Dreams and Realities:
Developing Countries and the English Language

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Paper 14
English as the language for development in Pakistan: Issues, challenges and possible solutions
by Fauzia Shamim

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English as the language for development in Pakistan: Issues, challenges and possible solutions[1]

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Introduction

English as the language for development has dominated the political and official discourse in Pakistan as in other developing countries for a long time now. More recently, the discourse of 'Education for All' and the increase in the use of English in the global market have added a universalistic dimension to the teaching-learning of English in Pakistan, thus making it a complex policy issue particularly for resource distribution and achieving quality in English language education. 'English is the passport to success and upward social mobility' and 'English is the key to national progress' are some common clichés that are interspersed in the formal discourse of official planning and policy meetings; more importantly, these clichés reflect the perception of many people – both rich and poor – in discussing future life chances for their children.

To begin with, it is important to clarify what is meant by 'development' and what are the espoused relationships between education, language and development.

Education, language and development

Chabbot and Ramirez (2004) emphasise the central role of international development organisations and conferences in rationalising a discourse that strongly links development and education for national and individual development goals. According to the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (see Appendix 3), a major goal of education is poverty alleviation. However, recent studies emphasise the social, political and cultural aspects of development in addition to economic gains from development. The declaration of Education for All[2], signed by more than 150 nations, including Pakistan, reaffirmed the close link between education and development at the individual, national and global levels. In this context, a pertinent question asked by Brock-Utne is:

'Education for all – in whose language?' Brock-Utne argues, rightly in my view, that, 'The concept "education for all" becomes a completely empty concept if the linguistic environment of the basic learners is not taken into account' (2000:141). The complex relationship between language, power and the personal and its consequences is highlighted by Chambers, a development specialist. He asks:

> whose language and whose words count[?] In whose language do we – or are we – compelled or induced to co-ordinate our behaviour? And in whose language do we together bring forth our world? **(2007:155)**

As English is now widely recognised as a lingua franca or a 'world language', it seems pertinent to examine the relationship between English and development. In a report commissioned by the British Council, Coleman (2010a) has tried to tease out this relationship using examples from language and development conferences held in different parts of Asia and Africa since 1993. He concludes that English plays many roles in development, including:

■ increasing individuals' employability

■ enabling international collaboration and co-operation

■ providing access to research and information

■ facilitating the international mobility of students, tourists, workers and others

■ facilitating disaster relief and disaster preparedness

■ acting as an impartial language in contexts of disharmony. (Coleman 2010a:15)

Therefore, unsurprisingly, English is considered by donor agencies as the de facto language for development in developing countries. Often a lot of aid money is spent on improving the English proficiency of people and communities in the recipient nation states before or alongside other development work, particularly in the field of education. The aim, ostensibly, is to improve the effectiveness of teaching – and therefore the overall quality of education – in non-native English speaker contexts. Examples include the ten-year English Language Teaching Support programme for Tanzanian secondary school teachers, funded by the British Council through the former Overseas Development Administration (now the Department for International Development) (Arthur 2001) and the English Language Improvement Programme for Ethiopian teachers of English and other subjects, also funded by an international donor agency (Siraj et al. 2007).

Different kinds of relationship exist between language and development. Appleby et al. (2002:327-328) identify at least four kinds:

■ language in development, where English is viewed as playing an essential role in the socio-economic development of the country

■ language as development, with English being taught 'as an end in itself'

■ language for development, where 'English is used as a tool for other domains of development'

■ language of development, 'the discourses that construct the ways in which development happens'.[3]

In Pakistan, English is viewed mainly as the language for development at both the individual and national levels. Indeed, the race for individual prosperity and economic development at the national level seem to have overtaken issues of class, identity and fear of cultural invasion from an erstwhile colonial language.

