A DESCRIPTION OF THE EFFECTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IMPERIALISM ON PUNJABI AND URDU LANGUAGES

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Abstract:
The goals of the study are to analyze the effects of English language imperialism on the socio-cultural status of local languages spoken in the Punjab province of Pakistan such as Urdu and Punjabi languages. It links with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory as a theoretical framework to examine the status of languages spoken in the Punjab province and its aspects through which one language holds the power and becomes a superior language and then plays an important role in construction of identity. By using a mixed-method approach this research examined and explored the societal and cultural factors which give status to any language. The data is collected from public and private sector university students and instructors, one hundred students made up the whole population and were asked to fill out a semi-structured Likert scale questionnaires consisted of 30 items and ten instructors were selected for the interviews. The results of this study determine that English language is an overwhelming language and has become an inevitable need in a Punjabi socio-cultural environment. Moreover, this imperialism effects local languages status and this linguistic imbalance contribute to loss of identity among Punjabi speakers. Therefore, the study has concluded that, to preserve local languages status, it should be promote in academics or there must be certain seminars, cultural shows and movements for engaging local languages so that Punjabi speakers achieve a balanced linguistic socio-cultural landscape.

Key phrases: English language, Language imperialism, sociocultural status, local languages

1. Introduction

Human beings represent their identity through their thoughts and thoughts are represented through language. Language can be either verbal or sign, thus to understand one's values and ideas languages play an important role. Language is a unique characteristic of human beings. It is the most significant element of human activities. It is used for communication, expression and a source of coordination among members of any society. According to Sapir (1921), language is the system of intentionally created symbols that is exclusively human and non-instinctive, used to communicate thoughts, feelings and needs. Language distinguishes human beings from animals (Lieberman, 1998). Each language has its own value and importance in the world. Each language is the representative of a specific region or culture which has the specific norms, values and ideologies of that culture. Language and society are mutually constitutive as it shapes the social interaction, cultural practices and the transmission of knowledge and values among individuals therefore it plays a crucial role in shaping societies and creating social cohesion.

English language therefore holds the power in the colonial country Pakistan that now it is compulsory to learn all systematic patterns of it as a second language in order to shape their conversations. Also it is stated that this language is said to be the key to a prosperous future (Umrani, 2017). Therefore, mainly it is introduced to infants through formal education because

it has been rooted in socio-cultural fabric as an official language of the country. It is then observed that elite class of Pakistan specifically makes English a very important language which reaches a distinctive status rather than their national language of the country (Rahman, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

The study intends to analyze the effects of English language imperialism on the sociocultural status of local languages such as Punjabi and Urdu by focusing on the perspective of multilingual university speakers of the province of Punjab that how English language dominance impacts and effect the overall language attitude of speakers and why. Thus, the study determines the effects and factors for liking or disliking English language or local languages such as Urdu and Punjabi in the academic and social life of university speakers in the sociocultural setting.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research are to:

➢ Explore the linguistic, socio-cultural and academic role of different languages spoken in the province of the Punjab.
➢ Find out the socio-cultural status of local languages in Punjab by focusing the perception of students and teachers of the public and private sector universities.
➢ Analyze the superiority of language that affects the socio-cultural status of other language/s in the socio-academic life of students and teachers of university sectors.
➢ Determine the factors responsible for the liking or disliking English or local languages such as Urdu and Punjabi in the academic and social life of university students and teachers in the sociocultural setting.

1.2. Research Questions

Following are the research questions of this study:

➢ What is the linguistic, socio-cultural and academic role of different languages spoken in the province Punjab?
➢ How can the socio-cultural status of local languages in Punjab be found by focusing the perception of students and teachers of the public and private sector universities?
➢ How does the superiority of language affect the socio-cultural status of other language/s in the socio-academic life of students and teachers?
➢ What are the factors of liking or disliking English or local languages such as Urdu and Punjabi in the academic and social life of university students and teachers in the sociocultural setting?

