

**A FUTURISTIC VIEW ON IMPACT OF CHINA PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR ON LINGUISTIC ECOLOGY OF PAKISTAN**

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**Abstract**

*Language change, shift and death are dynamic processes which happen under several socio-historical, demographic, geographic and linguistic metamorphoses in the world. The economic romance with China Pakistan Economic Corridor is considered to be a "game and fate changer" for the regions especially South Asia, South East Asia, Middle East and even Africa. Whether this economic consecration would also result into changes in social dynamics or consequences in the forms of linguistic apocalypse, socio-cultural cataclysm and evolution in the literary produce would become a serious cause of "game and fate changer" for linguistic ecology of the regions. Perhaps, the history has not observed and witnessed pidginization, creolization and hybridization of languages at such a large scale that CPEC is going to leave nothing more than a byproduct. Here we hypothesize that this by product would change the linguistic ecology of Pakistan altogether which poses serious challenges for language maintenance in different domains of its function.*

**Keywords:** Linguistic ecology, Pidgin, Creole, Language

**1. INTRODUCTION**

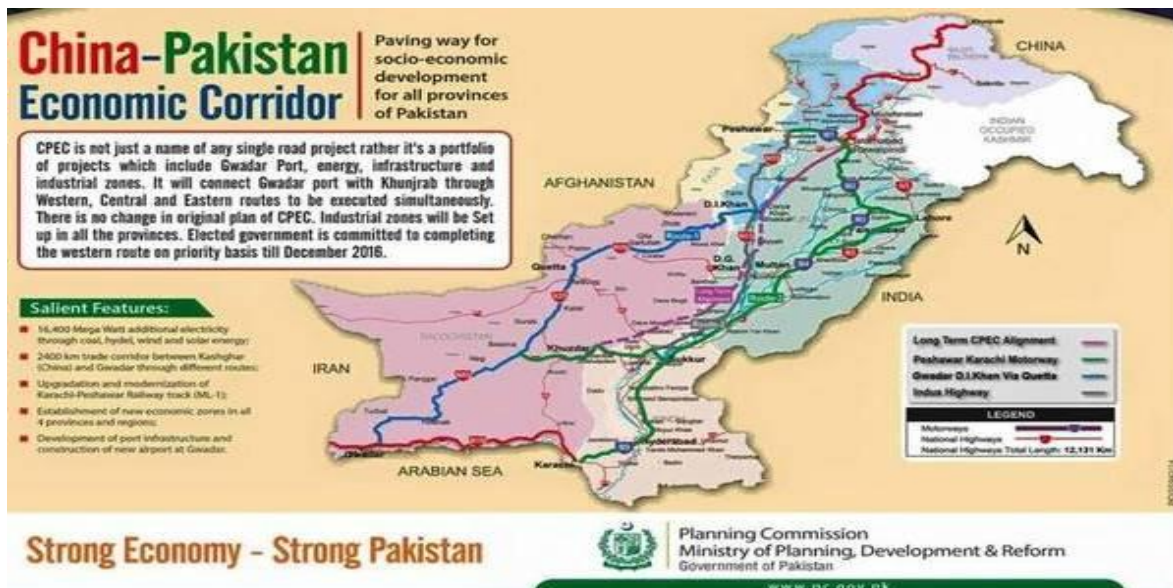
Impact of different social, political and economic factors on linguistic ecology of any of the locations in the world is a gospel truth and emergence of several theories on linguistic ecology (Fil & Muhlhausler, 2006), language change and shift (Croft, 2000 & Ehret, 1988), language birth and death (Mufwene, 2004; Abrams & Strogatz Cr, 2000), language development and maintenance (Giles & Johnson, 1987) bear witness to this undeniable truth. Social factors such as interethnic day-to-day relations, assemblages and marriages; trade of slavery and indentured laboring in past and human resource development, maintenance and exploitation in the modern world of commodification; and large migrations and immigrations across the national borders due to political manifestation are some of the important catalyzers that affect the ecology of the linguistic habitus. The current study provides a futuristic view on the impact of China Pakistan Economic corridor (CPEC) on the linguistic fabric of Pakistan. The same impact may also be assumed on the Chinese linguistic ecology.

