

Language-Teaching Policies in Pakistan

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Language-Teaching Policies in Pakistan

Tariq Rahman

1. Introduction

Language-teaching is important not only as part of the overall educational policy of the state but also in its own right. It is important as part of overall policy because it reinforces the values, attitudes and policies promoted by the state. It is important in its own right because languages empower or disempower people (Rahman 1996). Languages used in the domains of power -- the administration, armed forces, commerce, media, education -- empower people by giving them access to social and technical skills and lucrative jobs. Languages are also identity symbols and enable people to get access to the world view expressed in the literature written in them.

This article, then, examines the language-teaching policies of the state in Pakistan. The focus is on state-controlled vernacular medium schools and not private English medium schools or *madrassas* (religious seminaries) though policies about them have been mentioned in passing where necessary. The policies have been examined in relation to the states' overall policy of developing Pakistani nationalism as a counter to ethnicity. In order to restrict the scope of the study, the other aspects of the state's education policies have not been given the detailed attention they deserve in their own right.

2. The Political Agenda

The first educational conference held at Karachi (27 November to 1st December 1947) laid the foundations of a language-teaching policy which the state still follows. The cardinal points of this policy were to make Urdu 'the lingua franca of Pakistan' and to teach it 'as a compulsory language in schools' (PEC 1948:43). While the conference did not make it a medium of instruction in schools, the situation was that it was being used as such in the Punjab, the N.W.F.P, Baluchistan and in parts of Kashmir. In Sind alone, out of the provinces of present-day Pakistan, was Sindhi the medium of instruction for most schools. But even here the cities were changing fast in their demographic composition. The predominantly Urdu-speaking mohajirs were migrating in large numbers from northern India and settling down in the cities (Census 1951:Statements 2.E&F). Having more urban, educated people among them than the Sindhis (Census 1951: Tables 9-B), they wanted more and more schools -- Urdu and English-medium schools -- in the cities of Sindh. Thus, when Karachi became a federal area separate from Sind on 23 July 1948 the number of schools was as follows:

Table 1:

Medium of instruction	Number of Schools	
	1949-50	1950-51
Urdu-medium	69	80
Sindhi-medium	57	59
Gujrati-medium	17	17

Source: ABE 1953: 53

The figure for both Sindhi and Gujrati-medium schools decreased even further in the years to come.

3. Symbolic Value of Urdu

Urdu was given so important a place for political and psychological reasons. The political ones are easy to catalogue: Pakistan was a multilingual country and the ruling elite used Islam and Urdu, in that order, as symbols of integration. Urdu, then, was to help forge the Pakistani national identity which would reduce the threat of ethnic identities, focussed around their indigenous languages, from weakening or disintegrating the state along ethnic lines. According to ethnic nationalists this policy helped the Punjabi and Mohajir elites to consolidate their power in all the provinces of Pakistan and was, therefore, part of an overall policy of internal colonialism. However, since it was English not Urdu which was used at the elitist level in all central services, the rule of English-knowing people was ensured and Urdu was, if anything, only a threat to it. However, this policy did favour the Mohajirs and Punjabis at the lower levels of power. Moreover it elevated the status of Urdu vis-a-vis the other languages of Pakistan. This created the valorization of the urban, Urdu-using culture and a corresponding devaluation of indigenous vernacular-using rural cultures. This was the psychological dimension -- the valuation of one symbolic system (language, code of conduct, dress, values and a way of structuring and categorization of reality) rather than the many symbolic systems based on the indigenous languages and ways of life. Psychologically speaking, then, the valuation of Urdu vis-a-vis the indigenous languages created a situation which can only be described in terms of cultural imperialism. An imperialism which, as Paulo Freire points out, is not only acquiesced into but actively supported by those who are subjected to it -- the 'invaded'. Indeed, everyone -- 'invader' and 'invaded' -- accept, internalize and act according to the same values (Freire 1989: 151).

