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Reflections on Donor-Funded Reports and Education Programs in Pakistan: A Qualitative
Analysis on Pakistan's English Education

Amy M. Puett

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in TESOL
degree at SIT Graduate Institute

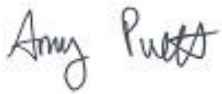
Brattleboro, VT

October 2016

Advisor: Dr. Elka Todeva

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Puett". The signature is written in a cursive style with a loop at the end of the last name.

Student name: Amy Puett

Date: October 3rd, 2016

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Abstract

The extensive rise in aid from aid organizations and donor agencies for education in Pakistan at the beginning of the 21st century has resulted in a rise of the number of studies and reports on Pakistan's education system and newly developed education programs. This was partially due to the concern about the status of the religious schools known as *madaris* and the quality of education they provided. The majority of the existing reports on education offer quantitative analyses and pay little attention to English taught in schools although English is critically important for job opportunities and professional growth in Pakistan. The English education programs designed for Pakistan, which involve teacher training programs and English language programs, often lack practical considerations and, in some cases, have unclear motives. In order to attain educational effectiveness, it is necessary to first look in depth at various contextual factors in the country. This includes, among other things, looking at the history and culture of a country—information which can be acquired through more qualitative methods. This IPP undertakes a qualitative assessment of the state of English language education by eliciting the perspectives of Pakistani English teachers, students and bilingual professionals in Pakistan. Nine teachers and eight students and bilingual professionals were interviewed using a standardized, open-ended interview. The interview explored the methodologies for English language teaching, the cultural and socio-economic context in which the language was taught and the effectiveness of English education in Pakistan within that context. Recurring themes are identified using an inductive analysis of the interviews. Evidence is offered that if emic perspectives are taken into account, English education would be more conducive for optimal learning. Specific socio-economic and cultural factors are identified that were not considered in donor-funded reports and program assessments discussed in the literature review of this IPP. It was observed that while

teachers are knowledgeable about effective teaching methods, they are constrained in practice by the competitive nature of education and the job market in Pakistan that compelled them to focus on institutional and standardized testing. Also evident are differences in perspective on which language should be used in the classroom. While many teachers are intent on using only English in the classroom, many students feel that using Urdu and other Pakistani languages would assist them in understanding certain concepts. This work fills an important gap in the assessment and design of donor-funded language education programs in developing country contexts, especially Pakistan and countries with similar socio-political history. This IPP identifies a number of qualitative assessment factors that need to be considered before such programs can be effective towards meeting their goals.

Keywords: donor agencies, education sector development programs, emic perspectives, English education in Pakistan, Pakistan, language ecology, teaching training, TESOL, qualitative analysis, Western Aid

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Descriptors:

Classroom Techniques, Cultural Awareness, Cultural Context, Cultural Differences, English (Second Language), Interviews, Language Teachers, Language Usage, Second Language Learning, Qualitative Research, Questionnaires

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Introduction

The extensive rise in aid from aid organizations and donor agencies for education in Pakistan at the beginning of the 21st century has resulted in a rise in studies and reports on the Pakistan education system and newly developed education programs. This has had many positive effects and has created many opportunities for Pakistanis that would otherwise be unavailable. However, the majority of the existing reports on education offer only quantitative analyses and pay little attention to the context of English taught in schools although speaking English is critically important for job opportunities and professional growth in Pakistan. The English education programs designed for Pakistan, which involve teacher training programs and English language programs, often lack practical considerations, and, in some cases, have unclear motives. In order to attain educational effectiveness, it is necessary to first look in-depth at various contextual factors in the country. This includes, among other things, looking at the history and culture of a country—information which can be acquired through more qualitative methods. Making these reports and programs more culturally inclusive would move them towards making the approach to English language learning less reductionist, linear and simplistic and more culturally sensitive and inclusive, which is a trend in modern approaches to second language acquisition. Diane Larsen-Freeman's writings on complexity theory describe this trend when she notes the similarities of language and language acquisition to a complex, non-linear system. Language and language acquisition are, she states (1997), 'dynamic, complex, nonlinear, chaotic, unpredictable, sensitive to initial conditions, open, self-organizing, feedback sensitive and adaptive' (p. 142). Further research into non-linear, culturally sensitive and inclusive approaches would help guide stakeholders to a deeper understanding of language acquisition in the classroom. This IPP will undertake a qualitative assessment of the state of English language

education by eliciting the perspectives of Pakistani English teachers, students and bilingual professionals on the state of English and English language learning in Pakistan.

Literature Review

The literature review for this IPP will look at selected reports from aid organizations, donor agencies, educational programs, and academic literature related to both general and English education in Pakistan. The literature review reveals an imbalance of quantitative research in the donor agency reports, sometimes questionable motives in education programs and perspectives on English education in Pakistan in academic resources.

Reports

The reports discussed in this chapter are from aid organizations and donor agencies. The majority of the existing reports focus on general education in Pakistan, except for the report from the British Council that focuses on English language education in Pakistan. With a few exceptions, the reports show a focus on quantitative assessment and a lack of attention to English education in school. This lack of attention is surprising, given the language's increasing social significance in contemporary Pakistan and its use as a measure of social class. The following reports discuss findings of some of the key recent studies on the status of education in Pakistan.

The National Education Census (NEC) was first conducted in Pakistan in 2005-2006. It was funded by UNESCO and covered over 240,000 institutions, including private schools, public schools, universities, professional institutions, and *madaris*¹ (Lynd, 2007). The study found low overall enrollment, especially starting at the mid-elementary school level (Lynd, 2007, p. 13). Gender parity index (GPI), the ratio of female to male enrollment, was also low at 0.76 (Lynd, 2007, p. 24). Other findings include high numbers of untrained teachers, public schools with no electricity, and low youth and adult literacy rates.

¹*Madaris* is the plural of *madrassa*, which refers to the religious schools in Pakistan.

