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# **Mapping multilingual ecology**

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**Exploring sociocultural aspects of learners' investment  
in EFL in Pakistan**

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of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics

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## ABSTRACT

In the multilingual context of Pakistan, the role of English in education has gained increasing attention during the last two decades against the backdrop of the rise of global extremism and the positioning of Pakistan in the so-called “War on Terror”. Research and policy documents often link better English education in the country with promoting tolerant views about the western developed countries. Students from upper social classes often have access to quality instruction in private schools as compared to the government schools. Although most private schools use “English-medium instruction” as a catchphrase to attract students, there are significant differences among these schools in terms of the actual use of English on campus and the quality of English teaching.

In Pakistan, research often explores issues around English learning outcomes in terms of social constructs like socioeconomic class, gender, and ethnicity, or macro factors like language policy failure and parallel school systems in Pakistan. This study argues that, complementary to these factors, a focus on learners’ subjective experiences and their multilingual identities might be an important missing aspect of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Using the naturalistic ethnographic methodology, the study investigated the language perceptions of six students (age 16 to 18 years) from two private schools belonging to high-fee (Global School) and low-fee (Ummah School) categories in the northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. Research tools included semi-structured interviews, classroom and general school observations, ethnographic fieldnotes, documents and artifacts from the field, and reflexive research tools including researcher bracketing interviews and a bracketing research journal. An extended stay in the field lasted for eight months. Data coding was assisted by qualitative analysis software NVivo and was analyzed using thematic analysis.

Although both private schools claim English medium instruction, findings suggest that learning EFL is influenced by complex sociocultural factors related to the way languages are perceived in the multilingual context of the learners. As compared to Ummah, Global School is locally known for quality English education and is attended by learners from affluent backgrounds. However, in spite of significant differences in terms of students’ social class, school infrastructure and quality of English instruction, both groups of learners seemed to

struggle against the hierarchical perception of languages and negative attitudes towards English in social domains that restricted their functional use of the target language. Learners avoided practicing speaking English in social and domestic environments to maintain a positive face and avoid being viewed as westernized. Inside the schools, monolingual school policies and a focus on English to secure good grades were found to be misaligned with the students' EFL goals of using English for authentic communication in daily interaction and in online social media platforms. Findings also suggest that learners' investment in English learning was based on instrumental goals (for example, higher education and career abroad) and integrative goals (outward social mobility and gaining access to imagined communities in the western developed world). Conflictual elements in socio-domestic and academic environments were found to be implicated in learners forming subordinate identities as learners and speakers of English. These aspects can have a negative influence on learners' EFL learning outcomes.

*For my parents for supporting me not to give up on my doctoral dreams*

*For Romaisa, Ashfaq, and Sobia who had to deal with my long absences from  
home*

*For the participant learners who revealed their hearts and minds to me so  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiv
1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1. Motivation for the study.....	2
1.2. Sociolinguistic profile of Pakistan .....	5
1.3. Purpose of the study.....	8
1.4. Research questions.....	11
1.5. Research sites and participants .....	11
1.6. Theoretical framing.....	13
1.7. Research Design.....	15
1.8. Thesis outline .....	17
1.9. Summary .....	19
2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	20
2.1. Introduction.....	20
2.2. English learning in SL/fL contexts .....	21
2.3. Identity in language learning .....	25
2.3.1. Historical overview .....	25
2.3.2. Research approaches to identity in language learning .....	28
2.4. Significant constructs in language and identity .....	32
2.4.1. Investment.....	33
2.4.2. Identity .....	36
2.4.3. Imagined communities.....	39
2.4.4. Ideology in language learning.....	42
2.5. English language learning in Pakistan: Research perspectives.....	44
2.5.1. Language policy perspective.....	44
2.5.2. Parallel school systems perspective .....	47
2.5.3. National and Muslim identity perspective .....	49

2.5.4. Postcolonial and indigenous languages perspective .....	51
2.5.5. The language conundrum and identity struggle in Pakistan .....	54
2.6. Summary .....	56
<b>3.    CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN .....</b>	<b>57</b>
3.1. Introduction.....	57
3.2. Research framework .....	57
3.2.1. Theoretical framework.....	58
3.2.2. Methodological design.....	63
3.2.3. Analytical approach .....	66
3.3. Research sites and participants .....	67
3.3.1. Context of the study .....	68
3.3.2. Sites selection and access.....	68
3.3.3. Participants selection .....	71
3.3.4. Ethical considerations .....	74
3.4. Researcher positioning.....	75
3.4.1. Cultural insider.....	76
3.4.2. Researcher outsider.....	77
3.4.3. Analysis of subjectivity.....	78
3.5. Methods.....	81
3.5.1. Interviews.....	83
3.5.2. Observations .....	86
3.5.3. Research diary.....	88
3.5.4. Documents and artefacts .....	90
3.6. Data management and analysis.....	92
3.6.1. Data management.....	92
3.6.2. Translation and transcription .....	93
3.6.3. Data analysis .....	95
3.6.4. Interrater reliability .....	102
3.6.5. Rigor and quality in research .....	102
3.7. Summary .....	105

4.	CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS' PROFILES .....	107
4.1.	Introduction.....	107
4.2.	Sociolinguistic context of the study .....	107
4.2.1.	Historical background.....	108
4.2.2.	Language and education in Pakistan.....	111
4.3.	Research sites.....	113
4.3.1.	Ummah School.....	113
4.3.2.	Global School.....	115
4.4.	Research participants .....	118
4.4.1.	Global student participants .....	119
4.4.2.	Ummah student participants .....	123
4.4.3.	Teacher participants .....	126
4.5.	Conclusion .....	128
5.	CHAPTER FIVE: ENGLISH LEARNING IN GLOBAL.....	129
5.1.	Introduction.....	129
5.2.	Perception of languages .....	129
5.2.1.	Perception of English.....	130
5.2.2.	Perception of Pashto and Urdu .....	136
5.3.	English learning in different domains.....	141
5.3.1.	Classroom .....	142
5.3.2.	School .....	146
5.3.3.	English at home.....	149
5.3.4.	English oral skills.....	152
5.4.	Learners' reception of the course contents .....	157
5.5.	Idealized places and people in learning english.....	161
5.5.1.	Imagined communities in second language learning.....	162
5.5.2.	Ideal speakers in language learning .....	164
5.6.	Summary .....	167

6.	CHAPTER SIX: ENGLISH LEARNING IN UMMAH.....	170
6.1.	Introduction.....	170
6.2.	Perception of languages .....	171
6.2.1.	Perception of English.....	172
6.2.2.	Perception of Pashto and Urdu .....	177
6.3.	English learning in different domains.....	181
6.3.1.	Classroom .....	182
6.3.2.	School .....	188
6.3.3.	English at home.....	192
6.3.4.	English oral skills.....	195
6.4.	Learners' reception of the course content.....	197
6.5.	Idealized places and people in learning English .....	201
6.5.1.	Imagined communities and learning English.....	201
6.5.2.	Ideal speakers in language learning .....	204
6.6.	Summary .....	206
7.	CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION .....	209
7.1.	Introduction.....	209
7.2.	Language ecology as metaphor.....	211
7.3.	Perception of multilingual resources .....	211
7.4.	English in social domains .....	218
7.5.	Textbooks and English learning.....	226
7.6.	Imagined places and people in English learning.....	229
7.7.	English learning in a multilingual ecology .....	232
7.7.1.	Language hierarchy in language learning .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
7.7.2.	Language tensions in socio-academic domains .....	237
7.8.	Learners' investment in English learning .....	240
7.8.1.	Learners' reception of textbook materials .....	241
7.8.2.	English as an exit strategy.....	243
7.8.3.	Learners' agency and online communities .....	245
7.9.	Linguistic capital and learners' positioning.....	247
7.9.1.	English as a symbolic capital.....	247

7.9.2. Learners’ positioning and identities.....	249
7.10. Summary.....	252
<b>8. CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>254</b>
8.1. Introduction.....	254
8.2. Significant findings.....	255
8.3. Methodological contribution.....	259
8.4. Implications and Recommendations .....	260
8.5. Limitations .....	268
8.6. Future research.....	271
8.7. Concluding remarks .....	275
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>272</b>
Appendix 1: Copies of the ethics forms .....	299
Appendix 2: UAHPEC ethics approval .....	318
Appendix 3: Interview schedules .....	320
Appendix 4: Participants’ demographic data forms .....	324
Appendix 5: Coding comparison query .....	326
Appendix 6: Coding sample in NVivo .....	327
Appendix 7: Mind mapping diagrams in NVivo .....	328
Appendix 8: Research diary entries .....	331
Appendix 9: Sample textbook lessons .....	333
Appendix 10: Pages from Numair’s diary .....	338
Appendix 11: English-Urdu transliteration on commercial signage .....	339
Appendix 12: English classroom in Ummah .....	340

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Demographic data of the Global and Ummah schools.....	68
Table 3.2: Demographic data of research student participants.....	71
Table 3.3: Demographic data of research teacher participants.....	71
Table 3.4: Research methods and data gathered.....	80
Table 3.5: Participants' use of language.....	84
Table 4.1: Historical overview of language policies in Pakistan.....	107

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: A model of learners' investment based on Darwin and Norton (2015).....14

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BD:	Bracketing Diary
BI:	Bracketing Interviews
CF:	Consent Form
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
ELL:	English Language Learner
ELT:	English Language Teaching
EMI:	English Medium Instruction
ESL:	English as a Second Language
FL:	Foreign Language
FN:	Fieldnotes
GoP:	Government of Pakistan
IE:	Interviewee
ICT:	Information and Communication Technologies
Int:	Interview
IR:	Interviewer
KP:	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MoI:	Medium of Instruction
NEP:	National Education Policy
Obs:	Observation
OE:	Originally in English
PIS:	Participant Information Sheet
SL:	Second Language
TA:	Thematic Analysis
TP:	Translated from Pashto

TU: Translated from Urdu

UAHPEC: University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

## 1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the study of sociocultural factors in relation to learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Pakistan (Khan, 2016; Mahboob, 2009, 2015; Manan, 2014, 2017; Rahman, 2005b, 2008). However, little attention is given to an in-depth analysis of students' perceptions of English language learning in relation to sociocultural factors in their academic and non-academic environments. To fill this gap, this study examined the perception of EFL in the context of two schools in the multilingual Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistan. Relatedly, the study conceptualizes language learning as a social phenomenon that is not confined to the four walls of a classroom but is embedded in the linguistic, cultural, and social lives of the learners. It examines how language resources are differentially distributed in the domains of the classroom, the school, and in the participant learners' home environments and the relationship of the social distribution of languages to learners' investment in EFL. English learning is thus investigated from a broad sociocultural perspective and the students' motivations are examined in terms of their socially situated language perceptions. A significant aspect of the learners' motivation and their investment in English learning relates to the learners associating English learning with imagined destinations they wanted to access and with ideal speakers of English with whom they affiliated through modern technologies of connectivity like the internet and mobile phones. To elaborate further, the following sections explain the purpose of this study and introduce the research context in terms of its socio-educational and linguistic profile. The sections also introduce the research sites, the participants, and the design of the study in terms of methodological framing and structure of the thesis argument.

## 1.1. MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

This section explains how my interest in the present research topic evolved over the years. Further, it relates the topic of this research to my socio-educational history. Often termed as reflexive research, in the qualitative inquiry the sociocultural background and theoretical assumptions of the researcher can be made visible to help the reader make sense of the interpretive claims the researcher makes in the study (Davies et al., 2004). As Hamdan (2009) explains, “reflexivity is researching [oneself] and reflecting on [one’s] personal beliefs and values both as a researcher and as a member of the researched group” (p. 378). As a cultural insider who belongs to the same area as my research participants, it is important for me to reflect upon the personal relevance of this study and how it can affect my engagement with the research participants.

I am a trilingual speaker of Pashto (first language), Urdu, and English. Throughout my schooling days, the significant status of English remained evident as proficiency in English was often considered to index the educational achievement and intelligence level of a student. Being a government school student, I grew up in an environment where a common social belief was that private school students were usually more intelligent than government school students, as was perceived evident from their relatively better proficiency in English literacy and speaking skills. In Pakistan, government schools are usually considered lower in status as compared to private schools. Parents often prefer sending their children to private schools mainly in the belief that they would learn English better than in government schools (Manan, David, & Dumanig, 2015; Rahman, 2004). Although I had never been to a private school throughout my schooling days, I used to imagine how different and well-furnished the classes would be as compared to our poorly-resourced classrooms. Further, I also compared our English subject teacher with an English teacher in private schools. While our teacher used

Pashto to teach us English, I imagined the teacher in the private schools would use only English in the classroom and the learners would use English as a medium of communication throughout the class time.

English was thus socially valued in the environment where I was born and raised. It was, however, differentially distributed as only those who could afford to send their children to expensive private schools had access to quality instruction in English (Manan, 2017; Rahman, 2001, 2005b). Further, the perceived and actual difference in our schooling seemed to provide the basis for imagining different futures (Norton, 2013; Norton & De Costa, 2018). I, for instance, had a deficient view of my future career prospects as compared to private school students. Throughout the years from high school to graduating from the university, my perception of the relationship between English learning and educational and career success might have propelled my self-directed learning efforts to enhance my English proficiency.

Throughout this period, I had to cope with a lack of social availability of the English language as it was communicatively non-functional both at school/college/university and at home. Learning Urdu at school, however, was easier and was also supported at home as, in the evening, our family used to watch TV programs in Urdu and we read Urdu newspapers and popular magazines at home and in the community. Pashto literacy, on the other hand, mostly remained limited to school. As a subject, I studied Pashto up to Grade 8 (13-15 years of age). However, apart from being a curricular subject, Pashto had little literacy function outside the school domain where Urdu is dominant. To improve my English proficiency, from Grade 10 (16-18 years of age) onwards I intermittently attended private English language institutes in afterschool hours and listened daily to BBC Radio. For me, English

thus remained a much sought after cultural and social resource throughout my educational career.

Over the years, I became a relatively more confident user of English and began to reflect upon social perceptions associated with learning English. I mulled over a range of questions, like why I felt less intelligent during my schooling days as compared to the private school students; what is the relationship between English language proficiency and being intelligent; why there are private and public schools in Pakistan that teach different textbooks; why all children cannot have the same education; and what difficulties students face to learn English if the language is socially non-functional in their home and social environments.

After accepting a teaching position at a university in Pakistan, I started reading sociolinguistic research literature and used to discuss social aspects of language learning with colleagues working in this field. It was a revelation to learn that the above-mentioned questions about language learning and education that I had previously considered insignificant for formal research inquiry were the foci of a large body of research in Applied Linguistics in various contexts worldwide. This body of research focused on investigating learning English as a socially embedded phenomenon associated with the cultural and social domains of learners and mediating their understanding of possibilities for the future (Barkhuizen, 2016; Norton, 2013). Such exposure to research literature and colleagues' views gave me confidence that issues related to English learning that had haunted me for years can be investigated in a systematic and meaningful research framework to illuminate their causes and work towards mitigating them.

## 1.2. SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROFILE OF PAKISTAN

This section presents a brief profile of the multilingual context of Pakistan as a background to the present research study. Specifically, it focuses on the status of English in the socio-educational context of Pakistan and its relation to the indigenous languages in social and academic domains. It explores how access to English in Pakistan is related to socioeconomic disparity, inequitable access to education, and the growth of private schools in the country, especially over the last two decades. The section concludes by pointing out the relevance of this discussion for the focus of this research study.

Pakistan is a multilingual country with around 59 minor and 6 major languages spoken in the country (Rahman, 2006)<sup>1</sup>. Officially, Urdu is the national language of Pakistan while English is the official language of the country. In terms of percentage of speakers, the major languages in Pakistan include Punjabi (44.15%), Pashto (15.42%), Sindhi (14.10%), Siraiki (10.53%), Urdu (7.57%), Balochi (3.57%), and other languages (4.66%) (Census, 2001, p. 107)<sup>2</sup>. Despite this strong linguistic diversity, only English and, to a lesser extent, Urdu are privileged in different domains like education, government offices, the judicial system, and other powerful national institutions like the army and the bureaucracy (Manan, Dumanig, & David, 2017; Rahman, 2008). Further, the connection between socioeconomic inequality and unequal access to particular languages remains a significant challenge in Pakistan (Coleman, 2011b; Coleman & Capstick, 2012; Rassool & Mansoor, 2007; Shamim, 2011). Arguably, in terms of social status and access to powerful jobs, a hierarchy of languages exists in which English, the most sought-after language, is followed by Urdu while the indigenous languages

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<sup>1</sup> Different figures are given for the total number of languages spoken in Pakistan, depending on which languages are counted as either distinct languages or dialects of the same language. Rahman (2006), for instance, counts 65 while Gordon (2005) puts the number at 77.

<sup>2</sup> The data is based on the fifth census held in 1998. The only census in Pakistan in the 21<sup>st</sup> century was held in 2017. However, linguistic demographics data from the census are not yet available to the public (Arshad, Hu, & Ashraf, 2019).

are lower in the hierarchy as they are often not embedded in academic and institutional domains.

The National Education Policy (NEP) of Pakistan (2009) acknowledges that “a major bias of the jobs appears in the form of a candidate’s proficiency in the English language” (p. 8). The significant role of the English language in education and often marginalized status of the indigenous languages in Pakistan are major challenges for the country (Andrabi, Das, & Khwaja, 2006; ASER, 2015; Coleman, 2011a; Shamim, 2008; 2011). Further, unequal access to quality instruction in English, mostly contingent upon the socioeconomic class of the students, plays a divisive role in the social context of the country (Aslam, 2009; Khan, Ajmal, 2013; Rahman, 2001; 2008). Some significant implications of differentiated access to English in the education system of Pakistan are pointed out as a) a perpetuation of the existing social class structure that favors a small but powerful elite class (de Lotbinière, 2010; Rahman, 2004); b) unequal access to well-paying jobs in the country based mainly on proficiency in English; c) learners developing negative attitudes towards their indigenous languages (Khan, Ajmal, 2013; Shamim, 2008); d) a proliferation of private schools in the country that claim to use English as a medium of instruction (MoI) (Andrabi et al., 2006).

The proliferation of private schooling in the country is widely related to unequal educational opportunities for different socioeconomic classes. The National Education Policy (2009), for instance, acknowledges that “the existence of insulated parallel systems of public and private education in Pakistan remains a cause for concern as it creates inequitable social divides” (p. 17). An estimated 59% of students between the ages of 6 to 16 years old (Grades 1-10) attend private schools, while only 35% go to the government schools in Pakistan (ASER, 2015). Whereas the number of high-fee private schools has remained relatively stable, the number of

low-fee private schools has increased ten times during the last twenty years (Andrabi et al., 2006). The existence of parallel education systems in Pakistan that are mainly divided in terms of which language(s) (English, Urdu, or an indigenous language) is/are used as MoI are seen to produce in the country a situation of language apartheid (Shamim, 2011); language conundrum (Khan, 2016); ethnolinguistic dilemma (Manan, 2017); ghettoization of the indigenous languages (Rahman, 2001); and a division between elite (high-fee English medium) and non-elite (low-fee non-English medium) private schools (Rahman, 2008).

Against the sociolinguistic and educational background of Pakistan as described above, parents usually prefer to send their children to a private school, hoping that the student will learn English better as compared to the public schools. As English is often considered the pre-eminent language of access to high-paying jobs and powerful positions in Pakistan, the demand for “English-medium” private schools has been steadily increasing over the last few decades (Manan et al., 2015). However, the relevance of English as a language of communication inside and outside the school play an important role in a learner’s success in language learning. Similarly, the social perception of English and other languages is a relevant aspect affecting learners’ investment in EFL and learning outcomes.

Although some research exists focusing on formulating multilingual education policies in Pakistan that can protect and promote languages other than English (Mahboob & Jain, 2016; Mahboob, 2017; Manan et al., 2015; 2016); improving teaching practice for better language learning outcomes (Shamim, 2008, 2011); and addressing disconnections between language education policy and language learning at the micro-level (Atta, 2015; Rahman, 2003), insufficient attention has been given to studying language learners’ perceptions of their multilingual resources, their exposure to English in different social and academic domains,

and the relation of these sociocultural factors to learners' investment in EFL in Pakistan. Further, qualitative ethnographic analysis for an in-depth understanding of learners' perspectives about EFL in Pakistan remains scarce. A micro-level focus on learners' perspectives can provide a significant missing piece in putting together the puzzle of language perception, education systems, and language learning in Pakistan. This study aims to address this gap.

### 1.3. **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

As mentioned above, the study presented here focuses on exploring language learners' perceptions of the academic and socio-cultural aspects of learning English in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistan and the relation of social factors to learners' investment in language learning. Specifically, it focuses on the *language perceptions* of six English Language Learner (ELL) participants and their two English subject teachers to understand how multilingual resources of English, Urdu, and Pashto languages are received in the social and educational contexts of the learners. In the education system in Pakistan, English medium instruction remains a major factor that differentiates public sector schools (Urdu or a local/heritage medium) from the private schools (English medium) (Manan, 2017, Rahman, 2005). Parents and students mostly prefer private schooling because of English-medium instruction which might enhance proficiency in English and secure better prospects for future employability of the learners (Zaidi & Zaki, 2017). However, little is known about what language perceptions circulate in the socio-educational environment of EFL learners in private schools and how these perceptions relate to opportunities and challenges for learning English as a foreign language.

Furthermore, language learning takes place across the continuum of academic and social domains sometimes referred to as language ecology (Kramsch, Claire & Whiteside, 2008;

Manan & David, 2014). Ecology is a biological construct that has been widely adopted in sociocultural (Van Lier, 2006), socio-cognitive (Atkinson, 2011), and socio-ethnographic (Duff, Patricia A., 2012) research approaches in language acquisition. Building on insights from Steffensen and Kramsch (2017), I use the organic metaphor of ecology to capture a symbiotic relationship of interdependence between the different sociocultural aspects in the learning environment of the focal learners while keeping EFL learning at the center. In other words, EFL learning does not take place in a vacuum but rather it is contingent upon the sociocultural and historical specificity of the learning context and the relationship of English with the other languages available in this context.

Psychological aspects of language learners' motivation are among the key factors affecting learners' success in learning the target language (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013), availability and functionality of the target language in different social domains are also significant for learners' investment in target language learning and successful acquisition (Darvin, Ron & Norton, 2015; Norton, 2013). However, there is scarce micro-level research regarding the availability of English in different socio-academic domains and its relation to language acquisition in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region. This study, therefore, aimed to understand the perception of ELLs regarding the role and function of English in the domains of their classroom, schools, and home environments and how they relate this role and function to constraints and opportunities for target language acquisition.

Another strand of investigation in this study relates to how the participant learners received the linguistic and cultural contents of their curriculum textbooks. Indeed, textbooks are important as they mediate contact of the learners with a new language (Banerjee & Stöber, 2016; Mahboob, 2015). The world described in the textbook lessons can be of differentiated

significance for the learners as there can be contrasts and similarities between textbook material and the lived reality of the students' social environment (Erling, Adinolfi, & Hultgren, 2017, p. 37). Learners' perception of the cultural and linguistic aspects of textbook lessons in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa (KP), however, remains under-investigated. A few available studies focus on racial or gender stereotypes (Khan, 2014; Ullah & Skelton, 2016) portrayed in English textbooks. The current study explored learners' reception of textbooks taught in the private schools which provided useful information about how they received the cultural contents of the textbooks and how these were related to their sociocultural lives and English language acquisition goals.

Lastly, the study explored the imaginative and idealistic aspects of learning English. While ELLs learning trajectories are affected by classroom practice, school environment, and social factors that are real and tangible in their routine learning environments, learners may also associate a target language with imagined communities they want to access and speakers with whom they affiliate through imagination or through digital networks of access like the internet (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). These imaginary and ideal aspects of language learning can have a strong impact on learners' motivation and investment in language learning. This study, therefore, explores the imagined communities (Anderson, 1991; Wenger, 1998) and ideal people that the learners associated with their English learning and how these imagined aspects of EFL related to their lived social realities.

#### 1.4. **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The overarching question explored in the current thesis is: To what extent are EFL learners in the two schools invested in their learning of English as a foreign language? The sub-questions are:

1. What are the research participants' perceptions about their trilingual resources of Pashto, Urdu, and English?
2. What opportunities for English language learning and use exist for the learners in the domains of the classrooms, the schools, and their home environments?
3. What perceptions do the participants have about the cultural aspects of the textbook contents?
4. What imagined or real places and people do the participants associate with English learning?

#### 1.5. **RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS**

Two private schools, a high-fee (Global School<sup>3</sup>, henceforth Global) and a low-fee (Ummah School, henceforth Ummah), were purposively selected as the research sites for this study to compare and contrast ELLs' perceptions in two contexts in terms of the four research questions mentioned above. Whereas Global caters to students from more affluent socioeconomic classes, Ummah attracts students from lower classes. Global is part of the Cambridge-affiliated international schools teaching O-levels<sup>4</sup>. Ummah, however, has to use the government prescribed curriculum for Grades 9 and 10 as the students are enrolled in the traditional matriculation system of education in Pakistan. It is mandatory for private schools

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<sup>3</sup> To protect their identity, pseudonyms are used for both schools.

<sup>4</sup> Like several other developing countries, in Pakistan most of the high-fee private schools offer British international education following the examination system of Ordinary Level (O Level) and Advanced Level (A Level), and replacing the mainstream Secondary School Certificate (SSC, aged 14 to 16 years) and Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC, aged 16 to 18 years), respectively (Mkwanzani & Wilson-Strydom, 2018).

(other than those offering O level) to use the government prescribed curriculum from Grade 9 onwards.

The two schools differ in terms of physical infrastructure. Whereas Ummah is run in a small single-story rented building in a suburban area where the classes are small and not well-lit, Global has its own three-story building in the main capital area of the district with spacious classrooms. Similarly, whereas Ummah students have no library, computer rooms or computer technology instruction, Global students have a large number of books for every age group and spacious well-equipped computer labs for instruction in digital literacy. In Ummah, teachers can use physical punishment to discipline the students whereas in Global teachers are not allowed to use any form of physical punishment. However, the two schools are also similar in being part of the private sector in education that runs in parallel to the public sector education in Pakistan and is argued to thrive on the weaknesses in the public sector (Manan et al., 2017; Rahman, 2004; 2009). Significantly, the private schools claim to provide English-medium instruction and its students' better English proficiency is present as the main feature that distinguishes these schools from the government schools where the de facto medium of instruction is predominantly Urdu (Andrabi et al., 2006; Rahman, 2005b).

Each of the two schools runs more than two hundred branches throughout Pakistan that are centrally administered from the capital Islamabad with regional and district offices around the country. Ummah and Global testify to remarkable growth in the number of private schools in Pakistan, especially over the last two decades, driven mainly by the demand for English-medium instruction provided in the private schools (Manan et al., 2015; Rahman, 2005). Pertinently, high-fee private schools are often preferred by parents as they are perceived to develop the English proficiency of the students better than the low-fee schools. The official

websites of the schools indicate that Ummah claims to provide quality English-medium education to cater to the future needs of the students and build their character from an Islamic perspective; Global, on the other hand, claims to instill among its learners qualities of global citizenship and self-directed life-long learning in a total immersion English environment.

Participants in the study include three student learners from each school (in each case, two male, one female), aged 17, as well as their two English subject teachers (both in their late twenties). To protect their identities, pseudonyms are used: the Ummah student participants have been named as Numair, Samina, and Haris. The Global participants have been named Osama, Sabiha, and Shahid. All the participants are proficient speakers of Pashto (first language) and Urdu. However, their English-speaking proficiency varies.

#### 1.6. **THEORETICAL FRAMING**

This study draws on a model of learners' investment in language learning (Figure 1.1) developed by Darwin and Norton (2015) that is derived from the sociological ideas of Bourdieu (1977; 1984; 1991), and others (Anderson, 1991; Weedon, 1987; Wenger, 1998). However, as I got familiar with the data and the emerging themes, it became obvious that the model needed additional conceptual framing to address the themes more adequately. I, therefore, adopted useful ideas from social positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) and postcolonial theory (Bhabha, 2004) (in terms of the construct of hybridity) to assist me in the analysis and interpretation of research data.

The model of investment stresses the importance of understanding “the complex relationship between language learner identity and language learning commitment” and how ideology is implicated in language learning processes (Norton, 2013, p. 3). In the context of this model, *identity* indexes how learners see themselves as learners and users of language while

*language ideologies* inform dominant social discourses about the relative significance of languages in a social setting (De Costa, 2010; 2012). In contradistinction to the construct of motivation (Dörnyei, 2001) that focuses on the individual psycholinguistic aspects of language learning, *investment* foregrounds learners as complex social beings whose identity changes across time and space in relation to the context of interaction (Norton, 2015, p. 37). To encompass a broad sociocultural focus, the model locates the learners' investment in language learning processes, inside and outside the classroom, at the intersection of capital, ideology, and identity. The model sees ideology as implicated in the value assigned to the linguistic *capital* of a learner/user of language in social domains. Learners' identity is therefore socioculturally situated, changing across spatial and temporal dimensions, and mediated by language ideologies circulating in social domains (Darvin, Ron & Norton, 2015; 2017; Norton & De Costa, 2018).

*Social positioning* refers to “an event of identification, in which a recognizable category of identity gets explicitly or implicitly applied to an individual” (Wortham, 2004, p. 166). In relation to the model of investment above, social positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) accentuates the ideological aspect of identity construction. As De Costa (2011) explains, “positioning theory takes into account how learners position themselves (“intentional self-positioning”) and how they in turn position others (“interactive positioning”) in ways that ultimately affect their [language] learning” (349).

A third strand in the theoretical framing of the study builds on useful insights from *language socialization* to bring into focus how the participant learners are socialized into linguistic norms of their “speech community” (Gumperz, 1968) and how they are exposed to asymmetrical and hierarchical perceptions of languages in formal learning and informal

interaction in social domains. As Ochs and Schieffelin (1984; 2011) point out, language learning is embedded in and constitutive of socialization into a language community through which language learners gain the status of a competent member in that community (cf. Howard, 2011). This relates to the aim of this study to analyze language learning from a broad sociocultural perspective. Further, language socialization is relevant for the purposes of this study because “it engages critically with macro-social, political, and (other) ideologies of language, culture, and habitus, on the one hand, and with micro-level aspects of language use on the other, seeing phenomena at these different levels or scales as mutually constitutive and inseparable” (Duff, Patricia & May, 2017, pp. ix-x). This relates to the aim of this study to explore affordances and constraints the learners encounter in different social and academic contexts in an EFL environment.



Figure 1.1: A model of investment (Darvin, Ron & Norton, 2015; 2017; Norton & De Costa, 2018)

## 1.7. RESEARCH DESIGN

In methodological terms, this study is designed as a multi-sited ethnography for reasons that have to do with the research aims of the study. First, as Starfield (2010) explains, applied linguistics adopts an ethnographic approach to study “language practices within communities and institutions that are familiar to the researcher rather than exotic and strange as in traditional ethnography” (p. 53). Ethnographic orientation allows for a flexible

methodological framework that combines the cultural insider knowledge of the researcher (emic perspective) and his/her analytical posture as an outsider (etic perspective) (Candlin & Sarangi, 2003). As my position in the field was of a cultural insider and a researcher outsider, the ethnographic design allowed me to use my insider insights as an analytical resource by reflecting on how I perceived the data and my positioning vis-à-vis the research participants (Tedlock, 2003). On the one hand, this explicit flagging of the role of the researcher might enhance the trustworthiness of the analytical orientation of the thesis and, on the other hand, it can help the reader put data presentation and its interpretation in perspective with regard to the positioning of the researcher.

Second, ethnography studies phenomena in their natural settings and in terms of the meanings that people bring to events and processes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Relatedly, the aim of this research is to study what meanings the participant learners attach to their English learning in the academic and non-academic social domains of the research context. Third, an ethnographic orientation allows for a research study to accommodate the sociocultural context of the participants and explain data as the individual and social aspects of the research context interact with one another (Heigham & Sakui, 2009; Starfield, 2010). Pertinently, this study focuses on the students' language learning experiences in relation to the social domains of the two schools and their homes and social environments.

In terms of data collection, the study used interviews (semi-structured); research diary and observation data; informal conversations in the field; and artifacts (students' workbooks, the schools' official documents, curriculum and syllabi, pictures). To incorporate researcher positionality and insider perspective as useful resources in the data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Holliday, 2007), researcher bracketing data were gathered through interviews with the

researcher conducted by a PhD candidate. The researcher bracketing data comprised two interviews (one before starting the fieldwork and one immediately afterward) and notes from the bracketing diary maintained throughout the research study.

Fieldwork started with observations in both school sites to familiarize myself with the context and fine-tune my participants' interview schedule. In total, 12 classroom observations were conducted in each school, apart from several general visits to the schools. After initial observations, each participant student was interviewed on three occasions, with 18 interviews in total (each interview lasting for around an hour). After an initial interview, the question schedule for the subsequent interviews was modified in the light of emerging themes in the data. Initial data analysis and fieldwork were conducted simultaneously to stay aware of emerging findings from the data. The initial and subsequent stages of analysis and data coding were guided by the thematic approach as advocated by (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2014).

## 1.8. **THESIS OUTLINE**

The thesis is presented in eight chapters. Chapter One has briefly introduced where this research study is located and the personal significance of the research topic. It has introduced the two school contexts as the research sites for this study. The ethnographic design of the study and the methods used were briefly explained. It also introduced the research questions.

Chapter Two presents a review of relevant literature on the social aspects of language learning and learners' identity construction in language learning. First, I present a broad historical overview of sociocultural considerations in language learning, its theoretical underpinnings, and some ongoing debates in the field. The main constructs relevant to the present study are reviewed in the next section, including "investment"; "identity"; "imagined communities"; a "model of investment"; positioning theory; and language socialization. To

contextualise the study against the backdrop of existing research on language learning in Pakistan, relevant research studies are reviewed in the final section. In sum, the literature review contextualizes the present study and provides the rationale for undertaking this study.

Chapter Three outlines the theoretical framework of the study based on the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The chapter then discusses the theoretical framing of the study and its methodological design in terms of a multi-sited ethnographic approach. It also introduces the research sites, the participants, and the data collection methods of the study. Justification is given for selecting the data collection tools of semi-structured interviews, field observations, informal conversations in the field, researcher diary, artifacts from the field, and researcher bracketing methods.

Chapter Four focuses on contextualizing the study in terms of details about language education in Pakistan and parallel school systems in the country and their relation to English as Medium of Instruction (EMI). It discusses the two school sites and how they relate to the education system in Pakistan. The six students and two teachers who are the participants in the study are introduced in terms of their language learning trajectories, socioeconomic backgrounds, learning goals, and imagined future careers. The chapter thus orients the reader to understand the multilingual context of the study and the relationship between English learning and education systems in Pakistan.

The next three chapters focus on a close analysis and discussion of the data. Chapters Five and Six analyze research findings from the Global and Ummah schools, respectively. The data are presented in terms of emerging themes from the data regarding social perception of the three languages spoken by the participants (English, Urdu, and Pashto) and how it relates to language learning; the distribution of languages and availability of English in the social

domains inside and outside the school; learning reception of the linguistic and cultural aspects of textbooks; and imagined places and people associated with English learning. Chapter Seven discusses and interprets the findings from the previous two chapters in relation to relevant research and with the help of the theoretical framework of this study to understand what the study shows with regard to English learning in the two schools.

The final chapter concludes the thesis by relating key findings to the research questions and discussing the implications of the findings of the study for language policy and pedagogy in Pakistan. It also reflects upon the research process as a whole and, in retrospect, identifies some limitations of the study. The chapter ends with pointing out certain possible directions for further research in the ethnographic analysis of language and identity in general and in the context of Pakistan in particular.

#### 1.9. SUMMARY

By way of introducing this research study, this chapter sought to set the scene for the following chapters in terms of explaining the origin of my interest in a sociocultural understanding of English learning. My motivation for the study was explained in terms of a chronological description of events that inform the focus of this research. Further, the sociolinguistic complexity of the research site was explained to provide a social backdrop for the thesis. Next, after introducing the purpose of the research in terms of exploration of sociocultural factors affecting language learners' perceptions of different languages in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, specific research questions were given that guided this research inquiry. The two research sites and eight research participants were briefly introduced followed by an introduction to the theoretical framing of the study and how the two school sites fit into the multi-sited ethnographic methodology adopted in this study.

## 2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

Over recent decades, the study of learners' identity formation and its relation to language learning has resulted in a large number of studies that have informed language policy and practice (Preece, 2016). This interest in identity and language learning seems driven by technological innovation and global migration in the modern era that brought peoples from different cultures and nationalities together (Darvin, R. & Norton, 2017; Kramsch, Claire, 2013). However, digital communication and global flows of peoples have not only made identity an important issue for international students in L2 environments; learners in L1 contexts are also increasingly aware of and connected with global networks through social media, satellite television, and through their foreign imagined destinations in the future (Kanno & Norton, 2012; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Multilingual identities are constructed, enacted, and negotiated in language learning contexts nationally and internationally. The global spread of English and how it coexists with other languages is a major factor in socially-oriented studies of learners' identities (Kramsch, Claire, Zhang, & Jessner, 2015; Phillipson, 2006; 2013).

This chapter aims to consider a rich and diverse body of research literature dealing with learners' identities from a sociocultural perspective. To situate the current thesis within wider research that has already taken place, the chapter starts with discussing studies related to a current debate in the field regarding a distinction between ESL/EFL learning and how the distinction is more tenuous in the present era of connectivity and mobility. The next section outlines the development of a sociocultural focus in research on language and identity and discusses studies that take different approaches to what identity means. The next section

critically reviews significant concepts that are relevant to the approach to identity adopted in the current thesis. Whereas the first three sections of the chapter deal with identity-related studies in different national and social contexts, the last section focuses on Pakistan to give a critical review of research perspectives in EFL research and how the current thesis can contribute to the existing literature by filling research gaps in our existing understanding of EFL in this context. Specifically, the chapter identifies research gaps in relation to the lack of an explicit research focus on how learners perceive their multilingual resources; how language learning and use play out in social and academic domains; insufficient attention given to the social hierarchy of languages and how this relates to EFL learning; and a lack of reflexive analysis of the researchers' positioning as cultural insiders/outsideers.

## 2.2. **ENGLISH LEARNING IN SL/FL CONTEXTS**

Traditionally, a distinction is made between foreign language (FL) and second language (SL) learning contexts, especially in terms of the significance of enhancing the communicative competence of learners (VanPatten, Dvorak, & Lee, 1987). Whereas the development of communicative competence is often considered a priority in SL contexts, in the FL contexts literary analysis and grammatical awareness are often considered more important. However, more recently, it is acknowledged that a dichotomous conception regarding FL and SL learning contexts is tenuous because "both foreign language and second language teachers have focused on enhancing the communicative competence of language learners' in the wake of 'the communicative turn' in FL study (Kramsch, Claire, 2005, p. 1). In spite of a developing confluence in teaching practice and some shared methodological approaches in research, SL and FL learning research approaches remain quite distinct. Kramsch, for instance, notes:

From a disciplinary perspective, SLA research wields the powerful discourse of the social sciences—linguistics, psycho- and sociolinguistics. [...] Its main focus is on the spoken skills, functional communicative competence, and oral fluency. Foreign language education, by contrast, speaks the discourse of educational psychology and the humanities, i.e., literary and cultural studies. It is oriented mostly towards adolescents who learn foreign languages as part of their general education. [...] Its main focus has traditionally been on the development of literacy skills, both in L1 and in L2. (pp. 10-11)

More recently, it is argued that instead of maintaining the SL/FL distinction, researchers need to focus on the “multilingual subject” (Kramsch, Claire, 2009; Paquet-Gauthier & Beaulieu, 2016; Pavlenko, 2007), that is the language learner as a conscientious and complex human being whose individual and social background and future ambitions are an integral part of acquiring L2 proficiency.

The SL versus FL distinction is blurred in the contemporary global reality that is marked by global connectivity and “reterritorialization” of national boundaries (Appadurai, 1997; Wenden, 2002). Therefore, we cannot consider a stable L1 monolingual student trying to replicate a stable L1 speaker of the target language (Firth & Wagner, 1997; 2007). Rather, as Block (2010. 330) puts it, “being neither on the inside nor on the outside, being affiliated but not fully belonging, is argued to be a normal condition” of the postmodern world (p. 330). Further, an uncritical adaptation of SL pedagogy in the FL context reinforce the dominance of a powerful language and mainstream language teaching approaches as research demonstrates in the contexts of Sri Lanka (Canagarajah, S., 1999), South Africa (Chick, 1996), Hong Kong (Lin, Angel MY, 1999), Vietnam (Sullivan, 2000), and Turkey (Clachar, 2000).

However, insufficient attention has been given to the above aspects of language learning and subjective elements of multilingual learners are only starting to appear in the research on multilingualism. Kramsch (2005) and others (Blommaert, Leppänen, & Spotti, 2012; Kramsch, Claire & Zhang, 2018), for instance, stress that multilingual subjects draw upon

different semiotic resources in order to “enact the paradox of multilingualism” in the late modern period. Kramsch explains:

The subjective feelings [...] are only starting to be investigated in SLA research. [...] Speaking like a near-native speaker yet not feeling that one ‘owns’ one’s words; [...] the feeling of linguistic arbitrariness (language as a ‘mutable thing’) that has been observed in bilingual children but not researched in adolescent and adult learners; the affective link between language learning experiences and personal identity. These dimensions of language acquisition and use are different from feelings of linguistic adequacy or inadequacy, sociopragmatic appropriateness or inappropriateness in the here-and-now of verbal encounters with native speakers or in tests of academic performance. (p. 17)

Increasingly, it is pointed out that language learning is a complex process and, to address this complexity adequately, the learners’ situated social positioning and their identity need to be considered as integral parts of the learning process (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; De Costa, 2011). Instead of focusing only on essentialized constructs in language learning (e.g., socioeconomic class, ethnicity, race, etc.) and linguistic aspects (e.g., communicative competence, lexico-grammatical accuracy) of ELLs, the language learning experience needs to be understood in its totality, including the subjective dimension of the learners’ experiences.

It is clear that learning another language is not like learning math or word processing. Especially in adolescence, it is likely to involve not only the linguistic and cognitive capacities of the learner as an individual but her social, historical, emotional, cultural, moral sense of self as a subject. (Kramsch, 2005, p. 18)

In terms of a distinction between SL versus FL contexts, some studies suggest that a) only SL learners have the urgency and the need to speak English outside the classroom and b) it is important for the SL teacher to understand what opportunities are available for the learner to speak English outside the classroom. For instance, Norton (2013) argues:

First, unsurprisingly, the language teacher needs to help prepare learners to speak the target language outside the classroom. This is particularly important in the context of second, as opposed to foreign language classrooms. [...] Language learners need regular practice in speaking and writing in the language classroom so that they can feel more confident in interaction with target language speakers outside the classroom. (p. 174)

Norton cites Burnaby and Sun (1989) to argue that studying grammar and literary texts serve the needs of FL study in China but not of SL learners in Canada (the context of her study). However, it may be argued whether a distinction between SL/FL contexts holds true in the globalized world today that is marked by both geographical and virtual mobility and increasing intercultural contact (Blommaert & Rampton, 2012; Kramsch, Claire, 2005)? Further, Norton claims that teaching in an SL context is different from teaching in an FL context:

Second, the study indicates that it is equally important for the language teacher to understand what opportunities are available for the learner to interact with target language speakers outside the classroom and how these opportunities are socially structured. Unless the language teacher understands what possibilities are available for the language learner to speak outside the classroom, practice in the classroom may not facilitate practice outside the classroom. [...] in other words, the teacher needs to develop an understanding of the learners' investments in the target language and their changing identities. (p. 175)

However, is it significant for SL teachers only to be aware of what affordances for language use the SL learners have outside the classroom or is it also significant for FL teachers? Is the speaking practice in the classroom enough for FL learners or, like SL learners, they need spaces to speak English outside the classroom?

The above discussion raises issues about the ESL/EFL distinction that is getting more tenuous in today's globalized world. It also points to the need for studies that focus on the socially situated aspects of learning an additional language and how learners' identity, their sense of "self" as learners and social members are intricately connected to how and for what purposes they are interested in acquiring the target language. These foci contextualize the research aims of the current study which accentuates the socially situated aspects of learning EFL and how these intersect with the participant learners' identity. Broadly, the study aims to focus on how understanding EFL learning processes in a multilingual context can help us understand learners' commitment (their investment) in learning the target language. The

following section further contextualizes the current thesis in terms of sociocultural factors in language learning and identity formation.

### 2.3. **IDENTITY IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

It is important for language learning in classrooms with students from multilingual backgrounds that instruction should support learners' existing resources and promote empowering identities among learners as owners of the target language. Cummins (2005), for instance, emphasizes:

When students take ownership of their learning—when they invest their identities in learning outcomes—active learning takes place. In classrooms with students from linguistically diverse backgrounds, instruction should explicitly activate [...] not only information or skills previously acquired in formal instruction but also the totality of the experiences that have shaped the learner's identity and cognitive functioning. (p. 38)

To further contextualize the focus of the current thesis, the following section gives a historical overview of the development of a “sociocultural turn” in identity in language learning studies.

#### 2.3.1. **Historical overview**

In recent years, a growing body of research has investigated language learning in terms of the relationship between language learners' identity construction and the larger social world and the implications of this relationship for language learning (Pérez-Milans, 2016; Preece, 2016). These studies “examine the diverse social, historical, and cultural aspects of the contexts in which language learning takes place, and how learners negotiate and sometimes resist the diverse opportunities those contexts offer them” (Norton, 2011, p. 416). Block (2003), for instance, draws attention to the increasing salience of social factors in second language acquisition (SLA) research, naming it “the social turn in SLA”. In the context of this shift towards social underpinnings of language and identity, it is important to consider

developments in the 1970s and 1980s in the context of a transition from a psycholinguistic approach to language learning to a sociocultural perspective.

Whereas the first of these approaches clearly draws on psychology and linguistics for its theoretical and methodological underpinnings, the second draws on anthropology, critical theory, and poststructuralist theory to study the relationship between language learning, learners' identity construction and the sociocultural world of the language learners (Kramsch, Claire, 2011). Before the 1970s, ideas of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1966) and the American linguist Noam Chomsky (1972) predominantly informed a *psycholinguistic perspective* of language learning and use. From this perspective, the language was seen as the domain of research for linguists only while the teaching of language was considered the teaching of linguistic forms. The *sociocultural turn*, however, challenged this perspective by underlining language as a cultural and symbolic resource and language learning as a culturally, historically, and politically situated activity (Block, 2009; 2010; Kramsch, Claire, 2011). From this perspective, the teaching of second/foreign language is viewed as a contextually situated activity; language learners have instrumental and integrative aims in language learning to gain access to desired social groups, better economic positions, and possibilities for national or international movement (Pennycook, 2017; Rampton, 2017).

In recent years, research on language and identity from a sociocultural perspective has been productive, ranging from special issues of research journals to edited volumes, books, and monographs. Special issues on the topic include *linguistics and education* (Martin-Jones & Heller, 1996), *TESOL Quarterly* (Norton, 1997), and *Language and Education* (Sarangi & Baynham, 1996). In 2002, the establishment of the *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education* provided a more permanent platform for publications addressing sociocultural

aspects of the intersection between language learning and identity construction. Several edited volumes, books, and monographs have appeared over the years dealing with the construction of identity from a sociocultural perspective in various contexts (for example, Blackledge & Creese, 2016; Block, 2003; 2009; Blommaert, 2006; 2008; Caldas-Coulthard & Iedema, 2016; Canagarajah, S., 1999; 2004; Creese, Shaw, Rock, & Copland, 2015; Day, 2002; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Fina, 2012; Kinginger, 2004; Kramsch, Claire, 2009; Norton, 2013; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Potowski, 2007; Preece, 2016; Silseth & Arnseth, 2011; Toohey, 2000; Wenger, 1998). According to Pavlenko and Norton (2007),

[Language is viewed] as a situated process of participation in particular communities of practice, which may entail the negotiation of ways of being a person in that context. Thus, because learning transforms who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity, a process of becoming, or avoiding becoming a certain person, rather than a simple accumulation of skills and knowledge. (pp. 669-670)

The construct of “identity” has thus been used as a broad concept to study the relationship between language learners and their sociocultural contexts. As (Norton, 2011) notes, “[research] work on identity [from a sociocultural perspective] offers the field of language learning a comprehensive theory that integrates the individual language learner and the larger social world” (p. 2). Language education research from this perspective focuses not only on linguistic input and output but also deals with the relationship between the learners and the socio-cultural world they live in and the negative and positive implications of this relationship for language learning (e.g., Blackledge & Creese, 2016; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

Different theoretical influences have contributed to current approaches that inform sociocultural perspectives on language learning and identity construction. Significant among these include the works of Hymes (1964), Derrida (1970), Vygotsky (1980), Foucault (1980), Bakhtin (1981), Weedon (1987), Bourdieu (1992), and Hall (1997). Clearly, these seminal

sources provided the basis for an epistemological shift from a structuralist view of language (Saussure, 1966) to a poststructuralist one (see, Morgan, 2007). From a *structuralist* perspective, language signs derive their meanings from the linguistic system; hence language groups are considered fairly homogenous and consensual in their linguistic practices and the meanings assigned to these practices. By contrast, the *poststructuralist* perspective assumes that meaning is socially contested, even within linguistically homogenous communities; that language is not a neutral medium of communication but derives its meaning from the social situation and the identity orientation of the speaker who uses language in contexts of unequal power relations (Norton, 2011).

Several studies build on poststructuralist understanding of language and identity construction, drawing, for example, on the sociological approach (Bourdieu, 1992); positioning theory (Bhabha, 2004; Davies & Harré, 1990); sociolinguistic ethnography (Heller, 2006); and postcolonial theory (Bhabha, 2004; Ngugi, 1986; Said, 1979). In these studies, a significant aspect relates to the different purposes for which the construct of identity is operationalized. After a brief historical account, the following section discusses three significant approaches to the study of identity in language learning and situates the current thesis within these approaches.

### 2.3.2. **Research approaches to identity in language learning**

A distinction might be drawn in research in SL/FL contexts in terms of whether they focus on *identity* to foreground the social and political aspects of how learners develop their sense of “self” and how this relates to language learning in specific sociocultural contexts (e.g., Darwin, Ron & Norton, 2017; Norton, 2013; Norton & De Costa, 2018; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Focus on *subjectivity*, on the other hand, gives primacy to the historically situated and emergent aspects of the subjective experiences of

learners, relates these experiences to the learners' sense of "self", and considers the implications of these aspects for language learning (Kramsch, C., 2015; Kramsch, Claire, 2011; Markova, 2003; Vitanova, 2005; Weedon, 1987).

With regard to the construct of identity as described above, recent significant works include Bonny Norton (2000; 2013), and Aneta Pavlenko and Adrian Blackledge (2004). Norton operationalizes the construct of identity to theorize about access to material and symbolic resources as mediated through access to English as a second language. Focusing on five female immigrants in Canada studying in her ESL language support classroom, she uses the construct of identity to accentuate the learners' struggles as they try to acquire interactive competence in English among unequal power relations in their new host country of Canada. Her understanding of the concept of identity is informed by socioeconomic metaphors like "investment" and "symbolic and cultural capital" – metaphors derived from the ideas of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1992).

Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) also link language and identity with social justice and political inequalities by drawing on sociocultural concepts like gender, ethnicity, and sexuality in multilingual contexts. They focus on multilingual practices to illuminate "various aspects of negotiation of identities by linguistic minority speakers" (p. 1) in different countries to show how identity construction takes place among relations of social, economic, ethnic, and ideological struggles marked by unequal distribution of power. From this perspective, the identity construction of immigrant bilinguals is framed as a political and social construct as the bi/multilingual speakers try to claim more powerful identity positions in order to access civil rights and social and economic privileges in the democratic society of the host country (Kramsch, Claire, 2012).

Kramersch (2009), on the other hand, focuses on language learners' subjectivity in foreign language classrooms in the United States. Instead of using social constructs like class, gender, ethnicity, etc. as framing categories for her research, she draws on poststructuralist feminist theory (Weedon, 1987) to focus on the subjectivity of foreign language learners as "subjects in process" (Kramersch, Claire, 2009, p. 95-97). Kramersch and others (e.g., Pennycook, 2000; 2001), argue that learners' subjectivity is always a work in process that is mediated through the symbolic forms of meaning-making, language being one of these forms; subjectivity is historically contingent and subjectively emergent. Importantly, while identity is primarily a socio-economic and socio-political construct as explained above, subjectivity is a socio-psychosocial construct that foregrounds learners' sense of "self" as mediated in the social world through the symbolic forms of language. Whereas the construct of identity is primarily concerned with issues of social justice and ELLs' access to real or imagined communities in multilingual contexts, the construct of subjectivity aims to foreground the personal and subjective aspects of the multilingual learners' sense of "self" that are not always oriented towards tangible outcomes, social position or access to economic opportunities (Kramersch, C., 2015, p. 217).

Along with identity and subjectivity, a third significant orientation in identity research in language learning relates to hybridity which focuses on postcolonial multilingual contexts. Sandhu and Higgins (2016) state that "*hybridity* offers space for new identities that are seen as the product of mixing" of linguistic repertoires (p. 182). In a seminal study of English learning in Sri Lanka, Canagarajah (1999) focuses on how the participant language teacher uncritically applied western communicative ELT methods in the classroom and the students resisted such methods by adopting diversification practices in the classroom such as scribbling in their textbooks using different languages that were banned in their classroom.

Canagarajah theorizes that these discrete “safe houses” (Canagarajah, Suresh, 1997) in the English classroom are instances of appropriation of English to resist models of monolingual “native speaker” and to create spaces for learners’ hybrid and changing language practices and identities. He encourages “critical pedagogies” in EFL in Sri Lanka and other postcolonial countries to create room in English classrooms for students to practice hybrid identities (Canagarajah, Suresh, 2004).

More recently, Canagarajah (2013) links hybridity with the concept of *translanguaging* in language learning and teaching. From a translingual perspective, language learners are active users of their multilingual repertoire<sup>5</sup> rather than deficient learners of a target language. Translanguaging is a relatively recent concept in language learning and the research potential and pedagogical implications of the concept are currently debated in the field (see, Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2019).

In the contexts of Pakistan and India, it is pointed out that English is getting more hybrid and integrated with other local languages:

Language practices are becoming more hybrid [and] identities are getting increasingly blurred [...] as people are integrating English into their [language] repertoires in recognition of the better-paid employment opportunities and [due to the effect of] communication media associated with globalization. (Canagarajah, Suresh & Ashraf, 2013, p. 258)

It is advocated that Pakistan needs to focus on adopting critical pedagogical practices that are better suited to the multilingual context of the country. It is increasingly argued that the interface between language and identity in Pakistan needs to be studied in terms of the

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<sup>5</sup> *Linguistic repertoire* refers to the ‘multilingual [learners for whom] languages are part of a repertoire that is accessed for their communicative purposes; languages are not discrete and separated, but form an integrated system for them’ (Canagarajah, Suresh, 2011, p. 1).

contextual realities of the sociocultural features of the students. Pennycook's (2017) argument is instructive:

There are therefore many Englishes, not so much in terms of language varieties as posited by the World Englishes framework, but rather in terms of different Englishes in relation to different social and economic forces. We need to understand English not so much as a pre-given entity but rather as a local practice (p. xii).

The above studies contextualize the focus of this thesis which explores the construction of the identity of the participant EFL students and their "hybrid" trilingual practices. The thesis explores language learners' identity in terms of unequal access to multilingual resources in social domains and its implications for EFL learning. Language learners' identities are affected by factors that go beyond the classroom and formal learning environments. Norton (2013) points out that "identity is influenced by practices common to institutions such as homes, schools, and workplaces, as well as available resources, whether they are symbolic or material" that shape the learners' actual and imagined identity (p. 2). The present study aims to take a holistic view of English as a foreign language learning by studying the participant ELLs' multilingual perceptions, their sociocultural identity, and how it intersects with dominant language perceptions in their social and academic contexts. The following section reviews major theoretical constructs relevant to the focus of the current thesis and how these have been used in research studies.

#### 2.4. **SIGNIFICANT CONSTRUCTS IN LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY**

Learners' identities are socially situated and historically contingent. As such, the construction and transformation of learners' identities need to be understood in terms of socially sensitive constructs and research approaches. Following the foundational work of Norton (Norton, 2000; 2013), identity is increasingly understood as "the relationship between the language learner and the larger, frequently unequal social world" mediating students' investment or lack of investment in language learning practices (Norton & De Costa, 2017, p. 93).

#### 2.4.1. Ecology

Ecological perspectives in SLA/FLA emphasize learning of English as a local practice. It means that the sociocultural, multilingual, and historical context shapes the learning experiences and psychological (subjective) approaches of learners towards a new language. Learners are not just free agents with individual characteristics but are members of social communities that shape how they are socialized towards different languages (Duff, Patricia & May, 2017; Duff, Patricia A., 2013). Language learning is, therefore, emergent in a specific social context and characterized by affordances and constraints operating in that context. In other words, the ecological perspective stresses that English is not a monolithic entity manifesting in different parts of the world as the World Englishes perspective posits, but emerges in a symbiotic relationship with the sociocultural and historical forces of a context, shaping the language socialization experiences of language learners.

In applied linguistics, the ecological construct has been operationalized from different perspectives. For instance, *symbolic* ecology perspective focuses on the coexistence of languages as symbolic systems; *cognitive* ecology focuses on how language plays a significant role in peoples' cognitive orientation towards the social and natural environment; and *sociocultural* ecology, which is relevant to the current thesis, focuses on language "in relation to the social and cultural forces that shape the conditions of speakers and speech communities" (Kramsch, 2017, p. 3). It means that adequate sociocultural context of EFL/ESL learning needs to be provided including the legacy of the colonial period in postcolonial contexts (Pennycook, 1998). As such, the ecological perspective provides an alternative to the one language-one nation ideology by stressing the ethnic and linguistic pluralism of the specific context of learning (Hornberger, 2002). It opens up spaces for local languages by promoting diversity in ESL/EFL learning contexts.