As anyone who knows Pakistan will observe, this is true for most middle class people in the Punjab. They believe that Urdu, and the values which go with urban Mughal culture (the culture of the Urdu-speaking elite), are superior to Punjabi and rural values. However, in the N.W.F.P, Sind and tribal Balochistan people are proud of their indigenous culture. The language movements of various parts of Pakistan -- including the Hindko, Siraiki, Punjabi, Balochi and other language movements -- are trying to make urban Urdu-using people take pride in their indigenous language and culture too (Rahman 1996). In short then, the policy of favouring Urdu explicitly has devalued the other indigenous languages of Pakistan while English, about which more will be said elsewhere, has devalued all Pakistani languages.

4. Opinion-Moulding Textbooks

Urdu was not, however, the only, or even the main, part of nation-building. Islam and nationalist symbols -- an ideology, flag, pride in independent national identity -- were used to construct or 'imagine', a la Benedict Anderson (1983), a nation. Since identity is maintained by boundary-marking; by making the 'other' define what we are not; by creating contrasts and oppositions; by under-playing similarities and over-emphasizing differences -- the state has used socialising or opinion-moulding, texts to do this in varying degrees. The 'other' in the case of Pakistan is, of course, India. The Pakistani identity is defined, in official myth-making, as the 'Muslim' identity. This identity is an undifferentiated monolith -- its sectarian, ethnic, linguistic, class, educational and power differentials are ignored or underplayed or presented as if they were merely variations of a whole rather than painful differences. The 'other' Hindu identity too is a similar monolith. It too is not allowed to be differentiated so that there is no room for understanding that the response of an Indian liberal towards Muslims (and other issues) may be as different from that of a BJP nationalist than that of a Pakistani liberal from a hard-liner state functionary towards similar issues.

Opinion-moulding texts are those which directly define the world, pass judgements upon it and mould our attitudes to it. The social sciences or humanities are always the major opinion-moulding texts. Religion,

philosophy, history, political science discuss our place in the world; the values we bring to bear upon it and how we look upon it. Literature is a powerful medium either reinforcing or refuting these values. And language texts, which are more about the world, than language itself, can be used to reinforce what the social science texts assert.

In Pakistan the opinion-moulding texts used in schools were primarily historical or social studies texts. Language-teaching texts were used to reinforce the ideological contents of texts. The state carried out a conscious policy of Islamizing these texts. Early in the 1950s it was resolved that 'history books will be re-written'. Item 11 (para 18), where this was written, said:

ways and means be found to encourage publication of standard books dealing with achievements of Islam with special reference to (a) Historical personages, episodes and (b) contributions to art, science and culture (ABE 1954: 26).

Several committees were made for this purpose and the new Islamized and Pakistanized textbooks were introduced from April 1952 in many schools (ABE 1954: 48)

5. Language Policy in 1950s

The Urdu committees kept emphasizing Urdu despite the opposition to it in East Bengal. In Dacca, one year after the first phase of the Bengali language movement in 1948, the Advisory Board of Education set up an Urdu committee under the chairmanship of Abdul Haq, the father of Urdu (*Baba-e-Urdu*). Among its terms of references was the replacement of English by Urdu as a medium of instruction at the university level. The committee decided in 1950 that Urdu shall be a medium of instruction in schools in Punjab, N.W.F.P, centrally administered areas of Karachi and Baluchistan to begin with (ABE 1954: 72). From 1952 it also became the optional medium of instruction at the intermediate level (12 years of education) at the colleges affiliated with the Punjab, Peshawar and Karachi universities (ABE 1954: 65).

Indeed, so soon was Karachi converted into an Urdu-using city that a report of 11 May 1949 tells us that the Municipal Corporation of Karachi adopted a resolution recommending the immediate adoption of Urdu in all of its proceedings. All the roads, for instance, would then be named in Urdu and other languages would cease to be used. This, however, was 'felt to be too precipitate' and the decision-makers contented themselves by making Urdu the official language of the corporation (Review 1949).

Part of the drive for creating a Pakistani-Muslim identity was the marginalization of the indigenous languages of Pakistan. Among these Bengali posed the greatest threat being the language of 54.6 per cent Pakistanis according to the census of 1951 (Statement 4-B, p.71). The state did this through several language planning policies (LP).