2. Review of Literature

Language is the tool of communication. Language is one the most important element in order to understand one's identity and the status of the speaker via their use of language. Languages came with man on Earth and man has always spoken different languages. It is formed when combination of words pair up into sentences in a communication. It occurs when a man wants to communicate with each other to share the ideas, beliefs, commands etc. and it is owned by people by whom they can make a clear distinction between linguistics and non-linguistics communication (Barber, Beal & Shaw, 2009). After years of evolution, the English language now has different varieties in different countries. And these varieties are different on the basis of

accent, dialect, vocabulary, spellings and so on. Moreover, these differences in English language are then able to identify a person's socio-cultural background.

The diverse socio-cultural influence the use of English language, with the widespread use of this language it becomes the lingua franca. As now in many countries it has become the international language therefore the international status of this language creates implications for ELT professionals to consider. Though many users brought a change of form in this language therefore, it is also quoted that English is now a pluralistic language with diverse and complex pronunciations, grammar, vocabulary, discourse, cultural conceptualization and pragmatic conventions (Marlina, roby & Xu, Zhichang, 2018).

In today's world, learning English as a second or foreign language has become essential, and people acquire this language through formal and informal instruction. This language can be distinguished by its adaptability and flexibility because it allows many borrowed grammar and words from other languages. Thus, it is now a hybrid language made up of several accents and dialects which becomes easier for people to learn and apply in different varieties of situations (Walia, 2023). As a result, now there are different variations of English, such as American English, British English, Indian English, Australian English, and Canadian English etc. All variants of English have their own different dialect, accent etc.

Punjabi language does exist in the cultural roots of people; the younger generation is not comfortable with the use of Punjabi language, although the parent generation finds it acceptable. The reason behind this is Urbanization and the lack of Punjabi language instruction in schools has led to a perception of Punjabi language as having little value and low status (Rabia, 2018). Thus, the power of Punjabi language can depend on the power of its speaker and many literate people have already omitted this language and shifted it into Urdu as their mother tongue language. According to Abbas & Iqbal (2018), Punjabi language is losing its values as people are associating themselves with Urdu and English language.

In Pakistan, people are very conscious now towards their language use, as it reflects their identity towards the particular group of class. Government universities of Pakistan have their separate departments of Punjabi, but private institutes of Pakistan have omitted to offer Punjabi and Urdu languages graduation which clearly indicates that minority and discrimination towards their own native language. As the result, Punjabi speakers are illiterate in their own mother tongue language as they only get this language inherited but unable to write or read this language, yet there are majority group of Punjabi speakers in community but not allowed or consciously not speak it in formal places, (Zaidi, et el., 2017) identify this situation as linguistic Schizophrenia. There are 44% of Punjabi speakers in Pakistan, yet it does not have its own official status because it is not the language of education and government settings. Rahman (2006) investigated that, Punjabi speakers switch their language now more into Urdu language into their day to day communication.

In Pakistan, Urdu language contains an accumulation of the nation's cultural and social legacy, as it is the common language used in education, laws, media etc. It is the language which is understood by all the population of Pakistan. Jafar (2022) says that, "Urdu is now spoken in many countries around the world and has long been regarded as an elevated and aristocratic language in South Asia; it continues to conjure a subtle, polished affect in South Asian linguistics and literary sensibilities". Therefore, it is now the language used in newspapers, calligraphy and poetry and now also preferred by non-native speakers. It is the language which gets higher status

among all other regional and provincial languages though it has only 8% of its speakers who learn Urdu as their native language but still it is the common language used by every Pakistani hailing from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Thus, Urdu language connects the people of Pakistan to interact with one another and to understand each other's communication.

Cultural globalization has shaped the mind of individuals, though in Pakistan, there are heterogeneous communities and each has their own dialect of language but globalization due to political power has a great effect to diminish local languages. Hence, cultural transitions set an ideological perspective for individuals to understand and learn dominant language in order to be a part of modern society. Urdu and Punjabi languages are part of Punjab province, and cannot be completely diminished yet the decline to use this language is burning down a particular or distinct cultural history. The disappearance of a particular language automatically loses its literature, as well as the mindset, vision and approach of its scholar and the general public. Thus, it demonstrates ideological reproduction in the modern world as it is stated by Phillipson in the year 2009 that, "Linguistic imperialism interlocks with a structure of imperialism in culture, education, the media, communication, the economy, politics, and military activities.