#### 2.4.2. **Investment**

The construct of investment was developed by Norton (Darvin, Ron & Norton, 2017; Norton, 2000; 2013; 2015; Peirce, 1995) as complementary to the construct of motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013). Whereas the psychological construct of *motivation* views language learners as autonomous individuals who are motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, interested or uninterested in language learning processes, the sociological construct of *investment* gives primacy to the unequal power relations in which learners are socially situated and how language hierarchy, social class, race, gender, and ethnicity affect learners' access to acquire the language.

Derived from Bourdieu's (1992) theory of cultural capital, investment signifies "the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often *ambivalent* desire to learn and practice it" (Norton, 2013, p. 50, my emphasis). If learners are invested in the practices of the target language classroom, it enhances their desire to increase their cultural capital by acquiring both symbolic and material resources that the target language may offer. However, learners' investment in the target language is often complex and sometimes conflictual due to unequal relations of power in the society where certain languages might be more powerful than others (Hajar, 2017; McKay & Wong, 1996). Investment is, therefore, a broader concept as compared to motivation as it can capture the broader sociological factors in relation to language learning. Instead of asking how much the learner is motivated to learn the language, researchers working from an "investment" perspective focus on the learners' investment in acquiring the target language and what opportunities learners have for interaction in the target language in the classroom and in the community.

Investment accentuates two aspects of language learning. First, the social aspects of learners' expectations to gain through learning the target language; second, the individual aspect of how learners exercise their individual *agency* to affect the process to which they are subjected in education environments. Norton (2013) explains:

If learners 'invest' in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic resources (language, education, friendship) and material resources (capital goods, real estate, money), which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital and social power. [...] As the value of their cultural capital increases, so learners' sense of themselves and their desires for the future are reassessed. Hence, [...] there is an integral relationship between investment and identity. (p. 6)

The agentive aspect of the construct of investment relates to possibilities for ownership of the learning process by the learner and what identity positions are available to the learners to claim greater autonomy in the process of learning. Kramersch (2013) elaborates that, from the "investment" perspective:

Learners are no longer passively structured by powerful institutions; nor are they simply moved to learn what others teach them. They can exercise agency, claim their right to be heard, change perceptions and institutional prejudices, and strive to become whoever they want to be. (p. 195)

The sociological focus of the construct of investment has sparked many research studies over the years. Along with a special issue of the *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* (Arkoudis & Davison, 2008), the construct has been operationalized in many countries to study the challenges and opportunities for minority groups, immigrant students or workers, adult language learners in host countries, and refugee education (De Costa, 2010; Norton & Kamal, 2003; Norton & De Costa, 2018). In a study of the Iranian youth in an off-school English language institute for adult learners, Mohammadian and Norton (2017) found that although the learners were from well-off socioeconomic backgrounds, their investment in the program came from their desire for upward social mobility. The EFL classroom also served as a socialization space in a cultural context where male-female segregation is strictly observed. Relatedly, Hajar (2017) employs the construct of investment in a longitudinal study

of two Syrian postgraduate students in Britain. He reports that both students' investment in English language learning and their involvement with the British culture, in general, were driven by their strong agentive approach towards settling in the host country. However, cultural and material resources contingent upon their differentiated socioeconomic backgrounds had a significant impact on the success of the two students in English learning. These studies point towards the adaptive capacity of the construct of investment in different sociocultural and educational settings and, on the other, point towards the importance of taking into account the sociocultural factors in research on second/foreign language learning.

A growing number of studies have used the construct of investment to study the construction and negotiation of identity in multilingual contexts. Rajadurai (2010), for example, uses the construct to study the intersection of community ideology, language use, and identity in a case study in Malaysia. Nguyen (2015) reports a single case study of a Korean transgender ESL learner in the US, focusing on how her investment in the language relates to her self-identified and ascribed gender status inside and outside the classroom. Haneda's (2005) study of a Canadian citizen learning Japanese writing composition provides a contrast to Norton's own study of immigrants in Canada.

#### 2.4.3. **Identity**

As a sociocultural construct, identity is often informed by the ideas of Bourdieu (1990), referring to how a person understands his or her relationship to the world (*habitus*), how that relationship is constructed across time and space (*fields of power*), and how the person understands possibilities for the future (*desire*). *Habitus* refers to how learners make sense of the world and position themselves and others in it. *Fields of power* are the social domains in which learners enact their ways of thinking about the world as they position others and are positioned by them in certain ways (Davies & Harré, 1990). As Tamim (2017) points out, the

habitus and the fields of power are ideologically mediated; people act in the world under the influence of, and in response to, the dominant ideologies in their sociocultural environment. *Desire*, on the other hand, brings in the aspirational aspect related to what might be rather than what is. According to Darwin and Norton (2015), “what learners desire can also be shaped by habitus; however, it is through desire that learners are compelled to act and exercise their agency in language learning” (p. 46).

In SLA/FLA research, identity has been theorized as related social positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990), belonging (Weedon, 2004), and as affected by authenticity and legitimacy as speakers of a second language (Kramsch, Claire, 2012). The first two of these perspectives are relevant to subsequent analysis in the current thesis. Positioning is concerned with how power is implicated in the social positioning of the learners and also sees the learners as “choosing subjects” who exercise their individual agency to affect their relation to the power structures in their environments. Like Bourdieu (1990), Davies and Harré’s construct of identity is situated at the intersection of socially dominant ways of thinking and individual desire. Identity is therefore often conflictual and characterized by ambivalence. Block (2010) explains:

[...] identity construction is potentially and indeed often conflictive as opposed to harmonious [...] across borders which [may be] geographical, historical, cultural and psychological. In such circumstances, identity work is often characterized by the *ambivalence* that individuals feel about exactly who they are and where they belong. (p. 338, my emphasis)

With regard to the second approach to identity, drawing on Weedon (1987), Norton (2013) identifies three important aspects of language learners’ subjectivity relevant to understanding learners’ identity construction that have relevance for the current study: subjectivity is multiple and non-unitary; it is often a site of struggle between social forces and individual agency; and subjectivity changes over time. Although Norton draws on aspects of

subjectivity as developed by Weedon in the context of a poststructuralist analysis of gender roles in social settings, Kramsch (2013) argues that the way these constructs are operationalized in Norton's study should be understood in terms of identity and not subjectivity (see Section 2.3.2):

The efforts of some language educators to view an individual's identity as multiple, changing and conflictual (Norton, 2000, p. 8) have aimed at making bilingual and bicultural minorities less threatening by helping them reconstruct themselves within a pluralistic democratic society. Such a reconstruction reduces anxiety, making the other predictable and controllable, but it risks sacrificing difference for diversity, subjectivity for identity. (p. 213)

Whereas the debate regarding the distinction between identity and subjectivity is mostly focused on studies of immigrant communities, ethnic and religious minorities, and other marginalized groups in the western developed world, identity research in postcolonial developing contexts often builds on other theories to challenge the dominance of English (Kachru, 1992; 2006; Kirkpatrick, 2010). Bhabha's (1994; 2004) ideas around "hybrid identities" have been particularly influential in understanding identity from a decolonizing perspective (e.g., Sandhu, 2015). Bhabha (1994, as cited in Sandhu and Higgins, 2016) defines hybridity as:

the process of subverting colonial authority by interrogating 'originary and initial subjectivities', focusing instead on instances and processes where cultural differences are articulated. For him, in-between, interstitial, 'third spaces' of engaging cultural differences are sites where collaborative or contested new identities are performed from the minority viewpoint located in the peripheries of power and privilege. (p. 182)

At the micro-sociological level, applied linguists have used the construct of hybridity to understand language usage in terms of code-switching and code-mixing (e.g., Jaffe, 2000; Kachru, 2006; Spitulnik, 1998; Woolard, 1998). Kachru (2006), for instance, uses the construct to analyze movie songs in the Indian film industry as an instance of nativization of the English language through a playful blending with Hindi. Canagarajah and Ashraf (2013) use it to explore contradictions in language policy objectives and the practice of language use

in the postcolonial contexts of India and Pakistan. They argue that hybrid language practices have both identity and policy implications that need to be taken into account in language policy formulation:

The emerging hybrid identities, ideological tensions, and class divide are posing new policy dilemmas that are difficult to resolve for governments. [...] Rather than compartmentalizing languages and demanding equal competencies in each of them, such a model would allow for functional competencies in complementary languages for different purposes and social domains, without neglecting mother-tongue maintenance. (p. 258)

The above discussion suggests that a sociological understanding of identity in language learning views identity as socially constructed and mediated by a struggle between societal power structures and individual desire. Because learners often construct their identity within socially dominant ways of thinking about language(s), identity can be conflictual and ambivalent. This sociological understanding of identity contextualizes the focus of the current thesis which focuses on sociocultural aspects of language learning and the often-hierarchical perception of the multilingual resources of the learners.

#### 2.4.4. **Imagined communities**

Research studies show that learners' investment in learning a target language cannot be understood only in terms of the here and now. The construct of *imagined communities* points towards the imaginative aspect of learning an additional language(s). Through learning a new language, learners desire to belong to other groups that are not immediately accessible to them. Wenger (1998) argues that we relate to the world around us either through engagement (actual contact) or through imagination with the later extension of our relation to others beyond the constraints of space (here) and time (now) to include possible places and imagined futures. Relatedly, Anderson (1991) adds that our sense of belonging, such as being part of a nation or an ethnic group, is based on our sense of being part of imagined communities, although we could never meet all the members of such a group.

Based on the above seminal works, the construct of imagined communities has been used to study how “imagined community assumes an imagined identity, and [how] a learner’s investment in the target language can be understood within this context” (Norton, 2013, p. 3). Norton further argues that the construct of imagined communities can capture the aspirational aspect of language learning:

[Imagined] communities include future relationships that exist only in the learner’s imagination as well as affiliations – such as nationhood or even transnational communities – that extend beyond local sects of relationships. [...] These imagined communities are no less real than the one in which learners have daily engagement and might even have a stronger impact on their current actions and investment. (p. 8)

In her study of migrant ESL learners, Norton (2000; 2013) operationalized the concept to understand how her participants aspired to belong to imagined communities in their host country of Canada and how this was related to their investment in the ESL classroom that they attended in the evening. For example, although Mai (one of the female participants) is a highly motivated language learner, when their English teacher wanted her students to share their past experiences in the classroom “Mai struggled to make a connection between the language practice of the classroom and her imagined identity” (p. 9). Eventually, she withdrew from the ESL course as she could not see it useful to achieve her aspirations.

Kanno (2003) draws on the construct of investment and imagined communities in the context of a multisited ethnographic study in five schools in Japan. She found disparities in access to “additive bilingual education” (Lo Bianco, 1997; 2009) based on the socio-economic class of the students. Kanno argues that social inequities are exacerbated by students having different aspirations and imagined communities that can have a limiting effect upon access of the students to linguistic and non-linguistic resources. Similarly, in the wake of “the war on

terror”<sup>6</sup>, Norton and Kamal (2003) conducted a study in Pakistan focusing on school students involved in helping Afghan refugee children develop their English language skills. Drawing on the constructs of “imagined communities” and “politics of location” (Canagarajah, S., 1999), the study argues that, being aware of the law and order situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan at the time, the student participants were invested in the English literacy practices of the school. English was perceived as the language of technology, global access, and most importantly, a peaceful future for Pakistan. The attraction of English was attributed to achieving imagined futures and escaping the present-day harsh reality of their social context in the wake of the “war on terror”.

The above sections indicate that the three concepts of investment, identity, and imagined communities have proved useful in understanding language learners’ commitment in ESL/EFL contexts. Important aspects relevant to the present study include the sociological focus of these constructs. Language learning is understood in terms of how the habitus (the “normal” ways of thinking in a social setting) are contested in fields of power (schools, classrooms, home, society) and how learners challenge these powers through the exercise of their agency, imagination, and desire. Focusing on social and academic challenges in EFL learning, the present thesis contributes to this perspective in the study of language learning by exploring participant learners’ socially situated identities and their relation to their investment in EFL learning. Further, an important focus in the current thesis relates to the effect of ideology on language perception.

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<sup>6</sup> For a detailed analysis of the effects on Pakistan of the ‘war on terror’ in the neighboring Afghanistan, see (Abbas, 2015).

#### 2.4.5. **Ideology in language learning**

In recent years, researchers have called for theorising and researching language learning that explicitly critiques ideology (De Costa, 2010). Ideology can be understood as normative sets of ideas that “control social distribution of different forms of capital including linguistic capital, mediated through ideologically supported ways of thinking and systemic structures” (Darvin, Ron & Norton, 2015, p. 43). For Bourdieu (1992), forms of capital include economic capital (wealth, physical possessions); cultural capital (educational credentials, cultural artifacts); social capital (networks of social power); and symbolic capital (acknowledgment of the legitimacy of these forms of capital). The value and distribution of these “capitals” is ideologically structured and constantly negotiated in social sites of struggle (Darvin, Ron & Norton, 2017). Darvin and Norton explain:

In response to the demands of the new world order, spurred by technology and characterized by mobility, [we] propose a comprehensive model of investment which occurs at the intersection of identity, ideology, and capital. The model recognizes that the spaces in which language acquisition and socialization take place have become increasingly reterritorialized and unbounded, and the systemic patterns of control more invisible. This calls for new questions, analyses, and theories of identity. (p. 36)

The ideological dimension in language learning has gained attention in recent literature (Blommaert, 2006; Blommaert & Rampton, 2012; De Costa, 2010; Heller, 2011). It is asserted that, in offline/online contacts, literacy (especially in English) has become more important in order to claim the right to speak (Janks, 2009) while power structures constraining or facilitating this right have become increasingly invisible (Kramsch, 2013).

However, few studies are available that give specific attention to the role of ideology in language learning. As discussed in Chapter One (Section 1.5), Darvin and Norton (2017) made ideology a key aspect of their model of investment in language learning. However, they recognize that “since the expanded model of investment has only recently been made available in the literature, research which draws on the model is in its early stages” (p.233). A

few studies that have drawn on the model include Barkhuizen (2016) who explores the analytical potential of this model in the context of a longitudinal study of identities of a preservice ESL teacher in New Zealand who originally migrated from the Pacific Island of Tonga. Barkhuizen notes that a key aspect of his study is that “the researcher includes reflexive personal commentary on his own positioning throughout the article” while using the model of investment for data interpretation (p. 655). Relatedly, using the model of investment, Uju Anya (2016) focuses on the language learning experiences of African-American learners of Portuguese in Brazil. Her study focuses on how construction and negotiation of identities along racial, gendered, and class lines affected the investment of these learners in the language learning practices in study abroad.

In sum, studies of how the subjective, ideological, and aspirational aspects of English language learners affect learners’ investment in acquiring a new language have proved beneficial. Such research contextualizes language learning in socially situated realities. The global spread of English in the present era and its association with economic and ideological factors cannot be dissociated from learners’ desire to acquire English. Pennycook (2017) comments:

These economic and ideological forces are also at play in the construction of students’ desires to learn English. As Motha and Lin (2014, p. 332) contend at the center of every English language learning moment lies desire: desire for the language; for the identities represented by particular accents and varieties of English; for capital, power, and images that are associated with English; for what is believed to lie beyond the doors that English unlocks. (p. xii)

After discussing theoretical aspects of the current thesis and how identity is being increasingly researched from a sociocultural lens, the following section specifically focuses on language learning research in the context of Pakistan to situate the current thesis in existing scholarly work and the contribution it can make to our understanding of EFL teaching and learning in Pakistan.

## 2.5. **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN PAKISTAN: RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES**

Rahman (2007) argues that “English is the key to understanding the complex interaction between class, worldview, the medium of education, and globalization in Pakistan” (p. 219). This argument makes learning the English language a central concern in the socio-educational context of Pakistan. The following sections discuss EFL research in Pakistan in terms of four major research perspectives to put in perspective the current thesis and its contribution to language learning research in the country. The four perspectives relate to the relation of official language policy to EFL learning in Pakistan; unequal access to quality EFL instruction predicated upon differentiated parallel education systems in the country; EFL learning in Pakistan as reinforcing national and religious stereotypes, and a critique of the dominance of English in the education system of Pakistan from a postcolonial and indigenous languages protection perspective.

### 2.5.1. **Language policy perspective**

As explained in Chapter One (Sections 1.2), Pakistan is a multilingual country with at least 72 languages (Gordon, 2005). Different ethnic groups in Pakistan (e.g., Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun, Balochi, etc.) identify a dominant ethnic language as the key marker of their identity (Rahman, 2008). However, according to Gordon, the state frames the national identity of Pakistan in terms of a monolingual policy of Urdu as a marker of national identity whereas English is privileged as the official language of the country. Further, although Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, has greater acceptance in the country, it also remains in constant tension with regional languages, a situation described as “Urdu imperialism” (Rahman, 2005c). English is desired in the country as the language for social status and economic mobility (Khan, Ajmal, 2013; Rahman, 2004; 2009). However, it is also detested as a remnant of the British colonial hegemony and as a western cultural influence (Durrani, M.,

2012; Durrani, N. & Dunne, 2010; Khan, Aziz Ullah, 2016). Rahman (2009) and Atta (2015) argue that in spite of the great diversity of languages and ethnicities in the country, the state neglects the development and revitalization of local languages by not adopting a flexible multilingual language policy.

Several research studies attribute the lack of a vibrant multilingual ecology in the country to the failure of the state at the policy level. Ayres (2003), for example, argues that since its establishment in 1947 after the British colonists left the Indian sub-continent, “the state of Pakistan has been unable to formulate and implement policies to address the unabated tensions between the idealized, imagined Pakistan envisaged by the nation’s rulers and the reality of its diverse [multilingual] citizenry” (p. 51). Divisive socioeconomic and educational policies of the colonial British raj<sup>7</sup> have been perpetuated through policy formulation and lack of implementation in the post-independence era of the country (Durrani, M., 2012). It is argued that a wide gap exists between the well-off, mostly urban, population of the country and the lower, mostly rural sections of the society in terms of access to quality English teaching (Rahman, 2004).

Relatedly, several language-in-education policies have been formulated since the establishment of Pakistan in 1947 (see Chapter Four, Section 4.2.1). However, these have not been successful in addressing issues related to equity in access to English across socioeconomic classes (Khan, 2016, p. 39). English, according to Shamim (2011), provides the basis for a “linguistic apartheid” in the country, creating a division between the rich and the poor in Pakistan (p. 299). Shackle (2007) summarizes the linguistic situation in Pakistan: “The historic [colonial era] diglossia between formal standard languages [English, Urdu,

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<sup>7</sup> ‘Raj’ is a Hindi word meaning ‘rule’ or ‘kingdom’. For a detailed study of the rise and fall of the British raj in India, see Metcalf (Metcalf, 2005).

Hindi] and local speech continues in the general modern sociolinguistic pattern of a hierarchically organized triglossia between English, Urdu, and the local language” (p. 111).

Research focusing specifically on language-in-education in Pakistan is scarce. Indeed, Rahman (2008) complains that “there is not much scholarly work on language and education in Pakistan” (p. 387). Some key studies include survey research by Mansoor (2002) that collected quantitative data from 2136 students, 121 subject and English teachers of public and private sector colleges and universities, and 63 parents. Mansoor concluded from the data that “public sector students need to be provided more state support by adopting an English for all policy” at the school level to prepare learners for English medium instruction at the tertiary level. Conversely, in a mixed-method nation-wide study, Shamim (2011) analyses how language policy in Pakistan can be detrimental to the lower economic sections due to the effect of the sociocultural environment on developing proficiency in English. English is differentially distributed in Pakistani society, often acting as the boundary between socioeconomic classes. Shamim advocates a policy of multilingual education to increase ethnic harmony in the country. However, she also points out the difficulties in choosing such a policy:

Do we, in the developing contexts, really have the right to choose our own language for development? If not, how can people in developing country contexts be enabled to choose one or more languages for individual, societal and national development? (p. 310)

Studies point out that language policy formulation and implementation in Pakistan have failed to take into account students as key stakeholders in the process. Atta (2015), for instance, conducted a vertical case study of the implementation of the Pakistan National Education Policy (PNEP, 2009) in six government schools in the north-eastern region of Pakistan. She found that while the policy made it official that English be used as the medium of instruction for science subjects and maths from Grade Four onwards, the policy provides

no justification for this shift except that “it is important for competition in a globalized world order” (p. 4). According to Atta, a key shortcoming of the policy is that “students were found missing in policy formulation to assess the connection between ELP [English Language Policy] and its effect on groups of students” (p. 189).

### 2.5.2. **The parallel school systems perspective**

Research on EFL learning in Pakistan often focuses on the growth of different types of private schools alongside the government-run schools in the country. It argues that disparities in access to quality education in English is perpetuated by these competing and widely differentiated school systems in the country (Burki, 2005; Coleman & Capstick, 2012; de Lotbinière, 2010; Hathaway, 2005; Mahboob, 2002; Mustafa, 2012; Rahman, 2001; 2004). According to Mahboob (2002), disparities in the education system in Pakistan provide the basis for class stratification as parents mostly believe in “no English, no future”.

In Pakistan, there are at least three categories of schools apart from the mainstream government schools and religious seminaries called *madrassah*: state-subsidized schools run by the armed forces of Pakistan, high-fee private schools, and low-fee private schools (Rahman, 2001). Whereas the government schools and the low-fee private schools teach English only as a subject, in the high-fee private schools and military-run schools English is used as a medium of instruction and communication along with being taught as a subject (Rahman, 2001; 2005a). Rahman (2001) concludes that “English is an elitist preserve and a stumbling block for all other Pakistanis” (p. 242). Building on his argument of availability of English being a dividing factor, Rahman claims:

English, which has been taught very well but only to a small elite so far should now be taught, perhaps less well, but to all students. It should be spread out far more evenly. This is only possible by eliminating privileged English-medium schools while promoting the teaching of English as a subject in all schools. (p. 259)

However, a counter-argument is that policies and research studies that assume that access to monolingual education in English can mitigate the divide between the rich and the poor fail to take into account wide disparities between the socioeconomic backgrounds of the students and how much English is available to them in these spaces (Atta, 2015).

The adverse consequences of misguided efforts in Pakistan to promote English in education for socioeconomic development are well documented (Coleman, 2011a; Coleman & Capstick, 2012). For instance, in spite of nation-wide research-based recommendations from international organizations indicating that teachers did not have the capacity to adopt monolingual English instruction (Coleman & Capstick, 2012), the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government decided in April 2014 to change the medium of instruction (MoI) in the government-run primary schools in the province from Urdu to English. The government argued that the change in MoI will help bring government-run schools' students to par with the private schools' students (see, Channa, 2014).

Shamim (2011) argues that “the perceived need for English in Pakistan is driven, to some extent at least, by “folklore” and by parents’ dreams about the wonderful future which their children will experience if they learn English” (p. 299). These beliefs, combined with the government policy to support public-private schools’ segregation, is argued to be responsible for the rapid growth in the number of private schools in Pakistan during the last few decades. For example, Andrabi (2006) points towards the exponential increase of the private schools from 3,343 in the year 1983 to 33,238 in 2000. More recently, the ASER (2015) survey reported that 59 percent of school-going children aged six to sixteen years in Pakistan attend private schools. Relatedly, Coleman (2010) reports that the high-status private schools charge very high fees and are very few in number. Most of these high-fee schools follow the British

National Education system (like the Global School in the current study), enrolling students in O- and A-levels (2007).

The socioeconomic and global security repercussions of a divided educational system in Pakistan have been pointed out repeatedly. For example, in his testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in the United States, Burki (2005) commented:

It is right for the world to worry about the larger impact of Pakistan's dysfunctional educational system especially when it has been demonstrated that poorly educated young men in a country as large as Pakistan pose a serious security threat to the rest of the world. (p. 1)

The current thesis focuses on two schools that belong to the two different types of private schools in Pakistan mentioned above. The above discussion contextualizes the importance of the current thesis in terms of exploring the complexity of the social context in which learners from both schools live. Although the two focal schools are considered very different in terms of quality of English teaching and learners' socioeconomic backgrounds, there might be social perceptions and learners' identities that cut across these differences and limit their target language acquisition.

### 2.5.3. **National and Muslim identity perspective**

English teaching in Pakistan has been studied in terms of how access to quality education in English might be related to learners' identity construction. Mostly, these studies have focused on government-run schools where the national curriculum of Pakistan is used for instruction (Durrani, N. & Dunne, 2010; Khattak, Jamshed, Ahmad, & Baig, 2011; Mahmood, Asghar, & Hussain, 2012). Durrani and Dunne (2010), for instance, conducted a study of how students in five primary government schools viewed themselves as Pakistanis in response to classroom activities in different subjects. Drawing on a textual analysis of curriculum documents and a multi-site ethnographic case study, the study argues that textbooks and

classroom activities encourage students to construct “essentialist” identities in terms of collectives like “Muslim” and “non-Muslim” which are explicitly and implicitly supported in the texts (see also, Lall, 2008). They conclude:

Ironically, this emphasis (on essentialist collective identities) creates social polarization and the normalization of militaristic and violent identities, with serious implications for social cohesion, tolerance for internal and external diversity, and gender relations. (p. 215)

Some studies have also focused on EFL learners’ identity in Pakistan at the micro-level (Durrani, 2008; Durrani & Dunne, 2010). Durrani (2008), for example, states that research on gender identity in the Pakistani education system might have the potential to challenge patriarchal social relations if researchers and donor agencies focus on gendered identity and its role in access to quality education in English. Through analysis of textbook materials and classroom interaction, Durrani argues that “curriculum acts as a set of discursive practices which position girls and boys unequally and differently, constitute them as gendered and nationalized/ist subjects”. The curriculum thus constructs and reinforces a hierarchical and binary conception of gender identity and its relation to the national identity (p. 595).

Relatedly, threats to security are a major concern in the Pakistani context if unitary national identities are consolidated in the schools based on meta-narratives about national identity. Rahman (2005), for instance, takes a macro-level perspective on issues of militancy in South Asia to argue that “Muslim response” to English in the region in general and in Pakistan, in particular, can be understood in terms of access to English; the better the access, the less resistant identities to the western democratic norms are constructed by the learners. He argues that religious militancy can be mitigated, and the protection of women’s rights might be ensured through better and wider access to exposure to English in the education system of Pakistan.

Identity construction in English learning in Pakistan is also related to curriculum management by the state to transmit state-endorsed ideologies to younger generations (Kausar & Akhtar, 2012; Mahboob, 2015). Mahboob (2015), for example, draws attention to the way identity is “managed” in the language contents taught in government schools in Pakistan. Through textual analysis of course contents for the teaching of English as a foreign language to students of Grade 10 (aged 16 years or above), he examines how identity management is motivated by ideological projects of the state. He draws attention to how identity is managed not only through the teaching contents but also through forms of presentation on the page in the textbooks and through ideologically-driven selective inclusion of specific contents.

The above discussion suggests that national and Muslim identity perspectives have often focused on curriculum content analysis and learners’ identity formation in government-run schools. This perspective relates the formation of essentialist gendered, national, or Muslim identities with threats to social cohesion and stability. The above review shows that not enough attention has been given to learners’ language perception and how they construct their identity in social contexts.

#### 2.5.4. **Postcolonial and indigenous languages perspective**

The postcolonial perspective in EFL learning in Pakistan focuses on the implications of the dominance of English in the education system in Pakistan and links it with the legacy of the British colonial rule in India. Further, it often links the legacy of the colonial era to negative attitudes of the speakers towards their indigenous languages (Durrani, M., 2012; Rassool, Heugh, & Mansoor, 2007; Sandhu & Higgins, 2016). It is argued that the British colonial rulers adopted a divisive policy of access to quality education in English for a small elite section of the population while the majority of the masses were instructed in the vernacular languages (Mahboob, 2009). Tsui (2004) argue that this divisive policy has trickled down to

the present-day education systems in postcolonial contexts, resulting in the concentration of material resources and linguistic capital in the hands of a few affluent and socially well-connected classes in postcolonial contexts.

Durrani (2012) argues that the “specters” of the colonial rule survive in the postcolonial state of Pakistan in the form of marginalization of vernacular languages in school curricula. She argues that by according prestige status to the English language at the expense of regional and ethnic languages, the state perpetuates top-down language policies in Pakistan that are reminiscent of the policies of the colonial era. Such policies contribute to socioeconomic inequality and issues of identity among ethnic groups in the country (see also, Rahman, 2008).

Researchers working from a postcolonial perspective argue that the continuation of colonial-era language policies contributes to the dominance of English in Pakistan and, to a lesser extent, Urdu. These policies have also been linked with students’ negative attitudes towards indigenous languages (e.g., Khan, Ajmal, 2013; Khan, Aziz Ullah, 2016; Mahboob, 2015). Mahboob (2015), for example, argues that if the cultural and linguistic background of the students is different from what is supported in the school, children face a situation of “conflict” that can develop negative attitudes towards their own language and associated cultural concepts.

Similarly, Khan (2013) conducted a mixed-method ethnographic study of two high-fee private English-medium schools in the capital territory of Peshawar in the north-west of Pakistan. Focusing on students in Grades 9 and 10 (age 16 to 18), the study analyzed the interaction between the schools’ English-only policy and its implementation on the ground in terms of classroom practice and its effect on students’ perception of the local languages –

Pashto and Urdu. The study found that students experienced domain shrinkage for the local languages as they considered Pashto and Urdu less instrumental for any future career goals and as having a lower status than English. Khan concludes that as a result of strong “assimilationist” English-oriented policies of the schools, the first language of the students, Pashto, shows signs of language shift as it gets relegated to oral domains and is considered to have no literacy value. While this study provides key insights into how the multilingual proficiency of the students plays out within English-dominant high-fee schools in Pakistan, a contrastive study of these schools with low-fee schools in terms of language perception is missing. Further, the study is mainly concerned with how macro-level policy interacts with students’ views about their multilingual proficiency. A more exclusive focus on EFL learners’ subjective experience of living multilingually is missing. The current study addresses this need by selecting two contrastive private school contexts. It focuses on the subjective aspects of EFL students’ differentiated desire for Pashto, English, and Urdu in social domains and how it is historically situated in the postcolonial history of the context and in the imagined futures associated with EFL learning (Anderson, 1991; Dagenais, 2003).

Appropriating English through encouraging multilingual practices in the language classroom has been proposed as a possible solution in teaching English in Outer Circle countries like Pakistan (Ali, 2015; Kachru, 2006). Ali (2015), for example, found that the postgraduate student participants in her study showed resistance to accepting the Pakistani variety of English as legitimate. She argues in favor of moving away from a stereotypical western L1 speaker model (Firth & Wagner, 1997; 2007) in ELT towards celebrating the diversity of local forms of English in the classroom that can support learners’ multilingual identities (see also, Mahboob, 2009).

With regard to language teachers' language perceptions, studies show that teachers' "ambivalent" attitude towards English and other languages in Pakistan might be related to colonial history and the present-day language policies. Khan (2016), for instance, conducted a narrative ethnographic study of language perceptions and practices of primary school teachers in two government primary schools (a Pashtu- and an Urdu-medium) and one low-fee English-medium private school in northern Pakistan. He found that while the teachers saw little value for Pashtu (the first language of the participant teachers and their students), their approach towards English was ambivalent, "both detesting and desiring the language" (p. 111). In terms of future research, he stresses the importance of analyzing the relationship between the construction of identity and learning English as a foreign language in Pakistan to understand the subjective aspects of this ambivalent attitude towards English.

The above discussion suggests that the postcolonial perspective in ELL learning in Pakistan mostly deals with macro-level factors affecting ELLs' success in English acquisition and their attitudes towards the target language. Issues in bilingual education in Pakistan are often linked with the continuation of colonial-era policies that often marginalize indigenous languages. However, insufficient attention has been given to investigating ELLs' perception of their multilingual resources and, as Khan (2016) points out, to the subjective aspects of learners' often ambivalent attitude towards English.

#### 2.5.5. **The language conundrum and identity struggle in Pakistan**

The above studies have demonstrated a variety of approaches to EFL learning in Pakistan focusing on language policy, parallel education systems in the country, national and Muslim identity in EFL, and the colonial legacy of English in Pakistan. Broadly, these studies focus on thematic areas around educational, social, and political aspects of EFL learning. The studies point out the importance of understanding English learning as a complex social

activity not just confined to the acquisition of formal aspects of the language. However, there are several limitations to these studies. First, an explicit focus on learners' perceptions of their multilingual identity is missing. Although some studies examine learners' identity, this construct is often treated as a minor focus to contribute to the main focus of the studies relating to macro-level considerations around language learning. Second, although some studies have focused on micro-level aspects of language learning and language use, these studies are often focused on the intercultural aspects of learning English as a foreign language in Pakistan and its implications for broader global debates around promoting intercultural understanding (e.g., Ali, 2015; Baumgardner, 1990; Mahmood et al., 2012).

Third, a majority of earlier studies do not take a reflexive methodological perspective to fully understand and build upon the role of the researcher as cultural/linguistic insider and researcher outsider. Such a perspective can enrich the understanding of the researcher as well as provide the reader with a fuller understanding of the positioning of the researcher by making his/her role in the research processes more transparent.

Fourth, most of these studies include language hierarchy as a minor focus of analysis instead of using it as a broad social influence on the status, use, and desirability of the multilingual resources of the learners. Research is needed that focuses on language hierarchy in multilingual contexts, how it is socially sustained in domestic and school environments, and how it might relate to learners' socialization as members of a social group.

Lastly, the above studies indicate that there are a variety of school systems in Pakistan including private and government schools. The high-fee private schools are often argued as different from low-fee schools where EFL learners are perceived to be at a disadvantage due to institutional and domestic reasons. However, more research is needed to see whether these

school systems are dichotomously different or share similarities that have to do with the social context where they are located.

## 2.6. SUMMARY

In the context of EFL learning in multilingual contexts, this chapter set out to put the current thesis in perspective in terms of its theoretical, methodological, historical, and empirical aspects. Research literature surveyed in the chapter suggests that the global spread of English (Phillipson, 1992; 2009) is increasingly analyzed in local contexts to understand the politics of language and how learners' identities are affected in these contexts (Blommaert, 2006; Blommaert et al., 2012). A sociocultural analysis of EFL learners' identity construction in Pakistan can contribute to this literature through the analysis of the struggles and aspirations of the students under local and global factors. Pennycook's (2017) remarks are quite instructive in this regard:

[English is] enmeshed in complex local contexts of power and struggle. [...] To understand the power and politics of ELT we need detailed understandings of the role English plays in relation to local languages, politics and economies. This requires meticulous studies of English and its users, as well as theories of power that are well adapted to contextual understandings. We are never just teaching something called English but rather we are involved in economic and social change, cultural renewal, people's dreams and desires. (p. xi)

As Pennycook suggests, "meticulous studies of English and its users" are needed if we want to affect the broader aspects of language learning. In Pakistan, there is a need for EFL research to focus on learners' perspectives about their multilingual resources in different school systems and social domains and how these relate to their identity formation. As a cultural and linguistic insider and research outsider, I build on my understanding of the context to conduct a rich reflexive analysis of participant learners in the current thesis. The next chapter outlines the philosophical assumptions and methodological design adopted in the current study.

### **3. CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on explaining the framing of the current study in terms of its theoretical framework, methodological design, analytical approach, and data gathering methods. The first section of the chapter focuses on the research framework of the study in terms of the theoretical assumptions that informed my research orientation and that led to choosing a qualitative study with an ethnographic methodological approach. It also details the analytical approach of the study in terms of Braun and Clarke's (2006; 2013; 2014) thematic analysis (TA) in qualitative research. The second section explains the two research sites and the participants (six students and two teachers). The third section focuses on my positioning in the field as a member of the same Pashtun ethnic group as my participants (emic perspective) and as a researcher outsider (etic perspective). The implications of this positioning are discussed in terms of an analysis of the subjectivity of the researcher. The fourth section describes the methods used for data gathering, comprised of semi-structured interviews, observations in the field, research diary entries, and relevant artifacts and documents from the field. The last section provides a detailed discussion of how the data gathered in the field were managed, translated and transcribed, and analyzed. Lastly, issues around reliability in data coding and maintaining rigor and quality in research analysis are discussed.

#### **3.2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

The following section discusses important points regarding the theoretical assumptions informing the current study, its methodological design, and the analytical approach adopted in the study. As Silverman (2004) points out, it is important that the relationship between analytical perspectives and methodological choices are explained to the reader because these

aspects are a crucial part of why the study was conducted and how the researcher made sense of what he/she gathered in the field.

### 3.2.1. **Theoretical framework**

Being mindful of theoretical assumptions and stating them explicitly is important for a research project for at least two reasons. On the one hand, theoretical assumptions inform and influence the choices a researcher makes in terms of methodology, selection of research site, methods used for collecting data, and analytical approach towards the data. On the other hand, an explicit statement of theoretical assumptions helps the readers to make sense of the research design and the arguments made in a thesis. As Silverman (2013) stresses, “research is never just about techniques. Finding a theoretical approach which [makes] sense could provide a settled basis for inference and data analysis” (p. 39). The following lines discuss briefly the theoretical assumptions that inform the present study and why I chose a qualitative approach that is situated in a (social) constructionist view of learning English.

#### *Qualitative research approach*

This section outlines why a qualitative approach in second/foreign language research is more suitable for the aims of the present study. In philosophical terms, quantitative research acknowledges a positivist ontology (i.e. the nature of reality) that can be described, in simple terms, as “the belief that there are [established] truths that can be discovered about a common reality” (Hammersley, 2013, p. 21). Quantitative research is often closely modeled on research in the physical sciences and imitates its view of what exists (ontology) and how we can acquire knowledge about it (epistemology). Generally, quantitative research perspectives are committed to the following basic tenets, although the level of commitment can vary from case to case. Research design is developed to test an explicitly stated hypothesis or hypotheses. Standardized instruments are used to collect numerical data through

measurements, counting, and ranking. Procedural objectivity is ensured through standardized measurements to rule out the personal bias of the researcher. The sample is studied with a view to generalize to a larger population. Statistical techniques are used to validate generalization and control for errors. Experimental methods are preferred to control for variables in establishing cause and effect relationship between a “treatment” and particular outcome(s) (Mackey & Gass, 2005). As quantitative research focuses on “the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables”, the social context of the study remains outside the purview of this approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 10).

In contradistinction to these tenets of the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach developed as “a theoretical lens to inquire into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a problem” (Creswell, 2007, p. 37). In the qualitative approach, observation of the participants in real-life situations is held as important, rather than controlling for variables under experimental conditions. Respondents are viewed as active interpreters of the social world around them rather than passively responding to it; data are therefore gathered through methods that allow the respondents to express their views fully. The research design is, therefore, flexible rather than rigid and fixed, data-driven rather than hypothesis-driven (Robson & McCartan, 2011). The social and personal characteristics of the researcher are considered a valid part of the data rather than as contaminating the results (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 24). As Roberts-Holmes (2011) points out, our “personal motivations are part of generating the methodology, validity and authenticity of the research project” (p. 23).

The above discussion indicates that a qualitative approach is suitable for the study reported here because it aimed to explore the learners’ perspective on the social aspect of EFL learning in academic and non-academic settings. Instead of establishing a cause and effect relationship, it aimed to explore how these aspects interact and how the researcher can make

sense of their interaction in relation to the participant learners' perspectives. The collected data were verbal rather than numerical so that the learners could express their views fully. Further, instead of testing a stated hypothesis, the study was driven by a general interest in the sociocultural factors that interact with English learning in the two school environments. As I belong to the same culture as my research participants, my role as a cultural insider and a researcher outsider (see Section 1.2) was considered as an integral part of the data. The above aspects of this research study in terms of research aims and researcher positioning indicated the suitability of a qualitative approach to this study.

### ***Philosophical assumptions***

This section explains the philosophical assumptions that provided the basis for the methodological choices made in the study. This is important because these assumptions or theoretical positions “can be seen as the background theories of qualitative research. Each of them contains assumptions about the nature of realities [ontology], how to address an issue conceptually [epistemology], and how to plan research [methodology]” (Flick, 2009, p. 45).

Research scholars have identified different theoretical positions and often categorized them differently (e.g., Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). However, I followed Hammersley's (2013) categorization of theoretical positions into positivism, interpretivism, and (social) constructionism. In what follows I first explain these positions briefly and, subsequently, make a case for why the (social) constructionist position can be the most suitable for the purposes of this research inquiry.

As explained in the previous section in the context of qualitative-quantitative research approaches, *positivism* in social sciences emerged as a strong empiricist movement (i.e. acknowledging the validity of sensual data only) in the twentieth century that sought to

oppose any previous supernatural outlook of the world. Closely modeled on methodologies in the physical sciences, positivism “[saw] scientific knowledge as general and abstract in the form [and] consisting of laws that capture relations operating across all times and places” (Hammersely, 2013, pp, 22-23). Research, therefore, aimed to abstract general knowledge from particular instances while socio-historical variation was downplayed as a mere appearance that could be explained in terms of underlying universal causal relations (Brinkmann, 2013). Positivism thus recognizes a singular common reality (ontology); emphasizes objectively verifiable and sensual data as sources of knowledge (epistemology), and favors a structured research design aiming to test a set of hypotheses (methodology).

*Interpretivism* developed as a reaction to the positivist position (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014). Its main tenets include a belief in the distinction between physical sciences and social sciences, claiming that the latter is very different from the former. Interpretivism argues that human beings are not the same as physical objects and phenomena and social scientists must see people as actively interpreting or making sense of their environment and of themselves, shaped by the culture they live in. Hammersley (2013) explains, “the task of the social scientist, from the interpretive point of view, is to document these cultures, and perhaps also their sources and consequences” (p. 26). Interpretivism, therefore, acknowledges a subjective world as interpreted by human agents (ontology), a contextual exploratory orientation towards the research context in order to discover the logic or rationality behind apparently illogical or contradictory phenomena (epistemology), and a data-driven methodology that is responsive to contextual factors in the field.

*Constructionism* evolved more recently over the last thirty to forty years and amounts to a significant reaction against the two others (Hammersley, 2013). Although broader than the previous two theoretical positions and containing a range of ideas, some common

assumptions in constructionism can be identified. Human perception and cognition are seen as constructed through social and cultural processes rather than given. Instead of studying objects to discover causes and consequences, the proper object of study is considered those constitutive processes that generated them. As Hammersley (2013) illustrates:

An example would be to treat people's personal characteristics not as intrinsic to them but rather to examine the discursive practices through which people are characterized as intelligent/stupid, motivated/lazy, confident/hesitant, and so on; and how these operate in particular contexts, from informal situations among friends or family to more institutional ones such as job interviews [or schools and classrooms]. (p. 37)

Due to its focus on discursive practices in a social context, language often assumes center stage in constructionist studies. However, instead of representing the world (as assumed in positivist and interpretive studies), language use is seen as performative and directed towards some pragmatic ends. In sum, from this theoretical position, the world is socially constructed through processes of communication and social interaction (ontology); research is a meaning-making process to study the role of social processes in constructing particular "realities" (epistemology); while the task of a researcher is to study the processes through which people construct their shared reality in which the researcher is also implicated (methodology).

The above discussion indicates that social constructionist ontology and epistemology align with the purpose of this study because this study aims to investigate the participant learners' engagement with language learning from a sociological perspective in terms of investment. Further, the study focuses on how the learners' trilingual resources are socially positioned in different domains and how this relates to their investment in EFL learning. As the social value of different languages might be asymmetrical and hierarchical, learners have a dissimilar investment in these languages either in alignment with dominant social beliefs or in resistance to them. A social constructionist theoretical lens allows for investigating these aspects of language learning as a socially situated activity that is subject to dominant beliefs about the value of cultural and symbolic resources including language. The social

constructionist position also allows for investigating another focus of this study, namely the social aspects of EFL learners' construction of identity in formal and informal domains of learning. As Darwin and Norton (2017a) note, "learners' identities [may be] multiple and sites of struggle [as their] investment [in language learning] is always a dynamic negotiation of learning in specific [social] contexts" (p. 227). A social constructionist approach allowed for developing an ethnographic design to study language learning as a socially situated activity in the two school research contexts of this study.

### 3.2.2. **Methodological design**

The previous section has focused on explaining the broader theoretical framework of this study by situating it in the qualitative research approach and by explaining its theoretical position in terms of a social constructionist ontology and epistemology. This section builds on this theoretical basis to briefly explain the rationale for an ethnographic methodology adopted in the study. I first outline a brief historical review of ethnographic research and then explain the specific aims of this research in relation to an ethnographic design.

Historically, ethnography was used by anthropologists in the first half of the twentieth century to study distant communities and their ways of life (Heigham & Sakui, 2009). Subsequently, this perspective has been adopted by researchers in various fields like "critical ethnography, feminist ethnography, focused ethnography, confessional ethnography, auto-ethnography, and in the internet age, virtual ethnography" (Heigham & Sakui, 2009, p. 92). According to Mackey and Gass (2005), ethnography is an interpretive research process as the researcher makes sense of the meanings the participants have about themselves and about the world around them. Research topics investigated through ethnographic approach are, therefore, fairly broad, as an ethnographic perspective is adopted when "the social issue or behaviors are not yet clearly understood" (Angrosino, 2007, p. 26).

To relate the ethnographic perspective to the present study, firstly, as Starfield (2010) stated, “applied linguists typically use ethnographic approaches to study language practices within communities and institutions that are familiar to the researcher rather than exotic and strange as in traditional ethnography” (p. 53). As a cultural insider, it is useful for me to adopt this research tradition. Secondly, ethnography studies phenomena in the natural environments of the research participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Relatedly, the research questions investigated in this study aim to explore the language learners’ investment in learning English within two natural environments: school and home. Thirdly, ethnographers are interested in investigating the meanings that people bring to their experience in their social settings (Mackey & Gass, 2005). This study explores participants’ investment and identity in terms of their relation to their sociocultural context. Fourthly, from an ethnographic perspective, data generation methods are not determined on the basis of explicit hypotheses before the study begins. Rather, the methods are guided by a broader interest in a problem. Research motivation for this study is propelled by a general interest in understanding the sociocultural aspects of learners’ investment in learning English.

The fifth relevant aspect of ethnographic research relates to the use of multiple methods of data gathering. Eberle and Maeder (2011) summarize this as follows:

Doing ethnography means using multiple methods of data gathering, like observation, interviews, collection of documents, pictures, audio-visual materials as well as representations of artifacts. The main difference from other ways of investigating the social world is that the researcher does ‘fieldwork’ and collects data herself through physical presence. (p. 54)

Pertinently, I generated data from a variety of sources to focus on as many contextual aspects of language learning as possible. I stayed in the field for eight months, visiting the school sites to conduct classroom and general school observations, participant interviews, and informal conversations with the students, teachers, or the school principal. This extended stay in the field and data generation with multiple sources also helped me to develop an insider

(emic) understanding of the language learning experiences of the participants (Silverman, 2011).

Lastly, in the reflexive ethnographic tradition, the researchers' role in the field, their position as a cultural insider and a researcher outsider, and the role of the researcher's theoretical assumptions are considered as important parts of the research (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Hammersley, 2007; May, T. & Perry, 2014). Further, the role of the researcher is seen as a resource that needs to be made explicit to the reader. The current study is based on a reflexive approach to ethnographic research using methods such as researcher bracketing technique (see Section 3.6) to reflect upon my positioning and make it a resource in the analytical process of the research. Further, explicit analysis of my role as a cultural insider and a researcher outsider helped me remain sensitive to asymmetrical and potentially exploitative power relations between myself and the research participants of this study (England, 1994, p. 82).

Traditionally, "ethnographic research is small scale and focused on a single setting or group", (Starfield, 2010, p. 51). However, the current thesis took participants from two school sites to investigate how the language learning experiences of the student participants compared across these sites. My study, therefore, specifically aligns with the multisited ethnographic design. The case for multisited ethnography was initially stated by Marcus (1995). It provides a research framework that is suitable to study social phenomena in spatially separated research sites (Zimmermann, 2016). While multisited ethnography studies more than one site, the research does not aim to develop explanations to generalize across the research sites. As Marcus (2012) states, each setting is treated as a complex locus of social processes. Relatedly, this research aims to study the two sites as complex sites of language learning and

investigates their unique and common aspects in terms of students' language learning experience.

### 3.2.3. **Analytical approach**

After situating my study in terms of theoretical position and methodological design, this section briefly explains the analytical approach of this study in terms of the thematic analysis of the research data. Being explicit about how the data were analyzed to establish themes allows consumers of qualitative research to assess the relevance of methodological choices and assertions made in the thesis argument (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 86). Braun and Clarke (2013) elaborate:

If we do not know how people went about analyzing their data, or what assumptions informed their analysis, it is difficult to evaluate their research, and to compare and/or synthesize it with other studies on that topic, and it can impede other researchers carrying out related projects in the future. (p. 80)

Historically, TA arguably developed from content analysis and could be regarded as a form of qualitative content analysis (Joffe, 2012). However, although TA recognizes the significance of language and discourse analysis at the micro-level, it concentrates more on what is said rather than how it is said. It does not, therefore, require a technical analysis of language use at the grammatical and syntactical level (Block, 2010). In line with this analytical procedure, the focus of analysis in the present study is not on microanalysis of language use but on the thematic ideas emerging from the data.

In recent times and with the influential publications of Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013), TA has emerged as a theoretically flexible analytical approach that can be adapted for various qualitative analyses dealing with small and large scale data. Following Braun and Clarke's six phases of analysis in TA, data analysis phases in the present study included: familiarization with the data→ initial coding→ categorizing themes→ reviewing themes→ defining and refining themes→ linking themes into a theoretical framework. However, these

phases were not implemented in a linear fashion but in an iterative and recursive manner. As my understanding of the data developed, I went back and forth in the data several times to revisit earlier stages in the coding process and to modify, revise, and refine the coding and analysis. These phases of analysis are further explained later in this chapter (Section 3.6.3).

In terms of analytical approach, thematic patterns within the data can be identified either inductively (bottom-up) or through a theoretically-oriented deductive (top-down) approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83-84). Among these two, the former form of TA bears some similarity to Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) as the themes are assumed to emerge from the data themselves. Also, like Grounded Theory, the analysis is not driven by the researcher's theoretical interest and background knowledge. By contrast, the deductive (top-down) approach in TA is explicitly analyst driven and theory-oriented. Often, the analysis is focused on specific aspects of the data while a rich description of the whole data is lacking. In this study, my analytical approach aligns more with inductive thematic analysis as it builds on a close thematic analysis of the data. However, the deductive aspects of analysis are also important. As Braun and Clarke (2006) state, "it is important to note that researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum" (p. 84). My theoretical understanding of the learners' investment in learning English, my position as a cultural insider, and the influence of my theoretical orientation in the framing of the research questions are some of the relevant top-down factors. Data analysis is explained in greater detail in Section 3.6 below.

### 3.3. **RESEARCH SITES AND PARTICIPANTS**

After explaining the theoretical framework of the study in the previous section, this section describes the research sites and participants and explains the criteria for their selection. It also describes how I secured access to the sites and how participants were recruited for this study.

The section ends with explaining ethical considerations regarding protecting the participants' identity and ensuring their voluntary participation.

### 3.3.1. **Context of the study**

As mentioned in Chapter One, this study was conducted in a northern region in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province of Pakistan. The majority of the population in the region is ethnic Pashtun with Pashto as their first language (Jamal, 2015; Malik, 2016). Urdu, the national lingua franca in Pakistan, is the second-largest language in the region. English, a foreign language and the medium of official correspondence in Pakistan, is designated as the medium of instruction in all schools (NEP, 2009). However, the de facto media of instruction in government schools are Pashto and Urdu, whereas the private schools in the country claim that they follow a monolingual English Medium Instruction (EMI) in policy as well as in practice and that this policy is more likely to develop learners' proficiency in English (Council, 2013; Khan, Ajmal, 2013). The linguistic and educational consequences of these parallel education systems in the country in terms of government and private schools and in term of the medium of instruction has been a contentious issue in research studies over the last few decades (Manan et al., 2015). The context of the study is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

### 3.3.2. **Sites selection and access**

In terms of site selection, a purposive sampling approach was followed in line with the aims of this study. In non-random purposive sampling, "researchers knowingly select individuals based on their knowledge of the population and in order to elicit data in which they are interested" (Mackey & Gass, 2005. p.122). Similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) point out that qualitative researchers use purposive sampling because "they seek out groups, settings and individuals where [...] the processes being studied are most likely to occur" (p. 378). The

research aims of this study align with purposive sampling because the study seeks to explore the social aspects of EFL learning in the context of private schools in Pakistan with a focus on private schools that claim to have a monolingual EMI academic environment. It aimed to explore English learners' language perceptions and their investment in English learning in the context of two schools that are different in terms of their affiliation, with different socioeconomic classes represented in the school populations. The two schools, Global and Ummah, provide such contexts because both claim to have a monolingual EMI environment and cater to different socioeconomic classes as described in the following section. (A more detailed account of different education systems in Pakistan and its relation to English learning is provided in Chapter Four.)

### ***The two schools***

This section presents only key information about the schools because a more detailed account of the two schools is given in Chapter Four. Both schools are private educational institutions that attract students from two different socio-economic sectors. Whereas Ummah appeals to students from low-income families, Global targets students from more affluent backgrounds. The tuition fees in the two schools reflect this difference. Differences between the schools are also reflected in their location. Whereas Global is located in the district capital in a more developed area, Ummah is situated in a suburban less developed area.

The schools use their official websites and advertisements in print, social, and electronic media to reach out to parents and potential students and communicate the distinctive features of the education they offer. On its website<sup>8</sup>, Global school projects itself as a liberal progressive school that prepares learners to become global citizens. Ummah claims to prepare its learners to become educated citizens who retain a strong sense of affiliation with the

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<sup>8</sup> To ensure anonymity, website addresses of the school websites are not given here.

Muslim *Ummah* (i.e. Muslim community worldwide). In terms of teaching English, both schools claim a total immersion monolingual EMI environment. Global distinguishes itself from other private schools (like Ummah) by claiming to have a student-centered and task-based experiential learning environment where students acquire skills to become lifelong self-directed learners. Ummah, on the other hand, claims that its students acquire a strong sense of affiliation with Islamic values and belonging to the global Muslim community that helps them retain their cultural identity in Pakistan and when traveling internationally for education and career opportunities in the future. A summary of the two sites is given in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1 Demographic data of the Global and Ummah schools

	<i>Global</i>	<i>Ummah</i>
<i>Nationwide number of schools</i>	200 (approx.)	200 (approx.)
<i>Level of education</i>	K-12	K-10
<i>Number of students</i>	412	511
<i>Declared educational outlook</i>	Self-directed, lifelong learning	Promoting Islamic identity
<i>Target socioeconomic classes</i>	Upper classes	Lower classes
<i>Declared political affiliation</i>	None	Affiliated with an Islamic conservative political party
<i>Business model</i>	For-profit	For-profit
<i>Curriculum contents</i>	Cambridge University Press (K-12)	Local private publisher (K-8); National Curriculum of Pakistan (9-12)

### *Access to the schools*

Access to the research site is an important step in ethnographic studies as those who control access—usually referred to as “gatekeepers”—may be reluctant to facilitate the researcher (Bruni, 2006). On arrival at the school sites, my first point of contact in both schools was the school principals who were authorized to grant access to the schools. Earlier, during the provisional year of my PhD study, I had met both the principals through a friend to secure their informal consent. On my second visit, I presented the University approved Participant Information Sheets (PIS) and Consent Forms (CF) for this study and responded in detail to their questions about what my research in the schools would involve (see Appendix 1 and 2). After the principals had signed the CF, I was introduced to the English language teachers. In both schools, the teachers were male in their late twenties. I met them in the principal’s office. I informed the teachers about the voluntary nature of participation in this study and what would be involved in terms of their commitment if they chose to participate. Both teachers showed immediate interest in a research study focusing on their classes. The teachers signed the CF form and asked me keen questions about the implications of my research and how learners’ identity is related to the language they learn and speak. I answered their questions in as much detail as possible. I was able to establish a good rapport with the principals and the teachers from the start of the study that proved very helpful during my eight months of research involvement in the schools.

#### **3.3.3. Participants selection**

After gaining access, I started going to the schools to observe classes, talk to the students, teachers, and sometimes the principals in the schools to familiarize myself with the field (Johl & Renganathan, 2010). These initial visits and observations were also important to develop a good rapport with students and understand the two school cultures in ways that would help

develop questions for the first round of interviews. In each school, the teacher introduced me to the students (Grade 10 in Ummah, O level in Global). The teachers had already explained to the students why I was there in school. At this stage, informal talks with the students were important to establish a good rapport and gain their trust.

The recruitment of students for the study did not proceed as I had anticipated. I wanted to invite all the students to participate in the study by posting invitation letters on student noticeboards in the schools. However, the principals in both schools rather preferred that I would interview the students whom they had selected as “the most intelligent students”. I had to agree in order not to lose access to the schools. It was a rare opportunity because in both schools no researcher had thus far been given access except for one PhD candidate of Chemistry in Global who studied students’ lab work. Both principals nominated one female and two male students to participate in the study as per criteria I had specified (e.g., that the students must be currently studying O-level). Due to strict gender segregation in the local cultural norms, I had not anticipated that I would be able to recruit female participants. It was a significant positive development for my research project in terms of gender diversity.

I conducted one joint introductory meeting with the participants in each school about what was expected if they agreed to participate in the study. I introduced the PIS and CF forms and answered their questions. The students were informed that participation was voluntary and that it would not affect their relation to the school principal and subject teacher if the students chose not to participate or withdraw from the study at a later stage (as they assured through the CF form). Most of the students agreed to sign the form after the meeting while a few returned the signed documents over the next few days. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 give a summary of information about the student and teacher participants, respectively (pseudonyms are used).

TABLE 3.2 Student participants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Class/school</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Languages spoken</i>
Samina	F	Grade 10/Ummah	Pashtun	Pashto, Urdu, English
Numair	M	Grade 10/Ummah	Pashtun	Pashto, Urdu, English
Haris	M	Grade 10/Ummah	Pashtun	Pashto, Urdu, English
Sabiha	F	O-level/Global	Pashtun	Pashto, Urdu, English
Osama	M	O-level/Global	Pashtun	Pashto, Urdu, English
Shahid	M	O-level/Global	Pashtun	Pashto, Urdu, English

TABLE 3.3 :Teacher participants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Gender/school</i>	<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Languages</i>	<i>Teaching experience</i>
Mazahir	Male/Ummah	Postgraduate degree in business	Pashtun	Pashto, Urdu, English	5 years
Ishaam	Male/Global	Postgraduate degree in English literature and linguistics	Pashtun	Pashto, Urdu, English	7 years

### *Selection criteria*

Like other qualitative ethnographic studies (for example, Canagarajah, S., 1999; Khan, Aziz Ullah, 2016; Norton, 2013), a small number of participants were selected to focus on an in-depth understanding of the participants' perceptions in relation to the social domains or sub-culture relevant for English learning (Flick, 2009). The criteria for selecting the students were: a) they must be enrolled in private schools (Grades 9-10/O-level) in a low and a high fee school; b) the grade level of the student participants in both schools must be essentially the same to facilitate comparison and contrast; c) the participants must be bi/multilingual

speakers; d) they should be able to take part in at least three interviews at different stages of the data generation; e) female participants should be recruited if local cultural norms allowed it; f) the teacher participants must be English subject teachers in the schools where the student participants are enrolled.

