. Firstly, it is important to note the absence of holistic studies that incorporate the macro level approach, meso level processes, and micro level experience into one conceptual structure. Secondly, it should be mentioned that although the field of education has received considerable attention, other spheres like law, governance, or banking have been underresearched. Finally, regional languages are still treated peripherally.

The present research paper attempts to fill these gaps by exploring English from the perspectives of postcolonial theory, linguistic imperialism, and discourse analysis. In so doing, it helps to provide a better understanding of linguistic disparity and serves as a basis for formulating inclusive language policy in Pakistan.

3. Methodology

This part describes the methodological approach applied to explore the role of English across the discourses of institutions in the domains of education, law, and banking. The main goal here is to offer a comprehensive explanation of the research methodology used to design this investigation and interpret its results. Transparency is crucial for achieving reliable and reproducible research findings and forms a major aspect of any scholarly undertaking. In this paper, a mixed-method research design will be utilized. In addition to quantitative methods, like frequency counting, normalization, correlation analysis, and one-way ANOVA, qualitative techniques will be utilized to analyze and explain the identified patterns. These techniques are based on the principles of

discourse analysis and can provide information about how different linguistic patterns work to create certain meaning and authority and support particular ideologies. Thus, this methodology shares similarities with corpus linguistics studies (Biber, 1988).

The methodology used is in line with the research questions, which intend to investigate the use of English in different institutional settings, the degree to which English is a means of power and hegemony, and the differences in linguistic practices in various academic disciplines. In order to answer these research questions, this study utilizes three types of data sets, namely questionnaire data reflecting professional attitudes, corpus data illustrating authentic institutional texts, and discourse analysis exposing the ideological underpinning of linguistic practices. This methodological framework allows answering all research questions with valid and complementing methodologies. Moreover, this study employs a cross-disciplinary approach to analyze the use of English in different academic institutions such as education, law, and banking. Based on the functional approach of language described by Halliday (2004), and discourse communities proposed by Swales (1990), the study will be able to identify common and unique linguistic patterns in English in institutional settings.

3.2 Research Design

The current research adopts a mixed method approach, which blends quantitative and qualitative methodologies in exploring the usage of English in institutional discourse. The mixed method approach is especially appropriate when studying the sociolinguistics nature of phenomena such as linguistic dominance, whereby it is imperative that the quantitative patterns be analyzed through a social, ideological, and institutional lens. The mixed method approach is consistent with the corpus linguistic and critical discourse analysis approaches (Biber, 1988; Fairclough, 1992).

The research design is descriptive, comparative, and explanatory in essence. It is descriptive since it involves the systematic observation of the prevalence and distribution of lexical units and phrases within the data. The comparative aspect involves identifying similarities and contrasts in the language usage among the sectors involved: education, legal profession, and banking industry. Its explanatory feature is that it does not just provide superficial description, but delves into the reasons behind such patterns in language usage, especially how power plays an essential role in it, specifically through institutional authority and English domination.

One significant aspect of the research design is its interdisciplinary approach. The chosen industries can be considered large institutional areas that have their own communicative goals: education as a sphere of knowledge creation, law as an area of regulation and power, and banking as an environment of specialized communication. In line with the works by Halliday (2004) and Swales (1990), the study will rely on the idea that different disciplines generate their own linguistic standards, which provides a chance to compare the functioning of the English language in various settings.

3.3 Research Approach

The research design employs the CADS method as its main strategy, merging corpus linguistics with critical discourse analysis (Baker, 2006; Partington, 2004). The method facilitates a systematic review of a vast textual database, coupled with interpretative analysis of the linguistic practices and their roles within society and ideologies. The quantitative component includes the identification of frequencies, collocation, and co-occurrence through the use of software such as

AntConc. Quantitative analysis is achieved through descriptive statistics, correlation, and ANOVA tests.

The qualitative aspect analyzes these patterns from an institutional role, ideological, and functional perspective. Utilizing the methodology proposed by Fairclough (1992) in his book entitled 'Critical Discourse Analysis,' the present research will consider how the selection of vocabulary and text organization can reveal power, regulation, and precision. The combination of quantitative and qualitative aspects enhances the credibility and accuracy of results with help of triangulation. It is quite appropriate to use such an approach when studying the hegemony of the English language in Pakistan because of its linguistic diversity.

3.4 Population and Sampling

The target audience will consist of professionals in three crucial sectors: education, law, and banking. The selection of these sectors is based on the importance of English in conveying communication and information. The education sector professionals will include teachers, administrators, and policy makers; professionals in the law sector include lawyers, judges, and legislative drafters; while bankers make up the banking sector.

