

The Symbolic Capital and Expanding Roles of English: A Study of L2 attitudes in a Pakistani EFL Context

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Abstract

Despite relatively lesser number of native speakers, English carries an enormous symbolic capital in Pakistan. Therefore, it seems necessary to see how young Pakistanis envision the role of English in their individual and collective lives. This study aims to explore the attitudes of a sample of Pakistani learners towards the expanding national and global roles of English in the contemporary world. In addition, the study also investigates the socio-cultural and contextual factors that shape their views about English language. The study is qualitative in nature. Twenty semi-structured interviews of Pakistani undergraduate EFL learners were conducted to get an in-depth data about their linguistic attitudes. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that Pakistani learners, overall, reveal an ambivalent attitude towards English and its culture. However, they seem to have internalized the socio-educational roles of English in their lives. The findings also indicate the symbolic capital and linguistic imperialism of English as participants consider its knowledge necessary for socio-economic uplift in the contemporary world including Pakistan. Policy makers and academicians can use the findings of this study to analyse the possible effects of English on the roles of local languages, especially, in Pakistani educational settings.

Keywords: L2 Attitudes, Symbolic capital, Linguistic imperialism, Ambivalent attitude

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Introduction

In the varied linguistic fabric of Pakistan, English has remained an important, dominant and prestigious language in Pakistani society since the creation of the country (Abbas, 1993; Shamim, 2008; Jilani, 2009; Coleman & Capstick, 2012). There is no official number of English language speakers in Pakistan. However, the researchers have estimated it differently. Rahman (2007) argues that almost 3 to 4 percent of Pakistani population can or do speak English with proficiency, including those who use it as their first language. Pakistan is a multilingual and multicultural country. However, the teachings and traditions of Islam (religion of 97% population) seem to provide some common grounds to the people of Pakistan (Norton & Kamal 2003; Rahman 2007). Almost 72 languages are spoken in Pakistan (Rahman, 2007; Asher, 2008; Coleman, 2010). There are six major regional languages - Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Saraiki, Urdu and Balochi - which have the dominant majority of speakers (almost 96%) in Pakistan (Rahman, 2003, 2007). Despite its relatively limited number of native speakers, Urdu is the national language of Pakistan and was given this status as a symbol of national unity in the multilingual society of Pakistan (Mansoor 2004). English is the co-official language (along with Urdu) of Pakistan.

National Education Policy of Pakistan (2009) has also clearly acknowledged the huge international influence of English and considers competence in it essential for 'competition in a globalised world order' (Education, 2009, p. 2). Hitherto, there has been little effort by the government and policy makers of Pakistan, except some initiatives taken by the government of Punjab in the recent years, to meet this global need. Moreover, apart from a few business studies, 'a comprehensive national analysis and debate on the potential impact and possible benefits of globalization has been a major deficit' in Pakistan (Education, 2009, p. 5). The field of ELT is no exception to this lack of research. This situation necessitates the effects of the international significance of English language on Pakistani learners being investigated in detail.

The Status and Role of English in Pakistan

Besides American Capitalism and technological progress in the 20th century, British colonialism was undoubtedly the main cause for the spread of English throughout the world (Boampong, 2005, p. 15).

The same is true for Pakistan, which was a part of united India (also include today's India and Bangladesh) – an erstwhile British colony – before emerging as an independent state in 1947. Even after independence, this region, especially Pakistan, has been under the immense political influence of the USA and UK that might have contributed to the spread

of English here. Scholars and researchers (see Hickey, 2004; Boampong, 2005) have identified various factors – e.g. activities of Christian missionaries, traders, especially those of British East India Company, and a demand of English by some sections of local elite - which trace back the introduction of English language to the Indian sub-continent well before the establishment of formal British rule here in 1765. During the British rule, English was ‘developed into a medium of control’ (Boampong, 2005, p. 14). The official policy of promoting English aimed at creating a class of natives who would be “Indians in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions and morals and intellect” (Hickey, 2004, p. 540). This class could assist British rule in various spheres of administration and could also serve as a bridge between them and local Indians. Under this policy, English was made the medium of instruction in the institutions of higher education which also compelled prestigious schools to focus on its teaching. This policy successfully created an ‘English-based subculture’ and elite social class in united India (Boampong, 2005, p. 14). Later on, English enjoys even more importance and penetration in the educational, official and social circles of independent countries that previously formed united India (Kachru, 2005). The powerful elite of Pakistan ‘appropriated’ English ‘in order to empower itself and to modernize the country’ (Rahman, 2016, p. 26).

