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Constructing, Negotiating and Reconstructing English Language Learner Identity: A Case Study of a Public Sector University in Postcolonial Pakistan

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Education

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The University of Edinburgh
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Abstract

This is an instrumental case study that focuses on the construction of English Language Learner Identity (ELLI) in postcolonial Pakistan. It is a study of students at a public sector university in the province of Sindh. The study broadly examines how English language learners reconstruct, redefine and negotiate their language learner identities during their English language learning journeys. In particular, it attempts to explore learners’ investment and agency in learning English and what ‘future possible selves’ they want to achieve after acquiring English language skills. Consideration is given to how learning English as a second language may be impacted by students’ gender, social class and ethnolinguistic selves and how learners’ English Language Learner Identity is formed and reformed in postcolonial Pakistan.

This instrumental case study of the University of Sindh did not attempt to explore the case in its entirety but rather studied a particular aspect of it. In order to gather the data for my study I recruited three cohorts - primary (Year 1) and secondary (Year 2, 3 and 4) participants and other stakeholders from the Institute of English Language and Literature (IELL), the University of Sindh (UoS). Year 1 students were the key participants in the study but with the involvement of 2nd, 3rd and 4th year students, I was able to construct a possible sense of language learner identity and language learning evolution beyond the first year students’ experiences. Year 1 students were interviewed twice over a twelve-month period during which time they also wrote reflective diaries twice a month. Engagement with each of the other year groups involved one focus group discussion with each year once only in the middle of the data collection journey. In addition, participant shadowing and non-participant classroom observations were also utilised to enhance understanding and to triangulate the data. The views of other stakeholders such as the language teacher, the Director of the Institute and the Dean of the Faculty were also gathered to supplement and inform the data collected from students.

The key findings of this study suggested that investment, learner agency, desire for possible future selves and historical and cultural consciousness are the main constructs
of language learner identity in postcolonial Pakistan. Learners have invested in
English language learning through a number of processes and have had unique
language learning journeys exercising their learner agency. It reinforced an
understanding of learners’ identities as dynamic and multidimensional and fluid in
nature, being continually reconstructed and negotiated over time in different academic,
social and cultural contexts leading to a hybridised English Language Learner Identity
(ELLI) situated in the ‘third space’. It was found that Year 1 students were open to
negotiating their multidimensional identities but conformed to an acceptance of the
primacy of English while their senior counterparts resisted and sometimes challenged
not only English language learning but also the significance of English as a
mechanism for linguistic and cultural manipulation. It was noticed that the nature and
extent of investment, agency and identity negotiations were related to learners’
individual experiences, social class, academic, family and ethnolinguistic background
and their year of the degree programme.
Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work, and has been composed by myself. It contains no material previously submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. All the references and resources used are duly acknowledged.

Sumera Umrani
November 2015
Acknowledgments

All praise is due to Almighty Allah who made it possible for me to achieve this laborious and challenging task and complete this PhD thesis.

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CSS</td>
<td>Central Superior Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEM</td>
<td>Elite English Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELLI</td>
<td>English Language Learner Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>English Language Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as Second Language</td>
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<td>GE</td>
<td>General English</td>
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<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEC</td>
<td>Higher Education Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>IELL</td>
<td>Institute of English Language and Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IELTS</td>
<td>International English Language Testing Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Mother Tongue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEEM</td>
<td>Non-elite English Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PakE</td>
<td>Pakistani English</td>
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<tr>
<td>QEC</td>
<td>Quality Enhancement Cell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>Remedial English</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLL</td>
<td>Second Language Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>Teaching of English as a Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UoS</td>
<td>University of Sindh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTS</td>
<td>University Testing Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>VM</td>
<td>Vernacular Medium</td>
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Introduction

1. Overview

English is generally seen as the primary language of progress and modernisation in contemporary Pakistani educational and social scenarios and this is reinforced by the positioning of English in the global market. Additionally, from primary to tertiary level, students aim to attain English language skills to ensure their participation in the race for upward social mobility and to improve their prospects of employment (Coleman, 2010). Therefore, the ability to communicate in English carries significant rewards both inside and outside the classroom and its status is perceived to be significantly superior compared to other local languages and even the national language\(^1\) of Pakistan (Rahman, 2001; Shamim, 2008). English is considered to be a ‘passport to privilege’ and plays a gatekeeping role for the lucrative job market, higher studies and immigration to foreign countries (Haque, 1983; Baumgardner, 1993; Rahman, 2001). Rahman (1997, p.130) states that English has become a ‘marker of class, urbane upbringing, affluent family background and sophistication’. Thus, not only upper middle class of society, but also feudal heads and tribal chiefs from illiterate families want to educate their children in English-medium schools (Rahman, 2004). Moreover, the supporters of the Urdu lobby\(^2\) also want their children to be educated in English-medium schools to ensure their better future prospects and entry into a privileged class (Rahman, 2002).

However, the importance and popularity of English in today’s world especially in postcolonial states like Pakistan is never quite as simple as it may appear. Language learning is a political exercise where issues of legitimacy and power relations are crucial (Cook, 1999). Learning any second/foreign language is always value-laden and this is so in the case of English in Pakistan. Pavlenko (2002) argues that second language learning is not only about acquiring a new language but is also a means of

\(^{1}\) Urdu

\(^{2}\) Supporters of national language (Urdu) often called Pro-Urdu.
socialisation and more importantly a process of identity building. Language is not simply a means to communicate or express ideas rather it is a product that is constructed by the ways language learners define and redefine themselves, their social surroundings, their histories and their possibilities for the future (Riasati & Mollaei, 2012). Wenger (1998, p. 215) arguing along the same lines says ‘learning any other language transforms who we are and what we can do; it is an experience of identity’.

Thus, the intertwining of language learning and identity has become a pivotal focus and lies at the heart of this study. Informed by the readings cited above I argue that learners of English at a public sector university in postcolonial Pakistan similarly undergo a process of identity reconstruction and negotiations during their language learning journeys. In this study, a significant transition point in student English language learning forms the basis for an investigation of the construction of English Language Learner Identity (ELLI). This transition period is important as it is a time of particular fluidity, as young people move from young adulthood to adulthood and career development, and are exposed to broader views and diverse student groupings.

2. Impetus for my study (Rationale)

The starting point for my study came from my own experiences, firstly as a student and later as a member of staff. When I was a first year student of English Literature at the Department of English now Institute of English Language and Literature (IELL) University of Sindh\(^3\) (UoS) in year 2002 I realised that mastery of English was a requirement to survive in this department. It was the medium of instruction and a means to secure good grades. My seniors always advised me that ‘you should try to speak in English as much as possible because it will build your image as a bright student’. Since all subjects were taught in English, it was compulsory for all the students to have a very good command of English before entering the department. My

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\(^3\) I will be using the actual name of the university in this thesis because i) university administration consented to participate and use its name, ii) it is the only public sector general university and this thesis uses well known facts and information about this university therefore using a pseudonym would not have helped to hide its actual name and iii) it has been common practice to use the real name of the university by the preceding researchers belonging to the same institution.
hopes of developing my English abilities in the English department were disappointed when I attended the first few lectures. None of the teachers came to teach us English language but instead focused on the terminology of English literature, history of English literature, classical poetry and prose. There was, however, a subject called Remedial English, which, turned out to be my only hope for learning English language and practising my English skills. However, the classroom reality was surprisingly different from what I had expected. I noticed that students never wanted to miss any Remedial English classes because they thought if they did they would miss a great opportunity to learn English in order to excel in other subjects. In my class of 120 students, I noticed that many students who excelled in other optional subjects (Sociology, Economics or Pakistan Studies) could not participate in English or get good scores in English. They were motivated to learn English but still did not perform well in English language or literature classes. I wondered whether this was due to their prior education (schooling). Many students attended schools where they could not learn even the basics of English and where they were taught all subjects, including English, in the vernacular.

A few years later in 2007, when I started teaching at the same institute I taught Remedial English in the departments of Mass Communication, Sindhi, Urdu, Islamic Studies, Philosophy, Psychology and English to students in Years 1 and 2 of the degree programme. While teaching in these departments every semester I saw young students’ enthusiasm and determination to learn English. I noticed that students from various academic, social, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds were attending Remedial English. No matter what proficiency level of English they had, what academic background they came from and irrespective of their gender and social class, the majority of students would always want to attend English language classes. However, when it came to participation in the class, it was only a particular group of people who would always come forward and speak in the class and the rest kept silent throughout the semester. Since I was dealing with more than a hundred students per course I never had a chance to talk to them individually and inquire about their unwillingness to participate. Once, I happened to talk to a group of Remedial English students from
IELL outside the classroom. I asked them what stopped them from participating in class; one of the replies I got was:

Teachers should understand we all come from different backgrounds and different schools where there was no English at all, there is no culture of learning English at home either, there is no one at home who can talk to us in English or even encourage us to use English. We speak different languages so we have to take steps on our own if we want to learn English but of course it will take time as we are passing through a transition from one environment to other, from one language to other and it does not happen so quickly.

These words made me ponder that the English language learning process in our context was not as simple as I had thought. The process itself is not value-free. It is contingent upon many factors such as learners’ family and academic background, their linguistic affiliations and the overall environment/context where a new language is learnt and learners have to pass through different phases of change and negotiation to acquire a new language (English). This idea made me think about how these factors might possibly interact with learners’ English language learning processes. That was the first research idea I wanted to study and explore in my PhD. Subsequent readings raised the idea of the relationship between second language learning and identity. It was this synergy of these two elements, which led me to the foundation of this project.

3. Previous Research in Identity and Second Language Education

In the broader field of language education and applied linguistics, the construct of identity has been greatly researched in last three decades. The foundational work of Norton (1995; 2000) followed by studies of Pavlenko (2001a), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), Block (2007) and Edwards (2009) are other keys works done on identity in the field on second language education and second language learning (SLL). Identity started gaining considerable attention from Norton Pierce’s (1995) study of immigrant women in Canada. Subsequently, Norton (2000) proposed a comprehensive theory of language learner identity that integrates language-learning
context as an indispensible part of their identity formation. She brought forward the concept of investment, a sociological construct that complements the psychological construct of motivation in the field of SLL. She redefined the term ‘social identity’ to refer to ‘how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future’ (ibid, p. 5). She argues that language learners cannot ‘be defined unproblematically as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited’, as all these ‘affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways in a single individual’ (ibid, p. 5). Thus she pioneered the idea of language learners’ identity as a dynamic, ever changing and context-informed construct.

Increasing research into the relationship between identity and language learning has led to identity gaining more focus in the field of second language education and it has now become a distinct and independent research area (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Many researchers in the domains of Applied Linguistics and Second Language Learning (SLL) have portrayed different aspects of the relationship of identity with language learning in various contexts (mainly study abroad and immigrant contexts) where both, identity and second language learning, spontaneously interact with each other. Miller (2003) explored the ways Australian high school’s immigrant students’ social identities affected their speaking skills in their one to one interactions with their other school fellows and Liang (2006) investigated the relationship of Chinese immigrant students’ code-switching practices with their individual and group identities in the language classroom in a high school in Canada. Pavlenko (2001a) using autobiographical accounts of the participants studied how the female immigrant ESL learners’ gender identities and gendered positioning went through a transformation during their English language learning journeys abroad.

Language learning and identity research in study abroad contexts is a comparatively recent phenomenon and a relatively new area of study for SLL researchers. It focuses on how learners’ identities influence their language learning and how they are
influenced during their journeys of language learning in new communities away from their home countries. Gao (2008), Polanyi (1995), Benson et al. (2013), Sato (2014) and Skarin (2001) are some other studies done in this context. In addition to these studies, a great deal of research has looked at language learning and identity issues in immigrant contexts. Block (2006), Broeder et al. (1996), Ennemoser (2014), Goldstein (1996), Nawyn et al. (2012), Norton (2000), Teutsch-Dwyer (2001) are some of the many more studies undertaken in this area.

The studies outlined above have focused on different aspects and relationships of language learning and identity in various language learning contexts, which have contributed to conceptualising identity in SLL. Additionally, in the broader field of Applied Linguistics the works of Lo and Reyes (2004) and Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009) on identity and pragmatics, Joseph (2004), Omoniyi and White (2007) and Edwards (2009) on identity and sociolinguistics and Benwell and Stokoe (2006), Wodak et al. (2009) and Young (2009) on identity and discourse are also significant.

4. Research Gap and Significance of the Current Study

This study will fill in the research gap in the indigenous research context in Pakistan and also in the broader research area of SLL and identity research. There is a dearth of empirical studies in the Pakistani context. Most of the literature available on English language learning and teaching is theoretically based, so a gap exists in the relative absence of empirical studies. A few empirical studies were conducted on pedagogical methods (Mansoor, 2002; Shamim 2006; 2011), teachers’ training (Mahboob & Talat, 2008) and on the issues of large classes in higher education institutes (Bughio, 2012; Shamim, 1993). However, there is much non-empirical research available on the education system of Pakistan, education and language policies and the role and status of English in Pakistan (Abbas, 1993; Haq, 1983; Mustafa, 2015; Rahman, 1996; 1997; 2001; 2002; 2004; 2005; 2007; 2008; Siddiqui, 2007). The current study aims to be an original study in the Pakistani context on the issue of English language learners’ identity, as none of the studies and scholars so far has touched upon this potential research area in the field of higher education. Besides filling in the indigenous
research gap, the current study will also contribute towards the broader context of 
Second Language Learning and Identity research (see Block, 2007, Mantero, 2007; 
Norton, 2000; Norton Pierce, 1995; and Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

There has been an increasing amount of research conducted on the relationship 
between language learning and identity in different contexts such as Immigrant, Study 
Abroad and Foreign Language contexts but very little attention has been paid to 
English language learning and learners’ identity in any postcolonial context. Norton 
and Toohey (2011, p. 436) state that ‘an understanding of identity and SLA processes 
must be enriched by research conducted in postcolonial and indigenous sites, where 
multilingualism is ubiquitous and language acquisition processes can be quite different 
from language learning experiences in the West’. Most of the studies conducted on the 
relationship between identity and language learning in the above mentioned contexts 
are mainly based on language learning and identity at primary and secondary levels; 
there are very few, if any, conducted on higher education level. Therefore, this study 
will be a pioneering study carried out in an indigenous, postcolonial and higher 
education context based on adult students from different educational, socio-economic 
and ethnolinguistic backgrounds.

5. Aim of this study and Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate the construction of English language learner identity in 
a postcolonial university in Pakistan. The University of Sindh (UoS) is one of the 
largest and oldest public sector universities in Pakistan. It is based in the province of 
Sindh in a district called Jamshoro. It is a seat of learning for young students from 
across the country especially those from different cities, and rural and urban towns in 
the multilingual and multi-ethnic region of Sindh. The main focus of this study was to 
explore how Pakistani learners of English at the UoS constructed and negotiated their 
language learner identities and how their other identity markers (i.e. gender, social 
class, ethnicity, L1), previous education, desires for the future and their political, 
historical and cultural consciousness influenced the construction of their language 
learner identity over a period of time.
The aim defined above determined the following research questions:

i) Why, to what extent and in what ways are participants invested in learning English?

ii) What is the nature of learner agency in the construction of possible selves and language learner identity?

iii) How do other identity markers (e.g. gender, social class, ethnolinguistic identities) influence or/and help to shape language learner identity?

iv) How might language learner identity evolve over a period of time?

6. Summary of Research Design

In order to address the research questions and research aim given above I drew upon social constructionist and poststructuralist perspectives of identity to form the theoretical frame for this study. In using social constructionist and poststructuralist perspectives of identity I wanted to highlight the importance of understanding the lived experiences and perceptions of participants from their own point of view and so a qualitative, instrumental case study was identified as the most appropriate choice of research approach and methodology. I decided to carry out an instrumental case study because it focuses a study on a particular aspect of the case rather than the case in its entirety. I collected the data from four different cohorts (Years 1 to 4), which included students from IELL and other stakeholders associated with English language teaching and administration at the UoS. Participants from Year 1 were the primary participants whereas participants from Years 2, 3 and 4 were the secondary participants for this study. The participants were selected using purposive-convenience sampling. The methods included individual interviews, diary entries, participant and non-participant observations with Year 1, focus group discussions with Years 2, 3 and 4 and also interviews with key stakeholders at the university.
7. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1 presents the broader context of the study which will discuss the historical and political background of English in Pakistan, its current status, the system of education and English language teaching in higher education. Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framing adopted in this study and reviews other relevant concepts and constructs used in this study. Chapter 3 continues with the literature review, it presents the review of other empirical studies conducted in different contexts in the area of SLL and identity. In chapter 4 I will put forward the methodological approaches, sampling strategies, data collection tools and process, and methods used for the analysis of the collected data. Chapters 5 elaborates on the case of this study i.e. the University of the Sindh and its particular aspect under investigation which is English language learning at the Institute of English Language and Literature. Chapters 6 and 7 deal with the findings from the primary and the secondary participants respectively. The discussion on the findings is given in chapter 8. Chapter 9 concludes this thesis with its implications, limitations and suggestions for future research.
Chapter 1: Contextualisation of the Study and Key Issues

Introduction

This chapter provides the context of the study. Firstly, I will discuss the historical and political background of English in Pakistan. This section will trace the status of English from colonial times to the present. Presenting the sociolinguistic milieu of the country, I will highlight the position of English in relation to the national language, Urdu, and other provincial and regional languages. I will then elaborate on the development and transformation of language in education policy in Pakistan, which will lead the discussion to a brief explanation about how different language policies have created linguistic controversies in the country. The system of education and language in education policy will then be expanded upon. In the following section, the education system will be reviewed in detail by presenting its different streams. Finally, I will consider English language teaching practices and relevant issues in higher education in Pakistan. This broader context of the study will help my readers familiarise themselves with the issues relevant to education in Pakistan, the status of English, and its teaching and learning practices. After reading this chapter, my reader will have a better understanding of my participants’ backgrounds (especially academic and socio-economic) and clearly comprehend the case of this study as situated in a particular setting (Pakistan).

1.1 Historical and Political Background of English in Pakistan

The history of English language in Pakistan dates back to British rule in the Indian subcontinent, when what is currently Pakistan was part of a British colony. On 7th March 1835, at the instigation of Lord William Bentinck, the Governor General since 1829, the British parliament passed a resolution which stated that the main objective of the British government would be to promote European literature and science. To achieve this aim, the English language was made the language of communication and
instruction. The British developed their language policies to replace Persian, which was the official language of the Mughal Empire, with English as the official language of the government (Mahboob, 2002, p. 15).

Lord Macaulay, an English writer and politician (1800-59) who served as a member of the Supreme Council of India between 1834 and 1838, was instrumental in bringing about a major change in the existing language policy of British India. He introduced English education to India through his famous Minute of 1835 (Government of India Act 1935 cited in Rahman 2002). Rahman (2002) argues that in order to promote English culture, which colonisers believed was better than and superior to Indian culture, amongst the Indian elite. Macaulay tried to implement an educational system that would create a class of anglicised Indians who would serve as cultural intermediaries between the British and the Indian people. Macaulay succeeded in implementing ideas previously put forward by Lord William Bentinck. Bentinck greatly supported the replacement of Persian and Sanskrit as the official languages by English, the use of English as the medium of instruction, and the training of English-speaking Indians as teachers. Macaulay convinced the Governor-General to adopt English as the medium of instruction in higher education, from the sixth year of schooling onwards, rather than Sanskrit or Persian, which were used in institutions financially supported by the East India Company. As stated in his ‘Minute on Indian Education’ (1835), Macaulay wanted to educate people in English and his preference for the English language was based on his view that all the local languages were ‘poor and crude’ due to their lack of international exposure and the poor prospects for the future attached to them, and on his belief that the body of writing available in Sanskrit and Arabic was no match for the scholarship available in English (Rahman 2002, p. 89).

Pennycook (1998) calls it a crucial part of the colonial enterprise. The change was aimed at westernising rich local people by making them aware of English values and traditions (Baumgardner, 1993; Mahboob, 2002). However, access to English was not universal. The policy was primarily implemented in urban areas, and the rural areas remained unaffected (Mahboob, 2002). When the new country of Pakistan (previously
part of the Indian subcontinent) gained independence and recognition, and became an autonomous state in 1947, it inherited the colonial legacy of these language in education policies (Shamim, 2011).

After independence, all the succeeding governments in Pakistan retained English as the medium of instruction in the elite and missionary schools (different types of schools are discussed later in this chapter) whereas all other government educational institutes switched to the vernacular as their medium of instruction. Hence, there was no universal language in education policy. The Pakistani constitution, the state by-laws and the major policy documents at federal and provincial levels were written in English. English was, and is, the language of the military and the bureaucracy and all the civil service competitive examinations are conducted in English (Abbas, 1993; Haque, 1983). Apparently, the federal system of governance envisaged a multicultural, multilingual, multi-ethnic society but the constitution of the country (Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, Article 251) ordained that Urdu should be the official language of the country.

Article 251 of the Constitution (1973)

(1) The National language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day.

(2) Subject to clause (1), the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu.

(3) Without prejudice to the status of the national language, a provincial assembly may by law prescribe measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a provincial language in addition to the national language.

However, interestingly, since 1973 no arrangements have yet been made to implement this law and consequently English continues to be the official language of the country.
Recently the Supreme Court of Pakistan directed the federal and provincial governments to adopt Urdu as the official language (Dawn, 8 September, 2015), which has added to the already confused state of affairs. The verdict of the then Chief Justice was as follows:

In the governance of the federation and the provinces there is hardly any necessity for the use of the colonial language which cannot be understood by the public at large…This wasteful exercise at times results in absurd and farcical outcomes which would be wholly avoided by use of the National language. (Dawn, 8 September, 2015)

This new verdict forwarded by the Supreme Court was welcomed with a considerable amount of criticism in newspaper articles and editorials. Many of these writings questioned the validity of the definition of national identity, and of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. For these writers and journalists, it amounted to nothing more than forced homogeneity and sabotage of linguistic diversity.

1.2 Sociolinguistic Milieu in Pakistan

Pakistan is a, multi-ethnic and multicultural (Rahman, 2008), and linguistically diverse country (Coleman & Capstick, 2012) having four linguistically and ethnically prominent provinces named Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and Khaibar Pakhtunkhwa where Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi and Pashto are the most commonly used languages respectively. In addition, there are two administratively autonomous states, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir, which also have their own particular and distinct linguistic, ethnic and cultural identities.
Pakistan has a population of 180 million people who can speak and understand the four major languages mentioned above and have access to over fifty-nine minor languages (Rahman, 2002). However, Coleman, providing updated information, states that there are 72 other living languages in the country (Coleman & Capstick, 2012).

The table below shows the percentage of the population and speakers (in millions) using the different languages in Pakistan as their first language.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Speakers (Millions)</th>
<th>% of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Panjabi (Western)</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sindhi</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Siraiki</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pashto (Northern)</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pashto (Central)</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Balochi (Southern)</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Brahui</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Hindko (Northern)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Balochi (Eastern)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pashto (Southern)</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Balochi (Western)</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Farsi (Eastern)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Panjabi (Mirpur)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>134.1</td>
<td>84.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58 other languages</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>158.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Languages in Pakistan
It is important to note that Urdu, the national language, is the language with the fourth largest number of speakers, however, it is the mother tongue of only 7% of the population of the country. The statistical data provided by Coleman (2010) regarding Urdu being the first language of only 7% of the population may be contested on the grounds that it is the most commonly understood and spoken language in the country, and its role is that of the lingua franca and the symbol of national identity (Rahman, 1997). It is debateable how, with quite a meagre population with Urdu as their mother tongue, it can have such status. In tracing the popularity of Urdu, the following should be taken into consideration:

- It is a part of the colonial legacy, therefore supported and promoted by the state as the binding force in a diversely multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country.
- It is a common means of communication amongst different sub-nationalities in Pakistan; even the uneducated masses that cannot read and write can easily understand it.
- It is the popular language of print and electronic media.
- It is Urdu, rather than Punjabi, which is commonly used in Punjab, the largest province which constitutes approximately 60% of the population of the country (Siddiqui, 2007).
- It has strong lexical and phonological links with the Hindustani language (now called Hindi) which is the major language used in the neighbouring country India, in the Indian media and Bollywood.

It is usually the case that in countries, for example the UK and the USA, the national language is the mother tongue of the majority of their population. In other cases, for example in some African countries that were previously colonies, the language of the past colonial masters became the national language of the country. But, interestingly, in Pakistan the national language is neither the mother tongue of the majority nor it is language of its ex-colonial rulers. Apparently one logical explanation for Urdu being the country’s national language is because of its affinity with other provincial and regional languages (Siddiqui, 2007). The other reason is Urdu’s instrumental role in
the country’s independence movement from British rule. For example, Hindi was associated with Hindus, whereas Urdu was the symbol of Muslim culture and unity (Durrani, 2012; Rahman, 2008). Therefore, declaring Urdu as the national language dates back to pre-partition, colonial times when it was the language of the socio-political struggle to create an independent country.

1.3 Language in Education Policy

The language policy in education in Pakistan has never been consistent since the country’s independence. It has been observed that it continues to change with changing times and governments. Every government, soon after gaining power, formulates its new policy of language education, which later on proves to be just a futile exercise. ‘As the decision is politically motivated, it comes as no surprise that implementation efforts fall short of the supposedly democratic intent of the policy’ (Shamim, 2011, p.4-5). In the absence of a clear-cut language policy, educationalists have adopted an ad hoc and arbitrary approach to language teaching that has proven detrimental to the overall education system (Mustafa, 2015).

The evolution of the language in education policy adapted from Coleman (2010) is given below in the table.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Implementation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1947</td>
<td>Colonial rule</td>
<td>Urdu medium for the masses, English medium for the elite</td>
<td>As policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Urdu declared to be the national language</td>
<td>Urdu medium for the masses, English medium for the elite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Commission on National Language</td>
<td>Primary and secondary education in Urdu, higher education in English</td>
<td>No Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>New Constitution</td>
<td>English to be replaced by Urdu within 15 years; provinces free to develop their own language policies</td>
<td>No Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Zia-ul-Haq’s Policy</td>
<td>Islamisation and Urduisation of education</td>
<td>English taught from Year 4; schools begin to prepare for complete Urduisation of exams by 1989; private English medium schools begin to grow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Benazir Bhutto’s policy</td>
<td>English to be taught from Year 1</td>
<td>Little effective change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>New education policy</td>
<td>No statement regarding language policy</td>
<td>Private English medium schools flourish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Education Policy by Pervez Musharraf</td>
<td>English to be taught from Year 1 ‘where teachers are available’</td>
<td>Little effective change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>White Paper</td>
<td>English to be taught from Year 1; mathematics and science to be taught through English from Year 6</td>
<td>Little effective change; in Punjab, science taught through English from Year 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>National Education Policy</td>
<td>Science and mathematics to be taught through English in Years 4 and 5; all science and mathematics to be taught through English from 2014</td>
<td>Punjab declares science to be taught through English starting in Year 4 from April 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Evolution of Language in Education Policy
The table shows how Pakistan’s language in education policy has evolved since independence in 1947 but also how the implementation has generally failed to develop in line with the set policy. From 1947 until 2009, when the last education policy was approved by the national parliament, different rulers supported different education policies without realising the need for a universal education policy. It is interesting to note that in the making of education policies in Pakistan the academic think tanks and academia are rarely consulted, decisions are usually made by the civil bureaucracy and approved by parliamentarians (politicians). One of the reasons for not having any universal education policy or failure in its implementation may be the lack of interest in the education sector on the part of the serving government. Education policies have always been less important than the country’s defence and foreign policies. There is also a possibility of an intentional disregard of the issue of language in education policy, because this might give rise to ethno-linguistic clashes in a culturally divided country.

The English+Urdu policy has always remained popular amongst all education policies since the inception of the country. Durrani (2012) and Siddiqui (2012) state that political interests of the rulers have always influenced decisions in language policy making. Similarly, Rahman (2008) argues that the interests of the upper class and the ruling elite have always influenced the education and language policies of Pakistan. He further points out that this lobby has used several ways to strengthen its hold on society, by using language politics in the name of religion and other ethnic ideals. One of the serious consequences of the strengthening of English and the privatisation of education in English is that it has led to ‘ghettoization’ (Rahman, 2008). The weak and poor classes remain underprivileged and are denied access to English and a good (standard) education. Hence, this becomes a significant hurdle between the poor and progress (Mustafa, 2015).

1.4 Urdu/Sindhi vis-à-vis English: A Controversy

Urdu has been recognised as the language of national integrity and identity. It also helps to maintain federal unity and to avoid absolute regional autonomy and
separatism (Mansoor, 2004). ‘The Commission on National Education’ in 1959 declared that Urdu should be the medium of instruction from class six (age 11-12) onwards and it should be considered as the language of national integrity.

National language is a powerful force for developing a sense of nationhood. It is one of the basic elements that welds people into homogenous units. It is the symbol of a nation’s dignity and like its flag, its national anthem, and its heroes, it fosters national pride (The Commission on National Education, 1959, p. 289).

The Commission had also recommended that until Urdu became the substitute for English, English would continue to be used for the purposes of higher education and research. However, on the other hand, a new issue arose in the province of Sindh where Sindhi was already the medium of instruction. Sindh felt that this was a serious blow to their language, culture and heritage. Following agitation in the streets, protests at national level through television, newspapers and debates in the press, the decision was reversed in 1972 in the province of Sindh, in favour of the Sindhi language. But this created a gap between the Sindhi and Muhajir (migrants from India whose first language is Urdu) communities in Sindh province (Khalique, 2007; Rahman, 1996).

According to article 251(3) of the Constitution of Pakistan, Sindhi could be promoted as an official language of the province of Sindh but this situation resulted in the Sindhi-Muhajir riots in Sindh in 1970-72. Little could be done in any real sense to give Sindhi its official status. There is a strong Sindhi nationalist school of thought in Sindh, which has been agitating for a robust Sindhi cultural and linguistic identity, by raising the status of the Sindhi language, since 1947 (Qureshi, 2008). The regional nationalist lobby in Pakistan is in favour of amending the constitution and wants four provincial languages to be declared as the national and official languages of Pakistan (a status currently enjoyed exclusively by Urdu). However, English is the official language of the country despite there being no mention of it in the constitution. According to Ansari (2005), the whole controversy about the supremacy of Urdu at the expense of regional languages has naturally strengthened the position of English,
which is more acceptable to the regionalists/sub-nationalists than Urdu. The ruling civil and military bureaucracies are also inclined towards English because of its politically neutral status in the country (Mahboob, 2002) and want to avoid the wrangling which sometimes leads to ethnic and linguistic riots in the province of Sindh, where the demographics have undergone diametrical changes since the influx of a huge number of Urdu speaking immigrants from India in 1947.

In the current political, educational and social scenario English has superiority over all other regional languages, including the national language. In addition its status as an international lingua franca (Crystal, 2003; Gradol, 2006) and its global popularity as a means of economic development (Erling, 2014) has earned English an indisputable place in Pakistan. It is used as a status symbol and categorically assures its users of maximum academic, economic and political benefits (Mahboob, 2003; Rahman, 2001, 2004, 2005; Shamin, 2008). However, according to Mustafa (2015) the supremacy of English can be related to its linguistic hegemony, which has had a profound impact on the education system of Pakistan and on other local languages. She argues:

First, the pre-eminence of English dwarfed the national language, Urdu as well as the other indigenous languages. Because of the elitist status attached to those speaking English ‘as the Englishmen speak’, the other languages lost their importance socially, culturally and in education system. The decline has been continuous and absolute. It was not that English could not coexist with other languages; it could, as it has done in other countries (Mustafa, 2015, p. 22).

Having been the language of the influential elite at the present time and colonial masters in the past, English has overshadowed other local languages. Many of the problems including creating linguistic inequalities and stunning the growth of local languages developed by linguistic imperialism during the colonial rule have continued to cause complex situations in postcolonial societies even in contemporary times (Rasool, 2000). Worst of all, the privileged position bestowed on English by the private sector in education has created the myth that good English can only be imparted in English (Mustafa, 2015). English is regarded as a magic wand that will
resolve all the economic problems of the poverty stricken masses. As a result, a public demand for English has been created to which the government does not have the capacity to respond. It has therefore chosen to be indifferent on the language issue.

1.5 Streams of Education: A great divide

It has been observed that from 1846 till 1947 Pakistan had inherited certain policies of language and education from British India. The education system in Pakistan is a legacy of British colonial powers and the establishment has a vested interest in maintaining this (Durrani, 2012; Mustafa, 2015). Similarly Shamim (2008) argues that a parallel system of education in Pakistan has been retained from colonial times. Shamim (2011), presenting the details about the disparity in the education system of Pakistan, states that there is no unanimity in education; it is class-based. The terms ‘Urdu-medium’ and ‘English-medium’ are connoted with socio-economic and cultural implications.

Rahman (2004; 2006) argues that Pakistan does not have one universal system of education catering for the needs of all, irrespective of economic class or background. Pakistan’s educational system is stratified and polarised according to socio-economic classes and can be expressed roughly in terms of the different educational institutions. ‘The madrasas cater for very poor children, mostly from rural and urban working class localities. The Urdu-medium schools cater for lower middle class and some middle-class children, while the elite English-medium schools cater for the upper-middle class and above’ (Rahman, 2004, p. 315). According to Rahman there are three major divisions in the education system, i) The Madrasas (Religious Schools), ii) The Vernacular Medium Schools and iii) The English Medium Schools. However, Coleman (2010) in a report commissioned by the British Council reported four categories of school-level education:

• Private elite English-medium schools
• Private non-elite English-medium schools
• Government Urdu-medium schools
• Dini Madaris (madrasas)

I will discuss the Pakistani system of education under three broad categories:

• Religious schools
• Private schools
• Government schools

1.5.1 Religious Schools

The religious schools (Madrasa) offer Islamic-oriented education, catering for poor children from rural areas and urban working localities in the country, mostly free of charge. They also provide free boarding and food and admit students between 10 to 20 years of age (Andrabi et al., 2005). According to Coleman (2010) each religious school has roughly one hundred to several thousand in attendance. In terms of ideology, the religious schools are extremely varied and cannot be easily categorised. They may be divided in accordance with their affiliation with different sectarian groups and types (e.g. Sunni, Shia etc.). The majority of religious schools are funded by voluntary charities such as those run by rich religious businessmen and philanthropists. The Saudi government also finances some of them (Rahman, 2004). These schools are administered and regulated under the Federal Madaris Education Board under the Ministry of Education; however, it is debatable to what extent its authority is recognised and implemented.

1.5.2 Private Schools

The private schools in Pakistan can be broadly categorised into i) private elite English-medium schools and ii) private non-elite English-medium schools. The number of private elite English-medium schools is very small. They are extremely expensive and provide education for the children of a small and powerful elite section of the population while the private non-elite ‘English-medium’ schools serve both rural and urban areas, and the lower middle classes of society, and charge an affordable tuition
The medium of instruction in private schools is English, however, non-elite private schools usually fail to meet their claim of teaching in English in reality, and have grown rapidly in almost all parts of the country, mainly for commercial reasons (Rahman, 2005, Shamim, 2011). It is probably because of the symbolic value of English that during the last two decades, the number of private non-elite English-medium schools has increased immensely; in fact, they have become quite popular even in remote areas of Pakistan (Andrabi, et al., 2006; Harlech-Jones, et al., 2005). It can be argued that the proliferation and popularity of non-elite private English-medium schools is because they are meeting the needs of lower and middle class parents to help their children aspire for the better prospects for the future associated with proficiency of English.

Private elite schools prepare students for Cambridge ‘O’ and ‘A’ level exams in high schools. They use expensive foreign textbooks and a syllabus designed by British and American academicians. They teach Urdu, the national language, as a foreign language. None of the private schools teaches any regional languages at all (Shamim & Allen, 2000). Like the standard of education and their infrastructure, the quality and qualifications of teachers in private elite and non-elite English-medium schools also varies greatly. The former have qualified and trained staff, while the latter have less proficient, and inexperienced teachers (Shamim, 2011). However, private non-elite schools provide better education compared with government schools (Khattak, 2014).

1.5.3 Government Schools

Government schools, almost all of which are Urdu-medium (except in Sindh where Sindhi is also the medium of instruction) are available almost everywhere throughout the country, in both rural and urban areas, except in extremely remote areas (Rahman, 2004). Government schools offer free education and provide textbooks as well. Provincial ministries of education administer all the government schools in the country. It has been reported in Coleman (2010) that teachers in government schools are better qualified and better paid compared to those in private non-elite English-medium schools. However, it is quite common in government schools for teachers to
be absent from their duties therefore they tend to produce poorer learning outcomes (Siddiqui, 2007). Normally children studying in government schools require extra time to achieve what pupils in private schools acquire in expected time (Coleman, 2010). The government schools evaluate students through the annual examination system and therefore students usually rely on rote learning, which discourages pupils from developing their cognitive and critical faculties (Rahman 2008, Shamim 2011). These schools are poorly furnished, with no proper desks or other basic facilities such as clean drinking water, toilets etc. (Coleman, 2010; Rahman, 2004; Shamim, 2011).

Shamim (2008; 2011) talks about the social and academic disparity in the education system in Pakistan caused by the private and public education sectors. She concludes that the two parallel education systems are distinguishable by their quality of education and learner achievement, particularly in terms of their ability to use English in writing and in speech. As the proficiency of English has become symbolic of elite class and works as a yardstick of standard education, the difference between knowing English and being truly educated has significantly diminished (see also Ramanathan, 2005). Thus, the aspiration of most parents is to provide an English-medium education for their children, to improve their future life chances (Shamim, 2011).

1.5.4 Comparative Analysis the Pakistani System of Education

Khattak (2014) elaborating and analysing the nature of three streams of education, public schools, private schools and Dini Madarsas (religious schools), in Pakistan calls the entire system highly stratified and apartheid. These three types of the schools greatly vary from each other in terms of academic and physical facilities; organisational structure, relative autonomy and more importantly they provide different types of schooling experiences to their respective students which I argue play an important role in constructing their language learner identities. All these factors have significant implications for developing students’ class-habitus, political worldviews, their social roles and their occupational trajectories (Malik, 2012). In addition this stratified system of education launches young learners in a hierarchical
world where they come across the concepts of class-consciousness and sense of distinction at the time when they need to adopt the ideals of equity and social justice.

This issue of education apartheid is basically rooted in the education policies of the country since their development immediately after the inception of the country. Curle (1966, p.71) contends that the role of education in Pakistan ‘was not thought as a means of promoting democracy, or spreading egalitarianism, or increasing social mobility’. On the contrary, it has always played a role to reinforce inequitable distribution of power and maintain the status quo. Moniza (2009) arguing on the same lines, states that the ruling class of the country, which consists of military, bureaucracy and feudalists have followed the British colonial apartheid system of education through which only privileged classes of society can attain good education and skills whereas the rest of the people remain subservient to them in almost all walks of the life.

There is a profound relationship between teachers’ attitude and sense of responsibility and students learning outcomes in these three types of schools. In state schools and in Dini Madrasas which predominantly fall in low-income brackets, teachers generally perceive their students as disadvantaged with regards to possessing cultural, symbolic and intellectual capital. On this pretext they reduce their sense of responsibility towards them and resort to engaging them in rote learning and memorisations rather than involving them in active learning. On the other hand, in elite schools teachers have faith in their students’ familial, cultural and intellectual assets and therefore engage them in creative and analytical practices of learning (Malik, 2012).

The organisational policies of elite schools are deeply ingrained in dominant-class interests and economic-market demands (Khattak, 2014) that follow updated and modern curricula often borrowed or adapted from developed countries. These schools have retained their original goal, from the colonial times, as educational institutes to disseminate progressive education and Western intellectual ideologies and train their students to keep pace with current realities of globalisation, capitalism and neo-liberalism. Additionally, the exorbitant fee structures ensure the admission of upper
classes in these posh institutes exclusively. In contrast, the state schools exercise less autonomy and rely on educational bureaucracy to chalk out any major and minor policies, determine curricula, textbooks as well as pedagogy and evaluation mainly to produce the scholastic capital. Such practices do not encourage cognitive and critical skills in unprivileged students of vernacular medium state schools who will eventually have to compete with their elite counterparts in job market and in other competitive civil service exams.

1.6 English language Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (HE)

There is a strong link between any country’s economic development and its higher education. This observation is also true in the case of Pakistan. A number of research studies such as ‘Knowledge for Development’ (1998-99) and Higher Education in Developing Countries (2000) have explained this relationship well by suggesting that the knowledge gap leads to an economic gap between developed and developing countries. Arguing along the same lines, Siddiqui (2007) points out that although Pakistan’s higher education is directly proportional to the country’s progress, unfortunately it is considered the least important on the list of government priorities in terms of policy and allocating funds.

The Higher Education Commission\(^4\) (HEC) of Pakistan charters all the higher education institutes of the country. According to a report (HEC, 2012) there are 72 public and 61 private sector universities recognised by HEC. There are two types of universities i) General Universities and ii) Professional Universities. In addition, there are a number of colleges in each province which also offer higher education. Although these colleges are affiliated to the HEC recognised universities they offer limited degree programmes. Research based activities are normally restricted to the universities, while both universities and colleges undertake tertiary level teaching.

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\(^4\) Formerly known as ‘University Grants Commission’, constitutionally established in 1947, it is an autonomous institute of the Government of Pakistan that regulates funds, accredits and supervises higher education institutions in the country.
Siddiqui (2007) argues that although it has faced many challenges, the higher education sector has been growing tremendously. Pakistan has witnessed a proliferation of universities, both private and public, in last two decades. The universities, like schools, are categorised under the same parallel streams of education i.e. private and public sectors. The number of enrolments and types of students in each stream is based on the university’s location and infrastructure, fee structure, and the quality of the teaching in each faculty. Sedgwick (2005) notes that 80% of the university population in Pakistan goes to the public sector universities, as they are affordable. Rahman, highlighting the problems in public sector universities, points out that:

The system of evaluation is stereotyped, memory-based, corruptible and stagnant; the universities are often closed because of student unrest; student unions are highly politicized and violent; graduates of universities lack the necessary skills for employment and so on (Rahman, 2008, p. 287).

On the other hand, Shamim (2011) argues that the private sector universities usually attract students (those who can afford them) because they use English as a medium of instruction for all subjects, have a modern infrastructure and well equipped classrooms. English language teaching in the HE sector takes place at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. English should be used as a medium of instruction in all higher education institutes (Higher Education Commission Report, 2011). However, the reality in the classroom is very different. It is just taught as a subject in most of the public sector universities. The teacher in the public sector is the sole authority, it is his or her prerogative whether or not to use English as the medium of instruction. Rahman (2008), Mansoor (1993; 2002; 2005) and Shamim (2006; 2008) provide a detailed analysis of the English Language Teaching (ELT) scenario in the public sector universities in Pakistan. They argue that their English language teaching is normally carried out in large classrooms with many students (80 to 100 approximately) and usually relies on teacher centred lecture methods. Mansoor (2003; 2004) states that private sector universities not only attract students because of their teaching of English, but also because they lead to better opportunities to get good (well-paid) jobs.
The teaching in these private sector universities is done in comparatively smaller classrooms with 30 to 40 students in each class, whereas ELT in the public sector universities is more of a formality than a productive practice; there, the teachers are less concerned about whether the students are learning or not and there is yet no concept of accreditation of the courses or evaluation of their success rate.

Abbas portrays the other side of the picture. She argues that despite a massive input into the teaching of English at higher education level, and its increasing demand, the achievement results nationally are poor. At college level, the pass rate in English is barely 18 to 20% (Abbas, 1993). Abbas comes up with two possible reasons; firstly, that the teaching of English is perhaps not necessary for all students, because those who come from English-medium schools do need not to learn the basics of English; secondly, the pedagogy and materials designed are seriously flawed and out of date. It is argued ‘we need to create our own pedagogies and materials to teach the language, using our own native, grassroots oral and literary traditions’ (Abbas, 1993, p. 89).

Similarly, Canagarajah (1999) also suggests adopting a middle way and a personalised approach to learning and teaching English in postcolonial contexts. He proposes a ‘pedagogy of appropriation’, especially for the teaching of English in non-native contexts. He suggests that in this way students on the periphery will become insiders and use the language in their own terms, according to their own aspirations, needs and values and will make use of English creatively and critically.

Warsi (2004), highlighting the conditions under which English is taught in Pakistan, suggests that there is a need to address the issue of successful ELT application from an applied linguistic perspective rather than having theoretical debates and dialogues. According to Warsi, unqualified and untrained teachers, flawed teaching methods, inappropriate books, inadequate facilities, a flawed examination system and ineffective supervision (evaluation) of ELT practices are the areas which need to be seriously examined to ensure positive learning outcomes and to meet the demands of learning English.
1.7 Private English Language Teaching Industry

It has been discussed above that having proficiency in English brings multiple rewards in one’s academic, professional and social life. Thus, it can be seen that the demand for learning English has increased rapidly over the last few decades, which in turn has resulted in the commodification of English. Rahman (2001) points out that the ever-increasing demand for learning English has led to a large supply of English teaching institutions (commonly known as private language institutes or centres) across the country. This situation has given rise to a private tuition culture for teaching the English language. These private institutes offer General English (GE) and communication skills courses, and preparation for international proficiency exams such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as Foreign Language (TEOFL). Memon (2015), in her survey of private English language institutes in Pakistan, points out that owing to lower learning outcomes, a poorer success rate, out-dated teaching methodology and a lack of modern teaching resources in public sector institutes, students wanting to learn English for academic, instrumental and integrative purposes usually prefer private language centres where English language teaching input is helpful and learning outcomes are comparatively far better. Memon’s analysis is in agreement with what Siddiqui (2007) found to be the reason for the popularity of the private tuition culture. He suggests that the tuition academies actually fill the gap of regular teaching (at schools and universities) that has failed to meet students’ demands for learning English.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the broader context of the study including the historical and political background of English in Pakistan, and its status in the language policy and in the education system of the country. In order to help my reader better understand this scenario, I elaborated on the system of education in Pakistan and the role of English vis-à-vis Urdu, the national language, and other provincial languages, and the controversy around the national and regional languages. I also explained the English language teaching and learning practices in the higher education sector.
The historical and political positioning of English suggests it has always been prioritised as the official language of the country since its inception in 1947. The most cited explanation for this decision was English’s neutral status amidst the national and regional language controversy. It is significant here to raise the question of whether any language can be neutral. English may be neutral because it is not ethnically connected with any of the factions in Pakistani society, however, the role it has played in creating further divisions on the basis of its presumed prestige and privilege cannot be totally ignored. Coleman and Capstick (2012) therefore, argue that English plays a complex role in Pakistan, and it is not completely neutral. None of the governments considered replacing it with Urdu, the national language, even after holding many dialogues and decision-making sessions on the issue at regular intervals. Will English ever be supplanted by Urdu? It is a question to ponder upon. On the other hand, the debate and controversy over the medium of instruction is also worthwhile highlighting here. Rather than resolving this issue and directing education policy towards uniformity, each successive government has made the situation worse by adopting politically motivated and poorly planned education polices.

Broadly speaking, there are two different schools of thought on the issue of the medium of instruction. One group advocates that the national language should be used as the medium of instruction until primary school, so that children can develop their cognitive and creative faculties in their first language which will in turn help them better understand scientific and technical subjects which would otherwise be difficult to learn in a foreign tongue. The second group supports the use of English as the overall medium of instruction. They argue that English, as the source of a huge reservoir of knowledge and the language of international communication, must be taught to children so that they can equip themselves to compete in the world. They believe that the use and knowledge of English is associated with economic development, so keeping children away from English will amount to depriving them of a wide range of opportunities to acquire knowledge and to progress. Therefore, they challenge any decision in favour of Urdu as the medium of instruction, arguing that such a decision, in the socio-economically divided system of education, would further widen the gap between the haves (children studying in private English-medium
schools) and the have-nots (children studying in vernacular-medium government schools). In addition, even if Urdu did replace English, it would have to expand its boundaries to accommodate the huge amount of knowledge and information available in English. Yet another concern is whether or not translations can do justice in scientific and technical terminology.

The assumption that English medium education is synonymous with good quality education has significantly increased its popularity and demand amongst the middle and lower middle classes in Pakistani society and this has stimulated a proliferation of private English-medium schools in last two decades. These schools claim to offer children an English education which the state (vernacular-medium) schools have failed to provide. The different streams of education catering for different classes in society are divided according to students’ socio-economic status, where the upper class attends ‘posh’ English-medium schools and the poor go to free of charge, state-run schools. All of these different schools, and even different higher education institutes, not only vary in the curricula they follow, their teaching strategies or their distinctive learning outcomes but they also create implications for society at large, as the very terminology of ‘elite English-medium’ and ‘non-elite English-medium’ schools is riddled with connotations of academic inequity and social injustice.
Chapter 2 Theoretical Framing

Introduction

As mentioned in the introduction this thesis is based on the interrelation of learning English as a second language, and the negotiation and reconstruction of language learner identity in postcolonial Pakistan. This project aimed to study the nature of participants’ language learning journeys and its influence on their language learner identity. However, as the process of research developed and I began to analyse and interpret the data some new aspects emerged, which I had not set out to study at the beginning, before collecting the data. The impact of participants’ other identity categories such as gender, social class and ethnolinguistic identities (see chapter 3 for detailed discussion) surfaced in the latter parts of the study. In this chapter I will discuss the literature which forms the theoretical framing of this study, and also the literature which is relevant to the concept and construct of language learner identity in the field of language education and Second Language Learning (SLL). The discussion in this chapter is integrated i.e. theoretical concepts and empirical studies have been synthesised to increase the readability and flow of the argument.

I will begin this chapter with the orientation, which leads on to the theoretical framing of the study and its development. I will then discuss the relationship between second language learning (SLL) and identity construction and negotiation. The constructs of investment, agency and imagined identities will also be highlighted as they occupy a significant place in identity and SLL research. At the end of this chapter I will briefly review identity and SLL studies conducted in immigrant, study abroad and foreign language contexts.

2.1 Orientation of my study

Wenger (1998, p. 215) suggests that learning any other language transforms ‘who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity’. Therefore language learning, it
can be argued, is ‘the process of becoming or avoiding becoming something, rather than a simple process of acquiring skills and knowledge’ (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007, p. 670). Similarly, following Hall (2002), I argue that like any other individuals, second language learners are also social actors, whose identities are multiple, varied and emergent from their daily lived experiences. The present study views my participants as social actors. They belonged to different social groups and their membership of those social groups helped them to construct and reconstruct their multidimensional identities, which tended to be dynamic in nature. Consequently, when they learned English their multidimensional identities interacted with their language learning processes, which influenced the construction and negotiation of their language learner identities.

2.2 Social Constructionist and Poststructuralist Views of Identity: Paradigm Shift

Identity has been viewed and defined from a number of perspectives and approaches in different studies and various areas of research. The conceptualisation of identity foregrounded in this study had initially been drawn from social constructionist views of identity. However, as the thesis developed and data unfolded this position was informed by the poststructuralist concept of identity. Hence, identity in this study is presented from dual perspectives i.e. from a social constructionist and a poststructuralist perspective.

The social constructionist and poststructuralist perspectives of identity offer a paradigm shift from a structuralist and essentialist stance on identity. Structuralist approaches to identity asserted ‘universal laws or rules of human behaviour’ (Block 2007, p. 12). This meant that the self was seen as ‘the product of the social conditions in and under which it has developed’ (ibid.) and that they were determined by their membership of social and demographic categories, formed and shaped by a fixed view of ‘culture’ and biological characteristics, all of which preceded their existence (ibid.). This approach to identity was criticised by social constructionist theorists for ignoring the dynamic and fluid aspect of identity (Jenkins, 2008) and by poststructuralists for ignoring ‘power relations and complex socio-political, socio-economic and socio-
cultural factors which shape interactions between various groups in multilingual societies’ (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 6).

Social constructionists (Burr, 2003; Jenkins, 2008) see identity as dynamic, social relational, fragmented, multiple, incoherent, hybridised and even ambiguous. Jenkins (2008, p. 17) defines identity as a social construct states that ‘all human identities are, by definition, social (sic) identities’. He argues that human identity is a process not a ‘thing’, it is not something that one can ‘have’ or not; it is something that one ‘does’. Identity can only be understood as a process of ‘becoming’ rather than ‘being’. One’s identity is always multidimensional, it is never a final or settled matter. ‘Identifying oneself or others is a matter of meaning and meaning always involves interaction: agreement and disagreement, convention and innovation, communication and negotiation’ (Jenkins, 2008, p. 18). The social constructionist perspective of identity shifts its focus from the traditional psychological concept of ‘core self’ which is innate and self contained. This was part of the structuralist view of identity, understood in terms of demographic categories, cultural practices, languages and inner psychological elements (Jenkins, 2008). Later on, it was realised that these categories and their corresponding identity traits were not sufficient to explain human irregularities and in various social phenomena. Therefore, new understandings and perspectives (social constructionist and poststructuralist) of identity evolved.

The term poststructuralism means ‘surpassing of structuralism’ (Block 2007, p. 12). As the word suggests, it seeks ‘more nuanced, multileveled and ultimately, complicated framings of the world around us’ (ibid.). Its theory recognises:

the sociohistorically shaped partiality, contestability, instability, and mutability of ways in which language ideologies and identities are linked to relations of power and political arrangements in communities and societies (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004, p. 10).

In order to probe deeper into the social constructionist view of identity, poststructuralist understanding of identity was introduced into this thesis to examine the complex and subtle process of language learner identity construction and
negotiation. The complexities include factors such as ideology, consciousness, relations of power and different forms of capital, which were not highlighted or considered in the social constructionist perspective of identity. Poststructuralist approaches recognise the role and influence of these factors on learners’ identity negotiation and construction (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

Since much of social constructionist understanding of identity owes its development to the social identity theory by Tajfel and his colleagues in the 1980s (Benwell & Stoke, 2006), it could be said that it lacks space for some of the complexities involved in identity constructions. Poststructuralists incorporated power and ideology into the analysis of social dynamics and individuals through the concept of discourse. This led to an enhanced understanding of identity, with its irregularities and multiplicity (Block, 2007). However, the key to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of identity is to maintain a balance of different theoretical perspectives and approaches by keeping what works well from each paradigm (Block, 2007 p. 14). The demographic categories offered by the structuralist paradigm have also been considered to refer to different identity categories in analyses such as race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, social class, language and so on that are partially core to human identity (Block 2007, p. 27). However, the obscured and complex notions of power, and political, historical and socio-cultural attributes highlighted by the poststructuralist perspective are vital in considering language learner identity construction and reconstruction in Pakistan. Thus, I arrive at a balanced position by drawing on the key aspects that each paradigm offers to foreground the theoretical farming of this study. Both constructionist and poststructuralist approaches have been adopted and synthesised to produce a more holistic view of identity (Edwards, 2009) within a postcolonial context.

The key studies in the research area of SLL and identity come from the 1990s, e.g. McKay and Wong 1996; Norton Peirce 1995, 2000; Pavlenko 2000, 2002, Block 2007 to name a few. They mainly adopted a poststructuralist perspective of identity to study language learner identity. They became aware of the need to consider power relations and ideologies and the relationships between individuals multiple identities and
second language learning outcomes. This highlights an infinitely more complex concept than that portrayed in the socio-psychological and essentialist paradigms (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). Thus, it is argued that owing to its complex nature identity can be better understood through using more than one approach and paradigm.

### 2.3 Identity and Second Language Learning (SLL)

Taking this a step further, in the field of applied linguistics, identity has been gaining attention since the recognition of its significance in domain of Second Language Learning (SLL). SLL is not simply ‘the acquisition of a new set of grammatical, lexical, and phonological forms’, but ‘a struggle of concrete socially constituted and always situated beings to participate in the symbolically mediated lifeworld of another culture’ (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000, p. 155). In other words, SLL is not just a matter of acquiring pre-determined linguistic knowledge, but involves a complex process of negotiating identities, cultures and power relations. Considering the traditional SLL theories, Norton (2000, p. 5) developed a comprehensive theory of identity that integrates the language learner and the language-learning context. She reintroduced the term ‘social identity’ in the field of SLL to refer to ‘how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future’. Jenkins’ (2008) social constructionist conceptualisation of social identity does not touch upon these complexities highlighted by Norton (2000) and Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000).

According to Norton (2000, p. 5), language learners cannot ‘be defined unproblematically as motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited’, as all these ‘affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways in a single individual’. It can be noticed here that identity in the realm of SLL has been partly conceptualised in a way which echoes Jenkins’ social identity theory as well as the sensitivities of poststructuralist perspectives in terms of power relations and an added criticality of purpose concerned with the playing out of possible power inequalities, context-dependent language learning and future
possibilities. Furthermore, Block (2007) states that for researchers who aim to study the relationship of identity and SLL, a poststructuralist approach is the choice because it helps them see the subtleties of the process of language learning beyond the mere acquisition of linguistic skills.

2.4 Identity Negotiation and Construction

In the previous section, it was established that social identities constantly change due to movement within and across different social groups, and interactions and experiences within such groups, which means the learner must continuously negotiate his or her identity whether it be consciously or unconsciously (Marx, 2002). In the language-learning context, language is most significant as the medium through which a learner negotiates his social identity (Hansen & Liu, 1997; Norton, 1997; 2000) because it is through language that a person is either given or denied access to social groups (Norton, 2000, p. 5). Non-native English speakers may not feel comfortable or confident enough to speak up during a casual lunchtime break at work with native English-speaking co-workers. This lack of participation may exclude them from this social group and may influence how native English speakers interact with them. When language learners speak, they organise and reorganise their identity and how they relate to the social world (McNamara, 1997; Morita, 2004; Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 1997, p. 410). This negotiation of their identities occurs in every social context, because the language learners generally try to gain access to social groups. If language learners cannot gain access to the social group because they are unable to communicate well, they inevitably have to reflect on and negotiate their sense of who they are and what happens next. Thus, their inability to speak the target language engages their identity negotiation as a non-speaker of the target language. On the other hand, perhaps they can communicate very well, and they construct their identity based on a successful encounter in the target language in a way which reinforces a sense of self as a member of the group and allows interactions which can further shape their identity. In other words, it can be said that identity is constructed by language (Norton, 1997) and that people establish their identity by how they choose to use language (Freed, 1995) in interactions, experiences and in their positioning within these.
Social identities are negotiated and constructed throughout the language learning process and are inextricably intertwined. However in the context of the current study identities are not reconstructed and negotiated only for gaining access to certain social and learning groups, but also during students’ language learning journeys in various environments such as home, university and other social circles as they move towards a secure, desired, possible self.

As identity is not seen as a fixed construct (McNamara, 1997; Morita, 2004; Norton, 1997; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002) it is rather a complex, dynamic and at times even contradictory (Marx, 2002; Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 1997) and is continually changing depending on the social context or setting (Marx, 2002; McNamara, 1997; Morita, 2004; Norton, 1997). The learners have to adjust or negotiate their identity depending on varying social situations (Skilton-Sylvester, 2002).

The term ‘negotiate’ is used here to describe how a language learner belongs to different social groups and how this relationship changes over time. To clarify negotiated identities, consider that at home, a woman may identify herself as mother or wife; at school, as a student; or at work, as a member of a team or a head of a department. However, despite the discrete nature of these roles they form part of the whole and each may feed into the other in some way. Learners move between various social groups and social contexts and are constantly negotiating and constructing their identities to either be or not be a member of a group. They have multiple and changing identities in moving from one context to another which means that learners are negotiating and constructing their identities in every social context during their language learning journeys.

