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Impact of English Language Imperialism on Pakistani Learners' Psychology

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Abstract

In the course of the past few years, English language has acquired uncommon consideration in Pakistan. In the progression of this momentum, students have embarked on learning and communicating in English at the cost of dismissing their native language, that is, Urdu. The current study attempted to discuss the dominance of English language and its consequences on the psychology of learners. This study addressed the question of whether students perceive English language imperialism as a threat to their national language, Urdu. The current study is quantitative in nature. A sample size comprising 100 participants was selected and those learners were studying in undergraduate and graduate programs at Kinnaird College for Women Lahore, Minhaj University, and the University of Punjab, Lahore. A self-constructed questionnaire was utilized to gather the information. Moreover, an investigation was undertaken on the impacts of the independent variable namely English language imperialism on the dependent variable namely students' psychology. The results indicated a notable interconnection among various psychological factors, collectively exerting a significant influence on student's psychological well-being. Since they consider it a sign of accomplishment in their academic and professional careers.

Keywords: English imperialism, English language, learners' perceptions, learners' psychology, linguistic imperialism

Introduction

It is a worldly acknowledged fact that man is a social animal and a language tends to separate human beings from animals. According to Charles Darwin, our early ancestors developed the ability to speak a language just to charm the opposite gender (Yule, 2017). Later, language became a primary source of communication. Over the time, linguists and educationists attempted to define a language many times which is still an area of high interest in many

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subjects. According to Spolsky (1999) language is a focal element of human personality, when we hear somebody talk, we promptly make guesses about their gender, education level, age, profession, and place of origin. Moreover, a language is a very strong image of public and ethnic conduct and personality.

In the present time, human beings are living in a multilingual world where thousands of languages are spoken. All of these languages are very important according to their speakers; however, some languages stand out the most due to their mighty military, substantial economy, cogent historical background, and sizable number of its speakers.

English Language

The English language has been world's dominant language for more than a century: “Just as Latin steamrollered, this language paved its way across Europe 2000 years ago, defeating many languages. Finally, this language has become the lingua franca of our times” (Morrison, 2002). Furthermore, it continues to be the prevalent language used in commerce, diplomacy, education, the arts, entertainment, science, and technology. There has been a lot of discussion in educational, economic, political, social, and linguistics forums that English is the highly influential language worldwide. Therefore, it is known as a global language. However, it has frequently been embraced with mixed emotions; at times it has been seen as neutral and de-nativized, but more frequently it has been imperialist and oppressive or democratic and liberating (Doms, 2003). A language neither becomes significant due to its distinctive structural features nor because of its vast vocabulary nor because it is a source of dynamic literature in history nor because it is connected with a powerful religion or culture. A language chiefly becomes global because of one strong reason, civil power, mainly their constitutional and naval power (Crystal, 2003).

In the case of English, it is the language of almost 1.5 billion speakers which makes up 20% of the world's population (Lyons, 2021). Many individuals use English as a second language around the globe. According to an international survey, India has considerably more users of English language, approximately 125 million. Surprisingly, Pakistan is the third on the list as 49% of the total population of Pakistan speaks English (Kroulek, 2017). Five of the most powerful, influential, and most watched broadcasting companies including BBC, CNN, NBC, CBC, and ABC in the

world transmit their programs in English. These programs are watched by millions of people around the world. English language has a conceivable richest vocabulary. The Oxford English Dictionary lists about 500, 000 words. Many nations who do not speak English utilize it as their primary language of education in various subjects at universities. English departments are established in most universities around the world. These universities offer major programs in English literature and linguistics. It is important to mention here that the percentage of international students enrolled at English-speaking universities is 43.3% in Asia and from Africa: 31.6% (Fishman, [1977](#)). All these facts and figures enroll English as a global language which is increasingly remarkable.

Statement of the Problem

Due to the fact that Pakistan holds the third position on the list, demonstrating a language proficiency rate of 49%, it is clear that English is highly valued in Pakistan throughout all spheres of life. The term "language imperialism" often pertains to the dominance or influence of one language over others, leading to shifts in communication patterns and cultural dynamics. In this context, the current study seems to be investigating how the widespread adoption and use of English in various spheres, such as education, media, and professional settings, impact the psychological aspects of Pakistani learners. The current study also attempted to understand students' attitudes towards learning English language and their motives for doing so. Moreover, do they feel threatened by it in terms of their national identity, culture, or language?

Research Objectives

1. To determine the perceptions of learners about learning and speaking the English language.
2. To determine the motivation of learners behind learning and speaking the English language.
3. To explore the beliefs of learners that English language is causing a threat to the Urdu language.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of learners about learning and speaking the English language?

2. What are the motivations of learners behind learning and speaking the English language?
3. What are the beliefs of learners regarding English language causing a threat to the Urdu language?

Research Significance

The current research is important since it not only discusses the perceptions of learners regarding the English language, however, it also brings to light their motivations for acquiring and using it as a language. Furthermore, the study provided profound insight to comprehend the present position of English in Pakistan's educational sector. It also discussed that the present situation of English is causing a threat to Urdu language.

