Significance of critical applied linguistics for applied linguists and English teaching professionals in Pakistan

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Abstract

Contextualizing critical applied linguistics within the diverse multilingual and multiethnic setting of Pakistan, this paper seeks to underline how important it could be for applied linguists and English teaching professionals to underpin their research on the rich insights this relatively new field of academic inquiry affords. Underlining this can be crucial because we observe that most applied linguists and English teaching professionals in Pakistan usually view the scope and application of applied linguistics rather narrowly as they believe that it only deals with English language teaching and learning. However, the fact remains that the scope of applied linguistics transcends far beyond language teaching and learning. In addition, such professionals tend to see language related issues in isolation from the political, ideological, and power dynamics, which govern them. Such an approach is termed as traditionalist, structuralist or apolitical/ahistorical. Contrary to the above approach, critical applied linguistics problematizes and politicizes language related issues, raising more critical questions that relate to access, power, marginalization, hegemony, difference, and resistance (Pennycook, 2001, p .6). Thus, the purpose of the paper is to enlighten applied linguists and English language teaching professionals by introducing some crucial conceptual frameworks within critical applied linguistics such as linguistic imperialism, linguistic human rights, critical language policy, and minority language rights and so on. We believe that applied linguists can usefully apply the above frameworks in their academic research as well as their teaching to understand and analyze the critical dimensions of language policy and planning, sociolinguistics, English teaching and so on. Towards the end, the scope of those concepts is also contextualized, and discussed in relation to language policy and planning, English language teaching, and the challenges of indigenous mother tongues in Pakistan.

Keywords: critical applied linguistics, linguistic imperialism, linguistic human rights, language policy and planning

Introduction

This study aims to highlight the scope of critical applied linguistics and emphasize the need for applied linguists from Pakistan to capitalize on the rich insights it can provide in understanding the multi-layered and complex sociolinguistic, sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociocultural dynamics of the country. Critical applied linguistics is a relatively recent area of academic inquiry within applied linguistics. We believe that highlighting the scope of critical applied linguistics can be critical from the viewpoint of applied linguists and English

teaching professionals because we observe that most applied linguists or English teaching professionals in Pakistan still narrowly perceive applied linguistics, an umbrella field within which critical applied linguistics falls, as restricted only to English language teaching. However, the reality remains contradictory to the narrow view of limiting applied linguistics to English language teaching practices.

Thus, the purpose of the paper is to enlighten applied linguists and English language teaching professionals by introducing some crucial conceptual frameworks within critical applied linguistics. Introducing those concepts is likely to acquaint them with the insights those concepts offer, which we believe could be applied usefully in their academic research as well as teaching to understand and analyze the critical dimensions of language policy and planning, sociolinguistics, and English teaching. Towards the end, the scope of those concepts has also been contextualized, and discussed in relation to language policy and planning, sociolinguistics and language teaching in Pakistan. For analysis and discussion, the paper predominantly draws on secondary data that comprises of books, research journals, bibliographic databases, survey reports, newspaper articles, and related websites.

Critical applied linguistics

Pennycook (1990) proposed applied linguist to study language issues from a holistic viewpoint, and emphasized them to broaden the scope and realm of applied linguistics from the bare structuralist and positivist paradigms to more critical research. According to Pennycook, the traditional approaches to applied linguistics kept it detached from the critical issues, and observed that there was "paucity of politics and possibilities in applied linguistics for dealing with major concerns of difference and disparity in relation to language" (Pennycook, 2010, p. 16). Such traditional approaches were positivist described as 'neoclassical' by Tollefson (1991). The dominant approaches such as structuralism and positivism had rendered it almost impossible to link applied linguistics with social and political problems of inequality, discrimination, and differences. Therefore, Pennycook (1990) made applied linguists realized of the need to address critical issues , and embark on language issues in relation to social inequalities. He thus proposed applied linguists to "…cease to operate with modes of intellectual inquiry that are asocial, apolitical or ahistorical" (p. 27). Moving further on the project of critical applied linguistics, Pennycook's (2001) publication titled as "A Critical Introduction to Critical Linguistics" elaborately and systematically sketched out the scope, marking boundary lines of critical linguistics and its range and manner of inquiry. Some of the major areas identified within the purview of applied critical linguistics included critical literacy, critical pedagogy, critical, language policy and planning and so on. Pennycook (2001) explained that a central element of critical applied linguistics is a way of exploring language in social contexts that goes beyond mere correlations between language and society and instead raises more critical questions to do with access, power, disparity, desire, difference, and resistance. It also insists on an historical understanding of how social relations

came to be the way they are (p. 6).