I argued earlier in this chapter that language learners, like all other human beings are social actors who belong to different social groups. Also, their language learning journeys do not just end with the acquisition of linguistic skills but also involve a process of redefining who they are, and what they want to become having acquired the particular second language. Hence, it is important to learn about how second language
learners are invested in language learning processes, which are also an investment in their own identities (Norton, 2000). Having argued that language learners have multi-layered and multifaceted identities, I take the position that Pakistani learners’ other identity categories/aspects such as their gender, social class, ethnicity, and linguistic affiliations are embedded in the formation of their language learner identities, through and within which they negotiate and construct their language learner identity. Hence, these identity categories significantly influence their language learning experiences and journeys and consequently their English language learner identity.

2.5 Language Learner Identity

Within this identity framework second language learners begin their language learning journeys with their past experiences and their investment in English through formal and informal mechanisms including their engagement in schooling and higher education. On an informal level, this can involve family learning experiences and private language learning outwith formal education. Hence they come across a number of language learning interactions, which define and redefine their identities. Some learners may have ample opportunities to interact in English, some may have access to English television, newspapers and other media while others have to struggle to find ways to use English in their formal or informal environments. Therefore, the extent to which they learn, the accuracy with which they use English, and their acquisition of certain vocabulary, style and dialect usually depend on different variables such as academic, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Thus, I argue, every language learner has their own unique English language learning experiences, journeys, motivations, goals and aspirations for English language learning. All these elements constitute their language learner identity. This concept of language learner identity is adapted from and is relevant to Norton’s (1995; 2000), Block’s (2007) foundational works on second language learning and identity which reconceptualised the basic constructs of language learner identity in immigrant and foreign language contexts and Gao’s (2008) presentation of Chinese English language learners’ identities in study abroad context.
Norton and Toohey (2011) state that previously in 1970s and 1980s language learner identities were mainly considered as personalities having fixed learning styles and motivations. This view was gradually altered in recent times when poststructuralists redefined learner identity. The poststructuralist conceptualisation of learner identity is rather fluid, context-dependent, and context-producing. Therefore, it can be argued that ‘learners’ personalities, learning styles and motivations are not fixed, unitary, or decontextualised’. They tend to assume the identities they wish to claim (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 420). In continuation of the current debate on identity and second language learning, researchers and theorists (Norton, 2000; Duff, 2002; Block, 2007; Pavlenko & Norton 2007; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Darvin & Norton, 2015) consider the constructs of investment, agency and imagined communities (imagined identities) as the potential key elements in the theorisation and development of SLL and identity research. It is important, therefore, in order to capture the process of the construction of language learner identity that I review the literature on these constructs, which is in the following section.

2.5.1 Identity and Investment

Investment is one of the key constructs that influence the nature of identity and language learning. According to Norton and Toohey (2011, p. 415) ‘the construct of investment seeks to make a meaningful connection between a learner’s desire and commitment to learn a language, and the learning practices of the classroom or community’. Learners may choose to invest in various aspects of their lives such as education, their job or perhaps in learning a new language. Their investment represents their desire to acquire ‘a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital and social power’ (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 17).

The sociological construct of investment was developed by Norton (2000) to complement the psychological construct of motivation (Dornyei, 2001), which draws ‘meaningful connections between a learner’s desire and commitment to learn a language and their changing identities’ (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 420). Similarly
Darvin and Norton (2015) state that the construct of investment occupies an important position in language learning theory for ‘highlighting the socially and historically constructed relationship between language learner identity and language learning commitment’. Norton’s construct of investment is intrinsically intertwined with the Bourdieusian concept of capitals (discussed in detail in chapter 3). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) state that cultural capital has a differential exchange value (or ‘currency’) in different social fields. The value of learners’ cultural capital is intrinsically connected with their sense of who they are and what they desire to become. Thus it can be argued that ‘investment in a target language is also an investment in learner’s own social identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space’ (Norton Pierce, 1995 p.18).

As mentioned above, the construct of investment is associated with its predecessor, concept of SLL motivation. A great deal of early research on motivation framed it as a fixed characteristic of individual language learners, and hypothesised that individuals who could not learn their target language successfully did not have a sufficient desire to learn that language (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Regarding language learning as mainly an individual accomplishment, these studies of SLA motivation were not, by and large, concerned with power relations between language learners and target language speakers. According to Norton’s (2000) foundational research on identity and investment, most of the times even highly motivated learners did not always end up with successful learning experiences because of the presence of unequal power relations between second language learners and target language speakers inside and outside the classrooms. Thus, even a highly motivated learner may have little or no investment in language learning processes and practices in the classroom or target language community due to the latter’s ‘racist or elitist’ nature (Norton & Toohey, 2011 p. 421). It is important to mention here that as the present study is focused on a different context, the construct of investment is, therefore, viewed from a slightly different perspective. The issue of power relations amongst target language learners and target language speakers is not pertinent here because it is purely a non-native second language-learning context. However, power relations do come to play a part in the Pakistani context in different ways. A shift in power relations has been explored in
the context of this study, which is significantly different from native English language learning contexts. (See chapter 8).

The fields of applied linguistics and language education have seen great interest in the construct of investment (Pittaway, 2004; Norton & Gao, 2008). McKay and Wong (1996), for example, investigated the English language development of four Mandarin-speaking students in Grades 7 and 8 in a Californian school, noting that these students’ investment in the school’s language was related to their needs, desires, and negotiations. Skilton-Sylvester (2002) argued that the psychological construct of motivation did not sufficiently describe the complex lives of four Cambodian women in adult ESL (English as a Second Language) classes in the USA with whom she worked. It was argued that the understanding the domestic and professional identities of these women were necessary to explain their investment in ESL programmes. These studies have highlighted a strategic perspective on learning as investment as an important mechanism for supporting linguistic developments.

An ethnographic study by Duff (2002) portrays the relationship of the psychological construct of motivation with the sociological construct of investment in a classroom discourse of a Canadian high school. This study basically focuses on teacher’s efforts to create such an environment in the classroom of ESL (non-native) and local/native students where they get to know each other’s cultural/ethnic differences, interact constructively and use linguistic resources equally. Despite all her (teacher’s) attempts the non-native students of the class were, most of the times, found unwilling and unmotivated to participate because of the fear of being criticised by their native English counterparts. One of the obvious reasons for this inactivity on their part was their limited vocabulary and lower levels of proficiency, which was considered as their lack of initiative and agency to participate in the class and by their counterparts. Duff (2002, p. 312) noted that ‘silence protected them from humiliation’. An insightful review of Duff’s (2002) study by Norton and Toohey (2011, p. 421) states that

The teacher’s efforts to provide the non-local students with opportunities to speak sometimes positioned students in ways Duff called ‘awkward’. While
some students resisted their subordinate positioning verbally, others were seemingly content to remain silent, investing instead more in the written activities of the classroom. It could be argued that rather than being unmotivated, many of the silent English language learners in the class were not invested in the language practices of their classroom, actively resisting practices in which they occupied unequal relations of power vis-à-vis the local English speakers.

Skilton-Sylvester (2002) in her research study on four Cambodian women in adult ESL classes in the USA, has argued that previous research on adult motivation has not captured complexities of learners’ lives, therefore, it is important to have clear understanding of their professional and domestic identities in order to analyse their investment in ESL programmes. This highlights the need to consider the learner holistically and makes links to the female and domestic lived world of the individual as well as the adult learner.

Potowski (2004) using the construct of investment explains students’ use of Spanish in a dual Spanish/English immersion program in the USA. He noted that even if a language programme is well run, a learner’s investment in the target language must be consistent with the goals of the programme. Similarly, Haneda (2005) drawing on the construct of investment studies the engagement of two university students in an advanced Japanese literacy course. This study found that learners’ multi-membership in different communities might have impact on shaping the way they invest in writing in Japanese.

De Costa (2010), in his research on immigrant students in a Singapore school also used the notion of investment to investigate how a learner from China acquired proficiency in Standard English to be identified as an academically able student. In addition, Chang (2011) studied two non-native English-speaking international graduate students in a graduate school in the US. Studying the constructs of investment and imagined communities, it was found that the students were able to invest in areas that they thought would possibly increase their market value in their
current and imagined communities. This was achieved by exercising their agency ‘to fight their academic battle’ Chang (2011, p. 228).

Norton (2013) studying her participants’ investment found Mai was a highly motivated language learner; however, she had little investment in the language practices of her classroom.

I was hoping that the course would help me the same as we learnt [in the six-month ESL course], but some night we only spend time on one man. He came from Europe. He talked about his country: what’s happening and what was happening. And all the time we didn’t learn at all. And tomorrow the other Indian man speaks something for there. Maybe all week I didn’t write any more on my book. [Excerpt from Norton’s participant Mai] (Norton, 2013, p. 9)

The teacher in question was actually attempting to incorporate the lived histories of the students into the classroom discourse by inviting them to present about their native countries. Thus, she appeared to do was to validate only one aspect of student identity i.e. an essentialist/ethnic identity (for example European/Indian). However, very little attention was paid to other aspects of identity formation, such as gender, age and class. Furthermore, the teacher primarily focused on the students’ historical past, while ignoring the crucial demands of the present and the future, which, for Mai, included an investment in literacy practices.

In recent years there has been a debate about the role of agency in investment in second language learning. It has been argued that learner agency plays a significant role in investment. Kramsch (2013, p. 195) states that investment is accentuated by learner agency and that the constructs of investment and agency are complementary in the field of applied linguistics. Hence agency shapes learners investment in language learning processes (Darvin & Norton, 2015).

Two decades after Norton Peirce (1995) introduced first model of investment in the field of applied linguistics, the latest study by Darvin and Norton (2015) develops a
comprehensive and updated model of investment, which integrates identity, ideology and capital. The element of ideology has been added in the current version of the model. Keeping in mind the changing times, shifts in the global economic order, new relations of power and more recent language ideologies, ‘the model recognizes that the spaces in which language acquisition and socialization take place have become increasingly deterritorialised and unbounded, and the systemic patterns of control more invisible’ (p. 36). This means that the diversity, fluidity and dynamic nature of spaces as a result of new technologies has encouraged language learners to learn a new language interaction without any boundaries. Studying two language learners, one female from rural Uganda and a male from urban Canada the model also elaborates how structure and agency can be instrumental in providing learners with the power to speak. It is thus argued that the latest version of the construct of investment recognises the interrelation and interdependence of investment with agency and structure.

In the next section I will delineate the relationships of agency and structure with language learning practices.

2.5.2 Identity and Learner Agency

Learner agency has been discussed and empirically studied in Second Language Learning (SLL) research as a significant part of language learning journeys and identity construction (Block, 2007; Duff, 2012; Fogle, 2012). In this section I will discuss the general conceptualisation of agency, agency juxtaposed with structure and the role of agency in SLL.

Bandura (1997, p. 3) states that agency is ‘the power to originate actions for given purpose’. It is the capability of individual human beings to make choices and to act on these choices in way that makes a difference in their lives. In the context of SLL research learner agency is considered as learners’ potential for self-directed engagement in language learning by actively pursuing their participation and involvement rather than passively waiting to be taught (Lantolf & Pavlenko 2001; Gao, 2010). Van Lier (2008) states that agency is a fundamental construct in SLL.
processes and for language learner identities. He claims that there are three central characteristics when it comes to agency in language classrooms: learners’ abilities to self regulate, the socially mediated nature of the sociocultural context and an awareness of one’s responsibility for one’s own acts.

According to Duff (2012, p. 414), agency refers to ‘people’s ability to make choices, take control, self-regulate, and thereby pursue their goals as individuals leading, potentially, to personal or social transformation’. Emirbayer and Mische (1998, p. 971), on the other hand, see agency as ‘the capacity of actors to critically shape their own responsiveness to problematic situations’. Ahearn (2000, p. 12) goes on to define agency as ‘the socioculturally mediated capacity to act’. Where Duff argues that agency is mainly related to personal decisions and choices, Ahearn’s take on agency implies that it is always ‘a social event, that is, it does not take place in a void’, and it is always socially motivated and socially interpreted. Thus, it can be argued that agency is shaped by our social and historical trajectories and agency is socially mediated. This also implies that agency is an interdependent construct and that the efficacy of agency depends on the contexts where it is exercised. Mele (2003) states that agency is shaped and controlled by external influences. Therefore it is possible for individuals to exercise more agency in one context and less in another.

This relationship of interdependence is further elaborated on by Giddens (1984) who talks about the ‘dualism’ of agency and structure. Here structure is explained in terms of social, political and economic contexts where action (agency) takes place. In his theory of ‘Structuration’ he argues that agency and structure are mutually dependent and internally related. Structure exists through agency and agents have ‘rules and resources’ between them which will facilitate or constrain their actions. Thus, there is close relationship between agency and structure, which are two sides of the same coin. Following Giddens’ idea of the relationship of agency with structure, Ahearn (2001) argues that although agency brings about autonomous social action and allows individuals’ abilities to operate independently but it has to first determine the constraints of social structures. Within such social structures, there is usually involvement of the other agents in individual’s formation of agency which either plays
a collaborative or conflictive role. The other agents may help the individual exercise their agency or obstruct it. In this way agency is often co-constructed and negotiated with other individuals co-exiting and with society as a whole (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001).

Flowerdew and Miller (2008) investigated how the interplay between agency and structure impacted on investment in three young adults English language learning journeys in a postcolonial society, Hong Kong. English being the linguistic capital was considered to be the ladder for participants’ development and for the creation of better opportunities for their futures. Following Norton Pierce (1995) and Norton’s (2000) updated theory of learners’ social identity as complex and dynamic, they argue that language learners create opportunities for learning with their agentive positions. The findings of this study (Flowerdew & Miller, 2008) also suggest that, with ‘creative discursive agency’ and investment inside and outside the language classroom individuals can actually mould their social world (social structure). Similarly Lantolf and Thorne (2006) further highlighting the relationship of agency with social structure suggest that agency is constantly constrained and empowered by social groupings and symbolic resources as well as other social factors. It is a culturally informed attribute which is often shaped by participation in specific community practices. It is negotiated and constructed with others in social setting.

Vitanova et al. (2015) go beyond the social aspect of agency. They argue that agency is evoked by deliberate, conscious choices and actions. Not all actions exemplify human agency. It does not merely require the ability to act to produce a change in the world, but also that these acts should be knowingly and consciously undertaken. Thus reflexivity has emerged as another significant component of agency The same idea is presented in Kogler’s (2012) definition of agency where he says that it is the human capacity to act purposefully and reflectively which prompts individuals to reinvent their positions and imagine how can they act.

Second language learners ‘actively engage in constructing the terms and conditions of their own learning’ (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 145); their actions are ‘situated in
particular contexts’ and are influenced by their dynamic identities, which are subject to change over time (ibid, p. 155). This presents learners’ agency as active and dynamic rather than static or passive. Consequently, second language learners should be treated more than ‘processing devices that convert linguistic input into well-formed (or not so well-formed) outputs’; instead, they have to be understood as people, whose agency should be appreciated and explored (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001, p. 145).

Van Lier (2008) discussing the notion of agency and its role in language learning, extends the argument saying that agency is all about three elements, which include ‘action, interaction and affordances’ (p. 598). This suggests that action (initiative) is something, which goes beyond the intention or simply planning, leading to interaction that implies participation and finally practical usefulness, which reflects the idea of affordance. This idea is relevant to the context of current study where learners tend to exercise their agency which I express in the initiative-input-implementation model. The application of agency may be individual as well as collaborative. In view of Lantolf and Thorne (2006) the construct of agency can be exercised by both; individuals as well as communities in the form of collective action. For example in a classroom learners can act individually or in groups carrying either the ‘I’ or ‘we’ perspective. However, it is not essential that individual agency should always be in harmony with collective agency.

Recent research in identity and SLL reinforces the correlation of agency with identity. Individuals’ identities are not only shaped by their historical and social trajectories but also by their agency, according to Hall (2002). Basically it is agency that drives motivation into action by defining learners’ choices (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). Furthermore, second language learners’ motivation, goals and actions are dynamic and subject to change; they are always context situated, and influenced by the learners’ own histories and the attitudes of the people around them. They may act upon their wishes only if their present environments allow for such agency (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Pavlenko, 2002a). Drawing on Margret Archer’s (2003) theorisation of ‘internal conversation’, Gao (2013) further conceptualises language learners’ agency as a pre-condition to learners’ efforts to take charge of the learning processes. He
proposed that close examination of language-learners’ reflexive/reflective thinking helps reveal how agency enables them to act upon their desires, determinations and visions. However, learners have to be conscious of the contextual and structural conditions before they begin their language learning journeys (see also Gao, 2010).

The role of learner agency is not limited to the classroom interactions and learning practices or the formal language-learning context. Xiao (2014) in a longitudinal study of a student learning English as a foreign language explored how agency played an instrumental role even in a distance-learning programme. The findings of this study suggest that learner agency was key for self-regulated learning and impacted on the learners’ motivation, self-efficacy, identity and metacognition that were considered to be the four constructs of language learning success. However, agency does not always imply active and positive participation of learners. Canagarajah (1999) demonstrated, in a Sri Lankan classroom, how students can resist particular discourses and how they thus employ agency by not participating actively in the classroom as a form of resistance. However, Ahearn (2001) argues against this by saying that agency cannot be equated with and reduced to resistance, but rather that this is ‘oppositional agency’: one of the many forms of agency.

Notions of second language learners’ agency helped my understanding of how my participants’ identities were influenced by their agency and how far their agentive positions helped them to reconstruct their identities and negotiate within their social structures. From the discussion above it can be suggested that learners exercise their agency to create better opportunities to learn which may pave the way towards their imagined communities and imagined identities.

2.5.3 Positioning in Imagined Communities and Projected Possible Selves

The term ‘imagined communities’, was originally coined by Anderson (1991) observing that nations are imagined communities, ‘because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion’ (1991, p.
6). Thus, our imagined association and relationship with others who we not yet met can create a sense of community. Norton (2001) being particularly interested in the relationship between imagined communities leading to imagined identities applied the concept of ‘imagined community’ in SLA theory. She saw it through the lens of learners’ investment in language learning. It may be implied that imagined communities create imagined identities assigned by the possible membership of future communities of practice. Therefore, the notion of imagined communities is associated with individuals’ personal aspirations to become members of some specific community of practice (Wenger, 2000).

These concepts were further developed in Kanno and Norton (2003) and Pavlenko and Norton (2007). They argue that when learners learn any other language they begin to imagine who they might be, and what their communities might be after learning the target language. These imagined communities might have a strong impact on the realities of the learners in which they are living and thus their investment in language learning may also be influenced. In addition, Norton (2001) argued that it is equally important for teachers to be aware of learners’ imagined communities because the lack of it might negatively affect a teacher’s ability to construct learning activities in which learners can engage and invest. An understanding of the construct of imagined communities in language learning processes allows teachers and researchers to explore more about learners’ affiliations with such communities and their influence on their learning trajectories.

Language learners desire to become members of certain imagined communities (Toohey & Norton, 2012) affects their learning trajectories. Similarly, Pavlenko and Norton (2007, p. 670) state ‘learning transforms who we are and what can we do and thus it is an experience of identity, a process of becoming and or avoiding becoming a certain person, rather than a simple accumulation of skills and knowledge’. Strahan and Wilson (2006, p. 2) argue that ‘a person’s identity involves more than the thoughts, feelings and behaviours of current self’ but also includes the memories and experiences of his past and hopes and fears for what he might become in the future. Thus, the construct of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) concerns the ideas that
learners have about their future selves and what they might become after achieving a particular goal (language learning). These ideas are subject to constant revision and redefinition. The various possible selves present in one’s concept of self include the ‘hopes, aspirations, and fears of what that person might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming’ (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p.954). Although possible selves focus on the future, they may derive from experiences, history, and varying representations of the self. Change in self-identity can be connected to transitions in life (Frazier & Hooker, 2006). Based on the concept of self and self-knowledge, possible selves are not static and fixed but are constantly changing in different situations and discourses. Possible selves can be positive: ‘the successful self the creative self, the rich self, the thin self, or the loved and admired self’ or negative: ‘the alone self, the depressed self, the incompetent self, the alcoholic self, the unemployed self or the bag lady self’ (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954).

The concept of possible selves until recently was used primarily in the field of adolescent psychology. Indeed, only a handful of studies connect the idea of possible selves to identity or to language learning (Oyserman et al., 2006; Leondari et al., 1998). Moreover, Block (2007, p. 867) noted that the study of identity and language is ‘a move away from’ framing learners as having just one identity, that of an individual, towards recognising hybrid or multiple identities, e.g., gender, age, education, profession, ethnicity and culture, all of which make up the identity of a language learner. In recent literature, identity categories such as age, gender, nationality and race are seen as socially constructed and not fixed, noting, ‘identity is a process as opposed to an essentialised fixed product’ (Block, 2007, p. 866). Thus, each individual is free to negotiate and construct their own identity through learning and dreaming of new possible selves.

The construct of possible selves correlates with the construct of imagined communities, which is actually an extension of the interest in the identity and investment area of research in the area of second language education. By imagined communities it is meant ‘what learners want to be’ and more specifically ‘where they want to be’ after achieving their learning goals (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2001;
Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Thus like possible selves imagined communities are related to learners’ language learning aspirations and objectives. Furthermore, imagined communities refer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination. ‘In our daily lives we interact with many communities whose existence can be felt concretely and directly. These include our neighbourhood communities, our workplaces, our educational institutions and our religious groups’ (Norton, 2013, p. 8). As Wenger (1998) suggests, it is not only through direct interaction and association we are connected with the communities of practice but also, he argues, via individuals’ imagination. Such imagined ties then become a source of creating imagined communities of practice which exist across time and space. Therefore, communities of practice are not only the ones with which we are currently affiliated but also with which want to be associated in the future.

Pavlenko and Norton (2007, p. 669) state that ‘the process of imagining and reimagining one’s multiple membership may influence agency, motivation, investment and resistance in the learning of English in terms of five identity clusters: postcolonial, global, ethnic, multilingual, and gendered identities’. For some learners, one identity aspect may be more pronounced than the other; however, generally all these five identity aspects come into conflict with learning English either as a second or a foreign language. All learners are positioned with regards to their gender roles and cultural context, whether global or postcolonial, and obviously learners of English are either bilingual or multilingual. Hence, their membership of imagined communities or their desire for a new imagined identity has to pass through one or the other of the above-mentioned aspects of their identity.

Kharchenko (2014) contends that every individual throughout their life, advertently or inadvertently, becomes a member of various imagined or real communities. Membership, imagined or otherwise, of these communities is crucial to the formation of an individual’s identity and helps them make their life choices. However, it is important to note that some of these communities are created through personal desire, whereas others are imposed on individuals against their wishes.
In her study on immigrant women learning English in Canada Norton (2000) presented an example of an imagined community from the diary of one of her participants Mai. She said:

After work today when I was walking by myself on New Street then I met Karl who was go to the same school with me last course . . . I just told him about my job and the course I am taking. He said to me, “The good thing for you is to go to school then in the future you would have a job to work in the office.” I hope so. But sometime I’m scared to dream about that (Norton, 2013, p. 9).

Mai’s hope for the future was that she would become a member of the community where she was living as an immigrant; her imagined identity was that of an office worker who dressed smartly and was not lost in the anonymity of the factory floor. Mai knew she would need to speak and write in English to be able to join this community. However, when her English class focused on the past lives of students, across diverse geographic communities, Mai struggled to make a connection between the language practices of the classroom and her imagined identity and future community.

Norton and Kamal’s (2003) study imagined communities of English language learners in a Pakistani school. This study was part of a project called the Youth Millennium Project funded by the University of British Columbia, which aimed ‘to provide youth opportunities to build self-confidence and community by creating a local plan of action that address a larger social issue’ and bring about any social change (p. 304). Norton and Kamal involved 40 girls and 40 boys between 12 and 13 years of age from a private English medium school in Karachi called the Model Elementary School. They aimed to conduct the research study on the ways in which young students responded to a community building opportunities in the wake of 9/11. The study was carried out in three stages. The young participants, in stage one, developed a

5 Series of attacks on the US landmarks on September 11, 2001 by Islamist terrorist group Al-Qaeda that distorted the image of Islam and Muslims in general. This incident had long-term negative repercussions creating tension and great rifts in the relationship between the West and the Muslim world.
programme to promote literacy amongst a group of Afghan refugee children in a local orphanage. This small-scale project involved the young reformers in teaching the refugee children basic English usages and phrases which they might use in their daily communication. In the second and third stages of the study participants gave their insights into the importance of literacy, and English education and their hopes for the future and their imagined communities.

In response to the definition of ideal community in their views, they told that the spread and progress of literacy, competence in English, and technological advancements are significantly required. They imagined a future society in which Pakistan was peaceful, true to the principles of Islam, and constructively contributing member of the international community. Norton and Kamal (2003) suggested that the students’ imagined communities might be well explained in terms of a ‘politics of location’ (Canagarajah, 1999) in which the English language peacefully coexists with other regional and vernacular languages. Hence, within such imagined communities learner identities will be, subsequently, hybrid and multi-cultural. The authors conclude that, therefore, the challenge for educators is to direct the young students’ imaginations in the pursuit of a peaceful, equitable, unprejudiced and international community.

A study in China, drawing on Norton’s (2000) notion of imagined communities, Xu (2012) examined how the imagined identities of four ESOL teachers were transformed during their early years of teaching. Coining the term ‘practiced identities’, she illustrated how the practical identities of three of her case participants differed substantially from their initial imagined identities. Only the fourth case teacher, through perseverance and agency, was able to extend the imagined learning facilitator identity that she had conceived at the start of her career. This suggests the fluidity and dynamism of imagined identities.

Critiquing the construct of imagined communities Kharchenko (2014) points out that in their one-sided (always positive) interpretation of imagined community as a positive stimulus for action, researchers ignore the down side of this phenomenon. ‘The desire
to participate in some imagined communities could be a driving force to change the existing real communities of participation or even to alienate oneself from the real community in favour of a future imagined one. The problem is that a newly imagined community is not necessarily a better one’ (Kharchenko, 2014, p. 23). Similarly, Appadurai (1997) criticising the role of the media and globalisation in encouraging the building of new imagined communities, argues that this whole process is causing the destruction of real communities. Consequently, it encourages tensions between our participation in the real and imagined communities, especially if those communities violate or overlap with the imagined communities of our fellow members.

Language learners usually carry an ideal image of their imagined communities without realising the potential disadvantages of these communities. They tend to believe that their membership in imagined community will always be much brighter and better than their current communities. Interestingly, in Norton’s (2000) study one of the participants intentionally refused to invest in language learning because she could not abandon her affiliation with her past community. She imagined herself as a wealthy Peruvian independent woman without any obligations to adjust to a new culture and adopt a foreign language. This implies that learners’ both past and future communities are crucial for their investment in second language.

I have employed the constructs of possible selves and imagined communities in this study to explore my participants’ future aspirations for what they want to become (their possible selves) and where they see themselves (their imagined communities) having reached the end of their language learning journeys and after acquiring the proficiency in the English language.

2.6 Second Language Learning (SLL) and Identity in Different Contexts

A number of recent research projects, drawn from diverse regions of the world, are illustrative of the ways in which particular pedagogical practices in language classrooms can either constrain or enable students in their reimagining of possibilities for both the present and the future (Norton, 2013). In this section I will highlight the
studies conducted on identity and language learning in three main language learning contexts: i) immigrant ii) foreign language and iii) study abroad.

2.6.1 Identity and Second Language Learning in the Immigrant Contexts

Research in the area of identity and SLL in the field of language education was initiated and emerged within this particular context in the early 20th century. In the immigrant context, I include the cases of language learners who learn a new language in a new territory by moving across geographical borders and settling down in a new country, with a different cultural and linguistic background from their own. In order to assimilate into a new society and adopt a new linguistic and cultural environment, individuals seek the help of language classes (or rely on other ways of language learning), which then becomes a platform for identity negotiation and reconstruction (Block, 2007).

During the review of the literature I noticed that the majority of these studies researched the identity and language learning issues of women migrants rather than men. The reason for this may be because the impact of immigration on women is greater than on men; therefore they have usually been the favourite choice of researchers for such studies. I have frequently referred to Norton, (2000) in this thesis on women language learners’ experiences in immigrant contexts because the views of her female participants and their experiences are quite relevant to that of my female participants. This emphasis on a female experience provides particular insights into the gendered lived world of participants and has salience for my own reflections on gender and the second language learner.

2.6.2 Identity and Second Language Learning in Foreign Language Contexts

The foreign language context is, when in any country in the world, a particular language (for example English in many European countries) is not the language of communication outside the classroom, nor it is used as a medium of instruction, and it does not have any official status in the given country. For many years, the research
into identity and language learning was limited to immigrant contexts in Canada, the US and the UK. However, identity in foreign language learning contexts started gaining research attention in the last decade or so as a result of a call for foreign language learners to be regarded as people exposed to intricate social networks (Riley, 2006; Mercer, 2011; Lamb, 2011) study key issues related to identity and foreign language learning.

### 2.6.3 Identity and Second Language Learning in Study Abroad Contexts

Language and identity research in study abroad contexts is comparatively a recent phenomenon and a relatively new area of study for the SLL researchers. It focuses on how learners’ identities influence their language learning and how they are influenced during their journeys of language learning in new communities away from their home countries. Skarin (2001), Kinginger (2013), Block (2006) and Gao (2008) are some of the few studies carried out in this context.

It is apparent that there is a wide range of literature on language learning and identity covering the three aforementioned contexts. However, there is an obvious dearth of studies which focus on identity and second language learning in postcolonial indigenous contexts which are predominantly multilingual and where second language learning experiences can be quite different from those in the West (Norton & Toohey, 2011) and native English contexts. Hence this study, as it was conducted at a postcolonial multilingual and indigenous site, will therefore fill a research gap in the field of identity and second language education.

### 2.7 Chapter Summary

I began this chapter with the theoretical orientation of my study, and proceeded to explore different perspectives of identity and their respective positioning in the current study. The social constructionist and postructuralist views of identity were compared and contrasted and were justified as complementing paradigms for the analysis of the complex construct of language learner identity in a postcolonial context.
The identity theorists and researchers in SLL have stated that language learning involves a complex process of negotiating identities, which are socially and historically constructed. They have also argued identity is a non-static construct, changing continually over time and space. The identity and SLL theorists put forward a poststructuralist view of identity, as discussed above, mainly through Norton (2000; 2013) and Block (2007). They define identity as the way ‘a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands the possibilities for the future’ (Norton, 2000, p. 5). In addition, Block (2007) argued that the poststructuralist concepts of language and identity will probably be far from the domain of essentialism and fall within the framework of diversity, contradiction, dynamism and variation. Furthermore, through the postructuralist lens language is seen as a social phenomenon, a source of power and individual consciousness, and as a form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991). Such complexities of identity and its interconnection with language learning were not highlighted in the social constructionist view. Thus, in order to interpret the findings of this study in the discussion chapter I will use both the approaches to identity as the sensitising concepts to analyse the data.

The arguments discussed in the light of the literature presented above in this chapter suggested that the constructs of investment, learner agency and imagined communities are crucial to explore the development of language learner identity. The constructs were elaborated on as the main facets of identity and second language learning research, which would be likely to be significant in the construction and negotiation of language learner identity in Pakistan.

It has been posited in this chapter that language learners, like other human beings, are social actors, so their second language learning activities (investment) are not just about acquisition of grammar and language skills but also about a process of organising and reorganising their sense of who they are and what they want to become (imagined identities/possible selves/imagined communities) after learning English. Therefore, they do not only invest in language learning but also in their own identities
and it becomes an experience and exploration of their identity. Hence, in order to invest and reach for their imagined communities and desired possible selves learner have to exercise their agency which helps them achieve their language learning objectives and in turn redefines their language learner identity (Norton, 2013). However, it is also important to note that sometimes learners may resist their investment in language learning because they remain rooted in their past real communities and show an unwillingness to imagine a new community and adopt a new identity. In such cases, learner agency works as a source of resistance rather than a positive action (Canagarajah, 1999).

The chapter ended with a brief review of identity studies conducted in different language learning contexts, highlighting the gap which this study is going to fill in the field of identity and second language education.
Chapter 3 Review of Studies and Conceptualisation

Introduction

I have argued in the previous chapter that language learners, like all other human beings, are social actors who belong to different social groups. Their language learning journeys do not just end with the acquisition of linguistic skills but also involve a process of redefining who they are and what they want to become having acquired that particular second language. In order to learn the second language learners are invested in language learning processes, which also turn out to be an investment in their own identities in terms of their future selves (Norton, 2000). The notion of second language learners’ multifaceted identity provides me with a useful concept to work with. I take the position that the Pakistani learners’ gender, social class and ethnolinguistic identities which are not detached components but are rather intrinsically interconnected to their language learner identity (Norton, 2013) and are negotiated through their English language learning journeys.

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section 1 reviews literature on gender, social class and ethnolinguistic identities in the area of Second Language Learning (SLL) and identity research. Section 2 presents some other conceptual understandings relevant to this study, including language as cultural and symbolic capital, English as a global linguistic capital, linguistic imperialism and hegemony and the concepts of third space and hybridity.
Section 1

3.1 Language Learning and other Identity Categories

Sarup (1993) points out that human beings do not have a fixed set of characteristics, and often build up their characteristics in a dialectical way. Each person has many different identities at the same time, and each of these does not exist in isolation from the others. The substantial research concerned with the notion of identity encompasses a range of aspects, including gender, ethnic, racial, national, cultural, linguistic, sociocultural, social class, feminist, and sexual identities are some of many other identity categories (see Blackledge, 2002; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Kubota, 2003; Kubota & Lin, 2006; Lippi-Green, 1997; McMahill, 1997; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2001b). Miller (2003, p. 41) stresses the contemporary conceptualisation of identity as one in which ‘unitary labels and hard binary oppositions are rejected in favour of the conception of multiple identities, which are fluid, dynamic, contradictory, shifting, contingent and processual’. It means individuals can have more than one active identity at the same time and also that they are likely to have their membership of more than one social group simultaneously.

Interest in the relationship of different aspects of identity and language learning has been gaining momentum in recent times. A great deal of research on identity and language learning not only explores the interconnected and multiple dimensions of learners’ identities but also seeks to investigate the ways in which relations between, for example, race, nationality, gender, social class and ethnicity influence language learning process. Innovative research that explores these issues in detail does not consider these identity categories as ‘variables’ but rather as sets of relationships that are socially and historically constructed within particular contexts and situations (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Since this study focuses on how language learning interacts with participants’ gender, social class and ethnolinguistic identities I will, therefore, review only these in this section.

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6 This thesis uses the term identity ‘aspects’/‘categories’/‘markers’ interchangeably
3.1.1 Gender Identity

Gender is a significant aspect of second language learners’ identity and may affect the nature of language learning experiences and opportunities. There is, therefore, a growing interest in gender identities as they relate closely to language learning processes (Block, 2007). In SLL studies issues related to gender have been given much more attention than other identity categories such as social class, ethnicity, race, nationality etc. The relationship between language and gender emerged as a separate field of enquiry in the 1970s (Pavlenko & Piller, 2001) and has developed in relation to learning achievements and identity formation. A considerable number of studies have been conducted on gender difference and SLL ability (Ekstrand, 1980), motivation (Clark & Trafford; 1995), the four skills of language (Ellis, 1994), teachers’ perception of gender (Clark, 1998) and interaction in the SLL classroom (Losey, 1995).

In recent years researchers have challenged fixed gender positions; they have witnessed the emergence of a less unified model and have adopted a more poststructuralist approach in gender and language studies (Kubota, 2003), challenging binary division and fixed gender roles. These discussions have been derived from the works of feminist theorists such as Butler (1990) and Weedon (1997). They believe that gender is more about doing rather than having or being and that it is the outcome of the social practices mediated by language that emerge in and from activity and interaction. Therefore, it implies that gender is an on-going and emergent phenomenon, as opposed to a determined and essentialist one. Gal (1991, p. 176) regards gender as ‘a system of culturally constructed relations of power, produced and reproduced in interaction between and among men and women’. Norton and Pavlenko (2004a) consider gender not as a dichotomy or an individual property, but as a complex system of social relations and discursive practices constructed differently in local contexts. Consequently, it is inappropriate to assume that all men or all women have a lot in common with each other, just because of their biological makeup, or distinctive social roles. Instead, gender emerges as a key dimension of identity that interacts with ethnicity, social class and age, and it is influenced by individual, collective, social and biological factors.
With regard to intersections of gender and language learning, the work of scholars such as Cameron (2006), Pavlenko et al. (2001) and Sunderland (2004) is particularly insightful. Pavlenko (2004) suggests that there is need to understand the dichotomy in gender and other forms of oppression. She argues that both girls and boys who are marginalised and silenced in the language classroom are more likely to belong to the working classes of society. A number of similar issues have been taken up by Norton and Pavlenko (2004), who document research from different parts of the world that address the relationship between gender and language learning practices.

In addition, some scholars including King (2008), Moffatt and Norton (2008) and Nelson (2009) have explored how far sexual identity and gender orientation affects language learning processes and outcomes in the language classroom. Their interest lies in the research which investigates how a language teacher can create an environment which supports learners who may be gay, lesbian or transgendered. As in this study I am focusing on how gender identity interacts with English language learning processes therefore I will, therefore, only review the studies which focus on gender identity and its correlation with language learning practices and investments inside or outside the language classroom.

- Imposed Gendered Positioning and Agency

As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, from a poststructuralist perspective second language learners are social actors who exercise their agency and have the potential to be in charge of their own learning and its outcomes (Gao, 2008). However, at the same time the structural limitations cannot be ignored. When learners begin their language learning journeys their gender roles may be viewed differently in their society as ‘the meaning of gender is socially and culturally constructed and, as a result, differs across cultures’ (Pavlenko, 2001b, p. 124). At times the constraints of their gender roles in society may impose particular gendered identities and their gender agency may find it difficult to challenge these constraints. Moreover, second language learners’ agency is co-constructed with their identity, and their desires and gendered images of themselves are shaped by the social discourse (Norton & Pavlenko, 2004b). The
learners’ agency, therefore, has great potential to influence their investment and decisions. In addition there are many studies including Swigart (1992) and Holmes (1993) that highlight the fact that women, at certain times, learn a new language to climb higher on the social ladder of their community, to claim their rights which are otherwise sabotaged in male-dominated societies, and also to gain more respectable and economically stable positions. The significance of future selves here is important for women in a patriarchal society where there may be limited ways in which women can shape their future selves and their engagement with the wider world.

Pavlenko (2001b) states that it is a common practice in minority communities to allow men a privileged position if they are bilingual whereas women do not even get access to the knowledge of second language. They are often restricted from learning a second language, which is associated with symbolic capital and limiting their access to many professional opportunities portrays the process of empowerment of women through language learning. She argues that women belonging to minority and immigrant groups learn a second language in order to get away with gendered linguistic practices in their communities and gendered, unequal and unfair power relations within their male-dominated and patriarchal cultures. Kobayashi (2002), in a survey study found, compared to male students female Japanese students were more positive about learning English, training for English-language related professions, and travelling to English-speaking countries. For these young female Japanese students, proficiency of English allowed them an entry into the job market and professional growth. It also served for them a means to gain empowerment and enabled them to liberate themselves from gender-oriented discrimination, prejudice and patriarchal conventions. The studies mentioned here present the differential and limited linguistic access for minority women and the relationship of their gendered agency with second language learning practices in certain communities. However, in my study I will explore both male and female learners’ gendered agency and the challenges learners encounter due to their gendered positioning and the impact of these on their investment in learning English and consequently on their language learner identity.
Gendered Participation Inside and Outside the Classroom

Pavlenko (2001b) has discussed extensively the issue of gender in relation to second language learning and learner participation. She argues that, in some contexts where bilingual proficiency is highly valued, the differential and gendered access to linguistic resources tend to manipulate the linguistic rights of one group. Hence that very access subsequently causes gendered participation inside and outside the classroom and also becomes a means for one group to dominate the other. Quite a few studies such as Kinginger (2004), Pellegrino Aveni (2005) and Talburt and Steward (1999) confirm that students, both male and female, studying abroad in different countries (Spain, France, Japan etc.) do not only have limited and gendered participation in classrooms but they also have to face problems due to unequal opportunities when it comes to informal interaction outwith the classroom. Additionally, the studies mentioned above portray how females had to negotiate and reconstruct their gender identity and agency to create learning and participation opportunities for themselves in male-dominated classrooms and communities.

A more recent study (Zoghi et al., 2013) conducted in Iran has a somewhat similar focus. They argue that equal participation opportunities and an unbiased learning environment may have positive learning outcomes for female students. They highlight the variation in language learning outcomes based on gender. They investigated 100 young adults (50 females and 50 males) randomly selected from different classes in the institute where they were learning English as a foreign language. The assessment test scores were used as the data, which was analysed quantitatively through Statistical Package for social Science (SPSS). The results suggest that there is significant influence of gender equality on learners’ level of achievement. Female participants in the study outperformed their male counterparts possibly because they were provided with equal opportunities to learn and participate. However, Zoghi et al. (2013) did not mention if they considered participants’ prior education (schooling) and family background which may also impact on their assessment of participants’ test scores, to evaluate the role of gender in English language achievement. This study has implications for language teachers, who, it is suggested, should keep in mind the
learners’ gender and consider equal opportunities for participation when planning their teaching strategies, as this may lead to better learning outcomes.

However, sometimes patterns and ways in which women and men learn and use a second language ‘are not determined by their gender but constructed, negotiated, and transformed through social practices informed by particular social settings, relations of power, and discourses’ (Kubota, 2003, p. 37). In this section I have briefly discussed some of the studies, which highlight the ways in which gendered negotiations and transformations may occur in different contexts and have, in particular considered the significance of these for the distinctive context of postcolonial Pakistan.

3.1.2 Social Class Identity

Block has discussed the significance and role of social class in language learning contexts in detail in his several works such as (2003; 2007; 2014; 2015). According to Block (2015) social class has not yet received much attention in the field of applied linguistics especially in second language learning research. However, sociolinguistics has explored it to some extent, Labov (1966) being its main and the earliest exponent. Keeping in mind the relevance and application of social class in SLL, Block (2014) provides a working definition of social class. He describes social class as the label for wealth, occupation, education and symbolic behaviour (language, clothing, pastimes). Skeggs (2004) calls social class an identity marker. She draws on Bourdieu’s (1986a, 1991) range of ‘capital’ metaphors for her discussion/framework on social class in a postmodern world. Social class may be understood in terms of wealth, education, and capitals (cultural, economic, social or symbolic) where societies are divided into categories: upper, middle and working class (Block, 2007).

Social class is different from other dimensions of identity such as race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, and religion in the sense that they do not involve the concept of distribution and redistribution of material resources. Social class particularly embraces individuals’ day-to-day experiences such as material possessions (house, vehicles, electronic appliances, books, art etc.), wealth (property, bank balance), occupation,
location of residence, education (type and level of schooling), consumption patterns (shopping particular brands from specific places), social networking, symbolic behaviour (dressing, body language, way of speaking etc.) and life chances (quality of life, level of comfort, life expectancy etc.) are some of the salient dimension of social class (Block, 2015, p. 3). This means that social class is a multidimensional construct, having not only economic but also social and cultural distinctions.

- **Social Class and Second Language Learning (SLL)**

As mentioned earlier there is not much research available that studies the role of social class identity in SLL processes and practices. There is lack of clear and detailed discussion of social class in SLL literature, however, at places, it is indirectly referenced under the headings of ‘power relations’ and transformative practices’ (Collins, 2006, p. 4). There are only few studies where I could find the close relationship of social class with second language learning. The majority of the studies which portray the relationship of social class with SLL practices deal with it as a structuralist construct having fixed position within a larger social structure (Gao, 2008).

In the context of this study, social class is seen from both structuralist and poststructuralist perspectives. While poststructuralists consider it as non-static construct influenced and altered by social practices and discourses (Block, 2015; Collins, 2006; Kubota, 2003), essentialist view defines it as a stable construct. Poststructuralist believe that learners belonging to particular social class negotiate and position themselves during their language learning journeys, whereas structuralists argue that individuals language learning practices and experiences are determined by their membership within a certain socio-economic group which remains fixed and consistent.

- **Social Class and Learners in Different Language Learning Contexts**

In the recent times, in Asian contexts where societies have been frequently restructured creating various classes on the basis of economic resources, this has led to
inequality in different sectors and institutions including education (Block, 2015). In this regard China has some considerable research to offer demonstrating the influence of social class on language learning. According to Tong and Shi (2012) it is has now become a trend in metropolitan cities in China to get children enrolled in bilingual educational institutions. These symbolise an elite education and entrance is related to family income, therefore, can only be attained by the privileged social classes in the society. In another study Gao (2010) in the study abroad context found that Chinese learners social class identities, as middle or upper class citizens, were reinforced by their study abroad journeys in the United Kingdom. The findings suggest that learners’ social (middle and upper) class came in handy in helping them adjust socioculturally abroad. Gao’s work not only focuses on degrees of social class in itself in his participants, but also highlights the issue of how individuals maintain (or not) their class positions in their own country when they travel abroad. Their social positions as well educated, confident, elite citizens back home significantly help them manage their journeys abroad. A study more relevant to the current study is Ramanathan’s (2005) work conducted in a neighbouring country, India, on English medium instruction in higher education. Her findings show that English education is always interrelated and connected with many symbolic and material resources such as quality of educational institutes, lifestyles, clothing and modes of behaviour.

Another study (Schofield & Mamuna, 2003), conducted in the same context as the current study explored different non-linguistic variables, mainly focusing on students’ socio-economic status (SES), affecting L2 learners’ success in learning English. They argue that Pakistani society is inseparable from its socio-economic dimensions that play a crucial role in almost all aspects of life including education. With regard to English language learning, the social class membership and economic status of the individual play a significant role in terms of their schooling, books, home environment, resources such as availability of satellite TV channels, Internet, newspapers, magazines and opportunities to travel abroad. These factors, which are dependent on individuals’ socio-economic status, significantly impact on learners’ English language learning practices and outcomes.
Shin (2014) carried out an interesting ethnographic study that discusses the ways in which social identity intersects with other identity categories such as race and ethnicity in a Korean language learners’ study abroad context. Studying four pre-college students from middle class families in Toronto, Shin argues that although learners’ social class status helps them invest in linguistic capital, but owing to their transnational identities as Koreans they were marginalised and ridiculed as ethno-racial minorities in their target language context. In reacting to the linguistic and racial stigma and downward social mobility experienced during their transnational activities, these students tried to reconstruct their identities and claim status as global cosmopolitans, by distinguishing themselves from other immigrants based in Toronto. Thus, the key findings of this study suggest that the relationship between social class and language learning is a complex one; it involves racial and linguistic intersections in some unexpected ways having unanticipated consequences.

The studies discussed above in different contexts of social class identity and language learning will help me explore my participants’ understanding of their social class identities and how their social classes shape their investment and influence their language learning processes.

3.1.3 Ethnolinguistic Identity

Ethnic identity and language are inextricably linked (Trofimovich & Tursėva, 2015). Although ethnic identity occupies a large part of the research undertaken in the area of identity, its particular focus and relationship with second language learning has not yet gained much attention especially compared to research into social class and gender identities. Under the heading of ethnolinguistic identity I have merged two identity categories which are often closely related ethnic identity and linguistic identity. In this section I will briefly discuss the concepts of ethnic and linguistic identity, the relationship of ethnicity with language, and finally the impact of ethnolinguistic identity on second language learning and its outcomes.
Trofimovich and Tursêva (2015, p. 235) elaborating on the constituents of ethnic identity state that the construct of ethnic identity ‘embraces the feelings, experiences, and behaviours that in their totality amount to individuals’ positioning with respect to their membership in a single or multiple ethnic groups’. According to Ricento (2002, p. 1) ‘we learn who we are and what we are as we acquire language; our identities are co-constructed through the language(s) and local discourses in which we are raised in our ‘mother/father/caregiver tongues’. Ricento highlights the essential connection of native language and an individual’s core identity, which may be developed as his group identity or ethnicity as it is often called. Arguing along the same line Edward (2009) and Fought (2006) state that ethnic groups typically consider language as a salient symbol of an individual’s identity. Similarly a person’s pattern of speech, accent, code mixing and code-switching and vocabulary are also considered as their ethnolinguistic belongings (Bailey, 2000; Rajadurai, 2007).

In the Pakistani context an individual’s first language is always associated with and rooted in the individual’s ethnic origins. Rahman (1999) and Siddiqui (2007) portray the linguistic divisions in Pakistani society on the basis of ethnicities. They suggest that the strong links between an individuals’ mother tongue and their ethnicity have always played a vital role in forming their ethnolinguistic identities. It is for this reason that these two aspects of identity cannot be completely separated. Hence, in this study I will deal with language and ethnic identity jointly under the category of ethnolinguistic identity.

According to Block (2007, p. 40-41) linguistic identity is sociolinguistically termed as ‘ethnolinguistic’ identity. He calls it ‘language identity’ and defines it as:

the assumed and/or attributed relationship between one’s sense of self and means of communication’…… it is generally about three types or relationship with such means of communication what Leung, Harris and Rampton (1997) call language expertise, language affiliation and language inheritance (sic).
Expertise is all about the user’s proficiency in the particular language, dialect or sociolect and that speaker is accepted as a legitimate member of that linguistic community. Affiliation denotes the speakers’ attachment and affective connection with that means of communication. Finally inheritance is a matter of birth in the family or community, which commonly uses and has strong ties going back some time with that particular language or mode of communication. However it is important to understand that these three types of relationship are independent of each other. For example, one may be born into a family which has used a particular language for a long time but some of its members may not have or may have lost affiliation with it after gaining expertise in another language (Block, 2007). Hence the language learner identity of any individual is a dynamic construct layered with shifting orientations connected to gender or class or in this case ethnolinguistically (Norton, 2013).

Ethnicity on the other hand as Puri (2004, p. 174) defines it is:

A form of collective identity based on shared cultural beliefs and practices, such as language, history, descent and religion. Even though ethnicities often allude to enduring kin-based and blood ties, it is widely recognized that they are cultural, not biological ties.

This definition makes ethnic identity distinctive from gender or social class identities but it cannot be completely separated from linguistic or language identity, as language is a vital part of any culture and ethnicity. It is argued however, that learning English may alienate the learner from his or her own ethnic group (Hansen & Liu, 1997; McNamara, 1997) and even from his or her own family (Norton Peirce, 1995; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002). With group membership threatened, learners at some point may decide to learn the target language to a ‘certain extent’—meaning they can be fluent or even proficient without losing their old identity or their group membership. They may learn the new language in a limited way, believing this to be necessary to maintain old group memberships while simultaneously becoming members of a different social group (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Language learners usually do not want to discard established group memberships but prefer to move freely between the various groups
of which they are members. To maintain various group memberships, language
learners must have dynamic and multiple social identities.

- **Relationship of Ethnic Identity and L2 Learning**

The foundational work of Lambert (1978) highlights the relationship between ethnic
identity and language learning. He argues that language learning involves contact
between individuals and groups, which in turn increases the chances of bringing the
personal and group (ethnic) identities to the forefront. Consequently, being bilingual
or multilingual does not entail learning a new language as a linguistic system but it
also involves the interpretation of its cultural aspects, which may influence learners’
personal and ethnic identity. Lambert elaborates on different patterns, which involved
how individuals’ ethnic identity might interact with their language learning processes.
The two main patterns are i) additive bilingualism and ii) subtractive bilingualism. The
additive bilingualism, which is also called assimilation or the integration process,
focuses on the possibility that, despite having a strong sense of ethnic identity,
language learners embrace L2 and become bilingual and bicultural without losing their
own identity. However, contrastingly, in subtractive bilingualism there is a chance
that learners will acquire the language of the majority and lose their own language and
culture. In this case, learners may refrain from learning a new language if there is any
threat of losing the association with their ethnic group. Lambert emphasised that
adding a new language and culture should not lead to a loss of identity. However, it is
important to note that any interaction patterns also depend on the given social and
political context (Sachdev et al., 2012).

It is hard to say anything definite about whether or not individuals’ ethnic membership
negatively or positively affects their language learning practices. Alternatively,
learners’ sense of ethnic belonging to a particular group may have little bearing on the
rate or success of their L2 learning. There are some research studies which have
investigated the positive and negative influence of learners’ ethnic memberships on
their L2 learning practice and outcomes. Some of these are reviewed below.
**Positive Impact of Ethnic Identity on Second Language Learning**

It has been noted across different contexts that second language speakers can easily maintain their primary group membership while acquiring a new language. Ellinger (2000) found a positive association between Russian and Hebrew learners’ strength of ethnolinguistic identification and L2 (English) achievement levels in Israel. He argues that a stronger sense of identification with the home group was associated with higher L2 proficiency scores. Similarly, Coupland et al. (2005) also report positive connections of ethnic associations in L2 learning with Welsh high school students in Wales. Henning-Lindblom and Liebkind (2007) studied 291 Swedish speaking young students in Finland using surveys and found that better Finnish (L2) skills and more extensive Finnish interaction networks were linked to the speakers’ increased identification with the target L2 group. Most importantly, speaking the Finnish language as L2 did not detract from the speakers’ Swedish identity; on the contrary, the young students appeared to have multiple simultaneous identities: as bilinguals, Swedish speakers, and Finnish nationals without any major adverse effects of any of these identities on each other.

Second language learning may be most efficient when speakers embrace a double-positive orientation, that is, a favourable view of their own ethnic group and of the target language culture and community. For example, Gatbonton and Trofimovich (2008) showed that those native French speakers of L2 English in Quebec, who expressed a willingness to be identified as both Canadian and French Canadian were the speakers with the highest self-rated L2 ability scores. In a recent study of Kurdish learners of Turkish in Turkey, using listener-rated measures of the L2 accent, Polat and Schallert (2013) reported that the most successful learners included either those who demonstrated strong identification with their home and L2 groups or those who strongly affiliated themselves with the L2 group. The disadvantaged group included the speakers who were solely oriented towards their home ethnic group. The findings gathered from above studies thus imply that a double-positive orientation towards the
home and the target groups is a helpful, although not a required condition, for learners to show strengths in at least some aspects of the L2.

In the case of a study conducted by Cervatiuc (2009) the results showed that the effects were the other way round. Here, rather than assimilation and integration being the factors of successful learning, success in the L2 became the reason for creating hybrid identities. In this study 20 multi-ethnic immigrants in Canada were studied in their language learning programmes. It was found that the more proficient learners of the L2 (English) embraced the target community’s culture and ethnicity and chose to become part of the host country’s social groups. These findings suggest that successful L2 learning experiences may be instrumental in developing multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual identities.

- **Negative Impact of Ethnic Identity on Second Language Learning**

Having highlighted studies which indicated the positive influence of ethnic associations, it is important to show the alternative, where the issues of ethnic or group membership contributed negatively to L2 learning processes and outcomes. A study (Paladino et al., 2009) conducted in Italy on Italian-dominant speakers in the Italian-German bilingual community found that, because of the negative perceptions the Italian speakers had about their German language abilities their performances in written and oral tests in the German language (their L2) were affected negatively. It was implied that having negative feelings even for one’s own social/ethnic group might affect members’ language learning practices. Another example of a similar situation comes from Gluszek and Dovidio (2010) who surveyed English native and non-native speakers in the United States. Their study shows that non-native speakers of English with typical foreign accents and dialectal differences felt less affiliated with the country compared to those who spoke Standard English. The non-native speakers also had difficulties in interacting with the native community and perceived feelings of dislike and disregard from the L2 community. Both these studies show that a negative association of ethnic identity might be related to learners’ socio-political views about the target language community.
In concluding this section, I argue that whether or not individuals’ ethnic associations and membership of any group are positively or negatively related to their L2 learning experiences is a much more complex issue than it first appears. Therefore, stating anything definitively would be difficult; hence it calls for further research in this area.

Section 2

This section consists of three parts. In the first part, I will highlight Bourdieu’s theory capitals and discuss language as a significant form of cultural and symbolic capital. In the second part, I will focus on the implications of understanding English language as the form of linguistic capital and give a criticism of this. Part three elucidates postcolonial discourses, which includes discussion on hybridity and third space and critique on linguistic imperialism and hegemony associated with English.

3.2 Language as Capital

Capital is commonly associated with monetary exchange and the economic value; however, Bourdieu extended this term to wider sociological and cultural contexts. In his discussion of the forms of capital, Bourdieu (1986a) defines four different forms of capital. The first is economic capital, which means monetary power or financial wealth, which can be in the form of property, tangible assets and investments. The second is social capital, which is made up of social connections and group memberships with lesser, equal or more powerful others. The greater the cultural capital of these others, the greater the social capital accrued by knowing and associating them (Block, 2007). The third is cultural capital, which means cultural resources and assets. Cultural capital is further divided into three forms: embodied cultural capital, which includes dispositions, attitudes, and behaviour embedded in people’s minds and bodies; objectified cultural capital, which contains material cultural goods that can be transferred between people; and institutionalised cultural capital, which is composed of various educational credentials or certificates (Bourdieu, 1986). The fourth form of capital is symbolic capital, which denotes prestige, reputation and fame, all nontangible assets, which can be obtained from any or all of the other capitals.
In Bourdieu’s opinion, cultural capital is something that one acquires to equip oneself with symbolic as well as material worth and is reproduced by economic capital. The attributes of cultural capital, such as skills, abilities, qualifications and knowledge guarantee an individual a better position and status in society. He believed that if one possesses more economic capital it is easier for them to acquire more cultural capital. For example, it is easier for a wealthy person’s children to get a better education and higher qualifications, which will ultimately increase their cultural capital. It seems that both economic and cultural capitals can be directly proportional. In addition, cultural and symbolic capitals are also correlated. Individual’s qualifications and abilities increase their reputation and prestige (Bourdieu, 1986b). Cultural capital provides a possible explanation for the unequal academic achievement of children originating from different social classes (Bourdieu, 1986b). A significant factor that contributes to academic success pointed out by Bourdieu (1986b) is the domestic transmission of cultural capital. Hence, it can be argued that by gaining and equipping oneself with cultural capital this may lead to academic success and upward mobility on the social ladder.

According to Bourdieu (1991) linguistic capital is one of the forms of cultural capital. When he talks about cultural capital as knowledge, skills, abilities and other cultural acquisitions he includes the acquisition of the ability to speak different languages as one of the constituents of cultural capital; something which can be inherited and passed down to future generations. He also mentions the idea of linguistic power and legitimacy of language by which he means that some languages are perceived as superior to others and by this very fact they claim their power and legitimacy amongst those who speak them and the people associated with them.

According to SLL researchers (Norton, 2000; Pennycook, 2001; Pavlenko, 2001b) Bourdieu’s cultural and symbolic capital theory was introduced into the field of second language education to identify and understand the inherent relationship between language and power. This relationship explains why certain linguistic practices and varieties are valued and preferred more than the others in particular
settings. It is because some linguistic resources possess symbolic power, because they ‘can be converted into economic and social capital’ by providing ‘access to more prestigious forms of education, desired positions in the workforce or the social mobility ladders’ (Pavlenko, 2001b, p. 122). In this way, some linguistic practices and resources are equivalent to the economic and social capitals and are capable of constructing power relations between individuals, communities and institutions.
Moreover, Shi (2006) argues that it is through such linguistic practices the symbolic and material resources are ‘generated’, ‘validated’ and ‘distributed’. However, the symbolic power of language is not evenly distributed and the linguistic products are not equally valued. They are valued differently in different linguistic markets (Miller, 2003). Norton (2000) adds that in second language learning contexts target language speakers usually control linguistic resources and their respective linguistic markets.

