

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PAKISTAN'S HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION LANGUAGE POLICY FRAMEWORK: AN ARCHITECTURE OF LINGUISTIC CONTROL

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Abstract

This critical discourse analysis examines the language policy structure of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan with an aim of explaining how discourse has been used to construct power of an institution in a post-colonial situation. Through an integrated theoretical approach that explores the official documents between 2014 and 2023, the study argues that the policy is an apparatus of linguistic governance, but not an administrative device that is neutral. It exposes a multi-layered discursive regime that naturalises English hegemony through the grammatical requirements, interdiscursively combines the neoliberal and developmental ideologies, and uses ideological tactics that generate acquiescence at the expense of the local languages. The analysis shows the policy constitutes a kind of governmentality, creating subjectivities of failed students and submissive professors, naturalizing English as lingo capital, and arranging an epistemic shift to the knowledge of the Anglophone. The study thus throws light on the process of discursive politics of power within the post-colonial education that has ramifications of equity, identity and epistemic justice.

Keywords: Interdiscursivity, linguistic governance, developmental ideologies

Chapter 1: Introduction

Language policy is not only a management issue in the multidimensional environment of post-colonial education change, but one of the main ways in which institutional authority is practiced, national identity is negotiated, and the world hierarchies are internalized. The Higher Education Commission in Pakistan (HEC) formed in 2002 as part of a radical reformation agenda has taken the centre-stage of this linguistic change commanding unparalleled control on the linguistic code of the academic spaces in the country. The HEC has done this systematically, through a set of policy documents that span infrastructures of ideological governance the entire spectrum of pedagogic advice to the programming of the academic subject and the naturalization of specific linguistic hierarchies.

1.1 Background

The linguistic landscape of Pakistan is historically defined by a structural contradiction between the post-colonial traces of the English linguistic privilege and the nationalistic needs of the Urdu as the language of the post-colonial identity construction which Rahman (2002) describes as the English-Urdu divide. This conflict is also complicated by the fact that there are more than seventy regional languages and each of them represents different cultural and epistemic background. In this multilingual mosaic, the absolute drive of the HEC towards the use of the English language as the main medium of instruction is a profound intervention with far-reaching consequences to the issues of access, equity, the production of knowledge and the national sovereignty in an ever globalised knowledge economy. The language policy of higher education is an important place where some of the key issues of knowledge, power, and identity come to a convergence. Indeed, policy framework of the HEC, in the case of Pakistan, lies in the cross-section between the colonial legacies, nationalist ambitions, global pressures, and local realities. This paper seeks to shed light on the frequently unseen discursive operations by which linguistic hierarchies are naturalize, academic subjectivities are created and institutional

power is practiced by subjecting this policy framework to intensive critical discourse analysis. Thus, it tries, not only to interpret the current state of academic linguistic situation in Pakistan but also to imagine more equal opportunities of its future.

1.2 Problem Statement

The key question of the current investigation is by what means the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan ideologically constructs and legitimize its language policy framework, and to what extent this construction acts through ideological naturalization of linguistic hierarchies, of the formation of the subjectivities of academic subject-positions, and of mediation between the global and regional process of integration and linguistic nationalism.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What do linguistic representations of HEC language policy linguistically encode authority and obligation in the grammatical, lexical and textual selection of choice?
2. What are the discursive strategies used by these documents to create rationales of English dominance and how do they merge educational, economic, and developmental, and quality-assurance discourses to create an effective policy narrative?
3. How do these documents ideologically contain any potential resistance by polarization strategies, techniques of legitimation and creating specific subject positions of students, faculty and institutions?
4. What is the historical context of these policy discourses in the post-colonial path of Pakistan and what argumentative strategies are used to resolve the conflict between constitutional promises to use Urdu and the realities of promoting English?
5. What is the model of linguistic rule which appears out of this policy framework, and what does this model tell us about how institutional power is mediated by discourse in post-colonial higher educational systems?

1.4 Scope and Delimitations

The proposed research is narrowed down to analyzing HEC language policy documents as the main research area. Such emphasis is intentional due to a number of reasons. To begin with, the HEC is the national regulatory body and determines the framework of individual university functioning, therefore, its policies are especially consequential. Second, by considering the origin of the discourse of policy as opposed to its downstream effects, we have a better understanding of the ideological premises of the policy framework. Third, such narrow scope enables a more detailed and systematic analysis in comparison with a larger corpus of documents related to university level.

The time range is mainly within 2014, the year of the establishment of the Language Policy, and 2023, but historical sources are also used in some cases to add the contextual knowledge. The study is limited to policy documents available publicly and it does not involve interviews with policy makers and observations of the implementation procedures. Although it is a limitation that does not allow exploration of the reception or reinterpretation of policies at the local level, it does allow a focused analysis of how the policy is discursively created at the national regulatory level.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Language Policy in Pakistan: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

2.1.1 Colonial Legacies and Post-Independence Formations

The language of Pakistan is permanently stained with the colonial history of the country. In his book, *Language, Ideology and Power* (2002), Rahman explains in detail how the British colonial policy made English the language of administration, elite schooling and social economic mobility and established what he terms a linguistic apartheid, which has

continued in modified forms in the present day. It was this colonial heritage of hierarchy that has lingered to a deep sense where English became equated with modernity, sophistication and power access, and native languages were confined to domestic and local domains.