First, was status planning. English had the status of the official language and Urdu, it was declared, would be the sole national language. Second was acquisition planning -- the strategy to increase the use and users of a language through language-teaching. Connected with teaching were activities like standardizing a language, creating new terms in it to express modern concepts (neologism) -- and spreading its use through dictionaries and books of grammar i.e. corpus planning. All these forms of LP were undertaken by the state.

Among the corpus planning activities undertaken by the state was the Islamization of Bengali. The East Bengal government set up a language committee of 7 December 1950 and it recommended the use of non-Sanskritized Bengali. But after 1948 the East Bengalis mistrusted such changes. Above all they feared that the

script of their language, being very close to the Devanagari script of Hindi, would be changed to the *Nastaleeq* Perso-Arabic script of Urdu. Such apprehensions were expressed in the legislative assembly, the press and by the students of Dhaka University (LAD- B 01 Mar 1951: 61; *Pakistan Observer* 10 April 1949 and Umar 1970: 204). The government, thereupon, took no action but the apprehensions were not entirely ill founded. Even as late as 21 January 1952, exactly a month before the language crisis led to riots in Dhaka (21 February), the 4th meeting of the Urdu Committee with Abdul Haq as chair recommended that a uniform script be adopted for national and 'regional' languages. Bengali, the major language of Pakistan at that time was classified as 'regional', the idea that its script should be changed was mooted at various levels (ABE 1954: 79).

A small experiment was, indeed, conducted in this regard. The central government established 'twenty adult education centres in different parts of East Pakistan to teach primary Bengali through Arabic script' (Islam 1986: 152; *Pakistan Observer* 4 October 1950). However, since 1940, the medium of instruction in high schools had been Bengali in the Devanagari- based script (RPI- Bengal 1951: 19) so this experiment proved a failure. Apart from that Urdu was introduced as a classical language in high schools and Urdu medium classes were opened in Jessore and Khulna (RPI- Bengal 1952: 2). These schools, however, catered for non-Bengali children such as the Bihari refugees from India (RPI-Bengal 1956: 11) or West Pakistani employees. Surprisingly, however, the *East Bengal Report on Public Instruction 1952-53* was curiously silent about the greatest upheaval of its time -- the Bengali language movement of 1952. Indeed, it confined itself to the following laconic and under the circumstances rather perverse statement:

Urdu, then the proposed only state Language of Pakistan was introduced in Middle classes as a compulsory subject. English was, however, abolished upto class V which was now merged into the primary stage (RPI-Bengal 1958: 17).

The report of 1953-54 also unrepentantly reported that Urdu had been added 'from class IV to upward as a compulsory subject [in some areas] and as an optional subject in [certain other areas]' (RPI-Bengal 1959a: 12). Thus, Bengali- speaking students had to learn Urdu even after their own language, Bengali, had become the other national language of Pakistan in 1956. While official documents equitably declared that while Urdu was compulsory for Bengalis, Bengali was compulsory for 'Urdu-speaking pupils' (RPI-Bengal 1959b: 12), the fact was that state support made Urdu much more ubiquitous in Pakistani cities, especially in the official domains, than any other Pakistani language. Thus, anyone with any social ambition found it necessary to learn Urdu. This meant that, while pragmatic people, even if they were Bengali language activists, had to learn Urdu they also felt that their language, and so their identity, was unjustly marginalized because of an iniquitous language teaching policy.

The Bengali language movement led to no fundamental change in the centrist policies of the ruling elite. Indeed, the very worse took place. The consolidation of the provinces of the western wing into one-unit, the province of West Pakistan, in 1955 (WPO 1955) presented a united front to East Pakistan. While confronting ethnicity in this manner, this policy provoked the nationalists in West Pakistan -- the Sindhi, Pakhtun and Balochi-Brahvi ethno-nationalists -- to confront the Punjabi-Mohajir dominated centre even more aggressively than before. The rise of language-based ethnic movements has, however, been described elsewhere (Rahman 1996). What needs to be described now is how the state made language-teaching policies in the light of the increased emphasis on centrism.

