Challenges and Possibilities of Implementing English as an International Language (EIL) Curriculum in Pakistan

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Social Linguistic Complexity of English

The sociolinguistic complexity of English today is an undeniable reality, because it is an- and arguably- the international language. This status ascribed to English is a result of the growing number of countries granting a special role to English, either by making it an official language of the country or by fostering its growth as an additional language. Graddol (2006) estimated that "nearly 80% of today's communication in English takes place between bi-/ multilingual speakers of English", meaning that the so-called 'inner circle native speakers' of English have more than likely become 'the minority' (Bloch & Starks, 1999; Graddol, 1999; Jenkins, 2009; McKay, 2003). This complexity is further enhanced by the characterization of today's communicative exchanges by "variation in linguistic and cultural behaviour" (Xu,

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2002) as this language is being used as a "vehicle for users of English to project their cultural identities and to express their cultural conceptualisations" (Sharifian, 2011) to those outside their local environment.

It Is Now Ours

"The English language is now ours. We have colonized it too": this statement by the Filipino poet Gemino Abad (1997) clearly remarks on the current position of English language in this part of the world. What is this world? Samuel Daniel, in his 'Musophilus' (1599) refers to it as the "strange shores" in which English enters and "these strange shores are not language less" (Marlina, forthcoming). English in this world is thence "appropriated" (Canagarajah, 1999) and "renationalized" (McKay, 2002) to "suit the local taste bud" (Marlina, 2010).

English in Pakistan

One of the "un-language less" strange shores in which English entered and became an additional language to its linguistic repertoire is Pakistan. However the issue in Pakistan dwells within the study of English language as a separate identity from the world in which they live: victims of linguistic colonization as this language does not belong to them. What is required is an understanding that, "the English language is nobody's special property. It is the property of the imagination; it is the property of the language itself" (Walcott, 1986). Hence, this article moulds the coalescing of challenges in developing as well as implementing English as an international language (EIL) framework in curriculum design and ponders upon the possibilities for this achievement in the context of Pakistan. It is celebratory in the sense that it inculcates the understanding of EIL; what it means to teach English as a language that bridges nations and cultures and also fosters respect for the diversity of speakers who call English their tongue.

Debate Over Medium of Instruction in Pakistan

To begin with the ongoing challenges, the linguistic issue in Pakistan endures unrelentingly with an ongoing brawl over the 'medium of instruction' and the 'national language'. With the status of English as the official language of Pakistan, the government fails to inculcate an understanding of this role of English by demonstrating in the Constitution of Pakistan 1973 (Section 251) the following clauses:

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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.
2. Subject to clause (1), the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu.
3. Without prejudice to the status of National language, a Provincial Assembly may by law prescribe measure for the teaching, promotion and use of a Provincial language in addition to the National language.

The Official Status of English in Pakistan and the Role of English in Education

In light of these clauses, the official status of English in Pakistan requires serious deliberation. Despite English's constitutional trivialization, Urdu is still not the 'official language' of Pakistan nor has it entirely replaced English. This has also crippled the country's educational setup, polarising students according to English language capacity. Table 1 below (adapted from "Teaching and Learning in Pakistan: The Role of Language in Education", Coleman 2010) shows how Pakistan's language in education policy has evolved since independence in 1947.

Year	Event	Policy
Pre- 1947	Colonial Rule	Urdu medium for masses. English medium for elites.
1947	Independence	Urdu declared to be National language.
1959	Sharif Commission	Primary and secondary education in Urdu. Higher education in English.
1973	New Constitution	English to be replaced by Urdu within 15 years; province free to develop their own language policies.
1977	Coup by Zia-ul-Haq	Islamisation and Urduisation (of examinations)

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1989	Benazir Bhutto elected	English to be taught from year 1.
1998	New education policy	No statement regarding language policy.
1999	Coup by Pervez Musharraf	English to be taught from year 1 (where teachers are available)
2007	White paper	English to be taught from year 1. Math and science to be taught through English from year 6.
2009	National Education Policy	Science and mathematics to be taught through English in years 4 and 5; all science and mathematics to be taught through English from 2014.

Impact of Urdu-English Policy

Passing down through history, this Urdu-English policy contributes to a drastic level of distinction between the government and private education system in Pakistan. The English syllabus at the national or 'official' level (government education system) designed as per the constitution unwaveringly gives precedence to Urdu. Besides this language precedence, the minor amount of teaching of English in government schools is highly "ritualised" (Coleman, 2010). For example, a detailed ethnographic study by Fauzia Shamim (1993) discovered the mechanized approach of teaching grammar at government-run schools, which consists of the following steps:

1) The form of grammar item is explained by the teacher.
2) Pupils write sentences illustrating the grammar item.
3) The teacher dictates an essay or letter or writes it on the blackboard to be copied by pupils.
4) Pupils memorize the essay or letter and reproduce it in the examination.

