



A STUDY OF THE LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF PAKISTANI ENGLISH WITH REFERENCE TO PHONOLOGICAL AND LEXICAL VARIATION

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Abstract:

The study titled "A Study of the Linguistic Features of Pakistani English with Reference to Phonological and Lexical Variation" explores the unique characteristics of Pakistani English as a recognized variety of World Englishes. The research focuses on two major linguistic aspects: phonological variation and lexical variation. Pakistani English has developed under the influence of local languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto, resulting in distinctive pronunciation patterns and vocabulary usage that differ from Standard British and American English. The study aims to identify common phonological features, including stress patterns, vowel substitutions, consonant articulation, and intonation differences used by Pakistani English speakers. In addition, it investigates lexical variations by examining localized words, code-switching practices, borrowing from regional languages, and culturally specific expressions commonly used in academic, social, and media contexts. The research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach through the analysis of spoken and written samples collected from students, teachers, media content, and everyday communication. The findings are expected to highlight how Pakistani English reflects the linguistic identity, culture, and social realities of Pakistani speakers. The study contributes to the broader field of sociolinguistics and World Englishes by emphasizing the legitimacy and evolving nature of Pakistani English as an independent linguistic variety.

Keywords: Pakistani English, phonological variation, lexical variation, World Englishes, sociolinguistics, language variation, pronunciation, localized vocabulary, linguistic identity, code-switching

1. Introduction

English has emerged as one of the world's most significant languages today. It serves as a language of communication, education, science, technology, diplomacy and media internationally. English has developed into a variety of languages in multilingual and post-colonial societies, influenced by the local languages and culture. One such variety of English that has evolved unique linguistic features because of the multilingual environment in Pakistan is Pakistani English. The Pakistani English shows how the language evolves to fit in the social facts of life while also functioning as a vehicle for communication in the global arena.

English is a highly esteemed and influential language in Pakistan. It is also the official language, in addition to Urdu, and is widely used in Government institutions, Higher education, law, business, journalism and digital communication. English has always been linked to social and economic status and to education opportunities since the colonial days. English is not solely a British English language anymore in Pakistan because speakers of this language have modified it according to their linguistic and cultural norms. This has led to the emergence of the Pakistani English that is all unique in terms of its phonological, lexical, syntactic, and discourse characteristics (Rahman 52).

The evolution of Pakistani English is very much associated with the multicultural society of Pakistan. There are a number of regional languages in Pakistan such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, Saraiki and Kashmiri. In educational, working, media and daily life situations, these languages are constantly in contact with English. This interaction has led to many linguistic differences, particularly in pronunciation and word choice. Localised varieties of English develop when the users of the language make the English language more suitable for their communicative purpose and also their cultural identity (Kachru 18). This is the nativization and linguistic adaptation process of a language in Pakistan, which is the English language.

Phonological variation is one of the salient features of Pakistani English. Pronunciation patterns of Pakistani English differ significantly from the pronunciation patterns of other varieties such as Standard British English and Standard American English as the speakers are likely to transfer phonetic features of their native language into English speech. Vowel sound may differ, consonant articulation, stress, rhythm and intonation may vary. For example, the sounds /θ/ and /ð/ are often misrepresented as /t/ and /d/ because these sounds are not used in many locally spoken languages. Likewise, the stress patterns in the Pakistani English are sometimes affected by Urdu phonology, which is in turn affecting the syllable-timed rhythm (Mahboob and Ahmar 76). The pronunciation patterns give rise to unique characteristics of Pakistani English.

Another characteristic of Pakistani English is lexical variation. In spoken and written communication, Pakistani speakers often employ local words and phrases, borrow words from other languages, mix multiple languages within a single sentence and employ code switching. In addition, there are many words used in the Pakistani English which are not found in native English varieties, e.g., load-shedding, batchmate, time-pass, cousin-brother, etc. Urdu and local language borrowings also add some culture-specific meanings to the Pakistani English vocabulary. In the English discourse of Pakistan, the terms *iftar*, *mehndi*, *shalwar kameez*, and *madrasa* are used regularly, as examples (Baumgardner 264). The lexical innovations illustrate the relationship between language and social and cultural identity.

The phenomenon of code switching also demonstrates the bilingualness of Pakistani society. In media programmes, in ads, in classrooms and while talking to friends, there is a common practice of using English and Urdu in turns by the speakers. This linguistic mixing is not due to linguistic incompetence, but rather to social identity, communicative flexibility and cultural belonging. Shams says that the use of code switching in Pakistani English has functional and symbolic functions as code switchers use it to convey emotions, authority and intimacy as well as modern identity (Shams 101).

Increased globalisation and digitization of communication have contributed to the spread and acceptance of Pakistani English. The language is constantly evolving on social media platforms, television shows, newspapers, and educational sites. Hybrid linguistic structures are created by young speakers, particularly, through a blend of English words and Urdu sentences. The variable use of language in the case of Pakistani English shows the dynamism of the language in the current society.

Despite the growing popularity of the Pakistani variety of English, there is still a belief that localized linguistic variations are incorrect deviations from the Standard British variety of English. Conventional studies of language tend to be negative towards non-native varieties and focus on conforming to native norms. But current sociolinguistic theories have faced criticism for their view that language variation is natural and systematic. World Englishes scholars point out the localization of English varieties has its own rules, functions and meanings (Kachru 27). Therefore, the correct interpretation of Pakistani English should be that it is not a weak form of English but a valid one as well.

The current study concentrates on the phonological and lexical characteristics of Pakistani English that will be used to demonstrate the effect of local languages and sociocultural factors on language variation. This study examines the pronunciation patterns, vocabulary innovation, borrowing and code-switching tendencies of the Pakistani English speakers. The research will investigate the language identity and cultural experience in the Pakistani English through exploring these features.

