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Exploring Language Learning through Culture: Indigenisation of English in a Pakistani Context

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Abstract

The study aims to explore the cultural facets of learning and using English language in a Pakistani context. Drawing on information collected from participants, the study also indicates the present status of the indigenisation of English in Pakistan. This mixed-method research used a convenience sampling strategy to collect data from 476 students through a questionnaire and from 15 teachers through semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study revealed that there is little explicit focus on culture during the teaching and learning of the English language. The collected data also show that students learn the target culture more than the local culture, mainly due to the use of foreign teaching materials. Moreover, both students and teachers seem ambivalent about the Indigenisation of English in Pakistan, although a shift in the status of English can be observed in its teaching and learning processes. The study further suggested to develop materials based on the local context in order to incorporate local culture and make English more indigenous.

Keywords: English language teaching and learning, target culture, local culture, Indigenisation of Pakistani English

Introduction

The role of culture in foreign language teaching has been a subject of debate for decades. Communicative language teaching approaches prioritize small "c" culture, focusing on everyday life affairs, while translation-based methods emphasize the big "C" culture, which includes literature and the arts (Kramsch, 2013). In the Pakistani EFL context, teachers often concentrate on language, assuming that cultural knowledge is implicitly embedded in it. Furthermore, English teachers, typically locals with cultural competence in their first language (L1), may lack adequate knowledge of

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the target language's (L2) culture, resulting in a stronger emphasis on linguistic competence rather than cultural understanding. Although the understanding of culture varies among teachers and learners across secondary to tertiary levels, there is often a lack of deliberate focus on learning L2 culture at both levels.

In the contexts where English has become an "institutionalized variety" (Choudhury, 2014) and people have adopted it to express their own cultural identity and fulfil their other needs, it is generally argued that there is a little need to teach the culture of target language community in L2 classrooms (Akbari, 2008; Rubdy & Saraceni, 2006). Several studies (Baumgardner, 1990, 1995, 1998; Mahboob, 2003; Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004, 2008; Rahman, 1991, 2019, 2020) have confirmed the differences between Pakistani English and UK or North American Englishes, establishing the stance that English is a distinguished variety in Pakistan (Shamim, 2011). Hence, it becomes intriguing to explore whether the learning of the English language, without sufficient knowledge of the its culture, adequately meets the needs of Pakistani learners as well as whether educators are aware of this "nativization" (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004, pp. 1003) in Pakistani context.

Contrary to the idea of nativization, English is still considered to be a foreign language, at large, in Pakistan. The contents of English language textbooks include foreign materials. Simultaneously, most of the learners still aim to gain a native-like fluency in English classrooms (Islam et al., 2013). As a result, there is a state of confusion among learners and practitioners about the use of cultural elements, while learning and using English language. Generally, English language learning requires the integration of cultural aspects, either local or foreign, because, otherwise, according to Brown (2007), teaching a language without its culture or vice versa can cause the loss of the significance of either language or culture. Hence, the article also focuses on how learners and practitioners perceive this cultural integration and use cultural elements in the process of English language learning/teaching.

Indigenization of English in Pakistan

Indigenousness, or *Indigeneity,* refers to the specific characteristics and natural elements of life that shape a distinctive identity (Ansloos, 2014, p. 947). Therefore, an indigenous language embodies the identity of the

people, community membership, knowledge systems, ethical values, and a link to the ancestors (Degawan, 2020). Consequently, language indigenisation means associating such distinctive features to any language, which may be adopted collectively by a speech community and the people of that community start using it in an informal context (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008, p. 11). According to some researchers (Kachru, 1985, 1992; Hosali, 2005), the story of indigenisation of English started at the same time in many countries, such as India, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Pakistan, and many others, where the local varieties of English, over time, had become dominant (Kachru, 1976) than the variety used in the UK. In line with these arguments, many researchers (Baumgardner, 1990, 1995; Kachru, 1990, 1985; Gargesh, 2020; Mahboob, 2003, 2008; Rahman, 2016; Kachru, 1996) supported the Indigenisation of English in Pakistan and considered Pakistani English to be a separate legitimate variety (Khan, 2012), which is influenced by socio-cultural diversity in multilingual Pakistani society (Anwar et al., 2020).

However, several studies (Baumgardner, 1995; Parveen & Mehmood, 2013) showed that the attitude of Pakistani speakers towards Pakistani English (PE) is not very positive. Moreover, Baumgardner (1995), who collected data from teachers, journalists, and students, argued that most English speakers in Pakistan think they use the British variety of English. Nevertheless, he also concluded that the trend towards the endonormative model of English has greatly increased in Pakistan. Baumgardner (1995) endorsed the idea of indigenisation and agreed that PE has its own norms, which may make it an acceptable variety of World Englishes. Similarly, Khan (2012) argued that PE is a distinct variety, however, it is one of the less well-researched varieties of English. Similarly, emphasizing the indigenisation of English in former colonies and some other countries, Mufwene (2012) said that "English has indigenized itself everywhere" (p. 43) and linked this idea with the examples of India and Pakistan, where English has been indigenized. The differences between the native English variety and the Pakistani English variety have been underlined by many linguists (Baumgardner, 1990, 1995, 1998; Mahboob, 2003; Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004, 2008; Rahman, 1991, 2014, 2019, 2020). According to B. Kachru (Baumgardner, 1995), in India, the situation of English is similar to what it had been once in America and Australia one century ago. However, Mahboob (2014), criticizing the available research on indexing the specific

features of different English varieties, stated that many of such descriptions of world Englishes contain limitations and issues.