Over the years, the range of scholarship within critical applied linguistics may be said to have expanded exponentially as an array of topical areas and research paradigms could well fall within applied linguistics. In the following section, we review and discuss some of the most widely covered and researched research paradigms to highlights their different aspects in connection to critical applied linguistics. Here we review some of those topics in detail:

Critical language policy

Within the critical applied linguistics paradigm, Critical Language Policy (CLP) predominantly focuses on critical social problems that stem from language policy and planning. It is a critical approach to the study of language policy and planning. According to Tollefson (2006), the term "critical" in language policy context has three interrelated meanings:

1) it refers to work that is critical of traditional, mainstream approaches to language policy research;
2) it includes research that is aimed at social change; and (3) it refers to research that is influenced by critical theory" (p. 42).

Contrary to the "optimistic traditional research", critical research recognizes that policies generally "create and sustain various forms of social inequality, and that policy-makers usually promote the interests of dominant social groups" (Tollefson, 2006, p. 42). The social change implies that the researchers explore the social and economic inequalities and aims at reducing these inequalities. Critical applied linguistics derives inspiration from Marxist and the Neo-Marxist theory. Pennycook (2001) argues that researchers in critical applied linguistics need to "engage with the long legacy of Marxism, neo-Marxism, and its many counterarguments" (p. 6). Critical theory encapsulates work by a number of thinkers (Bourdieu, 1991; Foucault, 1982, 1995; Foucault & Sheridan, 1979; Gramsci, 1988; Habermas, 1979). Critical work in this sense has to engage in problematizing and posing questions of "inequality, injustice, rights, and wrongs." While elaborating upon the critical theory and language policy, Tollefson (2006) suggests that,

> Critical theory includes a broad range of work examining the processes by which systems of social inequality are created and sustained. Of particular interest is inequality that is largely invisible, due to ideological processes that make inequality seem to be the natural condition of human social systems. Critical theory highlights the concept of power, particularly in institutions, such as schools, involved in reproducing inequality (p. 43).

Critical theory has substantially influenced work in language policy. Especially, two assumptions have formed integral parts of research. One, the structural categories from critical theory such as class, race, and gender has been dealt with as explanatory factors in CLP research. For instance, Tollefson (1991) advanced that language policy should be viewed as a field where different classes and interest group struggle over conflicting interests. Other

critical work that gained substantial currency and wide publicity were by Robert Phillipson (1992) whose paradigm of linguistic imperialism suggested that the spread of English underlie economic and political agendas, and the expansion of English across the world specifically to the post-colonial world is analogous to military and economic imperialism. Phillipson (1992) theorized that linguistic imperialism was even more pervasive and penetrating as its impacts were profoundly cultural and ideological on colonized world. Thus Phillipson and other like-minded scholars alarmed that the linguistic imperialism of English and other colonial languages posed serious threats to global linguistic diversity, subjecting large number of indigenous languages around the globe to linguicism and linguistic genocide (Phillipson, 2009; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). In addition, critical scholars also advanced the arguments of minority and linguistic human rights (May, 2001; Skutnabb-Kangas & Dunbar, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, & Rannut, 1994; Varennes, 1996).

Tollefson (2006) explains that a critical theory of language policy is yet to develop despite rapidly growing body of CLP research across the world. The key areas of research within critical language policy include colonization (Donahue, 2002), hegemony and ideology (Fairclough, 1989; Gramsci, 1988; Ramanathan, 1999, 2005a, 2005b; Tollefson, 1989), and struggle (McCarty, 2002a, 2002b). CLP research focusses particularly on hegemonic policies and practices, which have become invisible or legitimated at a common sense level. Likewise, ideology is one of the concurrent areas of CLP. It refers to unconscious beliefs and assumptions that are "naturalized" and thus contribute to hegemony of the dominant group social, economic, and sometimes linguistic groups (Tollefson, 2006). Similarly, Fairclough (1989) contends that when social institutions are built on hegemonic policies and practices, they tend to reinforce privilege and grant it legitimacy as a "natural" condition. As a result, the structure of social institutions makes cultural and linguistic capital unequal between dominant and non-dominant groups. Therefore, critical language policy research seeks to uncover the explicit and implicit policies that contribute to hegemonies and reproduction of systemic inequality.

Another theoretical framework used in CLP is that of governmentality. Governmentality refers to the "indirect acts of governing that shape individual and group language behavior" enacted through "techniques and practices of politicians, bureaucrats, educators, and other state authorities at the micro-level as well as the rationales and strategies these authorities adopt" (Tollefson 2006, p. 49). Governmentality was first introduced by the French philosopher and sociologist Foucault in a series of lectures delivered during 1978 and 1979. Foucault conceived that government was not a sovereign or singular power, but a combination and ensemble of multiple and multilayered practices involving government of oneself, government within social institutions, communities and government of the state. Foucault defined governmentality as the "conduct of conduct" (conduire des conduites), addressing the power and governance that takes place from a

distance to influence the actions of others. Governmentality "takes the focus off a singular state-driven hegemony" (Johnson 2013, p. 118). Governmentality as a theoretical construct focuses not only on the governing of the state apparatuses, but it also addresses the governing of the individuals:

> Government designates the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick . . . to govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others (Foucault, 1982, p. 790).

