

**PAKISTANI UNDERGRADUATES’
INVESTMENT IN ENGLISH: AN
EXPLORATION OF IDEOLOGY-CAPITAL-
IDENTITY NEXUS**

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**Pakistani Undergraduates' Investment in English: An
Exploration of Ideology-Capital-Identity Nexus**

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ABSTRACT

Title: Pakistani Undergraduates' Investment in English: An Exploration of Ideology-Capital-Identity Nexus

Owing to the undeniable need for proficiency in the English language, the Pakistani youth and their parents invest heavily in learning English. The main push factors for such investment are the ideologies of power and status associated with English, the various forms of social, economic and symbolic capital it accrues, and the established future identity that it promises. However, very little research in the context of Pakistan has taken stock of how these factors influence the extent of investment of learners in learning English. This study, therefore, aimed to explore the perceptions of soon-to-graduate BS English regarding the dividends they perceive to have (not) received after four years of investment in the English language. Drawing on Darwin and Norton's (2015) model of investment, qualitative data was collected using an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. An extensive thematic analysis of 112 questionnaires and 20 interview responses was carried out. It was found that students deem English as a tool for advancement and enrichment of social, cultural resources connected with its learning hence assigning it the value of symbolic capital. They consider it the most important language for seeking social status and a substantial place in a world with more ESL speakers than native speakers, hence enabling them to be recognized as legitimate members of the society and gain access to the envisioned identities. However, they face challenges in negotiating the identity of a proficient English user owing to insufficient exposure to and proficiency in the language. The study has implications for the way undergraduate students are exposed to English during their studies. It also contributes to our understanding of how ideology, capital, and identity have an overriding influence on the level of investment of Pakistani undergraduates seeking English language proficiency, an area not much explored yet.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

With increased globalization, English has become an international language and has acquired the status of lingua franca of the world. English now serves as a symbol of belonging to an international community (Villa, 2016). The number of people speaking it as a second or foreign language is more than its native speakers (Crystal, 2003). The higher status attributed to the language has also increased its value as a symbolic capital since a wealth of social and economic resources is associated with it (Norton, 2013). In present times, this serves as an important reason for learning English. Therefore, students invest in the language to obtain the desired benefits associated with it. It also affects the way learners perceive themselves as a member of their desired communities hence having an impact on their imagined identities. For all this, an adequate level of proficiency is required from English learners without which they cannot get the maximum dividends in terms of their investment in English.

English as a lingua franca has also led to the need to connect globally with people from different socio-cultural backgrounds, for which learning English is mandatory. However, learning English as a second language or acquiring the required level of proficiency has always been a challenge for Pakistani students even though they are being taught English from grade one onwards as a subject and as a medium of instruction in higher studies (Manan, 2015). Even after spending a significant amount of time getting a degree in English, the Pakistani youth still may not have developed the required proficiency of English and struggle in constructing a strong identity as well. To address similar issues, the present study will be an attempt towards an exploration of the influences exerted by the English language on soon-to-graduate students, their self-perceptions regarding the existing level of proficiency, and the way this challenges their future possible selves.

1.1 Background to the study

In the Pakistani context, although English is an official language, it is more of a third or foreign language to the majority of the population because it is not

frequently used by people in general. The general public thus does not have the opportunity to learn it informally. It is only used in offices, in a few education systems and official documents (Manan, 2015). In spoken form it is mostly used by people of upper or middle class; otherwise, it is not used regularly even by students, particularly outside the classroom or in their daily lives where they mostly use their regional languages (Rahman, 2013; Khan, 2018). Even inside the school environment, due to lack of uniformity in school systems (distinction between public and private schools), students develop varying levels of English proficiency. In spite of this restricted usage and exposure to English, the youth has an immense need as well as desire to invest in learning the language of dominance and power. Therefore, to investigate students' exercise of agency, self-perceptions and future challenges in the learning of this language, this study draws upon Darwin and Norton's (2015) construct of investment. This notion consists of three main elements i.e., ideology, identity and capital. Norton (2015) has defined identity as "multiple, a site of struggle and continually changing over time and space" (p. 36); ideology as "a normative set of ideas" (p.43); and capital as "a tool of both social reproduction and transformation" (p.44) that extends from material capital to social and cultural capital. In accordance with these components, this study attempts to explore how and in what ways students are influenced by the dominant ideologies of the English language; identify themselves in relation to English language proficiency and will encounter various challenges in the future.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

English is currently the most desired language in terms of status, power, employment and upward mobility; Pakistani students therefore invest heavily in the language to be able to become proficient in it. Their investment in English language, as Norton and Darwin (2015) argue, is connected with the ideology of English, its importance as a symbolic capital, and learners' imagined identities. The most important language in their lives, with the economic, cultural and symbolic capital they envision, and with the careers they imagine for themselves in the future, is English. The nexus of these three key components of investment enforce the learners to invest in the language with their time, resources and intellect. However, after all of their investments, they still face challenges in achieving their desired future identities

due to the influence that English language exerts through its predominant ideologies. Since very little research in Pakistan has gone into exploring the nexus of the three; how English language ideology exists at the macro level of the society, the way it is related to capital and how it influences the imagined identities of students, this calls out the need to carry out the present research.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following objectives

- To determine the influence of English language ideology on the soon-to-graduate BS English students of a university in Pakistan.
- To explore the self-perceived symbolic capital they have in relation to their existing English language proficiency.
- To determine the extent to which their ideological standpoint and existing English language capital challenge their future imagined identities.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions will be explored during the study;

1. How do the soon-to-graduate BS English students at one particular English-centric Pakistani university position themselves in relation to the importance of English language?
2. What are their perceptions about the self-perceived adequacy of their existing English language proficiency?
3. To what extent do they believe their English language inadequacies pose a challenge to the identities they imagine for themselves in their futures?

1.5 Rationale for the Study

The need to carry out this research arises due to the lack of investigation of Pakistani students' investment in English language learning. This research is necessary in order to explore the challenges faced in achieving the desired identities

by students due to their English language proficiency. The extent to which students exert their agency in constructing imagined identities also arise the need for research. Another rationale, in particular, for conducting the intended research is the lack of inquiry of the nexus of identity, ideology and capital in the Pakistani milieu. Very little research has been conducted on the investment and imagined identities of English undergraduate students, despite the fact that a large number of this population exists in higher education in Pakistan. In addition, most of the research has examined English as second language learners' general composition. Since this study also explores students' past and current educational experiences in relation to English, it goes beyond the formal classroom setting and explores individual's extensive experiences and identity at a holistic level.

1.6 Delimitations

The present study is delimited to one university for the reason that it is the only English-centric University in Pakistan. It is further delimited to 7th and 8th semester students because they will soon be attempting to join their imagined communities and attempt to realize their imagined identities. The study is also delimited to students' self-perceptions about their language proficiency as no standard proficiency test was conducted for this purpose. Another aspect on which the study is delineated is the use of survey method to collect data and the exclusion of teachers' perspectives on student's actual investment inside the classroom in learning English language.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The research is significant in highlighting the unaddressed issues of investment faced by students of BS English by the end of a four-year-long journey, a program after which they will be entering into their desired communities. It will highlight the impact of English language on learners' existing language proficiencies and the positioning of their future selves. An important contribution of present study is its focus on students' present and perceived possession of linguistic and other resources, or capital, and the way they plan to make use of them for imagined

identities and career goals. Moreover, the study provides insights about the constraints and challenges students may face in negotiating their identities by means of language learning. It is also significant in giving voices to students' perspectives and bringing the perspective of investment to the growing body of research Pakistan.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

The present thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter has introduced the thesis in terms of relevant concepts, research problem, and questions along with the significance and rationale of the study. The next chapter reviews the previous literature related to the field with an added explanation to the concept of investment, its relation to English language, imagined identities and the impact of investment on learner's L2 identities. The third chapter explains the theoretical and methodological framework adopted for the research including a detailed account of the participants, research setting and methods applied for data collection and analysis. Fourth chapter analyzes the data qualitatively, and discusses the results of the study either aligning or in distance with the already existing literature. In last chapter, conclusion of the study and limitations faced during the process as well as recommendations for further research and practices needed to adopt are mentioned.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Introduction

English has become a global tool for communication across the world. These globalization processes have varied influences on the way people live, think, and act. One of these effects is an increasing interest in mastering English to achieve desired purposes and identities at different levels, including the choice of subject in higher education, future careers, and higher social positions. Due to the unique role of English, its status worldwide, and the variety of opportunities offered to its speakers, students generally show eagerness in learning it. This chapter begins with an historical account of the status and expansion of English language in general and in education system of Pakistan in particular. It then moves on to the concepts of investment, where ideology, capital and identity are linked to English language learning. Both theoretical and empirical studies have been drawn upon to explain the influences of English dominant ideology on understanding student's perceptions, identity and future dispositions. The chapter ends with an overview of the works already done in the field.

2.2 Historical and Current State of English in Pakistan

English has always been given importance in Pakistan throughout the history. During British rule in 16th century English language was introduced to the sub-continent (Mahboob, 2009). Reason for its rapid spread was the increasing social and economic mobility associated with competence in this language which continued to grow during the course of British rule. The only possible way to learn English at that time was either through social contact with the natives or through learning it formally in schools to which only few had access (Mahboob, 2003). After independence although Urdu remained the national language, English became the official language of Pakistan to be used in all official proceedings and educational spheres (Mahboob,

2009). Due to its association with British, people had mix reactions towards learning it but the speakers of English continued to enjoy status and prestige in society.

However, changes in the policies of language use in education created a gap between the students getting education from elitist English-medium schools and the ones studying in government schools, and deprived the children of general public from English teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the position of English as Pakistan's official language is valid till date and is now widely spoken in many sectors including legal offices, civil administration and defence forces along with being a language of media and advertising industry (Rahman, 2002). In recent years, it has become the most learned and sought after language by the youth for acquiring better job opportunities in both government and commercial sectors. Proficiency in this language has become a criterion for securing jobs and admissions in higher education, inducing a desire to master this language of power for their bright career. Hence, it has become a source for upward mobility in Pakistan, like other parts of the globe, and plays a significant role in determining the fate of people (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996).

2.3 Language Ideology

Language ideology is generally considered as a set of ideas, beliefs, or feelings that people have about the nature of language, its use and the speakers. These fundamental beliefs can shape not only the attitudes people have towards a language but also the learning and teaching of that language, both inside the communities and educational institutes, along with the language policies made afterwards. Language ideologies are mutually shaped and constructed by the socio-cultural experiences of the speakers, in other words, are actively performed in a society. These attitudes are socially shared among the communities, connected to the larger social systems and are shaped by it.

The language ideologies "affect speakers' choices" of language structures and "interpretations of communicative interaction" (McGroarty, 2010, p. 3) as people's assumptions about the language are reflected in their language use. Irvine and Gal (2000) have also emphasized the significant role played by ideologies in the history of colonization and perpetuation of discourses related to the concept of *othering*.

The concept of language ideology was developed in the 1970s and 80s within the field of anthropology and from the school of ethnography of speaking but its scope has been diversified within the next few years by scholars of different fields (Woolard, 1994). Some of the major figures who worked on it include Silverstein, Friedrich, Gal, Irvine, and Woolard. Other related concepts to language ideologies are the notions of resistance, awareness and consciousness and other names for this concept are 'linguistic ideology' and 'ideology of language'. Its central concerns range from cultural, to political and economic interests. It views language as inherently associated with power structures that shape it and are shaped by it, as Blommaert (2005) says, language ideologies become 'instruments of power' (p.171). In order to understand the dynamics of power and its effects on language, we must take into account the ideologies behind the use of such forces. For this reason the attitudes of participants of the present study towards English language are examined through the lens of ideology which in turn explains the relationship of identity and power.

Language ideology also acts as a force that shapes our social life through every instance of language use with the power structures inherent in it. Due to the unequal power associated with linguistic structures of various languages, linguistic hegemony can be made visible through different language practices creating a discrepancy in the power and status of languages and their speakers. The dominant language is thus, due to the inequality of status, either imposed on the group of people or willingly adopted for personal benefits (Razfar & Rumennapp, 2012).

The language ideologies can be found operational both at 'macro' level of society as well as at 'micro' level of classroom (taken in the present study), nevertheless, they should be observed as mutually consistent in the context of everyday life because as language is always embedded with social and cultural practices of the community, so is the case with language ideologies. According to Woolard (1994), it acts as a link between language and society and represents the ideas of power and identity as construed by society (Cummins, 2000). Ideologies are not always explicit but also implied (Gal, 1989). They are multiple and contested. They not always remains the same but are constituted in an interaction (Subtirelu, 2013).

2.3.1 Ideology of English as the Standard Language

The notion of standard language ideology was described by Wiley and Lukes (1996). In view of this ideology, a particular variety of a language that is widely spoken by the people who hold powerful positions in society is idealized and imposed on the rest of the population speaking other varieties of same language or other languages. This imposition is widely “maintained by dominant bloc institutions” (Lippi-Green, 1997, p. 64) because this variety is based on prescriptive norms of the written language that is learned and taught at schools. The use of standard language variety elevates the status of the group speaking it, while diminishing the status of other varieties and its speakers as nonstandard and illegitimate. Believing this language to be more ‘correct’ than others, all other spoken and written varieties are judged against the standard and their speakers are tend to be viewed as deficient with the need to gain more proficiency in the standard language, hence, given less chances of success in achieving upward social mobility. This has certainly been the case with English language as well. It became a standard language after going through similar processes of discriminating and marginalizing millions of speakers of other regional languages.

The widely believed language ideology related to English is again similar to that of any other standard language where English is considered as the global language, the most useful for all communicative purposes, the sole property of native speakers, and unique in its own. English language ideology considers English as the standard and a superior language than the rest of the languages of the world. Not only native English speaking societies have enforced these beliefs for centuries but rather many immigrant and second language learners who projected their language or accent as deficit also played a role in imposing English dominant ideology onto themselves. These perceptions built increasingly due to the heavily focused “grammar-centric models” of teaching English in schools with privilege given to the native’s language use and pronunciation rather than on the “socio-pragmatic” realities of learning a language (Ciriza-Lope, Shappeck, & Arxer, 2016, p. 298, Hassler, 2019).

Due to all the factors and higher status given to English language, its speakers are always socially and economically advantaged while non-speakers are considered less privileged and are excluded from high positions, creating social inequality (Piller, 2015). For example for a very long time in the USA, only ‘Standard American

English' was considered appropriate (Lippi-Green, 2012) giving its speakers more chances of success in diverse fields, rest of the languages being considered inappropriate and neglected. Such 'linguistic legitimization' is accepted by both the dominated and the dominant. However, no language is inherently superior to any other language but is made belief by the dominant classes via using their position to further strengthen the ideology.

2.4 Capital

The concept of 'capital' was introduced by Karl Marx in economic terms but Bourdieu (1986) expanded his notion to all forms of power which have an influence on an individual's social positioning (Guliz, 2016). Bourdieu (1986) categorized capital into three types: social, cultural, and economic capital. Social capital refers to relations and connections to social and political networks. As defined by Alfred (2010), social capital is the collaboration and sharing of resources. It also plays a role in the creation of social inequality by positioning individuals' in a certain way that allocates them a form of power (Bourdieu, 1986). This theory was also developed by Putnam (2000) and Coleman (1998). Cultural capital includes cultural values, knowledge, and skills. It is one of the essential components of Norton Peirce's (1995) theory of investment that views it in the context of language learning (Wharton, 2013). In this context, learners can gain cultural capital with increased investment in language learning, as a way of increasing their access to material and symbolic resources (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Economic capital refers to material resources or anything that is quantifiable like wealth and goods (Gordon, 2018).

A distinction between economic and cultural capital was made by Kim and Kim in 2009 according to which "economic capital is tangible and objective" while cultural capital is "intangible and subjective" (Wharton, 2013). The value of each capital is relative across different fields as what is valued by a particular field may be devalued in other fields (Gordon, 2018). All these forms of capital are also linked to one another and convertible but this conversion is possible through investment (Wharton, 2013). Bourdieu has stressed more on the importance of non-material capital i.e., social and cultural capital as it serves to improve learners' chances of success in the future. In addition to this, linguistic capital which is considered a part

of cultural capital is of more relevance to the concept of investment because it embraces competence in highly privileged variety of language or that which is of high market value (Bourdieu, 1977).

The type of capital and the value ascribed to it in a particular community, as argued by Bourdieu (1977, 1991), also plays a significant role in the interrelations and positioning of a person. Putting it simply, it means that the greater amount and value of capital possessed by an individual, the greater use of power and resources one will be able to access to get profits. For this reason, individuals invest to increase their capital and convert it into material gains so to improve their position in the society (Swartz, 1997). In support of this argument, present study attempts to explore the different forms of capital possessed by participants, with significant focus on English language proficiency, and how they make use of them in order to portray strong identities in the society and earn material and cultural benefits from it. It was observed that students enrolled in the given degree mainly invest with their time, energy and money in the expectation to get considerable amount of return, both in the form of cultural and material profits, i.e., getting a graduate degree in English (language and literature), that they can use afterwards to earn a reputable position in the society and secure a respectable job. The concept of capital, thus, allowed to examine the challenges may face by participants in future in achieving their desired imagined identities as well as success in the career.

In the present study, therefore, drawing on from Bourdieu's work on capital and Norton's concepts of investment and power relations, participants' socially constructed relations that exist "among individuals, institutions and communities through which symbolic and material resources in a society are provided, distributed and validated", are approached as a form of capital (Norton, 2013, p. 47). Representing post-structuralist's perspective, Darwin and Norton (2015) assert that the relations of power exist in the process of learning of a language. These processes include both micro and macro levels of power, being the focus of the present study. Among them, micro level processes encompass day to day social interaction with people who have different degrees of access to symbolic and material resources and macro processes refer to (Norton, 2013). In this view, participants' interactions help them in negotiating a unique sense of self within a larger world (Norton & McKinney, 2011). Thus, it is essential in understanding the processes of developing identity and

investment in the learning of a language. However, not all of them are equally granted the right to speak when interacting in English language (Ortega, 2009). Such unequal power relations may not allow their voices to be heard hence arising the need for present research to understand the conditions in which learning takes place and how it helps few and impede others.