The National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) published a report in 2011-2012, and it was a more in-depth report than the one published by the NEC. It looks at institutions, enrollment, education trends, effectiveness, teachers and physical facilities. It also explicitly mentions the limitations of data collection; for example, the fact that Pakistan has not had a population census since 1998 (Amin et al., 2013, p. 3). Like the NEC 2005-2006 study, it took data from private schools, universities, professional institutions, and *madaris*. Unlike the NEC study, it reported *madaris*' sector percentage, gender of teachers and enrollment by sector and gender. It showed that 97% of *madaris* were in the private sector (Amin et al., 2013, p. 22), and 77% of the teachers were male (Amin et al., 2013, p. 23). It also showed that 62% of enrolled students were male (Amin et al., 2013, p. 23). Additionally, it had more detailed data on teacher training programs and six years of enrollment data, which showed an overall rise in enrollment since the time of the NEC report. In terms of data on facilities, it had data on electricity, water, latrines and boundary walls (Amin et al., 2013, p. 45-47).

The *Education for All* report from 2015 details the progress on the six goals Pakistan agreed to meet by 2015 by signing the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000. The goals are as follows:

- Expanding and improving early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable children.
- Ensuring that by 2015, all children, particularly girls and the disadvantaged, have access to quality free and compulsory primary education.
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015.

- Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs.
- Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and offering equitable access to basic and continuing education to all adults.
- Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence. (Basic Education and Gender Equality, 2012)

The Education for All report details the progress on these six goals. The report states that the challenges Pakistan education faced were lack of access, poor quality of education, budgetary issues and lack of expertise on the government level. Other issues affecting education were poverty, insurgency and violence, and natural disasters. Like the NEMIS report, there are sometimes questionable statistics; for example, a 119.5% primary school Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for Gilgit-Baltistan in 2012-2013 (Malik et al., 2014, p. 20). There is also a lower rate of increase in some areas starting in 2012-2013 due to a change in the projected population (Malik et al., 2014, p. 20).

The report shows an overall increase in the GER of early childhood education and pre-primary students. The average GER in 2001-2002 for Pakistan was 28.2%, rising to 66.4% in 2012-2013 (Malik et al., 2014, p. 18). The goal for 100% of children to have primary education was not met, and it was reported to be 85.9% in 2012-2013 although these numbers are debatable because of the reported 119.5% GER in Gilgit-Baltistan and the 104.1% GER in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) (Malik et al., 2014, p. 20). There is even a footnote on table 3.2a: 'For GB, Statistics include extraordinarily high non-formal primary enrolment figures. As such, any analysis can lead to spurious conclusions' (Malik et al., 2014, p. 20). The overall retention rate

for primary students to the fifth grade is at 66.8%, and that number is equal for both females and males. Although the report states this could be due to the high cultural expectations of males, boys sometimes skip school to deal with familial issues while the rate of female attendance stayed the same (Malik et al., 2014, p. 21). While literacy rates have increased among youths aged 15-24, they are still at 71.6% with large gaps between males and females in regions such as Balochistan and KPK due to the lack of encouragement at home and in communities (Malik et al., 2014, p. 25). The adult literacy rate is much lower at 56.2%, with a large gap between males and females in all regions in Pakistan. The report shows a GPI of .63 for adult literacy, which is stated to be a major challenge in society as an illiterate workforce cannot help with any sort of progress (Malik et al., 2014, p. 26).

In the section of the report that shows the statistics on the quality of education, it states that while the mean scores of tests are low, many teachers are highly qualified and possess bachelor's and master's degrees in education, and that they all possess teacher certification (Malik et al., 2014, p. 29). However, the report also states that there is room for improvement in teacher training and states more professional development programs have been implemented (Malik et al., 2014, p. 37).

Pakistani economist Madiha Afzal of the United States Institute of Peace conducted a study in 2015 that analyzed Pakistani textbooks (Afzal, 2015). Using qualitative methods, she looked at the textbooks used in Pakistani secondary schools and conducted interviews with teachers and 9th and 10th grade students about terrorism, and its perceived causes, in Pakistan. This study is unique in the context of the sources of this literature review because it involves a qualitative methodology. The study on the textbooks discovered narratives that were designed to blame the United States and India for terrorism in Pakistan. The textbooks were also found to

base everything on Islam, despite the fact that there are other religions in Pakistan. Moreover, textbooks used the word *jihad* not only in terms of personal struggle but in a manner stating that it was necessary to 'fight' against enemies of Islam (Afzal, 2015, p. 6).

The study reports on previous attempts at changing the curriculum, such as the revised National Curriculum of 2006. The curriculum was revised because of complaints of it being biased, but this resulted in little change (Afzal, 2015, p. 5). The textbooks do not contain any mention of terrorism and depict India as a big threat to Pakistan, both culturally and in terms of physical harm, using words such as 'hostile', 'destroy' and 'ruin' when they discuss Hindu's and Indian's perspective of Muslims and Pakistanis (Afzal, 2015, p. 7). The United States is mentioned in the textbooks a few times and, when it is, it is depicted as a country that has historically disappointed Pakistan in terms of issues of nuclear power and in terms of their relationship with India (Afzal, 2015, p. 7). This report is also an exception to the ones previously mentioned because it discusses textbooks written in English. It states that English textbooks are often translated from Urdu and have a high number of grammatical errors (Afzal, 2015, p. 6).

The interviews with students reveal beliefs similar to the ones espoused in the books. Students often expressed sentiments similar to the narratives used in the textbooks and in their argumentation used beliefs found in the media and society (Afzal, 2015, p. 14). The author asserts that schools do not offer any opportunity to question these narratives, and states that students need to be taught how to evaluate sources and opinions (Afzal, 2015, p. 14). The author's recommendations include the creation of a rigorous curriculum that analyzes these narratives and allows students to question and debate the material provided in textbooks (Afzal, 2015, p. 15).

The only study in the literature review that is specifically focused on English Language Teaching (ELT) is the British Council's report on the state of the English language in Pakistan (Coleman & Capstick, 2012). This study is unique in that it offers both quantitative and qualitative analysis and focuses entirely on English education. The report is extremely thorough and examines demographics, the role of English, and language policy. The study also includes policy dialogues, discussions at SPELT (Society for Pakistani English Language Teachers) conferences, consultation meetings with provincial education ministers, call-in radio programs and written and email submissions. The study found a lack of information on how education is used in the classroom, misunderstandings about how children learn languages, uninformed views on the function of language in education, a negative view on language diversity, and a general desire to teach children through their L1 (Coleman & Capstick, 2012).