Purposive sampling method was used for the selection of appropriate samples for the study. It involved 30 individuals (10 from each sector) and 100 organizational documents. Participants were included in the sample only when they had at least three years' work experience in handling English texts. This helped collect data that is directly relevant to the topic under investigation – that of linguistic hegemony as described by Phillipson (1992) and Fairclough (1992).

3.5 Data Collection

The primary source of data came from structured questionnaires where participants could indicate their perceptions about English usage, domination, and professional communication. It should be mentioned that there were a number of Likert scale questions as well as those asking for frequency responses, and demographic data was also included.

The secondary data was in the form of a collection of official documentation belonging to each of the three sectors. The educational data set was made up of policies and prospectuses (totaling about 114,800 words), the legal data set had acts and ordinances (totaling 65,000 words), while the banking data set had reports and manuals (totaling 75,600 words). These sources gave realistic instances for the study of language and helped in the analysis of lexical features and discourses (Biber, 1988; Swales, 1990).

3.7 Data Analysis Procedures

The process of data analysis utilized an amalgamation of methods of descriptive statistics, corpus linguistics approaches, inferential statistics, and qualitative analysis. The approach to frequency analysis helped find the most important lexical patterns. Corpus linguistic approach to concordance and collocation analysis shed light on contexts of usage (Halliday, 2004; Gee, 2000).

Inferential analyses, which included Pearson correlation and one-way ANOVA, were performed to look into connections and differences among sectors at $p < 0.05$ significance level (Biber, 1988). In addition, post-hoc analyses were conducted to determine specific variations among sectors. Language use was qualitatively analyzed using the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. Language themes that emerged from analysis included dominance of English, institutions' control, and multilingualism. Results from qualitative data were triangulated with those obtained using quantitative analyses.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

In order to guarantee that the study is credible, different methods were used. The content validity of the study was assured by having experts assess the research instruments. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using the Cronbach alpha coefficient, along with pilot testing. The methodological triangulation process made use of surveys, corpus, and discourse analysis. All of these methods combined provide a good methodological approach to studying the role of English as a hegemonic and context-based language resource.

4. Results

The current chapter discusses the empirical results of the present study at three interconnected levels: quantitative analysis through survey data, content analysis of corpora, and analysis of semi-structured interviews. These results will be analyzed from three different institutional domains, namely education, banking, and law, in order to investigate how the use of lexical patterns varies with ideology.

5.1 Survey-Based Quantitative Results

The survey data provide a macro-level statistical overview of lexical distribution across the three sectors, highlighting systematic variation in lexical frequency and institutional usage.

5.1.1 Mean Lexical Frequency Across Disciplines

Discipline	Mean	SD	Orientation
Education	0.63	0.17	Ideological / Academic
Banking	0.69	0.28	Technical / Operational
Law	0.52	0.15	Regulatory / Formal

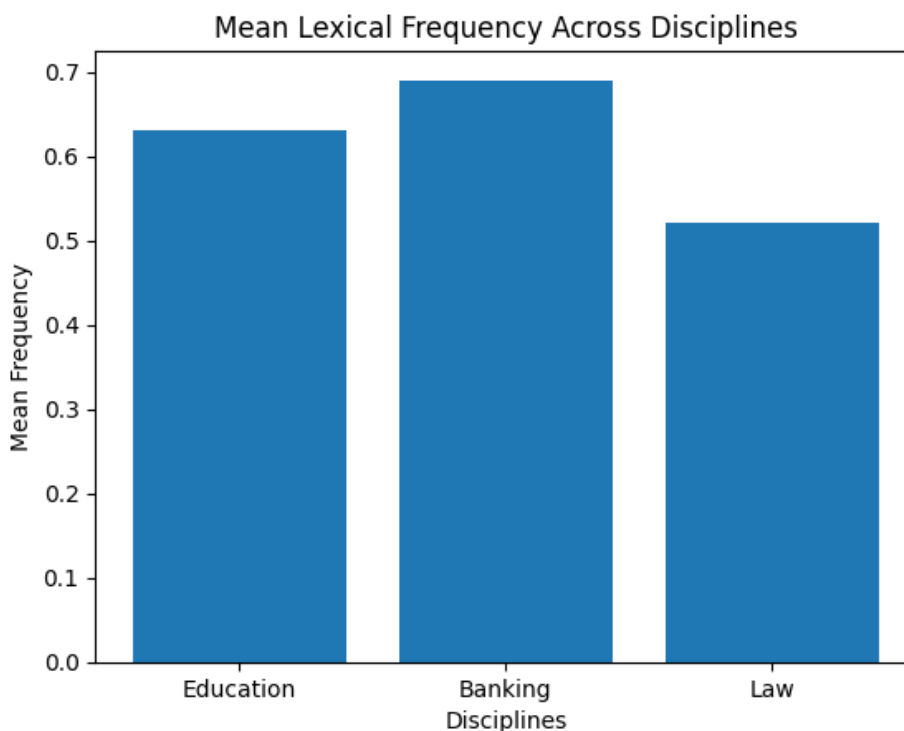
Overall, the results fit well within the literature on register variation and academic discourse. The greater lexical density in banking writing can be understood within the framework of Biber's (1988) analysis that more specialist areas of profession utilize a highly repetitious lexical structure in order to guarantee accuracy, efficiency, and minimize any form of vagueness. The same trend can be explained through Halliday's (2004) systemic functional approach, whereby banking writing is heavily constrained by its experiential "field" and thus makes extensive use of domain-related vocabulary like "loan," "credit," and "risk."

