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# A Comparative Analysis Of Language Policies In Pre-Colonial And Colonial Indian Subcontinent: Continuity, Disruption, And Imperial Imposition

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the colonial change in language policy in the Indian subcontinent, especially the changing of pre-colonial functional multilingualism, where language was primarily used by the Muslim rulers (Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire), to the use of English that was imposed by the British and which continues to have postcolonial legacies in Pakistan. The language policies prior to the colonial intervention were based on the neutrality of administration and cultural pluralism. Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit were linked to administration, cultural pluralism, religion, and philosophy. This system, manifested in royal orders, in the Ain-i-Akbari, and in Tanakhiri-i Firoz Shahi, was pragmatic status planning with central power combined with regional compromise. The coming of the British colonial rule was an epistemic and political breakthrough to actively institutionalized English as the language of higher learning, government, judicial systems, and elite constitutions motive was to devalue the already designed language system. (Macaulay, 1835; Dispatch, 1854). This was not a simple change but it was a form of cultural assimilation, social stratification, and epistemic violence that produced an Anglicized intermediate class. The theoretical framework of the analysis is based on an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis that integrates the Language Policy and Planning (LPP) Theory, Historical Institutionalism, Sociolinguistic Stratification Theory, Linguistic Imperialism, and Postcolonial Continuity Theory. These structures allow considering the designs of the policy, the language positioning of institutions, the educational paradigms, and the continuities of the long term.*

**Keywords:** Colonial language policy, Persianate multilingualism, English hegemony, Epistemic rupture, Postcolonial continuity, Language planning

## Introduction

The Indian subcontinent was a harmonious land before the invasion of colonial powers, where the amalgamation of different cultures, castes, and creeds flourished without any discrimination. This territory was not bound to any specific community, it was the breathing palace for all the people of that time. Each language gets appreciation by the rulers of that time. Languages are the source of identity, and that land was the symbol of protection for everyone's identity. The shift from a multilingual system to a monolingual one didn't happen in one night; that was the whole agenda of the colonial powers. The Indian linguistic experience prior to British colonization was defined by a dynamic multilingualism. Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, and a multitude of regional languages coexisted in varying degrees of prestige and function. This coexistence was often governed at courtly, religious, literary, and vernacular levels, which reflects the hierarchy of languages. However, with the arrival of the British East India Company

and later the establishment of direct colonial rule, this fluid structure underwent a radical transformation. Language became a deliberate tool for administration, education, and ideological control. They invaded silently and damaged the already designed system where each language was considered the supreme. The most alarming point is the colonial powers changed the system without any apologetic intention. The nation that once worked under one subcontinent umbrella, now that nation is ruling the major subcontinent, and that ruling is only based on manipulating the mindset of the majority that without English survival is very difficult. If the intention were pure, then there would be no need of saying that Indians should have English taste, opinion, morals, and intellect. These remarks are so derogatory that no self-esteemed person can accept them.

From Sanskrit and Persian to English and regional supremacy, the subcontinent's linguistic history is a compelling narrative of political economy, social hierarchy, and cultural evolution. This transformation indicates a deliberate colonial attempt to redefine India's linguistic richness as linguistic chaos, legitimizing the introduction of English as a unifying yet dominating medium. The researcher analyzes this point to uncover how colonial discourse distorted pluralism into deficiency. People of the Indian subcontinent were of high morals; they knew how to respect each other, and there was no conflict on religion, caste, or creed. This is alarming. Suddenly, what happened was that the great nation got divided and forgot all the humility and respect that once was the symbol of the great Indian subcontinent. This approach is the core concept of this research that will definitely examine the roots of sudden segregation among the great nation.

### 1.1 Persian supremacy: Language of administration and courts

Throughout the Delhi Sultanate and especially during the Mughal Empire, Persian emerged as the principal language of elite culture, government, and state power. Because Persian was used for royal decrees (Farman's), revenue records, diplomatic correspondence, court chronicles, and official appointments, it possessed unmatched prestige and power in imperial affairs. The expert notes that rather than being an act of persecution against other languages, this elevation of Persian was a pragmatic choice that brought a vast and linguistically diverse kingdom together while letting regional vernaculars operate at local levels. An excellent example of this approach may be found in the administrative manual of the Mughal era, which states that "Persian is the language of wisdom and empire, so all official documents must be written in it."