The language issue took centre stage after the attainment of independence in 1947 and was a subject of constructing the nation. The federal establishment of Urdu as the national language of Article 251 of the 1973 Constitution was an effort to create unified national identity in ethnolinguistically diverse areas. But as Mustafa (2015) records, this imposition of Urdu at the top down created its own tensions, especially in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), where it also led to the language movement that eventually led to independence. This Urdu English duality developed in West Pakistan, producing what Mansoor (2005) regards as a kind of a double divide that exists between English and Urdu and between Urdu and the regional languages.

2.1.2 The Higher Education Commission and Language Policy Reform

The formation of Higher Education Commission in 2002 is one of the major turning points in the higher education policy of Pakistan. Shamim (2011) illustrates the way language policy was incorporated into larger policies of quality assurance, internationalization, and global competitiveness. This agenda was the most explicitly laid out by the HEC in 2014 in its Language Policy in Higher Education, which required that English became the medium of instruction in most of its disciplines. The available studies on the HEC language policy have concentrated more on the problem of implementation and its results. The challenges that students whose backgrounds are Urdu-based experience in English-dominated classrooms are recorded by Ali (2013).

A survey conducted by Rahman (2010) on the attitudes of the faculty members finds out that there is ambivalence in the attitudes, and although most of them identify the need to use English as a practical means of conducting research and having a global presence, they believe that its impact on conceptual knowledge and inclusion is worrisome. These researches offer useful information concerning the implications of language policy but less focus on discursive construction of the policy itself which is a gap that this study will fill.

2.1.3 The Social and Educational Implications of Language Policy

The reproducing role of language policy in Pakistani educational settings has also been extensively studied showing how this strengthens social stratification. Mansoor (2005) illustrates a strong relationship between English proficiency and socio-economic status to produce some sort of a linguistic capital notion, which Bourdieu has coined, that has educational and occupational benefits. This interplay creates a self-reinforcing vicious circle, where affluent families give preference to English-medium education to their children, thus cementing the boundaries of classes. In educational institutions in particular, a recent ethnographic study by Mustafa (2015) reveals how students with varied language backgrounds navigate in English-centric educational institutions. She reports on the case of linguistic anxiety among students with Urdu-media backgrounds, who have to struggle with not only the material of the educational course but also the pronunciation of such material in a language that they might not feel at ease speaking.

On the contrary, English-speaking students are often armed with what she calls the unmerited linguistic privilege and this enables them to perform well in school regardless of their mastery of the concepts. Although these works give light to significant social aspects of language policy, they are inclined to view policy more as a given and relatively stable place than as a discursively anchored and disputed space. It is still important to conduct a research that explores the generation of language policy itself by means of particular discursive practices, which serves as an agenda in the current research.

2.2 Critical Approaches to Language Policy Analysis

2.2.1 Language Policy as Political Practice

Such a reversal in research of language-policy is the critical turn, represented by the works of Tollefson (1991, 2006) and Ricento (2000, 2006), to the idea of language policy as an apolitical, apathetic field. Rather, these researchers argue that language policy is essentially political in nature, as it acts to distribute material and symbolic resources, endorsing specific social order, and naturalizing power relations. The idea of historical structural analysis as formulated by Tollefson (1991) prefigures the way language policies are determined by the larger historical forces and structural inequalities, and his subsequent formulation of the notion of critical language policy (2006) is focused on how language policies can reproduce or challenge the status quo. The language policy analysis framework developed by Ricento (2000) shows that there are three interrelated levels that include (1) macro-socio-political processes, (2) discourse and ideology, and (3) on-the-ground practices. In the current study, the main level of interest is the second one, discourse and ideology, which places the current analysis in an interpretation of macro processes such as globalization, neoliberalism, as well as with consciousness of the implications of the same on practice.

2.2.2 The Neoliberal Turn in Language Policy

The recent academic literature underlines the transformation of language policy by the neoliberal ideologies that define the concept of the language as the human capital and education as the preparation to the global competition. In his discussion of caring about the neoliberalization of language, Block (2018) examines the way in which discussions concerning the employability, competitiveness, and human capital discourse have taken over the language-policy discourse globally. On the same note, the work by Holborow (2015) follows the evolution of language as a part of identity and cultural dimension to a marketable skill and economic resource. Within the framework of higher education, the idea of neoliberalism as a language policy as proposed by Piller and Cho (2013) proves the growing influence of the market logic in making linguistic preferences in universities all over the world, in which English is increasingly becoming the default language of academic capitalism of the world. These interpretations provide essential theoretical instruments of comprehending the language-policy framework of the HEC that explicitly correlates the level of English skills with the national competitiveness and the personal employability.

2.2.3 Post-Colonial Perspectives on Language Policy

Extensive research on post-colonial theorists has focused on the continuity of colonial language ranks along new lines. In the article on the cultural politics of English, Pennycook (1998) discusses the simplistic accounts of linguistic imperialism but at the same time recognizing the unequal power relations that are still in place in global English. His idea of the worldliness the situated, contingent, and contested quality of English in a wide variety of contexts can provide a subtler way of understanding the process of appropriating, resisting, and transforming world languages on the local level. The article by Canagarajah (1999) on resisting linguistic imperialism in Sri Lankan higher education reveals that the student and faculty body negotiated the dominance of English by use of appropriation, mixing and subversion strategies. His writing emphasizes the role of the local actors in changing the global flows of linguistic, making it more challenging to implement the top-down models of language policy. Such post-colonial attitudes are necessary to interpret the language policy of Pakistan that stands at the border of the worldwide pressures and domestic bargains.

