THE IMPACT OF THE CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (CPEC) ON LINGUISTIC LANDSCAPES AND LANGUAGE PRACTICES IN NORTHERN PAKISTAN: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC EXPLORATION

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Abstract

The China-Pak Economic Corridor, or CPEC for short, is an astounding infrastructure and economic project that seems to have changed the social, economic, and even cultural framework of Pakistan, at least where the north of the country is concerned. In this paper, the overall goals are to first examine the effects of the CPEC on the linguistic and language practices in the northern regions of the country, the extent of the introduction of Mandarin and English and the attendant sociolinguistic changes. Research design The study adopts a qualitative research design and focus on the alteration of the language use in public areas, the change of the language practices among local communities, and the socio cultural impacts arising from the changes. The research starts by examining the linguistic environment of regions hosting CPEC's direct impact, with specific emphasis on Mandarin and English as well as Shina, Pashto, and Balti languages. It is significantly significant that the second language of instruction is Mandarin though the Chinese language as the official language of China is globally recognized since Chinese workers, contractors, and businesses have a crucial role related to CPEC-related projects. That has made people to see Mandarin signs appearing at construction sites, terminals mean of transport and business districts. Likewise, English, which is an official language of Pakistan, has further become more significant in the framework of business, education, and bureaucratic and governmental communications related to CPEC that has led to the processes of multilingualisation of public spheres of the region. The research focuses on how supraterritorial languages have affected local language use with reference to language change. Data indicates that the younger generation, especially in the CPEC areas, is switching Mandarin and English especially due to new employment openings and economic requirements. At the same time, it is made a question of indigenous languages' subordinate status, which still are actively promoted by indigenous populations in their attempt to persist with language renewal processes. Such result points out the growing contradiction between globalization and localization where Mandarin and Engilsh act as agents of economic mobility and Shina and Balti languages struggle to preserve and find their place. Moreover, the work explores the aspects of the new linguistic culture with the emphasis on language contact and interaction of the global languages with local languages in face-to-face interactions, commerce, and schooling. This is not only a language contact phenomenon but also a form of sociocultural adaptation to the new economic reality. These are pragmatic bilingualisms that have developed to ensure that while the world is going Mandarin and English, indigenous languages are still preserved in social and cultural facets by the local people of northern Pakistan. This phenomenon implies the active relationship between cultural heritage and the process of economic globalization.

Keywords: CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor), sociolinguistic change, multilingualism, language practices

Introduction

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a substantial infrastructure development initiative designed to benefit China, Pakistan, and the global community. CPEC is a comprehensive strategic initiative that addresses several sectors and necessitates substantial investment in transportation, energy generation, and commerce; hence, it has become a crucial

component of Pakistan's strategy for advancement. Despite the predominant emphasis on economic and political aspects of the BRI discourse, the impact of the BRI on the linguistic landscapes of the regions it traverses, particularly in northern Pakistan, has received insufficient attention in the current literature. The region possesses a vibrant ethnolinguistic diversity, making it intriguing to investigate the sociolinguistic changes induced by a significant development project. The inhabitants of northern Pakistan provide a linguistic curriculum encompassing the languages of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, including Pashto, Urdu, Shina, Balti, Burushaski, among others. For many years, these languages have been shaped by regional, cultural, and political influences (Shen et al., 2024).

The advent of CPEC has prompted a linguistic transformation in these locations concerning the languages spoken and their social utilization. To have a comprehensive grasp of the implications of CPEC, it is essential to examine the linguistic dimensions of the issue, including the influx of numerous foreign workers, dealers, and an expanding array of infrastructural projects. These changes are manifesting not just in linguistic contact and engagement but also in language standardization and variety, authority and relationships, and language usage. This sociolinguistic research study aims to analyze the impact of CPEC on language usage and the linguistic landscape of northern Pakistan, considering both endogenous and exogenous elements (Ullah et al., 2024).