2.4.1 Symbolic Capital

Any form of capital is when “recognized as legitimate”, affording power and prestige to an individual, becomes symbolic capital (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 45). This view stresses the dynamic nature of capital where through legitimization social and cultural resources can acquire symbolic character. Norton (2013) also emphasized the “exchange value” of cultural capital, which governs learners’ access to symbolic and material resources (p. 17). This recognition is assigned by a dominant group of society who also depends on others for the recognition of their own capital (Bourdieu, 1986). By legitimization of the resources, implicit capital can be made explicit.

Symbolic capital is not limited to any one field like other forms of capital that operate within their particular domains. Rather it is of a more general nature and can be seen in the “eyes of the others” (Crossley, 2005, p. 32). Pittaway (2004) also emphasized the importance of symbolic and other forms of capital for second language learners by comparing them with stock investors. He maintained a view that in order to acquire the discourse of an imagined community and its associated symbolic, linguistic and cultural capital, learners attempt to get familiarization with the language and practices of that community. By doing so, they engage in the processes of getting access to power and “the right to speak” (p. 206) as provisioned to them by the capital they possess.

Darvin and Norton (2015), in their recent model, have also emphasized the importance of symbolic capital to the construct of investment, according to which when learners operate within diverse fields and contexts and enter into the process of learning, they are already equipped with social, material and cultural resources that they negotiate to transform it into something valuable relative to the demands of new spaces. In the present study, students’ existing English language proficiency is explored as symbolic capital.

As referred by Norton (2000) symbolic resources include “language, education and friendship” (p. 7) therefore, an individual’s ability to speak any additional language always provide him a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu,1991) but the learning of English in particular, because of its dominant position in the global economy, provides him a wider range of resources (Crystal, 2003). The non-material resources associated with English language can also be converted into economic gains because English is globally viewed as a valuable asset providing its role in increasing social status and symbolic capital of the speakers. Besides speaking English, the way it is being spoken also affects individual’s capital. It can be better understood through the example of native/non-native dichotomy where non-native speakers of English are marginalized on the basis of their L1 accent and pronunciation, in contrast native English speakers or native-like proficiency is given much privilege. Similar is the case with getting education from English speaking countries which are given more value than the education obtained from local institutes. Hence, illustrates the importance of English language as a symbolic capital.

2.5 Identity

One of the influential ways of integrating language learners into their social world is to inquire about their identities. The link between language learning and identity was described by diverse scholars of the field, Ochs (1992) among them. She emphasized the ever changing nature of social identity of an individual within an institute or in community depending on the relationship, role and social status one has in the society. Drawing on poststructuralists’ views, Norton highlighted the need to integrate the theory of identity into broader socio-cultural contexts of language learning. This need led Norton to propose a theory of socio-cultural identity that aims to incorporate the areas lacked in previous second language acquisition studies hence shifted the focus of research in the field and the identity approach to second language acquisition springs from Norton’s concerns.

Identity has been previously defined as “the self” (Taylor, 1989, p.5) but Norton (2013) defines it in terms of the relationship that an individual has to the external world, its construction across different places and spaces, and the future possibilities. Norton(1995) also redefines language, regarding it not as a mere tool of

communication but a source through which a person gains or is denied access to wide range of powerful social networks, shaping their sense of self and giving them opportunities to speak. As per this view, identity is an understanding of the self that does not remain constant, rather, is negotiated every time a learner interacts with the social world due to which this relationship is reorganized in multiple ways (Norton, 2010).

Identity helps people shape the way they look at themselves and the world around. One of its important characteristics as argued by Norton (2010) is the multiplicity of identities which means learners have a diverse range of identity positions from which they can participate in an interaction. Learners' identities are not only achieved by self-perception but are often ascribed by others according to the predominant ideologies and by virtue of their social class, race, gender, religion, and ethnicity (Darvin & Norton, 2015).

The identity approach also draws attention to the importance of context by looking into the relationship between language learning and contextual factors, as per Norton's (1995) view that language can only be understood with reference to the range of social meanings it encompasses. Thus, the issues of identities of language learners should always contemplate the language learning context (Norton, 2000). It shows identities can be constructed in various fields as in social, political, cultural, and religious contexts however within the realm of second language acquisition or language education, according to Norton (2008), language learning acts as an important site for the negotiation of identities. Since when learners invest in the acquisition of new experiences or language, they continue to reclaim their previous identities in an attempt to acquire new identities. Norton (2008) has linked the investment in learning of a language to the investment in learner's own identity. This theme of the intersection of identity and language learning investment was taken up into numerous studies including Norton & McKinney, (2011); Norton & Toohey, (2002); Norton, (2001); Norton, (1995), to name a few.

2.5.1 English Learning and Identity

The relationship between identity and language has always been significant. Language plays an important role in influencing individuals' identities. Wenger

(1998) has noted that learning a language is often tied to learner's participation in the communities of practice which necessitates the negotiation of learner's identity.

In the new world order, English is no longer the predominant language of the Inner Circle countries (Mckay, 2010), rather it has become a link to be connected to the world either through advanced technology, media resources or by physically moving to foreign countries. In other words, English has grown into an asset which opens the linguistic gates to almost every field of life (Nghia, 2010) This increasing connectivity has deep effects on people's lives as Block (2007) argues learning English as an international language has considerable impact on learners' sense of self. Similarly, in a paper by Fonseca & García (2010), while discussing the impact of technology, observed how mass media provided motivation to American students to learn Spanish. In the same way it has created awareness among the masses, of the need to master English language that has global affiliations, thus acting as a tool to help students engage with such communities of practice to which they are not in direct contact.

The processes of globalization with special reference to English also raise new challenges in the field of education including student's access to world knowledge and information, increasing contact with people from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds and most prominently, the unlimited cultural influences that lead to changes in one's sense of self and questioning their belonging to one nation or community by cultivating multiple identities among them (Villa, 2016). Their act of taking part in a global community is guided by Norton's (2001) notion of imagined communities.

Since English plays a vital role in the processes of globalization and identification of world citizens to the target language, numerous researches have explored the construct of identity in relation to English. Kramsch (1999) discussed the affect of globalization on learners and their interest in English. Block (2007a) presented a study showing the direct effects of engaging in English as an international community on learners' sense of self. Yashima (2002) observed the role of English in the identification of Japanese learners to target culture. Lamb's (2004) study highlighted the importance of English in transforming learners' lives and societies. All these views are linked to Norton's approach to investment and language learning, taken up in this study.

Hence English, inevitably, act as a key to provide range of opportunities for the expansion of learners' identities, due to which, has increased the need to master this language with an adequate level of proficiency, to accomplish the desire of adopting future imagined identities, seeking entry into the imagined communities, and reaching a wider audience; in short, to access the international imagined community.

2.5.2 Imagined Communities and Imagined Identities

The concept which is central to the understanding of the construct of identity and investment is the importance of the future of language learners, discussed in terms of 'imagined community' and 'imagined identity'. These two notions are of considerable importance to the field of second language learning. The term 'imagined communities' was coined around two decades ago by Anderson (1991) in order to define the concept of nationalism. His concept inspired Wenger (1998), who took it up as an element of *engagement* in the community. Norton then, drawing on Lave and Wenger's view of learning, expands it "to connect the learner's future affiliations and his or her current learning" (Kanno, 2003, p. 287). Later, taking Wenger's idea of imagination, Norton (2001) wrote a paper titled "Non-participation, imagined communities and the language classroom" and developed further on this notion, suggesting its importance in language learning.

Norton (2001) notes that these are not only existing communities that had an impact on the learning of a language but learners' imaginary communities had a significant impact too. She found that, learners' imagination acts as a powerful source in constituting the communities that go beyond the current context. Through this, learners can imagine themselves in the communities they want to be a part of as a form of their possible future which influences their learning behavior as well as their identities (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2001). It suggests the importance of social context that also has an effect on learners' desire to learn a language. This notion has been extended in applied linguistic research by Kanno and Norton (2003). They defined it as "groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination" (Kanno and Norton, 2013, p. 241).

Central to the concept of imagined communities is the notion of imagined identities. Norton herself puts that learners' investment in imagined community acts

as reinforcement towards imagined identity. These identities are learner's perception of their possible self that go beyond space and time and triggers them to invest in their present and future identities and learning (Markus & Nurius, 1986). It acts as a force that compels learners to invest in learning and gain the symbolic capital of their desire (Wu, 2017).

In order to explain the positions adopted by learners for themselves and for others within an imagined community, Norton and Toohey (2011) discussed the usefulness of the notion of “positioning” in helping them to adopt certain identities (Davis and Harré, 1990, 1999). This notion is significant, as Block (2007) argues, in understanding the subject positions take up by language learners making use of the power of imagination. Norton & McKinney (2011) argued that learners’ imagined communities are not less important than the real ones because they may have a strong impact on their investment as well as on the construction and negotiation of identities since their future images guide their current learning and affect their possible sense of selves.

Considering that English learning opens up the possibilities for a variety of imagined communities, numerous scholars took these constructs in their studies to further investigate and suggest their importance. Among various studies, one of the research conducted by Peng (2015) with university EFL learners in China, emphasizes that learners’ envisioning themselves in an English speaking community correlates with the construct of imagined communities that in turn, enhance learners’ motivation to invest in learning English. Learners’ images of themselves as communicative members of an imagined community may motivate them to become closer to attaining their envisioned identities (Peng, 2015). In a similar study by Yim (2016), with primary school students in South Korea, he argued that language learners who imagine proficient use of English as their second language have a stronger connection to their possible selves. Hence, understanding learners’ imagined communities can help to gain a better understanding of their imagined identities.

2.6 Theory of Investment

The foundation of work on investment began two decades ago by Bonny Norton in 1995 with her article “Social Identity, Investment, and Language Learning,” in which she discussed the interconnectedness of identity, power relations and imagined identities and imagined communities with the notion of investment (Park, 2019). The key concepts on which this notion was defined and developed was taken from other scholarly work like the notion of subjectivity by Weedon, psychological construct of motivation from SLA, concept of capital and positionality by Pierre Bourdieu and other related work by Cornel West, and Jim Cummins (to name a few). The reason for using this term was Norton’s belief that it can best explain learners’ complex reasons for the desires to master the target language. The term refers to the effort that learners put in learning a language in order to acquire a wider range of resources. It emphasizes the learner's relationship to the target language, and their desire for learning.

According to this concept, which is strongly connected to Bourdieu’s (1977) idea of cultural capital, learners often invest in the learning of a target language at particular time and context in order to avail the symbolic and economic benefits associated with it which in turn increases the value of power they possess in the form of symbolic and cultural capital (Norton & Williams, 2012). Norton (2000) held the view that due to the difference in the power structures, linked with socially constructed relations, cultural and material resources are produced and distributed. The uneven distribution of resources assigns differential access to power among members of a community. These power relations ultimately vary owing to their dependence on the varying value of resources.

The important relationship between the investments of learners in a target language and their identity is explained by Norton and Toohey (2002), in addition to the difference between motivation and investment; considering one as a psychological construct whereas the other as sociological. They considered investment a social construct because it gives importance to the language learning context; in which L2 learners take part in social practices; and its effects on language learners (Wu, 2017). Moreover, the notion of investment takes into account the possible interest of a person towards a certain language that is, from Norton’s perspective, intrinsically connected to a person’s complex identity. Norton & McKinney (2011) emphasizes that learner’s

investment in target language is similar to the investment in their own identities that are constantly changing. According to this view, every time a learner communicates in the target language, they are presenting themselves to the world as who they are thus, changing their sense of themselves (Villa, 2016).

According to this view, a learner who is highly motivated but not invested in the language practices of a given community will not be able to learn the language as effectively as the one who invests more (Norton & Darwin, 2015). There could be many reasons for his less investment like racist, sexist or elitist practices of the community which must need to be investigated. In other words, the amount of investment in language learning practices has a direct impact on the quality of language learned. The more learners are invested in learning a language, the more their language skills and capital will be increased (Norton & Darwin, 2015). So as Cummins (2006) indicated, “investment has become an important explanatory construct in language learning and teaching” (p.54)

Darvin and Norton (2015) have considered investment as a process that occurs at the intersection of three key elements: identity, ideology and capital. Ideology regulates the flow of power both at macro and micro levels, by controlling learners’ access to various resources and modes of inclusion and exclusion, thus positioning them in unequal ways (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Ideology determines how power can be exercised in any social practices, whether within a classroom, workplace, or community (Park, 2019). Capital encompasses wealth, knowledge, credentials, and connections to networks of power within economic, cultural and social categories, the value of which shifts across time and space (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Park, 2019). Identity is elucidated as “a struggle of habitus and desire, of competing ideologies and imagined identities” (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 45). Habitus, a concept adopted from Bourdieu’s work, shapes learners’ thoughts and actions in ways consistent with the dominant ideologies (Gordon, 2018). It is also because of habitus that learners positions and are positioned by others in certain ways. However, it is through desire and imagination that they exercise their agency to invest in the practices of the imagined communities. Furthermore, through the affirmation of learner’s identities and legitimization of their already possessed capital in the target language environment, learners’ investment can be made productive in the learning of a language (Gordon, 2018).

This dissertation study focuses on students' investment in target language proficiency and the effects of power politics on their investment, to help clarify why learners have different levels of English language competence. In particular, here investment is conceptualized through the use of existing English language proficiency as student's valued capital, based on the assumption that the better their proficiency is, the more they have invested in their capital and imagined identities. The study also focuses on how students perceive their identity in relation to the prevailing ideology of English by using the available resources including linguistic proficiency, relationships with teachers and peers, learning environment and parental support as affordances to transform them into the capital valued by the society. Therefore, the construct of investment, which occurs at the intersection of three other important concepts, acts as a foundation for investigating the issues addressed in this study.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter builds on the theoretical framework underpinning this study and provides the backdrop for my research. The chapter began by tracing the history of English language in Pakistan and how it has evolved. It then particularly focused on the three major concepts of identity, ideology and capital underlying the theory of investment because of their relevance to this study. The theoretical and empirical literature was also cited to establish a ground for how students could envision imagined communities for themselves and how this could influence their language choices. It also drew attention to the need for research on Pakistani students' investment to understand their varying levels of competence in spite of being provided with the same environment. Finally, the section ended with re-stating my research purpose.

2.8 Works Already Done

Norton's work (2000) initiates a debate in the areas of identity, language learning and investment shifting the perspective of work being done on the fields, after which a great number of research publications, special volumes of journals and books have appeared, making them central issues in the fields of applied linguistics and second language acquisition. Various dissertations have also been written on these topics to add to their importance. Zuengler and Miller (2006) noted that identity research has even become an area 'in its own right' (p.43).

To investigate the relationship between second language learning and identity many scholars took identity approach to SLA, inspired mainly from Norton's pioneering work. This new paradigm was then shaped by the work of many researchers in the field. Seminal work in the area includes Norton's (2000) study on the exploration of the relationship between identity and language learning. She carried out a longitudinal study with five immigrant women in Canada and found out their differential degrees of access to English speaking networks. She concluded her research by stating that although women can have enough exposure to English language through media and technology, they often have fewer opportunities in natural settings to practice their speaking skills for which 'access to Anglophone social networks' is highly necessary (p.135). It also reflects the construct of identity as a complex site of struggle. The examples in it proved that lack of access to the target language is detrimental to L2 development.

A great deal of research in language learning is also being conducted in relation to identity categories like race, gender, class, etc. (Norton, 2013). One such research was carried out by Teutsch-Dwyer (2001) to find out the relation between language and gendered identity of a Polish man for over 14 months. In contrast to Norton's subject, his subject had considerable contact with L2 speakers still he did not develop L2 grammar due to his complex gendered positions. Norton has worked much on second language acquisition and on gendered identities and language learning, therefore, extended her notions on language learning, identity and investment in collaboration with several scholars such as Kelleen Toohey, Yasko Kanno, Christina Higgins, Aneta Pavlenko, Peter De Costa, and Ron Darwin.

Other areas where identity approach to language learning was employed include studies on multilingual identities (Block, 2006), language practices and affiliations (Schechter & Bayley, 2002), and negotiation of identities in varying contexts Pavlenko & Blackledge (2004a). Similarly, numerous empirical studies have also followed poststructuralist approach to the study of different constructs including the notion of imagined identities and imagined communities, by several scholars to frame their theoretical explanations. To name a few, these scholars are Kanno & Norton (2003); Pavlenko & Norton (2007); Kanno (2008); and Kendrick & Jones, (2008). Several other scholars (Pittaway, 2004; Cummins, 2006; Potowski, 2007),

who were interested in the notion of investment, developed the concept in their studies.

One particular area where much work has been done is the investigation of target language use in chat rooms and the digital world. Similar research has been carried out by Lam in 2004, with two Chinese immigrants of 17 and 18 years of age living in California who participated in chat rooms to improve their language which enables them to develop new identities through the medium of English. Because of the barriers faced in order to practice English inside and outside of their schools, they preferred chat rooms over practicing it in the community. Through her research Lam (2004) showed a transformation of identities among immigrants. Other studies on digital media where work has been done include

A wide range of theses have also been conducted taking Darwin and Norton's (2015) model of investment as their theoretical framework. A Master's study underpinned by Elisha Hannah Gordon in 2018 investigated the investment of five study abroad students in target language and related practices using a case study approach over the course of one semester. It was carried out at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Findings of the study illustrate that students' identities, capital, and understanding of ideologies of New Zealand had an impact on their investment on the basis of which they invested differently in different target language practices to attain desired identities, and valued symbolic capital. Numerous other master and doctoral theses on investment include works by Chang (2009), Torras Villa (2016), Park (2019), Hassler (2019) and many others.

The use of this model is not only limited to the investigation of students' investment but is also expanded to language teachers' investment in learners' identity to negotiate their own identity, as done by Reeves (2009). In the contexts of language teaching, Ollerhead (2012) has also drawn on the constructs of investment and imagined communities to explore those pedagogical practices that enhance or limit learners' available identity positions. Various other studies in which Norton's work was used as a foundation include the contexts of EFL (English as a foreign language), ELF (English as a Lingua Franca), ESL (English as Second Language), and other academic and non-academic contexts.

