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**Localized Features in Pakistani Undergraduate Academic
Writing: A World Englishes Perspective**



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Abstract

English language in the contemporary world is used (both spoken and written) by people of various linguistic and cultural backgrounds which has naturally led to the development of various localised varieties referred to as World Englishes. The English language, as is the case in Pakistan, has an official status and is primarily used for educational purpose and medium of communication in academia and certain other specific contexts in many countries across the world but is primarily spoken as a second/foreign language. The present paper discusses the ways in which characteristics of Pakistani English are represented in the academic composition of undergraduate students and how these characteristics indicate local linguistic and cultural influence and not language incompetence. It is a qualitative study that is carried out using written assignments by undergraduate English students in the Pakistani public sector universities/colleges. Moreover, the short questionnaire responses were employed to get an idea of how students perceive their use of English. The results indicate that the writing of students is often full of local terms, Urdu-based sentence structures, and culturally determined phrases. These attributes tend to be outside the mainstream British or American English norms, yet still has a communicative and pragmatic significance in the immediate local context reflecting a different sociolinguistic reality. The analysis of the observed patterns reflecting local Pakistani sociolinguistic reality should be considered in the context of World Englishes and not simply as errors as seen and evaluated in the traditional sense of the prescriptive and descriptive paradigms. The paper concludes by suggesting a more balanced approach to academic writing instruction that recognizes linguistic variation while still developing standard academic competence.

Keywords: World Englishes; Pakistani English; academic writing; undergraduate students; language variation

1. Introduction

English language as a result of continual process of evolution across the centuries has finally turned into a global language that is used way beyond the nations of its origin (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 1997). Millions of people do not consider it as their first language but still speak and write it today (Jenkins, 2009). The spread of the English language in various places did not occur in the same form. Rather, it came up with new forms that were influenced by local

languages, cultures, and communicative requirements (Kachru, 1985; Bolton, 2004). The developments are usually addressed within the idea of World Englishes which sees English as a plural and heterogeneous language, and no longer as a single and fixed monolithic system (Kachru, 1992; Seidlhofer, 2011).

Pakistan English represents an important context within this global picture as English is an official language of the country and is at the center of the education, administration and professional life (Rahman, 1990; Mahboob, 2009). English is taught in the university level as a subject, as well as a medium of textbooks, exams, and academic writing (Baumgardner, 1993). Despite this central and significant role of English, the majority of Pakistan students speak English as a second and even a third language (Rahman, 2001). Their everyday linguistic environment is dominated by Urdu or other regional and local languages like Pashto, Punjabi or Sindhi (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004). Consequently, these languages affect their use of the English language in quite significant ways (Canagarajah, 2006).

In academic settings, student writing is, however, normally compared against the British or American norms and standards of English (Hyland, 2003). Violation of these norms is commonly termed as grammatical errors or lack of language proficiency (Matsuda, 2003). Although precision is a component of academic writing, this approach sometimes ignores the broader sociolinguistic reality in which English is being used and practised (Jenkins, 2006). From a World Englishes perspective, some of the characteristics that are prevalent in the writing of Pakistani students can be seen as a localised form of English, and not necessarily as haphazard errors and random mistakes (Kachru & Nelson, 2006).

Previous research studies have outlined Pakistani English language as a language that has its own lexical, grammatical and pragmatic characteristics (Rahman, 1990; Baumgardner, 1993; Mahboob, 2004). Nevertheless, the research has not delved so extensively into analyzing how these features manifest themselves in real undergraduate academic writing, particularly in the small institutional settings (Bolton, 2006). This paper tries to fill this gap by examining written assignments by undergraduate English students in public sector universities/colleges in Pakistan.

The primary goal of the current research study is to discuss the ways in which the elements related to Pakistani English reflect in the academic writings of the students and how it is possible to interpret these elements in the context of World Englishes. The research questions of the study include:

1. What are the linguistic characteristics of the Pakistani English in the academic writing of the undergraduate students?
2. What role does local language and cultural norms play in these patterns of writing?
3. What are the ways these features can be viewed through the prism of World Englishes?

By focusing on real student texts, the current paper aims to make a contribution to the current debate concerning the linguistic variation, academic norms, and the status of localized Englishes in higher education.

2. Literature Review

World Englishes, initially a simple idea and concept later on became a significant phenomenon due to the increased awareness of the fact that English does not belong to the few native-speaking nations anymore (Kachru, 1985; Bolton, 2004). With the expansion of English as a result of migration in the first place followed by colonization in the second stage, and finally through globalization and education in the contemporary world, it became embedded in various social and cultural contexts and imbued the local contexts as it both affects and in turn is affected by the local sociolinguistic realities (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006). Scholars started to claim that such new varieties of English had to be examined on their own terms (Kachru & Nelson, 2006). The new scholars from the field of World Englishes especially Kachru (1985) began to argue that these new forms of English should be studied in their own right rather than judged against British or American standards.