For instance, Pennycook (2002) , Moore (2002), and recently Manan, David, and Dumanig (2014) deployed the framework of governmentality to examine language policies. Pennycook (2002) proposed a postmodernist stance on the analysis of micro-level language policy enactment methods drawing on the notion of "governmentality" used earlier by (Foucault, 1991) . Moore (2002) and Pennycook (2002a, 2002b) shift attention from domination and exploitation by the state and capitalist market to the indirect acts of governing that shape individual and group language behavior. These researchers examine the techniques and practices of politicians, bureaucrats, educators, and other state authorities at the micro-level, as well as the rationales and strategies these authorities adopt. These researchers also suggest that critical language policy research should not focus primarily on the historical and structural bases of state policy, but instead address "discourses, educational practices, and language use" – social processes involved in the formation of culture and knowledge (Pennycook, 2002, p. 92). For example, examining medium of instruction policy in Hong Kong, Pennycook (2002) found that the policy on medium of instruction was not merely about selecting the language of education, but rather was part of a broad cultural policy aimed at creating a "docile" local population that would be politically submissive and willing to cooperate in its own exploitation. Likewise, Manan et al. (2014) drew on governmentality framework to examine language management techniques, practices and discourses of the school authorities about indigenous languages and linguistic diversity, and its effects on perceptions of the students in school in Pakistan. The findings suggest that school authorities exercise stringent techniques such as notices, wall paintings, penalties, and occasional punishment to suppress the use of languages other than Urdu or English. Mostly, the students also show compliance to the top-down policies. Most of participants perceive indigenous languages as worthless because of their lesser role in professional development and social mobility. The governance methods displace the indigenous languages both physically as well as perceptually. The prevailing orientations at the micro-level apparently accord with the macro-level policies, in which the stakeholders at the school levels tend to look upon languages as commodities, profoundly downgrading the cultural, literary, aesthetic, and sociolinguistic dynamics of the indigenous languages (Manan et al., 2014).

Linguistic imperialism

Linguistic imperialism is one of the most influential academic works in the field of applied linguistics and language policy and

planning contexts, which has spawned remarkable amount of academic research ever since Robert Phillipson (1992) firstly introduced this term in his book titled as "Linguistic imperialism". Since then, many academic researchers have embarked upon the application, analysis, and critique of the term. For instance, some scholars of LPP have insightfully reviewed and critiqued the strengths and limitations of the Phillipson's approach (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 2001). Ricento (2006) described Phillipson's claims as "provocative and controversial", which he believes has stimulated "a great deal of research and a great many publications, which seek to reaffirm, contest, or recast the original claims within emerging new paradigms" (p. 16). Linguistic imperialism (LI) refers to the imposition of a language on other languages and communities. Phillipson's reference was mainly to the global expansion and increasing role of English particular to its teaching and learning in the postcolonial world. Phillipson (1992) argued that "the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural_and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (1992, p. 47). It explored the dominant role of English and other colonial languages in the former colonies and the roles they play in shaping the North-South relations. In addition, it sought to analyze how pedagogies of English language consolidated a linguistic hierarchy where English invariably climbed up to the top.

Although imperialism has traditionally been seen as domination in political, economic, cultural or military term; however, Phillipson made a noticeable departure from the traditional notion of imperialism, and theorized that language (s) can also serve imperialistic goals. Phillipson explained the processes through which the former colonial empires particularly Britain, France and United States expanded and used their languages for economic, political, social, cultural, and educational power and exploitation, leaving disastrous effects on linguistic diversity and indigenous languages across those colonized contexts. He also saw linguistic imperialism as a structure of neocolonialism that threatened the world with hegemonic objects. Tollefson (2000) notes that Phillipson's work "places English squarely in the center of the fundamental sociopolitical processes of imperialism, neocolonialism, and global economic restructuring" (Tollefson, 2000: 13). In a recent article , Phillipson (2016) also uses the term "global linguistic apartheid" in relation to linguistic imperialism. Following are the defining features of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992, 2009). It causes some form of *linguicism* . It is structural which means that extensive material and institutional resources and infrastructure are allocated to the politically dominant languages than to many other less dominant ones. It is also ideological which involves the glorification of the dominant languages through people's beliefs, imager and attitudes rationalizing the politically created language hierarchy, and on the other hand stigmatization of many minority or minoritized languages. Linguistic imperialism is also hegemonic, in which the dominance of some languages is naturalized as well as internalized as being normal rather than politically motivated. It is exploitative because it goes against the essence of social justice,

equality, and equality as it provides a favorable ground to the users of the privileged languages to hold power and wealth. Most critically, linguistic imperialism is subtractive as the domination of colonial as well as national lingua francas in education and other institutions of power drive away, and closes spaces for the indigenous languages.

