

UNDERSTANDING PAKISTAN

1

The Future of English in Pakistan
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THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH IN PAKISTAN

Introduction

This paper aims to evaluate the future of English in Pakistan and to propose directions for a future language in education policy. In order to do this, we will first look at the political history of English in Pakistan and then look at the results of a language attitude study. The discussion will then be based on the findings of these two studies.

Historical Overview

English Language in British India from 1835 to 1947

The British came to India to conquer and rule it. However, there were differences in the way that the officials and advisors to the government thought it should be governed. During the early British period, there were two major schools of thought: the Orientalists and the Anglicists. One school of thought, the Orientalists, appreciated the past greatness of the natives and knew that there was much to learn from the Indians. They believed that Indian history, languages, religions, and traditions needed to be studied and that Indians should be ruled in accordance with their own traditions and culture. The Orientalists established schools to study the vernacular and classical languages of the region and maintained the established norms of the society. Persian, the official language of the Mogul Empire, was maintained. In contrast to the Orientalists, Anglicists believed in the 'supremacy of English and Western culture' and held 'oriental learning in contempt' (Rahman, 1996). The Anglicists felt that it was their duty to civilise the native Indians by introducing Christianity and other English values and traditions. Introduction of the English language and English traditions was also considered to be of economic value to Britain. The Anglicists wanted to promote English by teaching European 'literature and science through the medium of the English language' (Lord Bentinck, 1835, in Spear, 1965: 127).

After an initial reign of power, the Orientalists lost their control and the Anglicists took over. The significance of 1835 is in this symbolic victory of the Anglicists over the Orientalists. Macaulay's Minute of February 2 of that year was the argument that was approved by the Governor-General of India, Lord Bentinck. The purpose of Macaulay's Minute was to create 'a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste and character, in morals and in intellect' (Curtin, 1971). On 7 March 1835, Lord Bentinck (Rahman, 1996: 34) announced that:

The great object of the British government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone.

This change from an Orientalist to an Anglicist viewpoint did not occur without strong criticism from the Orientalists. Mackenzie predicted that such policies would antagonise the Indians and might lead to problems (Basu, 1952); however, his views were ignored.¹ Although the Orientalists strongly opposed this step, they had lost their influence and their views were not taken into consideration. Macaulay recommended that publication of books in Arabic and Sanskrit should be stopped. A number of people lost their jobs and financial security as a result of this policy. This Anglicist philosophy led to the establishment of English medium education in British India. And according to the *Dictionary of Languages* edited by Dalley (1998):

With the establishment of the first university...English for all practical purposes became an Indian language' (S. Mathi). By the time British rule in India had flourished and declined, to end with independence in 1947, the English language was so solidly entrenched in education and in communication among speakers of the various indigenous languages that it was impossible to do without it. Its constitutional position has varied but English remains, in practice an essential lingua franca...

Spring (1998) has elaborated the economic reasons behind the shift in language policies in the British government.² According to Spring, the colonisation was grounded in a combination of psychological motives that included:

... a desire for wealth, civilizing less-than-human barbarians, and converting pagans to Christianity. What better situation could there be than to make money and do good at the same time...Europeans could return with wealth while feeling bathed in the glory of God and with the knowledge that the uncivilised were being civilised. (p. 32)

Spring further states that in the early days of colonisation, the colonisers were engaged in exporting goods from the conquered lands to their home countries, and later, with industrialisation, to finding new markets for their produced goods. The industrial revolution in the West influenced a change in the administrative and educational policies in the colonies as well. To create a market for European

¹ It can be argued that the adoption of Anglicist policies was one of the central factors that led to the great 1857 uprising in which the Indians fought the British army. The British won this war (which is called the 'War of Independence' by South Asians, and the 'Mutiny of 1857' by the British) and dethroned the Mogul emperor. Thus, in 1857, the British officially became the rulers of India.

² Other sociolinguists have also looked into the economic aspects of language policy. For example, Paulston (1983) refers to Heath's (1972) study of language policy in Mexico in her discussion of the economic and political motives behind language planning. Heath illustrated that policies are made by people who have political power and are made for economic and political purposes and not necessarily for linguistic purposes or to solve linguistic problems. This supports Cooper's view of language planning, in contrast to the problem solving aspect of language planning as discussed by Rubin and Jernudd (1971), Karam (1974), and Neustupny (1983).

goods, policies were switched towards an integration of the indigenous people of the colonies to the European views—and education was seen as the most powerful instrument for accomplishing this. Spring cites Charles Grant, who said, 'To introduce the language of the conquerors, seems to be an obvious means of assimilating a conquered people to them...this is the noblest species of conquest, and wherever, we may venture to say, our principles and language are introduced, our commerce will follow' (p. 15). Thus, Spring argues that the debate between the Orientalists and the Anglicists was essentially a reflection of the industrial revolution and the economic changes in Britain.

In 1837, Persian was abolished from the courts. However, instead of replacing Persian with English, the Governor-General replaced it with Indian vernaculars. This policy had significant results. A single official language had united the people who spoke different languages. This language functioned as the official language, the national lingua franca, the language of science and education, and the language of high literature. It was a symbol of the Mogul rule in India. By destroying this symbol of unity and by replacing Persian with other vernaculars at the local level, for example in local courts, nationalistic sentiments in linguistic and ethnic groups were fanned, as language allegiance and use of language as an identity marker developed. The British used this rise in nationalism to their advantage by adopting a policy of 'divide and rule'. The deposing of Persian also created a gap: there was no other local language that could be used as an internal lingua franca or as the language of education. English was therefore a natural replacement for Persian. It was the language of the new rulers who brought with them new sciences.

The divide and rule policy increased the differences between Urdu and Hindi speakers and was exploited by the British (see Rai, 1991; Beg, 1996; and King, 1994 for a detailed study of the origins and development of Urdu and Hindi). Urdu was used as a symbol of Muslim nationalism during the independence movement by the All India Muslim League and served as a symbol of Muslim unity.³ Urdu was marked as being different from Hindi even though they share the same grammar and an overwhelming number of lexical items. The difference between the two languages lies in their scripts: Urdu uses a script based on Persio-Arabic characters and Hindi employs the Devanagiri script.⁴

³ However, it has been suggested that Urdu was not initially used as a language of pro-Pakistan emotions. Ahmad in his survey of literature in Urdu (1993) points out that there was no significant pro-Pakistan literature in Urdu until the 1965 Indo-Pak war. He also indicates that Urdu was not just a Muslim language and that, in fact, the first Urdu language newspapers and magazines were actually brought out by Hindus.