Background of the Study

The process of Englishization in South Asia has been going on since the period of British domination, and in that time English has been adopted as the language of administration and education. English remained the dominant language in the government and academic circles

after the independence of Pakistan in 1947. With the passage of time, the Pakistani speakers have modified English as per the requirements of communication in local context and its linguistic system. This process gave birth to the Pakistani English which is a distinct variety of World Englishes.

Most of the previous research related to Pakistani English was undertaken from the point of view of grammatical deviations and pronunciation errors. But modern linguistic studies have identified these differences as regular characteristics that emerge under the effects of multilingualism and sociocultural contact. English, as a subject of sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, and a study of postcolonial languages, is now an important topic in Pakistan.

Research Gap

While some studies have been conducted on Pakistani English, most of the previous studies have been based on one of the three following areas: grammatical structures, code switching or general language variation. There has been little research that has focused on both phonological and lexical variation in the same study. The pronunciation pattern and/or vocabulary errors were analyzed earlier researchers, but there has not been any study that analyzed these linguistic features together and examined how these features contribute collectively to the evolution of Pakistani English as a separate variety of World Englishes.

In addition, many studies on the subject compare Pakistani English with the British or American English from the prescriptive point of view, regarding the local variations as deviations from the standard English. The research available which takes a sociolinguistic and identity based approach to Pakistani English, and considers how local languages (Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi and Pashto) affect pronunciation and vocabulary formation within everyday communication is lacking.

A broad omission in the analysis of the present-day linguistic practices triggered by the media, globalization and digital communication is another. In recent scholarship, the use of hybrid vocabulary, localized vocabulary, and code switching in social media and education has not been sufficiently investigated. In addition, little qualitative research has been conducted on spontaneous naturally-occurring spoken or written samples from Pakistani users of English in various social contexts.

Hence the present study aims to address these gaps and to present a detailed study of phonological and lexical variation in Pakistani English. It also investigates the correlation between language variation, multilingualism and cultural identity from the sociolinguistic and World Englishes perspectives.

Statement of the Problem

While the use of Pakistani English in educational, professional and social settings is ubiquitous, its phonological and lexical aspects are not well understood or accounted for. To this day, a lot of speakers/teachers are assessing Pakistani English based on the standards of the native English, without considering its local features and cultural value. There is therefore a need to explore the development of unique pronunciation patterns and vocabulary use of Pakistani English in the presence of indigenous languages and multilingual interaction.

Research Objectives

The study sets to achieve the following goals:

To locate the phonological characteristics of the Pakistani English.

2. To analyze lexical variation of the Pakistani English Language.

To examine the impact of the local languages on the Pakistani English.

To discuss the relationship of language variation and cultural identity in Pakistan.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

What are the salient points of Pakistani English in terms of its phonological characteristics?

In how many ways is lexical variation manifested in Pakistani English?

How local languages affect the pronunciation and vocabulary of Pakistanis English?

5. What are the issues faced in the context of Pakistani English in terms of communication?

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it has a role in the world Englishes and sociolinguistics field. It emphasizes that Pakistani English is legitimate and a legitimate variant. The study also contributes to understanding of the impact of multilingualism on language development in post-colonial societies.

The results could be of interest to linguists, researchers, teachers and students in language variation and English language research. The study may also assist the language teachers in familiarizing themselves with the sociocultural context of English use in Pakistan and provide them a positive attitude towards local varieties of English.

Scope and Delimitation

This study is specifically about phonological and lexical variation of Pakistani English. It looks at samples of spoken and written communication from educational settings, the media and informal communication. The research is not a detailed syntactic or grammatical analysis, as its main focus is on variation of pronunciation and vocabulary.

To conclude, Pakistani English is a dynamic and dynamic language that is influenced by multilingualism, socio-cultural interaction and history. The phonological and lexical characteristics of Pakistani English show linguistic creativity and identity of Pakistanis. In this chapter, background, objectives, significance and scope of the study were introduced and the importance of recognizing Pakistani English as a valid variety in the context of World Englishes was kept in mind.

2. Literature Review

The study of the varieties of English around the world is now a significant field of modern studies in linguistics. The diffusion of English into the countries outside its own region has led to the emergence of regional variants as a consequence of cultural, social and linguistic influences. These are all examined within the context of World Englishes, as the use of English is no longer limited to Britain, the USA or other countries where English is the native language. Rather, English is an international language that is able to adjust to the communicative needs of various societies. One such variety is Pakistani English which has developed as a response to the multilingual and multicultural setting in Pakistan.

Braj B. Kachru popularised the idea that English has a number of legitimate varieties around the world (Kachru 10). Kachru has come up with a Three Circle Model to classify English-speaking communities as Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle. Pakistan is a part of the Outer Circle where English is the second language of administration, education, law and official communication. Kachru argues that English varieties in the Outer Circle acquire local linguistic characteristics from the indigenous languages and cultures that they encounter over a long period (Kachru 21). Pakistani English is, therefore, a nativized version of English which is influenced by the local communicative practices.

In the late 1980s, the study of Pakistani English became more prominent during the 20th century when it was realised that the language was not just a faulty form of British English, but a distinct variety of English. Tariq Rahman defines Pakistani English as a variety 'socially and culturally influenced' that speaks of the multi-lingual nature of Pakistani society (45). The thesis of Rahman is that English in Pakistan is localized due to the speakers' adaptation of their pronunciation, vocabulary and structure of their sentences depending on the local linguistic patterns. He also says that in addition to being a language of communication, Pakistani English is also a social class, educative and professional signifier (Rahman 63).