I chose Grades 9-10/O-level (age group 16-17 years) for this study because this study mainly uses interview data for analysis. I was not going to record spontaneous interaction between the students inside or outside the classroom. Due to the study's reliance on interview data, I needed participants who were not very young and were able to give detailed answers and reflect upon their language learning experiences across social domains like the school, teacher, and family (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

#### 3.3.4. **Ethical considerations**

It is crucial for social scientists to remain aware of their ethical responsibilities towards the research participants in the field. Mackey and Gass (2005) point out that “awareness of ethical issues is likely to lead to more thoughtful and ethical research practices, which are clearly of benefit to everyone” (p. 41). Some of the key ethical aspects relevant in this study include protecting the participants from harm, developing a relationship of trust, respecting their cultural norms, ensuring voluntary participation, keeping participants' identity strictly confidential, and coping with unanticipated issues in the field in an ethical manner (Israel & Hay, 2006). These were addressed in the study at all phases of the research.

Initially, ethical guidelines for the study and PIS and CF documents were approved from the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee (UAHPEC) before the fieldwork began (see Appendixes 1). In the field, I explained to the participants what was stated in the documents to ensure their comprehension. All the participant students were of the legal age (16 years or above) to give consent on their own. Both the teacher and student

participants are trilingual speakers of Pashto, Urdu, and English. Being sensitive to their language use was, therefore, important. During the interviews, I always asked the participants what language(s) they wanted me to use and encouraged them to talk in any language(s) they felt comfortable with.

Another important ethical dimension in social research relates to power relations in the field. Researchers may be considered as more knowledgeable than the participants and, as a result, they wield greater power (Holliday, 2007, pp. 116-118). To address this aspect, it was explicitly stated to the participants during each interview that the study was evaluative and the researcher was not there to judge their English language proficiency. Relatedly, participants can feel vulnerable when they disclose “insider” information to the researcher. It was, therefore, pointed out to the participants that their data will be kept strictly confidential and the school authorities or their teacher will not know what they had said.

#### 3.4. **RESEARCHER POSITIONING**

After discussing the research sites and the participants, this section focuses on my role as a researcher in terms of a cultural insider and a researcher outsider. Reflexive ethnographic research encourages making the role of the researcher more explicit and what role it plays in the research processes involved in the study (e.g., Ahern, 1999; Anzul & Ely, 2003; Finlay, 2002; May, T. & Perry, 2014; Peshkin, 1988). As Anzul and Ely (2003) argue:

By acknowledging our own myths and prejudices, we can more effectively put them in their place. [...] greater self-knowledge can help us to separate out thoughts and feelings from those of our research participants, to be less judgmental, and to appreciate experiences that deviate greatly from our own. (p. 122)

The following sections discuss my insider/outsider positioning and what methods were used to bring it to conscious awareness and enhance the credibility of the research analysis.

### 3.4.1. **Cultural insider**

The distinction between insider and outsider is not fixed and dichotomous but rather contingent and changing (Kusow, 2003; Labaree, 2002). For instance, as a Pashtun I was able to draw on my ethnic background to establish rapport with the student and teacher participants; however, as a university researcher, I was also positioned as an outsider even though the participants allowed me to be part of their in-group school culture. However, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out, “the insider/outsider distinction does capture something important about the different sorts of roles that ethnographers can play in the field, and the perspectives associated with them” (p. 87).

In terms of ethnic, sociolinguistic, and cultural background, I share with the participants several aspects as a cultural insider. I was born and raised in the same Pashtun community as the participants and I am too familiar with the cultural context of the research to pretend that my being a cultural insider has no implications for the study. As Charmaz (2006) elaborates, “it is important to point out that the mind of the researcher is far from being a ‘tabula rasa’ (a blank slate) [and that] the implications of the researcher’s positioning need to be made a part of the research design” (p. 165). Relatedly, like the participants, I am a trilingual speaker of Pashto, Urdu, and English. In terms of cultural beliefs, I was born in a low-income conservative family who preferred government schools to the English-medium private schools in the belief that the private schools can alienate students from the local culture and enculturate them into western norms and values. Data show that in most cases the participants struggled with similar cultural beliefs in their family lives (see Chapter 7, Section 7.4). Relatedly, my schooling was more similar to Ummah than to Global in terms of lack of classroom resources and teachers’ English language proficiency. In terms of the medium of

instruction, we were taught in Pashto and Urdu throughout elementary school and our first contact with English as a subject was in Grade 5 (age 10-11).

Further, like some of the student participants, I had no active support from my family in terms of my studies and English learning (see Chapter 7, Section 7.7). At home, Pashto and Urdu were functional languages; Pashto was the dominant language of communication whereas the family watched television programs predominantly in Urdu. By Grade 10 (16 years old), I could speak Urdu fluently, however, my struggle to develop English speaking proficiency continued throughout my educational career. In the school days, I and most of my fellow students believed that private school students were more intelligent than the government school students because they could speak better English. In academic and non-academic domains, a student's proficiency in English was often considered an indication of his/her intelligence. The above aspects of my position as a cultural insider illustrate that it is important to adopt methods to acknowledge my positioning in the field and during research report writing. Researcher bracketing interviews and a bracketing journal in the field were two significant procedural measures adopted to acknowledge insider/outsider positioning in the context of this study (this chapter, Sections 3.5.1 & 3.5.3).

#### 3.4.2. **Researcher outsider**

Along with having the benefit of being a cultural insider, it is crucial that the outsider perspective as a research analyst is maintained in the interest of analytical rigor and reliability of data interpretation. Indeed, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) warn that too much reliance on insider perspective runs the risk of “not only abandoning the task of analysis in favor of the joys of participation but also, even where it is retained, bias can arise from ‘over-rapport’” (p. 87, emphasis in the original). The following outsider aspects of positioning are therefore important parts of this study.

My outsider positioning in relation to the participants is informed by my research objectives and my theoretical understanding of language learning. I was not an “objective” observer with no prior knowledge of and theoretical assumptions about language learning. My readings, for instance, about the relevance of sociocultural context in learning a language are implicated in the selection of the research topic, the methods chosen to generate data, and how experiences of the participants were analyzed and interpreted. As Guenther and Falk emphasize (2007), researchers never walk into the research field value-free but are influenced by their prior readings, theoretical understandings, and research goals.

Similarly, I was positioned as an outsider because I was not part of the school culture in terms of regular teaching-learning activities. While the participant students and teachers were engaged in these activities, I was taking notes and conducting interviews. Relatedly, I was perceived as a research student from a foreign university who was temporarily there in the school to generate data for his PhD thesis. During the interviews, for instance, I was asked questions about education in New Zealand, the weather in Auckland, how long a PhD took to complete and so forth. This indicates that, along with being a cultural insider, I was positioned as someone temporarily participating in the school culture because of my interest in the participants’ language learning experiences and as someone who would be leaving the school soon, taking their data for analysis to write a doctoral thesis. As mentioned in the previous section, in order to acknowledge and record these aspects, I used a bracketing diary in the field and afterward to remain aware of different aspects of my presence as an outsider and the effect it had on others in the field (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4).

### 3.4.3. **Analysis of subjectivity**

Another aspect of enhancing rigor and credibility of analysis in qualitative research relates to being as transparent as possible about the role of the subjectivity of the researcher in the field.

Weedon (1987) considered subjectivity as “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (p. 32). To use the interaction of my subjectivity as a resource, I kept a record in the bracketing journal of those moments in the field when powerful negative or positive feelings emerged (see Appendix 8). Following Holliday (2007), I consider the analysis of subjectivity as a “way in which researchers come to terms with and indeed capitalize on the complexities of their presence within the research setting” (p. 138). Through paraphrasing entries from my bracketing research journal, this section gives a subjectivity audit by discussing briefly different aspects of my “subjective I’s” (Peshkin, 1988) followed by a discussion of their potential impact on the current research study. These include, *the school-going I*; *the protective-father I*; *the education-reformer I*; and *the scholar-from-abroad I*. For the purpose of illustration, only the first two of these are discussed here.

### ***The school-going I***

When I went to Ummah School for the first time, a striking aspect of the context was the condition of the classrooms. The “school-going I” was alerted immediately as the scene reminded me of my time in the government school where we were studying under similar uncongenial conditions. In Ummah, the students were crammed into small rooms in the middle of an extremely hot summer. With little ventilation and one ceiling fan, it was quite hard to read and write. The passage between the students’ chairs was so narrow that the teacher could not walk to the back of the room. Sitting with the students in the back, I was taking notes and wiping sweat off my face with a hand towel. After a class finished, the students would rush to the veranda outside to have some fresh air. Although I was aware that my fieldwork would soon be finished and I would not have to sit in that room anymore, I felt a strong affinity with the students. The “distorting hazard” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 18) of my

“school-going I” is that my sense of affinity with the Ummah students could make me ignore or minimize any learning difficulties the Global students had because I could perceive them as dichotomously different from the Ummah students in terms of having well-ventilated, high-resource classrooms. Acknowledging this aspect of my subjective response in the field helped to bring it to conscious awareness and minimize its distorting effects.

### ***The protective-father I***

I started the fieldwork by giving assurance to the school principal and the participants that my involvement would be limited to observation and recording data. However, as I began to establish a good rapport with the students, I noticed my emotional engagement with the students altered from a more objective observer to someone who cared about their personal struggles and wanted to protect them. I call this aspect of my subjectivity the “protective-father I”. For instance, this aspect of the “I” was alerted when I discovered for the first time that one of the participants from Global, Osama, had a speech impediment problem and asked me whether I could help him overcome a stammering issue. It immediately drew a strong personal reaction. My emotions were engaged when he complained that he wanted to be fluent in English, but his stammering problem worsened when he switched from Pashto or Urdu to English. As a result, he had chosen to remain silent in the class to save his face. I started reading about the causes of stammering in adolescents and about strategies to overcome it. One of my suggestions was that Osama could try singing (in English and the other languages) as I had read in my research on stammering that it could be reassuring and could help in developing more fluent speech. After every interview session with Osama, we discussed possible solutions for his stammering issue. This particular subjective “I” could potentially eclipse the experiences of the other participants from Global. As the protective

gaze shines upon one student, the others may seem to be faring well although, in fact, their struggles may only be less engaging for the “protective-father I”.

### 3.5. **METHODS**

The ethnographic study is labor-intensive and requires time, energy, and resources (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). Data need to be generated from a range of sources and the researcher needs to have a prolonged engagement in the research setting in order to understand the phenomena being studied and gain insights into the perspective of those involved in that setting (Starfield, 2010, p. 51). To this end, data were generated through multiple methods including participants’ interviews, researcher bracketing interviews, observations, research journals, and artifacts from the field (Table 3.4).

TABLE 3.4 : Research methods and data gathered

<b>Methods</b>	<b>Collection period (Feb.—Oct., 2017)</b>	<b>Data</b>
Interviews	Participant students' interviews (2 male, 1 female Grade 10 students from Ummah; 2 male, one female O-level students from Global; 3 interviews per student; interviews conducted across the year) Participant teachers' interviews (1 male teacher from each school; 1 formal interview with each teacher; conducted in Aug. 2017)	Audio-taped, average time 50 min  Audio-taped, average time 80 min
Classroom observations	Across the year	Fieldnotes
General school observations	Across the year	Fieldnotes
Documents	Ongoing	Examples: copies of participant students' workbook, subject syllabi, school documents, official notifications
Artefacts	Ongoing	Pictures from the field, drawing, and sketches by the learner participants

### 3.5.1. Interviews

Different types of interviews are employed in qualitative research, ranging from highly structured (resembling verbal questionnaire) to totally unstructured (Flick, 2009). Semi-structured interviews fall somewhere between the above two types “in which the researcher uses a written list of questions as a guide, while still having the freedom to digress and probe for more information” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 137). This aligns with the purpose of the present study since I was interested in eliciting data to understand the student participants’ perceptions and preferences with regard to language learning in social domains. Further, as Bryman (2006) points out, semi-structured interviews are useful when the aim of the research is to acquire an in-depth understanding of the participants’ views while retaining a sense of structure in the interview schedule for comparing data across participants. However, an important caveat regarding using interview data relates to the accounts in the interviews being constructed by the participants that need to be verified through other sources of data (Silverman, 2011, p. 48). Interview data were, therefore, supplemented by other techniques of data gathering such as observations, field notes, and artifacts from the field, as explained in the following sections.

In addition to participant interviews, two researcher bracketing interviews were conducted with the help of a fellow PhD student, one before fieldwork started and one after it was finished, each lasting for about one and a half hours. As explained above, these interviews focused on making the positioning of the researcher more explicit to enhance the credibility of the research analysis. With the participants, I conducted three one-on-one interviews with each of the six student participants and one interview with each of the two teacher participants. The interview data were audio-recorded. In each school, the first interviews were conducted after several classroom observations had been carried out to gain initial

insight into the context of the study. The schedule for the first interviews was modified in the light of data from observations inside and outside the classroom in the school. The subsequent interviews were based on questions emerging from the first interviews and concurrent observations (Corbin, Strauss, & Strauss, 2014). Each student participant interview lasted for an average of 50 minutes whereas each of the teachers' interviews lasted for about one and a half hours. Significantly, the timeframe for the interviews was always decided in consultation with the students so that the timing of the interviews did not interfere with the academic engagements of the students.

In Ummah, the interviews took place in a large room reserved as the school library. In Global, the interviews took place in a spacious computer lab. In Ummah, depending on participants' availability, the interviews took place during the school time or in the after-school hours whereas in Global the participants wanted to be interviewed during vacant classes during the school hours. The schedule for the interviews elicited participants' responses in relation to biographical information, language learning goals, the relative significance of their trilingual resources, and the role of academic and non-academic domains in learning English and so on (see Appendix 3 and 4).

As Rubin and Rubin (2011) point out, it is important that during the interviews the participants express their views in as much detail as possible and the researcher gets as rich an understanding of their views as possible. At the start of an interview, I would give a summary of what we were going to talk about and invited the respondent to ask any questions they had. Building on responses to the initial broader questions, I would then focus on the specific aspects of their lives and how they related these to their language learning experiences. I always listened actively to what the participants said, asking follow-up questions where necessary. The next question was asked only after we had exhausted the first

one. Following Dörnyei (2007), in follow-up interviews, I used a retrospective interviewing technique by linking up the present responses of the participants to what the participants had said earlier. This proved a useful way of getting more detailed responses. All participants provided detailed answers to the questions except Shahid and Samina with whom I had to use follow-up questions more frequently to keep them talking.

An important aspect of interviews in a multilingual context involves being sensitive to the participants' language preferences. The danger here might be for the researcher to denigrate the use of local language(s) through implicit or explicit indications. I therefore explicitly stated to the participants to speak any language they felt comfortable with and to ask me to use the language they preferred during the interviews. In all cases, they asked me to speak in English while the participants' use of their trilingual resources varied across participant cases (see Table 3.5). The frequency evaluation of particular language use for each participant mentioned in the table is based on transcribed data from the interviews.

Significantly, research interviews produce an asymmetrical power relation (Kvale, 2006). As Holliday (2007) argues, "no matter how open and sensitive the language used by the researcher, it will still have an irrevocable power, which critical, postmodern and feminist researchers continue to struggle to reduce" (p. 165). The researcher is often considered as more knowledgeable and holds more power, especially when the participants are young or adolescent students. To minimize the distorting effect of this aspect of the face-to-face interview, I consistently used verbal and non-verbal cues to assure the participants that their views were important. I encouraged their autonomy during the interviews and allowed them to change a topic during the interviews.

TABLE 3.5: Participants' use of language

Participant	School	Frequently	Less frequently	Rarely
<i>Student participants</i>				
Osama	Global	English	Pashto	Urdu
Sabiha	Global	English	Pashto	Urdu
Shahid	Global	Urdu	English	Pashto
Ishaam	Global	English	Pashto	Urdu
Numair	Ummah	Pashto	Urdu	English
Samina	Ummah	Urdu	Pashto	English
Haris	Ummah	Pashto	Urdu	English
<i>Teacher participants</i>				
Ishaam	Global	English	Pashto	Urdu
Mazahir	Ummah	Pashto	English	Urdu

### 3.5.2. Observations

Whereas the semi-structured interview technique can help to understand in detail the participants' perceptions and attitudes towards the research topic, observations are "a useful means for gathering in-depth information about such phenomena as the types of language, activities, interactions, instruction, and events that occur in the classroom and in the school in general" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 186). In ethnographic studies, therefore, observations are not merely a preliminary tool, for example, prior to formulating the questionnaire, but are fundamental to the overall argument of the thesis (Silverman, 2011, p 42-43). In each of the two schools, I observed 12 English subject classes (each class lasting 40 minutes) and conducted excursion observations in the school. The time for classroom observations was decided in consultation with the English subject teacher.

During classroom observations, I was usually offered a seat at the back of the classroom from where I could see and hear most of the activities. An important caveat about classroom observation relates to being unobtrusive while observing (Mackey & Gass, 2005). I tried not to be noticeable in the classroom so that students' and teachers' attention would not be diverted. However, some level of "observer effect" is unavoidable and should be countered through cross-referencing data from complementary data gathering techniques, such as interviews (Flick, 2009).

In ethnographic observations, as many details about the context should be noted as possible as these can later help reconstruct the situations retrospectively at the time of writing the research report (Carspecken, 1996, p. 99). Initially, I was very tentative about which aspects to record and whether I was conducting observations "the right way". Feelings of naivety and even incompetence were common at this stage. However, as I became familiar with the site and became more comfortable with my identity as an "ethnographer researcher", I accepted that there was no one right way to observe (Bryman, 2017; Carspecken, 1996). I focused on the use of languages in the classroom, functions assigned to languages, teaching methods, language(s) used as media of instruction, students' participation in the classroom and so on. Although I was not able to take pictures of the teacher and students because I did not have prior ethics approval for it, I took pictures of writings on the whiteboard in every class. I also observed the physical environment of the class in as much detail as possible (see Appendix 12).

Outside the classroom, I observed students' and teachers' activities and what language(s) were spoken in the teachers' staffroom. In the principal's office, I took note of how the office was organized, who came to the office and for what purposes, what language(s) were used for communication, and how often parents came to the office and for what purposes. During the

morning assembly, my observations focused on the use of language(s) in the roles assigned to the students and in the speeches by the principal and the teachers. Apart from providing data from the field that focused on practice as against perceptions and attitudes, observations in the two schools also challenged any presupposition I had about the school contexts before I entered into the school cultures as an observer (Hammersley, 2013).

In Ummah, my role changed over time from a non-participant observer to a participant-observer because the principal of the school insisted that I take classes with the students of Grade 10 to improve their English language proficiency. He also invited me to conduct a professional development training session with all the male and female teachers (K-10) on any topic of my choice. During the fieldwork, I took four classes with Grade 10 students and conducted a training session with the teachers focusing on learner-centered pedagogies. In Global, the school administered its own teachers' training courses and no teacher or trainer from outside was allowed to operate in the school.

### 3.5.3. **Research diary**

Maintaining a research diary is a useful way of keeping a record of what is happening in the field, what processes and activities are of interest, and what insights the researcher has at different stages in the research. As Flick (2009) instructively states, “your research will benefit a lot if you start memo writing right away by writing a research diary throughout the process. Writing field notes should complement this once you get in touch with your empirical area and the members of your fieldwork” (p. 434). Notes in the diary help researchers reconstruct the complexity of the events in retrospect and can inform thorough analysis and interpretation (Silverman, 2013).

My research diary consists of three types of notes, namely research memos, fieldnotes, and reflective notes. *Memos* refer to any significant insight about the research study such as to

record key insights and interconnections between components of a research study (Appendix 8). Writing memos started at the research proposal formulation stage. Questions, ideas, relations, and theoretical and analytical insights recorded in the memos built into a rich resource over the fieldwork and analysis stages in this study (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The *fieldnotes* recorded descriptions of actions and situations that seemed significant such as what I observed in the field (Appendix 8). I found it useful to keep the fieldnotes as much at the objective level as possible without drawing inferences (Angrosino, 2007, p. 41). The strategy helped me in recording as much relevant information as possible. To this end, I also used certain short words and abbreviations that I developed for my fieldnotes. Every entry in the observations recorded in the field was headed by the data, place, and time of the observation. Systematic field notes helped me to make sense of the notes afterward when I had returned from a session in the field. The notes were expanded and built into a more detailed account on a daily basis after I returned home from the field (see Appendix 8). Whereas the fieldnotes recorded an objective description of what happened in the field, the *reflective notes* enabled me to note down aspects of my subjective responses to the events, processes, and objects in the field.

However, it is essential to keep a clear distinction between these three kinds of notes. The words of Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) are instructive - that “it is essential, to [take notes] in a way that retains a clear distinction between analytic notes [memos], on the one hand, and both the accounts provided by participants and the researcher’s own descriptions of actions and situations, on the other” (p. 150). To this end, I placed memos in square brackets while a special symbol was placed before each reflective note to differentiate it from the fieldnotes. Further, as the example in Appendix 8 shows, I recorded notes using all my

trilingual resources (Pashto, Urdu, and English) depending on which language or word seemed the most appropriate and easy for me to use.

#### 3.5.4. **Documents and artifacts**

Textbooks are designed with certain interests and aim in view and are “published within the political and economic constraints of markets, resources, and power” (Apple, 2012, p. 46). Textbooks are important because these are often at the center of how teachers plan their lessons and their pedagogic practice in the classroom (Mahmood et al., 2012). The two school sites selected in the current study teach quite contrastive textbooks which, in the case of Ummah, are locally published and approved by the government of Pakistan or, in the case of Global, published by the Cambridge University Press as part of their international school syllabi. Focusing on the text of the lessons I observed in the classrooms, I used thematic analysis to analyze the texts. The analysis concentrated on what characters, places, and cultural contexts were depicted and, secondly, what subject matter was dealt with in the text. I scanned the lessons into NVivo software as text documents to facilitate digital coding of the data into nodes and running frequency queries. This initial content analysis provided the basis for categorizing the data into sub-themes and themes. For instance, in Global, the lesson titled “Shopping” depicts characters and settings that the participants considered foreign to their native Muslim culture. By contrast, in Ummah, the lesson titled “The caliph and the gardener” depicts characters and settings that the participants positively associated with Islamic values. Analysis of textbook contents in tandem with the interview and observational data provided an important additional lens to understand students’ investment in their EFL learning experiences in the classroom.

Policy documents and other official/non-official literature are a valuable source of data in ethnographic studies. They help the researcher understand the broader institutional context in

which EFL learning takes place (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This study collected the following kinds of documents to support research analysis: language policy documents, teachers' training manuals, website contents, schools' admission and other types of public display notices. In Ummah, the principal was very cooperative in sharing official documents. However, in Global, I had to rely mainly on the English subject teacher to share the documents. Similar to textbook content analysis, I used steps in thematic analysis to find out relevant themes in the data. I scanned the documents into NVivo program either as text files or images to categorize and code the documents and run frequency queries. I then used node trees to group the categories into sub-themes and themes to help in analyzing the data from interviews and observations.

Material artefacts are another important source of data as the fields in which ethnographers carry out fieldwork not only consist of social phenomena and intangible processes but also of physical things that often mediate these phenomena. Artifacts from the field can, therefore, act as important reminders of the contextual reality of the field and can help stimulate memories and analytical ideas (Holliday, 2007). In the field, I extensively used photography inside and outside the schools. For example, inside the school pictures of writings on the whiteboard, the arrangement of the chairs, and students' artworks on display at the students' noticeboard. Outside the school, pictures of school buildings and the entrance gate, other buildings and businesses situated around the schools, and pictures of security personnel on duty at the school entrance were taken. Distribution of the three main languages (Pashto, Urdu, and English) in the area was captured through pictures of commercial and non-commercial signage in the area. Further, all the participant students drew simple portraits to visually represent how they perceived their trilingual resources (see Appendix 10). The

material artifacts provided important sources to stimulate analysis of data and help me recall aspects of the field.

### 3.6. **DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data analysis can be an arduous task for a novice researcher. As Silverman (2011) argues, for novice researchers, “data analysis can be something of a mystery (p. 57). You have gathered your interviews, selected your documents or made some observations. Now, what do you do?” The following sections explain data management, organization, and analysis in regard to this study and discuss some of the problems that arose during this process.

#### 3.6.1. **Data management**

A diverse and large set of data were generated through the methods described in the previous sections. In order to keep the data safe, backup copies of all the data were kept in two formats—in a “soft” format on a different computer hard drive and in hard copies in hanging folders in a drawer. Systematic data management and organization proved helpful in safeguarding against accidental loss of the data and was useful in handling the data to make the data more manageable. Systematic data management techniques can also help in structuring the format of the thesis (Berg & Lune, 2012). As this study focused on two schools, I organized all the data materials into two large folders with one folder for each school. Echoing Norton’s (2000; 2013) struggle with data organization and figuring out the structure of her research report, I arranged and rearranged the data files in different ways to figure out whether to structure the thesis in terms of a contrastive analysis of the two school cases or in terms of comparative analysis of individual participant cases. I decided to analyze each school separately (Chapters 5 & 6) and then compare the two school cases in the discussion (Chapter 7) because it can facilitate the readers to first understand the two schools

as separate complex sites of learning and then in terms of how these sites compare with one another.

### 3.6.2. **Translation and transcription**

Audio data from the interviews consisted of a mix of trilingual data (Pashto, Urdu, and English). Whereas participants from Ummah spoke mostly in Pashto or Urdu, the Global participants spoke predominantly in English and Urdu. Therefore, the interview data had to be both translated and transcribed. Due to a large amount of audio data from the interviews, I hired the services of a local translation company. I made sure that the transcriber assigned to me was proficient in all the three languages used in the interview data. To ensure the anonymity of the participants and confidentiality of the data contents, the transcriber signed a confidentiality agreement not to disclose the data to any other person or party (see Appendix 1).

As Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) underline, data transcription is part of initial data analysis when the researcher begins immersing himself/herself in the data to develop familiarity with the data. After the transcriber turned in any part of the data, I listened to the original audio recordings and critically analyzed the transcription. Whereas the data that were originally in English were often accurately transcribed, it proved much trickier than I had anticipated when the data had to be both translated and transcribed. It was not always easy to decide which English word/phrase could capture the original word/phrase in Pashto or Urdu as it would be often a concept that was contingent upon local social and cultural norms. The Pashto word *angrazan*, for instance, is a complex sociohistorical and cultural construct that can be translated differently into English, as a positive as well as a negative word, depending on the contextual meaning of the word. Whereas at the literal level, *angrazan* simply refers to “the English” people, at the connotative level it can imply association with the colonial occupation

of India by the British government, refer to “western” people in general as a threat to Muslim culture, or connote association with the success of the western nations in science and technology. Faced with this complexity, I carefully assessed the original data to select the most appropriate contextual translation.

To ensure the validity of the translated data, the strategy of peer feedback was used (Mackey & Gass, 2005). After getting his signature on the Confidentiality Agreement, I shared the transcripts with a fellow PhD student who is a proficient user of Pashto, Urdu, and English. As a result of our discussions about the data, I got helpful feedback and suggestions with regard to changing some parts of the transcribed data.

The following “transcription notation” (De Guerrero & Villamil, 2000) was developed to facilitate readers in understanding multilingual data in the transcripts:

- *italics*            used to indicate that the original word (in Pashto/Urdu) is quoted without translation
- [TP]                indicates that the following text is Translated from Pashto
- [TU]                indicates that the following text is Translated from Urdu
- [OE]                indicates that the following text is Originally in English (as spoken during the interview)
- [...]                indicate that text has been omitted
- ()                    indicate explanation by the researcher

After discussing data management, translation, and transcription of the data, the following sections focus on how the data were coded, analyzed, and interpreted.

### 3.6.3. **Data analysis**

Data analysis in this study continued throughout the research study along with data gathering. As Richards (2003) points out, “analysis [in qualitative research] is neither a distinct stage nor a discrete process; it is something that is happening, in one form or another, throughout the whole research process” (p. 268). My early reflections on the focus of this study, theoretical insights gained from reading relevant literature, and my experiences during the fieldwork informed the data analysis process described below. Relatedly, in terms of an inductive/deductive approach to data analysis, as explained above (Chapter 3, Section 3.2.3), my approach inclined more towards inductive data analysis as it builds on a close thematic analysis of the data. However, the analysis was also informed by deductive aspects in terms of theoretical assumptions and important relevant research literature.

The process of data analysis in qualitative inquiry mostly consists of managing and analyzing a large set of verbal (and often audio and visual) data. The process of managing and analyzing can be facilitated by the use of computer software like NVivo (Flick, 2009). Although there are other programs (such as QDA) available for this purpose, I selected NVivo mainly because I found its interface user-friendly and the range of its functions useful for the analytical purposes of this study. On the one hand, it allowed me to manage all relevant data files (including text, audio, and pictures) by importing them into the “Internal” folder and, on the other, I could run different queries on the whole data set to analyze the frequency of occurrence of specific words/phrases. In terms of coding, NVivo proved very helpful as it allowed me to consider all the data files from interviews, observations, field notes, etc. within one interface where I could attach code labels to them. Further, as I familiarized myself with the data, I could record my analytical ideas in the form of memos in the program. To work with the codes and memos, NVivo offers flexibility in manipulating

the codes and memos as the codes can be arranged into categories and thematic clusters while any memo can be attached to one or more codes. In brief, as a novice researcher, I found NVivo helpful in saving me from getting overwhelmed by the large quantity of data gathered in the field. However, heeding other qualitative scholars (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Clarke & Braun, 2014), I did not consider this software as a substitute for the researcher's analytical involvement in the process of data analysis. The software can only assist the researcher, not a substitute for him/her.

The following sections describe in detail the different stages of data coding and interpretation in this study based on a thematic analysis approach. Whereas there are different approaches to coding in the thematic analysis of the data in qualitative research (Block, 2003), this study followed stages of coding in relation to TA as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2014):

TA is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning across a data set. Through focusing on meaning across a data set, TA allows the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences. Identifying unique and idiosyncratic meanings and experiences found only within a single data item is not the focus of TA. This method, then, is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and of making sense of those commonalities. (p. 57)

The focus of TA on what is common rather than unique about a data set is suitable for the purposes of this analysis as it focuses on ideas and perceptions shared in the linguistic community of the research participants and its relation to EFL. The approach involves six stages of data analysis, as briefly discussed in the following sections.

### ***Familiarization with the data***

A common first step in qualitative data analysis, familiarization with the data, involves immersing oneself in the data through repeated readings of different items in the data set (Dörnyei, 2007; Mackey & Gass, 2005). In the context of this study, familiarization with the data started before the analysis phase. My readings of the data transcripts along with listening

to the audio recordings of the interviews to ensure the most appropriate translation choices enabled me to know the data contents well. However, during the initial analysis phase, I reread all sources in the data set including interview transcripts, audio recordings of the interviews, observations, and fieldnotes, documents and artifacts from the field. Heeding Braun and Clarke (2014), I took notes of any questions, reflections, or insights I had at this stage. NVivo helped in keeping track of my notes in the form of memos attached to snippets of data and, sometimes, in the form of annotations referenced in the related bit of information in the data. At this early stage, notes (memos and annotations) were recorded in a messy form, whenever I had any important idea, as the aim was to record ideas as “memory aids and triggers for coding” and analysis later in the stage of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2014, p. 61).

Reading the data for familiarization involved critical reflection on the contents of the data. This means that the data were not read-only for surface meaning, but the words were actively analyzed in order to start reflecting on what the data meant. Key questions guiding this process included reflecting on how the participants made sense of their language learning experiences and what social and personal assumptions informed their views. I also reflected upon the broader question of what sort of world was revealed in the participants’ ideas and in conjunction with the rest of the data. Familiarizing myself with the data thus led me to know the data contents intimately and helped me in beginning to notice aspects of the data relevant to the research questions that this study explored.

### ***Initial coding***

Important considerations at this stage included that the codes assigned to parts of the data should be relevant to answering the research questions in this study and that the coding is thorough, inclusive, and systematic. If done systematically, codes can provide building blocks for analysis by “identifying labels for [features] of the data that [are] potentially

relevant to the research questions” (Braun & Clarke, 2014, p. 61). Notes prepared during the data familiarization phase proved helpful in facilitating a systematic approach to data coding. Before coding, I read the data thoroughly one more time and started coding each data item in its entirety before moving on to code the next item. When unsure about whether a part of the data was relevant, I coded it anyway because I could modify or discard the code at a later stage in the analysis. This approach was aimed to ensure inclusivity in data coding. Once I had generated code, I kept reading the rest of the text until I found the next piece of data relevant to my research questions. I needed to decide whether the same code could be applied or a new code was needed to capture the idea(s) in the data. When this approach was applied to each item in the data, I had to go back to previous data items to modify certain codes. Flexibility in NVivo software to change or delete codes proved helpful in this process (Appendix 6). The experience of recursive and iterative coding helped me gain confidence in coding the data.

With regard to types of codes at this stage in the analysis, most of the codes I assigned to parts of data were descriptive and stayed close to what the participants had said. Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2013) identify these codes as “semantic” or “descriptive” codes whereas they label more conceptual codes as “latent” codes that are interpretive instead of descriptive of the data and go beyond what is said by the participants. Relatedly, while many of my codes were inductively derived from the data, several codes came from the theoretical constructs that informed this study. As a novice researcher, my initial coding was more descriptive. However, as I gained confidence in coding, I generated more latent codes and modified some earlier descriptive codes to relabel them with more interpretive codes. For instance, a common element in the interview data related to the participants’ views regarding their language preference and whether it was accommodated in the school and home

environment. Initially, I coded such data in terms of “language tension”. However, later I realized that the linguistic tension described by the participants was related, at a deeper level, to a mismatch between the “language hierarchy” supported in their socio-academic milieu and the students’ own priorities. This shift in perspective was reflected in the coding labels as I relabeled several codes at a “latent” level in terms of aspects of “language hierarchy” such as the differential integrative and instrumental value of the trilingual resources of the participants. In sum, a systematic, inclusive, and iterative coding procedure in the initial phase of analysis was helpful in a thorough understanding of the data and developing interpretive (latent) codes apart from descriptive codes.

### ***Searching for themes***

Whereas the previous two stages involved analyzing the data to identify important parts and code those parts which were relevant to my research questions, this stage involved synthesizing the data to form clusters in terms of themes. As Braun and Clarke (2006) summarize, a theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set” (p. 82, emphasis in the original). This was a significant step towards building the final argument/narrative of the thesis. To identify thematic issues and topics in the data, I reviewed the coded data for similarity in ideas that were relevant to the research questions in this study. Codes that shared similar foci were grouped into subthemes (subcategories in a theme). For instance, I realized that the participant learners’ interest in English speaking online communities and media celebrities, and their plans for a future education career in the western developed countries, were underlined by their investment in improving their speaking skills in English by affiliating themselves with communities where the use of

English was socially integrated. These aspects, therefore, were clustered into two subthemes under the broader theme of “learners’ investment in English learning”.

However, instead of being a linear straightforward process of clustering codes into subthemes and subthemes into themes, searching for themes involved exploring different ways of combining codes, discarding many codes, and drawing many conceptual maps in NVivo (Appendix 7). Similarly, the “node trees” in NVivo were rearranged several times as I identified new subthemes/themes. An important aspect of this phase in data analysis relates to establishing relationships between themes to work out the overall story of the analysis. In this regard, I chose to use the metaphor of “language ecology” (Kramsch, Claire & Whiteside, 2008; Manan et al., 2015). The metaphor can capture the existence of different languages in a multilingual ecology and provides a broad organic metaphor based on interdependence and coexistence. To ensure that the complexity and richness of the data are sufficiently reflected in the themes, I considered codes from all data sources in forming a theme.

### ***Reviewing and defining themes***

Although Braun and Clarke (2006) discuss reviewing and refining themes as two separate phases in data analysis, I discuss these together as they are interrelated. Reviewing essentially relates to quality checking and making sure that the selected themes are adequately represented across the data set. This involved considering the themes recursively against the snippets of data to which they were assigned to see whether the themes worked. Some of the themes were modified whereas others were discarded after review. For instance, an earlier theme titled “subaltern subjects speaking back” was discarded after review as it was too theory-driven and seemed to force the data into my theoretical inclinations. During the review, key aspects of a quality check included seeking answers to the following: a) is the theme relevant to my research questions? b) is the theme sufficiently distinct from the other

themes? c) are there enough data to make it a legitimate theme? After reviewing themes for inclusivity, coherence, and distinctiveness, I reread all the data to consider whether the tone of the data was sufficiently captured in the themes I had selected. As a result, I discovered that some aspects of the data had not been sufficiently coded. For instance, the learners and their teacher had different understandings of making English a functional language in the classroom. I modified codes in the interview and other data items to make the theme of “language learning in institutional domains” more inclusive.

Defining and refining themes involved trying to capture the “essence” of each theme (what it is about) and what aspect of the research questions it captures. It is essentially a first step towards building the narrative or argument of the thesis. I considered all the extracts for each theme in the data and organized them into a consistent account to understand what was important in each theme and how it was relevant for my research purposes. As I was identifying key aspects of each theme, I was also relating the individual themes to the broader narrative of how the participant learners’ perception of languages related to their English learning in a specific multilingual ecology in Pakistan.

### ***Producing the report***

Unlike quantitative research in which the data analysis is followed by writing up the research report, in qualitative research these phases are interwoven (Braun & Clarke, 2014). Writing the report was informed by different sources of analysis including early memos and annotations, and analytic notes I had written throughout this research study. This phase in data analysis involved putting together the themes to make a coherent argument that conveys a compelling story to answer the research questions explored in this study. To produce a convincing argument, I kept close to the data and provided sufficient examples from the data to illustrate the reliability of the themes. The data extracts in the following analysis (Chapters,

5, 6, 7 & 8) are, however, not merely illustrative but embedded in the analytical framework of the argument of this thesis. The report links up the analysis with relevant existing research literature to make sense of how this study is situated in relation to this literature.

#### 3.6.4. **Interrater reliability**

The previous sections discussed measures to ensure that coding was done systematically and the data from different data items were adequately represented in the final themes of the analysis. However, along with ensuring internal validity, “it is common to ensure that the coding scheme can be used consistently or reliably across multiple coders wherever possible. This is known as interrater reliability” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 242). After coding the first three interviews with the participants from Global, another coder was given the same data to code in NVivo. To determine the simple percentage agreement and Cohen’s Kappa value for the coding reliability, interrater reliability query was run in NVivo (see Appendix 5 for Coding Comparison Query results). As Mackey and Gass (2005) emphasize, it is important to determine interrater coding reliability because

Coding involves making decisions about how to classify or categorize particular pieces of data, if a study employs only one coder and no intracoder reliability measures are reported, the reader’s confidence in the conclusions of the study may be undermined. (p. 242)

#### 3.6.5. **Rigor and quality in research**

The previous sections discussed how systematic data analysis was supported at different phases in the data analysis through maintaining systematic, recursive, and reflective analysis. These steps are important to ensure the internal validity of the analytical process. I also demonstrated how “external audit” (Morse, 2015) (Morse, 2015) for the reliability of the coding process was supported through the measurement of interrater reliability. This section summarizes different aspects of maintaining rigor in the research operationalization and data analysis stages in the study. The section is essentially concerned with retracing my

“conceptual journey” (Barbour, 2014) throughout the research process. Various scholars describe criteria to determine rigor in qualitative research differently and with different terminologies (e.g. Guba & Lincoln, 1980). In the following sections, I follow Morse (2015) and Barbour (2014) to talk about aspects of rigor relevant in relation to this study. However, describing how one went about the business of data analysis in qualitative inquiry is not straightforward. As Flick (2009) points out, “discussions about the quality of qualitative research are located at the crossroads of internal needs and external challenges” (p. 2). The following sections reflect this dilemma in determining rigor in qualitative inquiry.

### ***Prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and rich description***

In relation to ethnographic studies, a prolonged stay in the field and diverse persistent observation are assumed necessary to make sense of the in-group culture of the participants and to create a good rapport and trust with them (Agar, 1996). My eight months stay in the field and follow-up visits to the schools after the fieldwork finished provided opportunities to interact with the material, cultural, and social aspects of the field to gain insight into the two school contexts. Prolonged engagement in the field was also important to reduce the effects of my personal and theoretical biases and assumptions. Further, it provided sufficient time to establish trust and elicit rich data. Participants are unlikely to share their views and experiences fully with a researcher who meets them just to collect data. In terms of observations, the data set in this study comprises not only scheduled classroom observations but unscheduled excursion observations into different parts of the schools including the common areas, teacher staff room, principal’s office, and the school libraries. This thesis research builds on these sources of the data to create a rich and complex description (Geertz & Clifford, 1973) of what was happening in the schools. Thorough and inclusive coding, as

described in the previous sections, ensured that the complexity of the contexts was captured through inclusive data coding of different items in the data (Holliday, 2007).

### ***Peer review and debriefing***

Peer review can be useful to prevent researcher bias influencing the data (Morse, 2015). Two significant forms of peer review in this include the sharing of interview transcripts with a trilingual speaker of Pashto, Urdu, and English to check the appropriateness of the translations in the text. As discussed earlier in the current chapter (Section 3.6.2), this process yielded some useful feedback to modify parts of the translated data. The second significant form of peer review involved presenting initial findings from the study in two research seminars at the Faculty of Arts, University of Auckland. This sharing of data analysis and theoretical assumptions was useful, as Morse (2015) points out because it “assists new researchers to synthesize and to see patterns in their data—sometimes by the questions asked by their peers, and sometimes even by listening to their own voice” (p. 1216).

Debriefing can take many forms in the context of qualitative inquiry. In the present study, a debriefing was a significant aspect of data gathering as the study includes two researcher bracketing interviews (before and after fieldwork) as part of the data set to uncover the researcher’s biases and assumptions. Based on semi-structured interviews conducted by a fellow PhD candidate, the data were used during various phases of the analysis in the study to reflect upon issues around positioning and personal biases.

### ***Clarifying researcher bias***

This aspect is closely linked to the previous aspect in terms of the role of the researcher in designing the study, conducting fieldwork, and analyzing the data, and the need for making this role explicit to remain aware of it. A source of researcher bias is a tendency of the

researcher to see that which is anticipated. Although adopting a “neutral stance” is not possible for a social scientist, it is important to remain aware of one’s presuppositions and biases. For instance, as a “cultural insider”, I was familiar with the difference between perceptions about the two schools I studied; Global is considered a high-fee, high-quality institution while Ummah is ranked lower in social prestige and quality of education. Through bracketing techniques and reflective journals, I tried not to see my research participants and their educational contexts in a dichotomous fashion.

Another bias relates to the design of the research. The research questions, for instance, can have an inherent bias that emphasizes a particular aspect of the participants’ experiences. For example, the initial framing of this study focused on institutional constraints in relation to the participant learners’ English learning goals. Although a valid focus, after initial observations and first interviews with the participants I realized that the questions needed to be rephrased to accommodate diverse social factors and learners’ exercise of agency to assert their learning agenda. The process of refining different aspects of the research design continued throughout the study as I gained new realizations.

### 3.7. **SUMMARY**

This chapter has used insights gained from the literature review in Chapter Two to construct a research design based on qualitative research philosophy, multi-sited ethnographic methodology and a thematic analytical approach. This research design is aimed to help the current study answer the four questions about the learning experiences and perceptions of the participant learners. The design is aimed to explore what meanings the participant learners attach to their trilingual resources, how these resources are acknowledged in different social domains, how the learners’ investment in English learning is related to their reception of textbook materials, and what imagined people and places are associated with the learners’

investment in L2 learning in this multilingual context in northern Pakistan. This chapter has discussed in detail how research philosophy adopted in the current study is relevant to answering these questions. It has also discussed why multi-sited ethnographic methodology and a thematic analytical approach could provide reliable answers to the research questions. A significant aspect of the research design relates to incorporating the researcher's subjectivity as a resource in data gathering and analysis phases of the current study.

## **4. CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS' PROFILES**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on discussing aspects of the sociocultural and educational context of this study and introduces the six students and the two teacher participants in this study. The aims of this chapter are related to the ethnographic approach of this study that sees language learning as “primarily shaped by the social contexts in which [it] occurs and is interested in uncovering the meaning that participants in [language learning] processes bring to the communication events in which they engage” (Starfield, 2010, p. 50). In an ethnographic analysis, it is therefore important to provide comprehensive information about relevant aspects of the context of the study and introduce the participants in the study.

The chapter begins with a description of the country context of Pakistan and the relevance of the postcolonial history of the country for the present-day education system in Pakistan, specifically in relation to the role of English and regional languages. Building on this broader context, the two schools are introduced in terms of their location, academic “cultures”, and language policies. After contextualizing the schools, the six students and two teachers as participants in the study are introduced in terms of their family and education backgrounds, language learning goals, language preferences, and perceptions about language learning in the context of the two schools.

### **4.2. SOCIOLINGUISTIC CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic and multilingual country. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2017), the population of the country is 207.77 million with the majority of the people (around 70%) living in villages and depending on agricultural production. The

majority of the population is of a young age, as reflected in a median age of 21 years (Kugelman, 2011). Approximately 72 languages are spoken in the country. In terms of national percentage of speakers, Punjabi ranks highest (44.15%), followed by Pashto (15.42%), Sindhi (14.10%), Siraiki (10.53%), Urdu (7.57%), Balochi (3.57%), and other languages (4.66%) (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The official language of the country is English whereas Urdu is designated as the national lingua franca (Rahman, 2009).

#### 4.2.1. **Historical background**

Pakistan remained a colony of the British Empire for about two hundred years until 1947 when it was declared an independent state. During the colonial period, the British rulers established a large number of low-quality, state-funded schools where Urdu or Hindi was used as the Medium of Instruction (MoI). These schools were attended by children from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The British rulers also established a limited number of high-quality, expensive English-medium schools that were attended by children from more affluent socio-economic backgrounds. Kachru (2005) comments that the local languages were not privileged in administrative affairs of the government, Christian missionary activities, and higher education while English enjoyed a dominant function in these spheres. This divisive policy was aimed at colonial political expediency to create a small highly educated local elite class to act as an intermediary between the British rulers and the Indian subjects (Rahman, 2005). On the other hand, the majority of the subjects who studied in Urdu or Hindi medium institutions remained excluded from the affairs of the government and could not compete for well-paying jobs. Although there was much resentment against these policies among the Indian subjects and the English language was seen as a cultural threat and as a tool of economic exploitation, it was also desired as the language of power and upward social mobility (Shahbaz, 2012). Thus, in Pakistan, the perception of English is historically

situated in conflictual views regarding English as a cultural threat and as an instrument of economic mobility (see Chapter 7, Section 7.3).

After independence, Pakistan chose Urdu as a national language to symbolize its distinction from India where Hindi was selected as a dominant national language. Building on Ayres (2003), Manan (2017) observes:

Urdu is numerically non-dominant language used by only 7% of the population [in Pakistan]; however, owing to the political motivations of the founders of the country, it was declared the national language [of the country] despite resistance from the ethno-nationalists of regional/provincial languages. (p. 72)

However, the legacy of the divisive British colonial education policies in Pakistan did not come to an end in the post-independence era. Parallel government and private education systems in Pakistan still exist, divided mainly in terms of the quality of English language teaching in these systems (Durrani, 2012; Pennycook, 2000; Rahman, 2004). On the other hand, successive official announcements have been made throughout the history of Pakistan to promote Urdu in education and government affairs (Table 4.1). The 1973 constitution, for example, stipulates that the government would make arrangements to promote Urdu as the official language of the country and that Urdu would replace English over a period of fifteen years. It also urges the provincial governments to “prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion, and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language” (Government of Pakistan, 1973, Article 251). However, in practice, these plans remain unfulfilled to this day (Zaidi, 2017). Similarly, despite repeated plans of the government to take measures for making English widely available in society, it remains available only to a small section of the population (Rahman, 2008). In regard to the division among education systems in terms of access to English, Mustafa (2016) argues that the language divide is tied up with social stratification and unequal distribution of socioeconomic resources as access to

English determines prospects of employability in Pakistan in both government and private sectors (Nayyar & Salim, 2005; Rahman, 2001; Shamim, 2008).

Table 4.1

Historical overview of language policies in Pakistan (Zaidi, 2017, p. 58)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Significant language-related points of the policy</b>
1947	Three language structure: Urdu as national, English as official, one provincial language
1948	Urdu declared as the only national language and as MoI at the primary level, English as MoI for higher levels Urdu to substitute English in official domains once developed in ten years
1958	English taught as a compulsory subject in state-run schools, private English-medium schools allowed to flourish Lease of 15 years granted for Urdu to substitute English
1971	End of Urdu-Bengali linguistic conflicts; Urdu harmoniously declared as the state's national language
1973	Restatement of the three-structure language policy: English as official, Urdu as national and a provincial language Another lease of 15 years granted for Urdu to replace English
1977	The imposition of Urdu as MoI in state-run schools, English introduced in Grade 6 Arabic introduced as a compulsory subject
1987	Urdu only policies retracted
1989	English taught as a mandatory subject from Grade 1 Non-state run schools continued with English-only syllabi
1998	New education policy announced with no statement regarding the language policy
2007	A "white paper" issued that stressed English to be taught as a subject from Grade 1, mathematics and science to be taught through English from Grade 6
2009	Science and mathematics to be taught through English from Grade 1 from 2014
2015	Official notification passed by the Supreme Court to make Urdu the language of official communication
2016	Policy under formulation to make Urdu the only official language of communication

#### 4.2.2. **Language and education in Pakistan**

The above presentation of the historical background suggests that, in Pakistan, access to linguistic resources is tied up with political, social, and economic factors. These factors, in turn, determine the social status of languages in the country. English enjoys the highest social status, mainly due to the socioeconomic advantages it can offer, followed by the national language Urdu because of its investment in domains of power like education, urban centers, and to some extent official correspondence (Rahman, 2006). Regional languages, however, are not invested in powerful domains and are often only considered important as markers of ethnolinguistic identity (Khan, 2016). They have little value in public domains like the judiciary, health, and civil administration (Coleman, 2011; Shamim, 2011). Languages like Pashto, Punjabi, Balochi, Sindhi, etc. are taught as a subject in the government schools but not in private schools. Pinnock (2009) estimates that as many as 91% of school students in Pakistan do not have access to education in their mother tongues. Children either attend Urdu medium government schools or English medium private schools (Manan, 2016).

In this context, access to the English language can be seen as the grounds where social status and power relations are contested in terms of which school provides greater access to the English language. The state could play an important mediatory role in ensuring equitable access to quality education. However, as Shamim (2011) points out, the state education policy in Pakistan remains “vaguely articulated on the one hand and rarely implemented in practice on the other” (p. 239). In the absence of a clearly articulated uniform language-in-education policy, the private schools have proliferated in Pakistan during the last two decades, using English medium instruction as an advertising tactic to attract students and their parents. Manan (2016) points out:

Two factors appear to have given rise to the proliferation of English-medium private schools: the collapse of Urdu-medium government schools and the increasing demand for English-medium education, motivated by both national as well as global imperatives. English is used in the domains of power in Pakistan, and pragmatically most parents view it as “passport” to power, prestige and an array of social, economic and cultural goodies. (pp. 220-221)

In the absence of uniform education policy, there are different types of educational institutions in the country providing different qualities of education and English learning opportunities to the learners (Coleman & Capstick, 2012; Rahman, 2005). First, there are private schools that follow the British education model, use foreign curriculum contents (mostly from the Cambridge University Press), and use English as the medium of instruction. These schools usually charge a very high tuition fee and remain affordable only to a small well-off part of the population in the country. Second, there are English medium schools run by the armed forces that are subsidized by the government. Children of in-service and retired armed forces personnel can avail themselves of the subsidy offered in these schools. However, for the general public, these schools remain very expensive as they have to pay the full fee. Third, there is a large number of low-fee private schools in which the professed medium of instruction is English whereas the de facto medium of instruction is usually Urdu or a mix of Urdu and a local language. Fourth, there are fully funded government schools that cater to about two-thirds of the school student population in the country. Urdu, or a mix of Urdu and a local language, is used as a medium of instruction. Fifth, Islamic religious seminaries (madrasahs) are private charity institutions providing free religious education that is recognized as equivalent to formal schooling. In these institutions, local language(s) is/are used for teaching while Arabic, the sacred language of Islam, is held in high esteem and is mostly the language of the curriculum contents.

After describing the education system in Pakistan, the following paragraphs introduce the two schools where this study was conducted and situates them in terms of the five types of educational institutions in Pakistan as described above.

#### 4.3. **RESEARCH SITES**

##### 4.3.1. **Ummah School**

Ummah is a low-fee private school that falls in the third category in terms of the five categories of schools in Pakistan mentioned above. Like other low-fee schools, Ummah claims English medium instruction but the actual language of instruction is predominantly Urdu and to some extent Pashto (the first language of the students and the teachers). However, the school is also distinct from other low-fee schools as they are predominantly individual private business institutions. Ummah, on the other hand, is part of a vast network of around 200 schools and colleges throughout the country that are centrally administered from the capital Islamabad.

Situated on a dusty road in a suburban commercial area, the Ummah School is surrounded by business shops, mechanical workshops, second-hand car dealers and property dealer shops. The school is located on the first floor of a two-story rented building not specifically designed to cater to the needs of a school. On the ground floor of the building is a large furniture showroom. The school is comprised of 15 classrooms, offices of the director and the principal, a teachers' staff room, and a small kitchen. The staffroom also houses a library consisting of one cupboard of Islamic books. The director's office also serves as a reception room to receive visitors and parents.

The school has about 300 male and 180 female students from class nursery to Grade 10. There are 11 male and 8 female teachers. At the primary level (nursery to Class 5), boys and

girls can study in coeducation classes taught by female teachers only. From Class 6 to Class 10, however, girls are taught in a separate female section. The male and female teachers remain separate in the school and have exclusive teacher staffrooms. Gender segregation is common in the local Pashtun culture. However, as the next section explains, Global has a different culture from Ummah in terms of gender segregation.

The school building is divided into a male and a female section. During the long and harsh winter season in this hilly region, the school receives sunlight for a very short time during the day as the rooms are built in a square with a small open space in the middle. The girls' section receives even less sunlight as it has no open area. In the boys' section, the open space is used for various purposes including conducting exams. According to the teachers, taking exams in the open area also facilitates them in monitoring the students to ensure they do not copy materials from their notebooks or any other source. A bronze gong hangs in a veranda. Every 40 minutes, a student goes to the gong and strikes it with a small black stone that is kept on the floor underneath to announce the end of a class and the beginning of another.

In the vicinity of Ummah School, a primary school (nursery to Class 5) and a high (Class 6 to 10) government-run school are situated. In 2008, an armed militant group had taken control of a few districts in the area, demanding, apart from other things, that "secular" school education must be banned in the region and students must attend religious seminaries (madrasahs) only. The group members wanted to impose strict Shari'ah law in the region. The militants destroyed many schools in the area including the building of the nearby high school. At the time of fieldwork for this study, the school building had recently been rebuilt. During the military operation to overthrow the armed militants, Ummah and other schools in

the area remained closed for about eight months when all people migrated to the southern parts of the country to escape the fighting.

As mentioned earlier, Ummah is part of a network of about 200 schools run nationwide by a centralized foundation system. Established in 1990, the foundation's aims mentioned on its website declare to provide quality education to its students to prepare them for the challenges of the 21st-century world. However, it also aspires to consolidate their Muslim identity through promoting Islamic culture in the schools and with the help of privately published curriculum contents to reflect Islamic values and local ways of life. However, the school network can use privately published content up to Grade 8 only. From Grade 9 to 12, government prescribed curriculum contents are used as district education boards conduct uniform exams for these grades based on same government-approved curriculum contents for private and government schools. Paradoxically, although the foundation's website declares that it aims "to counter the negative effects of state education policies that alienate our youth from Islamic culture", it also says that the aim of establishing a separate publishing press is to develop quality curriculum contents in accordance with the guidelines of the national education policy. This apparent contradiction highlights the complexity of private education in Pakistan.

#### 4.3.2. **Global School**

Global is a high-fee school that falls in the first category of private schools in Pakistan out of the five categories mentioned earlier in this chapter. The school is part of Cambridge affiliated international education schools in Pakistan. The tuition fee in Global is about ten times higher than what students in Ummah pay for the same grade. The medium of instruction and communication on the school campus is English. Unlike low tuition fee

schools which are usually not part of a network, expensive schools like Global are predominantly part of a larger network with branches throughout Pakistan.

The Global school's network has around 200 schools in 50 cities throughout Pakistan, with 126,000 students enrolled from nursery to A-level. Established in 1978, the network is one of the largest high-fee private schools in the country. The Global School studied in this research has about 700 students (both boys and girls), studying in Grades 6 to 12. The primary section (K-5) is located in a separate building. On its official website, the Global school's network claims to have adopted a uniform curriculum in all its branches, from nursery to the A-level based on the British international education system. However, in practice, most of the Global network schools offer alternative streams of education. After class 8, students can either take the traditional Pakistani system of matriculation certification or take the Cambridge affiliated stream of education to study for O-level exams. In the matriculation stream, like Ummah, the school has to adopt government-endorsed textbook materials from Grade 8 to 10 as examinations for these grades are conducted by the government district education board. Tuition and exam fees for O and A-level are also much higher than the matric stream. All schools in the network provide co-education. All academic activities in the school, including the appointment of staff members, is approved from the headquarters of the network in the capital Islamabad.