⁴ This division of Urdu and Hindi as two different languages based on non-linguistic reasons is similar to the case of Nynorsk and Riksnorsk in Norway (Paulston, 1983 and Wardhaugh, 1998). Paulston (1983: 59) states that in Norway,

...each code has its own written grammars and dictionaries, fiction and non-fiction are written in both codes and recognised and accepted as such by the Norwegian people, and most importantly, political parties have espoused the adaptation *in toto* of one code or the other for reasons of nationalism, socialism and other ideological values.

The political parties in British India made use of non-linguistic differences between Urdu and Hindi for their own purposes.⁵ This was similar to the use of language as an identity marker in the development of national identities in contemporary Europe. Thus, it can be argued that the mobilisation of attitudes of the masses to develop and change their religious and ethnic identities in India based on so-called linguistic distinctions was engineered in the fashion of nineteenth century Europe. In this sense, the ethnic and linguistic nationalism in South Asia today is a result of imported western notions of linguistic identities.

Cobarrubias (1983) identifies nationalism as one of the four major ideologies that can motivate language attitudes. He points out the significant role language can play in national identity development. However, he is careful in pointing out that, in its own turn, such use of a particular language can lead to policies that suppress other regional and ethnic languages. This is clearly the case with Urdu, which has suppressed the other vernaculars in Pakistan.

English was adopted as one of the language of education in 1847 after considerable debate. The Governor-General did not believe in the total elimination of vernaculars from education, therefore, two different types of schools were created: English schools and vernacular schools. Job opportunities for natives who had a good command of English were excellent and their pay scale was higher than those educated in vernacular schools. However, admissions to the English schools were restricted to people with money. The moneyed class comprised of the rajas and feudal landlords who were loyal to the British authority. Hence, only people who could be depended on to be loyal to the government were given access to education in English. The vernacular schools were not as expensive as the English medium ones: the average cost of sending a child to an English school was twenty to seventy five times higher than that of sending him/her to a vernacular school (Rahman, 1996). The amount of money spent by the government on the different students was also very different: the government spent two to ten times more on students who went to the English schools. This dual system of education created two different classes of educated natives who were trained for different purposes. According to Rahman (1996: 55), the vernacular schools served at least two purposes: 'the

policy of spending less money on producing subordinate staff and generating the political support of the nationalists'. The English schools, on the other hand, served Macaulay's purposes of creating an Indian elite, which would be educated in English and be employed by the British in the government as local representatives.

Modern Politics of the English Language in Pakistan

⁵ The Urdu-Hindi controversy was used symbolically in the political arena and was among the factors that led to the partition of India in 1947.

This section is further divided into subsections representing time periods that coincide with major political changes in Pakistan. These political changes influenced the language policy of the country. Daoust (1997: 440) realises these effects of political changes on language policies and states, 'Language planning policies sometimes seem to develop as an afterthought following a period of sociopolitical turmoil, such as when a country gains independence or when a political party is overthrown'.

1947-1958

At the time of Independence, Pakistan, like most other ex-colonial countries, was faced with the problem of developing a language policy. Like many other countries, the problems in designing and implementing such a policy were complicated by languages and language groups competing to be recognised as national languages. Among these languages, the two dominant native languages were Urdu and Bengali. Urdu was used as a symbol of Muslim unity. Bengali was the native language of East Pakistan or Bengal (modern Bangladesh). Bengal was the largest and most populous province of Pakistan. According to the 1951 census, Bengalis made up 54.6 percent of the total population of Pakistan. Bengal also produced the most revenue. However, the prominent leaders of the Pakistan movement, including Muhammad Ali Jinnah (the first Governor-General of Pakistan) and Liaquat Ali Khan (the first Prime Minister of Pakistan), supported Urdu as the only national language. Jinnah, in a speech he delivered in English in Bengal, said, '...it is for you, the people of this Province, to decide what shall be the language of your Province. But let me make it very clear to you that the State Language of Pakistan is going to be Urdu and no other language. Anyone who tries to mislead you is really the enemy of Pakistan' (Government of Pakistan, 1989: 183). While this speech recognised Bengali as a provincial language, it also made it clear that Bengali was not to be officially recognised as a national language. Furthermore, it labelled those who wanted Bengali to be recognised as a national language as anti-state elements, giving them negative stature. The Bengalis protested against this speech and friction was created between the two units of Pakistan, East and West Pakistan. The Pakistani leaders believed that there had to be only one national language and that more than one national language could not hold the nation together. In trying to develop a national identity for Pakistan, the Urdu Committee, which was set up by the Advisory Board of Education to cultivate the Urdu language in Bengal, even tried to introduce a uniform script for all languages spoken in Pakistan. Needless to say, this policy was highly criticised by Bengalis and people of other linguistic groups who had their own scripts and literary traditions. This policy of the government towards Bengali was symbolically treated as a sign of suppression of the Bengali culture and was therefore used as a symbol during the Bengali nationalist movement that eventually led to the separation of East Pakistan to form Bangladesh in 1971.

The purpose of the reference to the Urdu-Bengali controversy above was to show how complex the situation in Pakistan was after Independence. In addition

to the political problems associated with an Urdu-Only policy, lack of materials (corpus planning) was listed as a handicap for having Urdu as the only official/national language. Thus, in order to run the government smoothly, English was maintained as the official language, Urdu was recognised as the national language, and one local language from each province (Bengali, in the case of East Pakistan) was recognised as the official provincial language. This gave Pakistan a three-language structure. Such a structure is not unique to Pakistan. Nadkarni (1983: 152-3), investigating linguistics problems in a multilingual country, states that:

Most multilingual countries have consequently evolved a language policy which has a three-language structure with a distinct major communication role or function assigned to each language. Nida (1971) identifies these communication roles as follows: (a) communication with people of the in-group (the language of each cultural group), (b) communication with people of the out-group (common or national language), and (c) communication involving specialized information (a world language such as English). An individual member of a multilingual society who wishes to participate at all levels of communication is obliged to acquire the necessary communication skills in all these three languages. It is the responsibility of the educational system of each country to provide him with the opportunity for acquiring these skills.

