Divergent Patterns of Variant Tag Questions in Pakistani English: A Corpus-based Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

The research explores forms and function of variant tag questions (VTQs) in the native and non-native Englishes. For the said purpose, patterns of VTQs in Pakistani English are compared with two native (British and New Zealand) and two non-native (Indian and Singaporean) varieties. The components of the *International Corpus of English*, henceforth ICE (Greenbaum & Nelson, 1996) of the said varieties, have been used. Each ICE component consists of one- million-word corpus of the regional variety, with a common design, in order to ensure maximum comparability between the components (Nelson 1996). The ICE samples the English of adults (age 18 or over) who have been educated through medium of English to at least the end of secondary schooling. Convenient sampling technique is used to collect data. All the possible tags were extracted using AntConc 3.5.9 and the collocation were then studied. The results revealed that VTQs are under-used in non-native Englishes while least used in Pakistani English. As for the forms of VTQs, Pakistani speakers follow the native speakers and observe the grammatical rules. The functions of VTQs are analysed in Pakistani English, following Axelsson's (2011) model, and compared with that of Indian English as both varieties share almost similar linguistic and sociocultural backgrounds. The results show that declarative VTQs are preferred to seek and exchange information in both the varieties. The research suggests that further linguistic entities may be explored to observe the similarities/differences in native and non-native varieties, including Indian and Pakistani Englishes, to establish their identities.

Keywords: Inter-variety comparisons, Pakistani English, variant tag questions, World Englishes.

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INTRODUCTION

Language varies from region to region and place to place in terms of accent, lexis and grammar

(Benhima et al., 2021; Hughes et al., 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2021; Kochi, 2006; McArthur, 2002; Nelson et al., 2020). The same is true for the English language. The use of English in various settings has caused some variations in the language (Baratta, 2019), which are studied under the umbrella of World Englishes (henceforth WE). Li, E. S. H., & Mahboob, A., (2013) point to two types of research on *WE*. On the one hand, the inter-variety variations are examined in the Englishes.

This cluster of work deals with 'divergence'. On the other hand, another frame of research deals with 'convergence' and addresses how these differences are entertained in order to communicate. The present study falls in the first thread and tries to find out inter-variety differences in terms of variant tag questions (Henceforth VTQs).

A tag question (TQ) is a short question that is attached to a statement, called an anchor. There are two types of TQs: Invariant TQs (henceforth InTQs) and Variant TQs (henceforth VTQs). The one-word tags that do not correspond to the anchor in terms of the verb and the noun (e.g., *he is coming, right?*) are called InTQs. VTQ, on the other hand, consists of a verb and a pronoun that corresponds to the verb and pronoun in the anchor, e.g., *he is coming, is he?* The present research examined the inter-varietal differences in terms of VTQs in native and non-native varieties. The VTQs are investigated in terms of their form in two native (British and New Zealand) and two non-native (Singaporean and Indian) Englishes, focusing on Pakistani English to determine the place of Pakistani English in the continuum of non-native Englishes. Further, a comparison is carried out for the functional analysis of Pakistani English and Indian English.

Literature Review

English is an official language in Pakistan (Hickey, 2005; Mahboob, 2003, 2009; Rasool & Winke, 2019; Umrani & Bughio, 2017). Researchers argued that colleges and universities could not do well in Pakistan without English (Abbas, 1993; Mahboob, 2002; Rahman, 2001, 2020; Shamim, 2008). The consistent use of English in Pakistan and its contact with other indigenous languages has resulted in its growth as a separate variety. Hassan (2004) observed:[Pakistani English] deserved to be recognized as a full-fledged member of a large group of languages, related to a greater or lesser degree with one another, lumped together under the general name "English"; thus, Pakistani English would be related more closely to Northern India or Bangladesh English and less closely to Australian English (p. 4).

Scholars have been trying to highlight the differences among Pakistani English and other varieties to establish that Pakistani English exists as a distinct variety (Asghar et al., 2018; Khan & Humaira, 2012), having its peculiar features and forms, which is primarily influenced by the indigenous languages (Khan & Humaira, 2012). Even though scholars have been trying to identify the features of Pakistani English, many areas remain unexplored. VTQs is one of the unexplored areas so far.