2.3 English as Medium of Instruction in Post-Colonial Higher Education

2.3.1 Global Trends and Local Adaptations

There has been significant literature on the spread of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in higher education all over the world. The global trend, according to the thorough overview of Dearden (2014), is considered to be EMI, as a phenomenon of galloping, imposed by internationalisation policies, the movement of students, and the global ranking systems. Nevertheless, according to Dearden and Macaro (2018), the way that EMI is implemented is quite different in different contexts, which is reflected in the various historical relationships with the English language, the level of resources, and the educational tradition. The study of Asian higher education by Kirkpatrick (2011) is a comparative insight to the way various nations have incorporated EMI. His case study of Malaysia, Hong Kong and China shows that there have been different ways of balancing the demands of global integration and local language requirements. The comparative knowledge gained can be useful when trying to contextualise the case of Pakistan, but Shamim (2011) observes that Pakistan has unique challenges due to the particular colonial history, multilingual environment, and limited resources.

2.3.2 Pedagogical and Epistemic Implications

The studies of the EMI pedagogical implications have produced mixed results. According to the research presented by Airey (2011) in Sweden the second language may be cognitively challenging in terms of learning content especially that of complex concepts. On the same note, a study by Lo and Macaro (2012) in Hong Kong shows that students can have problems learning in two languages at the same time when instructed in English, which can impair the results of the learning process. On the epistemic plane, an old criticism made by Phillipson (1992, 2009) against the so-called linguistic imperialism states that the dominance of English in the scholarly world excludes other knowledge regimes and modes of thinking. More recently, the language choice among the knowledge that is validated and which is not is discussed by Bennett (2015) in his article on epistemic justice in higher education. Such fears are especially pertinent to Pakistan, where English-language instruction can become an obstacle to working with native knowledge systems in local languages, mostly Urdu.

2.4 Discourse Analysis of Policy Documents

2.4.1 Critical Discourse Analysis and Policy Studies

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has become an important method of analysis of policy documents of different fields. The discourse-historical approach of Wodak (2001) has been especially significant in policy analysis with the focus on the need to contextualize policy discourses in a historical and political context. Her work shows how textual policy naturalises certain forms of worldviews and excludes other forms of worldview. In the education policy more precisely, Taylor (1997) early research on policy as discourse formed the basis on analyzing the ways educational policies create problem, define solutions and placate stakeholders. Most recently, Ball (2015) introduces the idea of policy as text and discourse that separates between policy as a written text (text) and policy as a larger discourse that influences how texts are written and understood. The given distinction is useful to the current study, as it pays consideration to the policy textualities but admits that they exist within the wider discursive constructions.

2.4.2 Analyzing Language Policy Through Discourse

Discourse analytic techniques can be used in language policy study, and salient insights are obtained. The ethnographical discourse analysis of policy implementation that Johnson (2013) provides explains how the official mandates are interpolated and re-constituted at the sub-national levels thus highlighting the multi-layered nature of language policy. Statutory

texts in his account are just a stratum of a greater negotiation process. A critical sociolinguistic ethnography of language policy at schools in Madrid is presented by Pérez-Milans (2013), who discusses the circulation and changing of policy discourses between a range of scales, the European Union directives to the national legislation, and then to the classroom practice. The current study is informed by his dramaturgical scaling analysis because it locates national level policy discourse as some important strata where supranational pressures get localized.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1 An Integrated Theoretical Framework

The current paper describes a comprehensive theoretical framework that would be used to analyze the Higher Education Commission (HEC) language policy documents in Pakistan. By acknowledging that language policy is practiced on linguistic, discursive, ideological and historical levels, the paper is conducted in a quadripartite manner synthesising four complementary traditions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) into a positive dialogue. This comprehensive framework allows a multi-faceted analysis of the ways the linguistic encoding of authority, the discursive structuring of rationalities, the ideological disposition of consent and the historicity of the linguistic options taken in Pakistan. Instead of giving preference to one theoretical perspective, the framework illustrates the contribution made by each tradition to the various tools of analysis that need to be used to unpack the various aspects of policy discourse, thus providing a complete picture on how institutional power is exercised by language about language.

3.2 Fairclough's Dialectical-Relational Approach: Discourse as Social Practice

Norman Fairclough dialectical-relational approach, which is expressed in such seminal publications like *Language and Power* (1989, 2001) and *Critical Discourse Analysis* (1995), provides the general theoretical framework of this study. Fairclough takes discourse as a type of social practice which shapes and is shaped by social structures. His strategy is outlined by three major propositions which are applicable in analyzing language policy texts. First, Fairclough assumes that there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and society, where discourse is not necessarily representative of reality, but it is one that creates it (Fairclough, 1995). The given approach is instrumental to policy analysis because it does not only describe the arrangements of language but actually creates a specific version of linguistic reality. An example of this is that when the HEC policy states that English will be the medium of instruction, it is not simply stating a given fact but executing a social action that will constitute that fact.