Research in the field was not confined to some specific region but is widely dispersed in states of the world including California (McKay and Wong, 1996), United States (Skilton-Sylvester, 2002), Japan (Haneda, 2005), Singapore (De Costa, 2010), and many others. Emphasizing the role of power relations in learners' investment, Arkoudis and Davison (2008) highlighted the issue of complex identities in English as foreign language learners in China. Norton and Gao (2008) and Kanno and Norton (2003) also pointed out the fluidity of identity and the influence of imagined identities and imagined communities on learners' investment in target language.

However in the Pakistani context, a handful of researches have been carried out from the perspective of investment with students doing an undergraduate degree in English, lacking the focus on future imagined identities both inside and outside the educational spaces. One significant research in the local context was by Norton & Kamal (2003) to investigate the imagined communities of Pakistani middle school students and the relationship between their school's vision of pupils and students' personal identities. They observed that not only students but institutes also envision such communities where students will participate in future thereby, affecting students' identities as well the policies of the institute. It is precisely the influence of learners' future imagined identities on their present sense of self and investment in target language that necessitated the need to carry out the present research and to expand the notion in Pakistani context as well.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

As mentioned in first chapter, this study highlights the identity constructing and capital increasing nature of English language through increased spoken proficiency among undergraduate students during a four-year program. This chapter presents the theoretical and methodological framework of the study. Theoretical framework is grounded in Norton and Darwin's (2015) model of investment concerning the three core elements of identity, ideology and capital as an attempt to explore the combined effect of these components on students of a less investigated context. Methodological framework discusses the methods of data collection and analysis used in this research. This chapter also presents a detailed account of research instruments employed, setting of the research, information of the participants involved, transcription and translation practices and the processes through which the validity of research is ensured.

3.2 Research Design

The present study is of exploratory research design (i.e., to determine the nature of problem, develop a better understanding of it and provide the initial groundwork for future research), underpinned by an interpretive epistemological paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 2011) which perceives reality as multiple and understands it within a social context. Since the approach takes into account the subjective interpretations and experiences of participant's i.e., understand the reality from the point of view of the people who live in it, it is considered most appropriate to find answers of the research questions stated in the first chapter. The underlying idea of this approach is that the researcher is part of the research, interprets data and as such can never be fully objective and removed from the research. To capture "the socially constructed nature of reality" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 10) qualitative mode of inquiry is employed in this study, while the type of triangulation used is of multiple tools for data collection i.e., by using questionnaires and interviews. The

reason for triangulation is to corroborate the findings from both sources and to decrease the deficiencies and biases that come from any single method, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the results (Denzin, 2010). The purpose of choosing a qualitative research design is to ensure an in-depth understanding of participant's views and experiences with regard to the phenomenon under investigation. Further, to give voice to the overlooked perspectives of soon-to-graduate students of a highly reputed institute of Pakistan, use of narrative frames seemed to be an appropriate choice.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

The ways in which investment in English language influences the identities of language learners have been explored by a diverse number of scholars from different perspectives. Particularly, the construct of identity has been much explored by Norton from 2000 onwards in collaboration with other scholars. However, a recent model of investment presented by Darvin and Norton is unique in the sense that it brings together the concepts of identity, ideology and capital, a nexus that other scholars have missed out. For this purpose, Darvin and Norton's (2015) latest model of investment regarding identity and language learning is therefore employed as a theoretical framework for the proposed research. Norton has used the term 'investment' to explore students' commitment and desire to language learning and their relation to the target language and society (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Their model consists of three elements: identity, ideology, and capital (see Figure 1). These elements when taken together explain the construct of investment and the flow of power relations (Gordon, 2018). Norton (2015) has defined identity as "multiple, a site of struggle and continually changing over time and space" (p. 36); ideology as "a normative set of ideas" (p.43); and capital as "a tool of both social reproduction and

Figure 1.

Model of Investment



From Darvin and Norton (2015)

transformation” (p.44) that extends from material capital to social and cultural capital.

Following poststructuralist notions, Norton (2015) has also viewed ideology not as static but a dynamic entity. Ideology play a role in positioning individuals in a certain specific way that gives them privilege or marginalize them. It can also position learners on the basis of their identities. They have an effect on the fields students can participate in. An important aspect of ideology that was investigated in the study is how students perceive themselves to be positioned in relation to the importance of English language in an ESL context.

Like ideology, identities are also dynamic, are subject to change across time and space, and are constructed within language and social interaction (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Language learners construct and negotiate their identities every time they interact (Gordon, 2018). But it’s not always the case as certain identities are ascribed to learners during an interaction by the interlocutors and are intersubjectively constructed (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). In this study, the identity category examined is learner’s imagined identity and their use of existing English language proficiency which affords them symbolic power hence increasing their access to various resources.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Research Setting

Data for the research was collected from a well reputed traditionally been a languages-based; particularly English- based university in Pakistan. This institute is one of the highly recognized public sector universities situated at the heart of capital city of Pakistan, Islamabad. The reason for choosing this institute is its cultural and linguistic diversity including large population of students from all regions across and beyond Pakistan. Due to particular focus on languages it also provides them a chance to interact with international students. Based on the university’s admission criteria (evaluation of prior academic record and marks obtained in entry test and interview) it was assumed that students must have some competence in English language, hence,

making it an appropriate context for examining differences in the identities and perceptions of students about their present and future possible selves.

3.4.2 Participants

Participants selected for this study were from BS 8th semester morning and evening programs. All were studying English at the selected institute. Total number of participants was 112 selected through convenient sampling, out of which 20 were selected for interviews. All participants were required to fill the questionnaire after which interview participants were selected through purposive sampling i.e., those students were selected who had high, low or intermediate proficiencies. Efforts were made to include equal numbers of male and female participants nevertheless, the ratio of female participants was higher because of the greater number of female students enrolled in each class. Therefore, despite desiring equal number of genders, the purpose of study was not to look at gender differences but to have uniform views from both genders. Participants of the study were from different school backgrounds and had varied level of exposure to English language before getting enrolled in the degree. However, their diverse background was not a determining factor or criteria for their selection in the study rather was helpful for the study to explore their language learning experiences regarding their transforming identities as well as maintenance of power relations within and outside classroom context. The major rationale for choosing them is their enough exposure after spending four years in a specific program, current English language proficiency and readiness to enter into the imagined communities. Table 3.1 summarizes the information obtained from each participant before filling up the actual questionnaire. To retain participant's' anonymity pseudonyms were assigned to all the participants. Questionnaire participants were assigned pseudonyms 'S#' i.e., referring to the order of student in which they completed the questionnaire while interview participants were given cultural pseudonyms.

Table 3.1*Participants' Background Information*

Particulars	Category	Number of Participants	Percentage
Gender	Male	47	42%
	Female	65	58%
Age	18-20	3	2.7%
	21-23	12	10.7%
	24-26	97	86.6%
Mother Tongue	Urdu	20	17.8%
	Punjabi	53	47.3%
	Pashto	30	26.7%
	Other	9	8.0%
Medium of Instruction (MOI)	English	52	46.4%
	Urdu	14	12.5%
In prior education	English & Urdu	20	17.8%
	Other (including any of them)	11	9.8%

3.4.3 Framing Participants' in the Context

Taken into account Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of communities of practice (CoP), an approach to study participants within a context, students of the present study were located within a broader context of society and the specific context of classroom and institute in order to understand their experiences and practices from

the viewpoint of a community member and to understand the role of context in promoting or impeding participants' learning and identities.

3.5 Research Instruments

In accordance with the requirements of qualitative research, two methods were used to collect data in two phases, one in each. In the first phase, data was collected through the use of questionnaires and in second phase data was collected through interviews. These two research tools were used to enrich the quality and deeper understanding of data. These methods are discussed as follows:

3.5.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided into two sections i.e., background information, and a series of narrative frames. The first section of the questionnaire was structured as per various other surveys that ask for general information about the participants to be used later for analysis purposes. The second section of the questionnaire, narrative frames, were employed because of their efficacy for precisely capturing the stories of large number of the participants in a particular context (Barkhuizen, & Wette, 2008) and were designed to base on the three core elements of the theoretical framework of investment i.e., identity, ideology, and capital. This section of the questionnaire was adapted from Barkhuizen's (2014) article focusing on the use of narrative frames as a research instrument for language teaching and learning. However, the statements of questionnaire were formed by looking at the themes of my own research questions. Questionnaire with 11 narrative statements was designed on Google forms and distributed electronically through a link to WhatsApp group of students of each section of BS English 8th semester. The response rate of the students for filling in the questionnaire was as high as 90%. The number of students targeted was 150 while 130 students willingly filled the questionnaire from which 18 responses, due to being incomplete, were rejected so total 112 responses were included as part of the study. Efforts were made to include equal numbers of male and female participants selected on the basis of convenient sampling. Each participant was required to fill the questionnaire but only selected participants were interviewed. The selection for interview was mainly based on their current proficiency in English language in addition to their willingness to participate in present research which was requested along with other demographic information. Moreover, at the beginning of

questionnaire short summary containing information about the researcher, topic and purpose of study, instructions to fill the questionnaire and statement to ensure privacy was included. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, it was effectively investigated to avoid any double or confusing questions and was sent to a few graduates of another university so to eliminate any irrelevancy found or to inspect if all questions measure the same underlying construct. The questionnaire is included as appendix to this study.

3.5.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore students' present, past and future experiences. Each interview lasted minimum 13 and maximum 30 minutes of duration. Total number of interviews was 20, 11 from females and 9 from males. Participants for interview were selected on the basis of purposive sampling. Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face at the institute during class breaks while some interviews were taken over the phone call. At the beginning of each interview, I introduced myself and take participants' consent to record the interview with the assurance of maintaining anonymity. Therefore audio recording of interviews were made on mobile device to preserve the authenticity of responses and pseudonyms were assigned to intact their identity. Time of each interview was decided as per students' convenience i.e., mostly during the break between class slots when they had no class so not to disrupt their studies. Each interview began with participants' experiences regarding their investment in English language that leads to a set of premeditated questions. Interview questions were an expansion of narrative frames used in questionnaire. The questions were centered on participants' use of English language, improvements made so far, impact on perceived identities and the capital envisioned for them in future. All interviews were held individually so that participants could comfortably share their experiences.

3.5.3 Transcription and Translation

Most of the interviews were conducted in English for the purpose of knowing students' use of language and proficiency in English. Only three interviews were conducted in Urdu as per the convenience of participants. Later I transcribed and transliterated the data all by myself. Translation of Urdu excerpts was put in square brackets while the original text was italicized. All interviews were recorded on mobile

phone and later transcribed to be kept electronically in separate computer files labeled with the name of participants. Each recording was listened repeatedly to interpret the meaning. The type of transcription was edited with the purpose to focus more on the content, readability, conciseness, and clarity of the conversation. During transcription finer details like pauses, hesitations, repetitions, overlaps etc. were excluded whereas spelling and grammatical mistakes in few participants' responses were corrected and put under round brackets to better understand the content of data in order to validate the findings. Translations of Urdu excerpts were put in square brackets while the original text was italicized. To ensure the inter-rater reliability (Creswell, 2017) of the translated data, help was taken from my supervisor and a PhD student. They cross - checked my translations to ensure accuracy.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

In this section, general approach and methods drawn for the analysis of data is discussed mainly focusing on the processes of analysis of the data.

Analysis of the present study was carried out through six steps of thematic analysis, a method widely used for the analysis of qualitative data, prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Deductive approach to thematic analysis was used to find themes related to the core concepts of thematic framework i.e., identity, ideology and capital. Data obtained from both sources were analyzed collectively using same processes including familiarization of data through reading and re-reading transcribed data to understand the content thoroughly. After that meaningful codes in the form of key words and phrases were generated from the data. Then frequent and significant patterns were identified from codes to put within themes. Then the data within themes was checked to review and refine the themes further. Then a name for each theme was decided in relation to the theoretical framework of the study. At last arguments were generated to report the findings of the study regarding the themes, and research questions. However, because of the considerable amount of data obtained through both sources, only interviewed data was categorized according to the patterns found w.r.t. their interest, exposure and fluency in English language before getting enrolled in the degree. Their fluency was judged as per their own assigned number on the scale from 1-10. Fluency level of participants of group A was 6-9 (were able to

communicate a good deal in English), of group B was 3-5 (were able to understand and use some English expressions), and of group C was below 3 (were not able to communicate in English at all). Table 3.2 contains the aforementioned division.

Table 3.2.

Categorization of Interviewed Data

Groups	Criteria of division	Exposure to English	No of Participants
Group A	More interest and good fluency in English language	Largely exposed to direct interaction in home or school	05
Group B	More interest but relatively less fluency in English language	Somewhat exposed (directly or indirectly through movies, songs and reading novels)	06
Group C	Less interest and no significant fluency in English language	Little or no exposure (either direct nor indirect)	09

Group A include students from an English medium background. They were from private school where English was the medium of instruction. They were directly exposed to this language through communication in home or school environment. Both Group B and C include students from “vernacular medium” (Rehman, 2008) schools where they were taught English as a subject. Group B were slightly exposed to English language before getting enrolled in undergraduate studies mostly through media industry or reading. Group C had little to no English speaking exposure at all. Most of these students were first time being interacted to listening and speaking English in university.

Varied level of fluency and exposure to this language in spite of being taught at English medium schools highlights the inequality they faced in past which might impacted their identity and language competence later. Nevertheless the present study mainly seeks to explore the influence of English language ideology on participants' self-perceived capital and future imagined identities after getting an environment of equal exposure for four years.

3.7 Criteria for Evaluating Research

In order to ensure the validity of present research I draw on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for evaluating qualitative research as discussed below.

The credibility of present research is ensured by triangulating data collection methods through questionnaire and interviews; spent reasonable time in the field; and shared same setting with participants as a student and a researcher. To ascertain the transferability of research I presented a detailed description of the research setting, design, participants' background information and perceptions. For maintaining dependability adequate details of research procedures and the social context were provided to make sure if any other independent researcher evaluate the established evidence could reaches at similar inferences. Confirmability of present research is maintained by describing the processes implicated in data collection, analysis and interpretation. Audio recordings of data and corroboration of two scholars of translated data thereby increases the confirmability of the study.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented in detailed the methodology used in the present study. The chapter began with an explanation of the research design adopted in the study. It then described the theoretical framework followed by a comprehensive account of the participants and context selected for the research. Then the methods used for collection of qualitative data including questionnaire and interviews and thematic stages employed for the combined analysis of data were discussed in detail. Finally, the chapter was concluded with mentioning the measures took to ensure the reliability of present study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I report and discuss in detail the perceptions of soon-to-graduate English students regarding the influence of English ideology on the social and linguistic aspects of their identity along with their accessibility to future career goals. The ideology of English as a desired language has been the focus of this study. I aimed to highlight the dominant dispositions of the students regarding their behavior towards the need of learning English. Findings will also draw attention to the effect of medium of instruction in prior education and home environment on the extent to which students' improved during the course of the degree.

I have organized this chapter according to the themes I drew mainly from theoretical framework of the study and from the analysis of data. The data obtained from both sources: questionnaire and interviews were analyzed and discussed collectively with few themes focusing more, due to its richness, on interviewed data. Excerpts of data from questionnaire responses are referred with 'S#', whereas from interview responses with pseudonyms. This chapter has five main sections, dealing with themes related to the ideological effect of English on students' perceptions of language in general, and their identities and capital in particular. The chapter begins with the influence of English language ideology, discussed below.

4.2 Influence of English Language Ideology

Ideologies are the underlying beliefs; ideas or values held by a community or a society, almost no language can be learnt without getting influenced from the ideologies behind learning it. It is the case with learning English as well. Therefore, this section mainly deals with the relationship between student's future career objectives and the impact of English language ideology on their imagined identities. Several responses by the participants contain references to this ideological perception, corresponding to the first research objective of the study i.e., to determine the

influence of English language ideology on soon-to-graduate students of a university in Pakistan. From their responses, several sub-themes have been drawn which are discussed below.

4.2.1 Ideology of English as the Desired Language

In this rapidly developing world almost everyone is aware of the status of English language. So are the students of a particular English centered university. Answers to a simple question addressed to the participants about their reason for choosing BS English chiefly turns out to be their interest in English language and its status as a global language. Their reason for the choice of degree includes both instrumental and integrative aspects.

More than one-third of the participants explicitly stated their liking and interest in learning English as a key factor in their choice of career. They cited their inclination towards the language especially with reference to its international status. One of the student mentioned that English has always remained his first choice and intrigues him in all its forms (S29). There were also comments stating English to be “my favorite subject ever since I was a kid” (S44) and that “I loved English” (S104). Giving a detailed reason for choosing the said degree, one student (S92) specified that:

I wanted to be fluent, proficient, and skilled in English language. Moreover, I wanted to polish my skills that I possess to some extent in English Language. Furthermore, my interest in debates and speeches urged me to improve and explore more. (p. 3, lines 15-16)

Her comment not only voiced the reason for wanting to master English but also show her concerns about the identity she wants to carry in future given the existence of a strong link between the language most preferred and person’s identity. Likewise, from other statements, students seem to be conscious of the presence of an international community who speak this language. For instance, in agreement with Seidlhofer’s (2005) notion of “lingua franca”, a student also commented on the importance of English language as “it is a lingua franca a language that speaks and understands throughout the world” (S32).

In the same manner, further discussing this issue, another participant (S91) added more information emphasizing it to be “very important as it allows one to

communicate with global citizens” (S91). The student acknowledges the global spread and international status of this language which has turned it into a tool for communication. With this tool people are facilitated to interact to a wide range of populace worldwide.

Other students also view English language to be “the most preferred language now a days” (S15) and “best sour [*sic*] of communication” (S40). Commenting on its status, a student assumed it has “a God like status in the world of languages, so one has to be master in this field” (S112). These answers suggest that students were actually interested in what this language encompasses. It also show the value placed by participants on this language.

It is also important to mention that even the students who had little prior exposure to this language or did not opt this degree as a preference, have not refuted that it was already an important part of their lives. Most of the students had some link with this language in the form of reading literature, as Kainat whose mother used to read stories to her from birth. Likewise Maaz, who was interested in this language from childhood and during higher secondary level, developed a habit of reading literature and short stories end up choosing BS English. Similarly Shahzain opt for this degree because to him “this is a field that can actually awaken my knowledge, my instincts, my understanding of the world. So from that particular reason I did BS English.” (Shahzain, p. 1, lines 5-6) His passion clearly shows his desire not to be left behind and to keep pace with the fast growing world.

