Food for Thought: A Linguistic Analysis of the Menus in Karachi's Elite Cafes and Restaurants

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ABSTRACT: Language embodies different forms of identity: ethno-linguistic, socio-economic, cultural, national, religious as well as political. Just as language helps project one's identity, food choices perform the same function. A Muslim diner, for instance, is not expected to order pork. Similarly a staunch Hindu diner, is expected to order vegetarian food only. However, in elite restaurants and cafes which seem to be transmitters of globalization, consumers' food choices are controlled by the language used on the menu cards, which can sometimes question their identity in more than one way. Reading the menu cards of such elite restaurants and cafes in major cities of Pakistan, one is likely to receive culture-shock for their menus are dominated by weird names and dishes that are neither aesthetically appealing nor do they seem to appeal to the taste buds of the locals. In fact, the names of some dishes are in sharp contrast to the socio-cultural fabric of Pakistani society. The current study aims to analyze the language used on the menu cards and the weird names assigned to food on the menu of fifty-five elite cafes and restaurants in Karachi, Pakistan. Total 300 names of dishes and beverages have been analyzed using purposive sampling. The linguistic analysis of the menu cards reveals clear signs of socio-cultural metamorphosis which is likely to result in the obliteration of local identity. Moreover, the dominance of foreign cuisine over local Pakistani cuisine in such restaurants and cafes also reflects cultural imperialism. The results of this study can draw attention of the restaurant and cafe industry working in Pakistan to not only rewrite their menus by replacing culturally alien names with those that represent the local Pakistani culture, but also make more space in their menus for Pakistani cuisine, as food is one of the strong symbols of culture.

Keywords: *food, culture, cultural imperialism, globalization, identity.*

1. Introduction

Food not only performs the function of satisfying one's hunger but is also involved in the construction of different forms of identity including, cultural, ethnic, religious and national. It would not be an exaggeration to state that food is a means to strengthen one's ties with one's culture, which is an integral means to assert one's distinct identity. Emphasizing the importance of culture, Khan (2009) states, "It is culture that makes us distinguish one society or social group from the other." (p.192) and he includes food besides other things in his definition of culture.

Highlighting the relationship between food and culture, Kittler, Sucher, & Nelms (2012) comment: "One way to establish that a person is not a member of a certain cultural group is through diet." (p.5). Food choices and dietary habits are strongly influenced by both religious and cultural beliefs; food that is highly valued by one group may not even be considered acceptable by the other. Take example of the people living in the Kalash Valley of Chitral in the North of Pakistan, where eating chicken is considered a taboo. Some communities avoid certain food items because of their superstitious beliefs, while others avoid it for religious reasons. The Tibetan Buddhists,

for instance, avoid consuming fish because they worship it. Just as fish has religious significance for the Tibetan Buddhists, cow is a sacred animal for the Hindus. Staunch Hindus avoid consuming cow's meat because they worship it. There are numerous other communities across the world where such food taboos exist. Food choices and the taboos associated with certain food items are important means to understand different socio-cultural, ethnic as well as religious groups, as their consumption and/or avoidance of certain food items can reveal useful information about their socio-cultural, ethnic and/or religious beliefs.

However, in today's globalized world where boundaries are disappearing fast, one is likely to run the risk of misjudging people's cultural, ethnic and/or religious identity merely on the basis of their food choices. For not every Muslim immigrant or tourist is conscious of asking for *halaal* food in non-Muslim countries these days. The same holds true for Hindus, as not all of them are vegetarians anymore. Many Hindus have started consuming different forms of meat now. As far as the people belonging to the Kalash community of Chitral are concerned, those who have moved to urban centres of the country, like Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Islamabad, have started consuming chicken without any reservation. Eating chicken is no more a taboo for those Kalashi people who have migrated to urban centres.