The recommendations made by the British Council include a multilingual language policy for the first few years of education, equal opportunity for education, the introduction of national and international languages (i.e. Urdu and English, respectively) at more appropriate ages, and better qualified, better prepared language teachers (Coleman & Capstick, 2012, p. 69). The authors state that more preparation is needed before these changes can be made, which includes:

- original research,
- data-mining and dissemination,
- advocacy,
- establishment of a national consortium and local working groups
- research training. (Coleman & Capstick, 2012, p. 69)

Education Programs

The education programs discussed in this subchapter are ones that have been implemented in Pakistan since 2000. The section provides more of a focus on English language teaching than the studies in the previous subchapter. The selected English programs in this section include both teacher training programs and English education programs. There are many teacher training programs, which are an efficient means to reach a large number of students. Also mentioned at the end of this subchapter are surveys collected in a widespread English program.

Teacher Training Programs

ELTeach is a program that has been implemented in fourteen countries including Pakistan. It was funded by the U.S. State Department and the HEC. The program is a sixty-hour online English teaching certification course with courses in 'English for Teaching' and 'Professional Knowledge for English Language Teaching (ELT)'. The program was developed as a cost-effective way to train large numbers of teachers. ELTeach consists of online modules, which facilitate the process for working teachers. The Professional Knowledge for ELT module focuses on methodologies in teaching language skills and foundation courses in teaching and learning. The 'English for Teaching' module discusses language used for classroom management and how to effectively convey lesson content and provide feedback. The 'English for Teaching' module focuses on the practical English used by instructors in public sector classrooms around the world. The developers of the program saw that other programs aimed to improve teachers' general command of English, so they incorporated an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach that teaches language used in the classroom (Freeman et al., 2015, pp. 129-130). To create the basis of the program, the developers researched the most common tasks and routines

found in research and national curricula. Their research generated the following three central categories:

- managing the classroom
- understanding and communicating lesson content and
- assessing students and giving them feedback (op.cit. p.135).

This program covers a lot of important topics with language teachers, and the fact that Pakistani teachers scored high on the assessments (ELTeach Implementation Report: Pakistan, 2013, p. 6) shows that implementation has been useful in Pakistan.

The *CELTA* is also offered in Pakistan as an online course with optional face-to-face — sessions. It's one of the most recognizable ELT certificates in the world. It is similar to the EL Teach program as it focuses on language used in the classroom. The aim of the program is to help teachers effectively use English, utilize appropriate English for a variety of situations in the classroom, and be able to instruct students from different backgrounds. It offers eight modules, which—among other topics—include language for lectures, language for communicating online, language for evaluation and feedback, and language for fulfilling professional responsibilities (Institute for Career Development, 2014).

Another online teacher training program worth mentioning is the *E-Teacher Scholarship Program* offered by the U.S. State Department. The E-Teacher Scholarship is a ten-week online professional development program for non-U.S. English teachers. One of the requirements for this program is regular access to high speed internet (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, n.d.).

The *Punjab Education and English Language Initiative (PEELI)* is a teacher training program that trains elementary and middle school teachers of English medium instruction (EMI) in public schools and teacher trainers in the Punjab province. The program aims to provide quality training to teachers to help them better understand the content, and to provide them with tools to implement child-centered instruction with activity-based lessons which create an environment conducive to learning (British Council, 2014). The training is done through face-to-face modules with continuing professional development, which helps reach government school teachers who might not have access to the internet. At the time of the one-year report on the initiative, PEELI had engaged 3,000 teachers and indirectly reached almost 100,000 teachers and 3.5 million children (British Council, 2014, p. 16).

The associate's degree in education or a B.Ed. designed by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) with assistance from USAID (Methods of Teaching, 2012) provides a syllabus, unit plans, and resources for faculty. The course guide outlines a fifteen-week long, seven-unit course for pre-service teachers. The curriculum includes lesson plans on student-centered versus teacher-centered learning, effective methods of conveying content to students, and when to implement lectures, discussions, demonstrations or cooperative learning in a lesson plan. It also discusses curriculum design through lessons on constructing learning objectives, designing lesson plans, learning outcomes and assessments. There is also a lesson on Constructivist Learning Theory and Behaviorism and how these can be incorporated into a classroom for young learners (Methods of Teaching, 2012). Of interest in the Methods of Teaching course outline for this program is the lack of EFL methodologies mentioned even though the class is being conducted in a second or third language for most of the participants. There is a note in the course outline in 'Summary of Conclusions from Teacher Effectiveness

Research' directed to the participating student teachers which states that, while the research conducted was done in a Western classroom, 'the research is still relevant, as most of the conclusions are consistent with contemporary research on learning and the results are believed to be universal to all human learning' (Methods of Teaching, 2012 p. 78). While this might be generally true, if students are taught in a language they do not understand, they are less likely to participate in class or do well in school. This is especially true of children growing up in poverty (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2016). Since the majority of schools in Pakistan have at least some English education implemented in their curriculum, it is important to facilitate the process as much as possible for young learners.

English Education Programs

On their website, the *U.S. State Department* offers English language materials for teachers and students living abroad. The materials are for self-study and include content for a wide range of learners: young learners, adult learners, university and advanced students. The materials include both cultural information and English language activities (i.e. songs, content-based materials) (U.S. Department of State, n.d.).

The British Council has a similar website aimed at students of all levels and ages with activities and resources that include English for Specific Purposes (i.e. job search, sending emails, IELTS information). It also has games for children, audio samples and smartphone apps for learning. There are several British Council centers in Pakistan that provide further resources, such as teacher training and test centers (British Council, 2016).

The Pakistan American Cultural Center is a non-profit, non-political language center that teaches students through communicative methods and enables opportunities to 'live' English

through gatherings and cultural events. It was founded in 1959 with the mission to 'provide quality language teaching and provide cultural understanding to students who are looking for career development and personal growth' (Pakistan American Cultural Center, 2010). It has three centers in Pakistan, two of which are located in Karachi and one that is located in Hyderabad. The center provides language courses on conversation and communication skills, business English and IELTS, as well as a children's language course. It also offers teacher training courses. Furthermore, the center offers a broad range of additional courses including dance, music, radio broadcasting, parenting skills and computer courses (Pakistan American Cultural Center, 2010).