The purpose of this chapter is to critically analyse the need and current provision for the teaching-learning of English for individual and national development in Pakistan. First, I look briefly at the factors that have led to the current insatiable desire for English in Pakistan. Second, the findings of a nationwide study of the current situation regarding the teaching-learning of English in public sector universities in Pakistan are reported so as to initiate discussion on the adequacy or otherwise of provisions for the teaching-learning of English in Pakistan; Marsh's (2005) framework of 'drivers' and 'enablers' is used for this purpose. Next, I briefly examine issues and challenges in the teaching-learning of English, such as the possible consequences of current language policy on the literacy level of children in English and other languages (including Urdu, the national language of Pakistan). Additionally, the case of a donor-funded project for teaching-learning of English at a professional university is used to illustrate the issues in 'external' projects for enhancing students' English language skills in public sector institutions, in particular.[4] Finally, policy implications are drawn for developing well informed and thus more realistic language-in-education policies in Pakistan. As the demand for English and the educational provision in several other developing contexts are similar to those in Pakistan, it is hoped that the study findings and the resultant policy recommendations will be of benefit to language-in-development workers in such contexts.

Drivers: Need for English in Pakistan

In Pakistan there has been a lack of systematic analysis, debate and dialogue about the need for English. With the national literacy level being low,[5] folklore about when children learn foreign languages best and dreams of a bright future with English for their children often influence the average person's thinking and expressed desire for the teaching-learning of English from early grades. This section critically reviews the major drivers for this felt need for English in an attempt to distil the main arguments for the need of English in Pakistan.

Political gains
Pakistan is a multilingual and multicultural society. The linguistic map of Pakistan is quite complex with many languages; each of the four provinces has one or more dominant languages and a number of minority languages. The emblematic status of English, due to its historical association with the elite and proto-elite (Haque 1983, Rahman 1998, 2002), has helped in making it a prestigious language. English is the language of power in comparison with Urdu, the national language, and other regional languages of Pakistan (Rassool and Mansoor 2009). Each new government soon after it assumes power announces its policy of teaching English to the masses as a way of achieving its democratic ideals of equality of opportunity. As this

decision is politically motivated, it comes as no surprise that implementation efforts fall short of the supposedly democratic intent of the policy. This official rhetoric of providing 'equal' opportunities for learning of English as a potential tool to level differences among the social classes, without a study of current provision and teachers' ability to teach English effectively, does not match the overall 'two stream' education policy in Pakistan. (We will consider the 'two-stream' policy in detail later in this chapter.) Thus the teaching of English stays as a live issue on the agenda of every successive government (also see Shamim 2008).

Economic gains

Jalal (2004:24), a former education minister, argues:

> When we subscribe to the experts' view that the economic future of Pakistan is linked with the expansion of information technology, it means that we are recognising the need for making the comprehension and use of English as widespread as possible. This is now an urgent public requirement, and the government takes it as its duty to fulfil this requirement.

This view has resulted in the English for All policy, where once again the government has instructed all public sector schools to start teaching English from class I without working out the feasibility of this policy decision or the steps and resources required for its successful implementation (Government of Pakistan 2009). In contrast, the Higher Education Commission's English Language Teaching (ELT) Reform Project aims to improve the teaching-learning of English in higher education institutions in Pakistan. Through improvement in the teaching-learning of English, the project aims to revolutionise 'the socio-economic indicators of Pakistan' and 'contribute considerably to supplement the efforts of government to improve the standard of higher education and scientific learning'. More specifically, improving the teaching and learning of English 'will help the graduates of public sector universities and institutions of higher learning to compete for good jobs in Pakistan'.[6]

Advancement in learning English is unequivocally linked to technological development, particularly in the field of information and communication technology (ICT). However, the main argument revolves around learning English for long-term economic gains. The official viewpoint resonates with the current discourse of promoting education for poverty alleviation, a discourse initiated by development agencies and also embodied in the Millennium Development Goals. The majority of people in Pakistan also subscribe to the view that English is the tool for individual and national economic prosperity. These beliefs are in sharp contrast with the arguments put forward for using the mother tongue for economic development, particularly in rural communities in developing countries (e.g. Bruthiaux 2002, UNESCO 2005).

Two streams of education

In Pakistan, there are two distinct systems of education identified mainly in terms of medium of instruction, i.e. English medium and Urdu medium. The English medium schools are privately owned and cater to the upper class as well as some sections of the middle class. In contrast, the Urdu medium schools are mainly public sector

schools catering to the lower income groups and they offer free education in addition to other incentives such as free textbooks (at least at the primary level). Private schools offer 'quality' education to elite children in highly resourced classrooms through the medium of English. The outcomes for these children, who also have acquisition-rich home environments, are higher levels of proficiency in English compared to those children studying in poorly resourced classrooms who have little or no exposure to English outside the 30–35-minute English class every day in school.