Phonological variation is one of the most important fields of study in Pakistani English. Pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation are part of the sound system of a language,

referred to as the phonology. It is found that Pakistani English has some distinctive phonological features from Urdu and regional languages from different parts of Pakistan, as revealed in several studies. In the case of Pakistani speakers, they sometimes borrow the sound pattern of their native languages when speaking English.

For Pakistanis, one of the most prevalent phonological features of English is consonant substitution, as stated by Mahboob and Ahmar (77). The sounds /θ/ and /ð/ are commonly written as /t/ and /d/ in words like think and this as these sounds do not occur in many Pakistani languages. Likewise, the Pakistani speakers can say /v/ as /w/, resulting a phonetic change of “vine” to “wine.” These variations are not random errors of pronunciation but regular patterns, reflecting native phonological systems.

In Pakistani English too, the placement of stress and rhythm are very different. British English is stress-timed, that is, stressed syllables are at regular intervals. The Urdu language and many regional languages, on the other hand, are syllable-timed, meaning that all syllables are of equal weight. This leads to the fact that the Pakistani English speakers' English speech shows syllable-timed rhythm (Rahman 89). This difference has an impact on fluency, intonation and speech patterns. They say that such phonological variation is one of the reasons behind the accent specific character of Pakistani English.

Another area of the pronunciation of vowels in the Pakistani English has been explored extensively. Diphthongs are often reduced to diphthongal vowels in the examples Baumgardner provides, in which the diphthongal vowels are influenced by the phonetic systems of languages in the local environment (Baumgardner 268). The vowel sound in “face” could be a glide sound and not a single vowel sound, for instance. Likewise, some long and short vowels are sometimes confused with each other. The differences illustrate the influence of local phonological structures on pronunciation of English in Pakistan.

Another major aspect of the phonology of Pakistani English is its intonation patterns. Research indicates that the Pakistani speakers use less sharp intonation contours than native English speakers. This is especially common in formal settings, like speeches, news reports or the classroom. This is a special rhythm and intonation in speech which is influenced by Urdu intonation.

Lexical variation constitutes an important research area of Pakistani English. Lexical variation is the use of different words, word formation, borrowing and semantic variation. Many words or phrases originating from the Pakistan culture, religion or social habits are used in the Pakistani English. The issue of lexical innovation is a strong grounds for the question of nativization of the language.

According to Baumgardner, there are four types of lexical innovations in Pakistani English: borrowing, hybridization, semantic extension and coinage (Baumgardner 272). Urdu and local languages are used in English in a manner that often mirrors cultural concepts that do not have native English counterparts. Some of these are “mehndi,” “iftar,” “shalwar kameez,” “madrasa” and “nikah. The terms are frequently used in newspapers, TV broadcasts, or speech.

Another special aspect of the vocabulary of Pakistani English is hybrid expressions. Pakistani speakers tend to hybridise words in English with local semantic structures to form new expressions. Some examples are, “cousin-brother,” “time-pass,” “batchmate,” or “co-brother.” These expressions might sound strange for native English speakers, but are common and comprehensible to the Pakistani society (Talaat 48).

There is also a large amount of lexical variation due to code switching. The use of two or more languages in a conversation or in a single sentence is called code switching. In Pakistan, bilinguals are often bilingual in both languages, depending on their communicative goal, the interlocutors, and the situation. For Shams, code-switching is an indication of bilingual competence and social identity and not of weakness in the language. (Shams 102) English

conveys modernity, authority, professionalism, whereas Urdu conveys intimacy, emotion and cultural belonging.

The use of Pakistani English vocabulary has been greatly facilitated by media discourse. There has been a practice in which English and Urdu are used together in the television channels, newspapers, advertisements and social media to attract the audience. This 'lingua-franca' has grown to be especially popular with the urban youth. Yousaf argues that the media language in Pakistan "facilitates the creation of hybrid linguistic forms, in which there is an evidence of globalization and cultural modernization" (124).

Pakistani English is also influenced by the educational system. English-medium schools and universities introduce students to the norms of native English and the local language practices. A blend of English and Urdu is used in classroom discourse by teachers and students. The bilingual learning context helps to strengthen localized phonological and lexical structures.

Sociolinguistic research has highlighted the importance of the close link between language variation and identity formation. The use of the Pakistani English demonstrates cultural identity and multilingual experience of the Pakistani speakers. Sociolinguistic theory states that language serves as a communication tool as well as symbol of a sense of belonging and social identity. The opportunities for speakers to use local vocabulary and pronunciation patterns enables them to keep their cultural connections yet still be able to communicate with the world. Though there has been scholarly interest regarding the study of Pakistani English, there are still some areas which need to be addressed. The previous studies concentrated mainly on errors and pronunciation deviations in the learners' output from the British English norms. Very little research has looked at both phonological and lexical variation within a sociolinguistic context. Moreover, recent developments in the linguistic practices that have developed with digital communication and social media have not received much attention. Globalization, technological advancement and the changing social dynamics influence the contemporary Pakistani English language and make it an ever-evolving entity.

The present study aims to fill these voids, attending to both phonological and lexical variation in Pakistani English at the same time. Based on a qualitative sociolinguistic methodology, it deals with samples of spoken and written language in their natural context. In this way, the study helps in understanding Pakistani English as a valid and dynamic variety of English in the context of World Englishes.

The results presented in this chapter shows that Pakistani English has gained unique phonological and lexical characteristics from multilingualism, sociocultural interaction and the postcolonial experiences. Previous studies emphasize that there are differences in the pronunciation, stress patterns, vocabulary use, borrowing and code switching of Pakistani English speakers. These differences are regarded by scholars of World Englishes as natural and not as fault. Previous studies, however, have yet to provide a complete analysis of both variation in phonology and in lexicon in a single sociolinguistic framework. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the linguistic expression of linguistic identity and cultural experience of the Pakistani English in the context of the contemporary Pakistan.