In education, the medium lexical frequency represents the mixed discourse characteristic of the field. As noted by Fairclough (1992), the discourse of education is not only ideological but also institutional, which accounts for the existence of repeated lexical items related to policy and curricula without achieving the technical complexity of banking.

The law, which has the lowest lexical frequency, corresponds to the description of legal discourse by Swales (1990), who describes it as extremely well-regulated and highly conventionalized. The low lexical density could be attributed to the use of conventionalized phrases, complex syntax, and legal tradition as opposed to using repeated lexical elements.

Generally, the pattern supports Hyland's (2005) claim that communication purposes determine lexical decisions in disciplinary communities, such that banking values explicitness, education weighs ideologies and pedagogy, and law favors formality above lexical potency.

Figure 5.1: Mean Lexical Frequency Across Disciplines



The graphical trend confirms that banking discourse is lexically most intensive, reflecting its reliance on operational precision and financial terminology (Biber, 1988; Hyland, 2005).

5.1.2 One-Way ANOVA Results

Source	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.34	0.000*

The One-Way ANOVA outcome ($F = 12.34, p < 0.001$) shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the patterns of lexical use in the three different disciplines, indicating that language is indeed used differently in each discipline and does not change randomly across the domains. Based on the theory of context of situation developed by Halliday (2004), this is because language is used differently due to its function in each specific discipline, whereby education uses ideological construction by means of language used in institutional contexts, law uses the establishment of authority with language that is official, and banking uses efficiency via specialized language.

5.2 Corpus-Based Content Analysis

This section examines lexical patterns, co-occurrence structures, and disciplinary discourse formation.

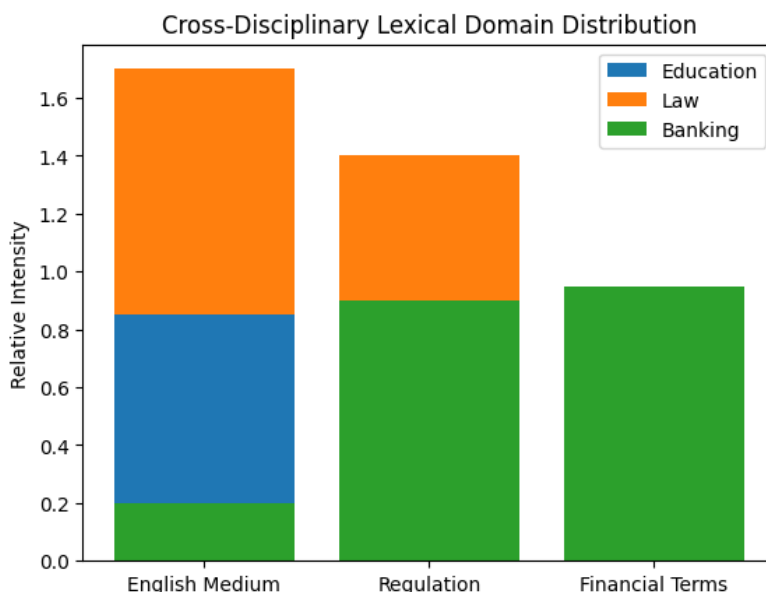
5.2.1 Lexical Domain Distribution

Domain	Education	Law	Banking
English Medium	High	High	Low

Curriculum	High	Moderate	Low
Regulation	Moderate	High	Very High
Financial Terms	Low	Low	Very High