However, the change in people's life style in general and the food choices in particular, are not just the result of migration, globalization has also played a crucial role in transforming societies. In the contemporary world where globalization has affected distinct identities, the criteria for the selection of food in cafes and restaurants have also changed to a great extent, especially among the elite class. According to Almerico (2014), "food symbolism permeates our social psyche." (p.6). Keeping in mind the psychology of the elite class in general and the youngsters in particular, the menu card writers assign weird and idiosyncratic names to dishes and beverages to increase their sale. Although the food items and beverages on the menu of most of the cafes and restaurants are more or less the same, their names vary and can have a strong impact on their sale. With the desire to appear modern and different, many people, especially youngsters, order food that sounds different even if they do not like the taste of it, for their major purpose is not to satisfy their hunger but to boast of their socio-economic status, and in doing so they do not mind putting their socio-cultural and even religious identity at stake. Almerico (2014) states that "people will eat or drink something they find unpleasant or distasteful to be part of the world." (p.7). Being part of the world

means being accepted by the society one desires to be a part of even if its norms and values are in sharp contrast to our own. Foreign names and dishes are deliberately made part of the menu of elite cafes and restaurants to mutilate cultural as well as religious identity, which is evident from the inclusion of even those food items on the menu that are not considered *halaal,* like calamari, squid, crab, prawns, to name a few. It cannot be denied that restaurants and cafes serve dual function; they not only offer food to relish people's appetite but also offer a venue where the chances of socio-cultural metamorphosis are multiplied through the food items and their names on the menu.

1.1 Aim of the Study and Research Questions:

As the name of an item on the menu plays a major role in deciding what to order these days, the current study aims to analyze the language used on the menu cards and the weird names assigned to food on the menu of fifty-five elite cafes and restaurants, including fast food restaurants in Karachi ---the biggest city of Pakistan where the traces of globalization resulting in cultural imperialism are very obvious, especially among the young genration. Although the young generation, irrespective of its socio-economic status, has great admiration for foreign items, youngsters from the elite class seem to have developed an unusual fascination with everything that sounds, looks or tastes foreign, which is indicative of a move away from one's native culture, which is definitely alarming.

Considering the danger of being swept away by the Tsunami of globalization, the study aims to examine the linguistic markers on the menu cards of elite cafes and restaurants, as they represent culinary culture by providing "a written record of the evolving culinary changes" (Gvion & Trostler, 2008, p. 952). It is true that "menus can enable a study of the interaction between popular attitudes toward ethnic cuisines, social perceptions of means of acculturation, and the process of dissemination and demystification of ethnic dishes and cuisines" (Gvion & Trostler, 2008, p. 971). A closer look at the linguistic markers on the menus of elite cafes and restaurants in Pakistan shows strong signs of cultural imperialism. It is feared that this cultural imperialism which is the product of linguistic imperialism may lead towards the construction of an ideology that does not harmonize with the socio-cultural ideology of Pakistani society ---- a society which is being modified in a very subtle way through the infiltration of not just foreign cuisine but also eccentric names that carry strange connotations.

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

i.   What kind of language is employed to name dishes and beverages on the menu of elite cafes and restaurants in Karachi?
ii.   How do the names assigned to the dishes and beverages affect the local Pakistani identity?
iii.   Do the menus of elite cafes and restaurants have enough space for the local Pakistani cuisine?

2. Literature Review:

Research on the role of food in the projection of culture and the discourse revolving around food is not new. It focuses on various sub-fields of linguistics, like semantics, onomastics, anthropology, sociolinguistics, as well as pragmatics. With the aim to understand diners' psychology, research is also conducted to study menus of restaurants from multiple perspectives. Ozdemir and Caliskan (2014) in their article present a comprehensive review of literature on restaurant menu research. Most of the studies reviewed in their article focus on menu structure and engineering. Although there is a vast body of research literature on the structure and design of menus focusing on the presentation of dishes to attract consumers (Kershaw, 2009; Lorenzini, 1992; McVety, Ware, & Ware, 2008; Zwicky & Zwicky, 1980), very few research studies focus on the linguistic analysis of the names of dishes and beverages on the menu cards of restaurants and cafes (Jurafsky, 2014; Wansink, Painter, & Van Ittersum, 2001; Wansink, Van Ittersum, & Painter, 2005).

