

INTERPLAY OF LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY IN EDUCATION: PROSPECTION FOR URDU AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Shazia Mushtaque¹ and Dr Sajida Zaki²

ABSTRACT

Educational contexts are the primary sites for the promulgation of linguistic ideologies and for determining the linguistic market for a language. English language in Pakistan is considered vital for mundane, official, and academic activities hence its learning gains currency in the polity. Conversely, the learning outputs are unsatisfactory which necessitates understanding how English language learners perceive themselves concerning the languages they are taught in the educational context. This study explains the language identity for Urdu (L1) and English (L2) of Pakistani undergraduate English as second language (ESL) learners for institutionally recognized and prescribed languages in the national curriculum to explicate the interplay of language and identity of learners in educational settings. Learners' demographic profiles (previous education, schooling system, language proficiency, and family's socio-economic status) were also inquired to understand relationship variation across demographic traits. A validated survey questionnaire was administered to a sample (N=316) comprising male and female students from 28 different programmes at a large public university in Karachi. Descriptive analysis and one-way ANOVA were carried out using the IBM SPSS 22 version. The findings attest to learners' hybrid identity revealing attachment neither with L1 nor to L2. Learners acknowledged the privileged status of the English language in polity and preferred British English compared to the indigenous variety of Pakistani English [PakE] echoing the language ideologies permeated through the Educational context. They also endorsed English language speaking skills for gaining higher recompenses in society however deluded themselves in code-switching instead of practicing speaking skills. Besides, no significant difference was found in the language identity of ESL learners across demographic traits. The study has strong implications for devising language policies for education and adopting pedagogical approaches calling to accentuate language identity as a catalyst in the teaching-learning process and not considering linguistic diversity a barrier in the multilingual context.

¹Visiting Faculty, Department of English Linguistics and Allied studies, NED University Karachi. Email: shaziyaamushtaque@cloud.neduet.edu.pk

²Professor and chairperson, Department of English Linguistics and Allied studies, NED University Karachi. Email: drzaki@neduet.edu.pk

Keywords: *Ideologies, Language identity, English as a second language ESL, Pakistani English [PakE], code -switching, multilingual context.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Language, Ideologies and Education

Language is cardinal for ideological debate hence two inseparable phenomena as language provides an arena for perpetuating and reconstructing ideologies in discussions where it is the central topic of debate in public spheres. Gal, (2006) defined language ideologies are “cultural ideas, presumptions and presuppositions with which different social groups name, frame and evaluate linguistic practices” (cited in Krzyżanowski & Wodak, 2011). Therefore, the language choice while making national language policy, nominating a language for official or national purposes is very instrumental especially for teaching and learning as it circumscribes the access of knowledge to a particular group in a society which in turn may limit their access to employment opportunities, literacy, education, and status in the society. Language policy is thus orchestrated and ordained to determine language use in the public context, and for promulgating the required knowledge and skills within the context (Owu-Ewie & Eshun, 2015). In addition, institutional social actors define how languages should co-exist and what roles they should perform in social, political, and economic contexts through language-in-education policy (Krzyżanowski and Wodak, 2011). Hence, educational institutions are the prime sites where these language ideologies are practiced and promulgated (Canese, 2018; Cushing, 2021) to help turn out large-scale producers and consumers and then upsize the linguistic market in the context (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991).

Ostler, (2009) identifies that in a multilingual state language choice is an upheaval task that can lead to abominable consequences whether it's a choice of a majority language; a case of Urdu in India, a minority language; a case of Bangla in East Pakistan or compromising for ex-colonial language; English. Pakistan has followed her ancestral traits and implemented a top-down language policy ranked English the prestigious position on the socio-economic ladder since gaining independence. Urdu language on the other hand constitutionally declared as the national language, prescribed to be taught as a compulsory language, and proposed as the medium of instruction essentially at the secondary level however remained confined to the masses and middle class. The power of ideology has permeated in language-in-education policies of Pakistan as it conforms ideological space for the English language and to some extent for the Urdu language leaving almost no provisions for regional or local languages (Khan & Zaki, 2022). The footsteps

of British colonialism followed by Pakistan's Ministry of Education identified as inequitable and undemocratic and low-esteemed Urdu state education resulted in an increased growth rate of private education system mostly English-medium in Pakistan (Powell, 2002). Consequently, a socio-economic class stratification in educational institutions is evident which developed a sense of 'cultural anomie' among people in contemporary Pakistan as elite English-medium schools cater upper-middle class; Urdu-medium schools, lower-middle and to some extent middle class, and madrassahs accommodate the needs of the very poor especially rural working-class inhabitants (Coleman, 2010; Rahman, 2010). Shamim, (2008) observes that high-income English-medium school learners are comparatively more fluent than non-elite private schools as their learning is facilitated with a wide range of learning opportunities and they are welcomed with greater opportunities in academic and professional lives as well. This language divide in educational institutions leads to easier access to those who are at the top of the socio-economic ladder, translates linguistic inequality among learners through educational practices, and raises questions about ownership, class stratification; and emblems of identity markers (Shamim & Rashid, 2019; Mushtaque, Anwar, & Zaki., 2022)

1.2 Linguistic Market in the Polity

In the post-colonial context, societies are transformed for building nation and citizenship organizations however synchronously regulated through language ideas and practices by the reconfigured relationship of actors and agents to state, market, and civil society (Jones, Blackledge, & Creese, 2012). Being blessed with 69 living languages (Eberhard, David, Simons & Charles, 2023) Pakistan is a polity where language choice in major functioning areas remains a polemic issue from the time of birth. This resulted in disarray and chaos amongst the denizens for preferring and utilizing language in different domains of life. Hence the East Pakistan separation and the Sindhi literary movement are the worst consequences of the language quandary; reflecting a sense of deprivation amongst other ethnic groups. For leveraging the language plight English has been constitutionally declared as an official language and Urdu as the national language. Nevertheless, the English language has become a sentinel for entering prestigious higher education institutions or getting high-salaried jobs across the polity (Shamim & Rashid, 2019). Mahboob, (2007) avowed that the English language traveled and 'anchored' in Pakistan (p.9), became part and parcel of mundane activities, and signified as an emblem of identity marker for fashioning bourgeois and elites in the society. Besides its pre-eminent position in media, science, and

technology it also serves as a lingua franca for bridging people of diversified linguistic backgrounds within the polity (Galloway & Rose, 2015).