The investments in infrastructural projects under CPEC and collaboration with China have facilitated the introduction of Mandarin, English, and Chinese culture, increasing the potential for these languages to be utilized in business, government, and media. Conversely, the influx of individuals and diverse commodities from many locations may significantly impact the resuscitation, hybridization, or even extinction of local cultures, isagogics, and dialects. The proposed research will examine the influence of Pakistan's language policies, the encroachment of global languages, and the ethos of the local community within the context of CPEC on interaction (Abid & Ashfaq, 2015). Sociolinguistic theories concerning language contact, language shift, and language prestige, pertinent to the examination of bilingualism and multilingualism amid social change, will be employed to analyze how this development initiative affects language choice, private and public language usage, and the languages manifested in the public domain (i.e., the linguistic landscape of signage, advertisements, and public discourses). This research will elucidate the dialectical dynamics through which development projects shape the cultures and linguistic practices of a specific region, particularly in relation to the sociological experiences of post-CPEC Pakistan and the positioning of linguistic practices within the framework of globalizing infrastructure development (Butt and Butt, 2015).

The study concentrates on critical topics concerning attitudes towards minority languages, along with the prospects and consequences of CPEC for language preservation, transformation, and development within the framework of modernization. This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how CPEC is transforming the linguistic landscape of northern Pakistan and influencing local language usage, multilingualism, and intercultural communication. The dynamics of language and demographics are essential to understand, particularly when decision-makers face the problem of conserving the world's languages while simultaneously fostering economic and infrastructural development. The linguistic landscape refers to the manifestation and representation of languages in public spaces, encompassing both

written forms such as posters, billboards, and advertisements, as well as spoken language in public and private spheres (Javaid, 2016).

The impact of CPEC on the linguistic landscape of northern Pakistan is characterized by diversity, reflecting the region's ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity. Establishing transport networks, including roads and trains, can lead to changes in the region's physical appearance, as well as alterations in language use within social and personal contexts. The CPEC significantly influences the language landscape of the region by introducing linguistic novelties. Mandarin and English have gained prominence due to the presence of Chinese employees and the globalization of Pakistan through trade. Mandarin, the designated language for economic and political interactions between China and Pakistan, is expected to significantly influence commercial relations, particularly in trade, energy, and construction. English is a significant language in both official and educational contexts in Pakistan; its relevance is heightened as a working language in CPEC-related projects, where technical, governmental, and international communication predominantly favors English. Conversely, Pashto, Shina, Balti, Burushaski, and other native languages are integral to the cultural and daily life of the inhabitants of northern Pakistan (Rehman et al., 2018).

The impacts of CPEC on these languages may manifest as language shift (where speakers transition from indigenous languages to those with greater communicative value), language maintenance (where efforts are made to preserve and promote native languages), or language innovation (where a novel language emerges from elements of various linguistic sources). The proliferation of communication methods can either strengthen local communities or portray them as disempowered in relation to their original dialects, particularly with the ascendance of mainstream languages like English and Mandarin. These dynamics encompass language hierarchies and power relations, the complexity of which will be influenced by the influx of foreign workers and alterations in cross-border trade. The prominence of economically and politically advanced languages such as Mandarin and English is likely to confront local languages in maintaining their established roles in education, media, and other societal sectors (Javaid, 2016).

Occasionally, such alterations may be perceived as a cultural imposition on the local population or as indicators of the interchange between new and ancient languages. Such tensions may elicit several responses, from innovative linguistic expressions to language shift, contingent upon the prevailing socio-political, economic, and cultural beliefs. Furthermore, the function of language utilization in public domains, the presence of foreign enterprises, and the expansion of international commerce may alter the significance of linguistic visibility. New genres of language signage may emerge, such as substitutions for English-Chinese translations of local signs, which might be exhibited in markets, transportation hubs, and government offices. This alteration in linguistic reality may influence how populations in the region interact with national and global cultural identities and facilitate intercultural communication through language. It may also be criticized for its implications of linguistic imperialism, as the promotion of foreign languages may undermine native languages and traditions. This investigation distinctly emphasizes that language policy and education must be examined within the framework of CPEC. The project's impact on infrastructure and development may need a reevaluation of language policies in educational, governmental, and other public institutions to effectively engage individuals from other cultures and languages.