There are also various short-term workshops on English language and ELT in Pakistan. The Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT) holds several workshops a month on a variety of topics, including classroom management in an ELT classroom, teaching language skills, fostering critical thinking, and lesson planning, among other topics (Society for Pakistan English Language Teachers, 2014). In August 2013, the International Islamic University Islamabad hosted a two-week workshop for seminary teachers that was run by American teacher trainer Don Johnson and the Dean of Faculty of language and literature, Dr. Monawal Iqbal Gongol. The interactive workshop included information on communicative language teaching, lesson planning, and teaching language skills (Teaching English: Workshop for Seminary Teachers, 2013).

Another English education program is the *English Access Microscholarship Program*, which is funded by the U.S. State Department. The aim of this program is to 'provide non-elite 14- to 18-year-old students in 44 countries with significant Muslim populations English language instruction through a U.S.-style classroom experience' (English Access Microscholarship Report,

2007, p. vi). It was implemented in government schools in Pakistan in 2004 in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar in order to improve the standards of English in government schools. The report on the program focused on results in Lahore

Students in the Lahore program attended class eight hours a week for two years, which amounted to 640 hours of instruction. Classes were conducted in American English with teachers who were fluent in the language. Integrated skills were utilized in the lesson plans with a focus on speaking and listening skills. A supportive environment was fostered through group work, feedback on language skills, and positive analytical error correction. Teachers were regularly evaluated on how they interacted with their students, on their punctuality, and on their use of teaching tools. Students were evaluated on punctuality in turning in assignments, on progress in skills, and on assessment scores. Student progress was assessed through a test at the end of each quarter and through a final exam at the end of each term. The curriculum included presentations, discussion, debate, and poetry recitals. Students listened to songs, watched movies, and read news articles and short stories (English Access Microscholarship Report, 2007, p. 52). Overall, students reported marked changes with regard to their language skills, especially speaking and grammar. Students also stated they were 'proud of their English acquisition, and mentioned that they could participate in English conversations, obtain better jobs, understand English-language websites, and apply to college or university due to their new ability' (p. 97). Notably absent are any quantitative studies and data on the improvement of their English.

Academic Resources

A significant academic resource on the state of donor agencies in Pakistani education is *Education Reform in Pakistan: Building the Future*, edited by Robert Hathaway (Hathaway, 2005). This publication is a collection of essays by prominent people in the education sector.

Tariq Rahman contributed an essay titled *Reasons for Rage: Reflections on the Education System of Pakistan with Special Reference to English* (Rahman, 2005).

Tariq Rahman's essay discusses the socio-economic issues prevalent in the current Pakistani education system with regard to English education. He argues that there is a perception of injustice with regard to English in the country since the Pakistani elite have access to private schools, while other classes must attend government schools and *madaris*. He states that government schools and *madaris* are 'the main target' of pro-military, pro-militant and anti-Indian narratives, which do not foster a peaceful image within the context of South Asia and the world (Rahman, 2005, p. 94). He also discusses how the privatization of schools and universities has widened the socio-economic gap due to the fact that many cannot afford to attend these institutions, which, in turn, results in 'rage' and anger among the educated, unemployed Pakistanis (Rahman, 2005, p. 101). He states that English should not be taught to just a few of the elite but should be spread throughout the social classes 'through innovative methods, to all school children' (Rahman, 2005, 102). He does admit, however, that the spread of English could possibly cause animosity and radicalization of some people (Rahman, 2005, 102).

In Fareeha Zafar's paper *The Role of Donor Agencies in Education: Does it Pay?* she discusses the role of donor agencies and how they have evolved throughout the history of Pakistan (Zafar, 2015). Zafar suggests that the focus of donor agencies in education is so wide that there needs to be a look at past achievements in order to develop new focuses for funding. While her paper focuses on general education, she discusses the importance of language with regard to realizing primary education, which she says donors should address as much as they do the 'unstinted support of training English language teachers' (Zafar, 2015, p. 19-20). She also

contends that 'research supports the use of students' first language as the most effective medium of instruction' (Zafar, 2016, p. 20).

Robert Phillipson's *Linguistic Imperialism* (Phillipson, 1992) contains a section on aid entitled 'Professional and Ethical Aspects of ELT 'Aid' (Phillipson, 1992, p. 11). While the book is nearly 25 years old and doesn't specifically mention Pakistan, it brings up a lot of pertinent issues of donor agencies in ELT. It discusses certain areas of disconnect in the ELT field, such as when donor agencies spend millions of dollars on finance reports conducted by individuals who may live a very different lifestyle than the people of the country in which they work (Phillipson, 1992, p. 12). Phillipson mentions social context several times throughout the chapter. He also gives several examples of authors, such as Christopher Brumfit (1985), stating that donor agencies 'ignore social and ideological messages expressed in language learning situations.' (as cited in Phillipson, 1992, p. 14). He cites Harry Krasnick's (1986) three ELT concepts which 'stigmatize' learners: they need remediation; they are given language not content, and they need 're-socializing' in order to 'behave properly' (as cited in Phillipson, p. 14). Alastair Pennycook (1990) states that there is a need for critical applied linguistics to explore cultural and political aspects of ELT in order to empower, rather than assimilate students (as cited in Phillipson, p. 15). Phillipson states that these examples 'raise not only intellectual questions about the nature, premises, and practice of the ELT profession, but also ethical issues about the responsibility of the West for what we have contributed to the Third World' (p. 15).

Reflections on Reports and Programs

The selected sources discussed in the literature review leave a number of questions unanswered. If the intended result of foreign aid for education is to improve the quality and accessibility of education, literacy rates and the future prospects for Pakistani citizens, the present system of monitoring and evaluation lacks information vital to achieving these objectives.

The paucity of systematic assessments of English language education in the majority of donor-funded assessments on education in Pakistan displays a lack of understanding of the social system in Pakistan. First of all, with regard to language, the nation is still grappling and dealing with the effects of colonialism. Zubeida Mustafa discusses this issue in the news article 'Pakistan ruined by language myth' (Mustafa, 2012). She discusses the idea that many Pakistanis believe that their native language is substandard compared to English and that this affects children's performance at school and the ability to be productive. In order to be competitive in the public and private sector job market in the country, one must have, at the very least, an intermediate level of English speaking skills. Normally an advanced level is often preferred for most white-collar occupations, and that is true for all social strata. The focus on English as a measure of social class was made evident by a recent viral video reported on in popular newspapers in Pakistan. In the video, a homeless man pleaded for an office job in fluent English, which was surprising for many because most people of his social status do not speak English fluently. As noted in the newspaper article, if the old man had tried to speak in a regional language (e.g. Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi or Pashto) not as many people would have heard his story. He received an offer to work within a week of the video being published (Talat, 2016). While this is just one story, it is emblematic of the significance of English language skills in the job market.