Culture in English Language Learning

The term "culture", nowadays, is not very simple. Nietwo (2009) defined culture as an ever-changing state of some values, traditions, and social and political relationships created by a bound group of people (p. 136). Kachru and Smith (2008), summing up many definitions of culture, pointed out that it is a colossal, stable, immediate, and historic yet dynamic system that shapes actions (p. 31). Similarly, a generally accepted view about language is that it is an integral part of culture; therefore, it plays a central role in cultural activities (Fishman et al., 2013). Describing the relationship between language and culture, some researchers (Kramsch & Widdowson, 1998; Nieto, 2009) argued that culture is inconceivable without language. A language reflects culture and takes its influence and shapes it or is shaped by it. As Brown (2007) described, language and culture are part of each other; they are intricately interlinked (p. 189). Moreover, language "can never be culturally neutral" (Baker, 2009, p. 588). Thus, language and culture are indispensable to each other. Therefore, researchers, for example, Byram (2009) and Hall (2013), emphasized on intercultural competence in second language acquisition.

However, it is debatable to understand, which cultural competencies will be considered in English language teaching, especially when the context is similar to Kachru's (1985) outer circle, where English has been indigenized (Thumboo, 2001), or when the context involves English being used as a lingua franca. For example, D'souza (2001) argued that Indian English, similar to American English, New Zealand English, and to others, has been locally adopted as a language of India, reflecting Indian culture. The same applies to English in Pakistan, as pointed out by Phillipson (2009). Canagarajah and Said (2009) argued that English language learners in outer and expanding circles should move towards diverse English language competencies that should go beyond proficiency since English functions more like a lingua franca. Similarly, Seidlhofer and Jenkins (Niżegorodcew, 2011, p. 8) supported the use of English with regional norms in international communication. Moreover, Niżegorodcew (2011) discussed two opposing views about this situation: one is the deterioration of local culture and using English as a global language with its own culture,

and the other is using English for the sake of communication in an intercultural context.

On the other hand, some researchers (Jenkins, 2007, Swan, 2009) advocated the use of native norms in teaching English to maintain intelligibility between the varieties. Similarly, referring to Dörnyei et al.'s (2006) notion of future L2 learning of English, Jenkins (2007) said students and learners seem to be more motivated to learn about the "world at large" (Dörnyei et al., 2006, p. 9), instead of, integrating themselves into NS (native speaker) English culture. Nevertheless, there is less agreement on the teaching of native speakers' cultural and linguistic norms in teaching English as a second language.

English Language and Pakistani Culture

English language is enjoying almost the same status in Pakistan as it had before the partition of the subcontinent (Abbas, 1993; Akram & Mahmood, 2007), and this continuous use of English has had a great influence on the local culture (Sekhar, 2012). Moreover, English was imposed on India by Britain, so the influence was rather obvious. Though a few language policies were introduced in Pakistan (Siddiqui, 2011), English, instead of being replaced with Urdu, became more popular over the time (Zaidi & Zaki, 2017). Discussing the use of English in Pakistan, Rahman (2019) said that there are two types of English-speaking elites in Pakistan: the formal Pakistani bureaucracy and the informal elite who have directly learned English. As Liu (2015) indicated, "the characteristics of formal and informal languages are culturally rooted and guided by the context of the situation" (p. 142). The elite, educated in private elite schools, are supposed to have more foreign (English) cultural awareness (Dildar et al., 2015), although the overall number of people knowing English and its culture in the country is very small (Coleman & Capstick, 2012).

However, pointing out the instrumental role of English in Pakistan, Mansoor (2002) argued that the primary objectives of English language learning are more relevant to local cultural aspects than international (British/American) culture (p. 36). She further discussed, similar to Kachru, that Indian students are not acquiring a new culture because they are learning the Indian variety of English in schools. The same is the case with Pakistani students, she suggested that Pakistani students learn English that reflects their own culture. Likewise, in a study of cultural elements in

