

A Corpus-Based Analysis of the Use of Singular Nouns by Pakistani Students in Higher Education

Mahmood Ahmad
University of Education, Lahore
mehmoodahmad@gmail.com

Humaira Irfan
Department of English, University of Education, Lahore
humaira.irfan@ue.edu.pk

Muhammad Khalid
University of Education, Lahore
ksdoshi786@gmail.com

Abstract

From its post-colonial history, English enjoys the status of an associated official language in Pakistan today. Since English is used in academic and non-academic settings, it is a natural question whether Pakistanis use English differently from standard British English, and what peculiarities they observe. To answer this question, this study analyzes 400 student essays in the Pakistani component of the International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English. The analysis focuses on non-standard spelling, use of native words, countability, use of articles, numbers, noun combinations, collocations, and confusing nouns. The findings suggest that Pakistani English exhibits distinct features from standard British English in terms of spelling, word choice, and grammar. The study contributes to understanding the use of English in Pakistan and its status as a distinct variety.

Keywords: Pakistani English, Use of singular nouns, Learner corpus, Pakistani corpus, Pakistani language learners

Introduction

English has an important role in Pakistan, serving not just as the national language, but also as a means of teaching, communication, and professional participation. This importance originates from the country's colonial history, which left English as a legacy in its educational and governmental structures. Despite sharing a historical basis with other post-colonial countries, English in Pakistan has evolved into a distinct variation that reflects its speakers' sociological, linguistic, and social background. Linguists and scholars are interested in the lexical, syntactic, and semantic aspects of Pakistani English (PakE), which has emerged as a separate variety. While various studies have looked into the phonological and lexical characteristics of PakE, there is still a need to investigate how this variety is employed in academic writing, particularly among students. The emphasis on student writing is especially important since it represents a critical domain in which English is actively utilized and developed in the country.

In Pakistan, English is scarcely spoken as a first language, but it holds the status of an “associated official language” along with Urdu, the national language of the country (Crystal, 2003, p. 49). Irfan (2018) has an opinion that English is the language of plurilingual educated people of Pakistan, and is also used as a medium of instruction. For these reasons, the use of English in Pakistan continually holds particular interest for scholars of the language. Mahboob (2013) distinguished 11 features of PakE in the use of noun phrases, different from standard English. Rahman (2020) studied the influence of English on local languages and vice versa. He gave a list of local words that Pakistanis have started using in their English. He considers the lexical features of PakE to be distinct from standard English because of the use of certain cultural words. Abbas et al. (2022) assert the need to study academic and non-academic genres to establish the features of PakE. Mahmood (2009), Shah and Mahmood (2017), Karam et al. (2020), and Ali et al. (2021) studied different aspects of noun phrases in PakE.

This study seeks to add to this understanding by undertaking a corpus-based examination of singular noun usage in Pakistani student writings. It examines a representative sample from the Pakistani component of the International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English (ICNALE) to find different patterns in spelling, word choice, and grammatical structures when compared to mainstream British English. It specifically addresses non-standard spelling, the use of native words, countability concerns, article usage, noun

combinations, and problematic nouns. The importance of this study stems from its potential to give empirical proof of the distinguishing traits of PakE in student writing. This approach not only highlights the variety's distinguishing qualities but also contributes to the larger discussion of World Englishes. Educators and policymakers in Pakistan can design more successful techniques for teaching and utilizing English if they understand how it is utilized and adapted in different settings. This can contribute to a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of English as a global language.

The objectives of this study are to figure out if English in Pakistan has distinct features from standard British English and find out if it behaves as a distinct variety in the use of singular nouns. It answers two questions:

- a) In what ways do Pakistani students use singular nouns differently from standard British English?
- b) Does the distinct use of singular nouns by Pakistani students project it as a different variety of English?

This study can improve the teaching and learning of English in Pakistan and give an understanding of the features of English used in Pakistan. Additionally, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on PakE.

Literature Review

Literature establishes the need to study the features of English in Pakistan and how it is different from the native and international varieties. The expansion of English in British colonies was part of the British Empire's overall strategy of political, economic, and cultural dominance. English served as the language of administration, education, and trade. Colonial officials encouraged English as a means of creating an educated elite who would support British rule (Phillipson, 1992). English was critical for administrative efficiency, especially in multilingual countries like India and Africa. It eventually became the language of law, government, and official documents (Crystal, 2003).

English spread throughout the colonies via institutions and missionary activities. English-medium schools were founded to teach colonial subjects and Western ideals (Viswanathan, 1989). English became the language of commerce in numerous colonial ports, increasing its prominence in business and industry throughout the empire (Kachru, 1983). In

India, the British utilized English to solidify their dominance, which was formalized through educational reforms.

As the British East India Company's governmental authority grew following the Battle of Plassey in 1757, the usage of English in administrative work rose (Rahman, 1996). The most significant milestone in the dissemination of English in India was Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education" in 1835, in which he argued for the promotion of English education among the higher classes. Macaulay's goal was to establish a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, opinions, morals, and intellect (Phillipson, 1992).