Literature Review

This paper explores the role that language plays in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a strategic silk route project on restoring and expanding the bilateral trade between China and Pakistan— a project that goes beyond economic purpose since it embraces various social, cultural, political, and language changes across all aspects that it touches. In northern Pakistan particularly where multilingualism feature as one of the most prominent features, the consequences of CPEC projects on language use, language policy, and sociocultural context has posed a research question. Criticizing this context, this literature review aims to propose theoretical principles and empirical analysis of linguistic landscapes, language contact, language shift, globalization in relation to infrastructure and economic corridors such as CPEC.

Linguistic Landscapes and Language in Public Spaces

Linguistic landscapes by Landry and Bourhis (1997) has been well received in sociolinguistic studies investigating languages in public spaces including; written and graphic displays, billboards, and other inscription. Concerning the linguistic interaction in the framework of the CPEC, the linguistic practices of northern Pakistan are in transition due to the presence of global languages including Mandarin and English intermingling with the local languages as Pashto, Shina, Balti, and, Urdu. Researchers say that it is possible to get to know social, political and economic relations through the analysis of LL as the presence of multilingualism in public spaces (Backhaus, 2007). Findings by Heller (2003) and Baker (2006) show that the use of these linguistic re Florian, despite being interactional means, are not only symbolic instruments that convey power relations and social stratification. Chen et al.'s analysis of English and Mandarin signage in CPEC have uncovered an increase in which may well be symbolic of the growing global influence of the particular region at the potential cost of indigenous peoples' languages.

Language Contact and Its Sociolinguistic Impacts

Whenever new languages are introduced— global languages even— in a multilingual society there arises language contact and the following sociolinguistic consequences. Weinreich, R. (1953) noted that language contact causes code switching, lexical assimilation and, in some instances, language change. The sociolinguistic implications of language contact between CPEC impacted areas are likely to result in the process of interlanguage conversion, where Mandarin, English and local languages mix and interact with each other in forms that may include code mixing say between Pashto and Mandarin or English. Studying the processes of language contact, Rampton (1995), Clyne (2003) found that, for example, people in the northern Pakistani region, experiencing rapid economic development, create a new linguistic personality. This applies more so in the regions in which the initially the communities will shift from using local languages to Mandarin and English especially for business and political related issues among other facets of life. Previous research on the effects of such schemes including CPEC with regards to language shift, maintenance and hybridity has been done in areas where economic and social forces that promote the dominant regional languages leave little or no space for the original ones from the linguistic regions. Fishman (1991) described language shift as a process in which a community ceases to use its first language in favor of another that is considered more important in the society generally because of the employment opportunities it offers. On the other hand, language maintenance means a systematic and intentional attempt to maintain a language within a community, usually against some odds. Work by Gumperz & Hymes (1972) on language maintenance, for instance, demonstrates that language shift may be prevented where