There is not only an emphasis on speaking English but on speaking it at an advanced level. In Zahra Ali's article on teaching world Englishes to Pakistanis, she describes a conversation that took place with a university lecturer. The lecturer asks the rhetorical question, 'Can you imagine working in Pakistan without having (making the air quotes) "*the accent*"' (Ali, 2014, p. 160). This is indicative of the competitive nature of most workplaces in Pakistan. If this attitude prevails in the majority of work environments, then it is imperative that donor agencies assess and report on the English programs in schools. These agencies should also engage in critical conversations and awareness-raising around the features of English as a lingua franca and also about what best facilitates communication and fosters collaboration and understanding in today's globalized world.

While the negative remnants of colonialization are still apparent to those who study and monitor the domination of English in the work and social space, the donor agencies continue to be naïve towards this facet of the society. If the majority of the population has access to English education, the high social status attained from speaking the language will most likely diminish, along with at least some of the pressures of speaking it. Irum Sarfaraz makes a case for how English improves one's life in the article 'A Case for English in Pakistan' (Sarfaraz, 2013). In the article, Irum discusses how it improves students' ability to pursue higher education, and how initiatives by the HEC are not being effectively implemented (Sarfaraz, 2013).

Even with regard to education programs, there are instances where there is virtually no attention paid to English Language Teaching (ELT) despite the programs being offered in English. One example is the Methods of Teaching course guideline (Higher Education

Commission, 2012). This was a course which detailed various teaching methodologies instructors should use in classes. While the course did include common Western teaching methodologies, it did not include any ELT methods, despite the fact that the class was taught to teachers whose first language was not English and the students they teach will be learning in a second language. Furthermore, courses of this nature are normally for teachers who will be teaching in impoverished areas, where students have lower levels of English proficiency than other areas. In such scenarios, it is pertinent to include methodologies common to ELT classrooms in a teaching methods course, such as the communicative method or TPR. These methods would be easy to teach and would provide engaging, quick, and easy-to-understand activities that all students would benefit from.

The appropriacy of the research used to create course materials must be given proper consideration. Indeed, there is the note to student teachers in the course guide which states that the research included in the course guide was conducted in a Western classroom. The note states: 'However, the research is still relevant, as most of the conclusions are consistent with contemporary research on learning and the results are believed to be universal to all human learning' (Higher Education Commission, 2012, p. 78). This attitude dismisses the fact that if students do not understand the language in which the course is being taught, they will not understand the content. Walter and Benson estimate that '40% of the global population does not have access to education in a language they speak or understand' (as cited in the Global Education Monitoring Report, 2016, p. 1). Studies have shown that this can have negative effects on a child's learning, especially in countries with impoverished populations (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2016). If there is no attempt to bridge that gap through proven EFL methodologies, the efforts in improving education might not have the desired results. It is also

important to take into consideration a host of other contextual factors such as class size and adequate classroom management, societal attitudes and learner expectation, prior language learning experiences and preferred learning strategies, none of which were included in the course guidelines.

Another issue found in the design and monitoring process of the programs, particularly in the English Access Microscholarship Fund, is the influence of unstated, and potentially clandestine, political motives based on cultural biases. In one assessment report for the program, data was collected on the students' knowledge of U.S. culture, the U.S. government, and knowledge of democratic values (Evaluation of English Access Microscholarship Fund, 2007, pp. 94-96). For instance, the participants were asked to self-assess their agreement or disagreement with the following 'democratic values': 'Voting is important because real decisions are made in elections', 'Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy', 'An independent media is important to the free flow of information' and 'Democratic principles enhance the workplace' (Evaluation of the English Access Microscholarship Fund Final Report, 2007, p. 92). This data collection, and the knowledge of the students' agreement or disagreement with the value statements, does not explicitly align with the stated objectives of the English Access program:

- 1) provide a significant English language learning experience to students in a cost-effective manner (approximately \$1,000 per student) to maximize the number of students reached;
- 2) provide direct English teaching to non-elite students living in underserved neighborhoods;

3) engage in the design and implementation of a transparent Access student selection process; and

4) recognize student achievement through award certificates signed by the U.S.

Ambassador. (p. vi)

This suggests that the study assesses the effectiveness of the English Access program from the perspective of the socio-political objectives of the funding agency. The fact that such an assessment of the English Access program was commissioned by the donors and executing agency of the English Access Program itself indicates latent objectives besides the stated ones of improving English language learning in the country. While there is often a cultural exchange in a foreign language classroom, this statement from the evaluation, for example, 'Voting is important because real decisions are made in elections' (Evaluation of English Access Microscholarship Fund, 2007, p. 92) presents a very narrow view of democratic values, and its reasons for inclusion in the program assessment are not clearly specified. While the statement is reasonably arguable, such a statement is definitely not universal, empirical, or theoretically irrefutable. In political sciences, for instance, there is ample documentation of both the strengths and weaknesses of voting as a system for the devolution of decision-making to the populace (Foucault, 1980).

Political scientists even raise questions about the effectiveness of voting as a means for the devolution of important decision making to the popular level in strong democracies such as the U.S., much less in younger and less developed systems. Voting systems have been utilized by a number of totalitarian regimes as well. For example, in 2002, Dictator Pervez Musharraf held a referendum before the country's return to a democratic system. While results stated that 97% of the people voted in his favor, it was clearly not a democratic vote. There were voting

irregularities indicating that some voted several times (BBC News, 2002). The statement 'voting is important because real decisions are made in elections' thus is not a factual statement but a political viewpoint, the validity of which is not only specific to a certain context but contested from an academic and empirical perspective. It is not made clear why a political statement is posed for students assessing the effectiveness of an English language program. Are the donor agencies equating English language usage with democratic culture? If yes, how are such values being promoted in the curriculum and teaching methodology and how does that link to the program's stated objectives? If no, then the relevance of these statements must be questioned. In a sense the assessment seems to imply that English language acquisition should condition you to have very specific and narrowly defined political worldviews. When students are assessed whether they agree with a political statement as a by-product of language acquisition, is there intent to encourage certain ideologies? Is language acquisition expected to implicitly serve that purpose? Again, the stated objectives of the program did not include teaching political ideologies. In asking students these questions, the assumptions must be that through merely teaching a language, certain political values can be propagated.

