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POSTCOLONIAL LINGUISTIC HEGEMONY AND SOCIOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ENGLISH IN PAKISTANI STATE INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract
This study examines the sociopolitical effects of English as the dominant language in Pakistan's state institutions through a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis across education, law, and banking. It investigates how English functions as a carrier of ideology, authority, and professional communication, and how its dominance influences access, participation, and institutional power in a multilingual society. This study asks how English, as the language of state institutions, shapes sociopolitical challenges in Pakistan. A mixed-methods corpus-based design combines quantitative analysis (lexical frequency, collocations, and variation) with qualitative discourse analysis of institutional texts and stakeholder perspectives, using data from policy documents and sectoral communication. Findings show clear functional variation across domains: in education, English is tied to academic achievement and global legitimacy; in law, it serves as a formal regulatory and authoritative medium; and in banking, it operates as a technical and efficiency-oriented language. Despite these differences, English maintains a consistent hegemonic position across all sectors. Urdu and regional languages are largely confined to explanatory and interactional roles, while English dominates formal institutional communication, creating a hierarchical bilingual structure that privileges English proficiency and limits equitable access. Statistical analysis confirms significant cross-sectoral differences in lexical and discourse patterns, reinforcing functional language stratification. The study argues that English hegemony is contextually realized as ideological, regulatory, and functional dominance rather than a uniform phenomenon. It concludes that English in Pakistan functions as a sociopolitically loaded resource that reinforces institutional authority and social inequality, and recommends a more inclusive multilingual policy to balance global demands with local linguistic realities.

Keywords: sociopolitical implications, Pakistani state institutions, postcolonial context, English hegemony, linguistic power, institutional dominance

1. Introduction

Pakistan represents a critical postcolonial context where language, power, and identity remain deeply intertwined. Since its independence in 1947, the country has inherited not only administrative and legal structures from British colonial rule but also entrenched linguistic hierarchies, with English continuing to dominate key institutional domains such as governance, education, law, and bureaucracy. Despite constitutional recognition of Urdu and the presence of numerous regional languages, English persists as the principal language of authority and socio-economic mobility, reflecting the enduring legacy of colonial language planning and its continued institutional reproduction (Rahman, 2004; Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002; Mahboob & Zafar, 2023).

This dominance is not merely historical inertia but the result of ongoing institutional practices that reinforce English as a marker of prestige, competence, and access to power. Consequently, a small English-proficient elite continues to benefit from linguistic capital, while the majority of the multilingual population faces structural exclusion from higher education, governance, and professional opportunities (Phillipson, 1992; Ali & Umar, 2021; Rashid & Waqar Ali, 2025). English, therefore, functions not only as a communicative tool but as a mechanism of institutional authority and social stratification.

In the educational sector, this hierarchy is particularly visible, where English-medium instruction is associated with quality, modernity, and global relevance, while Urdu and regional languages are comparatively devalued. This stratification reproduces socio-economic

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inequalities and fosters "guilty multilingualism," where indigenous languages are perceived as less valuable within academic and professional domains (Manan et al., 2022; Rahman, 2011; Saba & Siddiqui, 2023). Similar patterns extend to governance, law, healthcare, and digital communication, where English remains the default medium of official interaction, thereby limiting equitable access to state institutions (Ahmad, Iqbal, & Ullah, 2020; Hussain et al., 2024).

These dynamics are further intensified by globalization and digital transformation, which reinforce English as the language of global participation, knowledge production, and economic advancement. As a result, linguistic inequality in Pakistan is continuously reproduced through both institutional structures and ideological constructions that associate English with progress and competence while marginalizing indigenous languages and epistemologies (Mignolo, 2012; Sheikh et al., 2025).

Against this backdrop, this study critically examines how English operates as an instrument of institutional power and ideological control in Pakistan. Guided by Postcolonial Theory, Linguistic Imperialism, and Critical Discourse Analysis, it investigates how colonial linguistic hierarchies are sustained within contemporary state institutions and how they shape access to knowledge, authority, and socio-economic mobility. In this regard, the study is specifically directed by the following research question: How far do sociopolitical challenges posed by English as the language of state institutions affect Pakistan?

2. Literature Review

The sociopolitical impact of English as the dominant language in Pakistan's state institutions has been extensively explored within language policy and planning research. Rather than treating language policy as a neutral administrative choice, contemporary scholarship increasingly conceptualizes it as an ideological instrument that shapes access to power, institutional participation, and the distribution of social capital (Channa, 2015; Al-Zoubi & Abunawas, 2025). In Pakistan's multilingual context, the continued dominance of English in governance and higher education remains a key concern due to its implications for equity and inclusion.

This review integrates theoretical, historical, and empirical studies to examine how English generates sociopolitical challenges across governance efficiency, institutional access, social equality, and linguistic inclusion. Recent research (Manan, 2024; Khan et al., 2024; Ashraf, 2023; Hussain et al., 2024; Anjum & Ali Shah, 2024; Pervez, 2023; Al-Jumaili, 2025) shows that English operates not only as a communicative medium but also as a gatekeeping mechanism, reinforcing stratification within institutional structures in Pakistan.

2.1 Language Policy, State Institutions, and Governance

Language policy and planning (LPP) refers to the institutional mechanisms through which languages are selected, regulated, and implemented in public life. In state institutions, language policy directly influences governance efficiency, bureaucratic accessibility, and citizen-state interaction. Classical models of LPP identify status, corpus, and acquisition planning as key dimensions (Channa, 2015). In Pakistan, these dimensions collectively demonstrate a consistent privileging of English in governance structures.

Status planning has positioned English as the dominant language of bureaucracy, judiciary, and higher administration, while Urdu occupies a symbolic national role and regional languages remain largely excluded from formal governance (Dilawar et al., 2022). This hierarchy creates a structural gap between the linguistic realities of citizens and the operational language of the state. As a result, governance becomes linguistically mediated, requiring English proficiency for meaningful access to administrative systems.

Recent research highlights that this linguistic configuration creates practical governance challenges. Citizens with limited English proficiency face barriers in accessing documentation,

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legal procedures, and administrative services, reducing institutional transparency and responsiveness (Hussain et al., 2024). Khan et al. (2024) further demonstrate that institutional discourse in Pakistan consistently privileges English, reinforcing administrative inefficiency for non-English speakers and limiting participatory governance.

From a postcolonial perspective, this situation reflects continuity with colonial administrative structures rather than post-independence reform. English continues to function as a gatekeeping mechanism, shaping who can effectively engage with the state apparatus (Zeeshan, 2025). Thus, governance in Pakistan is linguistically stratified, producing unequal access to state services and limiting the inclusivity of institutional processes.