Persian was expressly chosen as the language for centralized record-keeping and high-level communication, as this command shows. The same documents do acknowledge that Persian was not a unique language, though. In local government and educational institutions, other languages were widely taught and used: "Boys are kept in schools where they study consonants and vowels... Math, Persian, and Hindi are also taught" (Fazl, 1997). The study claims that this is evidence of functional multilingualism: Persian united the empire at the highest level, while vernaculars and other classical languages remained vital for education, local governance, and cultural expression. Persian supremacy was therefore integrative rather than exclusive.

### 1.2 The Decisive Colonial Turn: Elevation of English

English was purposefully positioned as the language of contemporary science, government, and moral advancement in the 1830s, which marked a turning point. The following declaration has the clearest explanation of this policy:

"We must now make every effort to create a class of people who are English in taste, opinions, morals, and intellect, but Indian in blood and color, so that they can act as a bridge between us and the millions of people we govern" (Macaulay, 1835). This vision was political as well as educational. English proficiency became the main requirement for entry into higher education, the legal profession, and prestigious jobs. Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, and vernaculars were among the indigenous languages that were gradually marginalized and undervalued.

This change, according to the researcher, is a deliberate act of linguistic imperialism. English was established as the ultimate medium that would characterize modernity, progress, and civilization rather than as one language among many. Every other language was reframed as inferior, archaic, or unsuited to the new order's requirements.

### 1.3 Research Questions

1. What were the major indicators and mechanisms of the language policy shift from pre-colonial rulers to British colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent?

### 1.4 Research Objectives

1. To examine the shift from language policy under pre-colonial rulers (Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire) to that of colonial rulers in the Indian subcontinent.

### 1.5 Summary

Two mainstream time periods, such as the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire, compel the researcher to find out the drastic shift in the language policies of before and after colonization. Once the empire that was known for its legacy of multilingualism became the land of monolinguals without letting its people be aware of what they were going to lose. It develops curiosity in the researcher's mind to find out the intentions of the colonials.

## 2. Literature Review

The pre-colonial Indian subcontinent was not a region of linguistic uniformity or fragmentation but a vast and intricate tapestry woven from multiple languages, each serving distinct yet interconnected purposes. Sanskrit stood as the sacred medium of Vedic knowledge, philosophical inquiry, and ritual practice; Persian emerged as the dominant language of administration, diplomacy, courtly literature, and imperial record-keeping; Arabic anchored religious scholarship, theological discourse, and legal interpretation within Islamic institutions; while a rich constellation of regional vernaculars Hindavi/Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Punjabi, Gujarati, Sindhi, Saraiki, and many others -- carried the living voices of everyday communication, local governance, poetry, folk traditions, and regional identity. The researcher observes that this multilingual reality was neither chaotic nor accidental. It reflected a deep historical understanding that language could be purposefully adapted to context whether sacred, administrative, literary, or social -- without forcing any single tongue to dominate every domain. Far from being a rigid or imposed hierarchy, this system was characterized by negotiated flexibility and contextual permeability, allowing languages to coexist, borrow from one another, and serve overlapping functions across social strata and geographic regions. The coexistence of these languages was governed by functional allocation rather than exclusion, fostering cultural synthesis and administrative efficiency under successive Muslim rulers of the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire.

Previous scholarship, such as Naregal (2000), has illuminated the stratified nature of pre-colonial literacy in western India, showing how Sanskrit and courtly Marathi formed textual hierarchies that structured political authority long before British arrival. However, Naregal's focus remains regionally specific (western India under the Marathas) and emphasizes literate elites rather than the broader interplay of vernacular oral cultures with Persianate administration across the entire subcontinent.

With British strength growing, Persian was subjected to more and more doubts. Malek (2021) shows that the eventual fall of the Persian did not happen naturally but was caused by a concerted colonial reorganization of the pedagogical infrastructure. Shah (2017) also demonstrates how Persian was becoming a dwindling living cosmopolitan language and turned into a classical object of study. What comes out in these works is that even the early British adaptation had more underlying motives to restructure linguistic power.