The attached cognizance is translated and connoted in linguistic practices of people and officials resulting in the emergence of a distinct variety of Pakistani English recognized in McArthur's Circle of World English (1987) as the term South Asian English cannot suffice for a variety of English prevails in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, or Sri Lanka (cited in Galloway & Rose, 2015). According to Azher and Mehmood (2016), Pakistani English is a non-native variety, comprising independent linguistic and cultural identity at the 'lexical, phrasal, and sentential levels', now contains many borrowed words from Urdu and the other regional languages due to regular contact with the Urdu language. Rahman (2020), asserted that the variety of English developed as a result of Pakistani speakers in educational institutions is different from British English in terms of its linguistic features have an essence of Islamic and Muslim Culture. English language variety in Pakistan has evolved due to its omnipresent status in society necessitates examining the perception of English language users concerning this variety (Irfan Khan, 2012). Hence investigating learners' language identity and its subsequent components is pertinent as identity serves as a tool for bridging the gap between micro-level individual and macro-level social order (Block, 2007).

1.3 Research Questions

This study primarily investigates ESL learners' language identity for [L1-Urdu & L2-English] languages. The study also explored learners' preference for English language variety (i.e. British, American, or Pakistani) to reconfirm the languages they identify with. Lastly, it inquires how the language identity patterns varied across demographic groups. The following research questions guided the study:

1. How do ESL learners identify themselves with Urdu (L1) and English (L2) languages?
2. What English language variety (British, American, Pakistani) do ESL learners prefer, and which pronunciation do they attest as their most preferred for learning and using English?
3. Are there any significant differences between ESL language learners' language identity and their demographic characteristics (i.e. previous education, schooling system, language proficiency, and socio-economic status)?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Language and Identity Interplay

Language links the inner world of an individual to its outer context, an emblem for keeping a record of historical narratives of discourses, cultural values, beliefs, and norms of society, and a cohesive device for a nation to view itself as an integral part of culture, economy, politics, and society. Weedon (1997) claims that 'Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed' (p. 21). Language in its archaic meaning, was merely viewed as learning of linguistic codes (Pavlenko, 2002). Contrary to its traditional definition, Mikhail Bakhtin, a Russian literary theorist views language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories but as a situated 'utterance' where speakers in dialogues strive to make meanings (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981, p. 271). It is not only a tool for communication but a tool to interpret its user background such as belonging to a nation, specific region, level of education, etc. (Evans, 2015).

Identity, on the other hand, is a multifaceted construct. Kouhpaenejad and Gholaminejad (2014) defined identity as an entity that can be viewed both as 'given, innate and predetermined, such as social class or physiologically inherited characteristics; and constructed by desire' (p. 202). They further argued that identity is bi-dimensional i.e. the personal and social facet of identity where individuals as human beings act self-consciously by managing and negotiating their multiple selves deciding to manifest 'which' self to be activated according to place, time, and context. Conversely, the social dimension of identity is reflected through membership of a person categorized based on age, gender, religion, and profession; the identity markers for the inclusion or exclusion of self and others in a community of practice.

Language and identity are thus two inseparable concepts understood as the assumed or attributed relationship between the medium of communication i.e. Language and one's sense of self (Rezaei, Khatib & Baleghizadeh, 2014). Ostler, (2009) suggested that in a multilingual landscape, language can potentially be used as an identity marker. Moreover, as Phan, (2008) explicitly delineated that 'the more languages you speak the more identities you have' (p. 63). Thus 'particular languages, varieties and linguistic forms' decreed on individuals can be entrancing or enduring in a multilingual context (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 3). These identities are translated into discursive practices of a language user reflecting moral and affective association with the language (Rasookha, 2010). Individuals hence can discern what they connoted through language by underpinning their language

identity in these speech communities at the time of utterances (Hall, 2005) subject to their different positions in the context.

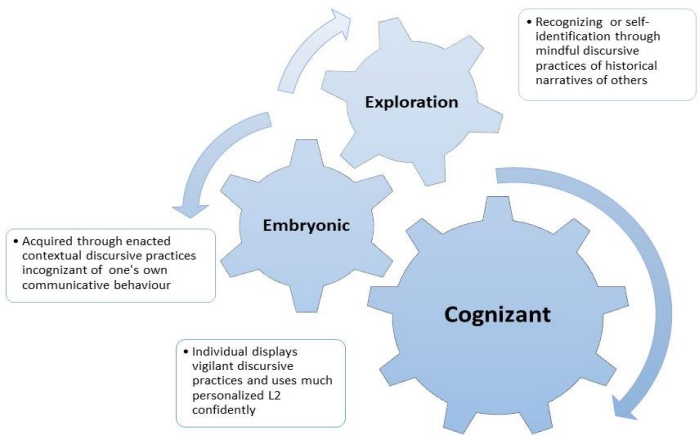
2.2 Language, identity, and L2 classroom practices

Conceptualizing language as a social phenomenon 'language learning entails mastering complex sets of discursive practices for use in a range of social contexts' (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p.291). Social contexts in this regard an important arena for the emergence of identities where individuals exercise their agencies according to locally situated or broad cultural and social identities as per affordances (Preece, 2016). Identity from this viewpoint is fluid and dynamic hence discursive practices shape language identity subject to changing contexts (Rasookha, 2010). Therefore, social class, socioeconomic status, and educational background (Block, 2015), potentially contribute to the language learning process where negotiation of identities takes place between novice and competent members of the language community where it is practiced (Pavlenko, 2002). Norton Pierce in her study foregrounds language as a social tool to gain access or denial to a social site and claims that language learning context serves as a site where language learners face the challenges imposed by both personal and social dimensions of identity as mentioned earlier in the article. They constantly evaluate the social and economic recompenses that confront their investment in target language capital and its utilization (Pierce, 1995; Norton, 2010). Effective language learning hence obliges accentuating learners' multiple and dynamic identities in the learning context (Norton, 2010).