Although these students had an interest in the literature of this language yet not everyone was aware of the global status of this language before entering the university, as Fizza said:

As far as the use of this language on global level I was totally unaware. I got this knowledge when I entered university then I get to understand that at each and every platform, each and every media the only medium is English language (Fizza, p. 2, lines 3-5).

To her, learning English was not only a matter of learning a language, but also to gain access to the resources linked with this language. Moreover, out of 112 students who filled the questionnaire, only one-fourth were exposed to this language as medium of instruction in their previous education. Others were largely unwilling to

study English because they had different goals and wanted to pursue different disciplines for further studies like medical, IT, commerce etc. They came here either by chance or by getting inspiration or suggestion from someone else.

For instance, a student (Babar) told that: “I am just here because of my parents and my brothers, cousins. They suggested me but actually what I wanted to do was ... CA (*Chartered Accountant*)/ACCA (*Association of Chartered Certified Accountants*)”. Similar remarks were made by Hammad: “Actually I wanted to be a doctor. Unfortunately I couldn’t be able to pass the exam ... and I just took admission in (a reputed institute) BS English.” While a student commenting on the inspirational role played by her English teacher gave a reason that:

The teacher of English is always very elegant ... so I always wanted that; to have a personality, to have class in my personality. So from there then I knew that I want to do this (Fizza, p.1, lines 7-8)

Her comment clearly points out that in Pakistan English is a symbol of status. It shows that the suggestions or inspiration they received and acted upon eventually depends on the status of this language.

Therefore, the general notion behind student’s preference of studying English and adopting it as a field for higher studies seems to be connected to the significance of this language. This significance lies at two levels: as a global language (with integrative purposes) and for their personal selves where they want to get the benefits associated with this language (instrumental purposes) in return increasing their capital as well. As one student commented:

Now a days it's the most recognized language throughout the globe and there are many things which are only done in English and In order to be benefitted from them it's important for us to know this language (S54, p.3, lines 6-7).

This clearly shows that the ideology of English as the most important language in their life is constantly reminded to them both inside their homes and community; and outside in the street and academia. Their views correlate to Kachru’s (1986) “alchemy of English” according to which English provides social status as well as acts as a “powerful linguistic tool for manipulation and control” (p. 13-14).

4.2.2 Resourcefulness of English in Providing Opportunities

Status of English language worldwide is not the only reason that inspires students to get a degree in this language, it's also about the extended opportunities provided by this language in their local settings. Since it has become an official language of Pakistan "all the educational activities particularly at university level are carried out in English. So good command on it is very important for students to pursue higher education in Pakistan" (S34).

Students talked about the necessity of learning English in job market. To them "there is a lot of competition in English based jobs now" (S73); "wherever we go, for like jobs or interviews or anything else, we have to communicate in English" (S100) because "there are better chances you get a good job if one is proficient in English" (S99). Such responses reflect their awareness of the advantages associated with mastering this language and their acceptance of role played by the language worldwide.

Analysis of data further revealed that it is mostly instrumental drive (Baker, 2006) that compels them to invest in this language because "without English you can't progress in your professional life" (S1) whether it's about "to communicate with a wide variety of people, to adjust in any environment, or to go abroad for education, we need to learn this language" (S92). Students are very much aware of the current realities on how this language has become a need of the hour.

Some students also intend to explore and embrace every opportunity provided by this language. Like Zaira who said that "...before the field I was told that English is the kind of universal language and you get jobs everywhere. So I want to explore that in practical life". Her comment not only informs of her desire but also notifies about her future imagined capital and access to various resources afterwards. Because she observed English to be a:

Language which is used in business, science, technology, everywhere. So when you (know) how to speak in English, you can communicate with different people living in different country ...and in future I'm hoping that I'll get different job opportunities by doing this degree right. I'm hopeful. (Zaira, p.2, lines 10-12)

Their comments support Shamim's (2008) argument who considers English "the vehicle for achieving modernization, scientific and technological development and economic advancement for self and the country" (p. 216). All such comments reveal that students aspire to master this language emphasizing the career opportunities that this language and this degree could offer them in their country or abroad.

In addition to general opportunities, a large majority talked about specific motives lying beneath their apparent interest in learning English and mentioned that they had certain goals in mind to achieve while choosing this degree. For instance, one-third of the students wanted to appear in *Central Superior Service (CSS)* exams to get a government-level job that require having a good command on English language to excel. According to them learning this language will help in clearing all types of written tests like *Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC)*, *Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC)* etc. that are mandatory before getting a job or continuing higher studies and will help them in interviews afterwards. One of the students observed that English is

Very essential for passing CSS exams. You had [*sic*] to do Précis writing. You have to do essay writing. You have to learn how to make a thesis statement, how to research and things like these are very important in getting good grades in CSS and also another competitive exam like FPSC. So that's why I thought it would be a good idea to take admission in BS English. (Hammad, p. 1, lines 12-15)

Another student told that "because i want to become CSP (Chief Superintendent of Police) officer, this desire led me to this discipline." (S87). Most of the students, who were CSS aspirants, their "only purpose of studying BS English (was) to get good marks in CSS". (S39). Other than these goals, some students "wanted to become (an) English language professor" and to pursue their educational journey in the field of English literature (S95).

Some "wanted to become a writer", and their main aim was to improve writing skills. (S98). Others thought of improving English skills to help them in their communication and presentation skills (S88). Hence students most likely seek to be

provided with the opportunities to gain cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) with respect to the rest of their society and other graduates.

Some students also joined this degree program without having specific goals initially but later they come to know the significance of learning English to succeed in every domain of life. As in the case of a student to whom English “ was not my interest at first but then as I go with the semesters now I have accepted this that I have to do it no matter what” (Huda, p.1, lines 13-14). After accepting the role of English in providing social and cultural benefits as well as opportunities for further growth she started putting effort in learning this language. These students had varied level of investment in learning this language and developed weak identities comparative to their fellows (discussed later in 4.4 and 4.5). Hence, evidence shows their awareness of English being an international language providing range of opportunities is as a result of dominant ideologies prevailing in the society.

4.2.3 English as a Valued Resource

Proficiency in any language also had an effect on the social standings of speakers as an individual's status is also determined by the language they speak and how. English is considered a prestigious language all around the globe. It bears status not only to itself but also ascribe it to the speakers hence learning and attaining proficiency in this language in a developing country like Pakistani is regarded much valuable. It grants repute and esteem to its speakers. The main reason can be the fact that it is not easily accessible to everyone in general so the ones who speak it are given privilege over others.

Because of dominant ideologies, students are positioned by the social status they have in society. Just like other factors by which an individual is given position in a society, social status obtained from the language they speak is one of them. The way an individual speaks is one of the prevailing notions on which learners' are perceived by others. As Khaliq (2007) argued that English is used as a symbol of status. Therefore, even though all participants aimed to the future career possibilities that pursuing this degree would offer them, when further discussing the role of English in their lives, it was noted that instrumental reasons (Gardner, 1985) were not the only factor that drove them to get enrolled in this degree.

Interestingly, majority of participants stated that the real motive behind their decision was something else that they wanted to gain from learning English. English seems to be giving them sense of supremacy and power over others. Thus, the status ascribed by English language to its speakers mattered to the participants equally alongside its instrumental drives.

Students were very well aware of the fact that learning English is not only important for their career but are also helpful in giving them recognition at national and international level. In fact, one participant explained that for him:

English is considered a language of sophisticated and elegant people, and also a trend language. (S62)

Through stating English as a language of cultured and refined people, the student asserts the authority and domination of this language. It is furthermore an indication to the presence of linguistic imperialism where people accept themselves to be subjugated by their superiors. This mindset has been there from centuries and it's still not changed. They reflect that this language

Has been the standard and it will continue to be in the coming years. (S49)

It point towards the dominance of English leading to inequality of power between languages (Phillipson, 1992). Understanding the role of English in Pakistani context a student said that when we are able to speak and write better English

We are quite naturally supposed to feel intellectually superior in a society like Pakistan. (S77)

The student sees English as a mark of social prestige in Pakistan. Given these remarks, it is also important to locate the role of English language in Pakistan. English, for a long time, has been a language of power in Pakistan. After declaring English an official language, Pakistan can be classified to be a part of Kachru's (1986) Outer Circle, i.e., countries where English plays an official or institutionalized role.

The responses propose that in addition to the worldwide attribution of power relations, students have recognized its importance to the speakers of local context as well. Another student said that by speaking English "we get more appreciation" (S56). Most of the students feel "proud while speaking (English) in class as well as with

foreigners” (S37) and “prioritized in every way” (S12). It shows that they are conscious of the value it can give to their personal selves and the way they will be perceived by others. For them, status-assigning feature of this language is as important as other benefits. Therefore, in relation to the role that English has achieved universally, participants want to pursue a field where they feel not to be left behind.

On the contrary, few students also commented on the hegemonic role played by this language in their local setting. They said that:

The dilemma of nowadays society (is) that people consider those people literate who are good English speakers. (S73)

Sadly it is not just considered a language, it is considered a skill. (S44)

Unfortunately we have made it standard to get better of everything in society like better job, better university to study for, better school to send your child to. (S54)

They discussed how they are looked down upon and are judged negatively and harshly by everyone even their classmates, teachers and the society only because they are unable to speak good English. In this way it has become a cause of discrimination between students with good and average English speaking skills and exerts its dominance over many aspects of their lives. It takes control over their consciousness and increases their dependency upon English language (Tsuda 1996).

Even though, they are aware that “it has become the requirement of the society now” (S10) still think “it is not the measure of intelligence” (S71). So for them no matter how important this language is, they should never be judged on the basis of English proficiency. They consider such assumptions of society as problematic and inappropriate. Another student believes:

We shouldn't bind ourselves to show the superiority over others as it is with many graduates. They started thinking themselves superior and others being inferior (S8, p. 4, lines 32-33)

Students seemed to hold the view that English, like all other languages, should only be considered as a tool of communication and not more than that. This view implies the presence of dominant ideology imposed on them against their will. It indicates that they must have experienced such behaviors where respect and

acknowledgement is only given to those who speak better English. Therefore, even if intuitively, they are mindful of the benefits that mastering this language entails. Hence their actions and thinking is in accordance with the predominating English ideology.

As a result, significance of this language seems to lie on two levels: its importance in the world and its importance for oneself. Taking into account the data excerpts presented above, the global status of English as well as students' imagined identities, plays generally a determining role to their interest towards this language. Therefore, participants' reasons for liking or being interested in English language appear to go beyond the language itself. This is in consonance with the notion of research findings from other studies in Pakistan such as those by Haider (2018), Khan (2018), Channa & Manan (2015), etc. For the reason that participants also addressed identity issues, career possibilities, future imagined goals, prestige given to them and the status of this language in the world as the factors that led them to like this language and pursue a degree in it. All these factors are interlinked and will be further discussed in next sessions.

4.3 Prevailing Identities

Another theme that emerged from data, answering first research question of the study, is how students position themselves in response to the pre dominant ideology of English language. The process of negotiating a person's identity is closely related to the language one speaks since identities are socially constructed so the medium used to create them plays vital role (Norton, 2000). Since every student has a unique identity. A few questions were asked in both questionnaire and interviews keeping in mind this major theme of looking into their identities. Student's existing sense of self has been examined by observing their current English language proficiency, level of confidence, critical approach and social aspects of their identity.

4.3.1 Relation between Language and Identity

To investigate whether students' beliefs on the relation between language and identity are aligned or distanced with Norton's views i.e., "to invest in a language is to invest in an identity" (2002, p.43), a general question 'Do you think language has anything to do with the identity?' was asked during interviews. In response to this, a student said

I think language does affect our identity because the way we speak, the way we behave, it is also imposed by the language that we're speaking ... my English language knowledge will tell me that how am I to react on things that are happening around ... (Zaira, p. 4, lines 8-10).

According to Zaira, language teaches us the manners of what to say and, how to say it in different contexts. It informs us about the formal and informal discourses. The way we think and act can be shaped by the language we speak. So language is not only a tool to share your thoughts and ideas but in addition help us to construct an identity. Reinforcing this view another interviewee believes that:

The language you give more importance to or more priority to, it actually shapes your identity in a way that you start thinking in that language, you start acting in a different way because it connects you to a different culture and you try to adjust yourself in that culture, adjust yourself in that language (Tania, p. 3, lines 17-18)

As she has stated, language asserts the identity of an individual. By using a particular language, people can identify themselves to the culture and can shape their worldview. It can give them a sense of belonging to a specific nation as it acts as a unifying force in determining the identity of people (Davies, 2003). Another convincing comment by a student went like this:

I think when we are trying to learn a language, we acquire some of the morals and some of the culture of that language too because we usually access that through literature or movies and all that. So I think we take in their morals and cultures and it affects our worldview. (Anaya, p. 2, lines 25-27)

Some other students clearly think that “the way you talk determine who you are” (Ayan). He prompts that people not only judge you by how you look but how you speak. Continuing his point he said “You actually tell everything by the way you speak. It’s about the choice of words (that) depicts what you are and how (who) you are” (p. 5, lines 2-3). His stance is in line with Norton’s views on the process of identity construction. He held a view that the act of speaking is not merely for the exchange of information, rather a creation of a sense of who they are in relation to the world.

All the said responses illustrate participants' general understanding of the impact a language has on person's identity. However, one student expressed otherwise. He did not believe that a person's identity can be changed by language. Supporting his belief he said:

My personality is something that is mine. I don't think language can change it. Though it definitely change(s) your ideas, but not that much that your whole personality get(s) changed. (Danish, p. 4, lines 28-29)

He has the stance that if a person starts accepting everything he read, only then it is going to be a part of one's identity. But this is not the case with him, he said, because he does not take the influence of literature and philosophies, comparing himself with another boy who used to absorb the knowledge with a clear impact on his personality. He believes, this is because he just studies the concepts for the sake of understanding without taking any impact from it. He also has a strong association with his regional community and regional language. He was proud to be a Pashto speaker and does not want himself to be identified to any other group. His love for mother tongue and affiliation to his community and region does not allow him to recognize with people of any other language.

Hence, the above mentioned comments clearly indicate that participants are very much mindful of the impact that learning a language has on constructing one's identity by the way they speak and behave, corresponding to Wenger's (1998) notion of learning as "the formation of the identity" (p. 96).

4.3.2 Positive Impact of English on Participants' Identity

Relating previous section to present, students' perceptions particularly about the effect of English language on their own identities are examined. The question 'In what way or how do you think English has influenced your identity?' was addressed only during interviews. In response to this question, most of the students expressed changes in their way of thinking, and general perspectives of looking at the world. For instance, Zaira said

I personally think that it has improved my personality. My sense of words like I have begin to appreciate things... I have developed this habit of thinking like understanding things deeply or even human, I have improved my human communication.. (Zaira, p. 3, lines 11-13)

English has not only improved her personality but also enriched her understanding of different life events. Specific aspects of students' identity and personality that gained influence from learning English was increase in their self-confidence. Almost all the students were of the view that this language has helped them in becoming more confident which they were not before. As Fizza elucidated that

Confidence is the key because otherwise if you are speaking it with confidence then automatically the next person standing in front of you would admire you (Fizza, p.2, lines 8-9).

Bareera's remark on this question was:

I feel myself much more confident and I have again self believe because of this language. Now since I'm proficient in speaking in it so I don't feel like lacking behind anything. I feel I'm more confident to speak up and raise my problem, my issue, my stance on anything. (Bareera, p. 5, lines 15-17)

She has linked her mastery of English language to self-believe and confidence. In her view, English has a positive impact on her identity since it allows her to keep pace with the emergent phenomena and situations at hand. Then again, Tania's identity took more influence of the culture of this language as she expressed:

I think if I hadn't given more importance to English I wouldn't be the same... when I started giving more importance to English I started to get inside that culture. I learned about it. I started observing different things at that culture. (Tania, p. 4, lines 10-12)

She undoubtedly expresses a positive shift in her personal self. Like others, learning English has enhanced Shahzain's personality as well. It has made him more realistic and true-to-life, a person who "looks at different kinds of things from the perspective of literature." His comments draw attention to the fact that literature being an important aspect of a language also has an effect on individual's personality. These views highlight that English is and has been an integral part of their lives.

Focusing more on the status of English language one student said that "language brings up the power and (knowing) the language that is a standard it gives you more motivation that you have already learned the language" (S49). His view

aligns with Pennycook's (1995) reference to the power of English functioning as a gatekeeper to the transmission of supremacy and prestige to its speakers.

Discussing how and in what way has English language influenced their minds, way of thinking and identity as a whole, a student commented:

It has changed my thinking, it has changed my ideologies, it helped me look in a very different way, to look behind the wall I will say. So yes it has influenced on all the things, on all the ideologies that I follow currently in my life ... Related to my thinking, related to my ideologies, how I perceive this world, how I perceive each and every regime that is being occurring in this world. So in all the aspects (Dania, p. 4, lines 22-25)

On the contrary, when she was particularly asked about the identity this language has helped her in getting, she presented her argument in following words:

Instead of just dividing people into different identities, like she's speaking second language or native language or mother tongue or all these things, Instead of it we should say that this language helps us to communicate. (p. 5, lines 1-2)

She held the view that language should not act as a dividing force as per which to segregate them in groups rather it should be considered as helpful in bringing people close to each other so to interact without judging them on the basis of language. This implies that she is taking a strong stance by reducing language to sounds and words. Interestingly, scholars such as Mehboob (2018) also prescribe to this idea of making language a neutral phenomenon. Relating students' identity to improvement in their language proficiency is discussed below.

4.3.2.1 Strengthened Linguistic Identity. Considering language to be an important aspect of one's personality this section looked into the development of students' identity with respect to English language proficiency. One way of knowing about their existing sense of selves in relation to English language is to ask about their current proficiency level in English. Assuming their language fluency to be directly related to their self-perception or in other words to their identity, a question asked during interviews and questionnaire was: 'How far your English has improved after spending four years in English centered university?' Students reported to develop different levels of proficiency with respect to their prior exposure to English language.