Literature Review

English Language Imperialism

Historical chronicles explain that English language has a prolonged history of imposition in most periphery communities. This language has a long trail of struggles to get hegemony against other languages. Therefore, the English language is firmly ingrained in our culture and thought to be regarded as foreign (Canagarajah, [1999](#)). The term imperialism advocates the imposition of a dominant language on other people. Phillipson interpreted the term linguistics imperialism as the supremacy of the English language (Phillipson, [1992](#)). To get to this status, English has not only influenced the culture, language, and knowledge of weak communities but also the psychology of the people of those communities (Canagarajah, [1999](#)). It is clearly witnessed in the sub-continent during British colonization (Kirkpatrick, [2007](#)).

Another view is also associated with the term imperialism and that is colonialism. When the British Empire set its foot in other lands for the sake of trading and building up its economy along with its military power and strong language influence, the English language started to stretch its wings in other subdominant communities. The United States of America has probably been the home of more bilingual people than any other country in the world. There was a dying need to select one language as the nation's official language. Therefore, in 1983 the term English only was first introduced (Viskova, [2016](#)). Some opponents criticized this movement by

saying that the true intention behind this movement was to establish English language dominance over other languages. They totally turned down this movement by calling it linguistics imperialism. Consequently, the supporters of this movement started defending it. According to them, it is not linguistics or English imperialism, in fact, English language is protecting the rights of minority groups and their languages by providing them an equal chance to fight for their survival. James Crawford in his book “Language Loyalties” defended this movement and said that “many of these measures have been implemented to safeguard the rights of linguistic minority communities, rather than imposing a dominant language.” (Crawford, [1992](#)).

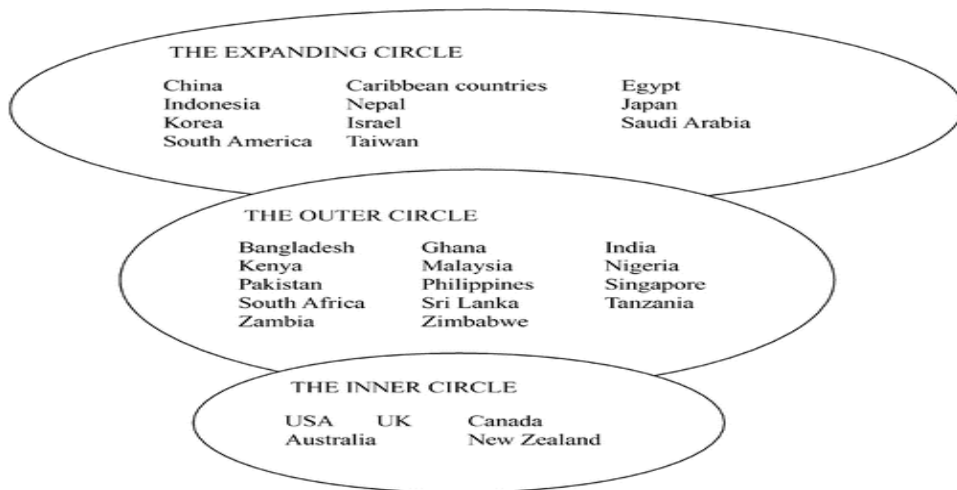
According to Trudgill, the expansion of English language in the world is mainly due to three reasons. Firstly, the arrival of native English speakers directly or indirectly from the British Isles, secondly, the eradication and deportation of the indigenous people by newcomers, and thirdly, the process of language shift whereby indigenous people gradually abandoned their native language and adopted English instead (Filppula et al., [2016](#)). Although, English language is dominant in the world, it is still a foreign language in various cultures and religions (Rodriguez & Fortier, [2007](#)). To some and too many, it is a representation of colonialism; to others, it represents power, knowledge, science, and civilization (Jenkins, [2007](#)). The expansion of English language is a very remarkable phenomenon in the eyes of historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and linguists, however, the fact cannot be overlooked that this expansion of the English language has proved us all as losers in a sense we lost the linguistics diversity from the world (Filppula et al., [2016](#)). Trudgill described English imperialism as a language ecological disaster.

English in Pakistan

In Pakistan, language is used as an identity marker and evidently played a vital role in the movement for independence. With its colonial background, the newly emerged country had a choice to select the language of its masters as a state language. Hence, the English language is treated as L2 in Pakistan. Resultantly, in Kachru’s three circles model of the spread of the English language, Pakistan was given a spot in the outer circle, due to the fact that English was brought along by the British ruler during the colonial era (Doms, [2003](#)).