This economic romance between Pakistan and China is based on the economic vision of China to revive ancient trade routes connecting Asia with Africa and Europe through water and land both. These economic corridors i.e. trade routes have been sketched to connect Beijing via Moscow and Germany with Europe via Northern Corridor; from Shanghai to Europe and Persian Gulf via Tashkant, Tehran and Banda Imam Khomeini Port of Iran i.e. Central Corridor; and Asia and Africa would be connected through Southern Corridor from Khanjarab Pass to Gawadar Port (Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf) Pakistan. As it can be seen in Figure 1, the Southern Corridor of China from the third largest city of China i.e. Guangzhou will diverge into tripartite road links in Pakistan through northern route connecting western, eastern and central alignments with Gawader port (Rana, 2016). These four alignments in Pakistan consist of all major cities of

Pakistan including Islamabad, Peshawar, Lahore, Multan, Karachi, Sukkhar, Quetta, Gawadar, Gilgit and Hunza as the economic clusters/hubs/zones. Bulk of academic, business, political and cultural activities has already been started in Pakistan. For instance, teaching of Chinese in some of the Pakistani universities (See Appendix 1), private elite English medium schools (See Appendix 2); government schools of Sindh province (See Dawn, 2015); large number of scholarships offered by Government of Punjab, Pakistan (See Appendix 3); and some other government initiatives such as establishment of Pak-China Institute (See Appendix 4) and Pak-China Friendship Centre (See Appendix 5) speaks volumes of this possible shift in new foreign language trends.

Considering this economic rhetoric, therefore, 298 languages of China including several hundreds of dialects are going to assume the mantle and/or liability for almost 7000 languages of the world (Lewis et al. 2013). This also includes 73 languages with 27 endangered languages of Pakistan according to UNESCO Atlas of world languages 2010 (Moseley, 2010). Since this economic corridor is intended to be completed by 2030, it is deemed to portray to the black canvas of linguistic ecology of Pakistan from futuristic view. Thus, it is pertinent to understand the consequences of linguistic contacts resulting from the economic activities and the impact of these trade communications on the linguistic matrix of the regions. Our study hypothesizes that due to massive interaction between the locals and Chinese mercantile including state officials, traders and manpower would also give birth to several pidgins and creoles in Pakistan. This whole economic and linguistic consecration leads us to believe that it would alter the linguistic ecology with numerous social, political and psychological and environmental implications.

Figure 1. CPEC Alignments in Pakistan



## 2. LINGUISTIC OVERVIEW OF PAKISTAN

Linguistic diversity of Pakistan can be mapped into two major spheres according to Ethnologue of World Languages (Lewis et al., 2016) southern region and northern Pakistan region. Urdu is the lingua franca and English is the *de facto* official language of Pakistan. The southern languages include macro languages e.g. Punjabi, Pushto, Sindhi, Balochi, Siraiki and Brahvi belong to three major families of languages including Dravidian, Iranian and Indo-Aryan families. All of these languages have many other sub-varieties which may or may not be intelligible to the speakers of the same language. Most of the southern Pakistani languages are vigorous or developing according to Ethnologue, 2016.

On the other hand, northern Pakistani languages have comparatively less number of speakers than southern Pakistani languages speakers. Akin to southern region this part is also embedded with thick linguistic diversity including 29 languages as per demographics of Ethnologue (Lewis et al., 2016). Owing to several migrations to southern areas especially Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore, northern languages have been in contact with the southern languages which are causing high level of hybridization of lexicons according to our ethnographic observations.

Keeping the CPEC alignments in mind, another mapping of linguistic diversity of Pakistan can also be done as can be seen in Figure 2. The regions across the northern alignment and northern parts of eastern, southern and central alignments are highly diverse linguistically. So, the possibility of language contact among Pakistani languages and with Chinese languages would definitely increase in these areas across the alignments. Furthermore, most of the endangered languages also exist in these parts of the country which would increase susceptibility of these languages to language change, language shift and death too. In short, these alignments would serve one of major geographical linguistic divisions of Pakistan in future. These linguistic divisions may also cause emergence of several new social groups based on new varieties of languages i.e pidgins and creoles.