Second, Fairclough is keen on materiality of discourse in the sense that it is integrated in institutional practices, power relations and historical conditions (Fairclough, 1995). Therefore, the analysis should not focus solely on the textual meaning as it should also consider the production contexts (the regulatory power of the HEC), the paths of circulation (official notifications, websites, institutional communications) as well as the material practices that it influences (resource allocation, hiring decisions, curriculum development). Third, Fairclough endorses critical language awareness involving a conscious study of how language decisions naturalise certain power relations. Based on this the current study replicates the principle to the policy discourse so as to ask the question of how HEC documents socialise the dominance of English into a set of linguistic and discursive decisions.

3.3 van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach: Ideology and Legitimation

The socio cognitive approach as presented by Teun van Dijk in his works, including *The Ideology* (1998) and *Discourse and power* (2008), fills the gap between the macro-social organization and the micro-discursive practice via the level of social cognition. Van Dijk sees ideologies as systems of ideas, or underlying beliefs, or socialised mental images, and which group cognitions are organised around. His method proves to be indispensable in understanding

how HEC language policy documents, as well as are subject to, ideological formations around the language, education, and national development. The discourse-cognition-society triangle of Van Dijk argues that society is mediated by the social cognition between the discourse and society (van Dijk 1998). Accordingly, policy analysis HEC documents do not directly change social practices but it works by altering the way stakeholders conceptualize language in terms of beliefs about English, Urdu and other languages; attitudes towards linguistic competency; and anxieties about linguistic incompetence.

3.4 Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach: Context and Argumentation

Through her Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA) (discussed in the books) Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), Ruth Wodak highlights that discourse cannot be understood without referring to their historical and political backgrounds. DHA is specifically well-positioned to examine the situation concerning language policy in Pakistan that cannot be perceived in the vacuum of its colonial history, country-building, and the formation of the constitution, its engagement with the world. The main qualities of Wodak approach are the principle of triangulation, which involves three methods, types of data, and theoretical opportunities in order to create a set of comprehensive insights into complex social phenomena and, therefore, agrees with the combination of different CDA frameworks in the current study (Wodak & Meyer 2001).

3.5 Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics: The Grammar of Power

The micro linguistic toolkit in the analysis of the text in detail is provided by the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) developed by M.A.K. Halliday in *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1994, 2004). SFL is based on the idea that language is structured to express the meanings in the context, and grammatical decisions are never neutral, but they have a social purpose (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Halliday singles out three meta functions all texts simultaneously fulfil, and each which offers analytical means of discourse interrogation, namely:

- 1) Ideational Function, representing experience and reality
- 2) Interpersonal Function, enacting social relationships
- 3) Textual Function, organising discourse in a coherent and analytical way

3.6 Integration of Theoretical Frameworks

The four theoretical perspectives to be used in this work provide complementary and not competitive points of view:

- Fairclough suggests the general framework to analyze the discourse as a social practice and a three dimensional method of analysis (text, discursive practice, social practice) (Fairclough, 1995).
- van Dijk provides the key instruments in the study of the ideological aspects of discourse, the ways in which policies influence and are influenced by social thoughts and also the manner in which they justify specific power structures (van Dijk 1998).
- Wodak insists on the fact that historical and political context is indispensable, and gives systematic means to analyzing strategies of argumentation and the construction of social subject (Wodak & Meyer 2001).
- Halliday provides the instrumental grid of linguistic analysis of the way power has been coded in the grammatical and lexical options (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

3.7 Analytical Integration in Practice

Practically, these frameworks were combined by means of a stratified approach to analysis:

- First Layer (Halliday): HEC documents are analyzed linguistically closely, paying attention to transitivity, modality, nominalization, and lexical selection (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

- Second Layer (Fairclough): Study of these linguistic features as the part of the discursive practice, and how they operate in specific genres, institutional situations, and social relations (Fairclough, 1995).
- Third Layer (van Dijk): The analysis of the ways in which these discursive practices do ideological work, which is the creation of specific worldviews, power legitimizations, and consent management (van Dijk 1998).
- Fourth Layer (Wodak): Placing such ideological structures in the context of historical and political phenomenon and examining the argumentative strategies with the help of which they are promoted (Wodak & Meyer 2001).

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

The integrated theoretical approach offers an overall analytical tool to evaluate how the HEC language policy documents in Pakistan create specific forms of linguistic reality, naturalize given patterns of power, legitimize English dominance, and deal with the historical and political complexities of language in the Pakistani higher education. This model allows drawing a multi-dimensional analysis by taking into consideration the concepts of a social practice through Fairclough, ideology and legitimation through van Dijk, the significance of the historical context and argumentation in Wodak, and the detailed instrumentation of language employed in discourse in Halliday.

4.1 Research Design

The qualitative research design is adopted in this study, and the methodological approach is a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study is planned as a document-based critical policy analysis based on which the Higher Education Commission (HEC) language policy documents in Pakistan are analyzed in several theoretical perspectives. The design is interpretive, emphasizing on how language policy can create social reality discursively as opposed to quantifying the results of the policy or its implementation efficacy. The study is conducted based on an embedded single-case study in which the case is the HEC language policy framework (2014-2023) and the embedded units of analysis are the respective policy documents that form the language policy framework.