The official website of the Global school states that the school aims to enable its learners to develop skills of lifelong learners who seek to broaden their perspective and face challenges in life through personal convictions. That the school culture instills in its students a conviction that no one can stop them if they believe in the motto "I am to learn". Key strengths of the school curriculum are stated to be the incorporation of Information and

Communications Technologies (ICT) and digital media; engaging learners in a student-centered environment; promoting co-curricular activities, and enabling students to take responsibility and assume leadership roles. The network also states that it regularly hires education consultants from the UK to work with teachers to revise and upgrade the school curricula and develop teachers' professional competence.

Unlike Ummah, Global School is located in a large three-story building situated in the main capital area of the district. The surrounding buildings are mostly houses with a few shops and businesses here and there. The roads here are in good shape and less dusty. The area has a lot of trees, giving it a fresh greenish look. On the other side of the road opposite the school, there are several offices of the district administration. Getting into the school was a different experience than Ummah. Unlike Ummah where there were no specific security arrangements, security in Global was more elaborate. Every time I arrived at the school, I had to enter my name and other details in a register at the entrance of the school and had to wait for the reception to get permission from the principal to let me in. Beyond the entrance, I would have to go through a walk-through detector gate followed by a hand-held metal detector scan.

Inside the school, the principal's office is the first room to the left. During my visits to the school, his office door was mostly open. The three-story building is constructed in a U shape with a wide-open area in the middle. During summer, this area is shaded whereas in winter it receives direct sunlight when the shades are rolled away. The open space is used for different student activities including prayers in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan (the month of fasting). Here, students engage in different co-curricular activities such as quiz competitions, variety shows, funfairs, drawing and painting competitions. In terms of gender segregation, the milieu of Global School was different from Ummah. Male and female teachers could talk

to one another in offices or on the veranda. The female teachers did not cover their faces inside the school and mostly covered their heads with a shawl or dupatta according to the local cultural norms.

Like Ummah, Global also remained closed for several months when religious extremists took over the region ensued by a military operation against them in the area. The motor barricades in front of the main entrance of the school, a large number of security guards, several surveillance cameras inside and outside the school building, and a high boundary wall around the school with barbed wire were some of the security measures put in place during this time of high-security alert for schools in the area.

The above sections suggest that although both Ummah and Global are private schools in Pakistan, they have significant differences with each other in terms of fee structure, socioeconomic background of the students, material resources, and teachers' training. They fit into two different categories in terms of the five categories of schools mentioned earlier in this chapter. Following a description of the context of the study and the two research sites, the following section focuses on the six students and two teacher participants in this study.

#### 4.4. **RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

This section describes the participants in terms of demographic information and how they see themselves as students or teachers and as trilingual speakers. The participants' socioeconomic background, academic goals, future aspirations, and language learning aims can provide a useful backdrop for the following analysis in Chapters Five and Six. As mentioned earlier in the thesis (Chapter 3, Section 3.5.1), each of the student participants was interviewed three times in one-on-one interviews whereas each of the teacher participants was interviewed once. Based on information from the interview data, I first introduce the student participants

from the two schools followed by the teacher participants in the study. The following sections draw on the data from the interviews and observations in the field. Throughout the following sections, pseudonyms are used to ensure the anonymity of the participants' identity.

#### 4.4.1. **Global student participants**

##### *Sabiha*

Sabiha is of medium height, has a rather pale complexion and frail physique. She was born in a village a few kilometers away from Global School. Her father is a retired Pakistan military officer and her mother is a housewife who holds a postgraduate degree in English literature. Before coming to Global, she had attended schools in different provinces in Pakistan and in other countries including Jordan where she studied from class 2 to 7 when her father was posted there. Among her four sisters, the eldest sister completed her postgraduate studies whereas the others were still studying. Sabiha informed me that her mother and elder sister had been supporting her throughout her studies. Sabiha's school uniform consisted of kameez (a long shirt), a headscarf, and shalwar (loose trousers).

English, according to Sabiha, "has been the dream language in [her] family" and she had been familiar with it from early childhood (Sabiha, Int. 1). Her parents talk to their children in English and Pashto, whereas her grandmother, who lives with them, scolds gently anyone who speaks English in the house. Her grandmother disapproves of English as the language of the *angrezan*. The word *angrezan*, as previously explained, has connotative meanings in the local context that are related to the negative experiences of the British colonial occupation of the country. But, according to Sabiha, even her grandmother inadvertently code mixes English words like "color", "smart", and "dieting" while speaking Pashto. When family members point it out to tease her, grandma usually replies, "it's because of being with you

guys that I no longer speak pure Pashto” (Sabiha, Int. 3). During the interviews, Sabiha spoke English as she thought her Urdu had “many grammatical problems” (Sabiha, Int. 1).

At the time of fieldwork for this study, Sabiha was studying for her O-level exams. After doing her O- and A-levels from the Global School, Sabiha wanted to get a postgraduate degree from the UK and then join federal or provincial bureaucracies in Pakistan which offer powerful positions in the country. In Global, she did not opt for the matriculation stream because she was [OE] “used to conceptual study and matric system is based on mere reproduction of what one has learned” (Sabiha, Int. 2). However, Sabiha felt that her English had “gone down” after joining Global because students could speak English only with their English subject teacher and not in the other content classes in which Urdu and sometimes Pashto is used predominantly. In this environment, she found speaking English awkward because, even when she spoke English, her fellow students and teachers would not speak back to her in English. Sabiha traced her interest in English to her time in Jordan where she [OE] “learned how to be fluent in English” (Sabiha, Int. 3). However, she was worried about her [OE] “minimal exposure to English in the environment in [Global]” (Sabiha, Int. 3).

### *Osama*

Osama is a lean and tall boy with a closely trimmed beard and a light mustache. His small deep-set black eyes are somewhat overshadowed by his thick black eyebrows and dense bushy hair. His thick eyesight glasses make him look a bit older than his age. During the interviews, Osama was always dressed in his school uniform of a white shirt, a grey striped tie, and black pants. His father works for an international wildlife conservation organization while his mother is a homemaker. She studied up to the intermediate level (Grade 12) but could not continue her studies afterward. Osama is the first among two male children in the

family. He has been studying in Global since the class nursery. in terms of studies, he gets some support from his mother but she cannot help him much as he explained, [OE] “she cannot even read my books as she is from the matric education system and my O-level books are different and very difficult for her” (Osama, Int. 2). His father mostly remains busy and has little time to support him in his studies. Osama does not have many friends in his hometown as he seldom hangs out with his peers being busy completing his daily school homework.

Osama is passionate about improving his spoken English but he thinks he will never be able to achieve this goal because he stammers while speaking. He explained that he stammered less in Pashto and Urdu as compared to English. He was not satisfied with his language learning experience in the Global School because the school focused only on keeping students’ notebooks completed as an accountability measure to satisfy the parents but paid less attention to integrating English as a functional language in the school. He was also critical about the teaching staff that they were not qualified to teach in English and used Urdu or Pashto in the class most of the time. He complained even about Ishaam, the English language teacher, that he spoke English only at the start of the class but mostly used Urdu during the rest of the class time. During the interviews, Osama chose to speak in English predominantly and sometimes in Pashto or Urdu. However, he considered himself a poor speaker of English. For Osama, [OE] “English is a common language because everyone knows English in the world” (Osama, Int. 3). He admires the UK and wants to visit this [OE] “beautiful green country and its big shopping malls” (Osama, Int. 3). His two maternal uncles are medical doctors who are settled in Birmingham, UK. However, he said he was usually too busy in his school homework and rarely talked to them. In the future, he wanted to be a medical doctor in Pakistan.

## *Shahid*

Shahid is a fair-skinned lean boy of medium height with dark curly hair. He talks fast and in brief words. He has an elder sister, two younger sisters and a brother. Except for the younger brother, all siblings go to school. Shahid described his father as educated and his mother as not fully educated who is a housewife. Although she had to quit her studies in class 9, she checks Shahid's homework diary every day and then asks his elder sister, an undergraduate student, to help him finish up his homework. His father owns a foreign currency exchange business in the district capital. He takes interest in the educational progress of his son and specifically asks Shahid about what new English expressions he learned in the school. According to his father, Shahid should be an army officer in the future because [TU] "there is no post better in Pakistan than being an army officer as you will have power and can enjoy your life" (Shahid, Int. 2). However, Shahid wants to be a businessman like his father.

Shahid joined Global in Grade 8. Previously, he was in an Urdu medium private school. He thought the shift proved useful for his English language development and helped him reassess his future education plans. Previously, he wanted to study engineering at the higher education level within Pakistan. After joining Global, he wants to go to the UK to study business at the undergraduate level. During the three interviews I conducted with Shahid, he was code-switching between Urdu and English and rarely Pashto. Shahid feels that Global is good for improving his English language proficiency. Unlike Osama and Sabiha, he claimed students in Global spoke English as long as the teacher was present in the class. Compared with the previous Urdu medium school, he thinks he was getting a better education in Global as [OE] "students are not required to cram contents but study and write answers on their own" (Shahid, Int. 2).

#### 4.4.2. **Ummah student participants**

##### *Samina*

Samina is a tall thin girl of fair complexion. Like Sabiha, her school uniform consists of shalwar kameez and a headscarf. Her father is a senior lab technician in a local government hospital. Her mother studied up to Grade 10 in the matric stream of education. She has three sisters and two brothers. Her eldest sister is an undergraduate student in a local university while the elder brother is a pre-medical student in Grade 12. She takes help with her studies from both of them. Her mother also helps her out with her homework. Samina and her elder brother and sister try to speak English with one another at home. Samina thought that all three of them [TP] “do not understand English properly as it is not spoken in her school and in their colleges” (Samina, Int. 2).

During the interviews, Samina used to be a bit nervous at the start. Once settled, she usually had a lot to say about her plans to improve spoken English, school life and personal hobbies. She always chose to speak Pashto in the interviews, code-mixing very rarely some English words here and there. She was keen to learn one day how to speak “beautiful English” like her favorite media celebrities such as Justin Bieber, Selena Gomez, and Taylor Swift. She explained that [TP] “[these media celebrities] speak English directly. One cannot understand what they say but it’s very beautiful. I wish that I were able to speak like them” (Samina, Int. 2). The two questions she often asked me during the interviews focused on what it was like to live in New Zealand and how could she improve her spoken English. Samina wished that their English textbook had more information about life in the western countries and about *angrezan* so that she was better acquainted with foreign countries and people.

## *Numair*

Numair is a stout boy of medium height with a fair complexion and dark brown eyes. He has been studying in Ummah since the nursery. He lives nearby and mostly walks to school. Among five siblings, he is the second of siblings after his sister. He has two younger brothers and a sister. His elder sister studied till Grade six when his father took her out of the school and admitted her into a madrassah (a religious seminary). According to Numair, both his parents are non-literate. His father runs a small business of selling used-tires in the nearby city. His father sometimes calls him into the shop in after-school hours or over the weekend. According to Numair, his mother learned to speak Urdu by watching TV dramas. At home, he receives no help with any aspect of his studies, [TP] “whatever I have to do for my studies, I do it on my own” (Numair, Int. 2).

During the interviews, he spoke in Urdu most of the time with occasional code-switching to Pashto. He asked me to speak to him in English only and that he would ask for clarification if he did not understand what I said. Numair thought that he could not speak English because the school did not provide a proper environment. He believes that [TU] “it is the responsibility of the school to get students used to speaking English so that they start speaking it outside the school” (Numair, Int. 3). To improve his English spoken skills, he intended to attend English language classes in a language center in the city after taking his matric exam. In terms of his future goals, Numair thought that if he developed good English spoken skills he would permanently settle in New Zealand or Australia because he was not satisfied with the law and order situation in Pakistan and under-developed infrastructure in the country.

## *Haris*

Haris is a tall lean boy with a fair complexion and blue eyes. He speaks slowly, taking pauses to deliberate what he wants to say. He has an elder and a younger brother. His elder brother studied up to Grade 10 and works in an automobile workshop. His father has been working as a taxi driver in Dubai for the last many years. His mother studied up to Grade 6. According to Haris, his parents are not educated but they want him to get an education to become a good person. However, he also regrets that he receives no help at home with his school homework or any other aspect of his studies.

During the interviews, Haris chose to speak in Pashto, occasionally code-switching to English and Urdu. While the other two Ummah student participants studied in the school throughout their education career, Haris's parents migrated to this area only recently. He comes from a tribal area near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border region. The area is considered a stronghold of the militant group mentioned earlier in the thesis (Chapter 4, Section, 4.2). According to Haris, his schooling was continuously disrupted by curfews imposed by the Pakistan military in the region. When a military operation started in the region to oust the militant, Haris had to migrate with his family to a nearby district to live in a tent camp. He studied in a military-run tent school in the camp for a year. When he talked about these experiences, his eyes would fill up with tears.

When his family moved north and he was admitted to Ummah, Haris felt he was not as "intelligent" as the other students in the school because he could not read or speak Urdu or English like them. His Pashto accent was also different from the other students. He felt obliged to the teachers and fellow students who helped him gain confidence. He also tried to

improve his English through online media: [TP] “I started using the Facebook by this time in order to set my English and to be able to speak in English” (Haris, Int. 2). He wants to join the Pakistan army in the future in order to play a role in tackling terrorism in his native tribal region. Haris believes proficiency in English is necessary for him to pass the tests for joining the army.

#### 4.4.3. **Teacher participants**

This section introduces the two teacher participants briefly in terms of their sociolinguistic and educational backgrounds and approaches to English learning.

##### *Ishaam*

Ishaam, the Global School teacher participant, has been teaching in the school for more than seven years. He holds a postgraduate degree in English literature and English Language Teaching (ELT). Like all the participant students in this study, he is a trilingual speaker of Pashto (first language), Urdu, and English. In the evening, he teaches English to Grades 11 and 12 in a government school for adult literacy and runs his English language coaching center in the nearby city. Apart from offering short English language proficiency courses, the center also offers tutoring classes for O- and A-levels students. Regarding his own education career, Ishaam thought that, as a government school student, he never had the kind of learning opportunities and help with English learning as are available to the Global students.

During the interview, Ishaam would frequently code-switch between Pashto and English. He believes that English teaching in Global is distinguished from several other private schools in the area by its focus on student-centered, task-based learning. Regarding language use in the class, Ishaam believes that students need to be compelled to speak English, [OE] “If a student speaks in any other language [apart from English], their comment is not entertained so that

they know that if they participate [in the class] they will have to participate in English” (Ishaam, Int. 1). English, according to Ishaam, is the first language in the school and Urdu and Pashto are second and third languages, respectively. Regarding his students’ concern about their spoken English proficiency, he observed that other subject teachers were not providing a conducive environment for the students to develop fluency in English. As he had to make sure to finish the curriculum on time, he found it difficult to arrange English speaking practice activities in the classroom.

### ***Mazahir***

Mazahir, the Ummah school teacher participant, has been teaching in the school for the last five years. He does not have a specific qualification as a teacher of English. He holds a postgraduate degree in business administration. Like the other participants in this study, he is a trilingual speaker of Pashto (first language), Urdu, and English. As a school student, he studied in low-fee private schools. When he was recruited as an English teacher in Ummah, he faced difficulty especially with regard to the English grammar: [TP] “I consulted other senior teachers of English in the area in order to learn, for instance, direct and indirect narration in English” (Mazahir, Int. 1).

During the interview, Mazahir predominantly spoke Pashto and occasionally switched to English or mixed some English words into Pashto sentences. He believes that English learning is facilitated if students have a conducive environment to use the language in the school and at home. Regarding his own English learning as a school student, he recalled that it was difficult to practice speaking English because of fellow students and parents’ disapproval and, sometimes, making fun of how he spoke English. Mazahir developed his teaching method in Ummah over time that includes separate English textbook classes and

grammar classes on different days. After introducing a new lesson, he reads it two times while translating it into Urdu sentence by sentence. Although Pashto is not used as a medium of instruction in his class, Mazahir said he did not discourage the students from using Pashto.

#### 4.5. CONCLUSION

This chapter has discussed the country context of this study in terms of its postcolonial history, educational landscape, and English language perceptions in the socio-historical context of the study. The chapter suggests that the growth of private schools in Pakistan is a complex socio-educational phenomenon that is linked, on the one hand, with the decline of the standard of education in the government-funded schools and, on the other, with a dominant social preference for English medium instruction. Education systems in Pakistan appear to be divided mainly along with access to quality education in an English medium instructional environment. However, quality English medium instruction in expensive schools like Global is affordable for a small portion of the population only that allows low-fee schools like Ummah to proliferate in the country.

The chapter introduced the two school sites in terms of their material aspects (school building, location, etc.) and in terms of their academic “cultures”. This discussion indicates significant differences between the two school contexts. Next, the six students and two teacher participants were introduced. The students have different orientations towards learning English in terms of its pragmatic (for example, career prospects) and cultural value (for example, social prestige). Relatedly, the two teacher participants have different educational qualifications and indicated distinct orientations towards what language teaching involves. The next two chapters report data findings from the two school contexts focusing on key themes emerging from the data.

## 5. CHAPTER FIVE: ENGLISH LEARNING IN GLOBAL

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

As mentioned earlier (Chapter 4, Section 4.3.2) Global is a high-fee private school in a northern region of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Situated in the district capital area in the region, it is part of a network of nationwide schools with around 200 branches that offer nursery to O-and A-levels (Cambridge affiliated) classes along with matriculation and intermediate level (Grade 12) qualification (affiliated with district education board). The school caters to students from high-income families. The following data analysis is based on interview data and a variety of ethnographic data gathered through an extended stay in the field including field notes, research diary entries, observations, and documents and artifacts collected in the field.

### 5.2. PERCEPTION OF LANGUAGES

This section focuses on the perception of the three major languages (i.e., Pashto, Urdu, and English<sup>9</sup>) in the multilingual social environment<sup>10</sup> of the Global student participants and how they related language perception to their educational aims. Regarding English, the participants' views seemed in conflict with the social perception of English as a western "foreign" language. The participants considered English important for pragmatic reasons including higher education abroad, international communication, and global outward mobility for career-oriented goals. Urdu was consistently considered important for achieving their

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<sup>9</sup> Regarding the social distribution of these languages in the local context, a significant indicator can be the use of languages on commercial signage and advertisement billboards in the area. Appendix 11 indicates that mostly English is transliterated into Urdu alphabets. While some Urdu words are also used on these signboards, the use of Pashto words is very rare. This distribution of the three major languages points towards greater literate value given to English and Urdu in the local context as compared to Pashto which is the dominant language of oral communication in the area.

<sup>10</sup> As pointed out in Chapter One, all the three student participants from Global and their teacher are trilingual speakers of Pashto (their first language), Urdu (the national lingua franca), and English (the official language of Pakistan).

educational goals and, as the national lingua franca, for maintaining national unity in Pakistan. Although their first language Pashto was consistently considered important for oral communication and as a symbolic resource to index familial and ethnic affiliation, the participants saw no significant role for Pashto in the formal domains of education and their career in the future. In what follows, I report data regarding participants' perceptions of languages and how they compared the perception of English, Urdu, and Pashto languages in their multilingual environment.

### 5.2.1. **Perception of English**

All three participants related their English language learning goals to the dominant position of English in Pakistan and the educational benefits it can offer if they were proficient users of the language. However, they reported struggling with certain negative social attitudes towards English. While describing these attitudes, the participants referred predominantly to the family domain first and then to other social domains. Pertinently, in the local Pashtun culture extended families live together and are usually the most significant reference group for the family members. Often described as the language of the *angrezan*, English was mostly resisted at home as it was either considered a reminder of the British colonizers of India or associated with the western culture in general that might alienate youth from their heritage cultural values. Crucially, the Pashto word *angrezan*, literally the “British/English people”, can have complex and mutually conflicting meanings in the local society. The word can have at least three meanings, two negative and one positive. First, in the negative sense, it probably refers to the British colonizers who are often locally considered “crafty” people who plotted against the Muslims in India to subjugate them; second, to describe any local person or people who are often considered westernized in their language use, dress, or moral values. In

a positive sense, *angrezan* is used to complement others for being sophisticated and technology savvy like the English people.

The participants' data about the social perception of English often showed conflictual social attitudes towards the English language that was related to one or more of the three meanings of *angrezan*. For the participants, negative perceptions about English were significant due to their fear of being socially ostracized as *angrezan*.

#### Extract 5.1<sup>11</sup>

[OE]<sup>12</sup> The people here do not like *angrezan*, their language, and their clothes etc. Others make fun of you in the family if you speak English. Mainly, our elders do not like the English language and [the western] dresses<sup>13</sup>. In our family we can wear these things occasionally but, in general, other family members talk badly about us if we dress like that. (Osama, Int. 2)

Locally, jeans, pants, and shirts are considered western dresses while *shalwar-kameez* is considered Pashtun/Muslim dress. The participants pointed out that lack of acceptance for western dresses is also emblematic of lack of acceptance for English; just as they could not freely wear “western” dresses outside the school, the use of the English language was also discouraged.

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<sup>11</sup> Data extracts throughout the thesis are numbered to facilitate cross-referencing of the data. In this notation, the first number on the left (in this case, 5) indicates the number of the chapter while the other number after the decimal point indicates the serial number of the extract within the chapter.

<sup>12</sup> As explained in Chapter Three (Section, 3.6.1), three abbreviations are used throughout the thesis to signal the use of different languages: [OE] indicated that the abstract/quote was originally in English; [TU] and [TP] indicate texts translated from Urdu and Pashto, respectively. This exercise is meant to signal to the reader how often and at which points the participants were switching codes (languages) based on their trilingual linguistic resources.

<sup>13</sup> In the local context, pants, jeans, and shirts are considered western dresses. While in all high-fee schools it is mandatory for students to wear pants and shirt, in the low-fee schools it is not. In Ummah, for instance, the students can wear either “shalwar-kameez” (the traditional Pashtun dress) or pants and shirt. In the government schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the uniform was “shalwar-kameez” that was changed into pants and shirt in 2015, a move that was strongly opposed by conservative political parties as “Americanization” of public education.

## Extract 5.2

[TU] There is little connection between life inside and outside the school. You can wear western dresses proudly inside but outside people make fun of you. Similarly, you have to leave English when you leave school because people stare at you if you speak it outside. (Shahid, Int, 2)

Paradoxically, while English is arguably the most significant language in the local context as the official language of Pakistan and is considered essential for gaining access to high-paying jobs in the country, its use is not encouraged in the social context.

Sabiha reported a lack of approval for English outside the school, especially from her grandmother, younger sister, and some cousins. Although her parents were supportive in this regard, she reported: [OE] “Mostly, people like my grandmother think that English is like a bad language. That it can influence you in a bad way because [TP] it is the language of the *angrezan*” (Int. 3). Two of Sabiha’s paternal grandfathers had served in the British colonial army before the end of the British occupation of India in August 1947. Sabiha grew up hearing stories from her grandmother of how the British colonizers first “deceptively occupied India and how they wanted to suppress Islamic culture in the subcontinent” (Sabiha, Int. 2). However, bias against the English language in her family circle was not limited to her grandmother. She also reported social pressure from her siblings and cousins who used labeling someone as *angrez* to regulate other people’s use of language.

## Extract 5.3

[OE] A year ago or so, I got so fluent in English that I used to mix English freely with Urdu and Pashtu at home. I would not even know which language I was talking in. It became quite natural for me to talk like this. However, because my younger sister and other family members started calling me *angreza* to make fun of the way I used to speak, I stopped using English at home except with my mother. (Sabiha, Int. 2)

The second reason for social rejection of English related to the perception of *angrezan* as immoral people. Language, in this sense, was considered an ideological tool used to undermine the Muslim culture and encourage western cultural norms among young people.

#### Extract 5.4

[OE] The people here are like [TP] the British are non-believers. [OE] That the non-believers are always plotting against the Muslims and we should not speak their language. I know it's like a creepy and weird thing to say but that's what they think. (Sabiha, Int. 2)

The electronic media was also reported to play a role in how *angrezan* were perceived locally: [OE] "When [local people] watch English movies and stuff, they think *angrezan* are not good people. Their dresses and ways of life are considered against Islamic culture" (Shahid, Int. 2). Relatedly, Osama thought that media also caused jealousy against western nations among the local people.

#### Extract 5.5

[OE] The main thing is jealousy when [the local people] see English media etc. They can speak English. That is their mother tongue like we have Pashto. Why are [the local people] getting jealous from them and talking against them? (Osama, Int. 2)

The third perception of the English language in the social context related to *angrezan* perceived as sophisticated and technologically savvy. This aspect of language use was often linked with the social and technological development of the western nations in general; the English language considered as a symbol of this development.

#### Extract 5.6

[OE] I think it may sound weird but [being able to speak English] made me feel like more educated. I think it's because when you are introduced to the idea from your childhood that [TP] the ones called *angrezan* are very intelligent. [OE] So, when I was more fluent in English, I felt more educated. I know it's funny. That's when my interest in other subjects also developed more. (Sabiha, Int. 2)

As symbolically representative of the developed nations of the west, the English language was also considered a resource that enhanced the social standing of the speaker. [TU] “It reflects well on you”, Shahid reported, “when you speak in English to the guests in family functions. One looks intelligent and your parents are proud of you” (Int. 3). Analogously, the desire to learn English was seen in connection with the dominance of the western nations in technology and education.

#### Extract 5.7

[OE] People know here that English is an advanced language. English is too important. It is famous around the Globe. [...] The scientists are from their side, the English side, the western side. So they have made a lot of inventions. The book authors are westerns. Speaking English is a dream of everyone here. (Osama, Int. 3)

In the social context of the participants, the negative perceptions about *angrezan* and the English language appeared in conflict with the positive perception of the English language as essential for educational achievement and getting access to the developed world. On the one hand, the students were encouraged by parents and relatives to acquire proficiency in English (see also Section, 6.2.3) while, on the other, negative attitudes towards English existed in their social environment, prohibiting them from exercising their spoken language skills freely. The following lines present data about how the participants made sense of the value of English among the conflictual social discourses about *angrezan* and *angrezi* (the English language) in their social environment.

The Global student participants did not seem to consider English as a colonial language nor a means of western ideological influence. Their reaction to the negative social perception about English was predominantly based on English being a common international language that should not be negatively associated with the English people (*angrezan*) or with the legacy of

the British rule in India. However, the participants did believe that the dominance of English is related to the educational and technological achievements of the western nations.

#### Extract 5.8

[OE] Everyone should work on [improving their] English because English is important. If people in this society think that it is not our language and that it is not important if somebody is arguing against English, so they are wrong. English is an important [language]. Everyone understands English in the world. It's our common language. Everyone knows that the western nations have taken it to the point that now everyone should learn it. (Osama, Int. 3)

In all cases, the participants seemed more aware of the negative social attitudes towards English than the positive. With regard to the social perception of English as the language of the British colonizers, the local social perception was considered biased that failed to consider the contribution of the British rule to the social and infrastructure development of the Indian subcontinent.

#### Extract 5.9

[OE] If these [negative] attitudes [towards English] in our society are associated with the perception of the British rule in India in the colonial past of the subcontinent, then people are exaggerating because the British rule also brought several benefits for the people of India like the railway, judiciary, education system, etc. Why don't they talk about these things? (Sabiha, Int. 3)

The participants seemed to struggle to understand why speaking English was not encouraged in the society because they seemed to believe that English is just another language; that acquiring a new language should be a source of pride for the speaker and should be accepted in the society as such.

#### Extract 5.10

[TU] It is only a language like other languages. Why it is rejected? I like the English language and I love to speak it. So if I am speaking it, I am feeling proud that I can communicate in English. That it's a good thing about me because I can also speak in Pashto and Urdu. I have learned a new language. (Shahid, Int. 3)

To summarize, for the student participants the social perception of the English language was complex and often conflictual. English was both desired and detested in the local cultural norms. Although the participants' views about English were predominantly positive, their views were mostly articulated in response to the social discourses about the English language, its historical legacy in the Indian subcontinent, and the perception of the western cultural norms in the local culture. Further, although the participants often viewed English as “a common international language” (Osama, Int. 2) that should not be associated with the western culture, paradoxically they also viewed it as an important language because English was connected with the western developed world. The next section reports how the participants perceived the two other major languages, Pashto and Urdu, in their multilingual social environment.

### 5.2.2. **Perception of Pashto and Urdu**

In all three cases, the Global student participants valued Pashto as their first language in which they could express their views more fluently than in English. Relatedly, it was seen as a marker of family bonding and ethnic Pashtun identity. When talking about the use of Pashto in informal domains like at home or with friends, the participants seemed to confidently assert the usefulness of their mother tongue.

#### Extract 5.11

Pashto is our home language. Sometimes you want to say stuff but when you try to speak in English you can't. It just doesn't come out of your mouth in English. in Pashto, you can really say anything you want. [...] in English you are bound to like specific topics. You can't speak much freely in English. (Sabiha, Int. 1)

Although she appeared to be the most fluent English speaker among the three participant students, Sabiha felt constrained while speaking English. Relatedly, speaking Pashto was characterized as spontaneous in contrast to speaking English or Urdu in which the

participants reported to construct the syntactical structure of the sentence first in their minds and then speak. In the case of Osama, he had to contend with his stammering while speaking any language. However, in Pashto, he reported to feel more comfortable and stammer less.

#### Extract 5.12

[OE] I am more comfortable in Pashto. In Urdu and English, my stammering<sup>14</sup> problem is more as compared to Pashto. [...] in English, I would make the sentence structure [first] in my mind and then speak to you. [...] in the mother tongue, I know all the words. There is no struggle in Pashto. (Osama, Int. 3)

Shahid also reported using Pashto or Urdu to overcome his difficulty in speaking English fluently.

#### Extract 5.13

[TU] When I have shifted to this school two years ago, I could not speak a correct sentence in English. Now, I can speak to some extent but I cannot say most of what I have in mind for which I have to use Pashto or Urdu. (Shahid, Int. 3)

The importance of Pashto to signal ethnic Pashtun identity was consistently foregrounded. Shahid, for instance, commented: [TU] “I can speak with Pashtuns in Pashto. This way we can be identified as Pashtuns. So it’s good for communicating with our people” (Int. 3). Pashto was seen by the participants to have no significant role in the formal schooling of the participants. However, the communal significance of the language was considered an important safeguard against the decline of Pashto. [OE] “Everyone here speaks Pashto. It can never be in danger if people speak it and keep speaking it in the future?” (Sabiha, Int. 3).

Although in the informal domains Pashto was consistently valued and was reported to have strong vitality and social currency, in the formal domain of education Pashto was either seen

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<sup>14</sup> Usman reported that none of his teachers knew about his speech impediment; only his friends were privy to it. In the class, he either remained silent or spoke very briefly so that he may not stammer when talking to a teacher. During the interview with the English subject teacher, it was confirmed that he did not know about Usman’s speech impediment. The teacher only characterized him as weaker in participating in discussions in the classroom as compared to Saba and Shahab (Ishaam, Int. 1).

as irrelevant or to have marginal value. While Sabiha and Shahid saw no educational value for Pashto, Osama regarded it as useful in the classroom if the teacher wanted to explain a word or concept that could not be explained easily in English.

#### Extract 5.14

[OE] I see the role of the mother tongue. I clear my concepts in Pashto because English is not our language. So, if someone explains it to me in Pashto, I get it very well and then I can write it in English. (Osama, Int. 3)

The Global student participants considered themselves non-literate in their first language except for Shahid who reported being able to read Pashto to a limited extent. None of the participants had been taught Pashto in his/her formal schooling career. Although Urdu is written in the same Arabic script as Pashto with slight orthographic variation, the learners' belief that they were non-literate seems to be related to their lack of familiarity with Pashto in its literate form rather than an actual inability to read it. Relatedly, all the participants used transliteration of Pashto words into English alphabets as a common practice while writing mobile text messages to overcome their inability to write Pashto in its original Arabic script.

#### Extract 5.15

[OE] I can write [Pashto] in English alphabets but not the real Pashto. We use it in [mobile] text messaging but use the English alphabets. The Pashto language is too difficult. It is [more] difficult from the English language. (Osama, Int. 3)

Limited literacy of the participants in Pashto was attributed mainly to the fact that they had never been taught Pashto as part of their formal schooling. Osama commented, [OE] "Right from nursery up till now, we have not had a single period (class) of Pashto. Pashto class is in the government schools only but not taught over here (in the private schools)" (Int. 3). Shahid could read Pashto script to some extent but he learned it at home while playing language reading games with his father. Similarly, Sabiha reported, [OE] "My mother is the one who

helped me because she focused on both languages well. She made sure that we are learning English when in Pakistan and, if we were abroad, we didn't forget Pashto" (Int. 3).

Regarding the role of Pashto in the domain of education, there were mixed responses. While Osama and Sabiha stressed that measures need to be taken to promote Pashto, Shahid accepted it as a fact that English and Urdu would remain the dominant languages in the future.

#### Extract 5.16

[OE] We talk about the Pashto language that it's our mother tongue and it should be having a class [in our school]. If we say that Pashto is not a forward language, [that] it's not [a] modern language, so we should take it forward; we are responsible for Pashto; we are Pashtuns. If we are ignoring it so the Punjabis or the western people can't come to take our language forward. (Osama, Int. 3)

The extract suggests that language is perceived as related to ethnicity; Pashtuns are responsible to promote Pashto because they are ethnic Pashtuns. Being their mother, the learners seemed to feel responsible for promoting Pashto and embedding it in the literate culture of the country. Sabiha, for instance, stressed that Pashto should be given importance in formal and informal domains.

#### Extract 5.17

[OE] You can learn English anywhere, but you cannot learn to your mother tongue if you lose it. We should also know how to read and write it, but we don't. [...] Even if I go abroad and meet new people, I would make them learn Pashto. (Sabiha, Int. 3)

Shahid, however, did not seem to share the other two participants' views in this regard. Talking about the fact that none of the private schools in the region teach Pashto, Shahid said, [TU] "I don't feel anything about this because I wonder there is no role if I could write Pashto. In the future, I will only speak but never read or write Pashto" (Int. 3). He pointed out that Pashto had no presence in the media and advertisements were not in Pashto. [OE]

“Pashto is being wiped out”, Shahid said. Although Osama mostly advocated that Pashto needed to be promoted in the formal domains, at times he contradicted this position and seemed to align more with the views of Shahid.

#### Extract 5.18

[OE] For me it is OK [that I cannot read or write Pashto] because there is no way we can use it. If we want to study or we go to other places, we do not write or read in our mother tongue. English is the language we use mostly. (Osama, Int. 2)

To summarize data regarding the perception of languages indicate a hierarchy of languages this research context in which English appears to have a powerful status. Relatedly, while English was valued more in the formal domains, Pashto had better acceptance in the informal aspects of the participant learners’ social lives. This situation seems quite conflictual for the participants. Whereas their desire to learn English conflicted with the negative social perception of English as the language of the *angrezan*, the greater social acceptance of Pashto as the family language and a marker of Pashtun ethnic identity were undercut by its irrelevance in their formal schooling and for their future career goals.

The data about the Urdu language, however, were not so conflictual. Urdu seemed to have better social penetration and acceptance as compared to English. Although there are no L1 speakers of Urdu in this social context, it was reported that Urdu was not seen as culturally alien. [TU] “In the society at large”, Shahid commented, “if you speak in Urdu or English it feels very strange. Urdu is still Ok. People don’t mind that much but if you speak in English they stare at you” (Int. 2). Further, Urdu was associated with urban sophistication on the one hand while it was valued as a symbol of national integration in Pakistan on the other.

#### Extract 5.19

[OE] Urdu is given more importance in Pakistan. If you go to cities like Lahore or Karachi (two major cities of Pakistan) and you don’t speak Punjabi (an ethnic language in

Pakistan and India) you can speak Urdu. English is an international language while in Urdu you can speak to anyone in Pakistan. (Osama, Int. 2)

Acknowledgment of the integrative function of Urdu as the national language of Pakistan appeared unanimously among the participants. Analogously, in the formal domain of schooling, Urdu was reported to have greater value than Pashto. All the participants have been taught Urdu throughout their school as it is one of the mandatory subjects in all schools in Pakistan, both in private and government-run schools<sup>15</sup>.

This section focused on findings relating to the perception of English, Pashto, and Urdu in the formal and informal domains of the student participants. It looked into how attitudes towards the three major languages in the region are socially structured, informing a hierarchical conception of the relative importance of languages in this social context. The section also reported data on the social perception of languages, their value in the informal domains of social communication and in the formal domains of schooling and career goals. These socio-educational aspects of the three languages seem to inform the student participants' often a complex, and sometimes ambivalent perception of each of these languages. The following section focuses on opportunities for the participant students to learn English in the three domains of the classroom, the school, and their homes.

### 5.3. ENGLISH LEARNING IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS

This section focuses on how the students' language learning aspirations play out in different social domains. As language learning cannot be confined within the walls of a classroom but takes place at different sites spread over a range of social domains in which languages are usually differentially distributed, the section synthesizes data that show to what extent the participant students' English language learning is supported in the classroom, at school, and

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<sup>15</sup> The other mandatory subjects are Islamic Studies (for Muslims), Pakistan Studies, and English up to Grade 12.

their homes. The last section (6.2.4) specifically focuses on the development of the students' oral proficiency and how it is linked with the above domains. As such, this section continues and expands the findings reported in the previous section.

### 5.3.1. **Classroom**

In the data from Global, the classroom emerged as a space of central significance for the students in terms of their English language learning expectations. Given the negative social attitudes towards the English language in the social environment around the school and the lack of opportunities for the learners to practice their English language skills, the learners seemed to attach high expectations with their English classroom practices to provide a key space for developing their interactive skills in English. The English language teacher figured prominently in the students' views about learning English in Global. However, although they admired their teacher's language teaching skills, they also held his pedagogic practice accountable for their lack of communicative ability in English. Somewhat similarly to the conflictual perceptions about English and Pashto reported in the previous section, the students expressed conflictual views about the teaching methods in the classroom, expressing enthusiastic admiration for their teacher's teaching skills while also expressing discontent with the classroom practice he followed that did not encourage the use of English as a functional language of communication in the classroom. The following data illustrate these aspects of the data from Global.

In all cases, the English language classroom was considered significant for the students' language skills. Sabiha, for instance, compared the English teacher's teaching method with other class teachers: [OE] "English is at the top in terms of students' grades in the exam because sir Ishaam is a really hardworking teacher. [...] He makes sure that every student understands [what is taught in the class]" (Int. 1). Shahid commented about their English

teacher: [OE] “Sir Ishaam has a lot of [teaching] experience. He knows how to work with students. He has full command over his subject” (Int. 1). Likewise, Osama evaluated his English teacher positively: [OE] “The English sir is too better teacher. He is a master teacher in our school” (Int. 2).

However, the participant students also expressed discontent with the English classroom in terms of the use of different languages (Pashto, Urdu, and English) in the classroom. The relative use of the three languages for oral communication in the classroom emerged as the most significant aspect of the English classroom for the students. Shahid expressed satisfaction with the medium of communication in the classroom: [TU] “In the class, the teacher speaks English most of the time and the students also use it” (Int. 1). However, Osama and Sabiha seemed to contradict this report saying that English was used only to cover the teaching contents in the classroom while communication between the teacher and the students took place mostly in Urdu and sometimes in English.

#### Extract 5.20

[OE] [The English teacher] uses a little bit of English; he just speaks in English in the start of the class to cover the contents. [...] All the three [languages] are used. Urdu is used most of the time. No, he is not speaking English [inaudible] in the class. [...] It's not a good practice. Now you can look at me sir. I can't speak fluent English. So that's because we are not having a practice on English. The teacher is speaking the little bit English but that is not English for us because we don't know English. If there are just 40 minutes and in 40 minutes you are speaking in English, Pashto, Urdu so how it's possible to speak a good English. (Osama, Int. 1)

Osama and Sabiha indicated a distinction between the use of English for communication between the teacher and the students, and when the students were talking to each other during, for example, group-work activities in the class. Both the students reported that in the first instance English was used to some extent while in the second the use of Pashto was predominant.

#### Extract 5.21

[OE] Mostly English [is used in the class]. If a student is communicating with the teacher, then English or Urdu. The teacher uses English. Sometimes [he] switches to Urdu when someone is not understanding but mostly English. The students speak mostly Pashto to each other and sometimes Urdu. (Sabiha, Int. 1)

Paradoxically, while Shahid expressed satisfaction with how the English classroom was helping him develop his English-speaking skills, he predominantly chose to speak in Urdu during the interviews. On the other hand, while Osama and Sabiha complained that their English-speaking skills were deteriorating mainly due to a lack of speaking practice in the classroom (Section, 6.2.2), they predominantly spoke in English during the interviews and seemed able to express themselves quite fluently.

During the classroom observations, the teacher was predominantly speaking in English. The initial 15 minutes of the class was typically a lecture when the teacher would explain the topic for the day and give students relevant information on how to attempt the activity (for instance, writing an expository essay). Students' participation during the lecture part of the class was minimal. Afterward, the students would be asked to start the activity in groups of 3 or 4. During the activity, the teacher would go around in the class and talk to the students mostly in Urdu and sometimes in English or Pashto. When the students talked among themselves, they predominantly used Pashto for communication and sometimes Urdu or English.

Regarding his teaching method, the English language teacher stressed that the teaching method he followed was according to the officially prescribed teaching methods; that it was suitable for developing the students' English skills.

## Extract 5.22

[OE] It is there in the curriculum how to teach. The teacher's manual for O-level gives guidelines. [OE] The curriculum developers know that English language skills are important, that is why they want a child to be fluent [in English]. [...] English is considered the first language [in the class] and Urdu and Pashto are considered second and third languages. (Ishaam, Int. 1)

The extract suggests that the teacher trusts the official guidelines for teaching English at the O-level to be appropriate for his students in Global and might not favor teacher's autonomy in adopting contextually suitable teaching methods. It also indicates that a language hierarchy is upheld by the school and maintained by the teacher in which English is at the top. Relatedly, the teacher claimed that in the classroom the students were supposed to speak in English only and if they used any other languages their answers were not entertained by the teacher. He considered this strategy of policing language use in the classroom essential to motivate the students to use English for classroom interaction.

However, elsewhere in the interview, the teacher was critical of the curriculum design that had little room for students to practice their speaking skills. He was also critical of the school policy that prescribed that the students must be taught the O-level course at least twice so that they can secure good grades in the exam. Relating these macro-level constraints to his teaching method, the teacher complained that he was supposed to focus on finishing the prescribed curriculum twice in a limited academic session which made it hard for him to concentrate on developing the English communicative competence of the students. On the other hand, the teacher pointed out that the other subject teachers were not supportive of creating an environment in their classrooms where students could develop English speaking proficiency.

### Extract 5.23

[TP] There is a reason if students are concerned about their speaking fluency in English.  
[OE] I am of the opinion that it should not be the responsibility of the English teacher only but of every teacher in the school to create an environment in the class where students can participate in English off and on. (Ishaam, Int. 1)

Whereas the teacher advocated English-only teaching policy in the classroom, during his interview he used English as the main language while switching to Pashto and Urdu frequently, as illustrated in the above extract in the mixing of Pashto and English.

To summarize, the data reported in this section indicate that mismatches between the students' expectations and the reality of the classroom practices portrayed the classroom as a site of struggle. The students wanted to have more opportunities to interact in English in the classroom while the teacher reported having to work under institutional constraints that made it difficult to encourage verbal communication in English in the classroom. The data also indicate a language hierarchy in the classroom where English was considered the most desirable language while Urdu and Pashto were respectively considered second and third in significance.

#### 5.3.2. **School**

The data from Global indicate that the distribution of the three languages in the school was of central concern for the students. Similar to the previous section about the classroom, the participants expected that English should be the dominant language of communication in the school environment, both for formal instruction in all subjects as well as for general communication in the school. However, although the official school policy stipulates that all teachers and students must communicate in English, the de facto policy indicates a hierarchy of languages in which Urdu was the most frequently used language in the school. In Pakistan,

Global is nationally recognized as a prestigious school system. The participants considered that the high prestige of the school means that only English should be used inside the school.

#### Extract 5.24

[OE] People outside in the society are having a wrong idea about Global that it is a standard school; that the students speak in English. [...] The English environment is not there in the school. The system [in the school] is that they are telling us to speak English everywhere, inside and outside the class but the staff and the students are not following this rule. [...] They are not preparing us like we should have a good command of English because they are not giving us the opportunity to speak English. [...] Over here, English is taught like just writing it. (Osama, Int. 2)

Sabiha perceived a progressive decline in her English-speaking skills as she moved from Jordan to a school in Islamabad and then to Global. Comparing the distribution of language in Global to the previous school she attended, Sabiha complained: [OE] “Here we can speak English at the most with the English teacher and with the principal. The rest is Urdu. In Jordan, we were studying like in a native English environment. When I was studying in Islamabad, Urdu was strictly prohibited in the school” (Int. 1). Osama attended the Global school throughout his educational career. As the above Extract 5.24 indicates, he thought that he did not have good proficiency in English. Although Shahid thought that his English improved in terms of literacy skills since he joined Global, he believed that his spoken proficiency in English did not improve.

#### Extract 5.25

[TU] This school prepares me to go abroad in the future. Here they work on improving our English although no work is done on our speaking and accent. We will learn the accent abroad but we are leaning basic English here. Because of grammar and vocabulary, our English is getting stronger. (Shahid, Int. 3)

Official language policy in Global stipulates that, as an English medium school, the language of instruction and communication is only English that provides students a monolingual immersion environment to improve their English language proficiency. However, during the

school observations, students were rarely observed talking in English. Pashto and Urdu were used most often. When the principal would go around the school and talk to the teachers and sometimes the students, the medium of communication was predominantly English. Similarly, in the principal's office, the staff members and the students used English except any parents visiting the school principal who would speak in Pashto.

Regarding the school environment, the learners positively evaluated that in Global learning is learner-centered and activity-based and the students are encouraged to be creative and autonomous in all subjects. All the participants considered it a significant feature of their school that set it apart from most of the schools in the region where learning is lecture-based and memorizing contents is considered important. However, at school, the students were kept engaged in reading and writing activities and at home, they felt burdened with homework given to them in all subjects every day. In this routine, they found little time to practice oral communication in the classroom. Sabiha, for instance, complained,

#### Extract 5.26

[OE] Sometimes I can't manage my homework. I just open my books and then I cry and then I scream. In English, we get just an essay or a story or something. But the other subjects I would say it's really difficult for me. [...] My cousins and all of them are like [TP] you have changed. [OE] You do not come to hang out with us anymore. But it's like I don't get even a spare second. (Sabiha, Int. 1)

The participants reported that the impact of the macro-level policy of the school at the micro-level in terms of students' learning experiences was not taken into account. They reported that although these complaints had been reported to the principal by the students, the school routine had not changed. Osama exclaimed, [OE] "In foreign schools, they give respect to the children. They are not letting the children get bored. Here, there is no respect for the students" (Int. 3). Similarly, Shahid reported that if he were the principal of the school he would reduce the number of classes per day and encourage oral activities in the classroom to

reduce academic burden on the students. Sabiha, comparing Global to her school in Jordan, stated: [OE] “They did not pressurize children to do as they were told. Children must be respected. [...] How can we practice speaking when we are so busy?” (Int. 2).

The participants noted that the macro-level policy of the school to stress upon reading- and writing-based learning was part of the school strategy to make accountability to the students’ parents easier for the school authorities. However, this strategy was not seen as serving the interest of the students but rather of the school administration by making it easier to convince the parents that the school was fully committed to doing its part in terms of their children’s education.

#### Extract 5.27

[TP] If the parents complain about their child’s education in the school they can show the notebooks as evidence that they are working on the child. That we are doing our job but the parents are not contributing their part by neglecting the child’s education at home. (Osama, Int. 2)

To summarize, the participants positively evaluated activity-based learning in the school. However, the lack of oral activities and the dominance of Urdu as the medium of communication in the school were seen as features of the school environment that did not provide the students with space where they could improve their English-speaking skills. Similarly, students felt that their voice was not accommodated into the school policy as they were overburdened with excessive reading- and writing-based activities. This policy was neither seen to serve their aspirations for achieving better fluency in the English language nor their health and wellbeing.

#### 5.3.3. **English at home**

After reporting data related to learning English in the classroom and the Global school, this section focuses on the role of the participants’ home environments in learning English. In all

three cases, mothers appeared to play a significant role in supporting the participants. All participants acknowledged that their mothers have been more closely involved in their English language learning as compared to their fathers who were mostly busy in their business or jobs outside the house. In all cases, the mothers were homemakers and were less educated as compared to the fathers of the participants.

#### Extract 5.28

[TU] My father is educated and my mother is not fully educated. She studied till class 9. [...] First of all my mother checks my [school] diary etc. She checks my homework. Then she tells me to do it and sends my elder sister to help me. (Shahid, Int. 1)

Osama reported, [OE] “My mother studied only up to Grade 12. She is interested in my studies and English development and my father is not interested that much because already he is out of the home” (Int. 1). Similarly, Sabiha reported, [OE] “My mother is the one who usually takes an interest in my studies. My father is not usually at home. I see him in the evening when it’s family time” (Int. 1). However, in the local patriarchal family system, although the mothers were more closely involved in their education and language learning, the participants seemed to consider themselves accountable to their fathers in terms of their education and language development. Similar to Sabiha in the above quote, Shahid reported: [TU] “My father asks me how my English is going. What did I learn in English that day? Mostly, he checks my English notebook” (Int. 1). Analogously, Osama reported that his father was not “forcing” him to follow a career path and wanted him to decide for himself. The participants’ views suggest that in this social context the role of the father is dominant and the participants feel accountable for their educational achievement to their fathers although the mothers were more closely involved in their education.

Opportunities for the participants to practice speaking English at home varied across the participants. A significant feature of the home environment affecting students’ English

language learning related to the absence of role models for speaking English at home. In the case of Sabiha, exposure to English at home was relatively better than the other two participants.

#### Extract 5.29

[OE] Well, English has been like the dream language in our family so I was familiar with English from the beginning. [...] My mother says like don't think of English as something new. It's like a common language which is used worldwide now. If you are in [your native town] its Ok you can use Pashto. But if you go abroad for example for further studies, English is the language which you would need. She is the only one at home with whom I speak in English regularly. (Sabiha, Int. 1)

Although her grandmother opposes the use of English at home as described earlier (Section 6.1.1), Sabiha had a supportive parent and a role model in her mother. According to Sabiha, her mother developed her English-speaking skills through self-directed learning and through social immersion. Sabiha stated, [OE] “although my mother has done Masters as a private candidate but she improved her spoken English when we were in Jordan because in the army you get to meet delegates, new cultures, new traditions” (Int. 1). Sabiha's mother seems to provide a role model in English learning being of the same gender and also closely related to her.

In the case of Shahid, speaking English was not modeled by any family member. However, his mother and elder sister actively supported him in completing his homework from school. [TU] “My elder sister and my mother help me”, he reported. “I think 70 percent of the school work is done at home and 30 percent in the school” (Int. 1). His mother made sure that Shahid was completing all his work on time. Both Sabiha and Shahid were also taking personal tutoring classes at home for about two hours a day. Conversely, for Osama both an English language model speaker and general support for education were lacking in the family.

### Extract 5.30

[OE] My mother can't help me because she has studied till Grade 12 only and her education system was different from our education. She also passed Grade12 exam as a private candidate. She can't even read my books. I am alone to study and I am facing difficulties. (Osama, Int.1)

On the whole, language learning experiences in this group of participants suggest that the home environment played a key role in their language development and also in their general educational achievements. The difference in support at home and its correlation to the educational achievement of the students was also noted by the teacher: [OE] "Sabiha and Shahid are committed to their studies and English learning while Osama is not so committed. [TP] The reason is that their home environment is conducive for completing the tasks given to them in the school" (Ishaam, Int. 1).

The three previous sections reported data related to the domains of the classroom, the school, and the homes of the students and how the student participants related these domains to their English language learning and how English learning was supported in these domains. The following section focuses on the participants' oral skills development as related to these different domains.

#### 5.3.4. **English oral skills**

This section focuses on the participants' perception of their oral proficiency and their expressed dissatisfaction with it. In all cases, the participants perceived a gap between their personal goals for English speaking proficiency and their achieved level of proficiency. Sabiha experienced a progressive decline in her speaking skills from Jordan to Islamabad to Global while Shahid reported improvement since he joined Global school about three years ago. However, he reported being anxious about his future studies because he perceived his English oral skills to be lacking. Osama, who has attended Global since KG, remained

dissatisfied with his speaking proficiency. Relatedly, during the interviews, Sabiha was relatively the most fluent in English followed by Osama. Shahid, however, spoke mostly in Urdu but switched to English occasionally.

However, in spite of some participants being relatively fluent in English than the others, all participants reported a sense of inadequacy and poor self-confidence about their oral skills. A typical response was: [OE] “Our proficiency is good in reading and writing English because we are doing it since childhood. We only cannot speak proper English” (Shahid, Int. 2). Although all the participants had experienced an improvement in their oral skills in the long term, instead of feeling confident about their accomplishment they were inclined to feel anxiety and a lack of confidence about their spoken skills in English. A related common concern among the participants related to speaking English with what they considered the proper English accent. All the participants felt that they knew the grammatical structures and lexical features of the language but were lacking what they considered the most important aspect of English, namely, a proper English accent. To illustrate, the following data report the participants’ findings of the development of the participants’ oral skills and under what circumstances they felt either anxious or self-confident about their oral skills.

In the case of Sabiha, she had attended four different schools before coming to Global—three in different provinces of Pakistan and one in Jordan. She believed that her speaking skills in English developed while her father was posted as a military officer in Jordan where she studied from Grades 2 to 7: [OE] “I’d say that I developed my English speaking when we went to Jordan. At first, it was really difficult for me to communicate in English as it was an English medium school” (Int. 2). The school had a total English immersion environment. For Sabiha, a key aspect of her schooling in Jordan was that although the teaching staff was

Jordanians they spoke English with a “native accent”: [OE] “You could not tell the difference whether they were native speakers or not. They had a very good command of English” (Int. 2).

In Jordan, she had the option to choose one of the three additional languages offered in the school: Arabic, French, and English. Sabiha observed, [OE] “I always chose English. My friends were mostly Arabs. They chose either Arabic or French. [...] But it was my dream to be a good speaker in English” (Int. 2). The five years she spent in Jordan could have been a crucial period for her to learn Arabic which is a culturally and religiously important language for the Muslims. However, she always chose English. Relatedly, her choice not to choose Arabic was also supported by her parents. She traced the development of her English-speaking proficiency from this point onwards as she reported, [OE] “when I tried to go more deep into learning to speak English, I started speaking English at home” (Int. 2). However, she remained concerned about her speaking skills ever since the family came back to Pakistan following her father’s retirement from the Pakistan armed forces.

#### Extract 5.31

[OE] But coming over here, I feel it’s falling down. I get stuck sometimes. I know what I want to say but it just doesn’t come out of my mouth. I’d say that’s terrible for me because I have always been fluent in English. (Sabiha, Int. 2)

Unlike Sabiha, Shahid reported improvement in his English-speaking skills over the last few years. He attributed his lack of speaking proficiency to the previous school environment he attended and to his shyness in social interaction that he was trying to overcome. He commented about participating in the interviews: [OE] “Now I am talking to you but back then I couldn’t even do this. I was very shy” (Int. 2). Previously, he was studying in another private school in the same area where they were encouraged to use Urdu for communication in the school. He commented, [OE] “My English-speaking skills are much stronger now. I try

all the time to be able to improve my English” (Int. 2). However, Shahid reported that although his speaking proficiency in English has considerably improved, he found it challenging to speak in certain contexts of interaction.

#### Extract 5.32

[TU] When I talk to my friends in English, I feel very easy because if I commit some mistakes it’s not a problem. However, if I am talking to a teacher then I feel a bit uncomfortable. If there is a ‘stranger’ in the school or when I speak with the principal or in the school assembly, and I am required to speak in English, then I feel uncomfortable. (Shahid, Int. 3)

In the case of Osama, he felt that his speaking skills in English have improved considerably over the years. However, like the other two participants, he reported having problems while trying to speak in the language. In retrospect, he recalled his initial experience of learning English at the primary level: [OE] “It was not a good experience because I was not used to the English [...] it was difficult to communicate with others. [...] Now I can speak it a little bit” (Int. 2). He stressed the importance of the development of language skills as a whole: [OE] “If you do not speak English so how will your vocabulary build up? So, if spoken English is weak, the vocabulary is also weak” (Int. 2). Osama seemed uncomfortable with the fact that he has consistently performed well in writing competitions in his school but had limited oral proficiency in English.

#### Extract 5.33

[OE] English is not like you will write and you will learn the tenses so you will learn to speak it. If you make an environment for yourself, an English environment, so you could learn English and speak it properly. [...] This school is not preparing us like we should have a good command of English because they are not giving us the opportunity to speak English. So that is the main [thing?]. (Osama, Int. 2)

Osama’s anxiety about his oral skills also appeared related to a speech disorder that made it difficult for him to speak fluently when he was anxious: [OE] “The difficulty is that I am also having a stammering problem and English is a new language for me and I can’t speak in the

flow. [...] So, I get confused with the new language” (Int. 2). Relatedly, he reported that he stammered less while speaking Pashtu or Urdu. [OE] “If I get used to English”, Osama said, “I will not be having a stammering problem like this” (Int. 2). He attributed his English-speaking anxiety to the fact that the school did not provide such an environment where he could comfortably exercise his oral skills. [OE] “If we are speaking English in our school, the students are laughing saying, [TP] are you the son of an *angrez*?” (Int. 2).

All the participants stressed that English language acquisition is not about being fluent only but, more importantly, to speak with the “correct” accent. However, their desire to acquire the “correct” English accent was not articulated in terms of a specific English accent. The participants considered English different from the other language they spoke (Pashto and Urdu) in the sense that speaking these languages was not considered to require acquiring specific accents; in English, it was considered crucial to have a good accent.

#### Extract 5.34

[OE] For English, it’s not only the language; it’s the accent you have. [...] I come across many people, well-educated people, who have a really good vocabulary and everything, but their accent is really bad and that’s what makes them look really weird. Not weird for me but people laugh at them because the accent is something really important. (Sabiha, Int. 2)

Whereas Sabiha traced the development of her “proper accent” to the time she spent in Jordan where her teachers were like “native speakers”, the other two participants had no such historical reference point. While Sabiha reported concern for her English-speaking accent in Pakistan, Osama and Shahid were struggling to develop a “good accent”. Osama noted: [OE] “English is not like you learn to read and write and you speak well. It is like having the proper way of speaking” (Int. 2). A common concern for the students was that they could not find role models for speaking English who spoke “proper English”. It is probably related to

this limitation in their environment that the participants followed their ideal English-speaking role models who were accessible online or through electronic media (Section 6.4).