6. Ayub Khan's Language Policy

In 1958 when General Ayub Khan imposed martial law he declared that 'a strong central government' was 'an absolute MUST' (Gauhar 1993: 163). This was quite expected considering that in his 'appreciation' of 1954 he had written:

.....West Pakistan, in order to develop properly and prove a bulwark of defence from the North or South, must be welded into one unit and all artificial provincial boundaries removed, regardless of any prejudices to the contrary, which are more the creation of politicians than real (Khan 1967: 187).

However, Ayub had genuflected to what he called the 'prejudices' of the people. Thus he had conceded that West Pakistan should 'be so sub-divided that each sub-unit embraces a racial group or groups with common economy, communications and potentiality for development, and administration decentralized in them to the maximum possible' (Ibid 187). In practice, of course, this was a contradiction in terms. The disappearance of symbolic names -- such as Sindh, Punjab etc -- and the devaluation of the indigenous languages of different areas were calculated to strengthen the cultural and political domination of the centre which, in practice, meant the symbolic domination of Urdu and the urban culture of the Urdu-speaking *ashraf*.

Ayub Khan's Commission on National Education (appointed 30 December 1958 and submitted report on 26 August 1959) made its centrist language policy quite clear. Strengthening the position of 'national' languages -- which were Bengali and Urdu now -- the report said:

We are firmly convinced that for the sake of our national unity we must do everything to promote the linguistic cohesion of West Pakistan by developing the national language, Urdu, to the fullest extent. In the areas of the former Punjab, Bahawalpur and Baluchistan, Urdu is already the medium of instruction at the primary stage, and this arrangement should continue. Urdu in this way will eventually become the common popular language of all the people in this area. (RNE 1959: Chapter 21, para 14, p. 284).

As Urdu was to be introduced from 1963 as the medium of instruction in Sindhi-medium schools from class 6, the only language which would really be affected was Sindhi. Pashto too was not to be used as medium of instruction after class 5, but it was used only in a few rural schools while Sindhi was used in many more schools, especially in rural Sindh. Thus the Sindhis reacted aggressively to the proposed changes and succeeded in having some of them blocked (for details see Rahman 1996: 116).

Ayub Khan's own stance, and that of the officer corps of the army, was modernist and westernized. It was not that they accepted the liberal humanist values of the West and really believed in democracy but they did disapprove of values, traditions and attitudes of the past. Thus, for them, orthodox and revivalist interpretations of Islam; indigenous culture and language-based ethnicity were reactionary throwbacks to the past. English, on the other hand, was the language of modernization and progressive values. To combat the *mullahs* (as the *ulema* were pejoratively labelled) the army and the bureaucracy supported English medium instruction. To combat ethnicity, which was stigmatized as 'provincialism', the regime had to fall back upon Urdu in West Pakistan and even had to recruit Islam in the nationalist cause.

Ayub Khan's policy about religious education was clearly nationalist and secular. It was meant to use Islam to promote nationalist objectives such as the creation of a distinctive Pakistani identity, national integration and so on. The 1959 report on education stated:

Religious education should do nothing which would impair social and political unity in the country. On the other hand, it should strengthen this unity by developing a spirit of tolerance (RNE 1959: 211).

For the *ulema*, however, the theological objectives were the foremost. And, because they were so salient the differences over the interpretation of theological doctrines were also significant. Thus, Ayub Khan's nationalist aims were extraneous to the *ulemas'* world view. It belonged, as it were, to the alien world view brought into the Muslim world by Western colonialism. The state was, to be sure, contingent upon this secular world view but then the very reasons the *ulema* had chosen to alienate themselves from the state was precisely because the state was secular.

Ayub Khan's policy was, as Jamal Malik has pointed out, an attempt at the 'colonization of Islam' (Malik 1996) and the *ulema* reacted to it. The ethno-nationalists, and not only they but the supporters of Urdu too, reacted (Abdullah 1976: 57) to Ayub Khan's toying with the idea that all languages of Pakistan be written in the Roman script (Khan 1967: 85).