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Such provision of memorized texts means that teaching of English in government run schools neglects development of active and passive skills. According to Coleman (2010), "A government school pupil needs a further 2.5 years to achieve what a year 3 pupil in a private elite school can do in English".

Reasons for Resistance to English

The major reasons behind this refusal by the government education system for using English language, English textbooks and resources as being taught in the private educational system are:

1) *Funding*: The insufficient amount of funds available for the government institutions is a reality one cannot deny. Masses of population from all walks of life secure their future in government institutions where education is free and textbooks are provided. Hence, a primary school textbook which, for instance, consolidates grammar conventions is unaffordable (AUD $15.50 = PKR Rs.1459) especially by population residing in a government set up as "three-fifths of the population live on less than $2 (Rs.188) a day and thus are unlikely to be able to spare funds for their children's education" (Coleman, 2010)

2) *Westernization*: Inculcating cultures from around the world can result in "destruction of the older cultures and local self recognition" (Bacha, 2012).

Extreme Hardship at the Masters Level

With these linguistic battles taking place at the grass root level, a student managing to reach their master level are struck upon with the complexity of language being taught at this level. The standard of English at the master's level takes a phenomenal leap ahead, the students especially from the government- run system who come this far are ineffectual at handling the highly complex course of studies in the language at this level. The proof lies in the continually deteriorating results of this exam over the past few years. "In MA English (2010, 2011) the pass percentages were 2.35% and 1.16% respectively. While in MA Final (2010, 2011) the pass percentages were 14.28% and 13.33% respectively" (Sarfaraz, 2013).

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Status Symbol

On the other hand, the non-adherence to constitutional rules by the private education system has created severe ramifications for government-run schools which includes most essentially the discriminatory divide between the 'educated' (English users) and 'uneducated' masses. Unarguably, proficiency in English is among the outstanding status symbols in Pakistan, "English may be learned and used because it is associated with certain identities such as a 'modern' or a 'social elite' identity" (Clyne & Sharifian, 2008). Secondly, a most excruciating challenge still faced in the contemporary Pakistan is a 'preferential treatment to white native speakers of English' (Mahboob, 2009) in the private schools. According to Bacha (2012), "Many people in Pakistan still agree that native speakers are better English teachers than non-native English speakers". The choice of a 'native speaker teacher' also advantages the choice of an 'exonormative model' which automatically undermines the value and apparent legitimacy of a local teacher's own model of English. "Two tenets of native speaker English language teaching methodology are that English should be taught 'monolingually'- this despite there being 'no principled reasons for avoiding L1 in the classroom'- and that the ideal teacher is therefore a monolingual native speaker" (Kirkpatrick, 2007). Belief in these two tenets further undermines the value of multilingual local teachers.

Higher Education Commission Formulation

Based on this polarisation between the two education systems of Pakistan (government vs. private), the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) has formulated some policies to equalize the educational margin but things start to go awry when it comes to implementation. "There is a missed connection between the constitutionally defined status of English and the HEC definition" (Sarfaraz, 2013). HEC policies (2012) regarding English at the BS/BA and MS/MPhil levels with reference to reading, listening, and speaking skills include:

   i.   To develop the ability to communicate effectively.

  ii.   To understand and use English to express ideas and opinions related to students real life experiences inside and outside classrooms.

 iii.   Write organized academic texts including examination answers with topics or thesis statements and supporting details.

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iv.   Write argumentative essays and course assignments.

Evidently, none of these goals is being met since the "total proportion of population that speaks English is determined to be about three to four percent- a number startling enough to propel us into making a realistic assessment of where the state of English language is really going in the country" (Sarfaraz, 2013).

In light of the challenges posed above, there still remains a placated feeling mainly because solutions do exist and also due to the recent celebration of the localized variety of English in Pakistan. The ongoing battle between the government and private education system can only be resolved once the conflict between the constitutionally defined status of English and HEC (Higher Education Policy) is elucidated. The polarisation between students resulting in unequal accumulation of professional development can only be demarcated once the government reconsider the constitution and education policies in light of the current status of English as a global and international language.

