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**The Impact of Globalization on English Language use and
English Varieties: A Qualitative Study of Pakistani University
Students**



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Abstract

World these days has become a global village and hence, English language has spread throughout the world, mainly due to the globalization, as people from different regions of the world are connected with each other through various social platforms. Unlike the use of English in the same manner, people at various localities have begun to speak their localized English. This study focuses on an examination of the influence of the century of globalization on English language, particularly in terms of World Englishes. Moreover, in this study, it was investigated how the university students are using English and what are their perspectives towards the use of English in Pakistan. We interviewed ten university students, asked them questions regarding their use of English and recorded their answers. What we discovered is that globalization leads people to the desire of using English. It additionally prompts them to blend English and their local languages. Internet and social media are very important for developing avenues of usage for the English language. We pointed out that globalization not only spread English, but it also changed it, mixed it with the language and cultures of other regions. English language is evolving due to its influence and dominance around the world. It is a language change taking place all across the globe even in Pakistan, where people speak their own dialects in English. It is globalization that is driving people to choose English. Due to this approach towards English language, it has become more popular and more diverse and that is what we see when we look at how people in Pakistan use the English language.

INTRODUCTION

English is a language that people around the world use and this is because of the powerful past of the English people. English has also gained power because of the politics and economy of the English people. Nowadays, the whole world has become a global village and people are connected so English is used more and more for business, education and media. These days, English is used for talking to each other on the internet (Crystal, 2003). So now, English has become a language that people from different countries use in different domains to communicate with each other.

Moreover, even though English is used everywhere, it does not mean that everyone speaks it in the same way. Actually different regions have their own way of speaking English, which is shaped by their own culture and language. This is called

World Englishes, which's an idea that says all the different types of Englishes are correct with respect to their use in a specific domain (Kachru 1992).

Rahman (1990) has stated that in a country like Pakistan, English is very important for education, government and jobs. Currently, the local language Urdu is also influencing English language and that is why Pakistani English is a bit different. With the advent of internet and social media, English is changing even more. This study is about how the world being connected is changing the way English is used and how it is different in different regions. It looked at how university students use English and what they think about it. The study has focused on different Englishes, how globalization is affecting English, how English is used by university students and what are their views about English.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To examine the role of globalization in spreading English
- To identify features of English used by Pakistani students
- To explore the influence of digital media on English usage
- To analyze attitudes toward different English varieties

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does globalization influence English usage among university students?
2. What varieties of English are commonly used?
3. What role does social media play in shaping English?
4. What are students' attitudes toward local and standard English?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many languages are popular and one of them that can be said as one of the adopted languages is the English language which got popular with globalization. As migration, information and technology flows and trade increase among nations and the status of English as a world language has been further underpinned. According to Crystal (2003), the only reason why English is a world language is due to its use as lingua franca in education, business, science, technology, media and international relations. With the globalization of countries, English is reaching beyond its native speaking communities and becoming an essential means of global communication.

English has spread out across the world, but it hasn't remained as one language. It has, instead, grown into numerous regional varieties inspired by the native languages, histories and cultures of specific regions. This can be understood in the

light of the concept of World Englishes as proposed by Kachru (1992) as it implies that English belongs to millions of second language and foreign language learners and users of English as well. As seen in Kachru's three-circle theory of English, the Inner circle, Outer circle and Expanding circle, English serve different functions in various parts of the world. Pakistan falls within the Outer Circle (OC), where English has an important institutional function and has distinct language features. World Englishes contests the notion that British and American English are the only Englishes which are acceptable. Jenkins (2009) claims that the different varieties should be respected as the act of communication is more important than emulating the models of native-speakers. Local varieties are gaining more recognition as the use of English has been increasing among multilingual speakers. This view helps to recognise diversity in language and culture to be able to accommodate English in these setting—a flexible English.

