British or American English: Emerging Trends in Pakistani English Newspapers

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ABSTRACT
This paper analyses the features of American English found in Pakistani English newspapers and accounts for those features quantitatively with reference to British English. Pakistani journalistic English has the tendency to become more Americanized in the recent era. There is a shift from British English to American English in Pakistani newspapers and this brief study aims to show the growing influence of American English on Pakistani English. American English is considered the most influential and powerful variety of English (Kirkpatrick, 2007). The influence of American English in newspaper writing suggests that there is a tendency among the Pakistan English speakers to opt for American English instead of British English particularly at the lexical and grammatical levels. The results indicate that the use of American English is growing rapidly in Pakistan English newspapers. The quantitative findings of the study suggest that although British English is preferred in Pakistani newspapers yet the traces of American English are quite obvious and apparent. The previous studies related to Pakistani English explored the difference between Pakistan and British English at various levels. However, Americanization is Pakistani English is rarely discussed phenomenon. This is less researched area in Pakistani English context and this study aims to fill this gap.

Keywords: Pakistani English, linguistic features, lexical and grammatical levels, English Newspapers, American English

INTRODUCTION
English is used as a native/first language in America, United Kingdom, Australia, Newzeland and Canada. These native varieties of English particularly American and British English are considered norm-providing for those who use English as a second or foreign language. British English is used as a model in most of the non-native English speaking countries including Pakistan as these non-native varieties emerged in the context of British colonialism. Pakistan was a British colony before 1947 and English is held in a high esteem in Pakistan. British English provides norms to Pakistan English speaking community particular to the academicians. The dictionaries, reference and
grammar books of British English are recommended and preferred in educational institutions/settings in Pakistan. However, the presence of features of Americanization in Pakistani English newspapers reflects the global impact that is a natural outcome of the growing influence of America throughout the world.

Pakistani English is heavily dependent on British English and in many cases the variation in Pakistani English is explored with reference to British English. Received Pronunciation (RP) is taken as a model to teach pronunciation to the students of English at different levels in Pakistan. However, the growing interaction between Pakistan and America in the last few decades for economic, political, educational and geographical reasons has paved the way to opt for American English along with British English.

American English is getting popularity all around the world especially in Asia because of its social and political status as American English “is not only the variety that these participants are more familiar with given the US-dominant media exposure, it is also an influential variety, enjoying a great deal of prestige” (Tan & Castelli 2013, p. 197). American English got this stature because of the power associated with America as a super power.

America has a great influence on the economic and political affairs of many countries of the world. So people all around the world are inclined towards American English. The same trend can be observed in Pakistan particularly in English newspapers. The reason of this shift is the international reputation and prestige attached with the American English. British English and American English are considered the Standardized forms of English and option is available while writing through word doc in Microsoft office. According to Kachru (1981), American English is “an example of linguistic pride and what may be termed a conscious effort toward establishing language identity” (p. 23). British English is used as a model by many non-native speakers of English, but the American variety is also an acceptable and viable alternative.

**Statement of the Purpose**

In the recent times, high prestige is attached with the American English. American music and movies are a big source of not only expanding the American culture around the world but also competing with the British English (Ooi, 2001). With the advancement of technology and introduction of internet at the end of the 20th century, the American English started influencing the people particularly the younger generation (Taylor, 2001). Different varieties of English are increasingly opting for American English (Mair, 2013). Although British English is still preferred in academia, yet the traces of American English can be seen in all the domains where English is used in Pakistan and this is a prime focus of this study to show that American English is increasingly used in Pakistan English newspapers.

**Research Questions**

1. How is Pakistani newspaper English influenced by American English?
2. Which variety of English is preferred in Pakistani newspaper genre?
3. What is the reason of the use of American English in Pakistani newspaper?

**Delimitation**

The data for the present study has been taken from Pakistani English newspapers. Only the selected newspapers have been taken into account. So this study is far from claiming to be representative of Pakistani English. Secondly, only those lexical items/forms which occur more than 10 times are chosen for the study as a fewer
occurrences (less than 10) are not considered significant keeping in view the scope of the present research.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

The acceptance of the American variety is clearly linked to the increasing role of America as a superpower in the affairs of the world. The difference in spelling, idioms, grammar and phonology between American and British English can be observed although this difference is not that massive. The grammatical differences are mainly in the use of past/past participle forms of verbs, article, adverbials and prepositions. A few studies have been conducted to explore the impact of American English on non-native varieties of English.

Awonusi (1994) analysed the influence of American English on Nigerian English at phonological and lexical levels and found that the traces of Americanism are very obvious. According to his findings, the Nigerian speakers prefer the British variety but the percentage of the users of American English was very remarkable which indicates the influence of American English on Nigerian English.

The trend of Americanism was observed in Philippine English at grammatical level by Schneider (2011). He found that influenced by American English, Philippine speakers prefer to use the subjunctive. According to Borlongan & Lim (2012), Philippine English follows the patterns of American English in the use of past and past participle forms of verbs.

