
Paklish Verses English: Lexical and Semantic Features

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the differences between Pakistani English (PE) and International English (IE) with special reference to Lexical and Semantic features of Pakistani English. It explores that how PE is different from other varieties of English, further, it explores how PE borrowed words from Islamic culture, Arabic Language, Persian language and the experiences of Pakistani cultures. Data has been collected from newspapers for the analysis of words and its influences. The study is qualitative and descriptive in its nature.

Pakistani English, Culture, Islamic Influence, lexical and semantic change

1. INTRODUCTION

East India Company came to India and brought English language. At that time only Elite class of India used English language. It was used in medical profession, courts, armed forces etc. In the constitutions of India it was stated that Hindi would replace English in 1945, however this change was postponed later on (Apte, 1976). Pakistan came into existence in 1947, carved out of British Raj in India; English which was used at time was similar to Indian as well. English came later into Pakistan as it was partitioned later; this is one of the reasons that India established stronger English than Pakistan. (Jussawalla, 1985)

The constitution of Pakistan has also demanded to change or replace the official language from English to Urdu, but as like in India it did not happen. Most of the educational intuitions in Pakistan still use English language especially in elite schools such as Aitchison College Lahore, Burn hall and most the private sector schools, colleges and universities. They instruct students in English Language, but mostly students are unable to use it in everyday English (Rahman 2002: 288-309).

The students of these educational intuitions do write well and speak well which has been called as acrolectal Pakistani English (PE). Most of Pakistani writers also have international recognitions such as Bapsi Sidhwa, Ahmad Ali, Kamila Shamsie etc.

Pakistani English is also referred as Paklish/Pinglish, a term used for variety of English used in Pakistan. The term Pakistani English (PE) was already used in the research work Robert Baumgarder which researchers think is an inadequate term or incorrect term. Because in Pakistani English (PE) there are many varieties of English such as Pashtun English, Sindhi English, Urduized English, Baluchi English. All these varieties are because of language interference.

In Pakistan English is very much demanded by the parents and they sent their children to English medium schools (Mahboob, 2002). This report was confirmed by the British council and they are of the view that for the basic schooling, mother tongue should be used and English for the higher level (Coleman, 2010). PEELI (2003) states, that both public and private schools teachers have insufficient knowledge of English.

Despite the fact that research confirms basic schooling in mother tongue, but parents would insist for English.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

PE has been studied in individual lexical, phonological and grammatical features. It is in the early stages of recognition (Mehboob, 2004). Mehboob (2004) reports that there has been a shift now to the register variation-based studies, this change brings identity to Paklish.

Multidimensional analysis has been utilized in the previous research in order to explore it externally and internally in different registers of Paklish. The arguments urges to study register based than individual linguistics features.

Kachru (1965) used the term “non-native” English for Indian English and stressed on Indianness use of English than Englishness of British English. He further states that literature available was on varieties of English but some references was given to PE as he reported that Indian English shares some of the features with other countries as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Srilanka.

South-Asia as an area for linguistics study is also found in other researches (Masica, 1976). Garhard Leitner, a German scholar of English, who describes the South-Asian linguistics features but he does not provide references to the published sources on Pakistani English (Leitner, 2012). This reservation urges that there are Pakistani English and Indian English and both speakers are expected to confirm to it rather than aiming for Englishness in British or American English (Halliday et al, 1964).

Pakistan was enlisted in ESL countries along with other English speaking countries (Compbell at al, 1987:42). In Taxonomy of comprehensiveness of EFL and ESL countries, Moag (1982) enlisted Pakistan in neither of the two i.e. EFL and ESL countries.

Kachru (1998) gives many examples of cultural specific lexical items from Pakistani newspaper and refers to many varieties of English based in regions. Pakistani English is different from that of Indian English, because Pakistan is based on Muslim ideology and Islamic history, thus according to Kachru, many words in Pakistani English are borrowed from Arabic, Persian and contemporary English.

For this reason, based on Lexical and semantic, Pakistani English should be considered as non-native varieties. An American scholar Baumgarder has raised attention to only this aspect and terms it as Pakistani English in his two papers (Baumgarder 1987: 241-252 and 1990). He is of the view that Pakistani English can be taught by utilizing Pakistani English newspaper mainly through the use of verbs and adjectives.

Mahboob (2002) has also contributed many chapters to many books on PE after 2002. Like other researchers such as Hina Ashraf. He is still very active on PE. From the work of anthropologist like Kohlar (1937), Malinowski (1950), it can be inferred that culture determines language and language determines consciousness.

Language changes whenever a foreign language is used in to ones cultural reality. This is how English is shifted to many other cultures. It is because of the cultures of Pakistan that brings distinctive features of Pakistani English in lexical and semantic changes. Till 1989, only Baumgarder (1987) and Kachru (1984) referred to the lexical and semantic aspects of PE, before this other aspects were published, for instance Fauzia Shamim along with EH Andrey publish papers on Urduization on PE (1993). Mehboob (2009) worked on islamlization effects on PE and how it borrowed words from Arabic.

3. OBJECTIVES

This article will explore the lexical and semantic features of PE, how it is different from other varieties of English.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

According to Winreich, there are many ways through which vocabulary can interfere. Language A morphemes can be transferred to language B and language B morphemes can be used in new way in which the morpheme are culturally identified in language B. Further he states that words from one language can be borrowed, semantically changed, translated and hybridized.

The experience of British has been shared by Pakistan and India both therefore IE shares most of Lexical items with PE. On the other hand, words in PE are related to Arabs, Pakistani culture and Islam, are not shared with IE.