Thus the two kinds of school systems, public and private, are distinguishable by their quality of standards and learner achievement, particularly in terms of the their ability to use English for oral and written communication. With the level of proficiency in English being a major indicator of social class, quality of educational standards and learning outcomes, it is not surprising that for many people there is a fuzzy boundary between being educated and knowing English (see also Ramanathan 2005). Thus, the aspiration of most parents is to provide English medium education for their children to improve their future life chances.[7]

The huge promise of English as a 'world language' for economic and personal development seems to be a major driving force for the younger generation's desire to learn English in Pakistan. Literacy in English is considered a prerequisite, similar to ICT skills, for participating in the current trend of globalisation and becoming part of the global village. For example, Rahman (1999), in his survey of student attitudes towards English in different school types in Pakistan, found that the desire to learn English occurred among students from all school types including the deeni madrassah (religious schools) which represent the most conservative element of Pakistani society. Similarly, Mansoor's case study of language planning in higher education in Pakistan (2005) provided further evidence of an overwhelming 'need' for learning English among Pakistani students in tertiary education.

It should be noted that the existing proficiency level in English of school and university graduates does not match this popular demand for English in Pakistan. This raises an important question: Is the current provision for the teaching-learning of English adequate to meet this growing demand for English in education in Pakistan.[8] This issue is explored in the following section.

Enablers: A study of the current provision for the teaching-learning of English in higher education in Pakistan

As we saw above, there exists in Pakistan an insatiable desire to learn English for individual and national development. How can the goal of English for All be achieved? To what extent is the current provision for the teaching-learning of English sufficient for the masses to learn English (which is often their third or fourth language)? In this section, I will report the findings of a research study commissioned by the National Committee on English and funded by the Higher Education Commission as part of its ELT reform project.[9]

The objectives of the study were two-fold:

a) to review and evaluate the English language teaching capacity of a national sample of general and professional universities in Pakistan; and

b) to make recommendations for the reorganisation of English language teaching departments in public sector institutions of higher education.

A two-stage research design was used. In the first stage, a survey of the current provision for the teaching-learning of English was conducted in a nationwide sample of public sector universities. In the second stage, case studies were conducted of three selected institutions to understand, in depth, how the current organisation of English language teaching impacts on a) the allocation and utilisation of resources for teaching English, and b) teaching, learning and assessment practices for English in these institutions. This chapter reports the results of the nationwide survey and one case study of a donor-funded ELT centre established at a professional university in the province of Sindh.

The sample for the survey comprised 21 public sector universities located in various regions of Pakistan. Overall, 3,552 learners in these universities responded to a questionnaire that was administered to them on a cohort basis in English classes that were selected using pre-defined criteria. A total of 84 teachers also responded to the teachers' version of the same questionnaire. The aim was to get both student and teacher perspectives on various aspects of the teaching-learning of English in the sample institutions. In addition, the Head of Department in each university was interviewed using a structured interview schedule. The data from the general universities was analysed separately from that of the professional universities, for comparative purposes.

Major findings of the study are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Socio-economic profile
The socio-economic profile of teachers and learners in both the general and the professional universities is largely similar. The majority of teachers do not have formal qualifications or training in English language teaching. Few teachers engage in ongoing professional development activities or dialogue with the wider ELT community through membership of teachers' organisations or by presenting papers at ELT conferences at home and abroad. Fewer than one quarter of the teachers in the sample had one or more publications in the field.

English language programmes
English language courses are offered mainly at the undergraduate level but there are also some courses in postgraduate programmes in certain departments such as Business and Management Sciences. In the general universities, the undergraduate English programmes are normally managed by the Department of English in each institution. However, visiting teachers are hired to teach English, since the core business of the English departments is perceived to be the teaching of English literature and/or Linguistics to English majors. There is usually a prescribed syllabus for teaching English at the undergraduate level. In the professional universities and in the postgraduate departments offering English language programmes in

the general universities, where there are no core English teaching lecturers, the English language programme is managed by the department concerned or by the department or faculty of Social Sciences, if there is one. In such cases, teachers design the curriculum for the English courses themselves. The assessment practices in all cases focus on assessing content knowledge such as 'major barriers to communication' or 'characteristics of a good paragraph' instead of language skills.

