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# **CPEC and BRI Nexus**

## **Perspectives on Economy, Politics, Culture and Environment**

China Study Centre  
Karakoram International University  
Gilgit-Baltistan

## **The Impact of Chinese Language Learning to Capitalize the CPEC Opportunities: From Barriers to Bridges**

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### **Abstract**

This chapter highlights the strategic significance of learning the Chinese language to ensure the effective implementation of CPEC projects. Given the language gap between Chinese and Pakistani stakeholders, learning Chinese language skills is becoming increasingly important. Proficiency in the language will not only improve communication and strengthen trade relations but also help fulfill the rising human resource needs in CPEC's industrial zones.

Equipping Pakistan's youth with Chinese language education enables the country to better align its workforce with emerging economic opportunities. As China's global economic influence grows, Chinese language fluency becomes an essential asset for professionals and businesses operating within the corridor. The chapter delves into how language education can foster deeper economic cooperation, improve communication, and facilitate cultural exchange under the CPEC framework, thereby enhancing employability in both domestic and international markets.

Moreover, it explores the role of Chinese language proficiency in advancing cross-cultural understanding and strengthening diplomatic relationships between Pakistan and China. These efforts aim to transform language skills into a strategic advantage that promotes sustainable economic growth, regional connectivity, and the long-term success of CPEC initiatives.

**Keywords:** Chinese language, Trade, Employment, CPEC.

## **Introduction**

One of the most crucial elements of development in all respects is language learning & long-term prosperity is impossible for any nation without a substantial accumulation of human capital. It seeks to improve people's quality of life and extend their perspectives on the world. It has several social benefits for individuals and society, including boosting creativity and productivity, promoting entrepreneurship, and advancing technology. Being multilingual is seen as essential in the age of globalization in order to improve communication with others. Without the use of words, neither economic decisions nor environmental discussions can take place. A nation's language has a significant impact on its overall growth & the standard of living for its people is significantly raised. For this reason, governments around the world are committed to reshaping their countries' educational systems in accordance with internationally developed norms and standards. This increases the efficiency, strength, and competitiveness of each of these countries' national workforces. English was the language of the aristocracy, as is widely known from a historical standpoint. Recognizing that the more one understands the language and culture of another nation, the greater the likelihood of establishing successful, long-lasting political and economic ties. The study concentrated on the significance of the current language barrier under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which undoubtedly affects the two countries' bilateral interaction that is essential to the growth of any cultural industrial community.

## **Breaking Linguistic Barriers**

There are several reasons why language learning trends are shifting, but the trend to study Chinese is particularly distinctive since it is linked to the successful completion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the region's overall economic development. For instance, the English language is well-known among students in a certain field since it is used in all academic activities and learning processes. As a result, many people in our area are bilingual or multilingual. It is anticipated that CPEC will boost trade between the two countries, but this connectivity will also foster cultural exchange, communication and wealth enhancement. In terms of economic growth, CPEC is also credited with paving the way for linguistic and cultural connections throughout South Asia, especially with Pakistan.

## **Chinese Language as a Catalyst for CPEC**

It is important to keep in mind that the distinction of labor force can play a crucial role, which depends on training and fitness. Though it lacks the proper improvement of the effort force, Pakistan has the tenth largest labor force in the United States (Ahmad, Sharma, Ali, & Ali, 2019). Conversational difficulties are a significant obstacle to trade, because people in different nations often speak different languages, the costs of bridging linguistic divides may make it more difficult to exchange goods. Communication in client making business was more impacted by language distance than in product manufacturing (Hutchinson, 2002). Despite its dominance as a global language, English does not promote interchange any more successfully than other important languages. However, the primary languages, together with English, work better together than they do separately when it comes to marketing trade. In theory, a small bilingual school might provide everyone in each nation with access to all market information in their preferred language (Melitz, 2008). We will bridge the gap by relating to youth at the appropriate moment and on the appropriate path, but it is more focused on the observable advantage and pays far less attention to its social outlook. It takes far too long to teach such skills and curriculum, train teachers, teach Chinese, and give better equipment training (Butt, 2017).