4. ANALYSIS

Borrowing

Borrowing in PE is from Islamic culture, historical experiences of Pakistan culture, and Arabic. Mehboob (2009) stated that there is influence of Islam on PE and PE is much influenced by Islamic ideas and values and has south Asian Islamic sensitivities in it. Given are few examples of the influence of Islamization on PE.

(A) ISLAMIC CULTURE AND RELIGION

Borrowing from the register of Islam

(1) *This is what the Mujahideen leaders tell me.*

Explanation: The word *Mujahideen* has been borrowed from Islamic Culture and such word cannot be seen in IE. This means the fighters in way of God for God. We can see that there is no such concept of this term in IE.

(2) *A Nemaaz-e-Janaza was offered.*

Explanation: The word *Nemaaz-e-Janazaa* is not seen in IE, the word is borrowed from Islamic idea and shows influence on PE. The word means special prayers said at hears.

(3) *The language of the Kafirs.*

Explanation: *Kafir* is a word in Islam used for the Non-believers in Islam and is borrowed from Arabs.

Such words are directly borrowed from Arabs that PE users do not translate them any way. PE has also been influenced by the Persians, as Mughal kings have used Persian as their official language. According to Rahman (2011), gradually Urdu mixed up with Persian words and was used in India, for example in Dehli, Lucknow and Decacan.

INFLUENCE OF PERSIAN ON PE

(1) *ZERB-I-MOMIN*

The word *Zarb* is a Persian origin word which means “Blow” and *Momin* is Arabs origin word which means “pious Muslim”.

(2) *Qawwali*

The word has Arabic origin which means ‘singing with repetition which was held among Indians Muslims.

There can be a list of many words that had been borrowed for instance: Kabab, Pulao, Shahnai etc. these words are directly used in PE without translation and these are only translated in front of foreigner for explanation only.

PAKISANTANI CULTURE

Both India and Pakistan share some traits of their culture, however still there are customs and values which did not exist in Indian Muslim content. Some of these cultural influences on English would be discussed.

(1) *“Hathora group kills two more”*

Explanation: In 1983 there came a group that killed people with a hammer=Hathora.

(2) *“.....is almost Mohajir dominated.”*

Explanation: The word Mohajir is used for the people migrated from Pakistan to India or vice versa after partition. Mohajir is Arabic and Urdu in origin that means Emigrants.

PAKISTANI LANGUAGE

There are many languages being spoken in Pakistan such as Pashtu, Urdu, Punjabi, Hindko, Sindhi and PE has borrowed many words from these languages such as:

- (1) “*Jirga imposes rs2000 fine*” (Baumgarder, 1987)

The word *Jirga* is a Pashtu word which is used for counseling in Pashtoon culture.

- (2) “*Sain*” *he said.* (Ayaz Qadri, 1987)

The word “*Sain*” is used for Sir in Sindhi language.

SEMANTIC CHANGES

According to Weinreich ‘if two languages have semantemes, or units of content, which are partly similar, the interference consists in the identification and adjustment of the semantemes to fuller congruence’.

- (1) *Chips*

Is used for Potato and french fries in PE. Chips means a piece, a bit or to cut a small piece from large.

- (2) *Family*

In BE, family can be referred too only husband and wife, but in PE family refers to all members in a family.

- (3) *Give Examination*

The term is used in PE by students for taking their examinations which is actually direct translation from Urdu or Hindi language “*Imtehan Dena*”

- (4) *Hotel*

In PE it means a restaurant not only a place where one stays.

- (5) *Take examination*

Is used in PE by the teachers and is also direct translation of “*Imtehan lena*” from Urdu or Hindi into PE.

- (6) *Jack*

In PE it means how someone approached particular person for some advantaged.

Mohsin (2009) is of the opinion that she has been addressed differently in letter to her such as “Lady Journalist” not as “journalist” because in PE journalist only refers to Males journalist; another example can be “Lady Doctor” not Doctor. She has also given other PE words such as: Hippy for curvy women, safety for razors and sexually transmitted diseases, getting sugar for diabetes etc.

TRANSLATION

In PE, many words are translated from Urdu to PE such as

- (1) Four-Twenty

Is translated from Indian penal code 420 in charge of cheating.

- (2) Keeps fasts

Is the translation of “*Roza rakna*”

- (3) Light gone

Refers to electric power outage is the translation of “Bijli gai”

(4) Numbers

Refers to Marks obtained in examination or tests in PE.

HYBRIDS

PE has many hybrids where south Asians items are taken as head and modifiers.

For examples

(1) Police Thana

Refers to police station where as Thana refers to station

(2) Lathi-charge

Refers to attack by police with sticks in their hands i.e. Lathi=sticks

(3) Usher tax

Refers to Islamic tax system

(4) Walima Ceremony

Can be seen on wedding cards

(5) Goonda tax

Refers to taking of illegal tax

5. CONCLUSION

Pakistani English is a non-native variety of English. This variety of English can be sub divided into four sub-varieties i.e. Anglicized English used by few Pakistani, Acrolect is mostly used by those who have been to English medium schools or have learnt English somewhere, Mesolect and Basilect.

PE from Lexico-semantics features also brings some of the similarities and differences of English varieties. In other dimension such as phonological PE can be identical with IE but as from lexical- semantic dimension PE is very different from IE. It is different in many ways due to Islam, Pakistani cultural and tradition and languages spoken in Pakistan.

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