Kachru (1985) came up with one of the most influential frameworks in this field by outlining how English was used around the world with three concentric circles namely: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. As per this model, nations like Pakistan fall in the Outer Circle which has an institutional role of English and has acquired stable local characteristics (Kachru, 1985; Schneider, 2007). Kachru pointed out that the linguistic difference in these contexts portrays sociocultural reality and not imperfect learning (Kachru, 1985).

Later studies further supported this pluralist view of English. According to Crystal (2003), most of the users of the English language across the world are non-native speakers, and as a result, there is an aspect of diversity in the usage. In that sense, variation is not an issue that should be disregarded but rather a natural consequence of language contact (Jenkins, 2009). In the same vein, Bolton (2006) also claimed that World Englishes studies refute the notion of a correct norm and promote the investigation of English in its actual

usage in other societies.

Over the past few years, the direction of World Englishes has been moved away more towards actual application instead of simple description (Seidlhofer, 2011). Researchers have been more interested in researching the implications of these concepts on education, identity, and the academic practices (Matsuda, 2012). It is specifically applicable in situations where the English language is used in higher education and is the second language like in the case of Pakistan (Hyland, 2006).

2.1 Pakistani English as a Legitimate Variety

The Pakistani English has been a subject of linguistic literature since several decades and it is quite evident that it is a separate variety of Outer Circle (Rahman, 1990; Mahboob, 2004). It has evolved within the context of certain historical, educational and social circumstances (Baumgardner, 1993). English was established as an official language during the colonial rule and was maintained to a much later date because of its supposed neutrality and usefulness in administration, management and higher education (Rahman, 2001).

Rahman is one of the first scholars to designate Pakistani English as a systematic variety and not a set of random errors made by learners (1990, 2005). He identified features at the lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic levels, and most of them are affected by Urdu and other regional languages (Rahman, 1990; Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004). These include the use of localized vocabulary, extended meanings of certain words, and culturally shaped politeness strategies (Mahboob, 2004).

The variety of Pakistani English was also well represented by Baumgardner (1993) who highlighted and emphasized the fact that it functions effectively within local contexts. In his view, speakers of Pakistani English have common norms making successful communication possible, especially in the formal areas of the language education, media and bureaucracy (Baumgardner, 1993). This questions the idea that the non-conformity to the norms of native speakers has to lead to communication breakdown (Kachru & Nelson, 2006). It challenges the assumption that deviation from native-speaker norms necessarily results in communicative failure (Jenkins, 2006).

Even more recent studies have continued to confirm the legitimacy of Pakistani English. According to Mahboob (2003), attitudes toward Pakistani English are usually influenced and shaped by facts such as identity and ideology rather not linguistic evidence. Although teachers and students have remained adamant to British or American standards,

norms and models, local realities are represented in actual language usage (Mahboob, 2004). Such a conflict and tension between the preference and the practice is particularly apparent in the context of academic writing by Pakistani undergraduate students (Hyland, 2006).

2.2 Academic Writing and Language Transfer

Academic writing in a second language is widely influenced by a learner's first language (L1) (Odlin, 1989). This influence is commonly known as language transfer which may influence sentence structure, choice of words and rhetorical structure (Ellis, 1997). Such transfer is not negative always in multilingual situations; it can be indicative of strategic utilization of the present linguistic resources (Canagarajah, 2006).

As was explained by Ellis (1997), when writing complex texts, the second language learner is bound to use his or her first language. This is more so in scholarly writing where a student has to present abstract thoughts and be formal (Hyland, 2003). Majority of Pakistani undergraduate students would think and plan their ideas in Urdu or a regional language such as Pashto, Hindko, Saraiki etc. then translate it into English (Rahman, 2001). Consequently, some fragment of local language structure is likely to be reflected in their writing (Mahboob, 2004).

The same patterns have been observed in a number of studies already conducted in the South Asian settings (Mukherjee & Gries, 2009). When writing in English, students often carry sentence patterns, make verbatim translations of phrases and apply local discourse norms (Canagarajah, 2013). Although these features are usually discussed as mistakes in the standard assessment rooted in the traditional monolithic view of single British and American English norms (Matsuda, 2003), yet these very features can rightly be regarded as positive signs of bilingual proficiency in the new framework of World Englishes as is assumed in the present study (Jenkins, 2009).

