



## A FUTURISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE LANGUAGE OF CPEC & KARAKORAM HIGHWAY

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### ABSTRACT

*China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is a regional connection framework introduced by the Chinese government in Pakistan, which aims to enhance geographical linkages with improved transportation helping to create more connectedness with frequent and free growth exchanges. This unified project needs a unified language bringing benefits to both parties and this unified language is the most ancient ever written language, which is the Chinese language, native to China. This is one of the most powerful countries, which has created a significant impact on the world economy by entering the field, so it is better to learn the language of one of the most powerful countries in the world. The past few decades for Pakistan in terms of economics have not well making this CPEC project would be beneficial for us as it can boost trade and business. CPEC Is viewed as an economic game changer in the world, especially in Pakistan, this project is also known to bring a huge transformation to the linguistics and culture of South Asia, especially in Pakistan. (Asif et al 2019). All of this was possible when the Karakoram Highway was constructed making it one of the central places in the CPEC project but to make this project a success Chinese language learning should be promoted.*

**Keywords:** CPEC- China-Pak Economic Corridor, KKH- Karakoram Highway, Chinese Language.

### Introduction

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor mostly known as CPEC, is a regional connection framework introduced by the Chinese government in Pakistan but its perks are not only limited to Pakistan



this aims to have a positive impact on the Asian region especially on Iran and Afghanistan. This enhances geographical linkages with improved transportation such as rail, air, or road, which would help people to be more connected whilst having frequent and free growth exchanges. This would help in exchanging ideas, innovations, knowledge, and expansion of businesses. The basic goal is to make a well-connected and unified region where everyone would benefit from, a developed and peaceful future with a resilient economy. Making it a journey of creating a better area altogether. This unified project needs to have a unified language, which would bring immense benefits to the people connected with this project that is the people of Pakistan which focus on daily communication, and strategic communication as it is a broad and complex discursive process that focuses on the evolving strategies of the stakeholders' interests in which innovative persuasion tactics play a crucial part in communication, utilizing intricate networks of reasoning in contexts where competition and collaboration is strong. According to research, communication is the deliberate use of communication to convince and/or influence a specific audience (Aggerholm & Thomsen, 2015; Hallahan et al., 2007) so, it is better to learn the language, native to China which is Chinese, as it is one of the worlds, is largest first spoken language and has the highest ratio of speakers as compared to other languages. Attracting its citizens to learn the language more and more with each passing day as they think it to be revolutionary as it is believed that people who know Chinese would have an edge in the competitive job market with China making its significant mark in the world economy.

On the other hand, the Karakoram Highway (KKH) also known as the Eighth Wonder or the Friendship Highway where it all began in 1970 is a significant connection between Pakistan and China through difficult terrain. It stretches 1300 Km from Islamabad to Kashgar also the highest metal road globally. It took two decades of construction and workers from both countries worked endlessly some losing their lives in the process and completed in the year 1978. It marked a historically monumental year when the actual relations between Pakistan and China started and this highway transformed the areas initially inaccessible it not only connected the two countries but cities within Pakistan like Gilgit became easily accessible via this route for the rest of the cities of Pakistan. Throughout the years, the KKH has facilitated different trade endeavors, and integrated economy within the Central Asian countries. There were different challenges in the making and reconstruction of the road like the creation of Attabad Lake in 2010, which disrupted trade temporarily, but the efforts were never lost and the road was repaired and expanded which emphasized its pivotal role in reinforcing the Sino–Pak ties.

Historically we see that English in Pakistan has been a major concern among successive leaders. The official language of a country is decided by the powerful elites which influence education, business, and government communication. This is now transitioning into making Chinese a global language and this would make Pak-China relations better as Pakistanis would get easier access to the opportunities created by the project and understanding our neighbor's language would break the barriers making the lower middle class of the country to be able to work and communicate with the Pakistani natives.



Language education is a crucial factor in overall development. Without a significant accumulation of human capital, a country cannot achieve lasting economic growth. The goal is to expand individuals' perspectives and improve their quality of life. Language education has various social benefits, such as enhancing productivity, and creativity, and fostering entrepreneurship and technical advancements. In today's globalized world, being bilingual is perceived as essential for better communication. There are many reasons for this shift in language learning or change in trend but the Chinese learning trend is distinct as it relates to the successful implementation of the CPEC and economic abundance of the region. It is predicted that CPEC will increase trade amongst both countries (Pakistan and China) but this is not only restricted to connectivity but with promotion of communication, intermingling of cultures, and increasing of wealth.