In Pakistan, the vernacular fulfilled the first role; Urdu, the second role; and English, the third role. In order to be fully functional at all levels, a person has to be multilingual.

Another option for the young Pakistan would have been to adopt an approach of linguistic pluralism. Cobarrubias (1983) has pointed out that linguistic pluralism can be a successful policy in a multilingual society. According to Cobarrubias (1983: 65), linguistic pluralism is the 'coexistence of different linguistic groups and their right to maintain and cultivate their languages on an equitable basis' and can help to foster a feeling of equality between various ethnic and linguistic groups in a country. However, such a pluralistic policy was considered negative by Pakistani politicians because it was contrary to the ideal Pakistani image that they wanted to create. As a result of the complexity of the language situation and to not make Urdu the only language of

the state machinery, English was maintained as an official language in Pakistan. The people running the government were trained to do their work in this language and therefore it was not hard to convince the people of its usefulness as an official language. Haque (1993: 14) states that:

The use of English was inevitable for system maintenance: the ruling elite were trained to do their official work in English. English perforce continued to be the official language of Pakistan. It also had the compromise candidate, at least for the interim, since the adoption of one of the two languages of indigenous origin, Urdu and Bengali, as the national language could have meant the alienation of large sections of the populace, especially in an atmosphere charged with political activism generated by Bengali nationalism. And the switch to both would have meant confusion, not least for being premature.

Thus, English was anchored in Pakistan and was ready to play a crucial role in the structures of power and dominance in this new country.

The situation on the educational scene reflected the general feelings of the government towards Urdu. The government wanted Urdu to be the language of education. As early as 1948, Urdu was declared the language in which instruction should be given at the primary level. However, the role of English was not specified. In general it was decided that Urdu would be developed to take over the functions that English fulfilled and that Urdu would replace English within 10 years. The argument that there was a need for corpus planning before vernaculars could be used in education or in an official capacity was not a new one. Rahman (1996) reports that, in 1867, the Secretary to the Government of India, E. C. Bayley, used a similar argument. Bayley stated that materials were not available in the vernaculars to be used in higher education, and their role should be restricted to primary education.⁶

In addition to the Urdu medium schools, English medium schools were maintained. Thus, there were two systems of education. The policy of the government to continue the two mediums of instruction in education side by side reflected the British policy. It also served the same purpose: to create two classes of people, one that was to be trained to govern and the other to produce subordinate staff. The elite preferred sending their children to the English medium schools, while the rest sent their children to government schools or other non-elite English medium schools.

1958-1971

1958 saw the first martial law government in Pakistan. Ayub Khan, the Commander-in-Chief and the military ruler, believed that the army was superior to the politicians and also that the most qualified personnel acquire their knowledge in English medium schools. Ayub Khan was openly pro-English, something that the previous governments were afraid of stating. All training for military officers was in English and cadets were not allowed to use ethnic languages. However, at the same time, due to increased activities of the pro-Urdu right wing groups, English was not introduced as the medium of instruction in government schools where the majority of the people sent their children.

⁶ These same arguments have been used ever since to provide validity for maintaining English at the higher levels of education, especially in the better-known and well-reputed schools. Admission to these institutions requires English language proficiency. Thus, only students with previous background in the English language can ever hope to enter these prestigious institutions. As a result, the English medium schools were considered the elite schools. These included pre-cadet schools (schools which prepared students for military services), schools that prepared students for the civil services (a highly respected profession), and schools that prepared students for specialised professions (e.g., medicine, engineering or law).

In 1959, a commission was set up to look into the language issues in Pakistan. The Sharif Commission, which looked into the language in education issues, stated that Urdu and Bengali should be the mediums of instruction in secondary schools (Class 6 to Matriculation [Equivalent to sophomore year of an American high school]) in the government schools. The Commission predicted: 'in approximately 15 years Urdu would reach the point of development where it could become the medium of instruction at the university level' (Mansoor, 1993: 10). Thus, the lack of corpus planning card was played once more. This was a convenient method of maintaining the status quo and satisfying the right wing parties. During a discussion in the Punjab Assembly, the Minister of Education said, 'I would like to say that in the year 1972 the President shall constitute a commission to examine the report on the question of the replacement of English language for official purposes' (Legislative Assembly Debates-Punjab, 8 Aug 1964: 465). Thus, he endorsed the conclusions of the Sharif Commission.

The Commission clearly stated that until such time as Urdu was ready to replace English, 'English should continue as second language since advance knowledge which was in English was only needed for advanced study and research'. The demands for using vernaculars as the language of higher education were thus brushed aside. However, Urdu was instituted as the language of instruction in government schools, with English taught only as a compulsory subject. Elite English medium schools were allowed to flourish. According to Rahman (1996: 234), there were at least 19 private English medium elite schools in West Pakistan alone during this time:

...to which Rs 2,477,285 had been given in 1964-65, and on whose governing bodies there were 73 senior civil and military officers...There was some protest against Lahore Corporation's donation of Rs 1,000,000 to the Divisional Public School, whereas the corporation's own schools were in an impecunious condition. However, nothing was done to make amends, and a motion concerning this was not even allowed to be moved in the provincial legislature...

These figures show a bias of the people in power in favour of elite English medium schools. The government schools were ignored and the limited funds available were allocated to elite schools non-proportionately.

Based on the conclusions of the Commission, Urdu was introduced as the language of instruction in all the government schools. Although this was not an issue in Balochistan, NWFP, or Punjab, in Sindh it became the root of a division that pitched Urdu-speaking Mohajirs (people who migrated to Pakistan from India at the time of Partition, and who mostly lived in the developed urban centres) against Sindhi speakers (mostly living in the under-developed rural areas). Sindhis were very conscious of the Sindhi literary heritage and felt that it was being undermined by the dominance of Urdu. Since Sindhi had also been the medium of instruction in pre-Partition Sindh, Sindhis resented Urdu for replacing it in their homeland. This problem was ignored by the government and has since caused violent Sindhi-Mohajir clashes.