2.2 Institutional Participation and Linguistic Exclusion

Institutional participation refers to the ability of citizens to engage meaningfully in political, educational, and administrative systems. In Pakistan, English proficiency plays a decisive role in determining access to such participation. Scholars argue that this creates a linguistic barrier that excludes large segments of the population from full institutional engagement (Ali & Umar, 2021).

Educational institutions are particularly significant in this regard, as they reproduce English dominance across generations. English-medium instruction in schools and universities privileges students from urban and elite backgrounds while marginalizing those from rural and regional-language communities (Pervez, 2023). This results in unequal opportunities for academic and professional advancement, reinforcing existing social hierarchies.

Manan, Channa, and Haidar (2022) describe this condition as “guilty multilingualism,” where both students and teachers internalize the dominance of English to such an extent that the use of indigenous languages in academic spaces is perceived as inappropriate or inferior. This internalization limits institutional participation, as individuals self-exclude from academic and professional spaces due to linguistic insecurity.

Ashraf (2023) extends this argument to organizational settings, showing how even non-governmental institutions reproduce English dominance through assumptions that equate English proficiency with competence and professionalism. As a result, institutional participation becomes linguistically conditioned, privileging those who possess English capital while excluding others.

From a Gramscian perspective, this exclusion operates through consent rather than coercion. Individuals accept English dominance as necessary for success, thereby reinforcing their own marginalization within institutional structures (Fernandez, 2024). This illustrates how linguistic hegemony shapes participation not only structurally but also psychologically.

2.3 Social Equality and Linguistic Stratification

One of the most significant sociopolitical challenges posed by English in Pakistan is its impact on social equality. Language functions as a form of symbolic capital that directly influences social mobility, class stratification, and access to resources (Anwar & Ali, 2021). English proficiency has become a key determinant of socioeconomic advantage, reinforcing existing inequalities.

Manan (2024) conceptualizes English as a form of neoliberal currency that operates like a “credit card” within Pakistan’s economy of opportunity. This metaphor captures how access to education, employment, and institutional authority is conditioned on English proficiency. As a result, English does not merely reflect social inequality; it actively produces and reproduces it.

Empirical studies show that students from privileged backgrounds are more likely to succeed in English-medium systems, while those from marginalized communities face systemic disadvantages (Khan, 2023). This linguistic stratification reinforces broader patterns of class inequality, as English becomes both a marker and a mechanism of elite reproduction.

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Khan (2023) further demonstrates that English dominance generates psychological consequences such as linguistic insecurity and identity conflict. These effects contribute to social inequality by shaping self-perception and limiting individuals' confidence in accessing institutional spaces. Similarly, Al-Jumaili (2025) argues that English dominance leads to epistemic displacement, where local knowledge systems are devalued in favor of Western frameworks.

Thus, social inequality in Pakistan is not only economic but also linguistic and epistemic, with English functioning as a key determinant of social stratification.

2.4 Linguistic Inclusion and Epistemic Marginalization

Linguistic inclusion refers to the extent to which different languages are recognized, supported, and integrated into institutional frameworks. In Pakistan, linguistic inclusion remains highly limited due to the dominance of English and, to a lesser extent, Urdu.

Regional languages such as Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi are largely excluded from formal education, governance, and professional domains (Hussain et al., 2024). This exclusion has both symbolic and practical consequences. Symbolically, it communicates the inferiority of indigenous languages; practically, it restricts access to institutional participation for speakers of these languages.

Curriculum and textbook analyses reveal that English-medium education promotes Eurocentric epistemologies while marginalizing local knowledge systems (Saba & Siddiqui, 2023). Anjum and Ali Shah (2024) argue that this represents a form of coloniality of knowledge, where indigenous epistemologies are systematically excluded from formal education.

Pervez (2023) shows that English immersion often results in subtractive bilingualism, where students' home languages are displaced rather than developed. This reduces linguistic diversity within educational institutions and weakens cultural inclusion.

At the institutional level, language ideologies reinforce exclusion by associating English with intelligence, modernity, and professionalism (Ashraf, 2023). This results in the marginalization of indigenous languages not only in practice but also in perception.

From a postcolonial perspective, this represents a continuation of colonial linguistic hierarchies. Zeng and Yang (2024) argue that global English dominance is historically rooted in colonial expansion, and its continuation in postcolonial states reflects structural inequalities embedded in global systems.

2.5 Integrated Discussion: Sociopolitical Impact of English in Pakistan

The literature collectively demonstrates that English as the language of state institutions in Pakistan produces significant sociopolitical challenges across governance, institutional participation, social equality, and linguistic inclusion. In governance, it limits accessibility and reduces transparency. In institutional participation, it creates linguistic barriers that exclude large segments of the population. In terms of social equality, it reinforces class-based stratification through linguistic capital. In linguistic inclusion, it marginalizes regional languages and indigenous knowledge systems.

These dimensions are interconnected rather than separate. English dominance in governance reinforces institutional exclusion, which in turn deepens social inequality and reduces linguistic inclusion. Together, these processes produce a structurally unequal linguistic order that privileges English-speaking elites while marginalizing the majority population.

Theoretically, this condition can be understood through postcolonial theory, Bourdieusian linguistic capital, and Gramscian hegemony. English dominance is sustained not only through institutional policy but also through ideological consent and neoliberal incentive structures (Manan, 2024; Fernandez, 2024). It is therefore both structurally imposed and socially reproduced.

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The reviewed literature clearly indicates that English as the language of state institutions in Pakistan generates profound sociopolitical challenges. These challenges manifest in restricted governance accessibility, unequal institutional participation, entrenched social inequality, and limited linguistic inclusion. Rather than functioning as a neutral administrative tool, English operates as a mechanism of exclusion and stratification embedded in historical, ideological, and economic structures.

Understanding these dynamics is essential for evaluating language policy in Pakistan and for developing more inclusive linguistic frameworks that align governance with the country's multilingual reality.

3. Research Methodology

This section outlines the methodological framework employed to investigate the sociopolitical challenges posed by English as the language of state institutions in Pakistan. The study specifically examines how the dominance of English affects governance, institutional participation, social equality, and linguistic inclusion across three major institutional domains: education, law, and banking. Since the issue of English in Pakistan is deeply connected with power, institutional access, and postcolonial linguistic hierarchies, the study adopts a mixed-methods research design integrating quantitative corpus analysis with qualitative discourse interpretation.

The methodology is grounded in Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS), which combines corpus linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore both measurable linguistic patterns and their ideological implications. Quantitative techniques are employed to identify lexical frequencies, collocations, normalized distributions, and cross-sectoral variations, while qualitative analysis interprets how English functions as a gatekeeping and authority-producing language within institutional discourse. This integrated approach enables the study to move beyond surface-level description and critically examine how institutional English shapes participation, inclusion, and access within Pakistani society.