While the script remained unchanged more public schools and cadet colleges were opened to train future leaders through English rather than the vernacular-medium state schools. Ayub Khan personally justified the establishment of these elitist institutions in the name of efficiency and modernization. As General Officer Commanding East Pakistan he wanted 'to start good public schools where intelligent young men' could be educated (Khan 1967: 25). But the fact was that these young men would not be from all classes. Most people were illiterate. Undeveloped rural areas had no schools. Poor children had to work from infancy (Weiner & Noman 1995). Vernacular-educated children could not pass the entry tests of these schools. And, above all, none but affluent parents (middle class and above) could afford to send their children to these schools. Thus, 'intelligent' was really a codeword for affluent or powerful. The Education Commission too defended these schools (RNE 1959: 288) on grounds of efficiency. It reported that 'the education they [the students] receive in these institutions is outstanding. We have visited the schools at Chittagong and Hasan Abdal and we have been much impressed' (RNE 1959: 142). Such judgments did not take into account the difference between the money spent per student per year in these schools and the vernacular-medium state schools. The institution was described in laudatory terms as if it was intrinsically superior and more efficient because of the way it was administered rather than the way the state paid for and administered non-elitist schools.

The 1966 Commission on Students' Welfare and Problems, called the Hamood-ur-Rahman Commission, also defended the English medium schools using a blatantly elitist argument -- that 'such establishments are intended to produce some better type of students' who would become officers in the armed forces, higher civilian bureaucracy and executives in private bodies (RCSP 1966: 18). The Commission, was, indeed more pro-English than most other such bodies.

One reason for this defense of English was that some universities had started replacing English by Urdu or other languages as a medium of instruction and examination. Karachi University had declared early in 1963 that by 1967-68 all teaching and examinations in post-graduate, technical and professional subjects will be in Urdu. It had set up an implementation committee to see that this change took place efficiently. Since 1957 a Bureau of Composition, Compilation and Translation too had been functioning in the university and technical terms were said to exist to facilitate the changeover. However, the university did not suddenly abandon Urdu. Its relevant statute reads as under:

Statute 28: Medium of Instruction and Examination: The medium of instruction and examination shall be English or Urdu.

The university also decided 'to strengthen teaching of English (whenever necessary) to enable Pakistani students to use the language with greater facility'. Also, knowledge of English Scientific and Technical Terms, along with their Urdu equivalents, has been made compulsory for all students' (Karachi University 1963 in Abdullah 1976: 77-78).

But what the Ayub Khan government objected to was the spirit of the change. Karachi University had begun teaching in Urdu from 1963; it intended to introduce it at the highest examining and teaching levels; it proposed using the 400 books of Osmania University; it wanted to work with other pro-Urdu organizations such as the Markazi Majlis-e-Taraqqi Adab (Lahore) and produce glossaries of technical terms and, most defiantly of all, even teach Urdu to foreign students on the grounds that 'every foreign university presupposes adequate knowledge of that country's language' (ibid in Abdullah 1976: 78). Other universities too had moved away from English in various degrees. The Punjab University gave the option of answering questions in Urdu and English to B.A students in 1965 and M.A ones in 1967. Sind University had allowed not only Urdu but also Sindhi both for answering questions in B.A but also for teaching. Peshawar University retained English but taught and examined Islamic studies, Arabic and Urdu through the medium of Urdu (RCSP 1966: 111-115).

The Report was highly critical of these changes. It charged Karachi with discrimination and disobedience. The first because Bengali students were denied their right to study in Bengali and the second because the central government had directed universities not to change the medium of instruction in technical and scientific subjects. The University of Sind was castigated in terms which stung the Sindhi nationalists to the quick. The report said:

Sind University has gone to the extent of permitting the use of Sindhi for answering pass and honours examination papers, thus equating a regional language in this respect with the national language (RCSP 1966: 114).

The report also mentioned that such a change would be unfair to the English-medium students but this, perhaps the major reason for the highly critical stance adopted in the report, was camouflaged by the plea of the rights of the Bengalis and 'a heterogeneous multilingual population' in Karachi (RCSP 1966: 116). In the end the gloves come off and the report recommends that 'no university should be permitted to change the medium of instruction till a committee of a minister and a secretary -- i.e. high state-functionaries -- do not advise such a step (ibid 117). In short, the Pakistani ruling elite had done what the British did when Sir Syed and the Anjuman-i-Punjab wanted vernacular- medium universities to be established in the nineteenth century - - it put its foot firmly down (Rahman 1996: 43-46).