**Figure 2. Languages of Pakistan across CPEC Corridors**

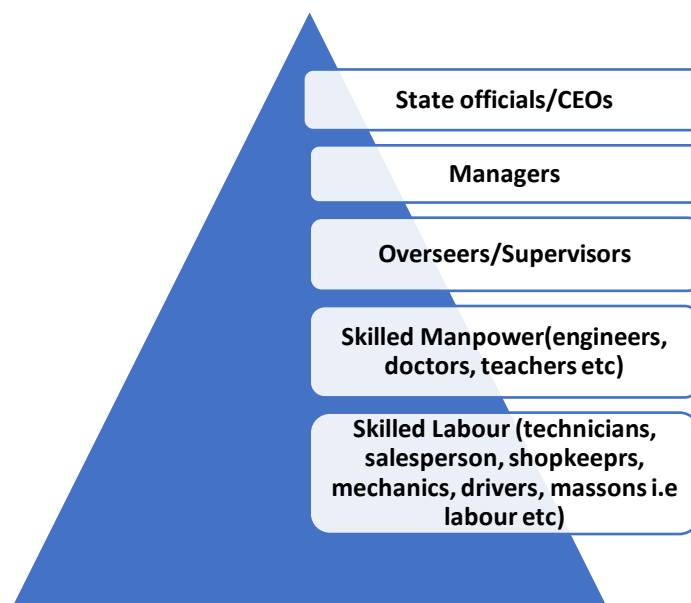


### 3. IMPACT OF CPEC ON LINGUISTIC ECOLOGY OF PAKISTAN

As it is obvious from Figure 1, there would be several economic zones in all the provinces of Pakistan emanating into many hubs and clusters of massive interaction among the people of Pakistan and China. The interaction among interlocutors can possibly be schematized at two levels i.e. horizontal and vertical levels. As we move down vertically, (See Figure 3) the amount of interaction increases with an increase in the number of people. The vertical interaction might be controlled by the minority groups i.e. powerful/authoritative people but the horizontal interaction due to flexible in nature would give rise to several possibilities of changes in the strata of languages. It is not only the super stratum languages which would affect the nature of substratum languages but the reciprocal phenomenon may also be witnessed. Moreover, the multilingualism would increase due to substantial addition of linguistic repertoire of the speakers in the form of ad stratum. Only the demographic strength of the interlocutors would determine the linguistic variation but the social status of the speakers and languages both are going to be vital factors in shaping the linguistic communities in Pakistan. For example, English and Urdu occupy major space in the linguistic zone of Pakistan; so, one can expect major interaction of these two languages with all other languages of

Pakistanis and Chinese involved at any level of interaction on this route. Though, the covert and overt prestige of these two languages show their dominance among all other languages but paradoxically these are the two languages which are going to be re-shaped most in future in Pakistan. At the same time, owing to promise of economic and social uplift a socio-linguistic romance may also begin with some of the Chinese languages.

**Figure3. Pyramid of Level of Interaction**



#### 4. PROSPECTIVE PIDGINS OF PAKISTAN

Pidgin is a system of oral communication emerged spontaneously when speakers of two or more than two different/unintelligible languages come into contact usually for a longer period of time, for trade purposes, commonly. According to many linguists (Bakker, 2008; Parkvall, & Bakker, 2013; Villupilai, 2015) recurrence of interaction; unintelligibility of the languages in contact; spontaneous communicative outcome; typified situations; status as a second language in restricted situations but not a mother tongue of a particular communities are some of the major social and linguistic manifestations of pidgins. All of these characteristics will be embedded in future communicative situations at all levels through with varying degrees (Figure 3). The interlocutors from Pakistan and China both at first three levels i.e. CEOs, managers and overseers might achieve proficiency in each other's languages most probably at basilectic or mesolectic levels only for horizontal and vertical interaction but this bidirectional interaction among the interlocutors at fourth and fifth levels i.e. skilled manpower and non-skilled manpower expected to be in millions would definitely meet all the characteristics of pidgin.

We are also expecting the birth of different types of pidgins based on the type of situations at economic hubs such as Gawader port in Pakistan which is going to be the *smartest and most advanced port of the world* according to the government officials of Pakistan. At this port and other economic clusters in Pakistan the spontaneous interaction might result into different types of pidgins based on the situations such as trade pidgin, nautical pidgin, industry pidgin and plantation pidgin. History also witnesses the existence of such pidgins such as Chinese Pidgin English was used a few centuries ago in southern China and the remnants of this pidgin are still found in the southern belt of China (Matthews & Li, 2013). We can expect the revival of the same pidgin as a communicative bridge for vertical and horizontal interaction at first three levels of interaction given in Figure 3. In addition, Ngarluma was an industry pidgin emerged at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century in Australia as a result