textbooks, Habib and Ullah (2017) revealed that there are around 70% more local cultural elements than foreign ones in the secondary school textbooks taught in most schools. In another study, Islam (2018) found out that although the attitude of learners toward English and its culture is ambivalent, they tend to internalize its socio-educational role in their lives in Pakistan. For the last few years, a shift from foreign to local cultural elements can be observed, although more in-depth inquiries into the phenomenon are required.
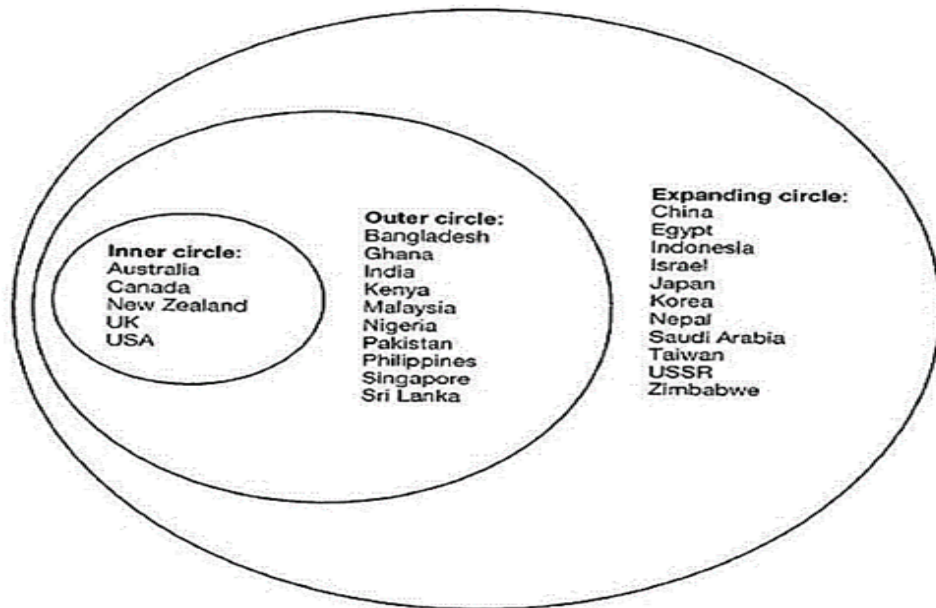
Theoretical Perspective of English Language and Culture

Vygotsky's (1978) influential work shifted the idea of language learning from being purely cognitive to emphasizing its social nature. He introduced the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), referring to knowledge or capabilities, indicating that the learners are in the process of developing through interaction. Vygotsky's theory highlights the importance of social contexts in learning, stressing that it involves interactions within social settings (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Building on the ideas of Bruner (2009) introduced the significance of cultural context in teaching and learning. He emphasized that learning and thinking are influenced by cultural settings and rely on cultural resources. Similar to this, Bennett's (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity outlines stages individuals progress through as they develop intercultural sensitivity. Bennett's model is instrumental in understanding the developmental process individuals undergo as they become more interculturally sensitive. The model could be used to analyze and interpret the intercultural experiences of Pakistani EFL learners (Khan, et al., 2023).

The concept of World Englishes is closely associated with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Bennett's (1986) intercultural model. According to Kachru (1985), the varieties of English are distinguished from each other based on cultural differences, and this phenomenon is known as varieties of English as cultural expressions. As discussed earlier, indigenousness refers to attaching local features to any language adopted collectively by a speech community. Researchers consider Pakistani English a separate legitimate variety influenced by the multilingual Pakistani society (Baumgardner, 1990, 1995; Kachru, 1990, 1985; Gargesh, 2020; Mahboob, 2003, 2008; Rahman, 2016; Kachru, 1996). Multilingual communities blend English and local languages, creating hybrid forms, and cultural richness in World Englishes (Crystal, 2003).

Figure 1

Kachru's Concentric Circles of English

Inner circle:
Australia
Canada
New Zealand
UK
USA

Outer circle:
Bangladesh
Ghana
India
Kenya
Malaysia
Nigeria
Pakistan
Philippines
Singapore
Sri Lanka

Expanding circle:
China
Egypt
Indonesia
Israel
Japan
Korea
Nepal
Saudi Arabia
Taiwan
USSR
Zimbabwe

Note. Three concentric circles of Asian Englishes. Adapted from "English as an Asian language," by Kachru (1998) *Links & Letters,* p. 94. (https://raco.cat/index.php/LinksLetters/article/view/22673)

Phillipson's (1992) theory of Linguistic Imperialism examines the power dynamics of English as a global language, highlighting its economic and cultural dominance, leading to a potential erosion of linguistic and cultural diversity. It provides a critical lens for examining the implications of English as a lingua franca and its impact on global communication (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2017, pp. 121–134).

Furthermore, cultural adaptability and intercultural communication have become a vital skill for English speakers worldwide (Seidlhofer, 2011). Similarly, Byram (1997) argued that English language teaching in World Englishes contexts should go beyond the traditional focus on native cultural norms. It is also important to consider the Language Ideology and Language Attitudes framework (Hill & Irvine, 1993; Kroskrity, 2000) to research learners and practitioners' attitudes toward the indigenization of English in Pakistan.