A variant tag question (VTQ) combines an anchor and a tag, where the anchor may be declarative, imperative, exclamative or interrogative. The examples below illustrate the four types of anchors:

It is interesting, isn't it?	(declarative)
Open the door, will you?	(imperative)
Are you coming, are you?	(interrogative)
What a nice surprise, isn't it?	(exclamative)

(Axelsson, 2011: p. 31)

In the above examples, the tag subjects and tag operators correspond with that of the anchor. Table 1 shows the types of canonical tags as understood by McGregor (1997).

With the availability of comparable corpora, various linguistic features have been explored to highlight the inter-variety differences, TQs being one of them. Cheng and Warren (2000) have examined the use of TQs by British (native) and Hong Kong Chinese (non-native) speakers of English and found that Hong Kong Chinese speakers are less inclined to use TQs, and wherever they use, they use InTQs to elicit information from the hearer. Similarly, Mollin (2006) has explored the use of TQs in Euro-English and British English and tries to establish that Euro-English is different from British English. The study established that the speakers of Euro-English do not use *isn't it* as an invariant tag, opposing to the general idea about Euro-English. In addition, Tottie and Hoffmann (2006) also noted the differences between American English and British English. They also used LSAC and spoken demographic part of the BNC. They affirmed that TQs are nine times more frequent in British English than in American English. Moreover, they found that facilitative tags are more frequent in American English while confirmatory and attitudinal tags are common in British English. Interestingly, they found that *aggressive* tags were specific to British English, although with less than one percent of the whole.

Hussain & Mahmood (2014) explored invariant tag questions in Pakistani English and compared the results with that of two native (Britain & New Zealand) and two non-natives (India & Singapore) varieties. They found that speakers of each variety have their own tendency to use invariant tags. Native speakers tend to use yeah most frequently as invariant

Table 1: Classification of variable tag questions in English (McGregor, 1997, p. 245)

Mood of stem	Polarity	Example
Declarative	Reverse + -	You're going, aren't you?
	Reverse - +	You aren't going, are you?
	Constant + +	You're going, are you?
	Constant - -	You aren't going, aren't you?
Interrogative	Constant + +	Are you going, are you?
Imperative	Reverse + -	Come here, won't you?
	Reverse - +	Don't come here, won't you?
	Constant + +	Come here, will you?
	Constant - -	Don't come here, won't you?
Exclamative	Reverse + -	What a bank balance, isn't it?

tag while Pakistani and Singaporean speakers preferred right. On the other hand, Indian English speakers use na (Hindi synonym of no) most of the time. The results of their study did not support the preconceived notion that Pakistani speakers of English use is it/isn't it invariantly like other non-native speakers of English. They argued that such corpus-based comparative studies might help to overcome the cultural gap between the speakers of different varieties of English.Axelsson (2011) conducted comprehensive research on the intra-variety use of TQs in the written corpus. She observed the difference between the patterns of TQs in the spoken demographic part of BNC and the fiction sub-corpus of the BNC. Regarding the functional analysis, it was observed that declarative TQs are used to elicit the response from the addressee, but in speech, they appear to be the rhetorical TQs. She developed a model of defining pragmatic functions of TQs based on the previous related studies (Algeo, 1990; Stubbe & Holmes, 1995; Tottie & Hoffmann, 2006), illustrated in Figure 1. This model is used in the present study to analyse the semantic functions of VTQs in Pakistani and Indian English.