In 1969, Nur Khan proposed that 'the medium of instruction at all levels of education should be changed to Bengali in East and Urdu in West Pakistan' (PNEP, 1969: 17). He stated that the differences created by the two educational systems, i.e., English and vernacular, were almost 'caste-like'. Although his proposals stirred some debate, the education policy of 1970 did not change the status of English and left the language issue to be decided by a commission to be set up in 1972. Thus, the trend of creating two different classes of people continued.

1971-1978

1971 signifies the divorce of East and West Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation. As East Pakistan separated to form Bangladesh, Bhutto gained power in the new Pakistan. According to Haque (1993), the 'separation of East Pakistan also 'simplified' the language situation in the two remaining provinces' (p. 14). By 'simplified' Haque was referring to the removal of the Bengali language problem. However, it is interesting to note that Haque only mentioned two provinces, Sindh and Punjab, in discussing the language situation in West Pakistan, and not the other two provinces, Balochistan and NWFP. The 'simplified' situation did not result in a change in the language policy in Pakistan. In fact, it is debatable whether the situation had simplified at all, because the status of the regional language in the new Pakistan did not change. Bhutto had run for elections with the popular slogan of 'bread, clothing, and shelter' for all, and it has therefore been questioned why he did not replace English with Urdu. One possible reason for this might be that Bhutto's political rivals supported Urdu. Rahman (1996: 238) supports this view:

...Urdu was supported by Bhutto's political enemies. In Balouchistan and the NWFP...the NAP-JUI ruling parties opted for Urdu as the official language in 1972. In the Punjab, the Islamicists...were more enthusiastic about Urdu than any other language. Thus, Bhutto found himself unable or unwilling to do away with English.

A second reason might have been that Bhutto had recently witnessed the power of language in creating nationalist sentiments in Bengal and could also see the Sindhi nationalists' feelings towards Urdu and therefore did not want to risk further controversy over the language issue. To confirm the view, all groups in Pakistan did not accept Urdu as the sole national language: there were major riots in Sindh over Urdu in 1971-72. These riots left 2 people killed and over 300 injured. Although these riots were a legacy of the previous governments, they illustrated that the language problems in the new-Pakistan were far from 'simplified'. Thus, doing away with English and making Urdu the only national language would also have been an unwise political decision.

However, in addition to maintaining English, Bhutto tried to appease the right-wing political parties that supported Urdu by giving Urdu official recognition in the newly framed constitution. Article 251 of the 1973 constitution states that:

Clause 1. The National Language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day.

Clause 2. Subject to clause (1) the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu.

This timing of the constitution had coincided with the lapse of the 15-year lease given to English by the Sharif Commission. Thus, the 1973 constitution gave English a new lease for 15 years. In order to achieve the goals in the first clause, language institutions were set up to develop Urdu. Under this constitution, the English medium elite schools were given legal protection.

1979-1988

In 1977, General Zia-ul-Haq overturned Bhutto's government and imposed the third martial law government in Pakistan. General Zia-ul-Haq tried to justify his coup by rapid Islamisation and Urduisation policies. The 1978 language policy introduced drastic changes towards English. Haque (1993: 15) states that:

The inadequacy of the English-speaking elite...in providing stability, responsible rule, and responsive leadership, and in accommodating growing feelings of national identity has strengthened the conviction among many that there is a need for the establishment of Urdu as the primary official language of Pakistan if the masses are to have a feel of the government.

The 1978 language in education policy advised the English medium schools to shift either to Urdu or to another recognised provincial language. However, only one language was recognised as the provincial language in each province. Thus, people speaking other regional/ethnic languages felt that they

were marginalised, e.g., Siraiki and Hindko speakers in Punjab, where Punjabi was recognised as the only provincial language.⁷

In addition to Urdu and a provincial language, Arabic was introduced as a compulsory foreign language. Arabic is not spoken natively in Pakistan. It is considered the language of Islam and was therefore symbolically important for an 'Islamic' government. Thus, making Arabic a compulsory language in schools served political and not linguistic purposes. This use of Arabic for political purposes supports Whitely's (1983) claim that language policy decisions are 'taken on political grounds and conformity with particular ideologies' (p. 69), and are not always based on linguistic issues or problems.

⁷ There are at least 66 languages spoken in Pakistan but only one language is recognised in each province in addition to Urdu. Other minority languages are not recognised. This non-recognition of other languages in Pakistan is leading to language death; as in the case of Domaaki, which has only 500 speakers left. People of these languages find that their language is not useful to them to progress in life. To be successful, they have to learn either Urdu or English (or both); therefore, they prefer to abandon their language in favour of Urdu or another more powerful regional language.

In 1979, the Muqtadira Qaumi Zaban (National Language Authority) was formed for the purposes of devising 'ways and means for the promotion of Urdu as the national language of Pakistan and to make all necessary arrangements in this regard' (Government of Pakistan, 1979: 2). General Zia-ul-Haq reversed the policy of the Bhutto government, which had nationalised all educational institutions in the implementation of its socialist ideologies, and started denationalising schools, as well as permitting new schools and colleges to open in the private sector. Urdu was imposed as the medium of instruction in all government schools from Class 1, and English was not introduced until Class 6. It was hoped that the students who would matriculate in 1989 would all be educated in Urdu medium schools. Once this was accomplished, it would become possible to change the medium of education to Urdu in colleges and institutions of higher education.

The government imposed the Urdu language policy quite strictly in government schools; however, the elite schools were not affected and were allowed to operate because of the political influence exerted by the people who sent their children to them. Rahman (1996) quotes an elitist educationist, Lady Viqarunnisa Noon, who said 'the General had assured her earlier that she could continue to use English as the medium of instruction in her school' (p. 242). Thus, even during the days of Islamisation and emphasis on Urdu as a means to minimise class distinctions, elite English medium schools continued to operate. This dual policy of President General Zia-ul-Haq was highly criticised. Parents were critical of the Urdu-isation policy, which they saw as hypocritical, and preferred sending their children to English medium private schools. They felt that the Urdu-isation would not be able to continue for long.