Through language, sociocultural influences social and cultural elements to impact people's experience, beliefs and behaviors. Similarly, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) suggests that human's development is shaped by social and cultural factors. According to McLeod (2022), Vygotsky's sociocultural theory views human development as a socially mediated process in which children acquire cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving strategies through collaborative dialogues with more knowledgeable members of society. In this way, in socio-cultural setting humans acquire language and address liking or disliking a language or languages. Second language and learning is interlinked with the socio-cultural phenomenon. Language plays a central and important role in socio-cultural theory by Vygotsky. Research Methodology and Procedures

The study aims to find out the effects of English language imperialism on the socio-cultural status of local languages such as Punjabi and Urdu languages by focusing on the perspective and opinions of random university students and teachers, with the following objectives abide by research questions. This section of this research focuses on the description of the process, the techniques, methods and samples that follows to evaluate the results.

3. Research Design of the Study

It might be the opinion of each individual that English language is the language of cross-cultural communication, it has the power and it becomes the bridge for a successful future. And everyone may try to use this language while interacting specifically in formal places. In order to understand the effects of this language on their mother tongue or local languages in a socio-cultural setting, this study employed both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

Table.1.Qualitative Research approaches by Ugwu, Chinyere & Eze, Val. (2023)

Approach	Its Purpose
Action research	Researchers and participants collaborate to link theory to practice in order to promote social change.
Grounded theory	After compiling a large amount of evidence on a certain topic, researchers deductively build theories.

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Narrative research	For this, researchers examine how stories are told in order to gain a deeper understanding of how participants make meaning of their experiences.
Phenomenological Research	Researchers examine participant's experiences to gain a deeper understanding of phenomena.
Ethnography	Researchers immerse themselves in groups or organizations to understand their cultures.

Thus, this study in order to provide deeper understanding of English language speakers at university level about the perception that English language is the dominant language in Punjabi society which holds the higher status than other regional or local languages in Punjab, Pakistan. A qualitative analysis has been employed to get the public observation of university teachers regarding the factors for liking or disliking the use of one or other languages and how they view

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This study explores sociocultural factors which affect the local languages of Punjab due to English language imperialism under the lens of socio-cultural theory by Lev Vygotsky (1978). The theory describes that human development depends on the socially mediated process and society plays a very important role in the process for giving things a meaning (McLeod, 2022). Similarly, society plays a central role to make one language as a high and dominant language and give status to each language. Vygotsky believed that the people among society are responsible for developing different cultures because they themselves develop different values, beliefs and ideas through interaction within social groups. Thus, this research intends to highlight that socio-cultural elements and factors play a significant role to give levels to languages. As through interactions an individual understand each other's languages and give status to it, with this the imperial language then has a major effect on socio-cultural status of local languages. Social interaction idealizes people's minds and allows them to understand and learn different cultural languages.

3.2 Data Collection Instruments

The researchers designed total thirty semi-structured questionnaires for students and three broad interview based questions for instructors. Each of the questionnaires reflected the objectives of this study. The questions were easily understandable in order to have participant's perception about the impact of imperial language in Punjabi society and its effect on socio-cultural status of local languages.

4. Findings and Discussion

This study intends to analyze the effects of English language imperialism on the socio-cultural status of local languages in Punjab, and to determine the factors for the liking and disliking of superior language or local languages in an academic socio-cultural environment. The researcher collected survey questionnaires and interview based questions, containing no tag questions from two public and two private sectors of universities of Lahore, Pakistan. The data is collected from random university students and teachers for the analysis of superior language impact on local languages in Punjabi society. Therefore, the following chapter contains complete results of the collected data that show participants perception and opinion about superiority of

one language over other local languages. The nature of this section is in a descriptive way and the given figures and tables represent impact of superior language that affects the socio-cultural status of other local languages in the academic environment.