The establishment of universities in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras in 1857 made English the medium of teaching for higher education. English proficiency became required for jobs in colonial administration and advancement opportunities (Kachru, 1983).

Following Pakistan's independence in 1947, English had an important role in governance, education, and social life. Despite the promotion of Urdu as the national language, English is still the official language of the government and judicial system. English remained utilized in laws, public communication, and courts (Rahman, 1996). English has maintained its place in Pakistan's educational system, notably at higher levels of education. The English-medium education system, which was established during British rule, has survived in Pakistan and is regarded as a gateway to chances in government positions, further education, and prominent professions (Rahman, 1996).

Continued use of English underlines its colonial legacy and role in social inequality, with English being the language of the elite, and Urdu and regional languages spoken by the rest (Phillipson, 1992). PakE, a variety of English that is peculiar to Pakistan, has received extensive research within the context of World Englishes. PakE's phonology reflects influences from local languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, and Pashto. PakE, for example, has no difference between /v/ and /w/ sounds, as well as no aspiration in consonants.

As stated by Amjad et al. (2023), Business English contains specific lexical features that distinguish it from general English. According to Siddique et al. (2022), the language of Pakistani English newspapers has become more informationally dense and less argumentative over time. PakE contains lexical borrowings from Urdu, such as "madrassa" (seminary) and "inshallah" (God willing). It also has unique grammatical forms, such as using the progressive tense more frequently than British English (Kachru, 1983). Code-switching is

prevalent between English and Urdu, reflecting Pakistan's bilingual society. Kirkpatrick (2007) explored how code-switching occurs in informal environments, media, and public discourse.

Research has looked into how the dominance of English in Pakistan's education system contributes to social inequality, as pupils in English-medium schools frequently have better employment possibilities than those in Urdu-medium schools (Rahman, 1996). Phillipson (1992) criticized how English spread in colonial regions, claiming that its imposition contributed to the marginalization of local languages.

Kachru (1983) examined how English had adapted to Indian cultural and linguistic contexts, resulting in new varieties such as Indian English and PakE. Rahman (1996) investigated how English became a weapon for the elite in Pakistan, contributing to societal stratification. He also investigated the politics of the country's linguistic policies. Kirkpatrick (2007) and Jenkins (2014) have investigated the legitimacy of variants in the global linguistic landscape. The studies assert the existence of the Pakistani variety of English and recognize the need for studying its features.

Methodology

Corpus Data

The data for this study is 400 essays by Pakistani students written on two topics: smoking, and part-time jobs. The proficiency levels of the participant students and their numbers were as follows: A2, 18; B1–B1, 91; B1–B2, 88; B2+, 3. The data was taken from the International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English, shortly called ICNALE (Ishikawa, 2023). Asim Mahmood from the Government College University, Faisalabad originally collected the texts as part of the essay development team (*About ICNALE*, n.d., sec. 4. Development Team). The corpus of essays written by Pakistani learners has 18,764 instances of the use of singular nouns, whereas the total size of the corpus is around 94,200 tokens. In other words, statistically, every fifth word is a singular noun. Therefore, there is a need to study this aspect of language use.

This study uses corpus tools to analyze the data through Anthony's AnctConc (2022) and the online tool for ICNALE analysis (Ishikawa, 2020). The ICNALE tool allows users to filter the corpus by parts of speech and sort the results. The results on the ICNALE tool for the search of singular nouns were viewed as 100 keywords in context on each page, and all

the nouns on every third page were analyzed, which make up more than 33% of the total occurrences of singular nouns in the corpus. The results were also confirmed through AntConc by using the downloaded data for offline use. Then the different aspects of the singular nouns and their context were analyzed, as given in the Analysis section.

Analysis

The exploration of the corpus data showed that Pakistani students used singular nouns differently from standard British English in the following aspects: spelling, pronunciation, countability, collocations, possessives, noun combinations, agreement, distributive plural, using verbs as nouns, and the use of articles—mostly the same areas in which Swan (2014) found usage issues. These areas have been used as an analytical framework for finding out non-standard usage, which has been discussed whether that is an error or a feature of a linguistic variety. Now, the framework for this study is comprised of the following broad areas:

- Non-standard spelling: Any spelling different from British or American English has been considered non-standard.
- Use of native words: This studies cultural preferences for native words.
- Countability: This analyzes if the students were confused about countable and uncountable usage of singular nouns.
- Use of articles: It analyzes the non-standard usage of “a,” “an,” and “the”.
- Number: Distinct from countability, this study where the students used the incorrect number of nouns, that is, whether they used singular nouns instead of plural nouns or vice versa.
- Noun combinations: This studies the coinage of grammatically unacceptable combinations of nouns.
- Collocations: This studies the use of non-standard collocations.
- Confusing nouns: This studies the singular nouns that the students confused with others.

Non-standard Spelling

The students misspelled 126 singular nouns for different reasons. The following patterns were found in the misspellings:

Using Two-word Forms for One-word Compounds

While combining “thing” with “every,” “any,” or “some,” the students usually wrote them as two words. Similarly, the students preferred the two-word alternative to the more frequent one-word forms in *back bone* for “backbone” and *book worms* for “bookworms”.