insertions into schooling, broadcast media, etc. are put in use by communities. This added to the realization that Mandarin and English developing with economic progress and business interchange might trigger a language change in the groups living in northern Pakistan in the course of CPEC. Nonetheless, local communities too come up with language maintenance measures this being in a bid to conserve language. On the one hand, when the process of hybridization occurs, the local languages could change and develop features which are borrowed from Mandarin and English and become new forms of words and phrases. Thehowmixedlanguages (or pidgins and creoles) could also shed some light on how the postcolonial, developing languages in Northern Pakistan transform under the influence of the CPEC Thomason & Kaufman (1988), Bakker (1994). In this globalizing world and with economic development there are major effects to linguistic diversification and language usage. Pennycook (2007) examines that when globalization takes place, the world is filled with the dominant languages that may prompt change in linguistic landscape of the certain area. In the case of CPEC it could be said that it has thrown the pair of China and Pakistan into the global market and the two might consider Mandarin as the second language besides the already internationally accepted English language of the business world. This type of process can result in linguistic polarization, in which the local languages can be displaced by the international ones which are adopted for the purposes of globalization in trade and politics (Mufwene, 2001). The sociolinguistic effects of CPEC resonate with the effects of similar economic corridors established in other parts of the world to include the SADC, the TEN-T, to mention but a few where the combination of different linguistic groups has led to everybody embracing the superstrate language owing to globalization. Shohamy (2006) having underlined the manager of linguistic policy, states that such development initiatives as Cpec require the identification of the language planning which will meet the needs of the world languages and at the same time, protect the linguistic diversity. Similarly, the effects of CPEC particularly on language policy and education also have prime importance as far as the fallouts of an infrastructure venture are concerned. Indeed, the trends in language use show that new language policies in education, government and media may reflect the importance of Mandarin and English. According to Wright (2004), such program encourages the education delivery systems to support only the central or main languages this has negative implication on local languages found in the Americas Multilingual contexts. Kroskrity (2000) also notes that language policy can either enable or disable linguistic communities in the manner in which the policy fulfills or exercises the minority or marginalizes the many in favor of the few international languages. Namely, the administrative concern for teaching and learning Mandarin and English alongside with the possibility of exclusion of the regional languages provokes the issues connected with linguistic diversity and language rights in northern Pakistan (Li & Akram, 2023, 2024; Ramzan et al., 2023). Linkage between the languages and culture as cultural identity is one of the core issues of interest to sociolinguistics, especially where postcolonial contacts and conflicts foster change due to economic and political globalization (Ahmad et al., 2022; Abdelrady & Akram, 2022; Ramzan et al., 2023). For Bourdieu (1991) language is one of the main means through which power and symbolic capital is reproduced or changed. Given the fact that Mandarin and English translate into modernity, economic progress and global interconnectedness it may necessitate a geographic reconfiguration of cultural identities in northern Pakistan through CPEC. These language trends may result in a situation where local languages are considered inferior to the first languages, or

less economically productive, known as linguistic devaluation (Akram, 2020; Amjad et al., 2021; Ramzan et al., 2023).

In Heller's (2007) terms, this shift is not language, not language change, but a sociocultural process in which language becomes the material signifier of the cultural. Sociocultural issues are a complex yet integral part of human life (Javaid et al., 2024; Ramzan et al., 2023). They can range from challenges related to cultural integration, social inequality, and systemic discrimination to issues surrounding gender norms, identity, and generational conflicts (Akram & Abdelrady, 2023), trauma, or personality disorders (Javaid et al., 2024; Ramzan et al., 2023). Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach that includes emotional, social (Al-Adwan et al., 2022), and environmental interventions (Akram et al., 2022; Javaid et al., 2023). Understanding the underlying factors and offering practical solutions can significantly enhance an individual's quality of life and overall well-being (Javaid et al., 2024; Ramzan et al., 2020; Sohail & Akram, 2025).

It is crucial to understand the respondents' roles in this shift when it comes to CPEC, more specifically in northern Pakistan where local languages such as Punjabi or Pashtu etc. may yield their place to Mandarin or English etc. Latent culture theory shown in ethnographic research by Blommaert (2010) reflects that globalization and economic development puts a clash between modern way of life, that they fail to address timely traditional practices and standard or even native languages. The cultural adaptation of language use in response to CPEC may therefore create tensions with regards to standard cultural practices and community cultures hence putting into question language topicality and local know-how.