#### 5.4. LEARNERS' RECEPTION OF THE COURSE CONTENTS

As mentioned earlier (Section 6.2.2), in Global the English teaching method focused on reading- and writing-based learning. In this context, the prescribed text contents for the English language class assume particular significance for the students as these are the main focus in their learning English in Global. The curriculum taught to O-level students in Global includes different genres including essays, factual accounts, and fictional narratives. This section focuses on the responses of the students to these genres. It also focuses on to what extent the participants' perception of the cultural aspects of the texts in the curriculum.

In all participant cases, the O-level curriculum contents were seen as part of the "western" education system which the participants contrasted with the traditional matric-based education system in Pakistan. The participant students seemed confident that the former education system was better as compared to the later.

##### Extract 5.35

[TU] The Cambridge education system is like this that we are affiliated with Cambridge and we are studying it over here in Pakistan. It's a western education and it's totally different from Pakistani education. Everything is different from them and the papers etc. are sent to Cambridge and checked over there. [...] The Pakistani system relies on rote learning and memorization while this system is based on creativity. (Shahid, Int. 1)

The prescribed course contents and recommended teaching methodology for the course are based on a situational approach to language teaching. Each unit is based on reading a short passage followed by comprehension questions and situational analysis of grammatical and lexical items (see Appendix 9). Oral communication in the target language is not a significant part of the prescribed syllabus. After discussing the contents and performing learning

activities in the classroom, the students are given homework to write a story or an essay as part of their preparation for the final exam.

Whereas two of the participants, Sabiha and Osama, preferred reading and writing fictional contents, Shahid preferred reading and writing passages that had more factual information. Relatedly, Sabiha found her English language course content till class eight more enjoyable as it included reading novels. However, Osama and Shahid found the present course contents preferable as they found it easy to attempt and considered it good for developing their creativity skills.

#### Extract 5.36

[TU] I'd say we are not reading like any novels and stuff. It's just essays and types of essays, stories etc. It's all like I would say we are studying grammar. Till class 8 we were studying the novels but in this class its only grammar and we write stories and composition. I'd say it's easy and it's more creative. (Shahid, Int. 3)

The students had recently studied two passages: "Shopping" and "The Chinese Money Lender" (Appendix 9). "Shopping" is an expository essay about the effects of extended shopping hours on people's lifestyles, while the "Chinese Money Lender" is a short fictional narrative about the foreign trip of a couple who are visiting their son. It narrates the experiences of the couple in the local market where the shopkeeper talks the husband into buying a miniature figurine of a Chinese money lender. Shahid preferred the expository essay on shopping: [TU] "I like 'Shopping' because we get more knowledge from [the passage]. The other lesson is just a story" (Int. 3). However, Sabiha and Osama had a different view, [OE] "Well, I found 'Shopping' rather boring", Sabiha observed. "It's a factual passage" (Int. 3). About "The Chinese Money Lender", she commented, [OE] "I believe in fairies and magic. I found it really interesting. [...] Me and my mother we are the ones in our family who believe in this sort of childish thing' (Int. 3). Likewise, Osama reported that he enjoyed

reading and writing stories. [OE] “I enjoy the story reading and writing”, he observed. “I have a lot of stories in my personal life, so I can write it easily. Essay reading is boring and writing it is a little bit difficult because it is not related to me and my life” (Int. 3).

The cultural aspects of the texts studied in the classroom appeared to remain unexplored during pedagogic activities. The school English language teaching policy and the teacher’s concomitant pedagogic approach seemed to treat English language learning as a value-free autonomous engagement focused on the acquisition of grammatical competence and comprehension skills for reading and writing in the target language. The student participants seemed to engage with the cultural meanings of the texts to the extent that the texts were seen as to a foreign western culture. The reasons for why the teacher did not consider it pertinent to engage with the cultural meanings of the texts will be reported later in this section after reporting the students’ perceptions.

When asked to reflect upon the cultural features of the texts and how they related to the participants’ social and cultural context, the participants seemed to view the cultural aspects of the text in a dichotomous way as related to “western” culture that is different from their own culture.

#### Extract 5.37

[OE] These things do not happen in our country. In foreign countries, it’s really common that family bonding is really weird. Parents and children are not much connected. As our course is mostly British, so I think that’s why these things are there. [In foreign countries] the children move to another house when they are 18 years old. [...] When sometimes my mother irritates me, I am like “let me turn 18 and I am moving out of your house”. My mother tells me if you turn 40, we would still be your parents and you would still our child. (Sabiha, Int. 3)

Sabiha seems to generalize from what she had studied about family life in the passage “Shopping”. Although the author names no specific country, Sabiha indicated that it was

about western countries because both parents were supposed to work and the family bond between children and parents did not seem strong to her—sociocultural features that she believed are common only in the western developed countries.

The situations represented in the passage—like the existence of supermarkets; the effects on family life if shopping hours were extended, and; mothers and students having to work in the supermarkets—seem to assume that western urban lifestyle is familiar to the target students. However, the participants' responses indicate that they found these sociocultural representations alien to their familiar ways of life given the fact that they lived in a developing country context in a remote region where they could not see these cultural features as part of their daily lives.

#### Extract 5.38

[TU] These things are common in western countries only. Here, our women do not work in the supermarket. We are Pashtuns. Secondly, a student cannot study and work at the same time. It would affect his health and studies. Here, students either study or leave their studies and work. (Osama, Int. 3)

Analogously, Shahid commented: [TU] “If women work in our society they work in their own houses. [The passage] is not relevant to our culture at all” (Int. 3).

Language teaching in Global is treated as a pragmatic activity to enable the students to pass their O- and A-level exams successfully. Discussing the cultural values and ideological messages are ostensibly not considered part of the professional practice of a teacher. The students reported that they had never considered the cultural aspects of the course contents before the interviews. Osama commented, [OE] “We were just willing to do our tasks [in the class]. We were also gaining information but the main aim was to do the learning tasks” (Int. 3). According to the participants, the teaching method in their class focused mainly on enabling the students to attempt the exercise questions effectively in the exam. According to

the teacher, the principal wanted him to prepare the students for taking their exam while focusing on cultural aspects and enabling students how to engage with the intercultural aspects of the texts would take too much of the classroom time. Relatedly, the principal that a significant function of the English classroom related to developing the students' English language skills that they could transfer from one subject to another and secure good marks in all subject areas.

In this section, data were reported related to how the students approached the course contents included in the curriculum and how they viewed the cultural aspects of the texts they read in the classroom. The following section reports data on the imagined places and communities that the participants wanted to have access to and for which they thought English was instrumental.

#### 5.5. **IDEALIZED PLACES AND PEOPLE IN LEARNING ENGLISH**

The previous sections in this chapter described how English is situated in the language hierarchy in the multilingual context of the participants, how English learning plays out in the different formal and informal social domains, and how the participants received the course contents. This section presents data that suggest that the students' language learning and their future education and career goals are associated with imagined places and communities in the developed west as their future destinations. They also associated the attraction of the English language with the appeal that famous English-speaking media celebrities had for them. The following lines report data findings in relation to the learners' motivation towards English learning and its association with imagined places and ideal speakers of English.

### 5.5.1. **Imagined communities in second language learning**

This section focuses on how the learners imagined future places, communities, and ways of life for themselves based on their English language competence at present and how they related these imagined futures with their motivation for language learning. Although not immediately accessible, these imagined communities and ways of life can play an important role in second language learners' investment in language learning. In the case of this group of participants, learning English was associated with imagined lives abroad, especially in the UK, as their destination for higher education and potentially for future employment. Significantly, none of the participants had visited a western country where English is the first language. In all cases, their imagined communities were L1 speakers of English. The participants imagined their future selves in interaction with L1 speakers in the UK. All the participants had close relatives living in the UK. Shahid, for instance, imagined living at his uncles' in Birmingham while studying for a postgraduate degree in business education.

#### Extract 5.39

[TU] I think that I may or may not be able to understand what those people will be talking about because their accent is very different. [OE] I have a cousin who can speak correct English. He is [in England] so he can now speak just like them. I will practice with him to strengthen my English and correct my accent. (Shahid, Int. 2)

Further, Shahid imagined that in the neighborhood at his uncles' majority of the people would not believe in Islam. He, therefore, thought that it would be important for him to perform Muslim religious practices regularly so that his religious beliefs are not affected while living in the UK.

Sabiha imagined a future community for herself in the UK where she wanted to study international relations or the law. Apart from an imagined community of future classmates who would be L1 speakers of English, she also imagined to meet some of her favorite media

celebrities in the UK: [OE] “I hope to move to the UK one day and meet my favorite stars especially the singers in One Direction (a teenage pop singing band)” (Int. 3). Sabiha imagined that the UK was a safe place for Muslims: [OE] “I personally prefer the UK to the US because America is like fighting wars and attacking other countries. In the UK, they do not disrespect our religion and they do not attack other countries” (Int. 2). Osama wanted to go to the UK to study medicine. He imagined that he would visit the University of Cambridge one day because their school is affiliated with it: [OE] “It will be a big university because it has so many schools all over the world. It will be quiet and green” (Int. 2).

In all cases, the participants felt that their investment in the English learning practices in Global will help them in moving abroad. For instance, Osama stated: [OE] “whichever school teaches you Cambridge education, it facilitates you to go abroad” (Int. 2). Securing good grades in their studies at Global seemed motivated by the future prospect of being able to easily get admission abroad. Shahid stated, [TU] “The role of this school is that it will facilitate me in shifting from here to the UK. When one gets good grades, one can shift easily there” (Int. 2).

Another aspect of the imagined communities of this group of students related to what they considered as poor sanitation and infrastructure in Pakistan. The attraction for the other is often also related to repulsion for one’s own. The participants considered two aspects of their present lives in stark contrast to what they imagined in their future communities. First, they considered the environment to be healthier and clean as compared to Pakistan.

#### Extract 5.40

[TU] Here [in Pakistan] there is a lot of dirt. In the UK and the US, it’s very clean. They take care of the environment. They also take good care of humans. [...] The cars and the road are also in very good condition over there. Their lifestyle and food everything is very good. (Shahid, Int. 2)

Second, the participants expected the educational institutions in the UK would be very caring about the needs and wellbeing of the students. The students felt under pressure because of excessive workload that they had to complete on a daily basis at school and at home. In spite of repeated complaints to the principal, reportedly no measure had been taken to address students' concerns about their health and wellbeing. They expected this situation to change when they have moved to the UK for further studies.

#### Extract 5.41

[OE] The students are not that much pressurized there. I am having some cousins in England. So, whenever I am asking them you are in which class so they are not giving me the confirmed answer. They are telling me that we are not having classes and exams. They enjoy their learning. (Osama, Int. 2)

To summarize, this section focused on how the students imagined the future communities that they wanted to associate with in the future and how they saw their investment in their present-day language learning activities in Global to facilitate them in reaching to their imagined destinations.

#### 5.5.2. **Ideal speakers in language learning**

This section relates to what the participants reported about their ideal L1 speakers and how that related to their investment in second language acquisition. Two of the participants, Sabiha and Shahid, reported in detail about their favorite show business celebrities as their ideal speakers of English. Sabiha commented that she had been inspired by Disney characters from her early childhood because she used to watch animated motion pictures produced by Disney and her mother used to buy her storybooks based on characters from these movies. However, more recently she has come to idealize a British teenage singing band.

#### Extract 5.42

[OE] Well, now my favorite band is “One Direction”. [...] It’s a British boy band. They sing teen-type songs like pop etc. They are really cute as well. There is this one guy Zain Malik. He is half Pakistani half British. I am really inspired from them and the way they speak in interviews etc. (Sabiha, Int. 2)

Sabiha particularly admired the English accent of her favorite member of the band Zain Malik. She also admired the band because they had apparently risen to a media celebrity status after having to live in poverty when it was difficult for them to make ends meet. [OE] “When some of them talk about their past, they start crying that we never thought we would reach to this position”, Sabiha reported (Int. 2).

However, cultural prohibition related to gendered identity in the Pashtun society seems to prohibit Sabiha from sharing with friends and family her enthusiastic admiration for these media celebrities. It is considered inappropriate in the local culture for an adolescent girl to express her admiration for a male celebrity. As Sabiha complained: [OE] “It’s really weird in my family to talk about Western singers because whenever I try to introduce them to someone, they would be like [TP] Oh! So you are into these sorts of things now?” (Int. 2). She had, therefore, stopped mentioning her favorite singers’ band in the family or in social gatherings. In her meta-analysis of the Pakistani culture, Sabiha seemed to locate such instances of restrictive gendered identity in broader cultural norms: “In Pakistan, I’d say there is still gender discrimination. Girls can’t speak up for themselves and do as they want” (Int. 2).

Idealized notions about his favorite English-speaking media figures also seemed to mediate Shahid’s investment in English learning. His English readings comprised of books related to formal aspects of language learning like learning rules of grammar. It, however, also included books that had been adopted into his favorite movies: [TU] “my readings include novels,

grammar books, and English vocabulary books. I also read the Hobbit, Lord of the Rings, etc. I have watched all Lord of the Rings movies” (Int. 3).

His favorite movie includes “Lord of the Rings”, a sequel of movies shot in New Zealand that depicts an imaginary world of magic and supernatural powers. Shahid also admires a Hollywood movie actor Paul Walker who was killed recently in a car accident. When Shahid was given a home assignment to write a letter to a local cable network, he chose to write about the acting career of Paul Walker. He also requested the network to play all movies in the series called “Fast and Furious” to commemorate the death anniversary of Paul Walker.

#### Extract 5.43

[TU] The letter was on the topic of ‘my favorite celebrity’. [...] I talked about Paul Walker and his recent death. I wrote to the cable director to commemorate his acting by playing all the movies from the ‘Fast and Furious’ series. (Shahid, Int. 3)

Shahid’s appeared to the situation his investment in popular media as a strategic tool for enhancing his English-speaking proficiency. His recommended list of activities and resources for someone who wants to enhance his/her English language proficiency seems to reflect that popular electronic media, especially English movies, are part of his toolkit for learning English: [OE] ”[Whoever wants to improve his/her English] he/she always has to speak English with anyone. He/she has to write, he has to listen to movies and videos. Read books, a lot of books; novels and stories, grammar books, vocabulary, etc.” (Int. 3).

While Sabiha and Shahid investment in English learning seemed mediated by their interest in popular electronic media and their favorite English-speaking celebrities, Osama showed little interest in the media. He, however, seemed inspired by the speaking accent and English-speaking fluency of his cousins who are living in the UK: Osama has two uncles and an aunty settled in the UK. His relatives in the UK and his peer group of cousins there seemed to

provide role models for him to achieve better proficiency in English speaking skills. [OE] “They speak correct English. It is hard for me to understand their accent. They were born and studied there so it is natural for them to speak like this” (Int. 2).

In sum, the participant learners’ investment in English learning in Global seems mediated by powerful global media images and the learners’ association of English with their favorite English-speaking media celebrities. However, the learners’ interest in these “non-traditional” resources for scaffolding their English learning is often disapproved in a social environment, whereas in the academic domain of the English classroom this interest mostly remains irrelevant.

#### 5.6. **SUMMARY**

The findings suggest that language learning in Global is complex in terms of the differential perception of languages and different social, economic, and cultural values assigned to different linguistic resources. The perception of Pashto, Urdu, and English in the social context of the learners is predicated on the hierarchical perception of languages that assign domain-specific roles to the multilingual resources of the learners. For instance, whereas Pashto has a strong integrative function to signal ethnic belonging in the social environment of the learners, English seems to lack cultural acceptance and is often associated with historical colonial occupation or with contemporary dominance of western ideologies and culture.

In the socio-academic domains of the learners, mismatch emerged between the language learners’ goals and the distribution of languages in academic, social, and domestic environments. This aspect of the data findings seems closely connected with language hierarchy in the linguistic ecology of the learners and with the learners’ socialization into this

hierarchy (Duff, 200, 2008; Kramsch, 2003). The academic environment of the classroom and the school, language policy, and practice are often predicated on an instrumental conception about English as an object that the learners need to acquire to secure good grades in their O-level exams, whereas in domestic and social environments English seems to be ostracized from social interaction for ideological reasons related to the perception of English as the language of cultural transmission for western ideologies. Relatedly, in cultural terms, lack of reflective engagement with the cultural contents in the textbook emerged as a key finding. Exploration of the cultural aspects of the contents taught in the class did not seem to be a part of the pedagogic practice in Global.

In all cases, the participants prioritized oral skills over literacy skills in English. They were highly motivated to learn English, a language they associated with better educational opportunities in the future and with an idealized conception of the developed western countries to which English provided access. However, although the students are better supported by their parents to learn English, their larger social circle does not seem very supportive in this regard. Relatedly, the participants showed a monolingual subtractive attitude towards English learning in that they wanted total English language immersion in the school while rejecting the role of their first language (Pashto) and the national lingua franca (Urdu) in learning a foreign language (English). Further, learning English grammar and composition skills appeared to be prioritized by the teacher while cultural contents of the textbook material were not used to encourage reflection and deeper engagements with the texts that often depicted western social environments.

In this sociocultural and academic context, the EFL learners in Global seemed to struggle to find resourceful ways to enhance their investment in English learning through online

networks and affiliation with famous English-speaking celebrities. The learners appeared to maneuver in terms of taking initiatives to enhance their access to English and to scaffold their investment in learning English. These findings contradict a widely shared local community perception about the Global school as an expensive education institution where students are fully immersed in the English communicative environment while succeeding in their O-level examination.

## 6. CHAPTER SIX: ENGLISH LEARNING IN UMMAH

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reported findings from the Global School focusing on the four main themes from the data related to the social perception of languages, language learning in different social domains, learners' reception of the linguistic and cultural contents of their course materials and imagined ideal destinations and speakers that learners associated with the English language. This chapter reports findings from the Ummah School, mirroring the themes of the previous chapter. As the two findings chapters are organized around the themes that emerged from the data gathered through semi-structured interviews and supplemented by field observations and researcher journal data, there is a significant similarity between the data findings from the two schools, allowing the two chapters to be organized in a comparative format.

The contexts, however, are distinct. Whereas the Global School is a high-resource private school located in the district capital region, Ummah is a low-resource private school that is situated in a congested suburban area surrounded by small businesses and retail shops. Located on the first floor of a rented commercial building, the school lacks facilities like spacious classrooms, proper lighting in the classrooms, computer classes for the students, and a proper library. The school charges a modest monthly fee that puts it in the category of low-fee private schools as discussed in Chapter Four (Section, 4.3.1). Ummah does not follow the O-level system. All the participant Grade 10 learners in this study are admitted into the traditional matriculation stream of education administered through the district education board in the area. In all cases, the learners were interviewed on the school premises either during the school hours or immediately afterward. All three participants perceived themselves

as proficient speakers of Pashto and Urdu while English oral proficiency was perceived as very poor. During the interviews, one learner predominantly spoke Urdu; the other two spoke mostly in Pashto. Whereas all the participants asked the researcher to speak in English, the use of English by the participants was very rare and mostly involved mixing English with the other two languages.

The following sections focus on reporting findings from the data with regard to the four thematic foci mentioned above. The findings reveal that English learning in the multilingual EFL context of Ummah relates in significant ways to institutional as well as social and domestic factors.

## 6.2. **PERCEPTION OF LANGUAGES**

This section focuses on findings in regard to the perception of the three major languages (Pashto, Urdu, and English) and its implications for the learners' investment in English learning. The data suggest that learners perceived English to have instrumental value in terms of career enhancement prospects in the future, global outwards movement, and access to higher education within the country and abroad. Significantly, the learners also appeared to see English as ideologically important for promoting a good image of Pashtun Muslims in the wake of the international "War on Terror" and its association of Pashtuns with extremist tendencies. Although English was reported to have significant prestige value in the local culture, it was reported as non-functional in social interaction. Whereas Urdu was found to be academically relevant and socially functional in communicative events, the role of Pashto appeared to be downplayed in academic and literacy-oriented domains whereas it was highlighted in social interaction and family life to signal Pashtun ethnic identity and familial bonding. The following sections illustrate the findings with the help of extracts from the data.

### 6.2.1. **Perception of English**

For this group of learners learning English was associated with gaining social prestige on the one hand and with safeguarding their religious and ethnic identity on the other. Regarding the first point, English was seen as a dominant language in the multilingual context of the learners that was highly sought after. English was considered instrumental for challenging socioeconomic class differences and was seen to symbolize cultural sophistication in social interaction. However, the learners also critically evaluated the dominance of English and sometimes challenged its dominant social position. Regarding the second point, Ummah participants desired to learn English for ideological purposes to project a better image of the Muslims and enhance the ethnic identity of Pashtuns as peaceful progressive people. The 9/11 attacks in New York City and the ensuing war on terror were perceived important factors that blemished Pashtun Muslims' identity internationally, whereas English was perceived as crucial to redress this issue and promote a better image of the Pashtuns. However, as will become clearer below, in spite of the socially accepted dominant position of English, all the participants complained of a lack of social acceptance for speaking English outside the classroom was perceived as a significant challenge for developing their speaking proficiency. To elaborate the above points, the following lines report findings that highlight the social perception of English in the learners' social context and how their investment in English is affected by these social factors.

At the local level, the language learners consistently reported the social perception of English as a prestigious language that can enhance the social standing of its speakers. The need for learning English was often projected as a social and academic reality that was widely acknowledged in the community, mostly irrespective of whether one was involved in formal language learning or not.

### Extract 6.1

[TU] The role of English is everywhere. Everyone wants to learn English. There are even people who have not spent a day in school but they try to speak English and they want to learn it. [OE] No other language but English. [...] Whoever can speak English, their value increases. [TU] Everyone gives importance to what that person says because they think he would also be intelligent. (Haris, Int. 3)

Haris then gave examples of people he knew who were not formally educated but were trying to learn English using their circle of friends on the social media accessed through mobile phones. Further, whereas overall, the participants reported that proficiency in the English language offered social benefits and its speakers were considered intelligent, English was also socially associated with being knowledgeable and well informed. For instance, Samina reported, [TP] “One looks very good if they are able to speak in English. People say that this person is very knowledgeable” (Int. 2). Further, being able to speak English well was seen to impose reception on the listeners as English speakers were given more importance. As Haris explained, [TU] “You might be very intelligent, but nobody cares. But if you speak English well, others pay attention that this person must have something important to say” (Int. 2).

Socially acknowledged significance of the English language described above was associated with the participant learners’ language learning goals in the academic environment of the school. Numair, for instance, recalled when he was a primary school student:

### Extract 6.2

[TU] When I was in the primary classes, we used to hear other senior students in the school speak English and Urdu. We thought they were very intelligent. [...] Whenever we used to hear two people talk in English, we wished that we were able to speak like them. (Numair, Int. 2)

In the sociocultural context of the learners the dominant position of English is socially embedded in its cultural value and the material benefits that English can offer, the participant learners complained about the limited social circulation of the English language as a major

obstacle for them to practice their oral skills. Whereas the cultural and material aspects of English are socially recognized, the English language has little integrative function in the social domains. In this conflictual linguistic landscape, the learners reported ambivalence about the role of English for social integration in the local community context. Samina, for example, analyzed the situation as:

#### Extract 6.3

[TP] If one wants to stay in Pakistan, English is not that necessary but even then if one knows English well, it is good. Wherever you live, the kind of people you live with you will have to live like them. Here people speak Pashto or Urdu. No one speaks English. If everyone spoke English here, then it would have been necessary for us to be to speak English here. (Samina, Int. 2)

Limited social participation in social interaction in the English language in the local community was consistently reported as a motivating factor to plan for moving abroad in the future. English-dominant countries were expected to be different where the learners hoped English would be socially integrated, providing an advantageous supportive for speaking English.

#### Extract 6.4

[TU] There is no significant role of English here so that you may speak English with other people while abroad you will have to speak English whether you can speak it well or not. You will have no other way to survive there. That's why you can learn it there but not here. (Haris, Int. 2)

Mismatch between the learners' language learning goals and lack of a social environment to practice their oral skills was a significant factor for the learners. Samina, for instance, exclaimed: [TP] "*Kaash* (would that) they spoke [English] here [in the local community] then we would also have learned it with them" (Int. 2). In all cases, the lack of social integration of English in their social world was considered against the role of English as the language that could open up present and future possibilities for the learners.

#### Extract 6.5

[TP] If I know English, I will be able to understand everything. Then everything would be a lot easier for us. Without English, nothing is possible. We will not be able to understand anything. Today, everything is in English. If we do not understand English, what would we do? (Numair, Int. 2)

The following lines focus on how English was assigned an ideological function for propagating a better image of the Pashtun Muslims in order to counterbalance negative stereotypical perceptions about Pashtuns among the western nations. On the whole, the participant learners disagreed with a negative characterization of the Pashtuns that was thought to have developed in the wake of the international “War on Terror”.

#### Extract 6.6

[TU] English is very important for Pashtuns. It is essential so that we may tell the rest of the world that we are intelligent and good people. It is important that we tell the world that we are as good as they are otherwise they spread false information about us and we will not be able to do anything about it. (Haris, Int. 2)

Worldwide extensive permeation of English as a global lingua franca was perceived to be a useful vehicle for Pashtun to infuse their perspective in the narratives associated with the global efforts against religious radicalization. English was also perceived as useful to push back against unjust international power structures in which Muslims were perceived as marginalized. English was thus seen to have instrumental and ideological value for the Muslims to convey their point of view internationally and enable them to participate in globally circulating discourses about the Muslims’ involvement in religiously motivated radicalization and how Pashtuns and Muslims are often positioned in these narratives.

#### Extract 6.7

[TP] For Muslims, the English language is very important. They cannot tell others what they want to say except through English. If we are very competent in English, we can fight for our rights and express ourselves without any hesitation. If there are atrocities committed against Muslims, we can raise voice against that. (Numair, Int. 2)

Apart from highlighting the perception of English as a vehicle language to promote a positive image of the Pashtuns and the Muslims at the international level, some learners also saw a similar local function for English to redress certain stereotypical views about the Pashtuns in Pakistan. Whereas internationally the Muslims and the Pashtuns were seen as marginalized and stereotyped in western countries, domestically the Pashtuns were reported as downgraded by certain other ethnic groups. Samina and Haris stressed that Pashtuns were stereotypically perceived as non-literate who could not speak English properly.

#### Extract 6.8

[TU] I think that the Pashtuns are very good people but in Pakistan one value is given to Pashtuns and another to other ethnic groups. If Pashtuns learn English, they can change this situation. Pashtuns mostly remain deprived of educational opportunities. They cannot tell others [in Pakistan] that they are Pashtuns because no one gives any importance to a Pashtun. They tell others that they are Punjabis or from some other ethnic group. (Haris, Int. 2)

Domestically, English was thus seen to have an aspect of a power struggle as proficiency in English was seen to distinguish Pashtuns from other ethnic groups and give them an advantage in the ethnic ecology of the country. Stereotypical views about Pashtuns as poor speakers of English appear echoed in Samina's views. She seemed to endorse a negative evaluation of the Pashtuns by other ethnic people in Pakistan, establishing a link between English proficiency of Pashtun as an ethnic group and their intelligence level vis-à-vis other ethnic people in Pakistan.

#### Extract 6.9

[TP] I think the Pashtuns are very weak in English. These other people from other ethnic groups are better and more intelligent than we are. Our children first do not want to study. They pass 12 to 15 in school years, but they do not realize whether English is important for us. [...] Pashtuns can never speak English well. Even if highly educated, you could always tell when a Pashtun speaks English. (Samina, Int. 2)

After reporting findings of the perception of English and how the learners saw instrumental, integrative, and ideological roles for English in academic and non-academic domains, the following section focuses on findings related to the perception of the two other major languages, Pashto and Urdu.

#### 6.2.2. **Perception of Pashto and Urdu**

The learners linked the two local languages, Pashto and Urdu, with matters of identity, belonging, and social integration. While Pashto was foregrounded as the common language of communication in their home environments and society, its academic relevance was downgraded. As the major first language in the region, the learners saw Pashto well embedded in oral communication in their environment that was thought to provide many opportunities for practicing their oral skills. They, however, seem to perceive little need for its use in academic domains. Pashto was perceived to have no literacy function in the present and future academic purview of the learners and was considered irrelevant in terms of job prospects and international communication etc. Urdu, on the other hand, was perceived as the most important language after English that had some instrumental value for academic success and a significant integrative function as the national lingua franca of Pakistan.

As will become clearer below, the learners seemed to perceive a linguistic hierarchy in their multilingual environment. In this hierarchy, Pashto appeared as the least desired language and its use at school was recommended to be actively discouraged while Urdu was considered second in importance to English as a useful language for scaffolding learners' understanding of their English textbooks and for promoting national integration among different ethnic groups in Pakistan as a national lingua franca. The following lines illustrate the above aspects of language perception regarding Pashto and Urdu languages.

Overall, the learners perceived Pashto as a barrier to their achieving better speaking proficiency in English and Urdu. The widespread social permeability of Pashto in the local context was perceived to ensure that Pashto would remain functional in non-academic domains. However, in the academic domains, Pashto was considered redundant. Numair, for instance, seemed ambivalent about the academic importance of Urdu. However, for Pashto, he saw no role inside the school: [TP] “We like English more than Urdu but we like Urdu as well. As far as Pashto is concerned, when [the students] go out of the school, Pashto is everywhere” (Int. 2). Analogously, Samina seemed to perceive a hierarchy of languages in which English was the most desired while Pashto was the least desired language in the school.

#### Extract 6.10

[TP] We wish that Urdu was used more in the class. We know Pashto anyway. Our Urdu and English are not strong. We should speak English all the time. Urdu is comparatively easy but English is difficult. Therefore, we should use it all the time. (Samina, Int. 2)

Although the Ummah School formal language policy dictated that Urdu must be spoken on the school premises and that the students could incur a fine for speaking in their mother tongue (Pashto) in the school, all the three participant learners and their English subject teacher emphasized that, in practice, these rules were not strictly implemented.

#### Extract 6.11

[TU] Practically, there is little restriction on speaking Pashto over here. In good schools, the rules are very strict about speaking in Pashto or even Urdu. They only allow the students to speak in English and some in Urdu as well, but not in Pashto. That is why other school students are stronger than us in English are. (Haris, Int. 2)

As the participant learners reported limited opportunities to practice English oral skills outside the school due to its limited social circulation and restricted cultural acceptability in the community (Section 6.2.2), they considered it important that Pashto should be strictly

ostracized from the school to create a safe space for practicing speaking English and Urdu. However, in observed language practices outside the classroom in the school, Pashto was the most dominant language on the school premises. While teachers sometimes followed the formal language policy of the school and spoke Urdu, the students predominantly spoke Pashto to interact among themselves and with their teachers.

Regarding regulating the use of Pashto on the school premises, the English subject teacher expressed similar views as the participant learners. He recommended strictly restricting the use of Pashto to create more space for practicing English. The teacher viewed occasional use of Pashto useful in the classroom to facilitate English content learning. However, outside the classroom, he recommended a complete formal restriction over the use of Pashto.

#### Extract 6.12

[TP] Inside the class, my effort is to sometimes use Pashto in order to facilitate the learning of English but outside the class in the school, there must be complete restriction on the use of Pashto or Urdu. For example, during the break time, everyone should speak English only. (Mazahir, Int. 1)

However, the teacher's observed use of languages in the classroom was found different. Urdu was consistently used to translate the lesson contents sentence by sentence while the use of Pashto for instructional purposes was very rare. It was used mostly to respond to the learners' questions after the class lecture had finished.

Although at the conceptual level, the participant learners as a whole accentuated Pashto as dysfunctional in their academic lives; at the practical level, they seemed to contradict these views. Pashto was reported to have a role in facilitating instruction in the English classroom and was considered helpful in expressing ideas in other languages (English and Urdu). However, these functions of Pashto seemed non-systematic and were not part of any formal school language policy or language teaching method. Samina, for instance, reported, [TP]

“When I do not know a word in English, I use Pashto or Urdu word in a sentence” (Int. 2).

Similarly, Haris described the relevance of Pashto to facilitate English language learning.

#### Extract 6.13

[TU] We find [a lesson] very easy to understand in Pashto because there are always certain words in the lesson which we cannot understand in English. When [the teacher] explains in Pashto and then reads in English, we already understand what he is talking about. There are students who do not like the lesson in English or in Urdu. However, when it is translated into Pashto, they like it very much. [...] Therefore, either before or after reading the lesson, there must be Pashto translation. (Haris, Int. 3)

In terms of literacy in their mother tongue, all the participant learners considered themselves as non-literate except Haris. He reported, [TU] “I can read Urdu very easily but for Pashto, I have to put greater efforts to read” (Int. 3). The fact that, in spite of being their first language, none of the participants considered themselves as literate in Pashto was attributed to the educational divide in the country where private schools very rarely taught the local indigenous languages.

#### Extract 6.14

[TP] We have never seen Pashto books. Pashto is not there in the school. We never wrote it either. It is taught only in government schools. There are no private schools [in the KP province] where Pashto is taught. We have never been taught Pashto, so I do not know [the written form of] the language. We have only Urdu and English books. (Samina, Int. 2)

The learners differently viewed not being able to read and write their mother tongue. Samina and Numair reported having no significant reaction to this aspect of their language literacy. Samina, for instance, said, [TP] “There are no significant feelings. I am more desirous to learn English. Pashto is not important that much, English and Urdu are” (Int. 2). Haris, on the other hand, felt sorry about this situation:

## Extract 6.15

[TU] Occasionally, I think about it that other languages are spoken in the world but nobody understands or likes Pashto except Pashtuns. Yes, I do think about these things but then I also think that Pashto cannot give us anything. Even if one could write Pashto, others cannot understand it. It only helps if we can speak and understand it. I think it has no importance. (Haris, Int. 3)

To summarize, this section reported findings from the data bearing upon the participant learners' perception of Pashto and Urdu languages. While on the whole, the learners perceived Pashto socially functional but academically dysfunctional, they found it useful when L1 (Pashto) was used to clarify course contents in the English subject classroom and when they mixed Pashto words in oral communication to maintain their English fluency. However, institutional policing of Pashto was considered useful by the learners and their English subject teacher for promoting the oral practice in the English language. Urdu, on the other hand, was perceived to have academic value and was considered second in importance to English. Its academic and interactive functions in the school were foregrounded and improving speaking proficiency in Urdu appeared as a shared aspiration among the learners.

### 6.3. **ENGLISH LEARNING IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS**

The following section reports data regarding the participant learners' perception and experiences of learning English in various social domains like the classroom, school, and home environments and how language learning is facilitated or constrained in these domains. The last part of this section specifically accentuates to what extent English oral proficiency of the participants is supported in the above social domains. The section reports themes in the data that are relevant for understanding foreign language learning as a socially embedded activity that takes place under social, ideological, and economic factors that permeate across a range of social domains. The section thus expands a socio-cultural understanding of language learning elaborated in the previous section and reports data

findings to accentuate the linguistic and social aspects of English learning in the domains of the classroom, school, and domestic environment of the learners.

#### 6.3.1. **Classroom**

This section presents data findings related to the participant learners' perception of experiences of language learning in the English subject classroom and how the learners related classroom activities to their wider goals in terms of learning English. On the whole, the learners perceived a disjuncture between language instruction in the classroom and their speaking skills development goals. While the participants admired the teaching method of Mazahir, their English subject teacher, and foregrounded its role in the development of their interest in learning English, they also reported insignificant improvement in their speaking skills in English although he has been teaching them for the last several years. While the learners idealized the English-speaking skills of their teacher, they could not see themselves achieving that level of proficiency in the future. Relatedly, observed teaching practice in the classroom showed the low occurrence of students' active involvement for content and language learning. Whereas the teaching method was teacher-dominated and textbook-based, the literal translation of the lesson contents into Urdu remained the main instructional method. A few students would read and translate the lesson after the teacher had finished the lesson for the day; there were no group or pair work activities to involve the students in meaningful communicative use of the target language. Further, the students had little opportunities to participate orally in the classroom. The questions put to them in the class to check their comprehension level were mostly "closed" ones that required brief responses, mostly "yes" or "no". The following lines present findings from the data related to these aspects of learning in the English classroom in Ummah.

The participant learners described a typical classroom to include translating the contents into Urdu sentence by sentence and, if the learners still had difficulty in understanding the content, occasionally, Pashto was used to translate a lesson. The process would be repeated two or three times. Explanation of the contextual meaning of key lexical items by the teacher was reported as a regular practice when the students scribed the meanings in Urdu between the lines of the text in their textbooks or in the margins of the pages. The participants considered this part of their classroom activity the most useful for developing their English language proficiency. The lecture ended with “smooth reading” when the teacher would read the lesson once more but without translating it into Urdu. The students’ comprehension was checked by the teacher by asking them whether they had any questions. The class ended with a few students getting up in turn and reading the lesson while translating it into Urdu. Haris described a typical English subject classroom:

#### Extract 6.16

[TU] First, he reads the lesson and translates it into Urdu. If we cannot understand in Urdu, he translates it into Pashto. When he has read the lesson this way once or twice, then he tells us the meanings of difficult words and we write them down. After this, he does the smooth reading. Then he asks whether we have understood everything. We ask him any questions we might have. Then students get up one by one and read the lesson while translating it into Urdu. (Haris, Int. 1)

During the classroom observations, the teaching practice as described by the learners was observed repeatedly consistently. Comprised of a small rather stuffy room in which small wooden chairs for the 27 students could hardly fit in, the classroom is located in a corner of the school having little air ventilation (Appendix 12). With one ceiling fan and a single energy saver light bulb, the students had to cope both with the scarcity of light and of fresh air in the room. Facing the teacher, the students sat in five rows on closely packed chairs with writing boards on the right side of each chair. The teacher mostly stood behind the wooden lectern placed in one corner of the room. The students’ chairs were closely placed, leaving no

room for the teacher to move between the chairs in the class. The teacher used the whiteboard only on Fridays, which was reserved for studying rules of English grammar.

At the beginning of the class, the teacher would say *bismillah* (I begin in the name of Allah), a common Muslim ritual observed before starting any activity. It was followed by “pre-reading” when the teacher would explain the objectives of the class and the main ideas of the lesson. Next, the teacher would read three to four paragraphs along with Urdu translation, occasionally using Pashto at the end of paragraphs to provide a brief summary. After reading and translating the lesson two or three times, the teacher explained “difficult words” and did “smooth reading” of the lesson. Students were then asked to volunteer to read the text and translate it into Urdu. Students did not study the grammatical aspects of the lesson in the class as only Fridays were reserved for grammar. On Fridays, the students wrote down grammar rules for constructing sentences in different tenses and conversions of active and passive sentences, etc. Focusing mainly on grammatical forms rather than their communicative function, the grammar lessons were not integrated with the curriculum contents studied in the class during the rest of the week. The grammar lessons consisted of translation exercises consisting of stand-alone sentences to practice an aspect of English grammar such as tenses (see Appendix 9).

Overall, the participant learners agreed that Mazahir’s teaching method was helpful for them to improve their English language proficiency in general, to understand grammar, build vocabulary, and learn grammatical tenses. Typically, the learners acknowledged that because of Mazahir they developed a positive attitude towards learning English and started to ask questions about different aspects of language use in their daily lives outside the school because he encouraged them to observe the use of English in their social context outside the

school. However, the learners' awareness of their teachers' positive contribution towards their English learning seemed to sit uncomfortably with their awareness of a lack of oral proficiency in English.

#### Extract 6.17

[TP] We used to wish that we were able to speak English like others. Mazahir came and taught us tenses twice. We came to understand the construction of sentences. He encouraged us to ask questions. Before he came, even if we wrote an English word in our notebooks we were not interested to memorize its meaning. After his arrival, we started that because we were interested. We have learned a lot from him but still, we cannot speak English. (Numair, Int. 2)

Similarly, Samina acknowledged the positive contribution of the teacher towards developing her English language skills. [TP] "Before he came to this school a few years ago", she recalled, "there was no one to help us in English. Because of Mazahir *sahib* we learned the tenses a bit better" (Int. 1). Analogously, Haris emphasized the role of their English teacher in connecting the social environment outside the school with their English classroom by encouraging his students to observe English use in the society and ask him any questions they had. [TU] "He told us to write anything we see in the society outside and ask him in the school [...] He teaches very well and leaves no room for us not to understand the lesson" (Haris, Int. 1).

The learners as a whole seemed to idealize the English oral skills of their teacher. [TP] "His teaching method is so *Khkwali* (beautiful). [...] I want to be able to speak like Mazahir" Samina commented. "He speaks it very well and uses it for interaction with the students" (Int. 1). However, the observed teaching practice showed little use of English for authentic communication with the students in the classroom. While the use of English mostly remained limited to textbook reading, interaction with the students was predominantly in Urdu and occasionally in Pashto. While the participant learners liked the teaching method of Mazahir

and acknowledged his role in developing their interest in learning English, in all cases they were also aware that they could not speak English, both inside and outside the class; that classroom instruction did not prepare them for spontaneous interaction in the target language.

Although they accentuated their lack of oral proficiency, the learners seemed ambivalent about how to improve their speaking skills. Samina commented:

#### Extract 6.18

[TP] Learning tenses will definitely improve our English skills but to speak English it is not just tenses that are important. Many factors are involved. If we keep trying, to speak whether it is correct English or not, maybe it will improve our English. (Samina, Int. 1)

Numair and Haris thought that it might be useful for them if I took a few classes with them regarding how to improve their English proficiency. [TP] “It would be nice if you could take just a 30 minutes class with us in after-school hours”, Numair said. “No Pashto in that class. The students may talk *gadi waday* (nonsense) but only in English” (Int. 2). Similarly, Haris said, [TU] “Sir *ji*<sup>16</sup>, if you could tell us about any ways and means to improve our English it would be very good. How should English be taught?” (Int. 3).

Elaborating his teaching beliefs and practice, the English teacher indicated that he strategically used English in the classroom to model English speaking for his students. The teacher reported struggling with his limited proficiency in English as he tried to role model English speaking for his students. Further, he reported drawing on the three languages (English, Urdu, and Pashto) according to their instructional utility to facilitate language and content learning. He appreciated the role of L1 (Pashto) in facilitating learning English. However, he reported using Urdu in the classroom to conform to institutional demands in terms of the school language policy.

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<sup>16</sup> A common Pashto and Urdu form of address to index respect for the interlocutor.

#### Extract 6.19

[TP] Although my English is not that good I try to speak it in front of the students so that they are encouraged and they develop a love for this language. There are times when I cannot say something “smoothly” in English then I use Urdu. If I cannot say it in Urdu, I switch over to Pashto. [...] in my teaching method, I try to use English for things like asking students why they were absent, to get up and read a lesson, to stand up or sit down, etc. It is an “aimly” (purposeful) activity on my part so that the students get the message that our teacher wants us to use English. I first read the text in English then I tell its “meaning” in Urdu because it is in our syllabus that when you teach a lesson you should translate it into Urdu. Then I tell them in *sra Pukhto* (pure Pashto) what is the meaning of the paragraphs we studied. Because Pashto is their mother tongue, they can understand anything well in this language. I would say that if we impose a restriction on students not to speak Pashto but speak only in English, they could not learn English. However, if we develop a method in which we facilitate the students in Pashto how to learn English, how to speak it, how to pronounce it, and we tell them how to say something in Pashto and then in English, it will facilitate their learning of English. (Mazahir, Int. 1)

The teacher reported that the school did not have a teacher-training program to build teachers’ professional capacity. [TP] “It is all [OE] experimental [TP] here. I, for example, developed my teaching method by asking senior English teachers in other schools and by following the example of my teachers when I was a student” (Int. 1). The classes, therefore, did not have a coordinated teaching methodology to facilitate the students.

A significant aspect of the classroom in Ummah related to the students having little oral practice while the students’ involvement in language and content learning was mostly focused on memorizing exercises copied into their notebooks at home. Reading in the classroom and writing at home were the dominant methods of content and language learning. Further, exercise questions in the textbook were not based on checking the students’ ability to use critical thinking but relied on questions that could be answered by copying parts of the lesson to answer the questions Numair reported:

#### Extract 6.20

[TU] Mazahir sahib asks us to buy the notes from the market. When we have finished a lesson, he asks us to write answers to the comprehension questions from the notes. We memorize these answers for the annual exam. [...] I think it is a good method. in lower

classes, Mazahir sahib used to write answers, etc. on the blackboard. Now we have grown up and we should not write from the blackboard but from the notes on our own. (Numair, Int. 2)

The participant learners and their English teacher considered this approach to language and content learning sufficient to prepare the learners for taking the high-stakes annual exam. It was also a usual practice that the answers copied from the notes were not discussed in the class regularly. [TP] “We discuss the answers with the teacher only when there is a difficult answer”, Numair indicated (Int. 2). To prepare for the exam, the English classroom mainly focused on expanding the lexical resources of the students and enabling them to reproduce from their memory answers to the exercise questions and grammar rules.

To summarize, this section reported findings from the data related to English language and content learning in the classroom in Ummah. The data revealed pedagogic practice in the classroom to be teacher dominated, textbook-based, and reliant on a literal translation of the lesson content mainly using Urdu as the translating language. In spite of low learning outcomes in terms of insufficient level of students’ oral proficiency in English, students were not actively engaged in the classroom practice and there was little use of English for authentic communication in the classroom. The following section highlights the significance of the school environment and how the learner participants perceived the role of Ummah School in supporting learners in their language learning goals.

### 6.3.2. **School**

In Ummah, the relative significance and use of different languages for instructional purposes and for general communication in the school emerged as a significant consideration for the school administration, the students, and the teachers. Data revealed Urdu as the dominant language at the school policy level while at the micro level Pashto was predominantly used by the students and the teachers. The participant learners desired English to be a functional

language in the school as they were concerned about the lack of opportunities to interact with teachers and fellow students in English. The learners wanted to change the school environment to better integrate English language into formal teaching and informal communication in the school. They needed a safe environment at school where they could exercise their language oral skills without the fear of fellow students making fun of them if they made any mistake. The following lines illustrate the above aspects of the linguistic landscape of Ummah School and accentuate the participant learners' views about how to make the school a safer and encouraging space for English learning.

In all cases, the learners reported that the Ummah School environment was not conducive for them to achieve their desired speaking proficiency in English because the school policy favored the use of Urdu while English remained non-functional on the school premises. [TP] “The use of English is very low in this school. The director wants students to learn Urdu. He takes no interest in English”, Numair reported (Int. 2). Similarly, Haris reported that the director perceived English to have already a significant functional role in the school because most of the textbooks are in English. [TU] “The director encourages speaking Urdu in the school. He thinks English subjects and science books are already in English so students can learn English anyway. He says Urdu is important because it is our national language” (Int. 2).

During fieldwork, I usually met the director in his office located near the main entrance of the school. Mostly students and sometimes parents would come into the office. A tall middle-aged man in his late forties with a closely trimmed beard, Idress (pseudonym) was always wearing *shalwar kamees*, the traditional Pashtun dress. In his office, he spoke to the students most in Pashto and sometimes in Urdu while with the parents and with me he always spoke

Pashto. In his dealings with the students, he always friendly but rather strict in terms of what was allowed or not allowed in the school.

Whereas the symbolic value of Urdu as the national language of Pakistan is broadly recognized in the country and its broad permeation in the local social context of Ummah can be observed through its dominant use in commercial and non-commercial signage in the area (Appendix 11), the projection of Urdu as the officially endorsed language of communication in Ummah did not seem to sit well with the student participants' desire to improve their speaking skills in English. They wanted English to be the dominant language on the school premises so they can have more opportunities to practice their English oral skills for authentic communication in the school. However, while the school officially endorsed the use of Urdu as the language of communication on the school premises and students would be fined for speaking Pashto, there was no clearly articulated school policy regarding the use of English in the school. Samina observed:

#### Extract 6.21

[TP] The director punishes with a fine those who do not speak Urdu or who speak Pashto. I and my friend Hanzish like to speak English. We speak it among ourselves in the classroom. If we cannot express ourselves in English, then we use Urdu or Pashto words. [...] We do not understand English because it is not spoken in the school. Urdu is spoken mostly by the teachers, Pashtu by the students. (Samina, Int. 2)

In this educational context, it is not uncommon for private schools to have a macro-level policy to restrict the use of indigenous language(s) in the school. In fact, usually prestigious private schools are preferred by parents and students because of their strict implementation of a monolingual English policy in the school. However, in the case of Ummah, the data revealed an interesting tension related to how the macro-level Urdu-oriented policy of the director was resisted by the students at the micro-level.

#### Extract 6.22

[TP] He insists that Urdu should be spoken and fines students for not speaking Urdu or for speaking Pashto in the school. However, the director cannot keep this practice up for more than 10 to 15 days maximum. He can punish the students but then they start speaking Pashto again. (Numair, Int. 3)

Further, the learners did not seem to support the language policy of the school because Urdu was already available in their sociocultural context; they preferred English to be promoted. However, in the school, English remained dysfunctional in daily communication while its use as the medium of instruction was limited to the English subject class only.

#### Extract 6.23

[TU] Urdu is easy. I can speak it easily. In English, I have many difficulties. [...] in the English class, we use English quite a bit. However, in [science] classes, English is not used; Pashto is used. As far as this school is concerned, there is not many roles of the English language here. (Haris, Int. 2)

I now turn to measures proposed by the participant learners to facilitate English learning at school through creating an environment in which English is functional in routine communication in the school. In all cases, the learners considered it essential to make English more accessible in the school by advocating its use for informal chitchat instead of keeping it as a stiff formal language reserved for instructional purposes only. Further, whereas they proposed strict language, policing measures to regulate the use of any other language except English in the school; they saw some utility for retaining the use of Urdu while the use of Pashto was considered counterproductive for learning English.

#### Extract 6.24.

[TU] If I had control of this school, I would ask all the teachers to teach their subjects in English. [...] If the students could not understand in English, then Urdu or even Pashto can be used. However, once the lesson is over, jokes, conversation everything must be in English. This way the students get used to the use of English. We should not leave Urdu behind either but it is already quite dominant in the school. I would make sure that in the break time, which is about 25 min, everyone spoke Urdu. If anyone used Pashto, they

must be fined. The rest of the time, it would be English in the school throughout the day. (Numair, Int. 3)

Samina expressed similar views: [TP] “I will make sure that everyone speaks English in the school. [...] Pashto is not important that much. English and Urdu are important” (Int. 3).

In all cases, the participants indicated that face-saving was a significant factor in the students’ reluctance to speak English. The fear of other students making fun of their English pronunciation or syntactical errors seemed a significant hurdle to the learners. They wanted to make the school an encouraging space where learners should not be afraid of the other students’ discouragement.

#### Extract 6.25

[TU] If we want children to understand and speak English, we should do something which will make English like a play for them. Then they can learn English better [...] If they say something incorrect in English, others should not laugh at them. It is very difficult in this school to speak English when others make fun of the way you speak. (Haris, Int. 3)

To summarize, this section focused on the participant learners’ perception of English language use in Ummah School; how they evaluated the relative roles of the three languages (Pashto, Urdu, and English) on the school premises; and how the director’s efforts to promote Urdu as the dominant communicative language was resisted by the learners. While the symbolic role of Urdu as the language of national integration was acknowledged by the learner, Pashto was assigned no functional role in academic and non-academic interactions in the school. Significantly, punishing students with a fine for using Pashto in the school was approved of by the director as well as the learners.

#### 6.3.3. **English at home**

This section reports findings related to the relevance of the home environments of the learners to their language learning goals. The Ummah students perceived the role of the

family environment as an important factor in their language learning. Lack of English-speaking role models in the family was a significant challenge for most of the participant learners. The English subject teacher considered it a significant weakness in the social environment of the learners that their parents and family members were not actively involved in supporting the learners. While most of the parents provided passive support by encouraging their children to focus on their studies and did require them to participate in domestic activities, they could not provide active support because of having limited proficiency in English. The following lines elaborate aspects of the data pertaining to the role of family environment in language learning.

Whereas two of the participants, Numair and Haris, reported challenging environments at home where English was completely dysfunctional, Samina reported a supportive environment as her parents and older siblings took an active interest in her language learning and general education.

#### Extract 6.26

[TU] We might have learned English if attention had been paid to us in the school and at home. [...] I receive no help at home. My parents are not educated. My brothers are younger than I am. No one asks me what I did at school and how much homework I have been assigned. Whatever I do for my studies, I have to do it on my own. (Numair, Int. 1)

As mentioned in Chapter Four (Section, 4.4.2), Numair's father sells second-hand tires in the nearby city and is mostly away from home. His mother had to leave school after completing her primary education. Though English remained completely dysfunctional in his family environment, Numair reported Urdu was functional at the oral level: [TP] "My mother is not educated but she can speak Urdu as she learned it from watching dramas on the TV" (Int. 3).

Haris reported a similar family situation where he felt solely responsible for propelling his educational career and language learning, whereas his father has been working as a taxi

driver in the Middle East for many years, his older brother left school at the secondary level and has been working at a local mechanic shop. He described his mother as uneducated who could not help him with any aspect of his schooling.

Extract 6.27

[TU] My parents are not educated. My older brother works in a mechanic shop. [...] They want me to be an educated person, a moral person, but no one asks me about my school or homework. I do everything on my own. (Haris, Int. 1)

Their English subject teacher also complained that the students did not have supportive environment at home to encourage their language learning.

Extract 6.28

[TP] School and home are like the two wheels of a bicycle. Our efforts in the school cannot be fruitful when the second wheel is missing. One major shortcoming is that [the students] do not have a proper environment at home. Their parents do not take an interest in their studies and almost never come to the school. (Mazahir, Int. 1)

Unlike Numair and Haris, Samina reported a supportive environment at home where she was encouraged to speak English, make mistakes in this language, and ask questions about the lexical and syntactical aspects of English.

Extract 6.29

[TP] My older brother is a college student and my sister is in university. However, my brother is a genius. He can speak very good English. I want to learn from him. I spend time with him. I speak wrong English but still, I do speak it while he speaks correct English. (Samina, Int. 1)

Samina's parents are educated who take an active interest in her studies. Her mother is a homemaker while her father works as a laboratory technician in a local government hospital.

[TP] "When my father is at home, especially on the weekends, he checks my progress in studies and asks me what new English words I have learned" (Int. 3).

To summarize, the data in this section show that the participant learners and their teacher stressed the importance of a supportive home environment for language learning and educational achievement. The data, however, also suggests that linguistic resources are differentially distributed in the domestic environments of the students. Consequently, some students felt better facilitated in terms of language learning and education in general.

#### 6.3.4. **English oral skills**

This section focuses on aspects of the data from Ummah pertaining to what challenges the learners reported in relation to their speaking proficiency. The learners consistently accentuated the significance of and challenges in developing their speaking ability as compared to literacy skills in English. They faced challenges in fulfilling this goal. On the one hand, the learners described uneven development in their English proficiency language skills as they perceived their literacy skills were more developed as compared to their oral skills. On the other hand, they reported their oral proficiency varied from one communicative context to another. Whereas in formal situations they felt more anxious, in an informal talk in English with their close friends they reported more confidence. They reported struggle against the social prohibition on speaking English in different domains related to discouragement and ridicule by their audience. The participants found their academic, social, and domestic environments restrictive where English remained a dysfunctional language offering them little opportunities to practice speaking and develop confidence in their oral proficiency. The following lines elaborate on these findings from Ummah and illustrate it through excerpts from the data.

In all cases, the learners prioritized English-speaking skills over developing their literacy skills. They also considered oral proficiency more difficult as compared to reading and writing skills. Samina, for instance, pointed out: [TP] “I can read, write, and understand

spoken English but speaking it is the main problem” (Int. 1). Overall, the learners articulated a deficient perception of themselves as speakers of English constraining them from speaking English including during the interviews for this study although all of them requested that the interview questions be asked in English. For example, in spite of indicating communicative competence in English, Haris did not consider himself a good speaker of English.

#### Extract 6.30

[TU] When I try to speak English, I face a lot of difficulties. I tell myself that if I were a good speaker of English I would have been proud of myself. [...] When I speak English, it is not very good but I can speak that much to be able to tell others what I want to say. (Haris, Int. 3)

Significantly, although their teacher described the participant learners as high achievers in terms of their grades in the exam score, there were no instances in-classroom observation when they used English for authentic communication. Their English subject teacher indicated that a major reason for the students’ reluctance to practice speaking English has to do with the social prohibition on speaking English and their fear of being ridiculed by fellow students.

#### Extract 6.31

[TP] There are students who have a great love for English but they have this fear in their hearts that if they say something incorrect others would laugh at them. That is the greatest fear. [...] I used to ask them whether an Englishman could speak Pashto well. Therefore, I would tell them that they were better than they were because they (the students) could speak English at least to some extent. (Mazahir, Int. 1)

The learners indicated that their speaking proficiency in English varied in different social domains usually in relation to how relaxed and confident they felt in a given situation. Whereas Numair reported no situations in which he could feel more relaxed speaking English, Samina and Haris pointed out some examples of such circumstances. Samina, for instance, found it puzzling that she could speak English quite freely with her close friend

Hanzish at school and with her brother and sister at home but found herself hesitant to speak English with her English subject teacher although she perceived him to be a very gentle and friendly person.

#### Extract 6.32

[TP] I have improved to some extent; I used to be so scared of speaking [English]. I have a bit more confidence now. If I don't know a particular word in English, I can use Pashto or Urdu word. If my grammar is not accurate I don't care that much when I speak with my friend or my brother. However, when I try to speak to our teacher in English, I get so nervous that I begin to tremble and my heart feels strange. In Urdu and Pashto, it is OK. (Samina, Int. 3)

To summarize, this section reported findings in relation to the distribution of multilingual resources of the learners in formal academic and informal socio-domestic domains. The findings indicate that English learning in the multilingual social and academic contexts of the learners is mediated by linguistic tensions that have to do with pedagogic practice and school language policy not being in line with the language learning expectations and future goals of the learners. Relatedly, English in social and home environments seems predicated, on the one hand, on the socioeconomic status of the learners and poor educational background of the parents and, on the other, on negative social attitudes towards English that position English as a culturally alien language. In terms of family environment, unlike the other two participant learners, Samina seems to have better scaffolding from her parents and siblings to support her investment in English learning.