Another dimension of LI is the use of English for expanding economic and commercial interests of the English-speaking countries in general and that of Britain and USA in particular. Since 1930s, the British Council has taken lead in the promotion and expansion of the British English globally for political, geostrategic, and economic reasons. One of the key goals to promote interest is placing English in education. English is marketed "with the claim that Britain has the expertise to solve language learning problems worldwide, which is paradoxical and counter-intuitive when one recalls that the British are notoriously monolingual" (Phillipson, 2016, p. 2). For instance, higher education in general and English particular are seen as potential sources of revenue generation. English Language Teaching business stood out as one of the major contributing factors to the British economy as over half a million foreign students attend language schools in Britain each year. In Phillipson's (2006) view, these figures indicate the complexity of the supply and demand elements of English as a commodity and cultural force. Citing the British Council, Phillipson (2006) reported that the British economy benefited by £11 billion directly and a further £12 billion indirectly (British Council). As Phillipson (2006) observes, given the magnitude of cultural force and global attraction of the English language, there is a need to shift attention from colonialism and postcolonial to the contemporary trends and patterns of how subtly domination is maintained and influenced by the use of language. Thus, English language plays a critical role in in the internationalization of many domains (Phillipson, 2006, p. 488).

Linguistic human rights (LHR)

Skutnabb-Kangas, a leading sociolinguist is the most prominent advocate of linguistic human rights (henceforth LHRs). According to Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) LHRs combine language rights with human rights. Such rights are considered very basic rights, which people need for fulfillment of living a dignified life. Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) emphasizes that such rights are "so fundamental, that no state (or individual or group) is supposed to violate them" (p. 273). Skutnabb-Kangas also argues that an individual's right to use and learn his or her native language is as basic a human right as that to the free exercise of religion, or the right of ethnic groups to maintain their cultures and beliefs. The LHR research paradigm argues that minority languages, and their speakers, should be accorded at least some of the protections and institutional support that majority languages already enjoy.

In relation to education and LHRs, Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) emphasizes that without putting a solid binding mechanism on the states and its concerned authorities, LHRs are most likely to stand neglected and sidestepped. She believes that the absence of such rights particularly in the sphere of education can result in some serious implications. It would most likely force minority language groups to accept subtractive form of education being given

in the majority or dominant language (s). Subtractive education means that children from minority groups learn a majority or dominant language at the cost of their mother tongues, displacing those languages to private domains. Subtractive education create conditions for assimilation rather than integration, which Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) regards as genocidal. She strongly asserts that "Educational systems and mass media are (the most) important direct agents in linguistic and cultural genocide. Behind them are the world's economic, techno-military, and political systems" (p. 277). Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) further explains that people generally tend to react swiftly to the term "genocide", and may regard this as too powerful and strong a claim; however, in her view, the term genocide aptly fits with two of the five definitions of genocide as enshrined in the UN International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (E793) (1948): Article II(e), "*forcibly transferring children of the group to another group*," and Article II(b), "*causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group*". An array of studies testify to the bodily and mental harm caused due to submersion education either by the forcible transfer of children to language of another group or by the benign neglect of children's mother tongues in the mainstream education.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) points out that even many binding clauses with regard to human rights suffer from lack of serious implementation or strict legal protection mechanism, and mostly such bindings have limitations particularly that of the "opt-outs" and qualified clauses. Most of the times, such "opt outs" give the states the leverage to interpret such rights in their own ways to escape proper implementation. Tsui and Tollefson (2004) appropriately describe such "opt-outs" as "exit clauses and qualified statements" (p. 6). As Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) observes that, "The Articles covering medium of education are so heavily qualified that the minority is completely at the mercy of the state" (p. 276). She quotes several such clauses and statements which states employ to escape from actual implementation of the policies—"*as far as possible"*, "*within the framework of* [the State's] *education systems*, "*appropriate measures*," or "*adequate opportunities*, *"if there is sufficient demand*" and "*substantial numbers*", *"pupils who so wish in a number considered sufficient*" or "*if the number of users of a regional or minority language justifies it* "(p. 276). As Tsui and Tollefson (2004) observe, many countries claim to promote linguistic and cultural diversity through mother-tongue based education; however, in practice, the lack of commitment,

> …on the part of the policy makers is often seen in policy documents that contain exit clauses and qualified statements, the lack of a definite time frame for implementation, the lack of follow-up measures and clear guidance, and a reluctance to provide adequate resources for implementation. This noncommittal stance is motivated by the political agenda of avoiding ethnic conflicts, the economic agenda of exploiting the market of post-colonial countries, and the sociopolitical agenda of protecting the interests of the elite (p. 6).

Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) illustrates one

such examples from the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992; emphases added: "*obligating*" and positive measures in italics, "**opt-outs**" in bold):

1.1. States *shall protect* the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories, and *shall encourage* conditions for the *promotion* of that identity.
1.2. States *shall adopt* appropriate legislative *and other* measures *to achieve those ends*.
1.3. States **should** take **appropriate** measures so that, **wherever possible**, persons belonging to minorities have **adequate** opportunities to learn their mother tongue **or** to have instruction in their mother tongue.

Minority language rights

Stephen May (2006) is one the vocal voices for the minority language rights (henceforth MLR). Minority rights may be described as the cultural, linguistic, and wider social and political rights attributable to minority-group members, usually, but not exclusively, within the context of nation-states. May (2006) puts forward four principal reasons why MLR should get our support. The principals highlight the enormous endangerment and exponential loss of a large number of language globally. Citing statistics from previous studies such as that of Krauss (1992), who estimated that out of 6,800, 20 to 50 percent of the world's living languages will pass out of use over the next hundred years. May observes that,

> …language decline and loss occur most often in bilingual or multilingual contexts in which a majority language – that is, a language with greater political power, privilege, and social prestige – comes to replace the range and functions of a minority language. The inevitable result is that speakers of the minority language 'shift' over time to speaking the majority language (pp. 257–8).

May (2006) also notes that beyond the loss of languages are the social, economic, and political factors that influence massively on minority-language speakers. It results in language loss and shift at grand scale. The groups that get most affected are around 250 million to 300 million members of the world's indigenous peoples, who happen to be already marginalized and/or subordinated economically and politically. The second concern which May (2006) raises is that of nationalism, politics and minoritization of language. May (2006) emphatically asserts that the politics of nationalism and nation-building is responsible for the loss and shift of minority languages, and he observes that the linguistics hierarchies such as that of "minority" and "majority" languages are primarily not founded on any natural or even linguistic processes. In May's (2006) view, such hierarchization of languages is the result of wider political, historical and social forces. In his view, the politics of state-making resulted in the standardization of some languages out of a multitude of other languages. The roots of the politics of languages may be seen in a relatively recent phenomenon originating from the French Revolution of 1789 and the advent of European nationalism. The ideal concept of one-nation-one-language is not the natural or inevitable product of human social organization. May emphasizes that multilingualism is the

norm than exception in most societies. However, constructing the notion of national language is a deliberate political act "so too was the process by which other language varieties were subsequently 'minoritized' or 'dialectalized' by and within these same nation-states" (p. 261). May suggests that the dominant one-nation-one-language ideology needs to be resisted and deconstructed as a given, with its many corollaries such as multilingualism is a "threat" to the unity and stability of the state, and the notion that social mobility is enhanced by the abandonment of minority languages, and that minority languages have little if any value, and so on. Therefore, as May (2006) suggests, it is the responsibility of all critical researchers to consider *how* languages became positioned as relatively "good, useful, valuable" or "bad, useless, valueless" within the state system.

Discussion

In this section, we draw on a review of some of the key concepts within critical applied linguistics to highlight how relevant and insightful those could stand from the viewpoint of applied linguists and English teaching professionals in Pakistan. It may be argued that applying critical applied linguistics and all the related paradigms as reviewed in the above sections could be useful for researchers and practitioners of applied linguistics within Pakistan because most of those paradigms can aptly explain the kind of sociolinguistic and policy and planning related issues which recurrently surface in Pakistan. Most importantly, nearly all concepts within critical applied linguistics locate and discuss language related problems within multilingual countries in the postcolonial world; therefore, their relevance cannot be ruled out in Pakistan as well.

For instance, drawing on Critical language policy (CLP), researchers within Pakistan could analyze several critical issues through the prism of theoretical work originating from critical scholars such as (Bourdieu, 1991; Foucault, 1982, 1995; Foucault & Sheridan, 1979; Gramsci, 1988; Habermas, 1979). CLP also encourages scholars to depart from traditional, synchronist, presentist, and apolitical approach to problematize and politicize language related issues. This can be crucial because one finds that there is an acute dearth of critical scholarship on language policy and planning issues in Pakistan barring few studies such as (Manan et al., 2014; Mustafa, 2011; Rahman, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2004a). In addition, CLP research is generally driven by ideological motives that aim to bring about a positive social change in the society. In this context, we find extensive evidence that language policy and planning in general, and language-in-education policies in particular suffer from manifold weaknesses and limitations. One of the most glaring problems is the linguistic apartheid, the monopoly and inequitable access to quality English-medium education. Mustafa (2012) correctly points out that effective and quality English-medium education and its associated benefits are the preserve of a small affluent segment and the social elite who as "the wielders of economic power" perpetuate the myth of English teaching to their own advantage. Mustafa (2012) sums up that unequal distribution of English language teaching and learning furthers the the socioeconomic gap between the haves and the have nots .She observes that English opens the doors of prosperity, "but