Figure 1

Three circle Model of Spread of English Language



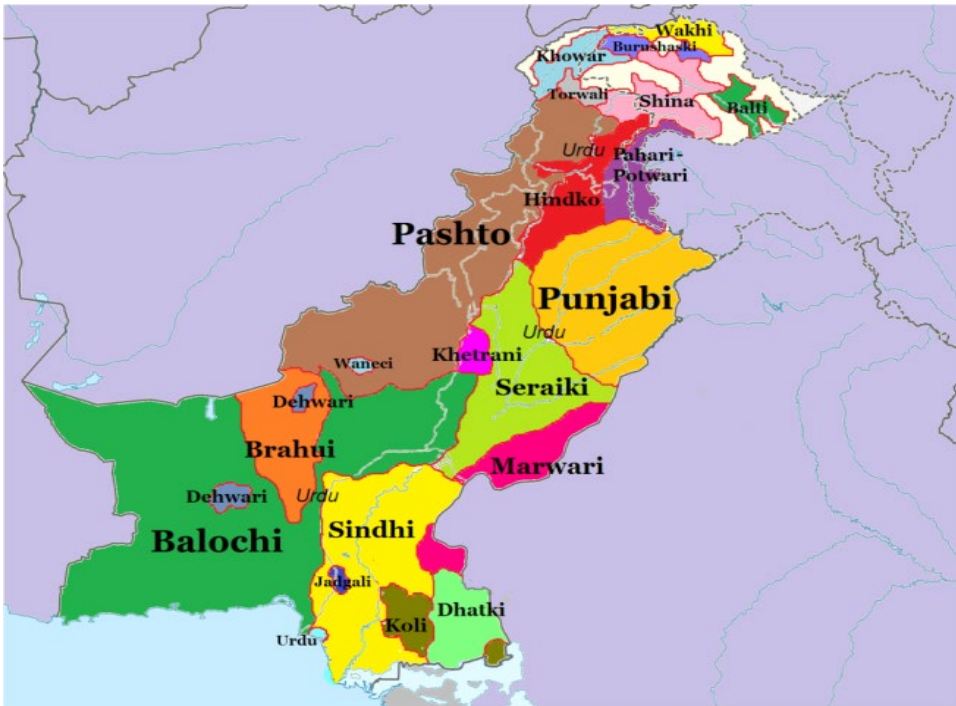
Kachru divided all the countries into 3 distinct circles: the inner circle, the outer circle, and the expanding circle. The first wheel comprised of countries, such as the UK, the USA, New Zealand, Australia, and others since they are native countries. The second wheel comprised of Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Singapore, and others where English is used both as L2 and as an official language. The third wheel comprised of China, Japan, Nepal, and many others where English is spoken as a foreign language (Kachru, [1985](#), [1998](#)).

Although, Urdu language is declared as a language of the state or the first language, this declaration caused no adverse effect on English. Consequently, the imperialism of English in outer circle countries is regarded as democratic, liberating, or threatening (Coupland & Jaworski, [2008](#)).

In addition to Urdu and English, many other languages are also spoken in Pakistan.

Figure 2 shows that Pakistan is a country with a rich diversity of languages. According to United Nations Educational Social and Cultural Organization, many regional languages are dying slowly and silently in Pakistan because of the same pro-English pressure that globalization places on the rest of the world (Zakaria, [2014](#)).

Figure 2
Linguistic Map of Pakistan



The educational sector in Pakistan clearly showcased the significant impact of the English language. English is the primary medium of communication in schools and universities. Despite not being taught at primary level in public schools, there are several private English-medium schools that introduced English education from kindergarten onwards. According to the 1959 report of the National Commission of Education Reforms, it was acknowledged that in today's highly competitive era, where scientific knowledge, discoveries, and inventions are rapidly progressing, no country can afford to isolate itself. Pakistan, therefore, should incorporate the study of a well-established foreign language into its education system (Moss, 1964, p. 64). English serves as a medium of communication in both public and private sectors within Pakistan. It holds significant importance and finds usage even in the country's constitution. The English language is employed extensively for legal documentation purposes, ranging from basic to complex matters. It is utilized by the civil service and bureaucracy, encompassing the provincial and federal

governments (Rasool & Mansoor, [2007](#)). Moreover, in Pakistan, English is employed alongside Urdu as a means of disseminating information through electronic and print media. The national news is broadcasted in both Urdu and English on radio and television channels. (Abbas, [1993](#)). In addition to this, many weekly and monthly magazines are also published in the English language like “The MAG”, “The Herald”, “The Cricketer”, and “The Young World” (Shamim, [2010](#)). Many leaders in history issued political statements in favor of Urdu language like Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, and Ziaul Haq but did not take any serious initiative to implement the Urdu language within the domains of power. Therefore, the English language became the language of power in Pakistan (Siddiqui, [2010](#)).

Language Attitude

The most important aspect in language learning and prevailing is the psychology and perceptions of the people towards that language (Edwards, [2006](#)). Attitude and action mirror thoughts and perceptions. When social status and power accompany a language, at that point, the language begins to enjoy its "elite" or "proletarian" position. This demonstrates how past imperialistic attitudes have an impact on the current use of language (Das, [2005](#)). Thus, in the early 20th century, educational strategies started to change their emphasis and it was decided in 1975 that several states legally designated English to be the only language of teaching in educational institutions, forcing native language speakers to neglect their native tongues (McArthur, [2005](#)). In light of Baker’s opinions, there are three elements that make up an attitude: preparedness for action, affect, and cognition. (Baker, [1992](#), p. 12).

In the case of Pakistani society, upper and upper-middle-class people were cognitively ready to embrace the hegemony of the English language due to their emotional attachment, identical thoughts, and beliefs about western culture and English language. Their readiness and positive attitude towards English flourished its dominance as L2 in the entire country (Edwards, [2006](#)). As a result, in September 2001, English was mandated to be the major medium of instruction for technology, foreign business, law, and economics courses at all Pakistani colleges and universities (Ngugi, [1993](#)). The middle and lower-middle-class people in Pakistan had a fear of learning English language. They considered it as a new face of colonialism and pictured it as a threat to social and religious values. However, they could not ignore the fact that without learning the English language their children

would not be able to enter the domain of power and would not be able to get lucrative jobs unless they speak and perform in the English language. Therefore, they developed a favorable attitude towards English language (Raza, [2015](#)).