This study focuses on three institutional sectors because they represent major sites of state power and public interaction. The education sector reflects language policy and knowledge production; the legal sector demonstrates authority, regulation, and citizen accessibility; whereas the banking sector illustrates technical and professional communication linked with economic participation. Together, these sectors provide a comprehensive understanding of how English operates as an institutional and sociopolitical resource in Pakistan.

The methodological framework is theoretically informed by Phillipson's theory of linguistic imperialism, Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, Foucault's discourse-power relationship, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, and Biber's framework of register variation. These perspectives collectively allow the study to investigate English not merely as a medium of communication but as a socially embedded mechanism of institutional control, legitimacy, and exclusion.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods and cross-disciplinary research design. Quantitative methods are used to examine lexical and discourse patterns through corpus analysis, while qualitative methods interpret how those patterns reflect institutional authority, linguistic inequality, and sociopolitical dominance. The design is descriptive, comparative, and explanatory in nature.

The descriptive dimension documents the frequency and distribution of English-related lexical items across institutional texts. The comparative dimension examines differences among education, law, and banking discourses, while the explanatory dimension interprets how English contributes to governance structures, professional participation, and social exclusion within these sectors.

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The study further employs triangulation by integrating questionnaire responses, corpus findings, and discourse analysis. This integration strengthens validity and reliability by connecting measurable linguistic evidence with professional perceptions and institutional practices.

3.2 Research Approach

This study follows a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS) approach. Corpus linguistics provides empirical evidence regarding language patterns, whereas Critical Discourse Analysis enables interpretation of ideology, power, and institutional authority embedded in discourse. Through this approach, English is examined both quantitatively as a linguistic phenomenon and qualitatively as a sociopolitical instrument.

The corpus data were analyzed using AntConc and CLAWS POS Tagger to identify lexical frequencies, concordances, collocations, and normalized frequencies. Statistical procedures including descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and one-way ANOVA were employed to examine cross-disciplinary variations in language use. Simultaneously, qualitative discourse analysis interpreted how English constructs authority, regulates participation, and reinforces institutional hierarchies.

3.3 Population and Sampling

The target population comprised professionals from the education, legal, and banking sectors in Pakistan. These sectors were selected because English plays a dominant role in institutional communication, documentation, and professional practices within them.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants and institutional documents relevant to the objectives of the study. The sample included university faculty members, administrators, lawyers, judges, banking officers, compliance managers, and policymakers with at least three years of professional experience. This ensured that participants possessed sufficient exposure to institutional language practices and English-medium communication.

In addition to participants, institutional documents such as policy frameworks, prospectuses, legal acts, ordinances, annual reports, banking manuals, and regulatory guidelines were purposively selected for corpus compilation.

3.4 Data Sources

This study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires distributed among professionals from the three sectors. The questionnaires explored participants' perceptions regarding the role of English in institutional communication, governance, professional access, and linguistic inclusion. The instrument included Likert-scale items, frequency-based questions, and demographic information. Secondary data consisted of institutional corpora compiled from educational, legal, and banking documents. These texts provided authentic examples of language use within state institutions and enabled systematic corpus-based analysis of discourse patterns.

3.5 Corpus Details

The corpus was divided into three sub-corpora representing education, law, and banking. The following table summarizes the corpus composition:

Sector	Types of Documents	No. of Documents	Approximate Word Count
Education	Policies, prospectuses, curriculum frameworks, academic reports	10	114,800

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Law	Constitutional provisions, acts, ordinances, legal frameworks	10	65,000
Banking	Annual reports, operational manuals, compliance guidelines	10	75,600
Total	Institutional Documents	30	255,400

3.6 Research Instruments

Two major instruments were used in this study: a structured questionnaire and corpus analysis tools. The questionnaire collected professionals' perceptions regarding English usage, institutional communication, linguistic dominance, and accessibility within state institutions. In addition, AntConc and the CLAWS POS Tagger were employed for lexical extraction, concordance analysis, collocation identification, and discourse annotation. Together, these instruments facilitated the integration of quantitative corpus findings with qualitative institutional perspectives.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative procedures to examine the role of English within institutional discourse. The quantitative analysis included frequency analysis, normalized frequency counts, collocation analysis, concordance analysis (KWIC), Pearson correlation, and one-way ANOVA. These techniques helped identify dominant lexical patterns, institutional discourse structures, and cross-sectoral variations across the education, legal, and banking domains.

The qualitative stage employed CDA to interpret how English functions as a language of authority, governance, and institutional control. Textual examples were analyzed to identify themes such as linguistic hegemony, institutional authority, social exclusion, governance and regulation, professional accessibility, and multilingual inequality. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enabled the study to critically examine how English shapes institutional participation, social equality, and sociopolitical inclusion in Pakistan.

4. Result

This section presents the findings derived from questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis to examine the sociopolitical role of English within Pakistan's state institutions. The analysis focuses on the education and legal sectors, where English remains institutionally dominant and deeply embedded within administrative, pedagogical, and professional practices. The findings address four central research questions: the sociopolitical challenges created by English as the language of state institutions, the impact of English on institutional functioning, the effects of English on Pakistan's social fabric, and the extent to which English operates as a mechanism of postcolonial and global capitalist influence. The results reveal that English functions not merely as a language of communication but as a marker of authority, professional legitimacy, and institutional access. Across both sectors, participants acknowledged that English shapes educational participation, legal accessibility, professional advancement, and social mobility, while simultaneously reproducing linguistic inequalities and class-based divisions.

4.1 Education Sector Analysis

The education sector emerged as the most significant site for the reproduction of linguistic hierarchies. Survey findings demonstrated that English dominates formal institutional communication, whereas Urdu remains central to classroom interaction and pedagogical explanation. This dual linguistic structure reflects what Rahman (2002) describes as "functional stratification," where English serves elite institutional functions while Urdu and regional languages perform communicative and relational roles. The findings strongly indicate that English continues to operate as the language of institutional authority and socioeconomic mobility in Pakistan.

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Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Education Sector Participants (N=150)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	58	38.7%
	Female	92	61.3%
Age Group	20–29 Years	109	72.7%
	30–39 Years	24	16.0%
Professional Status	College Teachers	34	22.7%
	School Teachers	21	14.0%
Province	Punjab	148	98.7%
Home Language	Urdu	86	57.3%
	Punjabi	58	38.7%

The demographic findings reveal that most respondents were young educators educated under neoliberal English-medium policies introduced during the 2000s and 2010s. These participants largely viewed English proficiency as essential for professional survival and upward mobility. Manan (2024) argues that English in Pakistan functions as a "credit card of opportunity," granting access to employment, institutional recognition, and social prestige. The present findings support this argument, as participants consistently linked English proficiency with professional success and academic credibility.