Those students, group A, who were already exposed to this language, improved less compare to the rest. The point worth noting here is that though slight but they still experienced improvement in their speaking skills. It later reveals that with increase in their proficiency level increases their positive sense of self and they acquire a strong linguistic identity. As one student of this category said:

I think my reading or writing hasn't much improved. I think it was all right even before I came to university, but I think there's been some improvement in my speaking. I think I wasn't confident enough in speaking in English before I came to the university, but it's better now. (Anaya, p. 2, lines 13-15)

In the same way a student while commenting on her improvement said that before coming to this institute:

I was able to speak..*esa b ni hai k* [it's not that] I wasn't able to speak at all. I was able to but I was not confident but right now ... I'm communicating with you I'm comfortable I'm confident (Fizza, p. 1, lines 19-20)

Another student who had enough exposure in English and used to write before getting admission here told that "it has improved so much of my sentence structure... I actually learned the depth of sentence structure" (Tania). She told that she already knew the basics of English language, just needed some assistance to polish her language skills. These students prior exposure to this language proved fruitful in continuing with the same positive sense of selves.

In contrast students from group B and C, who had less former contact with English language, observed major changes in their language competence like Alisha

who thinks “before that I was not too much confident in speaking. I was hesitant, but now I’m not hesitant... I have improved a lot.” Shahzain also said that “I’m talking to you in English that would have never happened if I stayed in Tonsa [place] so all of the skills have improved” (Shahzain). He has also given credit to the institute that has given him the environment to polish his skills.

A significant percentage of students, both in questionnaire and interviews, were of those who think they are still

struggling in my fluency but the time in my first semester and if compared to the last semester it is quite improved now but still there is a vacuum of improvement (Hadi, p.1, lines 12-13)

Similarly, a number of other students mentioned that their proficiency has enhanced much which has clearly a positive impact on their linguistic identity since they have made progress in the language they will be identified with in the society. However, they still believe a need for further improvement in order to get as fluent as possible which is positive in itself as it shows their desire and passion to get better.

4.3.3 Negative Impact of English on Participant’s Identity

Besides having positive influences of learning English, being unable to be skilled at it up to the required level of proficiency also impacts learners’ identity in a negative way. Among majority of students few students, who had less or nearly no exposure to this language in prior education and could not improved much either later, developed to have less confident identities.

A student from group C, who thinks him not to be good enough in comprehending this language and shows concern about not being fluent, said “I don’t know whether I am good with my fluency, but I may feel reluctant whenever I am presenting” and “I feel about myself that I am not good at all in the comprehension” (Shahid). In spite of this he thinks that he “can communicate for the survival you may say”. Talking about the reason he added further,

Maybe that is the pressure of my fellows or whatever the circumstances are, maybe I am not prepared, but I think that I am not good in fluency too (p. 2, lines 18-20).

His vagueness, uncertainty in fluency and insecurity to communicate on the basis of need evidently indicates ambiguous, less confident and conflicting identity. One more student who portrayed himself less competent said:

There is no perfection in it (English speaking skill). I even learn things, day by day and I'm not saying that I'm perfect or good. I am in learning phase. (Arham, p. 1, lines 14-15)

The above mentioned responses were from students who in spite of being less confident interacted in English during the interview. On the contrary there were those students too who on the one hand, believed to have improved in the use of language on the other hand, preferred to give interview in Urdu. These students' narratives explicitly indicate negative effects of knowing a language without being able to communicate in it. For example Huda while talking about her confidence to carry the identity of BS graduate responded:

It is not an easy task I would say it is not an easy task. *Agar mein ubi bana to lon k thek hai* [if I pretend at the moment that] I can speak English very well, no I can't do that. (p.3, lines 22-23)

Data has also revealed that English not only bring people close to one another but can also be the cause to create distances between friends. For instance, Kainat, a female student with low English proficiency, lost a good friend only because she could not understand her often-used English expressions. She could not respond properly hence English became a source of miscommunication and created a negative memory of losing a friendship, as shown in the following extract from her interview:

Mjy us ki kuch batein sahi sy samajh ni aany lagi or respond ni karny lagi to wo bond you know khatam ho gaya [I couldn't understand and respond to everything she used to say. So by the end our bond ended] (Kainat, p2, lines 13-14)

Moreover, her friend circle also observed to be small comprised mostly of Urdu speaking peers. It seemed that during other classroom activities Kainat also preferred to use Urdu more because she later mentioned that if you couldn't give presentations in English teachers deduct your marks and other fellows make fun of you. Her indirect comments point towards some hidden feelings of guilt and regret reason of which was to not being a skillful user of English.

In addition to the peer pressure inside the classroom, few students also shared their experiences of facing criticism from friends of previous circle outside the institute. When they speak English in front of them they ridicule them for doing so. One interviewer quoting his friends told that they say “*Ap english hamary samny bol rahy hen to ap zada angraz na banen to ap Punjabi mein bat kren hamary sath*” [Don’t try to sound like an English speaker. Talk to us in Punjabi]” (Arham, p.1, lines 27-28). Being friends with people who don’t value speaking or listening English proved not be useful in their learning and developing competence, but instead such behavior proved destructive for students’ motivation and desire to improve.

Another important subject matter emerged during an interview with Tania, i.e., losing identity linked with her mother language. She stated that in her attempt to get proficient in English “I didn’t give that much importance to Urdu or my native language”. This implies that she values not only language but its cultural and moral effects on a person as she in her comment discusses (mentioned in section 4.3.1) the influence of language on person’s identity. It shows that besides having less confident linguistic identities, English language also had a negative impact on students’ loss of regional language.

Similar remarked about the loss of mother tongue as a disadvantage of learning English. Giving a detailed account Maaz stated:

The first and I think it is the only disadvantage that I’m multilingual (with Pashto being native tongue, Urdu second and English third language). Speaking a 3rd language made me confuse in my other languages too so when I speak Urdu there are many words of English which I use so it’s affecting my Urdu proficiency. Similarly it’s also affecting my Pashto. The most effected language is my native language because when I speak Pashto there are a lot of words from English and Urdu so that would be the only disadvantage. (Maaz, p.3, lines 18-24)

Much work has been done on the issue of loss of cultural values and identity inextricably linked with the mother tongue due to the presence of an international language. Significant contributions were made by Cummins (1996), Norton (1998, 2000), Baker (2001), Austin (2006), to name a few. Thus, it is evident from above mentioned participants’ comments that knowing but not being proficient in English

language negatively affects students' personality and sense of belonging to a specific culture and community.

4.3.4 Impact of Learning English on Ethnic Identity

An important aspect that comes to light during data analysis was the emergence of strong ethnic identity of Pashtoon speakers. Pashto participants of the study were very proud on their ethnicity. They had deep love for their mother tongue and a strong sense of association with their community.

When Pashto speaking students were asked if you want to be identified as part of English speaking community, they said although this language is good and helped them in improving it but they never want to leave their Pashto identity behind. They are proud on their present identity and want to be associated "definitely (to) my Pashtun society" (Danish). He assigns equal value to both languages (English and Pashto) but associating Pashto with his ethnic group wants to be recognized with them. Similar phenomenon was evident in study conducted by McCreary, Slavin and Berry (1996).

A point worth discussing here is that although he is not interested to take up an identity associated with some other language however when he goes back to his native town he enjoys the status given to him due to speaking English language. It shows that either willingly or unwillingly English language plays an important role in his life.

Another Pashto speaking student, Ayan, explicitly stated that when he is speaking his native tongue he is the best version of himself because while conversing in his native language he has no fear of being wrong and can communicate in front of hundreds of people easily while comparing it to English he feels hesitant and fearful of being judged. For him, it is easier to express himself fully in Pashto language than in other languages. However, his second most preferred language, when interacting to any Urdu-English bilingual, is still English. It brings to light the inclination towards the use of English language and its importance in his personal life.

Talking about the different perspectives people have for languages and the way it impacts one's identity especially with reference to Pashto, Hadi expressed his view that the society has differentiated people on the basis of the languages they speak. He added that:

If you speak in English they would think you are an educated person but if you speak in Pashto they would think you are not educated person or if you speak in Urdu. So people have different perspectives about different languages you speak so yeah that is because usually in Islamabad I have seen that speaking with their children in English so *ab is mein* [this is about] what you are taught in childhood, has impact on you. But we have been taught in Pashto so it has impact on us and it will be remain till the end of the day. (Hadi, p.4, lines 21-26)

Discussing the general perceptions of Pakistani public towards the three widely used languages in Pakistan, he maintained his identity by concluding with the assertion of being a Pashto speaker. His assertion aligns with Norton's (1997) account on the way identity is constructed by the way one speaks.

The aforementioned responses of participants illustrated that language has an impact on the way learners position themselves with respect to proficiency and preference given to them, hence, proclaim a strong linguistic or ethnic identity. It was evident from the data that more proficient students were more confident in their identity while less proficient students had weak or muddled identities. It point towards the relation between English language and participants' identity.

4.4 Identity: A Site of Struggle

This section addresses the issue of participants' self-proclaimed identities in comparison to their peers. The analysis focuses on how do students identify themselves on the basis of English language proficiency in contrast to their classmates and to what extent they are aware of the importance of this language in negotiating identities. It investigates their responses on the narrative statement of questionnaire: "When I compare my English to other classmates"; and on few relevant questions in interviews. As it is believed that every individual allocate themselves different positions when engaging in different context and people of a community, through the use of language, therefore, this section emphasizes the ways in which participants of the study do so by positioning themselves, and others. The reason for taken into account the students' identities in comparison to their class mates is that Delanty pointed out:

The contemporary understanding of the self is that of a social self formed in relations of difference rather than of unity and coherence. Identity becomes a problem when the self is constituted in the recognition of difference rather than sameness (Delanty, 2003, p.135)

4.4.1 I versus Them

An analysis of the way students perceive themselves (identity they ascribe to themselves) compared to their peers, and how they think their peers as “others” perceive them is the focus of this section in order to investigate how students differentiate themselves from their peers.

Participants explicitly mentioned that they feel degraded only because they don't have a good spoken expression and are not fluent enough. They mostly distinguished themselves from other classmates on the basis of their academic efficiency and English expertise. For instance a student reporting his experience said:

When I compare my English to other classmates I feel very degrade and discouraged. I always think they know better than (I do) and whenever you started thinking like that your confidence level lessens as is with me (S8, p.1, lines 14-15)

Losing confidence and feeling dejected reflects an identity that led them to position themselves as disadvantaged (Lavé & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). It is also an outcome of the predominating English ideology and shows an unequal sense of belonging to the (English speaking) community (in this case their class fellows). Almost one-third participants expressed that their peers “are better than me because they had good educational facilities from their childhood” (S25). Below are few more extracts that show their feelings of being inferior:

I under-estimate myself just of the fact that I'm still not good at it (English) (S66)

I feel really bad, anxious and depressed. This is the reason of my low self-esteem and inferiority complex. (S46)

I learn less than others and the major factor of this shortfall is shyness and less grip in this field before university admission. (S112)

But still there are many good students around me who speak English fluently and when I compare my English with other classmates I feel like I still need to improve alot. (S45)

These students' anxiety and low self-esteem is due to their incompetency in English fluency. They feel themselves to be inadequate which has a certain effect on their identity as well. Further explaining the feelings, a student (S77) told that he “do not feel confident to speak in English around them (peers)” and feel “like I am lagging behind because of the lack of confidence”.

Participants told that they lack confidence only in speaking English and are good in expressing themselves in writing from and agree that their language anxiety will have an impact on the access to opportunities provided in future as well as their imagined identity. Knowing this fact a student said he feel:

Slightly lagging behind because my classmates have amazing vocabulary and spoken frequency (S44).

These were the few responses of questionnaire statement through which students asserts that differences in English proficiency is a source of embarrassment for them because they could not reach the required level of proficiency. Whereas on the basis of categorization made of interviewed students, students of group A being more proficient in English used to receive positive and encouraging remarks from their fellows, teachers and every outside circle they participated in, while students of other two groups being less proficient felt differentiated on every occasion. Two of the group A students, Tania and Fizza, telling about the comments they receive from friends and classmates stated (respectively):

When I give presentations I always perceived positive comments from classmates. They always come to me and they are like your presentation was good. It was really nice. You communicated very well. We understood the whole thing ... I think my classmates think that I am good at it. Good at these skills of English (Tania, p.4 ,lines 34-36)

They say that I can become an influential speaker I have that stance because I believe in logics ... plus again confidence is the key... (Fizza, p.6, lines 5 and 8)

On the other hand, students of group B and C visibly expressed their views based on distinction. For instance, a student Bareera giving general remarks on her perception of how other students look upon you when you can't speak confidently said:

Since we see anybody having lack of confidence we find them as we can say dumb or we say that this person is going to leave and they are going to end with it. I don't want to be friends with that person (p.4, lines 18-20)

The same student drawing a comparison, reckoning "others" on a fortunate position, said:

Because they were completely from private schools where they used to speak English but I was from a government college where the course was only in English and we used to speak Urdu so I wasn't much confident at that time (p.4, lines 18-19).

However, instead of being embarrassed by her lack of English proficiency, she regarded it as a challenge to improve herself and "later from like second semester I worked on myself and I did get my position back and now I find myself much more comfortable" (p.3, lines 6-8). Another student distinguished him and his class fellows from the ones with exposure to foreign state and enhanced linguistic capital, pointed out that:

Exceptions are always there. We have a fellow whose background, she has been in Europe, till O' level and (in) first semester when I heard her I was confused at what I am going to do in this class, but I think I am in the middle somewhere (Shahid, p.3, lines 27-29)

At beginning, his comment point towards a general observation that people with foreign exposure have excellent command on English that cannot be attained by the ones living in local contexts. But later he himself refused the notion and assumed himself on average that is still a privileged position which can provide him with some access to imagined identity and capital. So the identities either positive or negative are constructed by the language they are learning resulting in higher or lower academic achievement.

Hence, the analysis of data revealed that considering English fluency as a factor of distinction, students are aware of being dissimilar and judged owing to the

differences in language competence and background (family, environment, exposure). Similar study, where students distinguished themselves from their peers, was conducted by Myles and Cheng (2003) in a different context. But in spite of being at a less advantaged position they still discern that their access to resources, though limited, is helpful in negotiating a positive sense of self.

4.4.2 Fluidity in Identity

I would say that I'm the post-modern person who has no identity and I'm multi-identical you should say. (Dania, p.5, lines 3-4)

This section focuses on the influence of English language learning on changing student's identities and attitudes towards the world. It particularly takes into account the self-perceived changes in their personalities during four years as per their responses to an interview question 'what changes have you perceived in your identity after learning English' (comparing their present and previous self).

After spending time in learning English, students stated changes in their self-perceptions, society, and way of thinking as, Norton &, McKinney (2011) emphasizes that learner's investment in target language is similar to the investment in their own identities that are constantly changing. Change in identity is important in positively effecting students' personal development, improved sense of self and access to forms of capital. It is only by mastering a language that learners can gain all the benefits associated with it whether in form of financial profits, cultural acknowledgement or getting more possibilities of expanding their social circle.

Few students, who had prior exposure to this language and engaged in former English interactions, did not feel confident enough when getting enrolled in BS English. Their confidence of speaking English increased over the course of the degree. While few students had very limited or no experiences of participating in real English use. A clear difference can be seen in their perceptions of their past and present selves. However their confidence and self-perception does strengthen over the course of the degree.

In interviews they provided information regarding their initial and later degree of authority with respect to speaking English, as in the following extracts by Huda:

I still remember in first semester our teacher said that you have to write essay on this topic and I didn't know even single word to but *ubi koi aa kr boldy na*

k essay likh den ub jesy teachers hen wo quiz dy dety hen k novel apny read kiya h to likh kr den mjy apny words m [at present if anyone ask to write an essay like our teachers used to give us quizzes to write in our own words about the novel we have read] I can do that easily. (Huda, p.1, lines 36-38)

Similarly in Bareera's case "There used to no fluency in my language in terms of English as it is now." In the data, there was also some contradiction in participant's' responses in a way that when asked directly about the changes, they responded negatively having no change but in answer to other related questions they clearly stated they were "not that much confident" and "lacked using specific vocabulary items" however,

When I stepped in university I got exposure. My writing skills and my speaking skills both of them they got improved. (Fizza)

When asked about the reasons of improvement in their proficiency and changes in identity, they gave credit to both environment and the academia. In addition to this they specifically mentioned the role of "presentations they gave me confidence which I lacked behind so they groomed my personality overall."(Fizza)

Another student, Mayra, who believed language in general does not play any significant role to "shape your ideas or concepts that much when you are talking about practical fields", on the contrary commented that English has changed the way she used to look at herself before learning it.

Earlier I was not confident at all but now when I see myself I feel like I am developing into the self I used to idealize and I'm happy about this. It has changed me a lot because I can see into my personality when I was in matric when I was doing intermediate I was not the way I am right now. I can speak confidently and ultimately this specific field English literature has changed my overall concept of the society as well (Mayra, p.2, lines 16-20)

Hence she has acknowledged the role played by English language in changing her identity. She maintains that if it was not for English, she would not have succeeded in getting that personality. However changes in participant's' views about outside world also symbolizes the dominant effect this language entails. Below are the few excerpts of students' responses comparing their past and present selves:

Before learning English, I think my worldview was very narrow and it was confined to just the place I was living in, but after learning about different cultures and all that, I think it has broadened my mind. (Anaya, p.2, lines 10-11)

I would say that there is this 180 degree (change). Because I think when I arrived here I considered myself at zero point and now I consider myself 180 degree because I have changed a lot totally. What I thought before and what I think now is totally different. I am a total different person sitting in front of you from the first day I walked in. (Ayan, p.3, lines 22-24)

Few students were of the view that they couldn't shift or change their identities due to the image set in class from beginning. It was difficult for them to dismantle that image. On the other hand, when they are in a different class (context) where nobody knows anything about them it is easier to construct an influential identity. For instance Danish said:

I'm currently taking one course in afternoon. In that class, I'm quite I don't know what happened to me I can speak, I can talk to but here in my own class I don't quite get it ... Maybe they are all strangers for me, so I'm confident that they don't know who I am. I can speak fluently ... I quite clearly I can make anyone understand, but in my own class I'm not that good. Context is everything (Danish, p.3, lines 9-12)

Similarly Yasmeen, whose section changed during the degree said that after change in section "there was new me". Another important comment that aligns well with the theme and poststructuralist notion of identity is as follows:

I'm the post-modern person who has no identity and I'm multi-identical you should say ... before I had many identities like I could say that I'm a Pakistani, I'm a Muslim, I'm this and that. I still am definitely but I think that humanity is something that comes prior to all of these things (Dania, p.5, lines 3-7)

Dania's views reinforced Weedon's (1987) assertion about the nature of identity as multiple, changing and a site of struggle. Because of the dynamic nature of identity, it does not remain constant and is constructed across different contexts and spaces. Dania, through the use of term "multi-identical", also asserts that she recognize herself in multiple ways in relation to the external world (Norton, 2010).

