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THE IMPERIALISTIC NOTIONS IN THE LINGUISTIC ELEMENTS OF EDUCATION POLICY OF PAKISTAN (2009): A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The implementation of the use of English language in the educational structure of Pakistan has been in a hiatus because of political differences since the country became independent. This paper considers what it terms the imperialist politics behind the promotion of the English language in the most recent Education Policy of Pakistan. The over-representation of the English language in Pakistan has its imperialistic roots in the legacy left by British rule over subcontinent. This paper shows that the promotion of the official and second language of Pakistan in Education Policy has not only hindered the educational growth of the regional languages, but is also the by-product of the imperialism ingrained in the language through discourse-historical analysis. This paper considers the regional language to be limited as identity markers of nationhood in Pakistan, along with a hackneyed proclamation of the global significance of English language need in the Education Policy. It argues that linguistics imperialism in the Education Policy can lead to the disassociated identity of the speakers of regional languages and further social stratification in the country.

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1. Introduction

Pakistan is a post-colonial state, which was previously colonized by British. Given this, the country has a rich colonial heritage, which has left a strong imperialistic imprint in its cultural makeup and local linguistic features. Atif (2013) has identified this aspect as an aftereffect of colonialism. This history of the country is indispensable in order to question the imperialism after British Raj in the subcontinent. There are disguised imperialistic authorities in the country, as the English language is preferred and deemed more acceptable among national institutes of Pakistan. In this way, a national document like Education Policy (2009), which prescribes the language policies all over the country provides an intriguing subject to study the working of imperialism behind the English language.

When imperialism is practiced through language, it is called as a 'linguistic imperialism' (Philipson, 1992). In Pakistan, the English language was prescribed to be the official language according to the constitution of 1973, with a plan to be replaced by Urdu after some time, but since 1947 and today, it hasn't been made possible. This can be related to the anglicized elite of Pakistan, in turn following a traditional British imperialism. The education system in Pakistan is also segregated into English and Urdu mediums, the language policy throughout the education system has been decided under the mark of British imperialism.

The critical discourse analysis developed this approach; it is a multimethod approach which triangulates information from different fields (Wodak, 2012). The analysis particularly linked the analyzed entity with the history of the country and its impact in turn over national policies of Education.

In planning of education policies, the decision makers other than professional planners, are involved from administrative and political domains (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). In the case of Pakistan, constitutional, administrative and political structures seek to coherently design policies. Khan (2006) notes that administrative and political structures of Pakistan have conflicting identities, some fighting for and against the unitary existent state, for instance the negation of linguistic diversity in 1948 by imposition of Urdu, which led to ultimate alienation of East Bengal in 1971. Khan (2006) asserts that Urdu language was used to justify Pakistani unitary religious identity. The governing authorities in Pakistan have been exercising their power since 1947, through employing English language, which in turn opens lucrative opportunities in employment (Rahman, 1995).

The policy-making and the status of local languages in any context with a rich linguistic background such as Pakistan itself presents a national challenge. Moreover, according to statistics, more than one-fifth of local languages employed in Khyber Pakhtunkhawa are expected to be dead by the next decade (Zakaria, 2014). In the country like Pakistan, failure of promotion of regional languages runs parallel to other historical reasons ingrained in its sociocultural setup, whose roots date back to its colonial age (Zakaria, 2014).

The English language has a very prestigious status in Pakistan as it is taught in the education system. English language is taught from primary level to higher studies. This has created a kind of a linguistic imbalance in the country where a foreign language has been promoted, leading to linguistic ignorance of the local languages.

2.Literature Review

Discourse-historical analysis is a multimethod approach which has been employed in this research, developed by CDA, it triangulates data from different fields (Wodak, 1999). Language is a building block that integrates communities (Gee, 1999). Humans enclose their expression within their language. Gee (1999) notes that it is the language which is made political, it is established in a sense that when it is employed, it always implicates a hidden motive. Language constructs views and perspectives in relation to different contexts, which in turn on repetition and exposure breed 'situated meanings' (ibid). Discourse analysis considers these meanings. Linguistic events are closely interlinked with the socio-cultural context they are employed in. Discourse encrypts and breeds social views and relations while discourse analysis decrypts these views through language (Paltridge, 2006). Discourse constructs as well as alters the social

views and norms but in this, languages plays a primary role. Gee and Handford (2012) on an exemplary discourse analysis attribute the analysis of a policy to be juxtaposed with its respective history. Discourse analysis can be viewed as a fundamentally active force, according to Ron Scollon, in a democratic public discourse, policies are manifested after being argued and negotiated and decided (as cited in Gee & Handford, 2012). Discourse is the knowledge beyond the building blocks of language, such as words and sentences. Language shape the discourse which shapes the world, which socially constructs as well as influences the reality (Paltridge, 2006).