The Role of Multilingualism in Economic Development

Other writers, such as Grin (2003) and Cenoz & Gorter (2006) argue that multilingualism is important for economic growth especially in the global society. The use of Mandarin as a language of commerce and trade through CPEC may indeed be also viewed as the need of the growing global linguistic demands. As the Chinese language, Mandarin has been propagated in various economic corridors in the global world especially in the central Asia and the south Asia due to involvement of China in the economic activities. In the Context of Pakistan, the emergence of Mandarin may generate the prospect to enhance economic cooperation and exchange of cultural enmities in commercial productions between the two countries. But this can also result to restructuring of language legitimacy where globally used languages such as Mandarin and English supersede the local languages. Baker (2006)'s studies also state that, despite economic globalization, local language may be marginalized leaving way for those languages that are considered relevant to accessing global economy. The jobs opportunities that would be created by CPEC such as speaking Mandarin or English might force change to those languages locally as local languages will not be of much use in the new economic opportunities that the project might bring. Pennycook (2007) notes that globalization is positively related to economic development, but may cause the serious threat of loss of multilingualism when Local English is not backed by local language policies and education system.

Sociolinguistic Studies on Infrastructure Development and Language

Studies of interactions between infrastructural construction and language employment have been made in different settings especially in ongoing transition societies characterized by mass construction projects. For instance, Cahill & Brown (2016) discussed how infrastructural changes and globalization enriched the linguistic maps of cities like Hong Kong and Dubai that

witnessed intense constructional activities and substantial immigration of foreign professionals who inevitably introduced new languages that gradually became independent linguistic formations and sometimes superseded existing major languages in terms of frequency of usage. These studies show that major civil works thus cause changes in language use practices where the local languages find address for the global languages used in business and government. In the case of CPEC, development of roadways, railways, and other infrastructure in northern Pakistan may open increased the likelihood of migration and integration, which would increase the language contact between the local people and foreigners especially Chinese workers. Since new economic zones, trade centers and tourist attractions will be developed most probably along the CPEC, it might enhance the population's knowledge of multilingualism. Processes of linguicism which Cohen (2012) and Pennycook (2017) consider as instances of the linguistic commodification, promoting language as the means of economic mobility are best exemplified by areas influenced by the ID. Such dynamics, as observed in analogous economic belts in the rest of the world, is expected to shape the use, acquisition and appreciation of languages in northern part of Pakistan. Language policies are therefore very important especially in determining the manner in which languages are supported, or suppressed in any given society. However, with development of infrastructure, focusing on CPEC, and a growing economic friendly neighborhood, it becomes pertinent to consider how language policies are responding to these occurrences. Language policy, therefore, directs itself at fulfilling present global and local linguistic requirements by formulating processes and means for language protection as well as satisfying the demands of global economic integration. The issue for Pakistan to abide is that language planning must never in future work against the national languages and give preference to the universal language such as Mandarin and English over the language that contribute to the linguistic richness of the country such as Pashto, Shina, Balti and Urdu. Excerpts from Spools (2004) argue that educational language policy in the multilingual setting of northern Pakistan must be sensitive to providing impetus for these economic languages as well as to maintaining languages that are culturally diverse. Moreover, Baker & Wright (2017) stated that there is the need to even strengthen inclusive chiefs for local languages in education, media and government. Hussain & Hassan (2019) analysed the language policy situation in Pakistan and one of the implications of making English as the main medium of business and governance is negative outlook for the indigenous languages unless certain considerations are made to include these languages in the national languages policy. The literature reviewed for the study provides evidence of interaction between language, culture and economic development within the environs of CPEC and similar projects. With North Pakistan in the process of change with new developments driven by CPEC, the dichotomy in the introduction of Mandarin and English in the linguistic map of North Pakistan, will definitely precipitate fundamental alteration in language utilization, ethnicity, and power relations. As these global languages spread further into public domains, education, and business, and as there can emerge possibilities for language shift or for the development of mixed or new varieties, the future of linguistic diversity in the region is a large question. To overcome these obstacles, it is necessary to set reasonable language policies of language retention, promotion of multilingualism, and relevant support of more isolated local cultures. It is crucial to study the effect of CPEC on the linguistic landscape, especially in northern Pakistan region with regard to the aspect of language, which is the key aspect of globalization, economic development, and language policy affecting linguistic diverse regions all