In Pakistan, English holds a special status in academia, government, legal affairs, the media and the professional world. It is also co-equal with Urdu and some provincial languages including Pashto, Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi and Saraiki. It is a multilingual setting, which has resulted in creation of peculiar vocabulary, pronunciation, expressions and grammatical patterns in the English used in Pakistan. Rahman (1990) refers to the existence of a separate variety of Pakistani English which manifests the influence of languages and cultural practices of the area. A few commonly used expressions by the speakers of Pakistanis are the results of indigenization when English comes in contact with indigenous languages. This demonstrates the way English is able to adapt to its local context.

Globalisation also, and technological development and digital communication, have been affecting these linguistic changes, giving credibility to the idea that these changes have been accelerated. Every day social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and other online platforms expose the users to different varieties of English. Digital communication is a major determinant of sociolinguistic change as it also increases contact between individuals holding different languages (Androutsopoulos 2014). In this way, users learn new words, phrases, acronyms and ways of communicating, and they incorporate English with their native languages.

Similarly, Tagg (2015) argues that digital media promotes informal communication and linguistic creativity. Conversations on the internet often contain abbreviations,

simplified grammar, emojis, code-switching and mixing of languages. They are features which reflect changing patterns of English use, especially among young people who spend a lot of time on digital platforms. Instead of blunting the language, these changes show the flexibility of English as it adapts to new modes of communication.

One of the most striking effects of globalisation has been the increased use of language mixing and code switching. In multilingual settings such as Pakistan, speakers switch back and forth between English and Urdu or other regional languages during the course of everyday conversations. This practice reflects the multilingual competence of speakers and their ability to communicate in different social contexts. University students have become especially used to English, since they use English in academic settings but informally speak their native languages.

Previous research has also investigated people's attitudes towards varieties of English. Many countries use localised varieties of English, but British and American English are often considered more prestigious and more correct. Jenkins (2009) argues that this preference is mainly a consequence of traditional language teaching practices that continue to privilege native speaker norms. Therefore, many learners use their local variety for everyday communication, yet they perceive native varieties to be superior. This disparity between language use and language attitudes is still an issue in World Englishes research.

It is crystal clear from the current literature that globalisation has turned English into a global language while at the same time allowing for the emergence of different varieties of English. Studies show that the use of English is subject to change, influenced by digital media, multilingual environments and local cultures. However, there is limited qualitative research on how these changes are experienced in the daily lives of Pakistani university students. There is a distinct need to understand the impact of globalisation on their use of English, their awareness of Pakistani English, the role of social media in shaping their language practices and their attitudes towards local and standard varieties of English.

The current study addresses this gap by qualitatively exploring the experiences and perceptions of Pakistani university students through interviews. It explores the effects of globalisation on their English language usage, the role of digital media in their communication, their level of code-switching and use of localised features, and their attitude towards different varieties of English. In this way, the study contributes

to understanding the ongoing development of English in Pakistan within the framework of globalisation.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopts a qualitative approach to explore participants' experiences and perceptions in depth.

PARTICIPANTS

The study includes 10 university students from different academic disciplines. Participants were selected to represent diverse linguistic and social backgrounds.

DATA COLLECTION

Semi structured interviews were used in data collection. This approach enables participants to freely share their opinions and at the same time keep in mind the research topic.

DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis described by Braun & Clarke (2006) was used to analyze the data. Responses were grouped under themes, identified by patterns.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

To explore the influence of globalisation on the practices, attitudes and perceptions of the university students about English language, the interview data were analysed with the thematic analysis. The results indicate that globalisation leads to English being used as a social, cultural and identity resource and not merely as outcome of language learning. From the data, the themes that emerged suggest students' interest in English is shaped by requirements and needs of education, employment opportunities, the use of digital communication platforms, and opportunities for contact with global cultures. The findings show that there was no longer a separation of English from the formal academic arena among the University students. Instead, it has been caught up in everyday communicative activities in which students make their way between global norms and local identities. Under the analysis nine major themes emerged reflecting the changes in the role of English in the context of globalization.