These patterns are of special interest as far as the World Englishes point of view is concerned. Instead of taking transfer as an indication of absence, researchers assert that transfer is a natural process of the interactions between languages in multilingual contexts (Odlin, 1989). Such a perception is especially applicable with regard to the undergraduate academic writing where the student is yet to acquire mastery of the formal English registers (Hyland, 2006). Recent research in applied linguistics and discourse analysis in Pakistan has covered diverse topics, including syntactic theory, sociolinguistic attitudes, and the educational effects of language. For example, Ali et al. (2020) investigated how Pakistani

students view standard British and American English, uncovering complex issues of identity and sociolinguistics that often become more pronounced due to gender, as male and female students may face different expectations and opportunities in educational environments. Arshad et al. (2024) compared ad-positional phrase structures in English and Urdu using X-Bar Theory and the Theta Criterion, highlighting both similarities and differences between the languages. The emotional aspects of language learning have also been explored; Adeel and Ishtiaq (2025) examined language anxiety among undergraduate English learners, finding that anxiety and attitudes toward English differ by gender and can impact academic performance.

Ismael and Ishtiaq (2025) looked into students' views on code-switching in higher education, pointing out both the advantages and challenges of bilingual practices in classrooms. Together, these studies emphasize the flexible and evolving nature of language use in educational settings, where gender can influence linguistic choices and participation. The relationship between language, literature, and philosophy is evident in Gill et al. (2024), who explored themes of love and spirituality in Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love* through Sufi philosophy, showing how literature can address complex semantic and philosophical questions. Majid and Ishtiaq (2019) used stylistic analysis to uncover the syntactic and thematic depth of E.E. Cummings' poetry, while Majid et al. (2020) evaluated how primary-level English textbooks teach syntactic structures. These studies also shed light on how male and female students may interact differently with literary texts and grammar lessons.

Critical discourse analysis has been a prominent area of recent research. Gill, Ishtiaq, and Khan (2025) analyzed how Reham Khan is portrayed in digital media from a feminist perspective using the transitivity framework, while Gill et al. (2025) conducted a corpus-based genre analysis of the inaugural speeches of Donald Trump and Joe Biden, revealing rhetorical and structural features of political language. These works underscore the significance of gender as a lens for examining language use and representation. Raza et al. (2025) contributed to syntactic theory by comparing the null-subject parameter in English and Pashto. However, their research lacks detailed methodology and does not sufficiently discuss educational implications; clearer explanations of sample selection and data collection would strengthen the study. Nonetheless, it lays a solid foundation for further comparative syntactic research.

Ismael et al. (2025) effectively explored student attitudes toward code-switching in higher education, focusing on its pedagogical implications and offering practical recommendations for teachers. However, by only considering student perspectives, the study misses insights from teachers and administrators; including more stakeholders would provide a fuller picture. Ullah et al. (2025) investigated gender-based differences in English language achievement, offering useful comparative data for educational policy. However, their binary approach overlooks non-binary identities and deeper sociocultural factors. A more nuanced analysis would enhance the research, but the study still highlights an important area for further investigation.

Luqman et al. (2025) examined the use of computer-assisted learning in English language education, reflecting the increasing role of technology in classrooms. While their case study provides practical insights, its focus on a single institution limits its broader applicability. Wider or mixed-methods research could offer a more comprehensive view, but the study remains relevant for similar educational contexts considering technology integration. Gill et al. (2025) conducted a critical discourse analysis of Reham Khan's representation in digital media from a feminist perspective, using the transitivity framework. The study's strength lies in its integration of feminist theory and linguistic analysis, providing detailed insights into gendered media portrayals. However, it could be improved by including a broader range of digital sources and discussing wider societal implications. Overall, it makes a significant contribution to feminist discourse analysis in the digital age.

On the theoretical front, Ishtiaq and Gill (2024) applied Chomsky's X-Bar Theory to Pakistani languages, comparing Urdu, Pashto, and English, and deepening understanding of both universal and language-specific grammar rules. Similarly, Ishtiaq et al. (2022c) studied parallel syntactic patterns in English, advocating for a unified approach to internal linguistic systems. Ishtiaq et al. (2022b) addressed the difficulties of teaching and pronouncing transliterated words, identifying English-to-Urdu transliteration as a major source of pronunciation errors for Urdu speakers and stressing the need for targeted teaching methods. Additionally, Ishtiaq et al. (2021a) compared the semantic density of religious texts, demonstrating how syntactic and lexical choices affect meaning in translation and highlighting the importance of syntax in cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication.