In addition, based on the above notions learning a second language leads to a new identity where 'Pronunciation' is identified as the most resistant behavior to change often referred to as 'language ego' by most researchers, and could be neutralized by 'gaining native-like pronunciation' (Block, 2007, p. 51-52). In addition, linguistic utterances are also subject to 'linguistic habitus'; a sub-set of dispositions acquired during a course of learning in a specific context i.e. family, peer, group, schools' and 'linguistic agents' products depends on the market value associated with the linguistic practices (such as accent) in the linguistic market (i.e. field or institutions) (Bourdieu, Thompson & Raymond, 2009, p.17). In this vain, for English language teaching or using it as a language of instruction, investigation of attitudes toward language variation helps to make learners informed choices and perchance shift the exchange rate on different varieties (Mooney & Evans, 2015). Gatbonton, Trofimovich, and Magid (2005), accredited in their study that second language learners strive to make choices either to enjoy the reward of being efficient or not to cost their identity in the L2 context where social forces for inclusion or

exclusion from both L1 and L2 groups exert pressure on individual encounter identity manipulation, hence restrict to gain or perform native-like proficiency entails ‘identity-safe’ classrooms. Steele and Vargas (2013) found in their study that higher identity-safe classrooms increase learners’ participation and sense of belonging in the learning process where they want challenging work, feel more positive about school, and their scores are higher on standardized tests in comparison to students in less identity-safe classrooms. This laid a great responsibility on educators and other social actors to devise policy and adopt culturally sensitive pedagogical approaches where students can make their informed choices by creating inclusive and identity-safe classrooms and by not undermining their deficiencies as threats in the teaching-learning process (Holden, Tanenbaum, & Ashley, 2023). Therefore, it is pertinent to activate language identity construction phases (see Rassokha, 2010, p. 25-31) in L2 classrooms instead of remaining unnoticed. Language instructors and educators can mobilize the process leading learners to self-identification and exposing them to historical narratives of other members to associate or delineate from the larger linguistic community to finally reaching an apprising state where learners can critically evaluate and self-recognize themselves while displaying their linguistic repertoires with greater confidence in the teaching-learning process as conceptualized in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptualizing Language Identity construction process in L2 classrooms



Based on these critical views and taking into consideration power relations, socio-political arrangements, and surrounding ideologies this study

examines L2 learners' [L1 & L2] language identities and their perceptions relating to L2 learning.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study examines the language identity of both Urdu (L1) and English (L2) language of ESL learners prescribed as the compulsory languages to be taught in the national curriculum. Identity has been widely discussed and explored area due to its complex and multifaceted nature in second language acquisition and learning. Various ontological and epistemological underpinnings were adopted, advocating longitudinal ethnographic research to examine identity conflict (Pavlenko, 2002). Conversely, the messiness of data (Norton, 2013), time constraints, cost, and less generalizability of findings are issues that cannot be ignored (Rezaei, et al., 2014) and calls to broaden the horizon for investigating identity (Block, 2007). Creswell (2013) suggests a post-positivist framework for testing, verifying, and refining the laws or theories based on collected data that either rejects or fortifies the theory. Moreover, it problematizes and provides new possibilities of interpretation for still taken-for-granted aspects in the research (Adam, 2014). Hence, this study is based on a post-positivist paradigm. It adopts a quantitative method and explanatory approach that aims to capture how ESL learners identify themselves with Urdu (L1) and English (L2) languages in their educational context. IBM SPSS Statistics 22.0 software is utilized for computing descriptive statistics and calculating one-way ANOVA for data analysis.

3.1 Participants

The study population is proportionally allocated based on gender and discipline employed quota sampling for allocating "proportional weighting to selected strata" identified in a larger population (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 114). Using the 5% rule 400 students of this population were selected. Furthermore, a percentage based on the number of seats allocated to all disciplines was calculated for selecting participants from each discipline. Table 1 is a brief description of the research population and targeted sample. The findings may be generalized to undergraduate learners who completed prescribed English courses as per HEC national curriculum studying in 28 different disciplines pursuing four and five-year undergraduate course programmes (B.E, B.S, B. Arch.) are the actual population of the study. As the site of research is a major public university in Karachi participants were mostly inhabitants of the same city and were homogenous in their linguistic affiliation, medium of education, previous educational system, and socioeconomic status. Moreover, language and linguistic affiliation are considered a sensitive issue in the region as

participants may conceal the true representation of their feelings and hide the facts, therefore to increase the objectivity the study adopts a quantitative method, cross-sectional and embedded in a fixed period. The data was collected from the participants in one sitting hence findings may vary in terms of longitudinal studies carried out for in-depth inquiry.

Table 1: Research population and sample

Research population		Targeted sample		[N]*
8020 learners	5% of the total research	Total	400	316
(4-course years)	population			
2005 learners	60% of sample	Male	260	185
(from each course year)	40% of sample	Female	140	131

**[N] Sample included in the study*

3.2 Research Instrument

The study employed a language identity questionnaire adapted from Khatib and Razaei (2013) comprising learners’ profile sections in which learners’ linguistic affiliations and demographic profiles were inquired. The second section comprises 21 items to obtain data for “attachment to the Urdu language (L1), pronunciation attitudes, language and social status, L1 use and exposure in the society, language knowledge, view of script or alphabet, and attitudes towards the English language” (See Mushtaque & Zaki, 2019, p. 25). The Inter-item reliability of the questionnaire is 0.9 which is taken as highly reliable when calculated through Cronbach alpha (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

3.3 Participants’ Profile

A set of questions was included in the Learners’ profile section of the questionnaire to obtain information about Learners’ linguistic and demographic profiles to understand their linguistic background, socio-economic status, schooling system, previous degree, and medium of education. Table 2 represents and endorses the multilingual landscape of the context. Participants of the study were mainly affiliated with the Urdu language speech communities justified the study sample, the selected population, and the site for the present study, and enhanced the validity of the study findings. Inquiring learners’ demographic, profiles to gain insights about language proficiency, socio-economic status, and educational background set of the question was included in the profile section. Findings informed that (6.6%) of learners self-rated their English language proficiency as Excellent, (46.5%) as Good, (41.1%) as Fair, (2.8%) as Poor, and (2.8%) did not respond to the item.