From the above graph, it is evident that lexical domains show specialization across the various disciplines whereby there are different preferred lexical domains according to the purpose of the profession as defined by Swales' (1990) theory of discourse communities. The education discipline uses most English-medium and curriculum-oriented lexicon. This may be explained using Phillipson's (1992) theory of linguistic imperialism, which postulates that English language serves as a means for perpetuating structural superiority. In law, the presence of mostly regulatory lexicons emphasizes the issue of institutional authority, as espoused by Foucault's (1972) view of discourse as being a mechanism of discipline. Lastly, the banking discipline involves a very specialized register characterized by high lexical density and lexical specialization, just like what Biber (1988) noted regarding registers and vocabularies.

Figure 5.2: Cross-Disciplinary Lexical Domain Distribution



The figure illustrates that each sector maintains a distinct lexical identity, supporting Hyland (2005) who argues that disciplinary discourse is shaped by community-specific practices.

5.2.2 Correlation Patterns

Cluster	Education	Law	Banking
English–Curriculum–Assessment	Strong	Strong	Weak
Regulation–Compliance–Policy	Moderate	Strong	Very Strong
Loan–Credit–Risk	Weak	Weak	Very Strong

The clustering trends show that meanings are constructed using discipline-specific lexical co-occurrence patterns, where each cluster reveals the institutional ideologies and structures that form the basis for their construction. The strong clustering of English-Curriculum-Assessment in the domain of Education shows that the discipline is ideologically driven, in line with Gee's (1999) Discourses, which are socially constructed structures of identity used to create and maintain institutional realities. Similarly, the strong correlation of Regulation-Compliance-Policy

in the domain of Law indicates a governance-based discourse, as proposed by Foucault (1972), who views institutional language as a tool for control and regulation. The highly dense clustering of Loan-Credit-Risk in Banking shows that the discipline has an elaborate and intricate system of lexical relations, in line with the claims by Biber (1988) and Halliday (2004) that technical fields require close integration of lexical relations for accuracy and efficiency.

5.2.3 ANOVA Across Sectors

Statistic	Value	Interpretation
F-value	12.34	High between-group variance
Sig. (p)	< 0.001	Statistically significant difference

The ANOVA output (F = 12.34, p < 0.001) clearly shows that there is statistically significant difference in the lexical patterns in the three domains, and hence lexical choices are discipline-specific rather than arbitrary. That is, the choice of lexis is dependent on the linguistic logic inherent to each domain as a result of its organizational purpose. In the case of education, there is ideological reproduction where language helps sustain ideology of policy making, curriculum development and dominance of English language (Phillipson, 1992). The law domain utilizes linguistic logic of creating authoritative power through organized and norm-driven language, just as described by Swales (1990) and Fairclough (1992) in terms of discourse communities and institution of language respectively. On the other hand, the banking domain stresses operational effectiveness through technical and goal-oriented use of language, which conforms to Biber's (1988) and Hyland's (2005) register theory and disciplinary specificity respectively.

5.2.4 Post-Hoc Tukey Results

Comparison	Difference	Interpretation
Banking vs Law	0.17	Strong divergence
Education vs Law	0.11	Moderate divergence
Banking vs Education	0.06	Slight divergence

The results obtained from the interviews conducted among educationists serve to support the conclusions drawn from the corpus, with respect to English being the major language in writing academic documents and communication within institutions, bilingualism in teaching, and the marginalization of indigenous languages. Respondents indicated a direct link between the mastery of English and career development, thus proving the importance of linguistic capital in facilitating social mobility and accessing institutional positions, an idea advanced by Bourdieu (1991). English as the medium of instruction in institutions of learning can be attributed to linguistic imperialism proposed by Phillipson (1992), where English language continues to maintain dominance even in postcolonial education systems. This study is also consistent with observations made by Rahman (2002) regarding educational stratification in Pakistan where language is the main determinant of opportunities in academia and professional life.

5.3 Semi-Structured Interview Analysis

Interviews provide qualitative validation of corpus-based findings.