In Pakistan, the amalgamation of diverse regional cultures, including Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Balochi, etc., influenced by the overarching Islamic presence, has given rise to a unique cultural blend. Modern transportation and communication have fostered cultural convergence, with Urdu, emerging as the prevailing language across the country. English also holds significance as an official language, especially in legal, legislative, and higher education contexts, gaining prominence among the elite. English acquisition in Pakistan primarily occurs within formal educational settings, with a predominant focus on grammar and vocabulary, often sidelining communicative skills. This study aims to explore whether Pakistani university students, regardless of their English learning methods (traditional or communicative), possess explicit knowledge of L2 cultural aspects and the ability to distinguish Pakistani culture from English culture. It also explores teachers' perspectives on the integration of Pakistani and English culture in English language education. Furthermore, the research seeks to determine whether Pakistani English qualifies as a distinct variety of English, classifying it according to Kachru's (1985) outer circle and Schneider's (2007) dynamic model of postcolonial English. The study also investigates whether English has undergone "nativisation" in Pakistan and how English language teachers and students perceive it, whether as a local variety or as a foreign language with a distinct culture.

Research Questions

1. How far does English language learning help Pakistani EFL learners acquire foreign/target culture?

2. Which culture (foreign or local) is usually given more focus during the use of the English language?

3. What are the attitudes of learners and practitioners towards the indigenisation of English in Pakistan?

Research Methodology

To achieve the set objectives of the study, a mixed-method research design was chosen, as it allows for a more comprehensive and accurate description and explanation of the phenomenon. The quantitative part of the study was utilized to understand the students' perceptions toward culture and English language learning. This approach was deemed appropriate for a larger population size and for conducting more specific research. On the other hand, a qualitative approach was chosen to obtain more detailed views about

English language teaching and cultural issues from the teachers. The research design of the study is cross-sectional because the researcher intends to collect data from many participants within a short period of time (Rasinger, 2008).

Participants

Based on convenient sampling, students and teachers from different universities in Lahore were selected for data collection. The teachers taught English language courses to undergraduate students at various public and private universities in Lahore. The undergraduate students studied at four different universities in Lahore, Pakistan: namely Riphah International University, University of Management and Technology, University of the Punjab, and The University of Lahore. The group of teachers (n=15) included both male (n=6) and female (n=9) participants, with teaching experience ranging from 2 to 11 years. All of them held an MPhil degree in English, with specializations in ELT, Linguistics, or Literature. The group of students (n=476) included both male (n=197) and female (n=279) participants. Although the gender-based mean difference was not a focus of the study, the students were in various stages of their undergraduate studies, ranging from the first semester to the eighth semester, and were enrolled in different disciplines such as BS Psychology, BS English, BSCS, etc. In addition to studying English in their primary and secondary education, all of them were currently studying or had studied one or more English courses at the university level.

To collect data from the students, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used. The questionnaire consisted of 25 questions related to English language and culture, as well as the localisation of English in Pakistan. It included three main constructs: Target (British/American or Western) Cultural Knowledge, Target Culture in English Language Use, and Local/Pakistani Culture in English Language Use. For understanding the phenomenon from the teachers' perspective, interviews were conducted. A total of 15 teachers participated in the study. Due to the coronavirus pandemic situation, the interviews were conducted over phone calls and were recorded with the permission of the interviewees. Later, these interviews were transcribed and analysed.

Results

Quantitative Data

The overall descriptive statistics of the questionnaire for all three scales, Target (British/American) Cultural Knowledge, Target Culture in English Language Use, and Local/Pakistani Culture in English Language Use, have been presented in Table 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

English as a Source of Target (British/American) Cultural Knowledge

Table 1

One Sample t-Test of the Scale Target (British/American) Cultural Knowledge

Sr. No.	Items	Mean	*SD*	*MD*	*t*-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
	English has helped in knowing the:					
1	Western (British/American) clothing	3.09	1.124	.088	1.712	.087
2	Western food and drink	3.28	1.09077	.28571	5.715	.000
3	Western lifestyle	3.61	1.05119	.61345	12.732	.000
4	Western performing arts (e.g., comedy, dance, film, theatre, etc.)?	3.68	1.06767	.68067	13.909	.000
5	Western visual arts (e.g., architecture, design, drawing, painting, etc.)?	3.43	1.04110	.43277	9.069	.000
6	Western celebrations/ festivals (e.g., wedding ceremonies, Easter, Halloween, etc.)?	3.58	1.05794	.58403	12.044	.000
7	Western literature?	4.15	.85084	1.15966	29.736	.000
8	Western religious rituals?	3.43	1.06522	.43487	8.907	.000
9	Western forms of societal relationships?	3.56	.99814	.56092	12.261	.000
10	Learning of English cultural norms	3.62	.91010	.62605	15.008	.000
	Target (British/American) cultural knowledge	3.54	.67957	.54664	17.550	.000

Table 1 shows that the overall mean of the scale, Target (Western/British/American) Cultural Knowledge, is 3.546, which is slightly above the cut-off value, indicating that most of the students believe that they

learn target cultural norms while learning the English language. Moreover, the mean score of the item, *Learning of English cultural norms*, is 3.626, which also supports the same idea. It is interesting to note that no item has a mean value below 3, which refutes the notion of target culture-free language learning. The only item with a mean score of 4 or above (4.159) is *Knowledge of the target literature*, which clearly indicates the influence of language teaching through literature in Pakistan. Two other items, *Western (British/American) clothing,* and *Western food and drink* have relatively low mean scores, but the p-value of the scale (.087) for *Western (British/American) clothing* is greater than 0.05, indicating that it is not statistically significant. Apart from the item, *Knowledge of target literature*, the other two items, *Western lifestyle,* and *Western performing arts*, also have comparatively high mean scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that, since English language teaching is conducted through literature, students possess a good understanding of English literature. However, they appear to be somewhat uncertain about determining whether they have also gained a substantial understanding of Western cultural elements. Thus, English language learning is not imparting a significant amount of cultural understanding among the learners.

