Languages in Education, Social Capital and Inequality

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Abstract

This paper engages with the critical debate of the impact of languages in education, in private and government schools, in Pakistan, on participants' opportunities to construct social capital, an important dimension of intergenerational, relative poverty. The data from in-depth interviews of 32 participants, (secondary school final-year students and their same sex 5-6 years older siblings), reveal the growing significance of English, through the interplay of the language policy and languages in education in Pakistan, leading to hegemonic ideologies that constrict the opportunities for the government school participants to acquire the kind of social capital that may address social stratification and inequality. The paper offers insights into the nature of language-education and development relationship. With the use of Bourdieu's social critical theory, the paper captures the processes by which languages in education become implicated in restricting the social capital of the relatively poor. Findings revealed that the languages in education, within the current language policy transformed through mutual cognition and intersubjectivity into symbolic capital. This set off processes which constrict the social capital of the government school participants, creating social stratification, affecting collective agency and restricting opportunities for advancement for the disadvantaged despite their education. The paper argues that the question of language in education must be conceptualized with reference to the national language policy and seen in terms of its implications for development and inequality. This is because the trajectory of education into reduction of inequality, though widely emphasized, is not unproblematic.

Key words: social capital, languages in education, inequality

Introduction

A major factor in intergenerational poverty and inequality has been the transfer of social structural relationships of power, from one generation to the other (Bird & McKay, 2011). Correspondingly, in development literature, social capital has been considered a tool for development, overcoming deficits in policy and information, and facilitating social mobility (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Narayan, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Szreter & Woolcock, 2004). It is also argued widely, that

"lack of access to resource-rich networks constitutes an important dimension of social inequality for low-income adolescents" (Chattopadhay, 2012, p. 67).

Education is argued to contribute towards social capital (Chattopadhay, 2012; Huang, Brink, & Groot, 2009; Misra, Grimes, & Rogers, 2013; Print, 2010), though its impact maybe also be disruptive (Godoy, et al., 2007). The centrality of emphasis on education, in view of its positive role in development processes, is visible in the Millennium Development Goals (Mc Grath, 2010), and now, the focus is being shifted from access to equity in learning outcomes (Barrett, 2011). Nevertheless, the processes by which education actually intersects with poverty and inequality, remains relatively under-researched (Rose & Dyer, 2008). In addition, educational agendas, often undergirded by human capital and rights-based approaches, can neglect social justice issues embedded in the unique contexts of educational institutions (Tikly, 2011); and obsession with quantifiable results may lose focus of the wider non-tangible processes and outcomes of education (Barett, 2011). A competing discourse of capability approach evaluates equality in education not in mere resource provision but in equality of opportunities or "capabilities" that education offers to individuals to achieve their valued goals (Sen, 2000). Based on a social justice framework, it also emphasizes that equity is based on the premise of acceptance of diversity (ibid.).

Education is not always equitable and it may reproduce the existing power inequalities rather than addressing them (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2011). The choice of languages in education, in the given context of language policy can also trigger inequality in multiple dimensions (Tamim, 2013; Tamim, 2014), "perpetuating a post-colonial era" of power inequality (Tikly, 2011). Language plays a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining of social capital as it represents, constitutes and maintains spectrum of relationships across individuals and groups (Clark, 2006). Not speaking the right language can restrict relationships and limit participation (Bourdieu, 1991), affecting the agency of individuals to achieve their valued goals. Language can, thus, act as a subtle but potent tool of discrimination and exclusion from valued social capital (ibid.). Studies indicate the link between language, power and inequality, highlighting the significance of the linguistic hierarchy in the language policy (Harbert, Mc-Connell-Ginet, Miller, & Whitman, 2009; Rahman, 2004; Tollefson, 1991). Research also highlights the subtle exclusion extending from the use of a particular language in development contexts (Robinson, 1996). In such debates, the globalized role of English has been controversial. On one side, English is seen as a medium of social mobility and on the other, it is seen as a

stratifying factor, intensifying deprivation of the marginalized (Cangarajah, 1999). Nevertheless, the absence of an integrated cross-disciplinary dialogue between languages in education and narrowly defined inequality, in terms of differential access to social capital, is particularly striking. Similarly, the exploration of social capital, as an educational outcome, across middle and low-income groups, represented in private and government schools, respectively, in relation to issues of inequality and social justice remains under explored.

This paper is based on the findings of a wider 3-year study in the multilingual context of urban Pakistan. It contributes to the current literature by addressing the questions:

1. What is the impact of languages used and taught in education in private and government schools on participants' capabilities to construct, and expand their social capital?

In addition, it also explores

2. What kind of social capital is generated, by differential access to languages in private and government schools and who does it privilege?