3. Research Methodology

Research methodology is very important in linguistics because it allows the collection of data, the analysis of data and the interpretation of data to follow the established procedures. The research in hand examines the phonological and lexical characteristics of Pakistani English in the context of language variation and sociocultural impact. The research design used is qualitative descriptive research because the research emphasizes on learning the pronunciation patterns, vocabulary usage, and communicative practices in natural context. This chapter describes the research design, population, sampling method, data collection techniques, data analysis processes and ethical issues used in the study.

Research Design

The study is designed with a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the linguistic features of Pakistani English. Social and cultural research of language is best addressed by qualitative research, as it enables researchers to study language in its natural social and cultural setting. The purpose of qualitative research is to interpret meanings, experiences, and patterns in human interaction, not to measure numerical data, Creswell (39) argues. As this study investigates pronunciation pattern, lexical innovation, code-switching phenomenon, qualitative analysis can provide the best framework to understand these linguistic phenomenon.

The descriptive aspect of the study allows the researcher to identify and explain the phonological and lexical features which differentiate the Pakistani English from native English varieties. This research is not designed to test a hypothesis statistically but instead describes the linguistic variation and explains its social relevance.

Research Approach

Underpinned by a sociolinguistic approach, the research takes this angle as language variation is seen to be closely related to social identity, multilingualism, and cultural interaction. Sociolinguistics is the study of variation in language in relation to context, ethnicity, education, class and region (Wardhaugh 7). The area of Pakistani English seems appropriate for sociolinguistic study as it caters to the needs of multilingualism in Pakistani society.

Braj B. Kachru's theoretical framework of World Englishes has also been used in the study. If the speaker of English adapts the language to their communicative and cultural needs, then English takes on localized forms, according to Kachru (18). Hence, in this study, Pakistani English is seen not as an aberration, but as another variety of English used by the Pakistanis.

Population of the Study

The population of the study is composed of Pakistani English speakers who use English on a regular basis at educational, professional and social levels. This was to make the study complete as Pakistan is a multilingual nation and participants with different languages were included in the study to get diversity in pronunciation and vocabulary usage. Participants consisted of university students, teachers, media and bilingual individuals from urban areas.

Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi and Pashto language speakers were chosen as they have a major influence on the use of English in Pakistan. The participation of individuals from various linguistic communities enabled the examination of phonological and lexical variation within and between areas and social groups.

Sampling Technique

The sampling method employed in the study is purposive sampling which is carried out by selecting the participants and linguistic materials that are appropriate for fulfilling the research objectives. In qualitative studies, purposive sampling is often employed to select participants that have particular knowledge or experience of the topic of the study (Patton, 169).

The following selection criteria were used:

- They are able to communicate regularly in English, in an academic, professional or social context.
- They are bilingual/multilingual speakers.
- They come from different backgrounds of regional language.
- 4. They are from a variety of education and social settings.

To ensure that the data collected reflected realistic aspects of the Pakistani English as used in the daily life, purposive sampling was used.

Sources of Data Collection

Both spoken and written data have been used in the study so as to get a comprehensive analysis of Pakistani English.

Spoken Data

Spoken data were collected from:

- Classroom discussions
- University presentations
- Television interviews
- News broadcasts
- Casual conversations
- Student/Teacher communication and interaction within the classroom

The spoken samples were useful in determining stress patterns, consonant substitutions, vowel variations, rhythm and intonation.

Written Data

The following written data were gathered from:

- Newspapers
- Social media posts
- Online blogs
- Advertisements
- Academic writing

For television, captions and scripts will be used.

Written samples proved very helpful in analysing lexical variation, borrowing, hybrid expressions and code switching practices of respondents.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher was a participant observer of the natural use of language in both formal and informal contexts. Careful notes were taken on the spoken interactions, and a collection of written texts was taken from publicly available materials including newspapers and digital media platforms.

Special focus was placed on the recurring patterns of language. Pronunciation features were discovered by listening and transcribing and the vocabulary items were classified based on borrowing, hybridization, semantic extension and code switching.

Data collection continued on until adequate examples of phonological and lexical variation were gathered that could be analyzed meaningfully.

Method

Thematic linguistic analysis was used to analyze the collected data. Thematic analysis is a method that is useful in qualitative research, as it is able to detect themes and categories in the language of the text (Braun and Clarke 82).

The analysis was conducted into two broad categories:

Phonological Analysis

The phonological features were analyzed by considering:

- Consonant substitution
- Vowel variation
- Stress placement
- Rhythm patterns
- Intonation differences

Consonant Clusters

The pronunciation patterns were compared against Standard British English to highlight any areas where there are variations.

Lexical Analysis

Lexical items were divided into:

- Borrowed words
- Hybrid expressions
- Code-switching examples
- Localized vocabulary
- Semantic extensions

The analysis was centered around the issue of the representation of social identity, multilingualism and Pakistani culture in vocabulary.

Reliability and Validity

A multiple source of spoken and written data sources was used to ensure reliability. Findings were reinforced by repeated patterns found in various contexts.

Validity was preserved by sampling naturally occurring language rather than artificially constructed samples. Previous research and theories in the field of sociolinguistics that were related to the study of Pakistani English and World Englishes were also used.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical guidelines were observed during the research process. Prior to collecting spoken data, participants were informed about the purpose of the study. Their names and information were anonymous.

The information used in the spoken and written materials was for educational purposes only. Media content and written texts that could be accessed by the public were examined in a responsible manner without distortion.

Limitations of the Study

While the study provides valuable insights into Pakistani English, there are some limitations. First, the research is mainly on phonological and lexical variation and does not involve detailed grammatical/syntactic analysis. Second, the study is qualitative in nature and thus does not allow for statistical generalization. Thirdly, the linguistic diversity of Pakistan is very wide-ranging, and there is not enough space to capture all accents and vocabulary patterns.