only for a small elite". Thus, drawing on critical applied linguistics, applied linguists and English teaching professionals can play positive role as agents of social change in society, and unpack the questions of "inequality, injustice, rights, and wrongs". In addition, they can expose the deeply entrenched ideological processes that seem to show social and educational inequality as "the natural condition of human social systems", and can uncover how educational systems and institutions such as schools etc, are based on social powers, reproducing inequality (Tollefson, 2006, p. 43).

We all know that English is used in domains of power in Pakistan, and to access those domains, one essentially needs a strong schooling foundation and proficiency in the English language. However, the parallel functioning of different schooling systems and educational institutions hardly create level-playing field for the children of the poor and unprivileged as quality and state-of-the-art English-medium schooling remains the exclusive monopoly and preserve of the elite class. It is an established fact that English is taught very well to the rich while it is taught very badly to the poor. This naturally leads towards acute social polarization and economic marginalization. Critically, the state appears to have done very little to square this access differential, and ensure equal and equitable distribution of the English language, a language which Rahman (2005) regards as "passport to privilege".

Linguistic imperialism may be described as equally relevant paradigm, which helps explain many language-related problem we face in Pakistan. Linguistic imperialism as theorized by Phillipson (1992) and Phillipson (2009) clearly manifests in the the phenomenal expansion of English-medium education, and feverish pursuit and popularity of the public behind English-medium education at the cost of indigenous languages (Manan, Dumanig, & David, 2015). In addition, equally pervasive and ubiquitous are the impacts of the expanding role and penetration of English language on local linguistic and cultural ecology. Numerous studies show that English clearly stands the most powerful language not only within the domains of power, but it enjoys equally favorable status and role in the public perception as well (Manan & David, 2013; Manan et al., 2014; Manan, David, & Dumanig, 2015, in press; Rahman, 2004a). Likewise, Phillipson also emphatically asserts that English may be associated with socioeconomic progress and a symbol of economic prosperity and social mobility in many parts of postcolonial world; however, he argues that English plays a hazardous role in socioeconomic terms as it creates social divide rather than social cohesion in many such societies. According to him, English may open opportunities for few, but it certainly closes doors for many because the goodies of English are not distributed equitably in most postcolonial societies where only the children of elites have access to state-of-the-art English-medium educational institutions. In Pakistan, we find that English stands the monopoly and preserve of the elites who generally capitalize it to reach the corridors of power, and exploit it to their social and economic advantage (Mustafa, 2011; Rahman, 2004a).

Additionally, Phillipson (1992) long ago

problematized the blind pursuit of English-medium education in the postcolonial countries attributing it to fallacies and illusions. Five of his fallacies included "the early start fallacy", "the maximum exposure fallacy", and "the subtractive fallacy". For instance, it is a widely held perception that if children start studying through the English-medium schooling, there is greater potential for enhanced learning of the language. However, Phillipson and numerous other scholars consider this as an illusion, and argues that, "The age factor is one among many variables that influence educational success, but age is less important than the qualifications and quality of teachers and choice of the most appropriate medium of instruction" (p. 6). In this context, Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, Panda, and Mohanty (2009) also claim that "whenever English is not the mother-tongue, its learning should be promoted through linguistically and culturally appropriate education…and the faith that an early start in English means good education and ensures success in life is a pernicious myth" (p. 327).

Another critical dimension to the signs of linguistic imperialism can be found in the import of foreign textbooks, CDs, and native speaker experts as consultant for improving the English language education programs in the postcolonial countries. Phillipson (2016) is sternly opposed to such practices. According to him, the British Council commissions studies in many parts of the world to improve English language education. This also includes Pakistan where it has commissioned some studies, but those studies have often shown that English-medium policy is doomed to failure. For instance, to reform English-medium policy in Punjab called "Punjab Education and English Language Initiative" 2013. Presumably, it introduced the latest teaching techniques of the British models; however, it failed to bear positive results because the vast majority of primary teachers were unable to function in the English language. Phillipson (2016) aptly notes that it is unprofessional on part of the the British Council to dispatch under-qualified native speakers outside to teach English in schools. He also brings that primarily, the British Council is driven by business objectives to accumulate money globally out of teaching, examining, and native speakerism. It is illegitimate to employ monolingual native speakers as consultants or trainers to work in multicultural and multilingual contexts. According to Phillipson (2016), organizations such as the British Council and several others operates within a narrow paradigm, neoliberal and consumerist paradigms as commercial motives drive what Phillipson (2016) terms as "pseudo-academic opportunism". Thus, linguistic imperialism continues "in new forms and does not contribute to social justice. English functions as a professional Hydra, with tragic consequences".