Tan (2016) examined the influence of Americanization on the phonology of Asian Englishes. The results showed that young generation is more inclined towards the American English. However, some of the features of American English were not prevalent in all ethnic groups chosen for the study rather the participants were equally in favour of British English.

Fuchs (2017) analysed the recent changes in Philippine English by taking the data from parallel corpora. He found that Philippine English is more influenced by American English as compared to British English despite the fact that it is postcolonial variety of English.

Mostly, Pakistani English has been explored in relation to British English (Anwar 2012; Baumgardner, 1998; Rehman, 1990; Talaat, 2002). The researchers have identified the distinct and variant use of English in Pakistan with reference to British English. But no study has yet been conducted to explore the traces of Americanism on the English language in Pakistan. The Americanization of English in Pakistan has not got much attention. This is a neglected area of research and the present study aims to fill this gap.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

This research has been carried out through quantitative approach. In quantitative research, a social phenomenon can be described and analysed numerically (Muijs, 2004) and the researcher deals with numerical data for statistical comparisons/deductions in an objective manner (Gunter, 2002). The present study explores the occurrences and frequency of certain lexical choices appearing in Pakistani English newspapers. The corpus of Pakistani English newspapers in Table 1 for the period of one month (November, 2018) was compiled to check the frequency of British and American features.
Antconc software has been used to extract the examples from the corpus. All the newspaper data were converted into plain text files as the basic purpose of this research is to identify the emerging trends of Americanism in Pakistani English newspaper through its frequency and consistency. The frequency of the desired words was calculated by the software. The data has been analysed by taking the frequency of words into account.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The following sections show how different features of American English are used in Pakistani English newspapers.

**Lexical Features**

Certain entities are expressed by different words in American and British English. However, some words are found in both varieties, for example, the word ‘film’ is frequent variant in both varieties (Sedlatschek, 2009, p. 344). However, the higher frequency of the word ‘movie’ in American English indicates that it is an American variant. In the present study, many occurrences are almost same in some cases. It suggests that American variants are quite prevalent in Pakistani English newspapers. The data in Table 2 shows that the substantial use of American variants can be seen as a growing trend in Pakistani newspapers.

**Difference in spelling**

American English differs from British English in spellings as well. Spelling can be considered an important “variable to measure degree of Americanisation” (Fuch, 2017, p. 64). Both kinds of spellings can be observed in Pakistani English newspapers. The difference in spellings is not confined to one or two words rather by taking the list of lexical items (Taylor, 1989, p. 229–230) a systematic spelling differences between British and American English have been identified and discussed. Examples are shown in Tables 3-8.

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### Table 1. Newspaper corpus

| S. No | Newspapers          | Token  | Types  |
|-------|----------------------|--------|--------|
| 1     | Dawn (D)             | 2308174| 51163  |
| 2     | Daily Times (DT)     | 1772143| 43550  |
| 3     | The News (TN)        | 1833489| 40689  |
| 4     | Nation (N)           | 1638982| 39132  |
| 5     | Business Recorder (BR)| 1604370| 35914  |
|       | Total                | 9158558| 88618  |

### Table 2. British and American Vocabulary Variants

| S. No | British English | American English | Types |
|-------|-----------------|------------------|-------|
| 1     | Luggage         | Baggage          | 46    |
| 2     | Areoplane       | Airplane         | 10    |
| 3     | Flat            | Apartment        | 70    |
| 4     | Ground Floor    | First floor      | 15    |
| 5     | Trailer         | Caravan          | 185   |
| 6     | Football        | Soccer           | 66    |
| 7     | Motorway        | Expressway       | 29    |
| 8     | Film            | Movie            | 575   |
| 9     | Motorcycle      | Motorbike        | 57    |
| 10    | Guy             | Lad              | 12    |

Data in Table 2 shows that the substantial use of American variants can be seen as a growing trend in Pakistani newspapers.
Difference in spelling (miscellaneous)

In this category those items which do not show uniformity and consistency in spelling variation are included. For example the difference in the use of ‘u’ in ‘mum’ and ‘o’ in ‘mom’ is not so frequent. The same is a case with ‘i’ and ‘y’ in ‘tire’ and ‘tyre’. See Table 9.

Difference in the form of noun

The different forms of the nouns, used in both these varieties, can also be observed in Pakistani English newspapers as Table 10 shows.
Grammatical Features

American English is not very much different from British English at grammatical level. However, certain variant features are discussed here along with their usage and frequency.