Figure 1: Axelsson's model for describing functions of Variant Tag Questions

The figure below portrays Axelsson's model depicting the functions of tag questions. The same has been applied to analyze the functional features of VTQs in Pakistani English compared to Indian English.
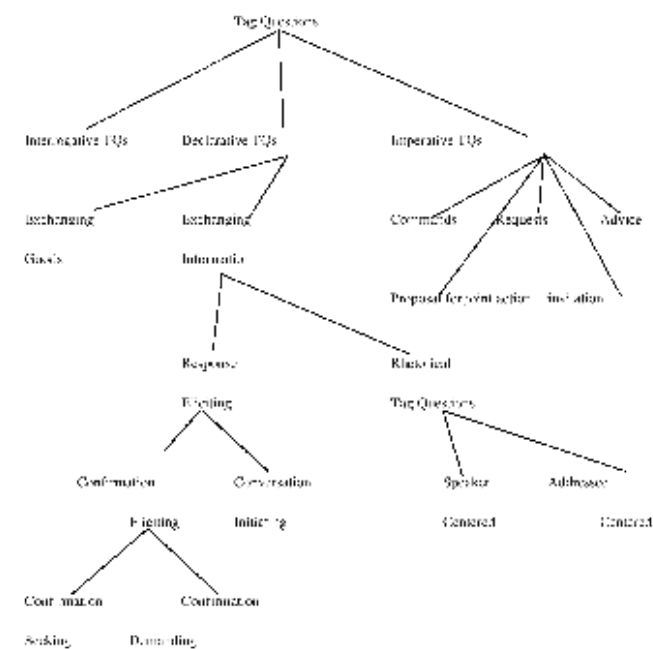

Figure1: Pragmatic Functions of Tag Questions (Adapted from Axelsson, 2011, p. 87)

International Corpus of English

To find out the similarities and differences in various English varieties, comparable corpora, like the *International Corpus of English* (ICE), are required. ICE is an international project started in 1990. It is a set of comparable corpora from various varieties. The essential purpose of collecting such corpora is to facilitate comparative studies under the world Englishes paradigm. Each ICE component consists of five hundred 2000-word texts sampled from twelve registers of spoken (60%, i.e. 300 texts) and written (40%, i.e. 200 texts) genres. Table 2 offers a glimpse of the design of ICE corpora along with their register codes.

In the ICE corpora, each file contains approximately 2000 words. There are 500 texts in total, making up the 1,000,000-word corpus. However, as ICE-PK lacks some sub-registers and only has 445 texts/ the ICE-PK corpus has about 850,000 words only.

METHODOLOGY

This research is based on the quantitative as well as qualitative research method and data analysis technique. As for quantitative analysis, corpus methodology (McEnery, Xiao & Tono, 2006, pp. 7-8) has been used to analyse the variant tag questions. The qualitative approach has been opted for the analysis of semantic functions of tag questions. However, the researchers have followed Axelsson (2011) to minimise the element of subjectivity.

The International Corpus of English (ICE) components of two native (British and New Zealand) and two non-native (Indian and Singaporean) varieties are purchased from the compilers. The tags were extracted from the spoken and written data by searching for every probable tag, i.e. "combinations of *DO, BE* and *HAVE*, possibly with *not* or *n't* plus personal pronoun or existential *there*" (Mollin, 200, p. 137). Following Mollin's method, the researcher searched for *ain't, am, are, can, could, did, do, does, dunnit, had, has, have, may, might, must, ought, shall, should, was, were, will, would* in pairs with all

Table 2
Design of ICE Corpora

Code	Source: Xiao, 2009, p. 423 Register	Number of samples
S1A	Spoken-dialogue-private	100
S1B	Spoken-dialogue-public	80
S2A	Spoken-monologue-unscripted	70
S2B	Spoken-monologue-scripted	50
W1A	Written-non-printed-student writing	20
W1B	Written-non-printed-letters	30
W2A	Written-printed-academic	40
W2B	Written-printed-popular	40
W2C	Written-printed-reportage	20
W2D	Written-printed-instructional	20
W2E	Written-printed-persuasive	10
W2F	Written-printed-creative	20

Table 3: The ICE-Pakistan and its Registers

Mode	Register	Availability/ replacement in ICE-PK	ICE-design	ICE-PK
Spoken	S1A	Available	100	45*
	S1B	Available	80	80
	S2A	Available	70	70
	S2B	Available	50	50
Written	W1A	Available	20	20
	W1B	Available	30	30
	W2A	Available	40	40
	W2B	Available	40	40
	W2C	Available	20	20
	W2D	Available	20	20
	W2E	Available	10	10
	W2F	Available	20	20
Total			500	445