### **Using Language as an Empowering Tool**

Language can carry additional functional weight when it can be used as a resource for negotiating identities through its soft power, and when it is imposed as a new corporate language, it becomes an empowering instrument. Being able to communicate well in a language confers power on one in the context in which it is employed where being able to speak a certain language is described as a highly valued resource (Tenzer & Pudelko, 2017, p. 46). Therefore, it is acknowledged that language is a significant source of influence in multinational organizations. According to the different surveys, speaking Chinese is regarded as a superior quality to take advantage of the prospects for a bright future in CPEC projects. According to Dr. Zhang Wei, Director of the Confucius Institute Islamabad, in the interview part, fluency in the Chinese language is preferred for its users not only in employability but also in business and academics because these projects are mostly managed by Chinese-owned organizations. Because of its employability potential, this language has the potential to become even more powerful in the setting of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Power dynamics influence how concepts are connected to power practices. As a result, language becomes both an essential power tool and an idea-shaping force (Carstensen & Schmidt, 2016, p. 319). In a similar vein, the introduction of Chinese as a new corporate language within the framework of CPEC may turn into a new language of empowerment by serving as a new identification identifier in the linguistic market of the future and by opening up new business and professional arenas. Expertise in this Language has the potential to be a powerful instrument by providing significant linguistic capital. The term "CPEC" refers to the introduction of corporate culture that is, the framework for corporate communication in Pakistan. As a result, the Chinese can end up serving as a crucial link between different corporate organizations. Additionally, this language is favored by their Chinese counterparts (such as technicians, engineers, and skilled individuals) since, according to Dr. Zhang Wei, around 25% of Chinese workers are proficient in English. Furthermore, this language is positioned as a foundational soft power. Chinese language training institutes' websites feature remarks and advertisements that offer more support for portraying Chinese as a developing business language so, the development of CPEC requires



awareness of the Chinese language which not only supports communication but fosters growth and development.

## Literature Review

As humans are social animals, they cannot live in isolation. Nowadays humans have expanded their horizons beyond borders. They engage globally, making the world like a global village where boundaries do not matter, this globalization affects all walks of life and is interconnected via money, business, government, culture, and technology. There is a single weapon that aids in the connection of humankind which is the language, nowadays we see that languages transcend all borders people sitting in another country can easily learn another language just by a single touch. Learning another language of an influential country like China would give any developing country, especially Pakistan financial stability. The past few decades for Pakistan in terms of economics have not well making this CPEC project would be beneficial for us as it can boost trade and business. This leads us to a question that either our workers or youth ready for the future success of this project? As we know, CPEC would create numerous opportunities for people in China, Pakistan, and Iran. It would also contribute to the bloom in the farming sector along with the tourism industry as well and to make it successful we in Pakistan need skilled personnel. This skill can learned via learning the Chinese language so that we can benefit from China's expertizes in terms of energy, technology, and education along with new job creation.

According to Asif et al (2019), CPEC Is viewed as an economic game changer in the world, especially in Pakistan, this project is also known to bring a huge transformation to the linguistics and culture of South Asia, especially in Pakistan. Despite having many avenues of opportunities it has many challenges.

Further and most important, the workforce of this CPEC project is Pakistani engineers. According to this study, language plays a crucial part in creating a substantial change in people's skill management faculties while working on big projects with a multilingual workforce. This would also create a big effect on Pakistani labor markets in terms of their performance at the job and their career development (Ali Anwer & Aneela Gill, *Webology* (ISSN: 1735-188X) Volume 19, Number 3, 2022 3812 <http://www.webology.org> 2020). This language in itself is tough to learn, hence the instructor of the Chinese language should receive directives from their authorities to use English as a medium of teaching initially along with studying their native language simultaneously. This linguistic difference may lead to distortions as the Chinese prefer to use their native language while doing transactions. Thus having expertise in Standard Mandarin would improve relations and understanding between China and Pakistan (Masum, R., Mohammad, N., & Perveen, K. (2021). Moreover, if both countries work on eliminating this barrier of linguistics, which they are, doing so would create a good impact on economic growth along with the provision of jobs and an array of business opportunities for the natives. To enhance the connectedness of



both the countries language barrier must be removed and they should learn the languages of both countries (Menhas, R., Mahmood, S., Tanchangya, P., Safdar, M. N., & Hussain, S. (2019).