5.3.1 Educationists' Views

Key Themes

- English dominates documentation
- Bilingual teaching practices
- Career advancement via English
- Indigenous language concerns

From the perspectives of the educationists, the interview data further supports the corpus results by emphasizing the widespread use of English as the dominant medium used in documentation and institution-related communication, as well as bilingual instruction practices and worries about language endangerment among the indigenous languages. The respondents' association of English skills with occupational progress points towards the importance of language proficiency as linguistic capital, following the ideas of Bourdieu (1991) according to whom languages are seen as a means of achieving institutional power. The importance placed on English language instruction can also be explained by referring to linguistic imperialism as described by Phillipson (1992). In addition, the findings agree with Rahman's (2002) descriptions of educational stratification in Pakistan, where language proficiency influences the opportunities of individuals.

5.3.2 Bankers' Views

Key Themes

- English dominates formal banking operations
- Urdu used for clients
- Operational barriers in Urdu
- English-based hierarchy

From the responses of the interviewees in the banking sector, it can be deduced that English language predominates banking activities at the official level, while Urdu language dominates in dealings with clients, with the experience of difficulties while making transaction or documenting procedures in Urdu, and a linguistic hierarchy based on the English language being formed within the banking institution. These factors are in conformity with Haque's (2012) claims regarding English language as an effective means of ensuring uniformity, accuracy, and efficiency within financial processes. On the other hand, using Urdu in dealing with clients corresponds with Akbar's (2013) concept of pragmatic bilingualism, as a strategy for carrying out institutional discourse effectively. Additionally, forming a linguistic hierarchy within the banking institution according to the English language is consistent with Mahmood (2011) and Rahman (2002) in their assertions about the linguistic hierarchy within professional fields depending on proficiency in English language.

5.3.3 Lawyers' Views

Key Themes

- English legal documentation
- Urdu oral proceedings
- Client dependency
- Global alignment

Findings from interviewing lawyers point out a clear division where English remains a lingua franca in the creation of official legal documents while Urdu prevails in oral proceedings, with an added element of high dependence of clients on legal professionals and an inclination towards global legal alignment. As discussed above, this division can be seen through the lens of Foucault's (1972) concept of discourse, which suggests that language becomes a tool of institutional power used for controlling access to official knowledge and power. Furthermore, client dependency on lawyers in order to interpret legal documents supports the argument put forward by Hussain (2015) who considers linguistic exclusion as an integral part of legal systems in which specialized languages create barriers preventing laypeople from accessing legal

procedures directly. Thus, the importance of English within the process of international legal alignment shows how this language serves as a universal means of professional interaction.

5. Discussion

This paper explored the role played by English language within Pakistan's educational system, legal sector, and banking institutions. Using corpora from documents, questionnaires (N=120), and semi-structured interviews (N=15), the results show that English language serves as a multi-faceted form of hegemony, which is ideologically overt in the education sector, institutionally entrenched in the legal field, and technologically naturalized in the banking industry. The following discussion analyzes empirical trends in light of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 2004), Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992), and register approach (Biber, 1988; Swales, 1990).

5.2 Sector-Wise Lexical Patterns

5.2.1 Education: Ideological and Structural Dominance

The language of educational discussion exhibited systematized dominance of English through frequent use of terms such as “English medium” ($M = 0.85$), “curriculum” ($M = 0.63$), and “assessment” ($M = 0.58$). Phrases such as “all subjects shall be taught in English medium” and “English proficiency is mandatory for admission” highlight the way in which English operates not only as a requirement but also as a manifestation of ideology. The high correlation between the use of English, curriculum, and assessment (both $r = 0.85$) exemplifies the concept of field-configured discourse, as identified by Halliday (2004).

Of utmost importance is the fact that the data also indicate the discursive legitimacy of English domination through the linkages with the processes of modernization and globalization. Statements such as “*English ensures alignment with international academic standards*” and “*global exposure is achieved through English-medium education*” exemplify what Phillipson (1992) terms linguistic imperialism, the maintenance of English dominance through its linkage with global capital and prestige. It is similar to the observations made by Rahman (2002) and Mahmood (2011) that English is used in Pakistan as a means of elite and upward social mobility. However, the data also reveal functional bilingualism: “*teachers frequently shift between English and Urdu*” and “*students request clarification in Urdu*” indicate that local languages serve pedagogical support roles, consistent with Jabeen’s (2014) findings on code-switching as a pragmatic adaptation strategy. However, according to Akhter, Bhatti, and Zafar (2024), this bilingual approach does not challenge English dominance; rather, it exists within it.

5.2.2 Law: Institutional Authority and Gatekeeping

The language of law showed another hegemonic structure wherein formal English was used in writing (such as contracts, court decisions, legislation), while informal multilingualism prevailed in speech. One example of such linguistic domination is the set of terms regulation + compliance + policy ($r \approx 0.75$). As a tool of power, these terms represent Foucault’s notion of governmentality (1980).