Note.*face to face conversation, to be included in spoken-dialogue-private (S1A), is very rare in the Pakistani context. The compilers of ICE-PK could only get 45 texts in lieu of the 100 to be included in the corpus. It is noteworthy that the same number of texts, i.e. 45, were extracted from other selected varieties to maintain the balance for comparison in the present study.

possible personal pronoun, i.e. *he, I, it, she, they, ya, yer, you, we* as probable tag subject. However, the initial results suggested that existential *there* is not frequent and was thus excluded from the present research that consists of approximately 200 tag operators.

The data was extracted with the help of the AntConc 3.5.9 corpus analysing toolkit (Anthony, 2020). The extracted VTQs were analysed according to their polarity, tag subject, and tag operator. As for the semantic functional analysis, only the VTQs occurring in Pakistani English and Indian English were selected. An in-depth study was carried out in the context of VTQs that helped the researcher to examine VTQs, according to Axelsson's (2011) model.

Results and Discussion

VTQs are found to be complex as far as their structure is concerned, in comparison with invariant tag questions (cf. examples 1, 2, 3 & 4). The results show that VTQs were most frequent in New Zealand English while they were least used in Pakistani Spoken English. As shown in Graph 1, there is an apparent decline in the use of VTQs from native to non-native varieties.

The relative frequencies of VTQs in the spoken and written components of the five selected varieties were also examined in the present study. The results revealed that VTQs are more frequently used in speech than in writing. As shown in Figure 2, a gradual rise is visible in the percentage of VTQs used in

Graph 1: Frequencies of VTQs in five selected varieties

45.8	77.1	84.8	94.6	95.4
Pakistan	India	Singapore	Britain	New Zealand
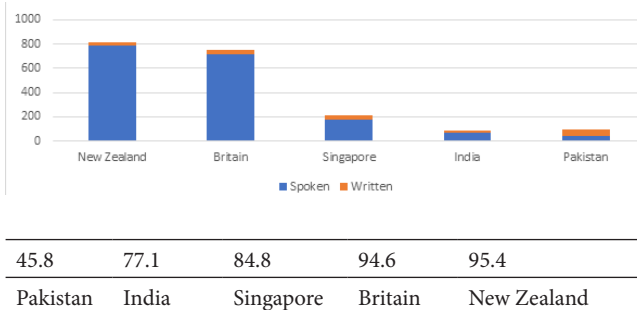
Figure 2: Percentage of VTQs in Spoken component of selected varieties
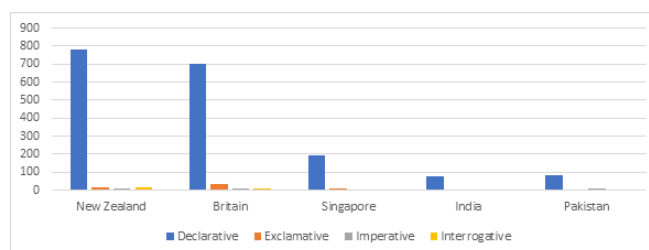
Graph 2: Types of VTQs according to the tone of anchor

speech from Pakistani English to New Zealand English. Figure 2 shows the percentage of VTQs on a scale showing the gradual increase from non-native to native varieties.

The most surprising finding is that only in Pakistani English, the percentage of VTQs occurring in writing (54.2%) surpassed that in speech. In non-native settings, every grammatical feature, which is being taught in schools, first gets an appearance in writing and then gradually gets its place in the speech (Rahman, 2010). So, it can be assumed that tag questions, as they are taught, appear more frequently in writing and may gradually appear in speech after some time.

Formal Features of VTQs in five varieties

In terms of formal features, first, the types of anchors were examined to determine whether the tags were attached with declarative (DecTQs), exclamative (ExTQs), imperative (ImpTQs) or interrogative (IntTQs) anchors. Graph 2 shows the types of VTQs with reference to the tone of anchors in each chosen variety.