Although the study has its limitations, it provides a great deal of insight into the nature of Pakistani English in terms of multilingualism, sociocultural interaction and linguistic identity. The methodology used in this study was discussed in this chapter. The qualitative descriptive research design was used for the study of phonological and lexical characteristics of Pakistani English. Scattered data was obtained from both spoken and written sources and analyzed using thematic linguistic analysis. The methodology is in line with the objectives of the study as it offers a systematic approach to understanding the language variation in the context of Pakistani English. The next chapter outlines the theoretical framework and analysis of the linguistic features in relation with a sociolinguistic and World Englishes perspective.

Theoretical Framework and Analysis

The theoretical base or theoretical perspective that underlies a research study gives the study its conceptual foundation, which is used to guide the interpretation and analysis of data. Theories are used in the study of languages to provide explanations for the way languages change, develop and interact with social and cultural settings. In the present study Pakistani English is analyzed from the theoretical viewpoints of World Englishes theory, sociolinguistics, Language Variation theory and code-switching theory. The frameworks are crucial to the understanding of the multilingual and cultural influences that have motivated the emergence of the Pakistani English phonological and lexical characteristics.

World Englishes Theory

Braj B. Kachru's theory of World Englishes has been the main theoretical underpinning of this study. Kachru challenged the conventional wisdom that all of British or American English is standard forms of English. He explained that English is a global language that has developed various varieties of itself based on the historical, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of various societies (Kachru 11).

The Three Circle Model was developed by Kachru to describe the use of English worldwide. The model includes:

1. The Inner Circle
2. The Outer Circle
3. The Expanding Circle

The Inner Circle made up of countries that use English as a native language, including Britain, the United States, Canada and Australia. The Outer Circle has countries that were once part of the British Empire but have English as a second language, as well as having an important role of English in important institutions. English is used in education, administration, law, media and communication in Pakistan, and so it falls in this category. The countries in the Expanding Circle are those where English is learned as a foreign language. (Kachru 15)

Kachru says that in the Outer Circle, the English varieties are subject to a process called nativization, which involves the adaptation of English by the native speakers, based upon their language and cultural situation (Kachru 20). Pakistani English is thus a nativized variety that is influenced by Urdu and local languages. Theoretical approach is in line with the claim that the Pakistani English isn't "incorrect English" but rather is a legitimate and systematic linguistic variety.

The World Englishes framework is very relevant for the present study as it explains why English used by British Pakistanis has unique phonological and lexical characteristics. The theory acknowledges that there are natural variations at the local level that are the result of the interaction between English and indigenous languages and cultures.

Sociolinguistic Theory

Another important theoretical framework that is used in this study is that of socio-linguistics. Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and society in which the use of language is studied in relation to the social factors which affect it, including class, education, ethnicity, age and gender (Wardhaugh 9).

The society in Pakistan is multilingual and multicultural, and hence it is inevitable for language variation. English speakers in Pakistan have a variety of language backgrounds, such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi. Consequently, there are variations in pronunciation and vocabulary within the English language depending on the region and community.

Labov believes that language variation is not random, but systematic, as language patterns are influenced by social and cultural factors (Labov 34). The idea is very useful for explaining the pronunciation variation and vocabulary differences in the case of the Pakistani English as these variations are used to explain people's social identity and cultural belonging.

Sociolinguistic theory is also responsible for the understanding of the symbolic nature of prestige and identity of language in Pakistan. English is linked to schooling, modernity and success in work, local languages to culture and feelings. In Pakistan, Urdu and English languages are used together to hold on to the global as well as local identity.

Language Variation Theory

Language variation theory highlights that language is a natural process and that different varieties of a language naturally exist in different language communities. There are phonological, lexical, syntactic and discourse levels of variation. Language variation is not a linguistic deficiency, but the normal characteristic of language evolution as argued by linguists (Holmes 73).

In Pakistani English, phonological variation is the result of the transfer of pronunciation from the native languages of the native English speakers into English speech. Lexical variation occurs when the speaker uses English to express local cultural concepts and the communicative functions in the local situation.

Language variation is a result of social interaction and language adaptation in speech communities, as Trudgill (56) states. The acquisition and evolution of Pakistani English is very clearly reflected in the continuous process of interaction between English and native language. This theory helps to understand the difference between Pakistani English and British and American English and also the fact that it remains in use in Pakistani society without any hindrance.

Code-Switching Theory

Another theory that is also applicable to the current study is the code switching theory, which explains the phenomenon of mixing between the two languages, English and Urdu, in the bilingual context of Pakistan. Code switching is the use of more than one language in a conversation or a sentence. Myers-Scotton believes that bilingual speakers switch codes as a way to express identity, social relationships, emotions, and contextual meanings (Myers-Scotton 84).

In Pakistan, code switching is used in classrooms, TV programmes, advertisements, political speeches and communication in social media. For instance, a speaker could state:

The discussion of the assignment will take place after iftar.

The use of “iftar” in this context stems from its cultural and religious significance in Pakistani society, and thus its presence in English speech is a result of this.

This Code switching theory states that bilingual speakers do not switch languages haphazardly. Many times, Urdu is used by Pakistani speakers to convey emotion and/or cultural reference, while English is used to convey professionalism, authority, or modernity (Shams 104).

The study findings are corroborated with this theory as many of the localized expressions in Pakistani English are the result of code switching and borrowing.

Theoretical Analysis of Phonological Variation

The effect of phonological variation in Pakistani English can be explained by the interaction between the English phonology and local language systems. However, Urdu and a variety of regional languages have different sound structures from English and so the speakers transfer local sound patterns to English speech.