Missing a Vowel

The students sometimes misspelled singular nouns by missing a vowel. In some cases, they missed a vowel because it was silent. Here is a list of such words:

- *darness* for “dearness”
- *disease* for “disease”
- *acadmy* for “academy”
- *intrest* for “interest”
- *science* for “science”
- *specialty* for “speciality”
- *tuiton/tution* for “tuition”
- *unawarness* for “unawareness”
- *mange* for “manage”
- *experince* for “experience”
- *mangement* for “management”
- *phenenon* for “phenomenon”
- *minstry* for “ministry”
- *rasturant/resturent* for “restaurant”
- *snakman* for “snakeman”

Missing a Consonant

If there was a double consonant in a word or the sound was produced by another consonant in proximity, the students would sometimes miss it, for example *uper* for “upper” and *mucl* for “muscle”. Here are some other cases where the students missed a consonant:

- *litealy* for “literally”
- *properity* for “prosperity”
- *smokig* for “smoking”
- *smoer* for “smoker”
- *phenenon* for “phenomenon”

Changing a Consonant for Another

The students changed a consonant with another sounding similar, for example *preseption* for “perception,” *intension* for “intention,” *advitizement* for “advertisement,” *nickotene* for “nicotine”. Other examples of consonant replacement include *fantaly* for “fantasy,” *attituce* for “attitude,” and *enposure* for “exposure”.

Changing a Vowel for Another

The students sometimes changed a vowel with another similar sounding, for example *digree* for “degree,” *aria* for “area,” *buseniss* for “business,” *bankor* for “banker,” *nickotene* for “nicotine,” *victom/victum* for “victim,” *book warms* for “bookworms,” *rasturant/resturent* for “restaurant,” *batter* for “better,” *berth* for “birth,” *low* (2 hits) for “law” and *breech* for “breach”. Other examples of changing a vowel for another include *amage* for “image,” *fishion* for “fashion,” *advitizement* for “advertisement,” *detractraction/distruction* for “destruction,” *perpouse* for “purpose,” *ciger* for “cigar,” *dawn* for “down-,” *decease* for “disease” and *delima* for “dilemma”.

Introducing Additional Vowel(s) or Consonant(s)

Sometimes students misspelled singular nouns by introducing an additional vowel or consonant. Examples of introducing an additional vowel include *faviour* for “favour,” *perpouse* for “purpose,” *tutor* for “tutor,” *launch* for “lunch,” *lunge* for “lung,” and *reliougon* for “religion”. The examples of introducing an additional consonant include *tenssion* for “tension,” *habbit* for “habit,” and *earninPg* for “earning”.

Wrong Arrangement of Vowels and/or Consonants

Sometimes the students were unable to correctly reproduce vowels and/or consonants in their correct order, such as *foregion/forgion* for “foreign,” *thier* for “their,” *preseption* for “perception,” and *reliougon* for “religion”.

Preferring American Spelling

Although Pakistani students usually used British spelling, sometimes they showed a preference for American spelling, especially when a suffix was added to the root word without deleting the final ‘e’, for example *aging* (US spelling) for “ageing”. *Color*, *behavior*, and *call center* are other examples of Americanisms. Sometimes they add suffixes without making necessary changes to the root word, for example, *useage*. The words that have -ae- in British English were often replaced with American -e- alternative, such as *anemia* for “anaemia,” and *feces* for “faeces”.

Lack of Knowledge and Other Reasons

They might have misspelled the following because of some unknown reasons or because of a mere lack of spelling skills. It is also possible that the typist had been unable to

read them properly, or they may have been introduced because of poor optical character recognition. Such cases include the following: *characteristic* for “characteristic,” *experiend* for “experienced,” *recue* for “rescue,” *satt*, *srend* for “scent,” *envoirement* for “environment,” *heddle* for “hurdle”. Sometimes misspellings resulted from sheer lack of knowledge of the proper word, for example, *adductor/additive* for *addict(ive)*, and *adoleson* for *adolescent*.

Mispronunciation Leading to Misspelling

The following misspellings are close to mispronunciations. They show a tendency to spell phonetically (the way students say those words), which ends up in misspellings. These are the cases where students phonologically misspelled the words because of the influence of their native Punjabi dialect, where they are used to pronouncing words in their peculiar way:

- *amage* for “image”
- *atmosphere* for “atmosphere” (Some people say “sphere” as /sfeər/.)
- *atticate* for “etiquette” (Many people pronounce “etiquette” as /etikeit/.)
- *book warms* for “bookworms” (“Worm” and “warm” are pronounced alike in British English, which may have confused the second-language learners.)
- *capesity* for “capacity” (It is common for Punjabi people to change /æ/ to /e/.)
- *carrier* for “career” (Locally, “career” is sometimes pronounced as “carrier”.)
- *collage* for “college” (Sometimes it is mispronounced as /kɒlədʒ/.)
- *hert* for “heart” (Some people mispronounce it as /hərt/.)
- *partime* for “part-time” (Sometimes locals do not repeat the t's in the middle.)
- *rasturant/resturent* for “restaurant” (It is usually pronounced and spelled in the local languages as /restərənt/.)
- *sellery* for “salary” (The word may have been misspelled by patterning it after “seller” as a mnemonic, or the vowel /æ/ has been shortened to /e/, and the word has been misspelled phonetically.)
- *shopekeeper* for “shopkeeper” (Sometimes local people say /ʃɔːpkiːpər/ instead of /ʃɒpkiːpər/.)
- *studding* for “studying” (Sometimes local people say /stədɪŋ/ instead of /stʌdɪŋ/.)
- *tabackoo/tabbaco* for “tobacco” (The local word for “tobacco” is like /təmbaːkuː/.)
- *waqat*, romanization of a local word for “time”
- *westren* for “western” (Some locals pronounce the final -ern as /-rən/, hence this word spelled as “-ren” instead of “-ern”)

The word “cigarette” is pronounced locally, especially in Punjab, the major location of the corpus data, in various ways, such as /sɪgrət, sɪgreɪt, sɪgrɪt, sɪgət, sɪrkət, sɪrkət, sɪrkət/. It has, therefore, been misspelled in 10 different ways as *cigarrate*, *cigarrrrete*, *ciggarate*, *ciggarrate*, *ciggerate*, *ciggreat*, *cigrate*, *cigratte*, *cigreatt*, and *cigrett*. The same is the case with “hookah” which is spelled variantly as *hooka/hooqa/hoqqa/huqa*, and *huqqa*. It can be inferred that the students did not take much care while spelling local anglicized words.

Confusing Nouns

Here are some errors where the students either misspelled the English terms:

- *addition* for “addiction,”
- *ambition* for “ambitious,”
- *batter* for “better,”
- *berth* for “birth,”
- *booth* for “both,”
- *breech* for “breach,”
- *breeder* for “bread earner,”
- *burnet* for “brunt,”
- *cession* for “session,”
- *ciger* for “cigar,”
- *circus* for “circles,”
- *coat* for “cost,”
- *county* for “country,”
- *courage* for “encourages,”
- *coward* for “cowardly,”
- *danger* for “dangerous” (11/18 hits) (“Danger, N. & Adj. Meanings, Etymology and More,” 2023)
- *dawn* for “down-,”
- *decease* for “disease,”
- *delima* for “dilemma,”
- *digest* for “digestion,”
- *impotency* for “impotence,”
- *lunge* for “lung,”
- *neglation* for “negligence,”
- *orgnazition* for “organization,”
- *prohabitation* for “prohibition,”
- *refreshness* for “freshness,”

Use of Local Words

Whenever the students did not know the proper English word for a noun, they would pick a local term from their native background, for example *chars* (1 hit), *nafsa nafī* (1 hit; misspelling of the transliteration for the Urdu phrase “nafsa nafsi,” a reiteration of “my soul,” derived from Arabic), *arab* (1 hit; a numerical term for “billion”), and *afoun* (1 hit; misspelling of a local word for “opium”).

Countability

“Meal”, in the sense of an occasion when people eat food, or the food eaten at such an occasion as breakfast, lunch, or dinner, is an uncountable noun, but Pakistani students used it as both countable and uncountable.

- ... *people ... went to restaurant to eat meal and enjoy.*

Use of Articles

Confusing “a” and “an”

The students were sometimes confused between “a” and “an,” and would use one for the other, for example *a academy* (½ hits), *a act* (1/17 hits). However, this confusion was observed to be rare.

Missing Articles

Where an article is required, the students would sometimes miss that, usually the indefinite article, for example, 37/166 hits of *restaurant* (30 with the definite article and 7 with the indefinite article) used the article. *Human being* (3/3 hits) was always used without an article. Similarly, they missed the indefinite article, for example, with the following nouns: *ban* (3/13 hits), *clerk* (2/2 hits), *house* (1/13 hits), *car* (½ hits), *cigarette* (39/126 hits), *consequence* (½ hits), *generation* (10/53 hits), *companion* (1/1 hit), *compulsion* (1/1 hit), *curse* (1/14 hits), *patient* (½ hits). The students missed the indefinite article usually when the head singular noun was premodified, for example *strict action* (½ hits), *handsome amount* (2/2 hits), *very strange attitude* (1/1 hit), *bad thing* (¾ hits), *very dangerous/harmful/important thing* (3/3 hits), *great delima* (1/1 hit; for *great dilemma*), *western concept* (1/1 hit), *small contribution* (1/1 hit), *under developing country* (1/1 hit), *couple of hours* (1/1 hit), *higher demand* (1/1 hit), *very bad condition* (1/1 hit), *part time job* (428/516 hits), *full time job* (5/8 hits), *positive/right/wrong way* (7/8 hits). They also missed the indefinite article when the singular noun immediately followed a preposition, for example *in acadmy or some tuiton center*, *for short time* (3/3 hits), *at low cost* (1/1 hit), *on curtain* (1/1 hit), and *in result* (1/1 hit). *College student* has only 6/23 hits with an article. Other cases include the following: *(bad) habit* (26/80 hits), *number* (6/31 hits), *scholarship* (4/6 hits), *majority* (8/18 hits), *lack of* (10/12 hits), *hobby* (2/6 hits, one definite, one indefinite article), *duty* (5/23 hits), *problem* (15/74 hits), *factor* (1/10 hits), *smoker* (39/109 hits), *drug* (4/25 hits), *bad image* (½ hits), *for sake of* (2/14 hits), *source* (4/20 hits), *passage of time* (1/17