### 3.2.1 English as the Linguistic Capital

Language learning is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a socio-political exercise, of which the economy is an integral part (Mahboob & Tilakaratna, 2012). In terms of English as a form of capital the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu are relevant here. Pennycook (2001) contends that Bourdieu’s framework of ‘forms of capital’ is helpful for understanding the position of English globally in terms of the problems posed by the linguistic capital of English especially in former British colonies. Gao (2008) suggests that Bourdieu’s concept capitals also relevant in analysing effects of the power of international tests of English proficiency, for example, International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) because of the social and economic capital they promise. English enjoys the position of the universal language of science, technology and media (Coleman & Capstick, 2012), and is the main language in global business (Graddol, 1997). The status of English as an advantageous global lingua franca contributes to its rising status and popularity in many South Asian countries, including Pakistan where it is considered a means to academic and professional progress and upward social mobility (Shamim, 2011).
Considering the ownership of English, Higgins (2003) argues that English should no longer be considered as the property of native English speakers, but a global property of people all over the world who wish to use it. However, there is still widely believed that the native English speakers use Standard English, and only the native English speaker has the right to determine English language norms, thus only native-English-speaking teachers will provide appropriate linguistic models for their students (Foley, 2007). Influenced by this belief, native English speakers have advantageous positions in the English language teaching market; even untrained and unqualified native-speakers of English are preferred over trained and qualified non-native English speakers (Holliday, 2005; Mahboob, 2010). Therefore, they have an advantage in accessing jobs teaching English worldwide compared to non-native English speakers. This shows that native English speakers have a natural advantage of possessing a superior symbolic power connected with the English language compared to non-native English speakers. Similarly, for native English speakers it is far easier to convert their linguistic capital into economic capital and social power. Arguing along the same lines, Mahboob (2010, p. 3) states that the notion of privileging of native speakers is deeply seated in applied linguistics and TESOL literature and has become ‘invisible’ and ‘axiomised’ in the field. This phenomenon has implications for non-native periphery countries like Pakistan where it has become a sign of privilege and prestige on the one hand, and a cause of inequity on the other to be taught in English medium institutions chartered by an English speaking leadership and supported by native English teachers.

3.3 English Language Learning and Postcolonial Discourses

English is often assumed to be key to material success and social inclusion, a source of knowledge and information, and a passport into the job market, which justifies its dominance globally. It is generally presumed to be a language that allows disadvantaged people privileges, immigrants to native English speaking countries the

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7 The Periphery refers to communities/countries where English enjoys a post-colonial currency such as in India, Malaysia, Singapore and Pakistan. Phillipson (1992; 2010) uses the term periphery to accommodate Kachru’s (1986) discussion on Outer Circle — the countries that have been affected by the spread of English, often as colonies, where English is accepted as the international language of communication, mostly used as the official language and taught as a second language, often as the medium of instruction.
chance to settle and develop, and underdeveloped countries the opportunity to grow economically. These assumptions often shape individuals’ linguistic investments, convincing them that they will achieve better future prospects and access to higher social positions. However, in reality these assumptions gloss over the social inequalities created by the excessive dominance of English and are often being oversimplified (Pennycook, 1994). This rosy picture of English obscures the historical, political and material agendas that gave rise to this myth of the promise of English (Park, 2011).

The global spread of English is basically an imperialistic process (Pennycook, 1998). English, a language that is hailed as a global lingua franca plays a hegemonic role in most postcolonial countries, including Pakistan. As a lingua franca, English creates inequalities in communication between native and non-native speakers of English, leading to inequity (Phillipson, 1992; 2000; 2003). It is also a source of socio-economic inequalities within and between societies, leading to further inequity (Pennycook, 1994, 1995; Phillipson, 2000; Tollefson, 1991, 2002). It is because English penetrated deeply into the socio-political fabric of the colonial empires that it continued to flourish, and retained its superior position even in postcolonial times.

Continuing the same argument Tollefson (1991, p. 210) states that:

> We must reject the notion that learning language is an ideologically neutral act intended simply to develop an employment skill. That some people must learn English to get a job is a result of unequal relationships of power — not solutions for them.

Similarly Pennycook (2007) criticises the ideological underpinnings of the promise of English as a global linguistic capital. He argues that ‘this thing called English colludes with many of the pernicious processes of globalisation and deludes many learners through the false promises it hold out for social and material gain’ (ibid, p. 100).

Despite such incisive criticism from scholars like Tollefson and Pennycook faith in the
promise of English still persists. In the next section I will discuss English as the potential carrier of linguistic imperialism in non-native postcolonial countries where it enjoys the status of a second and official language and superiority on one side, and serves as the cause of resistance and inequity on the other.

### 3.3.1 Linguistic Imperialism and Hegemony of the ‘One Language’

The phenomenon of one language dominating over the others and having a linguistic supremacy has been well argued by the authors such as Phillipson (1992, 2008) and Pennycook (1994, 1998). Phillipson (1992, p. 47) defines linguistic imperialism as ‘the dominance asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages’. Here Phillipson emphasises the discriminative and unfair importance of English in various spheres, such as culture and education at the expense of other languages. He argues that the global spread of English is part of a western conspiracy. However, different stakeholders understand the agency behind the spread of English differently. One important milestone was the role of the British Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries and of the US after the First and Second World Wars. Others consider globalisation, print and electronic media instrumental for such an expansion and popularity of English. The over dominance of English and its immense popularity in certain parts of the world usually lead it to overshadow other mainstream languages especially in the periphery which at times causes language death (Crystal, 2000).

In line with Crystal (2000), Rahman (2010) argues that the death of languages is caused by modernisation and globalisation. It is seen that modernisation results in more educated and mobile societies, making it necessary for those living in villages to move into cities and towns for the purpose better education and career opportunities. In the developed and modern cities people get closer to the dominant and powerful language which in turn creates distance between them and their local indigenous languages. The dominant language of power is taught in schools and is frequently used by the media. In one way or the other it becomes obligatory for these people to learn a
new language to adjust and to progress with a new life; hence their mother tongue is slowly forgotten and this is how languages die as a result of modernisation.

Phillipson's theory of linguistic imperialism provides a powerful critique of the historical spread of English as an international language and how it continues to maintain its dominance particularly in postcolonial contexts like India, Pakistan, Uganda, Zimbabwe, etc. It has been previously observed (see Rahman, 1996; 2002; 2006, Mahboob, 2002) that the language policies of Pakistan since the foundation of the country in 1947 have been designed to privilege certain languages and neglect others leading to linguistic imperialism and hegemony of one language – English. As the issue of language power is central to the issue of linguistic imperialism, it is important to consider this next.

Power is that quality which enables the users of a language to obtain more means of gratification than the speakers of other languages. Forms of gratification may be tangible goods: houses, cars, good food etc. or, they may be intangibles like pleasure, ego boosting, self-esteem etc. (Rahman 2002, p. 38-42).

A powerful language is one that makes it possible for its users to enjoy privileged positions in the domains of education, the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the military, commerce, the media, research and so on. Similarly in Pakistan, one simply cannot enter the domains of power such as education, the military and the bureaucracy without being able to communicate in the particular language of power, which is English. It is the language of communication and employment and without both one is unable to compete in the race of globalisation within modern societies.

Contrary to Rahman (2002), Phillipson (1992) states that the export of English to formerly colonised countries has not paved the way to modernity and prosperity, as it was speculated in the post-World War II era. It is one of the most durable legacies of European colonial and imperial expansion. He argues that there should no longer be the belief that English is a neutral tool with no cultural baggage or that it has nothing
to do with political, economic, or military power. Far from being a neutral medium allowing for international communication and access to the technology of developed countries, English has served the political, cultural, and economic interests of the principal colonial powers, Great Britain and the U.S., at the expense of local and national development in third world countries.

Pennycook (1998) contends that the English language teaching enterprise was important, not so much because it led to the current massive spread of English around the world, but because it sat at the heart of colonialism and it is deeply interwoven with the discourses of colonialism. Pennycook (1998) tries to locate English language teaching and its policy within the broader context of colonialism and states that language policies and practices, which developed in different colonial contexts still adhere to English as they did in colonial times. He further talks about the interweaving of English and colonialism; it is clear that English language teaching was a crucial part of the colonial enterprise and it still remains so in the form of neo-colonialism.

Phillipson (2008, p. 22) argues that ‘throughout the entire post-colonial world, English has been marketed as the language of international communication and understanding, economic development, national unity and similar positive ascriptions’. He calls them soft-sell terms overshadowed by the very idea of globalisation. According to Phillipson (2008) globalisation may be held responsible for damaging the linguistic and cultural ecology and unfair distribution of linguistic rights as posited Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) as well. In line with Phillipson’s argument about linguistic imperialism, Canagarajah (1999) suggests that we should adopt a middle way and a personalised approach to learning and teaching English in colonial contexts. He proposes the concept of ‘critical pedagogy’, which is defined as a personal and situated way of teaching English. He talks about the ‘pluralization of standards and democratization of access to English’ (Canagarajah, 1999, p.181). Talking about the pedagogy of English, he states that what is needed is a pedagogy, which ‘enables students to deal with conflicting academic discourses, raises their awareness of discursive tensions, and empowers them to negotiate effectively with competing discourses and to employ them creatively and critically (p.176). For this purpose he
proposes a ‘pedagogy of appropriation’. Arguing against the uncritical use of English that leads to marginalisation he strongly supports the ‘third way’ of critical negotiation, which leads to empowerment. He suggests that in this way students on the periphery will become insiders and use language on their own terms, according to their own aspirations, needs and values, not as slaves but as agents, and will make use of English creatively and critically.

The concept of ‘third way’ highlighted by Canagarajah (1999) may be traced back to postcolonial studies, mainly in the work of Bhabha (1994). In the next section I will discuss the concepts of third space and hybridity and their relationship with identity and second language learning.

3.3.2 Third Space, Hybridity and Language Learner Identity

The notions of third space and hybridity have gained prominence in cultural studies and occupy a significant place in the works of Bhabha (1994) and Khan (1998). Bhabha (1990; 1994) basically developed this concept to describe the construction of culture and identity within the conditions of colonial antagonism and inequity. Thus, it is used as a postcolonial construct to recognise the fluidity of the space where identities may be constructed and reconstructed; it is a place where negotiation of identities takes place (Soja, 1996). Bhabha contends that a new hybrid identity or subject-position emerges from the interweaving of elements from coloniser and colonised, challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist identity. Therefore, hybridity is regarded as an antidote to essentialism and third space is as a mode of articulation, a space which engenders new possibilities. It is ‘interruptive, interrogative and enunciative’ (Bhabha, 1994). Postcolonial authors (Bhabha, 1994; Gandhi, 1998; Loomba, 1998; Ashcroft, 2001; Ashcroft et al., 2007) have challenged the dominant and rigid views and established codes surrounding colonialism. They have engaged in a discourse which deconstructs the ideas of eurocentricism and neo-colonialism. Focusing on the concept of third-space (Bhabha, 1994) they have problematised the construct of postcolonial identity and come up with the concept of negotiated identities hybridised in a third space that is fluid and shifting.
The concept of third space and identity has been characterised in and is compatible with social constructionist and poststructural approaches of identity. Block (2007, p. 21) citing Bhabha argues that hybridity of identities occur where ‘elements encounter and transform each other’. Bhatt (2008, p.182) argues that third space ‘facilitates the construction of new social identities’ (ibid.) in a ‘discursive space’ that offers individuals ‘the possibility of a new representation, of meaning making and of agency’ (ibid.). It implies that hybridity is a collective rather than individual form of positioning. Furthermore, Easthope (1998) comes up with three connotations of hybridity: biological and ethical or cultural. In this study I am concerned with the second, which means to have access to and association with two or more ethnic or cultural identities simultaneously.

Yazdiha (2010) talking about the global cultural landscape, argues that it is amalgamation of different cultural influences, blended, patch-worked and layered upon each other. Culture is always hybrid, fluid and interstitial. The notion of cultural hybridity existed long before than it was popularised by postcolonial theory as a result of interactions between ‘colonisers’ and the ‘colonised’. Cultures naturally allow themselves to interact with each other creating a negotiated third space and hybrid identities.

Additionally, Bhabha (1994) argued that colonisers and the colonised are mutually dependent on each other in constructing hybrid identities and a shared culture. This mutual construction of identity provides an opportunity for the dominated cultures to reclaim shared ownership of a culture, which depends upon them (the colonised) for interaction. In this way ‘hybridity serves as a powerful tool for liberation from the domination imposed by bounded definitions or race, language and nation’ (Yazdiha, 2010, p. 32).

Bhabha sees hybridity as a ‘third space’ where new positions of understanding and authority are created (Rutherford, 1990) without reliance on the ‘us/them’ dichotomy and with the reconciliation of differences (Bhabha, 1994). According to Bhabha, ‘the process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and
unrecognisable, a new era of negotiation and representation’ (Rutherford, 1990, p. 211). This hybrid discourse opens up a space of unequal power where negotiation is neither assimilation nor collaboration but allows for the ‘emergence of an interstitial agency that refuses the binary representation of social antagonism’ (Bhabha, 1996, p. 58). Hence, it could be said that third space acts as a type neutralising zone where conflicting assumptions may collide but no single view or act is privileged or prioritised. Instead, conflict creates an occasion where something new and hybrid is collaboratively and mutually constructed.

The role and significance of third space and hybridity have not been considerably demonstrated in the field of identity and second language learning. It has been argued that in the multicultural and multi-ethnic language classroom, third space is recognised as a zone, which values diversity and difference and encourages effective learning and teaching without allowing any cultural conflicts to create animosity and a sense of inferiority amongst the learners. Kramsch (1993; 1995) suggests that the role of the language teacher is to engage students in exploring differences between cultures without attempting to resolve the conflict between these differences. Such an exploration of conflicting cultural views occurs within a third place, outside the target culture and the culture of the language learner, which allows the learner to construct a new understanding of the world and the potential identities to be negotiated or adopted within that world.

In a similar study, Wernicke (2010) in studying bilingual students in an ESL programme, explores that differing cultural assumptions and conflicting meanings create a ‘third space’ in which students find opportunities to construct new meanings of the world, and in doing so negotiate different subject positions. Thirdness, as an approach to language education, offers students the opportunity to recognise that learning a new language empowers them to have a voice of as members of a multilingual and multicultural society. However, Bhatt (2008) highlighted the notion of third space from a different perspective. Researching Hindi code-switching in English newspapers in India, he calls it a discursive space – a third space (Bhabha 1994) which portrays two identity representations converging forming new socio-ideological consciousness, a way to negotiate and navigate between local and global
practices. Such practices offer new linguistic expressions. He calls code switching a ‘linguistic hybridity’, a third space where social actors reposition themselves with regard to new community practices of speaking, reading and writing. In this space they have capacity to synthesise, and to transform, where code switching serves as a marker of such a transformation.

Another study (Idrus, 2012) conducted in Malaysia suggests that the construction of third space may serve as the solution for ethnic conflicts increasingly arising in multicultural countries like Malaysia by taking on board students and teachers at school level. She comes up with the idea of Shared Malaysian Identity (SMI), which refers to the individual’s sense of belonging to different social and ethnic groups by active participation and negotiation. SMI will enable young people to become closer to other nationalities despite cultural and religious differences, to form a fused sense of togetherness and build a transformed nation, which embraces the otherness of others.

Concluding this section, I argue that the notions of third space and hybridity may allow young learners of English to embrace cultural otherness, diversity and domineering ideologies which will lead to a space where they can negotiate and redefine their postcolonial identities without losing their sense of ‘self’. The ambiguities and contradictions they come across in their language learning journeys may be directed towards constructing a hybridised language learner identity which remains dynamically inclusive through the process of hybridisation, as Bhabha (1994) has described hybridity as an ongoing process.

3.4 Chapter Summary

I divided this chapter into two sections presenting the relationship of identity categories such as gender, social class and ethnolinguistic identities with language learning in section one and other relevant concepts such as understanding of language as cultural and symbolic capital and postcolonial discourses in section two. Section one highlighted how learners’ core identity categories gender, social class and ethnolinguistic identities interacted with their language learning processes, in identity
and SLL studies. Having reviewed the relevant literature I argue that language learners as social actors with multifaceted and dynamic identities negotiate their gender, social class and ethnolinguistic positionings, which positively and negatively on impact on their language learning outcomes and overall journeys. This in turn influences their investment and learner agency, which are significant constructs of the development of language learner identity.

In section two, following Bourdieu’s theory of capitals I put forward the notion of English as a global linguistic capital that sees English as a source of economic, cultural and symbolic value especially in the periphery contexts. However, the postcolonial discourses demonstrate the opposite side of the spectrum. The critique conferred by Pennycook (1994), Phillipson (1992) and Canagarajah (1999) point out the political agenda behind the supremacy and popularity of English as the international lingua franca. Terming this phenomenon ‘linguistic imperialism’, they argue that the global spread of English is an imperialistic process, which has given rise to hegemony as well as linguistic and socio-economic inequalities in the postcolonial states. Amidst of the debate on hegemony of one language which negatively affects the growth of minority languages and pedagogical practices, Canagarajah (1999) proposes the implementation of the ‘pedagogy of appropriation’, which accentuates the need to adopt critical strategies for the teaching and learning of English. He considers this approach a ‘third way’ to use English according to local needs and values and also to use it against the dominant ideologies.

The idea of ‘third way’ led the discussion in section two towards the constructs of ‘third space’ and ‘hybridity’ (Bhabha, 1994). Having conceptualised third space and hybridity through the works of postcolonial theorists I discussed some of the studies conducted on the significance of hybridity in SLL. Third space has been described as a common and mutual zone of negotiation of identities that does not allow conflicting positions to take over and create antagonism between ‘self’ and the ‘other’. The role of third space in multilingual, multi-ethnic and postcolonial language classrooms is crucial in maintaining harmony between the target language and target language learners’ cultures, and for creating optimum learning outcomes without renouncing
indigenous values. However, the creation of the third space is not always a possibility in SLL contexts. The findings of some of the studies reviewed in this chapter suggested that students exercising their agency sometimes resist learning a new language, which they believe would jeopardise their membership of their vernacular communities and make them sacrifice their local identities.
Chapter 4: Methodology: Understanding and Approach

Introduction

This chapter deals with the overall research design adopted for this study. To present the research design, I have divided the chapter into three parts, each of which contributes to the formulation of a research design suitable for addressing the questions set out to achieve the aim of my research. Before doing this, I begin the chapter by restating the overarching research aim and the subsequent research questions. Part one will then provide a brief discussion of the research paradigm employed for this study, which includes the ontological and epistemological stances that inform it. This leads on to the construction of the research approach, the research method, sampling, and the data collection process. I will discuss instrumental case study as the research method under the umbrella of a qualitative approach, and will then present the sampling strategies followed by a discussion on the issues related to the data collection process and research participants.

Part two elaborates on the research tools used for data collection and the approach to the data analysis. The final part of this chapter explains the researcher’s reflexivity and positionality, and grapples with issues of trustworthiness, credibility, and transferability. The chapter ends with a discussion of the ethical issues involved in the study.

Research Aim and Questions

The aim of this study was to explore the construction and negotiation of English language learner identity at a public sector university in postcolonial Pakistan. This overarching research aim generated the following research questions:
• Why, to what extent and in what ways are participants invested in learning English?
• What is the nature of learner agency in the construction of possible selves and language learner identity?
• How do other identity markers (e.g. gender, social class, ethnolinguistic identities) influence or help to shape language learner identity?
• How may language learner identity evolve over a period of time?

In order to answer these research questions I have come up with a particular research design. Each part of the overall design, and other relevant elements, will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

Diagram Illustrating the Overall Research Design of the Study

In the above diagram, I show the key layers of thinking which underpin the decisions taken about this project. Firstly, I situated the study within a broader perspective of research called a social constructionist paradigm. I then specified the qualitative research approach taken, followed by the method of study and the particular tools used to collect the data. Each of these steps will be explained in the next section.
Part 1

4.1 Research Paradigm

Every researcher works within a particular paradigm. A paradigm is an overall theoretical research framework (Grix, 2004), worldview (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) or a broader perspective (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Additionally, Crotty (1998) notes that paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which the investigation is accomplished. In order to clarify the nature and focus of the research inquiry of this study and its methodological choices, an exploration of the paradigm is adopted to situate the study within a specific research worldview, which will be discussed prior to the research approach, methods and tools employed.

Creswell & Plano Clark (2011) emphasise that research in any field is associated with one of the dominant paradigms, for example, positivism, constructivism, postpositivism etc. However, to some extent these paradigms overlap with each other. Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that there are four distinct paradigms, namely, positivism, postpositivism, critical theory and constructivism while Cohen et al. (2007) explain two broader categories, positivistic or scientific, and naturalistic or interpretivist approaches, for the choice of paradigm in any type of research. The division in research paradigms put forwarded by the established methodological literature does not seem to have a consensus and the division in terms of paradigms obviously contradict and clash with each other. However, there is one point of agreement amongst most of the books written on the theoretical and philosophical foundations of research. Most of these believe that irrespective of the names or the features these paradigms might have, each of them is characterised by a distinctive ontology, epistemology and methodology, which affect the ways a researcher looks at the research problem and determines the strategies for studying it (Creswell, 2013).

Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality; epistemology determines the nature of knowledge and the ways in which knowledge can be known by defining the
relationship of the researcher with the researched, whereas methodology deals with particular processes of approaching research such as inductive, deductive or abductive (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Having briefly defined the foundational theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of research I would like to discuss the orientation of this study in terms of its paradigm and the related ontology, epistemology and methodology.

**4.1.1 Social Constructionism as a Research Paradigm**

The divisions of the research paradigms presented above do not categorise social constructionism as an individual paradigm, however, some theorists, for example Schwandt (1994) and Gergen (1999), argue that social constructionism and constructivism are basically similar; if not exactly same they are at least synonymous or closely related. For both, constructivism and social constructionism emphasise that individuals socially construct reality and there could be as many realities as there are individuals to perceive them. However, unlike constructivism, social constructionism does not mainly focus on the external world or on the mind of the individual, its main concern is the creation of reality through language (interaction) in social settings. For social constructionists, what is real is always constructed through social relationships (Gergen, 1999). They believe that social relationships are intimately based on individuals’ interaction; therefore, knowledge or reality is the outcome of social discourse. Similarly Shotter (1996) states that constructionist reality is constituted and reconstituted in the ways we talk.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) state that the constructivist paradigm has relative ontology (that there are multiple realities) and subjective epistemology (researcher and researched co-create understandings). Similarly, social constructionism is also focused on having multiple aspects of reality followed by their subjective interpretations (Burr, 2003). However, there is another subtle demarcation between constructivism and social constructionism. For example, according to Burr (2003, p. 20), constructivism is distinguishable from social constructionism with regard to ‘the extent to which the
individual is seen as an agent who is in control of this construction process, and in the extent to which our constructions are the product of social forces, either structural or interactional’. Therefore, it can be argued that reality is dynamic; it is in a state of constant change and co-constructed discursively by individuals within the limits of social structures. However, the functioning of agency is socially, historically and culturally constructed in the context of this study.

I have adopted social constructionism because in this research project I studied the construction and negotiation of language learner identity which, being dynamic and fluid, has multiple forms and interpretations which are created through social interaction and are context-dependent (shaped by social structures). The ontological underpinnings of the social constructionist view of language learner identity construction complement the social constructionist and post structuralist theoretical framing of identity employed in this study. Hence, I argue that individuals do not discover reality and knowledge as much as they construct or make it. Social constructionist researchers always address the processes of interaction among individuals, and the interaction between individuals and the social contexts in which they live and learn language. Accordingly, I consider that the reality of my participants’ language learner identities and their English language learning journeys (processes) is understood through their discourses and actions, and my research findings are historically and locally specific and are therefore provisional and contestable.

Social constructionist epistemology enabled me to have a relationship of ‘closeness’ with the participants recruited for this study. I personally got in touch with them to build rapport, which encouraged them to be open and friendly with me during the whole process of this study. However, the relationship of ‘closeness’ at times led me to consider issues related to subjectivity, which have been acknowledged when discussing the researcher’s positionality and reflexivity later in this chapter (see section 4.11).

The chosen methodology was abductive. Abductive methodology builds upon
observed phenomena and previous theories but it does not aim to test any hypothesis or end with generalisable conclusions. Blaikie (2010) states that inductive strategy of research has many layers, first it constructs theories that are developed from social actors’ language (interactions), meanings and their accounts in their everyday context and then elaborates it iteratively with the help of previous research. I began with prior reading on the theories and literature around the topic of the research, which to some extent informed my research aim and questions. I then went into the field and gathered the participants’ accounts, which helped me develop general patterns, and broad themes, however, the final findings of this study do not attempt to draw generalisable conclusions.

4.2 Research Approach: Qualitative

A social constructionist perspective leads almost inevitably to a qualitative research approach which enables the exploration of processes and interactions as opposed to products. Qualitative research aims to depict the complexities of lived experiences rather than to offer a generalisable narrative or to predict others’ experiences (Talburt & Stewart, 1999). Silverman (2000) suggests that if the researcher is interested in people’s life histories or their everyday behaviour then qualitative methods may be favoured. The qualitative approach, therefore, helps elicit an in-depth, socially constructed reality through a social constructionist paradigm.

Cresswell (2007) equates qualitative research with ‘an intricate fabric composed of minute threads, many colors, different textures and various blend of materials’ (pp. 35) which provides richness of the data and a deeper insight into the realities of the participants’ lives and their experiences. Additionally, a qualitative research approach facilitates in-depth analysis of the particular phenomenon being researched. The inquiry I have undertaken (exploring language learners’ identity construction and negotiations) has never been studied in detail in the Pakistani context. The qualitative approach helped me generate intensive and extensive data to study the phenomenon comprehensively. It can be argued that a qualitative approach is particularly appropriate when the researcher determines that quantitative measures cannot
adequately describe or interpret a situation (Bryman, 2012). The aim of the current study was to investigate and explore English language learners’ identity construction and negotiation from their own perspectives and within their own contexts, which would have been only possible if the researcher had talked to the individual participants, understood their opinions, observed their situations, and interpreted their stories. These were all facilitated through the qualitative approach adopted for this study.

4.3 Research Method: Instrumental Case Study

As discussed above, a qualitative researcher is interested in rich, real and uniquely human material; case study is popular with qualitative researchers precisely because it provides a framework for the analysis of such material (Hood, 2009). A case study explores a case or multiple cases over an extended period of time by collecting rich data with the help of various sources (Creswell, 1998). Additionally Merriam (1988) defines qualitative case study ‘as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit’ (p. 16).

Both Merriam (1988 p. 9) and Creswell (1998 p. 61) suggest that a case is a ‘bounded system’ (p.9), or a defined individual or entity (such as a student, programme, school or institution) that the researcher wishes to explore. However, Stake (1995) points out that what forms the boundaries and contexts is not always immediately apparent. Yin (2003) agrees, defining a case study as ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context especially when the boundaries and contexts are not clearly evident (p.13). So, if a case is a bounded system and if the boundaries of that system are not clear, it is the researcher’s task to identify and explore those boundaries. The boundaries of this case study are seen as permeable (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). This highlights the idea that the case is not separate from or closed off from the wider community and society but may be influenced by, and in turn may have influence, beyond its permeable boundaries.

Duff (2008) states that a case study specifically for language teaching research
typically refers to a person, either a learner or teacher, or an entity, such as a school, a university or a classroom. In language policy research the case may be a country. Different research methodologists have categorised case study in various types depending on the purpose of research and its investigation. Yin (2008 p. 5) calls them ‘exploratory’, ‘explanatory’ and ‘descriptive’ whereas according to Stake (1995 p. 3) there are two main types of the case study: ‘instrumental’ and ‘intrinsic’. Instrumental case study is usually chosen if the researcher is interested in studying a particular aspect of the case whereas the intrinsic case study allows him to study the case in its entirety.

In the current study, the unit of analysis (the case) is the University of Sindh where learners’ identity construction in their English language journeys is considered as one of the aspects of the case. As an instrumental case study, the aspect of the case that provides the focus is the language learning journeys of specific groups of students in the case study of the University of Sindh. The social construction of English Language Learner Identity (ELLI) in this postcolonial context then lies at the heart of this study.

Case study usually employs a qualitative approach which allows the researcher to explore a real-life and contemporary phenomenon through detailed and in-depth data collection methods, involving multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2013). I employed different methods of data collection including interviews, focus groups, non-participant classroom observations, shadowing and student diaries so that I could gather data from multiple sources. In addition, the length of the study, the collection of data at different points in time and the researcher’s frequency of interaction with the participants, gave it longitudinal and ethnographic elements. These will be highlighted in the next section.
4.4 Longitudinal Elements

Cohen et al. (2007) state that a longitudinal study gathers data over an extended period of time. A short-term investigation may take several weeks or months; a long-term study can extend over many years where successive measures are taken at different points in time from the same respondents. They enable researchers to: ‘analyse the duration of social phenomena’ (Ruspini, 2002, p. 24); and highlight similarities, differences and changes over time. This research study also involves data collection over a period of time, at regular intervals, to explore the journeys and narratives of the set of participants (Year 1 students) through a number of tools.

I achieved a longitudinal aspect firstly through individual interviews and then through diary entries over nine months, and I finally ended it with member-checking interviews at the end of the 12th month. For practical reasons, time was limited and it was not possible to follow the Year 1 students through the next four years of their degree programme, yet it was important to understand any possible shifts beyond their first year at university. Consequently, a way had to be found to artificially extend that possible journey. This was done by using focus group discussions with some students from the current second, third and fourth year cohorts. This simulated and extended the longitudinal study. Hence, this study does not give snapshots, but rather was a longitudinal study, undertaken over one year with first year students and extended through interaction with second, third and fourth year students. The table given below shows the 12-month timeline.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Classroom Observations</td>
<td>Year 1 participants</td>
<td>Remedial English Classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Individual Interviews</td>
<td>Year 1 (15 participants)</td>
<td>IELL, UoS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>10 participants from Year 1 started writing diaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Initial data analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Years 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>IELL, UoS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Shadowing</td>
<td>Year 1 female participants</td>
<td>Participants’ homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Remedial English Teacher, Director IELL and Dean Faculty of Arts</td>
<td>In their respective offices, UoS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Participants sent their last diary entry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Member checking/Second round interviews</td>
<td>Year 1 participants</td>
<td>Interviews were conducted through Skype</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Timeline of Data Collection

The table above presents the data collection timeline as it occurred over a period of twelve months. I began gathering the data with classroom observations. I decided to go to the classrooms first because the teaching was about to be finished due to preparation break for semester exams. Had I started with interviews, I would not have been able to observe any Remedial English classrooms at all which might, consequently, have left a significant void in the overall scheme of data collection. I then proceeded to the individual interviews with Year 1 participants. Since they were supposed to be the main source of data and were primary participants for this study it was appropriate to talk to them first. The semi-structured interviews with my primary participants provided me with some raw data and core issues to begin the initial analysis and also to develop student diary guidelines for the same cohort. At this point primary participants were advised to start writing diaries. In addition, interview data helped me formulate some discussion points with senior participants for their focus groups. I was then ready to have focus group discussions with participants from Years 2, 3 and 4. Three Focus group discussions were conducted with 15 senior participants.
(5 each group) in three consecutive days at the same location (IELL) where individual interviews took place. The data collected from focus groups created a sense of continuum between the ideas of junior (primary) and senior (secondary) participants. Having gathered a major portion of data through non-participatory classroom observations, interviews and focus groups, I then switched to shadowing. Shadowing was meant to have some participatory observation to get an emic view of participants’ perspectives and to study them in their social surroundings and domestic cultures. Shadowing was carried on for several hours each day for 15 continual days.

The last part of the data collection journey in Pakistan was brief informal interviews with a new cohort of participants: the Remedial English teacher, the Director of IELL and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Their views were gathered to triangulate the data collected from student participants. The data elicited from these stakeholders helped me shape preliminary categorisation of the overall data. From July 2013 to March 2014 my primary participants wrote diary entries that were sent to me via emails and Facebook messages as I was working on my data analysis at the University of Edinburgh. This method generated a huge amount of data which was pouring in over a period of nine months. Lastly, in order to compensate for a second round of individual interviews with primary participants, (initially planned to be a part of main data collection process) I decided to opt for short interviews via Skype. The Skype interviews were conducted at the end of the twelfth month long journey of data collection which started in May 2013. These interviews also served the purpose of conducting member-checking. The complete details of each of the above mentioned tools/sources of data collection are given under their respective headings (See parts 2 and 3 of this Chapter).

4.5 Ethnographic Traits

Hammersly (1992) writes exhaustively on ethnographic research methods. He uses ethnography to mean the broader qualitative methodology, while the case study becomes a selection strategy alongside other research methods. The aim of an ethnographer is to develop an in-depth understanding of the behaviour of people in a
particular culture (social environment) over a period of time (Fetterman, 1998). We cannot separate case studies from ethnographies. Case study is borne out of ethnography (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). Although ethnography studies participants in a particular culture or context, it is not possible to understand any case without its historical context or the culture in which it is situated. An ethnographic approach to this case study enabled me to undertake a rich exploration of the participants within the specific socio-cultural and historical context.

Following Davies’s (2008) view that ethnographic research should use qualitative techniques based on the lives of those researched, I conducted individual interviews and observations, and used participants’ diary entries, which enabled me to study my participants within their social lives. Through their stories gathered from their diary entries and interviews, I studied their interactions within their social environment. My data contains whatever relevant information I could gather through these different data collection tools. The research process I adopted within the scope of case study reflected an ethnographic approach through real world context where limited participants having a common culture (worldview) were studied. The process of data collection brought in rich material for an in-depth understanding of the reality from participants’ point of view (Hammersley, 1993). This instrumental case study was shaped and informed by these key aspects of ethnography and, therefore, its research process reflects ethnographic practices.

4.6 The Research Site

The University of Sindh (UoS) was selected as the research site due to its status as the second largest public sector university in Pakistan hosting students from rural and urban backgrounds. It also accommodates students from diverse cultural, linguistic and socio-economic groups in Pakistani society. The main reason for conducting this study at the University of Sindh was to help address the dearth of research in the university, my alma mater and where I am now a staff member, and as access to possible participants would be more readily available. The Institute of English Language and Literature (IELL) was chosen as the research field for this study for the
following reasons: i) being one of the faculty members in IELL I am expected to offer my services for the betterment of my institute; ii) IELL is the only institute in the entire university where the medium of instruction is completely in English, and since the study focused on English language learner identity it was likely to have participants with a sufficient background in learning and understanding English; iii) easy and unproblematic access to Remedial English language classes running in IELL for observation purposes; vi) all my participants were associated with IELL therefore it was ideal to study them on their home ground. However, being an insider I had to overcome ethical dilemmas which are acknowledged and discussed in detail later in this chapter under the researcher’s positionality. Here, I would like to mention that before I began my data collection I got an appointment with the Registrar of the university to formally seek his consent with a permission letter in (see Appendix 1) to use the university, particularly IELL, for my instrumental case study, to use the spaces for data collection, to photograph the university site and also to use the university website and some official documents for this study.

4.7 Sampling Strategies and Decisions

A piece of quality research not only depends on the appropriateness of the methodology and the instrumentation but also on the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted to select participants for the study (Cohen et al., 2007). I employed the Purposive and Convenience sampling types of the Nonprobability sampling strategy to recruit participants for this study. Nonprobability sampling is conducted without the knowledge about whether those chosen in the sample are representative of the entire population. In some instances, the researcher does not have sufficient information about the population to undertake probability sampling. The researcher might not even know who or how many people or events make up the population. In other instances, nonprobability sampling is based on a specific research purpose, the availability of subjects, or a variety of other non-statistical criteria (Hussey, 2010).

Convenience sampling uses those who happen to be available and accessible. As it
does not represent any group apart from itself, it does not seek to generalise about the wider population. A convenience sample may be the sampling strategy selected for a case study because it allows the researcher access to a greater variety of individuals who can willingly serve the purpose (Cohen et al., 2007). In purposive sampling, on the other hand, decisions concerning the participants to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher based upon a variety of criteria, which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research (Oliver, 2006).

When I entered into the research field, in the IELL, UoS, it turned out to be an unfavourable time to collect data because the university administration had already announced unscheduled holidays in the wake of general elections in the country. I had just one week to recruit my participants and start the collection of the data. I was aware of the fact that after the election holiday the university was going to have its semester exams before students left for their two-month summer vacation. In such a situation I had to adopt the strategy of a Convenient + Purposive sample to recruit participants for my study within the given time. My sample was not representative of the whole population and it was not generalisable in the traditional sense because that was not the primary consideration of this study. Rather the concern was to acquire the in-depth information required for this project from those who were in a position to give it (Cohen et al., 2007). A different kind of resonance was looked for, which is discussed further later in this chapter.

My sample included three cohorts. Cohorts 1 and 2 were participants (all students) selected from a four-year BS (Bachelor of Studies) degree programme in English at IELL and for cohort three I invited some stakeholders involved in the teaching and administration of the university to participate. See the table below:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort 1</th>
<th>Cohort 2</th>
<th>Cohort 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students from Year 1</td>
<td>Students from Years 2, 3 and 4</td>
<td>Remedial English Teacher, Director of IELL and Dean of Faculty of Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Research Sample

Due to the nature of the current study, its limitations (time and focus) and the possibility of participants’ attrition across the project, I planned to recruit 20 participants attending an English language course called Remedial English (see presentation of the case) in Year 1 of the degree programme at IELL for the interviews, observations and diaries. I went to the first year class with a colleague who introduced my study and me to the students. The students were advised that participation was voluntary and that there was no connection between participation in the research study and grading in classroom tests, semester exams etc.

The students willing to participate in the study were advised to write their names on a list. I received 30 names but when I invited them to the next meeting only 16 students turned up and filled in the consent form (see Appendix 2) and formally agreed to participate. However, on the day of the first interview one of the 16 students dropped out so I ended up interviewing only 15 participants. The total number of Year 1 participants had decreased to 10 by the time they started writing the diaries for this study. From the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year classes I recruited 5 willing students (see Appendix 3) from each class to participate in the focus group discussions. In addition, I requested the Remedial English teacher, the Head of the Institute (IELL) and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts to participate in my study. They all kindly consented to be interviewed (see Appendix 4). Further details about the justification for the participants and their participation through the particular data collection tools are given the next section, Research Participants, and later in Research Tools.
4.8 Research Participants and Data Collection Process

Since the current study set out to be a case study with ethnographic and longitudinal elements, the participants were studied through interviews and observations at the beginning of the study. In addition to this, some ongoing, descriptive interactions with participants were carried out thorough regular diary entries (details given under student diary) to explore the learners’ informal language learning processes and identity construction, negotiations and their investment in learning English. Apart from interviews, observations, and student diaries, focus groups were also used to gather data for the study.

The rationale behind selecting cohort one (participants from Year 1 of the degree programme) was to have new learners who had just entered a new phase of their academic life, with diverse aims for attending language learning courses in the university and with multiple challenges. As this cohort generated most of the data for this study I categorised them as primary participants, whereas cohort two (participants from the 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 4\textsuperscript{th} years) was recruited to study the process of language learning during the course of Remedial English and the changes that might occur in learners’ perceptions and identities. They are called secondary participants. I selected cohort three (other stakeholder participants) mainly to triangulate the information collected from cohorts one and two, and also to better understand the university’s language teaching policies and administrative strategies to formulate and present my case in this study. They have been categorised as supplementary participants.

Part 2

4.9 Research Tools

In order to collect the data for this study, I employed multiple data collection tools. Individual interviews, student diaries and focus groups were the main methods,
whereas classroom observations and shadowing were carried out to triangulate the data and also to gather data from a different perspective.

First year students were investigated across an academic year through individual interviews at the beginning and at end of the study, which provided me with a sense of process of the development of language learner identity. I also carried out classroom non-participant observations of English language lessons, and participant-shadowing observations with the same cohort in their social spaces. This allowed me to gain insights into the nature of their learning inside and outside the classroom and into the challenges they faced, and gave both my participants and myself some shared experiences. Shadowing allowed me to introduce a strong element of understanding of the participants’ experiences. The same cohort (primary participants) wrote semi-structured diary entries to share their reflections and experiences, which they could not fully express in the interviews. Students from the second, third and fourth years were involved in focus group discussions to generate data which was important in studying both the continuity of the phenomenon, and also further developments and experiences beyond Year 1. Data were also collected from key decision makers in the university through interviews and documents which helped me study the case in greater detail. The tables below give details of the participants and the tools used to gather data from them:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ Pseudonyms</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Classroom Observation</th>
<th>Student Diary</th>
<th>Shadowing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Ahmed</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Aijaz</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Benazir</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Enam</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Farooq</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Hania</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Kamran</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Mohammad</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Nazia</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Rubina</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Saleha</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Saima</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Sania</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Yameen</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Zaheer</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Participants (Year 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Focus Group Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants’ pseudonyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd year</td>
<td>Ali, Raheela, Hina, Zara, Tariq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>Mukesh, Hussain, Mufazar, Azhar, Muhammad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th year</td>
<td>Maheen, Bisma, Saira, Azam, Touqeer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual Interviews with: Remedial English Teacher, Director IELL and Dean

Table 6: Participants (Years 2, 3 and 4)
In this section I will discuss each of the data collection methods individually. Before I do so, I would like to highlight an important issue which needs due consideration at this point. I argue that in this qualitative case study I tried to ensure the research tools used and the data collected served the purpose of providing rich and in-depth information to help me explore the phenomenon from a comprehensive perspective, and answer my research questions with greater insight and accuracy. However, I also realise that the whole research process could possibly have been improved if I had piloted the study prior to the data collection for the major study. Although I planned to pilot the research tools with my actual participants, I was unable to do so for a number of reasons.

Piloting, often called a ‘feasibility study’, refers to a mini version of the full study that is usually done in preparation for a large-scale study. Piloting helps the researcher to develop and test the adequacy of the research tools, assess feasibility, identify potential problems in data collection, formulate research questions more accurately and, more importantly, it provides an opportunity for the researcher to train himself/herself before beginning the actual study (Holloway, 1997).

When I entered the data collection situation, I faced the challenge of recruiting participants at a time when the semester exams were round the corner and all students were busy preparing for these and attending the last two weeks of taught classes. This meant I had difficulty getting sufficient willing participants for the interviews and focus groups. Hence, due to time limitations and a smaller sample size, it was not possible to firstly involve participants in a pilot and then collect data for the major study. I also realised that piloting the interviews and focus groups with other students would not have been as beneficial as with the actual participants.

Piloting is a more useful practice with quantitative or mixed method research or for studies having larger samples. In the case of qualitative studies it might prove helpful if it includes tightly structured interviews with closed ended interview questions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998), which the researcher might need to test and if necessary reword after piloting them. My study was based on a small sample through
which the qualitative data was elicited using four research tools. The interviews and focus groups I conducted were semi-structured with open-ended questions; therefore, I realised it was less essential in the case of the current study to benefit from having a pilot study.

The other option, which compensated for the absence of a pilot for the study, was the plan to have a second round of interviews at the end of the study. Holloway (1997) argues that second or subsequent interviews and continual interaction with participants in qualitative studies helps to achieve insights and sharpen the focus. It can, therefore, be argued that in such approaches the usefulness of pilot studies is less significant.

4.9.1 Individual Semi-structured Interviews

The interview is perhaps the most commonly used method of data elicitation in qualitative research as it may yield a wealth of valuable data (Bryman, 2012) and provides in-depth information pertaining to participants’ experiences and viewpoints on a particular topic (Turner, 2010). As my study aimed to inquire about a specific area (identity and language learning) of learning English, I opted for semi-structured interviews to give a consistency of topics across individuals but with scope for flexibility in following up participants’ particular concerns and issues. Semi-structured interviews capture the data in words, exploring individuality, beliefs and attitudes. They also provide ‘greater flexibility and freedom to the interviewer, though they need high effort on the researcher’s part to maintain consistency in relation to main research questions’ (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 355).

I conducted semi-structured, in-depth individual interviews with 15 first year participants in the first semester of the Remedial English language course at IELL. The interviews focused on learners’ perceptions about learning English, their past, and present, their perceived investment in learning English and the challenges they encountered during the process of English language learning. The interviews highlighted these specific ideas and themes but the interview questions were not too firmly pre-structured. Although I used interview guides (see Appendix 5), many
spontaneous probes and prompts were also used. However, I did not tell the participants what I was expecting from them. I allowed them to speak as much as they wanted and only interrupted wherever I needed clarity or further explanation. I tried not to ask questions in the middle of the story, as I did not want to break the momentum. I also tried to keep my comments straightforward and precise.

Semi-structured interviews allowed me to have an informal conversation with my participants at times that helped me develop a rapport with them and facilitated future interactions. The interviews with the three key stakeholders from the university, the Remedial English teacher, the Director of IELL and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, aimed to get a different perspective from the other participants, which enabled me to see the whole picture/phenomenon. Although these interviews were not very detailed they allowed me to triangulate the data to ensure its credibility and transferability.

All the interviews were audio recorded using an Olympus VN-8700 PC, with each individual interview lasting between 55 and 65 minutes. In addition to the recordings I also took notes to document any ideas I had during the conversations. Students were given the option to speak either in English or Sindhi/Urdu. The majority of the participants preferred speaking in Sindhi, only two spoke in Urdu and four participants preferred to be interviewed in English as they believed this would serve as a good opportunity to practise their speaking skills, which was otherwise quite rare under the given circumstances. In this way the study became a means of furthering students’ English language skills. All the other stakeholders preferred to use English in their interviews. All the interviews were transcribed (see Appendix 6), and translated when they were carried out in Urdu and Sindhi.

Creating the interview questions is one of the most crucial components of interview design and the researcher has to be very careful about how these are worded (Holestein & Gubrium, 1995). The interview questions I designed were mostly open-ended except the ones which asked for participants’ basic profile information such as their age, ethnicity, type of school they attended etc. (see Appendix 7). Open-ended questions allowed my participants to fully express their responses in as much detail as
they desired. Also, I did not use identical questions because every participant came with a different narrative and background (Holestein & Gubrium, 1995). Having opted for open-ended questions I was able to ask follow up, probing questions based on their responses which would have not been possible in fully structured interviews with closed-ended questions. However, I had to be very careful and neutral in wording the questions; I worded them clearly, and avoided using words such as judgmental or emotive, which might influence participants’ responses. In asking follow up, probing questions I avoided ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions, preferring rather to use statements such as ‘that’s interesting, tell me more about it’ or ‘please share more details’ etc. I tried to ask one question at a time. Having ensured the required protocol for the designing and asking of the interview questions, I acknowledge that the interviews I conducted were not perfect, they also had a fair share of problems. Using semi-structured interviews also creates certain issues for the researcher and may be criticised on the grounds of not having inconsistency in terms of the interview questions and data analysis (Turner, 2010). Open-ended questions resulted in some irrelevant details because some of my participants wanted to share almost everything about their life, which consequently generated a huge amount of data that created difficulty for me in extracting codes and categorising them in similar patterns.

In order to have a successful interview process, McNamara (2009) advises eight strategies: i) the setting of the interviews should be quiet and comfortable, the researcher should explain ii) the format of the interview, iii) the duration, iv) the terms of confidentiality v) the purpose of the interview, vi) the means of future correspondence, vii) ask participants if they have any questions and viii) the researcher should not rely on his/her memory. The site selected for conducting the interviews was mutually agreed with my participants. They preferred the interviews to be taken place at IELL. I requested one of my colleagues to lend me his office for few hours every day. The office was far away from the classrooms so it was a quiet place but I could not ensure absolute comfort as it was the height of summer and the room had no air-conditioning. I provided my participants with cold drinks to help deal with the 45C heat. All the participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study before I started interviewing them and I made sure that if they wanted to withdraw from the
interview they could do this at any time without any obligation. I told the participants that the interviews would take no more than 60 minutes of their time and also explained the format of the interview by highlighting the main themes of the discussion. In order to ensure a smooth flow of discussion, I used indicators whenever I introduced a new topic or theme by saying ‘now we move to the issue of/ new topic’. However, there were instances where the participants asked me to explain a little more about the given question or topic.

At the end of the interview, I ensured that all the participants noted down my details (email address and local cell phone number) so that they could contact me with any questions or queries at any time.

At the outset of this study I planned to have two sets of interviews from my primary participants, one at the beginning of the study and one at the end. However, I was unable to have a second round of one-to-one interviews as planned, so I combined this with the member-checking interviews conducted through Skype. I discuss the member-checking/second interviews later in this chapter.

4.9.2 Focus Groups

Krueger defines the focus group as a ‘carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment’ (Krueger, 1994, p. 6). The focus group discussions in my study served two main purposes, i.e. exploratory and confirmatory (Bloor, 2001) by further investigating the phenomenon being studied in this project and also by relating and confirming the data gathered through individual interviews, for triangulation. Through the focus group discussions I explored participants’ attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way that painted a picture of their combined perspectives, which had diverse (because they came from different academic and socio-cultural backgrounds) yet homogenous (because they all were learners of English) elements (Kruger & Casey, 2009). This also helped me gain a snapshot of the learners’ journeys over four
years in terms of their perceptions and investment in learning English at a public sector university, and in their social settings.

As stated earlier, this longitudinal study aimed to investigate Year 1 students in the same degree programme, but it was not practically possible to study the same group of participants across the four years of the programme. These focus group discussions with other year groups helped me to get a more complete picture of the learners’ experiences.

The ideal size of the focus group has always been a debatable issue. Some researchers consider 5-10 participants to be the best size, while others consider it to be between 4 and 12 (Cohen et al., 2007). According to Krueger and Casey (2009), the traditional recommended size of the focus group is 10 to 12 people. For non-commercial research studies small focus groups or mini-focus groups, with four to six participants, are becoming increasingly popular (Bloor, 2001). Also, smaller groups are easier to recruit and are more comfortable for participants. I recruited 15 participants from years 2, 3, and 4 (5 from each year) from the BS English programme at IELL to gain a more in-depth insight.

When all the participants were ready and comfortable, I explained to them the nature of a focus group, and also that the key objective was to have a discussion amongst the participants. I then defined my role as a moderator, told them the duration of the discussion, and finally requested that they switch off their mobile phones during the recording. Afterwards, all the participants signed the consent form that confirmed their confidentiality and their right to withdraw at any point. The focus group discussion was then initiated with a brief introduction of all of the participants. They introduced themselves and talked about their family, socio-economic and ethnic background and prior education. The discussions were audio-recorded and each one was 75 to 80 minutes long. Almost all the participants preferred to speak in English, except a few who spoke in Sindhi. However, there were many instances of code switching and code-mixing in their speech.
The questions developed for the focus group must be short, natural, and open-ended (Fern, 2001). Since this focus group was a facilitated discussion and it was part of a qualitative study, I used a set of open-ended questions which may be categorised as five types: opening questions, introductory questions, transition questions, key questions and concluding questions. All the questions clearly identified some discussion points followed by prompts and probes (see Appendix 8). I avoided asking any personal questions that might have caused discomfort and embarrassment for my participants in front of their colleagues. I ensured that all my participants were free to talk with other participants and they expressed their views without any hesitation; however, there were some participants in all three focus groups who dominated the discussion. When that happened I had to stop them to allow other, less talkative participants to share their views. Here, it can be argued that the role of moderator/facilitator is critical, as the person who stimulates the thinking, ensures that the discussion is to the point, and makes sure that everybody gets a chance to speak (Fern, 2001). Hence, the quality of the focus group discussion mainly depends on the experience of the facilitator. I did not hire a moderator but did this job myself for two reasons, i) even if I had tried I would not have found a suitable person to do this because of the lack of research activities carried out at the university, and ii) due to my strong belief in the wise saying ‘if you want anything well done, do it yourself’.

Focus groups have often been criticised for not producing reliable data, especially concerning strong feelings and sensitive issues such as religion, nationality etc. (Krueger and Casey, 2000) because certain topics may be sensitive in some cultures and cannot be discussed in the group. Therefore, ethnographers usually do not favour focus group discussions as they are conducted in an artificial setting, contrary to the natural environment, as opposed to individual interviews where participants talk more openly. I acknowledge the fact that my focus group participants might have responded differently if they had been interviewed individually. However, that would not have served the purpose of my study, which was to involve the secondary participants who were the source of supporting data.
Finally, I would like to highlight the challenging issue of transcribing the focus group data. As all the data were transcribed verbatim it was hard to transcribe the parts where more than one participant spoke at the same time and where their responses overlapped and I could not gauge the meaning of what they were saying. I therefore had to listen to the tapes several times to make sense of the sentences and expressions.

4.9.3 Semi-structured Non-participant and Participant-Shadowing Observations

Observation is the conscious noticing and detailed examination of participants’ behaviour in a naturalistic setting. Observation is used in combination with other methods of data collection to triangulate or provide additional empirical evidence for a research study (Cowie, 2009). I conducted 300 minutes (6 classes/lessons) of non-participatory classroom observations of the Remedial English classes which provided me with an opportunity to explore the culture of the classroom where my participants were invested in learning English and which tended to influence their language learning identity. Due to the unannounced and premature end of the semester, I could not observe more classes. Other than a simple checklist, detailed field notes (see Appendices 9 and 10), were taken during the classroom observations. The observations focused on the general proceedings of the classroom, and my participants’ activities and learning patterns, and served as a means of informing my research about the processes involved in teaching on the Remedial English course. The classroom observations also allowed me to share a common experience, which was later discussed in individual interviews. The information gathered through observations proved helpful to triangulate the data gathered through official documents and from interviews with other stakeholders such as the Remedial English teacher, the Director and the Dean.

Non-participatory observation is usually styled unstructured and informal (Robson, 2011). I conducted semi-structured classroom observations because I was particularly interested in the activities of my participants rather than the whole class. Also, I did not intend to investigate the course so I was less concerned about the curriculum or the teaching methods employed in the classroom. I did not make audio or video
recordings of the observations because this might have disturbed the teaching and the students’ participation. However, my presence may have influenced the classroom setting and affected the learners’ activities. In order to avoid ‘observer effect’ (Monahan & Fisher, 2010) I tried to arrive early and sat at the back of the classroom without disturbing the classroom.

From non-participant observation I moved to participant observation, which further reinforced my case study’s ethnographic orientation. Participant observations were carried out utilising a technique called ‘shadowing’. Shadowing is a research technique which involves a researcher closely following his/her participants over an extended period of time. This research technique is used to make in-depth and direct observation of behaviours in situ, within a particular social setting (Theron & Sappey, 2012). Throughout the shadowing period the researcher asks questions and for further explanation, which prompts a running commentary from the person being shadowed and the people around him/her (McDonald, 2005). Shadowing helped me gain rich and comprehensive contextual information about the participants that included their socio-economic background, culture, ethnicity and parents’ education. However, due to cultural and religious sensitivities shadowing could only be done with female participants. All female participants consented to be shadowed. Also, in the case of the males, all of them were residents at the university hostel and left to return home to their villages at vacation time. It was difficult practically for me to follow them to their villages, which were 500-600 kilometres away from the research site, and my residence during the data collection period.

The shadowing took place at the participants’ homes and each took six to seven hours. All the shadowing details were recorded in the form of researcher’s field notes. Some photographs were taken but these were used only for the purpose of understanding participants’ social settings for the analysis of the data and have not been given in the appendices for ethical reasons. The shadowing focused on participants’ day-to-day interactions and identity negotiations in their domestic, and social and cultural settings. Shadowing also provided me with an opportunity to have brief chats with some of my participants’ family members and friends as well as their engagement with
English in their lives away from the classroom. These chats helped me to further understand participants’ diary entries which narrate their interactions in English with their family members at their homes.

4.9.4 Student Diary

Using learners’ introspective diaries is not a new method of data collection in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research. A diary study in second language learning and teaching is an account of learners’ experiences recorded in a first person journal (Bailey & Ochsner, 1983). It can be used as the sole form of data collection in a research project, or as just one method in a broader study (Bailey, 1991). I have used it as one of the methods of data collection to complement the information collected through interviews and observation, and to provide a broader and richer perspective for analysis. The participants were asked to write two to three pages in their diaries at least once in a week. They were provided with semi-structured guidelines (see Appendix 11) on what should be noted down in their diary entries. They were expected to write about their language learning experiences and the challenges they came across during the course of their study, or anything else they wanted to share with the researcher which they could not tell in their interviews, related to their engagement and investment in learning English in the past or present (see Appendix 12). The diaries could be written during or after classroom lessons, in the diarists’ native or target language (Bailey, 1991). My participants wrote their diary entries in their target language i.e. English. Some of the participants wrote a few entries during or immediately after their English language lessons at the university, while the majority wrote the diaries at home.

It was already anticipated that for a number of reasons the participants might not be very motivated to write diary entries for this project, and out of a total of fifteen participants from Year 1, only ten wrote these regularly. The 10 participants initially sent their diaries back on a weekly basis, for the first few weeks after they started writing them, in June 2013 (see table 4.1), but as time passed this became less frequent and eventually they would only send a detailed diary entry once a month.
Student diaries have many advantages in SLL research as they provide a detailed ethnographic description of aspects of the participants’ language learning experiences which could not otherwise be gained through interviews and observations. As an exploratory and creative practice it helped my participants to improve their writing skills to some extent and provided me with first hand information about the natural setting of participants’ inner world from an emic perspective. Having mentioned the advantages of student diaries it is important to state that they also have some limitations. In this case they generated a huge amount of unregulated, and at times irrelevant, data which made it difficult for me to deal with in terms of coding and analysing it for categories and themes. I also realised that it would have been much easier and helpful to code the diary data as soon as I received each entry from my participants rather than collecting all the entries for analysis first, which made it an overwhelming data analysis process.

4.10 Data Analysis Methods

In qualitative studies, especially in longitudinal case studies, data collection and data analysis usually begin contemporaneously (Hood, 2009), as the researcher notes unusual elements and any emerging patterns or contradictions. This initial analysis of the data is then more fully developed at the time of transcription and translation. All the data in this study was fully transcribed and translated into English in cases where participants preferred using Sindhi or Urdu.

4.10.1 Translating from Sindhi/Urdu to English

The majority of my Year 1 participants (see Appendix 7) preferred to speak in their L1 during their individual interviews. In addition some of the conversation in the focus group discussions also took place in participants mother tongue with frequent instances of English to Sindhi/Urdu code switching. This required a considerable amount of effort in translating the data from Sindhi/Urdu to English. Birbili (2000) mentions about the practice of hiring independent and professional translators in
research studies where data was gathered in the language different from the language it was presented/reported in. Although I did not employ any professional translators or interpreters for this project, however, in order to check the accuracy of translations I did myself from Sindhi/Urdu to English, two friends with expertise in all three languages were requested to read the transcripts and translations without identifying markers and with the commitment of confidentiality, which proved very helpful in verifying the accuracy of the translations.