Consonant Substitution

One of the most common phonological features of Pakistani English is consonant substitution. Such sounds as /θ/ and /ð/ often get substituted with /t/ and /d/. For example:

- “Think” becomes “tink”
- “This” becomes “dis”

This variation is due to the fact that many of the Pakistan languages do not have these sounds (Mahboob and Ahmar 79). Language transfer theory states that when speakers attempt to produce foreign language sounds, they tend to go back to the phonetic patterns they are familiar with in their first language.

There is also a frequent alternation in the pronunciation of /v/ as /w/ in this word. Some words might sound similar such as “very” which can be confused with “wery.” This is a characteristic of Urdu phonology, in which the difference between /v/ and /w/ is not as clear. Stress and Rhythm

Pakistani English also demonstrates variation in stress placement and rhythm. British English follows stress-timed rhythm, where stressed syllables occur at regular intervals. In contrast, Urdu is syllable-timed, meaning each syllable receives approximately equal emphasis (Rahman 92).

As a result, Pakistani English speakers often pronounce English words with equal syllabic stress. For example:

- “Education”
- “Development”
- “Opportunity”

These words may receive stress patterns different from native English pronunciation.

Vowel Variation

Vowel pronunciation in Pakistani English reflects local phonological influence. Diphthongs are often simplified into monophthongs, and distinctions between long and short vowels may be reduced (Baumgardner 269).

For instance:

- “Face” may be pronounced with a pure vowel sound.

- “Ship” and “sheep” may sound similar.

These variations contribute to the distinct phonological identity of Pakistani English.

Theoretical Analysis of Lexical Variation

Lexical variation in Pakistani English reflects cultural adaptation, multilingualism, and social identity. Pakistani speakers frequently modify English vocabulary to express local concepts and experiences.

Borrowing

Borrowing refers to the adoption of words from one language into another. Pakistani English contains numerous borrowings from Urdu and regional languages.

Examples include:

- “Mehndi”
- “Iftar”
- “Shalwar kameez”
- “Madrassa”
- “Rickshaw”

These words represent cultural concepts that are deeply connected with Pakistani society (Talaat 50).

Hybridization

Hybrid expressions combine English vocabulary with local semantic structures. Examples include:

- “Cousin-brother”
- “Time-pass”
- “Batchmate”
- “Co-brother”

Such expressions may not exist in native English varieties but are widely accepted within Pakistani English discourse.

Semantic Extension

Pakistani English also demonstrates semantic extension, where existing English words acquire new meanings. For example, the word “shift” may refer to moving from one house to another rather than work schedules.

Similarly, “open” may be used to mean “turn on,” such as: “Please open the fan.”

These semantic changes reflect localized language use.

Code-Switching and Identity

Code-switching in Pakistani English reflects bilingual identity and cultural belonging. Pakistani speakers frequently mix English and Urdu to create hybrid linguistic forms. This practice is especially common in urban communication and social media discourse.

Code-switching allows speakers to maintain cultural identity while participating in global communication networks. According to sociolinguistic theory, such linguistic mixing demonstrates communicative flexibility and social adaptation (Holmes 82).

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theoretical frameworks guiding the study and analyzed the phonological and lexical features of Pakistani English through sociolinguistic and World Englishes perspectives. The theories of World Englishes, sociolinguistics, language variation, and code-switching explain how Pakistani English has evolved as a legitimate and localized variety of English. The analysis demonstrates that phonological and lexical variations are systematic linguistic features influenced by multilingualism, cultural identity, and social interaction. The next chapter presents a detailed discussion of findings and their implications for understanding Pakistani English in contemporary society.

5. Discussion and Analysis

This chapter presents a detailed discussion and analysis of the phonological and lexical features identified in Pakistani English. The analysis is based on spoken and written data collected from educational settings, media discourse, social communication, and digital platforms. The findings reveal that Pakistani English possesses systematic linguistic characteristics shaped by multilingualism, sociocultural interaction, and local communicative practices. The chapter also examines how these linguistic features contribute to identity formation and the recognition of Pakistani English as a legitimate variety within the framework of World Englishes.

Discussion of Phonological Variation

Phonological variation emerged as one of the most prominent linguistic features in Pakistani English. The analysis of spoken samples demonstrated that pronunciation patterns in Pakistani English differ significantly from Standard British English due to the influence of Urdu and regional languages.

Consonant Substitution

One of the most frequently observed phonological features was consonant substitution. Pakistani speakers often replace unfamiliar English sounds with sounds available in their native languages. For example, the sounds /θ/ and /ð/ were commonly pronounced as /t/ and /d/. Words such as “think” and “this” were frequently articulated as “tink” and “dis.”

This variation reflects the phonological influence of Urdu and other regional languages, where dental fricatives do not exist (Mahboob and Ahmar 81). According to language transfer theory, second-language speakers rely on familiar phonetic structures while producing foreign language sounds (Ellis 67). Therefore, these pronunciation patterns are systematic outcomes of multilingual language interaction rather than random speech errors.

Similarly, the distinction between /v/ and /w/ was often unclear in Pakistani English speech. Words such as “very” and “vine” were pronounced with a /w/ sound by many participants. This feature is influenced by Urdu phonology, where the differentiation between these sounds is less prominent (Rahman 94).

Simplification of Consonant Clusters

The analysis also revealed simplification of consonant clusters in spoken Pakistani English. Some speakers inserted vowels between consonants to make pronunciation easier. For instance:

- “School” became “iskool”
- “Station” became “istation”

This phonological process reflects the influence of indigenous language structures that generally avoid complex consonant clusters (Baumgardner 270). Such simplification demonstrates how speakers adapt English pronunciation according to familiar speech patterns.