Educational resources
In terms of physical provision, the findings of the study indicate that the majority of learners study English sitting in rows in large classes. The normal duration of the English programme is 48 hours or one semester during the first year of their study programme. Very little use is made of educational technology, even where it is available in the institution. Students are given few opportunities to develop academic literacy since teaching and learning focuses mainly on getting good grades in the content-based examination. Additionally, there are few expectations that learners will use English in the classroom. Similarly, there is only a low level of feedback, both oral and written, on assigned written work. Thus opportunities for learning English to the high levels of proficiency required both for higher education and professional work are quite limited. It is not surprising, then, that there is a general sense of dissatisfaction with the current level of English proficiency of the graduates of public sector universities.

Teachers' and learners assessment of the current programmes
Surprisingly, we found that the majority of learners rated their current English language courses highly in terms of meeting their future needs. Similarly, more than 50 per cent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the current English language courses would help students in meeting future needs. This apparently optimistic picture could be the result of two things: a) teachers' and learners' limited experience of alternative pedagogies and assessment practices and b) a focus on gaining high grades in English as short-term goals for success in their respective educational programmes.

Unequal inputs, unequal outputs
A comparison of learners' socio-economic status with their English language scores in the most recent public examination revealed that learners in the higher income bracket (upper third of the population) consistently outperformed learners in the lower income bracket (lower two-thirds of the population). The positive correlation of high family income with students' higher levels of proficiency in English, as seen in Figure 1, may be attributed to their earlier education in private English medium schools compared to students in the lower income bracket (also see Rassool and Mansoor 2009). (The two streams of education in Pakistan have already been discussed above.)
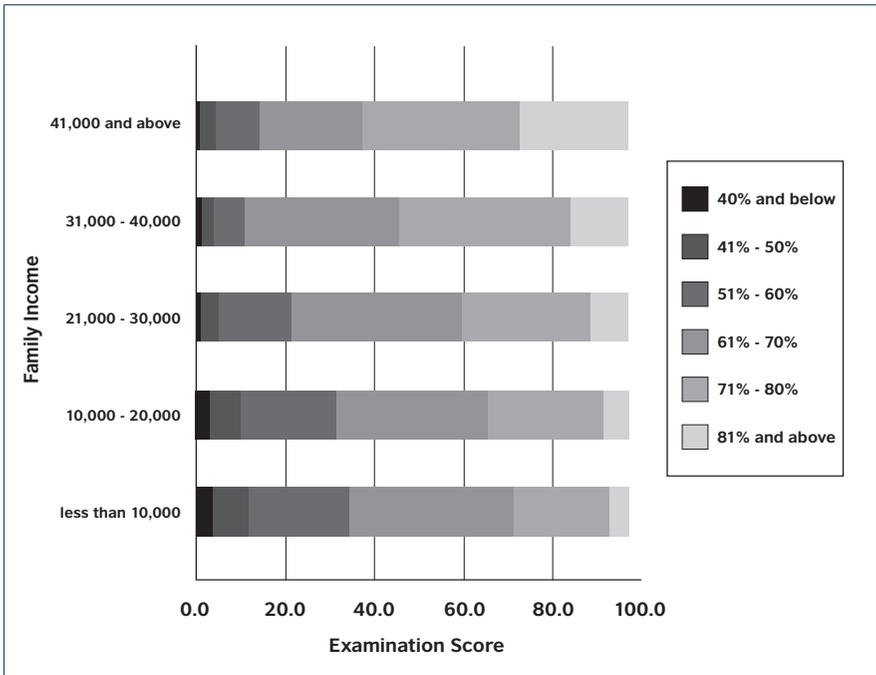
Figure 1: Students' family income (in Pakistani rupees) and proficiency in English (most recent public examination scores) adapted from Shamim and Tribble 2005

Similarly, in students' assessment of their current language skills, as used in the academic domain, the upper group was about twice as heavily represented in the categories of 'good' and 'excellent' compared to the lower third of the population. Hence, there seems to be a positive relationship between students' socio-economic status and their proficiency in English, probably due to the difference in opportunities available outside the classroom in the home and community for learning and using English. This indicates the urgent need for developing relevant and high quality English language programmes for learners in public sector universities to enable them to compete with their more fortunate counterparts.