Target Culture in English Language Use

Table 2

One Sample t-Test of the Scale Target Culture in English Language Use

Sr. No.	Items	Mean	*SD*	*MD*	*t*-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Can write a story based on Western context	3.624	.87742	.62395	15.52	.000
2	Greeting in British/American norms	3.439	.92819	.43908	10.32	.000
3	Make fun/jokes in English like natives	3.181	.98029	.18067	4.021	.000
4	Use of British/American culturally specific vocabulary in communication	3.416	.99010	.41597	9.166	.000
5	Understanding of the foreign cultural aspects (greeting, eating, clothing, relationships, etc.) in a text	3.815	.91735	.81513	19.39	.000
6	Use of Britain/American accent	3.660	.97642	.65966	14.74	.000

Sr. No.	Items	Mean	SD	MD	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
7	The purpose of learning is to settle in Britain or America.	2.384	1.1847	-.6156	-11.34	.000
8	Focus on both the English language and its culture.	3.357	1.0232	.35714	7.615	.000
	Target culture in English language use	3.360	.52659	.35951	14.90	.000

Table 2 displays the mean score values of the *Target Culture in English Language Use* scale. Although the overall mean value of the scale is 3.359, indicating that participants' responses to most questions on this scale are not entirely clear, it is crucial to note both the highest and lowest mean score values within this scale. The item with the highest mean value (3.815) is *Understanding the foreign cultural aspects (greeting, eating, clothing, relationships, etc.) in a text.* Conversely, the item *The purpose of learning is to settle in Britain or America* holds the lowest value (2.384). Most of the other items contain mean score values around 3, which serves as a cutoff point. In conclusion, our findings suggest that learners continue to exhibit ambiguity in determining the cultural focus when using the English language.

Local/Pakistani Culture in English Language Use

Table 3

One Sample T-Test of the Scale Local/Pakistani Culture in English Language Use

Sr. No.	Items	Mean	SD	MD	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Use of English for everyday life affairs	3.4223	.98422	.42227	9.361	.000
2	Use of English for local issues (e.g., writing a complaint letter, talking on call to a customer care officer, etc.)	3.8067	.92020	.80672	19.127	.000
3	Read/write things (e.g., articles, news, stories, etc.) about Pakistan in English	3.7899	.92565	.78992	18.618	.000
4	Cultural food items (e.g., samosa, pakora, jaleebi, etc.) in English	3.4505	1.09041	.45053	9.005	.000

Sr. No.	Items	Mean	SD	MD	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
5	Religious education (e.g., translation of the Quran, hadiths, etc.) in English	3.4599	1.08977	.45992	9.188	.000
6	Talking in English with teachers, seniors, fellows, etc. without focusing on target cultural norms	3.6329	.89410	.63291	15.411	.000
7	Do not need to learn foreign culture to use English in Pakistani context	3.4968	1.08766	.49684	9.956	.000
	Local/Pakistani culture in English language use	3.5793	.58048	.57930	21.681	.000

Table 3 presents the mean score of the *Local/Pakistani Culture in English Language Use* scale, which stands at 3.579. The item with the highest mean score (3.806) is *Use of English for local issues (e.g., writing a complaint letter, conversing with customer care officers, etc.)*, closely followed by *Read/write things about Pakistan in English (e.g., articles, news, stories, etc.)* with a mean score of 3.789. Similarly, the item *Talking in English with teachers, seniors, fellows, etc., without focusing on target cultural norms* also exhibits a relatively higher mean value (3.632). Although the overall mean score is not significantly high and slightly exceeds the cut-off point, it can be inferred that respondents to some extent utilise the English language while adhering to local cultural norms.

Qualitative Data

Target Cultural Knowledge

Most of the teachers agree that the focus during English language teaching is more on the target culture. For example, one of the respondents (Interviewee A) says:

> Usually, the material is foreign, whether they are grammar books or reading materials. Owing to the busy schedule of most of the teachers, it is difficult for them to prepare any material containing local cultural elements, e.g., reading material from a local newspaper or a novel written in the Pakistani context. However, in listening and speaking, things are different. I speak English in a local accent, and most of the students also do the same. Moreover, the customary class discussion also contains local cultural elements as

far as it is not about an event from a novel written in a Western context.