English language becomes the global language, which left certain effects on other languages spoken all around the world. As the more speakers use to communicate in English language, the other languages ultimately become local and turn into endangered. However, it is not easy to have one same ideological perspective among all individuals as each person has their own linguistic background. Each person has its cultural identity which he/she represents through language. In an academic socio-cultural environment where English language holds the power each student already has their cultural and linguistic heritage. However, the academic environment allows them to have their communication in imperial languages which ultimately affect their local languages cultural and linguistic heritage. They will omit their own linguistic heritage which reflects their beliefs, ideas, values and social dynamics, as a result, in a diverse culture; English language gets it higher status which greatly affect other linguistic and cultural heritage of local languages. For this, 25% university speakers also strongly agree and 55% respond agree that the academic socio-cultural environment only prioritized English language which ultimately effect local languages heritage. 18% participants show neutral response whereas 2% disagree to it, which shows that people in Pakistan now accept that dominant language holds power specifically in academia which effects individual's local languages heritage.

In the light of the analyzed data this study looked into the perceptions of university students and teachers. The quantitative survey from the students and the qualitative interviews from the teachers shed light on the impact of the English language on the socio-cultural status of other local languages in Punjab. It has been noticed that English language does influence socio-cultural identities of local languages, and when the researcher viewed it from the students' perspectives, it shows that 58% of the participants strongly agree that the language is the strongest tool that constructs human identities and it appears that for that very reason none of the respondents disagreed strongly to the question.

Socio-cultural status of languages makes people very conscious of their language use, as this reflects their identity towards a particular group of class. It is also demonstrated the issue that an individual's rank or status in a society is based on the language he/she uses, and 49% of students agreed while only 14% disagreed to it. The researcher infers from it that the socio-cultural status of the languages plays a significant role in people's lives as it determines their identities. The same has been proved by the qualitative analysis of this study, in question 3 where the instructor said that people are judged on the basis of the language they speak. One of the previous researches by Garrett (2005) did an investigation on language attitudes; he examined social meanings of dialects, performance and ethnicity of languages within a speech community.

In Punjabi society, the major local languages used are Urdu, Punjabi (and Saraiki in the southern belt of Punjab); however, question one is answer over here that the English language holds the superior academic, linguistic, and socio-cultural role. The researchers intend to analyze this in the perceptions of university speakers, and this is inferred that more than 50% of the population agreed that it is easier for them to have all tertiary level curriculum in English than Urdu or Punjabi, and they prefer to read all subjects in English rather than local languages (Urdu and Punjabi). The results show the dominance of English language in academic and socio-

cultural roles. The previous research discussed that English as a medium of instruction has led to concern for domain loss for the local languages that no longer have speakers in formal education environments, including those of students from Australia, Japan, South Africa, Germany, Denmark, China, and Sweden. The authors assessed the factors and provided policymakers, university administrators, and teachers with parallel learning so that students could receive their teachings in their own local languages as well as in English (Haberland, et.al, 2013).

The second question of the study has been answered in light of the analyzed data we see that due to English language imperialism there is a possible death of the worth of local languages such as Urdu and Punjabi and it is inferred that the priority given to English language has changed the perceptions of students using their local languages especially in academics. The superiority of one language suppressed the socio-cultural values and traditions of Punjabi and Urdu. The selected participants for this research accepted the hegemony of the English language and considered it overwhelming over other local languages in Punjab. The researchers infer from the results that though this language holds the dominant position, students are still not proficient and feel intimidated in the company of English speakers, and the qualitative result concluded that the prioritization of English in the present era can place barriers for those who are not equipped with English, which continues inequalities and restricts socio-economic and socio-cultural growth. In their previous research, Khan and Tania (2023) addressed student's perceptions of English imperialism as a threat to their national language. The results of that study concluded that university students considered the English language a sign of accomplishment in their professional and academic careers.