hits), *box* ($\frac{1}{3}$ hits), *room* ($\frac{1}{2}$ hits), *air* ($\frac{1}{22}$ hits), *image* ($\frac{1}{6}$ hits), *hurdle* ($\frac{2}{2}$ hits), *trend* ($\frac{4}{25}$ hits), *earner* ($\frac{1}{3}$ hits), *century* ($\frac{3}{6}$ hits), *sight* ($\frac{2}{2}$ hits), *road* ($\frac{1}{3}$ hits), *warning* ($\frac{1}{2}$ hits), *scale* ($\frac{2}{3}$ hits), *gathering* ($\frac{5}{9}$ hits), *sign* ($\frac{3}{8}$ hits), *root* ($\frac{2}{6}$ hits), *environment* ($\frac{16}{59}$ hits), *reason* ($\frac{4}{58}$ hits).

A common observation is that the students were unable to use the definite article with singular nouns for making generalizations. Here are some examples: *inter or bachelor level of study*, *backbone of nation*, *breathing system*, *starts from cradle and ends with grave*, *desire to smoke*, *student community*, *the conclusion is that* ($\frac{3}{4}$ hits), *inter or bachelor level of study*.

The students avoided using the definite article in phrases where a component of the phrase was already a proper or unique noun, for example *before afghan war*, *World Bank/bank* (2 hits), *sub-continent* ($\frac{1}{2}$ hits), and *world* ($\frac{7}{78}$ hits). In half of the cases, no article has been used with phrases with “level” ($\frac{15}{28}$ hits) as the head. Here are some other examples of not using the definite article with the heads of noun phrases: *nation* ($\frac{3}{37}$ hits), *country* ($\frac{17}{132}$ hits), *word* ($\frac{1}{15}$ hits), *other side* ($\frac{1}{3}$ hits), *in office* ($\frac{1}{2}$ hits), *in morning* (7 hits) instead of *in the morning* (11 hits), *very low package of money*, *computer* ($\frac{2}{5}$ hits), *holder* ($\frac{1}{4}$ hits).

Superfluous Use of Articles

The students used the definite article where zero article was required in standard English. *Money*, for example, was followed 16/227 times by the definite article. Here are some more examples of the superfluous use of the article from the ICNALE corpus: *the air* ($\frac{5}{22}$ hits), *the smoking* ($\frac{57}{1224}$ hits), *the inflation* ($\frac{1}{13}$ hits), *a propaganda* (1/1 hit), *the memory* ($\frac{2}{2}$ hits), *the education* ($\frac{14}{127}$ hits), *in the hotels and food places*, *the air pollution*, *the digestion*, *the passive smoking*, *on the one side*. We can see that the students used the definite article with uncount nouns and plural count nouns that did not have the -s/-es ending. Sometimes they even used the definite article with plural nouns where zero article was required. Below are some more examples of these types of usage:

- *Smoking word derived from the smoke ...*
- *People hate the smoking and smokers.*
- *The passive smoking is also equally harmful as well.*
- *the smokers put the ash on the floor*

We can see that the students were unable to follow the tradition that uncount nouns and plural nouns when used in the general sense usually do not require the definite article.

The same is the case with the indefinite article. The students used the indefinite article where zero article was required, for example, *a bad company* (4/23 hits; 6/23 hits with the definite article), *a mental calm*, and *to have a lunch or dinner*.

The students were unable to always capitalize words properly. They even did not take much care to capitalize the first words of sentences, for example, *money is very useful for every one*. Sometimes even the proper nouns were not capitalized, for example, *afghan war*, and *refugees came in pakistan from afghanistan through Pak-Afghan border*.

Number

The students made errors in using the correct number of nouns. Where plural nouns would be required for making generalizations, the students used singular nouns instead, for example:

- *Carcinogen* present in tobacco cause cancer ...
- *In foreign country* smoking become more common trend.
- other *creature* of worlds
- Smoking causes serious *problem* for restaurants.
- He is totally ignorant from the *danger* of smoking for him his fellow beings.
- Part time *job* are for short time and short duration ...
- *Vegetable* fruit and other food items ...
- on cigarette *box*
- newspaper (4/4 hits)
- *particle* (1 hit) for “particles”
- *chain smoker* for “chain smokers” (4/7 hits)
- *doctor* (2/5 hits) for “doctors”
- *problem* (15/74 hits)
- *at least one or two packet*

The singular number could be more acceptable in the case of *daily fruits rather than weekly eating*, but the student preferred using “fruit” in the plural.