4.10.2 Data Analysis Approach: Thematic Analysis

Unlike quantitative work, qualitative data is usually a large corpus of unstructured textual material (interview transcripts, field notes, and other documents), therefore it is not an easy and straightforward task to analyse them. In this research the data comprised interviews, focus groups, diary entries, and field notes. In order to analyse qualitative data, a researcher has to follow a suitable approach to data analysis along with a clear coding, which is the main feature of most of the approaches to qualitative data analysis. For this study, a thematic analysis was used to analyse the data gathered. Thematic analysis emphasises what is said by the participants rather than how they said it (Bryman, 2012). This approach is a method for ‘identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Thematic analysis is considered to be a useful method to analyse qualitative data and provide rich, detailed, and complex accounts of data (Cassell, et al., 2005; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis appears to be a flexible and effective analytical method, as it does not subscribe to any pre-existing theoretical framework (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Instead, the researcher becomes familiar with the data, developing initial raw categories representing the beginnings of patterns, unusual elements and contradictions. These are then reviewed and refined in an iterative process, continually returning to the data in order to establish themes that can be then used to understand participants’ construction and negotiations of English Language Learner Identity (IELL).
4.10.3 Details of Coding and Developing a Thematic Analysis

After an initial reading of all the transcripts, diary entries, and field notes, the data was primarily coded to form raw categories leading to more concrete themes. A code in a qualitative inquiry is usually a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and vivid attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data (Saldaña, 2009). Just as a title represents a book or film, similarly a code represents and captures data’s primary content and its essence. Any research data may possibly have as many codes as the issues included in it.

Saldaña (2009) describes two cycles of coding. In the first cycle I read individual transcripts and came up with a great number of codes, which helped me form some categories, subthemes and themes. In the second cycle of coding, I re-coded all the data together according to the key research questions to formulate more specific themes, which became the key themes of the study. The process of coding was iterative and recursive. Having done the second cycle of coding I ended up having several categories which led me to the major themes emerging from the data. Each theme has been individually discussed in the findings/discussion chapters. I followed Saldaña’s (2009) strategy to code and categorise my data and to develop themes. See the diagram below:

Diagram 2: Model of Thematic Analysis, Saldaña (2009)
Saldaña (2009) was particularly helpful in coding the data manually by using colour codes in word files using tables and charts. Additionally, researchers dealing with huge amounts of data often have to use the researcher’s ‘analytic lens filters’ while coding, which is informed by the researcher’s aim and methodological orientation (p.7). I used filters at various levels of data collection, data analysis and interpretation to come up with the themes relevant to my research questions and overarching aim. The table given below shows the major themes which emerged in this study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Investment in Linguistic Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Learner Agency for Possible Selves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Identity Negotiation (Influence of other identity categories on ELLI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Linguistic, Cultural and Historical Consciousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Third Space and Hybrid Identities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Major Themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) further suggest that thematic analysis helps in identifying themes at two levels: i) semantic and ii) latent. At the semantic level, the researcher tags names or codes to different parts of the data descriptively, and focuses on surface level meanings to present a more realistic and descriptive account of participants’ experiences, often in relation to the existing literature (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In contrast, latent level thematic analysis allows the researcher to discover more implicit ideas, assumptions, conceptualisations and ideologies underpinning the surface level meaning in the data set (Boyatzis, 1998). For a clear understanding and in-depth interpretation of the phenomenon of English language learner identity constructions and negotiation, I adopted thematic analysis at both levels, semantic and latent, rather than choosing one or the other as both are essential parts of the thematic analysis process. The analysis involved making various mind maps (for instance see Appendices 13 and 14), diagrams and tables at different stage of data organisation and analysis. The data extracts and initial coding schemes are given in the table, and the categorisation in the table below:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data extracts</th>
<th>Codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a classroom I can hardly speak… only those students spoke who knew how to</td>
<td>Different proficiency levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speak… I would just speak with my friends sitting beside me a little bit of</td>
<td>Hesitation/fear of speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English… I used to ask them how to say this sentence in English if they knew</td>
<td>incorrectly/ pair work/ learning from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the correct answer they would tell me then I would put the question to the</td>
<td>each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher didn’t allow us to speak Sindhi in class.</td>
<td>‘English only’ policy in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are Punjabi speaking and use it at home, but I don’t want to speak in</td>
<td>Mother tongue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi…. I prefer conversation in Urdu…. yes it (Punjabi) looks weird… it</td>
<td>Preference for national language over MT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>looks rustic… my parents are uneducated they cant speak in Urdu so they</td>
<td>Ranking language inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>converse in Punjabi.</td>
<td>Alternative means of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am from English medium where it was taught as a subject, we always</td>
<td>for uneducated people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communicated in Sindhi…. We never learnt English in the real sense. So</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actually it was at home where I began to learn English, my brother and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>father inspired me to learn English and told me its importance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These are stupid and false norms in front of me, but as they say first</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impression is the last so in our country those who speak English well we</td>
<td>English as set standard in society to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think they are better in all respects but for me it is not so, a person’s</td>
<td>judge people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behaviour is more important than anything else. Its not matter of life and</td>
<td>Personal preference is different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>death, I think we express ourselves best in our MT so its not English but</td>
<td>Point of view/perception about English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your MT through which we prove our talents and skills. English is our</td>
<td>MT vs. English/ MT is better way of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second language and shouldn’t replace the first. There is no harm in using</td>
<td>expression and enhancing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as language but of course not at the cost of our culture and mother</td>
<td>Superiority of L1 over English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tongue.</td>
<td>Realisation of market value of English/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was taught by all foreigner teachers we were bound to speak in English</td>
<td>importance of MT and indigenous culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and my accent reflects that I am taught by them not the Pakistani local</td>
<td>Elite English medium missionary school/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teachers. That’s why I really don’t need to attend Remedial English course</td>
<td>only English policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of Remedial English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 3

4.11 Positionality and Reflexivity

I will begin here with an old adage ‘one can’t cross a river without getting wet’. The situation of a researcher is more or less the same; they cannot pass through the process of research without affecting the data. Research in the social world is affected by the physical presence of the researcher (Clifford, 1986; Kenway & McLeod, 2004) as well as the questions they ask. I will talk about this issue in relation to the researcher’s positionality and reflexivity.

All researchers, quantitative as well as qualitative, have personal biases that can influence their interpretation of data (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In qualitative studies especially, the researcher’s own perspective is usually
made explicit through reflection and critical consideration of his/her beliefs, attitudes and conduct (Duff, 2008). It is this critical reflection that will be reviewed next.

According to Chiseri-Strater (1996, p. 115), ‘all researchers are positioned whether they write about it explicitly, separately or not at all’. The concept of positionality includes attributes such as race, nationality, and gender, which are fixed or culturally ascribed. Such attributes require textual disclosure when they affect the data, as they always do to some extent. Positionality is also shaped by subjective-contextual factors such as personal life history and experiences. Chiseri-Strater argues that complete objectivity is not possible, particularly in qualitative studies. She further points out that researchers need to reflect upon what they write, which shapes their interpretations and the ways they tell the stories from the data. Similarly, reflexivity provides an opportunity for the researcher to understand how her or his own experiences and understandings of the world affect the research process. It prevents researchers from artificially removing themselves from their research process, from their connections with their informants, or from their written translation of data to text (Maso, 2003). Just like any other participant, the researcher has his/her own story and experience, which inevitably interplays with the data he/she deals with. However, it has always been debatable just how much of the researcher’s self needs to be highlighted to guide the reader through the narrative about the participants. How much self-reflexivity is valuable for readers to help understand the methodology and ethics of the research context? What do readers need to know and understand about the situatedness of the researcher and influences that affect her or his perspective that are relevant to an understanding of the informants in the culture under investigation?

Edwards and Talbot (1994, p. 45-46) note that while doing a case study the very labelling of an event or phenomenon as a case, and your presence as an observer of the case, will in fact change it. Therefore I did not try to eliminate any influence I might have on the data but decided to be aware of it and to acknowledge it (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Davies, 2008; Miller & Glassner, 2004). As my participants and my readers expect me to be aware of, and open about, my role in relation to my data, I write not only about my participants but also about my own background and previous
experiences, and how these, and my presence during the interviews, might have affected my findings. ‘How people respond to the presence of the researcher may be as informative as how they react to other situations’ (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 15).

Nowadays biographical details of the researcher are an important part of much qualitative research. They draw attention to the fact that the results are not objective (not absolute), were obtained by a specific researcher with specific life experiences, and would not have been obtained by a different researcher with different life experiences, even if conducting the research in very similar circumstances and with the same participants (Woods, 1999). To minimise the impact of my position and reflexivity on this study I critically examined myself during the whole process of the research, to detect any potential bias and inclination that might influence the conclusions I made about the data. Although no data can be a hundred per cent value-free and objective, I have made a serious effort to convince my readers that the required level of objectivity in this study has been maintained wherever necessary. No human being can step outside of their humanity and view the world from no position at all. The questions that a researcher asks about the world, their ‘theories’ and their ‘hypothesis’ always arise from ‘the assumptions that are embedded in’ their perspectives of the world. Secondly, facts themselves are partial, since ‘they are always the product of someone asking a particular question’, which derive from the person’s ‘assumptions about the world’ (Burr, 2003, p. 152). Thus, the researcher always brings their particular subjective background to their research projects. Being subjective does not necessarily mean being biased or unreliable. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) state that most qualitative paradigms agree on the importance of the subjective meanings individuals bring to the research process and acknowledge the importance of the social construction of reality. Since it is unavoidable to prevent one’s subjectivity in research, I had a responsibility to make my subjectivities transparent to my reader.

The question of power relations (Miller & Glassner, 2004) is also of value here. Edwards and Talbot (1994) suggest that it is important that the researchers should
consider and acknowledge if they are taking any undue advantage of their position to gain access to the research field and sources of data. In my case, I was naturally having an undue advantage because to my position as a teacher in the same institute where I was conducting my study. I explained to my participants at the very outset that I am currently on study leave and so I am not a current member of the teaching staff. I also made it clear to them that their participation in this study would not affect their exam results or grades in any way. Yet, I was still a figure connected with power within the institution. My positioning as a researcher, an interviewer and as an observer removed me a little from this but it could be argued that I simply moved from one power position to another or that I sat astride both. It was, therefore, important to ensure that I did not in any way make use of that power to overrule or overly direct student responses, especially with the first year students who were learning to establish themselves for the first time in a higher education context.

My unique position as a teacher-researcher/insider-researcher, I believe, however, enabled my participants to trust me in a way that they might not have if I had been an unknown researcher, far removed from the experiences of student life. I also enjoyed the benefit of building a rapport that my position as a teacher-researcher, specifically as a PhD student, enabled me to establish with the case study participants. Nazia, one of my participants, in her member-check interview told me that she had joined the study because she ‘thought it sounded interesting to work with a teacher who has come from abroad to study us’ and she also appreciated that I was doing something (research) for students of my own university. However, I must admit that many students agreed to be part of my study out of respect rather than because of their interest in the research study I was conducting.

4.12 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, different strategies are used to evaluate the quality and authenticity of the research (Golafshani, 2003; Patton, 2001). The quality and credibility of my research study may be evaluated through the touchstone of trustworthiness.
Seale advises that the examination of trustworthiness is mandatory for qualitative research (Seale, 1999). There are several procedures to increase trustworthiness in qualitative studies such as audit trails, reflexivity (Creswell & Miller, 2000) rich description, triangulation, and member checking (Merriam, 2009). I have chosen to employ Lincoln and Guba’s strategy to enhance the trustworthiness of my study. The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry’s findings are ‘worth paying attention to’. In any qualitative research study trustworthiness may be achieved through credibility and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Credibility is an evaluation of whether or not the research findings represent a ‘credible’ conceptual interpretation of the data drawn from the participants’ original data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). Transferability is the degree to which the findings of this inquiry can apply or transfer beyond the bounds of the project. Likewise, in this study, trustworthiness was enhanced through the strategies detailed below:

### 4.12.1 Credibility

In order to increase the credibility of my study I employed two techniques: i) Triangulation and ii) Member Checking

- **Triangulation**

Triangulation is the process of strengthening the findings obtained from a qualitative inquiry by cross-checking information from different dimensions (Potter, 1996). A researcher who argues that his or her findings are derived from many different kinds of people across many different situations will be more convincing than a researcher whose conclusions are based on observations of one person in one setting. There are four types of triangulation: a) Methods Triangulation b) Triangulation of Sources (data triangulation) c) Analyst Triangulation and d) Theory/perspective Triangulation (Patton, 2002). I have used data triangulation and methods triangulation. In data triangulation a researcher refers to different sources of data in understanding a
particular phenomenon. I collected my data from three different cohorts of participants to look at the phenomenon from different perspectives and check similarities and differences within the same case (Oslen, 2004). In methods triangulation I employed different methods of data collection such as interviews, observations, focus group discussions and student diaries to study the particular phenomenon under investigation. Methodological triangulation helped me establish the validity of my study by comparing findings and results elicited from individual tools.

- **Member Checking and Second Round of Individual Interviews**

The other technique which I employed to enhance the credibility of my research was member checking. This is also known as participant verification (Rager, 2005). Member checks may involve sharing the findings with the participants, and allowing them to analyse the findings, amend their views or comment on them (Creswell, 2007). Member checks may occur during the interview or towards the end of the project (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I did a member check in two ways. Firstly, I shared the interview transcripts with the participants and allowed them to read and add anything if they wished to (Creswell, 2007). This took place in the middle of my project when I began to analyse the data, and all the correspondence took place through emails, text messages and Facebook. The second time I went back to my participants and did a short member checking interview via Skype. I sent some of the findings of the study to my participants and allowed them to examine these before the member check interview took place towards end of the project. The member check interview had two general questions for all students and some other questions specific to each participant. The general questions included: Would you like to comment on your journey of language learning from your first semester up to now? Is there anything else you would like to comment on in the findings you have read? The specific questions on the other hand asked for more detail and further elaboration on the views they had shared in their interviews and diaries. The specific questions served the purpose of securing a deeper reflection on certain aspects of their participation and the ideas they had shared. This second interview was useful in two
ways: as an opportunity for member checking and as an opportunity for increased reflection, elaboration and clarification.

Due to the limitations of time and funding it was not possible for me to go back to the field and carry out a second round of interviews with the participants in person as originally planned. I therefore invited my participants to come on to Skype for a slightly shorter interview that combined the two elements mentioned above. However, the number of participants who turned up for the second round of interviews on Skype was less than for the first round. Due to the unavailability of Internet services for some of the participants it was not possible for them all to come online for the member checking and the second round of interviews. Therefore, I ended up interviewing only seven participants at that point.

Like every other research method or technique, member checking also comes with its fair share of disadvantages and it is not a completely unproblematic procedure (Carlson, 2010). When I sent my participants their interview transcripts, most of them did not get back to me with any suggestions or amendments. I had to send them reminders and after a long wait only four participants asked me to make slight changes to their personal details such as name of the school and tuition centre they attended. None of them changed their views on the issues discussed in the interviews. This whole process was quite time consuming. It is helpful to set a time a limit for responses in order to reduce the waiting time (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013). The second stage of member checking was intended to share findings by including question checks in the short interviews through Skype. It was difficult to get hold of my participants for the Skype interview due to time differences between the United Kingdom, where I was writing my PhD dissertation, and Pakistan where all my participants were based. I also faced difficulties in selecting sections of the findings for my participants to read and comment on and I was not sure if I was sharing a substantial amount of the findings. As with the first stage of member checking, none of my participants commented on the findings I shared. However, they helped me further refine the views they had written in their diaries. They also shared their general views on their participation in the study.
4.12.2 Transferability

The findings of much qualitative research are based on a small number of participants and a particular environment and it is hard to prove that the findings are applicable to any other situations or populations. That is not the purpose of a qualitative study. However, Denscombe (1998) and Stake (1995) suggest that, although every case may be unique in its own way, it can also represent a broader group, for example learners at UoS might have something in common with learners at other higher education institutes in Pakistan. Therefore, the prospects of transferability should not be rejected entirely. Bassey (1981) states that researchers’ situations may describe situations that typify other contexts and consequently may have significance for other similar places. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that it is the responsibility of the investigator to ensure that they provide sufficient contextual information about the research site and participants to enable others to make such a transfer. Therefore, it is also important to provide minute details of the phenomenon under investigation. I have presented setting, situations and participants in sufficient detail that it makes easy for other researchers to compare and transfer the findings drawn from the study to their own contexts (Gray, 2009). To ensure transferability, I have also tried, wherever possible, to present my findings with rich description particularly when talking about the research context in the context chapter, while presenting my case and when dealing with findings from the classroom and shadowing observations, to enable my reader to better understand the context of the study and its participants.

4.13 Ethical Issues

Anonymity and confidentiality had been assured to all participants before and during the interviews according to data protection guidelines (Cohen et al., 2007). Anonymity, for example, was preserved by means of pseudonyms for the participants in interviews, focus group discussions and diary entries. Participants have only been described according to their age, gender, academic background and ethnicity. All contents of the recorded interviews (individual and focus groups) will be kept securely
for two years and then retained for another three years after which they will be destroyed.

The Registrar and Head of the IELL were formally requested in writing to allow me access to the research site for the purpose of class observations and interviews. Participants’ consent was obtained through a consent form that all willing participants were asked to sign. I informed them about the option of withdrawing at any time from their participation in this study if they felt they wanted or needed to do so. Participants were clearly informed that their participation in this study was absolutely voluntary.

Openness and transparency were maintained throughout the study. All participants were informed about the aim of the study and it was reinforced that all those involved would receive transparent information about any procedures. In addition to a verbal explanation, a short leaflet containing clear information about the intention of this study was provided to all participants prior to giving them consent forms. Participants were also provided with copies of the transcription of their interviews in case they wanted to amend anything they had shared in the recorded interview (see Member Checking).

The ethics form was drawn up according to the ethical guidelines of SERA (Scottish Educational Research Association). Prior to handing the ethics form to the participants, it was sent to the school of education’s research committee for scrutiny and approval.

4.14 Chapter Summary

I divided this chapter into three main parts to discuss the overall research design employed in this study to answer my research questions. I began with a recapitulation of the research aim and questions, followed by an illustration of a layered design, to highlight the key decisions underpinning the study. I argued that every research project is informed by a particular paradigm that has its specific ontology, epistemology and methodology. My research study adopted social constructionism
with its interpretivist ontology, subjectivist epistemology and abductive methodology. I also differentiated the often-confusing paradigm shift in constructivism and constructionism. Having elaborated on the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings, I justified why this study followed a qualitative approach to investigate the phenomenon of the construction and negotiation of language learner identity. The chapter then deliberated on the instrumental case study method and how this fitted with the research aim of this study. I also justified the presence of ethnographic and longitudinal elements embedded in the case study method.

The research field of this study was the Institute of English Language and Literature (IELL), University of Sindh (UoS) and the main reason for choosing that site was because of its multi-cultural, multi-ethnic orientation and its hosting of students from diverse academic and socio-economic backgrounds which proved instrumental in studying English language learner identity in postcolonial Pakistan. The sampling strategies were then discussed, followed by a brief introduction and decisions around the research participants who were categorised into three cohorts. Before I explained the research tools used for data collection and their strengths and weaknesses, I talked a little about the complications of not having a pilot study prior to the major data collection. Individual interviews, focus group discussions, non-participant classroom and participant-shadowing observations, and student diaries were adopted as the research tools to gather the data from various sources of information. All the collected data was coded and categorised for developing the five main themes of the study. The issues of translation, transcription and coding details have also been given.

‘All researchers are positioned whether they write about it explicitly, separately or not at all’ (Chiseri-Strater, 1996, p. 115). The final part of this chapter elaborated on my positionality and reflexivity as the insider-teacher-researcher. I tried to make my subjectivities transparent to my reader by highlighting the ethical issues including anonymity, confidentiality, openness, transparency, participants’ consent, permission to use the research site and the classroom, power relations and the potential biases I might have had in relation to this study. For almost all qualitative studies it is important to address the issues of trustworthiness and credibility. I employed the
strategies of member checking and triangulation to ensure the quality and authenticity of my study. I also pointed out the possibilities for transferability which this study might offer, with the help of detailed description.
Chapter 5. Presentation of the Case

Introduction

This chapter presents the case of this study with the help of some documented information, the university’s official website, images of the University of Sindh (UoS), information from non-participant classroom observations and other key stakeholders’ views. I will firstly set the scene at the UoS and will then focus on the actual research site, the Institute of English Language and Literature (IELL), where this study was conducted and where the particular case, and the phenomenon under investigation, English language learning, takes place. In addition, this chapter will present brief biographical and sociolinguistic information about my participants, in the form of brief vignettes. These details about the case of the study and the primary participants will familiarise readers with the background to where the research was conducted, participants lives, and the education policies and systems affecting their English language learning journeys, and the construction of their language learner identity. Brief narratives about the participants will give the reader an insight into their personal lives and family orientations.

5.1 Case of the Study: The University of Sindh

In this section I will present the data that was gathered from different sources at the UoS, including the university website, the registrar’s office, the directorate of admissions and quality enhancement, and the bureau of students’ tutorial assistance and guidance services. I will give basic information about the university, its geographical location and ambience, its infrastructure, faculties and departments, admissions policy, student enrolment, quality enhancement and student guidance services. These details regarding the university’s infrastructure, functioning and policies will help me present the case in all its richness and give a more detailed account of key aspects of the institution.
5.1.1 Setting the scene at the University of Sindh (UoS)

Nestled in the bosom of the Indus valley, this ancient seat of learning, the University of Sindh, is the second oldest university in the country and the oldest in the province. It was established just a few months before the country’s independence on April 9, 1947. The main campus of the university, Allama I.I. Kazi Campus, is located in Jamshoro (the district headquarters), about 15 kilometres from Hyderabad, a city on the right bank of the River Indus. The old campus, which is situated in Hyderabad city centre, is named Elsa Kazi Campus. Sindh University also has four regional campuses in the major cities of the province. It is a semi-autonomous institution patronised by the chancellor, the incumbent governor of the province who represents the federal government, and it is administered by the vice chancellor, pro vice chancellor and registrar who oversee all official, administrative and academic matters, including the recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff, under the University Ordinance.

Picture 2: Location of the UoS on Google Map
Jamshoro, the largest university residential campus in the country, sprawling across approximately 8000 acres of land, was a rather desolate hilly track until 1955 when it was selected for the establishment of Sindh University’s main campus. Although situated on a hilly track, the balmy and soothing breeze of the Arabian Sea always envelops its ecological environment (the coastal city of Karachi being just 150 kilometres from Jamshoro). Its architecture is a pleasing blend of the Mughal style and contemporary design. The well planned roads and modern urban town management make it feel as if one is living in a model township, far from the maddening crowd of the city. The peaceful evening scenery of Jamshoro relaxes and reinvigorates the tired minds of young scholars who feel exhausted after spending many hours in the classrooms and the central library.
The site for the new campus was chosen away from the city of Hyderabad, which lacked enough space to accommodate an ambitious expansion of the old campus of the university. Interestingly, Jamshoro is known to be the gateway to the Indus Valley, famous for its civilisation and rich cultural heritage. The development of the new campus on a hilly and bushy area was initiated in 1959, and slowly and gradually developed into a model township. Though still in progress, over the years some 24 teaching and research blocks have been built which house the different faculties and departments of the university. 16 halls of residence provide accommodation for 2,500 boys, in 10 hostels, and 1,500 girls, in five hostels. A separate hostel was built for postgraduate female students. Hyder Bux Jatoi Pavilion was constructed to provide indoor games facilities, a track for athletics and sports grounds. Fatima Jinnah Gymnasium provides games and sports facilities exclusively for girls. The institute of Sindhology building at one of the university entrances depicts the rich cultural heritage of Sindh. The imposing central library building, named after the late Allama
I.I. Kazi, the first vice chancellor of Sindh University, who conceptualised and supported the construction of the university, serves as a landmark, even from a distance. The new campus itself is named after him whereas the old campus, situated in Hyderabad, was named after his German wife Elsa Kazi.

5.1.2 Faculties and Departments

The university accommodates approximately 20,000 to 22,000 students in 48 teaching institutes/centres/departments functioning under eight academic faculties: i) Natural Sciences, ii) Arts, iii) Islamic Studies, iv) Law, v) Commerce and Business Administration, vi) Pharmacy, vii) Social Sciences and viii) Education. Each faculty operates under the Dean, who is nominated by the chancellor, whereas the departments/institutes are headed by chairpersons/directors appointed by the vice chancellor. In addition, UoS has seven research centres and eight research chairs. The University also owns two schools (one high school and another up to intermediate level), one in the main campus and the other in the old campus. Moreover, five Law Colleges, 65 Degree and Post-Graduate public sector colleges and 12 private colleges are affiliated to the university. According to the University’s official website, around 70,000 regular students are enrolled in affiliated colleges.
Picture 4: Non-teaching buildings in UoS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Departments/Institutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Natural Sciences</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty of Social Sciences</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty of Arts</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty of Commerce and Business Administration</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty of Islamic Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty of Pharmacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty of Education</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty of Law</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 9: Faculties and Departments at UoS**
Departments of UoS

Picture 5: Faculties and Departments, UoS
5.1.3 Admission and Entry Requirements at the University of Sindh

The University of Sindh (UoS) enrols around 20-22,000 students annually (University Annual Report, 2013) and according to the data obtained from the Director Admissions the number of the students being enrolled at the UoS every year seemed to increase steadily in the recent years (see the table below). Stating about the ethnic and linguistic background of the students enrolled at the UoS, Ahmed (2012) suggests that Sindhis constitute the largest ethnic group in most of the university departments, however, I could not find any statistical data available either on the university’s official website or from the university administration on students’ first language and ethnicity. In addition, he mentioned that UoS uses the policy of ‘district quota’ in admitting students in various faculties and departments. The district quota system somehow ensures entry of the candidates from the rural regions of the province of Sindh.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-6</td>
<td>13537</td>
<td>5055</td>
<td>18592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-7</td>
<td>13562</td>
<td>5232</td>
<td>18794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-8</td>
<td>13718</td>
<td>5168</td>
<td>18886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-9</td>
<td>13552</td>
<td>6006</td>
<td>19558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>14933</td>
<td>4764</td>
<td>19697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>17066</td>
<td>5214</td>
<td>22280</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>16577</td>
<td>5478</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>16823</td>
<td>6104</td>
<td>22927</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Student Enrolment Breakdown by Academic Year

Admission to the university is offered under various disciplines and degree programmes (BA., BS., BSc., MA., MS., MSc., MBA., MPhil., PhD. etc.) on general merit, on a quota system and under self-finance schemes. All admissions to the university are subject to qualifying in the pre-entry test conducted by the University
Testing Services (UTS) every year between November and December prior to the commencement of the academic year in January. The mandatory pre-entry test is based on 100% multiple choice questions in English (25%), General Knowledge (15%), Mathematics, General Science and Islamic Studies (20%). The score in the pre-entry test and previous academic records determine the merit for admission to all the academic disciplines. Students have to select their choice of disciplines in the admission application form before sitting the entry test. Every student is allowed to select up to ten options for their choice of subjects and subsequently they are placed under one or two disciplines on the basis of their accumulative scores. There is no other intra-disciplinary test except for the Institute of Art and Design, where another aptitude test is taken at departmental level after qualifying in the general entry test. An interview is only compulsory for admission to MPhil and PhD degree programmes.

5.1.4 Politics on the Campus

The University of Sindh has been a hub of local politics since its inception in 1947. Almost all the Sindhi-speaking political parties in the country have representative student wings at the university, which are actively involved in politics. However, these political activities have, for much of the time, been a cause of the university’s bad reputation, violence and frequent disruption of academic activities. The politics on the campus are rooted in the historical reaction and resentment to the decision of ‘One Unit’, a geopolitical policy implemented between 1954 and 1970. In order to diminish ethnic and provincial prejudices, reduce provincial administrative expenses and complications, and to ensure the autonomy of East and West Pakistan, the then prime minister announced that the four provinces of the country would be merged into one unit called ‘West Pakistan’, as was the case in ‘East Pakistan’ (now Bangladesh). This decision created agitation in all four provinces of the country including Sindh, where Sindhi nationalist political parties emerged to fight for the right to have a distinct, sub-national ethnic identity associated with their land (province) which they called ‘Sindudesh’ (land of Sindhis). The University of Sindh, being located in the predominantly Sindhi populated province, became the platform for this movement
Student political leaders used to play a positive role by providing counselling and financial support to students at the university, by arranging lectures and dialogues with political leaders, and also by organising social awareness campaigns. Unfortunately, over the last decade or so, the role of politics on the campus has become notorious and often criminal. Members of student political organisations (commonly known as ‘comrades’) are often seen carrying weapons and firing at each other over petty clashes. If the university administration refuses to meet their demands for funding their activities, or giving them a certain quota of student admissions to the university and also ensuring them good grades in the exams, they usually announce boycotts of academic activities, forcibly preventing students from attending classes and resorting to causing damage to the university’s property. As a result of these boycotts, the length of semesters is cut short, and teachers remain under pressure to complete the syllabus; they also cause many problems for students and their parents concerning issues of safety and security on the campus.

5.1.5 Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC)

The Quality Enhancement Cell of the university was established in November 2006 under the instruction and guidelines of the Quality Assurance Authority (QAA) of the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. The QAA works as a policy making and monitoring body for the maintenance and enhancement of quality in higher educational institutes in Pakistan. It ensures the systematic implementation of quality improvement procedures and determines the criteria for the attainment of improved levels of international compatibility and competitiveness at institutional and programme levels. Similarly, the QEC at UoS is engaged in developing a viable and sustainable system of quality enhancement in order to meet the increasing challenges for higher education in the country. According to university documents and its website, the QEC evaluates the university’s teaching departments, degree programmes, courses, curricula, research activities, funding for facilities and
equipment and other curricular and co-curricular activities annually through a proforma known as the ‘Self Assessment Report’ (SAR). The QEC comprises a committee with members from all faculties and departments of the university and it is headed up by an advisor, while the vice chancellor of the university acts as its patron.

5.2 Institute of English Language and Literature (IELL)

The Institute of English Language and Literature (IELL) of UoS is the service department which provides the teaching of English throughout the university in all 48 institutes/departments. In addition, IELL offers degree programmes in English Language and Literature in its home institute to approximately 1,500 students in morning and evening shifts. The degree programmes include BS English (4 years Hons.), MA (Previous) in Linguistics (2 years) and MA (Previous) in English Literature (2 years). The institute has recently started offering an MPhil degree programme (2 years’ course work and a research dissertation) in Applied Linguistics and in English Literature. IELL has a teaching faculty comprising 30 members including a professor, three associate professors, eight assistant professors and a large number of lecturers and teaching assistants. There are six teachers holding PhDs, out of which 5 completed their doctorate in the United Kingdom and four are currently on study leave pursuing their PhDs also in the UK and in Pakistan. The institute has a single story building with spacious corridors leading to 6 large classrooms, a (lending) library, teachers’ chambers and common rooms for girls and boys. However, there is no language lab or computer lab available for students.

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8 Masters degree programme for those students who have done their bachelor’s degree in any other department of the university or at an associated college
IELL Entrance and Seminar Library

Picture 6: Institute of English Language and Literature
5.2.1 Teaching and Learning of English

As discussed above, students from different socio-economic (mostly from middle and lower class) and academic backgrounds (English-medium or vernacular-medium) enrol in various disciplines at the university for bachelor’s and master’s degree courses. English is taught as a compulsory subject in all master’s and bachelor’s degree programmes throughout the teaching semester (3 hours per week). Until 2002, the course in question was titled English Compulsory, and was based on lessons from English literature including literary essays, poems, short stories, and plays.

The then vice chancellor formed a committee, including the senior teaching faculty of IELL in collaboration with the Oxford University Press in Pakistan, to update the syllabus and renamed it Remedial English. The new Remedial course aimed to enhance students’ reading, writing, speaking and listening skills through contextualised reading materials, and functional and practical English grammar lessons. There is no prior screening undertaken in order to evaluate who should be taught English and at which level they should be taught, and who should be exempted. It is mandatory for all students to pass the Remedial English course to complete their respective degrees. By the end of each semester every student has to sit a three-hour exam, which carries 100 marks, assessing their reading and writing skills. Students speaking and listening skills are not examined. All students from different academic backgrounds attend Remedial English classes together, are taught the same syllabus and are examined through the same question paper. A four semester (two year) course is designed for the B.A. /B.S. degree programmes whereas M.A. /M.S. students study this English language course for two semesters (one year) only. Books titled English for Undergraduates (2006) by Howe, et al. and Oxford Practice Grammar (2006) by Eastwood, J. are prescribed for English language teaching at the University of Sindh. Recently the Higher Education Commission (HEC) directed all English language teaching institutes in public sector universities to include an additional book, ‘English for Academic Purposes’, into their syllabus. The Learning Innovation Division of HEC in collaboration with the British Council in Pakistan designed and introduced this new book to be used alongside the current Remedial English syllabus. This additional book aims to improve students’ interpersonal communication skills and
basic academic writing and focuses on developing learners’ confidence by providing them with opportunities for maximum participation in the language classroom (Curriculum for English, 2012). In order to achieve the objectives of this course, Curriculum for English (2012) also recommends what methodology should be adopted for the teaching of English. The methodology suggested in the curriculum guides the language teachers to adopt innovative language teaching strategies focusing on all four language skills i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking. Their methodologies should include group presentations, guided reading exercises and interpersonal communication tasks through English lessons. It also emphasises that language teachers must involve learners in various writing tasks for example report, proposal and CV writing and encourage them to edit and revise their drafts individually and with the help of their peers and supervised by their teacher. The suggested methodology is a clear contrast to the traditional methods usually practiced in language classrooms. Furthermore, it redefines the role of the language teacher as a facilitator and guide rather than a sage on the stage.

In order to have a closer look at the teaching and learning practices of English at UoS I have detailed some of the findings from my non-participant classroom observations in the next section.

5.2.2 Teaching and Learning Practices in the Remedial English Classroom: Emic and Etic Views

The Remedial English course of BS Part 1 at the IELL is taught in the first (January to April) and second (August to November) semesters. Each class is approximately 50 minutes long. I observed 5 classes of Remedial English (250 minutes) without any active participation in the class. The purpose for observing the classes was to triangulate the participants’ views with the reality of the Remedial English classrooms. Although, due to time limitations, I could not observe the entire course these 250 minutes provided me with sufficient details of the proceedings classroom from both etic (being a researcher from the University of Edinburgh) and emic (having taught the same course for more than 6 years) perspectives. This section particularly highlights
the teaching and learning practices in the Remedial English classroom I observed. Here I will present my non-participant observation findings under the following questions:

- **What Remedial English class looked like?**

If I present the general layout of the classrooms in the Institute of English Language and Literature, I would say the classrooms were large, bright and non-air-conditioned, with a seating capacity for 80 to 90 students. However, the classroom I observed accommodated more than 100 students, which was slightly over its capacity. Almost all of the students were seated on desk-based chairs, however, due to the scarcity of seats and the overcrowded class, a few latecomers had to stand at the back or side of the class and hold their note books in their hands. Students who come early to the classroom get the front seats and reserve seats for their friends, informing them through text messages. One of the participants, commenting on this problem said:

> You know when I come late all seats gone. Now the whole lecture I have to stand which is difficult because at the back teacher voice cannot be heard when there is no microphone. Sometimes we boys have to give seats to our girls class fellows out of respect. University class should have many seats so everyone can at least get a seat in the classroom and sit during lecture.

(Aijaz, male, Year 1, interview)

Literature identifies that the problem of large classes is prevalent in almost all developing countries, including Pakistan, where it is a common phenomenon in public sector universities. Shamim (1993; 2006; 2008), elaborating on the challenges teachers and students encounter in large classes in Pakistan, argues that the size of the class has clear implications for students’ level of achievement and for teachers it becomes difficult to manage and to involve all the students in class activities.
It is normal in Pakistan, in most of the co-educational institutes that male and female students do not sit next to each other. Female and male students sit on separate sides of the class (as shown in the pictures below). In this case, if there was any group work, pair work or role-play, students mostly engaged with the same gender for the assigned tasks. It was quite hot weather, there was no proper ventilation and ceiling fans seemed not to be working efficiently, leaving the room stuffy and suffocating. This classroom had a white board with some permanent ink marks on it. There was a detachable microphone with built-in speakers in the room but the teacher usually preferred not to use it and relied on his voice projection. Since there was no fixed overhead projector in the room, the teacher borrowed one from the director’s office to use for his lesson/activity.

Picture 7: The Remedial English Classroom
• **How were students taught in Remedial English class?**

Grammar Translation Method happens to be the most popular pedagogical strategy in the majority of the public sector institutes for teaching English (Shamim, 2011). Similarly, in the Remedial English class I observed the teacher concerned also relied on the same method in the lecture format however, he sometimes tried to break away from the traditional methods of language teaching by using a projector and playing videos to teach English. The students looked as if they enjoyed watching the videos. He involved students in group and pair-work activities but due to the large size of the class he was struggling to manage this and therefore resorted to the lecture-method, actively teaching only intermittently. One of the female participants said that:

> This is very nice when teacher bring projector in class. It was only two times he played videos for teaching us English. After watching the song, he involved us in group activity which we enjoyed a lot… It was learning with fun. I wish if teacher do this everyday it is better than lectures.

(Saima, female, Year 1, interview)

Owing to time constraints and an inherent pressure to cover the topics of the prescribed syllabus within the allocated timeframe the teacher would not encourage liberal participation from the students. Hence, relatively few students could get a chance to participate. My classroom observations on the teaching methods are quite similar to the data collected by Bughio (2012), a study conducted on the issue of large class at the University of Sindh. Bughio noticed that the teacher in the English language classrooms spent a lot of time explaining the lesson and the vocabulary items used in the text that multiplied his turns of classroom talk compared to the students. I observed that the students responded by saying ‘yes’ or ‘no’ only when they were asked if they had understood the points explained by the teacher. Putative authority of the teachers in the public sectors universities made students surrender their talking time to the teacher in order to learn more.
I observed that the teacher in question did not seem to come prepared in the class with any formal lesson plans. He did not bring handouts or worksheets etc., although one thing was quite obvious that his experience (more than 10 years) of teaching the Remedial English course at the same university helped him to engage the class without any formal preparation. The rule of thumb methodology of the class was based on this formula starting with a) aloud reading the text b) explaining the difficult vocabulary items, c) followed by writing those words on the white board. Most of the students, especially those who sat at the front copied these exercises on their textbooks and notebooks. This practice was more or less similar to the observation data presented in Bughio (2012) and Ahmed (2012). However, the only difference between the current study and the above mentioned two studies conducted in the same context is the language teacher’s using, permitting or prohibiting the use of L1 in the Remedial English classroom. Both Bughio and Ahmed found that the teachers used L1 to explain difficult vocabulary and grammar items whereas I observed the Remedial English teacher neither used L1 to explain any part of the lesson nor encouraged his students to use L1 in the classroom.

![The Remedial English Classroom](image)

**Picture 8: The Remedial English Classroom**
During group work, students preferred using L1, which the teacher did not allow and strongly discouraged. However, the SLL literature endorses and encourages the limited use of L1 in L2 classrooms. It is considered as a linguistic and cognitive resource to enhance the development of L2 learning (Butzkamm, 1998; Eldridge, 1996; Swain & Lapkin, 2000). A study (Probyn, 2009) conducted in a similar postcolonial context in South Africa suggests that when the target language is not the home language of teacher or students there is frequently a gap between language policy and practice in the classroom, and for such situations use of L1 in L2 classroom which she calls ‘smuggling the vernacular into the classroom’ (ibid. p. 24) by teachers and learners is a common strategy to achieve a range of social and pedagogical goals. After the activities were over, he checked the answers by asking three or four students to respond, depending on the time available. I noticed the application of Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) sequence in almost all the sessions I observed. The teacher asked the question (Initiation), some of the students replied voluntarily, others were chosen by the teacher (Response) and finally teacher told them if their answers were right or wrong (Feedback).

- **What were students’ English language learning practices?**

I noticed there were three ways through which students were learning English in the Remedial English classroom: a) through teacher’s lectures b) through prescribed text books and exercises in them c) and thorough their individual, pair and group participations in classroom activities and assigned tasks. In addition, the important thing to mention here is that each student’s learning behaviour and practices were determined by their educational background. Students hailing from the private and public sector schools demonstrated distinct learning patterns for example the former tended to rely on practice while the latter preferred the rote memorisation mode of comprehension. This situation is consistent with Mansoor’s (2005) comparative analysis of private and public sector students’ participation in the language classroom. According to Mansoor (2005), students from private, English-medium backgrounds significantly outperform their vernacular-medium counterparts when it comes to participation in the English classroom, and in attainment levels.
Commenting on the reason for this, a female participant in her diary mentioned:

In my school, we always used Sindhi because teacher never asked us to use English we didn’t learn how to speak in English. Here at uni, things are still same because whenever I want to ask any question I feel my English is not good so I will ask question in wrong English so I keep silent.

(Rubina, female, diary entry:8)

Students like Rubina are the ones who need more help with English language but they are ignored in the class. The teacher sometimes encouraged students’ participation in the class by giving various tasks and picking students randomly to answer the question but that was not his normal practice. He often took control of the class through lectures to explain language items, tenses etc. This approach on the part of the teacher was practical given the pressure to complete the course.

Oxford Advanced Learners’ dictionary is usually the much-preferred reference book for acquisition of new and difficult words and is often recommended by the language teachers at the institute (Bughio, 2012). However the teacher I observed asked his students to avoid depending too much on the dictionary and to try to guess the meaning of the words from the context they were used in.

Having noticed the teacher not using any handouts or worksheets in the class I raised this issue in my conversation with him. He told me it was due to lack of sufficient resources (photocopying and printing) provided so teaching staff usually rely on textbooks and whiteboards for teaching English. Commenting on the lack of teaching resources on the campus, the teacher in his interview said:

No we cannot bring handout in the classroom. It is just impossible because we are not provided with funds which we can spend on this. Secondly, no teacher can afford to pay for handouts for such a large class from his own pocket. Even we are not paid for the examination papers and we have to arrange question papers on our own. (Remedial English Teacher, interview)
I observed that some students made an effort to give as many presentations as possible, either on their own or with their classmates, which was much appreciated in the class. Sometimes pair and group activity work was also assigned but due to the large class size it was problematic for the teacher to manage, therefore he preferred assigning individual tasks. The teacher very rarely used role-play activity in his class. Most of the time students participated by answering the teacher’s questions rather than by doing any other tasks. Classroom observation reflected that, apart from the classes where the teacher dedicated time for presentations, his talking time was always more than the students’ talking time. He read out loud in the class, presented and explained the topics, and gave lectures on the textual items. When I asked for the teacher’s comments on the students’ participation I was told:

Students prefer to listen rather than talk, I encourage those who are serious learners and come to gain something, others usually waste my and other students’ time by beating around the bush.

**Picture 9: The Remedial English Classroom (Girls’ and Boys’ sides)**
The situation concerning learners’ lack of participation in the language class may be compared with Duff (2002). She found that the silence on the part of the less proficient users of English was due to their lack of command of English, fear to be criticised and laughed at by their more proficient native-speaker peers. They consciously avoided interaction in the classroom in order not to get humiliated. As this study was conducted in a non-native English country so the more proficient users of English were those whose prior English medium schooling and better socio-economic background facilitated their English language learning outside the classroom. It can be argued here that the less proficient users of English may be motivated to learn English, but they were not invested in learning English due to unequal power relations (Norton, 2013) prevailing between them and their more proficient peers.

Picture 10: Boys’ side in the Remedial English Class

(remedial English Teacher, interview)
Interestingly, I noticed that the extent of students’ participation in the classroom activities and their responses for teacher’s questions also depended on their seating arrangement. Obviously the active students occupied the front seats in the class and contributed more to the class activities. While those situating in the back of the class played the role of the passive listeners with very little in put towards the classroom discourse. The net inference of the preceding phenomenon was that the students who took active roles in classroom talk were regarded as bright and promising and their dormant counterparts were deemed to be rather less intelligent. Hence it was concluded that the ability of a student was determined on the basis of his or her participation in the class. Consequently, those students judged to be intelligent gained more opportunities for learning. This reinforced the advantage for those already privileged in learning English and emphasised the disadvantage for those from low socio-economic backgrounds who had attended vernacular-medium schools. Saleha (female, Year 1) during her interview said that, ‘Whosoever responds in class, teacher keeps asking him questions throughout the semester.’ Zaheer (Male, Year 1) said, ‘teacher only focus on three front rows in the class and rest of the class remains away from teacher’s attention’. Overall, students suggested that the teacher’s attention was limited to the front of the class and on selected students. Continuing to focus attention on the same students reinforced the idea that the teaching was intended for those students familiar with English, who already knew what was being taught. They tended to attend the classes just to revise and polish up the skills they had already acquired. Whereas those who needed the ‘remedy’ of Remedial English most were apparently overshadowed by their ‘intelligent’ and ‘privileged’ fellow students.

- **What was the mode of evaluation in the Remedial English course?**

The examination and its contents remained the central focus of students at the UoS (Ahmed, 2012). The Remedial English course is evaluated through a three-hour written exam at the end of every semester. Students’ oral or listening skills are not examined on this course. Students were found to be anxious to know what they would be examined on. The teacher had to assure them that they would only be asked about whatever they had read and practised in class. One of the participants, Nazia, in her
interview mentioned that ‘we attend this class just to pass this subject ….if we don’t pass it we can’t get our degree’. In his interview, the Dean told me that:

Many students who focus on exams rather than learning English rely on rote learning and cramming textual information, produce verbatim answers in their exams which helps them getting passing marks and in worst cases they resort to getting marks through unfair means.

(Dean, interview)

By unfair means, the Dean probably meant getting marks through favoritism or political influence (see section 5.1.4). Students who just aim to pass the Remedial English course with no intention to learn English tend to cram answers by following past years’ question papers which can be easily obtained from their senior colleagues.

The Remedial English exam carried 100 marks out of which a student had to score at least 40% to pass the exam. Students were informed of their scores on a notice board first, and then through their marks sheets. No written feedback was given to students on their performance in exam scripts. Normally students were not allowed to see the mistakes in their script. Teachers did not usually encourage students to check their answers once they were submitted and marked. This might be seen as questioning a teacher’s credibility. When asked for any additional comments, Saima in her member check interview told me that when she had got a low grade in her Remedial English in the previous semester she had gone to her teacher in his office to ask him to show her the exam answers so that she could improve on her mistakes in the next semester. She was blatantly refused and her request infuriated the teacher.

I went to sir and requested him that I want to see my copy because I have got less marks and I want to see why I have been given this mark and want to check my mistakes so that I can improve my English… he got angry with me and said “you should trust your teacher I can’t show 120 students their copies”… since then this teacher is so rude to me.

(Saima, female, member check interview)
5.3 Participants’ Vignettes

In this section I present a brief introduction to each primary participant who took part in this study. In order to introduce the participants to my reader I have utilised the information I gathered from different sources of data including the profile forms (see Appendix 15) they filled in for me at the beginning of the study, individual interviews, shadowing, diary entries and other informal, electronic correspondence.

1. Hania

Hania belonged to a multilingual, lower middle class family, where her mother was a housewife and her father, a government servant. Hania’s mother was an Urdu speaker; her father was a Sindhi so they spoke Sindhi-Urdu mixed language at home. She had two younger sisters whom she taught at home after school as she thought teaching was one way to learn. She tried to speak in English with her younger sister all the time because she thought no one else would help her practise her language skills and also she never felt embarrassed making mistakes in front of her younger sister, as she did in the classroom in front of the teachers and hundreds of fellow students who might laugh at her. Her mother, who was less qualified than her father had never taken any interest in her girls’ education. She remained busy with her household work most of the time. Hania’s father was keen about his daughters’ studies and wanted to raise them like boys so that they should not feel disadvantaged in any way. This enthusiastic and determined young girl of eighteen believed in trying every possible way to learn English and wanted to prove herself the best amongst her cousins, who she says, ‘made her jealous showing off her fluency in English language’.

2. Benazir

Benazir, who was born and brought up in an urban city, attended an elite school and had a different story to tell from that of her close friend Hania. Benazir lived in a huge house with her extended family consisting of two siblings (a younger sister and a younger brother), her parents, two uncles, their wives and children and her
grandparents. Her family was a good example of a patriarchal family. Benazir’s
grandfather took all the major and minor decisions in the family. Her parents had to
have her grandfather’s permission before enrolling Benazir and her siblings in school.
Their grandfather objected to girls being enrolled in a co-educational school but
Benazir’s mother, who had a master’s degree and teaching experience, took a stand
and refused to send her children to any ‘substandard’ government school. Benazir said
‘my mother’s one decision at the right time saved us from a life-time disadvantage’.
The school she attended was one of the prestigious schools in the city. She believed
the ten years of her life she spent in that school helped her in many ways to attain a
quality education which most school children were denied.

3. Enam

This young boy, from the rural part of the province, had several dreams in his eyes and
a strong determination to achieve his goals with hard work and sincerity. He thought it
was only through the ladder of English that he could achieve his goals. Having spent
17 years of his life in his village, he began his journey to a new life in the city, with
higher education. Like his brother and cousin he wanted to qualify in a competitive
exam and join the civil service in Pakistan, although he had an alternative plan for his
future too, in case he failed. He wished to do a PhD in English Language and be a
professor. He initiated his journey in English language learning in a small village,
which had very limited options for standard education. His father, who was not highly
qualified, was a primary school teacher and his mother was a housewife. Enam lived
in a small house with his parents, his elder brother and two younger sisters. His only
inspiration for education was his elder brother, and a cousin who guided him when
making his choices for further study after school and college. He received his primary
and secondary education in the same village where he was born and brought up.

4. Yameen

Yameen, a boy who had just celebrated his 21st birthday, was full of positive energy,
optimism, determination and high hopes for his future and the prosperity of his family.
He had six brothers, amongst whom he was the only one who had reached higher education; the others had either dropped out or had had to discontinue their studies due to poverty and lack of resources. His father was a schoolteacher and his mother was a housewife and was uneducated. They lived in a small town surrounded by green fields located on the outskirts of the main city. The family he came from was very religious. His father wanted Yameen and his other brothers to regularly pray and read the Quran. Yameen showed immense love and attachment for his parents and family and he wanted to make them feel proud of having a son like him. Yameen was a bright student. He was a proficient user of English, very conscientious about acquiring a British accent and knew a lot about biology. He was actively involved in teaching school and college going children in private tuition centres in the evening after university. He believed this served two purposes; a means to support the family income and fund his own studies, and a way to learn more.

5. Nazia

Nazia came from a lower middle class family, based in the university campus town. Her father worked in the university and her mother was a housewife. Her parents were not very well qualified but they were very particular about their children’s education. She was the eldest of her three siblings, a brother and two sisters. Although Nazia’s parents were originally from a village in the north of the province they wanted their children to be raised in an urban environment. Nazia, being the eldest child, was her father’s favourite. He wanted to see her become a successful person in her career. It was her father’s dream that she would become a doctor but unfortunately she did not gain admission to the medical college she applied for. She then promised her father that she would work very hard to be a teacher in a university. With this dream in her eyes she entered the University of Sindh.

6. Saleha

Saleha was an Urdu speaker, a child of Pashto parents who had lived in the province of Sindh for the last few decades. She was the second last of her five sisters and two
brothers. Her parents were not educated but they had made all possible efforts to educate their children. Her eldest sister, who was a doctor by profession, was a source of inspiration for Saleha. Another elder sister who was a lecturer in a government college was also a motivating factor. They had both been teaching her and looking after her studies since she was in class one. Saleha’s parents had always encouraged their children to be independent and self-sufficient. Due to limited financial support from their parents, her siblings took on part time jobs while they were studying. Saleha was doing the same. She offered home tuition to primary school children in her neighbourhood in the evenings for a few hours. Saleha was Internet savvy. She found interacting online with people from English speaking countries the best way of learning English.

7. Kamran

Kamran was a determined and pro-active young boy who believed in self-confidence and proper planning, no matter how complex the work might be. Kamran said that if things were done through good organisation and preparation no one could stop him achieving his targets. One of his major targets in these days was to excel at English. For Kamran, English was not just a language but a potential means to prepare himself for the greater target of qualifying in a competitive exam, CSS, which was his family’s dream. His elder brother had always been an inspiration for him as he was now a CSS qualified government official in training. Kamran wanted to follow in his brother’s footsteps to achieve his goals and lead a successful life. Kamran came from a lower middle class family. His father, who was a high school teacher, passed away when he was in class 7, his mother worked as a Lady Health Worker in the small town where they lived.

8. Saima

Saima was an ambitious and confident girl, born and brought up in a rural environment. She belonged to a conservative and religious family, which originally came from a southern village in Sindh province. Her mother was a housewife and her
father had previously been a teacher in a government college then got a teaching job in the university. Saima and her family, her parents and four siblings (two sisters and two brothers) moved to the city when she was in class seven. She said that one of the reasons they moved to the city from a village was for her and her siblings’ education and her father’s new job. Saima’s parents had always wanted to educate their children so that they could lead successful and secure lives. Saima attended a government school in her village and then college in the city where she was currently living. Her elder sister, who was the first girl in the whole family who had attained a master’s degree, was working as an English lecturer in a government college. Saima’s sister had paved the way for her to get higher education and work after finishing her degree.

9. Sania

Sania was a shy and introverted girl of eighteen. She was born in a rural town but brought up and primarily educated in the urban capital of the country due to her father’s job. She came from a middle class family where her late father was a civil servant and her mother was a housewife. She was the only sister of her two elder and one younger brother. After her father’s death, her eldest brother looked after the family, raised her and encouraged her to continue her studies to achieve her goals. Sania’s family was hopeful of a bright future for her, and believed she would bring a good name to the family. She was one of the very few girls from her family who had made it into higher education. After being disqualified for entry into a medical university she had changed her goal in life. She now wanted to be a lecturer in English so that she could financially support her family. With this plan she entered IELL and was optimistic that English would help her get closer to achieving her goal in life.

10. Rubina

This nineteen year old young girl belonged to a middle class, educated family residing in an urban town. Her mother was teacher in a school and father was a government servant. She was the youngest, with two brothers who were also studying at the same university as her. Her parents, especially her mother, were very concerned about
Rubina’s education. She made sure that she got the best education. Rubina idealised her mother, who inspired her to study further and make her proud. Since her childhood, Rubina had been encouraged to learn English and for that reason she switched from a Sindhi-medium to an English-medium school after her primary education. Although Rubina wanted to opt for medical studies, her parents wanted her to study English, so her admission to IELL was her parents’ decision, which she happily accepted. Rubina believed that if her parents saw English as an important language to learn and master there must be some wisdom in this.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the immediate backdrop of the study. I firstly set the scene of the University of Sindh (UoS) by presenting general details about the location and infrastructure of the main campus, situated in a district of the province of Sindh called Jamshoro, UoS being the oldest and largest public sector, multidisciplinary university in the province of Sindh and the second oldest in the country. It caters for students from different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds who are enrolled in more than 48 departments and institutes under several degree programmes ranging from BA to PhD. However, the university’s reputation is often considered questionable because it houses different political organisations, many of which have caused serious damage to the Indus Valley’s ancient seat of learning. Despite its unpopularity amongst the upper and middle classes, a huge number of students from the lower middle class of society graduate from the UoS every year. The Institute of English Language and Literature (IELL) is one department of the university that has always been a catalyst for positive change in society by producing literary figures, civil servants, teachers, historians and motivational public speakers.

English language teaching is extensive, and carried out through the Remedial English course which is overseen by the IELL. As the focus of this study was to explore the construction of English language learner identity, I chose to investigate the phenomenon of English language learning at IELL. Therefore, in the next part of the chapter, I discussed English language learning practices with the help of the field
notes I took during the non-participant classroom observations in the Remedial English course. The classroom observations elucidated that English language teaching was carried out in large classes of more than 100 students, taught by one teacher in a single group. Because of this situation, the English language teacher usually resorted to lecturing the class or using the Grammar Translation Method that included all four skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. However, the activity of listening was focused on least, due to the unavailability of audio-visual aids. Speaking practice for the students mainly took the form of responding to the teacher’s questions, and sometimes through group or individual presentations. Significant variations were noticed in terms of different students’ participation in classroom activities. The students who sat in the front rows were more active and ready to participate; they were considered to be hijacking the classroom activities most of the time. On probing further regarding this group of students, I identified that they came from English-medium schools and perhaps belonged to better socio-economic backgrounds compared to their silent, shy, less confident classmates, in the back seats. This practice discouraged students who already had a low level of English proficiency due to their vernacular academic backgrounds and they regressed further, or relied on other modes of learning English, such as students’ study circles and private English language tuition.

In the last part of this chapter, I presented vignettes of my primary participants which portrayed their personal, familial, and ethnolinguistic backgrounds. In these ten narratives I provided my reader with a brief but naturalistic snapshot of my participants’ lives.
Chapter 6: Constructing and Negotiating Language Learner Identity: First Year Participants

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the contextualisation of the case of this study by describing the site where the current research was conducted. It set the scene of the participants’ social world and detailed other relevant background information through the lenses of official university documents, stakeholders’ interviews and non-participant classroom observations. Having presented the case and its different aspects, which directly or indirectly influenced my participants’ views and their language learning journeys, I now proceed to the findings as elicited from individual interviews with the Year 1 participants, from their diaries, shadowing and classroom observations conducted during the data collection and through field notes. Before I discuss the major themes from the data, I will briefly recapitulate the research background and the research aim, in the following paragraphs.

As in many other South Asian countries, the ability to speak English creates possibilities for promotion, social mobility and access to better educational opportunities or work in Pakistan (Erling, 2014). In other words, English is generally considered as ‘symbolic capital’ in Pakistan, and brings many tangible and material benefits. In order to gain these benefits, young students pursue different ways of learning English and hence invest in English language learning through different types of engagement. However, it is important to note that the process of learning also has implications for the learner. Wenger (1998, p. 215) argues that learning any other language transforms ‘who we are and what we can do, it is an experience of identity’. Like identity it is an ongoing process of becoming rather than being during which individual reflects upon his capabilities and capacity of achieving certain goals. Hence is not mere a mechanism of acquiring linguistic skills.
The substantial body of recent writing and research concerned with the notion of identity addresses a wide range of identities, including social, gender, ethnic, racial, national, cultural, sociocultural, class, feminist, linguistic, and so on (see Blackledge, 2002; Collins, 2006; Duff and Uchida, 1997; Gordon, 2004; Kubota, 2003; Lippi-Green, 1997; McMhll, 1997; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2001b). My participants, like any other human beings, are social actors. They belong to different social groups and their membership of those sub-groups helps them establish their multidimensional identities, which tend to be dynamic in nature. In this chapter I will highlight the dynamic nature of my participants’ identities and how they negotiate between their social class, rural-urban, gender and ethnolinguistic identities while passing through the language learning processes.

This study focuses on Pakistani learners of English studying in a public sector university in their own country and explores the following question. How do learners of English negotiate and reconstruct their identities while learning English and how does it affect their English language learning processes? In order to answer this overarching research question, I present the findings under four major themes as indicated in the diagram below:

Diagram 4: Four Major Themes from the Data of Year 1 Participants
6.1 Language Learner Identity

This is the first and main theme of my study. I start by presenting the findings from my data about the language learners’ identities. The focus here is on learning experiences and reflections, both formal and informal, and in relation to past, present and future selves. Here, I use the term ‘language learner identity’ to encompass the language learners’ English learning experiences, their investment, aims and future possibilities. My participants began their language learning journeys in their childhood and invested in English in diverse ways, which included their engagement with learning from school age to higher education. At an informal level, they were also involved in private language learning outside their formal education. Hence, they experienced a number of language learning episodes, which defined and redefined their identities. Thus, I argue, every language learner has their own unique English language learning experience, and their own motivations and aspirations for learning the language. Consequently, all these elements contribute to and/or challenge learners’ language learning identities. I argue that language learners’ identities are not only constructed in formal language learning environments such as language classrooms, but can also be shaped and redefined in various social contexts in which participants use or learn English, for example with their families and friendship circles or in any other informal setting. Under this theme I will present findings which highlight how my participants redefined and negotiated their language learning identities from their past to the present while learning English, how they were invested in learning English and what future possibilities and aspirations they fostered.