The statement 'Free and fair elections are the cornerstone of democracy' (Evaluation of English Access Microscholarship Fund, 2007, p. 92) holds similar implications because it asks students' opinions about a concept that they have not experienced, and besides this aspect of society is not something that they are able to change in their own society. The next statement which is posed is 'An independent media is important to the free flow of information' (Evaluation of English Access Microscholarship Fund, 2007, p. 92). There are exercises in English classes that build students' critical thinking and reasoning skills and the ability to see through rhetoric, but there are few lesson plans which are designed to discuss the validity of an

independent media, especially in English courses for teenagers with the curriculum designed for the Microscholarship English program. Another statement the students were posed for self-assessment was 'Democratic principles enhance the workplace' (Evaluation of English Access Microscholarship Fund, 2007, p. 92). Most teenagers do not hold a job until they have at least graduated from secondary school. While the English Access programs have evidence of helping students, they raise the question of how and when to separate politics from ELT. Certainly languages come with their own culture and politics, but political values are not absorbed via osmosis in an English lesson and neither should program developers or teachers expect them to be.

The last critique of the programs listed in the literature review is the lack of awareness in program design towards practical on-the-ground considerations. For instance, there is no consideration of the fact that power outages are commonplace in Pakistan and how that affects access to the internet, even in large cities. In 2012, there was an average of five electricity outages per day (Pasha & Saleem, 2013). This affects the ability to access the online teacher training programs. Moreover, those who do not have access to a home computer at all times are severely and disproportionately affected. While the quality of online training programs also needs to be evaluated, it would be of benefit to have more face-to-face programs available for those who do not have reliable access to internet.

Due to the issues stated above, there must be more qualitative analyses implemented in the assessment, monitoring and evaluation of English education reports and programs. With more qualitative analyses implemented in reporting on the state of English education in Pakistan and in reporting the results of English education programs, there would be an improved

understanding of the needs of Pakistani students and educators. An argument for the importance of a qualitative analysis shall be presented in the next chapter.

Qualitative Analysis

Based on the research conducted for this study, one can say that the majority of education status reports and assessments of education programs funded by donor agencies lack research on many real world issues found in Pakistan's English education system. Oftentimes there is a focus on quantitative analysis but what one witnesses infrequently is a lack of academic rigor and a tendency towards unsubstantiated opinions. These issues lead to, at times, questionable means of assessing the state of English education in Pakistan or the effectiveness of English language programs. This study intends to take steps towards addressing some of these issues.

Methodology

Nine bilingual professionals and students and eight teachers were interviewed on their experience of learning and teaching English in Pakistan. Attention was paid to selecting participants from a variety of ages and backgrounds. Care was also taken to have an equal number of male and female participants.² Participants were asked open-ended questions on a range of topics about English education in Pakistan, including learning styles, teaching methodologies, the experience of using English on a daily basis and the general perception of the English language in Pakistan (See Appendices A and B). Interviews were kept anonymous, and subjects were encouraged to focus on their own experience and not feel compelled by the interviewer to address any particular topic. Examples from other countries where English is spoken as a second language were sometimes provided as a means of comparison. For example, when asked about the state of English in Pakistan, or how the subject felt about learning the language, examples of Scandinavians in their own country who felt they were not given the

² Five males and 4 female professionals and students were interviewed. Two males and six female teachers were interviewed due to the amount of responses to a call for interviews.

chance to share their opinions in their own language in international or multilingual contexts were narrated. All the interviews were audio-recorded with notes also taken.³ and notes were taken on the interviews.

Analysis of Data

In an attempt to find cultural aspects or concerns which are often not included in, or would be of benefit to reports on English education or English education programs, typed notes from the interviews were searched for codes. If a particular response appeared three or more times, it was recorded in the findings. Categories for codes were not assigned before the interview, so as not to formulate pre-conceived notions of the findings. Codes consisted of perspectives, cultural aspects, specific teaching methodologies or learning styles that were shared by participants. If there was a difference of opinions between the professionals or students and the teachers, that would be included as a code. Sometimes if there was a response that was unique to a specific participant and revealed something unexpected by the interviewer, this was noted as well. Unexpected findings included responses that were unique to a certain question or were a different manner of describing a concept that was present in other participants' responses.

Before conducting the interviews, the author understood that there could be cognitive biases influencing the results. Examples of such biases include students' desire to paint themselves as excellent students, or teachers wanting to present their best qualities as a teacher. However, the participants seemed very eager to paint a realistic picture of English education in Pakistan and stated both negative and positive facets of their experience teaching and learning English.

³ Two interviews from professionals and students and one from a teacher were filled out and emailed back due either to the inability to schedule an interview or lack of internet access.

Findings

Following sections discuss the findings of the investigation in detail.

Student dissatisfaction with the quality of education

The vast majority of the bilingual professionals and students expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of English education in Pakistan. Rote memorization, or *ratta* in Urdu, is described by many of the interview participants as a substandard method of learning that is common practice in Pakistan. One bilingual professional stated that they saw no use in repetition and expressed a desire to know the meaning of new words rather than repeating them. He described *ratta* as a 'hammer'. This student's statement expressed a deficiency in presentation and effective explanation of language concepts, which many students described as unsatisfactory. Other issues that were expressed by students were: a lack of speaking practice, incorrect pronunciation on the part of teachers and difficulty understanding content in English-only classes. A more positive side of the matter is that several of the bilingual professionals and students say they have witnessed improvement in the overall English education system in the last decade.