4.2 Research Approach

The research works on a critical qualitative method that has its foundations in the critical theory and discourse analysis. This strategy is typified by:

1. Critical Orientation: The study aims to comprehend, as well as to criticize by exploring the ways through which power relations are enshrined and naturalize in the discourse of the policy.
2. Interpretive Focus: It focuses on meaning, assumptions, and ideologies in the text of policy as opposed to measures of linguistic properties.
3. Contextual Sensitivity: The analysis is located in the context of historical, political, and educational contexts of the country of Pakistan.
4. Theoretical Engagement: The study is clearly theoretically guided, with reference to achieving existing CDA paradigms.

This strategy could be conformed to Fairclough (1992) who characterizes it as a dialectical-relational analysis that looks at the correlations between discourse and social systems.

4.3 Data Collection

4.3.1 Data Sources

The main source of data used in this study is the official policy documents issued by the Higher Education Commission in Pakistan within 2014-2023. These records were chosen according to their relevance in language policy in higher education besides being official as a

guidance. The purposive sampling was based on the following criteria used in selecting the documents:

1. Formal Status: Documents need to be officially published by HEC as official policy or regulatory documents.
2. Relevance: The language problems in higher education should be directly discussed in documents.
3. Comprehensiveness: The chosen documents are to reflect the entire spectrum of language policy of HEC.
4. Accessibility: The documents have to be publicly accessible via the official channels.

4.3.3 Final Document Corpus

The paper discusses 7 important HEC documents:

1. Higher Education Language Policy in Pakistan (2014/2021).
2. Higher Education Vision 2025 (2020)
3. Quality Assurance Agency Manual Self-Assessment (2022).
4. Notification: M.Phil/Ph.D. Admissions (2023) Minimum Criteria.
5. Foreign Faculty Hiring and International Collaborations (2022) policy.
6. Internationalization and Quality Enhancement Chapter (2022-23) Annual Report.
7. Guidelines and Usage Policy of Digital Library Portal (2023).

4.3.4 Data Collection Procedures

The steps used in data collection were as follows:

1. Identification: Identification of documents was done by systematic search of the official site of HEC and the publication database.
2. Checking: The authenticity of every document was checked by cross-referentiation with official communications of HEC and university circulars.
3. Organization: Documents were arranged both chronologically and thematically to analyze them.
4. Preparation Documents were translated into analyzable formats without altering original structure and content.

4.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of data is based on an integrated CDA paradigm combining four theoretical models:

1. Three-dimensional Model: Fairclough Three-Dimensional Model: to analyze the text, discursive practice and social practice.
2. van Dijk Socio-Cognitive Approach: to study the structure of ideology and strategies of legitimation.
3. The Discourse-Historical Approach of Wodak: to contextual and argumentation analysis.
4. Systemic Functional Linguistics: a lingo-grammatical-lingo-meaning variety of linguistic analysis by Halliday.

Chapter 5: Analysis

5.1 Linguistic analysis: Grammar of policy mandatory

5.1.1 Construction of Modality and Authority

The policy requirements are of high deontic modal verbs systematically used in the documents produced by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). This tendency is fixed in the 2014 Language Policy without any doubt: all disciplines in undergraduate and graduate levels should be taught in English. The modal verb 'shall' is multifunctional; it is not only predictive but also performative and so it will actualize the mandate by saying it. This mode of choice makes the HEC an authoritative body with the prerogative to govern the language practice in the higher education machinery in Pakistan. This subordinate modality of high obligation is repeated all over the corpus. According to the 2023 Notification of

M.Phils./Ph.D.'s, all applicants are to provide a valid certificate of IELTS/TOEFL score (Clause 6.2b). Quality Assurance Manual (2022) requires: "Institutions will make sure that at least 70 percent of course contents are in English (Section 3.4). The modal options create, in terms of Hallidayan, a grammatical structure of compulsion, where adherence is a matter of necessity, not choice. The descriptive analysis shows that stronger modals (*shall, must) are used when the requirements are presented to universities and students, and weaker modals (should, may) are used when the support mechanisms are to be described or the challenges are to be mentioned. Examples include the same Language Policy which, among other provisions, writes: "Universities are also allowed to offer bridge courses to students who require language support. It is a hierarchy of power built through this differential modality whereby the demands of the HEC are treated as absolute and the institutional responses are flexible.

5.1.2 Transitivity Patterns, Agency Distribution

Transitivity analysis shows that there are systematic patterns of agency distribution in policy discourse. The HEC always makes it a point to portray itself as the Actor in material processes of regulation and enforcement: "The HEC will oversee implementation by their Quality Assurance Agency (Language Policy, Section 8.1). In contrast, universities are usually placed on either Goals or Recipients of HEC activity: "All universities will be surveyed on whether they are complying or not (Quality Assurance Manual, Section 2.3). Students are in the most passive grammatical role and are often used as Beneficiaries or Phenomena as opposed to being a director of action. According to the Vision 2025 document, students will have the required English proficiency, and it is formatted using the passive voice, which hides the agent of action and prefigures the student as an object of the intervention (p. 23). True to its role, this pattern of transitivity makes real a hierarchical social relationship that works by having the HEC taking action, institutions taking action, and students being taken action. In those instances, in which students are coded as actors, it is mainly in the mental processes that are pertaining to need or deficiency: "Students need to develop English proficiency, (Language Policy, Section 3.2), or in behavioural processes of compliance: Students shall comply with English-medium requirements, (Notification, Clause 4.1).