Because of the close relationship between language and culture (Brown, 2007; Kramsch & Widdowson, 1998; Mitchell et al., 2019), it can easily be estimated that if the material is foreign, the cultural elements associated with linguistic items will also be foreign. Responding to the questions on target cultural knowledge in English language teaching, some of the teachers think that, in most cases, teachers are bound to follow course outlines, which further leaves little choice for teachers to teach any local story, novel, or other reading. For example, one respondent (Interviewee D) discusses: "The prescribed syllabus and assessment by the department or the university further enforce me to use only the recommended material. Many of us are bound to take quizzes and written assignments from the recommended novels, stories, and grammar books."

Many teachers (e.g., Interviewee B, D, E, F, H, I, J, L, M) also believe that, along with target cultural knowledge, there are many cultural components in language teaching that are neutral and cannot be declared as either foreign or local. Moreover, many of the students seriously lack basic language proficiency, and teachers are only eager to improve their basic language skills instead of considering cultural aspects in language teaching. For instance, one respondent (Interviewee E) says: "The reason why a conscious focus on cultural aspects in English language teaching is ignored is the poor language knowledge of the students. Most of the students cannot write even one or two correct sentences." Therefore, many teachers think that cultural elements are commonly found in teaching material, but, as far as the teaching of cultural elements is concerned, it is done as an addendum after students achieve basic linguistic competence. Therefore, primarily, "the students are supposed to have maximum language input regardless of any cultural-specific knowledge" (Interviewee H). However, whenever they (teachers) "interact with any sharp difference between Pakistani and Western culture, we (teachers) explain it. Hence, a conscious focus on cultural aspects in language teaching is rare."

One of the teachers (Interviewee L) also points out that because of Netflix and easy access to the Internet, cultural dimensions in language teaching have changed to a great extent. A sort of mixed cultural knowledge, including many slangs and informal terms from the target culture, is produced since the students learn more from movies than they do

from English language classrooms and ELT materials. However, the idea is not very generalizable, and this can be true for only a small number of students who have the affordability of fast internet access and a taste for Hollywood movies.

Local Culture and ELT Practices

Despite the local cultural gap in ESL textbooks in Pakistan (Ahmed & Narcy-Combes, 2011), most of the teachers are local and commonly use the non-native Pakistani variety of English since these teachers (almost all respondents) have learned English in a local environment, and they use English for everyday needs. Such a state of English teachers influences their use of English during their teaching practices. For example, in response to the questions on 'local culture in English language use', almost all the teachers responded positively, highlighting a few other important facets of common ELT practices. Many teachers (e.g., Interviewees A, C, D, E, F, G, I, L, M) view that they use L1 (mostly Urdu) along with English because of students' English language inefficiencies. Many undergraduate students are unable to comprehend or produce a few correct sentences in the English language. Hence, code-switching and code-mixing are common practices in teaching the target language (English) in ELT classrooms in Pakistan, although they are discouraged by purists' language teaching behavior and monolingual paradigm. However, as discussed by Tumbahang (2020), code-switching and code-mixing may play some important socio-cultural and textual functions for multilingual classrooms and complex personalities. One teacher believes that "switching from English to Urdu helps me maintain the comprehensibility of my instructions to the students. Many students request me to speak Urdu along with English if I continuously speak English in my class" (Interviewee F). The use of L1 is an indication that the trends of English language teaching are towards non-native, multilingual, and embedded in local culture. Similarly, teachers also responded that because of a wide range of cultural and religious backgrounds of the students and because of a co-education classroom, they remain very careful in discussing any idea irrelevant to the Pakistani context. For example, Interviewee D responds, "I ignore explaining the reading text or grammar exercise based on Western concepts and inappropriate in the Pakistani context, such as 'having a date'."

Discussing the language output of the students, most of the teacher think that students speak the local variety of English, which is very neutral and contains source culture. For instance, one teacher (Interviewee B) says:

> Some common language learning tasks in my classes are students' presentations for speaking skills and assignments for writing skills, and the topics of these tasks – usually assigned by me – are based on any local problems of Pakistan such as 'Deforestation in Pakistan', which means that the culture in their language output is mostly local or neutral.

Although some of the teachers (e.g., Interviewee B, C, D, E, J, L, K) have responded that it also depends on the course outline which learning activities will be carried out in the classroom and which type of assessment will be done, still the emphasis is not on target cultural elements in students language use. Moreover, they also believe that the lack of interaction with native speakers has further raised the gap between target culture and the local culture or source culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Therefore, it is not wrong to say that the common English language teaching trends are cantered on socio-cultural and religious perspective of Pakistan.

Indigenisation of English

Though the concept of indigenisation of English is not very new, and the varieties of the English language in both spoken and written forms have been recognized globally, the results of the interviews show that most of the teachers seem not to be aware of the idea of World Englishes and the localisation/indigenisation of the English language in Pakistan. Most of the teachers opine that English is a foreign language greatly associated with the West, the UK, and the USA. For instance, Interviewee J says:

> Students often come to me and ask for tips to improve their English speaking skills, and I often suggest they listen to BBC News or Economist Audio Edition and watch English movies. All this neither possesses a Pakistani English accent nor contains local cultural aspects. Similarly, most of our ELT materials such as texts, grammar books, dictionaries, etc., are developed by English or American writers. Hence, I think that we are not able to compare our language variety with that of Australia, India, or any other country where English is being used too much locally.