In the aforementioned cases a clear shift in identity can be observed in response to change in contexts and time intervals. The responses point towards the enhanced aspects of their self which developed and strengthened over time. The data presented above strengthens poststructuralist notions by showing participants' awareness of the transformation in identity that allowed them to discover future possibilities.

Students' comments also reveal their mindfulness about the changes they have endured and the significant development in their relationship with English. Keeping in mind that language and identity are always bound to each other, students' quotes strongly align with the idea of "identity as a site of struggle" because when learners invest in the learning of a target language they keep on negotiating power associated with each identity thus, identity and investment both are in a state of flux (Norton, 2015, p.37).

4.4.3 Role of Institutes in Shaping Identities

Socioculturalists assert that learning of a language takes place within a social and a physical context with a significant effect on evolving learners' identity. This notion was also emphasized by Norton and Toohey (2002), as in language learning context L2 learners take part in social practices which effects their identity as a whole (Wu, 2017). In present study the physical and social context is the institute and the classroom. Context plays a vital role in providing individuals with unique set of experiences and activities to participate which in turn shape their identities. The context can accord or delimit student's access to various resources constructing their identity as well as increasing capital (Chang, 2009). Therefore, it's important to identify the function of context in shaping students' identity and capital.

In the present study given institute has a great reputation among Pakistani students for its language related courses offered, curriculum and teaching methods and also as an only English –centered university in Pakistan. Greater percentages of students take admission every year to improve the desired language competence. Although students came here to learn various languages offered however the ratio of students learning English is the most dominating here. Because of the name and recognition of the present institute, almost all of the students were conscious of the importance of degree a degree from here. They were of the view that they can easily

impress others by simply telling them the name of their institute. Voicing everyone's opinion, one student commented that:

... not only language this place also has a lot of name. Like when you say I am from (present institute) they won't even ask me questions. They would say *sahi hai* He got a degree from (a reputed institute) (Danish, p.2, lines 24-25)

Students assert the importance of studying in a reputable institute and possessing a degree in a globally recognized language also increased their cultural capital because, the present university is known to have an English-dominant culture where English is favored among students in academic spaces. The institute provide them environment to voluntarily communicate in English with their friends. Furthermore, most of the opportunities provided to them during class activities, discussions and presentations are in English. It allows them to practice interactions and get experiences to construct strong linguistic identities.

Majority of students were confident that their speaking has improved to a greater extent and helped them in getting respect in the community. For instance, reflecting on the view of being given social status and prestige to them due to speaking English, a student responded:

I won't say social status but it really did helped me a lot my family my parents and other relatives they mostly think that I am good at writing so they really appreciate me in front of other(s) (Tania, p.3, lines 13-15)

It fosters that they have developed linguistic identities and will sustain it but still believe that there is a room for improvement. So the students here exhibit differing degree of confidence as English speakers.

However, it was observed from the findings of data that other than few, only those students, who were already exposed to English speaking environment, developed greater academic and speaking skills and attempt to construct an identity through their efforts to speak in academic spaces because of its preference in the environment. While others, even after spending four years in a highly supportive English speaking environment, still find it critical to build and support their interpersonal relations using English as a common ground.

Although most of them claimed to have improved much comparative to their previous selves, on the contrary unless they are required they rarely use English even

inside the class and other settings. For instance, Arham, when asked about classroom participation responded like this:

Actually I am a keen listener before I speak. I prefer listening first and then speak at a particular situation so I speak when there is a need. Yeah, when teacher asked something then I answer the questions (p.1, lines 30-32).

Similarly, when asked about the use of English in informal settings, Hadi said:

I must say that unfortunately or fortunately we do not use English conversation with each other and whenever we some sort of meet up with our friends because our regional languages influences a lot but in our class or may be online system we may interact with each other through English language but not on the real grounds (p.2, lines 5-8).

Hadi's response shows that students separate the social spaces in which they use the two languages (L1 and English). They sustain friends and family relations with the use of Urdu whereas use English primarily in the academic context only. Hence, it was evident that students from schools of Urdu or other languages as medium, when entered the institute and classroom, perceive themselves at peripheral positions but gradually developed competence through engagement (more) with teachers and (less) with other participants.

Therefore, some students are confident English speakers, others are still struggling to develop their academic and spoken English, it supports the belief that even though provided the environment, unless they are not invested and engage enough in their academic experiences it will be difficult for them to develop the language of their desired level. For this reason participant's personal investment is discussed in detail in a later section 4.5.3.

4.5 Future Imagined Identities

One of the most significant issues of present study emerged from data analysis is how students, owing to the role of English nowadays, envision themselves in imagined community of English speakers. This concept is given importance because Norton (2001) implies, "a learner's imagined community invite[s] an imagined identity" (p.166). It indicates the vital role of imagination in envisioning one's future

identities as it is in imagination where learners can express their desire of what they want to become. Whatever learners imagine being in future is an integral part of their identity.

English language, as a source of attributing an identity, also plays a vital role in enabling students to envision their desired imagined community. With the help of this community they visualize their future selves which in turn incline them to engage in English learning practices. Such identity expansion is another key factor that may have pushed students to get enrolled in this degree in the first place.

Norton's (2001) notion of "imagined identities" refers to the person they want to become or the way they want themselves to be positioned by public as a form of their possible future which influences their learning behavior as well as their identities (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2001). When asked about how students imagine their selves in future, they expressed varied ideas, opinions and personas to adopt in the future. For instance, Fizza imagine herself:

As a lady who might be owning a business and who would be able to communicate with international people very confidently and who would be able to whatever I do I would do it with proud (p.1, lines 7-8)

The important role of English for international communication is essential for understanding the kind of identity Fizza pictures for her as this language allows her to position herself as an international English user. Likewise for Bareera, possessing English language skills is a prerequisite to embrace traveler's identity in the world and can place her on a worldwide map because she is:

Very fond of traveling so we would travel anywhere. So earlier I used to have problems with conversing with people and things like that. But now since I am much more proficient in English. So I find it very much easy (Bareera, p.1, lines 14-16)

Relating to her prior experiences, she claimed that learning English has now made it easier for her to communicate to the people of different languages and continue to embrace her imagined identity. Another student talking about her aspirations to become a writer said "I want to write a book so may be someone who is a bestselling author" (S61). From the responses it can be observed that the way

participants want themselves to be seen in future is a contributing factor to their investment and envisioned identities.

Students often seem to be chasing after an identity that compels them to be competent English speakers, like a student who “don’t want to stay in Pakistan for MPhil, I really want to join abroad or somewhere else if I can” (Bareera) and the one who “would be applying for scholarship” (Fizza), To take part in their desired communities, speaking English fluently is must and equally important to either of them.

Some other students also believe that English will enable them to “speak with native speakers” (S70) and “to convey message and make understand a native of English” (S52). These beliefs are a depiction of their imminent positions that can only be acquired through mastering English language. They are aware of the fact that leaning English language is a gateway to their desired imagined community (Wenger, 1998).

It is precisely the role of English as a universal language that has contributed to their visualizations of future selves. They encompass endless future visions for which mastering English is a requirement. Their visions are mostly related to the social and economic gains and prospects. However, they also struggle in achieving those identities in terms of language competency. It can be seen in a student’s response when he explicitly mentions that leaning English will enable him “to speak fluently but not as the natives” (S36). Although this response point towards the struggle of not being able to reach the level of native speaker fluency but his choice of words is telling about the way he wanted himself to be perceived while speaking English language. It provides information related to his abstract identity of an international user and not as native user.

Additionally, it stresses the presence of native/non-native dichotomy in the minds of undergraduates. Some of them even compare themselves to native-like standard and think that the pronunciation of natives is accurate as they own English language as stated by Bareera:

I try to copy the pronunciation because that’s the correct one since they are natives, so they speak the correct pronunciation. So I try to copy that (Bareera).

Her emphasis on the words ‘correct’ and ‘copy’ indicates her desire to sound like a native speaker. Almost all of them were comfortable copying the pronunciation of native English speakers but when asked whether they wanted to take on native speakers’ accent, all of them responded negatively. Same student added that “I really don’t want to copy their accents because it is natural to me the way I am, and it is natural to them the way they are” (Bareera). This view discloses her commitment to her native culture due to which she wants to retain her natural accent.

Similarly, another student who wanted to attain native speaker identity and wanted

To get inside that culture....at first I completely tried to mimic them and connects to be very honest but later on I learned that okay it is a bit odd and it looks a bit awkward ... so ... I made my own. I said I will mix Pakistani and American accent a little bit and I made my own accent (Tania, p.4, lines 29-31)

Tania’s attempts to ‘get inside that culture’ and creation of individual accent by mixing local and preferred accent corresponds to Jenkin’s (2009, p. 42) assertion that “accents may be closely bound up with feelings of personal and group identity”. It not only gives her a unique sense of identity but also reveals the desire to be identified with English speakers from her imagined community.

Moreover, data shows that student’s aspiration to acquire English proficiency is specifically connected to their sense of self in a globalized world where they need it to communicate with anyone. When asked about the role of English in students’ life, they gave numerous reasons all linked with their forthcoming prospects and future access to certain groups. The following quotes serve as examples of their ability in future to:

Read write and speak properly in English and will be able to compete globally.
(S55)

Achieve my academic and career goals (S90)

Get good jobs because I am able to express my ideas in English easily now
(S73)

Hence, these quotes signify the kinds of experiences and identities made available to them through learning and investing in English language and in the ways they want to be perceived in future. It might be the usefulness of speaking English from an individualistic point of view that drives them to invest in it.

Tania presented a comprehensive view on students' access to imagined communities through English. She stated:

(English) do help us a lot in reaching out to other people so we make online friends and we meet other people internationally all around the globe online. So I meet some online friends like someone from other parts of the world and they are good friends. They still somehow communicate with me so I think it helped me to reach out to other parts of the world as well (Tania, p.2, lines 18-20).

Her online relations are a new form of power in the present transnational world that reshapes individual's identities. This trend increased after an upheaval in the use of devices and internet. Through technological advancements learners can now easily traverse spaces (Lam & Warriner, 2012). Because of the dynamic nature of engagements of learners in unbounded spaces, the distribution of power no longer rests on the dichotomy of native speaker; instead they can now participate in variety of spaces including the physical and virtual world (Norton, 2015). However, it appears that being proficient in English is a condition to enable them to access diverse spaces and places and to certain communities as well to which they seek to belong to in future. The same communities can provide them the identity they envisage i.e., imagined identity.

In accordance with the identities they envision for them, some students also talked about their role models. These role models were mainly teachers who were fluent in English and had degrees and exposure to foreign countries. Students expressed desires to become like them, the reasons which they state is another sign of their aspirations to get associated with an English speaking community. For instance a student who had cousins from abroad and had similar goals too, was inspired from the teachers who "have been to different countries and they tell us that after doing this degree you can go out" (Zaira). Alisha also had similar goals which she articulated like this:

Actually I idolize my teachers, so obviously they are M Phil graduates they are PhD graduates. Some are post PhD graduates and they have the maximum experience. So Obviously I cannot just compare myself to them, but I want to be like them the way they are having the maximum knowledge I must have (Alisha, p.2, lines 15-18)

Fizza too was equally motivated to be an international speaker. Talking about the inspirational role of her teacher (as discussed earlier in section 1.2) she expresses her desire ‘to have a personality, to have class in my personality’. The identity she imagined is an example of how English contributes to her vision of future because she believed that her teacher’s personality would not have that elegance if she was not an English teacher. It shows how any person’s identity gets an impression from the language one speaks. Fizza chooses English for the very reason. The interest of becoming a teacher occurred to many other students as well due to the same role of English in their lives. One of them started thinking about becoming and taking the identity of a teacher “only in the last two semesters after studying from some teachers, really really great teachers, that have been so inspiring for us” (Mayra). Another student, Danish, even didn’t think himself to be “suitable for any other” job than teaching.

In addition to that, most of the imagined identities sought after by students were those of government servants or an international student. All these identities require good proficiency in English in order to get a respectable position in the society and gain access to cultural and symbolic capital as well.

On the contrary, few comments also proved that although it is a necessity to be a skillful English speaker in order to fully become a member of a community, nevertheless some learners’ identities may also go beyond only English proficiency and may encompass endless future images. Best example of this is again Fizza’s comment, for whom language is not an end in itself rather is just a means of getting confidence because:

I am a goal-oriented person. If I want to do something I know I will do it anyways, if I know English or if I don’t know English. Because I’m sure I’m going to do it. (Fizza)

For all such students, determination and consistency are equally integral aspects of an identity. Similarly there were other students who were not very much concerned about getting a membership of English community because in their “practical life (they) do not come across many people who converse mainly in English, so (they are) a little bit indifferent” (Anaya). Paradoxically, they still feel the need to gain more confidence because they were not satisfied with their language competence.

Hence, data revealed that learning and investing in English language provided opportunity to the students to envision their future identities and communities. The emergence of their identities, which was evident in their comments, requires them to have good command in English. Thus, the mastery of this language was connected to future possibilities of identity expansion and to the provision of necessary capital.

4.5.1 Legitimacy in Future Imagined Identities

One of the important subjects came into light from data analysis is how confident are the students of BS English 7th and 8th semesters in carrying the identity of an English language graduate. This question was addressed during interviews while discussing the expectations society has from them. How do people perceive English graduates, established to be one of the defining features in inducing among students a tendency to think about the identities they want to carry in future.

The motive behind asking this question was to enquire about students’ readiness to enter into the practical field specific to their local settings and about their legitimacy to be defined as English graduates. The basis for this purpose was the wide spread general assumptions held by Pakistani society, as discussed below, from students who complete their graduation in the subject of English. A student’s elaboration to these assumptions is worth quoting. She stated that before even completing my degree:

They just start asking me to, that do you know this word? Meaning of this word? Or can you write in this particular way? Or can you write an essay on this topic and all these things. So they are already expecting a lot of things and when it comes to speaking, they think that I should speak very fluently just like the native speakers of England or America. (Dania, p.3, lines 27-29)

Although it is a well-presented picture of public expectations, but most of the students complained that “it is not the case in reality because during BS English we don’t learn English language, rather we get to know *about* (emphasized) the language and literature” (Kainat). Voicing her own presumptions she added “*jo b literature mein admission leta h wo expect krta ha k English improve ho gi lekin environment ni tha exposure ni tha* [Anyone who took admission in literature expects to improve English communication but there was no such environment and exposure]” (p.4, lines 31-33). So taking into account this fact, I further inquired about their perceptions of the extent to which they think themselves as being a rightful member of the society and their self-belief in taking up the imagined identities.

From the analysis of data it was observed that comparative to students of other two groups, the students of group A were more confident to step into the real world as they were more fluent in English communication due to their prior exposure and later investment. For example, two students commented that:

I feel like I am confident enough to convince them but depend on the interest. If it’s related to my interest I will try my best ... (Zaira)

Up to 90 percent yes I am confident enough to justify myself. (Ayan)

Talking about the eagerness to participate in real life settings and communicating practices, a student stated that:

I currently believe in myself that now I’m at a position that I can actually indulge myself in those activities that I feel I should be doing in my future. (Bareera)

These comments exhibit their confidence, interest and receptivity of being a legitimate member of society (Bourdieu, 1977). It also shows the authenticity of their future imagined identities. Although two students, who were already fluent, had some reservations yet they were confident to a certain extent.

I think it would be hard to impress everyone, but I think to some extent I would be able to. (Anaya)

Somehow I won’t say fully confident I will disappoint them in some ways but I think overall. I would say 85% ready to face other people when I go out. (Tania)

These students were although a little hesitant but still perceived them as legally rightful in claiming a strong future and current identity. Few students were the ones who claimed to expect that they will not face any challenge with respect to English fluency as Fizza said “I don’t think so I’m lacking something”. This took that stance because of various factors including a good job, high score in academia, confidence level, English fluency and a good future ahead. All these facets of life facilitate her to have a legitimate identity in present and future time and to say that “I believe I am standing at a good place”.

Similarly, Hadi, also had confidence in his ability to carry the identity of bachelors in English which would otherwise “be injustice with our own self if we do not justify our own degree or our own investment”. Further he also talked about the crisis of present day that is COVID-19 which “also influenced and disturbed our education sector so there may be some flaws in this justification” but he was still explicit in validating his identity in society.

Hence, participants’ strong claims to be the legitimate members (Bourdieu, 1977) of a society after getting a graduate degree in English implies their ability to get recognizable positions in future and leading roles in society.

4.5.2 Challenges to Realizing Future Imagined identities

The ratio of students who were in doubt, face problems and think to still have major room for improvement, was greater than the ones who were confident and certain. These students are mostly from group B and C who had limited prior exposure to the degree but invested less in the present as well. These students were of main concern to present study because these are the ones who, even after getting same environment for four years, do not feel legitimate (Bourdieu, 1977) to enter their desired imagined groups. One representative sample of this case is as follows:

I m actually worried but I m trying ya agr mein bech mein gap deti hu ya mein bahar admission ho jata h MPhil mein to that would be a bohat acha change hoga mery liye lekin agr ni hota to obviously bohat masla aany wala hai mery liye that’s why mein English wali side py ni jana chahti. Mein thora time lena chahti hon I mean agr mein koi esi job krti hon jis mein mujhy bohat kam English use krni paray to mein us taraf jaun gi (Kainat, p.3, lines 14-17)

[or if I get a chance to get admission in MPhil in any foreign country that would be a good change for me otherwise I may face many problems. For this reason I don't want to continue anything related to English. I want to take a break or else will try to do a job where there is minimum English interaction].