7. Language-Teaching After Ayub

The next attack on English proved to be rhetorical. Air Marshal Nur Khan first broached the subject of there being 'barriers of privilege' between the vernacular and the English- medium students (PNEP 1969: 3; 15-17). But later, in the *New Education Policy* of 1970, he did not propose anything concrete about

this issue. As there was already a recommendation in the Pakistan Provincial Constitution Order (which the new military ruler General Yahya Khan, had promulgated) that in 1972 a commission would recommend whether English be replaced as an official language, nothing further was done about it. As a chapter of my book and an article (Rahman 1996: chapter 13 and Rahman 1997) describe the way English survived Bhutto's socialism, Zia ul Haq's Islamic martial law and the somewhat imperfect democratic interlude Pakistan has experienced since then, it would be pointless to go into the details of that controversy.

It should, however, be mentioned that Urdu became more and more closely associated with Islam, Pakistani nationalism and support of the military as time went by. The middle class Urdu press, especially *Nawa-i-Waqt*, the textbooks of social studies and those of Urdu concentrated upon these themes in order to create strongly a nationalistic Pakistani who would support militarization with religious fervour. Thus, when in 1988 the Ministry of Education took the citizens' views about educational policies, most of those who replied (mostly middle class people), supported Urdu medium schooling and the abolition of elitist English schools. However, alongwith this, they also supported restricting womens' freedom; witch hunting of free thinkers; compulsory military training and even more Islamic and nationalistic emphasis in the curricula than they state already provided (Shaikh *et.al* 1989). Fifty five school teachers, whose opinion was polled by a sampling procedure in 1981-82, agreed that the English curriculum reflected the ideology of Pakistan (Curriculum 1982: 31). These school teachers were themselves the products of state Urdu-medium schools. In short, those who supported Urdu were not liberal-democrats while those who supported English and liberal values mostly were from Westernized and elitist backgrounds.

Like all previous governments, Yahya Khan's government also emphasized the 'role of education in the preservation and inculcation of Islamic values as an instrument of national unity and progress' (NEP 1970:1). In short, as in Ayub Khan's time, religion would continue to be used to create nationalism. This meant that language-teaching textbooks would continue to reinforce the nationalist messages of the history and social studies textbooks. Pakistani nationalism would be identified closely with Islam which, in turn, would be used to support the military.

8. The PPP's Language-Teaching Policy

No significant change occurred in this policy during the PPP government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Despite his own socialist and liberal rhetoric Bhutto did not want to alienate the military nor the other members of the establishment. Further, he too found Islam and Urdu useful as integrative symbols against the threat of ethnic breakup.

The general objectives of the education policy of 1972-1980 were:

- (i) Ensuring the preservation, promotion and practise of the basic ideology of Pakistan and making it a code of individual and national life.
- (ii) Building up national cohesion through education and by promoting social and cultural harmony compatible with our basic ideology (English 1976: 2-3).

The textbooks on Urdu state emphatically that the teachers should ensure that the ideology of Pakistan should never be made to appear controversial and further:

In the teaching material no discrimination should be made between the religious and the mundane, but that material be presented from the Islamic point of view [original in Urdu] [Urdu 1974: 12).

Thus, the Bhutto regime, despite the fact that Bhutto himself opposed the *ulema* both politically and intellectually, also used the same paedagogic political strategies as the previous regimes.

These strategies were favoured, not just because Bhutto did not want to annoy the *ulema* unnecessarily, but because they had always been used to counter the ethnic threat. Thus, despite socialist and democratic rhetoric, Bhutto did not allow the National Awami Party to rule the N.W.F.P and Balochistan for long. Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto and Balochi were elective languages in classes IX-X but their textbooks had to reinforce the state's overall policy objectives. A pamphlet of 1976 on the curriculum of the 'regional languages' states that the courses in these languages should 'promote national integration and national cohesion' and that the contribution of each province in the freedom movement was to be noted. So wary were the policy makers about these languages -- presumably because ethnic sentiments had been expressed in them -- that the pamphlet on the curricula of these languages has the following words written in ink on the first page:

Certified that I have received this curriculum report and the report does not contain objectionable/political material and that there is nothing in the report which is repugnant to the Ideology of Islam and Pakistan except the material printed in the annexures (Regional 1976: no pagination).