The paper uses Bourdieu's (1986) theoretical toolkit of "social capital" as an analytical framework in confluence with the suggested typology of social capital: "bridging," "bonding," (Narayan, 2009; Putnam, 2000) and "linking," social capital (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004) to explicate issues of inequality in relation to the nature of social capital accessible to different groups. The aim is to enrich Bourdieu's construct of social capital by unpacking and "reconciling" it with other accounts of social capital for richer insights into issues of inequality (Kawachi, Kin, Counts, & Subramanian, 2004). The paper does not attempt to measure the extent of social capital, nor does it detail the impact of social capital; rather, it broadly discusses the differential access to different types of social capital across private and government school participants.

In this paper, inequality is evaluated in the "space of capabilities" i.e. "the freedom of opportunities" or range of effective choices (Sen, 2000) to access valued social capital. This is to emphasize that even when the same "functioning or achievement has been gained, for example the completion of secondary school, inequality may still persist in the unequal opportunities offered by that education, across classes (ibid.). This is because the needs of human beings are essentially diverse and individuals may require different resources to achieve the same valued goals. Hence, social institutions and policies must be evaluated in terms of equality in "capabilities" i.e., the range of opportunities and choices they offer to

individuals to achieve their valued goals (Tikly, 2011; Unterhalter & Meliane, 2007; Walker, 2012).

In the next section, the paper moves on with a discussion of Bourdieu's theory of social capital, complemented with a typology of social capital suggested by Putnam (2000) and Szreter and Woolcock (2004), and its link with language and inequality. This is followed by an overview of the context and methodology of the study. In the next section, I discuss the findings before summarizing the argument in the conclusion.

Social Capital, Language and Inequality

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social capital, while focusing on the benefits of social capital, transcends the narrow functionalist approaches (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000) and sharpens the explanatory power of the study. This allows a revalorization of social relationships within the political economy of the context, structured by the wider national language policy, of Pakistan. Bourdieu (1986) presents social capital as "an attribute of an individual in a social context" (p. 9), a resource that facilitates an individual's access to certain privileges that are collectively owned by the group, to which s/he belongs, and which are exclusive to its members. This access that may be "actual" or "potential" is embedded in "a network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (ibid.). By positioning the individual within the social milieu, I would argue, Bourdieu's construct of social capital assumes both collective and individual dimension, also evident in his concept of "habitus."

It is in the "habitus," i.e., the socialized individual self that Bourdieu argues, the social contextual constraints become embodied (Wacquant, 2008). This argument allows Bourdieu to connect micro-level social interactions with macro-level social inequalities, and challenge the dichotomy between objective and subjective realities (Wacquant, 2008). The individual subjectivities come to reflect the objective social realities of their existence in their "habitus" displaying certain attributes, specific "social schemas" (Simons & Burt, 2011), perceptions and practices that are shared with others similarly positioned. It is the "habitus" then that becomes a tool of reproducing the given social structures, of which social capital is an important aspect.

Bourdieu (1991) argues that it is the distribution of three basic forms of capitals: economic, social and cultural that positions individuals in the hierarchical social space i.e., the field. Different fields like the field of education, health, etc., are relatively autonomous. They have their own rules for defining social hierarchy, yet these rules are not completely independent of the rules operative in other fields (Maton, 2005). Fields are

marked by a struggle for "distinction" to either maintain a position of power and privilege or attain it (ibid.). Such struggles, I would argue, are ridden by conflicts both at intermental and intramental plane, driven by "a sense of belonging" towards those positioned similarly, on the one hand, and a sense of alignment with the broad cultural systems of "an imagined community," (Anderson, 2006; Norton, 2001). The community is "imagined" because the members might never meet; yet they perceive a shared sense of privilege or deprivation (ibid.). Successful shift towards a valued imagined community may come at the cost of "dislocation of self" (Bourdieu, 1991), whereby, one may disassociate with, and look down upon one's own culture, language and even family to mark association with and legitimize membership of an "imagined community" (ibid.).

The "doxa," the taken for granted beliefs and assumptions provide a clue to the rules of the game that underlie the struggles within a field. Though, unjust, arbitrary and biased towards the privileged, they are often "misrecognized," and projected as "common sense" (Bourdieu, 1991). It is in this misrecognition that the power of the doxa lies, leading to the "naturalizing" of the given order (Bourdieu, 1991; Sullivan, 2002). Hence, the given power structures are sustained with acquiesce of the dominated, as the possibility of questioning their validity becomes diminished over time, embedded in cultural practices, assuming the art of commonsense.

Social capital is essentially class-based and exclusive, because it is not only a "transubstantiation" of economic capital but can also be converted into economic capital (Daly & Silver, 2008). As such, social capital has the tendency not only to "persist" but also to "reproduce" it in "identical" or "expanded forms" (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1991) argues that group membership soften institutionalized through allocation of a title, which entitles an individual to certain privileges of the "collectively-owned capital" (Daly & Silver, 2008, p. 544). These titles, then, serve as reminders to self and others regarding their positioning in relation to others, the distances to be observed, and "legitimate" vs. "illegitimate practices" (ibid.). However, such social positioning is not reducible to interactions because one may perceive oneself positioned higher or lower in relation to people one has never met (Maton, 2005).