Pakistan has taken a number of actions to ensure that CPEC is carried out smoothly. Learning the Chinese language is one of them. There are now four Confucius institutes in Pakistan that focus on teaching Chinese language and culture. There are already thousands of Pakistanis enrolling and learning Chinese language. Some further China study centers have been established in over 19 Pakistani universities. The establishment of these centers within the major universities is to raise awareness of China, conduct behavioral research on different aspects of China, and promote OBOR and CPEC. Coaching classes on Chinese language, sinology, and many other topics are offered by some of those centers. The human aid needed for CPEC is being produced by these centers. Around 20,000 people in Pakistan are currently learning Chinese, which is still less than the demand for the language today (Hilali, 2020). In theory, a small group of bilinguals would choose to make all market records available to everyone in both countries in the language of their choice (Melitz, 2008). It focuses more on the observable financial gain and less on the social perspective, which we can address by guiding young people in the precise direction at the right time. The time to teach these skills and curriculum, train teachers, teach Chinese, and supply equipment for higher education

is long overdue (Butt, 2017). An "economic corridor" is a sea-based transit system that facilitates financial activity and is used for the transportation of goods and services. A capacity-building framework must be created in order to improve indigenous human resources and fortify the labor force in order to fully profit from CPEC. This can only be accomplished by increasing each nation's local, national, and international contacts (Farooq Abbad, 2020). In fact, English speakers are common in Pakistan, particularly among the educated, since English is considered a lingua franca & English-speaking has become popular across the nation. Since English is seen as a language of success, people in Pakistan study it in order to obtain a decent job. However, Pakistan feels that they should focus on the Chinese language, which has a higher proportion of speakers worldwide than English, given the significance of CPEC and its expectations. Our study indicates that compared to other language learners, Chinese language learners will have greater employment opportunities, which will contribute to their bright and happy future. There is no denying that Pakistan is seeing a language shift as a result of CPEC. With people being able to converse in Chinese, Urdu, English, and their mother tongues, it is also contributing to multilingualism in Pakistan (Asif et al., 2019).

Since language acquisition is thought to be required for participation in a variety of social group settings that use a particular language, language learning theories have placed a strong emphasis on the role that integrative motivation plays in the acquisition of language skills. As a social phenomenon, language is viewed as a social activity that enables people to engage in social activities by communicating ideas to others (Zafar, 2021). The fourth CPEC media forum was held in Beijing in November 2018 to discuss the importance of learning each other's languages in order to prevent misunderstandings brought on by information gaps and language barriers, as well as to gain a deeper understanding of each other's histories and cultures (Hassan, 2021). Similar to this, when managers are assigned to certain projects, their managerial and leadership skills are evaluated, with a crucial element being their linguistic communicative competence in traditional work positions like managing labor-based teams, small teams, and large project-based management as Pakistani engineers comprise the bulk of the CPEC project's personnel. According to this study, language significantly affects job performance and career advancement in the Pakistani labor market, as well as an individual's management skills when working on large projects with a multilingual workforce (Anwer & Gill, 2020).

However, learning Chinese is difficult, China should train its teachers to teach in English first while simultaneously requiring students to learn their native tongue. Since Chinese prefer to communicate in their own language in public, linguistic barriers may lead to misunderstandings; proficiency in standard Mandarin might enhance current mutual understanding (Masum, Mohammad, & Perveen, 2021). Additionally, both countries have stated that they are attempting to remove the language barriers by giving locals employment and commercial opportunities, & the CPEC will positively impact economic growth through this way. Learning each other's languages and fostering more interpersonal interactions are crucial for the citizens of both nations (Menhas, Mahmood, Tanchangya, Safdar, & Hussain, 2019). This is because it is critical that all members of society have a thorough understanding of languages. Serious issues that address global endangerment are conducted on both national and international platforms. According to (Zygmunt, 2016), language education is the primary means of bringing about significant changes in the environment through listening, understanding, and speaking. Being multilingual or bilingual in a world of globalization, where vast quantities of products and services are exchanged, is influencing migration and tourism trends.

Proficiency in foreign languages is crucial for establishing enduring business partnerships and reducing search and information expenses. In the case of English, which is frequently utilized as a lingua franca in international trade, this is especially true. Employers favor and compensate employees who speak foreign languages with significant pay increases, particularly in jobs related to the service, business, and tourism sectors. Effective integration into the host country is a direct result of having the ability to communicate and convey in the destination country. When selecting how much time and opportunity costs to engage in language acquisition, immigrants weigh the costs and expected benefits. A diverse cost structure is defined by language skills determinants like linguistic origin, age of migration, individual education and aptitude, and enclave density, whereas labor market advantages like higher wages and employment opportunities give the anticipated benefits. Because proficiency in English, particularly in South Asian languages, is crucial for landing blue-collar and white-collar employment, language proficiency has a significant impact on earnings throughout the occupational spectrum. It has been shown that language skills complement other forms of pre-migration human capital and act as a translation tool to transfer knowledge from the home country to the labor market of the host country (Isphording & Otten, 2014).