English is largely used by the influential people of Pakistan in the domains of civil bureaucracy, military, business, media and education (Rahman, 2002; Mansoor, 2004; Coleman, 2010; Shamim, 2011). It is the socio-economic vitality of English and prestigious status of the powerful English speaking community in Pakistan that inspires a sizeable majority of young students to learn this language (Norton & Kamal, 2003; Islam, 2009). The Pakistani English speaking community uses this language in both formal and informal- ‘private conversation, entertainment, reading and travel- spheres (Rahman, 2007, p. 220). Because of its persistent existence in Pakistani society, its educational system and media, a non-native local variety of ‘Pakistani English’ has emerged that has its own linguistic items based on ‘Urdu borrowings, Urdu-English hybrids, and local morphological and syntactic innovations’ (Baumgardner, 1995, p. 261). Rahman (2007, p. 221) adds that Pakistani English also borrows from other regional languages, Punjabi and Pashto, and differs from British and American English in pronunciation and accent. English language literary pieces written by local writers also contain many traces of Pakistani English (Mansoor, 2002; Rahman, 2007).

English is used as a medium of official communication in almost all public and private organisations that also includes administrative, business, academic and even political institutions (Hafeez, 2004; Naqvi, 2009). English is also used in both print and electronic media. Almost twenty newspapers (e.g. Dawn, The News, The Nation, Daily Times, Frontier Post, etc.) and periodicals are published all over Pakistan in English. It is

about 10% of the total newspapers printed in Pakistan (Rahman, 2007). Naqvi (2009) argues that English is an inspirational language for the educated youth of Pakistan as it not only opens for them the rich reservoirs of knowledge available internationally but also enables them to access opportunities for their future careers as well as travelling abroad for various reasons. Hafeez (2004, p. 27) maintains that the proficiency in English language has emerged as a primary condition for obtaining better jobs in Pakistan because all 'exams and interviews for the civil services, armed forces, and other attractive posts are conducted in this language'.

In recent times, the complete understanding of the importance and roles of English in Pakistani society may remain incomplete without realising its global spread as the major lingua franca in the contemporary world (Rahman, 2007; Shamim, 2008). English is usually viewed to be an important source of gaining 'modernisation, scientific and technological development, and economic advancement for self and the country; in short, for improving one's life chances' (Shamim, 2008, p. 236). Studies have revealed that educated Pakistani youth generally understands the global roles and importance of English language and view it a necessary skill when considering employment or migration abroad (Jilani, 2009; Capstick, 2011).

Some commentators have viewed English as a symbol of modernisation and liberalism that has the potential to minimise religious and political extremism by promoting socio-political tolerance, moderation and enlightenment among its users, especially youth (Mansoor, 2004; Rahman, 2007, 2002). It provides the learners with a 'western, liberal-humanist and cosmopolitan world-view that may be helpful in controlling 'Islamic fundamentalism' in the country (Mansoor, 2004, p. 43). In this regard, it may be observed that the English language press in Pakistan is more liberal and moderate than Urdu or regional languages' newspapers (Rahman, 2007, p. 227).

The Education System of Pakistan and English Language

Pakistan does not have a uniform educational system. The 'parallel systems of education'- private educational institutions and madaris- along with the public education system (Education, 2009, p. 9) reflect not only the failure of the public sector educational institutions in providing quality education to the people of Pakistan but also the stratification of Pakistani society on socio-economic grounds (Shamim, 2008). In addition, the English and Urdu medium division is a legacy of British colonial period when the rulers maintained this education to serve their particular political and administrative purposes (Rahman, 2007; Shamim, 2008; Coleman, 2010). Even after the creation of Pakistan, the powerful elite and governing bodies maintained this discriminatory system largely to continue with their status quo (Shamim, 2008; Coleman

& Capstick, 2012). At present, English medium has become 'synonymous with a quality education' and it is this 'symbolic value of English' that triggered mushrooming of English medium schools in Pakistan (Shamim 2008, p. 237). The recent education policy acknowledges that the students from elite private schools take full advantage of the policies of the job market in Pakistan where access to white-collar jobs is dependent on the candidates' level of proficiency in English language (Ministry of Education, 2009).