2.3 Gap in Existing Research

World Englishes and Pakistani English have been highly debated, but few studies have paid

much attention to undergraduate academic writing based on actual students writing (Bolton, 2006; Mahboob, 2004). Most studies are based on surveys, attitude questionnaires, or theoretical discussion, and those that are based on theory are limited in number examining the manifestation of localized English features in the daily academic tasks (Matsuda, 2012).

Moreover, much of the available studies have been carried out in big universities or in the elite institutions (Rahman, 2001). Smaller universities and colleges of the public sector in less urban areas are poorly represented in the literature (Mahboob, 2015). This leaves a gap in the picture of the usage of English in the various educational settings in Pakistan. Another gap lies in the interpretation/perception of student writing. Although it is true that deviations are normally spotted and are not necessarily examined through a World Englishes framework (Matsuda, 2003). Consequently, the local features are often talked about in the error analysis terms, but not in the terms of linguistic variation (Kachru & Nelson, 2006).

The current research is aimed at filling these gaps by examining actual undergraduate writing of a public sector university as well as a public sector college and interpreting the results in the context of World Englishes. In this way, it strives to add empirical evidence to the debate on variation in the English language, academic standards and language pedagogy in the multilingual settings (Jenkins, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2011)

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present research work adopts the quantitative descriptive research design. The reason to select a qualitative approach is to take a closer look at the real usage of English among undergraduate students in academic writing, as opposed to quantifying language usage by means of tests or scores (Dörnyei, 2007). Qualitative research enables the researcher to concentrate on patterns, meanings and repeated aspects in written texts, which is appropriate in studies that are based on World Englishes (Creswell, 2014; Schneider, 2007).

It employed a small-scale case study design which was utilized to investigate the use of language in a particular institutional context. Creswell (2014) believes that case studies are effective when the researcher wants to understand a phenomenon in the context of its real-life. The phenomenon on which the investigation is conducted is the role of Pakistani English on undergraduate academic writing in the current study (Yin, 2018).

3.2 Research Context and Participants

The research was carried out at Kohat University of Science & Technology (KUST) Kohat,

which is a public sector university where English is studied as a major discipline at the undergraduate level. The institution offers a typical academic environment where English is used as a subject as well as a medium of academic assessment (Mahboob, 2015). Students undergoing the BS English program were the participants who were undergraduate students. The number of students sampled was thirty using convenience sampling, which is commonly used in small-scale educational research (Dörnyei, 2007). Every one of them had finished at least four semesters of academic training and had typical experience with writing assignments, exams and brief academic essays in English.

Majority of the participants had their first language as Urdu or a regional language like Pashto or Hindko, and English was spoken in formal academic settings. This language background prequalified them to be useful subjects for investigating the interaction of local languages and the English language in academic writing context (Rahman, 2005).

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Two primary data collection methods were utilized by the researchers: written academic materials and a short questionnaire (Creswell, 2014).

The main data were written assignments by the students who were using them as a part of their normal coursework. These were short essays and descriptive responses that were written in academic conditions. The students were requested to present recent writing samples because it was necessary to be sure that the data would be reflective of the use of language as at present (Hyland, 2006).

Besides the writing samples, a short survey was conducted in order to acquire background data and the perception of the students regarding their English usage. The questionnaire contained straightforward questions concerning the language background, exposure to various forms of English and attitudes towards academic writing rules (Dörnyei, 2007). The questionnaire was not created to be analyzed statistically but rather to gain contextual insight into the information that was written.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the writing samples collected. The approach requires meticulous texts reading to detect any recurring linguistic patterns and meaningful aspects (Miles et al., 2014). The writing samples were read several times to be familiar with the data.

In the course of analysis, the use of lexical choices, the structure of the sentence, grammatical

patterns, and pragmatic expressions were paid attention to. Information that was found repeatedly in several texts was identified and put in larger categories (Schneider, 2007). These items were then construed in terms of literature available on Pakistani English and World Englishes (Baumgardner, 1993; Rahman, 2005).

The analysis was not about the number of errors and was aimed at determining patterns that depict localized language use. This methodology is similar to the principle of the World Englishes paradigm in that it is descriptive and interpretive instead of prescriptive (Bolton, 2006).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The principles of ethics were taken into consideration during the study. There was voluntary participation and the students were aware of the intention of the research. Data collection was done with written consent (Creswell, 2014).

In order to maintain the confidentiality, the names of the students were not applied in the analysis. All samples of writing were kept and all the participants were given a code number. The information was not disclosed in any other way other than the research process (Israel & Hay, 2006).