It was concluded that the need to provide enhanced teaching-learning facilities in public sector universities cannot be over-emphasised, particularly in terms of the huge demand for English in the employment market (Mansoor et al. 2005) and the relatively low levels of proficiency of graduates from public sector higher education institutions in Pakistan.

In public sector schools, English is mainly taught using the grammar-translation method through Urdu and/or the local language in crowded and under-resourced classrooms. In private schools, while English is 'officially' the medium of instruction, bilingual discourse is commonly used in the classroom (Shamim and Allen 2000; see also Cleghorn and Rollnick 2002 for similar findings from African classrooms). However, as the use of one or more shared home languages is not legitimised, the teachers do not admit to using them in the classroom.

Issues and challenges

Three main issues can be identified: the quality of education, the tension between local and global needs and the 'language apartheid' which Pakistan is experiencing. Additionally, there is the issue of sustainability and therefore long-term impact of donor-funded projects. Each of these issues will be discussed briefly in this section.

Quality and standards of achievement

English medium education is widely assumed to be synonymous with high quality education. Is it, therefore, surprising that parents prefer an English medium education for their children? This can be seen in the proliferation of private English medium schools even in the remote areas of Pakistan.

As mentioned earlier, the decision to start teaching English from grade I is taken by all elected governments soon after they come into power as a political gesture rather than as an expression of their political will to provide opportunities for gaining widespread literacy in English (Shamim 2008). This decision is taken without any feasibility study or a well-researched and coherent implementation plan. The most recent Education Policy (Government of Pakistan 2009) also recommends the teaching of English as a subject from grade I and use of English as the medium of instruction for Science and Mathematics from class IV onwards. However, as Coleman (2010b) points out, there is lack of clarity about several aspects of this policy. Coleman also notes that there are some internal contradictions in the policy documents; for example, the policy directive of using English for Science and Mathematics from classes IV and V is at odds with earlier statements about schools choosing any language as medium of instruction between classes I and V.

Unsurprisingly, there is an ever widening gap between the 'unwritten' language policy and practice of the teaching-learning of English in Pakistan. This has led to a situation whereby the majority of school and university graduates from public sector institutions enter the job market with only limited literacy skills in English.

Tension between local and global needs

Language is a marker of identity and a tool for representing local values and culture. On the one hand, the right to study one's own language is now considered a basic human right (cf. Segota 2001). On the other hand, there is an urgent-felt need, particularly among the younger generation, to identify with the global world culture. Universities in Pakistan are also faced with the challenge of achieving internationally recognised academic excellence and status, mainly through the medium of English, while at the same time serving the needs of the local population.

The patterns of language use in society point to the use of Urdu as the lingua franca in Pakistan. Urdu is used by most people in rural contexts mainly in addition to their local language. Similarly, while English is used for official written documentation and communication, Urdu and/or the local languages are mainly used for oral interaction in government offices. In the cities, only a small part of the population, the educated elite, use English (or English and an indigenous language) for their everyday communication. The challenge is to maintain an appropriate balance in the choice of language-in-education among individual, societal and national development needs.

A state of language apartheid

In Pakistan, familiarity with and use of English are indicators of social class and educational and family background. For example, the terms 'Urdu medium' and 'English medium' in Pakistan are heavily loaded with economic and socio-cultural connotations. Hence their use denotes more than just the medium of instruction through which a person has studied in school or in an institution of higher education. In fact, a person with an 'English medium' education is considered superior in all dimensions compared to someone with an Urdu medium educational background. Thus we seem to be moving towards a state of language apartheid.