ENGLISH AS A TOOL FOR GLOBAL CONNECTIVITY

The results indicate that in general, students have positive attitudes about English as a means of communication in the world, in education and professional mobility. As showed in the participants' responses, English has been endowed with practical values, which surpass traditional English as a school subject. The knowledge, job

opportunities, and access to global networks that one has depends on their English language skills.

For instance one participant uttered "For example,

"English is an important language because a lot of my textbooks are in English so for my education, English is very necessary. Furthermore, it helps me what is going on throughout the world."

Another participant explained:

"It is important to learn English, if we wish to work in other countries."

The responses reveal that students perceived English as a form of language that opens up opportunities for greater access to other languages, society and economics. English has been given a great value as a result of globalization, which makes English as a common means of communication among people with different language backgrounds. This corroborates Crystal's (2003) point that the English has evolved into a world language through its use for international communication.

The results, however, also indicate that students' motivation in the learning of English has been instrumental and not purely cultural. They want to learn English for future work, academic achievement and world travelling. So, globalisation has transformed English from a subject of study to one of the indispensable tools for one to function in the modern world.

FREQUENT CODE-SWITCHING AND LANGUAGE MIXING

The area of code switching from English to Urdu or from Urdu to English in students' daily interaction is one of the significant findings of the study. The problem that participants encountered was that they put in English words and expressions naturally when talking to other Urdu speakers, as opposed to planning to do so.

One participant stated:

I converse with my friends in Urdu but I put in words without thinking.

Another participant explained:

"Sometimes I mix the sentences half urdu, half english."

It is revealed from these examples that the students are not replacing Urdu by English but they are creating the hybrid practices of communication in both languages, which plays different social roles. Modern concepts, technological terms, concepts, or social identities are often identifiable in English expressions.

The pattern does not fit into the usual theory of separate systems of languages. Rather, the results indicate that translanguaging can occur, which involves bilingual speakers'

ability to communicate using their entire language system. Globalisation has placed more exposure to English so that it has been integrated in the local communication practices as opposed to being a foreign language which is used in formal communication.

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS

The results show that one of the factors which most strongly affects students' use of English is social media. Platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube were identified as key platforms that participants received in English language.

One participant stated:

“My greatest source of new words and phrases is social media such as videos and posts and the comments.”

Another participant mentioned:

On WhatsApp, we do not always use formal English, we use shortened words and informal expressions such as, we use ‘u’ for ‘you’ and other informal English.

These responses make it clear that the digital platforms serve as informal language learning spaces, in which students pick up new words, phrases and modes of expression. There is an opportunity to learn about different varieties of English from other parts of the world when interacting online, which is not offered in the classroom. The results indicate that globalization by means of digital communication caused the speed-up of linguistic change by the formation of newly emerging spaces of ‘fast’ English. Learners not only receive/consume global-English, but they also enjoy active participation in which they modify and re-shape English in the light of local-communication demands. This corroborates Tagg's (2015) claim that digital communication leads to novel forms of language variation and informal uses of language.

INFORMALIZATION OF ENGLISH

From the data, it can be seen that the most influence in the shift is the use of more informal language, especially in digital media. Participants reported that internet communication emphasizes quickness, ease, and feelings as opposed to excellence in grammar.

One participant stated:

In chatting, I don't really think of grammar, I just want to get my point across.”

This indicates that globalisation and digital communication have had an impact on students' concept of effective language. When it comes to communication in virtual

spaces, it's not important to follow all the grammatical rules, it's important to be efficient and to understand each other.

The results suggest that English is becoming looser and more flexible. Students actively develop short forms, lexicoids and new communicative patterns. Thus, globalization is not only impacting the language students have, but also their attitudes towards language appropriateness in diverse settings.

ATTITUDES TOWARD STANDARD AND LOCAL ENGLISH

The results indicate that the actual language use of the students and their beliefs regarding the correctness of English language are interwoven. Many students who use localised forms of English tend to still view “good English” as a British or American version of the language.

One participant stated:

“British English is more proper and professional I think.”

Another participant explained:

“Both we and our English is okay, but it is not like the English used by native speakers.”