This student has an unstable sense of identity. After getting contact to a language for years she is neither ready nor want to engage in any activity related to this field in future. In addition to the narrative she adopted in given lines, she also made a choice to switch to the medium of Urdu during the interview. Her, and of few others, choice of language also reveals much about almost every aspect of their identity, perceptions of present and future self and the capital imagined for future.

A contradictory response was of a student who communicated in Urdu but was confident to compete in a society where English has become a necessity to secure a good future in almost every field. Discussing how will he defend the fact of getting a degree in English but not being able to communicate or fluent in it, he said:

Allah ka shukar hai us le haz sy mein unka mo band kra skta hu [fortunately I am able to respond sensibly] (how?) *jis level k bandy puchty hen mujh sy mein un ko us le haz sy chup kra deta hu* [the type of questions they ask from me I give them satisfactory answers] (Babar, p.1, lines 19-21)

Such responses provided insight about the conflict in students' desire of being fluent in English but being unable to achieve the required level of proficiency, so to hide their incapability they assume such identities according to which they act as good speakers of language but actually are hesitant, not fluent and make lots of mistakes.

Data revealed that acquiring spoken fluency in English language was a greatest challenge to the students. On the subject of improvement almost every one, irrespective of their language exposure, was of the view that there is still a room for improvement and they are not perfect. Almost half of the participants' reported to have improved their writing skills more than their speaking skills due to which they feel "very less confident ... because there are a lot of things that I need to improve, there are lots of things that need my hard work and all. So definitely I don't feel so confident and motivated." (Dania, p.3, lines 16-17)

Majority of students thought to be lacking in one or more language related aspects. Some expressed the need to improve writing skills, some said fluency, and

some need correction in the sentence structure along with the greater majority of lacking confidence. For instance Arham said:

I need to improve in my writing, reading, everything because you learn day by day. You are always in a learning phase. (Arham)

While discussing the challenges he may face in future, added that:

Being a Hafiz-e-Quran you face much difficult(y) by surviving in the society. Because in society it's a stigma that anyone from madrasah background, cannot know anything [*sic*] besides memorizing the Holy Quran. (Arham, p.2, lines 13-14)

Despite knowing the attitude of his society, he said to have improved much regarding language and was determined to continue to improve further so to defy the aforementioned approach of people towards madrasah students.

Others were also of the view that they have not fully acquired the proficiency in English language and are still struggling for it. They are not ready to visualize themselves in the position of their desire. For instance one of the students who sought to pass Civil services exam “haven't (developed) that much grip on English language to clear CSS exams”(S8). He needs to invest further to assume his desired identity. Another student while talking about her language inadequacies said:

English is important just because of this *mein pechy reh jaun ye feel hota hai* [I feel to be left behind] (Kainat)

This student felt to be lacking behind just because of the importance of English which to all others is a form of capital while to her is a hegemonic force that will not allow her the right to participate where ever she wants to. In terms of language competence these are the areas where participants think to struggle in order to get the membership of English speaking society.

Discussing the reason of not improving up to the required level, one student put forward a general view, mentioned somehow almost by every participant with low fluency.

There are things that I can't even do single- handed because you need a companion, you need a partner while you are having conversation with someone. So in Pakistan you know it is quite difficult because here not many

people, especially when it comes to your family or friends, they don't speak in this language so ,there's very little medium for you to improve. (Dania, p.4, lines 5-8)

Hence the responses show that whatsoever the reason, students expect to face challenges not only in English language proficiency, but also in other language related aspects that is an essential part of their future visions and is a requirement for their imagined identities.

4.5.3 Role of Personal Investment in Future Imagined Identities

Another crucial theme, which emerged from data analysis of interviews in relation to student's imagined identities and capital, is the role of their personal investment in order to pursue the desired identity and capital. This section is important because for an individual to invest in the target language and identities, learners' sense of accomplishment or failure is a critical factor. Hence, the English related experiences and practices in which students have been engaged in the past is of due significance to the present study. These practices are vital for them to become the person they wanted to be in future and to attain the imagined identity and capital of their desire.

Students' interest in watching English movies, listening songs or reading books all are different means through which a language can be learned. Other than these, their active participation in real-life interactions is also a sort of investment in learning a language. Data reveals that except two or three, all interviewees were highly invested in learning English but had varied levels of investment. Moreover, their motives for investment in English also differed but their common goal was mainly to achieve better socio-economic status and get access to most of the resources this language offers.

Most of the participants started investing in this language after getting enrolled in the course through which they get to know the importance of English language. Those who invested more developed strong identities which were evident later in the way they carried and wanted to carry themselves in future. An outline of the investment of students from different categories on the basis of active participation in speaking activities, passive listening and reading or little exposure to English before

and during the degree is presented below in the sequence of groups categorized to interviewed participants.

Students from group A, who were already exposed to English language speaking, mostly invested further by adopting the same method of active participation in classroom as well as with friends inside and outside the institute. For instance, Bareera who interact with his family members and neighbors in English, feels “no shame” in “actually practic(ing) it in front of people” and also “teach the smaller words to my little nieces and nephews” improved largely in her fluency due to this. She imagined a strong identity of international student for her in future.

Similarly, Tania, another student who communicated mostly in English with her mother at home and teachers at the university, watch English movies and reads a lot, envision herself as a “bestselling author” in future. Investing in learning English through various ways students’ hope to achieve the identities of their desire.

Talking about students of group B, who invested mostly through indirect means of learning English, improved a little less but are hopeful to pursue their imagined identities. For instance, Alisha from group B whose “reading was just limited to course books” before getting admission in this field but after “that time onward” she studied and tried to make her “pace fast with the reading, other than course books.” Whereas for speaking, she preferred to interact in English during classroom activities because “obviously when you are going to have the daily classes so speaking is a must thing ... so it’s a part of life nowadays.” She invested in almost every skill needed to achieve her desired identity. Since she had been investing a lot in leaning this language, developed a strong identity later and gained sufficient capital reflected in her communication skills.

Likewise, Ayan, another student from category B, was investing in English language “from 8th grade. I have started watching movies, TV series and I had all the stuff (in) English like I have been exposed to reading, watching, listening, all the communication” (p.1, lines 6-8). He, at present, when got time “in Peshawar” or with friends “usually most of the time communicate with them in English.” Owing to this personal investment he improved a lot in all language related skills and was confident in achieving his future goals.

Few examples of investment of students from category C includes mostly those who had little or no experience to spoken interaction prior to given degree. These students invested in various ways hence envisioned diverse future identities. For instance, Arham, who was from madrasah background, for him learning English

Was the major breakthrough in my life because before that I couldn't even read a single paragraph in English. But I did really hard work to achieve this level. (p.1, lines 7-8)

His investment in learning language was mainly through reading books. He stated that "after getting admission in (a reputed institute), I started reading English novels. And currently I'm reading novels besides course". For speaking, although being an introvert he does not speak much except at "particular situations" but has "improved very much in my language", gave credit to the atmosphere provided to him at the institute, support of teachers and reading habits.

Arham's investment in the future capital was the teaching experience he had "for six months in my local area academy where most of the students are from government schools". Other than this he "currently in part time do freelancing as a content writer in different platforms like Up work, Fiverr. So it's a good opportunity to earn a basic salary for your future" as well as to gain economic and symbolic capital in a society where English is a much valued resource.

Another student from category C, who was from an Urdu medium school, improved her communication skills also adopted the means of reading and writing as a major source of investment in learning English. She chose writing over speaking because she thought that "if you don't have a companion to share your conversation it seems quite awkward in our society to speak English" that's why she used to write. So in her view "writing is what makes language more fluent." Like others, her investment even through passive means proved fruitful as she improved her speaking.

Hence, it is evident from the data that no matter how more or less prior exposure a person has to a language, those students who invested more especially in spoken interaction improved largely in fluency, as Bareera quoted "if we practice something every day we can improve more and much better", while, the students who invested through indirect means including reading, writing or passive listening to the use of language, improved less comparative to others. Thus, it can be understood from

the data that what seems to be students' interest towards learning English language, is also an investment in their future identity (Norton, 1995). Therefore, investing in the learning of a language implies an investment in how they imagine themselves in future.

4.6 Perceived Capital

One of the significant themes that emerged from the analysis of interviews is the capital perceived by students at the present time, as well as in the future. Bourdieu's concept of capital is of considerable importance to the present study because of a strong link with Norton and Darvin's model of Investment (2015). In this study Bourdieu's (1986) all three forms of capital, as incorporated in the theory of investment, were used to extract themes from the data and is examined in detail in relation to English language.

This section perceives English language as a valuable asset for the individual and looks into the benefits gained by students after learning this language, adding into the resources they already possess. From the data analyzed, learning English is observed to be extremely important in increasing participants' capital since it acts as a force that compels learners to invest in learning and gain the symbolic capital of their desire (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

This section also attempted to investigate how has leaning a global language raised students' self-worth and position in society.

4.6.1 Access to Social Resources

Analysis of data brings to light a substantial subject that is participant's relationship to their peers and the expansion of their social circle. This theme reflects upon the role of English language in helping students in making new friends, getting more social and gaining the confidence to talk to anyone in gatherings and different social groups. English language again plays a considerable role in the amount of capital students derive from peer relations. Due to the use of this language they create different nature of relationships with friends.

Assuming the larger size of a network owned by an individual as an indication of a strong social capital, present topic takes on a stance that good relations with

friends and family can be a valuable source of providing links and connections to networks of power. One of the interviewees, Tania has supported this idea by stating that this language has helped her in reaching out to people around the globe through social media and other online sites, also giving a chance to know more about the culture and traditions of people from various countries. Another student, Arham, cited his experience as

... I can easily make (new friends) because now I'm very social. Before I was very introvert kind of person. But now I'm an extrovert. I enjoy being around with people, talking about their backgrounds, their future plans, their experiences, about different things. I really enjoy it (p.2, lines 14-16).

He proposes that knowing more people from various backgrounds may help him to have strong connections to networks of people who possess powerful positions in society, hence allocating him social capital. Another student, who at first was not open to communicate and making ties with others, can now easily interact with her cousins and people from abroad. While commenting on the role of English in making her social she maintains a view that

When you know how to speak in English you can communicate with different people living in different country like I remember I had cousins who used to speak British English and I used to get confused back then. Now I can understand their accent. (Zaira, p.3, lines 5-7)

Talking to friends is also a means of increasing social capital through getting a chance to express oneself in a comfortable way in one's social circle and asking for favors in time of need. Talking especially to friends, who can understand and interact in English, act as a potential resource to possess a durable network of social relations, like Ayan's, who had ties with such friends and family members to who "most of the time communicate in English," hence allocating him a form of social capital.

It's not always the size of network that matters but also the reliability of members to approach when needed. Contrary to others students, Danish has small social network but built affluent relations with them specially after coming in contact with English language. Danish said "I have made great friends. I have interacted with many so (came to know about) many mentalities and how different areas people think about different things and perspectives" (p., lines). This expansion of social network

of the participants may help them in building strong connections with people of power hence increasing their social resources and assigning them a form of social capital.

Another example of expansion of social resources is Bareera who took part in national as well as international forums like *National Model United Nations* (NMUN), *Pakistan Scouts Association* (PSA) and others. English language proficiency enables her to increase social capital by providing direct or indirect access to diverse networks of power. Reference to her words are as follows:

I recently took part in an NMUN that is model of United Nations and I won the best delegate as well so it has helped me take part into things that I could not before ... I was also called on international girl child day to perform as a state secretary in the PSA (boys) ... So I feel now as if more opportunities are coming to me. (Bareera, p.3, lines 12-15)

Her access to diverse networks also increased her symbolic and economic capital as learning English and getting language related experiences is given considerable importance in Pakistani society and can be easily converted into material resources.

Another important factor for increasing student's access to networks of power is their family support and home environment. It was observed that those students whose parents were educated, had some proficiency in English and were linguistically supportive enhances their pupils' access to power networks by providing them quality learning environments, resulted in good English fluency, assumed leader-like roles in group activities and developed strong sense of identity as well. For instance Tania, whose mother was an English teacher and communicated to her in English from childhood, later went to English medium school too, developed strong communication skills and language fluency.

Likewise Fizza, Mayra and Zaira whose parents supported them from very beginning in their choice of field and provided them with the environment, acquired better speaking skills and remained confident throughout their journey too. Practicing this language outside the school environment too enabled them to gain more social and symbolic capital, proficiency in this language and an improved sense of self.

Hence the findings revealed the value of learning an international language in every aspect of participants' life specifically in enhancing their connections to

networks of power, expanding their social circle and giving them confidence to participate.

4.6.2 Access to Economic Resources

Economic capital is in essence money or anything that can be converted into money; for example, “wealth, property, and income” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 44). An individual’s economic capital is therefore the monetary value of everything they possess. Learning English in itself is an economic capital as it provides access to numerous employment opportunities. Due to this the prime reason of almost all participants to study English from a reputed institute, was to get economic gains and rewards.

This theme encompasses questions asked about the material resources to which students’ have gained access to at present as a form of economic capital. At the time of data collection only five out of twenty i.e., 25% of the total interviewees were using or have used this language as a resource to earn money. They were doing online jobs obtained on the basis of their English language proficiency while two of them were also currently enrolled in an additional course of American English to further improve their language expertise.

Their voluntary enrollment in extra course was for the purpose of improving English skills along with acquiring native like accent. This personal investment will be in future help them in getting economic capital because it enhances their skills required to continue to secure better jobs. This course and their present online jobs not only provided them economic benefits but also conditions for advanced learning to take place. For instance, one of the students said:

Alongside my studies I’m also working as tutor with one of the companies of Pakistan Dot in line and as a virtual assistant for USA (Alisha).

During her job as a content writer she mostly communicated in English language. The communication not only took place in writing form through messages but “there was also a video communication with one of my clients. It was totally English communication so there was no barrier” (p.3, lines 37-38). She gave the credit of securing jobs and speaking confidently with her clients to English language and said that “if I was not able to speak in English, obviously I wouldn’t be able to secure three jobs. And also, right now I’m also doing one course that is from U.S. Embassy. I

was also selected for that, so I think due to that language I have been given these opportunities” (p.4, lines2-4). Hence, the value of all opportunities and capital that she possesses depends on better proficiency in English.

Two other students, Arham and Shahid, were also doing jobs as content writer at various platforms. Students’ possession of knowledge and English speaking skills help them to convert these resources into economic ones giving them access to other forms of capital as well. English has also helped one student who was working as a freelancer since 2020 “to earn at least my pocket money. I earn, this is enough I think for now” (Dania). For Dania, only the feeling of earning even little is enough to make her confident and prestige in her own eyes.

Yasmeen is also “earning a good amount of money from Fiverr ... Due to my good writing skill I am earning almost 60-70 thousand per month and that is a good amount” (p.2, lines 15-16). Hence, all these students are using their linguistic resources (of speaking or writing in English) as a basis to gain other forms of capital mainly economic (here).

Those students who did not start taking material advantages from English language are not unaware of it either. They are fully aware of the fact that this language offers so much that will help them in gaining economic benefits in a long run. It was observed that students were hopeful that their ability to speak better English will help them to get better job opportunities. For instance majority students were of the view that they need to improve their English “because without proficiency in English cannot get dream jobs” (S55).

Similarly, others were of the view that since now English is an official language of Pakistan and is a medium of all the tests and interviews taken, they are at a greater advantage to know this language and to able to communicate in it, as Hadi said:

... Most of the interviews and most of the test which are for government posts most of those jobs tests are taken in English language so I think there are much space and there are much requirements of English in the Pakistani society (p. 2, lines 24-26).

Therefore, it suggests the ways in which English language is used as a form of capital and the most-sought after language in Pakistan with certain economic returns.

Students were well aware of the economic rewards they may or have already got from the knowledge and competency of English by accessing wide range of opportunities in the global job market. Hence, English acts as a gatekeeper to series of worldly prospects.

4.6.3 Access to Cultural Resources

Knowledge of English has always been considered a powerful tool for individual progress and development. English proficiency has become a valuable commodity and primary skill of contemporary life because of its representation as a form of cultural capital. The skill of using language fluently and developing confidence to speak it in public, provides individuals with varied range of career advantages along with increasing knowledge and making them skillful. This is because every job market, especially in which students want to pursue their careers, seeks people with greater English competence.

Students mentioned that “all the offices hire candidate who bear good fluency in English (S103). Agreeing to this, other students also responded that “English proficiency is considered a major skill in CSS” (S47) and they “definitely need to improve” their speaking skills “because the job I want demands fluent English (S45). Hence, it serves as a powerful tool for developing in all fields of life. Therefore, all participants were aware of the fact that being proficient in English language is the primary component of linguistic and cultural capital which will also help them greatly to gain financial benefits. Besides, they were also concerned that their inability to communicate in English may be the cause of their failure, as shown in following responses:

Without better English I would not be able to clear the exam and it will lead to my failure of getting my dream job. (S54)

Few students also talked about the inevitable need of learning English to gain access to endless knowledge and resources available regarding every field and aspect of life. On this subject matter Bareera responded: In this way English acts as an important resource to access all the cultural resources.

I think it (English) has opened a lot of doors since most of the world literature and everything is in English. So it has helped me access all of that because most of the works are also translated in English. So even if we go for

something non-European and non-American it would also be present in English (Bareera, p.3, lines 17-19)

She asserts that as they know the medium in which world's knowledge is translated, it opens numerous opportunities for them to learn and acquire knowledge. Dania's stance was no different than Bareera's in saying that "through this medium we can read anything and we will understand it".

As far as native accent is concerned, which in itself is a form of capital, it was observed that students were not ignorant of the wide spread popularity of different varieties of English with their own unique accents. Due to which most of them were satisfied with their natural accent and were conscious to retain a unique sense of individuality by not having any desire to copy them whereas few attempted to 'mimic' their accent at first but later realized that it sounds 'awkward'. Their attempt to sound near to natives was due to the desire of attaining the capital associated with it. (as discussed in section 4.4)

Cultural capital here refers not only to knowledge and skills, but also to students' experiences and involvements (both in classroom and society) in the learning of a universally recognized language. Therefore in the present study, not only participants' views but also their actual proficiency, developed as a result of previous background and investment, is considered as a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2013). Relating it to Bourdieu's view, the more capital one has the more dominant and powerful position one occupies in society. One of the students also agreed to this saying that

Language brings up the power and the language that is a standard; it gives you more motivation that you have already learned the language. (S49)

Thus speaking a dominant language, that is also considered 'a standard', accords power and a sense of achievement to its speakers. It also gives them status and respectable position in society. A form of cultural capital is also linked with the positions assumed by students in their classroom. Data revealed that high proficient students (mostly group A) are at leading positions in class and social group activities. They are not hesitant to participate instead encourage their fellows with low proficiency to speak confidently. It is mainly because they already have sufficient knowledge and language skills to do so. In a study by Kayi-Aydar in 2014, he has

observed similar positions taken by students in classroom which in turn give them access to learning opportunities and succeed in getting achievement and self-confidence.