While discussing the semiotics of food and drink along with their symbolic value indicating socio-economic, ethnic and cultural identity, Lehrer (1991) drew attention towards the linguistic devices employed for naming different dishes and beverages in restaurants. The devices she discussed include compounding, euphemism, narrowing or widening of word meaning, innovative word formation, etc. However, because of focusing too much on the symbolic value of food, the article does not provide enough space for a detailed discussion on the linguistic devices employed to name food and beverages on the menu cards and their impact on diners' psychology.

Gvion & Trostler (2008) in a longitudinal study investigated the changes that occurred in the presentation of ethnic dishes in the restaurant menus in America along with the change in diners' interest from the 1960s to 1990s. The results of the study indicate the

emergence of multiethnic cuisine in America --- a proof of its being a multicultural society.

In a large-scale hypothetical study based on Bourdieu's distinction, Jurafsky, Chahuneau, Routledge, & Smith (2016) focus on the language used on menus of 6501 expensive and inexpensive restaurants in 7 major cities of USA. The study is based on four aspects: natural vs. traditional authenticity, educational capital, size of the meal and implicit vs. explicit signalling of quality on menus. The results of this hypothetical study by Jurafsky et al. (2016) show the concept of natural authenticity being associated with expensive while that of traditional authenticity, being associated with inexpensive restaurants. It is also proved through this study that the high-status restaurants not only use morphologically complex words but also foreign vocabulary from French, Italian and Spanish languages, establishing a strong link between educational capital and restaurant status. Besides confirming these two hypotheses, the findings of the study also reinforce Bourdieu's concept of plenty in the working class meal by proving that inexpensive restaurants focus more on portion sizes as compared to expensive restaurants. The results of the study also reveal excessive use of adjectives on the part of inexpensive restaurants proving yet another hypothesis that the high status restaurants avoid using explicit indicators of quality.

Besides focusing on the linguistic analysis of menus, researchers have also studied customers' views on restaurant advertisements (Ehsan, 2012; Haque, Rahman, Ahmad, Yasmin, & Asri; 2011; Wansink, Cheney, & Chan, 2003) and the language used for building brand identity (Condon, 2017; Crystal & Herskovitz, 2010).

Despite being an extensively researched area across the world, there is no significant research on the language of menus of cafes and restaurants in Pakistan. The current study is undertaken to fill in the existing gap by performing a linguistic analysis of the names of dishes and beverages on the menu of elite cafes and restaurants in Karachi, Pakistan. The study's significance lies in establishing a strong connection between language and culture which together constitute the identity of a group.

3. Methodology

This qualitative study is conducted with a focus on the linguistic analysis of the names of dishes and beverages served at the elite cafes and restaurants including fast food restaurants in Karachi. The study being qualitative in nature employed purposive sampling technique by focusing on the menus of fifty-five elite cafes and restaurants located in the posh areas of the city. These cafes and restaurants were selected after

reviewing their menu which is available on internet. Some of these cafes and restaurants have their own face book page where complete menu is provided. Another reason for selecting these cafes and restaurants was that they are mostly visited by youngsters, a majority of who belong to the elite class.

Although the selected restaurants and cafes offer a vast range of food items and beverages, only those items were selected for the study that carry weird names having no connection with the local Pakistani culture. Using purposive sampling technique, total 300 names were included in the final analysis for the study. The names have been linguistically analyzed to study the relationship between language and culture, both of which play an important role in the ideological construction or deconstruction.

4. Data Analysis

Most of the names assigned to the dishes and beverages offered in the cafes and restaurants selected for the study are weird and in sharp contrast to the local Pakistani culture. The weird names of dishes and beverages found on the menu cards of these cafes and restaurants are the result of the menu writers' use of a variety of expressions to promote a distinct cultural identity that does not seem to synchronize with the Pakistani identity--- an identity which seems to be under threat because of the glorification of foreign culture through language. A detailed analysis of the data gathered for the study reveals:

4.1 Use of expressions that connote violence and aggression

Since young generation is more inclined towards action and violence, capitalizing on the young generation's psychology, the menu writers of some cafes and restaurants assign such terms to certain food items and beverages that can easily attract young diners. There are many cafes and restaurants including fast food restaurants in Karachi which offer food items with names that carry explicit signs of violence, aggression, and disaster, including natural disasters. An example of a smoothie served at *New York Coffee,* an elite cafe in Karachi, is *Berry Blast*. Examples of beverages with such names include, *Bloody Mango, Mind Eraser,* and *Hurricane.* Not only are such names assigned to smoothies and different beverages but also to starters, fast food items and desserts. Examples of names, conveying violence, assigned to desserts include: *Mint Chocolate Bomb* and *Death by Chocolate*, whereas examples of such names assigned to other food items include: *Fire Cracker Fish, Dynamite Prawns, Dynamite Wings, Dynamite Chicken, Loaded Fries, Explosion Chicken Burger, Flame Thrower Burger* etc. In some

fast food restaurants like **Burger O'Clock**, **Burger Lab**, and **Burger Cage,** for instance, the names assigned to some burgers are such that they do not show any connection with the item itself. Example include: *Fire House*, *Chilli Blast*, and *Jaw Breaker. By* employing words like *fire, blast, explosion, dynamite*, all of which belong to the semantic field representing violence and aggression, the food items are presented as transmitters of disaster, turning the whole experience of dining into a violent activity.

4.2 Use of terms that sound abhorring

Food should not only look and smell appealing but its name should also sound pleasant to tickle one's taste buds. However, the criteria for judging food through its appearance, aroma and name vary from one culture to another. The food choices in some countries are so diametrically opposed to each other that when people of these countries visit each other's countries they have to either carry packed food from their own country for survival or rely on fruits, unless they are lucky enough to find a restaurant where the food of their country is available. One example is that of Japanese food which is very different from Pakistani food. While Sushi which is made of raw fish is the most favourite dish of the Japanese, for Pakistanis even the idea of having a dish made of raw fish is enough to cause vomiting because in our culture meat is not eaten in raw form. It has to be cooked well to suit the local taste buds. Not only can food choices become problematic because of the taste but also because of the names assigned to dishes in some restaurants and cafes. I remember while travelling to Colombo by Sri Lankan Airlines in the year 2015, when the airhostess asked me if I would like to have *chick pea salad* or *rattle snake salad*, I was so horrified to hear the name 'rattle snake' that I preferred not to have any food during the flight. Although the salad they served did not contain rattle snake, the name was loathsome enough.

There are quite a few restaurants in Karachi as well where food items and beverages are assigned names that sound abhorring and disgusting. These names may appeal to the foreigners or those locals who idealize and glorify everything that is opposed to the local culture, but for the majority of Pakistanis these names are enough to kill their hunger. Examples include, *Sticky Fingers*, *Mudslide*, *Dragon Roll*, *Messy Meat Burger; The Monster, Carnivore*. In some restaurants, names of those animals are given to beverages and other food items, which are not even *'halaal'*. One example is that of *Porcupine Prawns* served at **China Kitchen**. Other examples include: *Blue Wolf, Crocodile, Gourmet Turtle, Bulldog Sauce, Spider Roll,* and *Rattle Snake Chicken*

Pasta. The first three names are so weird that they do not show any connection with food. While the first two are the names of mocktails, the third one is a dessert.

4.3 Use of brand labels to promote class consciousness

On one hand, globalization aims at cultural homogenization by focusing on the obliteration of distinct cultural identities in the third world countries, on the other hand, the notion of class-consciousness is promoted in almost every domain, including restaurant and cafe industry. The menu of elite cafes and restaurants promote class-consciousness not only through the exorbitant price of the food that is served but also through the names of the dishes and beverages served. It is pertinent to mention here that food is not only used to show one's cultural affiliation, the selection of food is also used to judge the socio-economic background of people. This may be one of the reasons why some people deliberately select such food items that carry names associated with the elite class.