Table 3 provides insight into learners’ educational profiles. Learners’ socio-economic background was deduced by the information provided about their family’s income in four general categories; Lower middle (4.1%) Middle (70.3%), Upper middle (24.7%), Elite (0.9%). The sample comprises the majority of students from middle-income groups. The profile data related to previous education reveals that the majority of them completed a Higher Secondary School Certificate the local mainstream education qualification; however, the majority studied at private and elitist institutes with English as the medium of instruction for most participants throughout primary to college level.

Table 2: Learners’ Linguistic Repertoire-Speech Communities

Balochi	0.3%	Kacchi	1.3%	Sindhi	3.8%
Brahui	0.3%	Kashmiri	1.6%	Punjabi	10.4%
Dari [Hazaragi]	0.3%	Pushto	1.8%	Urdu	73.1%
Shina	0.3%	Memoni	2.5%		
Hindko	0.6%	Gujrati	3.2%		

Table 3: Learners’ educational background

Previous Education		School Attended		Medium of Instruction		
				Level	English	Urdu
Intermediate-HSSC	89.6%	Public	5.7%	Primary	96.8%	3.16%
A Levels-CIE	9.5%	Private	84.2%	Secondary	98.7%	1.3%
Others	0.9%	Others	10%	Intermediate	99.4%	0.6%

4. FINDINGS

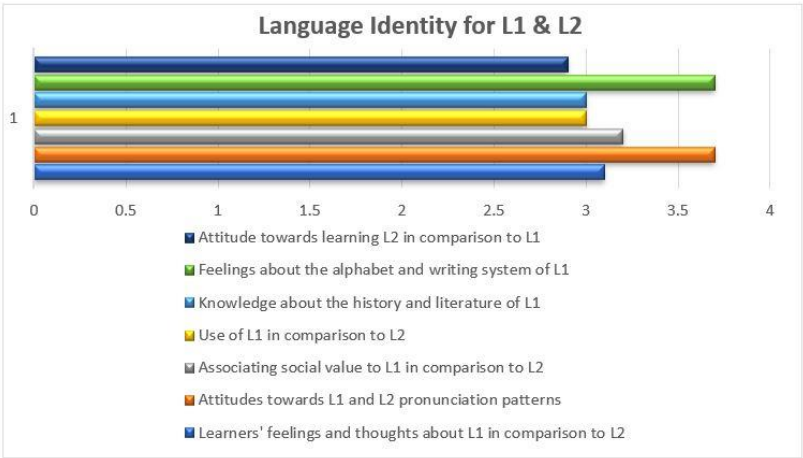
Language identity in this study is mainly informed by the way participants identify themselves through the language they use for communication purposes and the dialect/accent they prefer to speak in their discursive practices for Urdu (L1) and English (L2).

4.1 Learners’ language identity for Urdu (L1) and English (L2)

The first research question is answered by computing the data collected through a language identity questionnaire based on a 6-point Likert scale. The mean value of Language identity components is precisely captured in Figure 2, investigated through a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 6 with ‘strongly agree’ at one end of the scale receiving 1 point and ‘strongly disagree’ with 6 points at other end. Hence the lesser the score the stronger is participants’ inclination towards L1. Findings revealed learners’ inclination towards their L2 for pronunciation patterns and writing systems. Moreover,

learners neither show disposition for L1 or L2 in terms of attachment, social status, language use and knowledge, and influence of L2 on L1.

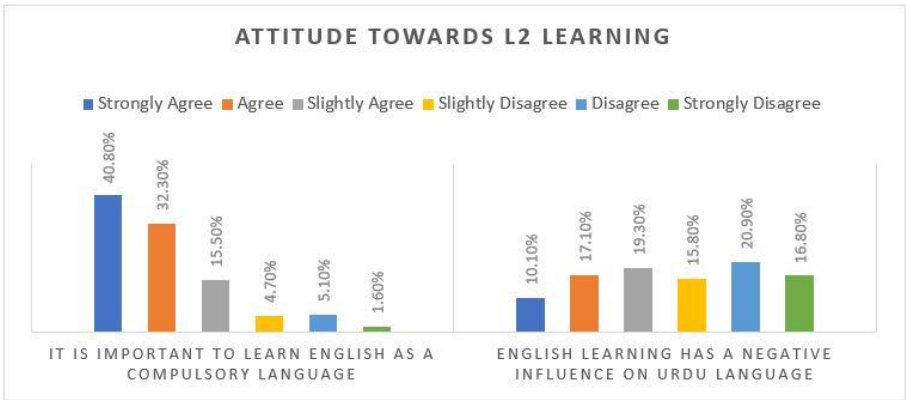
Figure 2: Mean value of Language Identity components



4.1.1 Learners’ attitude towards learning L2 in comparison to L1

Learners were probed to share the significance of learning the English language intensely emphasized for learning English as a compulsory language resonating the revered status of the English language in their educational context. On the other hand, they possess an oblivious attitude regarding the negative influence of L2 learning on their L1 as shown in Figure 3 reflecting their incognizance for their communicative practices.

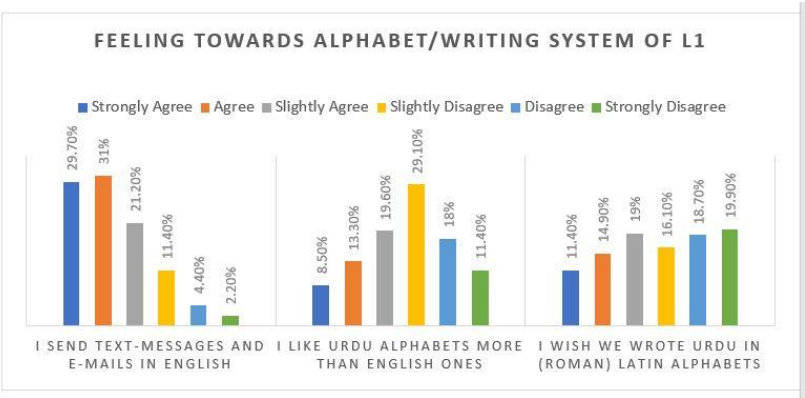
Figure 3: Learners’ attitude towards English language learning



4.1.2 Learners’ Feeling about the Writing System of L1

Learners use the English language to a greater extent for correspondence purposes instead of L1. They detested towards Urdu language script and writing system however had an ambivalent desire to use Roman/Latin script for the Urdu language captured precisely in Figure 4.