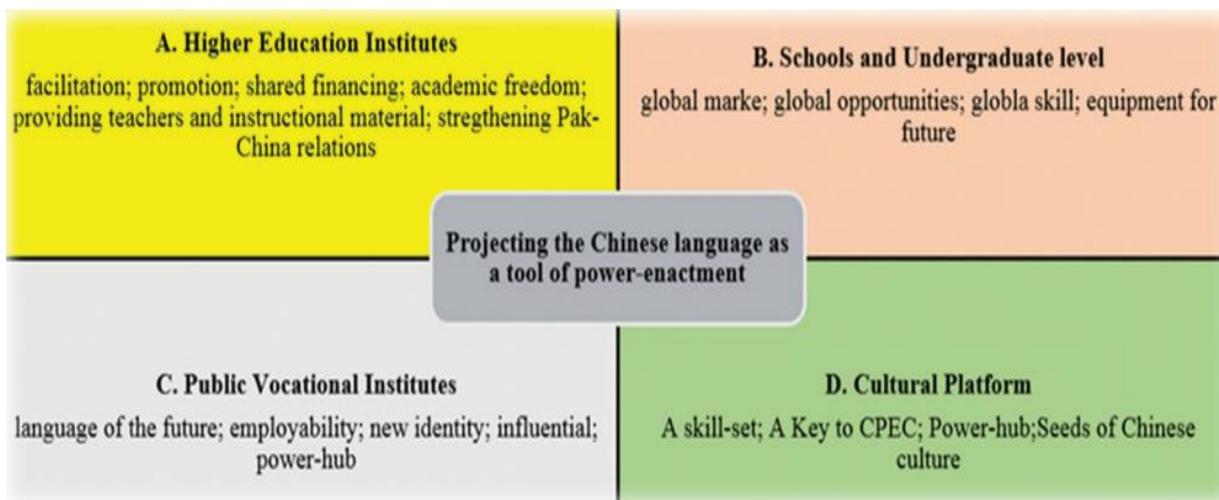
## Methodology

The study aims to see what the Chinese language offers to Pakistani society in the case of CPEC along with the implications and outcomes of learning the Chinese language to acquire the desired outcomes. To achieve this objective detailed descriptive analysis based on available literature is performed because, to me, Knowledge is a social creation rather than actuality or fact whereas Learning is the process of creating information through activity as opposed to passivity.

## Discussion And Analysis

Language plays a significant role in better understanding and connectedness of two countries. Karakoram Highway being the first step towards the long friendship of Pakistan and China is a historical landmark one of its kind also known as the eighth wonder of the world. A friendship means the diffusion of cultures, beliefs, and the exchange of language to understand each other to an extent, that leaves no boundaries. This advent of the Highway started something new and advanced in Pakistan with the adoption of educational exchange programs, and the establishment of cultural and language centers that promote learning Chinese. Further, on National University of Modern Languages in Islamabad offers Chinese language classes and 1000 Chinese instructors sent to Pakistan by the Chinese government to teach Chinese. To strengthen the ties the natives of Pakistan can get new and enhanced opportunities while making CPEC a success not only for present generations but also for future generations. CPEC has had a significant effect on both countries as they have invested a lot in this. Hence indirectly impacts education especially language education, which contributes to the quality of education in Pakistan through a practical understanding of Urdu and Chinese besides English executive training at business schools of both countries has benefitted. As there are, many collaborative efforts are being made in terms of many research articles, seminars, and conferences to enhance knowledge regarding the economies, laws, immigration, and joint ventures of both Pakistan and China. Universities in both countries offer scholarship programs to each other, especially for Pakistani students in China. To gain an edge in China in their studies Pakistani students tend to learn Chinese so they can converse easily and understand the Chinese culture and could give their valuable contribution to the CPEC. In 2020 Pakistan ranked third globally to have 28, 023 students studying in China. 6.156 Students enrolled in Ph.D. programs indicating a substantial growth in the Pakistani higher education system. Beijing has allocated resources to advance the standard of education whereas in Pakistan educational institutions in Pakistan promote Chinese culture, language, economy, history, and politics<sup>4</sup>. This exchange of language, culture, economy, and many other perks was possible only via the making of the Karakoram Highway in the 1970s which took 2 decades to be made, it's a relation of blood, sweat, and rough terrain that established long friendship and the starting of the CPEC project. Yusuf Karim office assistant at Karakoram Highway (KKH) phase –II (Havelian-Thakot) winner