3.6 Limitations of the Study

Throughout the research, similar to the majority of small-scale qualitative research, it has some limitations (Dörnyei, 2007). The sample used was also very small; it comprised only one institutions and this does not imply that the results would be applicable to all undergraduate students in Pakistan. The research also used written results and did not consider spoken language that would be helpful to understand the use of language further (Yin, 2018). Despite these shortcomings, the research provides significant information on actual academic writing practices, and helps to gain a more enhanced insight into the World Englishes in a local academic setting (Schneider, 2007).

4. Analysis and Findings

The data analysis was aimed at finding common linguistic patterns in academic writing of undergraduate students. The texts were not viewed as a set of isolated errors and as a collection of random mistakes, instead, they were analyzed as products of linguistic meaning influenced by the socio cultural and sociolinguistic environment of the students, which aligns with the descriptive orientation of World Englishes research (Kachru, 1985; Schneider, 2007). The writing samples have been read meticulously to note the way English was applied at the

lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic levels.

The results described in following section were obtained progressively after making recurring interactions with the data, a practice common in qualitative content analysis (Miles et al., 2014). Those patterns that came out in more than one text were considered significant and were grouped under broader categories. These classifications represent some of the general characteristics that are related to Pakistani English as reported in previous research (Rahman, 1990; Mahboob, 2003).

4.1 Lexical Choices and Localized Vocabulary

A visible aspect of most of the writing samples was the application of vocabulary that portrays local use of English in Pakistan, which has been documented as a salient feature of Outer Circle Englishes (Baumgardner, 1993; Kachru, 1985). Words and phrases that are commonly used in the local language(s) are often used by the students and they might not be popular in inner circle versions of English.

For example,, some students tend to use expressions and words like *time pass* to mean leisure and *backbencher* to mean less serious students. These expressions have been stated confidently and without clarification implying that students view them as being normal expressions in the English language. This has been noted earlier in the description of Pakistani English wherein local usage gets normalized at the speech community level (Baumgardner, 1993). Moreover, other students referred to kinship terms like *cousin brother* or *cousin sister*. Although these words might seem redundant, as understood in Britain or America norms of usage, the words are culturally clear in South Asian society, where kinship distinctions are socially significant (Rahman, 2005). In the data, such terms were clearly communicative in nature and will not lead to confusion.

Such lexical selections show that students turn to a localized form of English that they all share and which they use successfully in both their academic and social context.

4.2 Grammatical Patterns Influenced by Local Languages

Another notable trend in the data is associated with grammatical structure, especially the use of verbs and construction of sentences. Some of the students came up with sentences that were Urdu-like in configuration and structure as opposed to the norms of the English language, a phenomenon commonly discussed under language transfer (Odlin, 1989).

Typical examples of sentences like: He did not went to class yesterday or She was talked about the subject in detail were found in several writing samples. These constructions imply

the confusion of English verb forms and local language structures. These patterns do not occur as one would expect random errors but they seem structured and consistent as observed in the academic writing tasks of various students, suggesting systematic transfer rather than careless mistakes (Ellis, 1997).

The use of articles was also another challenge to many participants. Such sentences as *English is important language in Pakistan* or *Teacher gave us assignment* were found very frequent in the writing tasks by undergraduate students. Other comparable results have been documented in research on second language writing whereby the systems of writing articles vary considerably between English language and the first language of learners (Ellis, 1997). Although such grammatical situations are frequently rectified in an academic assessment, the prevalence and regularity of their occurrence point to the fact that they are not caused by an individual carelessness, but by shared linguistic habits, rooted in multilingual competence (Canagarajah, 2013).

4.3 Sentence Structure and Stylistic Preferences

The analysis also revealed distinctive sentence patterns that reflect local stylistic preferences. It was found that many students preferred a longer sentence with the help of the coordinating conjunctions like *and* or *because*, a feature also observed in South Asian English discourse styles (Schneider, 2007). This led to an informal appearance of writing according to the conventional academic standards, and yet logical.

For instance, one student wrote: *English is quite substantial to our future and it is spoken everywhere and when we know English well then, we can get good employment.*

The above sentence pattern resembles the patterns of speech used in Urdu and Pashto. It focuses on continuity of thought and not on syntactic compactness. These trends indicate that the students carry over oral narrative succession into the written academic backgrounds (Hyland, 2006). Though such a style cannot be relevant to the conventional principles of writing scholarly articles, it shows that students are trying to convey the complicated concepts through the well-known forms.