This grammatical patterned subjectivity forms a specific subjectivity of a student that is characterized by a lack and conformity in lieu of agency and choice. It is possible to nominalise and reify the same one. The nominalisation is extensively used in documents so that they could reduce the complex social processes to the technical objects. The English use-increase process turns into Anglicisation (Vision 2025, p.17) a noun, which does not specify who, why and what. The same applies to linguistic privilege which becomes the proficiency gap (Quality Assurance Manual, Section 3.5) thus re-conceptualizing a structural social problem into a technical one to be resolved. Most importantly, nominalisation makes contested political concepts true as natural facts. The term global standards are 47 times in the corpus as a noun phrase with an implied meaning of universal acceptance and validity, the assumptions of whose standards they are, how they were formed and in the interests of whom they serve. This naturalisation of ideological constructions by such nominalisations makes arrangements historically particular seem timeless necessities, as Fairclough puts it. A rather striking example is offered by the Digital Library Guidelines: "English proficiency is needed to access international knowledge resources (Section 2.1). In this case, the three nominalisations: access, knowledge resources and proficiency intersect to create an ostensibly logical chain where English is the key to the global knowledge, and alternative options of knowledge production and access are hidden.

5.1.3 Patterns of lexicon and semantic fields

Lexical analysis brings out patterns of systematization of word choice that creates specific versions of reality. A semantic area linked to globalization and quality prevails in the corpus, and such high-frequency words as:

- Quality cluster: excellence (63), standards (57), benchmarks (34), and enhancement (29).
- Globalisation cluster: international (89), global (76), competitive/competitiveness (52), world-class (27).
- Development cluster: progress (41), modernisation (33), capacity building (28), transformation (25).

These words are always in collocation with references to the English proficiency. As an example: English proficiency is a necessity in quality improvement and global competitiveness (Language Policy, Section 2.1). This pattern of lexical arrangement is, according to van Dijk, ideological coherence, and such that English is not only associated with communication, but with such treasured social commodities as quality and global status. On the contrary, words related to local languages are represented in different semantic spheres. The Urdu is mostly associated with identity and culture: “Urdu, as the official language, is our cultural heritage made national (Vision 2025, p. 15). There is practically no use of regional languages, which are only twice found in the whole corpus, both in reference to the preservation, and not to the educative. The discursive enforcement of this lexical marginalisation achieves the states of linguistic hierarchy of Phillipson where various languages are given varying values and domains.

5.2 Discursive Practice Analysis Production of Policy Truth

5.2.1 Policy Authority and intertextuality

The intertextual chains that are developed by the HEC documents form their authority by connecting the local policy to the global discourses. The Language Policy mentions explicitly the international best practices (Section 1.2), the global educational trends (Section 1.3), but they are never directly referenced. This phenomenon is in line with what Fairclough termed as presupposed intertextuality when authority of outside texts is called upon without clearly citing it, and hence makes it difficult to challenge since there is a lack of clarity of the authority invoked. Further, more narrow intertextual citation is in the Quality Assurance Manual, where it refers to the OECD education indicators (Section 2.1) and World Bank higher education assessments (Section 2.2). These sources have an authoritative role to play where HEC policy is based on what is being made out to be world standards. The cherry picking is remarkable: on the one hand, the international organisations that advocate the English language are cited, on the other hand, there are no counter-discourses: the UNESCO also advocates mother-tongue education. The documents also exhibit intratextuality in the HEC policy ecosystem alone. This document is then referred to in all other subsequent documents, which generates a self-referential order that strengthens internal coherence. As an example, such policy as the International Collaboration Policy says: “In accordance with the HEC Language Policy (2014), it is obligatory that one is proficient in English... (Section 3.1). This is what Wodak would call a discursive chain of authority in which one document supports another and the policy framework itself appears to be internally consistent and derived by logical reasoning.

5.2.2 Interdiscursivity: Educational and Economic Discourse Blending

The documents have advanced levels of interdiscursive blending, especially the educational discourse and the neoliberal economic discourse. A brightest example is the Vision 2025 document, which continues to be a smooth mixture of vocabulary across various fields: To improve the knowledge economy, higher education needs to create human capital that has global competencies to increase the competitive edge of Pakistan. English proficiency is part

of essential infrastructure to this value creation process. (Vision 2025, p. 7) This single sentence blends: • Learning speech (higher education, competencies) • Economics jargon (“human capital, competitive advantage, value creation”) Critical infrastructure Development discourse • Globalization talk (“global, knowledge economy) According to Fairclough, this interdiscursive mixture results in a strong ideological amalgamation, in which defying the dominance of the English language is also the same as defying economic progress, internationalization, and the quality of education at the same time.

5.2.3 Policy Legitimacy and Genre Conventions

The policies use characteristics of a particular genres that are related to policy discourse in order to increase their authority. These include:

1. Technical-bureaucratic style: The large amounts of numbered sections, subsections and reference to other sections that give the impression of rigor employed in a systematic manner.
2. Objective presentation: active voice is avoided and nominalisation to hide human agency gives rise to policies being discussed as emanating out of logical necessity as opposed to human action.
3. Future-oriented projection: The extensive use of future tense and modal forms of the verb to build up policy as progressive and looking into the future.
4. Quantification: in any place it can, the policies contain quantifiable numbers (e.g. 70 per cent English materials, IELTS 6.5 minimum) that give the impression of accuracy and quantifiability.