of the linguistic contact between Aborigines and Europeans at different industrial settings (Dench, 1998). So, the industry pidgin is also expected to be born at different economic hubs such as Quetta, Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, Gilgit and Hunza. Another sub-industry pidgin based on Information Technology (IT) jargon which we name IT pidgin may also emerge in IT driven economic hubs in Pakistan. Due to industrial revolution in Pakistan, farming and plantation which is the main source of export of the country would be affected owing to shift of labor for industrial work. This situation may increase the influx of indentured labor in Pakistani plantations from different part of the world including China which consequently would assemble workforce of unintelligible multilingual manpower in these plantations. The daily interaction would not only give rise to plantation pidgin but inter-ethnic communities may also come into being in Pakistan.

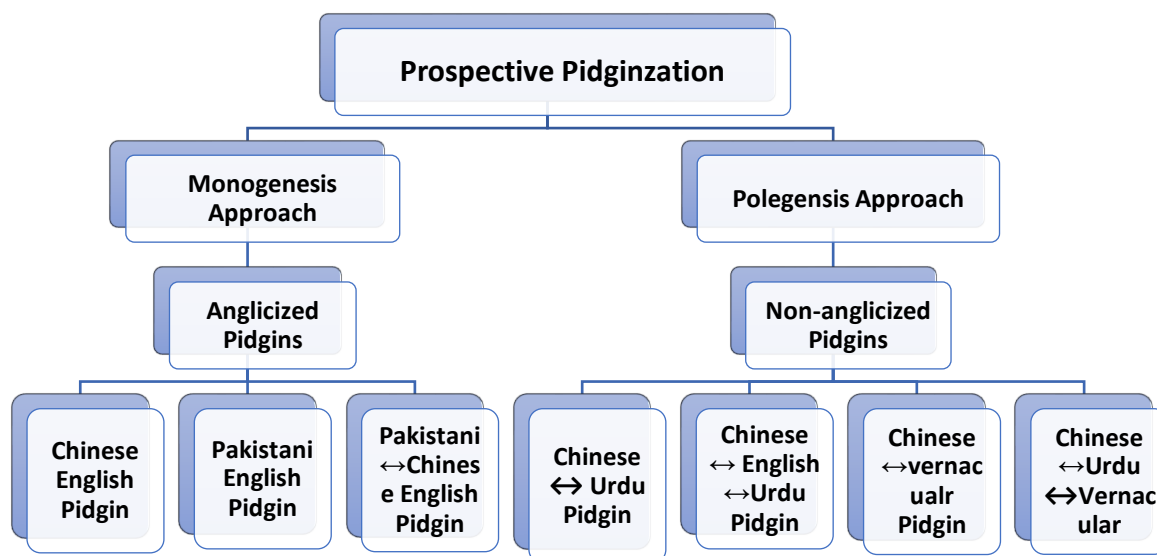
## 5. APPLICATION OF THEORIES OF PIDGINIZATION

In this section we delineate at macro level the formation processes of the prospective pidgin development in Pakistan from the perspective of some of the major theories of Pidginization such as Monogenesis and Polygenesis. Monogenesis theory explains the structural similarities in most of pidgins based on the argument that all the pidgins with European lexifiers are descendants of Proto-Pidgin (Holm, 2010). This pidgin is also known as Portuguese pidgin as it was emerged during 15<sup>th</sup> century when Portuguese traders explored West Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia and developed trading hubs in Indian and Pacific Oceans. With the invasions of other European nations including French, Spanish, Dutch and English into these lands Proto-Pidgin was relexified with the languages of these invaders. Chinese Pidgin English in Indo-Pacific area and Gullah and Krio in Atlantic area were the Anglicized pidgins (Villupilai, 2015).

Therefore, according to Monogenesis theory Chinese Pidgin English would provide bases for another Anglicized pidgin that we named Pakistani Pidgin English. If the jargon approach is given some authenticity then formation of the Anglicized pidgin has more probability due to existence of all the industrial and IT nomenclature as super stratum forms of English in Pakistan. Thus, Chinese Pidgin English or any other pidgin, for instance, Chinese English lexified Pidgin or Pakistani English lexified Pidgin or Chinese-Pakistani English lexified Pidgin developed first at any of the economic hubs might become the ancestral pidgin of Pakistani Pidgins (see Figure 4).