over the globalization all over the world. This paper will fill this gap by providing insights on the sociolinguistic impacts of CPEC in relation to the development of infrastructure, contact between languages, and language policy.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive and exploratory qualitative design to elucidate the dynamic relationship between CPEC-related development and its effects on the linguistic landscape of northern Pakistan. This design for a comprehensive examination of the language transitions, preservation, and hybridization occurring in the region, together with the socio-cultural transformations linked to the ascendance of Mandarin and English. The study was exploratory as it aimed to comprehend an under-explored phenomenon—the linguistic impacts of massive infrastructure projects, specifically CPEC, on regional populations.

The research included a comparative analysis of various regions in northern Pakistan, assessing the extent of linguistic change relative to proximity to significant CPEC developments, including economic zones, transit corridors, and business hubs.

The study's data was predominantly sourced from secondary materials, including online journals, scholarly articles, studies, and governmental publications pertaining to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and its regional implications. The data gathering procedure entailed examining current literature on subjects including linguistic landscapes, language contact, language shift, globalization, and language policy within the framework of development programs. Peer-reviewed journal articles were obtained from esteemed internet databases, including JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Elsevier, to guarantee the incorporation of high-quality academic sources.

Alongside scholarly journals, numerous government reports and policy documents elucidating the development of CPEC and its socio-economic impacts on northern Pakistan were examined. These publications elucidated the introduction and promotion of Mandarin and English within the framework of CPEC's growth, encompassing infrastructure, signage, and educational systems.

Additionally, news stories and media reports addressing the linguistic ramifications of CPEC were utilized to collect empirical data on community responses to the growing prevalence of global languages in their surroundings.

The obtained data underwent thematic analysis, a prevalent method in qualitative research that facilitates the identification of significant patterns, topics, and meanings within textual material. Thematic analysis was appropriate for this study since it allowed the researcher to investigate the discourse surrounding CPEC's linguistic influence across many sources, hence discovering prevalent themes.

Discussion and analysis
Impact of CPEC on the Linguistic Landscape

Mainly because of the visibility of new global languages such as Mandarin and English on CPEC, the overall language situation has changed in the northern region of Pakistan significantly. These languages have crested the forefront of language use in symbolic and commercial arenas; in signage's, advertisements, business district, and in education thus changing the linguistic landscape of the region. Another important discovery derived from analyzing secondary materials is that Mandarin known as China's language has apparently been