It should be noted that the teachers interviewed had creative approaches to teaching English to their students and put a lot of thought into their lesson plans. Many of the teachers took issue with the overall quality of English education in Pakistan, but they seemed to deal with this dissatisfaction by putting more effort into their own lesson plans. Several teachers spoke about using the communicative approach in their classes and learning new concepts and vocabulary in context (e.g. literature, newspapers and magazines). A couple of teachers expressed the need for more teacher certification programs and continuing education, and one

teacher highlighted the problem that some teachers attend such programs but fail to incorporate the techniques they learned into their lesson plans.

An additional fact noted by the author is that many of the participants were dealing with the prospect of an extremely competitive work environment, which explains some of the bilingual professionals' regret at not being able to get more practice in speaking English before going out into the professional realm. Several participants did express appreciation for having some practice in their English education but wanted more in-depth and real-life practice in English conversation.

Teaching Methodologies Used in the Classroom

As mentioned in the previous subchapter, many of the teachers implemented forward-thinking, modern teaching methodologies in their classrooms, which were not based on rote memorization. Many of the teachers described teaching through context-based learning and a focus on usage by introducing vocabulary in novels and newspapers. One teacher emphasized that students would not be able to retain information for any extended period of time unless language concepts were introduced in context. Many of the teachers also used role play a lot, including mock job interviews to prepare students for the competitive work environment.

Content-based learning was also popular due to the fact that many teachers felt that an immersion classroom created the best environment for learning English since students are forced to think in English during content-based lessons. Some of the teachers who taught adults assigned presentations to prepare their students for a work environment.

One teacher taught Greek to marginalized students to engrain a sense of empathy in learning a new language.

While many state that there has been a lot of improvement in Pakistan's English education in recent years, *ratta* is still implemented in some English classrooms in Pakistan. Several students offered accounts of learning English during their secondary education through pure memorization. They were made to memorize entire essays and points would be deducted if they missed any words. The focus on *ratta* is a complicated issue in Pakistan. The vast majority of both students and teachers interviewed stated that rote memorization was a substandard method of teaching English; however, there were a couple of teachers who asserted that the importance of standardized tests in Pakistan made it compulsory that rote memorization be utilized in the classroom. One teacher said, 'Though teachers here wish to teach English language using direct or conversational methods...they cannot afford the bad results...In case of poor result either they will be fired from the job or there is less chance for their promotion.' This brings about the question as to which teaching methods allow optimal learning and result in desirable learning outcomes. Choral repetition and iteration (Larsen-Freeman 2015) can still be useful pedagogical tools as long as they are not the sole method utilized in the classroom. Indian educator N.S. Prabhu discusses the idea of finding 'plausibility' in his article 'There is No Best Method – Why?' (Prabhu, 1990). He contends that there are no methods that work best for every context, but instead the effectiveness is based on how each teacher subjectively interprets and executes the method. If Western teaching methods are expected to be carried out in Pakistan as they are in the US, these methods might not have the intended effect. Prabhu states, 'Different sources may influence different teachers to different extents, and what looks like the same experience or exposure may influence different teachers differently' (Prabhu, 1990, p. 172). While English teachers in Pakistan may have knowledge of Western language teaching methodologies, it is possible that rote memorization could be incorporated in a lesson in such a

manner that it results in optimal learning. If teachers are only judged on the basis of how their class appears in relation to a Western one, there is no understanding of the cultural differences.

Prabhu goes on to state:

When a method considered to be good has been implemented on a large scale and later thought not to have “worked,” an important part of the reason identified has been that teachers followed the method “mechanically,” with no sense of understanding or identification. Indeed, the more “efficiently” a method is implemented (that is to say, with all possible measures to ensure that teachers will carry out the procedures envisaged), the more likely it is that mechanical teaching will turn out to be the main impediment to success (Prabhu, 1990, p. 172).

The teachers and students interviewed were thorough in describing the context of learning language in Pakistan and had a lot to say about their experience, which seems to point to the fact that both teachers and students knew what methods would work best for them.

Native language vs. English in the classroom

There was a distinct difference of opinions between teachers and students and bilingual professionals as to whether Urdu and another Pakistani languages or English should be used to teach English classes. Four out of nine students felt that there should be some Urdu included in English-only lessons because they felt additional explanation was needed. One student stated that he felt teachers taught English as a subject to pass a test rather than as a means of communication. This student claimed the issue affected the content-based courses—especially science courses—because the subject was taught only in English and that nuanced concepts were not understood because the students did not understand what was being said.

Explaining certain concepts in Urdu or in other Pakistani languages seemed like a reasonable request, given that several of the students were learning English as a third and sometimes fourth language. Only 8% of Pakistanis speak Urdu, so non-Urdu speaking students learn Urdu in school as well as English in primary and secondary. Additional explanations in Urdu and other Pakistani languages could be a means to accommodate English students in Pakistan.

In an interesting contrast, the teachers interviewed were adamant about students only speaking English in the classroom. While some stated they would intermittently use Urdu to explain things from time to time, they wanted classes to be conducted completely in English. The gap in expectations mentioned above could be also due to the fact that students are supposed to show reverence to their teachers, so students might have not been able to communicate this discrepancy in expectations with their teachers. Three of the teachers interviewed also revealed that it was mandatory to speak only English at their institutions, so their responses could have been affected by this rule.

Learning English as a means of survival

Both sets of participants stated that learning English was imperative to getting a job in Pakistan. When asked how they felt about having to learn English, no interviewees complained or expressed any negative sentiments. There was a consensus that it was imperative to learn English, and there was no question as to whether or not they had a choice having a good command of the language. One teacher described having to learn English as the 'ghost' of the British colonial occupation that remained in Pakistan. The teacher in question stated that she was happy that countries like India have been able to remove themselves from the 'trauma' of the British occupation but stated that Pakistan hasn't been able to accomplish that as of yet. When

describing what she meant about the 'ghost' of Britain and 'trauma', she stated that Pakistanis who are not able to speak English well—even if they might be able to write well—might feel bad about themselves because of this. Speaking English well is not only a means of being competitive in the work environment, it is a designation of social status.