The discourse analysis becomes critical discourse analysis as soon as the analysis centralizes around the working of power and dominance through language (Van Dijk, 2001). As Halloran (2011) puts it that language contains hegemonic power issue, based on ideologies and social processes. The critical discourse analysis particularly participates in questioning the social wrongs, such as racism or discrimination, Fairclough (2012) notes that the approaches in CDA differ by the thinly demarcated social issues.

Critical discourse analysis highlights a set of linguistic elements, employed to maintain power in a given group. Discourse-historical analysis calls it the 'field of action', when considering the relationship of language, its context and power elements (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). Discourse-historical analysis is an approach which considers history and contextual information in conjunction with the entity in question, discourse-historical analysis relates layers of relative data, along with the historical pattern (Fairclough, Wodak & Mudlerrig, 2011), as this research has considered history of language in the context of Pakistan on a political spectrum and traced it in the most recent National Education Policy. Wodak and Reisgel (2001) agree on the fact that the discourse-historical approach is the only approach which weaves together the context, history and all relative background information, hence taking all sociopolitical and cultural insights (Wodak & Reisigl, 2001).

According to Wee (2011), the planning of language policy became recognized as a legitimate field when the number of post-colonial states in the world arose in number, out of which particularly Asian post-colonial states stood with a challenge of national and ethnic identities. It relatively notes further in relation to the Asian post-colonial states, that the language policy planning was burdened with a cause to define a congruent language policy which could be agreed upon in diverse ethnic and classist context (ibid). When it comes to planning of educational policies, there is never a definite technical pathway instead a lot of other factors weave an intricate process, for instance a number of organizations with diverse vision are involved (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). It is a necessity to involve different systems; policy planning for education sector, as a process, differs internationally, and since the education is imparted based on the governed ideological and sociopolitical background (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). According to Haddad and Demsky (1995), the planning of education policy, typically needs to follow some significant steps: contextual analysis and research in the respective area, which has been subjected to denial in Pakistan as evidenced by Bengali (1999) that since inception of the country, the Education Policy planning adopted a rather fanciful approach. Haddad and Demsky (1995) assert that a planning of Education Policy shall recognize parameters of its feasibility, which though varies with the country's respective economic power, but every policy shall be given enough time period to reap its outcomes; Bengali (1999) on the other hand calls the educational policies' initiatives in Pakistan to be an act of gymnastics, particularly in 80s. Haddad and Demsky (1995) confess the primary role of political decision making in educational policy planning, but it is a rather advisable and urged attempt to involve all communities; Alam (1991) mentions the hegemonic alienation of communities in planning of education policies, which resulted as 'Bangladesh' in Pakistan (as cited in Rahman, 1995). The definition of education policies is indeed an extremely intricate procedure, which involves a large number of stakeholders (Haddad & Demsky, 1995). The government of Pakistan has evidentially stood it's ground on language policy in all the three constitutions, which signified that the Urdu language will replace the English language until arrangements (Ijaz Ahmed, 2011). In this regard, Rahman (2004) asserts that the policies of Pakistan since its

inception have been maintaining the English's hegemonic role by ill-treating the regional languages, except the Sindhi language, which is the only provincial language employed in education sector (Rahman, 2004). Rahman (2004) further asserts that except the Sindhi language, there is no regional language which has been employed as a medium of instruction in further education, though even the use of Sindhi language has dropped according to its speakers, in comparison to its use under British Empire. Taking another instance, the Pashto language in Pakistan, which owns quite large number of speakers is still not promoted in powerful institutions by the governing authorities (Rahman, 1999). The English language has been imposed in all the policies and it is indeed the continuation of the colonial mind set prior to partition; Rahman asserts that such policies have never really provided the favorable environment to foster use of other regional languages (Rahman, 2006). Rahman (2006) also agrees that such Anglicized policies have only paid lip service to regional linguistic sources ever since the inception.

The planning of policy throughout Pakistan's history is found to be an act of gymnastics as educational planners, language planners and civil bureaucracy has never followed one coherent pathway. There doesn't seem to be a consensus in language policy, since all governments have been coming up with different agendas. The language employed for language policy shifted from realistic terms to more flowery expressions and even effusive expressions giving topoi of English as language of science, topoi of economic disability to maintain Urdu terminologies in an era of science. Since 1975, policies and even the revised versions of the policies have been limited in their focus to Urdu and the English language only completely excluding the regional languages. Many a times the country has been distrained by emerging linguistic issues, globally and nationally, but importance laid on English and Urdu has continued (Rehman & Sadruddin Sewani, 2013). Not just this, Rehman and Sewani (2013) have assertted that the entire higher educational system in Pakistan has been structured in the English language. The education system of Pakistan has recently been reviewed and it mentions the sole English and Urdu language in education sector, as per defined by the legislature (Ministry of Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education Academy of Educational Planning and Management, 2014). The imperial rule never really ceased as ignorance of regional languages is seen in all post-colonial states. As in this, the teaching of a foreign language at the expense of first language is linguistic imperialism.