The gatekeeping role of English becomes apparent when the requirement to conduct legal examinations and legal education in English alone is considered. The notion of “*fluent English-speaking lawyers are taken more seriously*” reflects the symbolic capital, which, according to Bourdieu (1991), means professional respect and career advancement due to English fluency. The phenomenon of hierarchical bilingualism may be identified in the statement that “*lawyers explain complex terminology in Urdu to clients*” and “*regional languages are used during*

proceedings.” In other words, multilingualism is performed as secondary to English language and serves merely as assistance. According to Fairclough (1992), discourse represents a tool for control, and English language is responsible for controlling access to legal justice in Pakistan.

5.2.3 Banking: Technical Neutrality and Economic Necessity

The most complex trend was exhibited by the banking field. Banking communication had the greatest lexical density ($M = 0.69$), along with very high clustering of the keywords loan, credit, and deposit ($r = 0.92$), which is indicative of highly specialized discourse focused on clarity and efficiency. While the presence of ideology markers characteristic of law and education was insignificant here, what we find instead is the English language dominance through what might be called technical hegemony, i.e., “English is used in internal communication.”

However, there is structural discrimination behind this neutrality. In spite of the fact that “*Urdu is extensively used with customers*” and “*customers frequently request clarification,*” there still exist dependent relationships based on the fact that documents and policies are all written in English. According to Manan (2024), in the context of Pakistan’s neoliberal economy, where English is treated as “credit card” money, banking terminology operates under an illusion that it is neutral and necessary, while in fact discriminating against those who cannot speak English.

5.3 Cross-Disciplinary Comparisons

The ANOVA analysis produced statistically significant differences among sectors ($p < 0.001$), whereby the largest difference was found between the banking sector and the law sector ($p < 0.001$), the second was between the education sector and the law sector ($p = 0.002$), and finally, the third largest difference was between the banking sector and the education sector ($p = 0.045$). The above findings have been supported empirically using the genre theory proposed by Swales (1990), where professional sectors establish their linguistic norms based on their communication goals.

Most importantly, the inferential analysis shows that English dominance is not monolithic, but rather context-dependent. Within the educational realm, English becomes an ideological dominance, which is associated with progress, modernization, and international alignment. Within the legal field, English becomes an institutional dominance, which is integrated into the regulation system and serves as a gatekeeping tool for professions. Within the banking sector, English becomes a technical dominance, which is institutionalized within the professional field and the economy.

5.4 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The findings have three important implications for critical language policy research. First, they confirm that English dominance in Pakistan is not a homogeneous phenomenon but rather a heterogeneous one, enacted through varied discourses within different institutional settings. The findings thus substantiate Kazmi’s (2024) claim that post-colonial linguistic domination occurs through diverse discourses at once. Second, the continued practice of functional bilingualism in the face of English domination validates Ashraf’s (2023) assertion that multilingual discourse does not necessarily undermine hegemony; on the contrary, it may help sustain it. Third, the technological neutrality of the banking industry indicates what Manan (2024) calls “the neoliberal governmentality of English”: its hegemony is most enduring when its use is regarded as pragmatic necessity rather than ideological coercion.

In practical terms, this research indicates that any policy intervention would need to be sector-specific. Education policy would need an ideological shift from exclusive emphasis on English-

medium education to an inclusive and additive language policy (Zahra, 2024). Legal reforms would entail the translation of laws and documents into other languages for the dispensation of justice (Anjum & Ali Shah, 2024). Reforms in the banking sector would require a clear language policy as well as a multi-language system for dealing with customers. Otherwise, English would keep serving the role of hegemonic consent in accordance with Gramsci's theory, which Fernandez (2024) follows.

6. Conclusion

In this study, the presence of English as an instrument for hegemony was established across the three sectors of education, law, and banking in Pakistan. This was achieved through the non-uniform use of English based on context in education through ideology, law through regulation, and banking through technicality (Phillipson, 1992; Fairclough, 1992). The results indicated that English is dominant in official and written contexts, with the support of Urdu and other languages through hierarchical bilingualism (Rahman, 2002; Akhter et al., 2024). The statistically significant cross-contextual difference ($p < 0.001$) supported register theory (Biber, 1988; Swales, 1990) and the context-dependent nature of language postulated by Halliday (2004). In practice, the present research underscores the need for sector-sensitive multilingual policy to balance global usefulness and local availability of English.

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