## **Unlocking CPEC's Potential**

Being multilingual or bilingual in a world of globalization, where vast quantities of products and services are exchanged, is influencing migration and tourism trends. Proficiency in foreign languages is crucial for establishing enduring business partnerships and reducing search and information expenses. In the case of English, which is frequently utilized as a lingua franca in international trade, this is especially true. Employers favor and compensate employees who speak foreign languages with significant pay increases, particularly in jobs related to the service, business, and tourism sectors. Finally, the most investigated topic in the context of language skills and the labor market is the importance of destination language skills for international migrants. Effective integration into the host country is a direct result of having the ability to communicate and convey in the destination country. When selecting how much time and opportunity costs to engage in language acquisition, immigrants weigh the costs and expected benefits. A diverse cost structure is defined by language skills determinants like linguistic origin, age of migration, individual education and aptitude, and enclave density, whereas labor market advantages like higher wages and employment opportunities give the anticipated benefits. Because proficiency in English, particularly in South Asian languages, is crucial for landing blue-collar and white-collar employment, language proficiency has a significant impact on earnings throughout the occupational spectrum. It has been shown that language skills complement other forms of pre-migration human capital and act as a translation tool to transfer knowledge from the home country to the labor market of the host country (Ispording & Otten, 2014). Investigating and identifying CPEC's language hurdles is also the ultimate goal of this project. This research combines analytical and fundamental studies. We determine the main effects of CPEC as a language shifter in Pakistan and the significant cultural and linguistic differences between the two countries by critically analyzing various research publications. We also determine the language issues that project teams from both countries encounter while working on CPEC.

## **Building Bridges through Language**

Since it is a major obstacle in bilateral trade, this study aims to identify these impediments. The Language Barrier Index (LBI), a novel statistic that measures the disparity between the primary languages of trading partners, quantifies language obstacles across borders. The primary factor used to assess organizational preferences for trade is language, which clearly favors comparable or intelligible languages because of historical and cultural linkages. To promote language and cultural exchanges, the governments of the

two nations can launch television programs. Chinese language teaching is promoted by the Pakistani government at all educational levels, including colleges, universities, and schools. The results show that the disparities in language, culture, and processes are making language a hurdle to CPEC's success. In order to get across the language barrier, policymakers understand how important it is to bring the citizens of the two nations closer together. People in Pakistan believe they should concentrate on Chinese language because of the importance and aspirations of the CPEC. The study highlights the significance of linguistic barriers in the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the need for two nations to work together more closely in order to create a community of cultural industries.

There is no denying that Pakistan is seeing a language shift because of CPEC. In Pakistan, it also contributes to multilingualism. This is essential to investigate the language problems and potential solutions. Since Gwadar Port City serves as the hub for major trade, Balochistan is the primary province in Pakistan dealing with this issue as China was given 9,300 hectares of tax-exempt land by the federal government to establish an industrial zone. The federal government is automatically in charge of creating scholarship programs in collaboration with China to produce highly qualified technical staff for Balochistan who serve as a communication link, therefore; Chinese language learning for Balochistan residents is another vital requirement for the success of CPEC, since it would enable them to communicate effectively with Chinese people and facilitate trade.

The inclusion of second language learning in school, college, and HEI curricula may also benefit trade, but it will take the combined efforts of the local, provincial, and federal governments to encourage locals to learn Chinese by creating a public policy that will increase the number of interpreters and translators. By providing their staff with Chinese language teaching to enhance their communication abilities, businesses may expand their global trade. Both nations' cultures are open to the public & many Pakistanis are learning Chinese both domestically and abroad since knowing the language will open a lot of important and innovative career prospects in the near future. Millions of citizens expect fantastic job prospects with the massive CPEC projects & in order to better assist Chinese tourists; information portals and brochures are now available in Chinese. Pakistan is not solely responsible for removing this language barrier; China has also a long history of promoting Urdu language diminish obstacles and enhance cooperation and trade. In the 1950s, China opened an Urdu department at Peking University in Beijing. Since then, the department has produced several fluent Urdu-speaking Chinese intellectuals. In addition, the department translated a number of important Urdu literary works into Chinese and created the first comprehensive Chinese-

Urdu dictionary. The fact that at least five colleges now offer Urdu at various levels is one indicator of the language's popularity in China. Graduates of these programs provide their services to several private companies and work in a variety of government agencies. An old Chinese saying states that the basis for communication and understanding between two countries is their intimate relationship and interpersonal intimacy. Therefore, it is essential to boost engagement in bilateral cultural communication and collaboration where there is substantial potential under the BRI. China-Pakistan bilateral cooperation may focus on specific cultural industries from different perspectives industries such performing arts, folk crafts, radio, television, festival exhibits, cultural artifacts, etc. As part of this endeavor, they will also launch TV shows to promote language and cultural exchanges between the two sides. Most Pakistanis are youthful and active, making them one of the luckiest countries in the world in term for younger labor provider to the world. This makes them an asset in the form of human capital, which is the main driver of development in any country. In terms of the accumulation of human capital, Pakistan came in at number 118 out of 130 countries in the World Economic Forum's 2016 HDI, which is quite concerning. Even though infrastructure development is essential for long-term growth, prosperity also requires working human capital, which can only be developed through education and training. This is because learning a second language will make our workers more competitive. For the purpose of Pakistan's bright future, which requires that state policies be properly aligned to suit the objectives of CPEC, it is imperative that the policies of China that guarantee education be replicated. Recently, the number of students to study Chinese has increased at an unprecedented rate. We had about two hundred college students learning Chinese before CPEC. Because of an increasing demand for expertise approximately China, many personal institutions have also began imparting mandarin courses. The task will help close the gap in spoken communication between Pakistan and China. Additionally, it will help our students secure employment as translators and interpreters in several joint China-Pakistan projects. In 2016, 495 college students who were chosen through the Punjab government scholarship program were sent to China to study Chinese in prestigious universities and institutions. Pakistanis would want to confirm that they are eligible to work on CPEC projects; their resumes will be polished by studying Chinese language and meeting Chinese language standards.