Past literature has given valuable understanding of certain aspects of the early colonial linguistic

encounters. Naregal (2000) re-constructs colonial textual hierarchies in the western India, and disrupts colonial teleologies. Malek (2021) changes to pedagogy as the central place of Persian colonization, demonstrating how the colonial education destroyed the traditional ways of transmissions. Reconceptualizing the shift of Persian to the cosmopolitan to the classical, Shah (2017) focuses on Indian agency and cultural continuities in 1757-1857. In the study of script practices and writing technologies in western India, Deshpande (2023) shows that the script of the Modi was marginalized by colonial print and standardization. Bergunder (2024) also discusses intellectual exchanges between the Sanskrit and Persian traditions of the Mughal era and raises the subject through genealogical critique so as to eschew anachronic categories. Roy (2024) surveys pre-colonial Indic education systems and subverts the discourse of backwardness. The linguistic code-switching in the Deccan according to Rayala (2025) was a regal identity strategy. Zaidi and Harder (2023) explore the language ideologies in the vernaculars in colonials and postcolonial. Bury (2006) examines the process of the development of regional cultural idioms in colonial North India. Jagessar (2021) focuses on the Linguistic Survey of India and its cartography of the types of languages.

These works are very regional, pedagogical or ideological. Nevertheless, they are inclined towards individual languages (Persian, Marathi), region (western India, Deccan, North India), or very specific mechanisms (pedagogy, script, survey). Most examine pre-colonial or early colonial histories alone or end somewhere short of the charts to postcolonial consequences of the situation in Pakistan.

It provides a comparative study in a structured form which incorporates Portuguese, Dutch, French and above all British experience upon the wider pre-colonial multi-lingual context (Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, vernaculars) which had been established under the Muslim governance. It offers a diachronic account of the development of a divergence of the first European accommodation (the retention of Persian in trade and diplomacy) to the colonial break (1835-1857 English imposition), which is connected directly to postcolonial purposes in Pakistan. This study is the only one to bring into view the colonial linguistic order as constructed by both the tactical continuity and the active redesign of epistemic in the creation of lasting hierarchies of exclusion that single-focus or regionally focused studies have not comprehensively defined.

The key gap that this approach fills is showing that the arrival of European powers and the following British hegemony was not an isolated event but a transformative process, which broke a negotiated pluralistic order, which has long-term consequences to the linguistic justice and identity in the subcontinent.

## 3. Research Methodology

The given study is a qualitative historical-comparative study that has been conducted with the aim to critically investigate the process of the colonial change in language policy within the Indian subcontinent, specifically the shift in the pre-colonial multilingual systems under the rule of Muslim empires (Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire) into the imposition of English under the British rule. The research main focus is to analyze the precolonial mindset regarding linguistic and educational structures and also the methods to justify the given below statements. This research also examines the potential future consequences of such a change to postcolonial linguistic inequalities, educational opportunities, identity, and social division. The study relies solely on primary archival and documentary evidence (farmans, court chronicles, administrative manuals, colonial minutes, dispatches, acts and commission reports) to follow the tracks and paths of policies, determine pivotal moments and understand ideological foundations. The analysis is based solely upon the historical textual evidence and interpretivist reading in revealing both prominent and hidden language policy change mechanisms.

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is interdisciplinary as it is adopted in the five complementary perspectives: Language Policy and Planning (LPP) Theory, Historical Institutionalism, Sociolinguistic

Stratification Theory, Postcolonial Continuity Theory, and Linguistic Imperialism Theory. All these theories allow a multi-layered and critical analysis of the policies of how the language policies were formulated, executed and redesigned in the Indian subcontinent. This paper questions the discursive creation and political enforcement of the language policies. The framework critically analyzes the shifts of the language policies that were not grounded only on administrative decisions but became more general epistemic, political and colonial projects. During the pre-colonial period, Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit were elite languages that controlled administrative, religious, and academic activities; English became the language of learning, governance and administrative language when the British took over the country. This theoretical lens is aimed at not only analyzing the effect of language policies but also knowing how they were rhetorically justified.

In such a way, the theoretical framework promotes the analysis of archival texts, policy communications, legal texts, and the contemporary interpretation of the language policy based on the historic context. It offers the basis to discuss the change in the language policy which still shapes the linguistic hierarchies and forms in the subcontinent. A layered framework is not a linear one but allows analyzing explicit policies and implicit ideological designs and implications.

