




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 in 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.

Table 3. -our/-or

S. No.	American English	British English	S. No.	American English	British English
1	Behavior 144	Behaviour 418	6	Labor 145	Labour 809
2	Color 77	Colour 432	7	Honor 113	Honour 522
3	Favor 88	Favour 524	8	Humor 11	Humour 39
4	Neighbor 21	Neighbour 136	9	Harbor 30	Harbour 63
5	Vigor 10	Vigour 28	10	Endeavor 27	Endeavour 53

Table 4. -ise/-ize and -isation/-ization

S. No.	American English -ization 1740	British English -isation 3899	S. No.	American English -ize	British English -ise
1	Organization 529	Organisation 1451	1	Characterized 25	Characterised 46
2	Privatization 83	Privatisation 199	2	Specialized 51	Specialised 110
	Commercialization 18	Commercialisation 69		Analyze 60	Analyse 146

Table 5. -er/-re

S. No.	American English	British English	S. No.	American English	British English
1	Center 468	Centre 1706	4	Theater 34	Theatre 250
2	Meter 76	Metre 89	5	Fiber 62	Fibre 81
3	Liter 24	Litre 186			

Table 6. -l/-ll

S. No.	American English	British English	S. No.	American English	British English
1	Canceled 21	Cancelled 266	4	Fulfil 171	Fulfill 174
2	Labeled 11	Labelled 63	5	Traveled 29	Travelled 148
3	Signaling 10	Signalling 32	6	Marvelous 11	Marvellous 10

Table 7. -ence/-ense

S. No.	American English	British English	S. No.	American English	British English
1	Defense 292	Defence 1669	3	Licence 125	License 96
2	Offense 25	Offence 206	4		

Table 8. -e

S. No.	American English	British English	S. No.	American English	British English
1	Judgment 524	Judgement 368	4	Dying 122	Dyeing 18
2	Acknowledgment 20	Acknowledgement 35	5	Livable 10	Liveable 13
3	Aging 22	Ageing 50			

Table 9. Spellings

S. No.	American English	British English	S. No.	American English	British English
1	Tire 14	Tyre 33	4	Angle 43	Angel 34
2	Mum 142	Mom 46	5	Cozy 14	Cosy 11

Table 10. Noun Difference

S. No.	American English	British English	S. No.	American English	British English
1	Transportation 292	Transport 731	3	Centennial 10	Centenary 68
2	Candidacy 29	Candidature 14	4		

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.

Table 11. Forms of Verbs

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
2	Dream	Dreamed	21	Dreamt	17
3	Burn	Burned	99	Burnt	106
4	Bust	Busted	37	Bust	42
5	Spill	Spilled	27	Spilt	10
6	Spoil	Spoiled	18	Spoilt	10

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)

Table 12. Use of Article

S. N.	Amr English	Occurrence	British English	Occurrence
1	In the hospital	66	In hospital	54
2	In the future	263	In future	303
3	In the school	22	In school	92

Table 13. Collective Nouns Agreement

S. N.	Amr English	Occurrence	British English	Occurrence
1	Police is	36	Police are	83
2	Army is	11	Army are	42
3	Team is	106	Team are	30

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)

Table 14. Prepositions

S. N.	Amr English	Occurrence	British English	Occurrence
1	In University	11	At University	23
2	Momentarily	11	In a moment	10
3	Back of the	28	Behind the	15
4	On the weekend	10	At the weekend	34

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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