### **Overcoming Obstacles and Seizing Opportunities**

The Chinese language has become more widely spoken in Pakistan since the start of the CPEC. People are starting to realize how crucial the Chinese language is when looking at business and job prospects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It's important to note that people who

Speak Chinese well have an edge while applying for jobs in Pakistan. A prosperous future awaits many Pakistanis who speak Chinese fluently. When used effectively, communication is a powerful instrument that can break down barriers and propel any country forward. Since a country's sustainability is inevitably a global issue rather than a local one, its issues must be addressed on both a micro and macro level. Regardless of what country they belong to, the concern of 'all those in power' should be diverted towards sustainability issues such as that of foreign language education'. Furthermore, it is crucial to remember that foreign countries have a significant influence on the course of events in a globalized world, including aspects related to economic development and bilingual education. The increased interest in learning Chinese is not just the reason why more students from all across Pakistan are enrolling in, but it has also led to the opening of Confucius institutes in various parts of the United States. Given that China is one of Pakistan's key economic partners in CPEC, the importance of the Chinese language (Mandarin) has been magnified. Mandarin is not only essential for effective communication in business and trade but also for fostering deeper cultural understanding which highlights that how the integration of Chinese language education can enhance Pakistan's participation in the CPEC initiative and strengthen bilateral ties.

Effective communication between Chinese engineers, investors, and Pakistani officials is essential to the success of CPEC. Since Chinese people make up the bulk of CPEC project stakeholders, being able to communicate in Chinese is crucial for productive contract administration, cooperation, and negotiation. Business leaders, government officials, and workers who can communicate in Mandarin will have a competitive advantage in securing contracts, facilitating transactions, and overcoming bureaucratic hurdles. Diplomacy and trust are key components of China-Pakistan's strategic alliance. When it comes to improving communication between diplomats and negotiators, language is essential. Speaking Chinese can improve diplomatic effectiveness as CPEC deepens the two nations' bilateral connections by promoting easier cooperation, policy, and idea sharing.

Additionally, learning Mandarin might help you have a deeper knowledge of other cultures. Learning Chinese promotes cooperation and mutual respect between the two cultures as people-to-people interactions grow. Pakistani students, professionals, and workers involved in CPEC projects will benefit from language skills that enhance their ability to navigate Chinese cultural norms and practices, building better relationships with Chinese counterparts. The significance of Chinese language teaching in Pakistan is becoming increasingly acknowledged as the CPEC project moves forward. Mandarin language teaching is available at many colleges and universities, and more

Pakistani students are seeking degrees in Chinese literature and language. For example, organizations such as Pakistan's Confucius Institute are essential to the dissemination of Chinese culture and language. Pakistani government has implemented programs to encourage studying Chinese after realizing the importance of Chinese language. The development of Mandarin language programs, the inclusion of Chinese language in schools and university curricula, and financial aid for students to study in China have all fueled interest in the language.

### **Suggested Citation**

Moin, N., Ali, L. (2025). The Impact of Chinese Language Learning to Capitalize the CPEC Opportunities: From Barriers to Bridges. In *CPEC and BRI Nexus: Perspectives on Economy, Politics, Culture and Environment* (pp 21-31). CSC-KIU.

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The China Study Centre (CSC) at Karakoram International University (KIU) is funded by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Government of Pakistan. HEC frames the core objectives of the establishment of this Centre with special reference to the benefits that will achieve from creating a space that facilitates study and research on diverse arts, culture, history and polity of China, Pakistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and surrounding mountainous regions. The establishment of CSC aims to provide a base to learn Chinese society. The Centre provides an opportunity to develop research collaborations with counterparts in Xinjiang and mainland China. It is expected that these collaborations will play a key role in conducting research that has high relevance to Gilgit-Baltistan. There exist many commonalities between the two regions that provide important opportunities for collaboration between KIU, Chinese universities and beyond.



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