#### 6.4. LEARNERS' RECEPTION OF THE COURSE CONTENT

As mentioned earlier, Ummah school English classroom seemed teacher dominated and textbook-centered. In the absence of other learning resources in the classroom, textbook provides the focal point as learning material for the students. This section reports findings from the data related to the students' approaches to the lessons included in the English subject textbook as the participants considered the texts as a language learning resource, as

moral texts, and as a resource of cultural, social, and historical information. The section also reports what textual genres were identified by the students among the lessons included in the textbook and how they articulated their preference for certain genres. As will become clearer below, in most cases the learners articulated their evaluation of the textbook material in terms of their relative significance for Muslims as moral texts or in terms of informational value. Less frequently, the texts were perceived as a source of pleasure or preferred because of its aesthetic value. In all cases, the learners did not foreground the linguistic features of the texts.

Overall, the participant learners perceived the textbook lessons as infused with moral and ideological projects to inculcate in the students' social awareness and characteristics of good citizenship.

#### Extract 6.33

[TP] All of these lessons are important. Population explosion, for example, tells us about this important issue. People who are not aware of population explosion they do not understand how population explosion happens and how it can be controlled. All of these lessons are meant for our awareness. (Numair, Int. 3)

Along with identifying the social and citizenship functions of the texts, the learners seemed to put a premium on the importance of these lessons as moral texts. A common theme across the participant learners related to the moral function of the texts concerned with the learners' sense of identification with a worldwide Muslim community.

#### Extract 6.34

[TP] These stories about Arab culture are related to us because they are related to Muslims. It tells us how a king should behave. How a country can progress and the people in it can be happy. We are told how Muslims used to live in the era of Islamic progress many centuries ago. "After Twenty Years"<sup>17</sup> is also related to us because a Muslim is someone who keeps his promise. (Samina, Int. 3)

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<sup>17</sup> A short story by O'Henry.

Further, a number of moral values were identified that the learners found embedded in the text for which they found the texts appealing. Haris, for instance, enumerated a few moral precepts that he found as significant aspects of the two lessons he liked.

#### Extract 6.35

[TU] After Twenty Years tells us about the value of friendship and keeping promises. [OE] I think the Caliph and the Gardener is the most important one for me. This lesson gives me an idea of honesty. This caliph was very honest and he worked very honestly and hard work. [TU] If we act upon [the message in the lesson], we can progress in our lives and we can also benefit other people. (Haris, Int. 3)

Significantly, the English language learning function of the texts seemed overshadowed by the social and moral functions of the texts as perceived by the students. The learners seemed to pay little attention to the formal aspects of the language used in the texts. Possibly, because of segregated classroom instruction as the students were either taught textbook contents (Monday to Thursday) or were given discrete lessons in English grammar (on Fridays) that were not related to the textbook lessons, the learners did not focus on the linguistic aspect of the text. Relatedly, their English subject teacher was puzzled why two texts, a poem, and a short story, were included in the textbook when they apparently had no moral lesson for the students.

#### Extract 6.36

[TP] Well, in Stopping by Woods<sup>18</sup> there is a person who says that he is in the jungle and that he needs to go and get to his destination. Therefore, I could not think of anything that the students might take away from the poem. Similarly, in After Twenty Years, there are two friends and one is required to the Chicago police. Therefore, I could not see what is there in the lesson for the students. (Mazahir, Int. 1)

Overall, participant learners found it significant that the lessons in their present grades were different from lessons in junior classes in terms of the lesson's focus on preparing the learners for the future. Samina, for example, stated: [TP] "The Two Bargains tells us that one

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<sup>18</sup> A lyrical poem by Robert Frost.

must not be greedy as the Jew is shown in the story. [...] All these moral lessons are important for my future” (Int. 3). Analogously, Haris considered the “author” of the textbook intelligent because he found moral lessons in the book that prepared learners for the future.

#### Extract 6.37

Whatever we studied up to class 7 or 8 was just about the present time. Now, these lessons are telling us how things should be in the future. What should and should not be done is clarified in the lessons. [...] I find the writer of this book quite intelligent. He makes such lessons in English which can benefit us in the future. (Haris, Int. 3)

While all the participant learners accentuated the moral and social function of the lessons as their key features, Samina also valued the aesthetic aspects of the lessons and the pleasure she derived from studying a lesson. For instance, she liked “Old Woman”<sup>19</sup> because it sensitized her to the “hidden beauty” of aged people. Similarly, she derived pleasure from studying a travelogue in the classroom that described the valley where she comes from.

#### Extract 6.38

[TP] It is all about our valley. It shows the beauty of this place. When you read this lesson, you feel that we can see all this in actual life. In the lesson, they are going on a tour. It feels like it is our journey. As if we are taking this journey. (Samina, Int. 3).

To summarize, this section reported findings related to the participant learners’ reception of the curriculum content they studied in the class. While textbook materials provided the main learning resource in the classroom, the learners articulated its function in terms of the moral and social messages they perceived embedded in the text while the linguistic aspects of the text mostly remained unrecognized. In all cases, the learners considered English textbooks as a moral text that prepared them for their careers and personal lives in the future. Less

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<sup>19</sup> A poem by Joseph Campbell.

frequently, texts were liked because of aesthetic value and the pleasure derived from reading the text.

## 6.5. **IDEALIZED PLACES AND PEOPLE IN LEARNING ENGLISH**

In the previous sections, this chapter reported findings from Ummah in relation to a differential perception of the multilingual resources of the learners, how language learning situated in different formal and informal domains, and the learners' perception about the textbook contents prescribed for the English subject classroom. This last section in the chapter adds to this data by reporting how the learners associated imagined destinations with learning English. It also focuses on the attraction that the English language has for the learners because of its perceived association with famous media figures from the developed countries as ideal speakers of English. The section illustrates that the learners accentuated the instrumental role of English as a mediating language for international mobility transnational communication. Relatedly, while English was consistently associated with developed countries in the west, learning English was also seen as an exit strategy to escape poor socioeconomic and educational future prospects the learners perceived in Pakistan.

### 6.5.1. **Imagined communities and learning English**

For the participant learners, English seemed to symbolize developed social infrastructure, better educational opportunities, a clean environment, and social justice often articulated in relation to English-dominant developed countries in the global north. Relatedly, English was considered instrumental for education abroad and international employability and was viewed as a medium of communication with an imagined global audience accessible only through English. The symbolic salience of English was often articulated in a utopic conception of the developed countries whereas English was perceived to have a gatekeeping function to access these countries.

#### Extract 6.39

[TP] I like America, Turkey, England, New Zealand, and Australia. The environment there is very clean. [OE] Everything is so *khkwali* [beautiful]. They give so much importance to talent. [TP] I want to be a doctor in the future and have a job there. [...] English is important to live in any country abroad. In Turkey, English is used. It is everywhere in Australia. [...] If I cannot speak English, how would I tell them if I needed something? (Samina, Int. 2)

None of the participants had traveled abroad and had very limited traveling experience within their country. English was considered an enabling language that made it possible for the learners to choose different future destinations than the ones traditionally chosen by people in the area. Both Numair and Haris, for instance, wanted to avoid working in the Middle East in the future where most of their relatives work on low-paying jobs.

#### Extract 6.40

[TU] I do not want to go to Saudi Arabia or the UAE in the future where most of the people go from Pakistan. [OE] I like to go to an English-speaking country like New Zealand. [OE] There the use of English is *pura* [complete], as we speak Pashto here. (Numair, Int. 3)

Similarly, Haris wanted to move to England for higher studies in order to avoid working in the Middle East where his father works as a taxi driver. Haris articulated a romanticized conception of England where English is “strong” and the country has an idyllic environment.

#### Extract 6.41

[OE] I like England because there English is so strong. [...] I cannot see England pictures and England country but this is my thinking that England is a green country and the people are friendly. In addition, England is so small, not a big country. (Haris, Int. 2)

In all cases, the learners associated English with access to societies where they expected a more conducive social environment and a better-developed infrastructure in contradistinction to Pakistan. [TP] “They are good people as compared to people here in Pakistan”, Samina stated, for instance, [TP] “There everything is in proper order. Here in Pakistan, there is usually one problem or another”. (Samina, Int. 2). Similarly, Numair commented:

#### Extract 6.42

[TP] I have this picture in my mind that the environment over there [in New Zealand] would be friendly and peaceful. Everyone would mind his or her own business. It will not be like Pakistan. Here people fight with one another. (Numair, Int. 2)

Significantly, the law and order situation in the region remains precarious especially since the rise of militant religious groups in the region since 2008 who accepted responsibility for the destruction of 120 girls' schools and 80 boys' schools in the area (Khan, 2012). As mentioned in Chapter Four (Section, 4.3), a government high school was destroyed by the extremist militants, situated less than a Kilometer to the south of Ummah. At the time of fieldwork for this research, the school had been recently rebuilt after a military operation in the region pushed extremist groups out of the area. In 2014, extremists attacked a military-run school in the capital city of Peshawar resulting in several casualties (see Roberts, 2017). Random attacks on educational institutions have continued to date.

Numair and Haris emphasized social justice and less socioeconomic disparity as key aspects of the "English speaking countries". English was considered as an enabling language that only facilitated access to these socioeconomic systems. In this regard, Pakistan was considered as ranking lower in comparison with some Muslim countries.

#### Extract 6.43

[TU] The difference between the poor and the rich would not be that much in Europe as in Pakistan. Even in Muslim countries such as Dubai, the poor and the rich are treated the same by the law. However, in Pakistan, it is different. (Haris, Int. 2).

In summary, this section reported findings related to the perception of English as an enabling language lubricating international mobility, access to conducive socio-economic systems, and a clean environment. The learners imagined ideal social settings in the developed west accessible through English that was considered in contradistinction to Pakistan. In all cases, the attraction of unfamiliar foreign lands was expressed in terms of the learners' desire to

escape the indigenous social context that was perceived underdeveloped and marked by a lack of social justice and unstable law and order conditions.

#### 6.5.2. **Ideal speakers in language learning**

As the previous section illustrated, the participant learners seem to consider English the language of academic opportunities, personal empowerment, and global travel. However, apart from weighing the utilitarian aspects of English learning, most of the participant learners also reported having purposefully invested time in developing a sense of affiliation with ideal speakers of English. The learners used the internet on their computers and mobile phones ostensibly to transcend the physical limitations of their social environment where they could not hope to meet any foreigners especially after the rise of radical extremist groups in the area. Sense of affiliation with the ideal English speaker that the learners wanted to cultivate was seen as instrumental for vetting the motivation of the learners to aspire speaking like their ideal speakers. However, as the following lines illustrate, the learners also seemed to firmly believe that, as speakers of English as a second language, they could only aspire but never speak like their ideal speakers of English.

Two of the participant learners, Samina and Haris, reported purposefully developing a sense of affiliation with their ideal speakers of English. In the case of Samina, these were teenage singers and anchors of popular international variety shows. Through satellite TV channels, computers, and mobile phones, she watches and listens to her favorite media figures although mostly unable to understand what they said.

#### Extract 6.44

[OE] They speak English directly. One cannot understand what they say but it's so *khwalay* [beautiful]. [TP] I wish that I were able to speak like that. [...] I listen to them attentively. Sometimes I understand what they say sometimes I do not. They speak so fast. They speak it very differently. One cannot understand it properly. Their English is

different. No matter how well a Pakistan may learn English but they cannot speak like that. (Samina, Int. 2)

Samina thought that the difference in accent between her favorite media figures and someone who speaks English as a second language was related to English being their first language. This accounted for L1 speakers' oral language being so appealing to her. [TP] "They speak it from childhood", she commented. "It feels good to listen to them. It is like eating chocolate" (Int. 3). She gave some examples of her favorite speakers of English: [TP] "America's Got Talent judges speak English very well", she said. "There are so many others like Taylor Swift, Justin Bieber, and Selena Gomez" (Int. 3).

While Samina found her ideal speakers' English speech aesthetically appealing, Haris seemed to associate it with "intelligence". Online social media provided the main resource for him to access online communities where "intelligent" speakers of English could be found and where he could learn about what was happening in the world.

#### Extract 6.45

[TU] I started using Facebook in class 8 to "set" my English and to be able to speak English well. I was also using Facebook in order to know what is happening in the world and which countries are beautiful and good for getting an education. [...] Later, I could also talk through voice call [on Facebook] and to this day, this practice continues. There are people on Facebook who are very intelligent in English but they are not online that much. The ones who use Facebook a lot are usually people who are not that intelligent in English. One can find intelligent English people but they are not available for more than 5 to 10 minutes. (Int. 3)

Although Haris aspired to enhance his English-speaking proficiency through developing his circle of Facebook friends who were good speakers of English, he did not seem to prioritize speaking English the way people from the English-dominant countries did. Rather, the functional utility of the English language was foregrounded as the yardstick for measuring proficiency in English.

#### Extract 6.46

[TU] It is not necessary that we speak like them. [...] I am talking about England and Australia—English countries where English is spoken. It is not necessary to speak like them but whatever thing you want to talk about you should be able to say it in English. [OE] You should not forget words that what is used for this particular thing in English. This much is essential. (Haris, Int. 3)

Unlike the two other participant learners, Numair did not report having any English language ideal speakers besides his English subject teacher. He reported limited access to information technologies like the internet and mobile phone while at home he watched Urdu TV channels and dramas.

#### Extract 6.47

[TP] My father thinks that mobile is not good for young people. I don't like it either. I do not have a mobile or a laptop so I have not heard much about English speaking in other countries. [...] At home, I watch Urdu dramas mostly with my mother. She studied up to the primary level only but she learned to speak Urdu from watching dramas on the TV. (Numair, Int. 3)

To summarize, this section focused on findings from Ummah data in relation to the participant learners' perception of imagined foreign destinations and their ideal speakers of English. The data suggest that the learners' conception of ideal places associated with English nourished their motivation for learning English as an enabling language that makes access to these imagined destinations possible. Relatedly, for most of the learners, a sense of affinity with ideal speakers of English, accessible through information technologies and the internet seemed to propel their aspiration to improve their oral proficiency in English. Some of the learners, however, also stressed that it was not necessary for the second language learners to achieve native speaker proficiency in English or adopt their speaking accent(s).

## 6.6. SUMMARY

This chapter has focused on findings from the Ummah data concerning the themes emerging from the data. In relation to the research questions explored in this study, the findings suggest

that Ummah learner participants face more challenges in scaffolding their investment in English learning as compared to the Global learner participants. There appear to be several common factors between the two school cases in terms of sociocultural factors negatively affecting their investment in learning English. For instance, similar findings were found among the two groups of learners in terms of their experience of asymmetrical access to different languages (Pashto, Urdu, and English) based on the hierarchical social perception of languages and negative social attitudes towards English. Further, English was found to be socially non-functional and learners seemed to struggle to find opportunities to practice spoken skills in English; the primary focus of their investment in English learning.

There were, however, important differences as well between the two groups of learners. The learners perceived the official policy of Ummah to promote the use of Urdu in the school as counterproductive to their language learning goals. Mediated by ideologies of linguistic nationalism, Urdu appeared to be promoted as a linguistic symbol of Pakistani national unity in spite of the participant learners' strong desire to practice English-speaking skills at school. Relatedly, although the learners admire their English teacher, his pedagogic practice was perceived as not in line with the students' agenda to learn how to speak English in real-life situations in a spontaneous interaction. Learners also seemed to struggle with scaffolding their interest in English learning because of a lack of support at home and the poor educational background of the parents. Samina, however, was better supported in her language learning. Her parents' educational level and socioeconomic status are different from the two other participants. The family's domestic language policy encouraged multilingual exchange for academic and informal purposes and siblings could freely employ their trilingual repertoire in daily interaction at home. The following chapter discusses key themes

emerging from the findings reported in chapters 5 and 6 and analyzes them to seek answers to the research questions the current thesis set out to explore.

## 7. CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

### 7.1. INTRODUCTION

This research study has explored the learning of English as a Foreign Language in the context of two private schools in Pakistan in relation to the sociocultural and academic environments of the learners. The multilingual context of the study was explored in terms of the learners' perception of their trilingual resources (Pashto, Urdu, and English) and how these resources were acknowledged in academic and non-academic domains. To this end, Chapters 5 and 6 presented findings from the data gathered in the two school contexts. Interviews and observational data revealed social, academic, and personal factors interacting in the two EFL contexts, suggesting that sociocultural factors are implicated in the learners' investment in English learning. The learners reported different perceptions about the socio-educational status and roles of the three languages - Pashto, Urdu, and English.

First, whereas multiple factors were reported to influence how the learners perceived their trilingual resources, a major factor related to the social attitudes and dominant ways of thinking about different languages in the domains of the language classrooms, the schools, and the learners' home environments. A hierarchical perception of the trilingual resources of the learners emerged as a significant factor influencing opportunities available to learners to practice their English spoken skills. Second, the data suggest that in most cases the participant learners struggled in institutional and domestic spaces against beliefs and practices that they did not consider conducive for their English language skills development. Third, textbook materials in the two school contexts were differentially received by the learners in terms of the cultural appropriation. Fourth, the learners' investment in English

learning seemed predicated on their interest in popular international media figures with whom they felt a sense of affiliation through English as a common language.

The discussion in this chapter draws on thematic analysis of the qualitative data as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2014). As discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (Section 3.6.3), the thematic analysis approach adopted in this study is based on a six-stage analysis, from familiarization with the data to write this research report. Set within an ethnographic methodology, this study draws on data gathered through extensive fieldwork, providing data from multiple sources such as interviews, observations, fieldnotes, artifacts, and documents. The discussion draws on these different sources of data to triangulate information and enrich the analytical description. A key aspect of the ethnographic approach in this study relates to a reflexive approach to data analysis to capitalize upon my positioning as an insider researcher.

In the following sections, this chapter first summarizes key findings from the data in relation to the four research questions this study set out to explore. In subsequent sections, these findings are discussed in relation to language learning in a multilingual social context and the effect of hierarchical perceptions of linguistic resources on EFL learning. The analysis aims to abstract key theoretical understandings from the data in relation to EFL learning in the two school contexts and situates the data in the existing body of relevant literature. The chapter discusses the participant learners' investment in English learning in relation to their interaction with the textbook material and their preference towards English as an enabling language to help them fulfill imagined future aspirations. The last section in the chapter focuses on how English is situated as a form of capital in the social context of the learners and how learners negotiate identity positions as learners and users of the English language.

## 7.2. LANGUAGE ECOLOGY AS METAPHOR

The following discussion employs *language ecology* as an overarching metaphor to capture a broad view of English learning in the multilingual context of this study. In the context of the following discussion, the ecology metaphor is meant to promote four tenets: a) language learning is not linear and predictable but emerges in a social setting and is contingent upon linguistic, cultural, and social factors interacting in the environment; b) affordances in the environment for language learners are, therefore, significant in learning EFL; c) as education processes are mediated through language(s), the study of availability of languages in educational contexts is important; d) language learning experience is not independent but contingent upon contextual history and subjectivity (i.e., learners' sense of self and their ways of relating to the world of the learners and may, therefore, be conflictual (Weedon, 1987, p. 32). These tenets underpin discussion in the following sections.

## 7.3. PERCEPTION OF MULTILINGUAL RESOURCES

This section summarizes the data from both school contexts in terms of the first research question, namely: *What are the research participants' perceptions about their trilingual (Pashto, Urdu, and English) resources?* Perceptual data is important as, on the one hand, the learners' perceptions of their linguistic resources help in understanding significant aspects of the sociolinguistic context of language learning and, on the other, it helps to put in perspective their attitudes towards language acquisition (Dewaele, 2011; Kramsch, Claire, 2009). Further, language perceptions mediate the functional, integrative, and cultural roles assigned to each language in a multilingual context that reveal linguistic and cultural frictions in a multilingual society (Hornberger, 2002; Kramsch, Claire & Whiteside, 2008). The data from both schools revealed that the learners had complex perceptions about English and the

two local languages (Pashto and Urdu) with points of alignment and misalignment between their perceptions and the dominant social perceptions about these languages.

### **Global**

In terms of language perception, the Global learner participants' views appeared significantly similar to one another. In the experience of these learners, the English language appeared to have a paradoxical position in the language ecology of their social context. Proficiency in English was valued for pragmatic reasons such as to project a high social status, access to better educational opportunities and preparation to get into well-paying jobs. Further, it was also seen as a global language that could facilitate getting higher education in the West and help the learners settle into foreign cultures. The participants appeared to endorse these practical aspects of the social perception of English that, according to the learners, contributed to making English a dominant language in the local context. Thus, in terms of prestige value and instrumental function, English was seen at the top of the language hierarchy followed by Urdu and Pashto, respectively.

The Global participant learners also experienced negative social attitudes towards English as a language of cultural dominance. From this perspective, English was mostly seen as the language of the *angreزان*, a Pashto word that literally translates into "British/English people" but can have several connotative meanings in the local culture, both positive and negative. For instance, English is often seen as the language of the *angreزان* who occupied India in a cunning way to undermine the Muslim culture. The older generation seemed to endorse this perception strongly. However, this view was also reported to be shared more widely in society. Secondly, when speaking English in the social world outside the school, being called *angrez* (singular form of *angreزان*) could position the speaker as a westernized person

alienated from local Muslim and Pashtun cultural norms—a cultural and linguistic outsider (Morita, 2004). However, in a positive sense, being called *angrez* indexed sophistication and intelligence, positioning the speaker at a higher social status. The first two negative connotations of *angrezan* have wider circulation in the learners’ social context than the positive one, often resulting in restricting social permeation of the English language in this social context and the availability of English as a socially functional language (Manan et al., 2015; 2017). Thus, in contradistinction to the pragmatic status of English where it appeared to be the most desired language to access lucrative jobs or to project a high social status, the cultural status of English seemed to position it at the bottom of the language hierarchy (Blommaert, Collins, & Slembrouck, 2005).

English was not, however, the only language that appeared to have a paradoxical and often conflictual position in the language hierarchy in this social context. Perceptions about Pashto also exhibit conflictual dimensions as, on the one hand, Pashto was valued for affirming ethnic identity and familial affiliation (being the dominant home language) while, on the other, it was considered inconsequential in the academic environment, both for oral communication and in terms of Pashto literacy development. Whereas English was valued for present and future purposes as the language that could facilitate access to all the “desirable goodies” (Lin & Martin, 2005, p. 3), Pashto was seen to have no transactional and instrumental value in the academic and career-oriented pursuits of the learners. It echoes findings from Khan (2014) who found that Pashto in the northern region of Pakistan might be experiencing “language shift” because secondary school learners in his study consistently assigned Pashto (their first language) to non-literate domains and sometimes reported feeling ashamed of speaking it. In the present study, none of the participants had studied Pashto as an academic subject in their entire school career. Although all the learners are literate in Urdu

(written in the same Arabic script as Pashto with slightly different orthographic conventions), they believed they were not literate in Pashto. This suggests that the participants' perception of their lack of literacy in Pashto is most probably related to the fact that Pashto is non-functional in its literal form in this academic context.

Urdu, however, appeared to have a middle position between English and Pashto in terms of its instrumental function and cultural value. Although English was considered the most powerful language to access economic and academic opportunities nationally and internationally, Urdu literacy was also considered important for future education and employment purposes in metropolitan centers of the country. Further, its symbolic value as the lingua franca in Pakistan appeared to position Urdu more firmly than Pashto as an important literate language. Urdu was also reported to have wider social acceptability as a cultural and symbolic resource as compared to English that was often positioned as a carrier of western culture and considered an outsider language. These findings are partly consistent with Tamim (2014) who suggests that indigenous languages in Pakistan have been pushed to the margins, leaving "Urdu and English as the two languages contesting social and educational space", leading to a "symbolic violence" against the weaker languages (p. 113). In the context of the present study, although English and Urdu seem powerful languages in the educational space, in the social space Pashto seems to have a significant role as a linguistic marker of ethnic identity and familial belonging.

Echoing Manan et al.'s (2017) study of undergraduate students' language perceptions in Pakistan, mismatches emerged in the Global School data between students' orientation towards English oral skills development and negative social perceptions about English in their social environment. Whereas Pashto is widely available as a functional means of

communication, the learners seemed to struggle to find “safe spaces” (Canagarajah, 2011; 2013) where they could practice their oral skills in English. Relatedly, in contradistinction to the social perception about the English language seen as a legacy of the ex-colonial rulers of Pakistan or as a cultural threat, the learners appeared to see English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) that belonged to whoever speaks it. These findings relate to what Norton (2015) and Kramsch (2012) point out that the needs and self-perception of EFL/ESL learners have shifted over the last few decades and that the traditional binary of native vs. non-native speakers of English is undermined as learners assert legitimacy as speakers of a global lingua franca.

In all cases, the learners perceived uneven development of their English language skills; their reading and writing were perceived as relatively more developed than their oral skills. Although all the learners had experienced an improvement in their oral skills in the long term, they reported feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt while speaking English. Significantly, speaking English with a proper accent appeared as a main concern for the students. However, it was not clearly articulated which English accent the learners were referring to. These findings echo research studies focusing on a pervasive presence of “native-speakerism” in the ELT industry around the globe and its negative sociopolitical implications (Holliday, 2006) and studies that emphasize that “ideal native speaker” models in English pedagogy perpetuates beliefs of being deficient speakers among multilingual EFL learners (Blackledge & Creese, 2014; Erling & Bartlett, 2006). Further, whereas the learners felt more confident about their English oral skills while talking in informal contexts to their friends and family, in formal contexts they felt less confident.

After summarizing findings from the Global data, the following section briefly summarizes findings from Ummah in relation to perceptions of their multilingual resources. Additionally,

the following section also focuses on points of alignment and misalignment between data findings from the two schools with regard to the first research question in this study.

## **Ummah**

In terms of similarities between the two schools relating to the perception of languages, like the Global learners, the Ummah learners foregrounded the instrumental and educational value of English. However, although English was seen as the most sought-after language in this context due to its material, academic, career-oriented, and prestige value, it lacked functional value in the learners' socio-academic context and was usually positioned as an alien language. All participant learners wished that English were more widely distributed which could facilitate their acquisition of speaking skills in the language. However, unlike Global where learners reported predominantly negative social perception of *angrezan* as a major challenge for their speaking skills development in social contexts, Ummah students seemed to accentuate a socio-psychological aspect of English language use in social contexts in terms of fear of public shaming; speaking English in social settings was related to risking public humiliation. Learners felt the need to prescribe to the dominant medium of communication (Pashto and Urdu) to save face (Creese & Blackledge, 2010) and stay in their comfort zone ((Hülmbauer, Böhringer, & Seidlhofer, 2008).

Like Global participant students, English was desired partly due to its global permeation as an international lingua franca that allowed accessing global networks of education and employment. However, unlike Global participants, English was also perceived to potentially play an ideological function in terms of facilitating the image of the Pashtun Muslims as peace-loving people. The ideological function of English was deemed significant to counter what the learners perceived as a misrepresentation in the developed western societies about

the Muslims in general and about the Pashtuns in particular. Discourses that informed this misrepresentation were seen to link religious affiliation and ethnic background with extremist ideologies and terrorist tendencies. Representation of Pashtuns in these discourses was perceived to be articulated through stereotypes in popular media and other forms of communication with widespread circulation, positioning the Pashtuns as uneducated and unable to communicate in English. Countering these discourses appeared as a significant aspect of the learners' investment in English learning. Relatedly, within Pakistan, Pashtuns were perceived as a marginalized group who needed to assert their sociopolitical position through gaining access to elite circles in the military, bureaucracy, and civil service where English performs a gatekeeping function (Shamim, 2008; Waseem & Asadullah, 2013).

In terms of perceptions of the indigenous languages, Pashto and Urdu, significant overlap emerged between the views of the two school participants. Similar to Global, Pashto appeared to be associated with ethnic identity and social integration while Urdu was seen to mediate national unity in Pakistan and to offer literacy and career-oriented benefits within the national setting. However, some interesting differences emerged between the two groups of learners. Unlike most of the Global participants, the Ummah learners predominantly viewed Pashto as a barrier to learning English, especially in the academic domain. In the absence of literacy function of Pashto, strict institutional policing of the use of languages was recommended to curb the use of Pashto in the school and create space for the functional integration of English into the school culture. Like the Global learners, Ummah learners considered themselves illiterate in Pashto which they related to an educational divide in Pakistan where Pashto is taught as a subject in the public sector schools only (Zaidi, 2017). The learners, however, seemed ambivalent (Bhabha, 1994) in their responses about their perceived lack of literacy in their mother tongue, considering it either inconsequential to have

literacy in an academically dysfunctional language or lamenting it as a missed opportunity to promote their mother tongue (Manan, 2017; Rahman, 2008).

Like the Global learners, Ummah participant learners valued English speaking skills as a priority. However, their literacy skills were perceived to be more developed than their oral proficiency. A deficient perception of their speaking ability was reported to make it difficult for them to initiate a conversation in English, especially in formal contexts. However, in informal contexts, the learners reported to feel less anxious about their speaking ability and even to play with the English language through mixing their trilingual resources and experimenting with conventional rules of the English grammar.

In relation to the first research question in this study, the above section has discussed findings from the two schools with respect to the participants' perceptions of their multilingual resources in relation to learning English. Findings suggest that language learning in the multilingual environments of the learners is intricately associated with broader sociocultural elements that make up the linguistic and cultural ecology of the learning context. It indicates that learning a foreign language (in this case, English) cannot be understood fully without taking into account the ecology of the multilingual context and how languages are hierarchically located in this context (Rassool et al., 2007).

#### 7.4. **ENGLISH IN SOCIAL DOMAINS**

This section summarizes data from the two schools in relation to the second research question, namely: *What opportunities for English language learning and use exist for the learners in the domains of the classrooms, the schools, and their home environments?* As the data in the previous section suggest, languages are often allocated different uses and statuses depending on the interactional domain and contingent upon social, educational, historical,

and ideological factors (Durrani, 2012). This section summarizes findings of English learning in the social and academic domains focusing on opportunities for the learners to develop their English language skills. Overall, the learners reported conflictual language practices across the institutional and domestic domains, having repercussions for their goals in terms of English language proficiency development.

## **Global**

### *English learning in institutional spaces*

Although locally and nationally renowned as a prestigious school system that provides high-quality English language instruction, Global was perceived by the learners as lacking a conducive environment for developing English language proficiency, specifically in terms of developing their English-speaking skills. In relation to the classroom, the learners articulated conflictual opinions about the role of their English teacher whom they viewed as a skillful teacher and respected as someone committed to developing his students' English language proficiency. The learners, however, also seemed to hold him accountable for their perceived lack of English-speaking proficiency. In spite of the student-centered language learning in the English classroom as reported by the learners and observed during classroom observations, the learners predominantly complained that English had little communicative value in the classroom and that literacy skill development was a primary goal of pedagogic practice in the classroom.

Whereas the learners wanted to have more opportunities to communicate in English in the classroom to integrate English as a functional language and develop their oral skills, the teacher used English mainly for instructional purposes. The classroom thus emerged as “a site of struggle” (Menard-Warwick, 2008). Whereas the learners expected the classroom to be a

“safe house” (Canagarajah, Suresh, 2004; Norton, 2008; Pomerantz & Bell, 2011) for practicing the target language, the teacher prioritized the school official policy to finish the prescribed curriculum twice and to prepare learners for taking their O-level exams.

Further, a mismatch emerged regarding the learners’ and the teacher’s perception of integrating the communicative use of English in the classroom. Whereas the learners perceived communicating in the target language to mean using English to interact with the teacher and among themselves for performing learning activities in the classroom, the teacher perceived it as holding specific oral practice activities to develop the learners’ English oral proficiency; something that he did not want to do because of the constraint of time in a given school session. Although the teacher expressed an awareness of the desire of the learners to develop their English oral skills, he complained about strict institutional demands on his teaching method, making it difficult for him to exercise autonomy in language pedagogy (Lie, 2007). Paradoxically, although the teacher articulated a language hierarchy in the classroom with reference to the official school policy that English was the first language in the school and Urdu and Pashto second and third languages respectively, the learners complained about the position of English as a non-functional language in the classroom.

Regarding the Global School environment, the participant learners positively evaluated some aspects of the school whilst they also perceived several mismatches between their English learning goals and the school macro-level language policy. On the positive side, activity-based learning and student-centered classroom practice in English and other classes were pointed out as important features of the Global school environment, supporting better learning outcomes for students and encouraging self-directed learning. However, on the negative side, differential distribution in the school environment of the three languages Urdu,

Pashto, and English emerged as a central concern for the learners. Learners expressed disappointment that, in spite of being a prestigious school in the region, Urdu was used predominantly as the medium of instruction in subjects other than English. Learners' beliefs echo what Rahman (2005; 2008) points about hierarchies in the education system in Pakistan that are underpinned by access to quality English medium instruction. Correspondingly, the English subject teacher felt he was not supported by other subject teachers in the school to develop the English-speaking skills of the learners as the other teachers did not follow the official policy of the school to use English as a medium of instruction in all subjects. Pertinently, whereas general interaction in the school was observed to be predominantly in Pashto, the teachers and the students followed the English-only policy of the school when talking to the school principal inside his office and outside the school.

The participants evaluated the school administration strategy as one that stressed timely completion of writing and reading-based activities by the learners to make accountability to the parents easier for the school administration, as the parents could be shown that the learners were regularly engaged in learning tasks. Learners also complained about excessive homework assignments given to them in all subjects every day. However, the learners did not seem to see this practice as being in line with their learning agenda as they wanted to have more free time at home to socialize with friends and family and, at school, they wanted to exercise their English-speaking skills. The learners felt they lacked agency to influence the education processes in Global because, despite communicating their concerns to the principal several times, the voice of the students was ostensibly not acknowledged in the official school policy. Relatedly, learners felt their English oral skills were either not improving (Osama) or deteriorating (Sabiha), except for Shahid who felt more satisfied with the improvement in his English skills ever since he had switched to Global from an Urdu-

medium private school. This points towards institutional policy and discourses exercising power over the learners (Foucault, 1972; 1978) and determining what they can and cannot do (Vitanova, 2010).

### ***English learning in domestic spaces***

In the home environments of the Global participant learners, mothers appeared to play a more significant role in supporting the participant learners while the fathers mostly remained busy outside their homes. Pertinently, in accordance with the local norms where gender segregation is common and women are often expected to take care of the children and stay at home, all the three mothers were homemakers (housewives). Except for Sabiha, whose mother was reported as proficient in English, the other learners reported that their mothers could not actively support their children in learning English due to their own limited proficiency in English.

Lack of role models in speaking English emerged as significant for the learners. As mentioned above, except in the case of Sabiha whose mother could actively engage in her learning of English and seemed to model a proficient speaker of English, the other learners were concerned that their mothers were less literate and less proficient in English than the learner participants whereas their fathers, who could help them better, mostly remained busy in business activities. Further, similar to the schoolwork, completing their homework consisted of reading and writing activities which was considered significant by the parents whereas the students' desire to improve their speaking skills in English remained mostly unheeded at home. For instance, although Sabiha's investment in English learning seemed better supported at home, her oral use of English was opposed by her grandmother whereas her siblings and cousins seemed to police her use of the language by labeling her *angrez* for

mixing her trilingual resources in speech. These findings point towards a disconnect between “family language policy” (King & Fogle, 2006, 2008) and the learners’ priority to develop their English-speaking skills.

## **Ummah**

### ***English learning in institutional spaces***

Whereas a significant difference between Global and Ummah schools can be seen in terms of infrastructure, material resources, and institutional status in the local context, Ummah participant learners struggled against institutionalized practices some of which mirrored the findings from Global. For instance, like the Global student participants, the Ummah learners wanted to see English play an integral communicative role in the classroom but English was non-functional in communication on the campus and was limited to textbook reading and some closed questions asked by the teachers. Similarly, like the Global students, the perceptions of the learners about the role of their English subject teacher appeared conflictual as they seemed to idealize him as a teacher and speaker of English but also criticized his method of teaching that failed to create a classroom environment where learners could exercise their English language skills for authentic communication and without fear of being ridiculed for any mistakes they might make in English. Learners thus perceived a mismatch between their English oral proficiency goals and the pedagogic practice in their classroom.

However, important differences also emerged between the two classroom contexts in Global and Ummah. In Ummah, although the learners appeared to idealize their English subject teacher’s English proficiency, they could not imagine themselves being as proficient in English as their teacher. The learners indicated a deficient perception of themselves as

speakers of English and did not seem to imagine their English proficiency at par with their teacher in the future. Further, pedagogic practice in the classroom appeared teacher-dominated and textbook-centered (Erling et al., 2017) whereas students were not actively involved in any learning activities. Urdu emerged as the dominant language in the classroom used for literal translation from the textbook and to explain the contextual meaning of isolated lexical items to the learners. Although the teacher considered Pashto more useful than Urdu in developing his students' language and content learning in the English classroom, in practice he used Urdu to align with the school policy. Further, English grammar was taught on Fridays as a discrete component and not as an integral aspect of content learning in the English classroom. These pedagogic practices were justified by the teacher in terms of preparing students to secure good grades in the high stakes annual exams that tested the students' ability to translate texts into Urdu and reproduce comprehension answers based on lessons in the textbook.

In relation to the institutional context of Ummah School in general, language hierarchy emerged as a significant theme in the data. Data revealed Urdu as the dominant language in terms of school policy while Pashto has wide social permeation as the de facto medium of communication in the school. However, students could incur fines if they were found speaking Pashto on the school premises. Thus Pashto seems to have the status of a "smuggled-in language" (Probyn, 2009) that was officially discouraged on campus through punishment but was reported as widely used by the students. Instances of language policing in multilingual contexts are often predicated on a belief in the necessity of a national language for linguistic homogeneity (May, 2008).

The school administration defended the use of Urdu on campus in terms of the instrumental function of Urdu as the national lingua franca of Pakistan while, in symbolic terms, it was projected as a linguistic marker of national unity and a source of inter-ethnic national cohesion in Pakistan. Significantly, however, like the Global learners, the learners from Ummah explicitly opposed the school policing of language use in terms of a monolingual policy of Urdu on campus. Their view of a better school environment included a strict implementation of an English-only monolingual policy in which the use of Pashto and any other language except English would be prohibited in the school. Tamim (2014) links instances of learners' and schools' monolingual orientation towards English-only policies as related to "symbolic dominance" (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) in Pakistan where Urdu-medium school students are often treated as "the rejected other" (p. 121). The dominant status of English seems reflected in the discursive practices of the learners and their perception of learning English through monolingual immersion practices.

### *English learning in domestic spaces*

In the case of Ummah learners, linguistic and educational support at home emerged as a key missing factor in language learning and education in general that both the learners and their English teacher frequently pointed out. Except in the case of Samina, whose parents and siblings provided active support, parents in the other two student cases appeared to have no active involvement in the learners' language learning. Whereas parents mostly provided passive support by relieving the learners from domestic responsibilities and encouraging them to study, they could not provide active support because of having limited literacy. Whereas English remained non-functional in their home environments (except in the case of Samina), Urdu was relatively more accessible through electronic media, especially television.

In terms of English proficiency, the teacher reported that Samina performed better than the other two participant students and attributed it to her individual ability as a learner without reference to the domestic support she was receiving. The school director pointed out a lack of interest on the part of parents in the education of their children as a major challenge for the school. However, parents are not necessarily knowledgeable about the learning needs of their children and do not know how to support them. The school offered no consultation sessions with the parents to scaffold the parents' ability to help the children in achieving their academic goals.

#### 7.5. **TEXTBOOKS AND ENGLISH LEARNING**

Textbooks are purposefully designed documents having pedagogic, ideological, and cultural aims explicitly or implicitly embedded in the text (Khan, 2016). This section provides a critical summary of findings from the two schools about the third research question, namely: *What perceptions do the participants have about cultural aspects of the textbook contents?* The findings show interesting differences between students' perceptions of the textbook material in the two school contexts.

##### **Global**

Textbook contents prescribed for O-level students in Global emerged as a significant aspect of language learning as English subject classroom practice was mainly based on reading/writing activities and learning activities based on the prescribed syllabus. In all cases, the learners understood their English course contents as better in contradistinction to the course materials taught in traditional matriculation education in Pakistan. Affiliation of the school system with Cambridge University, UK, was accentuated as a distinguishing feature of the curriculum contents. Although compulsory subjects like Urdu, Pakistan studies, and

Islamic studies are part of their syllabus, the learners positioned their textbooks as “western curriculum”. This points towards the identity construction of the learners as mediated by textbook materials and institutional affiliation of the Global school with Cambridge. (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) consider identity as “social positioning of self and other” that is constituted and realized in forms of discourse, such as curriculum material (p. 586). The data suggest that Global learners position themselves in exclusive terms as different from learners who attend Urdu medium private or government schools.

In terms of pedagogic practice, English learning appeared as the acquisition of formal (i.e. related to language form) competence and syntactical knowledge of the target language through attempting exercises given in the textbook. The cultural aspects of the texts, however, mostly remained unexplored. Based on a situational analysis approach to language learning, the course contents included the study of genres like expository essays and fictional and non-fictional narratives depicting foreign sociocultural contexts. The learners appeared to perceive the social and cultural aspects of the texts in terms of a dichotomous understanding as belonging to a generalized western “other” whereas their own social context was positioned as different from what was shown in the texts. The learners expressed awareness of cultural contrasts between their own society where gender segregation was considered a norm and appeared to reject the “liberal” world depicted in the text as related to the western developed countries only. The classroom practice, however, did not appear to address the cultural aspects of learning a foreign language and seemed focused on guiding the students specifically for getting good grades in their final O-level examination. These findings suggest that classroom pedagogy in Global does not engage with what can be called the “hidden curriculum” (i.e., the cultural aspects) (Cunningsworth, 1995) of textual materials. As Kramsch (2019) and Byram and Wagner (2018) emphasize, culturally responsive pedagogy

needs to develop the intercultural competence of English learners, along with developing their formal linguistic competence, because learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century need skills to interact with people from other cultures.

## **Ummah**

Like Global, in Ummah, the textbooks appeared central in learning activities in the classroom, as teaching was predominantly textbook-centered. In a teacher-dominated classroom environment, learners had few opportunities to engage critically with the text material. The language aspects of the texts were not foregrounded by the learners. On the contrary, lessons in the textbook were primarily seen as culturally relevant. Unlike the Global participants who found it challenging to engage with the sociocultural aspects of the texts, Ummah participants saw the texts as sociocultural and historical documents related to the historical legacy of the Muslim *Ummah* (worldwide Muslim fraternity) or to social issues in their daily lives. Significantly, the English textbook was also seen as a moral text that prepared the students for a successful future through inculcating Islamic values. Mahboob (2015) points out that textbooks “project particular ideological positions [to] shape and influence students’ identity and reinforce dominant sociocultural positions” (p. 154). The Ummah participants seem to position themselves as the object of the moral lessons embedded in the textbook lessons. In one case, the lessons were seen as a source of vicarious pleasure and aesthetic satisfaction that enabled the learners to see their sociocultural reality differently. However, views of the learners about the cultural, moral and aesthetic aspects of the texts seemed to be based on their individual approaches towards the textbook materials. Pedagogic practice in the classroom was neither reported nor observed to engage the students with these aspects of the texts.

## 7.6. IMAGINED PLACES AND PEOPLE IN ENGLISH LEARNING

Learners' investment in learning a foreign language is often socio-culturally situated but is also mediated by "a community of the imagination, the desired community that offers possibilities for an enhanced range of identity options in the future" (Norton, 2013, p. 3). This section provides a critical summary of findings from the data in relation to the imagined and ideal aspects in language learning focusing on: *What imagined or real places and people do the participants associate with English learning?*

### **Global**

In the global language classroom, motivation for learning English emerged as not only related to the present and the factual aspect of their socio-educational context; imagined aspects of their future also seemed implicated in the learners' investment in acquiring proficiency in English. Echoing findings in Norton's (2013) study of immigrant women in an L2 context, the learners related their investment in English learning to access to good education abroad and living in healthier environments than Pakistan. The learners seemed to romanticize these imagined destinations as places where civil rights would be safeguarded and individuals would be treated with dignity. At the time of the interviews, none of the participants had actually traveled to western developed countries. In all cases, the UK emerged as the preferred destination of the learners for higher education and, in some cases, for a career. Although not accessible in the present, these imagined aspects appeared to be an important aspect of the learners' investment in English language learning.

Learners' perceptions of their desired imagined communities (Anderson, 1991; Pavlenko and Norton, 2007) and imagined identities (Norton, 2013; Kanno & Norton, 2003) in these communities in these social contexts also seemed influenced by the undesirability of their

present socio-academic context. A desire for the “other” seemed partly motivated by a revulsion for one’s own; deteriorating law and order situation in Pakistan (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3), lack of physical infrastructure and a faulty sanitation system seemed to provide motivations for learners to see English learning as an exit strategy to a better social environment. On the other hand, the academic environment was imagined to be better than Global where students felt they lacked agency. Learners’ investment to learn English thus seemed implicated in a struggle for students’ right to self-directed learning in education in the UK. Their desired community was imagined as more egalitarian where learners would be given greater autonomy in academic processes. Norton (2013) speaks of “identity references desire – the desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation and the desire for security and safety” (p. 47). Desire, however, cannot be separated from the unequal distribution of material resources in society (West, 1992). The positioning of the participant learners as citizens of a developing nation troubled by terrorism seems to mediate their desire to belong to affluent western nations for which English is often a gatekeeping language.

Learners’ investment in English learning also seemed predicated on the learners’ digital literacy and their connection to social media networks online. Some of the participant learners reported using online media (Facebook and Instagram) to remain in interactive affiliation with their ideal English speakers while others used the internet only to listen to videos posted by their favorite popular media figures. In both cases, the ideal speakers were associated by the learners to their investment in the English language. Although they could not interact with their favorite speakers of English in most cases, the learners reported being inspired by the English-speaking accent(s) of their favorite media figures that included a member of a teenage singing band in the UK, characters from animated motion pictures, and Hollywood movie actors. Glamour surrounding the perception of the English language and

the affluent status of its speakers (such as movie stars and famous singers) can blur the reality of the English language as a semiotic resource that is not different from other languages ((Chowdhury & Le Ha, 2014); the status of English speakers is often “misrecognized” (Bourdieu, 1977: 1991) as the status of the language itself.

## **Ummah**

Like the Global learners, learners from Ummah had not traveled to any English dominant country. However, a romanticized view of these countries seemed implicated in their investment in learning English as it was considered an enabling language for transnational travel. English was assigned a gatekeeping role in access to the developed countries that were mostly positioned in contradistinction to Pakistan as having better infrastructure, less socio-economic disparity, a cleaner environment, and a better law and order situation. Significantly, the male participants in the study saw English as an enabling language that might allow them to avoid working in the Middle East where most of the people from their home towns work in low-paying jobs. Instead, they might be able to live in a country where English is a dominant language of communication. Unlike the Global learners for whom the UK appeared to be a primary future destination, Ummah participants mentioned European and non-European nation-states as their imagined future destinations.

Like the Global learners, cultivating a sense of affiliation with ideal speakers of English emerged as a strategy of most of the learners in Ummah to support their investment in English learning. Access to online social media networks like Facebook was used for interactive affiliation while receptive forms of affiliation included watching online videos, interviews of famous singers, and watching international talk shows. However, the national identity of these ideal speakers either remained unknown to the learners or was articulated in

terms of generic terms “native speakers”. In the case of one participant learner who did not report having ideal English language speakers, lack of access to online media and communication networks appeared a significant prohibiting factor.

The following sections discuss these findings in the light of existing research and draw inferences regarding what the data show about language learning in the multilingual contexts of the two schools.

### 7.7. **ENGLISH LEARNING IN A MULTILINGUAL ECOLOGY**

This section discusses findings in relation to the implications of language hierarchy in the multilingual ecology of the learners for their language learning goals. It also discusses language tensions in the socio-academic environments of the learners in terms of a mismatch between an institutional agenda for EFL learning and the learners’ own language learning goals. Significantly, the findings suggest that the mismatch might be predicated on differences between school policy based on a narrow instrumental view of language as an object that the learners can acquire to secure good grades in the exams and the learners’ broader conception of language as a portable tool that they should be able to employ proficiently for academic success, spontaneous interaction in real-time, and affiliation with wider networks of people. In both schools, dysfunctional monolingual English-only (Global) or Urdu-only (Ummah) policies were found implicated in the learners’ perception of lack of a conducive environment for their language proficiency development.

#### 7.7.1. **Socially constructed language learning**

In the experience of the participant students, Pashto, Urdu, and English emerged as differentially associated with social status and class stratification, having significant implications for the learners’ investment in English language learning. Social dynamics in the

EFL learning mediated socialization of the learners in institutional and family environments. Conflictual perceptions about the learners' trilingual resources emerged as a theme in the data from both school contexts. Some level of asymmetrical and hierarchical perception of sociolinguistic resources is argued to be a basic facet of human societies (Dumont, 1969; Durrani, M., 2012). The hierarchical status of languages in multilingual settings is linked to unequal access to learning languages. The following lines explain the socially constructed hierarchical perception of languages and their relation to the learners' investment in English learning.

In the case of English, findings from both groups of learners suggest that perceptions about English were often predicated on whether the instrumental aspect of English was foregrounded or its cultural aspect. In instrumental terms, findings of this study align with previous research in Pakistan indicating that English is valued for all the "goodies" (Lin, Angel & Martin, 2005) it can offer such as social status, higher educational and career-oriented opportunities in the country and abroad, and access to the often-romanticized developed western countries (Piller & Takahashi, 2006). However, in cultural terms, English was often seen as not only a means of communication but a carrier of western culture and as a historical linguistic legacy of the British colonial occupation of the Indian subcontinent.

English thus appeared as situated in a paradoxical position in the social language hierarchy. Whereas in instrumental terms it was perceived at the top of the hierarchy, in cultural terms Pashto and Urdu appeared to have greater value. Conflictual perceptions in the social context of the learners regarding different aspects of English and its value appeared to complexify English language learning. Apart from being an academic enterprise, English learning emerged as embedded in the colonial past of the country and the present-day dominant status

of English as the language of global opportunities. Social dynamics intersected with the English learning and speaking position of the learners having implications for their investment in EFL and the local languages.

In terms of language skills, the learners' prioritization of speaking skills in English learning and their desire for the availability of English as a socially functional language in institutional and non-institutional domains was counteracted by language hierarchies in these domains. Other studies have also reported that, in foreign and second language contexts, learners often prioritize oral skills over literacy skills in English (Khamkhien, 2010; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, & Mathes, 2006). In the present study, both groups of learners faced challenges in exercising their English oral skills due to differential language perceptions in the social context mediating spatial control in terms of language use. In this regard, home and social environments appeared more restrictive for English use than the school environment where English had a better status as the target language of learning.

The two groups of learners seemed distinct in terms of the reasons indicated for a lack of availability of English as a socially functional language in their environments. Whereas in the case of Global learners, a dominant social perception of English as negatively associated with the cultural legacy of *angrezan* was reported as a significant social prohibition to speaking English, in the case of Ummah learners, prohibition was perceived to be mediated by a lack of education in the family circle of the learners where parents and siblings were usually non-literate in English. Limited space for English in the social milieu of both groups of learners often meant that language learning was experienced as a solo journey, with the learners having to take measures on their own such as finding affiliations online on the internet to enhance their investment in English learning (see Chapter Seven, Section 7.8.3). These

findings partly support what Rahman (2008) observes about disparities in the education system in Pakistan and social class mediating unequal access to English as a functional language at home. In his argument, Global would fit into the “elitist” category while Ummah would belong to the “non-elitist” school type.

Elite schools are run as business empires with campuses in most big cities of Pakistan. These schools charge exorbitant tuition fees and prepare their students for the British O- and A-level examinations. [The non-elite schools] cater to those who cannot afford the elitist schools but want to give their children better chances in life by teaching them English. Ironically, they do not teach good English, as efficiency in that language is a product of exposure to it at home and in the peer group, which are available only to the Westernized, urban elite [who attend the elite schools]. (p. 386)

However, findings in this study suggest that although social class mediates access to English in social and formal domains, a dichotomous difference between the two learners’ groups was not instantiated in the findings. Whereas Global learners seem to have better access to English for institutional and domestic reasons that have to do with their social backgrounds, both groups of learners struggled against hierarchical social perceptions of languages that often made it difficult to practice speaking skills outside the schools.

Social prohibition over the use of English often meant that learners prioritized conforming to the dominant social language practices using Pashto or Urdu so as not to alienate the significant others in their family and community; to avoid risking public shaming or being labeled as a cultural outsider. Considerations around being positioned as a member of an in-group and an out-group thus seemed to mediate learners’ linguistic choices in social domains. In the context of language socialization, Howard (2011) points out that “in families, schools, and other institutional settings, hierarchy and power are intertwined and expressed in a variety of ways” (p, 142), and that children growing up in a social context are sensitized to the significance of these hierarchies through verbal and non-verbal semiotic cues indexing affirmation, rejection, respect, and public shaming. Language socialization is a form of social

control that mediates power and regulates language practices (Duff, 2012). In a tightly structured hierarchical society, some languages receive greater acceptance (Pashto and Urdu) while others (English) are relatively silenced in social environments (Lo & Fung, 2011). Silence in a second language, whether inside or outside the classroom, is a strategic exercise of individual agency to maintain a positive face and avoid criticism. Duff (2002), for instance, notes about interaction in a multilingual secondary classroom in Canada that learners remained silent to avoid criticism or being laughed at due to limited proficiency in English by:

Silence protected them from humiliation. This silence, however, was perceived by the native English speakers as representing a lack of initiative, agency, or desire to improve one's English or to offer interesting material for the sake of the class. (p. 312).

In the current study, the position of Urdu emerged as less conflictual for the students as compared to English. As a symbolic bearer of linguistic nationalism in Pakistan, Urdu was valued as a symbol of national unity and accepted more widely in society. Although not on a par with English, in instrumental terms Urdu was thought more useful than Pashto due to its literate value in the society, relevance in certain jobs, and communicative value in urban centers in the country. Whereas the findings of the current study are consistent with Tamim's (2014) study in Pakistan who found that being an Urdu-medium school student is often stigmatized, the current study also found that proficiency in the Urdu language was desired in both school cases. It was seen as a means of national outreach and as helpful in job prospects in urban centers in the country. Whereas Tamim's findings suggest that English dominates Urdu in the educational and linguistic contexts in the case of her participants from Sindh and Lahore provinces, findings in the current study from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province suggest that in pragmatic terms Pashto is dominated by Urdu and English languages in the multilingual ecology of the six participant learners.

Overall, English learning in general and speaking, in particular, emerged as a complex situated social enterprise (Kramsch, 2008) that is not limited to the acquisition of the lexico-grammatical aspects of language but is rather embedded in the history and culture of the region.

### 7.7.2. **Language tensions in socio-academic domains**

Differential acknowledgment of the learners' linguistic resources in institutional and domestic spaces was often mediated by restrictive hierarchical attitudes towards English, as discussed in the previous section. However, findings also indicate tensions between the school policy and pedagogic practice on the one hand and the individual learner's language learning goals on the other. Heeding Kramsch (2005), needs of the language learners in the twenty-first century have changed drastically, whereas SLA research and practice often assumes "the language learner as a generic entity, whose goals and needs are assumed to match those of the institutions that teach them" (p. 1). As discussed below, the findings suggest that learners have very different and often broader present and future-oriented goals as their English language learning agenda.

#### ***Institutional agenda and individual agency***

In both schools, misalignment emerged between the learners' and their teachers' orientation regarding which teaching practices develop the learners' English communicative competence. As shown in Curdt-Christiansen and Maguire's (2007) study of Chinese students, individual language learning goals and authoritative institutional policies can be conflictual and learners "articulate their own patterns of alignment in contradistinction to the institutional discourses" (p. 43). Data from the present study indicate tension between the students' agency (i.e. their will towards autonomous, self-directed learning) and the institutional policy that structures

their access to the target language. The learners' desire to learn through interaction (Darvin & Norton, 2017) was often undermined by a structured implementation of language curriculum in both schools that often left little room for learners to influence their own learning trajectories and integrate their learning priorities into pedagogic practices. Other studies have also found that ESL/EFL learners might be highly motivated, but still not invested in the learning practices of a classroom or a community. Norton (2013), for instance, observes:

A learner may be a highly motivated language learner but may nevertheless have little investment in the language practices of a given classroom or community, which may, for example, be racist, sexist, elitist or homophobic. Thus, a learner could be excluded from the language practices of a classroom, and in time positioned as a "poor" or unmotivated language learner. Alternatively, the learner's expectations of good language teaching may not be consistent with the language practices promoted by the teacher in the classroom. The learner may therefore resist participating in the language practices of the classroom, with equally dire results. (p. 6)

In both schools, top-down inflexible monolingual policies were perceived by the learners as non-productive and often detrimental to their learning goals. Whereas Global learners valued student-centered learning as a significant distinguishing feature of the school policy, the learners perceived the school's English-only policy as irrelevant to their actual experience of learning in the school because they perceived English was not functionally integrated into their academic lives. For instance, subjects other than English were reported to be taught in Urdu and even the English classroom pedagogy did not meet the learners' expectations regarding their English communicative skills development. Similarly, in Ummah, the learners perceived the school's Urdu-only policy as the medium of instruction and communication as counterproductive to their English learning goals, as English remained a non-functional language in the school environment.

In regard to their English subject teachers, learners in both schools appeared to hold conflictual opinions regarding the role of their teachers in developing their English oral skills.

Whereas the learners highly appreciated the professional competence of the teachers and their rapport with the learners, they also positioned their teachers as promoting a classroom environment where English remained dysfunctional as a language of communication. The teachers' data indicate several factors that accounts for this perception of the learners such as restrictive school policies to focus on the curriculum only, a lack of teacher training courses in the school, and English-only (Global) or Urdu-only (Ummah) language ideologies of the schools.

Whereas a lack of teachers' training in private and public schools in Pakistan has been researched in large scale studies (Council, 2013) showing that over "one-quarter had received no [teaching methodology] training in the previous two years" before the study was conducted, the effect of institutional language ideologies on language learning and its relation to school language policy remains under-studied. In fact, teaching practice in both schools seemed mediated by English-only (Global) and Urdu-only (Ummah) ideologies that seemed rooted in broader socio-political considerations such as English projecting urban sophistication and global outlook (Ali, 2015) in the case of Global and, in the case of Ummah, Urdu symbolizing Pakistani national identity and multi-ethnic unity as the sole national language (Rahman, 2008). In both school contexts, these broader ideological orientations were not translated into micro-level pedagogic practices that might align school policies and ideological orientations with the language learning goals of the learners.