of the award of Outstanding Pakistan Staff of CPEC 2021 by the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan is one of the few Chinese learning pioneers associated with the language twenty years. In an interview with the Gawadar Pro, he talked about his diploma in Mandarin from NUML in 2007 and his work as a translator since 2008. In 2010, he joined the KKH phase-1 project and in 2016 transferred to the KKH phase-II project. He also talked about the upgradation of KKH, which further promoted tourism in the Gilgit-Balistan region generating many economic activities for the locals. The road improved connectivity between the north and south and all the linkages to China to get the benefits of the new CPEC project. He further said that it improved his Chinese language with a lot of personal growth and learned many official works. Although this language is very difficult but has many perks he can swiftly communicate with the organization both inside and out. He also encouraged professional degree holders to learn Chinese to have an effective role while doing the job for CPEC.



Universities in the Gilgit region especially The Karakoram International University (KIU) have planned to start Chinese classes to bridge a gap between the neighboring countries as these courses will be beneficial for the people doing business in China along with students. This empowerment cannot be made possible if this route from Pakistan to China has not been made.

Before CPEC interest of the local students in learning the Chinese language or made fun of by their culture and was never taken seriously. Then when CPEC was announced officially the locals of the Gilgit-Baltistan region started to get admission in the language courses of NUML University to learn Chinese. Further, the China Study Center in the Karakoram International University in Gilgit with HEC worked to provide scholarships to the local students helping them with their potential of studying in China in the future. For the future aspiring students of Pakistan especially the locals of the Gilgit-Baltistan region, the Chinese embassy in Pakistan offers scholarships, and universities like Karakoram International University and NUML offer Chinese language courses.



There are many institutions and Confucius institutes are developed to promote Chinese learning to get the future benefits of the CPEC.

## **Conclusion**

One of the most powerful tools in this world is the power of communication, which can break down any hurdles caused, and contribute to a nation's progression. To progress and get another country to help we need to take a step ahead to gain their trust so that they know if they are investing in a country it should be worthwhile. To break the ice and language barriers between countries it is the responsibility of the leader of a country to promote foreign language education according to the future roles of powerful nations in global issues.

In Pakistan, people are interested in learning the Chinese language due to the introduction of CPEC and the enrollment numbers are increasing across the country. Many Confucius institutes and private institutes have been established with the sole purpose of learning the Chinese language. Post CPEC there were 2,000 more students enrolled, as previously there were only 200. This initiative of the CPEC bridged the gap between the two neighboring countries and provided jobs and opportunities in the joint project. Many students are sent to China via scholarships to study Chinese and improve their qualifications to gain benefits from the CPEC projects.

Pakistan needs to include Chinese in the curriculum of all educational institutions to get a skilled and efficient workforce in Pakistan, which would give their valuable contributions to the CPEC projects. The youth of Pakistan are nowadays much more attracted to the idea of learning Chinese due to their economic importance, array of jobs, different cultural interests, and the possibility of travel. This all would not have been possible if the Karakoram Highway had not been made, and the CPEC would not have existed if this eighth wonder of the world with joint efforts of China and Pakistan had been fruitful. Gilgit-Baltistan would still be in the Stone Ages where people be disconnected from the world and be in their bubble. The benefits that the Chinese language offers would have been to Pakistan if the Highway on one of the most difficult terrains had made where many lives were lost. Those lives were not lost in vain but for the betterment and future of the economic ties between the two countries.

## **Policy Recommendations**

This study needs to be refined to see the full potential of Chinese learning in Pakistan in the CPEC projects along with the importance of the Karakoram Highway.

- Further primary study has to take in place to see how the Karakoram Highway and CPEC will transform the lives of the people of not only Gilgit Baltistan and Pakistan.



- Like development of China Study centers in Pakistan Urdu language centers are also promoted not only in China but in the areas around the routes of CPEC in Pakistan to enhance people to people connectivity by facilitating collaborations.
- It is observed that, learned and literate people are mostly involved in learning languages to have easy communications but after completion of CPEC a lot of people that are not literature are in contact through CPEC which require some innovative mode of learning language which may be some technological solution via cell phones so, efforts must be taken both sides to handle the upcoming problem.
- Chinese must be offered as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language in all HEI's (by the mandate of HEC) to have more understanding in our youth which will definitely open doors of employability in near future.



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