Sustainability of ELT development projects[10]

Kenny and Savage (1997:5) define development activities in development contexts such as countries in South East Asia or Sub-Saharan Africa, as the 'burden' of donor nations, where 'taxes paid by the citizens of donor countries are channelled to recipient countries as foreign aid through either multilateral organisations or national agencies, ending up as the financing of development projects'. However, the case study of a donor-funded ELT centre, established in the early 1980s at a professional public sector university in Pakistan's province of Sindh, indicates that such development projects are often not sustainable and, therefore, cannot have a long-term impact on the development of English language skills of the peoples of recipient nations.

This five-year development project aimed to enhance the English language skills of engineering students through setting up an ELT Centre at a public sector university in Pakistan. Project funding included staff and counterpart development through training courses in the UK, the provision of resources such as books and equipment and the development of learning materials and a self-access centre. The Centre was given a building by the university authorities; this was refurbished using project funds. More important, unlike other university departments, the Centre, as a donor-funded project, had financial independence with its own bank account. This greatly facilitated the work of the project and initial success was reported in several reports and studies (e.g. Ilyas 1992, Bamber 1994). However, a few years after the exit of the project (i.e. at the time of the study), the Centre presented a state of neglect and deprivation. The faculty interviewed showed low morale and uncertainty about the future of the Centre as other University departments vied for the space which had been allocated earlier to the Centre.

Why did the Centre, which seemed to flourish well during the life of the project, reach this state after its exit? If the ELT Centre was able to provide effective teaching-learning of English to the students, why could these gains not be sustained? Two issues seem to be at work here.

First, the Centre, as a development project, had been set up outside the organisational and financial structure and governance mechanisms of the university. Hence, soon after the donor agency left the ELT Centre – which was neither a department nor a centre of excellence (the two recognisable organisational units in the university) – it was bereft of support from the relevant authorities. For example, there were no funds for repair of equipment and/or its

replacement and the expansion of library resources. Also, when new computers were given to all the departments, the Centre did not get its share.

Second, and more importantly, interviews with senior management of the university revealed a lack of sense of ownership of the Centre; it was described as an external project that had had its life. More important, the Centre with its limited staff and outdated resources was clearly seen as being unable to meet the growing and changing needs of its clientele. Hence, the earlier system of teachers going to different departments to teach English was revived. The university administration refused to heed the teachers' request for smaller classes for the teaching of English. Moreover, at the time the study was being carried out, the classrooms which had been given to the Centre were in the process of being appropriated by different departments.

A major lesson learnt is that there is an urgent need – in the planning of English language teaching projects – for considering 'maintenance strategies' (for example, negotiating and establishing a place in institutional hierarchies and budgetary allocation for downstream and development costs for continuous improvement) in addition to 'development strategies' (focusing on capacity building of human resources and/or the development of learning materials and resources). This is in addition to what Holliday (1996) refers to as 'means analysis' for the success of development projects. Otherwise, the efforts invested in these projects are likely to go to waste.

The challenges faced by language planners, policy makers and practitioners in Pakistan are many. These include:

■ Achieving quality in education for all, irrespective of the medium of education

■ Balancing language needs and provision for the teaching-learning of English and other languages for local, national and global use

■ Combating linguistically defined social stratification and

■ Ensuring sustainability and continuous improvement after the project ends.

We must remember that Pakistan is not alone in facing these challenges. These and similar challenges abound in the majority of African countries and many other countries in Asia (see, for example, Vavrus 2002, Brock-Utne et al. 2003, Mansoor et al. 2004, Rasool 2009, Seargeant and Erling 2011, Chapter 12 this volume, and Wedell 2011, Chapter 13 this volume). In the next section, I will take a brief look at how some nations of the world have tried to address these challenges.

Multilingualism

A current trend identifiable in policy documents in many countries seems to be that of multilingualism. Multilingualism is espoused as the preferred approach to language policy-making for recognising and celebrating linguistic diversity and for intercultural communication. For example, in India the need for the three-language formula of state, national and international language has once again been reiterated by the National Focus Group on Indian languages (NCERT 2005).

Similarly, there is a growing awareness, among the more recently established Central Asian states such as Kyrgyzstan, of the need for multilingual education for increased interethnic understanding (Korth and Schulter n.d.). This is in sharp contrast to the policy of having just one national language as a marker of unity and nationhood, prevalent among nations in South Asia and Africa during the early years of their independence.