English Language Teaching in Pakistan

English is taught as a compulsory subject from primary to graduation level. It is also a medium of instruction for higher education in the universities and their affiliated colleges (Hafeez, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2009). National education policy (2009) has also proposed English as a medium of instruction for mathematics and science subjects from class 6 in addition to English as a compulsory subject from class 1. It also supports the teaching of Urdu and one regional language as a subject at primary level that may augur well for the promotion of local languages in Pakistan. The policy has promised for equal access to English language learning for all students in Pakistan, especially those belonging to the poor sections of the society. One may hope that such policies are implemented with full vigour and are not ignored like previous education policies (see Shamim, 2008).

The Role and Status of Regional Languages

The local/regional languages of Pakistan have suffered heavily from various educational and language policies of the country (Rahman, 2007; Shamim, 2008). These declared and, sometimes, undeclared policies are made by powerful elite of Pakistan in the bureaucratic and administrative spheres of successive governments and aim to promote English language even at the cost of local languages (Rahman, 2003). The lack of patronage and official recognition of the regional languages by the government and business organisations have reduced them to the place of lower status languages in the eyes of their own speakers (Mansoor, 2004). This situation has raised the issues of ethnic identities and language shame among the speakers of these marginalised languages (Rahman, 2003). For example, Punjabi is the most widely spoken regional language of Pakistan yet its many urban speakers consider it a lower status language and are switching to Urdu and English in formal and informal domains (Mansoor, 1993; Rahman, n.d.).

In addition, the use of foreign (or other than mother tongue) language for education may have serious effects on young learners. The emphasis on English and Urdu in the educational system of Pakistan has deprived a dominant majority of Pakistani children from getting education in their mother tongues, which might have seriously

affected their desire to participate in education as well as their intellectual ability to learn. This may even result in the exclusion of large groups of the population from the education system, especially, in remote areas and add to the socio-linguistic division of the country (Pinnock, 2009; Coleman & Capstick, 2012).

Research Questions

Based on its purpose, the study focused on the following research questions:

1. What are the attitudes of a sample of Pakistani learners towards English language, its speakers in the contemporary world?
2. Are these Pakistani learners aware of the expanding roles of English in the contemporary world including Pakistan?
3. In what ways the attitudes of these Pakistani learners reveal the symbolic value of English and linguistic imperialism in Pakistani society?

Methodology

The study is qualitative in nature and included 20 semi structured interviews of Pakistani undergraduate students from seven public sector universities situated in central Punjab, Pakistan. Interviews aimed to get a detailed view of participants' attitudes towards English and its expanding roles in the contemporary world including Pakistan. This was also in line with Ushioda (2009) and Lamb (2004)'s suggestions that a qualitative method may be beneficial to investigate dynamic and complex identification processes involved in the learning of a second/foreign language.

The interview guide for this study was piloted by interviewing two university students in Pakistan before conducting actual interviews with the target sample. The choice of undergraduate students for this study was based on the idea that these grown up students would be able to talk in detail about their attitudes towards English language and its role in their individual and collective lives. Interview participants were conveniently selected, based on their early availability, among the participants of a previous quantitative study (Islam, 2013) and included both male and female students. The interviews were conducted individually after seeking participants and their institutions' informed consent. I used Nvivo 9 to transcribe and manage the data, and its coding tools saved me time. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Berg (2009) argues that qualitative data should be analyzed by reducing and managing data into intelligible forms and themes that usually emerge from and interconnect various sections of the data.

Findings of the Study

Following the process of thematic analysis (codes and categories), the data were reduced to the following themes:

Attitudes towards English in the Contemporary World

Nineteen out of twenty interviewees spontaneously expressed a strong liking for the English language which involves participants' general disposition towards and respect for the language itself. The participants provided me with different reasons for their attachment to the English language. When asked, some of them expressed genuine liking for the language beyond its utilitarian advantages. English appeared to be a part of their new individual/personal youthful identities as well as of developing social relations. An interviewee (N) told me that 'one of the most critical things is this that I myself feel it easier to convey in English my personal feelings, my personal thoughts. He added; 'it is [a] sort of my personal or my own language, so I never get fed up with it'. These statements reveal this participant's strong and intrinsic liking for, as well as some kind of affective association with, English language itself.