The lower-class of Pakistan, who spoke indigenous languages, were finding it difficult to read and speak in Urdu. Due to their limited understanding of the English language, they had to acquire English skills from a basic level, resulting in a lack of cognitive familiarity with it. They felt disgraced because they could not find fine jobs due to their poor English speaking skills. They started to consider English as an alienated language. They did not stop to express their anger and hatred against the system and the English language (Raza, [2015](#)). However, over the time, variations have been seen in the perceptions of Pakistani people towards English and their attitude has inherently changed and is still changing. Melitz ([1999](#)) conducted a study on “English-language dominance, literature, and welfare” and reported that English fever is a phenomenon that is gaining popularity in Pakistan. Academics claimed that learners are drawn to English language imperialism which is problematic for national languages and their positions.

Methodology

Research Design

The paradigm of the current research is quantitative in nature. Labaree ([2006](#)) said that a quantitative study emphasizes goals, measurements, and statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of the data gathered by polls, questionnaires, or surveys, or by utilizing computational methods to work with pre-existing statistical data. In order to achieve the objectives of the current study, a detailed questionnaire was prepared to collect the data. The questionnaire was self-structured and close-ended, used as the main source to collect data regarding the impact of English language imperialism on learners’ psychology.

Variables

The current research used two types of variables, that is, independent and dependent variables. The independent variable was (1) English language imperialism and the dependent variable was (2) Learners’ psychology. The dependent variable has subcategories. The first category was learners’ perceptions and the second category was learners’

motivations. The third and last one was the notion of threat. English language imperialism was an independent variable because the dependent variable learners' psychology was affected by the independent variable.

Data Collection

The data was collected from Kinnaird College for Women Lahore, Minhaj University Lahore, and the University of Punjab, Lahore. Kinnaird College was selected because it is a semi-government institute and learners from the lower middle, middle, and upper class study here. Moreover, it was a good source to gather diverse data. Minhaj University was selected because it is a private institute. Students from the lower middle and middle class study here and the majority of them belong to the rural areas of Punjab. It was a good source to determine the perceptions of the students living in rural areas. Lastly, the University of Punjab was selected because it is a public university and students from all over Pakistan study here which makes it a valid place for data collection.

Theoretical Framework

The concept of linguistics imperialism originated in the 1930s (Nordquist, [2019](#)). It symbolizes the dominance of a nation by imposing its language on others and influencing the cultural, social, political, educational, behavioral, and economic ideas and values of others. Robert Phillipson gave other names to this terminology in his book “*Linguistic Imperialism*”, such as linguistic nationalism, linguistic dominance, language imperialism, and language supremacy (Phillipson, [1992](#)). Presently, the predominant instance of linguistic imperialism is attributed to the global proliferation of the English language, which, according to intellectuals and linguists, exerts a significant influence on the sociolinguistic outlook of developing nations, often seen as a contemporary extension of colonialism and conquest. Phillipson highlighted that in the past, both the Nazis and the Soviet Union denounced this linguistic imperialism and proclaimed English as the language of global capitalism. (Khan, [2013](#)). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis puts out the same idea which described the interdependence of language and thought. This theory asserted the thinking patterns and behaviors of the individuals influenced by language framework that one frequently utilizes. Whorf also asserted that different languages influence people to behave differently because languages shape perception and restrict how occurrences are categorized.

Regarding the English language, it is commonly linked to notions, such as "proficiency in English leads to employment opportunities," "English facilitates global connectivity," and "English signifies modernity." (Asraf, [1996](#), p. 10). However, these assertions highlight a serious threat connected to the local language and culture. The risk is that the local cultures and languages of the learners are inadvertently portrayed as antiquated and incapable of modernity. As a result, "this contributes to a cultural degradation of conviction in the capacity of local culture and language to cope with the modern environment"(Hejazi & Fatemi, [2015](#)). This whole scenario led to the perception that the dominance of English as a global language of communication poses a threat to other languages (Pennycook, [1999](#)). English language hegemony and its role in promoting "globalization" are indicators of English language imperialism. This language is enforcing western ideas and views and English teachers act as agents aiming to control the culture and language of unfortunate foreign learners.

The theoretical underpinning of this study is Phillipson's Linguistic Imperialism ([1992](#)) which contended that when a global language is used widely, it violates the rights of other languages and leads them to lose their proper form and structure. Linguistic imperialism caused other languages' status to decline, such as French in Senegal or English in Nigeria. (Khanda et al., [2021](#)). In the 20th century, significant shifts occurred with the rise of nationalism, urbanization, and globalization. Urbanization played a pivotal role, as it resulted in the migration of individuals from their ancestral areas, resembling patterns observed during settlement colonization. However, unlike forced relocations from rural to urban areas, people voluntarily migrated to cities where the prevalent language was spoken. This choice was driven by the desire to actively engage in the urban economy and participate in the opportunities presented by the urbanized society. Phillipson believed that other languages are endangered and lose their status due to the growth and increasingly challenging importance of English.

Population

The population of the study comprised of all the enrolled students studying in undergraduate and graduate programs at Kinnaird College for Women Lahore, Minhaj University Lahore, and the University of Punjab, in the academic year 2021/2022. Taking into account the time constraint

and the size of the study's population, the data was collected from three institutes between July and October 2022.