This study highlights respondents' perceptions on the socio-cultural status of the imperial language and its effect on the local languages of Punjab by considering two languages (Urdu and Punjabi). The third question of the study has been answered in light of an analyzed responses, provides the reasons that contribute to promoting imperial language and how it affects the socio-cultural status of other language/s in the socio-academic life of students and teachers. The results show that this hegemony of English imperialism is deeply rooted in the colonial era, and colonialism promoted this language and overshadowed other local languages but the same is continued till today as the aftermaths of colonial era. The speakers of dominant languages in Punjabi society develop their personalities in a positive way, as the analyzed data represent that students who are proficient in this dominant language consider themselves privileged, and the significance of using this language plays a vital role in personal and professional growth. The imperial language effect on the socio-cultural status of local languages has been shown in light of the analyzed data which showed that local language (Punjabi) speakers feel uncomfortable while speaking it in a socio-academic environment, and the majority associate superiority and literacy with the English language. Thus, it is interpreted by the given results that the socio-cultural status of local languages has been lost, as more than 50% of selected participants agreed. And those who don't come up with superior language are looked down upon; therefore, the imperialism of one language leads to the linguistic imbalance that contributes to socio-cultural identity crises.

The fourth question has been answered in light of an analyzed data to examine certain factors of speakers' liking or disliking of English or local languages in their socio-cultural setting. The results indicate that speakers in Punjabi society give preference to the English language in their academic and socio-cultural settings and accept that English language

contributes to the social and economic development of our society; it is the key that impacts personal and professional growth. The researchers from the results infer that respondents agree that in order to have professional and personal growth, learning this language is necessary. They determined their liking for the English language, however they also agreed, that learning this superior language makes local language status inferior in the academic socio-cultural environment and affect the cultural and linguistic heritage of it. Therefore, the selected participants did not show disliking towards their own local languages and accepted that local languages (Urdu and Punjabi) have their own values because of their cultural roots. The interview results represent that they wanted to promote local languages on an international platform to have a balanced linguistic landscape. One of the previous studies conducted a mentalist approach which concluded that students had integrated motivation with Urdu and Punjabi languages, but a sense of superiority was attained with the English language (Iqbal & Abbas, 2018).

5. Conclusion

The researchers draw the conclusion that the socio-cultural status of local languages has been demeaned because of their non-presence in international community's academic and social environment where English exercises a status of lingua franca and enjoys the role of a superior language. This endangerment gives rise to the superior language and multilingual speakers of our society prefer to communicate in the dominant language, i.e. Tool 1 of the data analysis highlighted that students accepted the hegemony of English language and they unconsciously switched their mother tongue to this dominant language while communicating, though their local languages have been deeply rooted in cultural heritage but still demeaned their status in academic socio-cultural environment. The findings of the results stated that the imperial language caused the death of local languages in formal places of Punjabi society and we may not find out the speakers of local languages any more. The analyzed data of tool 2 draw a detailed discussion which concluded that Urdu and Punjabi languages spoken by a greater portion of the population still have not reached the heights of recognition when compared with English language, and these languages are now associated with lower class people which completely effect the political, socio-economic and cultural values of our own local languages of Punjab. The findings demonstrated that English language should get its importance because it becomes the global language though to preserve our own local language socio-cultural status there must be social engagements and seminars that represents local languages heritage.

6. Recommendations

The researchers offer numerous recommendations based on the analysis and findings of this aforementioned study. These recommendations are aimed for the future researchers of Punjabi society and for the local language speakers in Punjabi society who are losing their socio-cultural identity gradually.

➢ In Punjabi society English may be retained as academic languages because people have to interact in it internationally and to function in society but socio-cultural status of other languages also need to be promote and preserved.

➢ We may avoid language death of local languages by giving extra attention to English to promote its hegemony on the local languages; hence, we have to bring them into

academics not just as a subject but to allow students to present local languages in their formal communication.

➢ There must be some sort of movements or seminars engaging the parents at the same time so that your culture is transferred to the coming generations in their own local language/s.

➢ There must be cultural shows, seminars and festivals on university level in order to promote local languages.

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