In contrast, some participants revealed pure instrumental reasons – e.g. social advantages and international status - to like English. For example, interviewee (R) stated:

I like English because it is an international language. But from my internal core, I like my own languages, Urdu and Punjabi. I like to speak Urdu and Punjabi more. Because it is very necessary in Pakistan to learn English and internationally as well, that's why, they go for English.

The statement seems to reveal that the participant's reasons for liking English are external and pragmatic. Whereas, his liking for local languages, Urdu and Punjabi, is internal. It appeared that most of the participants have some kind of emotional attachment with their local language/s as well as with English language – a powerful international language which also has a plenty of domestic uses and meanings for them. This dual linguistic affiliation seems to produce some kind of ambivalence in their attitudes towards English language.

In addition, most of the participants also presented mixed reasons for liking/learning English which reflected their ambivalent attitude towards this language. For example, an interviewee (G) stated different reasons for liking English on a detailed inquiry. First, he said; 'I just pursued English because I like it'. In response, when I asked whether he really liked English, he replied; 'Yes, I have to because it's my job'. Here, we

can see that former statement reflects a genuine liking and feelings for English language. In comparison, the latter statement shows that some career or academic consideration is the motive behind his liking for English. Further, the same participant added:

There are some languages, for example, Urdu is not that rich. I found Farsi (Persian) is rich. Arabic is rich. Urdu sometimes fails to comprehend the subject very effectively. I may be wrong because I have not studied Urdu literature that much but the much English literature I have read I found it rich. It has discussed various subjects very effectively.

This statement shows that it is the vitality or richness of English language as compared to Urdu, which has endeared English to this participant. From another perspective, this statement may also indirectly reveal an evidence for linguistic imperialism in which local languages are estimated low as compared to English.

Attitudes towards L2 Community and Culture

The majority of participants (seventeen out of twenty) also showed liking and openness for L2 community and its culture. When asked whether she had any idea about the culture of English speaking countries, a female participant (E) presented a brief comparison between the culture of English speaking countries and that of Pakistan:

Liberal, no gender distinction and no controversial views like we have here [Pakistan] - disputing always, have a gender distinction, male and female, all this stuff.

This participant seems to hold an ideal picture of the culture of these countries, therefore, liked it strongly. Another participant (I) explained the culture of English speaking countries in similar idealistic terms while expressing her views about it; 'liberal, democratic, have freedom of everything; every age group has their own freedom'. This statement is also based on the common perceptions of western culture in Pakistan portrayed by western media and movies. However, this statement carries a mixed message of liking and disliking. If we read this statement carefully, it seems that the expression of 'freedom of everything' is cynical and refers to social norms and relationships not permissible in Pakistani society. It becomes even more evident when she herself expresses a disliking for these aspects of the culture. She said; 'No. I am a bit conservative in this way. I don't like much of their culture'. Similarly, another female participant (C) expressed her partial liking for the culture of English speaking countries:

No, not inspired by their culture but if you take culture in terms of their literature then I am very well inspired by literature but not their culture, the way they perceive human relationships.

The statement also reflects an ambivalent attitude towards the culture of Anglophone countries as she showed liking for a cultural item (literature) but was not inspired by their culture in totality. She has also referred to the same notion of social relations as a reason for her psychological distance from the culture of English speaking countries. A male participant also raised similar points about the life style and relational aspects of English speaking societies:

I don't hate anyone but, I don't like their culture. I like my own culture, my own country culture... [we are] different on the base of living style. They [do] not belong to a family system and we live in a family system, which I want to live in [a] family system where we care [for] each other. (Interviewee D)

This participant also gave his perceptions about some social aspects of broader western societies as a reason for not liking their culture. However, he seems to be more assertive than other participants about his own cultural identity and the differences existing between his and western cultures. In comparison, another participant drew a comparison between the people of his area and English speaking communities, especially, the British. He stated:

What I extract from the so far literature I have read is that English people, they are very conventional people. When I see them in this context, I feel proud that people of FATA or Pakistan are also conventional people. The only thing is that we are lacking in will. In those people, they take everything seriously, they have a sort of vision, we people do have vision but we don't have that medium to express that vision, to give colour to that vision. (Interviewee B)

The participant's liking for English people is evident not only from his positive comparison between Pakistani and British people but also from his implied desire to see his people emulating British people in their vision and commitment to their work. Similarly, another participant (**J**), who claimed to have studied about the people and culture of English speaking countries in detail, also argued that 'English people are conceived decent all over the world because of their respect to their own traditions and norms'.