It is not uncommon to find brand names assigned to the food items on the menus of elite cafes and restaurants; the use of brand names on the menu of these cafes and restaurants reinforces class-consciousness. Such practice is truly representative of a snobbish society driven by class divide. There are numerous examples of menu items that are sold through their brand name to make them more appealing. *Butler Temptation Cake* served at **Butler's Chocolate Cafe**, *Sizzlers Fire Steak* at **Sizzlerz**, *Casa Villa Signature Platter* at **Casa Villa,** *Gun Smoke Club Sandwich* at **Gun Smoke,** and *Arizona Chicken* served at **Arizona Grill,** are a few examples of food items carrying brand labels.

Moreover, the menu of a restaurant, **Burn Out,** carries a list of mocktails that are assigned the brand names of highly expansive and luxurious cars that only highly affluent people can afford to buy. The names include: *Audi; Buggati; Ferrari; Rolls Royace; Porsche; Lamborgini.*

4.4 Use of sexual imagery

Sexual imagery is often employed in marketing to attract consumers. International brands like *Armani, Calvin Klein, Gucci, Versace*, etc., particularly employ sexual imagery along with explicitly sexual pictorial images to increase their sale. Employment of sexual imagery, however, is not just confined to luxury brand advertising. Such imagery has also begun to be used on the menu of elite restaurants and cafes for naming

dishes and beverages. The names of some of the items on the menu of these cafes and restaurants carry implicit as well as explicit signs of sex. While most of these names are used for desserts, some of them are also used for naming different flavours of pizzas, burgers and steaks. Some examples of desserts that are named by employing sexual imagery include: *Forbidden Pleasure; Dual Pleasures; Sinfully Yours; Chocolate Sin; After Eight; Sinful Sundae, Sweet Temptation*, etc, while examples of pizzas and steaks with names that carry sexual connotations include: *Hot Shot, Hot Stuff, and Hottie*. At **Casa Villa,** a burger is served with the name *Burn and Love Burger,* which also connotes sexuality.

4.5 Use of gender biased language

Although gender bias is practised in almost every society with varying degrees and is mostly reflected through the language used for referring to the opposite sex, there are various other ways through which this gender bias is manifested. One of the prominent examples of gender bias can be observed on the menu of some elite cafes and restaurants where the dishes and beverages are assigned such names that show clear signs of prejudice against women. For instance, at **Cosmopolitan**, an elite restaurant located in PECHS, Karachi, a beef burger is named *The Juicy Lucy*. The use of the adjective 'juicy' with a feminine name implies sexual connotations. Here, a food item is described as an easily accessible woman. The idea of presenting women as a sexual commodity is further strengthened through assigning such names to food items. Another example is from the menu of a fast food restaurant **Howdy,** where one of the burgers is assigned the name *Hot Cowgirl*, while at **Pizza Hut**, one of the flavours of pizza is assigned the name *Sweet Chick.* The word 'chick' does not only refer to a young chicken but is also used as a slang to refer to an attractive young woman or a teenage girl. A somewhat similar idea is projected on the menu of yet another elite restaurant where a mocktail is named as *Wonder Woman*.

1.6 Use of adjectives that violate collocational restrictions

The adjectives used with the food items served in traditional cafes and restaurants are specifically chosen to enhance diners' appetite. It is very common to find adjectives like 'scrumptious', 'crispy', 'tender', 'juicy', etc., attached to the dishes on the menu of traditional restaurants including fast food restaurants. However, in elite cafes and restaurants, such adjectives are rarely employed. Instead of using adjectives that collocate with food, the menu writers of elite cafes and restaurants deliberately use adjectives that do not collocate with food. One example is that of a shake called *Crazy Banana Shake* served at **Pane and Amore**, an elite restaurant in Karachi. Other

examples include: *Dancing Chicken; Dancing Fajita; Crazy Maki; Naughty Toffee; The Mad Oreo*, to name a few. Employment of words that do not collocate with food items has become a trademark of elite cafes and restaurants. Youngsters being carried away by such names order these food items to appear funky.