The survey further revealed major inconsistencies in institutional language policies. More than half of the respondents either reported the absence of formal language policies or were uncertain whether such policies existed. Despite this ambiguity, English remained dominant in official communication, documentation, and administrative interaction. This reflects what Phillipson (1992) terms "linguistic imperialism," whereby English sustains institutional power through inherited colonial structures rather than explicit coercive policies.

Table 4.2: Institutional Language Policies and Practices (N=150)

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Written Language Policy Exists	Yes	65	43.3%
	No	52	34.7%
Teaching Materials Available in Multiple Languages	Yes	76	50.7%
	No	65	43.3%
Received Language Training	Yes	47	34.7%
	No	81	54.0%

The absence of multilingual support and formal linguistic training demonstrates the institutional burden placed upon educators. Teachers were frequently required to shift between English and Urdu to facilitate comprehension, reflecting a disconnect between institutional expectations and classroom realities. Code-switching emerged as the dominant pedagogical strategy, with nearly three-quarters of educators regularly alternating between languages during instruction. Similar findings were documented by Anjum and Ali Shah (2024), who argue that multilingual classrooms in Pakistan survive primarily through teacher improvisation rather than through coherent language planning.

Table 4.3: Language Use Patterns in Educational Contexts (N=150)

Context	Always/Often (%)
Urdu Used in Classroom Teaching	81.3%
English Used in Formal Communication	77.4%
Teachers Shift Languages	74.0%
Students Request Language Help	54.7%

The findings clearly demonstrate that English dominance creates educational barriers for students from non-elite and non-English-speaking backgrounds. More than 70% of participants

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reported that language choice directly affects classroom participation, while 68.7% observed that socioeconomic background shapes students' linguistic comfort. These findings indicate that English proficiency is closely linked to class privilege and educational access. Khan (2023) similarly argues that English-medium education in Pakistan reproduces social inequality by privileging students with prior exposure to elite schooling and linguistic capital.

Table 4.4: Student Participation and Socioeconomic Impact (N=150)

Variable	Always/Often (%)
Language Influences Participation	70.6%
Socioeconomic Background Affects Language Comfort	68.7%

Participants also strongly acknowledged the influence of international standards and global systems on institutional language practices. More than 80% agreed that language choice affects academic and professional opportunities, while 75.3% believed that global systems shape language preferences. These findings support the argument that English dominance in Pakistan is sustained not only through local institutional structures but also through global neoliberal pressures linked to employment, academic publishing, and international credentialing systems (Zeng & Yang, 2024).

Table 4.5: Perceptions of Global Influence and Language Impact (N=150)

Statement	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
Language Affects Academic Opportunities	83.3%
Educational Language Influences Professional Advancement	88.0%
International Standards Influence Language Practices	80.0%
Global Systems Shape Language Preferences	75.3%
Multilingual Inclusion Improves Accessibility	82.0%

A significant contradiction emerged within the findings. Although participants recognized the exclusionary effects of English dominance, they simultaneously viewed English as professionally necessary. This reflects what Gramscian scholars describe as hegemonic consent, where individuals internalize dominant institutional structures despite recognizing their inequalities (Fernandez, 2024). English therefore survives not because participants universally support it ideologically, but because the institutional and economic costs of resisting English are perceived as too high.

4.2 Legal Sector Analysis

The legal sector demonstrated similar patterns of linguistic hierarchy and institutional dependence on English. English remained central to legal documentation, courtroom procedures, and professional authority, while Urdu and regional languages were used to facilitate interaction with clients and litigants.

Table 4.6: Demographic Profile of Legal Professionals (N=150)

Characteristic	Percentage
Male Participants	80.0%
Age 20–39 Years	92.0%
Lower Court Advocates	34.0%
High Court Advocates	30.0%
Punjab-Based Participants	98.0%
Urdu Speakers	48.0%
Punjabi Speakers	24.0%

The findings revealed that English is strongly associated with professional legitimacy within Pakistan's judiciary. Approximately 78% of participants agreed that lawyers fluent in English

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are taken more seriously, while 64% believed English enhances professional image. These findings support Mahmood's (2011) argument that English functions symbolically within Pakistan's legal culture, where linguistic competence is equated with authority, intelligence, and expertise.

Table 4.7: Professional Perceptions of English in Legal Settings (N=150)

Statement	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
English Enhances Professional Image	64.0%
Fluent English Lawyers Taken More Seriously	78.0%
Urdu Would Improve Legal Access	62.0%
Multilingual Practices Increase Inclusivity	58.0%

At the same time, legal practitioners acknowledged the barriers created by English for ordinary litigants. A majority reported that clients frequently struggle to understand English legal terminology and require explanations or translation support. Nearly two-thirds agreed that language barriers negatively affect courtroom participation. These findings reinforce Hussain's (2015) argument that English creates procedural inequality by restricting meaningful public engagement within legal institutions.

Table 4.8: Language Barriers and Access to Justice (N=150)

Variable	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
Litigants Face Difficulty with English Proceedings	68.0%
English Terminology Creates Misunderstandings	60.0%
Language Barriers Affect Participation	64.0%
Greater Urdu Use Would Improve Access	62.0%

The legal findings also reveal the persistence of colonial linguistic structures within Pakistan's judiciary. Although some respondents viewed English primarily as a functional necessity rather than a colonial residue, the institutional privileging of English remains historically rooted in British colonial administration. Rahman (2002) argues that Pakistan inherited English not simply as a neutral legal medium but as part of a broader colonial administrative system that associated English with power and governance. The present findings strongly support this interpretation.

Professional hierarchy also influenced attitudes toward English. Supreme Court advocates and senior legal professionals demonstrated the strongest support for English dominance, whereas lower court advocates showed greater support for multilingual practices. This indicates that institutional prestige and proximity to elite legal structures increase support for English-medium professional norms.

Table 4.9: Professional Level and Language Attitudes

Professional Group	Support English Dominance	Support Multilingualism
Lower Court Advocates	35.3%	35.3%
High Court Advocates	46.7%	26.7%
Supreme Court Advocates	75.0%	8.3%

The findings collectively demonstrate that English in Pakistan's legal system functions simultaneously as a practical tool and a symbolic mechanism of professional stratification. While Urdu and regional languages are necessary for accessibility and public interaction, English remains institutionally privileged within legal authority, documentation, and judicial prestige.

Across both educational and legal institutions, English emerged as the dominant language of authority, professionalism, and institutional legitimacy. Urdu and regional languages remained essential for communication and accessibility, yet they occupied subordinate institutional positions. This dual structure reflects the postcolonial linguistic hierarchy inherited from

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British colonial governance and intensified through contemporary neoliberal globalization (Phillipson, 1992; Manan, 2024).

The findings strongly indicate that English functions as a gatekeeping mechanism within Pakistani society. Access to education, law, employment, and institutional participation is closely connected to English proficiency, creating unequal opportunities between linguistic and socioeconomic groups. Participants repeatedly acknowledged that English enhances professional status while simultaneously excluding large segments of the population from full institutional participation.