Part of the issue with English as a mark of social disparity is the school system in Pakistan. Government schools are generally Urdu medium schools with classes that take place mostly in Urdu and classes in private schools are taught almost exclusively in English. According to two of the teachers, government schools are trying to rectify this by introducing English classes earlier in school, but the socio-economic divide is still prevalent. One undergraduate university student made a statement about social disparity and how students in elite private schools tend to speak English better than those in government schools because of the exposure they received at school and at home. The student stated that students could not comprehend or speak English unless they were completely immersed in a spoken English environment. Four of the teachers interviewed also stated that lack of exposure to proper English was key in learning the language. The vast majority of participants spoke about issues related to English skills, which included the inability to obtain a job, anxiety, and a feeling of inferiority over one's native language. Teachers at private schools who participated in the interviews stated that their institutions paid more attention to spoken English than in government schools, which gave their students a distinct advantage in the job market due to the focus on the English language in the work environment in Pakistan.

Career and Guidance Counseling

Three of the teachers interviewed specifically mentioned the lack of career and guidance counseling, as this service does not exist in Pakistan. This would definitely benefit students in

preparing themselves for the competitive work environment. Some teachers circumvented the lack of career guidance by having mock job interviews and presentations in their classes.

Implications

The interviews that took place in this study were composed of simple questions that took very little time to answer, yet they conveyed valuable information for designing English education programs. In this sample group of participants, it was conveyed how valuable learning English is for Pakistani students and also how difficult it can be to get a decent English education. This kind of assessment would be a worthwhile addition to general education reports, since implementation of these findings would assist students in placing themselves in a competitive job market, acquiring globally competitive skills and emerging from poverty.

The participants also shed light on issues that can be difficult to discern in a multi-level, multi-ethnic classroom: the fact that some students might be struggling in an English-only lesson, where they are learning sometimes a third or fourth language. This study provides valuable insight for English education programs to help prepare new teachers for the difficult problems that arise in a multi-lingual classroom, especially in a culture that is not conducive to students making suggestions or asking the teacher questions. In a qualitative interview, the students could express their dissatisfaction about traditional teaching methods, helping explain to a new teacher why traditional methods do not work for them. If this part of the survey was shown to new teachers who were accustomed to such teaching methods, it would show why these methods are ineffective with research conducted in their own country. There is research that has been conducted in other developing countries that encourages a bilingual classroom for young learners, which could be utilized in addressing these issues (Wildsmith-Cromarty & Goundman, 2006).

These interviews also revealed the teacher's awareness of newer language teaching methodologies and the issues in teaching English in Pakistan. They could reveal that a combination of different teaching methods would benefit English classrooms. These professionals would be easy to consult and offer cultural and pragmatic perspectives for English education in Pakistan. This would add a missing dimension for education reports, teacher trainer programs and program assessments because the monitoring and evaluation process for many of the donor-funded programs are outsourced to local or international consultants who may not be familiar with the objectives of the programs or the cultural context in which the program was implemented.

Suggestions for Further Research

These brief interviews could easily be expanded to a comprehensive general education assessment of ways to improve education standards beyond structural issues of the schools (i.e. barrier walls, toilets, clean water) and help provide teachers with basic information that would help them teach young students more effectively. The findings are also relevant for English education and teacher trainer programs and provide region-specific information instead of regurgitating research designed for Western classrooms. This helps give new teachers realistic expectations of what the job environment would be and sets them up for better performance. It would be imperative that such research be conducted by neutral third parties with international experience and familiarity with Pakistani culture, so that their judgment would not be swayed by institutional or international expectations.

Conclusions

The participants interviewed in the qualitative analysis conducted in this IPP indicated a much more complex scenario than the one described in some of the sources found in the literature review. The participants were aware of the issues in Pakistan's English education system, and many teachers described modern ELT methodologies such as the communicative method. While many of the students and bilingual professionals indicated dissatisfaction with their English education, several also described teachers who had helped them use English in real life situations. This demonstrates that there are enough capable teachers on the ground that should be included more often in donor-funded studies. According to several of the students and bilingual professionals interviewed, more education reflecting the elements of the communicative method would be beneficial in preparing them for Pakistan's highly competitive job market. The students were highly engaged in their language education and aware of possible methods that would benefit their language education. This clearly indicates that students could be more of a part of donor-funded reports as well. Several of the teachers stated there were students of a wide variety of backgrounds, information that would greatly benefit some English education programs that lack cultural context.

With the assistance of those well-informed about Pakistan's English education in the classroom and training programs on the ground, qualitative research could easily be incorporated into general education reports. As indicated in the sources and interviews cited in this IPP, having an excellent command of English is of utmost importance in obtaining a job that adequately pays for basic needs in Pakistan. Qualitative interviews would also provide more depth to English education programs by providing a much needed emic perspective, which would aid in the complex process of learning a language and help in deciphering and interpreting

qualitative research collected by donor agencies. They would also result in further inclusion of English students in Pakistan, assisting a population that needs a more culturally-inclusive English education in its country.

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Appendix A

Questions for Students and Bilingual Professionals

1. Describe your experience in learning English in school and/or university.
2. How did you feel about having to learn English growing up in Pakistan?
3. Explain, as much as you can remember, how you were taught English - through rules and grammar explanations and exercises or through conversation and other methods?
4. How did your teachers help you with the learning of vocabulary? Was much attention paid to pronunciation?
5. In learning English, were you expected to memorize a lot of information (i.e. lists of vocabulary words, grammar rules, etc.)?
6. Did you find 'English only' lessons beneficial or does judicious use of local languages work better for you and helps you understand things better and faster?
7. Did your English education prepare you for your professional career/university studies?
8. Does the history of the English language in Pakistan influence your thoughts or beliefs about the language?
9. How do you feel about the current state of English in Pakistan?

Appendix B

Questions for Pakistani English Teachers

1. Describe your experience teaching English in school and/or university.
2. How did you feel about having to learn English growing up in Pakistan? (you can also include opinions you've heard from your students as well)
3. Describe some of your teaching methods – do you teach through rules and grammar explanations and exercises or through conversation and other methods?
4. How do you help your students with the learning of vocabulary? Do you pay much attention to pronunciation?
5. Do you expect your students to memorize a lot of information (i.e. lists of vocabulary words, grammar rules, etc.)?
6. Do you find 'English only' lessons beneficial to your students or does judicious use of local languages work better for you and help your students understand things better and faster?
7. What do you do to help prepare your students for their professional careers?
8. Does the history of the English language in Pakistan influence your thoughts or beliefs about the language?
9. How do you feel about the current state of English in Pakistan?