The numerical results revealed that Declarative VTQs are most frequent in all five varieties.

Polarity in VTQs

VTQs are the tags attached with a complete statement in reverse polarity (Axelsson, 2011). Parkes (1989) pointed out that a negative tag is attached with a positive statement and vice versa (see Table 1 for an explanation of the same and reverse polarity in tags). However, in recent times with the ease of

Graph 3: Overall polarity in VTQs

**Graph 5: Frequencies of tag operators in VTQs**
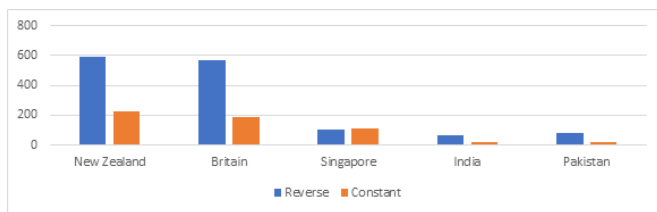
access of corpora, it has been pointed out that VTQs have been found to have both reverse and same polarity (Axelsson, 2011). This is supported by the polarity results in all five varieties, as shown in Graph 3.

Graph 3 documented the results of overall polarity in VTQs. Interestingly, Singaporean English has more tendency towards the constant polarity VTQs than reverse polarity VTQs. However, it is noteworthy that reverse polarity VTQs are most frequent in Pakistani English, while Indian English is at second place in the list of reverse polarity VTQs. As put by Rahman (2010), non-native English users are more prone to follow the grammatical rules as described in the books. So, it can be seen in the results presented in Graph 3.

Negation in VTQs

While examining the forms of VTQs, it was elaborated in the grammar books (Rahman, 2010) that VTQs can be used with either enclitic (i.e. *isn't it*) or non-enclitic (i.e. *is it not*) negation. However, the data observation showed that non-enclitic negation is rare in New Zealand English, which is the least significant. Graph 4 shows the total number of negative tags and the percentages of enclitic and non-enclitic negation in every variety.

**Graph 4: Enclitic and non-Enclitic Negation in VTQs**
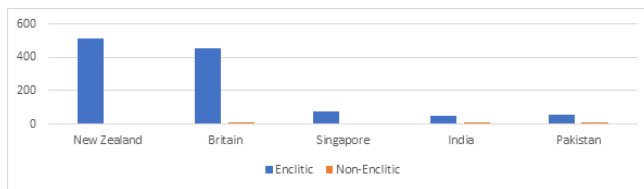
Again, it is observed that in native varieties (New Zealand and British Englishes), the users are more prone to use enclitic negation than non-enclitic negation. While in Indian and Pakistani Englishes, the users are also using non-enclitic negation in VTQs (Graph 4).

Additional Formal Features

Tag operators and tag subjects are observed under additional formal features. It is observed that TQs, when attached, change a proposition into a question, a request into a polite request, and lessens the intensity of the imperatives (Axelsson, 2011). This analysis helped the researcher to observe which verbs are preferred by the speakers of each selected variety for the TQs to be attached. Graph 5 shows the results of tag operators.
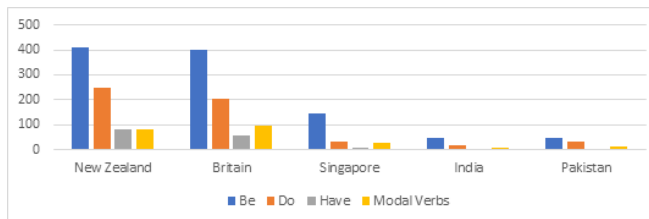
The *be* tag operator is found to be the most prevalent in all varieties. However, Pakistani English seemed the closest to New Zealand English and British English in the use of *be* operator as much as to approximately 47% and 50% and 53% respectively. Singaporean English exceeded all varieties in the use of *be* operator because of their inclination to use *is it* and *isn't it* frequently.