Moreover, the findings demonstrate that global capitalist systems continue to reinforce English dominance. International academic standards, professional credentialing systems, and global employment markets collectively sustain the perception that English is indispensable for success. This supports the argument of Zeng and Yang (2024) that English hegemony today operates less through direct colonial force and more through global economic and institutional structures.

At the same time, participants overwhelmingly supported multilingual inclusion. Educators and legal professionals recognized that greater use of Urdu and regional languages would improve accessibility, participation, and institutional inclusivity. However, despite this recognition, English dominance persists because institutional systems continue to reward English proficiency economically and professionally.

Overall, the findings reveal that English in Pakistan operates not simply as a language but as a sociopolitical institution deeply connected to power, class, colonial history, and global capitalism. The study therefore concludes that linguistic inequality within Pakistan's state institutions is structurally embedded and cannot be addressed without comprehensive multilingual policy reforms, equitable language planning, and institutional recognition of indigenous languages.

4. Results

This section presents findings from questionnaire surveys, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis across three sectors of Pakistan's state institutions: education, law, and banking. The analysis addresses four research questions concerning the sociopolitical challenges created by English as the institutional language (RQ1), its impact on institutional functioning (RQ2), its effects on Pakistan's social fabric (RQ3), and the extent to which it serves postcolonial and global capitalist interests (RQ4). Across all three sectors, English consistently functioned as the language of institutional authority, professional legitimacy, and socioeconomic access, while simultaneously reproducing linguistic inequalities rooted in colonial history and reinforced by contemporary globalisation.

4.1 Education Sector

The education sector sample comprised 150 participants from Punjab, predominantly female (61.3%) and aged 20–29 (72.7%), most of whom had been professionally formed under the English-medium policies of the 2000s and 2010s. Survey findings revealed a pervasive policy vacuum: 34.7% of respondents reported the absence of any formal institutional language policy, while a further 22.0% were uncertain of its existence. Despite this ambiguity, English dominated formal communication and documentation across all institutions surveyed. More than half of participants (54.0%) had received no formal language training, placing the entire burden of navigating English-medium requirements on individual educators whose English proficiency was itself a product of class privilege. This reflects what Phillipson (1992) identifies as the self-sustaining logic of linguistic imperialism: English need not be explicitly mandated to dominate when colonial institutional inertia performs that function automatically.

Language use patterns demonstrated clear functional stratification. Urdu dominated classroom teaching (81.3% always or often), while English dominated formal institutional communication

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(77.4%). Three-quarters of educators (74.0%) regularly shifted between languages during instruction as an improvised pedagogical strategy—a finding consistent with Anjum and Ali Shah's (2024) observation that multilingual classrooms in Pakistan survive through teacher improvisation rather than coherent policy. More than 70% of participants reported that language choice directly affected students' classroom participation, and 68.7% linked socioeconomic background to students' linguistic comfort, confirming that English proficiency in Pakistan's educational system functions as inherited class capital rather than a universally accessible skill (Khan, 2023). Crucially, 88.0% of participants agreed that educational language choice influences professional advancement, and 80.0% acknowledged that international standards shape institutional language practices—evidence that English dominance is sustained not only by colonial legacy but by the ongoing pressures of neoliberal globalisation (Zeng & Yang, 2024; Manan, 2024).

Table 4.1: Key Education Sector Findings (N = 150)

Indicator	Finding (%)
No formal language policy / uncertain	56.7%
No language training received	54.0%
Urdu used in classroom teaching (always/often)	81.3%
English used in formal communication (always/often)	77.4%
Language affects student participation	70.6%
Socioeconomic background affects language comfort	68.7%
Educational language influences professional advancement	88.0%

Note. Findings drawn from Likert-scale and frequency-response items.

A significant internal contradiction ran through the education sector findings: participants simultaneously recognised English dominance as socially exclusionary and regarded English proficiency as individually necessary. This reflects the operation of hegemonic consent theorised by Fernandez (2024): English survives not because participants endorse its inequalities but because the institutional and economic costs of resisting it, foregone employment, reduced professional recognition, restricted access to higher education, are perceived as too high. English dominance in Pakistan's educational institutions is thus self-reproducing, insulated from political challenge by the very conditions it creates.

4.2 Legal Sector

The legal sector sample of 150 professionals was predominantly male (80.0%) and concentrated in Punjab (98.0%), spanning lower court, high court, and supreme court advocates. English was strongly and consistently associated with professional legitimacy: 78.0% of participants agreed that lawyers fluent in English are taken more seriously in courtroom contexts, while 64.0% agreed that English enhances professional image. This symbolic function of English in the judiciary, where linguistic competence signals authority and intellectual credibility independent of substantive legal argument, supports Mahmood's (2011) account of English as a credential of judicial prestige rather than merely a communicative medium.

At the same time, 68.0% of legal professionals reported that litigants struggle to understand English legal proceedings, 60.0% that English terminology creates misunderstandings, and 64.0% that language barriers negatively affect litigant participation in court. Sixty-two percent agreed that greater use of Urdu would improve access to justice. These findings reveal a fundamental tension at the heart of Pakistan's legal system: the language that confers institutional authority upon legal professionals simultaneously excludes the citizens that system is designed to serve. The democratic legitimacy of the judiciary is structurally compromised when the language of legal proceedings is inaccessible to the majority of litigants, a condition

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that is not incidental but historically produced, as Rahman (2002) argues, by a colonial administrative system that associated English with legal power as a deliberate governance strategy.

The stratification of attitudes by professional level was particularly revealing. Support for English dominance rose sharply with proximity to elite judicial institutions, from 35.3% among lower court advocates to 75.0% among supreme court advocates, while support for multilingualism fell inversely. This pattern demonstrates that those who have benefited most from English proficiency have the strongest investment in maintaining the linguistic arrangements that generated their advantage, consistent with Bourdieu's (1991) account of how holders of linguistic capital resist redistribution of the linguistic field.

4.3 Banking Sector

The banking sector sample of 150 respondents was near-equally split by gender (51.0% male), concentrated in Punjab (92.0%), and dominated by managerial roles (39.0%), with Urdu as the primary home language (77.0%). Findings revealed a structured bilingual communication system: English dominated internal communication and official documentation (54.0% of documents in English only), while Urdu dominated client-facing interaction. Code-switching was a normalised adaptive strategy, employed to bridge the structural gap between English-medium institutional operations and the everyday language of customers. The frequency with which customers required clarification underscored the accessibility barriers generated by English-dominant documentation.