Zia-ul-Haq's government realised that the change of language policy had been hurriedly passed. In 1983, the General gave legal protection to the elitist

English medium schools and, by 1987, some of the Urdu-Only policies were retracted. English was allowed as the medium of instruction for science subjects and students were given the choice to take their Matriculation examinations in English or Urdu. However, this reversal in policies only occurred after the negative outcomes of the Urdu-Only policy had surfaced. Almost an entire decade of school-going children had had less exposure to the English language than the generations before them. The teachers also stopped working in English. This led to a sharp decline in the competency of people in the English language, from which the Pakistani educational system has not yet been able to recover.

The Urdu-Only movement was accompanied by suppression of all political movements and backlashed, as would have been predicted by Cobarrubias (1983). Urdu was used as a symbol of patriotism while all other languages were neglected. This resulted in the growth of anti-Urdu sentiments, especially in Sindh. It fuelled violent encounters between the Sindhis and the Mohajirs in the mid-1980s. The Zia regime had ignored the language issues that had caused

problems in the 1970s and was insensitive to feelings that gave rise to various nationalist movements. A lack of serious and well-researched language planning and policy development can be listed as one of the reasons behind the ethnic and linguistic divide among the people.

1988-1999

General Zia-ul-Haq was killed in an airplane 'crash' in 1988.⁸ The end of Zia-ul-Haq's 11-year rule was followed by a political circus in which Benazir Bhutto, the daughter of ex-Prime Minister Bhutto, was elected in 1988 and then removed on charges of corruption in 1990. Nawaz Sharif was elected in 1990 and dismissed in 1993, also on charges of corruption. Benazir Bhutto came to power once again, only to be dismissed again for corruption. And then Nawaz Sharif came to power again in 1995, this time to be removed by General Musharraf in a coup in 1999. However, the new military ruler, who called himself the Chief Executive of Pakistan, did not declare a martial law and the fundamental rights of the citizens were not suspended as in the previous three military governments.

During the juggling of the two two-time Prime Ministers, the policies of previous government were often reversed. However, the language policy was not changed. In fact, the governments did not frame any real language policies because languages were a politically charged and controversial issue. The 1992 and 1998, education policies did not directly address the language in education issue. Similarly, ex-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan 2010 Project also did not include a section on linguistic issues.

However, there were some changes in the governments' stance on English. Benazir Bhutto, during her first term, gave an option to schools for adopting English as the medium of instruction in all subjects from Class 1. Her government also announced that English should be taught as an additional language from Class 1 in all government schools instead of introducing it in Class 6. Such a change in policy is supported by the informants who participated in the present study, as well as those who participated in Mansoor's (1993) study of attitudes towards Urdu, Punjabi, and English. Mansoor observed that:

There is great discrimination between Urdu medium and English medium students regarding job opportunities and that the attitudes of the employers display a clear 'bias' in favour of English medium students...Highly favourable attitudes to English and English-speaking community is seen in the responses of all...The motivational intensity and desire to learn English borders on an obsession as English education is preferred over all languages as a compulsory subject and a medium of instruction. (pp. 140-3)

The provincial governments of Sindh and Punjab took up the central government's lead and introduced English as a compulsory subject in the primary schools. Sindh was the first province to introduce this change, and was quickly

⁸ The actual reasons for the crash have never been officially made public and it is widely believed that the plane was sabotaged.

followed by Punjab in September 1994. These governments justified the reintroduction of English on the grounds that by introducing English at the primary level of education, the government would provide the 'poor' the same opportunities that were available to the 'privileged class' (Riaz Fatima, Adviser to the Chief Minister of Punjab, 1993). However, the success of such policies in providing 'equal' education has been questioned. One major reason for doubting the results of the policy is the non-availability of a sufficient number of trained teachers. A second reason is that, according to this policy, English is merely going to be introduced in Class 1 instead of Class 6, and will not be used as the language of instruction as in the English medium schools. Thus, both the implementation of the policy as well as the results it would achieve are problematic.

1999-Present

The 12 October 1999 coup, which removed the elected government, has yet to announce its educational policy. Although a native Urdu speaker, General Musharraf gave his first press conference in English and only responded in Urdu if the questions were asked in Urdu. This indicates that the status of English will be developed in his government. Furthermore, one of the justifications for the coup is the poor shape of the Pakistani economy. Improvement of the economy has been set as the primary goal by Musharraf's government. The new government has stressed the need for development in information technology related sciences, especially computer science. In order to achieve these goals, the government will have to take necessary steps to increase the literacy rate. English is a key to the global economy; the government will also have to make arrangements to develop English language skills.

Present Day Attitudes

In this section of the paper, we will look at the results of a language preference study conducted in 1998 at a large public university in an urban centre of Pakistan. The results of this study, along with the historical overview of the language policy changes, will be used to suggest some broad outlines for a language policy in Pakistan.

Study Methodology

Language attitudinal data was collected from 245 freshmen students at the Karachi University, a large public university. The students were enrolled in the English language course for freshmen, which is a required class for all freshmen. A total of 315 students were enrolled in the English language classes during the semester in which data was collected and the students were asked to complete a questionnaire on a voluntary basis. Over 77 percent of the undergraduate population taking the course participated in the study. In addition to the students, English language teachers teaching this course were also asked to participate. All 10 teachers volunteered to participate. Thus, the corpus discussed below was

collected from a total of 255 informants. No statistically significant differences were found in responses given by the teachers and the students ($p > .05$) and therefore the two groups have been combined for the purposes of this study.