Stress Patterns and Rhythm

Stress placement in Pakistani English differed considerably from native English pronunciation. Many speakers used equal stress across syllables, producing syllable-timed rhythm instead of stress-timed rhythm. For example, words such as:

- “Education”
- “Opportunity”
- “Development”

Urdu phonology strongly influences this rhythm pattern because Urdu is generally syllable-timed (Rahman 96). This feature affects the fluency and intonation of Pakistani English but simultaneously contributes to its distinct identity as a localized English variety.

Intonation Patterns

Another important finding was the use of flatter intonation patterns in formal communication contexts such as classrooms, presentations, and news broadcasting. Pakistani speakers frequently used level intonation rather than the rising and falling tones common in British English.

This pattern reflects the influence of local linguistic habits and educational practices. In many Pakistani classrooms, English pronunciation is learned primarily through written instruction rather than interactive spoken communication. As a result, intonation receives less emphasis compared to grammar and vocabulary.

Vowel Variation

Vowel pronunciation in Pakistani English also displayed considerable variation. Diphthongs were frequently simplified into monophthongs, and distinctions between long and short vowels were reduced. For example:

- “Face” was pronounced with a pure vowel sound.
- “Ship” and “sheep” were sometimes pronounced similarly.

These findings support previous research suggesting that local phonological systems significantly shape English vowel production in Pakistan (Mahboob and Ahmar 83).

The analysis demonstrates that phonological variation in Pakistani English is systematic and influenced by multilingual interaction. These pronunciation patterns are not merely “incorrect forms” of English but represent localized adaptations reflecting linguistic identity and communication needs.

Discussion of Lexical Variation

Lexical variation emerged as another significant feature of Pakistani English. The analysis of written and spoken data revealed extensive use of localized vocabulary, borrowing, hybridization, and code-switching.

Borrowing from Local Languages

One of the most common lexical features was borrowing from Urdu and regional languages. Borrowed words were widely used to express cultural, social, and religious concepts that do not have exact equivalents in Standard English.

Examples included:

- “Iftar”
- “Mehndi”
- “Nikah”
- “Madrasa”
- “Rickshaw”
- “Shalwar kameez”

These terms appeared frequently in newspapers, television programs, advertisements, and everyday communication. According to Talaat, lexical borrowing reflects the process of cultural localization in Pakistani English (Talaat 52).

Borrowed words allow speakers to maintain cultural authenticity while communicating in English. Such vocabulary demonstrates that language adapts according to social realities and cultural practices.

Semantic Extension

Another important finding was semantic extension, where English words acquire localized meanings in Pakistani usage. For example:

- “Shift” is often used to mean moving from one house to another.
- “Open” may mean turning on an electrical appliance.

Examples:

- “We shifted to Lahore last week.”
- “Please open the fan.”

These expressions illustrate how local speakers modify English vocabulary according to cultural and linguistic habits.

Code-Switching Practices

Code-switching emerged as a dominant feature of Pakistani English communication. Speakers frequently alternated between English and Urdu within the same sentence or conversation.

Examples included:

- “I will complete the assignment after iftar.”
- “The lecture was interesting but bohat lengthy tha.”

Code-switching was especially common among university students, media professionals, and urban youth. According to Shams, bilingual speakers use code-switching strategically to express identity, solidarity, and contextual meaning (Shams 106).

The analysis suggests that code-switching in Pakistani English reflects bilingual competence rather than linguistic deficiency. Speakers use English for academic and professional purposes while relying on Urdu for emotional and cultural expression.

Pakistani English and Cultural Identity

The findings indicate that Pakistani English functions as an important marker of cultural identity. Linguistic features such as localized vocabulary, pronunciation patterns, and code-switching practices reflect the multilingual and multicultural realities of Pakistani society.

English in Pakistan is closely associated with education, modernity, and professional success. However, speakers simultaneously preserve their cultural identity by incorporating indigenous linguistic features into English communication. This process creates a hybrid linguistic identity combining global and local elements.

According to sociolinguistic theory, language serves not only as a communication tool but also as a symbol of belonging and identity (Wardhaugh 15). Pakistani English demonstrates this relationship clearly because speakers use localized language features to express both national identity and participation in global discourse.

Media discourse particularly highlights this hybrid identity. Television advertisements, political speeches, and social media content frequently mix English and Urdu to appeal to modern Pakistani audiences. This linguistic blending reflects changing social values influenced by globalization and digital communication.

Pakistani English in Education and Media

The educational system plays a central role in shaping Pakistani English. English-medium schools and universities expose students to both Standard English norms and localized speech practices. Teachers often switch between Urdu and English during classroom instruction, reinforcing bilingual communication habits.

The media also contributes significantly to the spread of Pakistani English. Television anchors, journalists, and social media influencers frequently use localized vocabulary and pronunciation patterns. The growing influence of digital communication has accelerated lexical innovation, especially among younger speakers.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok encourage hybrid language practices where English and Urdu are mixed creatively. These digital interactions continue to shape the future development of Pakistani English.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have important implications for sociolinguistics, language education, and World Englishes research.

First, the study challenges the traditional belief that localized English varieties are inferior to native English norms. Pakistani English possesses systematic linguistic features that reflect sociocultural adaptation and multilingual interaction.

Second, the study highlights the need for language educators to adopt more inclusive attitudes toward localized English usage. Instead of treating Pakistani English features as errors, teachers should recognize them as natural outcomes of language variation.

Third, the research contributes to the broader understanding of how English evolves in postcolonial societies. Pakistani English demonstrates that global languages continuously change according to local communicative needs and cultural identities.

This chapter analyzed the phonological and lexical features of Pakistani English and discussed their sociolinguistic significance. The findings reveal that Pakistani English contains systematic pronunciation patterns, localized vocabulary, borrowing practices, hybrid expressions, and code-switching tendencies influenced by indigenous languages and multilingual interaction.