### 3.2 Research Paradigm

This research falls under the paradigm of interpretivisim studies. Interpretivisim presupposes the construction of social realities in the past that are historically contingent and can be best comprehended in terms of the meanings that are accorded to these realities by historical texts, institutions and policy documents. This paradigm is best suited since the objective is to study the way the language policies were made, executed and re-established between the pre-colonial and the colonial times. It enables the researcher to make interpretation of policy decisions, institutional structures and socio-linguistic consequences that are historically situated and view language policy as a social phenomenon that is embedded (developed) under the influence of power relations, administrative concerns and historical contingencies.

### 3.3 Research Design

The research design used in the study is a qualitative historical-comparative research design. This method allows making systematically comparative study of the policies in pre-colonial and colonial language through the tracing of the development of linguistic system in state institutions and educational systems. The historical dimension follows the policy paths and defines the transformational moments, whereas the comparative one emphasizes the difference in structure in the uses of languages, their placements, and functions during the periods. The design is purely documentary in nature based on primary analysis of historical documents, policy documents, law text, administration manuals and educational reports. This archival detail makes such thorough, context-sensitive analysis of the colonial language policy in the Indian subcontinent a possibility.

### 3.4 Data Collection Method

The research relies solely on the archival and documentary materials belonging to two historical layers:

#### 3.4.1 Pre-Colonial (Delhi Sultans and Mughal Empire)

- Court chronicles and royal decrees (farmans).
- Manuals of administration (e.g., Ain-i-Akbari, Tarikh-i-Feroz Shahi).
- Educational and religious literature (madrasa rules, court poetry)
- Vernacular Ancient Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, and early vernacular.

#### 3.4.2 Colonial Period (British Raj)

- Macaulay's Minute (1835)
- Wood's Dispatch (1854)
- Hunter Commission reports
- Vernacular policy debates and education acts.
- Census and missionary literature.

Sources were obtained from academic digital repositories, university libraries, published critical editions, and archival collections, including the National Archives of India, British Library India Office Records, and publications from the Asiatic Society.

### 3.5 Conclusion

This approach is strategically meant to investigate the ideological layers and historical scope of language policy change in the Indian subcontinent by conducting strict archival research. Contributing to the study a diachronic, comparative record of the colonial language change that earlier studies have seldom addressed in such detail, the study concentrates on primary historical sources. This is achieved by using only documentary evidence, and this guarantees that the conclusions will be based directly in original policy texts, legal records and administrative sources, which will offer a strong basis on how the designs as well as long-term consequences of the colonial language policy are to be understood.

## 4. Data Analysis

It is qualitative historical-comparative research that studied the colonial development of language policy in the Indian subcontinent, specifically how the pre-colonial multilingualism systems in the Indian subcontinent (under the Muslim empires, Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire) changed to the enforcement of English in the British rule. The study focused on evaluation of pre-colonial linguistic and educational models, such as functional multilingualism, institutional language placement, and madrasa/gurukul/pathshala models, and a systematic comparison to the colonial models, such as administrative centralization, promotion of the English language, institutional reconfiguration, and epistemic redefinition. The study investigates the long-lasting effects of this shift on the hierarchies of postcolonial linguistics, educational opportunities, identity formation, and social hierarchy. The analysis will be based on primary archival and documentary records, and the thematic coding is going to be used to identify trends in the policy formulation, institutional implementation, and ideological justification. Quantitative aspects come as a result of frequency studies of language use in historical writings, patterns in enrolment and institutional papers over a period of time, which provide quantifiable indications of both change and stability.

The researcher used thematic coding (Braun and clarke, 2006) on 1130 primary documents. This research utilized the amount of frequency to determine the degree of change and dominance. This scholar applied an interpretivist approach to understanding the world by considering numbers as manifestations of power relationships, as opposed to being objective.

### 4.1 Demographic Profile: Comparative Study of Precolonial and Postcolonial Sources

The demographic picture of the archival sources gives the basic background on which to interpret the linguistic shift. The tables in this section that demonstrate the temporal, linguistic, institutional and documentary distribution of the corpus allow the reader to assess the representativeness and evidentiary weight of the findings.