A brief overview of the biographical background of the students who participated in the study helps establish the statistical validity of the survey results and the generalisations based on them. The age of the informants ranged from 16 to 24, with the mode being 19 years. In all, 164 female and 81 male students participated in the study. The students were enrolled in 12 different departments, including applied chemistry (37), biochemistry (10), chemistry (37), economics (26), education (6), English (12), geography (12), international relations (19), Islamic learning (10), mathematics (41), mass communication (7), and microbiology (27). There was one student who did not list his/her major at the university. The students came from different economic and social classes. Out of 211 students who responded to the item regarding their family's average monthly income, 23 students came from families whose average monthly income was PRs1,000-4,999 (US\$20-100), 56 from the PRs5,000-9,999 (US\$100-200) bracket, 52 from the PRs10,000-14,999 (US\$200-300) bracket, 40 from the PRs15,000-14,999 (US\$300-400) bracket, and 40 from the over PRs25,000 (US\$500) bracket. (The dollar ranges are approximations.) This shows that the students came from various socioeconomic backgrounds and strengthens any generalisations based on the results.

In addition to the variety in the socioeconomic classes represented, the ethnic and linguistic background was also very diverse. The informants represented all the major regions of the country and represented over 10

different linguistic groups. Among the more common first languages were Balochi, Brushaski, Chitralli, English, Gujrati, Hindko, Punjabi, Pushto, Sindhi, and Urdu. The informants came from different educational backgrounds and the medium of instruction in their schools and colleges was different. However, there was a higher number of students (178) from English medium intermediate colleges (pre-university schools, equivalent to US high schools) than from Urdu medium intermediate colleges (49). There were only 11 students who went to intermediate colleges where neither English nor Urdu was the medium of instruction.

The questionnaire was modelled on Mansoor's (1993) study. This was done for two reasons. Firstly, the questionnaire had already been used successfully in a Pakistani context; and, secondly, this allowed comparison of data from another major city, Karachi, with Mansoor's data from Lahore.⁹ The questionnaire sections covered:

⁹ A comparative study of the results from the two studies will be presented in a later paper.

- Biographical and background information;
- Attitudes towards respondents' native language, Urdu (in case it was not their native language), and English;
- Attitudes towards speakers of various languages;
- Attitudes towards language classrooms and teachers; and
- The English language proficiency of the respondents, using a cloze test.

The questions were designed to elicit a variety of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative items could be coded and run through statistical tests. These included questions such as 'What is your first language?' and 'How many languages do you speak?' The qualitative items were more open-ended questions in which the informants gave their opinions about certain aspects of an issue, e.g., 'Is it useful to study your first language?' In order to focus on the specific issue of language preference in education, this paper only analyses the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the sections on biographical information and on general language attitudes towards English, Urdu, and informants' native languages.

The questionnaire was distributed to all students who volunteered to participate in the study. The participants were given the questionnaire in their English language classes and asked to fill it out at home and return it the following day. The teachers were requested to help explain any problematic items to the students. A total of 280 questionnaires were handed out to the students and 245 students returned the questionnaires. This gave a return rate of 87.5 percent. No incentives, financial or otherwise, were given to the participants and they were requested to fill out the questionnaire only because it would be part of a major language attitudinal study in Karachi. Any items left unanswered by the students were marked as missing data and analysed as such.

The completed questionnaires were collected and then the quantitative items were codified and entered into the SPSS Version 10 software. All statistical analyses were performed using this software. The researcher and another graduate student categorised the qualitative items of the questionnaire. In case of a disagreement in categorisation, the two individuals resolved their differences by discussing the disputed cases.

Results

It was found that the differences in the background of the informants were not a significant source of difference in opinion about the usefulness of the various languages. Gender, major department of studies, family income, or ethnic/linguistic background were found to have no significant effect ($p > .05$) on language preference.

Analysing the responses to the questions that asked 'Is it useful to study English/Urdu/your first language?' developed a general understanding of the

relative importance of various languages. Out of a total of 255 informants who responded to the item, 252, i.e., 98.8 percent, stated that it is important to study English; 227 informants out of a total of 254 who responded to the item, i.e., 89.4 percent believed that studying Urdu is useful; and only 22 informants out of a total of 50 who responded to the item, i.e., 44 percent, said that the study of their first language (other than Urdu) was important. These numbers reflect the predominant feeling that English is the language that is most useful in professional life. Urdu is felt to be of some importance, but other native languages are not generally considered worth the effort of studying even by the native speakers of those languages.

This finding is worrying because it could lead to language death of a number of minor languages in Pakistan. Rahman (1996) regards this disinterest in native language a result of the 'ghettoising' tendency of these languages. By 'ghettoising', Rahman implies the lack of opportunities for social and economic progress of the people who speak these languages. The lack of positive feedback towards first languages other than Urdu might thus be a result of the dominance of Urdu as the national language and of English in the economic world. These findings also support Cobarrubias (1983) as they show that selecting one language (in this case, Urdu) in a multilingual state over all others as a national symbol represses other regional languages.

The questions 'Should English/Urdu/your first language be the medium of instruction for primary/high school/university education?' investigated the specific issue of the medium of instruction in education. The results from these questions are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Perceived Importance of Various Languages in Education

<i>Question</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Is it important to study English?	255	252 (98.8%)	3 (1.2%)
Should English be the medium of instruction for primary education?	250	190 (76%)	60 (24%)
Should English be the medium of instruction for high school education?	248	234 (94.4%)	14 (5.6%)
Should English be the medium of instruction for university education?	250	236 (94.4%)	14 (5.6%)
Is it important to study Urdu?	254	227 (89.4%)	27 (10.6%)
Should Urdu be the medium of instruction for primary education?	246	161 (63.1%)	85 (34.6%)
Should Urdu be the medium of instruction for high school education?	246	91 (37%)	155 (63%)
Should Urdu be the medium of instruction for university education?	245	65 (26.5%)	180 (73.5%)
Is it important to study your first language (other than Urdu)?	50	22 (44%)	28 (56%)
Should your first language be the medium of instruction for primary education?	50	5 (10%)	45 (90%)
Should your first language be the medium of instruction for high school education?	50	2 (4%)	48 (96%)
Should your first language be the medium of instruction for university education?	50	0 (0%)	50 (100%)

Out of a total of 250 respondents to the item, 190 (76 percent) stated that English should be the medium of instruction in primary schools; 234 informants out of a total of 248 who responded to the item (94.4 percent) stated that it should be the medium of instruction in high schools; and 236 informants out of a total of 250 who responded to the item (94.4 percent) stated that it should be the medium of instruction at the university level. Thus, the percentage of informants who wanted English to be the only medium of instruction in educational institutions rose as the level of education increased. Out of 246 informants, 161 (65.4 percent)

stated that Urdu should be the medium of instruction in primary schools; 91 out of 246 informants (37 percent) stated that it should be the medium of instruction in high schools; and only 65 informants out of a total of 250 (26.5 percent) stated that it should be the medium of instruction at the university level. For the 50 informants who spoke a language other than Urdu as a first language, only 5 (10 percent) stated that their first language should be the medium of instruction in primary schools, 2 (4 percent) stated that it should be language of instruction in high schools, and none said that it should be the medium of instruction in universities.