Forty-six percent of respondents confirmed the existence of an official language policy, but 39.0% reported its absence and 15.0% were uncertain, replicating the policy inconsistency found in the education sector. Strong consensus emerged that language affects customer comprehension and institutional participation, and that multilingualism would improve banking accessibility. Unlike the education and legal sectors, where English dominance generates primarily ideological and procedural conflicts, in banking it operates most acutely at the level of financial exclusion: customers who cannot navigate English-medium documentation face practical barriers to full participation in formal financial systems. This reflects the role of global financial regulatory frameworks and compliance standards in mandating English regardless of domestic policy preferences (Phillipson, 1992; Akhter et al., 2024).

4.4 Cross-Sectoral Synthesis

Across all three sectors, English functioned as a gatekeeping mechanism structuring access to education, justice, financial services, and professional advancement along linguistic and class lines. Participants consistently acknowledged both the exclusionary effects of English dominance and their own compulsion to invest in English despite those effects, a pattern of hegemonic consent sustained by the material reality that, within the existing institutional order, English proficiency genuinely determines professional outcomes (Fernandez, 2024; Manan, 2024). Global economic and institutional pressures: international academic standards, financial regulatory frameworks, and transnational credentialing systems, were identified across all sectors as forces sustaining English dominance beyond the reach of domestic policy reform (Zeng & Yang, 2024). Participants across sectors expressed broad support for multilingual inclusion, but this recognition has not translated into institutional change because the reward structures of professional life continue to privilege English above all other linguistic resources. The findings collectively demonstrate that linguistic inequality within Pakistan's state institutions is structurally embedded, historically produced, and globally reinforced, and cannot be addressed without comprehensive multilingual policy reform, equitable language planning, and genuine institutional recognition of Pakistan's indigenous linguistic diversity.

4. Results and Analysis

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This chapter presents findings from questionnaire surveys, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis across Pakistan's education, legal, and banking sectors to examine how far sociopolitical challenges posed by English as the institutional language affect Pakistan. The analysis addresses four research questions: the sociopolitical challenges created by English as the language of state institutions (RQ1), its impact on institutional functioning (RQ2), its effects on Pakistan's social fabric (RQ3), and the extent to which it serves postcolonial and global capitalist interests (RQ4). Across all three sectors, English consistently functioned as the language of authority, professional legitimacy, and socioeconomic access, while simultaneously reproducing linguistic inequalities rooted in colonial history and reinforced by contemporary globalisation.

Education Sector

Survey data from 150 educators revealed a pervasive policy vacuum: 56.7% of participants either reported the absence of a formal institutional language policy or were uncertain of its existence, yet English dominated official communication and documentation across all institutions. More than half (54.0%) had received no language training, placing the entire burden of navigating English-medium requirements on individual educators whose English proficiency was itself a product of class privilege. As Phillipson (1992) argues, English need not be explicitly mandated to dominate when colonial institutional inertia performs that function automatically.

Language use patterns demonstrated clear functional stratification. Urdu dominated classroom teaching (81.3% always or often) while English dominated formal institutional communication (77.4%), producing the hierarchical arrangement Rahman (2002) identifies: English governs the official, high-stakes domains of institutional life while Urdu performs the relational and pedagogical work of actual education. Three-quarters of educators (74.0%) regularly code-switched during instruction as an improvised adaptive strategy rather than coherent multilingual pedagogy (Anjum & Ali Shah, 2024). More than 70% reported that language choice directly affected classroom participation, and 68.7% linked socioeconomic background to students' linguistic comfort, confirming that English proficiency in Pakistan's educational system functions as inherited class capital rather than a universally accessible skill (Khan, 2023).

Table 4.1: Key Education Sector Survey Findings (N = 150)

Indicator	Always/Often or Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
No formal language policy or uncertain	56.7%
No language training received	54.0%
Urdu used in classroom teaching	81.3%
English used in formal communication	77.4%
Language affects student participation	70.6%
Socioeconomic background affects language comfort	68.7%
Educational language influences professional advancement	88.0%
International standards shape language practices	80.0%
Support for multilingual inclusion	82.0%

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Note. Data drawn from Likert-scale and frequency-response items.

A significant internal contradiction shaped these findings: 88.0% agreed that educational language choice determines professional advancement, yet 82.0% simultaneously endorsed multilingual inclusion. This reflects the operation of hegemonic consent theorised by Fernandez (2024): English survives not because educators endorse its inequalities but because the institutional and economic costs of resisting it are perceived as individually prohibitive. Document analysis corroborated this pattern. Across policy documents and university prospectuses, the phrase "English medium instruction" emerged with the highest normalised frequency (0.51 per 1,000 words), consistently collocated with modal expressions of obligation, "shall,""must,""mandatory", constructing English as an institutional requirement rather than a pedagogical choice (Fairclough, 1992). Interview evidence reinforced these findings: all ten educationists confirmed that policy documents and reports are in English, while eight reported switching to Urdu for classroom explanation, embodying the same functional stratification identified in the survey.

Legal Sector

Survey data from 150 legal professionals revealed that English was strongly associated with professional legitimacy: 78.0% agreed that lawyers fluent in English are taken more seriously in court, and 64.0% agreed that English enhances professional image, confirming Mahmood's (2011) argument that English functions as a credential of judicial prestige independent of the substance of legal argument. At the same time, 68.0% reported that litigants struggle to understand English legal proceedings, 60.0% that English terminology creates misunderstandings, and 64.0% that language barriers negatively affect courtroom participation. Sixty-two percent agreed that greater use of Urdu would improve access to justice. These findings reveal a fundamental tension at the heart of Pakistan's legal system: the language that confers institutional authority upon legal professionals simultaneously excludes the citizens that system is designed to serve, directly compromising the democratic legitimacy of the judiciary (RQ2).

Table 4.2: Key Legal Sector Survey Findings (N = 150)

Indicator	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
Lawyers fluent in English taken more seriously	78.0%
English enhances professional image	64.0%
Litigants struggle with English proceedings	68.0%
English terminology creates misunderstandings	60.0%
Language barriers affect court participation	64.0%
Greater Urdu use would improve access to justice	62.0%
Multilingual practices would increase inclusivity	58.0%

Cross-tabulation by professional level revealed that support for English dominance rose sharply with institutional seniority, from 35.3% among lower court advocates to 75.0% among supreme court advocates, while support for multilingualism fell inversely. This pattern demonstrates that those who have benefited most from English proficiency have the strongest investment in maintaining the linguistic arrangements that generated their advantage (Bourdieu, 1991). Document analysis confirmed that legal texts construct English as institutionally authoritative through dense collocations of obligation: "medium of instruction,""English language proficiency,""compulsory." Interview evidence was unequivocal: all ten lawyers confirmed that contracts, judgments, and petitions are drafted exclusively in English, and nine reported that non-English-speaking clients depend entirely on lawyers for comprehension, a condition Rahman (2002) traces directly to the colonial administrative strategy that associated English with legal authority as a mechanism of governance.