In this way, the resocialization of these responses illustrates the ongoing impact of the native-speaker ideology of English, which equates English varieties from countries like Britain and America with superiority. This results in a paradox – that students always use versions of English that are local to them but they measure their own English and value it against criteria set by people outside of the country.

The results confirm that Jenkins (2009) has claimed that there is tension between ownership of global English and traditional conceptions of correctness among L2 English Learners. Despite the increased spread of English through globalization processes, native-speaker attitudes to language legitimacy continue to shape attitudes.

AWARENESS OF PAKISTANI ENGLISH

Results reveal a range of awareness on the different levels of Pakistani English as an independent variety. Some of them realized that Pakistani English possesses its own traits, whereas others saw English as one common language.

One participant stated:

Yes, we got a certain Englishness to ourselves because we speak English different than British people.”

But another gauger said:

When it comes to Pakistani English, I didn't think about it whatsoever; in my mind, English is just the one English.

The difference shows that students' awareness of world Englishes is still in a developmental process. Although students are provided with local English practices, few is able to gain knowledge of the development of different forms of English in the world.

The results indicate that Pakistani education by English language might still be focussed on standardizing model, ignoring local varieties as valid mode of communication.

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF PAKISTANI ENGLISH

The analysis shows that there were instances in which Urdu language system affected the Pakistani English and English sentences were changed for Urdu one by employing Urdu language system and some examples of such English sentences are as follows:

“Open” the light (rather than “Turn on” the light)

Directive expression “Do one thing”

Translation of Urdu sentence patterns directly.

The following are examples that illustrate the process of nativisation whereby English is modified by the linguistic and cultural surrounding of its speakers. These are not errors, but evidence of the normal process in the development of a localized variety of English.

The study's result corroborates the idea of Rahman (1990) that through the process of interaction with the local languages English had formed its unique linguistic patterns in Pakistan.

ENGLISH AND SOCIAL IDENTITY

Results of the findings suggest that English serves as a social marker and identity of social standing. The association of the participants was between learning English and level of education, intelligence, and social prestige.

One participant stated:

“Individuals who are able to speak fluent English would be taken as educative.”

Another added:

English is a reflection of one's status in the society.

The answers provide evidence that English has semantics outside of the communicative realm. English in the Pakistani context can symbolize modernity or

success in the job market or even a higher position in the society. The advent of globalization has reinforced the relationship of English to international opportunities and economic improvement.

Thus, the enjoyment of mastery of the English language becomes a social resource which can shape the social reception of the individual who speaks it.

GLOBAL EXPOSURE AND ACCENT INFLUENCE

The results also indicate that globalization affects students' preference of pronunciation and accent. The students said that they learned the pronunciation from films, YouTube videos, and foreign media.

One participant explained:

“For me I just try to say what I hear in movies or videos on YouTube.”

This indicates that globally experienced media provide linguistic models which can be extra models for students beside from the traditional model in class. Their accents, pronunciation options are molded by continuous contact with speakers of Global Englishes.

The results show that globalisation has an impact on more than one level of language use, both vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation and the formation of identities.

DISCUSSION

The results show that globalization has seriously changed the role of English for university students. English no longer needs to be seen as a foreign language learned for academic ends; it is now also regarded as a social tool that is helpful for communication, identity-formation and interconnectivity with foreign networks.

The extent of code-switching and language mixing shows that the English language is being integrated with local languages, and not replacing them. Students learn to communicate meanings that are relevant to their social realities and global connections, in both English and Urdu.

In addition, the digital platforms have facilitated linguistic changes by presenting students with various types of English and informal modes of communication. In an era of social media, new contexts have arisen where students actively engage in the process of negotiated communication between global aspects in the use of English and local aspects in the languages that students cultivate.

Overall, the results indicate that globalization has resulted in a more flexible and hybrid use of English. Students still value the traditional types of English like British

and American but their daily use of language points to the evolution of English in the form of localized English, especially Pakistani English. This is a part of the general evolution of World Englishes (WE) and the view of English as an evolving language of the world.

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