The figures given above support a conclusion that the informants consider English the most important language for their academic (and professional) careers. Urdu is considered important only in primary education, and the respondents felt that English should replace Urdu in higher education, represented by the fact that 73.5 percent of the respondents also said that Urdu should not be the medium of instruction in universities. One of the informants (127) said, 'Urdu is good for understanding basic things, but English should be the language of the higher education because that is our future'.¹⁰

The informants believed that Urdu is important at earlier stages of education while English is important for higher education. However, being educated in an English medium school is an unspoken prerequisite in order to be admitted to the better universities. This is true for both private and public universities. Evidence for this claim comes from the observed imbalance in the number of students from English (74.8 percent), Urdu (20.6 percent) and other (4.8 percent) language backgrounds students attending Karachi University who participated in the present study. While the admission policies at Karachi University do not explicitly state that students with an English medium background have higher chances of being admitted to its various programs, the significantly higher number of students from English medium schools in the study is indicative of the higher ratio of students from this background. In contrast to public universities such as Karachi University, private institutions have internal admission tests of which an English language test is an essential component. Students who do not pass the English section of the entrance examination are refused admission.

The feelings towards other first languages are very similar to those towards Urdu. In fact, these languages are considered even less educationally viable than Urdu because they fulfil neither the official nor the communicative needs of the Pakistani citizenry. Their function is restricted to what Nadkarni (1983) has called 'communication with people of the in-group' and therefore they do not play a large role in achieving the social and economic aspirations of the speakers.

¹⁰ The responses cited here are exactly as they were written on the questionnaire. They have not been edited for content or language.

Informants were asked to elaborate why they chose to state that a particular language is useful to study and/or should be the medium of instruction. The responses of the informants to these questions were categorised based on the reasons given. In all, 220 informants responded to the item asking them why they think English is important, 197 informants wrote their reasons for studying (in) Urdu, but none of the informants gave any reasons for studying (in) their first language (other than Urdu).

The responses supporting the usefulness of English were classified into five categories, while there were only two categories of responses about the usefulness of Urdu. Some of the respondents gave more than one reason and therefore their responses were put in more than one category (It is for this reason that the percentages given here add up to more than 100 percent).

The five categories into which the responses for studying English were divided were (in order of frequency): global language (167; 75.9 percent), education/reading (71; 32.27 percent), jobs/professional development (63; 28.6 percent), technology and development (61; 27.7 percent) and status symbol (30; 13.6 percent). The two categories for the importance of Urdu were: mother tongue/national identity/culture (195; 98.9 percent) and link language (39; 19.8 percent). The differences in the reasons given for learning Urdu and English were distinct. While all the five categories of reasons for the usefulness of English were essentially international and economic, the reasons for studying Urdu were national and emotional.

Some typical responses given by informants in response to questions that discussed the importance of English as a global language were, 'Because when we study English then we communicate with world' (1), 'English is the global language of communication and if we don't learn it we will be left behind' (239), 'To communicate with foreign countries to gain the knowledge' (35). The educational importance of English was realised as 'Without English we can not read the newest books that are written in English' (147), 'If you want to study higher, you must know English' (39), 'In higher study we can understand and seek the language' (35). The remarks written by informants who said that English was essential for professional development were amongst the most provocative. One informant simply wrote 'No English, No Future!' (95). This statement demonstrates the intensity with which students believe that English is a key to their future careers and prosperity.

Keeping abreast of modern technology was another motivation for studying English: one informant (198) stated, 'If we want to keep in touch with the technology development in the world, we should study English'. The last category of reasons for learning English was to gain social status. The informants showed awareness of linguistic discrimination. One informant (133) stated, 'If you apply for a job and don't know English, you will not get it. If you know English everyone

respects you and give you special treatment, especially if you got a good pronunciation.’ This reflects the respondents’ frustrations about the

government’s dual policies of giving the elite and the moneyed class the privileges of enjoying an English language education, while the children of parents with lower income levels have no choice but to send their children to government schools where the medium of instruction is either Urdu or another regional language.

The responses to the question about the importance of Urdu were divided into two categories. However, these two categories are really sub-categories of a single main reason, i.e., national/domestic use, whether it concerns national identity or internal communication. Even informants who supported Urdu in schools stated in their responses that it is restricted in its repertoire of functions. One informant (6) stated that ‘Urdu is our national language and we should know it, but in today’s world if a person really want to achieve something he must know English’, while another (146) said that ‘Urdu should be learnt only because it is spoken all over the country’, and yet another informant (151) said that ‘The one and only reason [for studying Urdu] is that its our language’. These statements show that even those informants who stated that Urdu is an important language mostly said it because it was a national language and for no other reason. This reflects the low status assigned to Urdu in comparison to English. English is the language of economic progress and vitality, while Urdu is a domestic language.

An important implication of the lower prestige for Urdu is that the informants did not feel it important enough to spend time studying it. One of the informants (146), after stating that the only purpose of learning Urdu is to have a national language of communication said, ‘But we do not need to study it much because we can learn it at home.’ This attitude has led to a sharp decline in the quality of Urdu language education. Hoodbhoy (personal communication) supports this finding. This poor performance in Urdu is a result of a lack of motivation to learn it. The informants in this study reflect the common belief that Urdu can be learnt at home and in the playgrounds, and is not a serious topic of study. This belief is rooted in the lack of economical incentives and prospects for people with Urdu medium education. On the other hand, the level of English proficiency in schools is also very low (Hoodbhoy, 1998). The reasons given for this are poor content knowledge of teachers and ineffective teaching materials and techniques. As a result, the students graduating from non-elite schools today can be labelled as semi-literate, i.e., although they are literate in at least two languages, their level of competency is minimal and they are not able to perform demanding tasks (e.g., writing a research report) in either of the languages.