3.Methodology

The discourse-historical analysis is a field of critical discourse analysis, which according to Wodak (2016) differs only in the orientation in research interest and framework. Through this approach, the imperialistic notions in the Education Policy focused through historical dimensions, following step-by-step the theoretical knowledge provided on imperialism in education policies. Current research used linguistic categories as proposed by Wodak (1999), Reisigl and Wodak (2001).

Discourse-historical approach has mainly been divided into referential and predicational strategies. The said strategies are discursive strategies which are employed in the analysis of text under research. Discourse Historical Approach was developed by Vienna School of Discourse Analysis in 1980's. Their interest was to see how issues like discrimination, racism and anti-Semitism can be spread through language and affect our national identity. The aim of discourse-historical approach "attempts to integrate a large quantity of available knowledge about the historical sources and the background of the social and political fields in which discursive events are embedded" (Wodak, 2001). This model is thus very important because it focuses on the historical aspects of the text.

The discourse-historical approach has given strategies to analyze the discourse through content topics, like theme identification in critical discourse analysis. There are micro and macro strategies which distinguish the text on the basis of sentence construction, word choice, assimilation, topos of comparisons, justification and legitimization, topos of force and dismantling strategies. Micro strategies in the discourse-historical analysis explored the text through the sub strategies like linguistic exclusion, classification, collectivization and social problemaitization.

4.Discussion:

English language has been prioritized as in terms of first, 'carrying knowledge, competitive, globalized world order', while regional languages have been called to be having regional importance. Strategy of collectivization has been used to call regional languages as vernaculars as if they are only functional for this. The constructive strategies revealed the English language has been used as metaphor to denote a state of superiority over other languages, a social prestige, denied to other languages theoretically and practically. In research it has been found out about that the wording it was for importance of the English wasn't enough, though it was strongly implied. The major importance was revealed when text was studied through strategy of dissimilation. Through dissimilation, it was known that English's importance was compared and given absolute advantage over others. This comparison act implied the importance of English language. The text itself accepted that the English was responsible for economic differences, English was given as an imperialistic notion by where it has been applied and how it will impact on society. Vitalization strategy showed that the English language has been used in the Education Policy as a tool for civilizational advancement. Tahir (2017) notes that language power in making people at more advantage because of the particular language they speak is not practical but in Education Policy, only one language is entirely hegemonizing the polity itself. This disassociation from vernaculars causes complexes in society (Penny Cook, 2001), which is further grounded by this policy. The glorification of English in all domains (political, social, and educational) is a result of historical legacy of colonialism. This promotion of the English language at cost of vernaculars dismantles the identity of these regional languages. The analysis has revealed that the English language is used as a symbol of prestige, respect, economic stability, social acceptance, while the vernaculars are entirely ignored. Tahir (2017) also notes that this makes the speakers of English language more powerful, an increasingly exclusive elite. On the other hand, the out-group, the speakers of vernaculars are deprived of political rights, made unprivileged and alienated. The imperialistic notions leading to superior status of the English language in the Education Policy, as through discourse-historical analysis, is the product of elite of Pakistan with imperialistic mindset.

5.Conclusion

The findings of this study helped this research to come to a conclusion that the Education Policy of Pakistan has imperialist notions imbued in it. The promotion of English language in Pakistan has been equivocated with the political dominance of one group over the other i.e. of elite over the non-elite. In answer to the first question of this research, all the strategies employed in the Education Policy have showed clear promotion of the English language and the de-promotion of the regional languages. This answer in relation to the working of linguistic imperialism also showed that there is deeply ingrained imperialism behind the promotion of the English language. The characteristics of linguistics imperialism defined by Philipson (1992) and the promotion of the English language in the Policy align in this respect. The analysis has revealed that English language has been ideologically, politically, economically and socially compared to the regional languages, repetitively, which is traceable in the historical context of this research. The answer to the second question of this research has been complemented by the former conclusion that ultimately old imperialistic, English driven Anglicism persists. The analysis has revealed that such characteristics have made the Policy impractical and unrealistic in the context of Pakistan.

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