Sample Size

The sample size for the current research comprised of 100 participants. They were enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs at Kinnaird College Women's Lahore, Minhaj University Lahore, and the University of Punjab Lahore. The selected participants were between 17 to 35 years of age. They belonged to both genders: male and female.

Technique of Data Collection

The dissemination of the questionnaire among the participants was done by using the convenience sampling technique. This technique was employed because the current study discussed the psychological impact on the learners. Moreover, this sampling technique allows the researcher to involve the participants who were present there when the data was collected. Convenience sampling, according to Galloway (2005), is an excellent fit for studies that aim to understand peoples' attitudes and opinions. The participants received the questionnaires in hard-printed form. The study's purpose and nature was explained to them.

Tool for Data Collection

In order to examine the impact of English language imperialism on Pakistani learners' psychology, a questionnaire was used as a research instrument. Several academics of statistics and social sciences assessed the questionnaire to evaluate its validity and reliability. Their suggestions were incorporated accordingly. There were 25 statements in the questionnaire to determine the psychology of the learners. These 25 statements were divided into 4 categories. The first category of the statements comprised of 4 questions. These questions were about the background of the participants. The second category of the statements comprised of 8 questions. These questions helped to determine the perceptions of participants about learning and speaking of English language which was the first sub-category of the dependent variable. The third category of the statements comprised of again 8 questions and these questions helped to determine the reasons for motivation which was the second sub-category of the dependent variable. The fourth category of the statements comprised of 5 questions. These questions helped to assess whether the English language is considered a threat or not which was the third sub-category of the dependent variable. To

calculate the responses of the participant's, 4-point Likert-scale was used. The responses were coded as strongly agree 4, agree 3, disagree 2, and strongly disagree 1. The 25-items questionnaire had a 0.85 Cronbach alpha level of reliability. The estimated reliability of the questionnaire for this particular study was computed by using Cronbach's alpha. The questionnaire's reliability coefficient was 0.88, which was an acceptable reliability coefficient index. Pilot testing was also done to determine the accuracy of each question to identify whether the questions were obtaining the required data or not. Moreover, pilot testing also made sure that the calculated response rate at the first attempt would be satisfactory enough to use for the research.

Technique of Data Analysis

The data collected with the help of questionnaires was analyzed by using SPSS software (v.25). To obtain the frequency and percentage for each question, descriptive analysis was conducted. The percentages of different responses for each close-ended question were displayed in the form of tables. Moreover, the graphical representation of the statistical measurement was also displayed. The choices that participants made were influenced by their psychological and educational demands. After comparing the percentages of the responses given by the participants, an interpretation of these statistical measurements was also provided for the comprehension of the analysis. The current research attempted to understand the perceptions and psychologies of the participants concerned with learning and speaking English. This research would help the researchers in understanding whether the participants perceive this imposition of the English language as a threat to their national language Urdu.

Results

Demographic

The data for the current study was collected from 100 participants. According to the demographic statistics, the participants of the study were aged between 17 to 35 years. They belonged to different departments of the three selected institutes of Lahore. There were 50 males and 50 females in number and their first language was Urdu, Punjabi, Saraiki, and Mayawati. The total number of participants was 100 and the questionnaires were filled by them with a response rate of 32.68. The first part of the questionnaire

comprised of question no 1, 2, 3, and 4 which were related to the personal and demographic details of the respondents. Table 1 given below provides the demographic details of the respondents.

Table 1

Statistical Representation of Demographic of the Respondents (n=100)

Category	Frequency
Age between 17 to 35 years	
Gender	
Male	50
Female	50

The objectives of the current research were to examine the impact of English language imperialism on learners' psychology, as well as the factors that contribute to it. Table 2 given below reveals the findings of the second section of the questionnaire which was about knowing the perceptions of the learners regarding the acquisition and usage of the English language. In this part of the questionnaire, question no 5, 6, 7, and 8 discussed the positive impact of English on learners' psychology. Moreover, the responses of the participants showed that they agreed with the positive impacts of the English language.

Table 2

Learner's Perceptions About Speaking and Learning English Language

#	Questions	SA%	A%	D%	SD%
5	I can express myself better by speaking the English language.	36.7	48.3	15	0
6	I feel comfortable when speak the English language.	33.3	48.3	16.7	1.7
7	Speaking the English language in everyday life shows that I am well-educated.	38.3	28.3	21.7	11.7
8	Learning the English language creates tolerance and respect for other cultures.	21.7	41.7	30	6.7
9	I shall be considered a low-class person if I do not speak the English language.	8.3	40	28.3	23.3
10	I learn the English language so that I can be considered a modern person.	13.3	31.7	38.7	16.7

#	Questions	SA%	A%	D%	SD%
11	Learning the English language brings me closer to the international community.	48.3	38.3	13.3	0
12	I learn the English language only to pass the examinations.	5	16.7	53.3	25