Other promotional genre characteristics are used in the Annual Report, such as the success stories, statistical accomplishments, and upcoming promises. This mixture genre enables the HEC to control (via policy documents), imagine (via vision documents) and glorify (via annual reports) its language policy, and as such, construct an overall system of discursiveness.

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 The Model of Linguistic Governance

As it is identified in the analysis, the language policy framework implemented by the HEC is not a guideline system but the multi-layered discursive regime that naturalises and institutionalises linguistic hierarchies. This regime is based on four intersecting discursive layers that can be attributed to each of the integrated theoretical frameworks applied in this research.

6.1.1 Grammatical Stratum of Authority (Halliday)

On the grammatical level, the governing policies in the form of policy documents regulate by systematic choices of languages, which are encoded messages that express authority and responsibility. The extensive application of high deontic modality (shall, must) creates policy directives and presents them as non-negotiable, and transitivity patterns make the HEC the primary Actor and universities the Recipients or Goals of regulation. This structural grammar achieves what Halliday describes as the interpersonal metafunction of language, the creation and maintenance of social hierarchies by making clausal decisions. In addition, nominalisations like anglicisation, the proficiency gap and global standards make dynamic socio-political processes subjected to reification into technical objects, obscuring the agency and historical contingency. Such grammatical mystification is congruent with what Fairclough calls the technologisation of discourse, whereby language is designed in such a way, to produce particular effects of governance and pack them off as processes of natural necessity (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

6.1.2 The Interdiscursive Layer of Rationalisation (Fairclough)

Policy discourse is a legitimisation process of English dominance that is executed by highly refined interdiscursive mixture by configuring educational, economic, developmental,

and quality assurance discourses into a quality ideological story. This mixture forms what Fairclough refers to as an influential ideological complex, in which to challenge English-medium instruction becomes discursively identical to to disagree with quality, competitiveness, and national development. The documents also invariably use what van Dijk describes as rationalisation legitimation, and position English not as a language but as human capital, quality marker, and development requirement. Such interdiscursive approach proves to be successful to blur the line between linguistic medium and the products of higher education, to make English proficiency both the instrument and the result of higher education reform (Fairclough, 1995).

6.1.3 The Consent Management Ideological Layer (van Dijk)

On an ideological level, policy discourse functions by what van Dijk refers to as the ideological square in a systematic effort to highlight the positive aspects of English-language instructions in comparison to minimizing negative impacts of the practice (van Dijk 1998). This is attained by a combination of a number of overlapping strategies: The authorization legitimation appeals to external sources of authority (international organisations, global benchmarks) and at the same time in the affirmation of the institutional mandate of HEC. Moral evaluation legitimation provides the view of English proficiency as an ethical necessity of the educator and the school. Mythopoetic legitimation is based on narrative form, tales of success of globalisation, and tales of failure, in order to naturalise policy options (van Dijk 1998). The ideological text serves to produce consent in the sense that it brings the policy requirements into compliance with what is proclaimed to be the self-evident global realities and ethical duties, thus excluding any other linguistic forms as impractical or backward.

6.1.4 Historical Contextual Layer of Contradiction Management (Wodak)

The discussion places the present day policy in the context of the post-colonial path of Pakistan and has to deal with the conflicts of such a course. Wodak, using his discourse-historical approach, reveals the extent of involvement of the documents in the strategic historical distancing, whereby the documents recognize the colonial past of the English people, but purport to have reused it in the national process (Wodak & Meyer 2001). The constitutional contradiction in which Article 251, calling Urdu the national language, and Article 3, promoting English, is managed is resolved by the domain separation rhetoric. This rhetoric allocates English the functional areas of academia and international interaction and Urdu the symbolic areas of national identity and cultural heritage thus is building a hierarchical complementary that maintains the nominal of Urdu but excludes the substantive role of the Urdu in higher education.

6.2 Linguistic Governmentality as Post-Colonial governmentality

The combined analysis shows that the HEC language policy system is an example of post-colonial governmentality, which is a governing system, not by direct means of coercion, but through the creation of specific subjectivities, rationalities, and truth claims through discursive means. This governmentality works in the following three mechanisms.

6.2.1 Academic Subjectivities Production

The discourse has a systematic way of building subject position to the different actors in the higher education sectors. The students are interpellated as inferior linguistic subjects that should be remedied and as future world professionals whose worth relies on the knowledge of English. The faculty are placed as policy implementers and role models of English ability. Institutions are turned into compliance units under a quality assurance regime whereby the worth is measured using the anglo-phone indicators. This subject formation concurs with what Foucault defines as the disciplinary power that is a hallmark of modern institutions, power that does not act to oppress an individual but create an individual, to form that individual into a distinct type of subject whose desires and self-conceptions are controlled by institutional aims.