Apart from the unavailability of language input in the Pakistani variety of English, teachers also believe that there is a negative attitude towards Pakistani English among people. One of the teachers (Interviewee K) recounts his interaction with his English language teacher, who used to say, "I proudly claim that I teach English, not Pinglish," which fascinates the Interviewee as a learner. Moreover, he adds, "The similar fascination can still be observed among the students, and many students believe that there is no such variety of Pakistani English; real English is the one that is used by English/Americans." Discussing the same issue, one respondent (Interviewee C) replies:

> Not only do the students but many teachers also believe that native-like fluency is the actual target in the language learning process. However, it is also a fact that the English language we use is neither closer to British nor American English; rather, it is a South Asian variety of English like Indian English. Moreover, apart from academia, where the focus is more on formal or standard English writing, the people in media or others who use English do not seem to copy the British or American accent and speak in a local accent.

Contrary to the idea of English as an international or foreign language, a few teachers, mostly those who have studied Linguistics, think, "we speak a local variety of English," and they also seem to draw a comparison between Pakistani English with Nigerian, Philippine, and Indian English. Additionally, they are also aware of the work on Pakistani English by Mahboob and Ahmar (2008), which suggests that they consider Pakistani English as a separate variety of English. However, the overall opinions of the teachers towards the Indigenisation of English in Pakistan suggest that English is in the process of Indigenisation, and it will still take some time for Pakistani English to establish itself as a separate variety, as it has in some other countries of the outer circle.

Discussion

Considering Brown's (2007) stance regarding the interrelatedness between language and culture, it can be asserted that due to the absence of locally produced English language learning materials, the utilization of foreign learning materials incorporates Western cultural elements into language teaching, particularly within reading materials and grammar books. Asghar and Sulaimani (2017) analysed higher secondary school books and found

demonstrates that textbooks inadequately represent the local culture, even though some translated works are set in local contexts or outside of Europe and America. For instance, a widely recommended grammar book, 'Oxford Practice Grammar' by John Eastwood, extensively used in various universities, including the University of Management and Technology and the University of the Punjab, contains numerous examples from the target culture that hold little relevance to Pakistani culture. A case in point is the sentence, "I'd like to lie on the beach today. It's too hot to do anything else." (Eastwood, 1999, p. 159). The act of 'lying on the beach' lacks substantial relevance to the Pakistani context. As a result, most students and teachers believe they acquire insights into the target culture through English language learning. However, in Pakistan, local teachers primarily teach English, leading to limited interaction with native English speakers. This gap between native language usage and classroom language results in oral communication often reflecting the local variety of English, which sometimes incorporate local cultural and religious elements.

Upon reviewing the study's outcomes, it becomes apparent that the English language retains an ambivalent status in Pakistan, concerning its localization and its continuation as a native variety (Crystal, 2003). The findings reveal this ambivalence as both students and teachers indirectly, validate the contrasting concepts of "nativization" and "indigenization" of English in Pakistan (Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004, pp. 1003). English's substantial influence in Pakistani society leads to its unconscious use as a local language by teachers and students, despite limited awareness of this phenomenon. In a survey conducted by Mahboob (2005), it was discovered that both university teachers and students (66.8%) categorize their English as Pakistani English. Nevertheless, this categorisation does not comprehensively clarify their attitudes toward Pakistani English. The present study further lends support to the adoption of Pakistani English by both students and teachers. They employ it for day to day communication, religious purposes (Mahboob, 2009), educational endeavours, and other matters, notwithstanding their somewhat less positive disposition towards it.

Conversely, adopting Rahman's stance (2014), despite the existence of some scholarly work on Pakistani English (Baumgardner, 1990, 1995, 1998; Mahboob, 2003; Mahboob & Ahmar, 2004, 2008; Rahman, 1991, 2019, 2020), awareness of this English variety remains limited. In

pedagogical practices, British Standard English (BSE) is frequently upheld as the learning target. Additionally, the English literature produced by Pakistani writers does not conform to what Rahman labels as "genuinely indigenous English" (Rahman, 2014, pp. 9-10). Instead, local lexical items and idioms are strategically utilized for artistic purposes. Moreover, many researchers still employ the term 'EFL' to denote English in Pakistan. This usage signifies that English in Pakistan is still grappling for recognition. The study further corroborates the enigmatic state of English in Pakistan, as advocated by Rahman (2014), asserting that English is currently undergoing the second phase of its localization in the country. It functions as both a foreign language and is striving to find a place among local languages, a goal it has achieved notably well so far.