In addition, Linguistic human rights (LHRs) can be used to analyze a number of sociolinguistic as well as language policy related issues because LHRs mainly concern with multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic settings where the problems of minority language groups might potentially arise. The advocates of LHRs run rigorous advocacy campaigns and active mobilization movements to convince states and governments that

linguistic diversity is an asset rather than a problem to lament. It promotes linguistic and cultural diversity, and takes up research and analysis to minimize the level of threat many languages face, and reverse the language shift. We find that Pakistan is one such country where linguistic diversity largely remains unrecognized, and where state authorities consider linguistic diversity as a problem. Drawing on historical developments, we find that Linguistic diversity and multilingualism have been looked upon as problem than asset in successive government policies. Political history is fraught with numerous language controversies, riots and disturbances (Ayres, 2003; Rahman, 1996). Mostly language policies are highly centralized and politicized.

Like in many countries especially postcolonial ones, millions of children in Pakistan are forced to receive education in languages other than their own. English and Urdu are by far the most powerful languages in education while the rest of the indigenous mother tongues remain neglected barring Sindhi and to a certain degree Pashto. Even there is evidence that in some schools "school authorities exercise stringent techniques such as notices, wall paintings, penalties and occasional punishment to suppress the use of languages other than Urdu or English. Mostly, students also show compliance to the top-down policies" (Manan et al., 2014, p. 3). LHRs can be relevant as a number of minority languages are on the verge of extinction, and a number of others stand endangered. There is no legal protection or constitutional mechanism whereby those languages could be developed and emancipated in the mainstream education system. Although a provision about languages in the national constitution exists about the indigenous mother tongues; however, as Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) highlighted, those constitutional provisions are full of exit clauses, qualified phrases, and opt-outs. Noticeably, the constitution of Pakistan contains such clauses, which not only puts certain conditions on the use of 'provincial languages', but also indicates an apparently non-committal stance on the implementation as in the following provision: "*Without prejudice to the status* of the National language, a Provincial Assembly *may by law* prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion, and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language" (emphasis added). Some scholars contend that the constitutional caveat ("without prejudice") denotes that no such effort should be attempted for the promotion of regional languages at the cost of the national language Urdu (Abbas, 1993; Rahman, 1999).

Underpinning one's work on MLRs paradigm, researchers can draw on and explain many of the language problems and challenges concerning minority languages or what May (2006) describes "minoritized" languages in Pakistan. May's four principal concerns about MRLs may well be situated, and contextualized within the sociolinguistic setting of Pakistan. The first concern about the shift and loss of languages is Pakistan's concern as well where a large number of languages are faced with imminent threat of loss and ultimate extinction. Absence of institutional support leaves many indigenous languages stunted and several others endangered. According to Atlas of the World's Languages in

Danger by UNESCO (2003), a total of 28 languages are endangered in Pakistan. Out of those endangered languages, 7 are vulnerable, 15 diffidently endangered and 6 severely endangered. *Vulnerable* are mother tongue at home. Similarly, *severely endangered* languages are spoken by grandparents and older generations while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves. Most of those languages have relatively small number of speakers, which itself could be the major contributory factor to their endangerment. Following is image defines the degrees of endangerment by UNESCO (2015).

Degree of endangerment	Intergenerational Language Transmission
safe	language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted »not included in the Atlas
vulnerable	most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)
definitely endangered	children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home
severely endangered	language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves
critically endangered	the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
extinct	there are no speakers left included in the Atlas if presumably extinct since the 1950s

Figure 1: Degrees of endangerment (UNESCO, 2015).

The following table lists those languages in Pakistan which are vulnerable, definitely endangered or severely endangered (UNESCO, 2015). Most of those languages are used in the Northern areas of Pakistan.

those languages, which most children speak, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g, home). On the other hand, *definitely endangered* languages are the ones, which children no longer learn as

Table 1: List of endangered languages in Pakistan (UNESCO, 2015)

Vulnerable =6	Definitely endangered=15	Severely endangered=6
Balti	Bashkarik	Chilisso
Brahui	Bateri	Dameli
Burushaski	Bhadravahi	Domaaki
Khowar	Gawar-Balti	Gowro
Maiya	Jad	Kalasha
Purika	Kati	Kalkoti
Spiti	Kundal Shahi	
	Ormuri	
	Phalura avi	
	Torwali	
	Ushojo	
	Wakhi	
	Yidgha	