Thus, the basic policies of the state -- in language-teaching as in education in general -- remained the same in Bhutto's socialism as in the martial law regimes it had replaced.

9. Zia ul Haq's Language-Teaching Policy

When General Zia ul Haq imposed martial law on Pakistan on 05 July 1977 he legitimized himself in the name of Islam. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, despite his use of Islam as an integrative symbol and to appease the Islamic lobby, had been opposed by the Pakistan National Alliance which was deeply influenced by the Islamists. Besides, General Zia did genuinely hold middle class views and a certain somewhat strict understanding of Islam is very often part of middle and lower-middle class world view in Pakistan. Thus, it may not be true to suggest that Zia ul Haq merely used Islam cynically as a political strategy as Bhutto did. That his use of Islam, for whatever reasons, did help him politically cannot be denied. Further, it cannot also be denied that Zia ul Haq was a product of the colonial sector -- secular schooling, training as an army officer, socialization as an officer of the elitist armoured corps -- and nationalism, efficiency and modernization were very much part of his world view. This means that there are continuities between Zia ul Haq's policies of Islamizing education and the policies of earlier regimes. The difference, indeed, is that of degree not of kind. This is evident in the following stated aim of the education policy of 1979:

To foster in the hearts and minds of the people of Pakistan in general and the students in particular a deep and abiding loyalty to Islam and Pakistan and a living consciousness of their spiritual and ideological identity thereby strengthening unity of the outlook of the people of Pakistan on the basis of justice and fairplay (NEP 1979: 2).

In keeping with this overall objective Urdu is to be used as a medium of instruction 'to strengthen ideological foundations of the nation and to foster unity of thought, brotherhood and patriotism' (ibid 2).

While this was merely rhetorical, there was at first a policy departure from previous eras. The Ministry of Education was asked to review 'all the textbooks prescribed by the English medium schools' (ibid 57). Even more radically, the English- medium schools would start teaching everything in Urdu and even the nomenclature of 'English-medium' would be abolished (NEP 1979: 59). This was the greatest boost the status of Urdu had ever received. Indeed, the boost came in two ways. First, against the other indigenous languages of Pakistan on the grounds that:

Urdu became a great repository of Muslim culture and acquired the status of *a lingua franca* most extensively employed as a common link language by people speaking various languages and dialects from Torkhum to Karachi (NEP 1979: 59).

Even now it was conceded that primary education could be in an approved provincial language but the 'switchover to the National language as medium of instruction is the ultimate aim' (ibid 60). This was a departure from previous language-teaching policies in that even Ayub Khan had not stated so forthrightly that the 'provincial' languages would be supplanted at all levels by Urdu. Second, the policy about replacing English by Urdu was a major deviation. The most startling policy statement was as follows:

Starting April 1979 all students admitted to class 1 in all English medium schools will undergo instruction through the medium of Urdu or an approved provincial language, which will be progressively introduced in successive grades thereafter (NEP 1979: 80).

It was, however, conceded that five years would be given to replace books in English by Urdu ones at the intermediate and degree level and that during the interval the teachers could learn to teach in Urdu instead of English. These, however, were mere details. The basic policy seemed to have changed. The state was to retain English 'to keep in touch with modern knowledge' (NEP 1979: 60) but it would abolish the dual media of instruction. Presumably, then, English would no longer be required for seeking jobs in the state sector in Pakistan and the social symbolic significance of English would be appreciably reduced.

Such a policy was a deviation from the past and, of course, it was opposed. The opposition to Zia's policies and the abandonment of this policy are given in detail elsewhere and will not be dwelt upon (Rahman 1996: 242). Suffice it to say that Zia ul Haq eventually settled for a language-teaching policy not essentially different from his predecessors. His Islamization drive did increase the Islamic content in all courses, including language-teaching ones, but this was not a case of a radically new policy but of 'more of the same'.