On the other hand, the students with low proficiency (usually group C) are usually hesitant, less confident and unwilling to participate in classroom context due to which they struggle with learning and attaining proficiency in English. When these students are called by the teacher to present to the whole class, they become speechless because they are unable to convey their thoughts properly and lack the confidence as expressed by a student:

At first to ye hota tha k mein to ratta system matlb sentences jo mujhy bolny hoty thy wo mein likh k lati thi [I used to rote memorize everything means I used to write the sentences I had to speak (in front of class)]. Same goes with my presentations. I (used to) memorize all the presentation (Huda, p.1, lines 18-20)

In situations similar to this their peers help them by reassuring their support and boosting their self-belief. This is how their fellows take up the position of a guide and a mentor, a role similar to that of a teacher. Likewise in other classroom activities and discussions, high proficient students are appointed by their fellows to do most of the talking. Thus, it is assumed that student's different positions (inside or outside classroom) are closely associated to their current language proficiency and is constantly shaped through spoken interactions. Exploring these positions can provide understanding of how power norms are functional even within a classroom setting. Few examples of how mentor positions are constructed and maintained among peers are discussed in detail.

Fatima enacted the position of an "influential speaker" because her friends and fellows think she has a reputation and impression on others and she always presents "logical arguments so you can convince other classmates" (Fizza). These characteristics when combined with confidence enable her to hold leading position among others. Likewise, when asked from another student who considered herself a proficient speaker, if she has ever encouraged someone to improve his or her speaking skills, she replied

Yeah. As a tutor with dot in line, I have a student. They don't speak English, but I try to encourage them because in the market it is the requirement. They have to go for this thing, so I encourage them a lot to speak and I try to communicate in the specific language. (Alisha, p.1, lines 15-17)

This is how these and other students usually maintain their position among peers. They took these positions because of their higher English language proficiency which subsequently enable them to access various other opportunities. Thus improved English proficiency is a form of capital that leads them to assume different positions of prestige.

A contrary case reported by an interviewee (as discussed earlier in 4.3.3) was that due to her low English language proficiency she lost a good friend because she could not understand her excessive use of English expressions and could not respond properly. It is an example of how peer relations get effected due to language incompetence. It shows that English language, on one hand gives power to some to hold good positions, on the other hand also takes control from others to freely participate and express their thoughts in every setting. In this way places them at a disadvantaged position. They are not always given the right to speak and take part in interactions.

Establishing similar discourse Canagarajah (2005) argues that dominance of English can marginalize the people and may act as a threat to their native language, culture and identity. Feelings of being inferior, having low self-esteem and belittlement is the presence of a linguistic hegemonic stance similar to the one taken by Phillipson (1992) while discussing the “connotations of English with success and hedonism” (p. 40). Despite this, students were still determined to strive to obtain excellence in English.

Through the course, among different states of cultural capital as per Bourdieu (1986), all interviewees held the perception of having institutionalized form of cultural capital since they were of the view that the university they are studying in is considered prestigious one among the masses. They stated that getting a degree from an institute which is highly renowned and valued by everyone; also give them a form of cultural capital. It also adds to one of the form of power they possess (discussed in detail in 4.3.3).

The aforementioned perspectives denote that expertise in English language has symbolic values, and is highly valued in developing societies. Therefore, it seems that to expand their cultural capital (either in the form of academic qualification or status in society) people are willing to invest money, time and effort with the prospects of converting it into economic capital (better employment opportunities). Yet it is also a cause of inequality in the provision of better economic and symbolic opportunities among students who obtained early education from English-medium schools and the ones who are from working classes with limited resources.

Students with better English proficiency are likely to have more access to resources provided at national and international level including admission in foreign universities and getting jobs at highly paid sectors in order to further enhance their linguistic experiences, leaving the rest to spend more time in improving their fluency so that to compete them at equal levels and to gain financial returns.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the findings obtained from the analysis of data focusing mainly on the content related to the objectives and research questions of the study. The findings suggest that English asserts its ideology as the most important language in students' life providing them with social status and range of opportunities to prosper in any field. It is significant not only for making progress in the society but also in constructing and negotiating strong identities across different places and spaces. This language also has an impact on the way learners position themselves and others comparative to their peers and within a broader socio-cultural context affecting their sense of self in either positive or negative way. Findings also reveal that English also plays a vital role in enabling students' vision to future identities with respect to the imagined communities. However, it may act as a hindrance to students' upward mobility through inhibiting them from attaining a recognizable place in society because of not achieving required proficiency (Ferguson, 2009, 2006; Probyn, 2009). Hence, better proficiency in English language perceives to grant more power and access to numerous economic and cultural opportunities to its user.

The capital and powerful positions are mostly accorded to the students with more affordances in the form of greater exposure and practice in the language, either

formal or informal. While those with less exposure and proficiency in real life usage of English developed unstable identities and gained less capital yet considering the power and international status of this language they were determined to invest further in this language which as a result is an investment in their own identities. Hence, the more valued capital one owns, the more powerful position one possesses in the society (Bourdieu's, 1977, 1991). Therefore, students' investment in this language was not particularly linked to any one aspect but rather to the variety of opportunities and resources accrued with it.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In present chapter a comprehensive summary and findings gleamed from the data are presented in relation to the research questions of the study. Data for the study was collected from 112 questionnaire and 19 interview participants and was analyzed keeping in view the theoretical frameworks of investment and as per Braun and Clarke's (2006) defined steps of thematic analysis. The findings of the study are discussed in the light of the previous research done on the subject in comparison with the study participants' imagined identity, perceived capital, investment, and careers envisioned in future concerning their interest towards English. This chapter also discusses the limitations of the present study and draws implications for further research in the area of investment and language policies regarding English language learning. It is important to note that the findings presented here in relation to each research question are interlinked in agreement with the theoretical framework of the study, so the overlap cannot be precluded.

5.2 Findings

The aim of this study was to elucidate the influence of English dominant ideology on undergraduate students' self-perceptions and imagined identities. The extent to which it was connected to their future possibilities and capital to seek legitimacy in relation to existing English language proficiency was also investigated. In this section summary of main findings with respect to each research question of the study is presented.

The first research question attempted to determine the influence of English language ideology on the soon-to-graduate BS English students of a well-reputed university in Pakistan. The analysis of the results shows that students display a clear understanding of the dominance of English language in local and global context. This dominance is exhibited through their choice of degree along with all the benefits

associated with it in addition to their interest to learn English language in general and to achieve their desired future goals in particular.

Students regard English not only an important tool for communication among the globe, but also a source for assigning status and giving them a sense of superiority, hence an instrument for upward mobility. Irrespective of the background and exposure to English, criteria on which they were grouped, all participants place themselves at a higher position after learning this language. They narrated that a significant aspect of mastering English was improvement in their personalities and level of confidence. They acknowledged the vitality of speaking English in giving prestige and recognition, hence making them legitimate members of the society (Bourdieu, 1977).

Some students also expressed discontent towards English for its being treated as a criteria and standard for the measure of intelligence. Paradoxically, the same populace could not deny the instrumental and integrative values inherent with it. They articulated a desire and need to be competent in English language to gain the linguistic and symbolic capital. In this way English language acts as a double-edged sword for them in which they want to be competent enough but could not so express negative remarks about its superiority. Nevertheless, English language ideology is best manifested during classroom interaction between teachers and students where they have to speak in English regardless of their attitude towards it.

The second research question of the study aimed to explore the self-perceived capital they have in relation to their existing English language proficiency. This question was analyzed by asking the students to compare their present and past English language proficiency on the scale from one to ten. In keeping with Norton's view their language competence was then linked to their identity since language is always considered a part of who they are to themselves and to the world. According to the division based on collected data, participants of group A professed negligible improvements in language fluency as they were already competent and entered confidently to the field with valuable affordances in the form of exposure to the language. Gaining required level of confidence and proficiency in English language helped them in its early transformation into symbolic capital. Major changes in identity and perceived symbolic capital were reported in groups B and C participants with less or no prior exposure to this language. They experienced significant

differences in the way they perceive themselves before and after learning English. Owing to the importance of English in the participants' lives, it greatly impacts their position in society as well. Proficiency in English language gives them a meaningful place in local and global context.

Results also demonstrated that participants' negotiate their identity in relation to educational and cultural context. Learners engage in English language practices mostly in learning contexts i.e., inside the classroom in the presence of a teacher and tend to use Urdu or regional language in all other common practices which point towards the distant bilingual and ethnic identities. Findings also suggested differences in the power relations among peers. It was observed that students who already possessed capital in any form find more learning opportunities through participation and right to speak which translate into power, whereas students with less capital tend to participate less in limited opportunities provided to them, indicating their lack of power in the class. It shows that students position themselves differently on the basis of previous knowledge, and competence in English language creating an inequality to the access of experiences and learning opportunities.

The third research question intended to determine the challenges faced by students in realizing their future imagined identities. The question was addressed in both questionnaire and interviews findings of which proposes that although most of the students were confident in carrying an English language identity and securing a good job but were also conscious of their personal shortcomings in language proficiency in particular and personality in general. Except for group A, whom had enough prior exposure to English in school or home environment, all other participants including group B, whose proficiency significantly increased, communicated the need to improve further before entering into their desired imagined communities. So, in comparison with the identity positions of students of group A and B, substantial number of participants are still at more peripheral positions in society. Another greatest challenge participants discussed about is the gap between practical and theoretical knowledge acquired during the degree. They mentioned their expectations regarding the practical usage and discussion-based learning of English language for which they preferred this institute but complained that it was no different from their school and college environment with less focus on real-life communication.

This factor therefore, contributed obstructing rather than facilitating students' access to imagined identities.

Findings reveal that students from EMI schools improved less comparative to students of other two groups (with mixed languages as medium of instruction) making it a key factor in influencing their proficiency and self-perceptions. However, the difference not only lies in exposure to prior education but also in their investment and desire to achieve required level of proficiency and to gain entry into imagined communities. Though table 3.1 shows that most students were from English medium backgrounds, it is still controversial to say that they were being taught using English language too as it is the dilemma of most of the schools in Pakistan with English medium label (referring only to books) while actually giving all instructions in Urdu. Therefore, students with less exposure positioned themselves as disadvantaged compared to their peers. Another factor that gets affected from being more or less fluent was their access to economic and social resources and capital. Since greater proficiency lead to greater capital and vice versa. Results indicate the inequality of opportunities available to students in the form of symbolic domination as most of them were taught English as a subject equally in books but with some focusing more on the communication skills than others focus, creating discrimination among them. In this way English act as a double-edged sword, on the one hand exposed to it in the form of literature, on the other hand, could not develop strong fluency for not receiving enough attention on speaking skills. Major challenges that students faced was the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge and hands on practice of the use of the English. However, students with limited exposure but greater investment improved a lot in their own selves with respect to their previous dispositions. They developed not only in fluency but also in personalities as a whole. They gained more confidence and social capital hence highlighting the importance of notion of investment. Hence students used English language competence as a symbolic resource for dealing with linguistic/societal marginalization they could experience in future and for gaining entry into the imagined communities.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to its focus on 7th and 8th semester BS English students of one particular university in the capital city of Pakistan, Islamabad. Due to time and feasibility constraints the study was centered on this specific context thus cannot be generalized over larger population. However in choosing the participants it was taken into account to include the students who were generally ready to enter into the practical field and is representative of the degree. Another limitation of the study is that it employs only questionnaire and interviews as data collection tools when more detailed account could be generated through other types of data as well. This could have complexified the study in terms of time required. However, data was triangulated to serve the purpose of the study. Moreover, the time I spent on analyzing data may be insufficient to reach to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation as the three core elements involved in the study proposes an extended fieldwork thereby limiting the scope of the study.

5.4 Recommendations

The present research opens up number of possibilities for future research related to the field of investment. Few suggestions for research and for practice are presented below.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Research

While this study has shown how students from same backgrounds made varied improvements in English language proficiency; negotiate identities in present and struggle to gain entry in future imagined communities, there is still a need for further research in the relevant area to add to the work related to the framework of investment.

Following are the suggestions for future researches:

1. Future studies on a comparative analysis of the identities and investment of undergraduate students between the institutes with same and different medium of instruction can be of significant interest.
2. An attempt was made in the present study to explore the changes in participants' language fluency and identity but from their subjective

perspective. Therefore, it is recommended to explore similar phenomenon from ethnographic field research to record unbiased shifts in participant's personality and language competence.

3. Present study was also limited to a specific time frame i.e., with 8th semester students only. While future researches can be done on broader scale for extended period of time and different learning stages with special reference to positioning, identity and capital.
4. Future researchers can also attempt to carry out the same research by exploring the added influence of student's mother tongues on their perceptions about identity, capital investment as a whole.
5. A comparative study of investment in learning English language between students of public and private sector schools or universities can also be carried out.
6. The same research can also be carried out from gender-specific perspective since the present study focused more on the uniform views from both genders. Other researches can put equal or more focus on male or female perspectives as well.
7. The research has not included teachers' perceptions on students' progress, participation and observed changes in identities. It should be taken into account in further studies since teachers can provide more insightful and critical data as an insider's views.
8. The present study was limited only to two types of data i.e., interviews and questionnaire. It is recommended for forthcoming researches to explore similar phenomenon using other types of data as well including journal entries, focus group discussions, participant observations etc.
9. Regarding the dynamic nature, identities of students can further be traced in variety of contexts and during interaction with people of different fields.
10. In addition to the issues investigated here, many other research questions can be answered by looking at data of present study from different perspectives.

5.4.2 Recommendations for practice

The following recommendations are mainly generated from the results of study while few of them were suggested by the participants during interviews incorporated

to address students' concerns as well. However they can be generally applicable to the undergraduate level of education system in Pakistan.

1. Since students of different sections reported varying use of English by teachers as MOI at same level of degree, this varied exposure to English within a single institute, therefore, amplified the difference in students' level of confidence, improvements in English language proficiency and sense of stability in identities. This factor point towards the need to provide equal opportunities for linguistic growth to students of every section.
2. Similar MOI distinction faced by students in their prior education also had a great impact on their present and future investment and personality as a whole, making it easier for few fortunate students to readily enter into the communities of their desire in comparison to others. Therefore serious measures need to be taken to provide similar linguistic environment to students of every class.
3. Taken into account the cultural, social and linguistic diversity of students', teachers need to be mindful of the behaviors of students' investment and should encourage them to speak English inside and outside of classroom setting.
4. Rather than strictly adhering to theoretical knowledge, students from different backgrounds should be offered additional courses to acquire a thorough grounding of English language, and more real-life practices, and discussion-based activities should be conducted to enhance their competence and personality since students' future career objectives necessitates the overhaul of curriculum.
5. In primary and secondary level of education, English should not be treated only as a subject rather a skill to communicate in everyday life so to enable them to access more symbolic resources in order to increase their capital.

5.5 Conclusion

This study was an attempt to unpack the intricacies of investment of BS English undergraduate students and its effect on their personalities. I aimed to explore the role of ideology of English as a determining factor to their success in achieving future

career goals in relation to English language proficiency. The findings highlighted the influential role of mastery of English on students' perceptions about themselves and others in the context of their community. The striking feature of this study was a renowned languages centered especially English centered institute of Pakistan. This multilingual context was seldom researched in terms of student's negotiation of identities within and outside classroom setting. The most significant contribution of my study was its focus on both macro and micro practices involved in the understanding of students' future imagined identities (from participants' perspectives). It also emphasized the importance of implementation of strategies to promote equal learning of English, to provide opportunities for identity expansion and the need to carry out further research on context-specific issues.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Open-ended Questionnaire: BS English Undergraduates

I am Nabila Javed, an MPhil Scholar at NUML, Islamabad, working on the research topic of how identity, ideology, and capital have an influence on English language proficiency and vice versa. This open-ended questionnaire, where the aim is to create a story, will help me understand your experiences and perspectives in relation to English. The questionnaire contains two sections, the first relating to personal information and the second based on a narrative frame. Detailed responses for the second part will be highly appreciated.

The results of this questionnaire will only be used for the purpose of academic research. Your personal information will be kept confidential. Please be as detailed and comprehensive as possible.

Section-I.

Background Information

**Note: Please provide answers to all questions.*

Name _____

Gender: _____

Age _____ years old

Native Town: _____

Native Tongue _____

Name of last college attended _____

Medium of instruction in school and college _____

Willing to be contacted for interview _____Y/N_____

Email address: _____

Phone Number _____

Section-II.

Narrative Frames

Instructions: (1) Read the whole page BEFORE starting to write.

(2) Write a coherent narrative; i.e. link each idea to the next like you would in a story.

Right before I enrolled at this university, I wanted to do BS English because

My English proficiency at that time was good / was not good because

After spending three years in BS English, I feel that my English has improved / not improved because

When I compare my English to other classmates I feel

When we are able to speak and write better English, we

English is important because

It is also important because

Based on my current English proficiency, I will be able to

My current English proficiency will or will not help me a great deal in getting the job

I want because

In order to get my dream job, I need to / do not need to improve my English because

Finally, I would like to say that

Appendix B: Interview Guidelines

Students' personal background

Their life story about where were they born, obtained education, the kind of difficulties they faced in their life etc

Students' preferences

- Reasons for choosing and liking English
- English speaking role models
- Use of language in different contexts
- Practicing the language in daily life

Student's perceptions

- Importance and advantages of knowing English
- Improvement in proficiency
- Access to type and extent of resources
- Relationship between language and identity
- Influence of English on identity
- Changes observed in their present and previous selves

Future aspirations

- Future goals
- Ability to achieve their aims
- Expectations from society
- Any challenges they may face
- In what ways investing to improve

Students' experiences

- Any good or bad experiences during the degree