4.4 Pragmatic Features and Cultural Politeness

Pragmatic characteristics of politeness and respect also occurred in the writing samples of students in the two institutions. Some of the students employed phrases that show culturally appropriate norms of politeness especially when writing formally or in argumentative style, reflecting sociocultural pragmatics rather than linguistic deficiency (Jenkins, 2009).

The presence of certain formulaic or fixed expressions like *It is humbly requested, with due respect or kindly consider* were seen in academic essays by different participants. Such expressions are common in formal and official communication in Pakistan.

From a World Englishes perspective, such pragmatic choices are not accidental. They show how cultural values shape language use even in scholarly writing. According to Jenkins (2009), pragmatic norms are usually different in various varieties of the English language and that this difference should be interpreted and understood correctly instead of being evaluated as stigmatized, lapse, errors or mistakes or imperfect learning.

4.5 Students' Awareness of Language Variation

Questionnaire responses were an extra source of information about the awareness of the students regarding their language use. Majority of the students admitted that they think in Urdu or any other regional language and only write in English, a process consistent with bilingual composing practices (Canagarajah, 2013). Some students also indicated that they know that their English is not identical to the native English, yet they did not know how they could modify their writing without making it less clear.

Interestingly, most of the participants said that they were confused on the kind of English they need to follow. Such uncertainty has also been noted in earlier research on English in Pakistani educational contexts (Mahboob, 2003). Although teachers were mostly presuming the British or American standards, students claimed to have experienced mixed models in text books, media, and in the classroom. Such ambiguity seems to bring about the fusion of local and standard elements in their writing.

4.6 Variation across Individual Writing Samples

Though a few universal patterns have been identified in the data, the analyses showed also the differences in individual students. This supports the argument that Pakistani English exists along a continuum rather than as a fixed variety (Schneider, 2007). Some participants were found more in control of conventional academic forms whereas others had stronger reliance on localized varieties of English. This difference implies that Pakistani English used in academic writing is not a fixed and constant phenomenon but is found in a continuum.

Some students showed knowledge on the usage of standard verb forms and sentence structure, but they still applied localized terms. To illustrate with an example a student wrote: *English is a global language and it plays an important role in our education system, but students also use local expressions in daily writing.*

In this case, the sentence arrangement is quite similar to ordinary written English, whereas the term education system is used as one of the popular phrases of Pakistani academic writing. The given example demonstrates that localized use does not always mean low proficiency but instead selective adaptation.

On the contrary, other students had a stronger dependency on the first-language structures, especially in the complex sentences. For example, a student structure such as, *When we study English then our confidence is improved and it gives us chance to communicate with others* illustrates a clear transfer of Urdu sentence rhythm into English. The above structure is a typical example of a definite transfer of Urdu sentence rhythm into English. Its structure is still comprehensible and communicative, although it deviates off of traditional academic wording. These differences and variations bring out the influence of individual personal exposure, training, instruction and practice in shaping and determining writing styles.

4.7 Functional Effectiveness of Localized Features

An important observation and noteworthy finding emerging from the data is that numerous localized features and characteristics did not hinder meaning. Generally, the desired and intended message was always clear despite grammatical or stylistic deviation from standard norms (Kachru, 1985; Jenkins, 2009). This functional effectiveness and practical viability of the local and regional linguistics features holds great importance when approached and analysed according to the World Englishes perspective.

For example, the frequent occurrence of expressions and phrases such as, *English gives us confidence* or *teachers give us a sense of motivation* has meaningful implications. No doubt that such phrasing and expressions are stylistically simplified, yet it communicates the intended meaning and message very clearly and efficiently. The emphasis in these sentences lies more on meaning than on formal accuracy and precision.

Likewise, politeness indicators like *kindly* or *with respect* were frequently employed in academic settings where native-speaker-norms may tend to avoid such phrasing and expressions. Nevertheless, these indicators did not undermine the argument, but it showed academic behavior befitting the localized culture and norms of interaction and interpretations. This substantiates previous assertions by other researchers in the World Englishes field like (Kachru, 1985; Jenkins, 2009) who believe that communicative success cannot be measured only against native norms; instead, it should be evaluated more in terms of the local

sociolinguistic scenario.

4.8 Relationship between Instruction and Writing Practices

The effect of classroom instruction on the writing habits of students is also another significant area that emerges from the analysis. Several questionnaire responses indicated that students are taught English through mixed models. While grammar rules tend to be introduced under the British rules and norms, classroom interaction, communication and feedback tend to allow local usage.