Indefinite partitive plurals, or those modified by the plural determiner were sometimes used in the singular, for example:

- *many of the citizen face death*
- *a lot of family member*
- *One of the component of a cigarette*
- *it cause many disease.*
- *many member*
- *We do many thing for the sake of money...*

The students also confused the plural number with the singular in nouns that were complements of copular verbs:

- ... *even children without discrimination of gender are chain smoker?*
- *Some people are chain smoker.*
- *People become smoker ...*

The students sometimes did not use distributive plurals and went for singular nouns instead:

- *The smokers first of all give **a cigarette** to the innocent people ...*
- ***Sole bread earner of a family** are ruined ...*
- *they want academies, **computer** and many other things*
- *different type (3/3 hits) for “different types”*
- ***this little child** are the youth of Pakistani in the future*
- *They helps **her husband** ...*

Some nouns are usually used in the plural, but the students used them as singular nouns, for example:

- *circumstance (2 hits) for “circumstances”*
- *timing (5/5 hits) for “timings”*

In 7/166 sentences, *restaurant* concords with the plural verb *are*. The following are cases of clear disagreement of numbers between the subject and the verb:

- ***a mentally and physically depressed man** have desire to smoke.*
- *But if one is being tempted **his depression increase** instead of decrease.*
- *In Islam **cleanliness and hygiene** is emphasized ...*

Noun Combinations

The students coined grammatically incorrect compound names. We have *lung cancer* (16 hits) and *lungs cancer* (11 hits), *lung's cancer* (1 hit), *lunges cancer* (1 hit), *cancer of lungs* (2 hits), and *cancer of lung* (1 hit). It implies that Pakistani students were confused when they made compound nouns with the first noun involved in a situation as a plural. Here are some more examples of this:

- *the smokers addict*
- *the restaurants administration*
- *cigarettes advertisement*
- *drugs addiction*

A similar situation is observed in the case of *of* genitives: The students used *of* genitives where a noun + noun combination could sound natural, or they used noun + noun combinations where *of* genitives could sound better, for example:

- *the boy of college* instead of “the college boy”
- *the cloud of cigarette* instead of “cigarette smoke cloud”
- *the people of poor countries are frustrated by social affair* instead of “the social state of affairs”
- *family comfort* instead of “the comfort of the family”
- *all/old/modern age people* instead of “people of all ages / old people / modern people”
- *modern age cigarettes/education* instead of “modern cigarettes/education”
- *chronic coughing* instead of “chronic cough”
- *the pollutant atmosphere* instead of “the polluted atmosphere”
- *a smoking ban* instead of “a ban on smoking”

It can be seen that in the case of *health*, the *'s* genitive (9 hits) was strikingly less common than the *of* genitive (38 hits). They would sometimes miss the apostrophe with genitives, such as *from the parents side*.

The students superfluously used nouns even when noun phrases could do without them, for example, *it is very dangerous thing* instead of *it is very dangerous*, or *people who smoke* and *the smoking people* instead of “smokers”. Similarly, *cancer disease* and *brain tension* were redundant.

Collocations

The students used collocations which were influenced by their local languages. Instead of the “ability to do something,” we have the *ability of doing something*, and *the ability of adapting to the economic world*. *Addict to* (5 hits) is far less common than *addict of* (14 hits). Both are wrong constructions. The former is patterned after “addicted to”, while the latter is formed under the influence of the local language. A similar is the case with *addiction to* (3 hits) and *addiction of* (5 hits).

The collocation *reason of* (12 hits) was more frequent than *reason for* (9 hits). The former is an error in standard Englishes but appears to be a feature of . Similarly, they preferred *smoke of cigarette/cigarettes/the cigarette/the cigarettes/tobacco/your cigarettes* (52 hits) to the standard collocation “smoke from (your) cigarette(s)/tobacco”. For “smoking in/at a restaurant”, the students used *restaurant smoking*.

We have both *take the meal* and *have the meal*, but “take the meal (3 hits)” is more common than “have the meal (1 hit)”.

Under the influence of their local language, students used *create awareness* instead of “build, develop, encourage, foster, heighten, increase”, or “raise awareness” (“Awareness (noun),” 2024). Similarly, instead of “a breach of”, we have the following:

- *Smoking is creating a breech in natural beauty ...*

Instead of “a hurdle in something” for a singular noun, a student used “hurdle between something”:

- *It is hurdle between development of Pakistan.*

Other examples of wrong collocations include *modern century* instead of “the current century,” and *at morning* (2 hits).