UNESCO's position paper titled 'Education in a multilingual world' (2003) urges a change in attitudes towards multilingualism as it is a reality in many nations of the world. At the same time, the paper highlights the complexities involved in imparting education through multiple languages:

> *Education in many countries of the world takes place in multilingual contexts. [In these countries] multilingualism is more a way of life than a problem to be solved. The challenge is for education systems to adapt to these complex realities and provide a quality education which takes into consideration learners' needs, while balancing these at the same time with social, cultural and political demands.*
> **(UNESCO 2003:12)**

Interestingly, even in Europe, during the last two decades, efforts to facilitate trade, travel and interaction among the nations within the European Community have led to the development of policy guidelines favouring plurilingualism (differentiated from multilingualism mainly in terms of its broader view of the purposes of learning more than one language). The aim of language education, according to this view, is no longer to:

> *achieve mastery of one, two or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the 'ideal native-speaker' model. Instead the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory in which all linguistic abilities have a place. This implies, of course, that the languages offered in educational institutions should be diversified and students given the opportunity to develop a 'plurilingual competence'.*
> **(Council of Europe 2001:5).**

We would do well to remember that English is the language of instruction in only three European states: the United Kingdom, Ireland and Malta.[11] And even in these countries the indigenous languages of Welsh, Gaelic, Irish and Maltese are also used as languages of instruction.[12]

Policy implications

This analysis of drivers and enablers for the teaching-learning of English in Pakistan, on the one hand, highlights current perceptions about the role and status of English in individual and national development in developing countries. On the other, it gives rise to two important questions for consideration by language planners and policy makers:

1. Is English here to stay? If yes, how can we, in developing country contexts, strategically plan for managing English for All with limited resources?

2. In order to achieve our goal of Education for All, whose language should be selected and for whose development?

The first question is a simple one addressing the pragmatics of the current situation as it exists in many developing countries of the world. That is to say, the need for English is far beyond the current resources available for the teaching and learning of the language. If we agree, through debate and discussion at local and national levels, that literacy in English is vital for individual and national development, then it must have high priority on the list of educational reforms for any government. In fact, a growing trend is to go beyond the basic question of whether to teach or not to teach English. The preferred question now seems to be whether all subjects should be taught through the medium of English.[13]

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and the use of English have moved from experimental research to the centre of global education. As pressure grows on governments and education planners to raise English language levels, the promise of teaching the language while teaching other subjects is hard to resist. However, at the same time we need to consider whether CLIL is a Trojan horse which will drive English 'ever deeper into the heart of national education systems', as one of the participants in the Guardian-Macmillan debate wondered.

At the beginning of the chapter we noted that Brock-Utne, a leading advocate of education through indigenous languages in African countries, asks, 'Education for all – in whose language?' She also asks (in the title of a chapter in Brock-Utne 2000), 'Whose language and for whose development?' In this way, she challenges the view that English should be used as a medium of instruction particularly in early years. Accordingly, she raises issues of learning and intellectual dependency through the use of English in education in Africa and other developing countries. Several educators have voiced their concerns about using English as the medium of instruction in post-colonial contexts in Asia and Africa. In particular, they urge us to consider carefully the effects on personal and national development of using the former colonial languages in education:

> *As long as African countries continue to educate the continent's future leaders primarily through foreign languages, they will remain dependent. Education for liberation and self reliance must begin with the use of languages that do not impede the acquisition of knowledge. This is a challenge for the 21st century.*
> **(Roy-Campbell 1998 cited in Brock-Utne 2000:173)**

Similarly, Fanfunwa (1990 cited in Brock-Utne 2000:153), questioning the use of an imposed foreign language for communication instead of a 'familiar' language, postulates a relationship between underdevelopment and the use of a foreign language as the official language of a given country. Though there is no research evidence to substantiate his claim, the relationship between language and development is certainly worthy of attention from linguists and researchers in the field. (See also Williams 2011, Chapter 3 this volume.)