Exclusiveness of the group, Bourdieu (1986) argues, is intrinsic to its survival because inclusion of new members threatens the "legitimacy" of the group's identity. Hence, each member must act as a gatekeeper, a "custodian of the group's limits [. . .] by expelling or excommunicating the embarrassing individuals" (ibid. pp. 10-11). This is a necessary condition of "the right to declare oneself a member of the group" (ibid.). The resulting solidarity from the exclusive social capital empowers "scattered agents to act as one" and represent the whole group. This also opens room for

"embezzlement" so that even when not all the members of the group actually possess the quality that makes the group distinct, the mere group title, imperceptibly forces others to allocate them the group attributes. Hence, a subgroup, known to all, comes to represent the whole (ibid. p. 12).

However, Bourdieu (1986) emphasizes that social capital is under a constant flux, and membership is not a given but has to be "enacted," maintained and reinforced in exchanges" that may be "material or symbolic," to ensure "mutual acknowledgement" and reaffirmation of membership (ibid. p. 9). This exchange also ascribes a symbolic significance to the transaction itself, which is mutually recognized as validating group membership; marking its "distinction," from others; and allowing the group to be reproduced (ibid. p. 10). All such exchanges, because they are symbolic, are accompanied by an implicit understanding of the difference between "legitimate" and "illegitimate," practices (Daly & Silver, 2008).

Bourdieu's theory, despite its powerful account of social structures, however, seems to be concerned with the social capital of the elite that allows them to retain their privilege, creating an impression as if the disadvantaged or the dominated lack "social capital." I would argue that the theory is strengthened if one acknowledges that there are different types of social capital (Granovetter, 1973), with different kinds and levels of "performativity" (Clark, 2006). One could argue, for example, that "bridging" capital, emerging from networks across different groups (Putnam, 2000) and "linking" social capital, i.e. networks that connect individuals to institutional power (Szerter & Woolcock, 2004) might be more instrumental in upward mobility and achieving social equality than "bonding capital," i.e. close bonds of mutual acquaintance among those sharing the same social identity. The latter, with its strong social closure, though may be of service to the elite but may disadvantage the dominated, at times even leading to the formation of "ethnic enclaves" (Xie & Gough, 2011) that can socially exclude the whole group. Hence, not all social capital is good and the collectively owned capital may bear advantages as well as disadvantages to an individual (Moore, Deniel, Gauvin, & Dube`, 2009). Such integration of different accounts of social capital, despite differences in their theoretical underpinnings, has also been suggested by Szreter and Woolcock (2004). Adding this typology to the theoretical framework of social capital, in this paper, serves its aim to explain the variation in the kind of social capital accessible to different groups.

The theoretical framework of the paper is based on the assumption that an increase in bridging and linking social capital can generate collective agency (Putnam, 2000; Szreter & Woolcock, 2004);

while social fragmentation can lead to "disaffiliation and downward mobility" (Daly & Silver, 2008, p. 550). Although the context in social capital is often down played in functionalist approaches, following Bourdieu, I argue that the specific impact of any type of social capital is essentially context bound, because it is the context and its socio-historical location from which the very "meaning" of social capital emerges [Itl. org] (Daly & Silver, 2008, p. 555), whereby, "boundaries" are demarcated, "distances" mapped out, and the nature of relationships between the "insiders" and "outsiders" revealed (ibid.).

Language and Social Capital

Language as a primary tool to mediate in the social context does not only reflect the "concrete reality of relations between people" (Clark, 2006, p. 1) but also enacts, reconstructs and reproduces them in discourses (Fairclough, 2013). Hence, languages, embedded within specific socio-historical contexts, play a crucial role in the reproduction of social relationships. However, I agree with Fairclough (2013) that there remains in this re-production an opportunity to modify or challenge the given structures because language, like other cultural resources, is essentially only a resource that is amenable to modification. The power embedded in the use and access to different languages is manifest in the subtle but forcible exclusion of individuals or groups in social processes (Bourdieu, 1991; Fairclough, 2013; Rahman, 1997; Tamim, 2013; Tamim 2014). Language can be "socially exclusive" as in the case of "intimate or bonding language," for example the use of language among teenagers, or regional dialects to emphasize group affiliation (Clark, 2006). Language can also be "socially inclusive" or "bridging" when it works as a mode of connecting people across communities, as it happens in the case of a lingua franca of a given context. In addition, it can also leverage institutional power, "institutional power-linking language," for example English in the context of Pakistan (Rahman, 1997). However, such attributes I would argue do not exist in language itself, but are contingent on its specific use in different contexts, to generate different types of social capital. For example, the same language, English, can enable cross-cultural communication when all understand it, but it can be exclusionary when only few comprehend it. Similarly, professional registers can be used to exclude others, but at other times used to connect with individuals belonging to diverse communities. Clark (2006) argues that the "affective and effective disposition" towards a specific dialect of a language, and I would add towards different languages also, reflects an ideological bias (ibid. p. 12), which is crucial for utilizing a language in a social network. This is because it is through this mutual act of recognition and ascription that the language acquires a "symbolic power" that enables it to function and regulate social networks (Bourdieu, 1991).