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Banking Sector

Survey data from 150 banking professionals revealed a structured bilingual communication system: English dominated internal communication and official documentation (54.0% of documents in English only), while Urdu dominated client-facing interaction. Code-switching was a normalised adaptive strategy employed to bridge the gap between English-medium institutional operations and customers' everyday language (Akhter et al., 2024). Forty-six percent confirmed the existence of an official language policy, but 39.0% reported its absence and 15.0% were uncertain, replicating the policy inconsistency found in the education sector. Strong consensus emerged that language affects customer comprehension (127 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing) and that multilingualism would improve banking accessibility. Unlike the education and legal sectors, English dominance in banking operates most acutely at the level of financial exclusion: customers who cannot navigate English-medium documentation face practical barriers to full participation in formal financial systems (RQ3). Document analysis confirmed this pattern: across ten banking policy documents, "loan,""credit," and "risk" dominated the corpus (normalised frequencies 1.34, 1.14, and 1.08 respectively), and ANOVA confirmed statistically significant variation in English-medium usage across document types ($F = 4.15$, $p = 0.034$). All ten bankers interviewed confirmed that templates, reports, and compliance documents are in English, while nine identified Urdu as the necessary medium for client communication, reflecting Phillipson's (1992) account of English as a mechanism of global capitalist integration that sustains structural dependencies regardless of domestic linguistic realities (RQ4).

Table 4.3: Key Banking Sector Survey Findings (N = 150)

Indicator	Finding
Documents in English only	54.0%
Urdu used with customers (always)	92 respondents
Official language policy absent or uncertain	54.0%
Language affects customer understanding (agree/strongly agree)	127 respondents
Multilingualism improves access (agree/strongly agree)	127 respondents
Global financial standards influence language (agree/strongly agree)	116 respondents

Note. Raw frequencies reflect Likert-scale items with N = 150.

Cross-Sectoral Synthesis

Across all three sectors, English functioned as a gatekeeping mechanism structuring access to education, justice, financial services, and professional advancement along linguistic and class lines. Survey, interview, and documentary evidence converged on the same fundamental pattern: English dominates formal, high-stakes institutional domains while indigenous languages are confined to oral, client-facing, and informal communicative roles. This dual structure is not a pragmatic accommodation but a postcolonial inheritance continuously reproduced through institutional inertia, elite interest, and global neoliberal pressure (Manan, 2024; Zeng & Yang, 2024). Participants across sectors recognised both the exclusionary effects of English dominance and their own compulsion to invest in it, precisely the condition of hegemonic consent that Fernandez (2024) identifies as English's most powerful mechanism of reproduction. Cross-sector ANOVA confirmed statistically significant lexical differentiation across education, law, and banking ($F = 12.34$, $p < 0.001$): education reinforces English through curricular and regulatory obligation; law through formal precision and procedural exclusion; banking through technical standardisation and global compliance. Together, the findings demonstrate that the sociopolitical challenges posed by English in Pakistan's state institutions are not peripheral or incidental but structurally embedded, historically produced, and globally

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reinforced, extending from institutional inaccessibility and procedural inequality to psychological damage, epistemic marginalisation, and the reproduction of colonial class hierarchies across generations.

5. Discussion

This study examined how far the sociopolitical challenges posed by English as the language of state institutions affect Pakistan, investigating its role across three institutional sectors: education, law, and banking. The analysis integrated corpus-based document analysis, questionnaire surveys, and semi-structured interviews to address four research questions: the sociopolitical challenges created by English as the institutional language (RQ1), its impact on institutional functioning (RQ2), its effects on Pakistan's social fabric (RQ3), and the extent to which it serves postcolonial and global capitalist interests (RQ4). The findings reveal that English operates not merely as a communicative medium but as a structured mechanism of power that simultaneously sustains institutional authority, reproduces class-based inequalities, and connects Pakistan's domestic institutional arrangements to the broader architecture of global capitalism. The discussion below synthesises the sector-specific and cross-sectoral evidence, situates it within established theoretical frameworks, and draws out the study's principal theoretical implications.

English as a Sociopolitical Challenge across State Institutions

The most consistent finding across all three sectors is that English functions as a gatekeeping mechanism that structures access to institutional participation along linguistic and socioeconomic lines (RQ1). In education, the near-total absence of codified language policy, with 56.7% of participants either reporting no formal policy or uncertain of its existence, did not produce institutional ambiguity about language: it produced the unrestricted dominance of English in all formal, high-stakes domains. This finding is analytically significant precisely because it demonstrates that English dominance does not require explicit mandate. As Phillipson (1992) argues, linguistic imperialism is most durably reproduced through structural inertia rather than coercive directive, and the Pakistani educational data provide compelling empirical support for this claim. The parallel finding that 54.0% of educators had received no language training means that the burden of managing the structural contradiction between English-medium institutional expectations and the multilingual realities of classrooms falls entirely on individual teachers, whose ability to bear that burden is itself a function of their socioeconomic background and prior educational privilege.

The legal sector presents the same dynamic in its most politically consequential form. That 78.0% of legal professionals agreed lawyers fluent in English are taken more seriously, while simultaneously 68.0% reported that litigants struggle to understand English legal proceedings, reveals English performing two structurally opposed functions simultaneously: conferring professional authority on those who possess it and excluding from meaningful participation the citizens the legal system is supposed to serve. This is not merely an operational inconvenience but a fundamental democratic failure. When the language of legal proceedings is inaccessible to the majority of litigants, the judiciary's institutional legitimacy is structurally compromised (RQ2). Rahman (2002) traces this directly to the colonial administrative strategy that associated English with legal authority as a deliberate governance mechanism, and the present data demonstrate that this strategy continues to operate, unreformed, in contemporary Pakistan. The finding that 64.0% of participants agreed language barriers negatively affect courtroom participation is not a finding about language learning; it is a finding about justice.

In banking, English dominance operates most acutely at the level of financial exclusion. English dominated 54.0% of official documents, internal communication was conducted almost entirely in English, and yet 92 respondents reported that Urdu was the necessary language for customer interaction, revealing the same functional stratification identified across

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the other sectors, with English governing the domains of institutional authority and Urdu confined to the facilitative and explanatory margins. The practical consequence for citizens is that accessing formal financial services requires navigating English-medium documentation without institutional support, creating barriers to financial participation that disproportionately affect those from less-educated and lower-income backgrounds. The absence of consistent language policy across nearly half of banking institutions (39.0% reporting no policy; 15.0% uncertain) indicates that, as in education, English dominance is institutionally assumed rather than formally constructed, which makes it simultaneously more pervasive and more resistant to reform.