In addition, some participants viewed English people as devoted professionals and liked the work ethics prevalent in English speaking societies. For example, an interviewee (N) said:

Hardworking, sticking to their own business, knowing what they have to do, busy, of course, not wasting so much of their time or not letting others to waste their time.

Socio-economic Vitality of English Speaking Countries

Besides their professionalism, the participants also appreciated English speaking countries (especially USA and UK) for their vitality and scientific development in the world. For example, participant (C) referred to the political power and scientific development of these countries while answering to an inquiry related to the importance of English in the world; 'It is the language of Great Britain. It is the language of United States. They are the most powerful people globally. You cannot deny that all the new technologies are coming from there'. Interviewee (F) also argued; 'Because those people are much developed than us, they are powerful'. In a similar vein, participant (J) appreciated the vitality of socio-cultural norms of an English speaking country and expressed that 'there are a number of things, we can learn from English people'.

In addition, all participants, even those interviewees that showed disliking for some social aspects of English speaking countries, revealed strong liking for the cultural items of English speaking countries accessible in Pakistan. For example, interviewee (I) stated; 'I enjoy watching English movies and of course I learn from it'. It appeared that the participants not only enjoy these cultural items but also consider them an effective way to improve their English language skills.

Overall, we can see that most of the participants showed their appreciation for the people and culture of English speaking countries; no participant showed a complete indifference or hatred towards their culture. Simultaneously, no interviewee, when asked, showed an intention to integrate into the culture of English speaking countries at the cost of their own cultural, religious or national identity. Interviewee (N) expressed that his desire to learn English is based on personal reasons and not on any plan to follow the culture of its native speakers:

I think, it's for my personal growth. It is not to adopt their culture or anything but that plays a part later on in my own growth. For example, if I go for the research that may play a significant part in that.

Without any desire of integration into the culture of English speaking community, the participants have shown an understanding of and respect for the cultural diversity of the contemporary world.

Attitudes towards a Vague International Community

In fact, it appeared that their strong liking and respect for the people and culture of English speaking countries was a part of their general openness towards the world outside Pakistan in general and developed western countries in particular. In addition, they also see English as a powerful international language and a passport to get access to the world at large outside Pakistan. I observed that while answering inquiries not specific to English speaking communities or while talking about the international uses of English, the participants seemed to see a relationship of English with a vague international community, which lies outside Pakistan and not with the native speakers of English only. In this regard, the participants used vague terms, e.g. *foreign, abroad, international*, etc. while explaining their plans to go outside Pakistan in future. For example, interviewee (A) said the following words; 'If we go to foreign countries or abroad then it matters a lot.'. Another interviewee told me what would happen, if he fails to get command over English language:

I can't move internationally, I can't be an international man. You can say in every discipline of life, we can't move because it is an international language. We must learn this language. (Interviewee R)

These statements reveal that for these participants English belongs to a vague international community they wish to explore for different purposes in future. Even those students who were asked to specify the countries they would like to travel to in future, they referred to a broader international community (e.g. Spain, Germany, France and UK) and not only English speaking countries. All participants stated that English would help them to interact with the people of international community. Interviewee (J) maintained:

English is very important if you want to interact with the rest of the world, not only English speaking countries but rest of the world because they themselves, rest of the world, know how English is important to communicate with [the] other rest of the world.

He added; 'It helps me making more friends in cyber world, off course. In Pakistan, you don't need English as such to make more friends but in cyber world, social networking, you need English'. Another participant shared similar views while explaining the benefits of English in his eyes; 'It has given me confidence to explore the world because the world

is now the world of English (Interviewee G). The statement clearly endorses the vitality of English in making and maintaining individual relations among the people of a vague and wider international community.