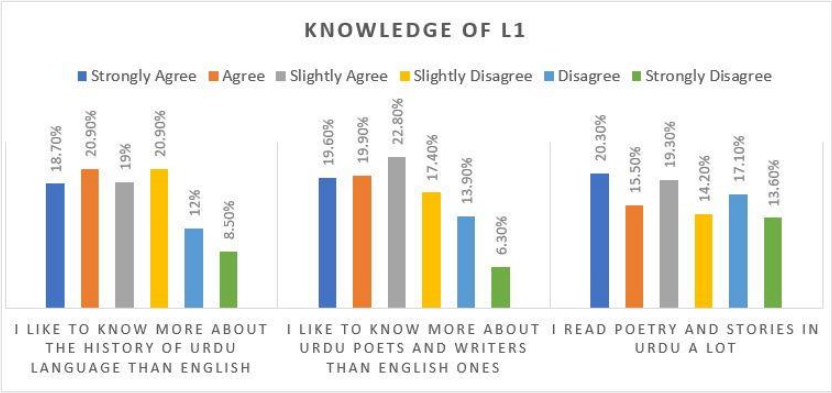
Figure 4: Learners’ Feeling about the L1 Alphabet/Writing System



4.1.3 Learners’ knowledge about the history and literature of L1

Learners’ opinions were measured to gain insight into their knowledge about the history and literature of the Urdu language illustrated in Figure 5. A cumulative of 58.6% of learners showed interest in being acquainted with the history of their L1 in comparison to L2, 53.86% anticipated acquiring knowledge about Urdu language poets and writers and 55.1% manifested their inclination for reading Urdu literature to a greater extent.

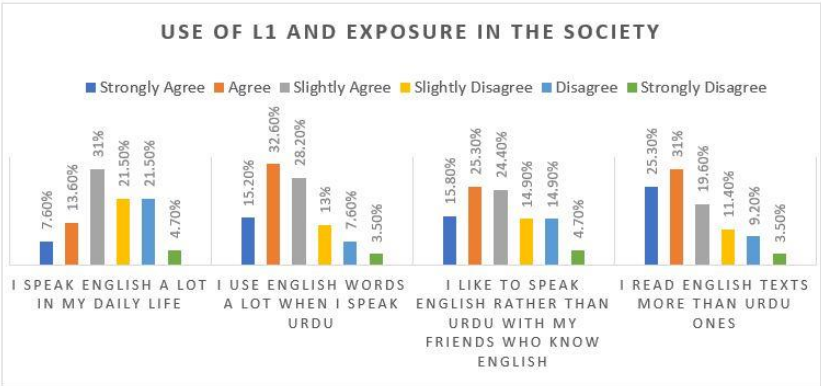
Figure 5: Learners’ knowledge of L1



4.1.4 Learners’ use of L1 in comparison to L2

Probing learners’ usage of linguistic repertoire only 7.6% of learners showed a strong inclination to speak the English language in their daily routine whereas 32.6% agreed to heavily use English vocabulary while speaking the Urdu language. Additionally, Figure 6 illustrates the English language as learners’ preferred choice for conversing with friends who understand L2 and English text for reading in preference to the Urdu language.

Figure 6: Learners’ use of L1 & exposure in the society



4.1.5 L1 & L2 social status

Learners’ perceptions were acquired to the prestigious status of their L1 and L2 in society. They attested that particularly having effective English language speaking skills brings respect and privilege in society and knowing English is obligatory for reverence making a cumulative response of 70.9% and 73.9% in agreement. Lastly, they showed mixed attitudes in response to condescending while speaking English in Figure 7.

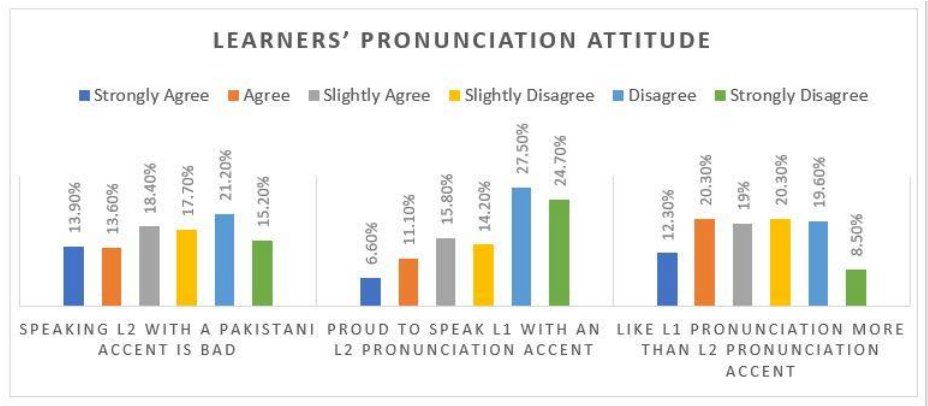
Figure 7: Learners’ perception of L1 & L2 social status



4.1.6 Learners’ Pronunciation Attitude

To particularly examine learners’ pronunciation preferences for learning L2 response percentage of items 4-6 was computed. Figure 8 illustrates learners' positive attitude to speaking L2 with a Pakistani accent, the majority of learners do not feel proud of speaking L1 with an L2 accent and showed a mixed inclination for L1 pronunciation more than L2 pronunciation accent.