A careful consideration of these two questions tells us that it is neither politically correct nor possible for education systems dependent on large amounts of money from international donor agencies in developing countries such as Pakistan to reverse the current trend of promoting literacy in English, similar to literacy in ICT skills, for development. As long as English remains the dominant language of power,

a gate-keeper to higher level jobs and a 'window to the world of opportunities' at home and abroad, all the research evidence in the world will not convince parents of the usefulness of imparting education to their children in the mother tongue. A more pragmatic approach to addressing the growing state of language apartheid between English medium and Urdu medium education in Pakistan would be to develop bilingual programmes for achieving proficiency in both English and Urdu. A second step should be to strive for a balance between felt needs and available provision for the teaching-learning of English based on research evidence. Finally, debate and dialogue should be initiated with the involvement of linguists, policy-makers, practitioners and the public media on language rights and the relationship between language and development, with the aim of working towards a practicable language policy for individual and national development.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with two questions that I hope will be taken up for discussion elsewhere.

1. Do we, in developing country contexts, really have the right to choose our own language for development? If not, how can people in developing country contexts be enabled to choose one or more languages for individual, societal and national development?

2. How can coherence be achieved between language policy and its implementation in developing countries?

The first question seeks to initiate a debate on linguistic rights in developing countries and indicates the need for empowerment in determining the choice of language for development. Linguistic rights, or more specific to this discussion, the right to the choice of language for education is meaningless and turns into a symbolic act if there is lack of coherence between the language policy and its implementation plan, as is illustrated by Taylor (2002) through his review of language-in-education programmes in Estonia and Africa. The second question, therefore, aims to remind us – language planners, policy makers, linguists and practitioners – of our responsibility to take up the challenge of drafting viable language polices and workable implementation plans for language-in-education programmes that aim to promote individual, societal and national development.

Notes

1. An early version of this chapter was presented at the 7th International Language and Development Conference in Addis Ababa in October 2005 and published in the Proceedings of that conference (Shamim 2007a).

2. For an overview of the Education for All movement and links to the text of the Education for All Declaration (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) and subsequent documents see the UNESCO Education for All website at *www.unesco.org/ education/efa/ed_for_all/*.

3. See Pennycook (1999) for a similar discussion of language in relation to development.

4. This was a follow-up study focusing on selected cases identified for in-depth examination in the earlier study (Shamim and Tribble 2005). The author was the principal investigator for this study.

5. The adult literacy rate in Pakistan is 57 per cent, according to the Economic Survey of Pakistan (Farooq 2010:145). For other key development indicators relating to Pakistan, see Appendix 2 below.

6. This information was retrieved from the Higher Education Commission website at *www.hec.gov.pk* on 12 July 2005 is but no longer available at that location. Details about the second phase of the ELTR are available at the same website.

7. In response to this popular demand for English, the number of so-called 'English medium' schools has mushroomed, even in the rural areas of Pakistan (Harlech-Jones et al. 2005). Parents prefer to send their children to these private schools, which do not offer high quality education, in the hope that their children will learn English. Literacy in English and the ability to interact confidently in the language are perceived to have more value than, for example, learning basic concepts in Mathematics and Science.

8. We need to remember that higher education in Pakistan, particularly in public sector institutions, is considered to be a right for everyone, not a privilege for the selected few.

9. For details see Shamim and Tribble 2005.

10. This section is based on a case study reported in Shamim 2006 and discussed further in Shamim 2007b.

11. 'Languages of instruction throughout the world: Europe.' Available at *www.unesco.org/education/languages/europ.pdf*

12. Phillipson (2009) claims that English is no longer a foreign language in Europe. While, according to him, all 'domestic functions' are carried out in the 'key' national languages, the massive influx of Hollywood and other American entertainment products as well as the requirement for English in higher education and employment in many countries have strengthened the position of English in Europe in recent years.

13. This is reflected in a 2005 debate sponsored by the *Guardian*, a leading UK newspaper, and Macmillan Education, a major UK and international publishing house; see *www.guardian.co.uk/guardianweekly/story/0,12674,1395532,00.html*

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In publishing this collection of papers, *Dreams and Realities: Developing Countries and the English Language*, the British Council seeks to make a powerful contribution to the growing debate about the role of English in the world. The book will be of interest to researchers working in a range of disciplines, such as applied linguistics and development studies, and indeed to anyone with an interest in the complex dynamics of language policy and practice.

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