### ***Language as an object vs language as a tool***

The learners' understanding of what it means to learn a foreign language diverged from what the teachers and the schools envisaged as successful language learning. Whereas the learners seemed to understand English as a tool both for academic success and social interaction, the

schools and the teachers appeared to see language as an object that the learners needed to acquire for instrumental purposes like securing good grades in their exams. In Ummah, literal translation of the text into Urdu, building students' lexical resources through teaching discrete vocabulary items, and teaching grammar on Fridays as a separate subject are some aspects of pedagogic practice based on a belief in "language as an object" that needs to be transferred to the students. In Global, in spite of student-centered learning and activities in the classroom, language learning was seen as mastering the curriculum contents to secure good grades in the high-stakes O-level exam.

In contrast, the learners' understanding of language seemed oriented towards language learning as the ability to interact in the target language along with using the language for academic success. From this perspective, language acquisition was not seen as merely learning forms of language and mastering a structured curriculum but was oriented towards social and emergent aspects of language use to enable learners to have spontaneous interaction in the target language. Analogously, in his study of English language teachers' beliefs and practice in the context of private and public schools in northern Pakistan, Khan (2014) found that considering "language as an object" mediated teachers' practice, relying on asking closed-ended questions from the students, using translation as a pedagogic strategy, and teaching grammar as a separate subject (p. 205). A misalignment between school language teaching policy and learners' goals can have significant negative implications for learners' success (Manan, 2015; 2017).

#### 7.8. **LEARNERS' INVESTMENT IN ENGLISH LEARNING**

The following sections focus on three aspects of the findings in regard to the learners' investment in English language learning in the context of the two schools. The first section discusses findings in relation to the cultural aspects of the textbooks taught in the English

classroom and illustrates to what extent the learners engaged with the social and cultural aspects of the prescribed curriculum. The next section relates to how the learners' investment in English was mediated by their perception of English as an enabling language for outward global mobility to the developed countries in the west. The last section focuses on the learners' exercise of their individual agency in terms of transcending the physical limitations of their social and academic environments through their affiliation with online communities to support their motivation towards English learning and to find English speaking role models.

#### 7.8.1. **Learners' reception of textbook materials**

Learners' engagement with the textbooks used in classrooms in Global and Ummah indicates that the texts were not received as only facilitating EFL learning but also mediated learners' engagement with the textual material at cultural, ideological, and religious levels. However, the learners seemed to struggle to engage fully with these aspects of the text. In Global, learners seemed to distance themselves from the western-oriented textual material as describing the culture of the "other", whereas in Ummah the learners showed greater cultural and ideological responsiveness towards the texts, albeit mostly in terms of racial and national stereotypes. If "school textbooks are purposeful texts [...] developed with pedagogical but also political [and cultural] aims, which are among others set out, and sometimes masked, in curricula" (Banerjee & Stöber, 2016, p. 143) then it might be important to raise critical awareness of the learners regarding the cultural, political, and ideological agenda of the texts and enable them to engage with these aspects in a dialogic manner to support learners' investment in the texts and target language learning. Byram (2018) emphasizes the negative implications of treating textbooks as essentialized information about target language country or countries:

That teaching culture as information about a country or countries where the target language is spoken is a common yet misguided interpretation is perhaps less self-evident, for this approach is often present in textbooks and is hence widely adopted because many educators rely on a textbook as their mainstay. (p. 142)

In both school cases, students' engagement with the texts exhibited a dichotomous conception regarding the people and sociocultural situations (re)presented in the texts, mostly articulating their views in binary terms like us/them, our/their, etc., For instance, in Global, the lesson on extended shopping hours was seen as discussing social issues in the west (for example, the effect of mother's job hours on child-rearing) that the learners perceived had no relevance for their own culture. In Ummah, stories and essays showing Muslim characters were considered important as moral texts whereas texts like "After Twenty Years"<sup>20</sup> and "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"<sup>21</sup> were considered as western narratives that were irrelevant in the daily lives of the learners. Similarly, the Ummah learners seemed to endorse cultural, racial, and national stereotypes in the textbook without questioning their validity. For instance, negative stereotypes about the Jews and Indians were ostensibly accepted as true rather than analyzed critically.

In Pakistan, parallel education systems use a number of textbooks. The O-level English curriculum taught in Global and the government-endorsed textbooks taught in Ummah seem to depict cultural worlds that are different from one another and underpinned by different ideological orientations. Whereas the Cambridge O-level course taught in Global seems to assume that western cultural norms are globally shared and does not promote critical engagement with the text beyond the formal aspects of language learning, government-issued textbooks taught in Ummah seem underpinned by nationalist ideologies inculcating views of cultural exclusivity among the learners as Muslims and as Pakistanis. As Mahboob (2015)

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<sup>20</sup> A short story by O'Henry

<sup>21</sup> A poem by Robert Frost

points out, the discursive stance of the government-issued English language textbooks incorporates an Islamic Pakistani identity and reinforces the cultural and political views of conservative groups in the country.

In both schools, however, pedagogic practice paid little attention to raising critical awareness of the learners regarding cultural, ideological, or political aspects of the texts. Whereas the Global teacher participant indicated that he found it hard to engage the students with the cultural aspects of the text because he had to teach the prescribed English texts twice in a short academic session, the Ummah teacher participant indicated that he struggled to engage with the cultural aspects of texts like “After Twenty Years” and “Stopping by Woods” because he could find no moral lesson in these texts that could be useful for the learners in their daily lives.

#### 7.8.2. **English as an exit strategy**

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the learners’ investment in English appeared motivated by a romantic conception of the western countries as spaces of personal freedom, social justice, and a clean environment. The desire to belong to the imagined western communities appeared predicated on the often-unstable law and order situation in the region. All the participant learners and teachers had experienced the effects of terrorism in the region and had been forced to live in temporary shelters as internally displaced refugees. English was often linked with peaceful social life and freedom of choice in the western developed countries where law and order situation was imagined to be stable. This echoes Norton and Kamal’s (2003) study of middle-school children aged 11 to 14 teaching English to young Afghan refugees in Pakistan:

Pakistani students noted that [apart from being the language of modern science and technology] another benefit of learning English is that it would enable the Afghan

children to communicate directly with people all over the world, without the help of translators, and explain to the wider community how much they had suffered. (p. 383)

The participants from Ummah specifically emphasized recent atrocities by militant groups in the region and how schools were specifically targeted. Against this backdrop, students' investment in learning English seem predicated on their perception of English as an enabling language for outward mobility towards developed countries (Blommaert, 2010) and, on the other hand, as an international lingua franca that could help the learners' highlight the plight of Pashtuns on the international level.

English was associated with opportunities to access education markets in western developed countries. Often articulated in terms of the global division between technologically advanced western societies and developing nations like Pakistan, the learners perceived English as an enabling language to transcend their marginal position as citizens of a developing country. This egalitarian agenda for EFL learning seemed to position western countries as advanced in terms of scientific knowledge and education in general whereas the learners seemed to position themselves as members of an out-group who could access scientific knowledge in the west through acquiring proficiency in English. In terms of Kachru's (2005) model of World Englishes (WE), the learners' desire to transcend the educational and social limitation of a "Third World" country in the Outer Circle through their investment in English learning and gain access to opportunities in the Inner Circle countries seems predicated on their assumption about the structure of the modern world and the role of English in this world. In this worldview, English seems exceptional in the sense that it is considered a language capable of describing the "reality" of the modern world, unlike lesser languages like Pashto and Urdu. As Pennycook (2017) cogently points out:

There is a key assumption within the discourse of English as International Language (EIL) that the world as described by English is the world as it really is and thus to learn English is essential if anyone wants to understand the modern world. (p. 120)

Whereas Global learners' desire for outward mobility to the UK seems propelled by Global School's affiliation with Cambridge and the learners' family relations in the UK, Ummah participants lacked such connection and seemed to have a broad conception of their future destination countries including Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. A significant aspect of the exit strategy of Ummah participants relates to using English to avoid working in low-paying work in the Middle East in the future where most of their relatives have been working. It is significant to note that the difference in learners' goals in English learning for outward mobility seems embedded in the difference in the socioeconomic classes of the learners in Global and Ummah.

### 7.8.3. **Learners' agency and online communities**

In response to a lack of English speaker role models in their physical environments, the learners used electronic media and online networks to access "native speakers", "western people", and "English people". Affordances of digital technology and how learners use their individual agency to transcend perceived or actual limitations of their immediate learning context have been investigated widely in recent times. Findings in the current study echo Lam's (2000, 2006) study of immigrant youth in the US, for instance, that the participant learners' investment in computer-mediated international networks provided language learning opportunities to them that seemed denied to them in the context of their physical academic environment where they were often stigmatized as immigrant learners and incompetent language users.

In both school contexts, the participants' use of online digital media was, however, situated outside the institutional domains of the school. The investment of participant learners in

digital online technologies had little relevance in the academic setting of the English classroom. Since the early 2000s, the proliferation of computer technology, fast internet, and the introduction of “smartphones” conglomerated to make digital literacy widespread and information technology affordable to most people in Pakistan. This “IT boom” is, however, rarely incorporated into English pedagogy in the country. Whereas Ummah has no IT and computer classes, in Global computer technology classes were taught as a separate subject that was not integrated into the EFL classroom. With regard to digital literacy research in SLA in developing countries, Norton’s (2013) comments, “much of the digital research on language learning has focused on research in wealthier regions of the world, and there is a great need for research in poorly resourced communities to impact global debates on new technologies, identity and language learning” (p. 20).

The learners’ often vociferous praise for their favorite media figures and their enthusiastic admiration for their English accent signaled that these figures modeled English speaking for the learners and seemed to mediate their investment in EFL learning. Two observations can be made here. First, in a positive sense, learners’ attachment to these figures seemed to mediate their investment in learning English by giving the language a glamorous appeal. Second, the learners often seemed to conflate the appeal of their favorite celebrities with the appeal of the English language they spoke. This second aspect relates to Bourdieu’s (1977, 1991) notion of “misrecognition” that symbolic dominance occurs when one language, or one variety of a language, or an accent, is “misrecognized” as symbolically linked to the intellectual, cultural, political, etc. superiority of a group [or individual] instead of being seen as merely indexical of their superior/more powerful position. For instance, although she could not understand much of what was said, Samina found the speaking accent of her favorite celebrities aesthetically appealing. She seemed to position this accent as a benchmark to

judge Pashtun speakers of English as deficient speakers who could never match the “beautiful English” spoken by her favorite film actors and popular singers. Native-speaker oriented language ideologies can thus produce a “symbolic order” (Pennycook, 2017, p. 242) which provides the criteria for who speaks good English.

## 7.9. LINGUISTIC CAPITAL AND LEARNERS’ POSITIONING

This section discusses findings in relation to English as symbolic capital and the learners’ positioning in socio-academic environments as learners and users of English. As discussed earlier in the current chapter (Section 7.4 & 7.7), the multilingual resources of the participant learners were differently acknowledged depending on the socio-academic domain. The following sections expand this discussion by analyzing findings from the data with the help of Bourdieu and Passeron’s (1977) sociological construct of “forms of capital” in social exchange and Davies and Harre’s (1990: 2011) construct of “social positioning” in sociocultural spaces.

### 7.9.1. English as a symbolic capital

As discussed earlier in this chapter (Section 7.7), the data from both school cases suggest that learners struggled to practice English spoken skills in academic and social domains. However, unlike their school environments where English was valued although not functional in interaction, participants reported that, in domestic and social environments, English was valued for pragmatic reasons (for example, material gains and access to powerful social networks) and denigrated in cultural terms. Social prohibition, for example in the form of language policing, was reported as common in social situations, affecting affordances for students to exercise their spoken skills in English. Learners preferred maintaining a positive face (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Duff, 2002) in these situations by using either Pashto or Urdu.

Research studies in Pakistan point out the significance of English learning for students and their parents (Ali, 2016; Manan, 2014, 2017; Shamim, 2011; Zaidi, 2017), emphasizing that access to English is predicated on socioeconomic class of the students because the education system in the country is divided into parallel networks of government-run and private schools that offer Urdu or English medium instruction, respectively. However, the data in this study suggest that although English is valued as economic and social capital in the context of the study, resistance to its cultural value often makes it difficult for the learners to integrate spoken English speaking into their social lives. This relates to Bourdieu's (1987) notion of "forms of capital" that can change value depending on the social context including economic capital (wealth, property, and other material resources), social capital (access to powerful social networks) and cultural capital (education). "Once [these forms of capital] are perceived and recognized as legitimate", Bourdieu observes, "they become part of the symbolic capital" (p. 4). Social structure is predicated upon the distribution of forms of capital:

The structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent structure of the social world, i.e. the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world, which governs its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success and practices. (p. 46)

In the context of this study, the data suggest that, in spite of its strong appeal for economic and social reasons, English lacks cultural value because, for instance, it is seen as a carrier of western ideologies and cultural norms or, in historical retrospection, as a reminder of the British colonial exploitation in the Indian subcontinent. Similarly, although the participant students predominantly viewed English as a global lingua franca that belongs to anyone who speaks it, they also observed that English is the language of the western developed countries that can have "westernizing" influence on the learners' identity.

Findings in the current study suggest that English has partial symbolic dominance in the social ecology of the learners in terms of economic and social value; however, it lacks cultural value. This contrasts with other studies that suggest that English should not be considered in connection with the colonial legacy of the country because “nativization” and “indigenization” of the English language over several decades resulted in a distinct Pakistani English that “reflects and incorporates local [...] philosophies, idioms, and cultures” (Mahboob, 2009, p. 181). Findings in this study suggest that all six learner participants struggled with the lack of acceptance of English as a cultural resource in their home and social environments. Norton’s (2013) observes:

[Language learning is] influenced by practices common to institutions such as homes, schools and workplaces, as well as available resources, whether they are symbolic or material. Examination of the practices and resources of particular settings, and of learners’ differential access to those practices and resources, offers a means to theorize [and understand success or failure in language learning]. (p. 2)

#### 7.9.2. **Learners’ positioning and identities**

In the context of the following discussion, positioning relates to how learners viewed themselves as learners and users of English (self-positioning), positioned others (other positioning), and adopted specific stances in response to how others position the learners (strategic positioning) (Harre and Langenhove, 1999). In the wake of the discursive turn in SLA (Kalaja, 2003; Young, 2009), it is acknowledged that learners’ beliefs about themselves and others are informed by social positioning rather than being mental traits in the heads of the learners (De Costa, 2011). The study of how learners are positioned as learners or users of different languages or different varieties of the same language can have important implications for language learning outcomes (De Fina, 2006).

The data in this study suggest that the student participants often positioned themselves as deficient users of English in terms of speaking accent and fluency. In the Global data,

whereas Sabiha perceived that her English-speaking accent was deteriorating after she returned from Jordan, the other two participants perceived insufficient improvement in their English spoken skills and accent. In Ummah, all the participant learners position themselves as deficient speakers of English. However, whereas the Ummah participants perceived that learners in high-fee schools like Global were better speakers of English and were more likely to go abroad to western countries for educational and career-oriented purposes, the Global learners considered themselves deficient speakers of English in comparison with their cousins and relatives in the UK who were born and raised there.

This hierarchical self-positioning of the learners relates to what De Costa (2011) found in a longitudinal study of Chinese EFL learners indicating that learners' self-positioning is not autonomous but embedded in wider social discourse (ideologies) about the status of languages, their speakers, and sociocultural hierarchies. In the present study, the learners' self-positioning seems predicated upon socioeconomic division in the social context of the study in terms of the two school systems, Ummah and Global, being viewed as low-quality and high-quality schools, respectively. The learners' self-positioning endorsed this dichotomy in relation to English speaking proficiency. Further, in a broader global context, the learners' conception of western "native speakers" of English as models for English accent and fluency signals a mainstream belief in EFL/ESL learning that Constant et al. (1997, p. 544) deconstructed as "conventional notions of the idealized native speaker". The data, therefore, suggest that learners self-positioning and their positioning of others (students from another school, western media figures, etc.) is embedded within discourses of educational divides in Pakistan and global discourses of "native speaker" model in TESOL (Creese & Blackledge, 2014; Holliday, 2006; Rampton, 1997).

Self-positioning of the learners as users of a deficient variety of English and their idealization of the “native speakers” of English seems predicated on the learners’ future plans to acquire internationally acceptable accent in English. All learners articulated plans to go abroad in the future either temporarily for educational purposes or, in some cases, to settle there as immigrants. In the context of globalization and English language learning, Blommaert (2010) points out that imagined trajectories in English learning in terms of global migration and economic upward mobility are mostly predicated on the prestige value associated with certain varieties of English; mastering this variety means gaining access to educational opportunities and to economic uplift in certain developed countries.

The data from both schools, however, also suggest that although the learners’ self-positioning and other-positioning appear predicated on local and global ideologies about English learning and use, it would be misleading to essentialize these positions as fixed and unchanging. The learners seemed to negotiate a “portfolio of positions” (Wetherell, 1998) as learners of English during the course of the interviews; positions that seemed to challenge dominant ideologies about the “ownership of English” (Kamal, 2013; Norton, 1997, 2015) and the superiority of standard variety of English (Creese & Blackledge, 2014). These positions were often irreconcilable with one another. For instance, in spite of the idealization of “native speakers” of English, in all cases, learners seemed to assert ownership of English for themselves. Whereas some learners asserted that English was a global lingua franca and belonged to whoever spoke it, others reported a sense of empowerment as speakers of English when they deliberately violated the conventional rules of English grammar in spoken language. Such instances of strategic positioning instantiate learners’ desire to exercise agency and break normative notions of good accent and correct grammar in English echoing Baxter’s (2016) analysis of Wetherell’s (1998) study:

The creative potential of these young men to negotiate who they are and how they relate to others is available as a resource but always constrained by the culturally governed range of subject positions available to them and the discursive tension between such positions. (p. 43)

#### 7.10. **SUMMARY**

This chapter discussed findings from the two school contexts in relation to the four questions this research study aimed to explore. Findings suggest that the institutional domains of the school and English classroom are closely associated with the domestic and social environments of the learners in terms of opportunities for English learning and the learners' success in achieving their language learning goals. Restrictive language ecology in institutional and social spaces in terms of English as a socially functional language mediated learners' access to English and their ability to practice speaking skills in the language. Differences in socioeconomic class of the learners and parental education level mediated support available to the learners at home and in wider social circles. The potential of textbook material as a basis for critical reflection and intercultural engagement with the content in a foreign language is not utilized in both school contexts. The learner participants' investment in English learning was predicated on their interest in outward mobility to developed countries and their sense of affiliation with well-known media figures and celebrities. Notions about ideal "native speakers" of English seemed to engender conflictual self-positioning by the learners in terms of good accent and speaking fluency.

Analysis of findings in this chapter suggests that learning English as a foreign language in the multilingual language ecology of Pakistan is a complex socio-academic enterprise. Success in achieving learning outcomes in English learning is not only related to what happens inside the walls of a classroom or in the school but is socially, economically, politically, and culturally situated in terms of the postcolonial history of the country, social divisions of socioeconomic class, and cultural discourse of in-group and out-group identities associated

with different languages. The approach to language learning in the two schools and classrooms, however, seems to treat English learning as a discrete academic enterprise. On the one hand, sociocultural contextual factors are not part of this approach and, on the other, the learners' agenda to develop their speaking fluency in English is not integrated into formal academic processes and pedagogic practices. This relates to what Rahman (2005) points out regarding learning English in Pakistan:

Calling a school English medium does not make it cross the class boundaries, which go by the name of English. One learns to operate in a certain manner and speak English spontaneously through interaction with the peer group and family. [...] This is where the illusion comes in. The parents spend so much money, which they can ill afford, chasing the illusive chimera of English. These are dreams and these schools sell dreams. (p. 36)

The following concluding chapter takes a broader view of the above findings and evaluates its implications for other EEL multilingual contexts. It focuses on how the findings in this study contribute to our existing knowledge about language learning in EFL contexts and what implications can be drawn from the findings of this study in terms of EFL pedagogy and language policy in Pakistan. The chapter points out the limitations of the present study and suggests what further research is needed to supplement the findings from this study.

## 8. CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

### 8.1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of recognizing the relevance of studying learners' identity and its importance to enhance learning outcomes, this thesis began with raising questions about the socially situated aspects of identity in language learning in the multilingual context of Pakistan. The issue of identity in additional language learning has arisen globally against the backdrop of globalization, increased mobility, and more widespread and efficient forms of communication. However, apart from the importance of identity in language learning in the context of international immigrants in developed western democracies, the construct is equally important in non-immigrant contexts where EFL language learners' identity is affected by social factors such as language hierarchy in multilingual settings and the learners' imagined identities regarding western developed countries where English is dominant.

Epistemologically, the issue is that the construct of identity is theorized and researched empirically from several different perspectives depending on whether the construct is operationalized to study social inequality and its relation to language learning, to study subjectivity of the learners (Kramsch, C., 2015), to focus on the hybrid nature of identity in English learning in postcolonial developing countries, or a combination of these perspectives (Sandhu & Higgins, 2016). Second, empirical research studies focusing on language and identity at the micro-level are scarce in Pakistan (Rahman, 2008). The current thesis started out to contribute to existing research literature from social justice and postcolonial perspective about the importance of identity studies for understanding issues in learning additional languages. By combining the social justice and postcolonial aspects of the

construct of identity, the thesis aimed to analyze socially situated perceptions of EFL learners in the multilingual context of northern Pakistan.

Building on findings from the current study, the following sections focus on what can be learned from this research study in terms of the broader picture of EFL education in Pakistan and how it can be related to other comparable contexts. The chapter starts out by summarizing the main findings of the study and its theoretical contribution to existing research literature. Educational, pedagogical, and policy-related implications of the study are then discussed along with recommendations arising from the finding of the current research. Next, the chapter takes a retrospective view of the design, sampling, and analytical approach of the study to assess the limitations of the study and suggest directions for future research work.

## 8.2. **SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS**

The research questions explored in the current thesis arose from my personal experiences in the past as an EFL learner in Pakistan and from current challenges in English language learning in the country. To explore EFL learning in the social context, this study focused on the socially situated aspects of EFL learners' language perceptions of their multilingual resources, opportunities for language learning and use in academic and social domains, the participants' perceptions of textual materials and their relation to language learning, and the places or people the learners imaginatively associated with EFL learning. These questions were explored against the backdrop of the multilingual ecology of the learners and the specific historical context of their social milieu as a postcolonial country ruled by Britain until 1947.

With regard to the first research question focusing on language perceptions of the participant learners about Pashto, Urdu, and English, findings of the current study suggest a significant overlap between learners from the two school contexts. In spite of differences in their socioeconomic background and school affiliation (Ummah being a low-fee and less prestigious school and Global a high-fee, high-status school locally known for quality English medium instruction) both groups of learners considered English as the most important language for its pragmatic value in terms of material gains and career prospects and as part of their exit strategy to gain access to developed countries where English is a dominant language. English was also prioritized as social capital which gave its speakers higher social status. The two local languages, Urdu and Pashto, were however perceived as less useful instrumentally in terms of career, material value etc. The learners perceived English at the top of their language priority followed by Urdu and Pashto. English and Urdu were perceived as literate languages having relevance in the academic domains whereas Pashto was valued for its affirmative role as a marker of family belonging and ethnic identity in non-literate domains. However, Pashto was seen as a non-literate language having little value in terms of education and career.

However, the learners' prioritization of English language and oral skills development seems undercut in academic and social domains. This theme in the data answers the second research question regarding opportunities and challenges for EFL learning in the academic, domestic, and social environments of the focal learners. Whereas both groups of learners prioritized oral skills in English, the linguistic ecology in school and society did not always support their language learning objectives. In the school and classroom, language teaching seemed predicated on a narrowly instrumental view of "language as an object" (Ellis, 2012) that the learners could acquire to secure good grades in high-stakes exams. This approach seemed to

provide the basis for the schools' emphasis on a monolingual English-only approach to language teaching in Global and an English-to-Urdu grammar-translation method in Ummah, both approaches considered essential for students to secure good grades. However, the learners viewed English as a flexible communicative tool that, apart from academic success, should enable them to gain access to global online and offline networks. Language policy in both school contexts affirmed Kramersch's (2015) argument that needs of the language learners in the current age of globalization have changed significantly but schools often consider "the language learner as a generic entity whose goals and needs are assumed to match those of the institutions that teach them" (p. 1). In both contexts, schools' monolingual language policy appeared repressive to the learners and not conducive to their language learning goals.

In relation to the same research question, findings also demonstrated a conflictual relation between individual language preferences of the learners and linguistic hierarchy in domestic and social domains (Duff, Patricia A., 2012; Moore, 2008). English learning in the multilingual postcolonial context of Pakistan emerged as a complex situated social activity not only related to learning structural aspects of language such as correct grammar and vocabulary but also related to language perception in the local linguistic ecology (Kramersch, 2008). Whereas Pashto and Urdu have greater social functioning in the context of this research, learners' prioritization of speaking practice seemed constrained by negative perceptions of the English as a carrier of western culture and as reminiscent of the British colonial occupation of the country. On the contrary, positive social perceptions of English seemed to promote learning English as the language of international access, good career and education opportunities inside and outside the country, and access to western developed countries.

The third research question explored in the current thesis relates to the perception of participant learners about cultural aspects of the English textbook contents and its relation to their language learning. Findings demonstrated that in both school contexts the learners received the texts as not only mediating formal aspects of language learning but also saw them as cultural artifacts that presented specific social environments. However, the learners seemed to struggle to engage with the cultural aspects of the texts as cultural contents in the curriculum were not explicitly discussed in the classroom. Whereas the Global participants seemed to distance themselves from the Cambridge University Press material in their O-level curriculum as describing social settings and cultural norms of western “others” that learners considered irrelevant in Pakistan, the Ummah learners showed greater engagement with cultural aspects of the locally-printed textbooks. However, Ummah learners demonstrated an essentialist understanding of the cultural aspects of the texts in terms of racial or national stereotypes often endorsing dichotomies like Muslim/non-Muslim, western/eastern, us/them, etc. Different parallel education systems in Pakistan use textbooks that depict cultural contents differently (Banerjee & Stöber, 2016; Mahboob, 2015) and classroom practice relies on the texts as a primary resource for language learning. However, as the data in this study show, explicit engagement with the cultural contents of the texts for promoting intercultural understanding and critical thinking in language learning is not part of the language pedagogy (Byram, 2018).

With regard to the fourth research question regarding what imagined or real places and people the participants associated with English learning and how this relates to their investment in EFL learning, both groups of learners seemed to perceive English as an enabling language that could give them access to the western developed countries. These countries were often romanticized as spaces of career development, social justice, and a clean

idyllic environment where individual freedom is guaranteed by the social order and students' right to self-directed learning is part of the education culture. On the one hand, echoing Norton and Kamal (2003), the focal learners' desire to acquire English for its instrumental value for outward social mobility seemed predicated on often an unstable law and order situation and incidents of terrorism in the area they come from. English was thus often linked with peace, freedom of choice, and social stability. On the other hand, the learners demonstrated awareness of a lack of learners' involvement in the schools' language policy and teaching practice; the western education system was seen as more egalitarian and learner-centered. The data thus indicate that learners perceived English learning as an exit strategy to enable their outward mobility from Pakistan and to access imagined communities in the western social and academic world. Pavlenko and Norton (2007) note that "if we do not acknowledge the imagined communities of the learners, we may exacerbate their non-participation and impact their learning trajectories in negative ways" (p. 678).

### 8.3. **METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION**

Methodologically, the current thesis is framed as a multi-sited ethnographic study to address the research aims of the current thesis. An ethnographic approach was selected for its flexibility to study broader social aspects of language learning (Starfield, 2010). Whereas ethnographic approaches in general support flexible research designs to study social phenomena, the *reflexive* ethnographic approach adopted in the current thesis also allowed me as a researcher to make my positioning in the field part of the data gathering and interpretation processes (Sarangi and Cadlin, 2003).

As a significant methodological contribution of the current thesis, the reflexive design of the study built upon my social position in terms of race, ethnicity, cultural background, and EFL learning experience. I share racial, ethnic, and cultural affiliations with my research

participants; I speak the same languages as they do; our language learning experiences in the multilingual ecology of this social context and the educational system overlap in significant ways. I, therefore, could not pretend to be an “independent” researcher producing “objective” knowledge in the study (Drake, 2010).

To use reflexivity “as a means to monitor the tension between involvement and detachment of the researcher and the researched as a means to enhance the rigor of the study and its ethics” (Berger, 2015, p. 3) the current study used the methods of researcher bracketing interviews and reflective journaling. With the help of a PhD colleague, two bracketing interviews were conducted, before and after fieldwork, to raise the awareness of the researcher about personal assumptions and sociocultural positioning. A bracketing journal was maintained throughout the study to help the researcher reflect critically upon his positioning in the field and while interpreting data. Further, to make the interpretive voice of the researcher transparent to the reader, the current thesis is predominantly written in the first-person narrative voice. As Drake (2010) points out, although tensions between the personal and impersonal aspects of research analysis exist in all kinds of research, qualitative researchers need to recognize and address them as an essential aspect of their interpretive claims and knowledge production. The current thesis contributes to this body of research literature that acknowledges explicitly the role of the researcher as a resource and as a point for critical reflection.

#### 8.4. **IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the research findings of this study, several recommendations are offered for language learning at the social, pedagogical, and policy levels. The following sections are not meant to prescribe what should be done to improve EFL learning outcomes; rather this study hopes to stimulate parents, teacher practitioners, and policymakers to acknowledge the

complexity of learning a foreign language as a situated social practice that is embedded in social perception of languages on the one hand and in the identity of the learners on the other. As the study was based on data gathered in the context of two private schools in Pakistan and focused on three learners from each school, the following implications and recommendations need to be interpreted with due diligence when generalizing to other similar contexts.

### *English language learning as social practice*

This study set out to explore broader sociocultural aspects of learning English as a foreign language in a multilingual context and in what ways the social aspects intersect with language learning in schools. Studies have hinted at social stratification in Pakistan as underlined by unequal access to quality education in an English medium instruction environment in expensive schools in Pakistan (Khan, 2013; Mahboob, 2007; Rahman, 2001; 2005). Based on his research in the context of two high-fee private schools in Pakistan, Khan (2013), for instance, argues:

The children of the affluent class, including the rich and employees of the civil and military institutions, have an obvious advantage at the higher level of education, which is almost completely in English. Similarly, they have an edge over mainstream school students in getting the best jobs, for which fluency in English is a key criterion. This suggests that language(s) play a significant role in determining social status. (p. 274)

However, the present study's findings suggest that social class may not account alone for difficulties in learning a foreign language. Findings suggest that our understanding of EFL learning in multilingual contexts can benefit from a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of how learners acquire a foreign language.

Negative social perception about a target language and the existence of language hierarchy in the society is a significant hindrance in learning a foreign language that cuts across social stratification. The two groups of students in the current thesis belong to different socio-

economic classes. Although the findings echo previous studies (Manan et al., 2017; Rahman, 2001; 2004; 2008) and instantiate that Global School students have greater access to English in domestic and academic domains as compared to the Ummah School students, both groups of students seem to struggle against social prohibitions in terms of language perceptions and language hierarchy that limit opportunities for them to practice English speaking and undercut their desire to improve English oral proficiency. This points towards deeper issues in English learning that permeate a whole social context and are contingent, for example, upon postcolonial historicity of the context and dominant local discourses regarding “foreign” languages being associated with “foreign” cultures.

The findings of the current thesis suggest that a mismatch between learners’ perception of languages (individual language hierarchy) and social perception of languages (social language hierarchy) counteract students’ chances of constructing a more empowering identity as learners and users of a foreign language (Norton, 2013). Whereas both groups of learners saw English as an international language that belonged to whoever uses it, the social language hierarchy seem to “otherize” English as the language of the *angrezan* and the western “liberal” culture; a language that is preferred for the “desirable goodies” (Lin & Martin, 2005) it can offer in terms of material gains and career prospects but remains culturally dysfunctional.

Whereas a focus on the role of social class, gender, and ethnicity in unequal access to English provides significant insights (Hamid & Jahan, 2015; Ullah & Skelton, 2016), the current study demonstrates that it might be more crucial for enhancing EFL learning outcomes to promote social debates through media campaigns and other public fora about raising awareness of the social and cultural aspects of EFL learning. It needs to be emphasized that

language learning is not confined to formal academic spaces like classrooms and schools but takes place across a range of social domains. Language perception and language hierarchy in these domains can support or weaken the language learning goals of ELLs. As Norton (2013) points out, “language learning is not an abstract skill [but] a social practice that engages the identities of learners in complex and sometimes contradictory ways” (p. 174). Social support and positive perception of the target language emerged as a significant missing factor in the current study. EFL learners perceived a disconnect between their learning goals and social language hierarchy, leaving most of the participants to learn English as a solo journey.

### *English language pedagogy*

It was not only in the social domains that the learners’ interest in developing English skills seemed undermined by dominant language hierarchy, in academic domains institutional agendas and pedagogic practice in both school contexts also seemed in conflict with the EFL learning goals of the participants. Whereas learners emphasized language acquisition as a functional integration of the target language in routine classroom communication, teachers appeared to prioritize the schools’ demand to focus on prescribed course contents to prepare learners for high stakes exams. Learners’ and teachers’ orientation towards language acquisition thus appeared misaligned.

Language learners are more diverse and unpredictable in the twenty-first century in terms of their learning needs whereas institutional agendas and teaching practices often assume that language learners are a generic group who have similar learning needs as those of the institutions and teachers who teach them (Kramsch, 2005). It can be concluded from the current study that, following the recommendations of Norton (2013), foreign language teachers might rethink their instructional strategies in multilingual classrooms:

Language teacher needs to help language the learners bridge the gap between their learning of the target language in the language classroom and their opportunities to practice it in the wider community. In order to bridge this gap, the lived experiences and identities of language learners need to be incorporated into the formal curriculum. (p. 182)

In academic courses that are geared towards securing good grades in standardized tests or high-stakes exams, learners are usually given little room to maneuver and steer their own language learning trajectories. Bridging the gap between language learning inside the classroom and learners' aspirations for language use and their imagined futures can be a good starting point for building curriculum and conducting pedagogy. Such a "ground-up approach" that views learners as active participants and not just passive receivers of a language program was found missing in both classrooms studied in the current thesis.

The desire to acquire better English proficiency for its transactional value in the current global order is argued to generate a demand for English among parents and learners in Pakistan (Ferguson, 2013; Manan et al., 2015; 2017). However, the pedagogic practice can help the learners achieve proficiency quickly and effectively only when it is sensitive to their social experiences outside the classroom and takes into account how the learners see the role of the language classroom in their language acquisition. A "pedagogy of possibility" (Simon, 1992) gives central importance to enhancing learners' capability and potential for future success based on their existing linguistic resources and future goals. At the risk of generalizing from limited data in the context of a small-scale study in the current thesis, EFL pedagogy in both participating schools can improve if it shifts towards creating a horizon of possibility through a learner-centered model of teaching. In terms of pedagogy, greater awareness about learners' "horizons of possibility" and flexible pedagogic practice to support learners' multi-directional language goals can enhance learners' stakes in the activities in the classroom and augment their investment in EFL learning.

### *English language policy*

In the context of the present thesis, evidence in both school contexts suggests that language learning goals and aspirations of the learners are not reflected in the language learning policies of the schools. Existing research points towards the divisive effects of parallel education systems in Pakistan as English and Urdu/mother-tongue schools and how it perpetuates social stratification (Khan, 2013). In sum, even in high-fee schools like Global that are locally known for high-quality English medium instruction, the English-dominant monolingual policy of the school does not seem to support learners' needs. Similarly, in Ummah, the Urdu-dominant monolingual policy seems disconnected from the learners' language learning goals.

In the context of Pakistan, a flexible multilingual policy is missing which will be based on a recognition of the multilingual ecology of the country (Kramsch, Claire & Whiteside, 2008; Manan et al., 2015). There is a need to shift from the current language policy model based on "subtractive bilingualism" (Fortune & Tedick, 2008) that assumes that proficiency in an additional language, such as English, can only be achieved through excluding students' existing linguistic resources from the classroom. A disconnect between national/school policy orientation and the learners' investment in acquiring a new language has important implications for students building either subordinate or powerful identities. Norton (2015) observes:

In contexts like Pakistan, Uganda, and Iran, where English is generally not spoken as a mother tongue, students are invested in English as a lingua franca that connects them to a wider world. The imagined identity of English language learners, younger and older, is that of a global multilingual citizenry, scaffolded by English, in which people are knowledgeable about other nations, and seek collaboration across borders. ... However, imagined identities are predicated on language policies and ideological practices in a given country. (pp. 386-87)

Finding in the current thesis illustrate that the learners' imagined English language user identities and their oral skills development goals are countered by monolingual hierarchical language policies. To improve learners' investment in classroom practices and maximize language acquisition in academic environments, flexible multilingual language policies need to be adopted that encourage accommodating the multilingual reality of learners' lives into classroom-based learning and encourage students to actively participate in shaping curricular goals and instructional approach. Following the recommendations of Cummins (2007, p. 222), if "we free ourselves from exclusive reliance on monolingual instructional approaches, a wide variety of opportunities arise for teaching languages by means of bilingual instructional strategies" and policies that are more egalitarian in promoting multilingual education.

#### *Protection of indigenous languages and EFL learning*

Threats to indigenous languages in multilingual contexts like Pakistan (Andrabi et al., 2006; Khan, Ajmal, 2013; Khan, Aziz Ullah, 2016) and elsewhere (Canagarajah, Suresh, 2006; Pennycook, 2010) have been highlighted in the scholarly literature. It can be concluded from the findings in the current study that indigenous languages like Pashto and Urdu are dominated by English which offers better instrumental value in terms of material gains and future career prospects. Whereas acquiring English opens new doors for the learners in terms of social and material capital, it also produces subordinate identities about indigenous languages. The dilemma for the multilingual learners is how to balance the desire for what English can offer with the emotional and familial value that a mother tongue has, a dilemma that Lin and Martin (2005) see as a typical "postcolonial puzzle". In the social context of the current thesis in northern Pakistan, other studies have argued that the indigenous language

Pashto might be going through language shift as it is steadily ousted from literate circles and the participant learners often feel ashamed about their heritage language identity (Khan, 2013).

At the risk of generalizing from the findings of this limited study, it can be concluded that language policy and classroom practice need to be connected with the natural language use of learners in society. During the interviews, most of the learners in this study seemed to mix freely their trilingual resources. However, the formal instruction environments in both schools emphasized an either-or approach to language use, expecting the students to shut off their multilingual mind and prioritize English only. However, research indicates that multilingual speakers experience reality multilingually. To introduce societal norms of language into the classroom, academic interest has converged recently around the concept of translanguaging as explained in Canagarajah (2011):

For multilinguals, languages are part of a repertoire that is accessed for their communicative purposes; languages are not discrete and separated, but form an integrated system for them; multilingual competence does not consist of separate competencies for each language, but a multicompetence that functions symbiotically for the different languages in one's repertoire; and, for these reasons, proficiency for multilinguals is focused on repertoire building, i.e., developing abilities in the different functions served by different languages, rather than total mastery of each and every language. (p. 1)

Although a relatively recent focus in multilingual education, the theory of translanguaging seems to offer immense potential for methodically introducing societal language norms into classroom practice. Multilingual learners develop a "wide panoramic view of self" (van Lier, 2008, p. 54) and more empowering associated with their indigenous language(s) if language classrooms are conceptualized as ecological microsystems (Creese and Martin, 2003, 2008) that build on social language and literacy practices instead of discouraging their use in formal instructional environments.

## 8.5. LIMITATIONS

Some limitations need to be mentioned to put in perspective the usefulness and transferability of the findings in this study. Subsequent research studies might improve on these limitations. This study was conducted within a multi-sited ethnographic design using qualitative tools. Statistical generalization is therefore not relevant in the context of the current study. Instead, transferability of the findings in the current thesis means “a transfer of knowledge to a specific new situation” judged critically “shifts the responsibility for generalizing from the researcher to the reader or potential user of the findings” (Maxwell & Chmiel, 2014, p. 541).

The following five limitations of the study are therefore meant to guide the readers and users of this research study about how the study was conducted and “to provide sufficient details so that readers can engage in reasonable but modest speculation about whether the findings are applicable to other cases” (Lincoln & Guba, 1997, p. 58).

First, an estimated 59% of students between the ages of 6 to 16 years old (Grades 1-10) attend private schools and around 35% go to the government schools in Pakistan (ASER, 2015). In terms of curriculum contents and examination system, Ummah School is closer to the government schools as compare to Global because it uses government textbook materials and learners take exams under the local district education board whereas Global follows the Cambridge international examination system. Nevertheless, significant differences exist between private schools in Pakistan and government schools in terms of infrastructure, teaching quality, and learners’ educational experiences (Andrabi et al., 2006; Channa, 2014; de Lotbinière, 2010). A study of government school students’ learning experiences and identity formation could have led to useful findings to complement the findings of the current thesis. However, the inclusion of a government school in the study was beyond the scope of

the current thesis due to time constraints and the qualitative approach of the study that focused on analytical depth, not on breadth of scope.

Secondly, parents are significant stakeholders in the educational processes in a social context. They might actively influence what language(s) are taught in schools and what learning outcomes are prioritized (Bloch & Alexander, 2003; Manan & David, 2014). Similarly, the significance of home literacy practices and family language policy (King & Fogle, 2006) for students' academic achievement is extensively researched. It might have helped the current thesis to develop a more holistic picture of the participant EFL learners' language learning journey and formation of their identity if parents were included among the research participants. However, the socio-academic context of the current thesis has certain constraints in terms of the interaction between males and females. Whereas some of the participants' fathers were abroad, as a male researcher I could not get access to interview the mothers. Another limitation related to the Global School informal policy that a researcher must not access the parents of the students and discuss any academic aspects of the school.

Thirdly, in the context of the current thesis language perceptions in a multilingual EFL context and its relation to "identity" formation of the learners are explored from a broad sociocultural perspective. Perceptual data were gathered through semi-structured interviews that aimed to elicit information about language perception and identity. Whereas the correlation between EFL learning and socio-economic class, indigenous language perception, and imagined future goals were foci, the study might have benefited from a stricter delimitation of its focus. During the course of this research, language perception of multilingual resources of the learners and its correlation with language hierarchy in social domains emerged as a theme broad enough to justify being an exclusive focus of this study

(Agha, 2007; Duff, Patricia A., 2012; Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011). Similarly, learners' imagined communities and imagined identities and their correlation with socioeconomic class and parallel education systems in Pakistan could have been enough as the only focus of this study.

Fourthly, as Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) point out, in “naturalistic” applied research in social sciences, the context is complex and unpredictable and research processes rarely, if ever, go as initially planned. Several adaptations and compromises might need to be made once the researcher lands in the field. This study was no exception in this regard. Initially, the study planned to invite participants in both school contexts by putting ads for research participants at appropriate places in the school like student notice boards. I expected to have several students volunteering to participate in the study with whom I would then have informal meetings. On the basis of initial responses, I planned to select participants who could best provide data relevant to the research aims of the current study. However, the schools wanted me to interview learners that they selected as the most suitable. In line with ethical research practice, I informed the chosen participants that their participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study if they wanted to. However, if participants had been elicited through an open call, the range of students' capabilities might have been wider, as the schools selected only more capable students. On the positive side, they allowed me to interview female students which would not have been possible through an open call due to local norms of separation between males and females.

Fifthly, the reflexive methodology adopted in this ethnographic study was part of ensuring the credibility of the research and methodically controlling the effects of the researcher's biases and assumptions as a social insider. However, being an insider researcher who shares

the social and academic context of his research participants can render the research analysis vulnerable (Boylorn, 2011). As a researcher and teacher practitioner, my personal attachment with the research context and investment in creating more equitable EFL learning opportunities carries the risk of reproducing or endorsing unanalyzed assumptions and biases. It also runs the bigger risk of what Moreira (2011) points out - that “knowledge production about the Other still tends to reify the very oppression it intends to challenge” (p. 145).

## 8.6. FUTURE RESEARCH

With regard to EFL learning in low-resource multilingual contexts, the findings in this study raised several issues that need further research. These issues range from modifying the scope and methodology of future research studies to investigating broader issues related to EFL pedagogy and policy.

### *Extending the research context and participants*

As a start, including government school participants and teachers can contribute to developing a more complete picture of language perception, language hierarchy, and learners’ identity formation and how it correlates to EFL learning success. Other studies also suggest that “identity management” in Pakistan can be analyzed in terms of the state language and textbook policies in government schools that aim to shape specific learners’ identities (Mahboob, 2015). As government schools provide education to a majority of the students in Pakistan, future research focus on these schools in terms of identity formation and the perception of multilingual resources can be useful. Further, as mentioned previously, the present study did not include parent participants. Inclusion of parents of government and private school learners in identity studies can be important to “map the sociocultural ecology

of the learners” (Manan, 2014, p. 203) and its relation to identity and language learning success.

#### *Specific research on social aspects in EFL*

In terms of research focus, the current study raised important questions about EFL learning as social practice in a multilingual context. Future research studies might be conducted focusing on more specific aspects of EFL learning. For instance, studies might focus on the correlation of social class with language perception and language hierarchy and their effect on whether students develop more empowering or subordinate identities (Durrani, N. & Dunne, 2010; Fina, 2012; Norton, 2011; 2013) as learners of English. Norton (2013) stresses that the lived experiences of language learners outside the schools and classrooms need to be made part of the formal curriculum to support language learning and empower learners. However, how to do this in a specific context, such as Pakistan, requires more research on specific aspects of social context and how they support or contradict the language goals of the learners.

#### *Intervention studies in multilingual pedagogy*

The current thesis points towards learners’ lack of autonomy in the language classroom where they seem to have little control over what is taught to them and how and, on the other hand, towards a disconnect between the social language hierarchy and learners’ desire to practice oral skills in social domains. Insights gained as a result of the current research might be augmented by conducting intervention studies to test, for instance, translingual pedagogy based on emerging research (Canagarajah, Suresh, 2013; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García & Wei, 2014; Otheguy et al., 2019) that supports flexible teaching approaches and integration of societal linguistic practices in formal teaching. Insights from applied studies are needed in order to counter monolingual top-down policies and their impact on teachers’ professional

practice. Bari et al.'s (2016) study, for instance, reports about the recent abrupt government language policy shift in the Punjab province in Pakistan to teach only in English from Grade 5 onwards. Teachers did not feel confident in monolingual instruction and tried to avoid content classes that were expected to be taught exclusively in English. Intervention based research studies might investigate the effect of alternative multilingual pedagogies that might promote empowering learners' identities and flexibility in teaching practice.

### *Imagined identities in EFL*

To increase learners' investment in formal language teaching practices, it is important to develop in them a sense of "ownership of English" (Ayres, 2003; Norton, 1997; Paquet-Gauthier & Beaulieu, 2016). However, learners' investment is not only conditioned by their present-day social experiences in different domains of life but also their imagined future and imagined identities in English learning. The findings of the current thesis support what has been pointed out elsewhere in the research literature. Pavlenko and Norton (2007), for instance, stress that "language learners' actual and desired memberships in imagined communities affect their learning trajectories, influencing their agency, motivation, investment, and resistance in the learning of English" (p. 669). The current thesis findings suggest that schools and social domains engender powerful or subordinate identities among learners that affect learning outcomes and students' ownership of English. Future research might focus on studying learners' imagined identities in English, its effect on learning outcomes, and how schools and other social domains are implicated in promoting a certain types of imagined identities among learners.

### *Broader mixed-methods policy-oriented research*

Although the current thesis was not based on policy analysis and is a small-scale study focused on learners' perspectives, the findings indicate that both learners and teachers are affected negatively by monolingual policy in Pakistan on the one hand and by a lack of teachers' autonomy to develop ground-up flexible teaching practice suitable for their learners on the other. Future research might focus on broader policy-oriented issues related to success in multilingual education in Pakistan. Such research might use mixed-methods research to combine the breadth of survey data, for example, with a fine-grained analysis through qualitative socially-oriented research. Data need to be gathered in various schools (low- and high-fee private and government-run schools) in all five provinces in Pakistan in order to make a case for a policy shift from a monolingual top-down policy approach to a flexible multilingual ground-up approach.

### *Indigenous language(s) protection*

Findings in the current study are in line with what has been reported elsewhere in the literature regarding the declining status of indigenous languages in Pakistan and students and teachers developing subordinate identities in their first language (Khan, 2013). An offshoot of monolingual English-only policies and global networks and discourses supporting English at the expense of other languages (Canagarajah, S., 1999; Phillipson, 1992; 2006; 2013), English seems to have acquired the status of a hegemonic language of social mobility, prestige, and literate practices in educated circles (Blackledge, 2008). In the wake of the "multilingual turn" (May, S., 2013; Ortega, 2010; Paquet-Gauthier & Beaulieu, 2016) and, more recently, the translingual turn, future research might explore alternative ways of linguistic ecology in which different languages can coexist and not necessarily compete

against each other. An ecological model of multilingual identity would require reimagining socio-academic spaces where indigenous languages can breathe and flourish along with more dominant ones like English. Future research might prioritize investigating possibilities and challenges in developing ecologically-oriented ways of EFL with a focus on promoting and preserving marginalized indigenous languages in Pakistan and elsewhere.

#### 8.7. **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

My aim in the current thesis has been to investigate the socially situated aspects of EFL learning in the multilingual context of Pakistan with a specific focus on learners' perspectives. The present thesis has implications for enhancing learning outcomes, encouraging empowering identities among learners, and highlighting the position of indigenous languages. The findings have relevance not only for EFL learning but also for learners' positioning and identity as English users in a postcolonial developing country. The thesis shows conflictual perspectives and ambivalent stances regarding the cultural perception of English and its relevance for the here and now in learners' lives and their imagined future destinations. The social hierarchical perception of languages seems to "otherize" English as a western language whereas learners aspire to have greater freedom to speak it in social domains because they perceive it as an international language that belongs to whoever acquires it.

To explore "gaps and possibilities" for empowering learners amidst social structures and school and classroom agenda, this thesis adopted a broad-based ethnographic design and a flexible qualitative approach. EFL learning as a social practice emerged as a significant aspect in this research as learners seemed to struggle against socially endorsed language hierarchy and socio-educationally upheld monolingual attitudes towards language

acquisition. In this ecology of languages, it appeared hard but not impossible for learners to forge empowering identities as learners and users of English.

Although differences between the two groups of learners did emerge in terms of the effect of social class and school prestige level and its relation to EFL learning opportunities for the students, the broad sociocultural factors just mentioned seemed to cut across these dichotomies and affect learners in both school contexts in spite of wide differences between their socioeconomic backgrounds and school prestige level. In this situation, it is reassuring that on a global level there has been a steady increase over the last couple of decades in terms of emphasis on the “multilingual turn” (May, S., 2013; Paquet-Gauthier & Beaulieu, 2016) in applied linguistics that acknowledges the importance and relevance of incorporating the existing multilingual resources of the learners to scaffold learning an additional language.

This study suggests that research needs to seriously tackle the complexity of the linguistic ecology in Pakistan instead of endorsing partial and simplifying approaches based, for example, only on social stratification argument that the students from wealthy backgrounds have access to English while others do not. The findings in the present study suggest that the picture might be far more complex and multidimensional. Secondly, learners’ voices need to be heard and they need to contribute to making decisions regarding their learning trajectories and EFL learning outcomes. All participants in this study expressed concerns over a lack of their say in academic matters. As learner participants have been the primary focus of this exploratory study, perhaps the best way to end this thesis is with the words of a learner participant as she addressed the researcher:

I would like to keep in touch and discuss my English learning experiences after you finish your data collection in this school. It is for the first time that someone listened to me with such attention and to what I have to say, what I feel, what I want in the school. Nowadays even when I am at home, I keep thinking about what I want to say in the interviews. Thank you for being here. (Sabiha, Int. 3)

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## APPENDIX 1: COPIES OF THE ETHICS FORMS



**EDUCATION AND  
SOCIAL WORK**

**CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY**

Epsom Campus

Gate 3, 74 Epsom Ave Auckland, New Zealand T +64 9 623 8899

W [www.education.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.education.auckland.ac.nz)

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

**(SCHOOL PRINCIPAL)**

**Reference number:** 018482

**Project title:** Exploring local and global identities in foreign language classrooms in Pakistan

**Researcher:** Imdad Ullah (i.ullah@auckland.ac.nz)

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Assalamu Alaikum, I am a PhD student in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Auckland. My supervisor is Associate Professor Martin East and my co-supervisor is Dr Douglas Loveless from the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

I would like to introduce my research project for which I am seeking your permission to access students and teachers in this school as participants.

I am also seeking an assurance from you that, if you allow me to access students and teachers in this school, their participation or non-participation in my research study will not affect their grades or employment with the school.

The aim of this research study is to understand the relationship between the teaching of English as a foreign language and the linguistic and cultural identities of the students who are learning English. English is considered an important language in Pakistan. Learners of English have different expectations about what they want to achieve through learning the language. My research looks at how students *see themselves* as learners of English – at present and in the future.

Through this research, I will be looking into questions such as what learners want to achieve through learning English; what is their attitude towards English as representing western culture; what influences their views about English language (such as their teachers, the school language policy; their family; and their ethnic and religious backgrounds); how they identify themselves with *imagined communities* of speakers of English (communities with whom they do not have physical contact but who they imagine as communities of speakers of English and to whom they imagine to have access sometime in the future). Answers to these questions will help us understand the teaching of English from the point of view of young learners of English. It is important to conduct research on highlighting 'students' voices' in the discourse on *language and identity*, and its implications for learning of English, because students are the recipient of all the measures taken by schools to enhance language learning. Researching their 'voices' regarding identity in language will provide useful data from the learners' perspective which will be helpful in understanding how learning of English is conceptualized by the young learners.

If you allow me to access students and teachers in this school, I would like to hold a meeting with the teacher who teaches English as a subject to class 10 (16 years old students). I will approach the

teacher either myself or through another teacher. I am not requesting you to oblige the teacher either to meet me or to participate in my study. His/her consent to meet me would be totally voluntary.

If s/he agrees to meet me, I will discuss my research project with the teacher and answer any questions s/he may have about the research study. I will also explain to the teacher how much time commitment is involved if s/he agrees to participate in the study. I will explain to him/her what will be his/her rights as a research participant. I will provide Participant Information Sheet (PIS) which explains in detail what it entails if s/he agrees to participate in the study. If the teacher volunteers to participate in my research study, I will provide him/her a copy of the Consent Form (CF) to sign.

It is mentioned in the CF form that, as a participant in this study, the teacher will facilitate me in accessing the students in his/her English language class. I will request the teacher to arrange a short meeting for me with his/her English students. The time and venue of the meeting will be decided according to the availability and convenience of the students. I will explain to the students what my research is about; answer their questions; tell them how much time commitment is required if they choose to participate; and what will be their rights as participants. I will request for 3 volunteers to participate in my study. If, however, more than 3 students agree to participate, students will be excluded who:

- do not belong to the ethnic group I am studying (Pashtun)
- who are not in the age group of my research sample (16 years old)
- who do not come from the social class of my research sample

If, however, the English teacher does not volunteer to participate in the study or there are not enough student participants to volunteer for the study, I will look for participants in another school in the vicinity.

I will also conduct eight classroom observations (each observation covering the entire duration of the class, i.e. 40 minutes). The observations will be carried out over a four-month period (Feb 1 to May 31, 2017). The observations will focus on the following aspects of the classroom:

- language(s) used as the medium of instruction
- instances of teacher's use of local or national language
- students level of participation in classroom activities in response to the language of instruction
- language(s) used by the students while participating in the class
- cultural aspects of the course content taught in the class
- students' reaction to the cultural aspects of the teaching content

Before I observe classes, all potential participants will be informed of the observation. They will be given the opportunity not to participate in the observation if they do not want to. Before I observe classes, all students (participant and non-participant) will be informed of the observation. It will be clarified to the non-participant students in the classroom that some students are being observed but that the researcher will not record anything that non-participants say or do. During observations, I will position myself in the class where I have the maximum chance of hearing classroom conversation and observing the teacher and the students. The position may vary depending on the actual situation in the class. During observations, I will be taking notes in my researcher journal which will help me in the subsequent analysis of the data by providing contextual information as it happened at the time of observation.

In terms of the time commitment required from the participants for the interviews, I would like to conduct two individual **interviews** with each student and two interviews with the participant teacher. Each interview will be of one-hour duration. Total time commitment required from each student and the teacher is, therefore, two hours, spread over two occasions during the term. The interviews will be scheduled as per the convenience of the participants.

The interviews can be in **any one language**, as per the choice of the participants, out of the three languages of English, Urdu, or Pashto. I will audio record the interviews and then type up the interview data (transcription) and, if the participant had chosen a different language for the interview, translate it into English. Participants will have the right to **withdraw** part or all of their interview data up to 21 days after each interview was conducted. However, they will have the opportunity to edit their transcript until May 31, 2017.

If they do not wish their interview to be audio-recorded, they can choose to ask me not to record it, or to stop recording during the interview. In that case, I will be taking handwritten notes. During the interview, participants can choose not to answer any question, without having to give a reason. After I complete my research, interview recording and transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, for six years and will then be destroyed safely.

Research participants can withdraw from participating in the study at any stage, even when they have participated in one or more interviews.

The data generated from the interviews and observations will be used only for PhD research thesis and related publication purposes. Analyses and conclusions based on the data will be reported in a way that students, teachers, the principal, or the school and its location will not be identified either by name or indirectly. The anonymity of all participants in all reporting is assured. If you would like to receive a copy of the summary of data analysis and results, you can indicate this on the consent form and I will be happy to provide it to you.

As a token of my appreciation for the time they will be giving to my research, I would be offering all participants a gift in the form of a **book voucher** (worth NZD 30), which will be available for them to collect at the first interview. The participants will be able to buy books by showing the voucher (printed receipt) in the nearby book market. If they choose to withdraw their participation from the research at any stage of the interviews, they will **not** have to refund this voucher.

If you agree to my request for access to the recruit participants from this school and conduct my research in this school, then please sign the attached consent form.

As per the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethic Committee guidelines, I have also committed to abiding by the cultural and social norms of the community where I conduct this research project.

If there are any aspects of my research project which are not clear to you, I would be happy to respond to any questions. My contact details, and of my supervisors from the University of Auckland, are given below.