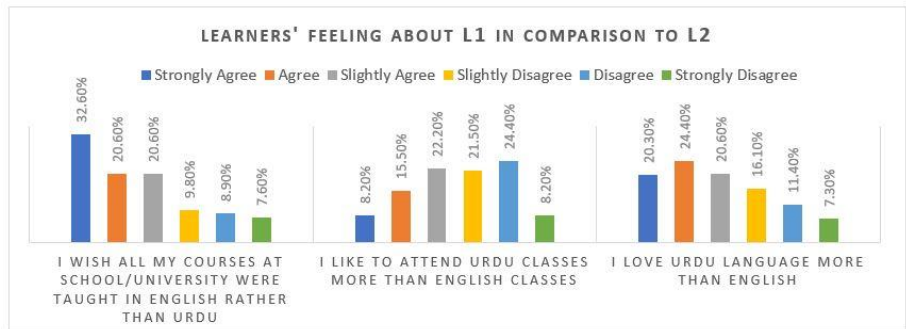
Figure 8: Learners’ pronunciation attitude



4.1.7 Learners’ feelings and thoughts about L1 in comparison to L2

Upon examining learners’ choice of language as the medium for learning they greatly emphasized on English language in comparison to the Urdu language. 54.1% of learners collectively detested to attend classes in the Urdu language. Contrary to this 65.3% of learners collectively adored Urdu language than English as shown in Figure 9.

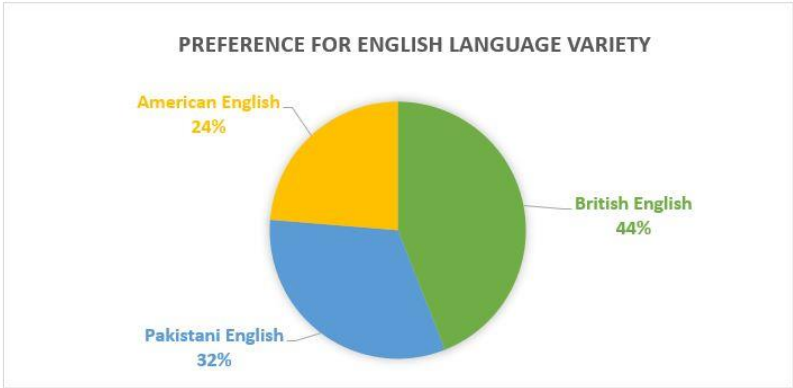
Figure 9: Learners’ attachment towards L1



4.2 Preference for English language variety

Learners’ preference for English language variety is inquired through items in learners’ profiles indicating that the majority of the learners favoured British English variety which echoes colonial connotation and impact of language choice for education in the polity. The survey also acknowledges the existence and inclination for Pakistani English as the second chosen variety and American English stands as the third preferred choice for the English language variety of the participant learners.

Figure 10: Learners’ preference for L2 variety



4.3 Language identity across demographic features

To identify whether there are significant differences in ESL learner’s language identity across demographic features such as gender, previous education, previous schooling, English language proficiency, and socioeconomic status separate hypotheses testing were carried out by running one-way ANOVA to understand the scores obtained through the questionnaire presented in Table 4. The descriptive statistics results of hypotheses indicate that there is no difference in language identity of ESL learners of their demographic profile at the significance value 0.05.

Table 4: Language identity and learners’ demographic characteristics

Demographic Characteristics		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups	8.499	52	0.163	0.630	0.977
	Within Groups	68.194	263	0.259		
	Total	76.693	315			
Previous Education	Between Groups	9.632	52	0.185	1.003	0.475
	Within Groups	48.555	263	0.185		

Studied in School	Total	58.187	315			
	Between Groups	55.347	52	1.064	0.995	0.490
	Within Groups	281.375	263	1.070		
English language proficiency	Total	336.722	315			
	Between Groups	40.139	52	0.772	1.384	0.053
	Within Groups	146.734	263	0.558		
Family's Income	Total	186.873	315			
	Between Groups	13.111	52	0.252	0.897	0.674
	Within Groups	73.936	263	0.281		
	Total	87.047	315			

5. DISCUSSION

The study primarily probed into ESL learners’ language identity for L1 & L2 mainly belonging to the Urdu language community. The findings of the study connoted the enacted ideologies in the educational context as learners are incognizant of their language identity and neither showed attachment to their L1 (Urdu) nor to L2 (English). The in-depth examination for understanding attachment to language reflects that the majority of the learners show a disposition for the Urdu language rather than the English language contrary to their L1 investment as they manifested a desire to learn all courses through the English language opting moderately to attend Urdu classes. Similarly, learners preferred the English language to Urdu for performing day-to-day activities, contested for seeking Urdu language knowledge, and highly supported learning English as a compulsory language revering speaking skills noteworthy for escalating social status. For pronunciation and writing systems they have fancied L2 in comparison to their L1 and are indecisive about the negative influence of L2 learning on the L1. In a nutshell, the findings indicate dispassionate sentiments that are intimidating specifically for L1 attachment, its exposure, and knowledge in society and the writing system (Figure 1). Upon examining learners’ perception of the social status they revere to L1 & L2, results in Figure 7 affirm the prestigious status of the English language in comparison to L1 which resonates with macro-level ideologies conveyed through the discursive practices of stakeholders policies. The findings acknowledge stakeholders' ideologies that reflect the prominence space for the English language in language-in-education policy discourses of the polity rather than Urdu and other regional languages (Khan & Zaki, 2022). Investigating language identity relationship variation across demographic traits revealed no significant difference (Table 4). The findings can be compared to Mahboob's (2007) study prospecting the future of English in Pakistan discerned that despite giving importance to the Urdu language, participants seem English language to be more useful for their professional lives and there is no significant difference observed in the attitude for the Urdu

language of the respondents to their gender, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds or difference in study programs or discipline. The study also affirms the hybrid identity of ESL learners and emphasizes the identity construction of English as a second language learner in classrooms (Anbreen, 2015; Shamim & Rashid, 2019; Mushtaque et al., 2022) shifting their language identity from the embryonic phase to providing exploration opportunities to learners and helping them reaching to cognizant phase of language identity construction for displaying their linguistic repertoire confidently. Figure 6 reveals learners' preference for the English language for conversing with friends instead of the Urdu language can potentially contribute to finding somebody who becomes meaningful in shaping their language identity and facilitates educators as well to provide them with identity-safe classrooms.