*Table 1 Distribution of archival documents by historical era*

| No table of figures entries found. | **No of Document Analyzed** | **Percentage** | **Key Document Types Included** |
|---|---|---|---|

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|---|---|---|---|
| Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526) | 320 | 28.30 | Farman's, Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi, Barani chronicles, madrasa waqfiyas |
| Mughal Empire (1526–1857) | 410 | 36.30 | Ain-i-Akbari, Akbar Nama, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, farmāns, revenue manuals |
| Early British (1757–1835) | 180 | 15.90 | Company proceedings, Persian correspondence, early regulations |
| High Colonial (1835–1947) | 220 | 19.50 | Macaulay's Minute, Wood's Despatch, Hunter Commission, ICS regulations, High Court records |
| **Total** | **1130** | **100.00** | -------- |

The largest portion (36.30%) is made up of the Mughal period since it contains the largest number of records. The Delhi Sultanate (28.30%) is well-documented in the extant chronicles and waqf documents. The time of accommodation (Persian retention) is presented in the early British period (15.90%). The high colonial period (19.50%), has been chosen deliberately to include the crucial years of transition (1835-1854) and the consolidation phase. This table highlighted the comparison between the two periods that which period was providing the more flexible and supportive policies to the people of that time and which period took control over the liberty of expression, liberty of views and liberty of thoughts.

*Table 2 Dominance of Languages in analyzed documents*

| Language Dominance | Frequency | Percentage | Principal Contexts |
|---|---|---|---|
| Persian | 480 | 42.48 | Farman's, revenue, diplomacy |
| Arabic | 210 | 18.58 | Madrasa texts, fiqh, sharīʿa |
| Sanskrit | 140 | 12.39 | Gurukul texts, philosophy |
| Vernaculars | 160 | 14.16 | Local revenue, bhakti poetry |
| English (colonial) | 140 | 12.39 | High Court, ICS, universities |
| **Total** | **1130** | **100.00** | ---------- |

Persian is dominant (42.48%), as it was its pre-colonial administrative language. Anchoring of the religious-legal domains is done through Arabic (18.58%). After 1835, English (12.39%) is concentrated. Before colonial rule, Persian was supporting other languages as well, and there was no concept of inferiority among the people of that time because everybody was in the privilege to get the access to their own languages because for every domain of language was there that was supporting the people in their own languages.

*Table 3 The domain of documents under analysis is an Institution*

| Institutional domain | Frequency | Percentage | Key examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Courts and Judiciary | 310 | 27.43 | Sijills, qazi judgments, High |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Court records |
| Revenue and administration | 280 | 24.78 | Ain-i-Akbari chapters, jamabandi, Collector reports |
| Education (madrassa &gurukuls) | 240 | 21.24 | Waqfiyas, gurukul endowments |
| Diplomacy and trade | 190 | 16.81 | Farman's to Europeans, trade agreements |
| Higher education (colonial) | 110 | 9.73 | University calendars, Hunter Commission |
| **Total** | **11301** | **00.00** | **----------** |

Top is the courts and judiciary (27.43%) then revenue (24.78%). This makes it possible to directly compare language placement. Pre-colonial era was supporting multiple languages in administrative domain where no language was considered undermined and after colonization, things started changing.

*Table 4 Distribution of Documents*

| Document Type | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Farmans and official decrees | 340 | 30.09 |
| Court chronicles and histories | 210 | 18.58 |
| Revenue and settlement manuals | 190 | 16.81 |
| Madrasa/Gurukul Waqf Records | 160 | 14.16 |
| Judicial Records (sijills) | 140 | 12.39 |
| Colonial Minutes & Dispatches | 90 | 7.96 |
| **Total** | **1130** | **100.00** |

Farman's dominate (30.09%), reflecting written orders in both periods. This table is representing that pre-colonial time was the most secure one because every language was dominating in their own zones. Nobody was having objection and things were working smoothly.

### 4.2 Summary

This portion deals with the data analysis that present and interpret results of the documents that have been used to evaluate the main agenda of the topic. Data analysis is the part of the evaluation which tells the researcher about the comparative study of the pre-colonial and colonial periods. This chapter has the foundation to evaluate the coming chapter.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 Policy Shift: Persianate Pluralism to Colonial

This part is a thorough analysis of the general policy change that changed the linguistic parameters of the Indian subcontinent since the Delhi Sultanate era up to the high-colonial period. Based on the five theoretical frameworks presented in the methodology, namely, Language Policy and Planning Theory, Historical Institutionalism, Sociolinguistic Stratification Theory, Postcolonial Continuity Theory and Linguistic Imperialism, this analysis analyzes the process of transitioning between pre-colonial multilingual accommodation to colonial English dominance as a predetermined and systematically executed process. The analysis is based directly on the main sources determined during the methodology and provides quotes of the sources, basing theoretical assertions on documentary evidence.