A Proposed Strategy

For instance, a recent report by Hywel Coleman, "Teaching and Learning in Pakistan: The Role of Language in Education" based on his consultancy visit to Pakistan in March 2010 laid out a proposed strategy for the development of English and English language teaching supporting policy as part of 2009 National Education Policy of Pakistan, which includes:

a.   "A strategy for supporting the learning and teaching of English in Pakistan should be informed by the National Education Policy's requirement and a comprehensive plan of action for English and these should give special attention to the poor and marginalised" (Coleman, 2010).

b.   "Raising awareness regarding the importance of mother tongue education" (Coleman, 2010).

The implementation of this policy has already been regulated in some of Pakistan's well renowned private schools and surprisingly in some government schools through introduction of the 'sandwich technique' at Kindergarten level. This technique promotes the utilization of mother tongue in classroom to grasp the concepts better as an ESL learner. For instance, when introducing students to the concept of 'apple' in the classroom, there is

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inclusion of student's mother tongue *saib* (apple in Urdu). This classroom technique is then transferred outside by the students when they locate apples in a shop or at home and vocalize s*aib* to an 'apple' thereby achieving the second policy of Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (2012), "to understand and use English to express ideas and opinions related to students real life experiences inside and outside classroom".

Growing Appreciation in Classrooms

More recently, Pakistani classrooms have also started observing an "appreciation of 'L1 use' and 'code-switching' as a valuable pedagogical tool in the classroom" (Llurda, 2004). Urdu borrowings as well as indigenous lexical and grammatical usages are beginning to find their way into locally produced English textbooks in Pakistan. For instance, Oxford University Press, Pakistan launched their recent "School Textbooks and Supplementary Readers Catalogue, 2013" which includes the following reading list for ages 3 years and up:

i. *Ismat's Eid* (AUD $1.35 = PKR Rs. 127)
ii. *Babloo*: The little boy who didn't like books! (AUD $1.35 = PKR Rs. 127)
iii. Where is *Amma*? (AUD $1.35 = PKR Rs. 127)

Code Switching and Other Processes

'Code switching' and utilization of 'local names' helps satisfy the needs of both the promotion of 'English' and in this particular case "Pakistani variety of English" while at the same time the teachers can internationalize the lesson, for instance, in teaching the lesson "Ismat's Eid" (Oxford University Press, 2013), teachers can inculcate readings like "Anjali's Diwali" (India) and "Kim's lunar festival" (China), where students will gain an understanding of how "speakers of different World Englishes employ features of English to express their cultural conceptualisations and world views" (Sharifian, 2009).

Localizing Textbooks

The reason for including the monetary value with the books mentioned above brings us to a harsh reality, "Pakistan ranks 141st from 182 countries in UNDP's Human development Index for 2009, placing it in the category that shares characteristics with some of the world's poorest nations" (Coleman, 2010). Hence, increasing government funding for education seems infeasible and what some might say idiocy**.** The solution has been provided

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by some local publishing companies of Pakistan which take the same book say, "Babloo: The little boy who didn't like books!" (AUD $1.35 = PKR Rs. 127), secure copyright for publishing and sell the same book for AUD 10 to 15 cents = PKR Rs. 10 to 15 (lack of quality in comparison to original). Therefore, one can see there is always a possibility: not only can the utilization of a 'locally defined EIL curriculum' solve the issue of affordability but help achieve what Widdowson (1998) stated, "Texts need to be localized to serve a meaningful communicative intent. What makes a text real or authentic is that it is meaningful and appropriate to a particular set of contextualised conditions".

Think Globally, Teach Locally

Moving beyond the technical aspects, the focus of this article now shifts towards the 'understanding of EIL and its teaching' in Pakistan. Coined by Kramsch and Sullivan, "think globally, teach locally" (1996) will allow current and future teachers of Pakistan to take their baby steps towards the encompassing of English as an international language in their classrooms. This includes, firstly, provide students with an awareness of the "diversity of English use today so that they are better prepared to deal with English interaction in international contexts" (McKay, 2012). This can be achieved through:

1. Enhance learner's receptive skills in processing different varieties of English (McKay, 2012).
2. Promote an awareness that EIL no longer belongs solely to the speakers of the inner circle (McKay, 2012).

Students generally in Pakistan have a conception of English as a 'global lingua franca', but what they fail to understand and disappointingly what is missed in the curriculum and teaching in Pakistan is 'the recognition and awareness of this diversity in English being spoken across cultures'. Therefore, to stimulate students in thinking about the diversity of English today, a global pedagogical space can be created through:

1. Make students explore grammatical and lexical variations that exist within their own country. The legitimacy of varieties of English existing beyond the normative inner circle can only be achieved once students start taking ownership of the variety they speak. Works of scholars like Robert J Baumgardner (1987, 1990 & 1995), Tariq Rahman (1991) and Ahmar

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Mahboob (2009) explore the indigenization of English in Pakistan and their research on Pakistani newspapers and Pakistani English literature can serve as useful pedagogical tools.