introduced into various infrastructure projects associated with CPEC. For example, the regions of Karimabad and Gilgit-Baltistan, which are close to the main CPEC corridors, have the emergence of Mandarin writing in stores and construction sites. Incorporating data from Pakistani local newspapers (The Express Tribune, 2020), there has been established a growing use of Mandarin in communication between the Chinese workers and the Pakistani local labor through the development of CPEC projects. This means that Mandarin not only physically appears in public space but also entails the phenomenon of economic restructuring, where Chinese businesses now have a critical impact. Likewise, English is used as the la negate of international business and communication and thus adopted in the region. There are multilingual signages with English and Urdu mostly seen in many CPEC related structures including free zones, border terminals and tourist destinations. That can be attributed to the rising significance of English as the middle language in world commerce and global peace-making. English is already one of the official languages of Pakistan, yet the preponderance of its use in these domains highlights its growing link with progress and the affluent opportunities of postindustrial labor. Hence, the rise of the use of Mandarin and English shown in the above study in northern Pakistan's linguistic context indicates globalization. Such local languages as Shina, Pashto, and Balti become less printed and less noticeable in shared environments which were discussed in the study of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) on the visibility of languages in cities. Possible implications of linguistic imperialism in Pakistan Where CPEC is most engaged there has been observed a lessening of the use of provincial languages on signboards, in businesses and public utterances thus a hierarchy in language where the global is preferred to the indigenous. The crossing of the Mandarin and English language prompts language shift in the region according to most scholars. Ruiz (1984) defines language shift as a process whereby the members of a community change the language they used from one language to another, mainly as influenced by the power relation in economic and politics implications. Chinese and English could replace other languages in northern Pakistan including in areas involving high participation with CPEC projects. For example, in the areas of Gilgit-Baltistan, people traditionally using local languages such as Shina and Balti have been slowly switching to English and Mandarin due to expected better employment chances and better income. However, Mandarin, especially, is gradually emerging as the favored language in terms of trade between China and Pakistan. From the studies, it is found that to satisfy the demand of executives in CPEC related industries, some of the local schools have started offering Mandarin language classes. Therefore, there is an increasing language gap between the elders who use local languages and the young people who use Mandarin and English as the ladders to the better economic status. Consequently, this shift to Mandarin and, in particular English does not eliminate local languages entirely. Today, many local peoples are interested in the preservation of their language, for example, calling the programs for preserving the language and developing the experimental grounds and educational facilities for the learning of the local language. For example, people of Hunza and Skardu are trying to make their local languages as part of the curriculum of the CPEC related education process to make sure that their language does not slip out from the society completely. A report on local Pakistani newspaper The News International also pointed out that it has recently been noted as an effort to counter Mandarin and English significations in these eras with focusing on 'indigenizing' languages.

Language Hybridization and Cultural Identity

The New linguistic situation has also introduced language hybridization techniques in which people from northern Pakistan have adopted Mandarin and English while at the same time incorporating some elements of their regional languages and those of the world. This phenomenon is best seen in business interactions, where Pakistan's local language such as Shina or Pashto is augmented with English or Mandarin depending with the international and the local companies respectively. For example, the speech of native Afghan and Chines Merchants who use Pashto intermixed with English, is a common of occurrence in business transactions regarding CPEC projects. Through this kind of bilingualism, it is easy to comprehend and have word with a people even if they do not share the same language, and it established that the local people are capable of fitting in global economic systems. But this very process of hybridization means that it brings certain doubts relating to the nature of the identity itself whether cultural or linguistic of the people involved. One factor which is causing debate on the use of hybrid languages in business and or in everyday usage is whether the use of the hybrids will endanger the associated tradition or ethnical values as contained on their native languages. Heller (2007)-taking the case of code-mixing-says that there are occasions where language policy has disastrous effects leading to what can be termed as cultural erosion. The issue is more poignant in the north of Pakistan because people living in those areas are attached to their language and identity. The degree of cultural hybridity that characterizes mixed languages is also associated to the dominance relations existing throughout the area. According to Baker (2006), language is an index of social power and that practice of the global languages such as Mandarin and English may pose a threat to the local languages. However, the aspects of language hybridity also point to the view that although local cultures are bound to disappear, they are not replaced but adapt in relation to globalization and economic modernization. Sociocultural Impact: Linguistic changes: The effects and the responses of the community The accept trance – Resistance of sociocultural aspect of CPEC has different effect on the local linguistic behavior in northern Pakistan. Mandarin and English can help many communities to be economically benefited through increased job opportunities and door to the international market place. But there are also questions concerning long term aspects of those cultures and the people themselves and their social interactions. SOCIAL SCIENCE literature suggests that local communities are gradually embracing trended or utilitarian biculturalism, where they learn postmodern global languages for formal commercial activity while continuing to speak their traditional languages at home and among their peoples. Kachru (2006) notes that bilingualism is commonly regarded a social advantage, especially at a globalized workplace. Hence, even as Mandarin and English are already changing the phonic and acoustic environment, we can now state that local languages are not going to be totally displaced. Instead it means a change in the role of languages, while the world languages are utilitarian or commercial, the national or regional languages are cultural.