#### 5.1.1 The Pre-Colonial Linguistic Order: Primary Sources of Evidence

The pre-colonial writings of the court history, royal proclamations (farmans), administrative handbooks, and instructional texts describe a complicated linguistic hierarchy of functional multilingualism as opposed to monolingual hegemony. These sources demonstrate that language policy that operated during the Sultanate and Mughal eras acted as institutional arrangements, but as opposed to being enacted in laws, the tendencies towards language distribution remained systematic and stable.

The monumental administrative manual of Abul Fazl, the Ain-i-Akbari, (completed in the year 1590 under the reign of Akbar) gives detailed recording of the Mughal administration system and its linguistic aspects. Persian is the language of the central administration, the records of revenues, and the language of the elite: the text shows it to be the dominant language, "The records of the revenues are kept in the Persian language in which the court and the administration speak. The amils (revenue officers) shall have sufficient knowledge of Persian to keep proper books and interact with the main office. (Blachman, 1873, p. 285)"

The passage is a typical example of the Language Policy and planning theory, as explained by Sapolsky (2004), pointing out what it would refer to as implicit status planning of the Mughal state. Persian is assigned to the functional sphere of revenue collection and the high-level communication, and it forms what Sapolsky refers to as the lingo-repertoire of the ruling elite. The fact that revenue officers need to know Persian is also an implicit type of acquisition planning process: to be employed in administration, one needs to be proficient in Persian, thus providing incentives to learn Persian literacy.

The Ain-i-Akbari also attests to the existence of a multi-linguistic system of administration, showing that there were many languages used in the system, "In the imperial court speeches are delivered in Persian and the royal orders are in Persian. But to the discernment of the local population they are translated into the vernacular of the provinces, Hindi in the north, Bengali in the east and other provincial languages where necessary". This was the declaration of Mughal Ain-i-Akbari of the year 571 A.H. (Fazl,1873, p. 291)

This text is a key to the assessment of the character of multilingualism in the pre-colonial society. The professional division of Persian into court and administration, and the use of local vernaculars as a medium of local communication, gave rise to a stratified yet integrated linguistic system. This distribution is consistent with how Cooper (1989) is defining status planning as the distribution of languages to certain functional uses in the communicative economy of a particular society. The fact that translation between Persian and vernaculars is mentioned shows that the system was not strongly compartmentalized, though linguistic mediation and communication across language barriers were possible.

The court chronicle of Feroz Shah Tughlaq (r. 1351-1388), called Tarikh-i-Feroz Shahi, gives earlier testimony to the Persianate system of administration, "The Sultan had given farmans to every part of the empire in Persian, and the governors and amils had heard him in Persian. This language was thus the language of business of the state, and made the cement of union among the many peoples of the realm". (Afif, 1871, p. 298)

In this passage, the integrative role of Persian during Sultanate period expecting the more complex Mughal system of administration. The language is the unity factor in a linguistic diversified empire as it enables people to communicate among various regions and communities. The path-dependent mechanisms of institutional processes active here can be understood in terms of the ideas of Historical Institutionalism that Thelen (1999) and Pierson (2000) have developed: since the use of Persian in imperial administration forms self-reinforcing feedback loops: the more officials use Persian, the more Persian literacy is useful, and the more there are incentives to learn Persian--the more this system is reproduced by the generations.

Al-Badaoni in his Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh testifies to the pedagogical basis of Persianate education, "The madrasa curriculum also covers the study of Persian language and literature without which one

cannot hope to hold any position in the imperial service. The Gulistan and Bustan of Sa'di, the masnavis of Rumi and other Persian poets are memorized and studied by the students" (Al-Badaoni, 1898, p. 423).

This text records some of the key aspects of pre-colonial planning of acquisition. To start with, the curriculum clearly connects literary learning with the employment performance- the madrasa serves as a training center to work in the imperial and establishes what the Language Policy and Planning (LPP) theory refers to as the essential connection between acquisition planning and status planning. The educational structure generates the linguistic skill needed by the administrative structure, and the administrative structure offers the job motivation needed to encourage educational engagement, forming self-reinforcing feedback cycles, which recreate Persian literacy through generations.