4.7 Use of personification to glorify evil

Personification is a linguistic device used in literature for presenting inanimate objects as humans. Advertisers also use this device frequently to attract consumers and menu writers are no exception. The names assigned to some dishes and beverages on the menu of some cafes and restaurants are so different from the items they represent that unless one reads the description of the items one cannot be sure of what they actually are. For example the menu of **Hoagies** offers a steak with the name *Hooligan*. Similarly at **Gelato Affair** a dessert is assigned the name *Dare Devil*. It is quite striking that the items that are personified are assigned terms that belong to the semantic field of crime. Take example of a fast food restaurant **Burger Cage**, where the burgers are assigned names like, *The Gangster, The Ripper*, and *Serial Killer*. None of these names can be said to show any direct or indirect connection with food. Using such names for food items imply glorification of crime and criminals.

4.8 Glorification of deviant lifestyle

It cannot be denied that words have the power to influence people's thoughts. The effective use of words can transform people's perception of certain concepts and things around. Any idea or thing once considered unacceptable and loathsome can become acceptable as well as admirable through manipulation of words and the frequent exposure to those concepts or things they refer to. A few examples of the expressions used for naming certain food items in elite cafes and restaurants can be considered to prove the point. At **Burger Cage**, for instance, a mocktail is given the title *Thug Life.* Similarly, at **Gelato Affair,** a dessert is named *Black Magic.* At another elite restaurant, **Bella Vita**, desserts are given names that occupy negative semantic field. Examples include: *Chocolate Obsession* and *Chocolate Sin.* Neither the word 'obsession' nor 'sin' can be used in a positive sense. Both the terms are highly negative and imply destruction. Despite the negative connotations these words carry, they are used for naming food in elite cafes and restaurants. Employment of such expressions is the latest trend these days; it is not just a marketing stunt but is a means of changing people's

perception of right and wrong by glorifying deviant life style. The glorification of such a life style is achieved through the use of negative expressions.

4.9 Use of the names of foreign fictional and fairy tale characters

In order to draw attention of children and teenagers, the menu writers of some restaurants and cafes have assigned names of fictional characters to certain food items and beverages. Children order such food items not necessarily because of the taste but because they love those characters whose names are assigned to those items. At **Cafe Zouk,** for instance, a mocktail with the name *Cinderella,* which is a famous fairy tale character, is available. This mocktail is likely to be ordered by girls who fanaticize Cinderella. Another example is found on the menu of **Salt Cave**, where a mocktail with the name of another fairy tale character, *Snow White* is served. Similarly, at **Hoagies**, a fast food chain with three outlets in Karachi, a fried chicken dish is served which is named *Hobbit*, a famous fictional character from J.R. Tolkien's novel *The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, while at* **Broadway Pizza** one of the flavours of pizza is named *Tarzan Tikka.* Tarzan is yet another fictional character that children, especially male children love.

It is surprising to note that none of the dishes in these cafes and restaurants is named after any local fictional character. Only foreign fictional characters are glorified.

4.10   Use of geographic labels focusing on non-native identity

As mentioned earlier, the names given to a majority of the dishes and beverages on the menu of the cafes and restaurants analyzed for this study reflect preference for foreign over local cuisine which is manifested through the names assigned to the dishes and beverages. There are quite a few items that carry the names of geographically remote foreign lands making those items sound exotic.

Since everything that sounds foreign is considered prestigious and unique in our society, the menus of elite cafes and restaurants are dominated by the names of foreign rather than local areas. Instead of finding *Lahori charGha*, *Sindhi Biryani, Multani halva*, *Peshaavri qehva, or Kashmiri chaae* at such places, one is likely to find *Cantonese Chicken, Swiss Chicken, Montreal Steak, Thai Soup, Jamaican Tea* and the like. It is easier to find *Lebanese Snapper* or *Norwegian Salmon* at **Arbor Cafe**, *Mongolian Fish* at **Jade Garden**, *Malaysian Butter Prawns or Arabic Mezze Platter* at **The Patio,**