2. Have readings on the diversity of standards in English today. Books like "The Amazing World of Englishes: A Practical Introduction" (2012) contain resources (articles, texts) and activities about Englishes which can not only be adopted but also adapted to meet the local as well as global needs of the students.

3. The underlying issue is "the position in which the English language finds itself today as an international language" (Baumgardner, 2006) and "how" to pose this status is a critical subject that teachers are dealing with while designing and implementing an EIL mindset in their classrooms. In an EIL classroom if one were to merely expose students to different varieties of English in the hope of promotion and respect for these varieties, this might lead to "confusion or resistance when students are confronted with different types of English users or uses. Students may be shocked by varieties of English that deviate from the inner circle English, view them as deficient (rather than different), or grow disrespectful to such varieties and users, which seem counter-productive to facilitating international understanding" (Matsuda, 2003). In light of the above challenges of merely introducing varieties of English in a classroom, EIL literature guides in considering the specific functions for which learners need English today. Based on a survey reported in "Inside Guide – Pakistan" (British Council, 2013), "more than 25,000 Pakistani students are expected to pursue higher education at colleges and universities abroad in 2013-2014". In view of Widdowson (1994), "the role of English is that of the world's lingua franca in a myriad of diverse settings. More often than not, these diverse settings do not include a native speaker of English", and most of these Pakistani students instead of pursuing education in the normative inner circle countries are expanding their horizon and selecting countries from the outer and expanding circles as according to a recent statistic, "over 5000 Pakistani medical students are studying in China as of September 2012" (British Council, 2013). Similarly there are "about 100 Pakistani students in the National University of Singapore, studying subjects

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such as health, engineering, computer science, law etc" (British Council, 2013): therefore, based upon the needs and goals of the learners in using English, one can take this as an opportunity of introducing diverse varieties of English (for instance Englishes spoken in China and Singapore) without the fear of shock or adamant towards these varieties. Secondly, awareness towards other varieties depends on the geo-political and socio-economic relationships of a country. To elaborate upon this, students might consider "A Guide to Vietnamese English" in a Pakistani context to be pointless and inconsequential based upon the minimal relationship Pakistan shares with Vietnam. On the other hand, if one were to introduce the "indigenization of English in China", this might spark students' interest in a Pakistani context due to the strong political, economic and cultural ties between these two countries. More often than not, business students are required to deal with issues surrounding communication with China while discussing for instance, the "Karakoram Highway" (highest paved international road connecting China and Pakistan) and this can be taken as a prospect by the teachers to explore the English used in China as being different and reflective of its culture. This will not only promote an awareness of the variety but inspire students to understand and negotiate across differences between their variety and the one utilized in China.

Conclusion

When a foreign tongue crosses the threshold of a strange shore and becomes reflective of its socio-cultural reality, it is altered so as to enable it to express the way this reality is created by its new users. This condition facilitates in understanding the lexical and semantic changes English has had to grow through in referring to the distinctive culture of Pakistan. English in Pakistan is evolving its own identity. With 18 million consumers of English, constituting 11% of total population of Pakistan (Boltan, 2008), English has been adapted enough to "acquire local traits and happily pass for an indigenized Pakistani language" (Hashmi, 1990). To elaborate upon this, take the following example (from Anwar, 2007)

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"We in Pakistan are being pulled in different directions while the *Khakis* and their *Chamchas* control the country's real estate" (Dawn Lahore, Daily Newspaper Pakistan, May 21st 2006).

To those non-Urdu speaking societies, this headline is probably incomprehensible. Yet, it is indicative of the linguistic changes which are taking place in English which is spoken today in Pakistan. Speakers of English are now taking advantage of and "exploring new dimensions of English usage, phonetically, lexically, syntactically, semantically and pragmatically" (Honna, 2005) in the light of reflecting a diversity of disparate cultures. These differences of English are not viewed as "inferior examples of incorrect speech" (Marlina, forthcoming) rather, as vehicles for projecting socio-cultural identities. Henceforth, English as an international language is no longer a romanticized notion, it is a 'dynamic entity' locally and globally unique and one of its kind.

To summarize, EIL is like a broth of distinct yet equal varieties and therefore each variety deserves to be tasted in light of the needs of the palate (contextual needs of the society).

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