On the contrary, functioning of polygenesis theory has more probabilities in the linguistic ecology of Pakistan. This theory argues that the development of pidgin may occur independently without having an ancestral lineage. For example, Chinese Urdu lexified Pidgin, Chinese English Urdu lexified pidgin, Chinese Vernacular lexified pidgin and Chinese Urdu Vernacular Pidgin may emerge independently as non-Anglicized pidgins in different economic clusters in Pakistan (see Figure 4). We hypothesize more vitality for Chinese English Urdu lexified pidgin due to status of Urdu as lingua franca of Pakistan and the dominant existence of English jargon for technology, industry, transport etc as superstreet forms. Thus, English lexifiers as super stratum, Urdu as substratum and Chinese might occupy some space as ad stratum forms only. However, the intrusion of lexifiers language as super stratum, substratum and ad stratum would be determined by some socio-linguistic factors. Firstly, for example, the language with more demographic strength has more chances of acting as super stratum in pidgin formation. Secondly, in addition, the socio-economic status of interlocutors would also determine the magnitude of the contribution of lexifiers in pidgin. For example, the lexifiers of poor and less powerful speakers would have fewer shares in pidgin despite higher demographic status but this would happen true for vertical interaction only. Finally, the vitality status of language would also be a determining factor in developing amount of lexifiers in pidgin. For example, nomenclature in English jargon has more vitality than jargon of Pakistani languages in trade and technology, so, the expecting super stratum role of English language in Pidgin wouldn't be unrealistic.

Figure 4. Prospective Pidgins of Pakistan



6. PROSPECTIVE CREOLES OF PAKISTAN

Creole is a form of extended pidgin arisen as a mother tongue of interethnic community formed as result of intensive and extensive contact. It is a full-fledged language that caters functionality of a speech community in all domains of life such as education, law and media etc. Creole is emerged when two or more than two interethnic communities come into contact for a longer period of time at least for one whole generation as a result of migrations, immigrations, invasions, missionary intrusions and trade purposes. Keeping contemporary socio-political conditions of China and Pakistan in mind we expect all types of massive to and fro movement except invasions in from both sides of the border. Permanent settlements at level three and four (See Figure 3) in Pakistan is duly expected as a result of this massive influx which would definitely turn into formation of interethnic communities. Religion might become a decisive factor in this situation. As majority of the population in Pakistan is Muslim and in China ten minority muslim ethnic groups including Hui, Uyghurs, Kazakhs, Dongxiangs, Kyrgyz, Salar, Bonans, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Tatars, Utsul and Tibetans constitute almost 4% (20 millions) of the total population of China (Islam in China, 2016). These groups equal to almost 10% of the total population of Pakistan are settled mainly near the border areas of Pakistan and China including Xinjiang, Ningxia, Gansu, Kashghar and Qinghai in China. Therefore, this congruence on both sides of the border would turn into much interethnic polarization which ultimately may cause substantial change in the linguistic ecology in the form of creolization.

Exogenous and endogenous are two types of creoles based on the socio-historical backgrounds of the speakers. Endogenous creoles are formed when none of the groups of the interlocutors are indigenous to the region. Hawai'i Creole English is an example of the exogenous Creole which was emerged as massive importation of labor for the economy of colonial plantation (Robert, 2004). As a result of China Pakistan Economic Corridor the probability of this type of Creole formation is less as the majority of the interlocutors would be indigenous Pakistanis. However, the possibilities of the birth of endogenous creoles are higher which emerge as a result of contact between settlers and indigenous population. Geographic, demographic and linguistic conditions of the areas around northern alignment which is the first corridor opening from China into Pakistan are the most favorable conditions for prospective birth of creoles. As we can see in Table 1, all the languages are at different levels of threat of endangerment including 200 speakers of Gowro and 500 speakers of

Domaaklanguages. In case of any massive settlements of Chinese ethnic groups into these areas, the possibilities of endogenous creole formation would be maximum. Korlai is an example of endogenous creole spoken by around 800 speakers in the village named Korlai in south of Mumbai was emerged in similar conditions (Clements, 1998).

Furthermore, these prospective creoles might come into being through certain cyclical patterns. For example, creoles might emerge from Pidgins directly or the Pidgins might turn into extended pidgins first and then turn into Creole. However, the first stage in the developmental process of all the cyclical patterns of creole formation is norming a jargon for restricted communicative needs. Therefore, possibilities of turning Chinese-vernacular pidgin and Chinese-Urdu-vernacular pidgin into prospective creoles around the areas in northern alignment are maximum due to favorable geographic, demographic and linguistic habitat.

