

# A CORPUS BASED STUDY OF PRONOMINAL FEATURES IN PAKISTANI WRITTEN ENGLISH

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper studies, fifteen pronominal features of Pakistani English. Pakistani English being in the codification process has invited various researchers to identify its individual features as distinct to this variety. Frieberg Institute of Advance Studies launched a project where different linguists have contributed to identify the features of their respective variety of English. Pakistani English has also been distinguished on various grounds and certain features have been said to be existent/non-existent in it. As the opinion of the informant of Pakistani English has not been based on some scientific inquiry of the language features, this study aims to verify those opinion based results using corpus methodology. It not only answers whether or not these features exist in Pakistani Written English but also verifies (or otherwise) the authority of native speakers over their language. For the purpose, this study has chosen the corpus of Pakistani Written English that comprises over 2.1 million words. Using antconc 3.5 and studying these features in their linguistic contexts the researchers have concluded that though most of the features share results in both opinion and corpus based methodology but there are some features whose corpus based results are different from that of the first one. The researchers suggest to utilize bigger corpus in order to have considerable and generalizable results.

**Keywords:** Pakistani English, Features of Pakistani English, Pakistani Written English

## INTRODUCTION

Pakistani English is a non-native variety and has invited multi-faceted research. The researchers have attempted to identify distinctive features of Pakistani English in order to establish it as an individual variety of English. With the theoretical framework of world Englishes at its back, the present research will identify 15 pronominal features of Pakistani English. Using a corpus based methodology; this study verifies whether or not these features exist in Pakistani English.

English as a global language has united almost all the nations linguistically. With the binding thread of international features it also reflects local cultural influences. It is the only language that has travelled so comprehensively around the globe that it has not only influenced the local languages but has also been affected by various languages and cultures. In this process, it has given birth to various new varieties whose legitimacy has been a hot issue in the linguistic world during the last two decades. A plethora of research has emerged that has either justified or challenged the independent status of new emerging varieties around the globe. [1] was of the view that Pakistani English is developing using exonormative norms, but [2] opined that the trend is changing and "nation became interested in developing its own distinct variety of English". Before Jenkins, [3] had identified that Pakistani speakers of English are shunning an automatic acceptance of the norm providing British model. Thus, it is a step forward in the course of advancement made by English language that previously exonormative New Englishes are no more depending on British English norms and are breaking away old shackles in order to become endonormative varieties. As in the context of Pakistani English [4,5] and many other scholars have identified its independent features.

In Pakistan, English is not only official, but also the most prestigious language. It serves a wide range of functions both intra and inter-country communication. Pakistani English is a nativised variety. With the passage of time, it has started

showing its own particular bent of vocabulary and structure that is not in line with its previous norm provider i.e. British English. Various aspects of Pakistani English have been studied since last decade. These researches have contributed in the process of codification of Pakistani English. As it is not a product rather a process, many of its features are yet to be studied and distinguished from the native varieties of English. Many intuition based findings have tried to determine its place among World Englishes, but it is since the first decade of the present century that corpus based studies, being more authentic and mostly quantitative, have come into vogue in Pakistani English.

Though the attempts to codify this variety may not be comprehensive enough yet, the trend to identify its individual features has far more been accelerated since last three decades [6;7;8; 9; 10; 11].

This has proved very little research is found on this variety, a consistent research work is paving its way towards its being an individual, legitimate and well codified variety. It is successfully getting through the process of being recognized as an independent variety of English on the grounds of morphology, syntax, phonology, etc. by many scholars (Baumgardner [6]; Rehman, [7]; Baumgardner, Kennedy & Shamim, [3]; Kennedy, [9]; Tallat, [4,10,11]).

Up till now, the most comprehensive corpus based study on various features of Pakistani English has been conducted by Mahmood.A [5]. Using 2.1 million word corpus each from Pakistani, British and American English, he has identified various lexical and structural trends specific to Pakistani English.

The present research studies 15 more features of Pakistani English and explores whether or not certain pronominal features are the part of this variety. These are some of the features that have been identified by Frieberg institute of Advance studies' E-Wave (The Electronic World Atlas of varieties of English) project.

As the informant of this project is a native speaker of Pakistani English and his identification of the (non) existence of these features in Pakistani English is an opinion that is intuition based. The present research aims to verify those results using 2.1 million corpus of Pakistani Written English. This research not only verifies the existence of the said features of Pakistani English, but it also determines that how far the native speaker's opinion about their language variety is authentic enough.

For the purpose, linguistic tool antconc 3.5 has been used to extract instances of certain features and in order to draw conclusions these instances have been studied in their linguistic context.

#### METHODOLOGY

This is a corpus based study aiming to verify the results of previous intuition based opinion about the features of Pakistani English.. It studies the features of English identified by Frieberg institute of Advance studies' E-Wave (The

Electronic World Atlas of varieties of English) project in the context of Pakistani English

#### Corpus

In order to study the said fifteen features of the Pakistani English, this study utilizes 2.1 million word corpus of Pakistani Written English

#### Sampling

In order to take a workable sample, the researchers have done random sampling. 300 instances of each feature have been studied. These instances have been selected using random sampling techniques. The features whose instances have been found less than 300 have been studied all.

#### DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The table below shows the results of corpus based study of fifteen pronominal features selected to study from the list of E-Wave project along with E-wave results.

<i>Feature</i>	<b>E-wave</b> (source: <a href="http://ewave-atlas.org/languages/53">http://ewave-atlas.org/languages/53</a> ) AA= Attested Absence of feature NPNR= Neither pervasive nor rare ER= Extremely rare	<b>Results</b>	Results of Corpus based study
1. <i>She/her used for inanimate referents</i>	AA		Used for states and countries as in British variety of English
2. <i>He/ him used for inanimate referents</i>	AA		Non Existent
3. <i>Generalized third person singular pronoun (subject)</i>	AA		Non Existent
4. <i>Generalized third person singular pronoun (object)</i>	AA		Non Existent
5. <i>Me instead of I in coordinate subjects</i>	NPNR		
6. <i>Myself/meself instead of I</i>	ER		Exists, Not extremely rare
7. <i>Regularized reflexive paradigm ( his self, their selves etc)</i>	AA		Exists
8. <i>Object pronoun forms serving as base for first or second person reflexives (meself, yourself)</i>	AA		Non Existent
9. <i>Subject pronoun forms serving as a base for reflexives ( he self, I self, they self)</i>	AA		Non Existent
10. <i>No number distinction in reflexives (ourselves)</i>	ER		Exists
11. <i>Absolute use of reflexives as ( himself is gone to....)</i>	AA		Non Existent
12. <i>Emphatic reflexives with own (everybody took care of their own self)</i>	NPNR		Exists
13. <i>Subject pronoun forms as (modifying) possessive pronouns: first person singular (I book instead of my )book</i>	AA		Non existent
14. <i>Subject pronoun forms as (modifying) possessive pronouns: first person plural</i>	AA		Non existent
15. <i>Subject pronoun forms as (modifying) possessive pronouns: third person singular</i>	AA		Non Existent

The above features have been identified studying 300 instances of each feature in their linguistic context. The table above shows that the results of 9 out of five features are exactly same both in intuition based opinion and objective method of corpus based study. Viewing these nine features, this study has verified the previous findings exploring that Pakistani English does not use 'he, she, her, him' for inanimate objects. However, the pronoun 'her' has been found being used for the states and the names of provinces as in the following examples:

1. Sindh is also part of the region and therefore, **her** people equally deserve to freely interact with the people of adjoining states of India.
2. The United States of America, now the unipolar power of the world and **her** western allies have historically supported. . .
3. US and her allies. . .
4. American and her Western allies. . .

However, the use of 'she' or 'her' for inanimate like states, countries and provinces, etc is quite in line with the norms of British variety of English

Other features that have been studied include the use of some generalized pronoun (other than *he* and *she* that are gender specific) to denote third person singular in subject position and in object position. No instance of this type has been found using corpus methodology. Similarly, no instance of the use of *me* at the place of *I* has been found. Same is the case with the *absolute use of reflexives, subject pronoun forms as possessive forms in all first person singular, first person plural and third person singular* position.

However the use of *myself* at the expense of *I* has been found. The findings in E-wave suggest these features to be extremely rare, but the present study suggests that these instances cannot be said rare as among 169 uses of *myself* 10 have been used at the place of *I*. Examples of such uses are as follows:

1. Qazi Hussain Ahmed and myself opposed it.
2. Haqira, myself and your still born child. . .
3. Myself, my brother and son express deep sorrow
4. S and myself have not seen what the neighbouring room contained. etc

Non observance of *number distinction in reflexive* has also been reported to be extremely rare however this study found a number of instances of this type as :

1. We should consume ourself in different ways.
2. If we put ourself in the physician's shoes.
3. If we compare ourself with . . .

*Emphatic reflexives with own* has been said to be nor prevalent nor extremely rare and the present study has also found similar results. The instances of such occurrences have been:

1. .towards maximum concentration of powers in his ownself.
2. .You to be a defender of your own self.
3. . what deprivation has been done to his own self.

More than ten examples of this type have been found.

The feature whose results have altogether been different in both studies is :*regularized reflexive paradigm* for example the use of his self, their selves etc.

For example: while 80% will be gained by TMA by themselves. So this feature is not non-existent, as has been suggested in E-wave results.

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The above discussion show that though there does not seem very considerable difference between the findings mentioned in E-wave project and that of corpus based study. But still, the difference does exist. Some of the features whose attested absence has been announced in the mentioned project, though very rare, they are there in Pakistani English. As is the example of *regularized reflexive paradigm* that has been reported to be absolutely absent has been found in a small sample of this study. Viewing close similarities in the results of opinion based and corpus based findings, this study , on one hand, verifies the authority of the native speakers' knowledge to the great extent, but on the other it also opens up an expectation that bigger size of corpus and sample, may cause considerable differences in the results of the two type of methodologies.

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