This integration seems to lead to hybrid forms of writing. Students are trying to adhere to the norms of the academic rules and at the same time, use the well-known linguistic patterns. Consequently, their writing reflects more of negotiation rather than inconsistency.. This observation indicates that students are not unaware about the standard British English norms, instead, they work in a space where multiple norms coexist. This kind of negotiation is a defining characteristic of English use in Outer Circle contexts and should be appreciated rather than rejected (Kachru, 1985; Schneider, 2007).

4.9 Summary of Key Findings

The discussion indicates that the academic writing of undergraduate students is influenced by both local influence, exposure to education and also cultural norms. The localized vocabulary, the Urdu-affected grammatical patterns (so-called Urduisation, as defined by Bumgardner, 1993), the prolonged sentence structures, and the culturally-based politeness strategies are the most widespread characteristics of Pakistani undergraduate students' academic writing repertoire. Such findings and results confirm the opinion that Pakistani English is a meaningful and systematic variety rather than a set of random errors.. Although certain aspects might be adjusted to the international academic setting, they indicate linguistic identity of students and their communicative competence in their local community.

5. Discussion

This part of the paper explains the above findings in the context of the current research and theoretical approaches. The study aimed to analyze the concept of undergraduate academic writing in the perspective of World Englishes, with a focus on the impact of Pakistani English (Bolton, 2006; Schneider, 2007). The results indicate that systematic linguistic patterns of writing among Pakistani undergraduate students can be characterized as influenced by local languages, education, and cultural patterns rather than spontaneous or sloppy language usage (Mahboob, 2015; Mukherjee & Gries, 2009).

A key finding is that the linguistic characteristics obtained in the data are in line with the description of the Pakistani English in the previous literature. Such features as the use of localized vocabulary, long and complex sentence construction, and culturally informed politeness strategies can be considered as the stable feature of the English language in Pakistan as stated by Rahman (1990) and Baumgardner (1993) and later confirmed in empirical studies (Mahboob, 2003; Schneider, 2014). This further adds to the claim that Pakistani English is a functional and recognisable variety with its own sociolinguistic features and in its own sociolinguistic environment (Bolton & Kachru, 2006).

In terms of World Englishes, the given findings support Kachru's (1985) statement that Outer Circle varieties create their own norms due to the use in the institutional sphere like the sphere of education, administration, judiciary and elite circle. The writing of the students shows that English in Pakistan is not only taught, but also adapted. Although students focus on the desire to conform to standard academic practices, their writing inevitably uses local linguistic resources, a pattern also observed in other Outer Circle educational contexts (Kirkpatrick, 2007; Jenkins, 2015). This adaptation must not be considered as the failure to comply with native-speaker norms only but rather one of the demonstrations of the local development of norms (Canagarajah, 2013).

The results also bring out first-language influence in developing academic writing. The findings are in line with the study by Ellis (1997), which focuses on language transfer since it reveals that the structure of sentences and grammatical decisions are affected by Urdu and the local languages. Similar transfer patterns have been reported in recent studies on South Asian English academic writing (Hyland & Jiang, 2017; Karim & Haq, 2014). Nevertheless, instead of causing the communication breakdown, these influences tend to co-exist with intelligibility and coherence. This underpins the opinion that the multilingual writers employ all resources at their disposal in the production of complex texts in a strategic manner (Canagarajah, 2013).

A second significant concern that appears to arise out of the issue at hand, as of now, is the conflict between international and global academic standard and the identity of the local language variety. Although the students are tested on the basis of British or American standards, their real exposure to the English language is mixed, and it is provided by the local teachers, textbooks, and media (Mahboob & Lin, 2016). This forms an academic space that is a hybrid between two or more norms taking effect at the same time. According to Jenkins

(2009), this kind of hybridity is typical of English, which is used in the global context and must be taken into account in pedagogy (Jenkins, 2015).

The research also brings out concerns regarding the evaluation of academic writing in the Outer Circle situations. When localized features are always seen as mistakes without regard to the sociolinguistic background, students develop a feeling of doubt and lack of confidence, an issue also highlighted in recent English-medium instruction research (De Costa, Green-Eneix, & Li, 2020). A World Englishes-informed approach does not oppose mainstream academic norms but promotes the consideration of variation and context-sensitive evaluation (Sifakis & Tsantila, 2019).

Generally speaking, the discussion indicates that undergraduate academic writing in Pakistan is characterized by an ongoing negotiation between the world standards and local ones. To be able to appreciate this negotiation allows for a more realistic and inclusive approach to English in the context of higher education in Pakistan (Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017).