Mexican Burger or *All American Cheese Burger at **Casa Villa,** Italian Omelette* or *California Chicken sandwich* at **Gun Smoke,** *Italian Chicken at **Tavern Grill,** Belgian Waffle* **at *Bella Vita,** Seattle Roll* at **Yaki** or *Shanghai Spring Roll* at **Chop Soy---** restaurants located in the posh areas of Karachi--- but it is unlikely to find any local dish in such cafes and restaurants. It would not be wrong to state that the local dishes and names are avoided as they are considered to lack prestige. Names like *French Connection* and *Caribbean Crush* assigned to the mocktails at **Roasters** and **Cafe Zero Degree** in Karachi further strengthen the point. Similarly desserts like *Mississippi Mud* served at **Gelato Affair or** *American Brownie* at **Salt Cave** are indicative of the same trend. At **Pantry,** *an* elite restaurant located in Defence which is one of the posh areas in Karachi*,* there is a long list of food items with foreign association, like *Greek Omelette, Mediterranean Chicken, Norwegian Crepe, French Crepe, California Burger, English Muffin, New York Cheese Cake,* etc. Same holds true for **Maxims,** a restaurant in Clifton, where one can easily find *Mexican, Vienna, Swedish,* or *Portuguese Steak,* but what is not found is the Pakistani variety of steak.

In some cafes and restaurants, the entire breakfast range that is served is especially associated with foreign identity. For instance, at **Rowtisserie**, the breakfast that is served is named *The Full English*; at **Butlers Chocolate Cafe** it is *Irish Breakfas*t, while at **Bell Vita**, the breakfast one finds on the menu is named *American Breakfast*. Somewhat similar trend is observed in case of naming salads. For instance, the salad served at **Salt Cave** is named *Chicken Hawaiian Salad,* the one at **Butlers Chocolate Cafe** is named *Mediterranean Salad,* while at **Pantry,** salads with the names *Greek Salad* and *Thai Salad are served.* The dominance of the names of too many foreign places on the menu may be suggestive of either the menu writers' or the targeted customers' fascination with foreign and exotic places.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

As observed through a careful study of the food items on the menus, it is obvious that the local Pakistani cuisine is found missing on the menu of the cafes and restaurants included in the study. Among the dishes and beverages offered in these cafes and restaurants, there is hardly any local item. Moreover, the linguistic analysis of the names of dishes and beverages served in the elite cafes and restaurants selected for the study

indicate dominance of culturally alien terms. Foreign terms and foreign cuisine dominate all 56 menus analyzed.

The absence of Pakistani cuisine on the menu of such cafes and restaurants is highly symbolic and is indicative of cultural imperialism. One justification for the dominance of foreign cuisine could be that people from the elite class, especially the younger lot, consider it below their dignity to order local food. A closer observation of the food choices among the young generation is enough to show that they prefer to have burger over *bunkebab*, pizza over *paraaTha*, Singaporean or Chinese rice over *pulaao* or *biryani*, pasta or lasagna over *chapli* or *seekh kebab*, cake or pudding over *kheer or halva*, and the list goes on.

However, the preference for foreign cuisine over local Pakistani cuisine on the part of the young generation is the result of the way foreign cuisine is promoted in the cafés and restaurants where food is presented as a symbol of one's socio-economic class. The association of foreign cuisine with high class has led to the association of local cuisine with middle or lower-middle class as a result of which local food and their names have begun to be stigmatized. Invasion of foreign cuisine in the cafes and restaurants in Pakistan, particularly in Karachi, has not only resulted in the replacement of local dishes with foreign cuisine but has also led to the replacement of traditional food terminology with weird and culturally alien terms. There is no harm in introducing diverse cuisine to expose the locals to foreign dishes and promote multiculturalism but weird names need to be modified keeping in mind the local culture. There is nothing wrong with retaining the Italian word 'pizza' but '*Green Devil*' or *'Dare Devil'* can easily be replaced by names that appeal to the taste buds of the Pakistanis in general.

The results of this study can draw attention of the international restaurant and cafe industry working in Pakistan to rewrite their menus by replacing weird and culturally alien names with those that represent the local Pakistani culture. It also draws their attention towards making a room for Pakistani cuisine on their menu, as most of these elite restaurants serve Italian, Mexican, American, Arabic, Moroccan, Chinese and Japanese dishes but one hardly finds any Pakistani dish on their menu. The absence of Pakistani cuisine on the menu of such cafes and restaurants is symbolic and calls for serious attention as one way to promote one's native culture is through promoting the local cuisine along with the local names.

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