6.1.1 Learners’ Past and Present Language Learning Engagements

English language learning is a vast exercise in the lower and upper middle classes of Pakistani society because of its perceived academic and social benefits (Coleman, 2010). In order to achieve these academic and social benefits, such as good grades, white-collar jobs and upward social mobility, students opt to learn English through different means at different stages of their academic lives from school to higher education.
My participants’ engagement in English language learning is understood in terms of the construct of investment as proposed by Norton (1995; 2000). The construct of investment in the field of Second Language Learning (SLA), as established by Norton (1995), is not equivalent to instrumental motivation (Gardner, 1985) which presupposes only utilitarian purposes such as employment. Indeed, Norton (2000) argues that investment for second language learning is not only investment for material gain but also for attaining symbolic and cultural capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). It is also an investment in a learner’s own social identity, which is subject to change across time and space (Norton, 2013).

Under this theme, I will discuss how and to what extent my participants were engaged with English language learning in their past (in schools) and in their present lives (at university). All of them started their formal English language learning journeys in school, however, some of them were able to learn more effectively than others, or in some cases they began but could not acquire linguistic skills and communicative competence because of the nature of the schools they attended. They had now enrolled in a higher education institute where, for some, their engagement with learning English had developed and they felt they had improved significantly, while for others it remained the same. I will, therefore, also highlight the transitions in their language learning journeys from past to present.

My participants Yameen and Saima both attended state schools in rural areas, and expressed their views on their experiences of language learning in the following words:

There was no kind of set up environment where I could speak English, teachers used to deliver lectures in Sindhi, even the English teacher used to speak in Sindhi, he just used to give us words we would remember and rattafication⁹ was there, they taught us in Sindhi they used to translate each and every word.

(Yameen, male, Year 1, interview)

⁹ Rote learning
In small towns like Johi there was a chronic shortage of teachers and whatever were available were not even sincere. They never taught us in a sincere way. The problems of learning English that we are facing today are mainly due to this reason.

(Saima, female, Year 1, interview)

Yameen and Saima’s views on the schools they attended, it can be argued, are likely to typify the general situation of English language teaching and learning in state schools. In this study, due to teachers’ limited qualifications and lack of training, they taught English through the medium of Sindhi or Urdu. In the absence of a conducive environment to learn English, students relied on rote learning to pass the exams. Students learned English using grammar-translation methods, which focused more on vocabulary building rather than written and communicative competence. State schools in rural parts of the country normally do not offer good quality teaching of English, and overall the medium of instruction is the vernacular, even in English language classes. According to Khalid and Khan (2006) who studied the state of Pakistani education in detail, one of the reasons for such a situation, they suggested, was the recruitment of teachers in state schools on the basis of favouritism and political recommendations. The other contributory factor in this case may be the defective administration of the department of education in the province, which looks after all state-run schools. It does not ensure teachers’ attendance, nor does it have any measures to regularly evaluate their performance.

Saima questioned the sincerity of her teachers towards their duties. She believed that the mere presence of teachers in schools is not enough to benefit the students; they have to take their responsibilities seriously and sincerely by teaching their courses with proper preparation and diligence. In her opinion, when students face difficulties in learning and understanding English at university level, where each class has a range of students from different academic backgrounds, the teachers in the vernacular-medium state schools are to be blamed. It is these teachers’ lack of interest in teaching
that has created the poor foundations of English in their schools. Saima’s opinion is relevant to what Khattak (2014) states about the teachers in vernacular-medium state schools. She (Khattak, 2014) suggests that teachers in state schools usually have less of a sense of responsibility towards their jobs because they consider their vernacular-medium students to be disadvantaged in terms of their unprivileged familial and low socio-economic backgrounds, which negatively affects their commitment to their teaching.

In contrast, the situation seems far better in elite English-medium schools. Benazir, a participant who had experienced her schooling in an elite English-medium school in the city, spoke highly of her school and noted that it helped her to see the marked difference and disparity between different streams of education.

My schooling is from St. Bonaventure’s Qasimabad branch, it was a very good school it was English medium; it was from there that I started learning English. Yeah teachers were very sincere towards their duties. You know things were like…we studied Oxford system that’s why our approach towards English is good…we used to be fined if ever spoke Sindhi or Urdu especially in English classes.

(Benazir, female, Year 1, interview)

It seems the situation in private elite schools was more successful as they provided a conducive environment to learn English, with the guidance of teachers who were perceived to be better qualified than their state-appointed counterparts. Students were encouraged to speak English inside and outside the classroom environment. If anyone failed to follow the language policies of the school, they would be first warned then fined to make them follow the regulations, whereas in state schools there was no such practice; even in English language classes, teachers spoke in Sindhi or Urdu. So the private, elite English-medium schools not only provided extended opportunities to speak English and to learn in English but also included a punitive element to further enforce engagement with English.
6.1.2 Transition from Past to Present

Having attended different types of schools and having gained different language learning experiences, my participants continued their journeys into this new phase of their lives. They had now entered a higher education institute where they were taught English as a compulsory subject, under the title of Remedial English. Participants shared their views regarding English language learning in Remedial English classes and how far it was helpful for them in achieving their goals. It was quite noticeable that the students attending this course came from different academic backgrounds (public schools, private elite schools and private non-elite schools) and therefore had contrasting English language proficiency levels, degrees of fluency and confidence as well as an understanding of the technical components of English. Such variations cannot be confirmed, as they were not individually evaluated through a language-based test. These speculations are based only on participants’ narratives and a few non-participant classroom observations. It is, therefore, important to acknowledge that engagement with the Remedial English course was limited and narrow in scope.

Participants’ common views on the Remedial English course were not very positive. They shared their dissatisfaction with the overall way the course was run, except for a few things such as the occasional use of multimedia, presentations and group work, which they found productive and interesting.

The grammar taught by our teacher doesn’t make much difference. He teaches tenses, which I already know but discussions presentations were helpful… I improve my confidence…. Activities on multimedia were so much fun in learning English through songs and videos.

(Aijaz, male, Year 1, interview)

It was good it is good… we did activities used to work in groups… this gave us the chance to interact with each other and know others views… this provided us with a medium to expose ourselves before other students… we discuss share our thoughts but it would’ve been better if we learned English from those activities as well… but didn’t learn anything new.
The quotes here suggest students were unhappy with the content of the course and the approaches to teaching English. They realised that what they were taught was too basic and something they had already learned in their past. However, some of the students believed that the use of audio-visual aids and group activities in the language classes made them more interactive and interesting. It may be inferred that students needed to learn according to their individual requirements and that they wanted an interactive learning environment, rather than a teacher-centred approach as was the common practice at the UoS (Memon & Badger, 2007).

Shamim (2010) assessed English language teaching and learning in higher education in Pakistan. Her findings confirmed, considerably, what was seen in the classroom observations and what participants said in this study. One of the issues raised by Shamim was the problem of large class sizes in the current higher education set up, which significantly affected English language teaching and learning outcomes. Participants mentioned that their class was always over-crowded which made it difficult, at times impossible, for them to participate in class and to get the teacher’s attention. It was almost impossible for the teacher to customise instruction to the needs of different students and, perhaps, too challenging to try to cater for smaller groups. At this point, there was an opportunity for the university to potentially counter some of the inequities arising from the public and private school divide, but instead the practicalities of the situation hampered any chance to make a difference on an individual basis.

Some of my participants commented on the issue of large classes in the following ways:

We can’t learn in class, sir only talks to those who sit in the front rows, rest of the crowd comes for listening lectures.

(Mohammad, male, Year 1, interview)
It is not possible to participate daily, we are more than 100 students I got chance to speak two times in the whole semester.

(Benazir, female, Year 1, interview)

We have so many students in one class; many students don’t get chance in the entire semester to say even a single word.

(Nazia, female, Year 1, interview)

The issue of large classes is prevalent in public sector universities in Pakistan; the same is the case with the Remedial English course at the UoS. In large classes students are taught English through lectures, which curtail their participation and opportunities to speak in class. Teachers also find it difficult to manage and teach more than 100 students under one roof. In the literature (Shamim, 1993) identifies large classes as a common problem in education all over the world, and especially in developing countries like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Nigeria, and Kenya. There are two main reasons for the emergence of large classes in developing countries: global initiatives for universal education and rapid population growth (Benbow et al., 2007).

During my classroom observations, I noticed that the class was jam-packed with many students, some not even having seats. They remained standing for 50 minutes until the lesson for that day finished. When I talked to those students they said that sometimes they could not hear what the teacher was saying when he did not use a microphone. It was observed that these ‘back-seaters’ hardly involved themselves in the classroom activities. The teacher sometimes tried to encourage students’ participation in the class by giving various tasks and picking students randomly to answer the question. However, the teacher often took control of the class himself, through his lectures, to explain the language items due to students’ seeming lack of enthusiasm for participation.

However, the teacher concerned, when asked about the issue of large classes, sounded confident and positive about teaching and learning in the large class he took with my first year participants.
I repeat instructions to make sure all the students follow them and involve students in such a way that it should not look dominated by any one group of students. Tasks are designed for mixed ability students. Through initial tests, slow learners and fast learners may be identified and asked to sit in such a way that groups look balanced. If slow learners will sit with each other, it will affect their learners. Therefore they should be engaged with fast learners so that they should also benefit from their learning. It can be done at initial stage, and I continue to monitor that learning is taking place in a class.

(Remedial English teacher, interview)

Overcrowded classes were not an unusual phenomenon in the UoS and this might be linked to the admission policies of the university. An entrance test was taken for admission into Year 1 for all Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programmes. In his interview, the Dean of the Arts Faculty recounted some unpleasant realities to me.

There is little merit, entry test has been politicised, I think we should eliminate the quota system completely, and also the self-finance scheme which has destroyed education in the university.

(Dean, Faculty of Arts, interview)

According to the Dean, the admission policy at the UoS is flawed and politicised. It should, rather, be based on pure merit followed by an entry test. He spoke against the quota system in the admission policy, according to which each district of the province has a certain number of seats allocated to them. This system ensures that the UoS accommodates, fairly, students from different regions and ethnicities. The interference of local politics in public sector higher education institutes has a long history in Pakistan. The Director of IELL echoed the views of the Dean in his interview. He said that the UoS has been one of the worst victims of this kind of unrest over the last two to three decades. Local politicians, to a considerable extent, hijacked the university’s
pre-entry test every year to get their favourites enrolled, even when they failed the entry test. Additionally, many students who did not have connections with any political parties got themselves enrolled through a self-finance scheme. Through this scheme, students with low scores could be moved higher up the admission lists if they paid three times more than the actual annual tuition fee paid by students who were selected on merit in the entry test. The Dean did not support the self-finance scheme, even although it brought in a fortune for the university. This scheme further increased the diversity of students attending but also created an even wider range of abilities. The university administration was unable to control and limit admissions according to the available number of places available each year because those in positions of power in the university were politically appointed and consequently might feel bound to pay back through such favours.

When asked further about the challenges they faced in higher education at their university, almost all of the participants said the biggest challenge for them was politics on the campus. All participants agreed with the point that educational institutes should be free from politics, as political activities and the unrest caused by the clashes between political organisations led to the suspension of classes, followed by demonstrations and at times often by violence. As a result, some parents did not allow their children to enrol at UoS. Participants reported, due to the politics on the campus, that they had to face troubles on an almost daily basis. It badly affected the otherwise peaceful environment of the university. Sometimes, the university remained closed for many days if those responsible were angry at the university administration and if their demands were not fulfilled (see section 5.1.5).

These strikes and comrades are the big hurdle on our way to learn, they confuse us, I once talked them they said what are you going to do with this knowledge, we are not here to learn.

(Yameen, male, Year 1, interview)

Political parties should not interfere in education and there should be no room for weapons, it should run like an educational institution. Here murders are
committed and poor parents don’t even know what happened to their children …if this evil continues nobody would ever come to Sindh uni.

(Saima, female, Year 1, interview)

The student members of the local political parties, ‘comrades’, easily influenced normal proceedings in the university. They openly displayed their weapons to threaten students and university staff. It was quite normal for them to announce strikes and termination of teaching every other day to get their demands met by the university administration. The university administration seemed helpless to control them and to ensure a peaceful environment for those who came to the university to acquire an education without any fear. In the worst scenarios, these strikes ended up with firing, and the shooting of innocent students.

In addition, participants complained about the discouraging environment they experienced as they tried to survive within the university. They stated that the overall environment was not favourable for learning English because if they tried to practise English outside the classroom, the other students laughed at them. This suggested that the other members of the UoS community did not approve of speaking in English in a predominantly Sindhi environment. So, despite having the motivation to learn English, the students found it hard to learn and practise language skills due to the unfavourable environment. There was no concept or availability of student clubs or social spaces where they could easily catch up and polish their language skills in a friendly environment.

Everyone speaks Sindhi outside the classroom…if somebody goes to speak in English outside the class they laugh and comment that he is a show off so we avoid speaking English outside the classroom.

(Hania, female, Year 1, interview)
Saima, Hania and their friends found it very difficult to practise their English outside the classroom. They tried it several times but ended up being embarrassed because many students in the university found it awkward, as they themselves could not speak in English. Benazir, in her diary entry (5) said, “it is so unfortunate that many students who seriously want to learn English are often barred by unfavourable environment of the society”.

Many times these girls felt discouraged and looked down upon as if they were doing something weird. People laughed and made fun of the students who spoke in English in front of them, especially when they themselves did not understand. Narrating one such experience, Hania said that once she and her three university friends were practising their spoken English after their class and all of sudden a woman who looked like a teacher from some other department came and asked them ‘will you stop following English people’ and looked at them with disgust. After that incident, they always tried to find a secluded place if they needed to practise English. This particular example suggested that these young girls were motivated, but due to the unequal power relations between those who wanted to use English and those who disliked it, they lost their investment in learning English (Norton, 2013) at the UoS. This posed a substantial challenge for the construction of English language learner identity at the UoS. It seemed to be difficult for some of the students to invest in English language learning in such an environment, where they received conflicting messages about its value and practice.

‘If this can happen in educational institutions what can one expect at public places’? Benazir questions herself. This is suggestive of an anti-English sentiment, persistent in certain segments of society due to the over-whelming effect of English on the national language Urdu and other local languages (Rahman, 1997). It is, perhaps, a clash of mind-sets between the upper and lower middle classes of society which has created barriers for those who want to move ahead, forgetting the colonial baggage that English was connected with. They want to progress with the help of English, as it is one of the steps on the ladder to success in developing countries (Erling, 2014).
The nature or type of the challenges faced by participants may look different, but they all played a part in how learners’ language learning experiences fed into their construction of language learner identity. Be it a dearth of qualified teachers, a lack of resources, issues of large classes, an unfavourable environment and hostility towards English, or politics on the campus, collectively all of these factors were ingredients contributing to language learner identity. The crucial transition in the young people’s lives from home to university means they may have been particularly fluid and susceptible to the varied challenges they faced during their journeys.

Coming back to the challenges, it could be argued that it was the students who attended state-run education schools who suffered the most, as they were not privileged enough to have been exposed to English earlier in their academic lives, or at home with the help of their educated parents’ intellectual and cultural capital. In turn, these discouraging factors also affected young learners as they tried to find better and more helpful ways of learning English. They, therefore, opted to invest in language learning through other, more reliable means such as self-study and joining evening tuition groups, or seeking help from friends who were more proficient.

In the next part, I discuss my participants’ investment in language learning beyond the formal education they attained in school and at university.

6.1.3 Learners’ Investment beyond Formal Education

Prior to this transition, my participants’ language learning journeys started with their families and schools and continued on to university, where some of them tried to achieve their goals while others became disappointed with the university’s approach to teaching English and the provision of an unfavourable environment to learn and practise their language skills. Regardless of the level of satisfaction they had with their Remedial English course, or the proficiency they had attained so far, their endeavours continued with regard to learning English. I will illustrate how, and to what extent, my
participants were invested in learning English outside of the formal language learning settings.

Participants were found invested in language learning activities in a number of ways; one of the most common and widely practised was joining a private language institute/centre in the evening. This was usually encouraged because those who did not get much exposure to English in school or at university needed a way to enhance their language skills. The culture of evening language institutes has emerged equally in rural and urban areas. This culture of supplementary tuition is similar, in some ways, to Shadow Education (Bray, 1999) in some other Asian countries such as China, Japan, and Korea to name a few. Parents pay an extra amount of money to send their children to language classes to make up for the ineffective learning in schools (Rahman, 2006). Language learning, in this way, becomes about building a business and reaching a particular market but it also perhaps discourages the state from improving state-school provision.

Before I went to college I joined different centres in my village, the first one was ABC English Coaching Centre, where I learnt English as much as I could speak, then in the other centre I learnt some basic writing and advanced grammar.

(Ahmed, male, Year 1, interview)

Apart from that I joined a language centre in my vacations; it used to take place in Hayat School in evening time. [Hmm], I wanted to remain in touch with English and also because I want to approach English as a field and want to be updated and whatever flaws I have and the things I lack in.

(Benazir, female, Year 1, interview)

Ahmed attended a state school in his village, and was not able to learn English there, however, even in that rural area he managed to find some English coaching classes. But, interestingly, in the case of Benazir, who went to a private elite school and
acknowledged that she learnt English in her school (see her quote above), she also opted for evening language classes in order to practise her English language skills. It appears that attending private English language classes has got nothing much to do with students’ academic background or prior schooling. Ahmed was trying to develop his basic level of English while Benazir was attempting to further enhance her established level of the language and in doing so was maintaining or extending the gap between the poorer and richer students. It was likely that the private schools that each attended would vary in terms of quality and resources.

Some students, whose parents were unable to pay an additional amount for language classes or because of unavailability of language centres in their towns, had help from educated family members, in the form of tuition at home, followed by self-study. In these cases they invested in language learning within their family set up, with the help of their siblings who were more proficient, and through individual effort by reading books, watching English news and reading newspapers. This may also be considered as an example of familial linguistic capital, as in the case of Enam.

My brother and cousin, they were my first English teachers; they are my well-wishers and they are the ones who always encourage me to learn English… he gave me different books of grammar and novels. I also watched English programmes on TV sometimes and daily news.

(Enam, male, Year 1, interview)

Like many other participants, Aijaz (male, Year 1, interview) said he did not begin to learn English at school but at a private language centre in his village. He said, “Before college I went to a language centre and learnt basic English grammar there”. However, it is interesting to note that learners’ investment was not just limited to getting private or home tuition during this period. Learning English after attending classes at university was also a common practice among some students, who would find like-minded friends to sit with to help teach each other and learn from other group members. Some participants, including Kamran (male), Yameen (male), Nazia...
(female) and Hania (female) said in their interviews that they learned English in study circles organised by friends.

Yeah we give two to three hours daily outside the classroom. We four friends have joint study and share our about daily readings and each one of us memorises about thirty vocab items and share with each other… This includes phrases and idioms… we also put questions to each other and what we don’t know inquire from other members of the group, besides this we always converse in English but we don’t know if don’t know its correct or incorrect but we always talk in English…we try our best because we are learners.

(Kamran, male, Year 1, interview)

My three friends and me always speak in English inside and outside of classroom and work together on English lessons… One of us take the role of teacher turn by turn and check if others are following the lessons we plan for every week…this is very helpful practice especially when our teacher is absent almost everyday.

(Hania, female, Year 1, interview)

The practice of forming study circles outside the classroom suggests the students’ seriousness and determination to learn English. Also, this often happened when students did not have many opportunities to practise their language skills in the classroom or when their teacher was absent and the classes were not taken by any substitute teacher.

In the cases of Yameen, Hania and Nazia, they went further and became involved in teaching younger children. In their diaries, they narrated how they invested themselves in learning English every day by tutoring young kids. Yameen taught English to primary school students in a tuition centre in his hometown, while Nazia and Hania
taught English to their younger siblings at home. This practice possibly gave them the confidence to improve their language proficiency.

I have two younger sisters whom I teach English at home in the evening and also help them do their homework. They ask me how can we make sentences and we try to speak in English for one to two hours this gives me more and more confidence and this way I can avoid making mistakes in front of whole class… My sisters listen my presentation and I tell them English stories…

(Hania, female, Year 1, diary entry: 4)

Teaching in a tuition centre and tutoring some kids at their homes gives me a way to polish my English, the more I teach the more chances I get to involve myself in English learning… First I go to centre it is in my hometown and then I give tuitions to my neighbour children this keeps me busy for four to five hours.

(Yameen, male, Year 1, member-check interview)

I am the eldest among four siblings. When I came in class 10 I asked my father how can my cousin, who lives in Canada, speaks English so fluently in class 3 when I can’t in class 10. My father said because in Canada they speak in English all the time at home at school with each other if you start speaking with your younger sisters and brother in English and teach them grammar you can also speak like them. Since then I teach my brother and sister English.

(Nazia, female, Year 1, diary entry: 7)

All three entries given above indicate how Hania, Yameen and Nazia invested in teaching English in order to learn the language themselves. Hania and Nazia, being the eldest, helped their younger siblings with their English lessons, which consequently
helped them improve their own English language skills. However, Yaseen’s case was a bit different. He was involved in teaching not to learn but to polish up his existing English language skills.

6.2 Proactive Learners vs. Privileged Learners

This category highlights a division among my participants on the basis of the processes they underwent and the efforts they put into learning English. Some participants had acquired, or were acquiring, English language skills through hard work and personal effort such as getting private tuition, through self-study at home or with friends or cousins in study circles. The other group of participants had learnt English through easier means such as English-medium schooling, educated parents or an urban home environment. I have divided them into two categories and named the first category ‘Pro-active Learners’ and the second, ‘Privileged Learners’.

Yameen (male), Kamran (male), Enam (male) and Ahmed (male) shared how much they had struggled and worked hard to achieve their goal of learning English. They all attended state schools, where they believed that they ended up learning nothing very substantial to base their English language learning on. They all put in personal effort by joining tuition centres, saving money to buy books and newspapers, running from one place to other to attend classes to learn and teach, and trying all possible ways to gain knowledge of English through different means. When it came to learning English they proactively responded to the situation. The following excerpts from Yameen’s diary portray his struggle and passion for English.

It is a long story, I have been struggling for English since I was in class four. I remember as a child I spent my pocket money on buying grammar books… I never let my interest get weaker thus today whatever I have got I'm satisfied with it that being a student of government schools or college I'm able to compete with the students of Advanced or private school where all the subjects are taught in English & behind my struggle my parents are there, my dedicated
teachers are there who never let me feel that I'm a poor boy belonging to lower class having no standard.

(Yameen, male, Year 1, dairy entry: 4)

Yameen is a very good example of a proactive learner. His interview and diary entries vividly depict his interesting and sometimes challenging journey of language learning. He was always ready to face challenges that came his way to achieve his goals. He did not get the best education nor did he have a favourable environment in which to learn English, but he had manoeuvred difficult situations to help make his way, as described in the diary entry given above.

The other category, interestingly, includes my female participants. Benazir, who was born and brought up in an urban environment by educated parents, attended an elite English-medium school could be considered as an example of a privileged learner. The other example was Nazia. She attended a non-elite English-medium school and came from a middle class family. She was provided with all the facilities (grammar books and newspapers, dictionaries, personal computer, internet access) at home by her parents, which helped her learn English without much effort. Unlike the boys mentioned above, neither of these two ever had to struggle or face situational and financial challenges to learn English. However, their passion and interest should not be underestimated when compared to the boys. Benazir described her English language learning journey in the following words in her diary entry:

Alhamdulilah I am from a very good school where we were taught all the basics of English. When I entered university I already knew the lessons and could easily speak and communicate with my teachers… I sometimes talk to my father in English … I have Internet so I use it for online English lessons.

(Benazir, female, Year 1, diary entry 3)
6.3 Future Possibilities and Possible Selves

In the sections above, I presented my findings in relation to the kind of investment being made by participants in English Language Learning and the contestation around this investment, at times, caused by political, social and educational elements. In this section, I will firstly discuss what future possibilities participants perceived they might have as a result of learning English, and will then highlight where they speculated they might locate their possible selves having acquired the skills and knowledge of the English language.

‘Future possibilities’ characterise participants’ aspirations to achieve material or non-material gains whereas ‘possible selves’ denote individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming (Markus & Nurius 1986).

- Future Possibilities

6.3.1 English for Academic Success and Higher Education Abroad

The majority of my male participants who sought to be proficient in English, and especially desired to excel in written English, did so either to qualify in the national competitive examination in Pakistan, called the Central Superior Services (CSS), or to go abroad for further study. The CSS competitive exams require a very good grip on English as all the compulsory subjects are based on English language skills and are examined in English. With the exception of subjects like Sindhi and Urdu, all other subjects in this exam can only be taken in English. In addition it requires six to twelve months of rigorous preparation to be able to attempt and qualify in the CSS.

If you are good at English you can prepare for CSS within six months.

(Yameen, male, Year 1, interview)
In CSS the most important and only requirement is English, those who fail to pass this exam who do not know English.

(Enam, male, Year 1, interview)

I want to attempt CSS exam so there English is very important. If I want to pass this exam I should have great command of English, I read English newspapers daily to improve English to the CSS level.

(Saleha, female, Year 1, interview)

Students generally considered English a gateway to the CSS; prior to preparing for the specialist, optional subjects they made sure they had a good command of English. In order to achieve the required proficiency in English, they opted for CSS coaching classes and regularly read English newspapers, and books on English composition and essay writing. Yameen, Enam, Kamran and Aijaz, amongst the male participants, and Saleha and Hania, amongst the females, clearly mentioned that they wanted to excel in English to be able to attempt the CSS. Success in this examination would increase their status and potentially provide them with job security and the possibility of further advancement within the service. English was of overwhelming importance in this process as it provided both informal and formal benefits for students and reinforced the integral nature of English Language knowledge and its significance for their future possibilities.

On the other hand, English is a general requirement for all non-native speakers if they wish to study in English speaking countries like the UK, the USA, Australia or Canada. It became compulsory for students to learn English before they could go to any foreign, English speaking country to undertake higher studies. According to Coleman (2010), forty-five per cent of the world’s international students are found in four English-speaking countries: the USA, UK, Australia and Canada. They usually have to take an international English language test such as TOEFL (Test of English as
a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing System) before registering at an overseas university.

It is a must for those who want to go to foreign to study and work.

(Benazir, female, Year 1, interview)

When I finish my degree here I wish to go abroad to further study and for that I need to get a high band in IELTS, I know this can achieved if all my four skills of English reading, writing listening and speaking are powerful... I have already taken my first step towards it.

(Benazir, female, Year 1, diary entry: 9)

Benazir, in her individual interview and in her diary, shared that it is only English that can make her dream of going abroad for further education come true. The demand for English can be related to the desire to study abroad and work there. Some participants shared their desire to undertake their higher education in any English speaking country. The possibility of travelling abroad, widening cultural understanding and deepening learning were obvious practical advantages to be gained if their English language skills were improved; in addition to enhanced status, employability and the value attributed to the individual.

6.3.2 English for Employability

In Pakistan, the relationship between English and employability is a significant one. Most of the white-collar jobs and many other blue collar, non-gazetted jobs like technicians and beauticians also require proficiency in English. In order to be eligible for a job interview, candidates have to prove they have English language qualifications. My participants were of the view that in order to get a good job they needed to have greater proficiency in English, and they believed if did not know
English, they might end up unemployed or having to take less reputable jobs. Hence, this reinforces that English serves as the gatekeeper for employability in Pakistan (Mahboob, 2002; Rahman, 2006, Shamim, 2011).

If you go for a job they first inquire how good is your English. If I know English I can easily impress them.

(Aijaz, male, Year 1, interview)

Because nowadays we get jobs on English base, the person who speaks more good English can get a more good job so I think for job purpose I want to learn English.

(Saleha, female, Year 1, interview)

My participants seemed aware of the fact that getting a good job required them to have proficiency in English and for this they were ready to take all possible measures. They stated that, nowadays, a decent living was not possible without having a good job, and that English played a vital role in one’s employability and professional development. Nazia, in her diary (entry 3), mentioned that English would lead her to her dream job, which was to be a lecturer in the university. Similarly, Rubina’s diary narrated the requirements of her future job in the following words:

Whenever I look at the thick English books and people speaking English so perfectly I tell myself they have only reached on good position with the power of English… if I want to have a very good job in any sector I will have to have the same power of English.

(Rubina, female, Year 1, diary entry: 5)

The dominance of English as the gateway language further underlines its pivotal role when considering future possibilities, both academic and socio-economic. The powerful drive of their engagement with the language further highlighted just how
unlikely or difficult it would be for many of the students to move away from this mind-set, as this would mean giving up on their future possibilities.

- **Possible Selves**

As discussed above, learners’ identity negotiations were not simply focused around their past and present positioning, but also linked with their future prospects and aspirations, some of which appeared in the last section. Saleha, Enam, Rubina and Saima shared their aspirations for the future. Their comments could be related to the concepts of possible selves (Markus & Nurius 1986), imagined identities (Norton, 1995; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007) and imagined communities (Anderson, 1991), (see chapter 2 for detailed discussion on these concepts). These describe how language learners’ actual and desired memberships, future prospects and aspirations are linked to their proficiency in English. They argue that learners’ desire to learn a language helps them to transcend to a wider range of identities and enables them to reach out to the wider world (Kramsch, 2000; Norton, 2001). Aijaz imagined his identity in the following words:

> When I will have full command on English all my hesitation will disappear and can talk confidently wherever go…I will then attempt CSS…I will feel better at my social position and this will affect my total life style and bring about a positive change. If I am in lower class today I then enter in middle class…my friends and company will change…and my social interaction will also transform accordingly…this means this will affect a lot of things.

  (Aijaz, male, Year 1, interview)

> With English I will have a good job, a better future and settled life.

  (Rubina, female, Year 1, interview)

> Having command over English and a degree I see myself a lecturer.
(Saima, female, Year 1, interview)

There is a teacher Miss Amna, am very impressed with her English with her way of talking, its much more better I have seen in my life. I want to be like her, I can’t be her but I can try to be like her if my English gets better.

(Saleha, female, Year 1, interview)

I want to be like my cousins who live in Canada, they speak so fluently all the day, my papa said I can be like them only if I practise it a lot…. InshaAllah one day I will be in Canada.

(Nazia, female, Year 1, diary entry 7)

These participants had certain aspirations for their future lives. They saw themselves as different beings, in different positions and communities in their futures. Saleha wanted to be like her English language teacher so she imagined achieving that role in future. Rubina’s aspirations found her in a better position and place, she wanted to achieve a good job and with that she imagined her to be in secure position; whereas Saima looked forward to being in a particular profession that she had always wanted to be in. All these young peoples’ aspirations and future prospects led them towards certain imagined identities and membership of certain communities, which they were struggling to achieve by means of English language learning. The young participants’ future possible selves were linked with their investment in English (Norton, 2013). I noted the findings of this study were relevant to Norton and Kamal (2003), a study conducted in the same context. They found their young participants were motivated to learn English and teach it to less privileged children of refugee Afghani community so that they all can achieve their desired imagined communities and possible selves and for that they believed English had to play a significant role.
6.4 Gender Identity

Gender is a significant identity category, which might affect second language learners’ identity (Block, 2007). I found that gender played a significant role in my participants’ language learning journeys, and that it was an essential element in the construction of their English language learner identity. In the field of SLL, a considerable number of studies have been conducted on the role of gender identity in second language achievement. This aspect of identity has been discussed in the literature in detail (see chapter 3, section 3.1.1). In this study, under the theme of gender identity, I explore how my participants’ (especially females) gendered identities interacted with their English language learning processes.

6.4.1 Gendered Power Relations in the Family

Pakistani families are usually patriarchal. The eldest, or bread winning males run and control the family. Their female counterparts do not have an equal share of the power. All the major decisions are taken by, or in consultation with, the male head of the family. Children normally follow the male head of the family, who might advise on the choice of school or type of education they get. My participants’ statements and my shadowing visits to their homes confirmed a similar situation in their families.

In Nazia, Hania and Benazir’s cases, their male guardians had always made their academic choices. Since childhood, they had followed what their fathers or grandfathers had advised them to do; this was also the case in relation to their schooling and higher education. Nazia, in her interview, said:

When I couldn’t pass my medical test my father said this has happened for a good reason, you can now get admission in Sindh University and get your degree in English… ‘you know I always wanted you to be lecturer of English’.

(Nazia, female, Year 1, interview)
On my shadowing visit to Hania’s home, I had a brief chat with her mother. She told me that:

Hania is the eldest daughter and first child of the whole family, she is very dear to her father and he wants her to be like him… he wants she should do CSS and join civil services as he did 23 years ago.

(Shadowing, Hania’s home)

In Nazia and Hania’s cases their mothers were housewives and were not highly educated so it was obvious that they did not have equal power in decision making when it came to the children’s education and academic choices. However, it is interesting to bring up Benazir’s case here. This was in contrast to Nazia and Hania’s cases, where their mothers’ voices were unheard.

In my shadowing visit to Benazir’s place, I found out that her grandfather normally took all the major and minor decisions in the family. Her parents had to have her grandfather’s permission before enrolling Benazir and her siblings in school. Their grandfather objected to girls being enrolled in a co-educational school. It was only because Benazir’s mother had a master’s degree and had worked as a teacher, that a stand was taken by a female, who refused to send her children to a government girls’ school. She convinced her husband to get their children admitted to a private English-medium school. Benazir, in her diary, said ‘my mother’s one decision at the right time saved us from a life-time of disadvantage’ (entry 4).

In contrast with the female participants’ experiences of familial power relations, Kamran came from a matrilineal family. His mother was the breadwinner of the family and had a strong influence on her children. She worked as a Lady Health Worker in the small town where they lived. Kamran described his mother in the following words:
My mother is a very strong women, she sacrificed her life to give us education and make us good human beings… after my father’s death she was my father and mother both.

(Kamran, male, Year 1, diary entry: 6)

Kamran’s mother played an important role in educating her children. She saved every single penny to ensure Kamran had a better education and a healthy life. However, it was difficult to conclude if things would have been the same had Kamran’s father been alive.

In traditional patriarchal families, there was a tendency for the male head of the family to shape key decisions about a girl’s participation in education, the nature of that participation and the nature of any future self she might want to adopt. This was common practice in families where mothers were less educated or uneducated. However, in some cases, where the mothers were educated and working, they often took the decisions about their children’s future. This implies that the parents’ education and the family background may also play a key role in shaping students’ language learning identities. The findings of Arshad et al. (2012) are in line with this study. Through a quantitative study, they studied the impact of parents’ education and professions on children’s English language learning in Pakistan and found that there was a significant correlation between the father’s education and profession and the child’s language learning achievements. In Pakistani society, where the male is the breadwinner of the family, he is usually a role model for his children. A father’s education and job not only ensure the family a comfortable life but also a better education for the children, an environment that can facilitate children’s learning and more importantly may also prove to be a source of inspiration for the young people.

6.4.2 Gendered Participation in the Classroom and Social Spaces

According to Ehrlich (1997, p. 436), ‘individuals construct or produce themselves as women or men by habitually engaging in social practices that are associated with
culturally or community-defined notions of masculinity and femininity'. This view can be related to my participants’ sense of their gendered selves, while participating in their classroom and other social activities outside. They have shared their views on how their gender interacted with their language learning practices.

The issue of gender discrimination was also one of the challenges students said they faced in their English language learning classes. Female participants highlighted the gender-related problems they came across while learning English with their male classmates and also while being taught by a male teacher. Three female participants reported this issue in the following words in their interviews:

Boys taunt and shout whenever girls go for presentations. This decreases our confidence and girls think if we go next time this would happen again so they try not to speak in class. Again we need to overcome this thing.

(Benazir, female, Year 1, interview)

Whenever I participate boys make stupid faces and laugh which make me confused and sir don’t say anything to them… I don’t speak in class now I think it’s better to remain silent.

(Sania, female, Year 1, interview)

In her diary entry (8), Hania shared that once, when she was given a chance to speak in front of the whole class, she could not do justice to her turn. This happened when she was randomly picked by her teacher to say something about gender discrimination. She confided that, while trying to share her views on gender discrimination, ‘I myself became a victim’. The boys started laughing when she said ‘boys are always treated better than girls in our society, particularly in educational institutes’. She said that the boys’ attitudes in the classroom were quite ‘distracting’; they hardly ever allowed any of the girls to come forward and speak. Hania wished to have separate classes for girls, or at least classes which only had serious students (both girls and boys). This blatant
taunting of female students appeared to be tacitly accepted by the university, as the teacher did not acknowledge the discrimination being enacted in the classroom. It also sent a message that some males did not respect or value women’s opinions or existence in the classroom.

So far I have presented the female participants’ views on gender in relation to language learning opportunities because my male participants did not raise any gendered concerns, either in their interviews or their diaries. However, during my conversation with the Remedial English teacher I came across some gendered remarks about his students. He stated:

I think boys learn English quickly as compared to girls. Boys get more chances to practise their language such as through sports or socialising whereas girls stay at home and are shy. Girls have fewer chances to speak in class too but I try to involve girls more than boys because I know they need such chances. Girls written English is better that’s why they get good grades but they can’t beat boys in spoken English.

(Remedial English Teacher, interview).

The teacher’s quote suggested he had biased views against his female students’ ability to learn and be successful, partly because of gendered roles in society but also because he seemed to feel that they lacked the capacity to compete with some of the languages skills that the boys had. This also contradicted what I observed during the classroom observation. I noticed he usually asked the boys to participate more than the girls, who were disregarded when it came to questions and any chances they might have availed themselves of, to come forward and participate in classroom activities. One of my female participants described her views on this issue in the following words:

Sir hardly lets us speak or invited us for presentation if they do they have to face hard times… once my friend stood up to participate in a debate she was
confused with stupid questions and sir behaved like a silent spectator…boys are never given such a tough time, this is clear example of discrimination.

(Rubina, female, Year 1, interview)

The challenges for my participants were not limited to classroom interaction and the struggle for an opportunity to participate in a male dominated environment. Similarly, Saima suggested that it was not easy for female learners to practise their language skills, even outside the classroom. She said:

Everyone speaks Sindhi outside the classroom…if we (girls) go to speak in English outside the class they laugh and comment that he is a show off so we avoid speaking English outside the classroom.

(Saima, female, Year 1, interview)

With regards to gendered interaction in social spaces, Saleha shares an interesting story in her diary entry. She writes:

I have many foreigner friends on Facebook and on Skype almost all of them speak English. It is good to talk to them, I learn very much new words. I improve my listening and speaking and they correct my mistakes without laughing on me… I want to have more friends like them… since I have lost contact with them I have lost my speaking skills.

(Saleha, female, Year, diary entry: 10)

However, Saleha’s activity of chatting with foreign friends on the Internet was greatly disliked by her mother and she was asked to stop it. During my member check interview with Saleha I asked her why she had stopped talking to her foreign friends online. She told me that her mother believed it was not a decent practice to speak to strange boys who could exploit her. Moreover, she could never know who was online.
Her views were also relevant in relation to the shadowing observation notes I took in her home. Her mother, being uneducated and unable to understand English, objected to Saleha using English with someone she did not know. She would ask Saleha every time what exactly she had said to her foreign friends. After a time, when Saleha had failed to convince her mother, she had to discontinue this practice, which she believed had been a great help in improving her English.

I wish my Ami\(^{10}\) allowed me to talk to my foreigner friends once again so that I may be able to work on my English and improve it without wasting my money in language classes… This would not have been a big issue if I were a boy instead of girl.

(Saleha, female, Year, 1, diary entry: 10)

My female participants perceived higher education as an opportunity to contest the identities imposed on them by the society they lived in or by their own families. Therefore, by learning English and by trying to participate in the classroom they wished to prove they could excel in academic life and could compete with their male counterparts. However, unfortunately, their chances of carrying through this empowered engagement with the language were diminished in the learning environment, where gender discrimination was a common experience.

\(^{10}\) A way to address one’s mother in Urdu language
6.4.3 Imposed/Presumed Gendered Roles

Pakistani society is generally male dominated. It is generally observed, in rural areas or in lower income families, that parents usually only educate their boys whereas girls only get religious education, or possibly they might get a primary education. In urban areas the situation is often different, both girls and boys get an education, irrespective of their gender. Men usually work, earn money and are responsible for dealing with all the financial issues whereas women are expected to carry out all domestic chores, including cooking, washing and cleaning, and looking after their children. It is unlikely that male members of the family would take care of such domestic chores when they live in a family and have women family members. Even in families where women study or work, they are unlikely to get any support with the household responsibilities from male members. Hence, the roles of men and women in Pakistani society are predefined. Blommaert (2006, p. 238) similarly talks about ‘inhabited’ (one which an individual himself claims) and ‘attributed’ (one which an individual is given by someone else) identities. In the context of this study, gender identity is usually attributed rather than inhabited. My participants shared how their presumed and assigned gendered roles interacted with their language learning processes.

Enam, a male participant who belonged to a rural family had two younger sisters and a brother. His mother was a housewife and his father was a primary teacher in a government school. As they had financial constraints, they had to make a choice to either educate their sons or daughters. Enam’s parents, like many others from rural areas, preferred their sons to be educated. When asked in an interview about his siblings’ education, Enam replied:

Madam, one sister goes to primary school and other has just finished so she stays at home to help my mother in household work. I know it’s wrong but my parents believe educating girls is not a good idea because it’s not the culture of villages and after all they are not going to earn money… That’s not their job, they will get married anyway. Me and my brother have been sent in city to get higher education because eventually we have to run the family.
Hania, being the eldest sister, had to look after her younger sisters, help them get ready for school, make their lunch boxes and teach them after their school. She explained that it was part of her life’s routine, a responsibility that was assigned to her when she turned 15. Her mother told me that she had assigned her this responsibility because she was the eldest and also because she was the eldest female child. Hania, in her diary entry, wrote:

I have certain responsibilities at home and my time is divided, I have to take care of my younger siblings that’s like my part time job in uni days and full time on Sat and Sundays… to be honest that’s not a burden because I feel that’s my duty towards my family but sometimes I just want to do things which I like and enjoy… but I also learn and practise my English by teaching my sisters.

(Hania, female, Year 1, diary entry: 3)

During my shadowing visit to Nazia’s place, I noticed that Nazia’s relationship with her mother was not as close as it was with her father. Her mother was bit strict with her. Nazia then confirmed this in the following words, ‘My Ami does not leave any single chance to scold me, and she wants me to be an ideal daughter’. Nazia’s mother always encouraged her to learn to cook and give her a helping hand in the kitchen. She believed cooking and housekeeping were the real assets for any woman because these are the skills they had to use in their homes when they got married. She told me that:

It is against my family tradition to allow girls to study in university and earn money, they say only boys can do that because girls should run the house and get married and raise kids… they have no right to go out and study and make their life… we (my husband and myself) do not believe in these old notions that is why we are educating our daughters like sons. We do not differentiate...
amongst our children but I personally believe all girls whether studying or doing job must know basic cooking and housekeeping, that’s what is going to be a plus along with higher degrees.

(Nazia’s mother, shadowing, informal interview)

Nazia explained that she also liked to cook and be a helping hand for her mother. However, she thought that when she went to university and got back after a long tiring day, she would not have to do the kitchen chores her mother required. She said that, whenever she wanted or had free time after university, she had to help her mother but she did not want to undertake this obligation because she had so many academic commitments. Apart from the household chores, she also looked after her younger siblings and helped them with their studies.

Rubina, another female participant shared information about her gendered role in the following words:

Being the second girl in the family I have a few domestic responsibilities, I do cooking and cleaning every day in the evening since my elder sister is going to get married soon my mother wants me to be with her to learn more cooking… yes due to this regular household work I find it difficult to cope up with my studies and sometimes cannot even do my uni work… I want to attend evening language classes but cannot because of this… when everyone is finished with dinner and I am done with dishes and cleaning I then go to study for sometime before going to bed.

(Rubina, female, Year 1, interview)

In contrast to what I have presented above, Saima’s case was different. Like Rubina, she was also the second female child in the family. Her family also came from a rural background where educating girls, and having jobs being done by girls, was
considered an unusual and odd practice. However, her eldest sister, who was now a lecturer in a government college, had got away from the old family conventions and set a new trend for her younger sisters to follow. She, in a way, had contested her fixed gendered role and set a fresh example.

My sister was first girl in my family to attend university and start job. Initially it was difficult for my family to answer many people but then my father decided to ignore what people might say and asked us to move ahead without paying attention to what others say… she has made a way for me I can also now do a job once I am finished with my degree.

(Saima, female, Year 1, interview)

The findings presented in this section suggest that imposed gendered roles and responsibilities interacted with their language learner identities and in some cases restricted girls’ chances to achieve their academic goals. The literature (McMahil, 1997; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2001; Kobayashi, 2002, see chapter 3, section 3.1.1) on the issue of gender and second language learning confirms that female learners were often found to be more positive about learning a second language because they used it as a means of empowerment, a tool to get their voice heard and to claim an equal position in male dominated societies. The young female participants in this study had similar goals. As I also studied male participants, the findings of the abovementioned studies are relevant to their situations as well. However, it is important to mention here that, given the conventional patriarchal set up in Pakistani society, my female participants’ imposed gender identities and curtailed agency led them to possible shifts in their experiences and the possibilities for their future selves. Compared to their male counterparts, they had to negotiate their gendered roles in various ways to achieve their goals of English language learning.
6.5 Social Class and Rural-Urban Identities

The findings outlined in the previous themes suggested that my participants’ language learner and gender identities shaped their investment and their language learning trajectories. At the same time, their multifaceted identities were continually being negotiated and reconstructed, at different stages in their journeys. In this theme, I will elaborate on how my participants’ social class and rural-urban identities had further potential to influence their language learning engagements. The findings relevant to this theme suggested that participants’ perception about their social class identity were based on where they came from (rural-urban identities), the type of education they received and the kind of institutes they attended, and also their parents’ education and professions. Apart from that, drawing on the Bourdieusian concept of cultural capital, this theme also highlights my participants’ desire to move into a higher social class through the passport of their linguistic abilities.

6.5.1 Awareness of One’s Social Class

Pakistani society is explicitly divided into different social classes. Nayab (2011) divides Pakistani society into the following, main social classes: lower lower class (also known as the poor class), lower class (also called the working class), lower middle class, upper middle class, and upper class (also known as the elite class and high-income class). However, there are no clearly defined characteristics for each of these classes. As this study is interested in participants’ own understanding and perception of their social class, I will, therefore, discuss their views with regards to their membership of a particular class and the basis of this. I asked my participants ‘which social class of society they belonged to and why they thought so’. How they defined their membership of a particular class of society varied from one participant to another. However, the basis or reasons they gave for the categorisation did not vary greatly amongst participants. The following are the quotes that helped to shape an understanding of participants’ perceptions of their social class membership in their society.
I think I am from middle class, my family is neither rich nor poor we live in city, it is second largest and modern city in Sindh province, my father is a government servant he has bought us a big house and a car and we live a comfortable life.

(Hania, female, Year 1, interview)

Middle class because we live in urban area and have all necessities of life such as good living, private education…. My parents are educated, my mother has master’s degree, my father works on a high position in income tax department, and he fulfils all our wishes. He has also promised me to send foreign country for higher education.

(Benazir, female, Year 1, interview)

Hania and Benazir seemed to be similar in defining their social class mainly on the basis of their area of residence as well as their family income. Both lived in urban areas of the city in big houses with all the basic commodities required for a comfortable life such as air-conditioning, a car, computer and servants. Benazir also linked her father’s official position with their membership of the middle class. The other criterion she uses to define middle class is her father’s promise to send her abroad for further studies. She believed her father’s income was sufficient to afford to pay for her studies in a university outside Pakistan. This suggested her father desired to give her access to the wider world, and might suggest a more cosmopolitan outlook rather than an insular stance.

Although we are originally from rural Sindh but we now live in Jamshoro, which is a small town, but not like Hyderabad big urban city. My father mashaAllah earns enough to give us easy life, we eat well we have our own nice home we just don’t have a car but we are going to buy one soon that’s why I think my family belongs to middle class.
Nazia’s definition of middle class was slightly different from that of Hania and Benazir. According to her, living in an urban area was not a prerequisite for being middle class. It had more to do with one's father’s income, level of comfort and lifestyle. She also believed that, as they were well fed and owned a house, they belonged to the middle class of society. Here, it is interesting to note that family income and lifestyle were both reinforced as indicators of middle class membership. Moreover, it was also obvious that middle class membership supported a better education for the children and inculcated in them that they should always aim higher.

We are from poor class of society we have just one breadwinner who looks after 12 people who live in an underdeveloped house. We have seen tough times when we didn’t have much to eat and enjoy luxuries of life. I remember we had to walk for three miles from my home which is located in small town more like a village every day to go to school and come back because we couldn’t afford bus fares. Now situation is getting better, I earn, my brother is also earning. To be honest it is still lower class of society.

Yameen categorised his family as lower class. He thought that having a large family living in a small house, with limited resources and only one source of income, were the main reasons for this. Like the other participants mentioned above, he also believed the location of one’s residence was an important criterion for determining one’s social class. As he lived in a small town, where there was no school in the vicinity and access was by foot, he considered this made him part of the lower class and it is interesting that he mentioned accessibility of education as one of the markers. Since he was very poor and living in a rural environment, he did not have ready access to education that could become a means of moving into a higher class. He compared his situation in the past, when his family had undergone difficult times and there was even a scarcity of proper meals, to the present time when things were getting better, as
now there was more than one family member earning to support the whole family. However, Yameen believed that his family still remained under his definition of lower class.

Ahmed and Aijaz’s explanations of their social class were somewhat similar. Both of them categorised their families as lower class, mainly on the basis of their parents’ education, income and the places where they lived and originally belonged. However, each of the participants had some particular ideas about their social class and status in society. For example Ahmed and Aijaz referred to parental education as an indicator of class and this is something which is commonly used as a means of defining class.

The following are quotes from their interviews:

My social class is rural and I belong to a very poor family. My parents are uneducated and do not have money to afford life in city. I think those who live in city are high class we are not.

(Ahmed, male, Year 1, interview)

We come from lower class of society, although I no longer in village but that is where I am originally from and I think we should not forget our roots. My family is not educated but they have managed to send me to this city to continue my education.

(Aijaz, male, Year 1, interview)

Rubina and Sania, who used to live in rural parts of the province, had moved into urban areas seven or eight years ago. Their parents were not highly educated, but were educated enough to raise them in a family environment which valued learning. On the basis of these criteria Rubina and Sania believed they belonged to lower middle class families. They said:
We have educated environment at our home, my mother is intermediate she knows little bit of English and taught me basic things and my father is also in a government service. We live in a university town with other university teachers in our neighbourhood. The overall environment of our colony is very good… I don’t say it is middle class but it is may be lower middle class of society.

(Rubina, female, Year 1, interview)

Our class is lower middle I think because we now live in city. We still have house in village but no one lives there. After my father’s death my brothers started earning and provided us a comfortable life. My mother is not very much educated but all my siblings are studying. Above all I think your education can well define which social class you come from, you know what I mean.

(Sania, female, year 1, interview)

This section drew out participants’ perceptions about their social class and status in Pakistani society as they saw it. It seemed that how almost all the participants categorised themselves and their families, as being in a particular class of society, was mainly based on quite loose criteria, which included their area of residence (in both their past and present), their lifestyle and access to material goods, and their parents’ income and education. The findings suggested that they also used the degree of comfort in their homes, and other luxuries such as having servants and cars, as yardsticks to identify their membership of a particular social class. In addition, interestingly, the last quote from Sania took the discussion in a slightly new direction. She believed it was the type of education one got (schooling and higher education/private or state-run) that actually indicated which class of society one belonged to. However, there was also an acknowledgement of the power of education to create successful future selves and this might change some of these labels. The next section presents how my participants’ social class and the education they received,
played a role in defining social class and reinforcing advantage or disadvantage in Pakistani society.

**6.5.2 Socio-economic Class vis-à-vis Education and Language Learning**

The social class people belong to influences their life styles, language and education. Like gender identity, social class identity is also an integral part of a second language learner’s identity. In the Pakistani educational context, Shamim (2008) and Rahman (2008) state how different streams of education cater for different classes of society. Hence, the type of educational institute children attend is very much related to what social class they belong to. The vernacular-medium, state-run schools cater for those in the lower income brackets; students from the lower middle class attend private non-elite schools whereas students belonging to middle, upper middle and upper classes go to private elite schools, which are also further divided according to the areas they are situated in (Aslam, 2003; Mansoor, 2002). Students’ English language learning processes and experiences are also correlated with their socio-economic positioning in society (Shamim, 2011).

Participants’ academic profiles showed that eight out of the 15 Year 1 participants attended vernacular-medium state schools; five attended non-elite English-medium schools whereas only two went to elite English-medium schools. So, the majority of my participants came from vernacular, state schools run by the provincial government, some had received their primary and secondary education from private, elite English-medium schools and some in private, non-elite English-medium schools according to the socio-economic classes of society they belonged to.

The non-elite English-medium schools are usually attended by the majority of urban and suburban children of the lower middle class, which constitutes a large number of the Pakistani population, (Nayab, 2011) who can afford to get a standard education. These schools serve as an affordable option for those who cannot attend elite English-medium schools (Rahman, 2005). Three of my female participants, Nazia, Saleha and Sania who categorised themselves as members of the middle class, attended non-elite
English-medium schools and their journey of language learning actually started there, when they were in primary school. According to them, their schools played a significant role in developing their English language skills and encouraged them to further their acquisition of English later in their lives.

When I was in class 6th I started writing articles… So, with speaking I also concentrated on writing English by writing articles or by translating paragraphs given by my teachers and some times whenever I get free I use to write about my topic of interest. With this process I improved my writing skills. My English teacher also helped me by checking paragraphs and articles and making me aware of the basic mistakes I made. One of my English teachers gifted me some books on grammar vocabulary and on essay writing and I went through all books happily and learnt a lot.

(Nazia, female, Year 1, interview)

My school was English-medium, all subjects were taught in Urdu but English was English. Our English teacher encouraged to speak in English she taught us grammar and tenses translation… We read stories and poems in English… In exams I always got good marks in English.

(Sania, female, Year 1, interview)

Nazia and Sania, who attended non-elite English-medium schools, seemed to have gained basic English language skills at school. Unlike the vernacular-medium state schools, which are mostly attended by the lower classes and poor populations of society, where there is almost no concept of English language teaching, the teachers in private, non-elite English-medium schools involved students in different activities such as writing stories and articles and encouraged them to speak in English. These practices not only helped learners to improve their language skills but also boosted their confidence to do well overall in their studies, as noticed in Saleha’s case.
English was my favourite subject from school. I never missed any English class because I enjoyed lessons and reading. I know if I missed English class I missed chance to participate in speeches and debates and quiz competition… English helped me do good in science and maths and social studies because they were in English writing.

(Saleha, female, Year 1, diary entry: 3)

Participants’ views presented under this sub-theme suggest that those who came from middle or lower middle class family backgrounds attended better schools and availed themselves of better options for learning English. They were provided with a favourable language-learning environment in their foundation years of schooling compared to those who came from lower social classes and ended up in state schools. The findings of Schofield and Mamuna (2003), on the relationship of socio-economic status on English proficiency in Pakistan, are consistent with what I found in this study. Studying 250 Pakistani students from different socio-economic and academic backgrounds, they suggested the socio-economic status of any learner plays a crucial role in students’ experiences of language education. In addition to enrolling their children in top class English-medium schools, the upper class parents also ensure their children have the best resources such as books, satellite TV, the Internet and expensive gadgets which expose them to English in a number of ways. They use English at home and in their social circles. Their frequent travels abroad provide them with multiple opportunities to experience interaction in English with native English speakers. All these advantages are denied to those who belong to less privileged and lower socio-economic brackets of society. The findings of studies by Tong and Shi (2012), Gao (2010) and Ramanathan (2005) correspond with what I have found regarding the relationship of social class with learners’ opportunities to learn English as a second language, in different contexts. They contended that entrance into elite language education was related to family income and the type of social class learners belonged to.
In addition, Shamim (2011), comparing English language learners’ socio-economic status with their achievement levels, revealed that learners in higher income brackets consistently outperformed their counterparts in lower income groups. She argues that this higher level of proficiency in English may be attributed to the learners’ prior education in private English-medium schools. In the cases of two of my participants, Hania and Benazir, who attended elite English-medium schools, underwent entirely different language learning experiences compared to those (Saima, Kamran, Yameen and Enam) who attended government-run schools due to their lower socio-economic class. I have discussed their respective experiences in the section on investment (see section 6.1.1).

Although this study was not particularly focused on evaluating learners’ levels of achievement or proficiency in English on the basis of their socio-economic class, it is important here to identify and recognise that their membership of different socio-economic classes resulted in their different language learning experiences at school level, which created challenges for them later in their higher education. At the higher level, at university, these differences in proficiency were not acknowledged and similarly the diverse needs of the learners arising from their different academic backgrounds and English language learning experiences were not considered at all. All these factors contributed to my participants’ individual language learning journeys, in one way or another, and consequently influenced the construction of their English language learner identity.

### 6.5.3 Upward Social Mobility and Respectful Social Positions

Having talked about their current membership of different social classes in society, and the influence this had on their education and language learning, my participants shared how they thought they might possibly change their social class and attain upward social mobility. According to most of my First Year participants, English served as a status symbol, and led towards upward social mobility and a respectable position in society.
Learners’ investment in English to gain upward social mobility or respect may be correlated with the Bourdieusian concept of cultural capital. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) use the term ‘cultural capital’ to denote non-economic and non-financial social assets, such as education, language, intellect, culture, etiquettes, style of speech or outlook. Bourdieu and Passeron state that some forms of cultural capital have a higher exchange value than others in a given social context. In the context of this study, English is seen as a linguistic capital and those who possess this form of capital can easily progress up the social ladder.

I propose that learners of English in the context being studied invested in learning English with an understanding that they would not only acquire material, but also a considerable range of symbolic, resources which would enhance the value of any existing cultural capital. Therefore, they did not only gain in academic but also in social terms. In addition, my participants stated that they realised how important it was to join a particular social class for which the entry requirement was English. They sounded anxious to start moving upward from their current status. Some of the participants explained:

You know those who talk good English they are supposed to have good calibre and in today’s society those who do not know good English are lagging behind. My calibre is not that high but I am trying to reach that level…It upgrades the status of men.

(Aijaz, male, Year 1, interview)

It has become a social convention that who knows English is honoured; they make their own group.

(Zaheer, male, Year 1, interview)

I think it is important; it helps you form a certain status in society… You know we have developed a belief that those speak English have a respectable position in society… so English has a role to play not only in professional life but in social too.
Aijaz, Zaheer and Rubina all came from a similar socio-economic background and they intended to upgrade their social status through the help of English. According to them, English carried with it a tag of a high-calibre, respectable standing in society. Those who could speak in English formed a separate social circle, which was exclusive, and entry was only possible with the passport of English language fluency. They seemed to have been struggling to learn English, not only to excel academically, but also so that they could perhaps get admitted into that so-called privileged class.

Kamran, in his diary, sums up the role of English and its functions in the following words:

Speaking English has got great say in the society due to many factors like social status in society, getting a professional job, over and above, English being an international language is valued in business and trade. I think when science and technology is the actually carried in English language so world’s development heavily depends upon English language… I would say the benefits of English are multi-dimensional.