## 7. THREAT TO ENDANGERED LANGUAGES

According to Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (Mosley, 2010), 27 languages spoken in Pakistan (See Table 1) are susceptible to any change in the linguistic ecology of the land. The susceptibility increases as all of these languages are spoken in the surrounding areas of northern alignment of CPEC. These languages are under threat due to several social, demographic and linguistic factors. Majority of these languages are confined to the northern part of the country only which restrict social interaction with rest of Pakistan. In addition, code-switching with Urdu and English is a common norm among the speakers of these languages and more importantly less demographic strength of the speakers of these languages is a major threat to their survival. Therefore, this corridor of 'game and fate changer' might cause cataclysm and would result into linguistic apocalypse in this part of the country.

**Table 1: Endangered Languages of Pakistan**

Level of Endangerment	No. of Languages	Range of Speakers
Severely Endangered	06	200-5500
Definitely Endangered	14	500-75000
Vulnerable	07	220,000-770,000

## 8. CONCLUSION

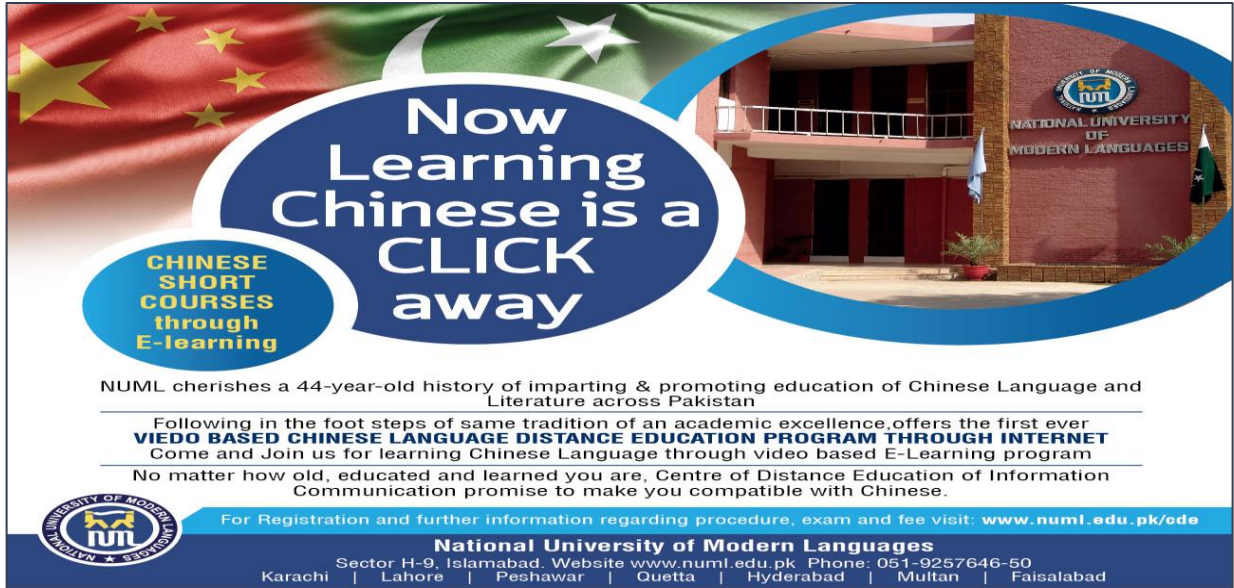
In sum, the impact of China Pakistan Economic Corridor on linguistic ecology of Pakistan would prove to be a gospel truth, though, this truth definitely would appear with slight or more variation from our assumptions. The economic corridor would open many new doors to linguistic arena of Pakistan. This prospective 'fate and game changer' on one hand would definitely bring economic prosperity in the country but on the other hand this macro change in linguistic genome of the country would arise some serious challenges to the policy makers in the fields of education, law, media, trade etc. Language planning and policy would become critical issue in all the domains of life including, social domains, official and institutional domains and might be even in political domains of the country also. Role of computational linguists would also become very crucial in assisting this massive interaction through different gadgets and software. Therefore, we suggest, the government should perceive the upcoming linguistic challenge beforehand by involving the linguists of Pakistan in planning and policing the languages of the country.

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Appendices



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has decided to send 500 talented persons to China to learn Chinese Language on fully funded scholarships.




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