#### **CONTACT DETAILS AND APPROVAL**

Student Researcher name and contact details	Supervisor name and contact details	Co-Supervisor name and contact details	Head of Department name and contact details
Imdad Ullah PhD Student, School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Auckland	Associate Professor Martin East School of Curriculum and Pedagogy Faculty of Education and Social Work The University of Auckland	Dr Douglas Loveless Lecturer School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Auckland	Associate Professor Helen Hedges Head of School School of Curriculum and Pedagogy Faculty of Education and Social Work The University of

Phone (in Pakistan): 03459514589 Email: <a href="mailto:i.ullah@auckland.ac.nz">i.ullah@auckland.ac.nz</a>	Phone:(09) 623 8899 ext. 48345 Email: <a href="mailto:m.east@auckland.ac.nz">m.east@auckland.ac.nz</a>	Phone: (09) 373 7999 ext. 48623 email: <a href="mailto:d.loveless@auckland.ac.nz">d.loveless@auckland.ac.nz</a>	Auckland Phone: (9) 623 8899 ext. 48606 Email: <a href="mailto:h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz">h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz</a>
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For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethic Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.

Email: [ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz)

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE  
 ON Jan 19, 2017. REFERENCE NUMBER: 018482

## CONSENT FORM

### (SCHOOL PRINCIPAL)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

**Reference number:** 018482

**Project title:** Exploring local and global identities in foreign language classrooms in Pakistan

**Researcher:** Imdad Ullah ([i.ullah@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:i.ullah@auckland.ac.nz))

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The researcher has explained this research project to me. I understand what it is about. I was given an opportunity to ask questions about the research and my questions have been answered.

I understand that:

- the researcher is requesting to have my permission to conduct this study in our school.
- he will conduct individual interviews with the English language teacher of class 10 and with three students from this class. He will also observe the English teacher and the three students in the classroom.
- before observing the classes, it will be clarified to the non-participant students in the classroom that some students are being observed but that the researcher will not record anything that non-participants say or do.
- participation in this research project is **voluntary** and participants can choose to withdraw their participation in the study at any stage of data collection, without having to give reasons for doing so.
- the researcher will share transcripts (written files) of the interviews with the participants and they can edit, rephrase, modify, or withdraw any comment from the transcripts till June 30, 2017.
- the participants will be able to withdraw their data from interviews up to 21 days from the date of data collection.
- no participant or the school will be identified by name in the research report written as PhD dissertation or related research publications. The confidentiality of the participants will be ensured.
- If I want, I can request a summary of the findings by providing my email address below.

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I give assurance that whether teachers and students from this school choose to participate in this research or not, it will not affect their employment status or studies in any way.

I agree with the study to take place in my school.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethic Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.

Email: [ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz)

**APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS  
COMMITTEE ON Jan 19, 2017. REFERENCE NUMBER: 018482**

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

### (TEACHER)

**Reference number:** 018482

**Project title:** Exploring local and global identities in foreign language classrooms in Pakistan

**Researcher:** Imdad Ullah

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Assalamu Alaikum,

I am a PhD student in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Auckland. My supervisor is Associate Professor Martin East and my co-supervisor is Dr Douglas Loveless from the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Participation in this research is voluntary. Your school principal has given written formal assurance that your participation, or non-participation, in this research will not affect your employment or relation with the school in any way.

I would now like to introduce my research project for which I am seeking your voluntary participation. The aim of this research study is to understand the relationship between the teaching of English as a foreign language and the linguistic and cultural identities of the students who are learning English. English is considered an important language in Pakistan. Learners of English have different expectations about what they want to achieve through learning the language. My research looks at how students *see themselves* as learners of English – at present and in the future.

Through this research, I will be looking into questions such as what learners want to achieve through learning English; what is their attitude towards English as representing western culture; what influences their views about English language (such as their teachers, the school language policy; their family; and their ethnic and religious backgrounds); how they identify themselves with *imagined communities* of speakers of English (communities with whom they do not have physical contact but who they imagine as communities of speakers of English and to whom they imagine to have access sometime in the future). Answers to these questions will help us understand the teaching of English from the point of view of young learners of English. It is important to conduct research on highlighting ‘students’ voices’ in the discourse on *language and identity*, and its implications for learning of English, because students are the recipient of all the measures taken by schools to enhance language learning. Researching their ‘voices’ regarding identity in language will provide useful data from the learners’ perspective which will be helpful in understanding how learning of English is conceptualized by the young learners.

My research study includes as participants teachers and students from two schools in this area. After getting permission from the principal to access teachers and students, I am here to explain to you what this research is about; how much time commitment is involved if you agree to participate in this study; and your rights as a research participant. This Participant Information Sheet (PIS) explains these aspects of my research in detail. After you read the PIS, I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about any aspect of my research. If you choose to volunteer to participate in my research study, I will request you to sign a Consent Form (CF) which means that you understand your rights as a research participant and that you volunteer to be part of my research study.

It is mentioned in the CF that I am also requesting for your voluntary agreement to facilitate me in accessing the students in your English language class. I will hold a short meeting the students in

which I will explain to them: what my research is about; answered their questions about any aspect of the research and their participation in it; clarify how much time commitment is required if they choose to participate; and what will be their rights as participants. During my meeting with the students, I will request for 3 volunteer students to participate in my research study.

In terms of the time commitment required from the participants for the interviews, I would like to conduct two individual interviews with each student and two interviews with the participant teacher. Each interview will be of one-hour duration. Total time commitment required from each student and the teacher is, therefore, two hours, spread over two occasions during the term. The interviews will be scheduled as per the convenience of the participants.

The interviews can be in any one language, as per the choice of the participants, out of the three languages of English, Urdu, or Pashto. I will audio record the interviews and then type up the interview data (transcription) and, if the participant had chosen a different language for the interview, translate it into English. Participants will have the right to withdraw part or all of their interview data up to two weeks from the date of receiving a copy of the transcript. However, they will have the opportunity to edit their transcript until May 31, 2017.

If a participant does not wish his/her interview to be audio-recorded, they can choose to ask me not to record it, or to stop recording during the interview. In that case, I will be taking handwritten notes. During the interview, participants can choose not to answer any question, without having to give a reason. After I complete my research, interview recording and transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, for six years and will then be destroyed safely.

I will also like to conduct eight classroom observations of your English language classes (each observation covering the entire duration of the class, i.e. 40 minutes). The observations will be carried out over a four-month period (Feb 1 to May 31, 2017). The observations will focus on the following aspects of the classroom:

- language(s) used as the medium of instruction
- instances of teacher's use of local or national language
- students level of participation in classroom activities in response to the language of instruction
- language(s) used by the students while participating in the class
- cultural aspects of the course content taught in the class
- students' reaction to the cultural aspects of the teaching content

Before I observe classes, all potential participants will be informed of the observation. They will be given the opportunity not to participate in the observation if they do not want to. During observations, I will position myself in the class where I have the maximum chance of hearing classroom conversations and observing the teacher and the students. The position may vary depending on the actual situation in the class. During observations, I will be taking notes in my researcher journal which will help me in the subsequent analysis of the data by providing contextual information as it happened at the time of observation.

Research participants can withdraw from participating in the study at any stage, even when they have participated in one or more interviews.

The data collected from the interviews and observations will be used only for PhD research thesis and related publication purposes. Analyses and conclusions based on the data will be reported in a way that students, teachers, the principal, or the school and its location will not be identified either by

name or indirectly. The anonymity of all participants in all reporting is assured. If you would like to receive a copy of the summary of data analysis and results, you can indicate this on the consent form and I will be happy to provide it to you.

As a token of my appreciation for the time they will be giving to my research, I would be offering all participants a gift in the form of a *book voucher (worth NZD 30)*, which will be available for them to collect at the first interview. The participants will be able to buy books by showing the voucher (printed receipt) in the nearby book market. If they choose to withdraw their participation from the research at any stage of the interviews, they will **not** have to refund this voucher.

As per the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee guidelines, I have committed to abide by the cultural and social norms of the community where I conduct this research project.

If there are any aspects of my research project which are not clear to you, I would be happy to respond to any questions. My contact details, and of my supervisors from the University of Auckland, are given below.

### CONTACT DETAILS AND APPROVAL

Student Researcher name and contact details	Supervisor name and contact details	Co-Supervisor name and contact details	Head of Department name and contact details
Imdad Ullah PhD Student, School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Auckland  Phone (in Pakistan): 03459514589 Email: <a href="mailto:i.ullah@auckland.ac.nz">i.ullah@auckland.ac.nz</a>	Associate Professor Martin East School of Curriculum and Pedagogy Faculty of Education and Social Work The University of Auckland Phone:(09) 623 8899 ext. 48345 Email: <a href="mailto:m.east@auckland.ac.nz">m.east@auckland.ac.nz</a>	Dr Douglas Loveless Lecturer School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Auckland Phone: (09) 373 7999 ext. 48623 email: <a href="mailto:d.loveless@auckland.ac.nz">d.loveless@auckland.ac.nz</a>	Associate Professor Helen Hedges Head of School School of Curriculum and Pedagogy Faculty of Education and Social Work The University of Auckland Phone: (9) 623 8899 ext. 48606 Email: <a href="mailto:h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz">h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz</a>

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Email: [ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz)

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE  
 ON Jan 19, 2017. REFERENCE NUMBER: 018482

## CONSENT FORM

(TEACHER)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

**Reference number:** 018482

**Project title:** Exploring local and global identities in foreign language classrooms in Pakistan

**Researcher:** Imdad Ullah (i.ullah@auckland.ac.nz)

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The researcher has explained this research project to me. I understand what it is about. I was given an opportunity to ask questions about the research and my questions have been answered.

I understand that:

- the school principal has been contacted by the researcher to conduct this study in our school and he has given formal, written permission for it.
- the principal has given assurance to the researcher that whether I choose to participate in this study or not, it will not affect the nature of my job, or my relationship with the school, in any way.
- participation in this research project is **voluntary**, and I can choose to withdraw my participation in the study at any stage of data collection, without having to give reasons for doing so.
- I am asked by the researcher to help him to meet my English language students to request for 3 student volunteers to participate in this research study.
- I will be interviewed by the researcher; he will record our conversations on an audio device; and he will observe me in the classroom teaching English to my students.
- I can ask him not to record my interview session or to stop recording at any time during the interview. I am free not to answer any questions I do not wish to answer.
- the researcher will share his transcripts (written files) of the interviews with me and I can edit, rephrase, modify, or withdraw any comments from the transcripts until June 30, 2017.
- I will be able to withdraw my complete data up to two weeks from the date of receiving a copy of the transcript.
- I, any participant in the research, and the school will not be identified by name, or in any other way, in the PhD research report, and related publications, by the researcher. The confidentiality of the participants will be ensured.
- If I want, I can request a summary of the findings by providing my email address below.

---

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.

Email: [ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz)

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE  
ON Jan 19, 2017. REFERENCE NUMBER: 018482

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

(STUDENT)

**Reference number:** 018482

**Project title:** Exploring local and global identities in foreign language classrooms in Pakistan

**Researcher:** Imdad Ullah

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Assalamu Alaikum,

I am a PhD student in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Auckland. My supervisor is Associate Professor Martin East and my co-supervisor is Dr Douglas Loveless from the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Participation in this research is voluntary. Your school principal has given written formal assurance that your participation, or non-participation, in this research will not affect your employment or relation with the school in any way.

I would now like to introduce my research project for which I am seeking your voluntary participation. The aim of this research study is to understand the relationship between the teaching of English as a foreign language and the linguistic and cultural identities of the students who are learning English. English is considered an important language in Pakistan. Learners of English have different expectations about what they want to achieve through learning the language. My research looks at how students *see themselves* as learners of English – at present and in the future.

Through this research, I will be looking into questions such as what learners want to achieve through learning English; what is their attitude towards English; what influences their views about English language (such as their teachers, the school language policy; their family; and their ethnic and religious backgrounds); how they see themselves as speakers of English in the future. Answers to these questions will help me to understand the teaching of English from the point of view of young learners of English. Researching students' 'voices' regarding learning the English language may provide useful data from the learners' perspective which will be helpful in understanding how learning of English is understood by the young learners.

My research study includes as participants teachers and students from two schools in this area. After getting permission from the principal to access teachers and students, I held a meeting with your English language teacher in order to explain my research study. I answered his/her questions about the research study. I also explained to the teacher how much time commitment is involved if s/he agrees to participate in the study. I explained to him/her what will be his/her rights as a research participant. I provided the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) which explains in detail what it means if s/he agrees to participate in the study. The teacher volunteered to participate in my research study. I provided him/her a copy of the Consent Form (CF) which s/he signed as formal consent to be a participant in this research study.

It is mentioned in the CF form that, as a participant in this study, the teacher will facilitate me in accessing the students in his/her English language class. I requested the teacher to arrange a short meeting for me with his/her English students. In today's meeting with, I explained to you: what my research is about; answered your questions; clarified how much time commitment is required if you choose to participate; and what will be your rights as participants. All these points about my research are explained in this PIS.

In terms of the time commitment required from the participants for the interviews, I would like to conduct two individual interviews with each student and two interviews with the participant teacher. Each interview will be of one-hour duration. Total time commitment required from each student and the teacher is, therefore, two hours, spread over two occasions during the term. The interviews will be scheduled as per the convenience of the participants. The interview can be in any language of your choosing from among the three languages of English, Urdu, or Pashto. During the interview, you will be at liberty to switch between languages whenever you like.

I will audio record the interviews and then type up the interview data (transcription) and, if the participant had chosen a different language for the interview, translate it into English. Once transcription of the recordings is completed, it will be shared with the participants. Participants will have the right to withdraw part or all of their interview data up to two weeks from the date of receiving a copy of the transcript. However, they will have the opportunity to edit their transcript until May 31, 2017.

If a participant does not wish his/her interview to be audio-recorded, they can choose to ask me not to record it, or to stop recording during the interview. In that case, I will be taking handwritten notes. During the interview, participants can choose not to answer any question, without having to give a reason. After I complete my research, interview recording and transcripts will be kept in a locked cabinet at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, for six years and will then be destroyed safely.

I will also conduct eight classroom observations (each observation covering the entire duration of the class, i.e. 40 minutes). The observations will be carried out over a four-month period (Feb 1 to May 31, 2017). The observations will focus on the following aspects of the classroom:

- language(s) used as the medium of instruction
- instances of teacher's use of local or national language
- students level of participation in classroom activities in response to the language of instruction
- language(s) used by the students while participating in the class
- cultural aspects of the course content taught in the class
- students' reaction to the cultural aspects of the teaching content

Before I observe classes, all potential participants will be informed of the observation. They will be given the opportunity not to participate in the observation if they do not want to. During observations, I will position myself in the class where I have the maximum chance of hearing classroom conversations and observing the teacher and the students. The position may vary depending on the actual situation in the class. During observations, I will be taking notes in my researcher journal which will help me in the subsequent analysis of the data by providing contextual information as it happened at the time of observation.

Research participants can withdraw from participating in the study at any stage, even when they have participated in one or more interviews.

The data generated from the interviews and observations will be used only for PhD research thesis and related publication purposes. Analyses and conclusions based on the data will be reported in a way that students, teachers, the principal, or the school and its location will not be identified either by name or indirectly. The confidentiality of all participants in all reporting is assured. If you would like to receive a copy of the summary of data analysis and results, you can indicate this on the consent form and I will be happy to provide it to you.

As a token of my appreciation for the time they will be giving to my research, I would be offering all participants a gift in the form of a *book voucher* (worth NZD 30), which will be available for them to collect at the first interview. The participants will be able to buy books by showing the voucher

(printed receipt) in the nearby book market. If they choose to withdraw their participation from the research at any stage of the interviews, they will ***not*** have to refund this voucher.

If you agree to participate in my research study, then please sign the attached consent form.

As per the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee guidelines, I have committed to abide by the cultural and social norms of the community where I conduct this research project.

If there are any aspects of my research project which are not clear to you, I would be happy to respond to any questions. My contact details, and of my supervisors from the University of Auckland, are given below.

### CONTACT DETAILS AND APPROVAL

Student Researcher name and contact details	Supervisor name and contact details	Co-Supervisor name and contact details	Head of Department name and contact details
Imdad Ullah PhD Student, School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Auckland  Phone (in Pakistan): 03459514589 Email: <a href="mailto:i.ullah@auckland.ac.nz">i.ullah@auckland.ac.nz</a>	Associate Professor Martin East School of Curriculum and Pedagogy Faculty of Education and Social Work The University of Auckland Phone:(09) 623 8899 ext. 48345 Email: <a href="mailto:m.east@auckland.ac.nz">m.east@auckland.ac.nz</a>	Dr Douglas Loveless Lecturer School of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education and Social Work, The University of Auckland Phone: (09) 373 7999 ext. 48623 email: <a href="mailto:d.loveless@auckland.ac.nz">d.loveless@auckland.ac.nz</a>	Associate Professor Helen Hedges Head of School School of Curriculum and Pedagogy Faculty of Education and Social Work The University of Auckland Phone: (9) 623 8899 ext. 48606 Email: <a href="mailto:h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz">h.hedges@auckland.ac.nz</a>

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.

Email: [ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz)

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE  
 ON Jan 19, 2017. REFERENCE NUMBER: 018482

## CONSENT FORM

(STUDENT)

THIS FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

**Reference number:** 018482

**Project title:** Exploring local and global identities in foreign language classrooms in Pakistan

**Researcher:** Imdad Ullah (i.ullah@auckland.ac.nz)

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The researcher has explained this research project to me. I understand what it is about. I was given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and my questions have been answered

I understand that:

- the school principal has been contacted by the researcher to conduct this study in our school and he has given formal, written permission for it.
- the principal has given assurance to the researcher that whether I choose to participate in this study or not, it will not affect my studies, or my relationship with the school, in any way.
- participation in this research project is **voluntary** and I can choose to withdraw my participation in the study at any stage of data collection, without having to give reasons for doing so.
- if I choose to participate in this research, I will be interviewed by the researcher; he will record our conversation on an audio device, and he will observe me in the English language teaching classes in the school.
- I can ask him not to record our conversation during the interview, or to stop recording at any time during the interview. I am free not to answer any questions I do not wish to answer.
- the researcher will share his transcript (written file) of the interview with me and I can edit, rephrase, modify, or withdraw any comment from the transcript until June 30, 2017.
- I will be able to withdraw my complete data up to two weeks from the date of receiving a copy of the transcript.
- no participant, or the school, will be identified by name in the research report written as a PhD dissertation, or related research publications. Confidentiality of the participants will be ensured
- If I want, I can request a summary of the findings by providing my email address below.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

For any queries regarding ethical concerns, you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.

Email: [ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz)

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE  
ON Jan 19, 2017. REFERENCE NUMBER: 018482

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

**(TRANSCRIBER)**

**Project title:** Exploring local and global identities in foreign language classrooms in Pakistan

**Researcher:** Imdad Ullah

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

**Transcriber:**

I agree to transcribe the audio recordings for the above research project. I understand that the content transcribed is confidential and must not be disclosed to another person or organization in any manner. I will abide by the complete confidentiality about the nature and content of this project.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## UNDERTAKING TO ABIDE BY LOCAL LAWS

(Researcher)

**Project title:** Exploring local and global identities in foreign language classrooms in Pakistan

**Researcher:** Imdad Ullah

**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

I am a PhD student in the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Auckland. My supervisor is Associate Professor Martin East and my co-supervisor is Dr Douglas Loveless from the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

I am working on the research project mentioned above. As part of the project, I am collecting data from students and teachers in two schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

I hereby undertake to abide by any local laws relating to research privacy and data collection. I have considered the safety of my participants that no harm will come to them as a result of participating in my study. Their identity will be strictly kept in confidence. I will abide by all social norms and ethical expectations of the community I am working in. I understand relevant local regulations, including those relating to the protection of privacy and data and will comply with all these regulations.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

For any queries regarding ethical concerns you may contact the Chair, The University of Auckland Human Participants Ethic Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711.

Email: [ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz)

Approved by the University of Auckland human participants ethics committee on Jan 19, 2017. Reference number: 018482

## APPENDIX 2: UAHPEC ETHICS APPROVAL

Office of the Vice-Chancellor  
Finance, Ethics and Compliance



The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland, New Zealand  
Level 10, 49 Symonds Street  
Telephone: 64 9 373 7599  
Extension: 87830 / 83761  
Facsimile: 64 9 373 7432

### UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

19-Jan-2017

#### MEMORANDUM TO:

Assoc Prof Martin East  
Curriculum and Pedagogy

#### Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 018482): Approved

The Committee considered your application for ethics approval for your project entitled **Responding to 'linguistic imperialism': Exploring local and global identity formation in foreign language classrooms in Pakistan**.

We are pleased to inform you that ethics approval is granted for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 19-Jan-2020.

If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application to UAHPEC for further consideration.

If you have obtained funding other than from UniServices, send a copy of this approval letter to the Research Office, at [ro-awards@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-awards@auckland.ac.nz). For UniServices contracts, send a copy of the approval letter to the Contract Manager, UniServices.

In order that an up-to-date record can be maintained, you are requested to notify UAHPEC once your project is completed.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals. If you wish to do so, please contact the UAHPEC Ethics Administrators at [ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz) in the first instance.

Please quote reference number: **018482** on all communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application.

*(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)*

UAHPEC Administrators  
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Curriculum and Pedagogy  
Dr Douglas Loveless  
Mr Imdad Ullah

**Additional information:**

1. Do not forget to fill in the 'approval wording' on the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms, giving the dates of approval and the reference number, before you send them out to your participants.
2. Should you need to make any changes to the project, please complete the online proposed changes and include any revised documentation.
3. At the end of three years, or if the project is completed before the expiry, please advise UAHPEC of its completion.
4. Should you require an extension, please complete the online Amendment Request form associated with this approval number giving full details along with revised documentation. An extension can be granted for up to three years, after which a new application must be submitted.
5. Please note that UAHPEC may from time to time conduct audits of approved projects to ensure that the research has been carried out according to the approval that was given.

## APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

### Interviews with teachers

#### *Personal background – Setting the personal and socio-cultural context of the participant*

- Socio-cultural background of the teachers (where are you from? where have you lived? where did you get an education? etc.)
- What was your experience of language learning when you were a student?
- What was the role of English in your education? Do you think it opened up opportunities in life for you?
- Do you see any effect of your educational background on your current approach to the teaching of English as a foreign language?
- Do you think the teaching of English in schools is similar to the time when you were a student or has it changed? If it has changed, in what ways?

#### *Professional aspects of teaching English*

- Why did you join the profession of being an English teacher?
- What do teachers of English as foreign languages need to be aware of, inside and outside the class?
- Is foreign language teaching linked with society in any way? If yes, please elaborate.

#### *Institutional aspects of teaching English*

- What language(s) do you use in the class for instruction? How do you make these choices during taking a class?
- What is the school medium of instruction policy for teaching the English language and for other subjects, such as social sciences? What is your opinion about this policy?
- What language do teachers and students use for general interaction in the school?
- What is your opinion about the medium of instruction in general? Which language(s) do you think should be used as a medium of instruction? Please elaborate.

#### *Approach towards learners' language needs*

- What are the first languages of the students in your class?
- What are the uses of students' mother tongue(s) in this school? Are these languages taught as a subject in the school?
- How would you describe your students' approach towards the English language?
- Are your students eager to learn English? If so, why do you think it is so?
- What language(s) do you ask your students to use in the classroom apart from English? Please explain your justification for it.
- What language(s) do students use while responding to your questions or when they want to ask a question? What do you think are the reasons for their preferences?

#### *Language, culture, and society*

- What kind of students do you have in this school in terms of their socio-economic background?
- What opportunities do you think your students have for learning English, within and outside the classroom?
- What is the role of the mother tongue (Pashto) in the life of your students?
- Should your students also learn Urdu (the national language)? What is the relevance of Urdu language for the future of your students?
- What is the role of students' parents in their schooling? Why do parents choose to send children to this school?

#### *Language and identity*

- When you look back in time, what has been the role of English in your personal and professional life?
- Why do you want your students to learn English?
- How do you see English in the life of the local community in general?
- In this area, Muslims are in the majority. Do you have any students from minority groups?
- What is the relevance of learning English for your Muslim students? Please elaborate.
- Do you think western countries promote English in the world? If yes, why do you think they do so?
- What differences or similarities do you see between your teaching of English and language teaching in western countries? Can you give me any examples?
- What do you think is the relationship between language and your students' identity as a Pashtun and as Muslims?
- Does learning English strengthen or weaken your students' ethnic identity as Pashtuns?
- Does learning English strengthen or weaken your students' religious identity as Muslims?

## **Interviews with students**

### ***Personal background – Setting the personal and socio-cultural context of the participant***

- Socio-cultural background of the student (where are you from? where have you lived? where did you get an education? etc.)
- Which languages can you speak? How do you rate your general proficiency in each of these languages?

### ***Effects of the school environment***

- How do you feel in general about English language teaching in this school?
- What language(s) do teachers and students usually use in the classroom, English language classes as well as others such as social sciences?
- Does your English teacher allow you to speak Urdu (the national language) or Pashto (local language) in the English language classroom?
- What teaching method does your teacher follow in the class? How do you feel about his/her approach?
- Have you studied at another school? For how long did you study there? How would you compare the teaching of English in the schools you attended so far?
- What do you expect from your English language teacher? What should s/he do to improve your learning prospects?
- What is the role of the mother tongue in your school? Is it taught as a subject? How do you feel about it?

### ***Influence of the family background***

- Did you want to join this school or your parents wanted to send you here? in either case, what were the reasons?
- What language(s) do you usually use at home and with friends?
- How would you describe the approach of your family towards English?
- Is English useful for young learners in an Islamic society, such as your society? Please elaborate.

### ***Peer group influence***

- What language(s) do you usually use with friends in off-school hours?
- Which schools do your friends go to?
- Is the teaching of English in their schools similar or different from your school? What are the effects of any differences?
- What do your friends say about English? Are there any negative and positive aspects of the role of English in our society?

### ***Approach towards language(s)***

- How do you feel about the English language as a medium of instruction in the classroom?
- Which language would you prefer to speak in the classroom? Please elaborate.
- Are you eager to learn English? Explain the reasons for your approach towards English.

### ***Language, culture, and society***

- Do you see any role for the English language in your society and in the world?
- What opportunities do you think you have for learning English, within and outside the classroom?
- If you were to bring any improvement in the teaching of English as it is practiced in your school, what would be the step(s) you take?
- When you look back in time, what do you see is the role of English in your life at home and in school?
- How do you compare the status and role of Pashto (first language), Urdu (national language), and English (official language) in Pakistan?

### *Language and identity*

- What do you think is the role of English in this school?
- What do you expect to achieve if you learn English well?
- English is predominantly used as a first language in western developed countries. Do you see any connection between the English language and western culture? Please explain.
- What is the relevance of learning English for a Muslim in the present times? Please elaborate.
- What differences or similarities do you see between the way you are taught English and language teaching in western countries? Could you give me any examples?
- Do you think western countries promote English in the world? If yes, why do you think they do so?
- What do you think is the relationship between language and identity?
- When you are learning a foreign language, such as English, what do you feel about your identity as a Pashtun and as a Muslim?
- Does learning English strengthen or weaken our ethnic identity as a Pashtuns?
- Does learning English strengthen or weaken our religious identity as Muslims?

## APPENDIX 4: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FORMS

### Teacher's Profile

Please fill in the following.

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Gender: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name of the school you teach in: \_\_\_\_\_
- Number of years spent teaching in this school: \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you taught in another school? \_\_\_\_\_
- If yes, for how many months/years? \_\_\_\_\_
- What was the medium of instruction in the previous school? \_\_\_\_\_
- Your first language/mother tongue: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other languages you speak: \_\_\_\_\_
- What languages are spoken at your home? \_\_\_\_\_
- What languages do you speak with your friends? \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you been to another country? \_\_\_\_\_
- If yes, please name the countries you visited along with time spent there, for example England (1 year, 4 months):  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Student's Profile

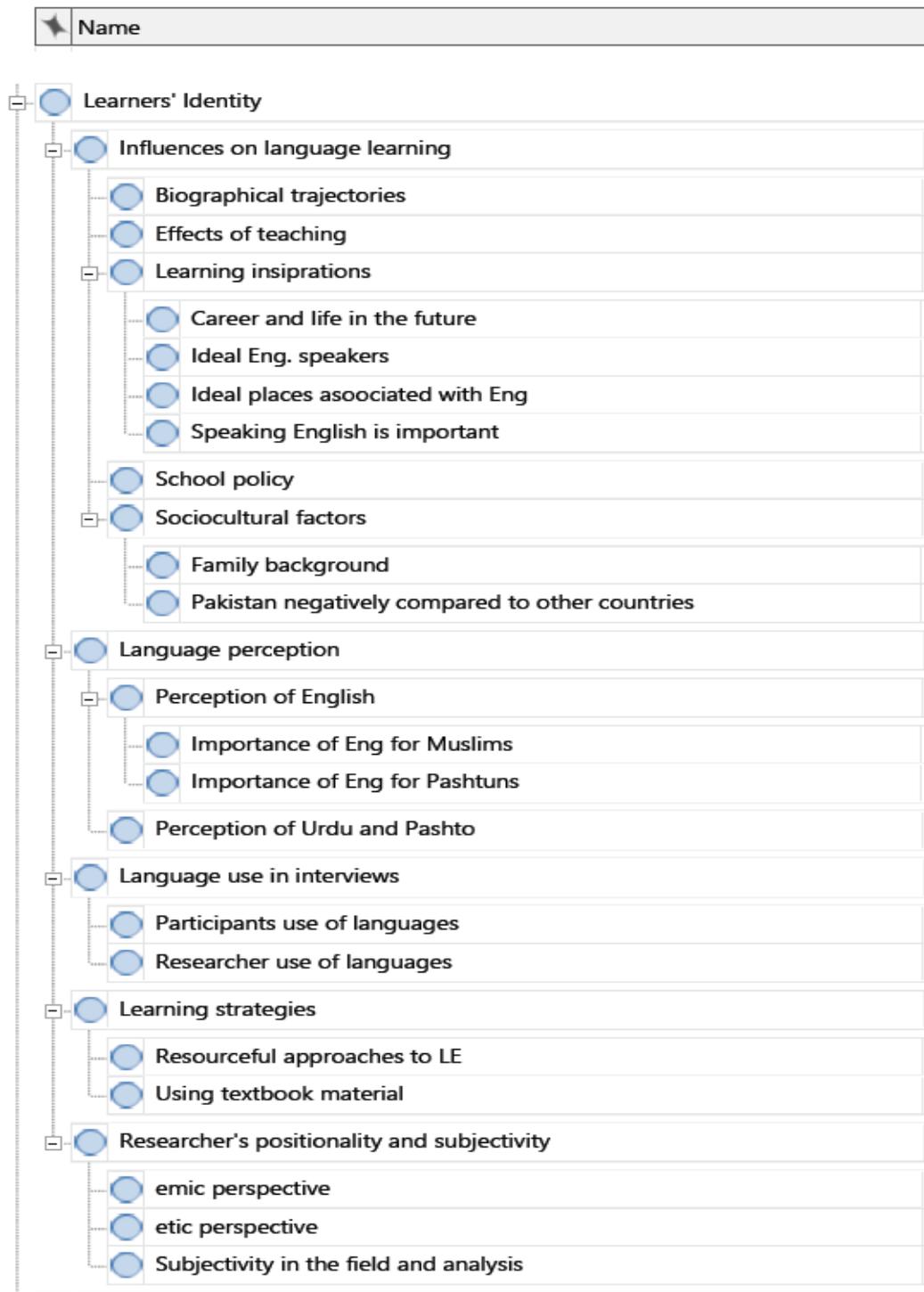
Please fill in the following.

- Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Gender: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name of your school:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Number of years spent in this school: \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you studied in another school? \_\_\_\_\_
- If yes, how long and in which classes? \_\_\_\_\_
- What was the medium of instruction in the previous school? \_\_\_\_\_
- Your first language/mother tongue: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other languages you speak: \_\_\_\_\_
- What languages are spoken at your home? \_\_\_\_\_
- What languages do you speak with your friends? \_\_\_\_\_
- Have you been to another country? \_\_\_\_\_
- If yes, please name the countries you visited along with time spent there, for example England (1 year, 4 months):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 5: CODING COMPARISON QUERY FOR INTER-RATER RELIABILITY

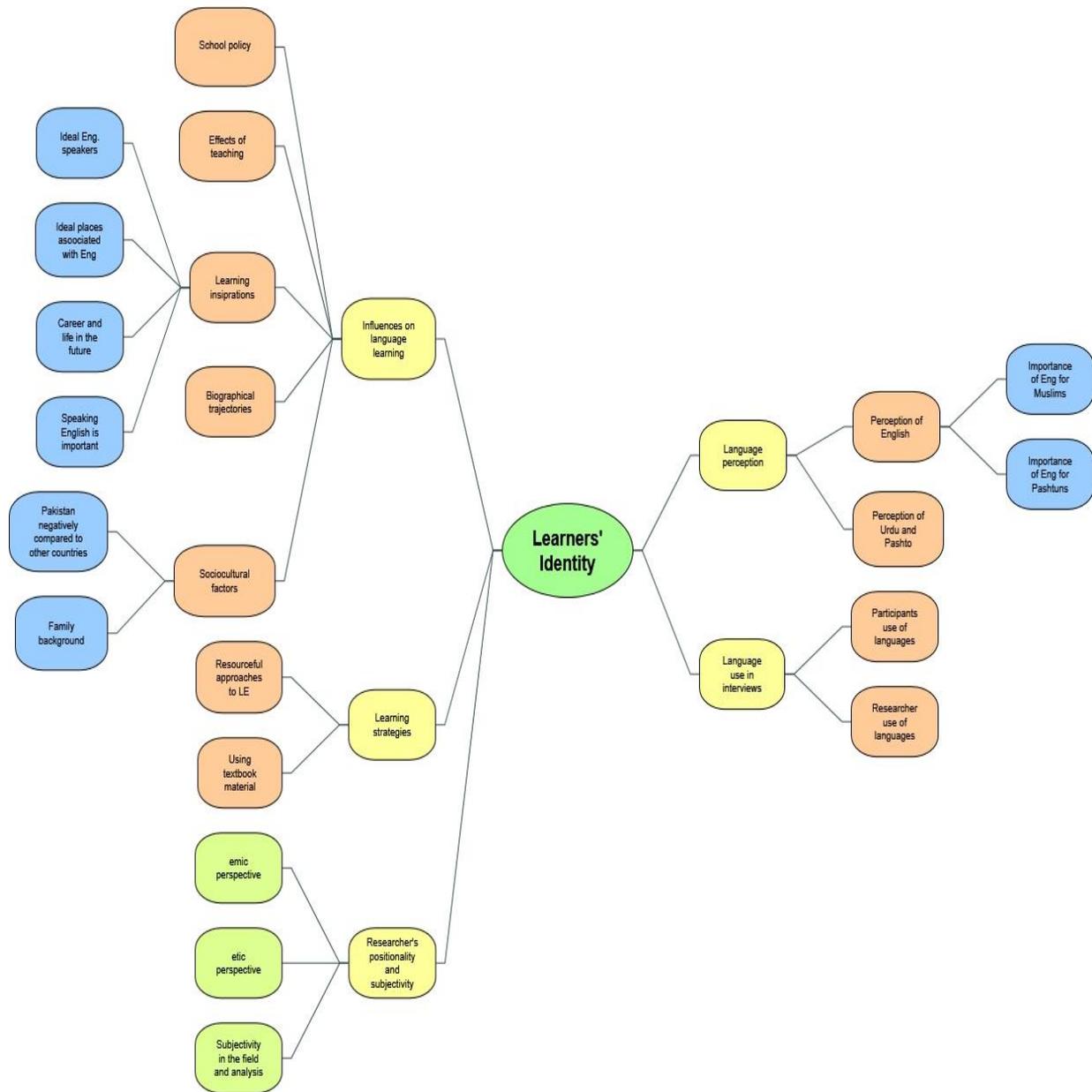
Node	Source	Source Folder	Source Size	Kappa	Agreement (%)	Not A and Not B (%)	Disagreement (%)	A and Not B (%)
Learners' identity	Imdad Ullah - bracke	Internals\Interviews	85803 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	12060 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	11552 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	12573 chars	0	90.73	90.73	9.27	9.27
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	18178 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	33320 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	21510 chars	0	91.3	91.3	8.7	8.7
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	15094 chars	0	98.79	98.79	1.21	1.21
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	22774 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	21953 chars	0	90.03	90.03	9.97	9.97
Learners' identity	Imdad Ullah - bracke	Internals\Interviews	85803 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	12060 chars	0	95.54	95.54	4.46	4.46
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	11552 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	12573 chars	0	93.14	93.14	6.86	6.86
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	18178 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	33320 chars	0	95.51	95.51	4.49	4.49
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	21510 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	15094 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	22774 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	21953 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Imdad Ullah - bracke	Internals\Interviews	85803 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	12060 chars	0	97.17	97.17	2.83	2.83
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	11552 chars	0	83.92	83.92	16.08	16.08
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	12573 chars	0	89.95	89.95	10.05	10.05
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	18178 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	33320 chars	0	92.98	92.98	7.02	7.02
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	21510 chars	0	94.77	94.77	5.23	5.23
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	15094 chars	0	95.38	95.38	4.62	4.62
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	22774 chars	0	95.84	95.84	4.16	4.16
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	21953 chars	0	96.33	96.33	3.67	3.67
Learners' identity	Imdad Ullah - bracke	Internals\Interviews	85803 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	12060 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	11552 chars	0	97.2	97.2	2.8	2.8
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	12573 chars	0	97.25	97.25	2.75	2.75
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	18178 chars	0	98.09	98.09	1.91	1.91
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	33320 chars	0	95.17	95.17	4.83	4.83
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	21510 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	15094 chars	0	94.19	94.19	5.81	5.81
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	22774 chars	0	84.94	84.94	15.06	15.06
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	21953 chars	0	98.38	98.38	1.62	1.62
Learners' identity	Imdad Ullah - bracke	Internals\Interviews	85803 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	12060 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	11552 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	12573 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	18178 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	33320 chars	0	99.64	99.64	0.36	0.36
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	21510 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	15094 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	22774 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	21953 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Imdad Ullah - bracke	Internals\Interviews	85803 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	12060 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	11552 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	12573 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	18178 chars	0	98.28	98.28	1.72	1.72
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	33320 chars	0	95.97	95.97	4.03	4.03
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	21510 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	15094 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	22774 chars	0	98.16	98.16	1.84	1.84
Learners' identity	Usman M Khan Inter	Internals\Interviews	21953 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Imdad Ullah - bracke	Internals\Interviews	85803 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	12060 chars	0	91.04	91.04	8.96	8.96
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	11552 chars	0	98.68	98.68	1.32	1.32
Learners' identity	S Shahadudin Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	12573 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 1	Internals\Interviews	18178 chars	0	96.61	96.61	3.39	3.39
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 2	Internals\Interviews	33320 chars	1	100	100	0	0
Learners' identity	Saba Haider Inter 3	Internals\Interviews	21510 chars	0	97.71	97.71	2.29	2.29

## APPENDIX 6: CODING SAMPLE IN NVIVO NODE TREE



## APPENDIX 7: MIND MAPPING DIAGRAMS IN NVIVO

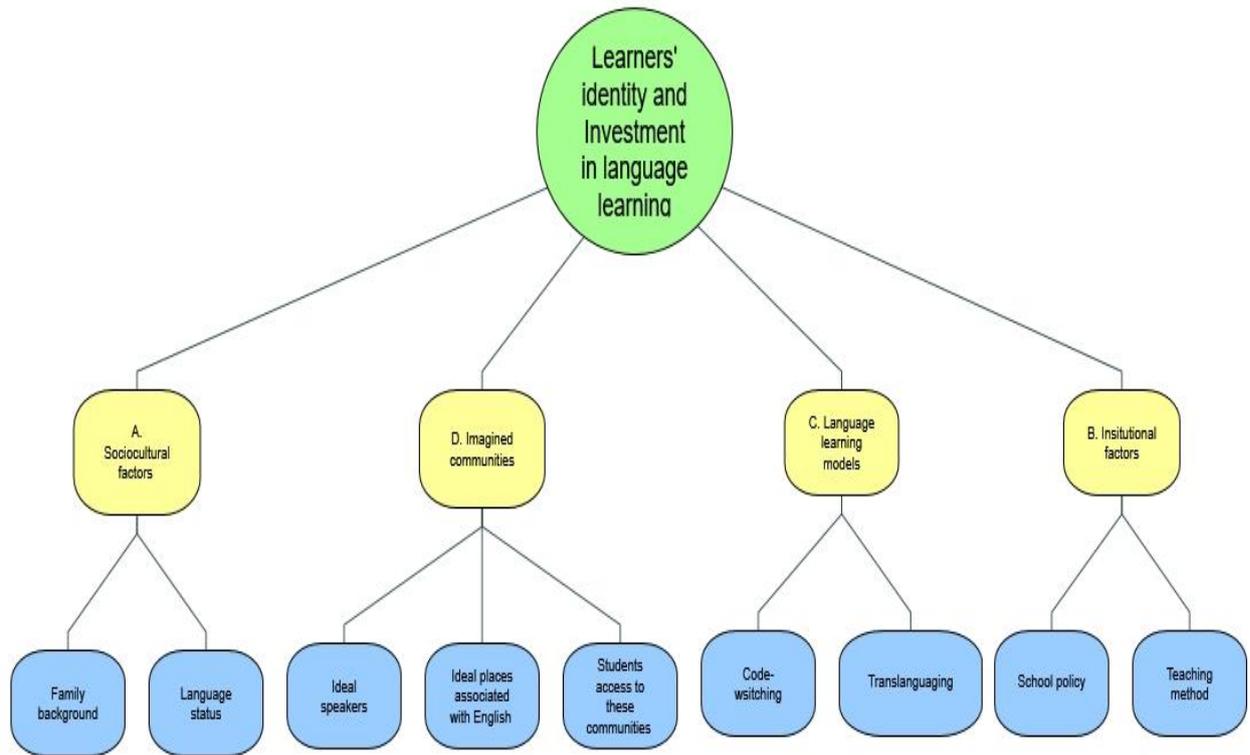
Mind map for the thesis argument



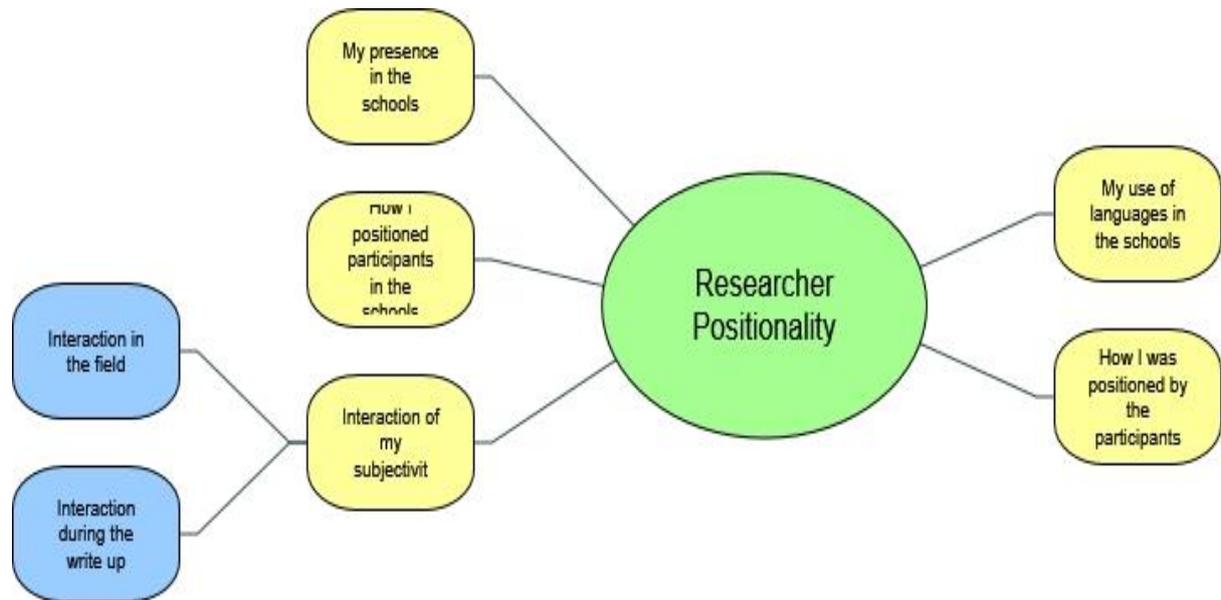
Mind map for the discussion chapter

L2  
motivational  
self system

Socio-  
educational  
model of  
motivation



Mind map for researcher positioning



APPENDIX 8: RESEARCH DIARY AND REFLECTIVE JOURNAL  
ENTRIES

35

Observation 1 : Ummah

    Fieldnotes Date. / /

⇒ The lesson started with the teacher saying 'Bismillah'. He wrote the title of the lesson on the board and started introducing the topic in Urdu.

⇒ Pre-reading: The teacher explains in Urdu what it means, starts reading the unit contents while translating each sentence into Urdu.

⇒ Asks Najeeb what is a business deal. The student responds in Urdu.

⇒ Teacher is now using Pashto to explain what the unit is about.

⇒ Teacher: says Bismillah again and says let's start the lesson (in Urdu)

⇒ The lesson is about Saudi Arabia. The contents are read sentence by sentence, each sentence is translated into Urdu. The lesson is focused on SA.

JINSHA

25



## Reflection / Elaboration

Date. 1 1

Δ I went outside our house to a shop across the road to buy some stationary. A friend came in and asked where I had been?

Before I could say, the shop-keeper, who is also a friend of mine, said "دے فو وس جو بے سیکہ لے دے  
دا نگر نزانو سرتا ہے تعلق ی"

"He has excelled quite high. He is now in touch with The 'English people' only."

I kept wondering later on what he subjectively understood my work as a PhD candidate is? Why did he foreground "the English people" instead of talking about PhD or Knowledge or edu. etc.?

It, this encounter, provides an excellent example of the diversity of perception people have in my country about English & Englishmen.

JINSHA

APPENDIX 9: SAMPLE LESSONS FROM UMMAH AND GLOBAL  
ENGLISH CURRICULUM

After Twenty Years – Ummah School

**Unit**  
**3**

**After Twenty Years**

O'Henry

Theme: Friendship/ values  
Unit Outcomes

After reading the Unit students will be able to:

- comprehend the text
- locate the main idea
- understand sense of responsibility
- understand values
- analyze the character of a personality with the help of a chart
- understand independent and subordinate clauses
- choose the correct option
- derive meanings from within the lines
- understand contractions

22

### Pre Reading

*Have you ever thought that promises should be fulfilled? An unprecedented example has been revealed in this unit. Let us read to understand it in its true spirit.*

The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely 10 O'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh deployed the streets.

Trying doors as he went, twirling his club with many intricate and artful movements, turning now and then to cast his watchful eye down the pacific thoroughfare, the officer with his stalwart form and slight swagger, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace. The vicinity was one that kept early hours. Now and then you might see the lights of a cigar store or of an all-night lunch counter; but the majority of the doors belonged to business places that had long since been closed.

When about midway of a certain block the policeman suddenly slowed his walk. In the doorway of a darkened hardware store a man leaned, with the unlighted cigar in his mouth. As the policeman walked up to him the man spoke quickly.

"It's alright, officer," he said, reassuringly. "I'm just waiting for a friend. It's an appointment made twenty years ago. Sounds a little funny to you, doesn't it? Well, I'll explain if you would like to make certain it's all straight. About that long ago there used to be a restaurant where this store stands\_\_\_\_ "Big Joe Brady's" restaurant.

**Why did the policeman suddenly slow his walk?**

Passage 2 – The Chinese Money-Lender

- 1 Peter stood on the balcony of his son's apartment and sighed contentedly. Peter and his wife had been concerned when their son, Christopher, had announced his intention to emigrate but, Peter reflected, it had been the right decision after all, despite his parents' original misgivings. This country offered unsurpassed employment opportunities. Christopher's apartment was situated in a lively and increasingly popular location where accommodation was relatively inexpensive, there was an excellent public transport service and new restaurants and cafes were springing up all around. 5
- 2 Soon Peter and his wife, Marian, were on the bus for yet another trip to the market recommended by the guide books as a priority for tourists. Stalls selling fabrics in a plethora of sizes and colours were interspersed with food stalls, their tantalising aromas wafting in all directions. Peter bought an impressive warrior carved out of dark wood from a stallholder who assured him that the purchase was an opportunity not to be missed. At another stall, he purchased a tiny green tortoise which, the stallholder claimed, was made of genuine jade. Marian hid her impatience; she did not share her husband's love of shopping and, besides, she was less inclined to be swept away by smooth sales talk. 10 15
- 3 As they strolled on, Peter's attention was suddenly drawn by an antiques shop, crowded in amongst hardware stalls and food outlets. A glint of metal caught his eye and he quickly entered the shop, discovering that the source of his curiosity was a somewhat mysterious-looking ornament, the figure of a man, no more than three inches high, seated at a solid-looking desk. Peter peered intently at it. 'It's a Chinese money-lender,' said the young shop assistant who, it seemed, had eagerly appeared out of nowhere. Closer inspection showed the money-lender's desk to be stamped on the front and the base with indecipherable inscriptions. There was an over-laden moneybag at one end, its contents spilling over the desk, and an abacus balanced on the money-lender's knee. The gilded figure, hunched over the desk, with palms upturned as if beseeching yet more money, glittered in the shop lights. One look at his face – spectacles shining on his nose, mouth agape, trembling beard – revealed the satisfaction of a deal well concluded, and the desire for more money. He cried out to become another purchase. 20 25
- 4 The shop assistant turned his full attention towards the bewitched Peter. Simultaneously he positioned himself so that Peter could not see Marian's furrowed brow, her silent rebuke to Peter that enough money had already been spent that day. 'I will charge you a fair price for this money-lender,' promised the shop assistant. 'Peter, it's time we were heading back for lunch,' warned Marian. 'Whoever buys him will never have ill-fortune,' promised the shop assistant. The money-lender had cast his spell, and within minutes Peter left the shop carrying his purchase, as the smiling shop assistant waved a cheerful farewell. 30
- 5 On the way back, Marian eventually saw the humour in the situation. Her awkward silence was short-lived and she soon linked her arm affectionately through her husband's, her free hand holding the jade tortoise and the wooden warrior, while Peter clutched the Chinese money-lender. 'You were really talked into that!' she laughed. 'Ah, but it's a unique work of art,' replied Peter, 'and who knows what it will bring?' 35
- 6 A few days later, their holiday over, it was their own house they were entering, dropping their bulging suitcases gratefully to the floor. Peter quickly unpacked the tortoise, the wooden warrior and, of course, the Chinese money-lender, while Marian took up the more mundane task of opening the pile of mail which had accumulated since their departure. In the living room, Peter, with the utmost care, was tenderly positioning the Chinese money-lender on a shelf. Now what was the best angle at which to display him for maximum aesthetic effect? He heard the rustling of paper and the ripping open of envelopes. Reluctantly he dragged his attention away from his new friend as he heard Marian's voice from the hallway: 'Peter, I can hardly believe this. I've won the top cash prize in that competition I entered before we went away ... I can hardly believe it!' Smiling, Peter adjusted the position of the Chinese money-lender yet again by a fraction of an inch. 'Oh, but I can believe it,' he said. 40 45 50

**Reading for Meaning [25]marks**

Read the given passage in the insert and answer all the questions below in the order set.

**From paragraph 1**

Q1 (a) How did Christopher's parents react to his announcement that he intended to emigrate?  
..... [1]

(b) What, according to the passage, is the advantage of the country to which Christopher had emigrated? Answer in your own words.  
.....  
..... [2]

(c) What evidence is given to suggest that the location of Christopher's apartment was 'lively'?  
..... [1]

**From paragraph 2**

Q2 (a) Peter and Marian went on 'yet another' trip to the market. What effect does the writer achieve by the use of the word 'yet'?  
..... [1]

(b) The stallholder 'claimed' that the tortoise was made of genuine jade. What effect does the word 'claimed' have that would not be achieved by 'said'?  
..... [1]

(c) What two aspects of Peter's character caused Marian's 'impatience'?  
(i) .....  
(ii) ..... [2]

**From paragraph 3**

Q3 (a) The Chinese money-lender was 'somewhat mysterious'. What single feature of the ornament was most mysterious?  
..... [1]

(b) What do you think the shopkeeper was eager to do?  
..... [1]

(c) Why did the Chinese money-lender glitter in the shop lights?  
..... [1]

**From paragraph 4**

Q4 (a) Peter was 'bewitched'. Pick out and write down the single word which continues the idea of 'bewitched'?  
..... [1]

(b) In what two ways did Marian try to indicate to Peter that he had already spent enough money that day?  
(i) .....  
(ii) ..... [2]

(c) Explain in your own words the two reasons why Peter was persuaded by the shop assistant to buy the Chinese money-lender.

.....  
 ..... [2]

**From paragraph 5**

Q8 On the way back, how did Marian show that she was still annoyed with Peter?

..... [1]

**From paragraph 6**

Q9 (a) Peter quickly unpacked the Chinese money-lender. Explain fully the other ways in which his behaviour indicated the importance to him of the Chinese money-lender.

.....  
 ..... [2]

(b) 'But I can believe it.' What exactly did Peter believe?

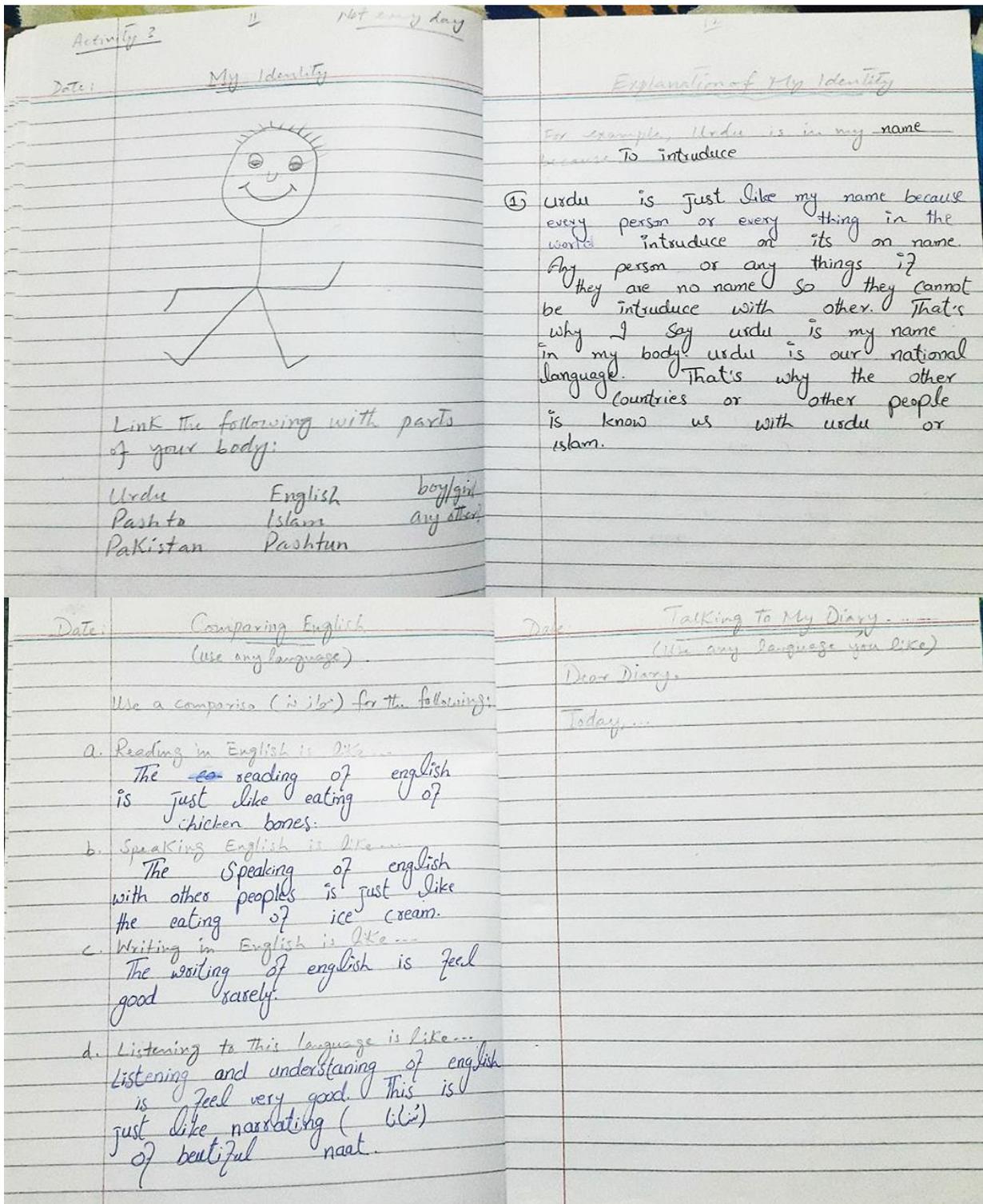
..... [1]

Q10 Choose five of the following words. For each of them give one word or short phrase (of not more than seven words) which has the same meaning that the word has in the passage (from the whole passage).

- |                           |                              |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| (a) priority (line 9)     | (e) intently (line 20)       |
| (b) plethora (line 9)     | (f) simultaneously (line 28) |
| (c) tantalising (line 10) | (g) unique (line 38)         |
| (d) wafting (line 10)     | (h) mundane (line 42)        |

Word chosen	Answer	
1) .....	.....	[1]
2) .....	.....	[1]
3) .....	.....	[1]
4) .....	.....	[1]
5) .....	.....	[1]

APPENDIX 10: PAGES FROM NUMAIR'S DIARY



APPENDIX 11: ENGLISH TO URDU transliteration ON COMMERCIAL SIGNAGE NEAR UMMAH



A sign banner outside a local shop transliterates in Urdu 'restaurant and fast foods'.



Writing on a bridge transliterates in Urdu script: "Naseeb (a personal name) rent a car".



A local commercial signboard transliterates in Urdu: 'Salman (a personal name) dry fruit'.

APPENDIX 12: ENGLISH CLASSROOM IN UMMAH IN AFTERSCHOOL HOURS