Students such as Kamran, like the other participants mentioned above, believed that learning English could be beneficial for social and material gains, both within their society and beyond. My participants seemed to realise the fact that English is the symbol of status in Pakistan; the ability to speak and write correct English opens up many career opportunities and can be seen as a stepping-stone in one’s life (Shamim, 2008). They considered it as the vehicle for achieving modernisation, scientific and technological development and economic advancement. Since the ability to communicate in correct English carries significant rewards both inside and outside of the classroom and its status is superior compared to the other, local languages in
Pakistan, they perceived that it was one of the important means to gain upward social mobility and higher social status.

6.6 Ethnolinguistic Identities

It is generally accepted that English is the de facto language of international communication today. However, it is also obvious that the dominance of English may cause not only linguistic, social and communicative inequality but also a feeling of anxiety and insecurity, especially on the part of non-English-speaking people in developing parts of world, in which English may appear to have overtaken indigenous languages in terms of linguistic currency (Pennycook, 1998). Moreover, the studies (Block, 2007; Hansen & Liu, 2007; McNamara, 1997; Norton Peirce, 1995; Skilton-Sylvester, 2002) conducted on the relationship of second languages argue that there may or may not be a possibility of losing one’s L1 or/and membership in one’s ethnic community.

The learners of English participating in the current study had various views on the current status of English in Pakistan and how it affected their linguistic and ethnic identities. Under this theme, I will present the influence of English on my participants’ Mother Tongue (MT) and indigenous cultures, and explore how their ethnic and linguistic identities were negotiated during the process of learning English in their past and in the present.

Siddiqui (2012) argues that the hegemony of English in Pakistan has influenced the personal lives of many people who want to acquire English for academic purposes only. It has also affected the use and development of other local languages, and indigenous cultures and identities, so much that young learners appear to abandon their mother tongues and ethno-linguistic identities. One of my participants, who was a native Punjabi speaker, expressed his views regarding his choice of spoken language, which suggested how his mother tongue was affected.
We are Punjabi speaking and use it at home, but I don’t want to speak in Punjabi…I prefer conversation in Urdu with my friends and in English at university…yes it looks weird…it looks rustic to use Punjabi…my parents are uneducated, they cannot speak in Urdu so they converse in Punjabi… if I can speak other languages why should I speak Punjabi which is just spoken in villages.

(Ahmed, male, Year 1, interview)

Ahmed came from a rural part of the province. He was hesitant to talk about his MT; when asked which language they spoke at home he acknowledged it was Punjabi and he believed it was the language of uneducated people in the villages. His preferred languages of communication outside the home were Urdu or English, so that his friends and classmates at university might not consider him rustic. Ahmed’s case is no different from many other Punjabis (residents of the largest province of Pakistan, Punjab, whose first language is Punjabi) who prefer the national language (Urdu) to their MT (Punjabi) possibly for the same reasons (section 1.2). Rahman (2006) argues that owing to its rich linguistic and cultural roots, and having the status of a national language, Urdu is a lingua franca in Pakistan and enjoys supremacy over the provincial languages. However, Urdu is not considered the most commonly used means of communication in the upper class of society; it is English.

The influence of English on Enam and Kamran’s appearance and mother tongue was quite evident and influential. They said:

You know my friends call me I am ‘becoming like English people’ because I speak all the time, not my dress, I am not rich to afford fashionable dresses, may be in future when I have money to copy their lifestyle…

(Enam, male, Year 1, interview)

Sindhi is my mother tongue and if you ask me to write an essay I will find it very difficult, even though I am from Sindhi medium and rural background, if
you ask me to write an essay in English I will write 15 pages…I am not much bothered about Sindhi; I can still be Sindhi if I speak English.

(Kamran, male, Year 1, interview)

Both Enam and Kamran believed that they were more comfortable in speaking and writing in English than in their mother tongues. Enam appeared to have a desire to dress up in western attire in the future, when he would be able to afford such a fashion. However, he was proud to be recognised as somebody who sounded ‘English like’ because of his preference of conversing only in English, in his friendship circles. This reflected that his personality was deeply affected by his English language-learning journey. The common factor in these three participants (Ahmed, Enam and Kamran) was their rural family background and type of schooling they experienced. It may be implied here that participants from a lower socio-economic background, with a vernacular-medium education, were more open to negotiating their ethno-linguistic identities compared to those who came from better socio-economic and academic backgrounds.

Nazia acknowledged that it was quite possible to be influenced by English when someone was in constant contact with it. However, she believed the influence of English was greater on people in urban than rural areas. This might be because of the frequency of exposure one gets by living in a particular area or society, or the media one comes across and environment one socialises in. This sort of influence has mainly affected people’s dress and life style. For example, it is very common these days for young boys and girls from certain classes of society to dress up in western styles and consider those who wear traditional clothes ‘old fashioned’. From Nazia’s comments it appeared that she did not disapprove of this change in society.

Yes quite positively… we adopt a lot from English movies… we imitate their life style and dressing we put on pants and this has changed our get up…we have left our traditional dressing… our society is following those things
especially adopted by those living in urban areas…their life style has undergone a lot of change.

(Nazia, female, Year 1, interview)

Benazir’s views on English focused on the intrinsic value of English and her perception of its neutrality. She said that although English was now a neutral language it still had a unique status in Pakistan. It no longer carried any controversial baggage; it was a neutral language now, which had been acknowledged globally.

It is our second language but this doesn’t mean that we should learn this language only…its not a threat to our mother tongue, we learn it just like any other language Urdu/Sindhi…I see it very positively…it has not got anything colonial anymore, it doesn’t belong to any country or region or nation now its spoken and understood worldwide.

(Benazir, female, Year 1, interview)

From what Benazir told me, it suggested she had a positive attitude towards English. She had separated English from its colonial past. She did not accept English and reject her linguistic heritage, rather she saw them as having equal importance. Benazir, one of the two participants who attended an elite English-medium school, had experienced a different view of English, not as a means of empowerment or social mobility as her other less privileged colleagues did. Elsewhere, in one of her diary entries, Benazir stated that English was important but that it should not be learnt at the cost of one’s cultural and linguistic heritage. It was an international language but this did not mean that it was the only language one should learn and speak. She wrote:

We are after English all the time but I think students should not be obsessed with it … we shouldn’t forget our own languages and cultures because we have to talk in English. All languages are important in their positions but many of us don’t understand this fact.
The comments of these participants suggested that some language learners had become so deeply influenced by the English language that they did not want to converse or write in their mother tongue. Furthermore, some of them reported feeling more comfortable in speaking and writing in English compared to their L1. Participants like Nazia held the view that learning English had not only affected their mother tongue but also their life styles. In learning English, they had equally adopted aspects of western culture. Benazir, on the other hand, acknowledged the importance of English, and believed that it did not belong to any particular country or region, but rather that it was an international language of communication. Nonetheless, she also suggested that one should not forget one’s own culture and mother tongue.

Participants’ views on the status of English reflected their respective journeys, their type of exposure to English and their aspirations related to English.

Hania had a somewhat different story to share. Hania’s diary, interview and other profile information depicted how she had gone through a linguistic identity negotiation in her journey of learning English. Being a child of multilingual parents, who came from two different educational and socio-economic backgrounds, she spoke three languages: Sindhi with her father, Urdu with her mother and English with her siblings and cousins. At home, Hania was the eldest daughter who had to look after her younger siblings and do some of the household chores, but when she was at university with her friends or with her cousins she adopted an entirely different persona. With them she behaved as a young girl, full of commitment to learning English to get educated and secure a good position in her future professional and social life.

We have a interesting mixture of languages at home, father is Sindhi my mother is Urdu, so with my father I speak in Sindhi with my mother we have to speak in Urdu. At school we are taught in English, we read in English and with my siblings I speak in English… I have now become a kind of mixture.
Sometimes I am Sindhi, sometimes am Urdu speaker and most of the times I am ‘angrez’\textsuperscript{11}.

(Hania, female, Year 1, diary entry: 4)

The cases of Enam and Kamran were more or less the same. They belonged to rural ethnicities and lower socio-economic classes of society. They did not have any exposure to English until they grew up and entered high school. Afterwards they went to university where they experienced a different environment and different situations to challenge them. This was a transformation in their lives. Every time they met up with their friends in study circles, or went to language learning centres either to teach or learn, they had to redefine their rural ethnic identity and position themselves in new ways.

Now I have got lots of confidence and more passion for English, my English has also improved a lot, I always wanted to be very much connoisseur in English … I found myself different and better as compared to past.

(Enam, male, Year 1, diary entry: 6)

When I was a small boy living in a village I wanted to wear pant and shirt with tie and be like educated man… now when I am in city, whenever I go to uni I have to wear formal dress not shalwar kameez\textsuperscript{12}… because with shalwar kameez I look like villager not educated, but when I go back to my village I wear Sindhi dress because people don’t wear pant shirt there so I will look stupid.

(Kamran, male, Year 1, interview)

Enam and Kamran’s narratives suggested that they had undergone a noticeable transformation from their previous ethno-linguistic rural identities to the present, due

\textsuperscript{11} Urdu/Sindhi word for English man
\textsuperscript{12} Pakistani informal two piece dress
to their interaction with English and their passion for learning it. They seemed to believe that their association with English had not only changed their outlook but had also given them a feeling of inner confidence in themselves to accept more challenges. They were able to recognise the overall change in their personalities and their mindsets.

Another male participant clearly stated that his affiliation with English would not affect his loyalty to his MT. According to Zaheer, his linguistic identity would remain unaffected no matter how deeply he was involved in language learning processes. He believed his mother tongue was so deeply ingrained in his personality that it could never be affected by learning another language. Zaheer’s identity, unlike his other colleagues, was not a multilingual identity. Instead he kept it protected and Sindhi-oriented, which suggested he remained vigilant throughout his language learning journey not to let English take over his core identity as a Sindhi, as was seen in the cases of Enam and Kamran.

I am Sindhi and I will remain Sindhi no matter if learn English or any other language. No language can change your identity.

(Zaheer, male, Year 1, interview)

Like Zaheer, Yameen’s views in his interview and diary entries suggested he was consciously resisting any changes which might affect his ethno-linguistic identity during his journey.

You can look at my outlook its typical fundamental, and I think learning any language can’t change your mentality…. I know Sindhi, Urdu, and Siraiki as well, none have changed me, what I have taken from English is the way of speaking and some ways of communication some dialogues, I watch their documentaries on their life and culture but I don’t borrow anything.

(Yameen, male, Year 1, interview)
Yameen belonged to a religious, conservative family. He had a beard, wore a cap, and dressed in the conventional two-piece clothing, which are considered to be compulsory elements of a staunchly religious man’s costume in Islam. He insisted that knowing different languages including English could not change the way he thought and his outer appearance. He said he did not borrow anything related to English and then he went on to contradict himself by saying he had adopted the ways English people spoke by copying their dialogues. Elsewhere in his interview he also acknowledged that he was quite impressed with the British accent and that he often tried to imitate it. Possibly, for Yameen, accent was not a part of his linguistic identity that he wanted to stick to. Moreover, even after his being vigilant about protecting his ethno-linguistic and religious identity, learning English affected Yameen. As Wenger (1998, p. 215) suggested, learning any other language transforms ‘who we are’ and ‘it is an experience of identity’ and it allows learners to participate in a lifeworld of new culture (Pavlenko and Lantolf, 2000).

Looking at different excerpts from the data and the findings relevant to the theme of ethnolinguistic identity, it shows, interestingly, that some of my participants to some extent resisted their possible identity negotiations when it came to their ethnic and linguistic identities. Those who were open to negotiation and redefining their ethno-linguistic identities were aware of this transformation and acknowledged it. The majority of the participants wanted to maintain their membership of their original ethnolinguistic group along with a proficiency in English, and they were trying to do so with the help of their dynamic and fluid identities. It is difficult to have a definite stance on whether or not, and to what extent, language learning changes individuals’ ethnolinguistic identities because learning a new language is not just a simple process of acquiring linguistic skills and knowledge but also a process of becoming and avoiding becoming (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007).

6.7 Chapter Summary

The findings presented so far discussed participants’ journeys of language learning from past to present and in relation to their future selves. My participants were found engaged in learning English through a number of ways that turned out to be their
investment in a language (English) that they thought carried better present and future prospects. Through different forms of investment, and their membership of different social groups, their multiple and dynamic identities were challenged, contested and protected. Their investment in language learning also turned out to be an investment in their own social identity (Norton, 2000). As the literature suggests, the findings of this study showed that while learning another language, learners’ social identities shift and respond in an ongoing dialogue (Gardner, et al., 2004; Norton 1997) as social identity is established and maintained by the language or languages one speaks (Hansen & Liu, 1997; McNamara, 1997). Similarly, language learners’ identities constantly changed due to their movement within different social groups. Their experiences and interactions in these social groups led them to negotiate their language learner identities consciously or unconsciously (Marx, 2002). Negotiation also occurred when language learners wanted to gain access to a particular social class or to an imagined community. Hence, they constructed their new identities as learners of the English language through their journeys from past to present in different social and academic contexts as they moved towards a desired possible self. It was also seen that learners’ gender, social class and ethno-linguistic identities interacted with their English language learning processes in different social and academic settings which consequently influenced the construction of their English language learner identity.
Chapter 7: Renegotiating and Reconstructing Language Learner Identity: 
Second, Third and Fourth Year Participants

Introduction

In the previous chapter I presented the findings that were elicited from my primary participants (Year 1), mainly drawing on the data from individual interviews, participant and nonparticipant observations and diary entries. These were also triangulated with findings from other stakeholders’ interviews. This chapter puts forward findings drawn primarily from focus group discussions conducted with three different groups of students (Years 2, 3 and 4), who were the secondary participants in this study. The findings from these focus group discussions have also been triangulated with the findings detailed in previous chapters (5 and 6). A more detailed account of the focus group discussions with the secondary participants and the sampling rationale are given in the methodology chapter (see sections 4.7-8). These three cohorts, each consisting of 5 participants, were second, third and fourth year students in the degree programme at the Institute of English Language and Literature (IELL). Each cohort had had a continued engagement with English language learning over 2, 3 and 4 years of study respectively and so provided an insight into the possible evolution of students’ multi-dimensional and dynamic language learning identities throughout their English language learning journeys. In this way it was possible to speculate on the continued development and further transition of the construction of the language learner identity of the primary participants, as this study followed an extended longitudinal approach.

7.1 Language Learner Identity Redefined

In the previous chapter I discussed my primary (Year 1) participants’ multi-dimensional identities, how they defined their identities and how their identities
interacted and negotiated with their English language learning processes. It was noted that their English language learner identity was constructed through their unique language learning experiences, which included their investment in the past and present, and also their aspirations for their possible future selves. My primary participants’ narratives also highlighted how their gender, social class and ethnolinguistic membership interacted in the development of their language learner identity. Here, I will take a step forward and delineate how my secondary participants’ language learner identities were constructed and transformed in their language learning journeys; although these were different from their junior counterparts’, there was a sense of a continued development of English language learner identity, in the context of this study. In this chapter I present data that illustrates how the secondary participants have defined and redefined their language learner identities, and how their language learner identities have undergone a gradual, yet significant, transition.

As I argued in the previous chapter, participants’ language learner identities are seen to be not only constructed through formal language learning settings, such as classrooms or language schools, but also are shaped and constructed in informal social contexts such as family and friendship circles. In order to understand my secondary participants’ language learner identities and their subsequent development, I will present their views pertaining to their language learning activities in their families, their prior academic background (schools) and also their engagement with English language learning through Remedial English at the university.

7.2 Construction and Reconstruction of Language Learner Identity in Multiple Settings

In this section I present the data dealing with participants’ English language learning experiences in different academic and social settings, firstly delineating their language learner identity formation in their past, at school and at home. The next section describes their present experience at the UoS, in the Remedial English course.
7.2.1 Language Learning Experiences in the Family and at School

My secondary participants came from a diverse range of ethnic, socio-economic and educational backgrounds. They variously defined their engagement with English through their academic backgrounds and social affiliations, which seemed to influence their language learning identities. The participants’ views about their different language learning engagements are presented below. Ali said:

Actually my family background education is nil, I am from a village where small children were forced to join religious education rather than the general education, I went to a Madrassa in the beginning but I couldn’t learn anything there… I went there when I was 5 years old and stayed there for some six months maybe because I didn’t like being there, or it wasn’t something I wanted to do, there was no English at all. Then I went to a government school, it was a so called school without any building, we used to sit under the shade of a tree, I could just learn ABC till my class three, can you believe I didn’t even know how to write my name in English which I learnt in class six.

(Ali, male, Year 2, focus group)

This quote from Ali in the focus group discussion highlighted his uneducated family and lack of a prior academic background. He belonged to a family where children, instead of attending school, were sent to religious schools where they were encouraged to memorise the Holy Scriptures and were given an Islamic education based on the Arabic language, without any interpretation and understanding (for a more detailed discussion on religious schools see section 1.5.1). Ali’s parents found this type of education unfruitful and stagnant so he left the Madrassa six months after his enrolment. Rahman (1998) states that it is quite common for those from the lower strata in rural Pakistan to send their children to Madrassa instead of formal schools, mainly for financial reasons. Some of the parents preferred Madrassa due to religious obligations, thinking their children would learn Arabic and become Aalim (religious scholars). However, the medium of instruction in Madrassa is generally Urdu (Sindhi
in the Sindhi-speaking parts of the Sindh), not Arabic, which is taught as a separate subject. Ali had to go to Madrassa, as was common practice in his village, but as a child he did not want to go there and wished instead to have a formal academic beginning to his education, in a school where he could learn English. Ali then attended a government school in his village. The conditions in this school were not very different from other government schools in the villages. Due to the lack of space and furniture, Ali and his fellow students would sit outside the school under the shade of the trees and get their lessons there. With regard to English teaching in his school, Ali explained that he only learned the English alphabet when he was in grade three (at age 7-8 years). He also mentioned that, such was the poor state of his English education, he only learned to write his name in English when he reached grade six. This situation reinforces the disadvantages of those who are poor and living in rural areas with little or no access to English; consequently they have less chance of being able to aspire to jobs reliant on English language ability. Looking ahead to the future, Ali’s family did move him to a government school with at least some access to English. In this case, Ali’s rural location and poor background limited his life choices with regard to the learning of English.

Another participant from year 3 shared his schooling experiences in the following quote:

My schooling is from Balochistan, since the early childhood my father would tell us English is key to everything, if you learn it from now all your problems will be solved, he always tells me importance of English. My school was a missionary school, it was not like Pakistan, it was like Britain, it was a life changing experience, all our teachers were Christians who taught us nursery rhymes and English stories which we learned with great interest… all subjects were taught in English, it was purely English environment, teachers and students used to talk in English all the time.

(Muzafar, male, Year 3, focus group)
Muzafar’s experience was entirely different and in contrast to that of Ali. As a beginner, Ali was sent to an institution where there was no teaching of English at all, whereas Muzafar, from early childhood, was inculcated with the idea that learning English was important, possibly a solution to many problems and an investment in his future, and he was, therefore, sent to an elite English medium missionary school. According to Rahman (2005), elite English-medium schools originated as Christian missionary schools, which provided strict English-medium instruction in an English environment, as portrayed by Muzafar. He was rather excited about his school, which he compared with British schools. His statement suggested his enthusiastic willingness to learn English, even when he was still a young schoolboy. Muzafar was proud to have been taught English by native English Christian teachers. Unlike in other government schools and many private schools he was taught all the subjects in English. He cherished the milieu where students were encouraged to speak English inside and outside the class. Upper middle class students usually attend such schools, where the private management charges significant fees which are beyond the reach of the majority of the Pakistani population (Shamim, 2008). This clearly typifies the inequity of access to language skills and knowledge, leading to social injustice in society at large.

Arshad et al. (2012) discuss how family background, parents’ education and their profession can have a direct impact on children’s learning of English in Pakistan. They argue that it is likely that a sound socio-economic family background and educated parents may facilitate learners’ English language learning activities, both at home and outside. Muzafar came from a well-off, upper middle class family, which could afford him to send him to an elite English-medium school. His parents were educated, so he had a conducive environment, not only at school but also at home. Here it is clear that Muzaffar’s middle class family and his educated parents were more strategic about his education. It is family capital that facilitates children getting a better education and helps them set future goals, but a lack of access and resources may also limit what is possible.
However, Hina who also came from a middle class family, but whose parents were not well educated, had something different to share. She said that:

I come from a middle class family, my father is intermediate, my mother is matric pass, our home environment doesn’t encourage much to learn English because no one knows English, we just use English words, but no one speaks in full English. The school I went to was a private English medium but there was no English, all subjects were taught in Urdu or Sindhi … I then left that school after three classes and went to another private school which was far better than the first one…though my parents are not well educated but they are at least aware of the difference between a private and public school, my sibling are also going to a private school.

(Hina, female, Year 2, focus group)

As mentioned above, a learner’s family background and parents’ education may play a role in his or her education and language learning processes. Hina categorised herself as belonging to a middle class family. However, as her parents were not highly educated, her home environment was not helpful for her to learn English. Her family members used only basic, common English words without much accuracy and fluency. Although Hina’s parents were not highly qualified, they were well aware of the inherent difference between a private school and an ordinary government school. They realised that their child would benefit much more from studying in a private school compared to a state-run government school. Her discussion raised the issue of the performance of the non-elite English-medium schools. Rahman (2001) and Khattak (2014) elaborate on the difference between elite and non-elite English-medium schools in Pakistan. They argue that non-elite English-medium schools usually fail to provide the standard of English medium education that they claim. Unlike elite English-medium schools they are poorly staffed with unqualified, untrained and inexperienced teachers (see section 1.5.2 for more details). Hina attended a non-elite, so-called English-medium school where she did not get her instruction through the medium of English as promised. On the contrary, she was only taught English as a subject, and all other teaching was carried out in local languages.
such as Sindhi and Urdu. Being disappointed by her first school, Hina’s parents enrolled her in another private school, hoping that she would get English-medium instruction. This shows a clear discrepancy in the system of education in Pakistan, where there is apparent lack of regulation when it comes to different types of schools and their policies about the medium of instruction (Siddiqui, 2012). Different streams of education offer different standards of education. There is no universal system of education offering the same standard education to all children, no matter if they are rich or poor.

Azhar gave an interesting view:

No one is educated in my family. The school I come from had no concept of teaching or learning English till class 6th. What I learnt in these 6 years is just to spell my name in English that’s it, everything was taught in Sindhi, we started English from class 6th. When I entered in college I came to know the importance of English from our English teacher who inspired me a lot.

(Azhar, male, Year 3, focus group)

Azhar’s experience of learning English as a beginner was more like that of Ali. He went to a vernacular-medium government school in his village, which was a typical example of a government school in a rural area where there was no teaching of English until class 6 (age 10-11 years). The school he attended also appeared to be lacking in the teaching of English and focused on the English alphabet and basic word formation at the primary stage i.e. classes 1 to 5 (ages 5 to 10 years). He was taught all other subjects in his native language, Sindhi. Hence, Azhar’s only accomplishment in English in his primary school was learning to write his name. If this situation is compared to any private school, there students learn to write their name in English in class 1. Aziz et al. (2014), in their rigorous study on the need for reforms in the Pakistani system of state education, suggest that the standard of education in government schools has deteriorated in the last two decades, mainly due to teacher absenteeism (Siddiqui, 2007), which results in the teaching of all subjects by the same
teacher, and considerably poor learning. Having attended such schooling, it is quite likely in the cases of Azhar and Ali that they only began learning English properly once they started college at the age of 17. Apart from that, Azhar had the added disadvantage of his family being totally uneducated, so the only way for him to enhance his English language skills was to rely on educational institutes. Since none of his family members was educated enough to teach him English, or inspire him to learn English and let him know its importance, he found his college teacher was the only source of encouragement and guidance he felt he received. However, Saira, his senior colleague, who found her inspiration to learn English at home, said about her experience:

I am from an English medium school but English was just a subject, we always communicated in Sindhi in all classes in all subjects... I never learnt English in the real sense at my school. So actually it was at home where I began to learn English, my brother and father influenced me to learn English and told me how important it is for academic and professional progress. I got English tuitions at home that made my base of English.

(Saira, female, year 4, focus group)

Saira shared her experience of attending a non-elite English-medium school where she suffered due to a lack of English language learning and the lack of a definite policy with regard to the medium of instruction. She complained that her teachers always taught and communicated in Sindhi.

It is usually the same state of affairs at almost all non-elite English-medium schools in Pakistan. Private non-elite English-medium schools are attractive because of their claims to offer ‘English-medium’ education (even though in reality these claims may not be fulfilled). They charge modest fees, which is affordable to the lower middle class, which covers a considerable portion of the Pakistani population (Coleman, 2010).
However, Saira explained that the situation was different at home, where she actually began to learn English with the help of her father and brother who guided her in learning English without taking private tuition, as most students from non-elite and vernacular-medium schools do. So it seems that family capital may take different forms: financial, strategic decision making or educational support. Family educational support was an invaluable means of enhancing learning experiences without involving further financial challenges. This echoes the learning experiences of my Year 1 participants who, in their interviews, shared that they also began learning English at home, with the help of their siblings and cousins. Saira’s parents also explained to her the importance of learning English, and how English was a prerequisite if she wanted to excel in her academic and professional career. It is probable that girls from lower middle class families usually do not get permission to go on to higher education and it is even less likely for them to get support and encouragement from their families when it comes to learning English. The case of Saira is different, the confidence she had gained from her father and brother since childhood seemed to have played a significant role in her academic and personal development.

All the participants’ views presented above have illustrated the variety of possible language learning experiences, obstacles and motivators which made their language learning journeys and their language learner identities unique from each other. Those who went to vernacular-medium schools did not learn English there and relied on either private tuition or educated family members, whereas those who attended English-medium schools managed to learn English there. This was noticeable in Year 1 participants as well as their senior counterparts (Years 2, 3 and 4). Also, as discussed above, English is a powerful mechanism for social mobility in Pakistan; the lack of English learning at government schools in villages and small towns reinforces social injustice and linguistic inequalities amongst different learners of English. This variety of language learning experiences and participants’ engagement with English in their past in fed into the construction and development of their language learner identity.
7.2.2 Remedial English Experiences: A Critical Analysis

Participants’ engagement with English influenced their language learning identities in different ways. In the previous section, I discussed how their prior academic and familial backgrounds helped them redefine their language learner identity. This section specifically deals with participants’ engagement with English through the Remedial English course at different points (semesters) at the University. It will also discuss how far their language learning identity was influenced by their engagement in the Remedial English course.

As explained in the context of the study (see section 5.2.1), Remedial English is taught for the first four semesters in the degree programme of BS English, as a compulsory subject. My focus group participants had had various experiences of language learning in the Remedial English course in their previous years. Their engagement in this course had possibly influenced their language learning identities. However, it was important to note that their narratives regarding their experiences of learning English at IELL were significantly different from those of their junior counterparts. I noticed a change in their perception and learner agency as my interaction with them moved from Years 1 to 4. Senior participants were not only found invested in, but critically analysed the pros and cons of the Remedial English course. In this section I will present the views of Years 2, 3 and 4 participants on their involvement in language learning processes through Remedial English.

I began with Tariq, who said:

It was just a revision and practice material for me, I didn’t learn anything new in these three semesters, for this subject I really don’t need to make notes and prepare for exam, I just have a look at the book on the very morning of the exam and appear in the exam … I feel a left out in class most of the times because all others are more or less from same background who needed to learn tenses in traditional ways… I really have never learnt English language in
classroom, yeah my trips to foreign countries help me know more about English life and culture.

(Tariq, male, Year 2, focus group)

I agree with Tariq we didn't get enough from it, I just got chance to give presentations, we could’ve done a lot more as I was expecting from this course, new aspects of grammar could’ve been done with innovative teaching but unfortunately there was nothing new, we had already learnt all these things.

(Zara, female, Year 2, focus group)

Tariq and Zara attended elite English-medium schools and their comments illustrated the inadequacy of the Remedial English content and teaching from their perspective. They seemed to have already acquired the English language skills and lessons being taught to them on the course. They therefore believed there was nothing additional or new for them. This is in partial contrast with their Year 1 counterparts (Aijaz and Benazir) who found the Remedial English course helpful in some ways, especially when they were provided with the opportunity to participate individually, had group discussions and did class presentations.

For Tariq, attending Remedial English classes sometimes provided him with some practice materials but he did not believe he needed to prepare for the course’s semester exam, and so reduced the amount of work he did. For Zara, on the other hand, the course gave her an opportunity to give presentations, which she probably could not do in her school. Both of them were critical about the teaching practices and materials, which they thought should be updated, as the teachers relied solely on conventional methods of teaching English grammar. Students like Zara and Tariq already had the advantage of learning English outside the classroom, in their homes, which is unlikely to be possible for students who come from vernacular-medium schools or lower socio-economic classes of society. They gained exposure to English through family capital, social media, movies, English literature and also their visits to English-speaking countries, which proved helpful in learning English. The course for them was almost
an irrelevance, as it could not enhance their skills and knowledge and was easy to pass because of their fluency in English.

In contrast to Zara and Tariq, Ali and Hina talked about the usefulness of the Remedial English course:

Yes I learnt through presentations, there were some useful lessons on new English expressions like ‘going to be’ ‘happen to be’ and I also got general awareness on some local issues like traffic rules etc. you know my vocab was also enhanced, overall it was good learning experience.

(Ali, male, Year 2, focus group)

Yes I learnt some new vocabulary item through reading passages et cetera but a lot more could’ve been done. It was good for reading practices but no proper listening and speaking were done. My writing skills did not improve to a great extent because whenever we submit some written work to teacher we never got it back with any suggestion so this way we never had a chance to look at our writing improvement and mistakes… Overall it was good experience.

(Hina, female, Year 2, focus group)

According to both Hina and Ali, the course was somewhat helpful to them in acquiring new usages of English and vocabulary items. In addition, Ali explained that he had also gained some general knowledge, through the course content. Hina, on the other hand, gained sufficient proficiency during the language course but she also analysed the missing elements of the course such as speaking and listening. Her disappointment with the lack of writing development in class was particularly noted and the lack of feedback from the tutor, she felt, restricted the extent to which her English writing skills were enhanced. Their opinion overall, however, was at odds with that of their fellow classmates, Zara and Tariq, who found the course unhelpful and outdated. Ali and Hina were generally positive in their evaluation of the Remedial English course,
which appeared to correlate with their previous limited experiences. They both came from vernacular-medium schools where English was barely taught as a subject. Therefore, they tried to achieve what they had been unable to in their previous academic institutions. The other factor in these different perceptions may be a difference in family and socio-economic background. Zara and Tariq came from the upper middle classes whereas Hina and Ali came from the lower middle class of society, where they rarely had a chance to be exposed to English within their families and social circles.

Azhar and Mohammad said:

Remedial English didn’t help me much as I was already familiar with basic English grammar and usages. I think it is designed for those need to learn English from very primary level such as parts of speech and tenses. For students who are doing masters in English literature and linguistics it was too simple and unhelpful.

(Azhar, male, Year 3, focus group)

There was no remedy in Remedial [laughter] we couldn’t take enough treatment as too many patients for one doctor … In the whole semester I got one chance like turn for 5 minutes to speak, we did some reading and writing but that was like uneffective, there was no practical teaching, no resources, and mainly no qualified teachers to teach language.

(Mohammad, male, Year 3, focus group)

These boys from year three, Azhar and Mohammad, highlighted the inadequacy of some significant aspects of the Remedial English course from their perspective. Azhar believed that the course had not been designed to take into account the standard of the targeted students and the degree course they were taking. He stated that the course, as currently offered, was too simple and so not useful for many students. The absence of appropriate content as well as resource issues affecting the delivery suggested that the
course was operating at quite a basic level and, therefore, only a few of the students were able to gain much from the process. However, he does seem to have ignored the fact that all students who reach Masters’ level might not have had such a productive language learning experience in their earlier years when they had an opportunity to have learn basic English grammar. Moreover, for Master’s degree programmes, the classes usually have a huge range of learners from different academic backgrounds.

Azhar’s classmate, Mohammad presented his remarks in a lighter vein by bringing up an analogy. He said that the malady of English had not been cured using an effective remedy, by which he meant the Remedial English course had not been taught beneficially. He went on to give a reason that sounded quite logical, ‘too many patients for one doctor’. As discussed earlier in the previous chapter, the issue of large classes is the most common phenomenon in public sector universities in Pakistan (Shamim, 2008). Mohammad’s statement echoed many of the Year 1 participants’ views on the size of class and challenges of learning English in such an environment. This may not be an ideal situation for language teaching; however, there are strategies, which have been formulated by research studies in this area, to deal with this problem (see for instance Benbow, et al., 2007; Harmer, 1998; Ur, 1996), which language teachers perhaps need to follow. According to Mohammad, in addition to class size, an effective remedy for Remedial English could be achieved if the course was taught by qualified and trained English language teachers, with updated teaching resources and interactive pedagogy.

The class size does tend to exacerbate the needs of individuals, both those who are already advanced, for whom the course is too easy, and those with limited English skills, as it further constrains their development. Those most disadvantaged, however, remain the less skilled students especially as they are more likely to have limited options for improvement elsewhere. The Director of IELL called it ‘an alarming’ and ‘difficult to tackle’ situation when a teacher had to deal with students from different academic backgrounds. In his interview he talked about the possibilities of one group of students getting more than the required attention and that some were left completely. He said in such situations, teachers felt immense pressure to cope with the
learning demands of all the students in the classroom but with little scope for doing so. Such a class of differentiated learning needs a variety of teaching methods and expertise, which not all the teachers were equipped with. The Director, being a Remedial teacher himself and a senior faculty member realised the gravity of the problem but he was not able to suggest any solutions for that.

Touqeer from Year 4, in his views, supports the opinion of his fellow classmates:

Remedial course was useless for me, the way they have made syllabus and the way it is taught in classrooms it is not helpful at all. It needs to be redesigned giving equal attention to all the four skills of language, to me it was more on writing and readings skills than on listening and speaking… it shouldn’t have been taught like other theoretical subjects but more interactively engaging students rather than giving long lectures.

(Touqeer, male, Year 4, focus group)

Touqeer’s remarks about Remedial English were somewhat similar to those of his junior colleagues, Tariq and Mohammad, who were also concerned about paying equal attention to the different language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. The same thing was noted in my class observations where I noticed that the teacher usually asked students to read and rewrite the reading passage given in the textbook. They were given hardly any time to practise their speaking skills except in instances where the teacher asked students randomly to explain the meanings of difficult words from the reading passage. As far as listening skills were concerned, the classrooms in the institutes were not equipped with audio-visual aids so practising listening was out of the question. Moreover, highlighting teaching methods used in the Remedial English course, Touqeer complained that his teachers taught this subject like any other subjects (Fiction and History taught to them in the same degree programme), rather than as a dynamic, interactive process of language creation and communication. Teachers in the institute mostly came from a literature background and had little or no experience of teaching language, therefore, they adopted the same traditional methods in teaching Remedial English. Their approach was lecture-based and teacher-centred.
which was not approved of by many senior students such as Touqeer, Tariq and Mohammad who had experienced English language learning at different formal institutions.

Another female classmate, Maheen, commenting on the usefulness of Remedial English for her, said:

I didn’t have any passion for learning grammar so I was indifferent. But I did learn some new points from our book ‘Oxford Practice Grammar’ which is actually very helpful for learning different usages in untraditional ways. There is no space for writing skills in this course, due to lack of practice and absence of regular feedback my writing skills were negatively affected.

(Maheen, female, Year 4, focus group)

Maheen, who came from an educated family and an elite English-medium schooling, described herself as ‘indifferent’ when it came to learning English in the Remedial English classes. She had learned English back in her school and at home to such an extent that she was competent enough and, therefore, Remedial English was not of much help to her. However, due to the lack of practice, which was the norm in the Remedial English class, her existing writing skills were adversely affected. But, unlike other students who had received an elite English-medium education, Maheen’s opinion was not entirely negative. She spoke highly of the textbook prescribed for Remedial English which she found innovative, relevant and useful for learning new English usage. However, she also complained about not getting any written feedback on the work she submitted to the Remedial English teacher. Students believed if they had been given formal feedback on their work, this would have been very helpful for them to learn what areas they needed to improve upon. On raising the issue of feedback with the Remedial teacher I was told ‘do you think it is practically possible to check 120 scripts in one day and come up with individual feedback on regular basis?’ This was a genuine issue that meant students were unable to have the kind of on going formative assessment necessary to develop an understanding of problems or
issues. However, the teacher acknowledged that he would always correct students’
grammar and other aspects of language such as pronunciation during the class
whenever they came forward for presentations or replied to his questions during the
lessons. The students, however, indicated a frustration with this approach to English
language learning.

Saira raised a significant issue in the focus group discussion. She shared her views on
individual needs with regards to the Remedial English course in the following words:

I don’t understand one thing why this course is same for all the learners of
English no matter whatever background they come from, it shouldn’t be like
this. All learners have different needs and come with different aptitudes. It
should be changed looking at students’ requirements and level, like there must
be different books and practice materials for year one to four.

(Saira, female, Year 4, focus group)

Having attended the course for almost four years, she had realised that the content of
the course and the practice materials had not been designed taking into account
individual learners’ needs and proficiency levels. As the University of Sindh is a
public sector institute, it mainly caters for middle and lower-middle class students and
it gets most of its enrolments from vernacular and non-elite English-medium schools.
However, it is also likely to have a few (10-15) students from elite English-medium
schools in every cohort for the degree programme in IELL. In this study, these 10 to
15 students, who tended to occupy the front rows of the class, were the centre of the
teachers’ attention. This does raise the question of whether there should be or could be
separate classes for students with diverse aptitudes or whether there was scope for
differentiation within the class of 100-120, or the possibility of using more advanced
course content within smaller groups, according to their need and proficiency level.

Bisma said:
It can be adapted… may be teachers needed to work on their teaching methods. They need to update their ways language teaching, they have same method for teaching language and literature, poetry or pragmatics … I agree with Saira the other problem here is culture of hijacking class by those who already know English, I remember I and Maheen kept on talking all the time and our hands were always up, its not good we snatched others’ chances. I think those students who already have good English background should not attend this course and only those who need to learn should be taught in these classes.

(Bisma, female, Year 4, focus group)

Bisma echoed the views of her classmates, Touqeer and Saira. She re-emphasised the need to evaluate the language teaching strategies adopted by Remedial English instructors teaching in all four semesters of the degree programme. In the four years of the degree programme she attended in IELL, she failed to notice any difference in teaching methods whether they were in subjects related to language, such as pragmatics, or subjects related to literature, such as poetry. They were all taught in the same, traditional, teacher-centric way. The reason for this might be the lack of teachers’ pre and post service training; when they start teaching in the university they come only with their educational qualifications, and no prior teaching experience or teacher education.

Bisma bravely noted her experience of the Remedial English classes and admitted that there was an acceptance of the domination of class interactions by students like her because of their English proficiency, and she acknowledged that this minimised other students’ chances to participate, particularly those who most needed to be heard. She suggested that the institute should have a mechanism whereby Remedial English classes would be made mandatory only for those with a low proficiency in the language. Here, it is necessary to remember the requirements for completion of the degree at the university. No student is eligible for the award of degree unless he or she obtains at least a pass mark in Remedial English in all four semesters, as it is one of
the compulsory subjects. So the above suggestion would not be feasible unless this rule was relaxed and English was taught as an optional subject.

Azam related his experiences and said:

Let me compare our Remedial English with a private English language course and tell you the difference. I once attended a listening and speaking course in PACC\(^\text{13}\) where listening was done using audio and video recordings. Everyone was given chance to speak daily even though it was just for two to three minutes but regularly, what I noticed is by the end of the course the boys who came blank started speaking in English. The teacher involved everyone equally. Here, only first two rows who occupy the same seats daily get chance to participate and the rest of the class keeps on yawning… teacher took the class we gave exam if we really learn or don’t that is not important.

(Azam, male, Year 4, focus group)

Azam presented his point of view by contrasting his experience of attending an English language course at a private English language institute with that of the Remedial English course at the UoS. According to him, there was a clear difference in the teaching practices and learning outcomes of both courses. Remedial English, as it is taught at a public institute, accommodates many more than the ideal class size described earlier in chapter 5, whereas English courses offered at private institutes such as PACC, as mentioned by Azam, do not allow more than 20 students per class and use audio-visual aids to teach language. He also pointed out how regular participation made a big difference to students’ learning outcomes. He found this was not the case in his Remedial English classes where his teachers did not pay any attention to the back benchers who, as a result, remained disengaged while the teachers remained occupied with the front rows of the class. However, it is important

\(^\text{13}\) Pakistan American Culture Centre, an institution that offers different English language courses and prepares students for international exams such as IELTS and TOEFL. It was previously patronised by the US State Department, but is now locally managed.
Azam was probably a bit critical of the teachers’ indifferent attitude towards students’ poor performance and low learning outcomes at the end of the Remedial English course. He concluded that, no matter how regularly the teachers took the classes or how strict the examinations might be, if students did not gain anything by the end of the semester the usefulness of the course had to be questioned. This probably calls for a proper evaluation and accreditation of the course.

Looking at participants’ views in the above discussion it appears that the students from Year 2 (Zara, Tariq, Hina and Ali) were generally positive in their comments about learning English through the Remedial English course. Zara and Tariq, who had a strong base in English due to their prior education, used the course to practise and polish up their existing skills, whereas for Hina and Ali it was a productive learning experience. Participants from Year 3, who had completed all four semesters of Remedial English teaching, reflected on their dissatisfaction with the course and noted it had not been very helpful to have attended the course because what they were taught was too basic. Similarly, the participants from Year 4, who were about to graduate from the university, were found to be quite critical of the overall content and teaching of the Remedial English course. They suggested that there was a need to revisit the syllabus of this course, to consider having more qualified/trained teachers to teach the language and above all that the course should not be compulsory for all students. It was felt that it should be made mandatory for those who needed it most.

One of the participants, Azhar, sums up the overall scenario of English language teaching, learning and outcomes in the following words:

We don’t have qualified teachers, we don’t have institutions, we don’t have learning environment and even after all that all the viva, job interviews and competitive exams are taken in English, this the tragedy with our country. The expected qualifications for the job market depends upon proficiency in English
but unfortunately the teaching standards of English language at the school, college and university level are so poor that student feels it hard to cope with selection process. What can we do about it? In the end the privileged upper class students get all the benefits.

(Azhar, male, Year 3, focus group)

Azhar shared some of the common grievances of Pakistani young people, who are struggling to get settled in their lives having graduated from higher education institutes. He articulated his concerns about the unavailability of qualified teachers and the dearth of a proper learning atmosphere. He also pointed out the impediments faced by students graduating from state-run institutions where they do not have the equivalent standardised quality education in English. When such students appear for a job interview or any competitive exams, it is suggested that they cannot do as well as their counterparts from private English-medium institutions. He called it a tragedy for the country. Azhar’s narrative suggested a deeply felt sense of frustration and a concern that the majority of students had an inherent disadvantage, due to their poor English skills when they competed for their professional careers. The bitter fact of the matter, expressed by Azhar, is that in the long run it is those from the privileged class who ultimately get better positions due to their advantageous academic backgrounds. The role that the university plays in reinforcing advantage, while allowing disadvantage to continue, according to these students, should be challenged and fundamental changes made.

It is interesting to note a steady evolution in the experiences and opinions of different participants, based on their level of seniority. In terms of student English Language Learner identity, it was noticeable that there was an increasingly critical edge to the comments about the inadequacies of the course: the problematic nature of the purpose, content and teaching approach in the course, the negative impact upon learners of large class sizes and lack of feedback, as well as the dominance of the already advantaged group in classroom interactions. There was a sense of grievance and frustration coming through the student stories and a fundamental questioning of the
place that the course holds in the university. Social injustice and linguistic inequity were underpinning many of the comments.

7.3 Resisting Identity Negotiation

Having discussed how my secondary participants redefined and reconstructed their language learner identity through their unique language learning journeys, from past to present, in different academic social settings, I noted a steady transformation in their identities and more critical learner agency. They raised the issue of the usefulness of the Remedial English course that was taught to them for four semesters, and brought up suggestions for how to improve its application and approach. Although they were invested in learning English, both formally and informally, and realised its importance like their junior counterparts as seen the previous chapter, at the same time they had gradually developed an ability to question the over-emphasised supremacy of English, and the subsequent linguistic inequity and social injustice this caused in Pakistani society and in its education system. In the next section I highlight this theme further, and more particularly elaborate on students’ increased awareness of the importance of safeguarding their Mother Tongue (MT) and indigenous cultural heritage.

7.3.1 Linguistic Inequalities and Social Injustice

The discussion with senior participants revealed a transformation in the commonly held views in relation to English. Their perspectives about English as a language differed from those of their junior participants (1st Years) in a number of ways. This evolution of ideas can be noticed in the quotations from three focus group discussions. In contrast to the first year participants, most of their senior counterparts did not believe in the idea of the relative superiority of English and the formation of social classes on the basis of proficiency and knowledge of English language skills. They considered it a prejudiced and unjust practice in society, which reinforced inequity, and used English as a means of maintaining class difference. With regard to culture and language, participants strongly believed that English should not be adopted at the cost of indigenous cultures, and the national and local languages of the country. They raised their voices to reclaim their linguistic identity, which they believed they were in
danger of losing in the long run. One of the participants from year three presented his views on the same issue in the following words:

English has created a gap between the rich and poor, it encourages class differences which is basically against social justice and equality, even our religion doesn’t approve of such preferential treatment based on class distinction.

(Muzafar, male, Year 3, focus group)

Muzafar was quite sensitive about the artificial barriers and social and cultural imbalances created by the dominance of the English speaking class in Pakistan. His opinion was representative of the resentment perceived and expressed generally by mature students at a senior level in the university.

Similarly, final year participant Maheen and her friends said:

Due to English we are facing different types of social and linguistic inequalities, which deprive us of equal opportunities in our professional and social life. It goes against our national pride, even after freedom we are not actually free. Why too much superiority of a foreign language?

(Maheen, female, Year 4, focus group)

Maheen believed that there was in place an unfair system of gaining social recognition through English language learning which was blocking the progress of students from the lower strata of society, as they could not avail themselves of the expensive education provided in the private schools. This had caused a gulf between the haves and have-nots. This unrest was breeding an uneasy yet vocal class of students who were against the imposition of a foreign language, especially when it held such currency in the job market. It is still the case in postcolonial societies that there is a dichotomy (different streams of education such as Madrasa, state schools and private education) in the educational system, which should have ended after the departure of
the colonial rulers, but in the case of Pakistan it still continues (Siddiqui, 2007; Rahman, 2002).

7.4 Safeguarding Mother Tongue (MT) and Indigenous Cultural Heritage

It has always been a debatable topic amongst Pakistani educationalists and civil society whether a child’s primary education should be in his mother tongue or in a second language such as English. The issues raised by Zara clearly echoed Mustafa (2015), who discusses the political, sociological and cultural dimensions of language education, and the predicament created by the medium of instruction policies in Pakistan. Mustafa (2015) discusses the advantages of mother tongue as the medium of instruction. She argues that a child’s cognitive and intellectual development can potentially be enhanced if he/she is taught using his/her mother tongue, and when learning does not take place in children’s first language they are robbed of this natural advantage. Moreover, in the Pakistani context where the pedagogy is substandard, a child suffers doubly, being additionally handicapped by the burden of a foreign language.

There is a recurrent debate on this issue at university level, and the majority of my senior participants favoured education in their native languages. However, at university they are not given any choice in terms of the medium of instruction; it has to be in English.

Zara said that:

These are stupid and false norms in front of me, but as they say first impression is the last so in our country those who speak English, well we think they are better in all respects but it is not so, a person’s behaviour is more important than anything else. We can see there are many other countries like China they do not know English well but they are progressing, they are far ahead of us. Its not matter of life and death, I think we express ourselves best in our MT so its not only English but your MT through which we prove our
talents and skills. English is our second language and shouldn’t replace the first. There is no harm in using English but of course not at the cost of our culture and mother tongue.

(Zara, female, Year 2, focus group)

Zara had strong views about the prevalent linguistic trends in Pakistani society where proficient English speakers were under the misguided impression that they were superior to their fellow citizens, just because they happened to have the advantage of having acquired English. The entrenched position of the job market ensured English knowledge and skills were in constant demand and reinforced the idea that it was one of the ways to progress socially and professionally. Contrary to the societal norm, she ranked behaviour as the basic criterion for being a decent human being rather than the flaunting of English fluency. Citing the example of other developed countries like China, Zara said that she believed that knowledge of English was not the only requisite for progress, as these countries were more advanced than Pakistan in spite of having lower proficiency in English. She was of the opinion that one could do well in the medium of one’s mother tongue, which she believed was the best means of exploring one’s potential. However, Zara perhaps did not think about the multiple sources of knowledge on various fields be it science, technology or humanities are readily available in English not in any regional language of Pakistan. She admitted that English had a secondary role to play in Pakistan, but that this should not overthrow the first language i.e. the national language. She reiterated the importance of English without losing sight of one’s own culture and linguistic heritage.

Zara’s views contrasted strikingly with Year 1 participants such as Aijaz and Rubina who believed that English was essential for upward social mobility and to gain a respectable position in society. They did not see English as a threat to their indigenous culture and mother tongue.

Furthering the argument of the influence of English on indigenous languages, Zara and Hina talked about the dominance of English in Pakistan. Hina said:
We are forgetting our language, we have borrowed their words ‘pen’, ‘plate’, ‘bus’ etc. we have become so habitual of this that we have lost many Urdu words. This shows dominance of English, and when a language becomes dominant it brings its culture with it too. And this is what has happened with us, we have borrowed their culture along with their language.

(Hina, female, Year 2, focus group)

Hina’s concerns were about the impact of English on native languages such as Urdu and Sindhi, in that borrowing words from English was imperceptibly changing indigenous languages. Citing the examples of everyday words, she attributed this practice to a national tendency of being too readily influenced by English, and as a consequence, losing the original Urdu words. She stated that this practice did not just affect language but had resulted in the indigenous culture being overwhelmed. This showed that Hina was conscious of her cultural legacy and linguistic heritage but she did not realise that borrowing is a significant part of language change and evolution (Thomason, 2001). Similar to the idea of language contact and evolution, Crystal (2000) argues that languages which cease to develop and change die out earlier than they should. However, Hina’s views implied that English could be seen as a ‘killer language’ (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000), which had engulfed many minor languages. She called English a subtractive language, which had been learnt at the cost of mother tongues.

Touqeer’s views were slightly different. He noted that:

My culture is in my roots I can’t lose it so on personal level and being student and speaker of English doesn’t mean I have forgotten my culture and mother tongue but on general level yes English culture has captivated our mind even years after independence we are still enslaved.

(Touqeer, male, year 4, focus group)
Touqeer presented a personal and a general opinion. At an individual level he was confident that learning another language would not affect his membership of his indigenous culture and his association with his MT. However, at a general level, like his other colleagues, Maheen and Muzafar, Touqeer emphasised that one’s cultural roots should not be discarded and the acquisition of English should not at the expense of compromising one’s cultural heritage and mother tongue. However, he conceded that English culture had been a tremendous force to be reckoned with since independence. Moreover, it had made the youth of the country subservient to English culture. Touqeer’s views were symptomatic of a general realisation that the national culture had undergone a gradual decline due to the predominant position of western culture manifested through English language. This theme of cultural despondency and loss ran through most of the narratives of the focus group discussions. The participants exhibited a sense of belonging with their culture, and increased social awareness about how, even after independence from their colonial masters, they were still inhabiting a life of indirect slavery as a result of globalisation, the influence of international media and the continued embracing of English as the currency for social and professional success. Muzafar added that:

It was the need of time when Sir Syed said so, now we don’t need it, why don’t we concentrate on our own languages, which are our identity. I don’t understand why are we crazy about English, it has enslaved our minds. We are reading Milton and Shakespeare when we have rich literature of our own language and we have some great literary figures like Shah Latif.

(Muzafar, male, Year 3 focus group)

Mufazar compared the present time with the colonial era, when learning English was a general requirement for entry into public services, as exhorted by an eminent educational reformer of the Indian subcontinent, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. Mufazar thought that one’s language should be deemed to be intrinsic to his sense of identity, as the slavish following of a foreign language interfered with independence of mind. Muzafar, comparing a local Sindhi poet like Shah Latif with English writers such as
Shakespeare and Milton, proudly proclaimed the inherent significance of his own language and literature. His reasoning was borne of his sense of pride in his mother tongue and native literature, which he believed was equal to any foreign literature. He was convinced that the utility of English was much greater during the British colonial era and that Sir Syed was justified in inviting the people to learn English. However, it was not needed today in the same way. Muzafar appeared to be reclaiming his native linguistic and literary heritage. He suggested that English had played a destructive rather than a productive role after the so-called independence from British rule in 1947.

Hussain shared his apprehension about losing his identity in the following words:

In this race of English, we are losing our own identity. We are bound by society and by our parents. This compulsion on us makes us feel as if we have to just learn a language for the sake of pleasing our parents and peers. In this process there is a conflict in our mind to stick to our cultural values and preserve our native selves or just to run after a foreign language and culture to survive in an imposed environment.

(Hussain, male, Year 3, focus group)

Hussain’s quote shows his dilemma over whether to adopt a western culture and language to please one’s parents and society, or to avoid doing this by following the indigenous culture and language. He had a sense of being compelled by his society and parents to learn English for economic benefits. However, Hussain believed that in this race to learn English, he was losing his identity (cultural and linguistic). He felt rather mentally suffocated due to western influences imposed by outside elements such as social norms and the job market. Here, Hussain appeared to be giving himself only one choice - either to learn English or to save his identity. His views suggested a restricted approach, where he had to limit himself to one or the other. Hussain perhaps could not conceive of a balanced approach. There can also be a harmonious combination of both, sticking to one’s culture and mother tongue and being open to learning languages and about other cultures. Bhabha (1994; 1996) defines this notion
as ‘cultural hybridity’, which means, ‘straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference’ (Hoogvelt, 1997 p. 158).

Muhammad continued the same argument. He said:

> We are preoccupied with English so much so that our brains have stopped working for any other thing like science and technology. We can’t think creatively in a foreign language and can’t express ourselves properly even if we have best English. It is but natural.

(Muhammad, male, Year 3, focus group)

Muhammad belonged to a group of learners who were of the opinion that one’s mother tongue was the best medium for learning new subjects such as science and technology. He also believed that mechanical learning by rote in another language killed original thinking and was harmful for students’ creativity. Muhammad’s ideas are generally popular in the Sindhi nationalist milieu. They strongly advocate the cause of teaching sciences and humanities in a mother tongue (Sindhi) up to higher education. However, in reality the Sindhi language has not been able to find a place in private English-medium schools (they do not teach Sindhi at all), even in the province of Sindh where it is a major/provincial language (Qureshi, 2008).

In addition to the medium of instruction, Mukesh raised another issue, more relevant to the current social norms of Pakistani society, given in his comment below:

> Our society has formed these so called standards, we call a person intelligent if he speaks well in English and consider the other a dumb even if he is so talented but can’t speak in English so a person’s credibility and aptitude is now judged on his English.

(Mukesh, male, Year 3, focus group)
According to Mukesh, the contemporary social set up has created self-styled, false standards, which honour individuals based on their ability to speak English, and deem them to be smarter than those who do not have proficiency in English. Those with English proficiency have an undue advantage over those who are weak in English language skills. This is patently a false indicator of intelligence and talent, putting at a disadvantage those who lack access to learn a foreign language. This is mostly the case for those people who have natural talent but cannot progress due to their handicap of expressing themselves poorly in English. It is indeed an unfortunate state of affairs in Pakistani society that even really talented people suffer socially and economically in comparison with those who can speak and write in English (Mustafa, 2015). This can be attributed to the former’s weaker academic background in English education. Mukesh’s criticism appeared to be directed toward a particular class in society who tend to evaluate individuals’ worth using the yardstick of English. This idea may not be generalised to Pakistani society as a whole, as it is contended by this participant as his own personal view on this issue.

Maheen raised another issue regarding the possibility of losing one’s linguistic identity due to the ingrained supremacy of English in Pakistani society since colonial times. She said:

We have been a British colony. Consciously or unconsciously we are slaves of English… today when a kid speaks English his parents feel proud, when gets good grades in English he is rewarded isn’t that pathetic…. It drifts us away from our own identity; it has always kept me preoccupied so I personally don’t like it, we have started copying English people its not good … I can’t read Sindhi; I can’t write well in Urdu, don’t you think we are forgetting our linguistic identity?

(Maheen, female, Year 4, focus group)

Maheen appeared to blame British colonialism for having created an inferiority complex amongst the Pakistani nation. The argument made here was that, as the country had been under British colonial rule for nearly a century, it had directly or
indirectly converted the Pakistani people into a mental subservience to the English language. She argued that this phenomenon of psychological influence could be witnessed in everyday Pakistani life, where parents were jubilant when their children spoke in English and did well in English subjects. Such children were presented as the pride of the family. Maheen felt aggrieved by such practices as it was thought that they negated children’s identity. She seemed to have gone through similar experiences during her childhood, which made express her repulsion of it. Maheen believed that, by imitating English people, she was losing her cultural and linguistic identity. Maheen expressed an alternative standpoint that was based on cultural nationalism. She belonged to that vocal group which seemed to be suffering from a sense of cultural loss through the dominance of English language and mannerisms (modern social media etc.), and culture. This cultural conflict is quite long established in this part of the world and has re-emerged after the inevitable linguistic globalisation. The inherent conflict of two cultures has been partially resolved in the metropolitan urban areas of Pakistan, however, students coming from rural areas and the lower middle classes of society may feel disadvantaged and suffocated in the midst of an active reinforcement of English culture and language.

In the ongoing discussion, once again Muzafar insisted that he be allowed to participate with his assertive remarks; he stated that English was:

A hidden virus, killing our culture, it is a tool of linguistic imperialism as we can clearly see it; first they sent priests now they are sending English teachers… the conspiracy is to convert our Muslim culture through the medium of English language and to damage our heritage. The trend is very dangerous in the long run, we must stop this as soon as possible.

(Muzafar, male, year 3, focus group)

According to Muzafar, English language is like a virulent disease eating into the vitals of the indigenous culture. It was the language which colonial masters used as a means of linguistic hegemony and which continues to be used by English language teachers
imported from English speaking countries. He raised the issue of the blossoming ELT industry in postcolonial states such as India and Pakistan. Phillipson (1992) and Pennycook (1994) highlight how English has hijacked many languages in developing countries through the means of the British Council, which has made it a business commodity. Pennycook (1994, p.147) argues, ‘beneath some of the idealistic rhetoric about the mission of the Council to increase cultural understanding, there is constant recognition of its commercial and political use’. They suggest that the phenomenal spread of English and its dominance has affected many languages and the lives of their speakers in a negative way.

Muzafar sounded cynical about the role of the Anglican Church in the spread of English imperialism through the English language. He pointed out a new conspiracy theory whereby even after independence of the subcontinent from British rule, the legacy of British rule in the guise of neo-colonialism was being preserved by importing English language teachers from English speaking countries. He could be considered alarmist but he proposed that there should be remedial measures to avert the attack of English on his religio-cultural values.