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Since, language is intrinsic to social capital and instrumental in constructing and maintaining it, the choice of languages in education and the linguistic hierarchy of the wider national language policy become implicated in issues of inequality.

Pakistan Language Policy, Languages in Education and the Social Context

Pakistan is a multilingual country with a variety of languages spoken in different parts of the country. It is ridden by high social inequality and poverty, as 45 % of its population live below the poverty line (Human Development Report, 2013). With the literacy rate at 57%, and poor schooling enrollment (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2013), there is little probability that Pakistan would achieve the millennium development goals of educational parity.

After independence, from the British colonial rule of over a hundred years, in 1947, Urdu was declared as its national language. English was retained as its official language, for pragmatic purposes. This was always meant to be a temporary arrangement until English, could be replaced by Urdu. However, despite, the passage of sixty-seven years, and several declarations in this regard, English has retained its official status, and over the years, its significance has progressively increased in the country. English remains strongly rooted as the language of power and prestige in the country, a pre-requisite for high social mobility, being the language of higher education, high judiciary, coveted jobs, bureaucracy and all major businesses of the country. Its power and prestige emerging from the higher order functions allocated to it in the language policy and the economic dominance of the core English speaking countries, resulting in its high utilitarian value across the globe. Regional languages have hardly any role in state business, although the provinces have the constitutional right to promote their own languages. It is English and Urdu that remain pervasive in all the sectors, the former more dominant than the latter, in written documentation and officially within organizations and the former in dealing with clients and unofficially within institutions. For example, the airlines, banks, hospitals etc., rely mainly on English, in written documents, and to conduct themselves officially with   only selective information documented in Urdu. However, paradoxically, it is Urdu otherwise, that is commonly spoken in these places (Tamim, 2014b). However, this remains largely in contrast to the linguistic reality of the context, where regional languages are commonly used within communities, in the running of small local businesses, and unofficially, even in larger businesses or service sectors its use is necessitated to engage with the people. The regional languages become crucial to connect with the local population, because more often than not, the dominant

languages, for example, English and Urdu, are learnt in schools; and given the low literacy rate not everyone has access to them.

The question of languages in Pakistan has always been a problematic one, and remains controversial among policy makers to-date. The main tension has been between the promotion of English for its global significance, and the emphasis on Urdu for national solidarity, though to a much lesser degree, the use of home languages for better learning also forms a part of the equation. Currently, nearly all private schools in urban areas use English as a medium of subject study and offer Urdu and English as languages. In the case of Sindh, however, schools preparing students for the provincial exam at the end of secondary school are bound to take a Sindhi language paper also. The quality of English language teaching/ learning in these private schools is often contingent upon their fee structure, with high-fee schools offering better English teaching/learning, as compared to schools with low-fee. The government- runs schools which do not charge any fee and until 2009, they have mainly delivered education in Urdu. In some cases, though, regional languages have been used at primary level, and in Sindh, even some secondary schools offer education in Sindhi. The languages taught in these schools include: English, Urdu and Sindhi (latter, in the case of Sindh only). However, the poor quality of English teaching and learning in these schools is well documented (Mansoor, 2005; Rahman, 1997; Rahman, 2004).

In 2009, following a realization of the disadvantage of the government-school students the new National Education Policy suggested that all government schools shift from Urdu to English-medium instruction until 2012. In the province of Punjab, following the disastrous failure of the program, because of the poor English language proficiency of the teachers and conceptual issues in learning, faced by the students, the policy has been rolled back. While other provinces, facing similar issues are struggling. Hence, fraught with pragmatic concerns, political tensions, and little research, the issue of languages in education in Pakistan is far from resolved. The data, for the study reported in this paper, was collected in 2008, and none of the participants had witnessed this transition.

The Doxa: "Difference as Deficit" (Street, 2011)

An application of Bourdieu's social critical theory, in the construct of "doxa" provides a useful tool to explore the taken for granted beliefs and assumptions in the context (Sullivan, 2002). In this context, where the privilege attached to knowing English was juxtaposed with limited opportunities to learn it, a language-based stratification was apparent. This crystallized into the dichotomy between "Urdu-medium" vs. "English-medium," the "us," vs. "they," referrals used by the participants. The

normalized discourse was that those who knew English had a "good family," and "good education," while those with poor English had poor family backgrounds, little education and even "poor intelligence" (Tamim, 2005; Tamim, 2013). Hira, a private school participant (PSP) stated categorically, "Urdu-medium is a stigma. It is a fact, Unais (PSP), a BBA, student in a private university who had no "Urdu-medium" class fellow, yet he could easily conjure up the image, reminiscent of colonial essentializing of the native subject:

> For example he is Urdu medium he has bad language, meaning . . . he verbally abuses . . . this is the way his language is but the class environment is different . . . these things are strictly disallowed and so are bad languages. (Source: Interview PSP, Karachi, June 22, 2008)

The linguistic difference can be seen, here, contorted into an ideological bias because of the linguistic hierarchy in the language policy, legitimized through education, and "misrecognized" as common sense, thus aiding in naturalizing the "distinction" of the elite (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Hence, what was actually mere difference in language refracted into "deficit," generating "inequality for those who lacked English skills and brewing advantage for those who possessed it" (Street, 2011, p. 581). Nazia, a government school participant (GSP) quietly acquiesces, and justifies her fairly unequal lower positioning in relation to the "English-medium," as she explains, "when someone is speaking English and I can't . . . then of course their level is higher and mine is lower [because] we can't speak on equal terms." Bourdieu (1991) argues that it is the "doxa," espoused in common sense that conceals the injustice, and enables the dominant to exercise their power with the compliance of the dominated (ibid.).

Recognizing this "doxa" in the field enables one to comprehend, not only the "definitions" that are offered but also "how" these definitions affect the power embedded in relationships (Street, 2011). It is argued that defining or ascribing titles itself is related to power and it is the questioning of given definitions and values that creates spaces for transformation (Bourdieu, 1991; Street, 2011). Hence, the titles: Urdu Medium (UM) and English Medium (EM) define not just mediums of instruction at school but also unequal power relationships between the two groups, defining their social positioning, the distances to be kept and the boundaries to be maintained (Bourdieu, 1986). This social positioning guides their interactions but is not irreducible to them (Maton, 2005). It is the mutual inter-subjectivity that belies the "doxa," woven into the "habitus" that can be seen seamlessly reproducing the inequitable power structures in the given context (Bourdieu, 1986).

Methodology

The study used a qualitative methodology and a multiple case-study design. Each case comprised a final year secondary school student and his or her same-sex five-to-six-year older sibling, with completed secondary school education. Sixteen cases, from four private and three government schools were selected with the help of teachers. The same number of private and government school participants and gender difference was retained to make effective comparisons. The difference in the age of siblings allowed an understanding of time related processes in the choice of schooling, schooling experiences, language-based wider out of school experiences. The schools were situated in the urban context of two provinces: Karachi in Sindh and Lahore in Punjab, with a student population of at least three hundred students, preparing them for a similar provincial matriculation exam after secondary school. The sampling process was purposive to highlight typical cases. A snowballing process also supported this with help from teachers and Heads to facilitate access to pairs of siblings and to government schools, following a particularly politically tumultuous time in Pakistan, the assassination of ex-prime minister Benazir Bhutto.

The data collection methods included in-depth ethnographic style individual interviews, participant observation and documentary analysis over the course of one year. The data that informs this paper, however, is based on thirty-two interviews, across sixteen cases. Alkire's (2002) dimensions of human development guided the interviews (see Appendix A). Participants, with the use of open-ended questions around a dimension were encouraged to explore language-based experiences. They were asked to provide concrete examples to substantiate their statements. However, they were not obliged to comment on each dimension. A dimension was introduced only to remind the participants if there was something they would like to add. At the end of each individual interview, the responses were clustered into different dimensions. This was done in consultation with the participants to ensure that the responses would later be interpreted in the right context. Later, they were asked to rank each dimension in relation to value it held for them on a scale of 1-7, with the highest ranked as one.

The analysis was done using grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The intention was to allow the categories to emerge from the data itself. This was a cyclical process that shifted between two broad phases: a) analysis of individual interviews; and b) analysis across cases, for emerging patterns and themes both within each interview and across cases. First, line-by-line coding of fully transcribed individual interviews was done, applying descriptive terms used by the participants. These were

then revisited to identify and subsume these into broader categories. The resulting themes seemed to divide the data into certain broad descriptive domains, for example, home, education, work and wider social life. Cross-case comparisons were conducted at this stage with the help of several detailed data matrices. The strategies of "clustering," "counting" the frequency, "contrasts and comparisons" were used, to draw interpretations and check their "plausibility" (Robson, 2002, p. 480). Later with "axial coding" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123), we arrived at more abstract codes and "core categories" (ibid.) in relation to each dimension of human development.

Findings

The findings here are discussed with reference to the theme of social capital arising from across the cases grouped as government school participants (GSPs) and private school participants (PSPs). This is related to the dimension of social relationships, ranked as third highest by most of the participants. The intra-group and gender differences are beyond the focus of this paper.