Figure 3

Learners' Perceptions About Speaking and Learning English Language

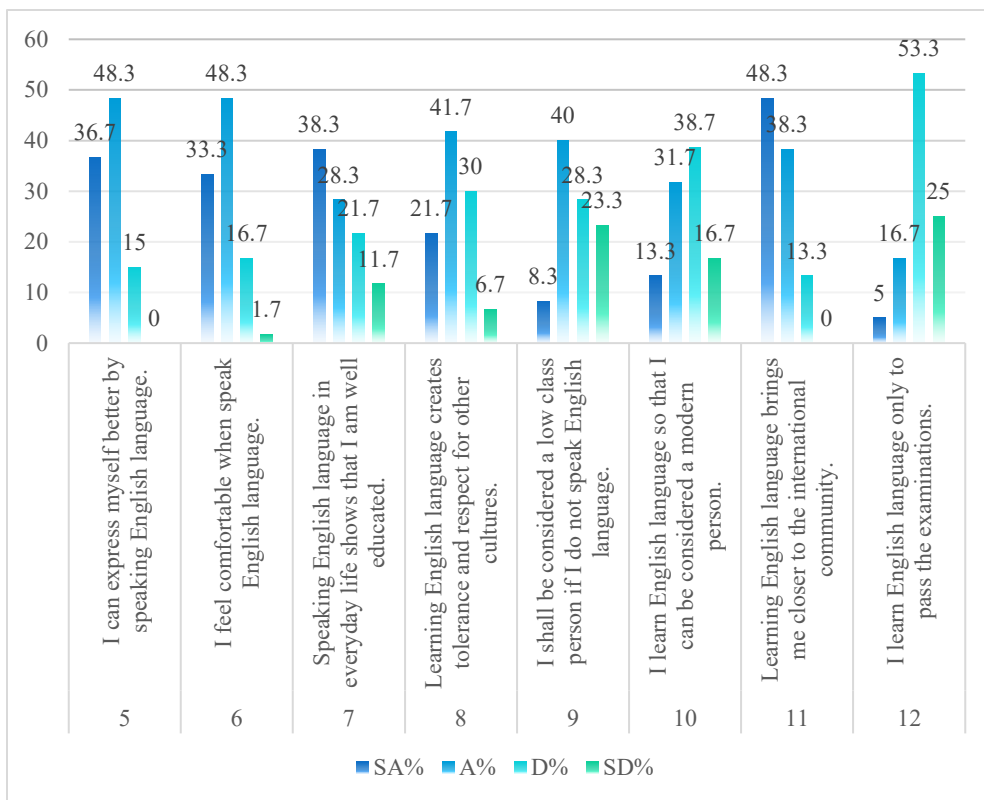


Table 2 comprises of the questions related to the perceptions of learners about English language imperialism. The table shows the percentage of the responses received on questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12. In response to question number 5 and 6, the percentage of the positive attitude was higher than in disagree or strongly disagree responses. In the case of question number 7 when participants were asked “speaking the English language shows that I am a well-educated person”, once again the percentage of positive responses was high, however, a slight increase was also noticed in

disagree responses. In the case of question number 8 when participants were asked “learning the English language creates tolerance for other religions 41.7% of participants showed agreement with the statement, whereas 30% of participants showed disagreement. Question no 9, 10, 11, and 12 were about the reasons for learning the English language. When participants were asked, “I shall be considered a low-class person if I won’t speak the English language”, 40% of participants showed their agreement with the statement. In response to question number 10, a high percentage of disagreement was noticed which indicated that speaking and learning English for the sake of becoming modern is not the only requirement. In terms of question number 11, a visible increase in the percentage of positive responses was noticed. Moreover, when participants were asked “they learn the English language for the sake of passing the exams” 53.3% showed their disagreement. The graphical representation of table 2 is given in Figure 3.

Table 3 reveals the findings of the 3rd part of the questionnaire which was about knowing the motivation of the learners in speaking and learning the English language. Question no 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 were about the specific reasons of motivation that were driving the learners to excel in the art of speaking the English language.

Majority of the students from the three universities agreed that English is bringing positive changes in their personalities and behaviors which led them to have good perceptions of the English language. It strengthens this part of the Spair Whorf theory that language influenced the perceptions and behaviors of the speakers. Statements, such as, speaking English stands for modernity or not knowing English stands for low class. Such statements exemplify a serious threat to the local language and culture, however, majority of the respondents from three universities refused this notion.

Table 3

Learner’s Motivation Behind Speaking and Learning English Language

#	Questions	SA%	A%	D%	SD%
13	I can get a better job if I am able to speak the English language.	65	28.3	5	1.7
14	Learning the English language can help me to get admission in a foreign university.	70	25	3.3	1.7
15	Learning the English language will enhance my professional identity.	48.3	45	5	1.7

#	Questions	SA%	A%	D%	SD%
16	By speaking the English language, I shall achieve social prestige.	26.7	51.7	18.3	3.3
17	I learn the English so that I can read books and articles in original language rather than a translation.	36.7	45	13.3	5
18	Mastery of the English language enables me to understand the culture of English speaking people.	30	51.7	16.7	1.7
19	Learning the English can help me gain access to a wider range of information.	38.3	48.3	11.7	1.7
20	Learning the English language would westernise me.	11.7	25	30	33.3