Table 4 shows the use of all the tag operators in detail. It shows that New Zealand English is more diverse in the use of tag operators, i.e. a higher tendency to use VTQs with all types of tag operators. On the other hand, Indian English has the least variety in terms of the choice of tag operators. Singaporean English came between Pakistani English and Indian English.

As the table show, only the tags with *might* and *must* are not found in New Zealand English, and the speakers have shown the diversity in the usage of tag operators. Further, the tag subjects have been observed. Graph 6 shows the number of tag subjects in all five varieties. Again, Graph 6 points to the fact that the influence of native speakers has been quite visible in Pakistani English.

Graph 6: Occurrence of tag subjects in five varieties
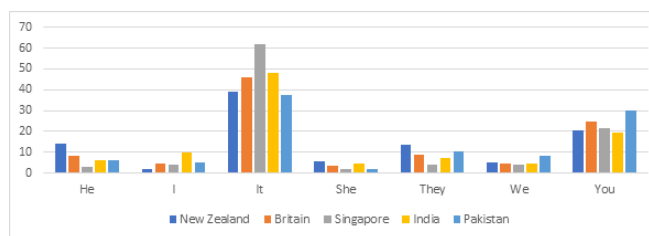
Graph 6 indicates that *it* is the most common tag subject in all the five varieties while *you* comes in second place. It has already been established that *is it/isn't it* are used invariantly in Singaporean and Indian Englishes; thus resultantly, *it* is found as tag operator as much as 60%. On the other hand, users of Pakistani English have the least tendency to use these tags invariantly. The occurrence of *it* subject in Pakistani English gets closer to New Zealand English. Another most used tag subject is *you* because the imperatives and interrogatives have been converted into polite requests with the attachment of the tag having a subject *you,* e.g.,

1. You owe me a reply, don't you?
    I am a little worried about your health.
    <ICE-IND: W1B>

Table 4: Occurrence of individual tag operators in VTQs

Tag Operator		New Zealand		Britain		Singapore		India		Pakistan	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Be	Ain't	2	0.2	-	-	2	0.9	-	-	1	1.04
	Am	1	0.12	5	0.7	2	0.9	-	-	1	1.04
	Are	72	8.8	74	9.7	13	6.1	5	6.02	12	12.5
	Is	234	28.5	264	35	110	52.1	44	53.01	23	25
	Was	80	9.7	45	6	9	4.2	-	-	4	4.1
	Were	20	2.4	14	1.9	9	4.2	-	-	4	4.1
Do	Do	59	7.2	77	10.2	9	4.2	12	14.5	15	15.6
	Does	55	6.7	51	6.7	14	6.6	4	4.8	8	8.3
	Did	135	16.4	75	9.9	11	5.2	3	3.6	10	10.4
Have	Has	34	4.1	20	2.7	2	0.9	-	-	2	2.08
	Have	46	5.6	29	3.8	5	2.3	4	4.8	3	3.1
	Had	3	0.3	6	0.8	-	-	1	1.2	-	-
Modal Verbs	Can	15	1.8	21	2.8	5	2.3	4	4.8	2	2.08
	Could	4	0.4	11	1.5	2	0.9	-	-	2	2.08
	May	1	0.1	-	-	2	0.9	2	2.4	-	-
	Might	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Must	-	-	3	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Shall	3	0.3	5	0.8	-	-	2	2.4	1	1.04
	Should	3	0.3	2	0.3	-	-	1	1.2	3	3.1
	Will	15	1.8	21	2.7	6	2.8	-	-	4	4.1
	Would	40	4.9	31	4.1	10	4.7	1	1.2	1	1.04
Total		822	100	754	100	211	100	83	100	96	100

The above section presented an analysis of formal features of VTQs in Pakistani English compared to two native and two non-native varieties. It is observed that Pakistani English has some similarities with Indian English with reference to the frequency, polarity and mood of the anchor as far as the formal features of VTQs were concerned. Moreover, both varieties have a visible influence on indigenous languages, i.e. Urdu and Hindi. Another reason that could have influenced was that the speakers of both varieties share some cultural backgrounds (Rahman, 2010). These factors and the results of formal analyses have led the researcher to compare the functions of declarative variant tag questions (DecVTQs) in both varieties, i.e. Pakistani and Indian Englishes using Axelsson's (2011) model. The following section discusses the functional analysis of VTQs in Pakistani English.