Brief Profile of the Participants

The government school graduates, in the study, were disadvantaged in several ways as compared to the private school graduates. Four of the eight government school participants (GSP) cases formed the lowest income group. They had uneducated parents, with fathers in skilled or unskilled manual labour. Their families were not in favour of females working, outside homes, except if it involved teaching. These participants also had to balance school and work, since there was little parental commitment to their education. The other group of GSPs had a higher range of income. Their fathers were either in small businesses or low paid office jobs. Though their parents were also uneducated, like the low-income group of GSPs, their families shared several positive values with the middle-class private school graduates (PSPs). These included an appreciation and commitment to education and a positive attitude towards female work outside home. The PSPs formed the highest income group. They had educated parents, with fathers either involved in privately owned business or in well-paid jobs. Their families projected a positive attitude towards female work. In addition, their families took a keen interest in the education of PSPs.

At the end of secondary school, according to self-reports, none of the participants had learnt Sindhi, from school, except one PSP. All the PSPs declared that their Urdu was "poor." They expressed more satisfaction with their English skills, though, only seven out of sixteen participants felt very confident of their English, yet following

"embezzlement," (Bourdieu, 1986), they all enjoyed the privileges ascribed to "English-mediums." In contrast, a majority of the GSPs felt confident in their Urdu (10 out of 16). However, they all felt that they had learnt very little English at school. Significantly, those from the lowest income groups also benefited the least from any kind of language instruction at school.

There were no significant differences between the schools in Punjab and Karachi, except that the physical infrastructure of the visited schools in Karachi was generally worse, with scarcity of financial resources. There were also no discernible differences in the responses of the participants from the two provinces. The findings here are presented as themes arising across cases. Intra-group and gender differences are not discussed in this paper.

Opportunities for "Crossing Over": Bridging Capital

As English became the "distinction" of the privileged, because of its class-based access, juxtaposed with its importance in the country, the advantage of English-mediums (EMs) was unambiguous in terms of opportunities for bridging and linking social capital. Hina (EM) put in extra effort to learn English; once she realized that those who could speak English well commanded attention from teachers and peers alike. She explained, "I was able to cross over . . . cross over from this side . . . where I was a no body in this sea of people in the class to somebody who got noticed by teachers and students." Later, in Grade VI, Hina (EM) proudly reported that the school owner's daughter chose to sit next to her because she was the most fluent in English in her class. Her English also allowed Hina (EM) to construct bridging capital at college. She narrated how it enabled her "to trespass class boundaries" and be "accepted in a circle of elite friends," despite her middle-class family background. She elaborated:

> Because I knew the language, I could do anything . . . talk to anybody . . . do anything, participate in drama clubs . . . debates . . . while others would be just thinking . . . and even now you know the advantage is there. (Source: Interview, EM, Lahore, May, 2008)

Such themes of acceptance, recognition and freedom that enabled participants to connect across groups were common in the discourse of those most fluent in English, though not absent from the discourses of other EMs. Faizan (EM), with an American accent, narrated several instances of how he was "just chosen to be a leader," by his peers, almost "effortlessly." Riaz (EM) emphasized that because of his English, he was "freely accepted" in different circles of friends and "simply nominated by his class fellows to represent the class . . . just like that . . . when no other name was even suggested."

This vertically inclined bridging capital was nevertheless carefully guarded, with the tool of English. Rehana (EM) stated the simple rule: "Anybody who does not speak English is out." She explained,"Obviously when you are speaking to someone in English and s/he can't . . . obviously there is this language barrier." Uzma (UM), at the other end, expresses the frustrated desire for bridging capital, to connect with EMs. She laments "you want to sit with them . . . so you can also learn English but they don't like to sit with us . . . they think it is lower . . . it is like lower if they do so." Sameen (UM), now a teacher in a local school, expressed her sense of isolation and low-self esteem, "I feel so little," she explains, as she watches two teachers in her school staffroom, "speak to each other in English and . . . I can't understand a thing. I also want to talk to them but I just look away."

English, here emerges as a tool of "gatekeeping" of "an imagined community" of the English speaking elite (Anderson, 2006; Norton, 2001). This "gatekeeping" is a legitimate practice that forges and validates membership of the elite group, by following the ritual, the symbolic practice of speaking in English (Bourdieu, 1986). Inclusion of the UMs threatens the "distinction" of the group. Hence, all members must guard its boundaries and keep their distance with the "others," the UMs, to legitimize and enact their membership. This explains why EMs must refuse to sit with Uzma (UM) and why Rehana must turn them "out" of the group and emphasize language as a "barrier." Significantly, the "barrier" that Rehana speaks of is not the absence of a mutually understood language, as everyone understands Urdu here, but only a symbolic feature of the group. It is the "difference" that she emphasizes here that of class, "good family," "good gathering" and cultured taste, symbolized in linguistic difference. Hence the struggle, of the "insiders" to maintain the exclusivity of the group, and of "outsiders" to breach the boundaries of the group for inclusion, can be clearly discerned here (Bourdieu, 1986).