Conjugation

In certain cases, the Americans usually make the past/past participle forms of the verbs with ‘-ed’ while the Britishers prefer to use ‘-t’ at the end of the word as is clear from the following examples:

1. Skipper Javaria Khan said: We learnt a lot from the game against India. (14 November 2018, N)
2. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has learned a valuable lesson. (23 November 2018, BR)
3. I have also dreamt of starting air ambulance service and this dream will be materialized by the grace of Allah Almighty. (9 November 2018, DT)
4. It is more than I ever dreamed of achieving. (19 November 2018, DT)
5. The whole country was burnt for more than three days but the writ of the state was not seen anywhere. (7 November 2018, DT)
6. Protesters, rallied by firebrand cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi, also set up roadblocks and burned tires in Karachi. (2 November 2018, BR)
7. They were spoiled by the father, who also has a daughter who is finding it hard to find a match. (17 November 2018, D)
8. They are also cleaning the beach because people have spoilt it. (4 November 2018, TN)

Article

The Americans do prefer the use of article at certain places where the Britishers would normally avoid as can be seen in the following examples:

1. After the incinerator is installed, we will be able to burn waste in the hospital. (November 2018, D)
2. One victim died at the scene and the attacker died later in hospital. (10 November 2018, N)
3. And the reason for its failure in the future is precisely because far too many inches have been given in the past. (5 November 2018, D)
4. Speaker Qaiser gave a ruling stating that no lawmaker would be allowed to `ridicule any tribe or clan’ in future. (6 November 2018, D)
5. Only 13 percent of girls in Pakistan are still in school at the start of matriculation. (19 November 2018, N)

| S. No. | Infinitive | Simple Past Amr English | Past Participle Amr English | Simple Past Br English | Past Participle Br English |
|--------|-----------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1      | Learn     | Learned 233             | Learnt 283                 | Learntt 17             | Dreamt 106                |
| 2      | Dream     | Dreamed 21              | Dreamt 17                 | Dreamt 42              | Burnt 10                  |
| 3      | Burn      | Burned 99               | Burnt 106                 | Burnt 42               | Burnt 10                  |
| 4      | Bust      | Busted 37               | Busted 10                 | Busted 10              | Busted 10                 |
| 5      | Spill     | Spilled 27              | Spilt 10                  | Spilt 10               | Spilt 10                  |
| 6      | Spoil     | Spoiled 18              | Spoilt 10                 | Spoilt 10              | Spoilt 10                 |

Table 11. Forms of Verbs
6. Because of lack of facilities in the school, many families don’t send their daughters to schools. (16 November 2018, N)

**Collective noun**

Subject verb agreement with collective nouns is used differently in British English and American English. In many cases Pakistani journalistic writers use singular concord like American English while the British English prefers plural concord (Trudgill & Hannah, 2002) as is clear from the following examples:

1. The police is investigating the matter. (16 November 2018, N)
2. The police are investigating why his bodyguard and driver were apparently not there to defend him at the time of the attack. (3 November 2018, TN)
3. The Army is engaged in eliminating terrorism from the country. (3 November 2018, N)
4. Army are still heading in the men’s medals tally. (18 November 2018, N)
5. When a team is chasing down small targets, then pressure is on batting side. (23 November 2018, N)
6. His team are nervous and agitated because they know he is going to lose, Fury told reporters. When a team is chasing down small targets, then pressure is on batting side. (30 November 2018, N)

**Adverbial/Preposition**

Some prepositions are used differently in both these varieties of English. Mostly ‘in’ and ‘on’ are used in American English where the Britishers would prefer ‘at’. For example,

1. My guy friends in university always offered to do all the work for me. (24 November 2018, DT)
2. A research was conducted at University of Punjab, Lahore to see the effects of parental conflicts on child’s self-esteem. (29 November 2018, N)
3. On the weekend of November 16 to November 18, Professor Carlos Almeida will be in Karachi, performing open classes at the Carlson Gracie Team Karachi Academy. (3 November 2018, N)
4. Posters of Modi with Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani were torn down or had their faces blackened at the weekend. (1 November 2018, DT)
5. Those who are different to us can always teach us something new, something about their traditions, language or the type of life they live. (15 November 2018, D)
6. Pakistan has already been in grey and black list but this time circumstances are different than the past due to some geopolitical situation. (23 November 2018, TN)
7. In a deeply unjust society, here is a cause which **momentarily** equalizes the working and lower middle class with the upper classes. (5 November 2018, DT)

8. Everything that describes his character and his deep and complex relationship with his brother is written on his face **in a moment** that gave me goosebumps even on my second viewing. (11 November 2018, D)

**CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study was to provide the researchers with quantitative data as an indicator of emerging trends in Pakistani English newspapers. There are not huge differences between British English and American English rather it is a matter of trends only. However, certain judgements on the basis of data analysis can be made. Firstly, the quantitative analysis demonstrated that British and American distinct lexical items are used interchangeably in Pakistani journalistic writing. Secondly, it confirms that although British vocabulary is mostly used in English newspapers yet the significant occurrences of American forms indicate the growing and emerging trend of Americanization of English in Pakistan. Since the choice of Americanism indicates the high status in Pakistani society, people take pride in using this variety. This brief paper will pave the way for the future researchers to explore this phenomenon in detail.

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