Confusing Nouns

Students sometimes confused nouns, or there was cross-categorical confusion. *Aide* (4/4 hits) was always used instead of “aid” (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Occurrences of “aide” in ICNALE

institutions and have to foot the bill . While financial	aide	and student loans help cover some of the costs a
finding themselves in a bind . In most cases financial	aide	and scholarships are offered on a need and or merit
finding themselves in a bind . In most cases financial	aide	and scholarships are offered on a need Unfortunately a vast
thrifty and pay more attention to his studies . Financial	aide	and student loans help cover some of the costs a
sort of finical independence . Unfortunately in most cases finical	aide	and scholarships are offered on a need and or merit

Assistant (1 hit) was used instead of “assistance”. In predicative position, “benefit” has been used instead of “beneficial,” or “benefit” was also possible with an article. Most of the time “effect” was used instead of “affect”, for example: *Smoking also effect the enviornment*. Almost always, *man* (99 hits) has been used instead of *person*. The noun *deficit* (1/1 hit) was used as an adjective: *if the students are deficit of their basic requirements ...* The non-standard form *ourself* (2 hits) has been used instead of “ourselves”. Here are other examples of confusing one noun with another, or confusing with words of other categories:

- *dependency* (1/1 hit) for “dependence”

- *necessaries* (1/1 hit) for “necessities”
- *roll* (1/1 hit) for “role”
- *idol*, (1/1 hit) a noun, for “idle” (an adjective)
- *Smoking is creating a breech in* (1/1 hit; confused with “breach of”) *natural beauty* ...

The students were not able to use the present participle as a subject:

- **Banned** *smoking in a restaurants protects non-smoker from heart attack* ...
- *The first step which have to take is banned smoking in restaurants* ...

Findings

From the analysis, the following observations were made:

a) The analysis revealed that the most prevalent distinction between Pakistani and standard English was in the area of spelling. This research infers that Pakistani students may misspell words because they pronounce them differently in their local language(s). Although the study did not examine phonological data, the misspellings indicate that it is heavily influenced by local phonological habits, contributing to spelling errors. This predilection for phonological misspelling provides valuable insights into the phonological differences in PakE.

b) There is a considerable preference for American spelling, especially for nouns ending in “-isation/-ization” in British English, for example *organization/organisation* (10/1 hits, see Figure 2). *Computerization, demoralization, fertilization* each has a single hit, but none of them has been spelled with the *-isation* ending, particular to British English.

Figure 2

KWIC Results for “organization/organisation” in ICNALE

And build a good thoughts to innovate and promote our	organization	and achive a good Position in the world in our
managerial rolls and regulation of the company or any other	organization	. In these students someone are eligible for the work
fight against the poverty . An average worker of any	organization	which have a big family can't survive in the
become responsible . They improve cooperation all the member of	organization	in which they are doing work They get a lot
part time job . If an employee work in an	organisation	in morning and do work somewhere else in evening he
job is a job which an individual performs at any	organization	for brief time for the sake of earning money This
of job you are not a permanent part of that	organization	so tour interest in your job is less and you
time job includes teaching working in a bank or some	organization	. I my self have taught while I was studying
of his parents . they can do jobs in franchise	organization	or may teach part jobs are very helpfull in todays
more dangerous for children for the same reason world health	organization	has banned selling cigarettes to children under age of 18
large advertisement by cigarette producing companies . The world Health	organization	WHO should took step of it and should banned on

c) When they were unsure, Pakistani students preferred two-word forms to one-word compounds, for example *every thing* (16 hits, see Figure 3), *book warms* (for “bookworms”).

Figure 3

Occurrences of “every thing” in ICNALE

to make themselves awake and fresh . But excess of	every thing	is bad To conclude with drugs are not good for
attention more than their money . As money is not	every thing	. And should enjoy its life by giving time to
give attention on them and on their diet and their	every thing	is their job Infact they are supporting their life and
need of the peoples because of the raising prices of	every thing	which is needed to a human Specially country like Pakistan
basically nowadays the need of the time because prices of	every thing	is increased day by day and poor parents are not
some people do it at night . In this world	every thing	is costly Most of the part time jobs are in
strong . it makes consistent in their working and do	every thing	with determination and always struggle for achieving their goals of
It glooms the personality . They can understand	every thing	and they can help the miserable people They do work
main job or full time job . In these days	every thing	is very high price So the money is need by
people do it in the night . In this world	every thing	is very much costly Prices of every thing is sky
world every thing is very much costly . Prices of	every thing	is sky high The rent of houses and the bill
part time job it can be make them responsible about	every thing	. For example they become able to use money with
their parents . There is always some advantages disadvantages of	every thing	. The disadvantage of part time job is that student
job . So studies are more important in nowadays then	every thing	. But we should work hard to become financially strong
money is very useful for every one .	every thing	can be bought only by money part time job could
not make the deficiency in their study . In short	every thing	in this world has benefits or demerits also and no

d) The students showed preference for their local understanding of countability, for example “meal” was used as an uncount noun.

e) The analysis of grammatical aspects of singular nouns shows that Pakistani learners tend to miss articles with noun phrases having nouns premodified with more than one word.

f) Pakistani students used singular nouns instead of distributive plurals.