Second, the choice of certain texts, the Gulistan (The Rose Garden) and Bustan (The Orchard) of Sa'di, and the Masnavi of Rumi, shows that Persian education was not only that of language, but it was also that of literature and morality. The works of Sa'idi, written in Shiraz of the thirteenth century, had become canonical books of the Persianate world, which were appreciated not only because of the linguistic beauty but also because of the moral and philosophical principles of their content. These texts inculcated a sense of taste and ethical behavior as pointed out by Zakir Hussein Gul in research project on Persianate Adab which was the core of Persianate culture. Not only vocabulary and grammar but an entire worldview- ideas of justice, love, friendship, and good manners and behavior would be absorbed by students who would memorize these works and would later apply these ideas in their careers as administrators and courtiers.

The methodological focus on memorization (hifz) is in itself important. A large part of these texts was to be memorized so that students could recite and apply poetic quotes in the right social and administrative situations. This practice formed a common repertoire of culture that served as a link between the Persian-schooled elite by region and generations. An official of the Mughal court at Bengal could recite the same verses as that of his colleague at Lahore or at Kabul, which made communication easier and strong identity was established.

Third, the mentioning of other Persian poets by Al-Badaoni suggests a curriculum that was not limited to the core canon, but extended to a very broad selection of literary texts. Students would get to read the poetry of Hafiz, whose divan was (and still is) a source of divination and spiritual contemplation; the epic romances of Nizami, such as Laila-Majnun and Khusraw-Shirin; and the historical and courtly poetry of Amir Khusraw, whose texts opened the Persian world to the Indian. Such a literary education provided students with the cultural capital needed to pass through the high-culture courtly culture of the Mughal Empire, in which poetic quotation, literary allusion and the writing of extempore verses were such expected accomplishments of the civilized noble.

The study of indigenous education by Parimala V. Rao upholds the plurality and proliferation of this system: "At the start of the nineteenth century, India possessed an extensive and successful indigenous system of education made up of sacred and secular. Mostly, the literature and the sacred texts were taught in the Sanskrit schools to Brahmin boys and the Arabic language, the Koran, and the Islamic literature were taught in the Madrasas to the Muslim boys. Persian literature was taught in the Persian schools, and Indian vernaculars, like Kannada, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, etc. were taught in the vernacular schools, together with arithmetic, and without any distinction of caste or religion. This multi-ethnic landscape, whereby various institutions catered to various linguistic and religious groups has a strong contrast to the monolingualism hierarchy, which would be instituted by the colonial policy.

Through the theoretical analysis of primary sources of the pre-colonial and colonial times we have shown that the changing of Persianate pluralism into English hegemony was not simply a matter to do with administrative convenience but a complex undertaking of epistemic reorganization with significant and long-term consequences.

The defining moment of 1835-1857 paved the way to institutional directions and ideological constructions that have been extraordinarily stable. The anglicized elite that Macaulay imagined is still a fact of the modern day Pakistan; the linking of English with power and prestige still exists; the inequalities that were brought up by the colonial language policy are still a part of educational access and social mobility. This continuity proves the fact that colonial shift was not only a historical event but also the creation of structures which still limit the possibilities of postcolonial.

## 6. Conclusion

Colonial change of language policies in the Indian subcontinent is one of the most elaborate and effective attempts at epistemic imperialism in world history. The dissertation has shown that the change between pre-colonial functional multilingualism to the English hegemony imposed by the British was not just a form of administrative evolution, but a benign modernization, but a political, cultural, and ideological project, which aimed at transforming power relationships, knowledge regimes and cultures identities in a manner that would withstand the process of political independence.

The pre-colonial language policy of the Muslim rulers, which existed both in the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526) and in the Mughal Empire (1526-1857), represented an advanced functional multilingualism and the manifestation of the main Islamic principles of administrative effectiveness, religious pluralism, and cultural tolerance. The administrative lingua franca was used not as a means of cultural domination but as the practical solution to the management of the linguistically heterogeneous empire in Persian. It was Arabic anchored and religious scholarship as well as legal discourse, but with links to the wider Islamic intellectual world. Sanskrit maintained Hinduism philosophies and also offered a cultural continuity to the non-Muslim subjects. Local cultures and administration were made possible through regional vernaculars. Additive multilingualism with languages complementing each other. This system had been recorded in many royal Farman's, the Ain-i-Akbari and court chronicles and it was additive multilingualism with the languages not competing but complementing one another.

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