According to Muzafar, English had played a divisive role and had caused a sense of displacement amongst the people of Pakistan, who had persistently tried to secure their cultural and linguistic identity in their own independent homeland. This sense of insecurity, as raised by Mufazar, is thought to be prevalent amongst the social classes that are lagging behind in the socio-economic race. The elites of society never seem to have paid any attention to this aspect of the currency of English as they have always been the beneficiaries of its patronage and use. This fear expressed by Muzafar is rooted in the history of the subcontinent when the Church, supported by English rulers, tried to convert the local population, but only lower caste Hindus and Muslims responded (Ansari, 2005). The background to this clash of cultures and languages is quite old and can be traced back to British colonial times. The result of this was ultimately the Anglicisation of the education system in the subcontinent and hence a conflict persists between the domination of a foreign language, having the status of the country’s second language, and other native local languages. There may be a
considerable number of young people in educational institutions who unequivocally share Mufazar’s apprehension of native cultural sabotage at the hands of English language dominance, as well as cultural influences; however, that is just one side of the picture.

Amidst the heated debate and contrasting comments, where most of the participants were speaking against English and its questionable status in contemporary Pakistani society, Hussain’s quote seemed to seek a balance of some kind. He said:

> We have to accept it as a bitter fact, its dominant in global village, to prove our existence we have to learn it, we need to leave these orthodox views, we need to be positive and see it as tool of progress and compete in the current race…

> As my friends are comparing Pakistan with China I think we shouldn’t talk about China here, they live in a different context their situation is not comparable with our country.

(Hussain, male, Year 3, focus group)

Hussain expressed somewhat positive views about the ascendancy of English and acknowledged it as a hard fact. He compared the world to a global village and justified the learning of English in order to survive in that village. Hussain termed anti-English sentiments as orthodox because to him such an opinion was not going to affect the status of English. He was dismissive of such ‘archaic’ notions about learning English. He did not subscribe to the narrative of his colleagues that China had progressed on the basis of the Chinese language. Indeed, the learning of English has been a strong element of schooling in China, and has been an important part of the high stakes testing and a significant means of development there (Xiaohong & Zeegers, 2010). He believed that their situation was different from that of Pakistan and should not be compared with a different local scenario. Hussain’s point of view, compared to the other group members, was quite broad-based and utilitarian. He advocated that learning English was quite essential to survive in today’s world, where English is a lingua franca (Erling, 2014). He was opposed to what he saw as obsolete ideas, which discouraged the learning of English by quoting the example of China. He refuted this
Bisma’s opinion was quite similar to that of Hussain. Her balanced view regarding English is presented in the following quotation:

If you know English your future is bright, but the tragedy is it is subtractive language you learn it at the cost of other local languages. But at the same time we realize that it is need of the time. Go for any job you’ll be first asked how efficiently can you communicate in English not in Sindhi or Urdu so why to talk about it. Whether, its Biology, Physics or Chemistry if you are a teacher you’ll have to deliver lecture in English. In almost all private firms that’s the first requirement. And I really don’t think we can ever forget our mother just because we use English for few hours in a day.

(Bisma, female, Year 4, focus group)

Bisma was of the opinion that students can have a successful career if they are well versed in English. Then she also came up with an acknowledgement that English might only be learnt at some cost to local languages, which meant one lost one’s indigenous vocabulary by substituting it with English words. Again she reinforced her first statement, where she emphasised the imperative of learning English, and what she felt was the impossibility of overturning the dominance of English. She noted the process of entering the job market, where candidates are supposed to converse in English to prove their worth, irrespective of the nature of the job, and whether in the public or the private sector. She also seemed to suggest that having expertise in one’s local languages was not going to help in the current job market therefore it was a useless debate to compare English with Sindhi or Urdu. This pragmatic approach to engagement with English Language learning echoes the outlook of the first year participants, although it does have a more critical perspective.
Turning to the medium of instruction, Bisma remarked that all teachers were required to teach in English, be they teaching Biology, Physics or Chemistry. It was probable that Bisma was unaware of the disoriented and vague nature of the language policies prevalent at most of the educational institutes. It is not compulsory in most public sector institutes to deliver a lecture in English. It is solely the teacher’s prerogative to use English or any other language he is fluent in to conduct his teaching. Neither is it a pre-requisite for teaching jobs to show English proficiency certificates in the recruitment process for most public sector institutions. However, it is an entirely different story when it comes to getting a good job in the private sector, be it teaching or any other technical jobs. They strictly require their prospective employees to have proficiency in English. Bisma’s views pertaining to English were quite realistic and rational and are reflective of the current situation vis-à-vis employment requirements and recruitment procedures in Pakistan. Most students like Bisma, who aspired to learn English at any cost, were quite conscious of the challenges they would have to face once they entered the practical world without the skills and knowledge of English. Their possible future selves were often associated with proficiency in English.

7.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I presented findings from data mainly drawn from focus group discussions conducted with participants from Years 2, 3 and 4. They shared their narratives based on their English language learning process, experiences and the challenges they came across in their past and in the present. Their narratives were different from the primary participants in the sense that they voiced issues about the apartheid system of education from primary to higher level that continues to exacerbate class and linguistic differences. As they moved forward in their academic years and gained more experience, they showed an increasingly critical awareness of English as a vehicle for improvement, but also as a language with a post colonial inheritance, encouraging hierarchy and division and with the potential to displace indigenous languages. Their discussion on these issues provided me with insights that
helped me better understand the reconstruction and renegotiation of English language learner identity in the context of this study.

As the primary participants, the senior participants were also invested in English, however, their investment was characterised by their critical learner agency, especially when they reached higher education level. They showed awareness about the inequity of access to English on the basis of one’s socio-economic and privileged academic background. They emphasised that this was further reinforced when the UoS did not take any measures to address this issue in the Remedial English class, which potentially leads to social injustice and linguistic inequality in Pakistani society at large. Participants’ views on the usefulness of the Remedial English course were critical and analytical. They suggested the ways to improve it so that learners can gain from it. In addition, they showed, a cultural consciousness and a desire to safeguard their MT and indigenous cultural heritage. This development in their experiences brought about transformation, renegotiation and reconstruction of their English language learner identity.

It was noticeable throughout the discussion on reclaiming linguistic identity and safeguarding one’s cultural heritage that students like Maheen, Zara, Touqeer and Muzafar remained on the outer edges of the notion. Interestingly, they were the privileged learners, proficient users and the beneficiaries of English, owing to their better academic and familial capital. They were very clear about their stance on English. They were unwilling to consider any compromise about the supremacy of English at the expense of their MT. However, they did not completely deny the significance of English as a prerequisite to progress in a developing country like Pakistan (Shamim, 2011; Erling, 2014). On the other hand, participants like Bisma, Hina and Hussain tried to create a bridge between clashing cultures and languages by pointing out the needs of the time. Their opinions were rather more pragmatic and utilitarian. They were the ones, like many others participating in this study, deprived of this form of capital due to their poor academic and socio-economic class, who wanted to gain a knowledge of English so that they may be able to use English against the dominant ideologies of the supremacy of the language, and avail themselves of
opportunities to progress in a society which is intrinsically pro-English. The analysis of the overall findings from all the participants across four years suggested a balance between two perceptions; significance of learning English on one hand, critical awareness of its dominance over indigenous languages and cultures on the other.
Chapter 8 Discussion of Key Themes

Introduction

In this chapter I will elucidate the key ideas from the findings of the study in relation to the main concepts from the literature which helped to form the theoretical frame of this study. As my thesis has developed, the conceptual frame for the study has evolved to reflect the data generated from a number of sources over the period of the study. Consequently, while retaining the focal idea of a negotiated and dynamic language learner identity and possible key influences of investment, learner agency and possible selves, a more sophisticated framing has emerged. This new framing draws on the suggested evolution of language learner identity provided by both the Year 1 participants and those in subsequent years (see diagram 5 below).

The conceptual frame I have developed for this study is informed by social constructionist and poststructuralist theoretical perspectives of identity, as well as the key findings analysed in chapters 5, 6 and 7. The key findings of this study reinforced the idea that English language learner identity in postcolonial Pakistan is multi-layered, dynamic, fluid, hybridised and complex. Within this conceptual frame, the study includes the major constructs of Investment, Agency, Possible Selves, and Historical and Cultural Consciousness as the significant elements that form English Language Learner Identity (ELLI) in a public sector university in postcolonial Pakistan. It also engages with the construct of Third Space and Hybridity. All these elements come under the overarching concept of Negotiated Language Learner Identity in postcolonial Pakistan, as seen in the diagram (5) below. I have presented that process of construction of language learner identity in the form of a model. The explanation of each of the constructs of English language learner identity, and their possible development within this model, is given below.
8.1. Explication of the Model of English Language Learner Identity (ELLI)

My participants’ narratives suggested that their formal language learning journeys actually started as soon as they were enrolled in primary school. The original intent of this study was to focus only on their language learning processes in the four years of their higher education at the University of Sindh. However, this would have been an artificial consideration of their language learner identity and would not have taken account of both their previous experiences and future aspirations. Consequently, although the study focused to some extent on an important transition period for these young adults in relation to their university course, I also explored the nature of their previous engagement with the English language, the future aspirations of the English Language Learners (ELL), and their current informal and formal engagement with English outside of the university (through shadowing). In this way, I was able to build a more holistic conceptualisation of the language learner across time and space.

Diagram 5: Model of the Construction and Negotiation of ELL
In order to study the nature of language learner identity I examined year 1 students’ language learning journeys in detail utilising several methods such as individual interviews, participant and non-participant observations, and their diaries. The potential evolution and transformation in language learner identity was studied through the use of focus group discussion with senior participants, students from Years 2, 3, and 4. The longitudinal nature of this study was simulated by using data from student diaries, which were written by my participants over a period of nine months and also with the help of focus group discussions with participants from Years 2, 3 and 4. The overall findings suggested that English language learner identity at the University of Sindh (UoS) in postcolonial Pakistan was frequently being negotiated, constructed and reconstructed, reflecting a dynamic, fluid, multi-layered and hybridised construct situated in the ‘third space’. However, the conclusions drawn from this proposed evolution of language learner identity are provisional and particular to the context of this study.

The construction of English Language Learner Identity (ELLI) is represented by a dotted line\textsuperscript{14} (see diagram 5) that shows two distinct points of contact (one stands for Year 1 and the other for Year 4). The constructs of investment, possible selves and agency are predominantly situated at one end. These three constructs are quite noticeable in Year 1 and keep on evolving, with the passage of time, in subsequent years. The other end of the line (Year 4) is predominated by the constructs of critical learner agency, and historical and cultural consciousness. The nature and role of the constructs at both sides of the line are subject to change, characterising the fluidity of the process that leads to the negotiated hybridised third space English language learner identity. In addition, both ends are also marked by the presence of other influences. These influences include identity markers such as gender, social class, and ethnolinguistic identities.

As the constructs and identity markers involved in the evolution of ELLI mentioned above develop from one end to the other, it is important here to highlight the transition

\textsuperscript{14} The dotted (broken) line allows the inclusion and free flow of different elements at different points of time across the evolution and construction of ELLI.
from Year 1 to Year 4. In Year 1, participants were found invested in learning English and exercising learning agency, which directed them towards achieving their possible selves by navigating potential sources of support, skills and knowledge. At this stage, agency was used as compliance. They looked at learning English as a means to an end and that end was academic success and economic benefits. So their focus was fixed and their possible selves, limited. As they carried on with their journeys, their investment was seen to be decreasing and their possible selves were diverted in new directions. Years 3 and 4 used their agency as a challenge to critically evaluate and analyse their investment and possible selves, and considered the consequences for their own culture and linguistic heritage if English language learning continued with its dominance. Their possible selves were not only aiming for material benefits but also beginning to critically reflect on their historical and cultural consciousness.

This potential evolution of English Language Learner Identity (ELLI) also suggested a noticeable transformation from one end to the other as far as the other identity markers were concerned (e.g. gender, social class and ethnolinguistic identities). The roles of gender agency and gender discrimination were seen prominently in Year 1 participants, alongside the influence of the different norms of social class prevalent in Pakistani society. At the other end, senior participants seemed to be questioning those norms of social class rather than just trying to fit in with them. In Year 1 participants it was noticeable that they wanted to use English as a means to achieve social mobility whereas for other participants, English language learning raised questions of linguistic and social inequity, reinforced by societal structures and hierarchies built around facility in English. The influence of ethnolinguistic identity became more distinctive when participants reached Years 3 and 4. At this point in the evolution of their language learner identity they had reached a level of maturity where they were able to critically analyse the status quo of learning English and they raised their concerns about safeguarding their local languages and indigenous cultures, which, they thought, were being overshadowed by the superiority of English.

Overall, this proposed evolution of English language learner identity showed a strong commitment to compliance as the predominant stance at the beginning of the students’
time at university, and criticality at the end. However, in reaching for a more critical engagement with English language learning it was apparent that the shifting and negotiating, and the challenges faced, encouraged a much more fluid and dynamic appreciation of ELLI in a ‘third space’. This space allows learners to accommodate various co-existing and interwoven constructs of their ELLI without challenging the authenticity and significance of each other (Bhabha, 1994). The third space creates a hybrid and multi-layered English language learner identity which is not fixed and remains in a state of flux.

8.2. Investment in Linguistic Capital

The analysis of the findings of this study suggested that the English language learner identity had investment as one of its major constructs. My participants provided various reasons for their investment in English (see chapters 6 and 7 for details). The main reason conforms with Norton’s findings (2000; 2013). She argues that if learners invest in a language, they do so with the understanding that they will gain a wider range of resources, such as material and symbolic resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital and social power. Norton’s construct of investment is intertwined with the Bourdieusian concept of capitals (Bourdieu, 1986a). My participants were invested in English language learning processes in more than one way, hoping to secure desirable future selves, which involved material and symbolic resources, as pointed out by Norton (2000) in her study. The major difference between her study and mine is the background of the participants.

I argue that learners’ investment differed according to their academic, socio-economic, gender and ethnolinguistic identities. Norton’s (2000) findings did not focus on a detailed account of her participants’ past academic backgrounds and their other identity markers such as social class and ethnolinguistic orientations, as given in this study. Her female participants were presented in an immigrant context in Canada, and were learning English in a private language school, whereas my study focused on both male and female participants’ investment in English in an indigenous, non-English speaking, postcolonial context. This study mainly covered participants’ English
language learning investment at university but also considered their past journeys at school, private language centres and within their homes and social environments. The participants’ investment in Norton’s study was significantly affected by their social identity as immigrants, whilst my participants’ social class, gender, and ethnolinguistic identities in their local contexts influenced their investment and consequently their language learner identity. Similarly, Skilton-Sylvester (2002), who draws on her study of four Cambodian women in ESL classes in the United States, suggests that the learners’ identities both at home and at work have to be examined closely to accurately evaluate their investment in English language programmes. In this study I presented a detailed and multi-layered exploration of my participants’ language learner identity in a sensitive, post-colonial context and across time, which gives a sense that the investment was context-dependent.

The status of English in Pakistan, from pre-independence to contemporary times, has always been perceived as superior to local languages and even to the national language, Urdu, perhaps because this allowed those in power and authority to reinforce and enhance their own positions. Additionally, it has been a source of earning material and non-material (symbolic) gains as mentioned by Rahman (2002; 2005), Shamim (2011), Mansoor (2004), Mahboob (2011) etc. In general, English is seen as the passport to privilege and progress, therefore, my participants’ main reason for investing in English focused strongly on ensuring their bright future prospects (academic and professional success), which, it was thought, would ensure economic benefits and entry into a privileged class, resulting in the attainment of symbolic resources such as social mobility and cultural elevation. English was perceived, at least at first, as value neutral and as simply a means to an end. My senior participants’ views on this issue, however, varied on the basis of their age, experience of learning English and their year of the degree programme. Most of the Year 1 participants were found invested in learning English to gain its material and symbolic benefits. However, participants in Years 2, 3 and 4 were invested in English, but at the same time they were aware of the over dominance of English, which they believed was a threat to their indigenous local languages and culture. Hence, their investment stance
became politically and historically conscious, unlike their junior counterparts (Year 1 participants) who were more narrowly focused on fixed goals.

Having discussed my participants’ various stances on investment, I argue that the notion of investment recognises the fact that learners often have varied desires to engage in the range of social interactions and community practices in which they are situated. Previous work on motivation frequently conceived of language learners as having unitary, fixed, internalised and ahistorical ‘personalities’ investment, but also having complex, fluid and dynamic identities, which are negotiated and reconstructed across time and space (Norton & Toohey, 2011). As identity is fluid and multidimensional, how learners are able to invest in a target language is contingent on the dynamic negotiation of power in different fields, and thus investment also becomes complex, contradictory and in a state of flux (Norton, 2013; Darvin & Norton, 2015).

Norton (2000; 2013) states that irrespective of the differences in theorisation and conceptualisation of learner identity, researchers in the field of identity and SLA agree that construction and negotiation of learner identity needs to be understood in terms of the power relations between target language speakers and target language learners. It is because of power relations that some identities and forms of participation are considered legitimate and others are devalued, depending on time and space. Norton’s (2000) construct of investment includes the concept of power relations. As all her participants were non-natives learning English in a native context she found that usually, unequal relations of power play a negative role in learners’ language learning activities. For example, a highly motivated learner may not be well invested in learning a language because of the community or classroom’s elitist, racist or sexist behaviour. However the situation with the current study is different as it was conducted, in a non-native, indigenous and postcolonial context. The concept of power relations is similar, and at the same time dissimilar, from what was presented by Norton (2000). In my study, the unequal distribution of power amongst different groups of students involved in English language learning was noticeable, especially in that those who were more proficient in their skills and knowledge of English exercised more power compared to those who were less proficient. I found that the power was
distributed differently in different English language learning sites, which affected my participants’ investment in the language learning processes, and consequently their language learner identity.

The English language’s connection to its colonial past meant that power imbalances created during the colonial period were being supported and continued via the dominance of English language learning in present day Pakistan. In trying to learn English, students were seeking to become part of the powerful, and to move further up the hierarchy. Yet, within the university, the least powerful may be the first year students at the beginning of the transition between young adulthood and adulthood. In this study the relations of power can be also traced in the anti- and pro-English sentiments of the wider Pakistani community. Hania (female, Year 1) reported an incident where anti-English sentiment from the academic community affected her and her fellow students’ investment in learning English outside the university classroom. She was humiliated for using the language of colonisers and avoiding using their own language. Hence, it was found that some of the participants were unable to find a suitable environment to engage with English outside the classroom. This is relevant to Norton (2000), whose participants were looked down upon when they tried to converse in English, with local English people. In addition to this, the presence of local politics on the campus, and their negative role, created another barrier to the learners’ investment in English language learning at the university.

In the context of this study, the status of a teacher is usually associated with assertion, authority and power, in different academic settings from primary to higher education. This relation of power was equally noticeable inside the English language classroom. Participants’ narratives described the role of the language teacher in different educational settings in terms of reinforcing power relations in the language classroom. For those of my participants who came from vernacular-medium schools, their past experiences with English language teachers suggested that the teachers’ lack of competence, qualifications and lack of interest in teaching created barriers to the students’ language learning engagements. They were not in a position to question the teachers’ practices.
Later, at higher education level, the role of the language teacher changed but the level of authority and control was not much different. Findings suggested participants’ unequal relations of power with their language teacher at the university, where the teacher was qualified but inconsiderate of his students’ prior academic backgrounds. He taught and evaluated students from different backgrounds with the same yardstick. He did not allow the use of indigenous languages in the class and involved only those students who spoke correct English in classroom activities. This attitude might have created incompatible and uncongenial relationships between the teacher and his students. Hence, unequal relations of power, which negatively affected learners’ investment, could be witnessed in classroom practices. It can be argued, therefore, that especially in the formal language learning setting, my participants were motivated but not fully invested in English language learning because of the discouraging and negative attitudes in the community and the classroom towards English, and the unequal distribution of power amongst those involved in the teaching and learning of English.

Here, I would argue that the investment suggested in this study introduces another layer, i.e. contested investment during transition points, where fundamental investment commitments are challenged and discouraged in particularly powerful ways, leading to an explicit reflection on language learner identity and its impact upon the student’s place in the wider, postcolonial society.

8.3 Learner Agency for Possible Selves: From Compliance to Criticality

Learner agency is a fundamental construct in SLL processes and for language-learner identities (van Lier, 2008). Individual identities are not only shaped by their social and historical trajectories but are also influenced by their agency (Hall, 2002). Similarly along with investment, the constructs of learner agency and possible selves contribute towards the making of English language learner identity in the Pakistani context. My participants’ pro-active attitude towards learning English from school level, and the personal efforts they took to achieve their goal of acquiring English language skills, was possible due to their learner agency, which led them towards their desirable
possible selves. The findings of the study suggested instances where participants exercised agency in their language learning journeys. Their conscious efforts and willingness to learn were initiated when they did not get good quality English teaching at school or college, so they utilised their agency and managed to make up for that through self study, study circles, home tuition and by attending private tutorials.

Shi (2006) argued that language learners often evaluate and contest new sociocultural/contextual values and beliefs, evaluate their agent choices, struggle to broaden their individual agendas and subsequently negotiate and reconstruct their own ideologies, choices and multiple identities. Similarly according to Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) and Pavlenko (2002a) second language learners’ goals and action are dynamic, context-based and subject to change. Therefore their agency is not just influenced by their own trajectories but also by the attitudes of people living in the same context. It is a socioculturally mediated capacity to act (Ahearn, 2001) and individuals can only act if their social structures allow them to exercise such an agency (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001). My participants had to encounter some negative and discouraging attitudes from their surroundings and also from their families. Such attitudes at times did not just minimise their agency but also caused it to wither. In the case of Rubina, her domestic responsibilities did not allow her to achieve her goals. However, for Saima, her sister became a positive influence for her to exercise her agency and get into higher education. So participants could only exercise their agency when the situation was favourable for this. This is what Giddens (1984) called ‘dualism of agency and structure’ which means the dependence of agency on social, political and economic contexts where agency can be exercised.

Learner agency does not only refer to an individual’s ability to act but to make conscious choices; however, it is often characterised by reflexivity and actions which are taken consciously (Kogler, 2012; Vitanova et al., 2015). The transition from compliance to criticality was noticeable in terms of my participants’ conscious decisions and reflective understandings during their language learning journeys from Years 1 to 4.
The most notable difference found between the primary and secondary participants was the level of their evaluation and feedback on the course. In the case of Year 1 participants, they mainly complained about the lack of opportunity to participate and the over-crowded classrooms. Some of them, especially those who came from English-medium schools or who had already had good exposure to English, also raised their concerns regarding the content of the course. They believed the prescribed syllabus of the Remedial course was too simple and out-dated. The senior participants, on the other hand, were comparatively more critical and analytical about the same course. They not only complained about its uselessness and the high number of students in the classroom but also brought forward suggestions as to how the situation could be improved.

The senior participants’ engagement with the broader ideas of culture and indigenous language gave them the knowledge to reflect on and consider the worth of their indigenous culture and mother tongue. As they moved forward in their academic years and gained more experience, they were increasingly critical, and showed an increasing awareness of English as a vehicle for improvement but also as a language with a post colonial inheritance, encouraging hierarchy and division, and with the potential to displace indigenous languages. Their discussion on these issues provided me with insights that helped me better understand the reconstruction and renegotiation of English language learner identity in the context of this study.

In the context of this study, learners were found to be exercising their agency to reach certain possible selves and their desired imagined communities. Year 1 participants’ future aspirations (possible selves and imagined communities) were connected with what they wanted to become and where they wanted to be once they had acquired English language skills. However, in case of the senior participants, they articulated what they did not want to become once they had achieved proficiency in English (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Yameen, Enam, Kamran, Aijaz, Hania and Saleha (Year 1) saw themselves getting through a professional competitive exam so their possible selves could become qualified professionals. Nazia and Benazir’s (Year 1) imagined communities were situated outside Pakistan. They wanted to go abroad to study to
open up more choices and opportunities for the future. Hence, it was noticeable that my participants’ desires to become members of certain communities with particular imagined identities affected their English language learning trajectories (Kanno & Norton, 2003).

Like the construct of investment, the constructs of possible self and imagined community were in a state of flux during the evolution of English Language Learner Identity (ELLI) from Year 1 to Year 4. My senior participants’ possible selves were different from their junior counterparts. The experiences, struggles and awareness they had gained over the years possibly made them realise that there was more to think about than just being naively influenced by the apparently attractive promise of English. They had reached a point of view where they were able to see things beyond their surface value. They may have exercised their agency to access English in order to reach possible, limited selves within existing structures but they were no longer dominated by the prospect of material rewards as a result of learning English. Instead, they may have deliberately stepped away from the notion of the superiority of English, which was at the cost of losing their connection with their local languages and indigenous cultures. They saw themselves in a much more practical world, where the role of English was limited to certain, narrow circles such as academics and the so-called ‘posh’ class of society. Their agentive positions and possible selves were no longer preoccupied with a one-sided goal of learning English but were also conscious of the broader issues, that English itself was not value free but came with historical baggage. Beyond this, they were becoming aware of the broader implications of the dominance of English in relation to their indigenous languages and cultures. Their possible selves were not only associated with their future aspirations for material purposes but also with a deepening, historical and political awareness linked with their past and present.

8.4 Identity Negotiation (Influence of other identity categories on ELLI)

The language learner is situated in a larger social world where is he/she is associated with different social groups simultaneously, and carries different identities at the same
time, which cannot exist in isolation from each other (Sarup, 1993). The review of literature suggested that language learning practices may be influenced by learners’ gender, social class, national, linguistic and ethnic identities (Gao, 2008, 2010; Vandrick, 2014; Block 2015; Trofimovich & Trusëva, 2015). I noticed that my participants’ social class, gender, and ethnolinguistic identities had been considerably influential in their language learning journeys from past to present and remained instrumental in constructing their language learner identity. They had to negotiate through these identity categories to develop or redefine their language learner identity. They were faced with many different points of negotiation and challenge as they engaged with these different aspects of their language learner identity. These other elements, of class, gender and ethnolinguistic orientation, then added other layers and points of influence and negotiation.

According to Norton and Toohey (2011) the negotiation and reconstruction of identities take place in socially constructed contexts or communities of practice, and they also involve the exchange of knowledge for positioning one sort of identity over another. Similarly, my participants negotiated their identities depending on the different social settings and contexts they came across during their language learning journeys. They resisted the positioning imposed or assigned to them because of their gender, social class or ethnolinguistic associations. For example, one of my female participants, Hania (Year 1), was an eldest daughter and so she accepted that she should bear certain domestic responsibilities, including taking care of her younger siblings. The choice of school she attended, where she started learning English, was based on her parents’ social class and when she finally began to use English she had to be mindful of her mixed ethnolinguistic identity. Her mother’s language was different from her father’s and she had to speak both languages at home, along with English which was her medium of instruction at school and the language of her choice. Hence, her language learner identity was negotiated with her gender, social class and ethnolinguistic identities. Similarly, in the cases of other participants, their language learner identity was negotiated with and reconstructed from their other identity categories throughout their language learning journeys.
Most of my female participants including Benazir, Sania and Rubina (females, Year 1) had to negotiate their gender identities in the classroom at university where it was a particularly male dominated environment. They had to fight for the right to participate or face embarrassment when their male counterparts laughed at them. The teacher and the university, by not addressing this issue, were actually reinforcing inequity and discrimination. Participants had to face the challenges or availed facilities on the basis of their gendered positioning and gendered agency.

The role of gender was not just limited to classroom language learning activities, but also affected Saleha’s English learning activity with her male friends over the Internet. Similarly, (Kinginger, 2004; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005 and Talburt & Stewart, 1999) mentioned unequal opportunities for female learners in different contexts. Goldstein’s (2001) study is clearly relevant to the case of Saima who, like Goldstein’s Portuguese immigrant women, was denied access to English language evening classes because of her gender familial conventions. A similar case was that of Saleha who was not allowed to join online English language chat rooms because she was a girl. The studies of Swigart (1992) and Holmes (1993) partly confirm the findings of the current study. Both of them argue that most of the time women learn a second language in order to gain higher and more respectable socio-economic positions. Further to this, in my study, it can be seen that gender can bring with it very specific and often negative experiences and hurdles that can prevent access to or the development of English language skills. In my work, both male and female participants were equally involved in learning English to achieve their desired positions in their imagined communities. However, the females had to negotiate their gender identities in a wider variety of ways when it came to learning English, whereas it was comparatively easy for males to achieve their goals owing to their gender orientations in patriarchal, Pakistani society.

Conventional Pakistani society assigns roles to individuals on the basis of their gender. This practice affected my female participants’ language learning journeys. Hania, Nazia, Saima and Rubina (Year 1) negotiated their assigned female roles to make it possible to get some spare time from their domestic duties for their language learning
activities. However, at times they failed to negotiate their gendered roles, which affected their desires and objectives. Nazia became the first female in her family to get to university, negotiating her gender identity with her family, whereas in the case of Rubina, she could not get permission from her parents to attend evening language classes and so she was restricted in the ways she could enhance her language skills.

Pakistani society is divided into different social classes. There is a clear division and inherent conflict between the capital-owning class and the property-less class. People's class-consciousness and class identities are rooted in the economic structures of society, and are developed through collective action in their experiences of organisation and class struggles (Siddiqui, 2012). There is a great divide in the education system in Pakistan based on social and economic class, which are well rooted in the fabric of society (Mustafa, 2015). From primary to higher education, students in Pakistan are enrolled in institutions on the basis of their social class and economic resources, where one’s social class is based on one’s wealth and symbolic resources. However, the participants in this study came from all three social classes in Pakistani society. Social class is another key factor that contributes towards participants’ language learner identities. Membership of a particular social class meant that participants had to negotiate their positions to maximise their opportunities for learning English. For example, those from a lower class had fewer financial resources and so access to English was likely to be more limited and was not necessarily of a high quality. Also, their membership of a particular social class affected their chances of acquiring English language skills and fluency. Participants who classified themselves as members of the middle or lower middle classes were found to have been enrolled in elite and non-elite English-medium schools whereas those who categorised themselves as members of a lower strata of society ended up in vernacular-medium schools, where English was likely to be taught as a subject rather than as the medium of education, and where teachers were usually less qualified and adept in the subject. Those participants who were unable to attend English-medium schools due to their social class then seemed to suffer at higher education level, at university, as was noticeable through their narratives on their experiences of the Remedial English course. Therefore, they had to make up for this loss by attending private, English
language evening centres. However it was not possible for some of the participants to attend evening classes to catch up, due to their limited financial means or family restrictions. Participants were keen to maximise their chances for upward social mobility from their current positioning. They believed that they could take a step forward in society with the help of English, and if they were ready to forsake their current social class identity. For those from a perceived lower social class, such aspirations required a sacrifice of time and money in order for them to try to compete alongside those from a higher social class, whose privilege had already helped them to establish a powerful position within the classroom.

The final identity category that participants negotiated through was their ethnolinguistic identity. My participants belonged to different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds which they carried as a key to their sense of self. However, participants’ ethnolinguistic identities at times clashed with their English language learning practices, especially in the case of rural boys Ahmed, Enam and Kamran (Year 1). Ahmed belonged to a Punjabi family whose parents did not know any language other than Punjabi so he used Punjabi at home. When he moved to the university campus he had to speak Sindhi or Urdu, whereas in class he had to converse in English. This constant switch from one language to another made him negotiate his core ethnolinguistic identity, which was Punjabi. Similarly, Enam and Kamran, male participants from a rural area, were found often negotiating and switching between their Sindhi ethnicity and English, especially when they had to move to city life from their villages. Interestingly, all three boys were happy and comfortable with this change. They accepted it as a move towards progress and the achievement of their goals.

This strong, aspirational stance seemed to imbue them with a determined motivation to be successful in relation to English. So these students were multilingual and able to switch comparatively easily across a number of languages and this highlighted their ongoing, active engagement with language and the continual negotiation over their linguistic identity. The kind of hierarchy of languages, however, that was inherent in the system emphasised the relative importance or otherwise of some languages in
society and as a result challenged, and perhaps overtook, ethnolinguistic identity. A gradual critical awareness of this dilemma began to appear in the words of the more experienced students and a questioning of the language hierarchy occurred.

8.5 Linguistic, Cultural and Historical Consciousness

Since the current study was conducted in a postcolonial context, the anti-English and pro-indigenous language ideology cannot be ignored. The analysis of the data, especially the data drawn from the senior participants, suggested their serious concern for and dissatisfaction with the undue importance given to English vis-à-vis their mother tongue, and the cultural politics and hegemony of English in Pakistan. Writers like Phillipson (1992; 2010), Pennycook (1994; 1998), Canagarajah (2004a) are some of the main exponents who critique the over-dominance of English in postcolonial contexts and highlight the language tensions between English and local languages caused by the hegemony of English, as a result of the imperialistic process. English is so deeply rooted in the socio-political fabric of postcolonial states that it continues to dominate their linguistic landscapes even many years after imperialism.

My participants shared their views on the issues of linguistic imperialism and language death due to the over popularisation of English in Pakistan - now an independent state. They also raised their voices against the social injustice and linguistic inequalities caused by English in Pakistani society. Their views showed their linguistic, cultural and historical consciousness, which was increasingly significant for them as they began to situate English not only as a mechanism for enhancing outcomes for their future selves but also as a colonial means of control, and more recently as a language that was endangering the richness of their linguistic landscape and associated culture.

The focus group discussions with Years 2, 3, and 4 participants brought up the above-mentioned issues of hegemony, linguistic imperialism and social injustice caused by English in contemporary Pakistani society more vocally than their junior counterparts. Muzafar (Year 3) and Maheen (Year 4) clearly articulated how English primacy had
given rise to social injustice and reinforced class differences on the basis of the proficiency of English and how a certain class of English-speaking people had hijacked all the key opportunities in different sectors of life such as powerful positions in the bureaucracy and high positions in the private sector. This has deprived less proficient users of English of the many opportunities where English serves as a gatekeeper. In this competition of English with other local languages, the speakers of other languages have to fight for their linguistic rights but eventually meet with disappointment in terms of securing a position in the job market. However, Pennycook (2007) believes that the promise of English for material and symbolic gains is false, and that it deludes learners of English. He tries to locate English language teaching within the broader context of colonialism and calls it an imperialist enterprise (Pennycook, 1998).

Senior participants believed that this uncalled for superiority of English had generated a sort of mental slavery among those who did not have any other means of progressing. This dichotomy has been further widened because of the parallel system of education (Mustafa, 2015). Children receive a particular type of education according to their socio-economic status, and those who end up in English-medium schools turn out to be the privileged ones when it comes to success in academic, professional and social life. Those who attend vernacular-medium state schools are marginalised. In this way English language education becomes an exclusive right of the rich and those belonging to the lower socio-economic brackets have to be content with sub-standard or, more usually, no English language education at all. This situation turns out to be more crucial when students from these different streams of education reach higher education, at university, where all of them, irrespective of their academic background and proficiency level, are taught in the same class without any consideration of their individual needs.

My senior participants’ views were found to be in line with Mustafa (2015) when they argued in favour of the medium of instruction in L1 rather than in English. Zara believed that one could best express oneself in MT and through his or her first language, a student could better acquire knowledge and excel in his or her studies.
Muhammad suggested that students could not think creatively in a foreign language. The situation in Pakistan is far more complex than it appears. It is a multilingual country where there are four major provincial, one national and more than 50 regional languages spoken. How far it would be pragmatically possible to provide every child with instruction in his or her mother tongue is a thought to ponder on. Hina (Year 2), on the other hand, was concerned about the influence of the English lexicon on local languages. She believed if the local languages continued to borrow English words, they would soon cease to exist.

There have always been debates amongst educationalists, academia, civil society, and social and linguistic experts about the role of English medium instruction and its subsequent impact on local and regional languages. Qureshi (2008) and Mustafa (2015) discuss this issue at length in the context of the Sindhi language. Mustafa (2015) suggested that the imposition of English-medium instruction at primary level might negatively affect children’s critical faculty, as the acquisition of language is a biological process, which has a symbiotic relationship with the development of the brain’s cognitive growth. She argued that if a child is forced to learn any other unfamiliar language that is not his mother tongue, his cognitive development is bound to suffer. In clear contrast to Mustafa (2015), Antonella Sorace’s extensive research on bilingualism and children’s cognition at the University of Edinburgh clarifies many myths related to this issue. Sorace (2006) argues that according to research in psychology and neuroscience, there is no link between children’s intelligence and bilingualism and also it is no more than a myth that bilingual children are slowed down in their general cognitive development by the burden of handling two languages. She further points out that recent research discredited the idea that bilingual children often mix two languages in the early stages of language acquisition leading to the failure of learning either of the two. Here, it could be argued that in the Pakistani context, where language education is already apartheid, implementation of instruction in L1 would further widen the gap between privileged learners of English and those who attend state-run public institutes.
Cultural enslavement by English was another debatable issue raised by my participants. They believed that it was not only their Mother Tongue (MT), which had suffered, but their culture as well. Maheen (Year 4), Muzafar (Year 3) and Tariq (Year 2) said they would not want their cultural roots to be replaced by an English lifestyle (dressing and manners). They realised that the national culture of the country and their ethnolinguistic identity had been eroded by the transplantation of English into their indigenous lives. Hussain and Mukesh (Year 3) held society, parents and peers responsible for the obsession with English. Hussain argued that young students are bound to follow whatever is the norm of society whereas Mukesh disapproved of the so called-standard of contemporary Pakistani society where English is the parameter of intelligence and social class. They asked for a change of mentality away from a slavish acceptance of English as the preferred language and of an English lifestyle. This may be partly associated with globalisation and the influence of the media. However, contrastingly, Touqeer (Year 4) believed learning English could not do any harm to his identity and culture.

This debate on the influence of learning English on indigenous cultures and languages can be seen and understood in terms of socio-cultural theory, based on Vygotskian’s theory of human development (Vygotsky, 1978 cited in Kramsch 2000, p.138), that language is created from its historical and cultural context, not as a separate entity merely informed by or linked to a learning context. Similarly, socio-cultural perspectives in SLL (Second Language Learning) assume that the culture of the target language cannot be separated from the teaching of it (Kramsch, 2000). Therefore, the construction of English language learner identity does not only involve attaining linguistic knowledge but also the influence of the culture associated with it. It is that very negotiation of my participants, through cultures and languages, which underpins the construct of English language learner identity in postcolonial Pakistan.

8.6 Third Space Hybrid English Language Learner Identity

The overall findings of this study, drawn from both primary and secondary participants, reinforced the idea of the indispensability of English language learning in
their lives, for academic and social success. Although they believed English to be a colonial legacy that exacerbated social injustice and linguistic inequity, it remained the goal of all participants in their past and present journeys. The primacy of English and its significance for their future possible selves and their imagined communities led my participants to invest in English in multiple ways, utilising their learner identity. As theorised in social constructionist and poststructuralist perspectives of identity, English Language Learner Identity (ELLI) was found to be dynamic and subject to change, and this was noticeable in this study in the constructs of investment, learner agency and possible selves leading to historical and cultural consciousness. My participants went through transitions, negotiations and renegotiations at different stages in the evolution of English language learner identity, which led them to a ‘hybridised’ identity that occurred in a ‘third space’ which allowed identity construction and reconstruction whenever needed or required, hence making it an ongoing process.

Third space (Bhabha 1994) was an important construct for identity construction and negotiation in the postcolonial context of this study, where different influences and elements passing through the development of the ELLI encountered and transformed each other (Block, 2007), creating a hybrid identity that was dynamic and fluid. Moreover, the key constructs of the ELLI transformed and also overlapped in this evolution, as shown in the ELLI model (see diagram 5) but did not completely merge into each other. This very notion of hybridised identity is compatible with the social constructionist and poststructuralist concepts of identity used in the current study, which is a move away from a static, passive and essentialised concept of identity.

The concept of third space, as developed by Bhabha (1994, 1996), portrays the negotiation of culture and identity within the purview of colonial inequity, and antagonism is relevant to the postcolonial context of this study where English serves as the means of social inequity and linguistic antagonism. My participants were seen as having an increasingly critical sensitivity to and awareness of English as a vehicle for improvement, but also as a language with a postcolonial inheritance, encouraging hierarchy and division, and with the potential to displace indigenous languages.
However, they negotiated ‘a middle way’ where opposing elements (a desire to learn English vis-à-vis awareness of safeguarding the MT and indigenous culture) co-existed in a common space without challenging the authenticity of one over the other, except in very few instances where two participants (Muzafar and Maheen) completely denied the significance of English in their lives, which interestingly contradicted their own acts as portrayed in their narratives. The views of Bisma (Year 4), Hussain (Year 3), Hina (Year) and the majority of the Year 1 participants including Enam, Kamran, Yameen, Hania, Benazir Nazia, and Zaheer, particularly reinforced the notion of co-existence of English language learning practices with their membership of, and sentiments attached to, their indigenous languages and cultures. They were often seen to find a balance between local needs and global imperatives (Canagarajah, 1999). The participants’ double positive orientation towards English and their own language might prove positive and helpful in their English language learning journeys as was noticeable in Polat and Schallert (2013). They found the most successful learners of a second language showed a strong identification with their home language and an affiliation with L2. Similarly, Cervatiuc (2009) in his study suggests that the most proficient learners of English were those who mingled within the target language culture and social groups.

It was noticeable in the data throughout, that the construction of English language learner identity within a postcolonial context was characterised by the constant negotiation and renegotiation, sometimes in the form of challenges and contestation in learners’ social and academic environments and at times within their pro and anti English perceptions and sentiments. The hybridity of ELLI provided them with a mode of articulation and a space (third space) that engendered new possibilities (Bhabha, 1994) without completely losing old ones. Thus, it can be argued that the third space allowed them to have a collective rather than an individual positioning. Bhatt (2008) argues that third space facilitates the construction of new social identities a ‘discursive space’ that offers individuals the possibility of a new representation, of meaning making and of agency. Bhatt’s idea of ‘discursive space’ is consistent with social constructionist perspective of identity construction through social interaction (Gergen, 1999; Shotter, 1993). The hybridity of the ELLI accommodated negotiations.
which forced neither assimilation nor collaboration, but rather provided my participants with a neutral zone where conflicting assumptions clashed but did not result in having only one privileged or prioritised notion (Bhabha, 1996). It was possible in such a space that they had their ELLI constructed and reconstructed.

Finally, I argue that the notions of third space and hybridised language learner identities allowed my participants to embrace the cultural otherness of English diversity and dominant ideologies, to negotiate and redefine their postcolonial identities without losing their sense of ‘self’. The ambiguities and contradictions they came across in their language learning journeys may be directed towards constructing a fluid language learner identity which remains dynamically inclusive, through the process of the construction of ELLI, as Bhabha (1994) describes hybridity as an ongoing process.

8.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the conceptual framework developed in this study based on a model (see diagram 5). The model showed the provisional evolution of English language learner identity through a dotted line that mainly represented my participants’ English language learning journeys from Year 1 to 4 in a degree programme at the University of Sindh. Following the theoretical framing of social constructionist and poststructuralist perspectives of identity, the current study suggested language learner identity as a dynamic, multi-layered, fluid and complex construct. The possible evolution of ELLI was built on the constructs of investment, learner agency, possible selves and historical cultural consciousness, and other influences leading to a hybridised third space identity that allowed continual negotiation and renegotiation to accept ‘otherness’ without losing the sense of ‘self’. The key constructs of ELLI were subject to change in different contexts over a period of time.

The evolution of ELLI, as seen in the model, captured my participants’ engagement with English in the Remedial English course, however, their investment with English
in their social and prior academic settings was also considered. It was noticeable that their investment was marked with compliance at one end of the evolution, developing into criticality towards the other. In addition to this, participants’ gender, social and ethnolinguistic orientations and their ideological stances were instrumental in the formation of their ELLI. These identity categories interacted with their language learning processes in a number of ways by challenging and contesting their agency and possible selves. There was an intrinsic relationship of learner agency with their investment which was integral to ELLI. If learners were successful in their bids for stronger learner agency, they usually ended up with enhanced investments. Similarly, investment had a meaningful connection between my participants’ desires and commitment to achieve certain possible selves in their imagined communities which offered them a greater range of future prospects.
Chapter 9 Conclusion

Introduction

This PhD research studied the construction of English Language Learner Identity (ELLI) at a public sector university in postcolonial Pakistan. The main aim of the thesis was to explore the construction and evolution of English language learner identity by adopting case study methodology, which examined in detail how learners of English at the University of Sindh (UoS) negotiated and reconstructed their language learner identities during their English language learning journeys. I recruited primary (Year 1) and secondary (Years 2, 3 and 4) participants to get a sense of the potential ongoing transformations that took place in the construction of language learner identity in the contemporary context of the study.

My initial readings around the area of second language learning research led me to second language and identity research. From there I began to read more on issues around language learning and identity in different contexts. I specifically ended up studying English language learners’ identity construction and negotiations in an indigenous, postcolonial context. In order to better understand the phenomenon of English language learner identity construction and negotiation I adopted a social constructionist theory of identity by Jenkins (2008), influenced by a poststructuralist perspective of language learner identity put forward by SLL and identity theorists/researchers Norton (2000) and Block (2007). I decided to use a poststructuralist view of identity to complement the social constructionist perspective on identity, as the latter required a refined language learner polish in order to more accurately reflect the nuances of this particular kind of social identity. These synthesised views on identity from social constructionist and poststructuralist perspectives formed the theoretical frame for this study and helped me analyse the data from a dual and nuanced perspective.
A great deal of language learning research in the 1970s and 1980s conceptualised the identities of language learners as their fixed personalities, learning styles, and motivations (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2013). By contrast, more recent works (see Block, 2007; Norton & Toohey, 2011) on language learner identities adopt a poststructural understanding of identities, as fluid, context-dependent, and context-producing, related to particular historical and cultural circumstances. My study adopted a similar perspective of identity formation, and its key findings suggest that language learners in Pakistan have multidimensional, fluid language learner identities. The nature of that fluidity and dynamism was explored in order to understand more fully their contextual, cultural and historical issues and influences. The participants negotiated their identities, accepting, challenging or actively claiming the identities they wished to have. Using the constructs of investment, learner agency and possible selves from SLL and identity literature (Norton & Toohey, 2011), I identified that each language learner had a unique journey, temporally, geographically and ideologically, which led to perceptions of possible future selves and a negotiated and hybridised English language learner identity, situated in the third space (Bhabha, 1994). The constructs of investment, learner agency and possible selves are typically manifested in the context of this study, and they are integrated with the constructs of historical and cultural consciousness and third space hybridity which are unique to this study. This study also engaged with participants’ gender, social class and ethnolinguistic identities as part of the negotiated construction of their English language learner identity (ELLI).

This chapter forms the conclusion of my study on negotiation and construction of ELLI in postcolonial Pakistan, where I share my reflections on the answers to my research questions, my theoretical understandings and the possible implications of this study. Consideration will be given to the limitations of the study, possible future research and, finally, my journey as a researcher in creating and producing this piece of work.
9.1 Reflections on the Research Aim and Questions

In this section I revisit the key findings of the study and see how the research questions and aim set earlier in the thesis have been addressed. The research questions were created ahead of the data collection to help shape the data collection tools.

The overarching research aim of this study was:

To explore the negotiation and construction of English language learner identity at a public sector university in postcolonial Pakistan.

This overarching research aim led me to form the following research questions

i) Why, to what extent and in what ways are participants invested in learning English?

Participants were found invested in learning English in order to gain not only economic but also symbolic and social benefits. They were invested in English with a notion that this would help them to gain a range of resources which would not only change their academic status but would also benefit their socio-economic position. This investment occurred in a number of ways and at various levels, from past to present, in my participants’ lives. For the majority of the Year 1 participants the main purpose of their investment in English language was to attain cultural and linguistic capital and to gain their desired possible selves, with success in the job market or in further education. However, the extent of their investment was strongly affected by their families’ socio-economic status, and accessibility to particular kinds of schooling. They began their language learning journeys when they were enrolled in school; however, some of them had already begun engaging with English within the family, prior to formal English language learning. Some of my participants attended vernacular-medium state schools, others went to non-elite English-medium schools and a few were enrolled in elite English-medium schools. The extent of their investment mainly depended on the type of the school they attended. So the
participants who attended elite English-medium schools were obviously invested in English language far more than their vernacular-medium counterparts. Yet, there was evidence that some students attending non-elite or vernacular schools were at times able to find alternative provision, in the form of private tuition, help from family and friends, and the media, when existing provision was found wanting.

The investment in English language was not limited to formal education at school or college. Participants were involved in language learning at a personal level within their families, social spaces (social media and friendship circles) and also through private evening language classes or tuition centres (see chapters 4 and 5). Participants who belonged to the upper middle class usually had parents who were educated, and in some cases their mothers were found to be working women. This group of participants was invested in learning English in their homes with the help of their educated parents. These participants also relied on English newspapers, movies and English television shows for learning English, whereas the participants whose parents were not educated sought help from their educated and more proficient siblings and cousins. This was found mainly in the case of participants who came from rural and lower middle class backgrounds. In certain cases, investment took place through friendship circles where groups of students got together to teach each other and practise their English language skills. Social media such as Facebook also played a part in learners’ investment.

Another way of investing in English language was through attending private language classes, in the evening. Most of the participants, regardless of their academic background (vernacular-medium, elite or non elite English-medium), took private English language tuition to get extra support for learning English. These evening language classes tended to be a popular investment amongst participants in Years 1 and 2, whereas participants from Years 3 and 4 mainly relied on self study at home as their mode of investment. This type of investment mostly took place between high school and the first year of higher education.

The data showed some interesting findings regarding participants’ investment in English at higher education level which was the main focus of the study. The
participants were invested in English language through the Remedial English course (see chapter 4). This mode of investment was common to all participants in Years 1 and 2, where it was taught as a compulsory subject for four semesters (2 years). Participants who came from vernacular-medium schools and were unable to have private tuition expected to learn English and gain some proficiency through the Remedial English course. However, the reality of the classroom situation and the learning outcomes turned out to be very different from what they expected. Through this investment some participants gained the confidence to face a huge audience through giving class presentations, others enjoyed group-based learning while some others were cornered and laughed at whenever they tried to participate in their class of more than 100 students.

Participants’ different ways and means of investment in English language learning raises the importance of learner agency as a means of realising access points and providing opportunities for practising and developing language skills. Participants’ investment and agency helped them to move towards their desired possible selves. This leads into the next research question, which focused on the nature of learner agency in this case study.

ii) What is the nature of learner agency in the construction of possible selves and language learner identity?

The key findings of the study suggested that participants exercised their learner agency to achieve their goals of English language learning at almost all levels, from school to higher education. Learner agency played an important role in the making of English language learner identity in all the participants, from Year 1 to Year 4. However, the nature of the learner agency itself was fluid and capable of change over a period of time and in different contexts and situations. This meant that learner agency was affected by experiences, increased critical awareness and gendered and class driven narratives. Initially, in Years 1 and 2, participants’ agency was found to be active in terms of trying to find alternative resources and access for language
development, but this agency was also compliant with the significant societal messages around the importance of English language learning as a means of upward social mobility. However, this appeared to change in later years, and when they had reached Years 3 and 4, learner agency had begun to develop as a critical construct.

Participants exercised learner agency not only in the context of the English language classroom but also in social settings. In the case of participants who came from state schools, where it was likely they had received little or no English education until secondary school, they had to make personal efforts to begin to learn English, either with the help of a sibling or relatives at home. Later in life, as they progressed academically, they enrolled for private tuition or joined friendship circles, utilising their learner agency to achieve their goals. At university, the nature of agency appeared to be different from that of previous years. In the Remedial class, they had to exercise their agency to find a way of participating and being heard in a crowd of more than 100 students but there seemed to be little which could be done within the constraints of the class. Consequently, participants looked for other ways of extending their capacities, through setting up conversational groups, interacting with English speakers on the Internet and attending evening language classes.

It was noticed that participants’ gender and their family background (social class) considerably influenced their learner agency. In the case of my female participants who belonged to the lower middle class of society, it was not easy for them to exercise their agency compared to their male counterparts, who had greater freedom and autonomy to find ways to go out and create opportunities for themselves. Due to family convention and cultural limitations, some female participants were often restricted to learning English at formal academic institutions or at home. They were not allowed to attend evening language classes or join their university colleagues after classes finished. However, the situation was different for female participants from urban areas of the city/province where attitudes towards women were more modern, and as a result they were more proactive and had a stronger learner agency.
The nature of learner agency, like that of investment, interestingly, was capable of change from Year 1 to Year 4, in terms of participants achieving their goal of acquiring proficiency in English. In the early years, students exercised their agency to access English learning opportunities without being critical about the language’s domination of their MT and indigenous culture. In years 3 and 4 their agency took the form of a more analytical consideration of the historical and cultural baggage associated with English, which encouraged them to question the status quo. They also became more robust in their concerns about inadequacies in the teaching practices in place at the UoS. They became active in suggesting ways in which the shortcomings of the course could be addressed to enhance its effectiveness and output. In addition, my senior participants analysed and compared the ‘rightness’ of learning English at the expense of indigenous languages and cultures. They believed their own cultures and languages were overshadowed and possibly displaced due to the powerful value ascribed to English in Pakistani society. In short, as we look across the year groups, participants’ approaches towards learning English became more analytical and their perceptions of English as a language also began to change. This analytical element challenged established assumptions about English and led to a more nuanced and contextualised account of the students’ relationships with the English language. Participants viewed language now through a post colonial lens and instead of simply seeing English language development as a means to future individual success, they began to gain insights into the wider ramifications of English language learning as a means of cultural and linguistic displacement in wider society. This presented a dilemma for students between the needs of the individual and the importance of taking a stand on behalf of their indigenous culture and languages.

The data analysed under research questions 1 and 2 showed that participants in this study invested in English and exercised learner agency in several ways. They did so to reach a positive future positioning which in this study was termed as ‘possible selves’. The possible selves varied with individual participants, however. The majority desired to see themselves as successful, settled, and socially stable individuals in the future in their imagined communities. A close analysis suggested that most of the participants in Years 1 and 2, and some from Years 3 and 4, saw their possible selves capable of
qualifying in the competitive civil service exam, studying abroad and getting a good job in their home country. Some senior participants from Years 3 and 4, on the other hand, dreamed of being somewhat different people in the future, who were conscious and critical users of English and who did not only blindly follow English language legacies (culture and lifestyles) but desired to be caretakers of their indigenous languages and cultures. Their possible selves were balanced between a sense of responsibility towards their mother tongues and cultures and a sense of realisation that there was a need to compete in the modern world by learning English as an international language but without allowing it to take over their indigenous selves.

iii) How do other identity markers (e.g. social class, gender, ethnolinguistic identities) influence or help to shape language learner identity?

Other identity markers included my participants’ social class, gender and ethnolinguistic identities, through which they had to negotiate their language learner identities. From the very beginning of their English language learning journeys up to their present language learning, participants’ gender, social class and ethnolinguistic associations played an interesting role in the construction of their language learner identities in the context of this study.

The data showed that participants’ investment in English language learning was shaped by their social class, from the time they began their language learning journeys in primary school. Those participants who categorised themselves as members of the lower middle class tended to be less invested in English due to the type of educational institution they attended as children. They were provided with English language education in vernacular-medium schools where the curriculum and teaching were weak, whereas their English-medium counterparts had an advantage because of their middle or upper middle class status. They were able to get quality English language education in schools where English was the medium of instruction and where investment occurred naturally as a part and parcel of the overall environment. In addition, those participants who came from middle class families usually had educated parents who ensured English was practised at home and ensured their children had
access to English television programmes, magazines etc. However, such support was not possible in the case of participants who came from rural, uneducated families.

Participants from the lower socio-economic classes had to overcome a number of disadvantages in order to move forward. Interestingly, although social class did affect and limit language-learning opportunities when these young people were growing up, as young adults they started to find ways and means of becoming invested in order to achieve their goals, for example they became proactive in learning English with the help of educated relatives or cousins. So, at the point when all the participants reached higher education level, the level of investment of students with lower socio-economic status was comparable to the middle class students and, at times, might have been considered as deeper than their middle or upper middle class counterparts. This suggests that participants’ social class had a greater impact in the initial stages of the construction of their language learner identity but its influence became less obvious in the later stages of their identity formation.

The influence of gender identity was significant in the case of my female participants. They had to actively negotiate their language learner identity around their gender, which brought with it certain predefined roles within the home and some specific duties in society at large. These assigned roles and acts considerably affected their English language learning practices. The findings showed female participants had to restrict their English language learning practices to certain areas and times. For example, some of them were not allowed by their parents to attend evening classes far from their neighbourhood or to practise their English skills with strangers on the Internet. In some cases, female participants’ interactions with English were very limited due to the domestic responsibilities assigned to them at home when they returned from university. The impact of participants’ gender on their English language learner identity was noticed in more formal environments as well. Some of my female participants experienced discrimination and discomfort because of their gender in their Remedial English course. Whenever they managed to get a chance to participate or to present in front of the whole class they were laughed at and this made them lose their confidence. Such behaviour discouraged them from coming forward and practising
their English language skills in the classroom. This suggests that not only were there specific roles and restrictions on women but that there was also an accepted discrimination against them in their university language environment.

Finally, participants’ ethnolinguistic identities played a role in the making of their language learner identities. In the context of this study, participants’ ethnicities were intertwined with their L1s. All the participants were from a particular ethnic and linguistic background, which influenced their language learning practices and their language learner identities. Multilingual identities were common. For example, those participants who spoke three different languages had to switch between these languages in different contexts. At home they would speak one language, in their academic institution another, and with friends and society yet another language. This continual switching between languages was negotiated every time they interacted in English. It was noted that the older participants (3rd and 4th Years) had become quite sensitive about language switching, no longer seeing it as a value neutral activity but as one which was actively displacing indigenous languages and potentially displacing cultural and literary accomplishments, as the result of the continuation of historical and colonial messages implicitly in the structures of contemporary society.

iv) **How may language learner identity evolve over a period of time?**

This final research question explored artificially the entire process of the construction and negotiation of English language learner identity at a public sector university in postcolonial Pakistan. It was possible to speculate on possible shifts and changes solely by looking at participants from Years 1 to 4 in a degree programme at IELL. However, their past language learning experiences and future aspirations were also taken into consideration. It was concluded that English language learner identity in the context of the study was reinforced as dynamic, multi-layered, fluid, and hybridised and occurred in a third space, which allowed negotiation and renegotiation across time and space. The overall findings drawn from participants from Years 1 to 4 confirmed that ELLI is mainly characterised by investment, learner agency and possible selves. It was noticed that ELLI appeared to shift and evolve with every passing year. The
nature and extent of investment and agency found in Year 1 and 2 participants was different from what was found in Years 3 and 4. The possible selves of the junior participants were not the same as their senior counterparts’.

The evolution of English language learner identity is represented in the model I developed and presented in Chapter 8 (see diagram 5), which showed a dotted line connecting the four years at university. At one end I placed Year 1 and at the opposite end Year 4. As the line evolved from Year 1 through to Year 4 so did English language learner identity. A distinct shift was seen in Year 3 and 4 participants, as their linguistic, cultural and historical consciousness was raised; this was missing in the early stages of their English language learner identity construction. In addition, in the evolution of English language learner identity, other influences affected the ways this was shaped – social class, gender and ethnolinguistic identities. Social class and gendered identities were either inhibitors of ELLI, as in the case of those from rural areas with low socio-economic status and some female participants, or capable of enhancing accessibility and resources as was noticeable in middle and upper social class, urban participants.