Discussion: A Direction for Language Policy Planning in Pakistan

Languages in Pakistan are used for one or more of the following four purposes:

- National economic progress,

- International communication and access to modern sciences and technologies,
- National identity formation and intranational communication, and
- Local/in-group/regional communication.

These four areas represent aspects that language policy planners should take into consideration while framing a policy.

National economic development is the most crucial among these and is dependent on access to modern technology. Development in either of these areas needs people who are proficient in the English language. English is also the language of global communication and modern sciences. Thus, English serves the first two functions listed above and should be used in schools for all subjects related to technology and sciences at all levels of education and in all schools. A similar decision, which was popularly accepted, was made in Cameroon in 1958. The Cameroonian government chose to make English the sole medium of instruction in all primary schools (Todd, 1983). This was done to modernise the country as well as to avoid a politically controversial policy of selecting one or a few indigenous languages out of the almost 200 spoken in Cameroon as official/national language(s). Although there are some groups that fear that this policy will kill indigenous languages and cultures, most people accept it as the only viable road to the much-needed economic development.

Urdu, which serves the third purpose listed above, is viewed as the language for communication within the country and seen as a national symbol. Thus, based on the findings of the study and keeping in mind other historical factors, Urdu should be taught as a compulsory subject at all levels in all schools. However, it should not be the medium of education.

Other regional and ethnic languages only serve the fourth purpose. They are used for local/regional communication and are perceived as group markers. This role of language as an identity marker should not be downplayed because it plays a significant role in boosting self-image and self-confidence. These languages should be offered as optional subjects to students who want to learn it in communities where it is spoken as a majority language. This recognition of regional and ethnic languages and first language literacy development will also improve the self-image of the people speaking minority languages. Cummins (1983), among other researchers who work on literacy development, has shown that literacy in first language helps literacy development in other languages. Thus, the development and use of native languages other than Urdu, and not just one provincial language, would not only be a politically astute decision, in that it will satisfy the need for official recognition of various linguistic/ethnic groups, but will also help in literacy development. In order to keep the costs of corpus development low, teachers should be actively encouraged to develop materials

needed for teaching these languages. Incentives and recognition should be given to teachers who develop teaching materials in their indigenous languages.

In the above discussion, I am promoting a language in education policy that uses English as the medium of education in all schools and recognises the need to study Urdu and other vernaculars as well. Such a policy will maintain the three-language policy that is already in place and put it within a framework of linguistic pluralism (Cobarrubias, 1983). Minority languages will be given recognition and people speaking those languages will be supported in their efforts to develop their languages.

The major change that a policy based on the above observations will bring about is that it will reassign the roles different languages play in education at present in relation to their function, their value in the economic and social progress, and the importance that the people speaking those languages give to them. Literacy will be developed in an international language, a national language, and a local language. It is hard to disagree that unless the literacy rate increases, rapid economic development is unlikely. The development of literacy in a local language will boost the image of the people who speak it natively and will lower ethnic, linguistic, and regional tensions. The development of literacy in the national language will boost intranational communication and will provide the people with a national lingua franca. And the development of literacy in the world language will open up Pakistan as an attractive destination for global investment. In addition, since English is a second language to all ethnic groups in Pakistan, no one group will have the benefit of being the 'native speaker'.

However, the implementation of such a policy must be very carefully monitored and teachers should be trained in their content areas. Without sufficient teacher training and improvement of teaching materials, the inequalities among the private and government schools will not necessarily decrease. Thus, it is the implementation and the constant evaluation of this implementation that will achieve results. A passive policy decision without implementation cannot bring about any changes (Kennedy, 1983).

Conclusions

In this paper I have attempted to give a brief sketch of the historical overview of the English language policies in British India and in Pakistan. I have shown that the various Pakistani governments have maintained the British policies of providing education in both English and vernaculars. Such policies create two classes of people: one that is trained to rule the country and takes the highest paying jobs, and one that is expected to fill in the lower and middle level jobs that do not offer the same benefits. I have shown that the informants in my study are well aware of these issues and that they believe that the only way to achieve success in education and in life is to study (in) English.

However, Rubin (1983) does not seem to agree with this. She refers to two studies (Paulston, 1974 and Engle, 1975) and states, 'the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn...is that language is not the major causal variable in successful school achievement' (p. 12). An analysis of the number of students from various backgrounds (media of instruction) shows that, contrary to Rubin, language does play a vital role in the success of the students.

Romaine (1994: 191) supports the position taken in this paper. She states that, 'Children who do not come to school with the kind of cultural and linguistic background supported in the schools are likely to experience conflict.' She further states that individuals who speak a low prestige language or speak in a non-standard variety have more difficulties in finding suitable employment than those speaking a standard variety. Romaine argues that the reason for this discrimination is linguistic because language proficiency is used as a measure of success.

Thus, in order to give equal opportunities to all, it is imperative that the language in education policy is so framed that all students have equal access to English. If a language policy has to be successful in providing equal opportunities to all, it should consider the attitudes of the people towards various languages in its formative stages. According to Rubin (1983: 11):

If language policies are to serve both individual and national needs, the policies should try to address the following issues which Herbert Kelman (1971), social psychologist described: (a) how to establish and facilitate patterns of communication (both internally and internationally) that would enable its socio-economic institutions to function most effectively and equitably in meeting the needs and interests of the population; and (b) how to assure that different groups within the society, varying in their linguistic repertoires (for either ethnic or social class reasons), have equal access to the system and opportunities to participate in it.

And once a policy has been developed, its implementation and evaluation should be done responsibly and conscientiously using appropriate resources. Without proper implementation a policy remains, at best, impotent.

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