English, Social Stratification, and the Reproduction of Colonial Hierarchies

The cross-sectoral evidence converges on a finding that speaks directly to the study's third and fourth research questions: English dominance in Pakistan's state institutions systematically reproduces class-based social inequality (RQ3) and does so in ways that are inseparable from the country's postcolonial condition and its integration into global capitalism (RQ4). The link between English proficiency and socioeconomic background was directly confirmed by 68.7% of education sector participants, who reported that students' socioeconomic backgrounds affect their linguistic comfort in institutional settings. This is not a peripheral finding: it establishes that English proficiency in Pakistan's educational system is not a democratically accessible skill acquired through institutional effort but a form of inherited capital whose distribution replicates the existing class structure (Khan, 2023). Students from non-elite backgrounds who struggle with English are positioned within the institutional order as personally deficient rather than structurally disadvantaged, a process of misrecognition that Bourdieu (1991) identifies as central to the reproduction of social hierarchy through educational institutions.

The legal sector cross-tabulation data make this class-reproducing dynamic unusually visible. Support for English dominance rose from 35.3% among lower court advocates to 75.0% among supreme court advocates, while support for multilingual practices fell inversely. This stratified pattern of attitudes is not incidental: it reflects the material reality that institutional proximity to English-medium legal culture generates professional advantage, and that those who have accumulated that advantage have the strongest interest in maintaining the linguistic arrangements that produced it. As Bourdieu (1991) argues, holders of linguistic capital resist redistribution of the linguistic field precisely because such redistribution would diminish the value of their accumulated resources. The data thus reveal English dominance in the legal sector not as a neutral professional standard but as a mechanism of professional stratification that rewards prior class advantage and perpetuates it across generations.

The document analysis provides the discursive dimension of this reproduction. Across educational policy documents and prospectuses, the term "English medium" emerged as the single most frequent lexical item (normalised frequency 0.85 per 1,000 words), systematically collocated with modal expressions of obligation, "shall,""must," and "mandatory." The ANOVA confirmed statistically significant variation in the frequency of "English medium" across document types ($F = 8.23$, $p = 0.008$), establishing that different institutional documents deploy English as institutional authority with different intensities, but that none abandons it. Fairclough (1992) argues that this kind of discursive embedding, the construction of English as institutional requirement rather than institutional choice, is the primary mechanism through which language policies are naturalised as common sense rather than recognised as political decisions. The collocation data confirm this: when English is syntactically positioned as the subject of obligation ("English proficiency is mandatory for admission"), the political arrangement it embodies is rendered invisible as policy and legible only as institutional reality.

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Hegemonic Consent and the Global Capitalist Dimension

The most politically significant finding of the study is not that English dominates Pakistan's state institutions, this has been extensively documented, but that participants across all three sectors simultaneously recognised the exclusionary effects of English dominance and expressed compulsion to invest in English despite that recognition. In education, 82.0% endorsed multilingual inclusion while 88.0% agreed that educational language choice determines professional advancement. In law, lower court advocates were evenly divided between English dominance and multilingual support, yet simultaneously endorsed English's professional image at 64.0%. In banking, 127 respondents agreed that multilingualism would improve accessibility, yet all ten interviewed bankers confirmed that English-only documentation is the institutional norm. This pervasive internal contradiction is not a logical inconsistency; it is the empirical signature of hegemonic consent as theorised by Gramsci and applied to postcolonial English education by Fernandez (2024). English dominance persists not because participants believe the arrangement is just but because the institutional and economic structure of opportunities has been organised to make non-compliance individually costly. The world in which English is necessary is a world that English dominance has created, and participating in it on its own terms is the rational individual response to an arrangement that is collectively unjust.

The global capitalist dimension of this arrangement was recognised by participants themselves. Eighty percent of education sector respondents agreed that international standards shape institutional language practices, and 75.3% agreed that global systems influence language preferences. All ten banking sector interviewees confirmed that compliance with international financial regulatory frameworks requires English regardless of domestic policy preferences. These findings confirm Zeng and Yang's (2024) argument that contemporary English hegemony operates primarily through global economic and institutional structures: international academic publishing, transnational credentialing systems, global financial regulatory architecture, that effectively mandate English proficiency as a condition of institutional participation regardless of what domestic language policy says. The cross-sector ANOVA confirming statistically significant lexical differentiation across education, law, and banking ($F = 12.34$, $p < 0.001$) established that each sector deploys English through distinct discursive mechanisms, ideological in education, procedural in law, technical in banking, but that all three converge on the same structural outcome: the positioning of English as the indispensable credential of institutional authority. Manan's (2024) characterisation of English as a neoliberal "credit card", a form of currency whose possession opens institutional doors and whose absence forecloses them, captures with precision the mechanism through which global capitalist pressures and domestic colonial inheritances reinforce each other to sustain English dominance as both a local institutional practice and a node within a global system of linguistic inequality.

Theoretical Implications and Directions for Reform

Taken together, the findings establish that the sociopolitical challenges posed by English in Pakistan's state institutions are not peripheral, remediable through incremental policy adjustment, or incidental to Pakistan's broader development challenges. They are structurally embedded, historically produced, and globally reinforced, extending from institutional inaccessibility and procedural exclusion to the psychological marginalisation of citizens whose languages are rendered structurally subordinate within the state that claims to represent them. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in demonstrating, across three institutional sectors and through triangulated quantitative and qualitative evidence, that English hegemony in postcolonial Pakistan is simultaneously a sociopolitical challenge (RQ1), an institutional dysfunction (RQ2), a mechanism of social fabric damage (RQ3), and a node within the

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imperialistic and capitalistic designs of the dominant global system (RQ4), and that these four dimensions are not analytically separable but mutually constitutive. Addressing any one of them without addressing the others will not produce the fundamental reorientation that linguistic justice in Pakistan requires. The study therefore supports calls in recent scholarship, from Zahra (2024), Anjum and Ali Shah (2024), and Manan (2024), for comprehensive multilingual policy reform that attends simultaneously to constitutional implementation, equitable language planning across institutional sectors, and the development of indigenous languages as legitimate vehicles of intellectual, professional, and civic life.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that English, as the dominant language of state institutions in Pakistan, produces deep sociopolitical consequences across education, law, and banking by shaping access, participation, and institutional power. Rather than serving as a neutral medium, it functions as a gatekeeping tool that privileges English-proficient individuals while marginalizing Urdu and regional language users, reinforcing linguistic inequality and social stratification. In education, English creates uneven learning opportunities by linking academic success to linguistic proficiency, thereby widening educational disparities. In the legal system, it limits access to justice by reducing transparency and understanding of legal rights for non-English speakers, reinforcing institutional authority. In banking, it operates mainly for technical efficiency but still restricts full inclusion due to specialized terminology and documentation practices. Overall, this study highlights that English operates differently across sectors: ideological in education, regulatory in law, and functional in banking, yet consistently reinforces unequal access to institutional resources. It ultimately contributes to a structured linguistic hierarchy that shapes broader patterns of inequality and power distribution in Pakistani society.

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