Figure 4
Learner’s Motivation Behind Speaking and Learning the English Language

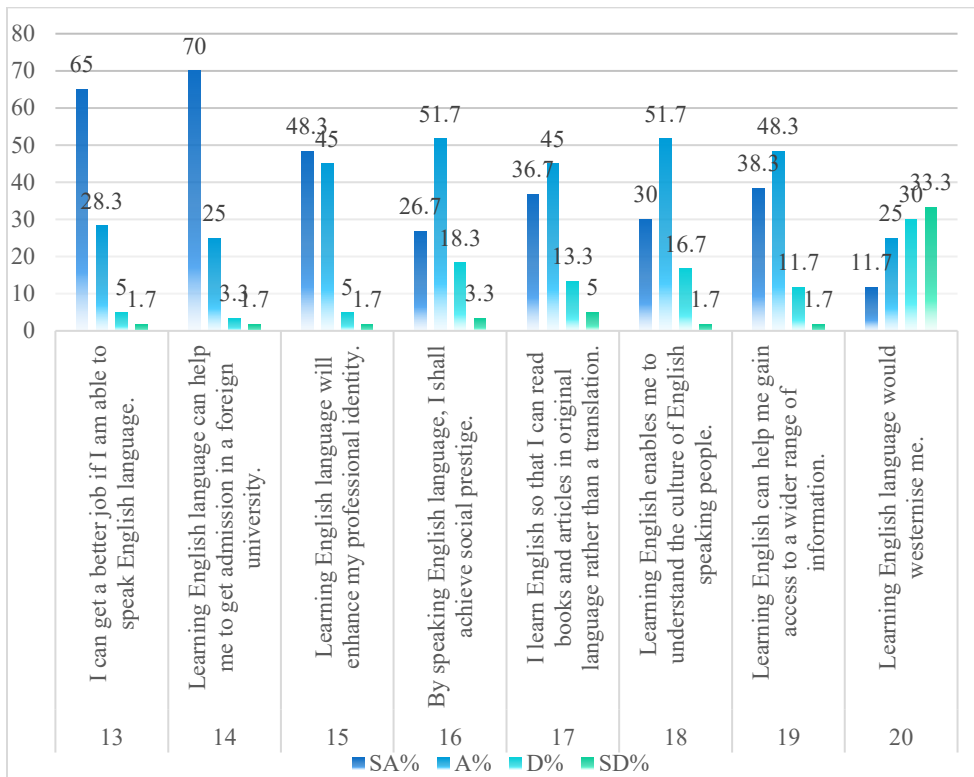


Table 3 comprises of questions related to learners' motivations regarding learning and speaking the English language. Table shows the percentage of the responses received on questions 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20. In response to questions 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19, the percentage of the positive attitude (strongly agree or agree) was higher than disagree or strongly disagree responses. In the case of question number 20, when participants were asked "learning the English language would westernize me", a higher percentage of disagree and strongly disagree answers were noticed. About 30% of the participants disagreed with the statement and 33.3% strongly disagreed. The graphical representation of table 3 is given in Figure 4, which shows the percentage of the above-mentioned questions.

Table 4 reveals the findings of the fourth section of the questionnaire which discussed the learning and speaking of the English language as a threat. Participants of the three universities significantly agreed that learning English is vital for their bright future and to access and avail good opportunities. Their motivations to learn English is connected with their future and a better lifestyle. Phillipson (1992) emphasized that due to its global status and the fact that it is a required component of the curriculum in many countries, English has gained popularity among students.

Table 4

Learning and Speaking English Language as A Threat

No	Questions	SA%	A%	D%	SD%
21	Speaking the English language will make me unpatriotic.	10	15	38.3	36.7
22	Learning the English language would affect my mother tongue negatively.	10	13.3	46.7	30
23	Learning the English language is harmful for our cultural values.	3.3	20	46.7	30
24	Learning the English language puts me at distance from my community.	8.3	23.3	45	23.3
25	Speaking the English language in everyday communication is against my religious values.	6.7	20	43	30