Discussion

The findings mentioned above lead us to discuss the following points:

The Symbolic Capital of English

The symbolic and instrumental value of English in Pakistan appeared to be a strong motive for its liking among the participants of this study. Their support for learning and promoting English was based on the realization that their own local languages are not fully developed to meet Pakistanis' needs of international communication and scientific knowledge. This situation clearly reflects a superiority of English over local languages, which is not unique to Pakistani society but it spans over other EFL/ESL contexts in the contemporary world. For example, in Pan and Block's (2011) study, Chinese students assigned a 'higher and superior status' to English over their native language because of the 'communication potential' of this '*de facto* global language' (p. 398). Andrea Parmegiani (2008) provides a similar account of a South African context;

Given the fact that English is a precondition for professional employment, it is not surprising that native speakers of African languages are more concerned with appropriating the highest possible level of English expertise than in increasing the market value of their mother tongues. (p. 121)

The findings of this study are also in line with De Swaan's (2001) hierarchical global language system theory which suggests that speakers of various languages in the world tend to learn a higher order language with greater communication and socio-economic benefits.

The overwhelming support for English language among the participants may also be explained by the backdrop of their socio-cultural context. This predominantly urban middle class sample of Pakistani students, already studying in universities and having some proficiency in English language, can see itself taking advantage of better English proficiency in future. Therefore, it may not be surprising that they are in favour of English playing a large role in the world and Pakistani society. This point may further be elaborated in the light of Bourdieu's (1991) forms of capital – economic, social, cultural and linguistic - working in a society. According to Bourdieu (1991), none of these forms

of capital can be valued highly unless they achieve symbolic capital, i.e. wider social recognition, legitimacy and acceptance. English carries enormous symbolic capital in Pakistan, which also promises easy access to economic (esteemed jobs, promotions, financial incentives) and social (entry into or the membership of influential social, business or academic communities) capital. The global spread and increase in the value of English as a lingua franca in recent times (Crystal, 2003, Pennycook, 2001) have also added to its symbolic capital in the country. Shamim (2011, p. 295) maintained that '[t]he huge promise of English as a 'world language' for economic and personal development seems to be a major driving force for the younger generation's desire to learn English in Pakistan', where the recent increase in its global economic capital has also 'added a universalistic dimension' to its teaching and learning (p. 291).

Linguistic Imperialism and the Appropriation of English Language

Despite an apparent rejection of the colonial legacy of English, participants' overall views suggested a form of continuing colonization of minds and a sustained state of 'linguistic imperialism', in which 'the domination of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages' (Phillipson, 1992, p. 47). Linguistic imperialism is not a static entity as new methods are usually adopted to maintain the power of a dominant language (e.g. English in the contemporary world). As socio-cultural and political conditions change in the relevant contexts, it may take 'new forms and realizations' (Canagarajah & Said, 2011, p. 388). After independence from the British rule, the imperialism of English has been maintained in Pakistan through local socio-cultural, economic, political and educational structures (institutions) and norms.

Participants' views that the proficiency in English is not only a major achievement in itself and an important personal trait but also a gateway to valuable jobs, social groups and the institutions of higher education clearly indicate the continuation of colonial education systems, where the 'successful learning of English was the primary goal', a necessary requirement for university education (Phillipson, 1992, p. 128), 'the official vehicle and the magic formula to colonial elitedom' (Ngugi, 1985, p.115 cited in Phillipson, 1992, p. 130). The situation is also similar to that described by Phillipson (1992, 2009) and Parmegiani (2008) in independent African countries where the imperialism of English and French is still deeply rooted. In Pakistan, it may be explained by the fact that the local ruling elite in the post-colonial era continued colonial educational and professional policies. Despite repeated promises and declarations by the successive governments, Urdu failed to replace English in official and higher education spheres (Rahman, 2003). This may possibly demonstrate an obvious lack of will on the

part of the ruling (bureaucratic and social) elite to change English-based professional and educational set up of which they were the greatest beneficiaries. Therefore, we may see a 'psychological manifestation of linguicism' (Canagarajah & Said, 2011, p. 390), in which 'an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language' (Phillipson, 1992, p. 47) persists.