Functional Analysis of Declarative VTQs (DecVTQs): Comparison of Pakistani and Indian English

This section discusses the functional features of Declarative VTQs (DecVTQs) in both Pakistani and Indian English. It is observed that TQs are frequently used with declaratives that exchange information. It is visible that the percentage of DecVTQs exchanging goods (see Figure1 for categorisation of DecVTQs) in both Pakistani English and Indian English are greater than those used for exchanging goods.

2. "I had put away all my money in that hole. I had filled up and covered that hole completely and had forgotten about this hole altogether."

"That certainly calls for a treat. Doesn't it?"
"Yes, it does." (ICE-PK: W1B)

3. You owe me a reply, don't you?
I am a little worried about your health.
<ICE-IND: W1B>

The example in (2) is taken from ICE-PK where the speaker has demanded a treat which has got a positive reply from the addressee. The same is observed in (3), an example from Indian written English. Here also, the speaker wanted a reply from the addressee and indirectly the response letting him know about the addressee's health. Further, DecVTQs are most frequently used to exchange information in both varieties; however, the

differences exist (see Graph 7). The DecVTQs that are used for the exchange of information, Axelsson (2011) further divided them in *response eliciting* and *rhetorical* VTQs.

Graph 7: Occurrence of the functions of VTQs in Pakistani and Indian English
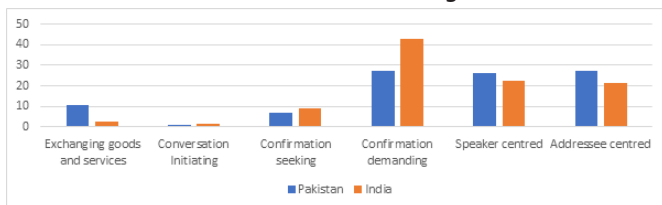
Here the difference is evident between Pakistani and Indian Englishes. When the tags were used in Pakistani English, they primarily elicit the response from the addressee. However, this should be kept in mind that only verbal response is taken as the *response*. There is, of course, some possibility that the addressee might respond with non-verbal actions such as head-nod. However, this might be considered a limitation of this study because only verbal reaction is considered a response. The rhetorical questions do not elicit any response from the addressee as in (4) and (5), examples from Indian and Pakistani Englishes, respectively.

4.　So you are a bibliophile <O> laughter </O> aren't you <„>
So I would better ask you to go to the <,> Mahalaxmi temple <,>
have you been there (…) <ICE-IND:S1A>

5.　<$A> Because one mistake leads to other.
And so this was the direction which <„> through central Asia have always taken, haven't they? They have through the, through the ages this is going on the birds the water, the variance.
<$B> All right but this is… (ICE-PK: S1A)

Both Pakistani and Indian Englishes have fewer instances of DecVTQs, which intend to initiate conversation. Both the varieties found fewer instances of the response eliciting VTQs; graph 7 shows the response eliciting VTQs in Pakistani and Indian English. The only instance of conversation initiating in Pakistani English was found in writing, and it is visible from the narrator's statement that the speaker wanted to start a conversation, as shown in 6.

6.　Ahh, nothing special, he was… he was just a bit confused, and I presume that's natural. Let's give him a little time to think. He wore a smile.

Ohh… I think we should order now or the waiter is gonna kill us with his stares… shouldn't we?

Yeah, we should. There was a soft grin on her face. (ICE-PK W2E.)

In this instance, it was clear from the previous statement that there was silence for a while, and the speaker wanted to restart the conversation, similarly, in Indian English (7).