Figure 5

Learning and Speaking of English language as A Threat

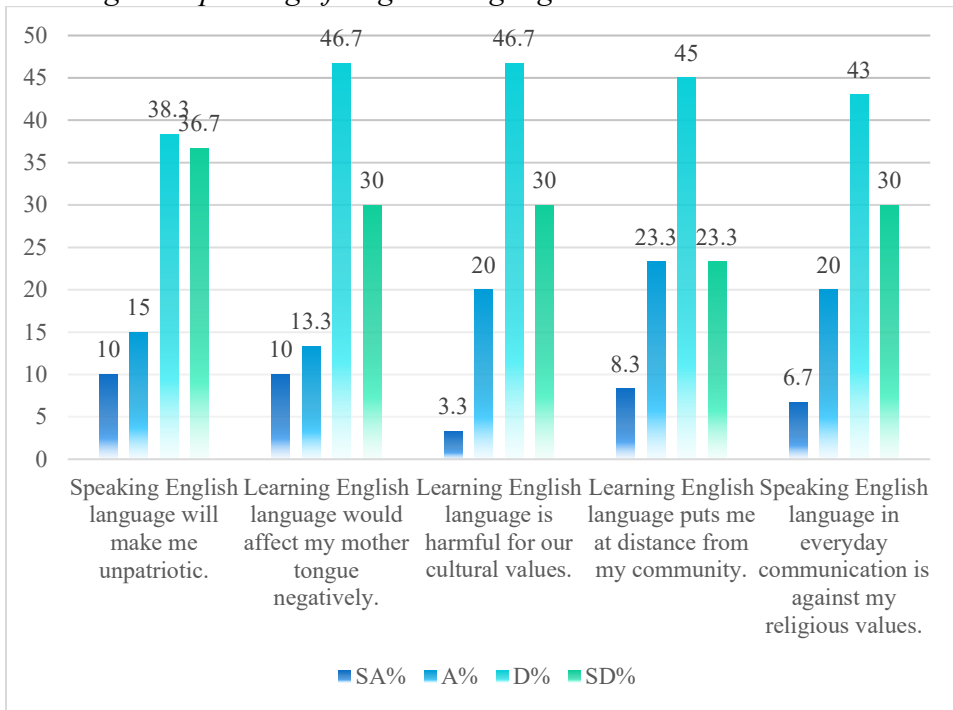


Table 4 comprises of questions based on speaking and learning of English language as a threat. It shows the percentage of the responses received on questions 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25. In response to question number 21, 22, and 23, the percentage of disagree or strongly disagree responses was higher. In the case of question number 24, when participants were asked “learning the English language puts them at distance from their community, 45% showed their disagreement with the statement. However, an identical percentage was noticed in agree and strongly disagree responses which was 23.3%. In the case of question number twenty-five, 30% of the participants showed their strong disapproval, while 43% showed their disapproval. The graphical representation of table 4 is given below.

Respondents believed that their native language is rich in structure and form. They value speaking in English, however, they also love their native language and want their native tongues to thrive and function effectively in the new practice and structure. No one denies the global importance of English, however, Phillipson (1992) claimed that its existence is affecting

other languages. Thus, it is also a lurking threat to Urdu. However, respondents were of the view that their desire to learn and speak English is governed by their psychological and educational needs.

Discussion

The current study discussed the impact of English language imperialism on learners' psychology. The results showed a positive impact of English language on the psychology of Pakistani learners. Many scholars believe that the ability to speak English is heavily influenced by individual psychology (Vadivel et al., [2022](#)). The study also revealed that the motivation behind the learning and speaking of English language is controlled by the psychological and educational needs of the learners. The study also declared that Pakistani learners accept that English language has become a vital demand of modern society and it is essential for them to speak and learn it in order to survive in this society.

Although, Pakistani learners are showing interest in the English language, their perceptions and psychological needs are different. Ryan and Deci ([2017](#)) differentiated among these needs while presenting the concept of self-determination theory (SDT) and claimed that there are three basic psychological needs that inspire learners to grow and perform well. It is autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The study also demonstrated that English language imperialism has a significant connection with psychological needs of the learners. In Pakistan, learners are enthusiastic to learn English for their well-being, however, they don't perceive it as a threat to their identity, language, and religion. Consequently, English is deeply integrated into students' everyday lives and majority of them take immense pride to communicate proficiently in English. Nonetheless, it is unavoidable to acknowledge that psychological requirements are constant needs of awareness or the soul. One may engage in unsettling behavior in an effort to satisfy his/her psychological requirements.

Phillipson ([2008](#)) commented that English language imperialism is also like a psychological phenomenon in which this language completely dominates the minds and lives of the learners. This phenomenon encourages them to exclusively rely on English for various aspects of life including education, employment, social status, government, justice administration, philosophy, and other sophisticated domains. The pervasive influence of this English-centric approach can even corrupt the most morally upright

individuals within a community. Eventually, the community loses the ability to recognize and appreciate the full potential of its native language (Hejazi & Fatemi, [2015](#)). Whereas, learners in Pakistan are seeing this as a good move which is both encouraging and alarming as the process of linguistic shift is just getting started. According to McKay ([2002](#)), the use of English is becoming more and more prevalent throughout Pakistan, creating problems for the country's linguistic system, such as linguistic shift. Holmes ([2001](#)) declared that when a "linguistic shift" takes place, the society is unwittingly and unconsciously drawn into a new identity as part of the new language and cultural notions related to it. Under the impact of the new language and culture, the identity of the native tongue gradually vanishes over time or hides behind the new one. In an effort to mitigate the prevailing influence of the English language, which could eventually jeopardize our culture and language. There is a significant need to implement a strong language planning approach across the country which works tirelessly to stop the "language shift" process from happening.

Conclusion

The current study delved into the growing influence of the English language in Pakistan, which has led students to embrace it for communication and learning at the potential expense of their native language, Urdu. By examining the interplay between English dominance and students' psychology, the research revealed significant connections among various psychological factors that collectively impact students' well-being. Interestingly, the findings suggest that while English proficiency is seen as a mark of achievement in academic and professional endeavors, students generally do not perceive it as a threat to their national language or identity. In fact, it has been recognized as an official language. They perceive it as a symbol of success in their professional and academic career. They also believe that to get social prestige and recognition in society, it is essential for them to learn and speak English because they are aware of the needs of the swiftly changing time. Moreover, the results showed that learners' attitudes towards acquiring and using English language is positive and at the same time, they are very eager to enhance their language skills. The findings prove that learners exhibit a voluntary inclination towards learning the English language, and this engagement is not enforced upon them. Rather, their attitude towards English is characterized by maturity and positivity. It's not merely an obligatory pursuit; instead, many learners are

intrinsically motivated to acquire proficiency in English due to their psychological desire. Their psychological desires arise from realizing the importance of the English language in various areas such as education, job opportunities, and connecting globally. As a result, their approach to learning English is marked by genuine interest and a clear understanding of the advantages it can offer. It's widely believed that when a language isn't given enough attention and support, a more dominant language will gradually replace it. Although, Urdu language has rich literature and lexis and it could be completely absorbed by the strong presence of English if Urdu is not given enough attention in terms of promotion and publicity in the country and on an international scale.

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