Conclusion

The power and use of the English language have resulted in many concerns about local languages and culture in many EFL/ESL contexts including Pakistan. In a similar vein, this study aimed to explore how far English has succeeded in gaining the status of a local language, carrying, and presenting local cultural aspects, or if it is still considered to be a foreign language incorporating a foreign culture. The study revealed that English, despite being used and learned as a local language and also as a local variety of English implicitly, is still explicitly considered a foreign language. There is a mixture of local and target cultural elements, in English as used in Pakistan, which supports the idea of its shift towards localization. English seems to be a source of the target culture, which is acceptable in terms of intercultural or international cultural competence. However, this might be damaging for local culture if such constraints are not considered carefully in ELT practices and material creation and adoption. The study further recommends that ELT practices and materials may be context-specific, containing more local and cultural aspects.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Dear Students,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore the cultural facets of learning and using the English language in the Pakistani context. Your responses on the matter will help us understand and analyse the phenomenon. The information provided will only be used for research purposes. Therefore, we ask you to respond the questions openly and honestly as only this can guarantee the success of the research. Thank you for your cooperation.

Researchers

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Instructions: For each of the statements below, please choose the option that best describes you and your opinion.

1. Do you think that learning English has helped you to understand Western clothing?   1 2 3 4 5

2. Do you think that learning English has helped you to become familiar with Western food and drink?   1 2 3 4 5

3. Do you think that learning English has enabled you to grasp the Western lifestyle?   1 2 3 4 5

4. Do you think that learning English has enabled you to appreciate Western performing arts (e.g. comedy, dance, film, theatre, etc.)?   1 2 3 4 5

5. Do you think that learning English has helped you understand Western visual arts (e.g. architecture, design, drawing, painting, etc.)?   1 2 3 4 5

6. Do you think that learning English has enabled you to learn about Western celebrations/festivals (e.g. wedding ceremonies, Easter, Halloween, etc.)?   1 2 3 4 5

7. Do you think that reading English has helped you understand Western literature?   1 2 3 4 5

8. Do you think that learning English has enabled you to understand Western religious rituals?   1 2 3 4 5

9. Do you think that learning English has enabled you to understand Western forms of societal relationships?   1 2 3 4 5

10. Do you think you have learned many English cultural norms during your study of the English language?	1 2 3 4 5
11. Do you think that you can write a story based on a Western context?	1 2 3 4 5
12. When greeting foreigners (British/American), do you use their native norms?	1 2 3 4 5
13. Do you think that you can make fun/jokes in English like native speakers (British/American) do?	1 2 3 4 5
14. Can you easily use British/American culturally specific vocabulary in communication?	1 2 3 4 5
15. While reading, can you easily understand foreign cultural aspects (greeting, eating, clothing, relationships, etc.) in the text?	1 2 3 4 5
16. Do you try to use a British/American accent while speaking the English language?	1 2 3 4 5
17. Are you learning English because you want to settle in Britain or America?	1 2 3 4 5
18. During reading, do you equally focus on both the English language and its culture?	1 2 3 4 5
19. Do you use English to express your everyday life affairs?	1 2 3 4 5
20. Do you use English to describe local problems (e.g. writing a complaint letter, talking on the phone with a customer care officer, etc.)?	1 2 3 4 5
21. Do you read/write things (e.g. articles, news, stories, etc.) about Pakistan in English?	1 2 3 4 5
22. Do you use cultural food items (e.g. samosa, pakora, jaleebi, etc.) without hesitation in English?	1 2 3 4 5
23. Do you get/read religious education (e.g. translation of the Quran, hadiths, etc.) in English?	1 2 3 4 5
24. Do you talk to other people in English (e.g. teachers, seniors, fellows, etc.) without consciously focusing on foreign culture?	1 2 3 4 5
25. Do you think that you do not need to learn foreign culture to use English in the Pakistani context?	1 2 3 4 5

Interviews

Though the interviews were semi-structured, the following numbered questions were asked from almost all 15 teachers. However, the specific questions asked varied among them based on their responses.

1: Background

- Educational Background
- Years of ELT experience

2: Language Learning through Culture: Indigenisation of English in Pakistan

1. How do you perceive the focus during English language teaching? Is it more on target culture or local culture?
2. In your opinion and experience, are the English language learning materials foreign or locally produced?
3. Do you consciously incorporate local cultural elements in teaching all four English language skills?
4. How do course outlines and prescribed syllabi impact your choice of teaching materials?
5. How do you view the lack of interaction with native speakers affecting language use in ELT classrooms, leading to more use of non-native Pakistani English?
6. What is your opinion about using code-switching and code-mixing in the class? Are they common in our ELT classes, and how are they relevant to the cultural aspects of the English language?
7. How do you ensure that discussions and readings in the English language are relevant to the Pakistani context, considering the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of students?
8. How do you assess the language output of students? Do you notice any trends in their language use, such as a mix of local and target cultural elements?
9. Have you observed any changes in students' language learning due to exposure to global media, such as Netflix and Hollywood movies? How has this impacted their language use in class?
10. Are you familiar with the concept of indigenization of English and the idea of World Englishes? How do you perceive the status of Pakistani English in relation to global English varieties?