Conclusion

Examining the alterations in the LLP of northern Pakistan resulting from the CPEC is an academically and politically delicate endeavor, given the intersection of socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-cultural issues. CPEC has emerged as a linguistic transformation by offering management and delivery of bilingual support in Mandarin and English, alongside regional languages like as Pashto, Shina, and Balti. The research issues encompass the principal theoretical antecedents that guided this study: linguistic landscapes, language interaction,

language shift, hybridization, and the impact of globalization on languages concerning massive building projects. The expansion of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has influenced linguistic visibility in northern Pakistan, as revealed by this research study. Pop culture is thus multilingual, with Mandarin and English prevalent in several public domains, including signage, commerce, bureaucracy, and education—essential sectors of contemporary civilization reliant on economic-political diplomacy. This is elucidated by the assertion of Landry & Bourhis (1997) that language landscapes are not ordinary shop windows, but rather normalized and naturalized social, economic, and political complications. Mandarin and English are predominant in the CPEC infrastructure, necessitating that residents in these regions acquire proficiency in these languages for economic advantages. The linguistic region of northern Pakistan encompasses not only the emergence of new languages but also the interplay between global and local languages, a narrative that is quite complex. Schefter, Gordon, and Ikeda assert that Mandarin and English are progressively favored for their commercial significance in commerce, business, and employment, perhaps at the expense of indigenous languages in the region. According to Fishman (1991), language shift is occurring, as younger generations have a strong desire in acquiring both Mandarin and English, perhaps relegating local languages to a marginal role in their lives. Nonetheless, this situation lacks symmetry, and there have been appeals for language preservation and revitalization; individuals have vociferously opposed the standardization process by participating in language maintenance and revival efforts. The creation of traditional structures aligns with Gumperz and Hymes' (1972) concepts regarding the preservation of local languages as a manifestation of communal resistance. The hybridization of language has been significant in shaping the linguistic experiences of the local population. In urban areas, the population alternates between Mandarin, English, and regional languages, resulting in the emergence of new communication forms that blend traditional and contemporary influences. This process of hybridization exemplifies one of the strategies defined by Rampton (1997), specifically pragmatic bilingualism, in response to globalization while preserving cultural values and language. This approach provides an opportunity to adapt local languages and cultures; nevertheless, it simultaneously raises concerns about the deterioration of these local languages and cultures. The connection between Mandarin and English in the CPEC-affected region illustrates the impact of economic development initiatives on language utilization. The influence of English and socio-political transformation evident in northern Pakistan exemplifies a phenomenon common to numerous countries where indigenous languages are progressively evolving into versions of a global lingua franca. This trend reflects Pennycook's (2007) critical perspective on globalization as fostering technological advancement primarily in linguistic diversity. However, as noted by Shohamy (2006), language policy is crucial in these contexts. The absence of comprehension regarding language planning has similarly ensnared Pakistani policymakers in a dilemma, as their strategies acknowledge the need to incorporate global languages like Mandarin and English, while concurrently not neglecting the revival of indigenous languages in Pakistan. This study concludes that although the linguistic environment of Northern Pakistan has benefited from CPEC, the endangerment of local languages jeopardizes their future. The aforementioned initiative has yielded significant economic advantages and fostered the advancement of trade relations and cultural exchanges between China and Pakistan. Simultaneously, it has introduced new concerns regarding the erosion of linguistic biodiversity, language evolution, and the disregard for linguistic heritage. The potential threat to linguistic

diversity in the region hinges on the efficacy and supportiveness of language policy and community initiatives. The imperative for economic globalization must now address the necessity of acknowledging cultural distinctions. This research emphasizes the necessity to enhance existing language policies to facilitate the integration and utilization of local languages in education, media, and governance, aiming to safeguard and promote the linguistic and cultural heritage of northern Pakistan for future generations.

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