g) The students missed articles with premodified singular nouns, and before the complements of some prepositions, for example, *couple of hours*, *full time job*, *for short time*, *at low cost* (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Occurrences of “at low cost,” “couple of hours,” “for short time,” and “full time job” in ICNALE, Analyzed through AntConc

to send their children to school	at low cost	or affordability. Education is not
tivates? Part time job consists of	couple of hours	to few hours. Basically to fulfill o
d part time job. Part time job are	for short time	and short duration like one hour
job. In part time job the work is	for short time	and the money is also short as co
Smoking gives comfortable only	for short time	but badly effected the body. Sme
ours. Job is not easy task. After a	full time job	is very hard to do an other part t
here are two types of jobs one a	full time job	and a part time job. A man who i
art time job. A man who is doing	full time job	do his duty all the day. But a mar
art time job. A man who is doing	full time job	do his duty all the day but a mar
are basically of two types. One is	full time job	in which a employee work all the
divided in two categories. One is	full time job	and the other is part time job. Fu
job and the other is part time job.	Full time job	mean eight continuous hours wh
ects and good aspects. After the	full time job	its very hard to do job as a part t

h) Pakistani students sometimes used the indefinite article as an alternative to the number “one” and therefore avoided using the indefinite article before nouns that meant something plural, for example *couple*, *majority* (see Figure 5), *gathering*.

Figure 5

Occurrences of “majority” in ICNALE

people do part time job due to inflation . Specially	majority	of students doing part time job after their college or
prices of necessities of life are rising constantly . The	majority	of people in Pakistan belong to low income group and
those who receive a steady flow from their parents a	majority	of others have to budget their expenses and take on
receive a steady flow of money from their parents a	majority	of the others have to budget their expenses and take
receive a steady flow of money from their parents a	majority	of the others have to budget their expenses and take
26 500 Europeans conducted in December 2008 found that a	majority	of EU citizens support smokefree public places such as offices
needs . Some doing it for their own affection but	majority	of students who doing part time job belong to middle
in it by using it continuously . Not only elders	majority	of our youngsters use smoking some smoke only as a
damage which is caused by smoking but still a great	majority	of people have become a victim of smoking and have
need and or merit basis that 's why a vast	majority	of College students do not necessarily fall in those categories
student loans help cover some of the costs a vast	majority	of college students are taking on parttime jobs to help
a need and or merit basis . Unfortunately a vast	majority	of college students do not necessarily fall into those categories
scholarships are offered on a need . Unfortunately a vast	majority	of college students do not necessarily fall into those categories
student loans help cover some of the costs a vast	majority	of college students are taking on parttime jobs to help

i) The students sparingly used the definite article for making generalizations.

j) If nouns had unique denotations, the students treated that like a proper noun and went for zero article with them, for example *World Bank*, *world*.

k) In terms of vocabulary, there were fewer instances of using local words. However, significant local language influence can be seen in the use of collocations, especially noun and preposition combinations, for example *reason of* instead of “reason for,” and *the ability of doing something* instead of “the ability to do something”.

l) Sometimes the students used singular nouns as complements to copular verbs where they were required to be plural in standard English, for example:

- ... *they are attracted toward it and also become **victim** to it ...*
- *Students smoke just for temporary enjoyment but become **a permanent smoker**.*
- ... *they can manage their work ... and can become **a responsible countryman**.*
- ... *they gradually turn into **a drug additive person** ...*

m) Instead of “one/one’s” combination, Pakistani students usually used “one/his” pair of pronouns, for example:

- ... *but very determination and diligence one can achieve his desired goal.*
- *No one can fulfill his basic needs even in one job.*
- *no one can fulfill his necessities by living alone in this world.*
- *During job one can meet with the people of different classes and ranks.*

n) Pakistanis have a distinct sense of number because of the influence of their local languages. They may use singular nouns for making generalizations, for example they would use singular nouns instead of plural ones because in Urdu and other local languages sometimes the singular form functions as the plural form as well:

- *Our Pakistani hospital and doctor are very irresponsible.*

Conclusion

This study concludes that differences from standard English varieties in the use of singular nouns are very likely to be found in a corpus of PakE. Careful observation shows that these differences, however, are not necessarily the features of PakE for the following reasons:

- a) The differences are not always consistent.
- b) They are more likely to be absent from careful writing in professional contexts. So, in a database, the mere difference from a standard variety is not enough to give the regional use of language the status of a different variety.
- c) The acceptability of usage across different genres is not present to establish regional usage as a variety of English.

The findings of this study highlight how Pakistani students use singular nouns differently from standard British English. Spelling was the area where most differences were found. Some of these differences could be attributed to phonological mispronunciations in Pakistan. This study was delimited to the analysis of written data. It finds that research on phonological data is sure to reveal more in this area. The preferences to American -ize/yz endings and other combinations were found. There is further need to see this influence on PakE. It would also help educationalists determine which variety should be modeled for teaching-learning purposes. To see which terms have been institutionalized, there is a need for a general corpus that would be as much representative of different fields of life in the regional variety as the British National Corpus represents British English. The study reveals that the students were not able to use the article (a/an/the) at an advanced level. Teaching practices need to be revisited for this, and curriculum benchmarks and learning objectives need to be improved. We need to differentiate between lack of knowledge, errors, and the features of PakE. Every difference from the standard varieties does not mean to be a feature of Pakistani English. In teaching and learning English, teachers, and students need to be careful that they follow the widely acceptable terms and usage of the language.

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