It is difficult to prove that Zia ul Haq's eleven years made Pakistanis more Islamic or nationalistic. Empirical evidence in such cases is generally inconclusive. However, the articulate sections of the middle class did express such views, right wing views, more forcefully and more often during and after his rule. As mentioned earlier, in 1988 the Ministry of Education elicited the opinions of citizens about the changes to be made in educational policies. A large number of people suggested more Islamization, more inculcation of nationalism and some advocated military training. Among the more radical views are:

1. Music should not be taught in schools as a subject.
2. Only Muslim teachers should be appointed at least upto secondary level.
3. Anti-Islamic teachers should be expelled from colleges.
4. Lady teachers should not be allowed to have their hair cut.
5. Islamic studies, Pakistan studies, economic [sic] and military training should be compulsory subjects at college level.

6. The concept of `Jihad' should be given more emphasis in books of Islamiyat.
7. Teachers should be disallowed to speak against Pakistan ideology in the classroom (Sheikh *et.al* 1989).

In short, an articulate section of the middle class, probably brought up on ideological school courses supported an ideology which used religion to create nationalism and militarism in the society.

10. Language-Teaching After Zia ul Haq

Zia ul Haq died in August 1988 and the country has seen two governments by Benazir Bhutto and two by Nawaz Sharif (not counting the caretaker interludes) in the last ten years. A number of documents pertaining to education policy have been issued from time to time. On close scrutiny, however, one discovers that they are curiously alike. The Nawaz Sharif education policy of 1998, for instance, reads like a document from Zia ul Haq's time and Benazir Bhutto could well be mistaken for Nawaz Sharif.

The 1995 preface to Teacher Education, for instance, says that the aim of teacher education is 'to inculcate the spirit of Islam and develop the qualities of tolerance, universal brotherhood and justice' (ETE 1995: 1). This was presumably written during Benazir Bhutto's second term in office (1993- 1996). But the Nawaz Sharif education policy too mentions Islam and Urdu in similar terms. Among other things Zia ul Haq made Arabic compulsory in classes VI-VIII which still remains compulsory. Urdu was made compulsory in classes XI-XII even in professional colleges and that continues till date. So, despite apparent repudiation of the previous governments' policies, the basic language policy remains the same. It is, indeed, a policy so interlinked with the distribution of power in Pakistan that it cannot change without bringing about unprecedented changes in the power structure.

11. Conclusion

If the state were to promote the teaching of Urdu, for instance, the English-using elite would be disempowered at least temporarily. Its place would be taken, at least till such time that the English-using elite does not learn to adjust itself to the change, by the products of the Urdu schools. There are, of course, problems with that too though it appears more just than the present elitist system of running the upper echelons of power through English and the lower ones through Urdu (or Sindhi in interior Sind). The first problem will be that there will be a brain drain from the state sector to the private sector and to the international bureaucracy among the products of the English schools. Such a brain drain is already in evidence but it will increase. The second will be that the Urdu school products, being brought up more on state sponsored texts and Urdu right wing journalism, will probably be less supportive of liberal values than even the present bureaucratic and military elite. The third problem will be that the supporters of Sindhi and, to a much lesser extent, Pashto, Balochi, Siraiki, Hindko and Punjabi, will resent the hegemony of Urdu such a policy entails. In the case of Sindhi, which has been used in official domains ever since 1853, the loss will be real while in the others it will only be symbolic. But, whether real or symbolic, if Urdu became the real official language of Pakistan the ethnic resistance to its perceived hegemony would be tremendous. These, however, are not the only reasons for the ruling elite to continue its elitist language-teaching policy. The real reasons are that any change in the *status quo*, whether in favour of Urdu or other Pakistani languages, implies a corresponding change in governance. If jobs and power cease to come through English, and especially if they come through the ethnic languages, entirely

new sets of people will climb into positions of state power. This is not a welcome change for those who prosper under the present power structure.

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