Although, Urdu also played a major positive role in bridging social networks, being the lingua franca in the given context, since these social networks seemed to be less vertically inclined, the role of Urdu was less appreciated, except by those UMs who had learnt it at school. Participants, paradoxical, to its actual use in the given urban setting, often dismissed the dismissal of the role of Urdu, as a means to bridging capital. This reveals the power of the hegemonizing "doxa" surrounding English.

Linking Capital: Recognition and Voice

The language policy privileged English across different fields, as the relational nature of fields, was augmented by the ubiquity of language. The significance of English, in almost all institutional networks, enhanced the

opportunities for EMs to construct linking capital. However, the scope of this opportunity seemed to correspond to the EMs', level of English skills. Those most confident in English, expressed ease in connecting to influential institutional networks. Farhan, (EM) detailed that a reputable multinational firm selected him for internship, because of his good English. Mehwish (EM), a final year, BA student of Architecture and an internee at a firm, explained that "those with poor English are kept in the back office [by the company] where they don't have to meet the clients," while those with good English skills have the opportunity to represent the company upfront.

At the other end of the spectrum, were UMs, those for whom their lack of English became a limitation, restricting their access to linking capital. Hussein (UM) reported that because of his poor English and regional accent, for a whole year, at college, he could not muster up courage to meet his professor, to dispel a misunderstanding that eventually led to his suspension. "You know what you have to say [but] how do you say it. Everyone is looking," he explained. The fear of derision and ridicule kept him silent, despite the fact that he had entered this prestigious college, after earning a gold medal in his secondary school exam. Similarly, Sameen (UM) refused to attend computer classes that were being offered by her school, free of cost because she worried that English would be used as a medium of instruction. Hence, she felt compelled to forgo an opportunity that could strengthen her institutional position at school, and augment her skills. Hussein (UM) with reference to general social context argued that in a government office "if you speak in English they would do your work just like that." Other participants also emphasized that using English, coerced people into making favorable decisions and helped them to deal with difficult situations, for example, when stopped by traffic policemen.

The issue of lack of access to linking capital emerged as a serious issue in the field of health. Hira (EM), a final year medical college explained, pointing to the issue of poor knowledge, of regional languages among doctors, " when patients from rural backgrounds come to us we are all running to find someone who can understand their language." Highlighting the normal mode of extensive borrowings of English words in Urdu, she insisted, "We only think we know English but we don't. Try it for yourself and . . . every word of English that we use is lost on them." Here, the reference is to the breakdown of communication between the educated and a large number of poor, rural population without access to the dominant languages and therefore rendered more vulnerable to disease and misery. The language–based power structures can be witnessed here to subtly exclude, those most in need, from effective

health care, that was otherwise offered at meager cost by the government. This reminds us that if the resources offered do not take into account the diversity of the needs of the human beings; they fail to offer equal opportunities to all, as emphasized by Sen's capability approach (Sen, 2000).

Bonding Capital: Affiliation

Contradictory to the demonstrated alienation with Urdu, all the participants reported using Urdu as a medium of bonding with close friends and family. They also described using Urdu when they wanted to ensure clarity in mutual understanding. The use of regional language was also reported for the same purposes but more by UMs than EMs. Urdu emerged as the main medium of communication by the participants, in the context of intimate relationships and close friendships, although the EMs reported frequent borrowings of English phrases and words, and to a lesser degree the UMs also followed pursuit. The participants also felt that Urdu was related to their national identity and was important. Nevertheless, the participants perceived a certain threat in using Urdu. Rehana (EM) explained "these days the one who speaks Urdu is made to feel let down [. . .] it is a fact you can try it for yourself" (as cited in Tamim, 2013, p. 164). For a fuller understanding of the phenomena, this needs to be compared with Hira's (EM) emphasis, "Just speaking in English makes you feel superior," because it "silences others" (Ibid.). Asim (EM) insisted "I want to learn English that others do not understand." Faiz (EM) reveled that his class fellows "just look on dumbfounded [and one of them] simply goes blank" when he uses "difficult English [vocabulary]."

As English assumes a symbolic power, the competition in its wake, becomes apparent, between the insiders who want to keep it to themselves and outsiders who yearn to access the privileges of the "imagined community" (Norton, 2001) and legitimize their membership by the symbolic act of "gatekeeping." This struggle for distinction seems to intrude into sibling relationships also. Asim (EM), the younger of the two siblings described how he tormented his elder brother an UM, whenever he tried to speak English. "I tell him you are not speaking English correctly . . . though he is . . . and he becomes quiet." Similarly, in three of the four cases, while the elder sibling, fluent in English, reported home environment to be very conducive towards the learning of English, the younger sibling felt lesser confident in English and complained of the home environment to be non-productive for learning English.