6.2.2 Naturalization of Linguistic Capital

The discourse of policy itself successfully naturalises that which Bourdieu refers to as linguistic capital, which transforms historically contingent tastes in language into objective data concerning the quality of teaching and the merit of students. The discourse itself conceals the arbitrariness of this association by repeatedly associating English proficiency with such terms as excellence, standards and competitiveness, portraying it as a rational association between the two. The distributive implications of this naturalisation are enormous, with English-medium students joining the higher education sector with what the analysis has identified implicitly as already held cultural capital, and those with Urdu or regional language backgrounds being created as deficient in such capital and therefore requiring compensatory measures.

6.2.3 Epistemic Realignment of Higher Education

On the deepest level, the language policy takes control by what the decolonial scholars call epistemic reorientation, changing the grounds of what is taken as legitimate knowledge. The policy implicitly undermines epistemic traditions that are not by default articulated in English through requiring English as the primary medium of knowledge production and dissemination. This restructuring poses serious inquiries of the so-called epistemic justice in university life as described by Santos. Although the policy documents give rhetorical lip service to the multilingual nature of Pakistan, the rationality of their operations favours Anglophone systems of knowledge, which could reproduce what Mignolo describes as colonialist of knowledge, the continuation of old colonial epistemic structures in post-colonial institutional structures.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This paper has attempted a critical discourse analysis of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan language policy framework in which the discursive construction, legitimisation, and naturalisation of institutional power in the post-colonial higher education environment have been examined. The study expounds on the theoretical perspectives of Fairclough, van Dijk, Wodak, and Halliday, to explain the advanced discursive framework in which linguistic governance is based. It can be seen that the HEC language policy is not a neutral administrative policy but is more of a multi-layered discursive regime which:

1. Authority is grammatically encoded by systematic use of high deontic modality, strategic patterns of transitivity, and nominalisations of political decisions, reified in the form of technical necessity.
2. Interdiscursively builds arguments on the superiority of English by composing educational, economic, developmental and quality-assurance discourses with an ideological account that makes any alternative view as retrogressive or unrealistic.
3. Consent is ideologically mediated using the ideological square as put forward by van Dijk, using the ideological strategies of authorisation, rationalisation, moral evaluation, and mythopoetic legitimisation as means of naturalising linguistic hierarchies.
4. Historically is full of contradictions with its strategic play with the colonial linguistic legacy of Pakistan, domain isolation of English and Urdu, and framing of the present issues as transitional.

This discursive architecture, as the study shows, is a way to have a governmentality, as defined by Foucault, where the governance is not done through the direct coercion of subjects but through the creation of certain subjectivities, rationalities, and claims of truth. Students are interpellated as inadequate linguistic citizens in need of remediation, faculty take on the responsibility of accomplishing the implementation of the anglo-phone norms, and institutions are quality-assurance units who measure value in terms of metrics of English proficiency.

7.1 Practical Implications

This analysis can make a number of vital considerations to stakeholders in Pakistani higher education: To policymakers, the study emphasizes the need to have reflexive policy formulation that puts into clear perspectives the ideological aspects of language decisions and the effects that it has on equity, epistemic justice and identity making. To university leaders, it offers vital consciousness of the way HEC policy places institutions in specific governance relationships and offers prospects of strategic bargaining within the policy constraints. Faculty: It provides faculty with means to engage with language policy that is both critical and it can be able to build pedagogical methods that traverse policy mandates while respecting the values and needs of education. To the students, it sheds light on how policy talk creates certain subjectivities and provides space in which agency could be taken against and within such creations.

7.2 Limitations of the Study

Although the work provided a thorough examination of the discourse on HEC language policy, it must be admitted that there are a few limitations to this study:

1. Document-based analysis: The study is limited to the policy as paperwork and does not involve interviews with policy-makers or observations of the working process. In future studies, ethnographic approaches can be used to study the ways in which policy discourse is construed, usurped, and opposed both at the institutional and classroom levels.
2. Temporal scope: The research will deal primarily with 2014-2023. Although the historical context has been included, a larger historical discussion can establish discursive continuities and shifts throughout the entire period of post-independence in Pakistan.
3. Theoretical integration issues: Despite the richness of the multiplicity of theoretical approach to analysis, there are issues of maintaining an analytical focus of the approach throughout the differing theoretical traditions which in some cases have competing assumptions.
4. Researcher positionality: Because the study is a critical discourse analysis, written in English on the English language policy, then it is bound to have some epistemological and linguistic positionalities, which influence the interpretation.

7.3 Future Research Recommendations

The present study provides a number of openings to future studies: The comparative analysis:

1. Comparable critical discourse analyses might be undertaken of language policies in other post-colonial settings (India, Malaysia, South Africa) in order to establish general trends and contextual differences in the manner in which the linguistic governance functions.
2. Implementation ethnography: Studies might focus on how the HEC language policy is construed and practiced at the level of individual universities, especially how faculty and students work around the conflicts between policy requirements and pedagogical practices.
3. Longitudinal analysis: Future research would be able to evaluate how HEC language policy discourse changes over time, particularly in reaction to changing politics, economics, or social movements supporting the idea of linguistic rights.
4. Resistance studies: Studies may also be specifically aimed at understanding different forms of resistance to language policy, including institutional bargaining and subversion in the classroom up to popular work in support of linguistic pluralism.
5. Epistemic implications: Research might consider the impact of language policy on knowledge creation within Pakistani academia, especially the exclusion or maintenance of native knowledge practices.

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