Investigating learners' preferred English language variety (Figure 10) results of this survey substantiated the entrenched status of English in Pakistan as of colonial legacy transmitted from the sub-continent and its firmly ingrained position in the educational context in Pakistan; as 'British standard English' is the official prescribed variety in the institutions (Rahman, 2001; p.258) then supporting Pakistani English [PakE] in comparison to American English. The findings can be compared to the 'An attitudinal study towards Pakistani English' conducted by Jabeen, Mahmood, and Rasheed, (2011), which revealed that 56% of participants favour the Pakistani accent; consider it a separate variety 'best suited for expression and creativity' argued that 'giving a native color to English is a marker of their identity' (p.114-116). Being recognized as an indigenized L2 variety (Azher & Mehmood, 2016; Saraceni, 2020), and widely practiced in Pakistani society, English language teachers need to underscore its significance in the teaching context by not recognizing it as 'incorrect' (Rahman, 2012, 2020). However, the acceptance of a local non-native variety is also supported by ELTs replacing the persistent concept of standardized English in the Pakistani context (Fareed, Bilal, & Saeed, 2016). Thus, Kachru's seminal work in the late 90s for demarcating English across different boundaries stirred the debate for 'World Englishes' and paved the way for the emergence of several other terms due to its different role as global English or International English (Bolton, 2004; p.367), stipulates more cautiousness on researchers, sociolinguistics and anthropologists for deciding the future, ownership and concurring an acceptable and mutually intelligible variety around the globe, approving or disapproving local varieties of English language locally or globally in a context.

6. CONCLUSION

The English language catalyzes safeguarding both technological and communicative competence in this digitally revolutionized society and authorization for ascending the socio-economic ladder in Pakistan. At this juncture, the educational context acts as an agent in upsizing the linguistic market (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991) in the polity. However, imposed ideologies, class stratification, and ritualized English language teaching practices are unable to cater to the needs of the digitally resourceful Gen-Z (Mushtaque et al., 2022). The status quo of L1 and L2 in the educational context and English language teaching and learning condition has obscured the utilization of linguistic repertoires to its maximum. Learners are incognito of their language identity hence, unable to spot the vandalization of their linguistic repertoire(s) as well as could not enjoy the feather of English language in their cap compared to their proclivity and fortitudes of L2 learning. An identity-safe (Steele & Vargas, 2013) and technologically assisted (Abbasi, Aftab & Farshad, 2023) English language classrooms hence empower both teachers and learners. Accompanying this, pedagogues should adopt approaches that foster learners' literacy skills by making classrooms culturally sensitive, inclusive, and identity-safe learning contexts (Holden, Tanenbaum, & Ashley, 2023) instead of focusing merely on linguistic systems. Pertinent to English language variety choice, learners' inclination for non-native English variety i.e. Pakistani English [PakE] stirred the debate for shifting the language ideology of stereotypical standards of native varieties and commodification of Pakistani English [PakE], call for 'language defense' in removing 'linguistic insecurities' by not considering the local variety as inferior one (Mooney & Evans, 2015; p.237).

The intertwined relationship of language and identity is proven in the educational context and illustrates how the absence of an unambiguous and cogent policy for language-in-education has been inadequate to meet the expectations for second language learning. Foreseeing the strong sense of linguistic nationalism focusing on national and regional languages was expected to escort language policies that could have unsettled colonial continuity to build an egalitarian society. However, as illustrated in the article, the linguistic inequalities created in the colonial days have strengthened in recent decades and have taken new forms of expression and incongruence. This foregrounds sensitization of language identity maintenance from the grassroots level and calls for cultivating a pluralistic and culturally sensitive approach while teaching language(s) for the protection and vitality of national heritage and wielding linguistic diversity as an asset. English language, globalization, and digitalization penetrate other developing societies like

Pakistan, affecting the linguistic ecology, sociocultural landscape, and socioeconomic reality, therefore, we recommend further examination of the inherent identity queries with its deeper issues with language and its subsequent impact on learners and the learning process for other regional languages in heterogeneous context(s).

REFERENCES

- Abbasi, H. M., Aftab, M., & Farshad, M. (2023). Experiences of English language learners about using quizizz tool for learning and language achievement in ESP classes. *Bahria University Journal of Humanities & Amp; Social Sciences*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.58800/bujhss.v6i1.166>
- Anbreen, T. (2015). The Influence of English Second Language Learning on Pakistani University Students' Identity. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 192, 379–387. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.06.054>
- Bakhtin, M. M., & Holquist, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: four essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Block, D. (2007). The rise of identity in SLA research, post Firth and Wagner (1997). *The Modern Language Journal*, 91(s1), 863–876.
- Block, D. (2015). Social Class in Applied Linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 35, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190514000221>
- Bolton, K. (2004). World Englishes. In A. Davies, & C. Elder (Eds.), *The handbook of Applied Linguistics* (pp.367-396). Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Bourdieu, P., Thompson, J. B., & Raymond, G. (2009). *Language and symbolic power* (Reprint). Polity Press.
- Canese, V. (2018). Language ideology as a conceptual framework to analyze issues related to language policy and language education. *Revista Científica de la Facultad de Filosofía*, 6(1), 20–42.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed). London; New York: Routledge. Englishes. Pergamon Institute of English.
- Coleman, H. (2010). *Teaching and learning in Pakistan: The role of language in education*. Islamabad: The British Council. <http://xa.yimg.com/kq/groups/23184549/1102973986/name/PakistanMotherTongueReport.pdf>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.
- Cushing, I. (2021). Policy mechanisms of the standard language ideology in England's education system. *Journal of Language Identity &*