6. Implications

6.1 Pedagogical Implications

The above research findings imply that in multilingual settings like that of Pakistan, academic writing can be taught in a number of ways (Hyland & Jiang, 2017; Canagarajah, 2013). Among the implications is the necessity of creating increased awareness among teachers about the fact of the local varieties of the English language and their legitimacy (Mahboob, 2015; Kirkpatrick, 2007). Once teachers realize that most aspects of writing in students are not caused by the lack of proficiency per se, but are rather a result of Pakistani English, feedback may be more prompting and encouraging (Bolton, 2006).

This does not imply that the standard academic conventions are to be disregarded. Rather, students can be helped to realize the distinction between local adoption and globally anticipated standards of academic performance (Jenkins, 2009; De Costa et al., 2020). Such awareness would assist the students to make wise linguistic decisions based on the audience and purpose. The moderate approach could help to reduce the confusion and anxiety of the students who tend to be unclear of which model of English they have to adhere to (Hyland, 2006).

Moreover, the inclusion of simple ideas about World Englishes in undergraduate programs can assist students in gaining a better idea of the linguistic diversity (Sifakis & Tsantila,

2019). Even their minimal exposure to such concepts can prompt learners to think of their use of English with more confidence while making an attempt to achieve clarity and accuracy in writing for academic purposes (Canagarajah, 2013).

6.2 Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, this research study contributes to the World Englishes model by giving empirical data in the form of real undergraduate writing (Bolton & Kachru, 2006). The data demonstrates that the localized features of English can work constructively in the academic setting and makes the point that English variation is systematic and sociolinguistically grounded (Schneider, 2014; Mahboob, 2015).

The results also add to the debates concerning norm development within the Outer Circle contexts. The existence of the regular linguistic patterns implies that the variety of Pakistani English is still developing as a part of everyday academic speech (Kachru, 1985; Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017). This is in line with previous assertions that the norms in these situations are formed not by external standards but by repeated institutional practice (Schneider, 2007).

Moreover, the study emphasizes the necessity to study written academic discourse in reference to World Englishes (Hyland & Jiang, 2017; Jenkins, 2015). Although spoken varieties have been the focus of many studies, written academic texts still constitute a significant field of research when it comes to understanding the interaction of global and local norms. This work thus justifies the demand to expand the scope of academic writing in the research of World Englishes (Canagarajah, 2013; Mahboob & Lin, 2016).

7. Conclusion

This paper set out to explore academic writing of Pakistani university students at the undergraduate level employing the framework of the World Englishes with a particular reference to the influence of local variety of Pakistani English (Penglish) (Mahboob, 2015; Canagarajah, 2013). The comparison revealed that the written texts of students had repetitive language aspects which are influenced by the local languages, practices in education, and the cultural standards. These aspects turned out to be systemic as opposed to random and in most instances they did not impede communication.

The results indicate that undergraduate Pakistani writers exist in a multilingual system of academic space where both the competing forces of international and global English standards and native localized linguistic features and traditions are at odds yet coexist. These

norms seem to be continually negotiated by the students in their efforts to conform to the institutional demands and use familiar language structures. It is a negotiation type representative of the larger sociolinguistic context of the use of English in Outer Circle situations as has already been proposed by Kachru (1993) and Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat (2017).

Notably, the research supports the perspective that non-conformance with native-speaker norms should not be viewed as something inadequate in any case (Bolton & Kachru, 2006; Jenkins, 2015). Using a World Englishes point of view, it is possible to interpret numerous features in the data as localised adaptations as opposed to a set of random errors (Schneider, 2007; Mahboob & Lin, 2016). It is possible that by identifying this difference, more inclusive and realistic methods of academic writing teaching and assessment can be developed (Hyland & Jiang, 2017; Sifakis & Tsantila, 2019).

Although it has made some contributions, the study has some limitations. The sample size of the undergraduate students taken was also very small and was limited to one institutional setting. Subsequently, the results cannot be inferred to the rest of Pakistani universities. Moreover, the analysis was done on written academic texts, excluding the area of spoken academic discourse and the teacher views. The limitations can be managed by future research by analyzing a broader subset of institutions, as well as providing comparative data of other Outer Circle settings (Kirkpatrick, 2007; Schneider, 2014). The longitudinal studies might also be interested in studying how the academic writing of students evolves with time as they are exposed more to the conventional standards of academic writing (De Costa et al., 2020). This research would also contribute to the knowledge about English variation in higher education.

In brief, the current study adds to the current debates in the field of World Englishes, by presenting the significance of analyzing academic writing contextually. It restates the necessity to understand the use of English in higher education as being dynamic, negotiated and shaped by local realities rather than being fixed and uniform (Kachru, 1993; Kirkpatrick & Liddicoat, 2017).

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