However, dynamic as these ELLIs were, they did not necessarily mean inevitable disadvantage. Some participants from rural/poor backgrounds found ways of developing their agency and creating opportunities for their improvement. All students had the potential to challenge the English language’s dominance and primacy in their society and some of them created critical spaces to engage with and debate the implications of maintaining the status quo in relation to English, and the possible ways that the displacement of indigenous languages and cultures could shift and regain a significant place in Pakistan. In this context, this critical space or spaces is called ‘third space language learner identity’, where some English language learners’ identities were found in the dynamic hybridity characterised by change, fluidity, critique and challenge.
9.2 Implications

This study adopted an instrumental case study method, which dealt with learners’ individual language learning journeys and experiences in a particular context. Hence, the implications of this study may not be generalised or considered universal. This kind of qualitative approach does not seek to achieve a transformation of understanding, but its sophistication (Stake, 1995) and potentially provide a typicality that may hold resonance in other similar contexts. However, as this study focused on the construction and negotiation of English language learner identity, which has already been studied in other contexts, it may also be seen as reflecting and typifying a particular phenomenon, and may offer some transferability. The implications of this study may be useful for future research in the same or similar contexts. The implications of my study may be categorised in the following headings:

- Theoretical
- Pedagogical
- Practical

9.2.1 Theoretical Implications

The literature review informing the theoretical frame laid out for this study allowed me to analyse a conceptual gap identified in SLL and identity literature. First of all, the research studied the relationship between identity and language learning in a postcolonial, non-native context where this relationship had not been adequately investigated. Furthermore, by exploring identity from social constructionist and poststructuralist perspectives, and considering the relationship of language learner identity with social class, gender and ethnolinguistic identities, this thesis draws conceptually on ideas from different disciplines such as social psychology, sociology, language education, sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. Through drawing creatively from these disciplines, the thesis has been able to explore the various subtleties of language learner identity negotiations and shifts in emphasis, and to better conceptualise ELLI in a postcolonial context.
This thesis invites those in the field of language learner identity to take account of the varied influences on language learners across space and time because they are not mere mechanical subjects of language acquisition but human beings with different backgrounds and contexts who are participating in an entirely new ‘lifeworld’ (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). This study draws readers’ attention to the idea of integrating the theoretical concept of language learners’ multi-faceted identities into classroom practice by considering them as social actors whose identities are contextualised. This can empower language learners in the second language classroom. In addition, this study provides implications for methodological approaches to identity and SLL research by introducing the idea of studying language learner identity in a longitudinal manner, examining learners’ past experiences, present journeys and future aspirations through detailed narratives and ethnographic observations.

9.2.2 Pedagogical Implications

My study offers a few suggestions at a pedagogical level for language teachers and language learners. The findings of this study suggest that teachers may need to consider adopting certain interventions and new strategies in their English language teaching practices, for better learning outcomes and to produce independent and conscious students. There are implications for learners as well as they may need to reconsider their roles and responsibilities as students and as active members (agents) of the wider society.

- Implications for Teachers

Firstly, it is suggested that language teachers should understand and acknowledge second language learners as extremely complex social beings with multiple identities, and then incorporate this into their lesson plans and teaching practices in the classroom. For example, the participants in the present study are young male and female university students from lower middle, middle and upper class backgrounds.
and from Sindhi, Urdu and Punjabi families in Pakistan. As Norton (2000) points out, second language learners already have identities, whether this is formally recognised by language teachers or not. She proposes that the language teacher needs to understand how the identities of learners are engaged in the formal language classroom. Understanding each individual second language learner’s multifaceted identity can assist language teachers to understand second language learners’ utterances and behaviour, to manage classroom conflict in a constructive, mutually beneficial way, and to create a multi-respected and multi-voiced learning atmosphere in the class. Subject to the size of the class (number of students), I suggest that this might be achieved by arranging informal conversations with each second language learner at the beginning of the language programme to discover learners’ experiences, life histories, desires and needs, so that teachers can gain some understanding of their students’ identities. The implementation of such a step at the teacher’s end would definitely require administrative support. I have discussed this under the heading of practical implications.

Secondly, my readings and reflections on the comments made by students indicate that there are important aspects of language learning to consider further in relation to pedagogy. In practice, language teachers could foster second language learners’ sense of being legitimate English speakers by introducing varieties of English to students, presenting British English as only one type of English amongst many, and validating the English that second language learners speak (e.g. Chinese English, Indian English, Pakistani English) as legitimate variations of English. As Holliday (2005, p.13) argues, ‘because English is international, its ownership has shifted to whoever wishes to use it’. Similarly, Norton (1997) suggests that second language learners who view themselves as legitimate speakers of English can own English. Furthermore, it may also be helpful to inform second language learners about both the ‘native principle’ and the ‘intelligibility principle’ in pronunciation (Levis, 2005). Second language learners need to know that achieving a native English accent is an almost unrealistic goal, and that a native English accent might not be necessary to become a successful English speaker. All these strategies could possibly help second language learners feel comfortable with their own English accents, and thus they might feel less reluctant to
speak English before larger audiences (in the classroom) or with more proficient
speakers of English.

Thirdly, language teachers should consider adopting the strategy of critical pedagogy,
what Canagarajah (1999) calls pedagogy of appropriation. This might ensure that
English language education produces politically aware and conscious learners (Freire,
1972; Giroux, 1992) with critical faculties, to consider the second language not just as
a commodity but also as a carrier of another culture, as no education is ideologically
neutral. They possibly need to realise and convey to their students that second
language learning, especially as in the context of the current study where English is a
colonial legacy, should be not be encouraged at the cost of first languages, and that all
local languages are important in their own right. Critical pedagogy (Pennycook, 2001)
can therefore be used to transform learners and create a better world in which learners
can easily manifest their core identities and local cultures along with their second
language learning. Also, it can help teachers to act as transformative intellectuals
working towards social transformation rather than being a spokesperson for one
language and one culture. English could then be used as a tool for emancipation and
social and linguistic equality, rather than enslavement and injustice.

Fourthly, language teachers need to be aware of the different academic backgrounds,
prior education and proficiency level of students attending English language courses.
This will help them organise their lessons according to the needs of the learners, and
to develop an understanding of learners’ investment in English language learning. It is
also important for language teachers to provide equal opportunities for all the students
(males/females/favourites or otherwise) present in the class; encouraging only one
group of students and asking only them to come forward and participate may possibly
be a reason for the lack of interest from other less proficient and shy individuals. The
use of student-centred teaching methodologies can help in this regard as conventional
lecture-method strategies, it can be argued, have now become ineffective in modern
language classrooms. In addition, the teacher should ensure that no instances of gender
discrimination and gender inequality negatively affect female learners’ participation
and opportunities to practise their language skills in front of their male peers.
Finally, it seems that some language teachers might need to rethink their attitudes towards second language learners communicating with their fellow students in their first language inside and outside the classroom. Beardsmore (1993) argues that it is unnatural to expect large homogeneous groups of speakers to interact spontaneously in a second language outside the formal classroom. This study also demonstrated that IELL (UoS), which has a substantial number of multilingual and multi-ethnic students, discourages the use of English outside the classroom and this is disliked by a great number of other students. Furthermore, language teachers need to be realistic in acknowledging that in classroom activities (pair/group work) students can plan their participation and presentations better if they are allowed to use their first language alongside English. This may be important in providing them affective and psychological support to deal with the task more efficiently.

- Implications for Students

This study also has implications for English language learners. The key findings suggested the importance of English in the context of this study. Participants and relevant literature (Rahman, 2005; Shamim 2011; Mahboob, 2002; Coleman, 2010) reached a consensus that learning English language and acquiring proficiency in it has significant advantages in developing countries like Pakistan, thus it is inevitable that people will want to learn the language. However, learners might need to have a sense of proportion and adopt strategies to allow them to organise against dominant ideologies (Canagarajah, 1999). By doing this they will use English to their advantage without sacrificing their indigenous languages and culture. There is a need to maintain a balanced approach, a ‘third space’, which can possibly be achieved by taking agentive positions; mere realisation and passive ideas will not help. There is need to take action, action for critical consciousness in education (Freire, 2005) combined with a practical response (praxis) to the needs of the present time. Today’s learners will be tomorrow’s teachers and policy makers; it will then be their turn to translate their ideas into actions.
9.2.3 Practical Implications

The findings from this study offer some practical suggestions mainly for two groups of stakeholders: policy/decision makers at i) The Ministry of Education ii) The Higher Education Commission and iii) The University of Sindh. The practical implications may be beneficial for English language teaching programmes at higher education level or public sector universities and could be used to enhance the functioning of the Remedial English course at UoS.

- **Large Classes**

One of the most common problems of any public sector university in Pakistan is the size of their classes, which impacts on the learning outcomes in language teaching. This issue was highlighted in this study, where overcrowded Remedial English classes (120 students on average) at the UoS negatively affected students’ language learning experiences. Likewise it was difficult for the language teacher to do his job efficiently. It created problems for seating arrangements for the students and classroom management issues for the teacher. Hence, it is suggested that language classes should be split into small groups of 20 to 30 students. However, this change might have financial implications because it will require extra classrooms to be built and more English language teachers to be hired to address this issue.

- **‘It is not for all’**

Keeping in mind the lack of foreign funding and the limited budget allocated for public sector universities from the Pakistani government, it is suggested that a new strategy might be adopted to deal with the issue of large class sizes effectively. The university conducts an entry test for admission to different disciplines every year. This entry test is has a section on English language, which carries 30% of the overall mark and comprises questions/entries on grammar, vocabulary and English usage. Students who score 80% or above in the section on English could be exempt from taking this course in year 1 (two semesters), but otherwise it would be compulsory for all students.
for the first four semesters of any degree programme. In order to better evaluate who should be exempt from the Remedial course in Year 1, the university testing services or the test makers need to update the section on English in the entry test. It does not contain any reading or writing passages, which are part of the course in Year 1 of Remedial English. This would significantly reduce the size of the Remedial English class which usually caters for students who already know the basics of English taught in year 1. In this way those students who come from vernacular-medium backgrounds and those who do not have an adequate foundation of English grammar, tenses and vocabulary would be taught effectively in comparatively smaller groups. This way they would get a reasonable opportunity to practise their language skills with learners at the same proficiency level.

Additionally, the exempt (more proficient) students could also be engaged in helping their fellow students on a voluntary basis, which could give them more exposure and experience before they actually start their professional careers. The issue of space (in classrooms) could be addressed by more efficient organisation of timetables and utilising seminar libraries and laboratories, which remain vacant most of the week.

- **Equipped Classrooms**

The classroom observations and students’ views highlighted the issue of the lack of the required teaching tools, such as audio-visual aids, in language classrooms. Many of the classrooms did not even have white boards and effective sound systems. Almost all the participants commented on the need for an overhead projector in their language classroom. They found it a helpful, interactive English language-learning tool. These audio-visual aids would enable language teachers to teach English using online resources, videos for communication skills, and audio clips, which might help students improve their listening skills and pronunciation.
• Revised/Updated Course Outline

Although this study did not aim to evaluate the syllabus of the Remedial English course, one of the significant issues raised by my participants was the course outline. They believed it was not fit for the purpose. It would be advisable for officials and policy makers in the HEC, who are responsible for designing the course syllabus, to check with language teachers and student representatives about the effectiveness of the course and update the course outline at the end of each academic year.

• Assessment and Feedback

Another important issue underlined in this study was the lack of formal feedback given to students. There is only one written assessment in the Remedial English course which takes place at the end of each semester. Students are informed of their mark and grade on a notice board. In the case of class tests, students never get feedback on their performance. There is perhaps a need to make it mandatory for every teacher to provide students with formal written feedback on the exams they take each semester. It is suggested that every student should be allowed to see their answer scripts so that they are able to check their mistakes. In order to achieve fair assessments, the HEC or heads of the schools could provide teachers with assessment criteria so that a unified and consistent marking system might be ensured.

• The Role of the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC)

This study provides information that could be helpful for the quality enhancement cell, which is set up in public sector universities to maintain and promote quality in the teaching and research sectors. It is recommended that QEC should take on the responsibility for evaluation of the Remedial English course. This might be helpful in ensuring effective English language teaching and learning at UoS where it is taught in its 58 departments in various Bachelors’ and Masters’ degree programmes. QEC could be also be given the task of providing regular feedback and recommendations to the
HEC on the functioning of the Remedial English course to ensure its improvement and effectiveness.

- **Universal and Equitable Education**

The current status of the medium of instruction at all levels of education in Pakistan is embroiled in a lack of clarity as to where the future direction of English vis-à-vis Urdu and other regional languages stands. The emotional appeal of Urdu, tracing back to the country’s founding fathers’ original emphasis on Urdu, did not find favour with the civil and military establishment in later years for pragmatic reasons. Although the constitution of the country (1937) gave primary status to Urdu, to all intents and purposes English has been the official language of business and administration until now. This has created a state of dichotomy and confusion in public life since the inception of the country (1947). The findings of this study suggest that policy makers and parliamentarians should develop a clear vision and perception by incorporating appropriate amendments into the constitution regarding the medium of instruction and the policy of language in education. They should introduce a two-language policy, reflecting the imperatives and demands of contemporary times. Regional and sub-national aspirations also need to be addressed urgently as any further denial of these ethnolinguistic sentiments may have serious repercussions for national unity and will generate a deep-rooted sense of deprivation and frustration. It is therefore proposed that Sindhi, Punjabi, Pashto and Balochi, being the major provincial languages with a rich, pre-colonial heritage need official recognition and introduction from primary school level along with Urdu and English which already have a dominant position at state level.

The dilemma of the public and private education system in Pakistan has created compartmentalisation. The system of education is divided according to the different socio-economic classes in society thus it lacks a universal system of education. This has created a great divide in society, both vertically and horizontally. The Pakistani government needs to ensure this inequitable system of education is replaced with an equitable and balanced system, where all children get the same standard of education, irrespective of their socio-economic class and ethnic associations. Access to English
language education should be made equally available to all so that it can be used to liberate the common people rather than to dominate them, to ensure social equity rather than to perpetrate linguistic inequalities.

9.3 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

Firstly, due to time and financial restraints this project had to be limited to a public sector university, which is located in the district where I am based and where I teach as a faculty member. It was easily accessible in terms of distance and also for data collection. As the findings of the study were gathered from one department and one university they are, therefore, not generalisable but instead they provide a typicality which may find resonance in other similar institutions (Hamilton and Corbett-Whittier, 2013; Bassey, 1999). To balance the limitations of the case study, the rich detail and in depth accounts provide a deeper and more transparent understanding of the experiences and stories of the participants, giving real insights into ELLI. It is recommended that future studies on identity and English language learning could replicate the study in other private or public sector universities in the province, or other departments in the same university, to confirm and/or extend the understanding of ELLI. The same study might also be carried out in an entirely new postcolonial context.

Secondly, this research studied English language learner identity using an instrumental case study underpinned by an ethnographic positioning. As with most case studies, ethnography lies at the heart of the research process, as the researcher delves deeply into the lived worlds of the individuals participating. However, there were restrictions imposed by contextual issues which affected data collection. There was only limited access to female participants in their social and cultural spaces and no contact with male participants outside the university campus because of the need to abide by cultural and religious constraints. This was balanced by the opportunities taken to engage with the personal reflections of participants via their diary entries.
Despite the limitations discussed above, my study gained some valuable insights into the world of English language learners, for example, that the female participants’ pre-defined roles in their societies and in their families, their imposed identities and unfavourable language learning situations created for them had a major impact on their language learner identities. For future research it would be interesting to study only female participants, using ethnography as a research methodology, which would enable the researcher to use participant observations, and have more prolonged contact with participants through shadowing. This type of study would provide an in-depth account of the making of female language learners’ identity in the Pakistani context where the majority of females have to struggle to acquire education, and face discrimination within mainstream education.

Thirdly, I relied mainly on individual interviews supplemented by observations and some shadowing to study the construction of English language learner identity. In addition, data was generated via student diaries and participants were given some general guidelines for writing these. However, the data gathered from the diaries did not always focus on the areas requested, and at times the student diaries turned out to be of a rather personal nature. It is therefore suggested that participants should be reminded of the guidelines and given detailed instructions before they start writing diaries. An alternative such as life story interview could be adopted in future research so that participants may be studied in greater detail and relevant data may be gathered through one to one talk, which is not possible in diaries.

Fourthly, in order to examine language learner identity I studied Year 1 participants at length by following them for nine months through individual interviews, observations and diaries. The further evolution of LLI was studied in participants from subsequent years through focus group discussions. It was not possible to study the same group of participants (Year 1 students) throughout their degree programme (4 years) due to time constraints and the limited focus of this study. It might be worthwhile to go back to the same participants (Year 1 students) when they finish their degree after four years. This might form a more substantial, longitudinal study.
Finally, the majority of the participants preferred using their L1 in interviews and a few wrote their diaries in their mother tongue as well because they were not comfortable with English. Some of the participants used both English and their L1 in their interviews and diaries. The rest of the participants used English only. Those who preferred to use English were confident and proficient users of English but had they used their L1 in this study it might have produced more detailed accounts. Nevertheless, it was important that participants were able to make a choice, and in choosing English they highlighted their perceptions of their own efficacy in using the language. Hence, future studies on a complex issue such as identity construction might take into consideration the language barrier and might consider asking participants to use the language (L1), they are most proficient in.

I believe that this study is the first attempt to study language learner identity in a university in the postcolonial Pakistani context. This should provide a foundation for future researchers to explore the topic further, in the same or in a different context. My main focus in this study was the students, but an equally important area to examine might be the making of the English language teacher’s identity and exploring how a language teacher’s identity might influence his pedagogy and the language learners’ identity.

This research highlighted and raised many significant issues related to the education system in Pakistan, and English language teaching and learning practices in Pakistani, postcolonial society. Future studies might be conducted on the following topics:

- Different streams of education and their impact on English language learning
- Issues of identity in English language textbooks and in Pakistani English literature in the postcolonial era
- Roles of gender and social class in language education
- Linguistic inequalities in a postcolonial society
- Significance of learner agency in rural students, in public sector universities
9.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to the existing pool of knowledge on learner identity in the following ways:

- It explored English language learner identity in an entirely new context, where language learner identity had not previously been studied in such depth and with such rigour. Previous studies were conducted in immigrant, study-abroad and foreign language contexts but none of the studies examined English language learner identity in a postcolonial, indigenous and non-native context where English is learnt as a second language.

- It confirmed the findings in existing literature, that learner identity is dynamic, multi-layered and fluid. However, it added the theory that it is made up of certain constructs and characteristics (investment, agency, possible selves and third space hybridity) which are uniquely particular to the context of this study, such as historical, cultural and economic development, which have shaped ELLI in a postcolonial context. It also added that learners’ social class, gender and ethnolinguistic identities played an influential role in the making of their English language learner identities. It jointly drew on social constructionist and poststructuralist perspectives of identity to bring forward a unique view of identity with all its intrinsic elements and complexities. Hence, it reconceptualised and redefined language learner identity, at a public sector university in a postcolonial context.

- It suggested an appropriate model for the construction and negotiation of English language learner identity which covered 4 years of learners’ language learning experiences through their narratives, capturing their past experiences and future aspirations. This study demonstrated that language learner identity in a postcolonial context was situated in a ‘third space’, which was characterised by its hybridity, dynamism and fluidity. The integration of a postcolonial discourse (Bhabha, 1994) with identity and SLL theory had not
been appropriately highlighted before in relevant literature on language learner identity.

It offered a case study method with ethnolinguistic elements by adopting four different methods (interviews, observations, diaries and focus groups) of data collection to capture the process of negotiation and construction of language learner identity with all its complexities and details. The rigorous thematic analysis presented an overall evolution of English language learner identity with different phases and levels.

9.5 End of the Journey

At the end of this research project I feel I have gained two achievements: this thesis and a different self. This journey of 3 years and 9 months has changed me as a researcher. From a novice and a superficial researcher, I started growing as an inquisitive and rigorous researcher and I have begun to understand the complexities of the research process, which can only be learnt by actually carrying out research. This process enabled me to see the world from a variety of perspectives, broadening my outlook and deepening my understanding. At the outset of this study I had many preconceived ideas about English language learners at the UoS but not all of these proved to be consistent with the findings of this study. Having finished this thesis, I realise many things could have been possibly done and said in different and better ways.

I believe the identity of the researcher can never be denied in any type of study, be it qualitative or quantitative. Being an insider (teacher) helped me in many ways to capture a picture of the vibrancy and dynamism of identity negotiation and conflict. My positionality at times did also create slight distractions in the process of data collection and data analysis. I learnt that in qualitative studies, especially when the researcher is an insider, their positionality is important but it has to be sensitised with reflexivity. If it is left unchecked it may generate unnecessary bias and subjectivity.
My role as a friendly, accommodating and supportive researcher provided my participants with a comfort zone in which to both work and learn. However, I can never forget the tough times they gave me when it came to sending me diary entries and turning up for interviews on time. Sometimes the hours of waiting for my participants in 40c+ on hot summer afternoons in Jamshoro seemed never-ending. This contrasted with extremely gloomy days and cold nights in Edinburgh when I began to transcribe, translate and analyse a huge amount of data. At times I felt very frustrated with all the data but with the passage of time I grew so fond of it that I did not want to lose even a single line. The challenges of data collection and data analysis taught me great lessons of patience and perseverance which, I believe, are highly essential characteristics for doing any research project as big as a PhD, and also play a significant role in the making of a better human being.

From theoretical framework to overall research design to every single research question, all were tuned and transformed at different phases of my study. The research design and questions I began with introduced me to the literature and it turned out to be a symbiotic relationship by the end of the first year. The annual progression boards at school level enabled me to take into consideration new aspects of my research. The board members’ feedback and discussion helped me sharpen my theoretical and methodological understandings. Most importantly, every time I met with my supervisors they nurtured me as a researcher and added a brick in the existing wall of my research, which has now begun to stand on its own but still needs to be fully developed and shaped. As it is wisely said, ‘research is a process not a product’. I end this journey with this reflection, well described in the words of Proust, which will remain my guide for many more journeys yet to come.

_We do not receive wisdom, we must discover it for ourselves, after a journey through the wilderness which no one else can make for us, which no one can spare us, for our wisdom is the point of view from which we come at last to regard the world._

Marcel Proust
(cited in Caranfa, 1990, p.170)
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Appendices

Appendix 1. Letter to the Registrar University of Sindh

Permission Letter

The Registrar
University of Sindh
Jamshoro

Subject: Permission to conduct case study

Dear Sir,

I am writing this to you to seek your kind approval to conduct a case study on the University of Sindh and to use its original name in my PhD dissertation.

I will be required to use university premises and some official documents for the purpose of data collection. I will also take pictures of the university to present my case study in a better way. My research abides by the ethical guidelines of the University of Edinburgh.

As I am particularly interested to investigate English language learners in the Institute of English Language and Literature, I may be allowed access in the classrooms and brief interviews with the Dean Faculty of Arts, Director of IELL and Remedial English teacher.

I will be grateful if I am given permission to collect my data for my research project.

Thanks

Yours Sincerely

Sumera Umrani

PhD Student
The University of Edinburgh
United Kingdom

Email: S.Umrani@sms.ed.ac.uk
Contact telephone no. 123345678
Appendix 2. Informed Consent Form (Year 1)

Title of the Study: Learning of English and Learners’ Identity at a Public Sector University of Pakistan

The methods that will be used to conduct this study will include:

- Individual interviews
- Observations
- Diary studies
- Shadowing

You will be interviewed three times across the whole period of this study. The interviews will not last longer than 1 hour each time. The interviews will be tape-recorded. You may use the language of your preference to participate in the interviews.

I will observe you in your English language classes, two classes per week in first and sixth semesters. I will also have some informal chats with you in your social settings, which may be at the university cafeteria or your home. (subject to your convenience and approval).

You will be encouraged to write diary entries once in a month. The guidelines for writing diary entries will be provided separately.

Confidentiality and anonymity and right to withdraw

The data collected from your interviews, diary entries and observations will be strictly confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study and for its publication. Your name or any other identifying information will not be used in any part of this study or elsewhere. You have every right to withdraw from this study at any point. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

I will be very grateful to you if you agree to participate in this study. Thanks!

By signing below you agree that you have read and understood the information about this project and your required involvement and are willing to participate in this research study.

Name of the Participant ___________________________

Signature _____________________________________

Contact no. ________________________________

Email: ____________________________________
Appendix 3. Informed Consent Form (Years 2, 3 and 4)

Title of the Study: Learning of English and Learners’ Identity at a Public Sector University of Pakistan

The methods that will be used to conduct this study will include:

- Focus group discussion

This will involve your participation in a focus group discussion. The discussion will last for around 2 hours. The focus group discussions will have 4 participants from the same year and it will take place at the venue of your convenience. The discussions will be tape-recorded. You may speak in the language of your preference.

Confidentiality and anonymity and right to withdraw

The data collected from your interviews, diary entries and observations will be strictly confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study and for its publication. Your name or any other identifying information will not be used in any part of this study or elsewhere. You have every right to withdraw from this study at any point. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

I will be very grateful to you if you agree to participate in this study. Thanks!

By signing below you agree that you have read and understood the information about this project and your required involvement and are willing to participate in this research study.

Name of the Participant ________________________

Signature _______________________________________

Date __________________________________________

Contact no. __________________________

Email: ________________________________
Appendix. 4 Informed Consent Dean, Director and Teacher

Title of the Study: Learning of English and Learners’ Identity at a Public Sector University of Pakistan

- Brief Interview

This will involve your participation in a brief interview (30 minutes). The interview will take place at the venue of your convenience. The interview will be tape-recorded. You may speak in the language of your preference.

Confidentiality and anonymity and right to withdraw

The data collected from your interviews will be strictly confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study and for its publication. Your name or any other identifying information will not be used in any part of this study or elsewhere. You have every right to withdraw from this interview at any point. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

I will be very grateful to you if you agree to participate in this study. Thanks!

By signing below you agree that you have read and understood the information about this project and your required involvement and are willing to participate in this research study.

Name of the Participant ___________________________

Signature ___________________________

Date ___________________________

Contact no. ___________________________
Appendix: 5 Interview Guide (Year 1 Participants)

- Introduce yourself
- Family and Academic Background
- Parents’ education

Engagement with English in Past

1. Can you share about your experiences of English language learning in your school/college?  
   Prompt: kind of school, its values, policies, teaching and learning English

2. Any experience of learning English at home in your childhood?  
   Prompt: Use of English in your family, parents’ education and profession

3. Did you used to watch English movies, read English books in your childhood? Prompt: extent/ways of exposure to English while growing up

4. Any other thing to share about English and childhood.

Engagement with English at Present

5. Why did you join IELL?

6. Can you tell me about a typical day in Remedial English classroom?  
   Prompt: Kind of learning, aspects of language, opportunities to speak/communicate in the target language, expectations from this course

7. What did you learn in your semester one in Remedial English course?

8. What kind of challenges do/did you have in learning English at uni?

9. What other chances do you have to use English within the university environment?

10. What benefits you think English will bring you?

Using English outside the university classroom

11. Are you involved in learning English elsewhere?  
   Prompt: Why, where, how long, learning experiences and expectations there
12. How do they (private language classes) differ from university classes, if at all?

13. How difficult/easy it is to use English outside the class?

14. How often do you practice English outside the classroom?

15. Which do you think is the best environment to learn and practice English? Prompt: Uni/home/language centre/social circles/friends/any other?

**English and You**

16. Do you think learning English will influence your personality? How?

17. Do you think you’ll be a different person after knowing English and attaining proficiency in it? How?

18. Does learning English makes you forget your culture and MT? How? Prompt: A threat to your language and identity

19. How do you see English, as a language? Prompt: As a vehicle to progress, as a colonial language, as a language of Christians, as a foreign language or as something else

20. Have you ever felt any difficulty for not knowing enough English? Any situation where you regretted not having skill of English language?

21. Any situation where English solved your problem and facilitated you?

22. How far do you think that your identity (who you are, a member of a particular family, society, ethnicity, background(rural/urban)) can influence learning of English?

23. Where do you see yourself after getting a degree and proficiency in English? Future employment, social class and status
Appendix 6 Excerpts from Interview Transcript (Year 1 Participant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sumera: Thank you for joining me for this discussion and sparing some time to come to participate in my study. As I have already told you there will be two sets of interview questions one will focus your engagement with English in your past when you were a kid and other on your present Shall we now begin?</th>
<th>This interview was recorded in Sindhi-and-English. So it is translated and transcribed. In order to bring clarity to the transcription, the language of the participant has been corrected grammatically and edited at few places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant: Yes sure ma’am</td>
<td>All praise is to God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum: Which school did you go to? And how did you begin to learn English? Did this happen at your school/home? How is your family environment? Are your parents educated? So tell me something about your family background and then we’ll move forward</td>
<td>9th to 12th grades exams are conducted by a separate examination board or by GCSE (General Certification of Secondary Education) by University of Cambridge, locally administered. Almost all the private schools go for latter option.</td>
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<td>Participant: First of all I thank you for providing me this opportunity to meet with you. My schooling is from St. Bonaventure’s Qasimabad branch, it was a good school it was English medium, it was from there that I started learning English. Yeah teachers were very sincere towards their duties. You know things were like…we studied oxford system that’s why our approach towards English is good. Alhamdulilah</td>
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<td>Sum: So your medium of instruction has been English, how other subjects were taught to you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant: Other than Sindhi and Urdu we learnt other subjects in English</td>
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<td>Sum: Were you taught Sindhi as well, was that a compulsory subject?</td>
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<td>Yes it was a compulsory subject from 4th to 8th then in 9th we either had to take Sindhi or Urdu I took Urdu in 9th and Sindhi in 10th along with English as a compulsory subject</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right! Like board exams. Okay please tell me what you think how much have you gained from your school in term of English language?</td>
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</table>
Very much because I still remember that we were often told in school that speak in English no matter if you make mistakes or speak incorrect English… practice what you are weak at…you know there was a fine of rupees 10 or sth

Fine for not speaking in English or using any other language in class?

Yes whenever we spoke Sindhi or Urdu in class

How about using any other language outside the class?

There we were free… you know we would get chocolates from the money collected from fines. A token of appreciation at the end of the year

Really! That’s interesting ok then tell me something about your college, how was it? How did they teach there? How things were different from St. Bonaventure’s?

I went to Superior College it was very good college we were made to learn sindhi Urdu and English. Teachers were good. I learnt a lot in college apart from grammar English was high level I learnt more in college

How were other subjects taught in your college? Did you use to be fined for not speaking English?

Other subjects were in English no, no fine we used to speak in Sindhi in our class but with teachers we always speak in English and they taught in English language like physics, chemistry etc. In my leisure time I used to go through internet and solve grammar quizzes so that I may be clear about grammar in better way. I was medical student but I was more interested in English language I wanted to my basics should be strong and I can approach it as a field

Right

Apart from that I joined a language center in my vacations; it used to take place in Hayat School in evening time. It was for two months there I learnt like how language changes…
<table>
<thead>
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<th>You mean current usages of English?</th>
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<td>Yes and pronunciation British and American accent etc. apart from that we used to do many activities in class so that we may learn more and more…. interaction with other students of the class made us learn from others</td>
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<td>Did you go to this center after your matriculation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>No after I did my intermediate, 12th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good! Tell me why did you feel you should join language center? Couldn’t you learn enough at your school and college?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hmm I wanted to remain in touch with English and also because I want to approach English as a field and want to be updated and whatever flaws I have and the things I lack in…. I wanted to learn from my mistakes which I did at the center… we used to work and learn in groups, sir would say try to speak in break time as well, he appointed a class monitor who would see if we speak in English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tell me what were your expectations from those language classes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>50% of my expectations were fulfilled</td>
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<td>How much did they charge for two months language course?</td>
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<td>2000 rupees…. Actually when I went there they were running basic level I joined that. Sir said once you finish this there are opportunities for higher levels of English too</td>
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<td>Did you then continue?</td>
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<tr>
<td>No I did not because then I started preparing for entry test in Sindh uni… I am thinking to join these classes again after my exams in this vacation</td>
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<tr>
<td>So you want to join the same coaching classes? Why?</td>
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Yes because I want to remain connected and start where I left my basic level

Good. Now please tell me something about your family

My parents are educated, my father is a government servant my mother is housewife

Tell me about their education

My mother is masters in Comparative Religions

Does she work?

She used to work before marriage, school teaching…my father is a CSS passed Income Tax Commissioner

That’s good, now coming towards your interests for English movies and books cartons comics as a kid and now?

Honestly speaking as far as English movies are concerned no doubt I am interested but I have not seen many as many as I should. I have recently finished a novel Alchemist by Paulo Coelho and reading other one for that I have viva exam tomorrow. Apart from that I read English magazines I read Dawn and Young World I read some good articles on net and have seen few English movies

Do you think there is any other way to get exposed to English and English life?

I think internet is the best source you can search the whole world on it anything you are interested in like these days looking for different accents is very much in and many other things like pronunciations

Did your parents ever ask you or insist for learning English? Anyone in your family inspired you to learn English?

I got influenced from my father who has done CSS he would used to tell me to learn English we were also told all languages are important but English is
must because it will help in professional life and selecting English as a field is personal interest my parents never forced me for selecting any field they left this decision on me

Okay now coming towards your engagement with in your present life and tell me why did you choose IELL? For learning English? Because I had interest in it

Interest in what? In English or in IELL?

(laughs) in both, I think it’s a very good department and no doubt teachers are very nice… as they say surroundings influence a lot, sometimes they encourage sometimes they deceive us. My encouragement has increased here to some extent but it has decreased as well

Please explain how has it been increased or decreased?

It has increased due to teachers here and decreased due to overall environment of the institute. Boys taunt and shout whenever girls go for presentations this decreases our (girls) confidence and girls think if we go next time this would happen again so they try not to speak in class again. We need to overcome this thing

Any other thing affecting your performance in the class?

I think surroundings

Please tell me sth more about that, what are those factors in surroundings?

I told you about taunting and a while ago you saw a group of trouble makers chanting slogans supporting their parties…they come every other day and boycott classes.. I think they are mainly responsible for disturbing our surroundings and studies plus they announce strikes etc. that’s why people say never join Sindh uni because there are comrades and strikes

Does this make you reconsider your decision to join
this uni?

Hmm I think if you have thirst of knowledge these things matter less

Right, you have just finished your first semester now you are dealing with your exams… in your first semester you had a course called remedial English. What did you learn in that class?

It was good it is good… we did activities used to work in groups. This gave us chance to interact with each other and know others views. This provided us a medium to expose ourselves before other students… we discuss share our thoughts but it would’ve been better if we learn English from those activities as well.

So were there new things you learnt in this class, which you did not in your school and center?

Not really

Ok tell me what do you think is the best environment to learn English? Is it classroom, friends circle? Language center? Home family?

Friends’ circle and classroom. Friends circle provides many opportunities to learn and classroom gives a particular environment to learn which sometimes we don’t in group of friends

Do you really learn in a class of 150 students?

Yes if all students are sincere to learn keep away from other non-serious acts otherwise there is nothing wrong with the classroom

Did you ever get chance to speak in your class? How many times?

Yes two times

Twice in how many classes?

20 to 23 classes may be. Yes I gave two presentations
Were they helpful for learning English?

Hmmm yes

Where else do you learn English outside classroom? Anywhere in institute? Uni?

We sometimes get chance to study in uni, but for learning English I would say no... for that joining language classes is the best option... or one can learn through internet and if lucky enough join any English language teacher’s company

Where do you learn outside the classroom?

These days I am learning through internet reading different articles and blogs

Do you think your family and academic background has helped you greatly to learn English without much support from other sources? What if you had come from a different background? Had you faced the same challenges?

That’s correct my background has supported me a lot…. Things would’ve been a lot difficult had I come from a sindhi medium background…. there they are taught in one language they speak same language at home and at school… till primary they just learn ABC nothing more…I wouldn’t have any basic grammar n felt hesitation in communication… we need to make their learning better… I thank god my family n educational background both are helpful n encouraging.

Have you ever wondered why English is so important for everyone in Pakistan these days?

I believe the society we live in has made it so, it has become a source of career building… even common people have started taking interest in it… I think everyone should have a know how of English to be able to communicate with others. I would also say speaking English shows a civilized and social mentality

Do you communicate in English with your friends or in your family?
Yes sometimes educational and professional matters
What is the social role of English? How important it is in your society?

I think it is important; it helps you form a certain status in society

Please tell me sth more about that status?

You know we have developed a belief that those speak English have a respectable position in society…. so English has a role to play not only in professional life but in social too.

It is usually seen that those who speak good English tend to a separate social class and they are not ready to mingle with non-English speaking people, do you agree?

Yeah that’s true, but I have not seen many such people in Hyd…they live Khi side

Do you want to join that class?

I won’t, we should talk to everyone, I am never proud for my English or background…. I will never be comfortable in that class… it’s unfair to abandon those who do not speak English, they have their own class

Would you like to join that class?

Yes, to teach them English and enable them to compete and occupy a better social position

This means they don’t have a better position without English?

You can say

Please tell me what benefits one may get after learning English?

A good job I think….there are many jobs which require fluency in English and there are many other advantages
What are those?

Like going to foreign countries for study and job that means for any good career one should have hold on English, this way we can easily communicate with anyone anywhere.

How do you see English as a language? Does that, in any way affect your MT and culture? How?

It is our second language but this doesn’t mean that we should learn this language only…its not a threat to our MT, we learn it just like any other language Urdu/Sindhi…I see it very positively…it has not got anything colonial anymore, it doesn’t belong to any country or region or nation now its spoken and understood worldwide…

Tell me did you ever feel embarrassment for not knowing enough English?

Yeah this used to happen in past in school when I was class 6 or 7 then I picked up go many chances to come forward in debates etc which developed my confidence… initially it was so embarrassing if someone talked to me in English and I replied to them in Sindhi or Urdu

Now tell me did you feel facilitated for knowing English? Do you feel proud?

I think that’s great I feel if someone talks to you in English and you can easily understand their point of view…this used to happen when I was attending language-coaching classes… I would reply to my friends and teachers correctly which gave me a satisfactory feeling

Felt proud before others?

Not really, just felt happy

Did this ever happen outside class?

No never
### Appendix. 7 Participants’ (Years 1, 2, 3 and 4) Profile Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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Appendix. 8 Focus Group Guide and Data Excerpts

Points of Discussion

- Family and academic background
- Engagement with English
- Comparison of past and present language learning experiences
- Purpose of learning English
- Future plans
- Remedial English course (comparison across semesters)
- You perceptions of English as a language
- Whose language is it? Your association with English?
- English vs. your MT and culture
- End of your English language learning journey
- Future plans

Focus Group Discussion with Year 4

Academic background

Saira: I am from English medium where it was taught as a subject, we always communicated in Sindhi…. We never learnt English in the real sense. So actually it was at home where I began to learn English, my brother and father inspired me to learn English and told me its importance. I think if one knows English he can teach anywhere, at a school, language center or at least can offer home tuitions and earn money

Bisma: I am from English medium, I began to learn it back in my school, and the beginning was learning it as a subject from class 5 or 6 but then from class 9 I actually began to practice English, started writing, reading and speaking. I began to learn it through novels. And yes then my father told me if I am interested in English I could attempt CSS. When I joined this institute I had learnt enough at my school and college, here they don’t teach you English language, they ask you to write in English, speak in English they expect you to have enough knowledge before you come here and join IELL, the teaching and exams here is different a lot different from the school I came from, you cant develop your creative skills here, my hopes were shattered

Maheen: me and Bisma shared the same school for last six year and before that I was in an English medium school where instruction always took place in Sindhi, in those days my mother’s friend advised her to get me and my other siblings enrolled in a summer language school at IMSA but there I couldn’t be able to speak English. When I joined Bonaventure’s in class 8 I began to pick up I started speaking in English. Teaching and learning back in school was so much fun, teacher would always encourage us to think and write, develop ideas, they would give us stimuli to write stories, we never prepared for our English exam, we never had any idea what would
come in exam, no rattafication, always creative…. Apart from that we had to contribute for our school’s newsletter it was a regular practice

Bisma: here we have ruined our writing skills, we find it very difficult to write anything because here we are out of practice, no environment to polish our skills. Language learning should be contextualized

Azam: (11.49) till 8th I was educated in Sindhi medium, after that when I went to Bahariya foundation I started learning English there, then I also joined an English center named Anglophile which I found quite helpful. I learnt English mainly there. There we learnt through translation method. In my college we used to talk in English. My uncle convinced me to join this department for learning better English and CSS and lecturership as job options.

Touqeer: I come from English medium where all subject were taught in Sindhi, except English. I also went to a centre in Larkana where I began with grammar. I learn some basic English, rest of the English I know today is self-taught. Coming to this institute hasn’t made any difference to my proficiency level, I would rather say, as Maheen said, my skill have been deteriorated some extent.

Role of the family in teaching English

Maheen: yes it plays an important role but I never spoke English with my family, though my father knows English well but he never spoke with us. I leant it at my school. I can speak and write well today without any support from family.

Bisma: my case is different. I got lots of encouragement from my father, he would always come and ask me some English words and tell me their meaning and give me some tasks. I joined IELL just because he wanted me to do masters in English and do CSS.

Azam: to me friends circle is the best place to learn English. We all friends practice English and have group discussion at hostel

Maheen: there is no fear of being pointed out, we can talk freely without any fear,

Saira: my father would always ask me to listen to BBC and tell him the update. I have also learnt from friends.

Azam: yes this works for me too. I ask my CSS preparing friends to assess my academic writing

Comment on Remedial English

Touqeer: it was useless for me, the way it is taught and designed it is not helpful at all. It needs to be redesigned and some writing and readings skills.
Maheen: I didn’t have any passion for learning grammar so I was indifferent. But I did learn some new points from Oxford practice grammar. There is no space for writing skills

Saira: its same for all learners, it shouldn’t be like this. All learners have different needs and come from different aptitudes. It should be redesigned keeping in view individual learners’ needs and proficiency level

Bisma: it can be adapted

Maheen: may be teachers needed to work on their teaching methods. Here its culture of hijacking class by those who already know. They should be exempted and only those who need to learn should be taught in these classes.

Azam: I once attended a listening comprehension course in PACC where everyone was given chance to speak even though it was just for two mins but what I noticed is by the end of the course the boys who came blank started speaking. Here, only first two rows who occupy the same seats daily get chance to participate and the rest of the class keeps on yawning.

Public vs. Private education Institutes

Maheen: you know our system of education is faulty it not uniform, there is something wrong in the very roots. There is no check and balance in public schools, attendance is taken lightly.

Bisma: teachers themselves don’t come to take classes why should students bother. See if we went to a better institution that’s not our fault, government should have maintained education for all

Azam: affordability and socio-economic status decide which school we go to

Saira: Parents decide that, it makes a lot of difference if parents are educated

Maheen: But I tell in some families, like in my own, parents are sometimes criticized by elderly people for sending kids to expensive private schools esp sending girls there. When my mother decided to send my younger sister and me to Bonaventure’s, I remember, she had to convince my father and grandmother for that. This usually happens in joint families.

Touqueer: its all about rate of learning, my father said, though we come from rural background, but they are now aware

Bisma: we never cheated, now look at government colleges, exams papers are solved on mobile phones.
Maheen: in school we learnt things in a different way, on a poem we were asked to write a critical summary in our own words, we would make drafts of our writing. Here its all based on rattaification.

Benefits of English

Touqeer: it has got a huge market value

Bisma: if you know English your future is bright, but the tragedy is it is subtractive language you learn it at the cost of other local languages. But at the same time we realize that it is need of the time. Go for any job you’ll be first asked how efficiently can you communicate in English. Whether, it Biology, Physics or Chemistry if you are a teacher you’ll have to deliver lecture in English. In almost all private firms that’s the first requirement.

Maheen: We have been a British colony. Consciously or unconsciously we are slaves of English, today when a kid speaks English his parents feel proud when gets good grades in English he is rewarded

Social benefits

Maheen: respect, it gives you a different social identity and we can pose we are better (laughter)

Your future

Saira: I will be a lecturer. It has influenced us greatly. I want to share an interesting story. This happened to one of my friends. When she got a proposal for marriage the boy, who working abroad, required my would be wife should know English well so that she can travel and live with him without any language barrier.

Role of English in your life, does it make you forget your MT and culture

Touqeer: I don’t think so but there are more benefits than harms

Maheen: it drifts us away from my own identity; it has kept me preoccupied so I personally don’t like it, we have started copying English people

Bisma: I can’t read Sindhi; I can’t write in Urdu, we are forgetting our linguistic identity

Azam: English is a foreign language it cant be ours

Touqeer: I think more than anything it is communication tool
Bisma: it is threat to my culture and MT but despite this fact it is necessary, a necessary evil

Azam: my father’s friends and colleagues talk to me in English and I feel so good that I am able to respond and baba feels happy to see me

Saira: When I went to my school for some work after long time, I talked to them (teachers) in English and felt proud that I can finally have this ability
### Appendix 9. Observation Checklist

#### Classroom Observation

**Class time:**
**Date:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the participant</th>
<th>Activities Participant Involved in (off task behavior)</th>
<th>Interaction with classmates (group/ pair work etc.)</th>
<th>Skill/s of Eng used in class</th>
<th>Participants involvement in the class (on task)</th>
<th>Other students’ participation in class</th>
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Appendix 10. Observation Field Notes

11-4-2013 Thursday

Class duration: 50 mins

Class started at 8:45 am

Teacher began the class asking about the home work given last week: description on a song played on multimedia
Students were asked to open some pages of the book: this book is newly introduced by HEC for communication skills
More than 100 students seated/ many standing at the back of the classroom due to lack of chairs, students from evening batch were attending morning class, teacher couldn’t know so was asking them
Due to excessive no of students room was stuffy, weather was quite hot
Many students kept coming in the class even after 30 mins of the start of the class
Students were asked to identify difficult words in the passage on the given page
Teacher tried hard to set multimedia in the class, but due to insufficient wiring it was difficult to settle, technician comes to help, it takes around 20 mins
80% students (mostly boys) do not have books so they are chatting with each other or texting on cell phones while those having books are doing their task
It’s quite noisy in the class room
Teacher asks about the given task after 7 mins
He reminds students how to do the task looking at the context technique
A girl student reads the passage aloud, she lacks fluency
After that students are asked to write the main idea of the passage: find out 6-7 themes, no time given
Teacher still trying to fix multimedia
Finally a song is played on the multimedia
Students are happy to listen to that song, they clap n cheer up
No one is looking at the text of the song except a few girls and boys
No use of white board in the entire class
Then a short clip is played on the usage of ‘you are’, it’s funny greatly enjoyed (it takes 3 min)
Task: organise the events of the song: 2 min, individual work
A boy and a girl reply, they try to organise the events
Teacher corrects that girl’s use to verb: forget: forgot
One more girl wearing hijab also participates
Appendix 11. Diary Guide

Dear Participant,

Diary study involves asking participants to record their experiences related to a particular subject over a period of time. It is a useful tool to help learn about participants' involvement in a particular activity.

I am using diary study as one of the methods for collecting the data for my research study. In order to enable me to have a record of your engagement with English inside and outside the classroom, you are requested to write some brief diary entries across the period of this study.

You can write diary entries in traditional way in your notebook and keep the record or can email me the entries at the end of every week for next three months. Please see below for the schedules of the diary entries and what to write in them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your diary entries should include your:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning English in Remedial class, your participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences of learning English outside class, uses of English (where and when) and challenges you come across while learning and using it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anything else you want to share related to your involvement in learning and using English in your day-to-day life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not hesitate to contact me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sumera Umrani, 2nd year PhD student
Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh

Email: S.Umrani@sms.ed.ac.uk
Appendix 12. Diary Entry

23-05-2013

Before writing a diary entry I would really thank ma’am Sumera Umran who is assistant prof at IELL & who is also the student of PhD at Edinburgh Uni at London. Ma’am has really encouraged me to write down diary. As once, I was interviewed by her, before the interview or at the beginning of the interview, I was enough hesitant to speak, but I somehow managed to speak before ma’am. That interview really boasted up my confidence & encouraged me to get myself involved in doing more activities regarding English language.

Well, before writing down something about my activities in Summer vacations, I want to share my experience of 1st semester in IELL that how did I study there? What did dept: teach me? Have I gained something different from that dept? How did I behaved with my newly made friends? & other questions to be answered.

Yup! I can say this dept: has really made me able to observe the persons. It has really provided me enough confidence to prove my self. Yap! It is a fact that I sometimes behaved rudely with some of students & I tried not to get involved in bad company. Teachers are really great & kindhearted. I liked their way of teaching apart from this, I got sense of communication with other students & I learnt how should I deal with them.

So, I can say that in the 1st semester I enjoyed the event of ‘Food Mela’ alot & it was really entertaining one. I also enjoyed the party that was arranged for winning 1st position in Food Mela.

When I was in class, I used to be quite serious & tried to pay attention towards the lectures. Well, finally we cleared the 1st semester.

Now let me tell you about myself. Well! I belong to a middle class family, my father, who is a primary teacher, supports me in my study. We are total 7 brothers. But I am the only one who studies at uni and in part time I teach English grammar & Science subjects also.

It is a long story that how I did I get a bit mastery over the English language, so I am not going to hit that topic now.

Let’s start writing down about my summer vacations that how did I spend it? What activities did I perform for improving my English language? What plans did I make for going through different books, digests, magazines or newspapers? How much did I act upon the plans & the other questions to be discussed a lot are there.
SUMMER VACATIONS

Well, we have just taken the papers of 1st semester & most of students (hostelers) feel as they have got out of prison or Govt: of state has freed them. Every student is feeling relaxed & untensioned as the hostelers are packing their luggage to get back to their homes & meet their relatives & parents. Everyone is wishing best of luck for the results & the Jamshoro city & Sindh uni! Alvida Alvida Sindh Uni Alvida Alvida (for 2 months).

You know what going to uni sometimes irritates us, but when uni is off officially for more than 2 months, we start feeling ourselves idle & staying at home & doing nothing does really annoy us & we do miss our classmates & other friends, we miss cracking jokes, laughing loudly at each other, we do miss sitting at the canteen or going to another dept: & other alot funs & activities are really badly missed & at that times we do desire of attending the classes & listening to the lectures of our teachers again without any delay in it, but on the other side, its also a fact that had we no friends at uni, it would have been boring & annoying institute of the world.

At uni, I noticed one thing from richer students' side or teachers' side (maybe) that they do not pay proper respect to the weak & dull students & to the watchmen, peons or security guards as well. Those students even don't like to shake hands with such dull & weak students & with peons, security guards & watchmen. I do not like this deed, to me this is really like ignoring the humanity. Sometimes I do not know that if I have a bit of knowledge & everybody is interested (not in me) in my knowledge my classmates come to me & ask me about that topic or want some notes of that subject (I do provide them) but once they receive it, they behave as they don't know me anymore. This is really hurting & touching yar! I don't like this, my classmates are so meaningful & selfish that without work they'll not talk to you nicely or attentively, such a nonsense this is.....

Well, there are alot other things in my class that I don't think to write down in this diary so, after the papers in the 1st week of summer vacations I din nothing just got relaxed & slept whole the day, did nothing related to study but in the evening I went to the fields with other my neighbors to play the most traditional & ancient game of Sindh (Wanjh Watti). I love to play this game & I'm the captain of my team having 8 members.

Well, let me tell you about my home location. I live in a village like area, away from the Kotri city for about 2-3 km. That area is surrounded by fields of crops & orchards of mangoes, guavas, lemon & banana & other fruits are also cultivated there, so that area is really beautiful, full of sceneries, attractive & air is really free of pollution or smoke, there is a canal by name 'Karachi Waah' water is given to the fields & orchards from this canal. Because of staying far away from the city, I'm unable to get the net connection unfortunately. So, whole of the 1st week went in vein, I just played my fav game & slept. From the 2nd week I thought to study sth either I should read the books & newspapers or I should go to my relatives. The later 1 could not be done, so I thought to read the books & newspaper.
So, in this week, I intended to do some new activities especially for improving the skills of English language. For this, I planned to go to bazaar & purchased some books & English newspapers next morning. And finally with the blessings & grace of Almighty Allah, the morning came, my father awoke me up at about 5:00 a.m & my father, my elder brothers & I went to Masjid & performed prayer & after reciting the Holy Quran, we came back to home, I had a nap for 1 hour & thirty minutes & my sister awoke me up, after washing my face & hands, I sat with my mother, I was served with breakfast, & I took it at about 11 a.m I went to bazaar where I purchased the DAWN newspaper. But, I could not purchase books & for that I had to go to Hyd, but there was also another problem that I have never been to Hyd or I have never visited Hyd. So in this connection, I got my friend to go to Hyd, *finally I purchased 3 books of classical literature as those books would help me in improving my vocab.

So, the DAWN newspaper & those books do consist of good & comprehensive & appropriate use of the English language. As I want to get a half nelson on the English vocab & this newspaper really helps me a lot.

While I was on my way back to home, I met my another friend by name, Shoai Hakro, he speaks good English or in my words marvelous English with great fluency & accuracy. He has got a mastery over English vocab, he is just a WOW! So he invited me to join his association that is organised for just speaking English language, all the members gather at a suitable place every weekends, at that place we could not be disturbed by deafening voice of vehicles & we could be served with tea & cold drinks aswell. I assure Mr. Shoai Hakro of joining the group, b/c this activity would also help me in improving English language especially speaking & listening skills.

That day I was so tired that could not let me read the newspaper or books, & I thought to take a nap, in the evening I went to play my fav game 'Wanjh Watti' & we won the match.

At night, after the Isha prayer, I started reading the newspaper & I just read 1 article of the front page & I observed that I underlined more than 20 words of 1 article consisting of 5 columns, at that moment I realized "I'm lacking vocabulary, I need to remember the words as words are the back bone of language."

Then, I got meanings of those words & used them in my spoken sentences & written sentences aswell, so that those words could get stuck in my mind. The best way of remembering the words is to use them in spoken form again & again, but b/c of not having any environment at my home in which I can speak with someone else in English, I could not implement this rule to remember the word, but now the group that I have joined would really provide me such environment where I can use those words & speak out in English.

The book, by name "Candida" by Sir George Bernard Shaw that I had started reading before the papers or summer vacations was about to be finished, so I thought it first then I would start another one.
Yap! I remember one thing in this that author has declared “The school system nonsense, a/c to him, schools are made to relieve the parents as parents are annoyed of their children. They cannot tolerate their kids all the with them and bothering them, in the same way children are annoyed of parents, but the school for the children is like a prison, in which the worst methods are applied to teach children.” I don’t know how could he come to say this, but a certain extent it is also a fact.

The next morning, it was really v. much beautiful. Wow! The greeny fields & plants, the yellow creamy flowers of cotton crops, were dancing & birds & sparrows, patridges of black & light brown colors, parrots, crows, cukos etc & others a lot birds were really singing & cold breeze was flowing & making plants & flowers dance, the sunrise was taking place & such a beautiful scene it was, it was that I do not have words to write about it.

Whole the day I did not read any article of newspaper or any page of the book b/c I was having flu, b/c in the morning I dived into the canal, I remained in water for 15 minutes, so I did not hit anything that day, but in the evening I went to join the gathering of group, it was my first meeting with them, & I was a bit confused that where to start from, what to say. First, my friend helped me & he introduced me with everyone & I got to know them also, but, I was quite & calm, did not speak, b/c I wanted to listen every one first. So everyone got chance of speaking in English, & I saw that 2 members of the group were really good speakers. One was ‘Shoaib Hakro’ & second was ‘Hamaad Ansari’ & others were not enough even my English was much better than that of others, now it was my turn to speak out, & I spoke out fluently & phonetically showing out the good accent of language. Hahaha! I was using the way of moulding my mouth & speaking as I the student of Sir Mohammad Khan Sangi so everybody was shocked & started admiring my accent, I felt good & a bit proudly at that time, so it was our first gathering in which we just introduced eachother & I got back to home at about 11 o’ clock, this is a long time that I spent outside the home with some friends, there I read some articles of newspaper & some pages of book & underlined some words & got them used in spoken & written form.

I knew that Ramadan Kareem was getting closer & closer & in Ramadan I do not touch any book either of English language or Sindhi & Urdu, I do not use any newspaper b/c my schedule of Ramadan is much busy that I cannot take time out for my friends even. That’s why in the time that I had before the Ramadan, I wanted to read a lot, speak a lot & listen a lot English.

In this way I read newspapers & book & we gathered in the weekend evenings at a suitable palce, gossiped a lot, shared our ideas, & thoughts, & enjoyed the gatherings.

In the last evening, I said everyone that I could not come in the whole Ramadan Kareem so guys you continue your meetings. I’d see you after the Holy Ramadan Kareem.

And whole the Ramadan I was busy in worshiping Allah, reciting Holy Quran, performing prayers with conggregation & performing all the Taraveeh namaz, & in the last 10 days of Ramadan, I was busy in serving my father as he sat in Aitqaf so
whole the Ramadan I was busy in collecting the blessings of Allah & thanking Allah for His countless, innumerable, numberless, uncountable, unimaginable, bounties & seeking for absolution & forgiveness for our bad deeds & praying in the betterment of Pakistan & praying for myself to achieve at my destination & goal.

End
Appendix 13. Mind Map 1

Stories detailing participants' identify negotiations, language learning experiences, strategies, themes, and challenges.

Events and incidents:
- Participants' experiences and ideas
- Parental background
- Regular engagements
- Remedial English classes and related matters
- Imagined identities and future hopes

Academic and family background:
- Language learning processes
- Experiences gained and areas of confusion
- Changes in perceptions
- Learning English but not at the level of parents
- Future prospects with and without English

English as a bridge between home and host, a world of ideas

Classroom environment:
- Classroom setup
- Teaching methods
- Student participation
- Learning patterns
- Teaching and evaluation
- Languages used in class

Home environment:
- Participants' regular activities
- Family structure, norms, and behaviors
- Diversity, power, Education, social roles

Other family members

Institutional support

Other institutional stakeholders

Re: Language Policy
- Medium of instruction
- Large class size
- Students' needs and challenges
- Students' academic and social background
- Unfavorable assessment for learning English
- English as just for survival
- It is mandatory and challenging
- Entry test in U.S. is prohibited, needs to be improved
- Teachers' training
- Profiles on campus American issue and a shared reality
Appendix 14. Mind Map 2

Identity Negotiation or Resistance

- Data categorisation from senior participants
- Class activities and discussions useful but too basic
- Syllabus and methods need to be updated
- Self-learning at home or in groups is better than in class
- Exercising reading centers provide better exposure to English
- Critical input
- Discouraging environment: laugh and laud
- Policies on the campus
- Language learning at university (Remedial Eng)
- Language learning
- Motivational Aims for learning English
- We can do without English
- CSW Competitive exam
- Employment
- Upward social mobility and respect
- People are respectfully running without English
- Identity
- Identity is our basic identity
- Imagined identities
- Rural/urban identity
- English is an international language but not local
- English is killing local languages
- MT should be used wherever possible
- MT negative perceptions
- Family background
- Political and historical consciousness
- Proud of our identity as who we actually are
Appendix 15. Profile Form

Basic Profile Questions For (Years 1 to 4)

Name: ____________________________

Age: ______________________________

Gender: ____________________________

School and College attended: _________________________________

Educational background (Sindhi/Urdu/English Medium): _________________

Culture/Ethnicity: _________________________________

Mother tongue: _________________________________

Other language/s spoken: _________________________________

City/town of birth: _________________________________

City/town where brought up: _________________________________

City/town where currently living: _________________________________