The analysis demonstrates that Pakistani English is a legitimate and evolving variety within the framework of World Englishes. Its linguistic features reflect cultural identity, communicative adaptation, and social realities in Pakistan. The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study based on the findings discussed in this research.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the linguistic features of Pakistani English with special reference to phonological and lexical variation. The research aimed to examine how English has been localized in Pakistan through the influence of indigenous languages, multilingual interaction, and sociocultural factors. Based on qualitative analysis of spoken and written data, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how Pakistani English functions as a distinct and evolving variety within the framework of World Englishes.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study clearly demonstrate that Pakistani English exhibits systematic phonological and lexical variation rather than random deviations from Standard English. These variations are shaped by the interaction between English and local languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto.

Phonological Features

The phonological analysis revealed several consistent patterns in Pakistani English pronunciation. One of the most prominent features was consonant substitution, where sounds such as /θ/ and /ð/ are replaced with /t/ and /d/. This occurs due to the absence of these sounds in most indigenous languages of Pakistan (Mahboob and Ahmar 81).

Another key feature was the simplification of consonant clusters, such as pronouncing “school” as “iskool.” This reflects the phonotactic rules of local languages, which generally avoid complex consonant combinations (Baumgardner 270).

Stress and rhythm patterns also showed significant variation. Pakistani English tends to follow syllable-timed rhythm rather than stress-timed rhythm, influenced by Urdu phonology (Rahman 96). This results in equal emphasis on syllables rather than the irregular stress patterns found in British English.

Intonation patterns were relatively flat in many instances, particularly in formal speech contexts such as classrooms and news broadcasts. This suggests limited emphasis on native-like intonation patterns in traditional English education systems in Pakistan.

Lexical Features

The lexical analysis revealed extensive use of borrowing, hybridization, semantic extension, and code-switching. Borrowed words such as “mehndi,” “iftar,” “rickshaw,” and “shalwar kameez” reflect cultural concepts deeply rooted in Pakistani society (Talaat 52).

Hybrid expressions such as “cousin-brother,” “batchmate,” and “time-pass” demonstrate linguistic creativity in adapting English to local communicative needs. These expressions are widely used and socially accepted within Pakistani discourse communities (Baumgardner 274). Semantic extension was also evident, where English words acquired localized meanings. For example, “shift” is commonly used to refer to moving residences rather than workplace scheduling.

Code-switching between English and Urdu was another dominant feature, particularly in informal communication. Speakers frequently alternated between the two languages to express identity, emotion, and cultural belonging. According to Shams, code-switching in Pakistani

English reflects bilingual competence and sociocultural identity rather than linguistic deficiency (Shams 106).

Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study strongly support the theoretical framework of World Englishes proposed by Braj B. Kachru. According to Kachru, English in Outer Circle countries undergoes a process of nativization, where local linguistic and cultural factors shape its structure and usage (Kachru 20). Pakistani English clearly reflects this process through its phonological and lexical characteristics.

The study also aligns with sociolinguistic theories that view language variation as a natural and systematic phenomenon rather than an error-based deviation (Wardhaugh 15). The observed variations in pronunciation and vocabulary are not signs of linguistic deficiency but rather evidence of linguistic adaptation in a multilingual society.

Furthermore, language transfer theory explains how native language structures influence second language pronunciation. Pakistani English speakers transfer phonological patterns from Urdu and regional languages into English, resulting in systematic pronunciation differences (Ellis 68).

Contribution of the Study

This research contributes to the field of sociolinguistics and World Englishes by providing a detailed analysis of both phonological and lexical variation in Pakistani English within a unified framework. Unlike earlier studies that focused on isolated aspects of language variation, this study integrates pronunciation and vocabulary analysis to present a more comprehensive understanding of Pakistani English.

The study also highlights the role of multilingualism in shaping linguistic identity. Pakistani English is shown to be a dynamic and evolving variety that reflects the cultural, social, and communicative realities of its speakers.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have several important implications:

1. **Linguistic Acceptance:** Pakistani English should be recognized as a legitimate variety of English rather than an incorrect form. Its features are systematic and rule-governed, consistent with World Englishes theory.
2. **Educational Practices:** English language teaching in Pakistan should acknowledge local linguistic realities and avoid excessive reliance on native speaker norms. Teachers should understand that variation is a natural part of language development.
3. **Sociocultural Identity:** Pakistani English plays an important role in expressing cultural identity and bilingual competence. It reflects how speakers balance global communication with local identity.
4. **Language Policy:** Language planning in Pakistan should consider the functional role of Pakistani English in education, media, and administration.

Limitations of the Study

Although the study provides valuable insights, it has certain limitations. The research focuses primarily on phonological and lexical variation and does not include a detailed syntactic analysis. Additionally, the study is qualitative in nature and does not provide statistical generalization of findings. The linguistic data were also limited to selected urban contexts, which may not fully represent rural language practices.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies may explore:

- Syntactic variation in Pakistani English
- Influence of digital communication on language change
- Regional variation across different provinces
- Comparative studies with other South Asian Englishes such as Indian or Sri Lankan English

Final Conclusion

In conclusion, Pakistani English is a dynamic and evolving linguistic variety shaped by multilingualism, cultural identity, and social interaction. The phonological and lexical variations identified in this study demonstrate that Pakistani English is not a deviation from Standard English but a legitimate and systematic variety within the framework of World Englishes.

The study confirms that language variation is a natural outcome of linguistic contact and cultural adaptation. Pakistani English reflects the identity, creativity, and communicative needs of its speakers, making it an important area of study in modern sociolinguistics and applied linguistics.

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