As May (2006) discusses that states and governments create the majority and minority hierarchy to serve its nation-building and state-making objectives. Thus, politics and ideologies largely drive such hierarchization than linguistic ones. May rightly brings forth that the monolingualizing tendencies to essentialize a single language as the the symbol of national unity in multilingual countries is an artificial construction, which can turn numerically larger languages and their varieties into "minoritized" or "dialectalized" varieties. Such construction may clearly be seen in the construction of linguistic hierarchy and status planning in Pakistan where Urdu, a

relatively much smaller language was made to surpass all other minor and major indigenous languages used in different parts of the country. It is an established fact, and several scholars testify to this fact that linguistic hierarchy in Pakistan is founded on political power than on linguistic or numerical factors (Mansoor, 2004b; Rahman, 1996; Siddiqui, 2010). Therefore, analyzing the current linguistic hierarchy of Pakistan from the theoretical lens of MLRs, one understands that a number of major as well as minor languages currently stand on the margins not because they are minor by population size or what May (2006) describes as 'useless, valueless', but the politics of minoritization has made them so. Tariq Rahman (2005a) uses the term "Urdu imperialism" to refer to the predominant position of Urdu within the sociolinguistic hierarchy of Pakistan. Sociolinguists like Suzanne Romaine (2003) fittingly employs the term "internal colonialism" to refer to the politically-motivated domination of a single, majority or dominant language subordinating many other languages in a nation state. This phenomenon has motivated language shift as well as caused engineering of perception amongst large number of speakers of languages other than Urdu particularly in the urban areas. Parents tend to encourage children to use Urdu rather than their mother tongues or ethnic languages in schools and in the neighborhoods. It has even motivated language shame, language desertion, and language alienation, and ethnolinguistic dilemma in different parts of the country (Asif, 2005; Manan et al., 2014, in press; Mansoor, 1993; Zaidi, 2010). Comparing the relative vitality of local mother tongues vis-à-vis Urdu and English in educational setting, Manan and David (2013) emplyed an ecological framework (Hornberger, 2003) mapped the ecology of literacies and perceptions in Pakistan. the study shown that as per the Continua model, literacy situations across contexts, development and content indicated an explicit privileging of Urdu and English (traditionally more powerful end) of continuum over local mother tongues (traditionally less powerful end) (p. 203). Similarly, the respondents perceived dominant languages such as English and Urdu as instruments of power, privileges and other cultural, social and economic gains while indigenous languages other the national language Urdu were " perceived to be good as identity carriers in a multilingual and multiethnic country, and their use could best be made in intra-ethnic interaction and family chitchat" (Manan & David, 2013, p. 203).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be summed up that the knowledge and application of critical applied linguistics and the related conceptual paradigms as brought forth in the paper can serve valuably in addressing several critical issues in relation to languages, and language teaching policies and practices. In the first place, scholarly activism inspired by critical applied linguistics can help policymakers make correct decisions about language teaching, and formulate judicious mechanism planning for management of linguistic and cultural diversity. In addition, critical scholarship can potentially deconstruct the monolingualizing and reductionist tendencies as embedded in the official narrative and discourses about languages and their role. It can also foster critical language awareness. More importantly, by problematizing and politicizing the

prevailing policies, perceptions and practices about languages, the critical researchers are likely to bring about positive social changes as well as emancipate the marginalized voices. We witness that the English-Urdu-centric policies have left profound effect on both physical as well as perceptual orientations of many users of the indigenous mother tongues. The indigenous ethnic languages and linguistic diversity are on the retreat. The current policies create a vicious cycle of linguistic hierarchization, which institutionally neglects and makes the weaker languages to slip further in the hierarchy ladder. The dominant political discourses and ideologies first strategically neglect those languages and the legitimate their exclusion on grounds that those are linguistically underdeveloped and scientifically unequipped for higher order knowledge and academic domains. However, the renowned linguist and political scientist Noam Chomsky (2014) debunks this notion and argues that, "the alleged impoverishment of languages is very superficial affair". When political will and institutional support is extended, "a language can quickly pick up, and can accommodate the vocabulary, conceptual apparatus of more advanced civilization." Towards the end, we conclude that for setting up a sustainable future for all major and minor languages of Pakistan, a strategic policy such as the one put forward by Nettle and Romaine (2000) can help address the problem of threatened linguistic and cultural diversity. They propose that,

> …to establish language policies on a local, regional, and international level as part of overall political planning and resource management. Just as every nation should have an energy policy, it should have a language policy as well—one that embodies the principle of linguistic human rights. This means setting up agencies for language maintenance and development where they do not already exist (p. 200-1).

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