The use of Urdu and its dismissal, the threat of using Urdu, reflects the price of success paid with "dislocation" of self (Bourdieu, 1991), shifting identities and conflict at intermental and intramental plane, as

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power-relationships are being re-configured. Forging membership in the "imaginative community" renders the speaking of Urdu and affiliating with those not knowing English "illegitimate," leading to a loss of distinction (ibid.). Hence, the threat felt in speaking Urdu. English, in its symbolic role, seemed to intersect with already existing bonds and erode them, forcing the participants to look down upon their own language and culture (ibid.).

Concluding Discussion

The significance of English in a globalized world, for harnessing economic gains is hard to deny, yet one has to take into account that the world is straddled with linguistic diversity, ignoring which can only aggravate inequality. Hence, the need to move forward from the human capital approach to train a workforce for national economic gains, and a rights-based approach, to education to capability approach, and acknowledge that the goals of social justice framework: "inclusion," "relevance" and "democracy" in education (Tikly, 2011) and through education, begin with the "recognition" and acceptance of diversity (Fraser, 1989); and commodification and "redistribution" of English does not resolve the issue. It is the acceptance of linguistic diversity that can strengthen social capital and enhance individual and collective agency.

The research reported in this paper reveals the intrinsic role of language in constructing, maintaining and expanding social capital. Since social capital is related to development processes (Daly & Silver, 2008), language itself becomes implicated in issues of inequality and opportunities for development. This highlights the significance of the linguistic hierarchy established by the language policy and the choice of languages in education, in resurrecting unequal power structures. The hegemony that English enjoyed in this context was in sharp contrast to the sociolinguistic reality, where most of the times actually Urdu, or a regional language, and not English are used to bridge and bond across and within communities, even unofficially in organizations. Yet, the upward vertical networks promised by English and the widespread use of English in documentation and written communication in English, are enough to dismiss local languages. Bourdieu (1991) terms such an instance as that of "a class turned against itself, whose members are seeking, at the cost of constant anxiety, to produce linguistic expressions which bear the mark of habitus other than their own," destroying their own means of expression (p. 21). He argues, this results from a "speaker's assessment of market condition, and the anticipation of the likely reception of his/her linguistic products" (p. 19). It was the given language policy, with the mediation of educational institutions that seemed to regulate a linguistic market where the value of local languages was limited. Hence, in the quest for global

social networks, the local perspective was lost and localized social capital that could generate collective agency was eroded.

The value of Bourdieu's theory lies in opening the space for challenging the given order. Hence, far from being deterministic, it offers an analysis of the struggles in the fields and highlights possibilities of change by breaking away from what seems to be natural and common sense. Bourdieu's theoretical framework, complemented with the typology of linking, bonding and bridging capital, showed that differential access to the valued English led to the generation of different types of capital for the EMs and Ums. The findings of the paper revealed that the government school graduates remained the most disadvantaged in terms of bridging and linking social capital, while the private school graduates, who were already from privileged backgrounds, emerged the most advantaged. Language education in relation to the hierarchy established by the wider national language policy played a pivotal role in mediating access to different types of social capital. Hence, the education of UMs did little to allow them access to vertically oriented bridging and linking social networks that could facilitate their social mobility. The language "barrier" changes from a mere social and symbolic to a real one when a doctor fails to communicate with her/his patient and the link between the educated and the vulnerable is disrupted. It can be argued that while, the bonding capital might be beneficial to the EMs, and it would be much less so for the UMs. Although, gender differences are not discussed in this paper, one can assume that particularly disadvantaged in this setting could be the female UMs for whom such an access could be vital for a more empowered and expanded participation, where as bonding capital, that is networks, with others similarly positioned, could naturalize their disadvantage.

The findings discussed in the paper match, to some extent, with the results of the studies suggesting language-based marginalization in immigrant contexts, in the West (Cummins, 2000; Norton, 2000). However, inequality in a home country context when a vast majority is marginalized in a way that even secondary education cannot address the issue is definitely more compelling and worrying. The findings of the paper are limited because of the nature of its design, yet they suggest an important dimension of future research.

Notes

[1] Tikly (2011) makes this comment with reference to issues of social justice in education, and not with reference to languages in education.

[2] Bourdieu does not use the concept of imagined community. This is an original contribution to understand his concept of "dislocation of self."

[3] The main regional languages spoken in the country are: Punjabi (44.15%), Pashto (15.42%), Sindhi (4.10%), Siraiki (10.53%), Baluchi (3.57%), and other languages (4.66%) (Census, 2001).

[4] Street (2011) uses the concept of deficit in relation to literacy issues. It is equally applicable here. Bourdieu (1986) also presents a similar view.

[5] No such differences were perceptible in the PSPs.

[6] To align my interpretations with that of the participants, I adopt their term "English-medium" (EM) for private school graduates and "Urdu-medium" (UM) for those from government schools.

[7] This can arguably be either because of the need to emphasize affiliation with the imagined community of the English speaking elite, lack of proficiency in either language, or code switching typical of bilingual environments.

[8] The elder brother was from a fast disappearing genre of private schools, which offered Urdu-medium instruction. Even this school had now shifted to English-medium instruction.

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