7.　<$Q>
Best actor award goes to <„> Shahrukh Khan <„> for <mention>
Kabhi Haan Kabhi Naa </mention> <„> <&> music </&>
<$N>
You are going to say something, aren't you <„> ?
<$R>
I am very happy that <,> uhm <,> this film has been recognised
which as <„> is a personal favourite <„>
<div style="text-align:right"><ICE-IND:S2A></div>

In the example quoted above, it seems that the speaker of the TQ is a radio presenter, and he wanted to start the conversation after the break or music, so he put forward the tag question, which functions as a rhetorical question. Apart from the single instance in each corpus, no such instance was found. This shows that in both varieties, VTQs have usually been used to elicit confirmation.

Regarding the VTQs eliciting confirmation, Axelsson (2011) discussed the A-events, B-events and AB-events. If the proposition made in anchors is better known to the speaker, i.e. A-events (as Axelsson calls them) have been handled under *confirmation demanding* TQs. While the propositions have been better known to the addressee, i.e. B-events, she considered them *confirmation seeking* TQs. Moreover, if the events have been known to both the addressee and the speaker, i.e. AB-events, the context determines whether it functions as confirmation seeking or confirmation demanding. If the event is better known to the addressee, the VTQs function as confirmation seeking. The speaker is unaware of the events and wants the addressee either to confirm or reject the proposition made in the anchor. Similarly, the events that are better known to the speaker or known to both speaker and the addressee; they fell under the category of confirmation demanding as the speaker wanted the addressee to confirm or reject.

Graph 7 shows that there are differences between the percentages of confirmation demanding VTQs in both Pakistani English and Indian English. The VTQs that demand confirmation from the addressee are as frequent in Indian English as up to 82% (as in 8), while around 79% VTQs in Pakistani English function as *confirmation demanding* (as in 9).

8.　<w> I'm </w> a bad mother, aren't I?"
" <w> You're </w> an angel, <indig> ma </indig> .
Besides, <w> there's </w> this new chap. <ICE-IND:W2F>

9. "I can see there's something in your mind. Come on now, out with it.
"I don't know, uncle."
"But I do. You're smoking with your friends, aren't you?"
Nina almost screamed, "How did you know that?" "I didn't, but now I do,"
Sameer smiled.
"Don't tell Papa, please. Please!" she pleaded, holding Sameer's hand.
(ICE-PK: W2C)

Graph 7 shows the overall frequencies of every functional category as described in Figure 1. There are minor differences in Indian and Pakistani English in terms of the functions in VTQs, especially in the VTQs *exchanging goods and services* and *confirmation demanding*. It can be inferred that when speakers of Pakistani English have offers for the addressee or they have demanded goods or services, they are likely to be politer and tend to attach a tag question and thus leave the floor to the addressee to accept or refuse the proposal. The trend is quite contrary to Indian English based on the findings in this study. The overall division of the VTQs that imperative anchors with VTQs are found only in Pakistani English. Further, VTQs demanding confirmation is more frequent in Indian English, about 43%. Other differences are negligible.

Conclusion

This research examined the inter-variety differences in terms of the use of TQs. The results showed that VTQs are more frequent in speech than in writing across the five varieties observed. The results further suggested that most of the speakers attach tag questions with declarative anchors. Focusing specifically on Pakistani English, this work has provided new empirical evidence of how the VTQs are used in this under-studied variety. The results can be helpful for the codification of this variety.

Further, it can help the *pedagogical model* developers of Pakistani English who may develop the teaching model of how to teach English in Pakistan and what features should be taught. Rahman (2010) advocated such a pedagogical model in which he suggested the invariant use of TQs can be taught to students, i.e. they should be given a choice to attach *is it* or *isn't it* with all types of anchors even if they do not correspond with the verb and subject in the anchor, keeping in view with the assumption that Pakistani users of English use VTQs in such terms. The researchers agree with the proposition, but evidence should guide the development of such a model. This research has thrown up questions that need to be answered by exploring larger data sets. Future researchers should explore the VTQs in larger spoken data, considering the intonation patterns of Pakistani speakers of English. It is concluded that

Pakistani speakers of English have more similarities with native Englishes as far as the forms of VTQs are concerned.

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