In contrast to the continuation of linguistic imperialism, there have been enough global changes in last few decades – e.g. fall of direct political imperialism, the spread of English and its ownership worldwide, ever-increasing domestic/national uses of English, development of indigenous varieties of English, growing possibilities for masses to learn it in many developing societies including Pakistan – which make us believe that the democratic powers of English are also on the rise in the contemporary globalized world. While arguing about this new face of English in the Indian context, Graddol (2010) pointed out that 'English language has emerged as a powerful agent for change' and is viewed as a 'means of inclusion' in India, where it used to be 'a key part of the mechanism of exclusion because of its very unequal distribution in society' (p. 120).

Ambivalent Linguistic Attitudes and L2 Learners' Identities

Participants' strong attachment with English implies that they might have internalized the socio-cultural influences, pragmatic gains and positive popular discourses associated with English in Pakistani society (Islam, et al., 2013). Another possible interpretation of this phenomenon lies in their youthfulness because many young people may 'find in a foreign language a new mode of expression that enables them to escape from the confines of their own grammar and culture' (Kramsch, 2009, p. 14). Therefore, English may provide these young Pakistanis a medium to manifest their new identities, everyday choices, fashions, relationships. It can be a source of internal empowerment and achievement of future possible selves for Pakistani learners (Islam, et al., 2013).

Their ambivalent attitude towards English and the culture of English speaking countries - a strong liking for the English language and its native speakers without any explicit desire to integrate in their cultures - seems to be in line with the findings of Islam, et al., (2013). Participants' positive attitudes towards English and its speakers may be seen as their general openness to English speaking communities all over the world. In addition, their reference to a broader English speaking international community supports the argument that the ownership of English has shifted from a static Anglophone community to a vague and ever-expanding English speaking international community (Yashima, 2009, Ryan, 2009).

Participants' mixed reasons for liking English - both strong pragmatic as well as powerful emotional associations - also show the complex nature of their L2 attitudes. This is in line with Norton's (2000, p.11) proposition that 'a learner's investment in the target language may be complex, contradictory and in a state of flux'. In addition, their disliking for some cultural aspects may indicate their resistance to the socio-cultural influences challenging their own cultural ethos. This is particular to many L2 contexts, as argued by Kramsch and von Hoene (2001, p. 286), where '[l]earners may be ambivalent about identifying with the native speaker ideal and may indeed resist assimilation'. In this way, their resistance may not be seen as negative aspect of L2 learning rather it may give them an opportunity to appropriate/use English language in line with their cultural orientations, identities and needs. Similarly, participants' concerns for the deteriorating social place of the local language/s are quite natural and a reflection of their desire to love and preserve what is their own.

Conclusions and Implications of the Study

The study presents a detailed and in-depth view of Pakistani learners' attitudes towards English language in the contemporary Pakistani and international community. In response to the research questions posed for this study, it may be furthered that Pakistani learners have an ambivalent attitude towards English and its native speakers. The participants' simultaneous attitude of openness to and restraint from the culture of English speaking countries also has implications for their multilingual and socio-cultural identities. Their liking for some specific cultural aspects of Anglophone countries was based on the desire to see those positive values in their own society. They are fully aware of - or have internalized - the symbolic capital of English language in both Pakistani and global contexts and want to use it for their own future benefits. They also believed that English can provide them access to the socio-cultural and educational capital of western countries. The attitudes of Pakistani learners also reveal the elements of linguistic imperialism in which English still enjoys a prestigious position as compared to other languages in Pakistani context.

In this situation, as linguists have argued, the government should take practical steps to promote 'cultural pluralism' (Mansoor 2004, p. 345) and 'additive multilingualism' (Rahman 2003, p. 1) through the education system where students may learn English without any damage to their interest and skills in the regional languages. English and regional languages may co-exist in Pakistan without compromising learners' identities (Norton and Kamal 2003, p. 314). Policy makers may devise a balanced education policy in which local languages are also given due place and English may not be allowed to marginalize the essential roles of local languages. Further, a longitudinal study of

Pakistani learners' linguistic attitudes may be conducted to see variations in their attitudes at different stages of their leaning. This may provide us a more detailed understanding of the diverse nature of Pakistani learners' linguistic attitudes. English language teachers may also use the findings of this study to motivate their students in Pakistani ELT classrooms.

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