- Education, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2021.1877542>. [Taylor & Francis Online]
- Duff, P. A., & May, S. (Eds.) (2017). *Language Socialization*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Eberhard, David M., Simons, G. F. & Charles D. (Eds) (2023) *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 26th ed. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.
- Evans, David. (Ed.) (2015). *Language and Identity: Discourse in the world*. Bloomsbury Academic.
- Fareed, M., Bilal, M., & Saeed, N. (2016). Impact Of Global Variation On English Language In Pakistan: Perceptions Of Pakistani English Language Teachers. *Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 4(2), 26.
- Galloway, N., & Rose, H. (2015). *Introducing global Englishes*. London; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group (pg 15-24)
- Gatbonton, E., Trofimovich, & Magid., M., (2005). Learners' Ethnic Group Affiliation and L2 Pronunciation Accuracy: A Sociolinguistic Investigation. *TESOL Quarterly* 39(3):489. doi: 10.2307/3588491.
- Hall, J. K. (2005). *Teaching and Researching Language and Culture*. Beijing: Foreign Language
- Irfan Khan, H. (2012). The Evolution of Pakistani English (PakE) as a Legitimate Variety of English. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 1(5), 90–99. <https://doi.org/10.7575/ijalel.v.1n.5p.90>
- Jabeen, F., Mahmood, M. A., & Rasheed, S. (2011). *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*. IJCRB, 109.
- Jones, M. M., Blackledge, A., & Creese, A. (Eds.). (2012). *The Routledge handbook of multilingualism*. London; Routledge.
- Khan, M. A., & Zaki, S. (2022). Corpus Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of Pakistan's Language Education Policy Documents: What are the Existing Language Ideologies? *SAGE Open*, 12(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221121805>
- Khatib, M., & Rezaei, S. (2013). A model and questionnaire of language identity in Iran: a structural equation modelling approach. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 34(7), 690–708. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2013.796958>
- Kouhpaenejad, M. H., & Gholaminejad R. (2014). Identity and Language Learning from Post-Structuralist Perspective. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 5(1):199–204. doi: 10.4304/jltr.5.1.199-204.
- Krzyżanowski, M., & Wodak, R. (2011). Political strategies and language policies: The European Union Lisbon strategy and its implications for

- the EU's language and multilingualism policy. *Language Policy*, 10, 115–136.
- Mahboob, A. (2007). The future of English in Pakistan. SPO Discussion paper series. Available at <http://www.spopk.org/DP1.pdf>, last accessed March. <http://www.spopk.org/spo/index.php/publications/discussion-paper?download=138:spo-discussion-paper-series-volume-i-social-justice#page=5>
- Mooney, A., & Evans, B. (2015). *Language, Society and Power: An Introduction* (4th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315733524>
- Mushtaque, S., & Zaki, S. (2019). Language Identity of Tertiary ESL Learners: Understanding Urdu and English Language Identities. *International Research Journal of Arts and Humanities (IRJAH)* 47(47), 19-35.
- Mushtaque, S., Anwar, R. H., & Zaki, S., (2022). Exploring Pakistani ESL learners' Investment Practices in learning the English language. *Journal of Education and social research (JESS)*, 10(1), 1-16.
- Norton, Bonny. (2010) "The Practice of Theory in the Language Classroom." *Issues in Applied Linguistics* 18(2).
- Norton, Bonny. (2013) *Identity and Language Learning: Extending the Conversation*. Bristol, Blue Ridge Summit: Multilingual Matters.
- Ostler, N. D. M. (2009). Andrew Simpson (ed): *Language and National Identity in Asia*: Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, *Language Policy*, 8(2), 193–195. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10993-008-9108-5>
- Owu-Ewie, C., & Eshun, E. S. (2015). The Use of English as Medium of Instruction at the Upper Basic Level (Primary Four to Junior High School) in Ghana: From Theory to Practice. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(3), 72–82.
- Pavlenko, A. (2002). Poststructuralist approach to the study of social factors in second language learning and use. In V. Cook (Ed.), *Potraits of the L2 user* (pp. 277-302). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters. http://astro.temple.edu/~apavlenk/pdf/Poststructuralist_approaches_2002.pdf
- Pavlenko, A., & Blackledge, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Negotiation of identities in multilingual contexts*. Clevedon; Buffalo: Multilingual Matters.
- Phan, L. H. (2008). *Teaching English as an international language: identity, resistance and negotiation*. Clevedon, UK; Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters.
- Peirce, B. N. (1995). Social Identity, Investment, and Language Learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, 29(1), 9–31.

- Powell, R. (2002). Language Planning and the British Empire: Comparing Pakistan, Malaysia and Kenya. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 3(3), 205–279. <http://doi.org/10.1080/14664200208668041>
- Preece, Siân. (Eds.) (2016). *The Routledge Handbook of Language and Identity*. London Routledge.
- Rahman, T. (2001). English-Teaching Institutions in Pakistan. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 22(3), 242–261. <http://doi.org/10.1080/01434630108666435>
- Rahman, T. (2010). Language Policy, Identity, and Religion: aspects of the civilization of the Muslims of Pakistan and North India. Chair on Quaid-i-Azam & Freedom Movement, National Institute of Pakistan Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Tariq_Rahman/publication/271521363_Language_Policy_Identity_and_Religion_aspects_of_the_civilization_of_the_Muslims_of_Pakistan_and_North_India/links/54d5cf690cf2464758084587.pdf
- Rahman, T. (2012). English Across South Asia. In C. Chapelle (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. Hoboken, NJ, USA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. <http://doi.wiley.com/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0372>
- Rassokha, M. (2010). Language Identity: Issues of Theory and Practice. *Asian Englishes*, 13(1), 20–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13488678.2010.10801270>
- Rezaei, S., Khatib, M., & Baleghizadeh, S. (2014). Language identity among Iranian English language learners: a nationwide survey. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 35(5), 527–536. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2014.889140> Teaching and Research Press.
- Saraceni, M. (2020). The politics of world Englishes. In D. Schreier, M. Hundt, & E. W. Schneider (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of World Englishes* (pp. 633–651). (Cambridge Handbooks in Language and Linguistics). Cambridge University Press.
- Shamim, F. (2008). Trends, issues and challenges in English language education in Pakistan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 28(3), 235–249. <http://doi.org/10.1080/02188790802267324>
- Shamim, F., & Rashid, U. (2019). The English/Urdu-medium divide in Pakistan: Consequences for learner identity and future life chances. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 6(1), 43–61
- Steele, D.M, & Cohn-Vargas, B. (2013). *Identity Safe Classrooms Places to Belong and Learn*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Weedon, C. (1997) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell.