

CHARTING LINGUISTIC SHIFTS: A STUDY OF CODE-MIXING IN THE SPEECH OF SCHOOLCHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS

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Abstract

This study looks at how the speech of children and their parents' changes, focusing on the use of English words. The study is qualitative and examines how many English words the participants use in their speech. It also identifies the factors that cause these changes. The researcher counted how often English words appeared in the speech of both children and parents and calculated the percentage of these words. Data was collected through interviews with twelve intermediate-level students and their parents. The English words were compared with an English-to-Urdu dictionary to check if the use of English words increased because there were no suitable Urdu alternatives. The findings show that children tend to mix more English words into their speech than their parents, meaning there is more variation in the speech of younger people. Additionally, the study found that the use of English words mainly affects the Urdu vocabulary.

Keywords: code mixing, lexicon, variation

Introduction

Language change refers to the permanent changes that occur not only in how a language is used but also in its structural features over time. Language change is a universal phenomenon found in all natural languages and affects every level of linguistic organization, including pronunciation (phonological change), meaning (semantic change), vocabulary (lexical change), and sentence structure (syntactic change) (McMahon, 1994). According to Aitchison (1991), the causes of language change can broadly be divided into two categories. First, there are external sociolinguistic factors, which operate outside the language system and include social, cultural, political, and technological influences. Second, there are internal psycholinguistic factors, which arise from the internal structure of language and the cognitive processes of its speakers.

In the case of Urdu, a significant number of English words have been incorporated due to the absence of direct lexical equivalents. Words such as *internet*, *mobile*, *charging*, *cigarettes*, and *circulation* are now commonly used in everyday spoken Urdu. Although these lexical items have become functionally necessary, they are often regarded as inappropriate or unacceptable in formal written Urdu, where their use may be viewed with suspicion. Some critics argue that Urdu lacks sufficient vocabulary to express modern concepts as effectively as English, leading to concerns about linguistic decline. However, despite such concerns, the number of Urdu speakers has increased considerably in recent decades. Scholars and language planners have argued that the issue lies not in the inadequacy of Urdu itself but in the insufficient development and standardization of modern technical and official terminology (Aitchison, 2001).

Significance of Study

Language change is an inevitable, continuous, and multifaceted process that reflects how language is structured, learned, used, and embedded within society and culture (Hickey, 2012). All languages evolve over time, though the pace and direction of change vary due to internal linguistic mechanisms and external social forces. Internally motivated change arises from the language system itself, striving for balance, regularity, and efficiency through processes such as analogy, reanalysis, articulatory simplification, sound change, and grammatical restructuring (Hock & Joseph, 2009). For instance, changes in pronunciation may trigger morphological simplification, as evidenced by the loss of case endings and grammatical gender in the historical development of English (Millward, 1996).

Externally motivated change, on the other hand, results from contact with social, political, technological, cultural, and geographical factors, including migration, language contact, borrowing, prestige, imperfect learning, and changing speaker attitudes (Aitchison, 1991). Political movements, technological innovation, and cultural shifts contribute to the creation of new vocabulary, semantic extensions, and changes in usage norms, while geographic separation and migration promote dialectal divergence and the emergence of pidgins and creoles (Crystal, 1997). Economic pressures encourage phonetic reduction through the principle of least effort, whereas expressiveness motivates the continual creation of new words to restore emotional intensity to frequently used forms (Murray, 1996).

Language contact, particularly in bilingual and multilingual societies, accelerates change through borrowing, code-mixing, and structural convergence, often shaped by relations of social and linguistic prestige (Haugen, 1950; Myers-Scotton, 1993). Language change may be systematic, affecting entire subsystems of language, or unsystematic, limited to individual lexical items, and it operates across all linguistic levels—phonological, lexical, semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic (McMahon, 1994). Crucially, language change is largely an epiphenomenon rather than a deliberate process; it emerges from countless individual communicative acts rather than conscious planning (Hickey, 2012). Although language change is often perceived as deterioration or decay, linguistic research consistently demonstrates that change is a neutral and natural outcome of language use, ensuring that languages remain dynamic, adaptive, and capable of meeting the evolving communicative needs of their speakers.

Literature Review

Language change has been extensively examined within historical linguistics and sociolinguistics as a systematic and inevitable process influencing all levels of linguistic structure. Aitchison (1991, 2001) frames language change as the interaction of internal psycholinguistic mechanisms and external sociolinguistic pressures, rejecting the notion that change represents linguistic decay. Complementing this view, McMahon (1994) and Hock and Joseph (2009) emphasize internally driven processes such as analogy, reanalysis, phonological reduction, and grammatical restructuring as central to linguistic evolution. These scholars argue that speakers unconsciously regularize linguistic systems to enhance efficiency and learnability. From a broader sociolinguistic perspective, Crystal (1997) and Hickey (2012) highlight the role of globalization, technological advancement, and social mobility in accelerating language change, particularly through lexical expansion and semantic shift. Collectively, this body of literature establishes language change as a rule-governed phenomenon shaped by the interaction of cognitive constraints and social context. Studies focusing on language contact and borrowing provide a relevant framework for understanding Urdu–English interaction. Haugen's (1950) theory of lexical borrowing explains how languages adopt foreign forms to fill lexical gaps, especially in domains

associated with science, technology, and administration. Myers-Scotton's (1993) markedness model further demonstrates that borrowing and code-switching are influenced by power relations, prestige, and speakers' social identities. In the context of Urdu, scholars observe an increasing incorporation of English lexical items in everyday communication, driven by educational policies, media exposure, and institutional practices (Aitchison, 2001). Although this trend has generated concerns regarding linguistic purity and decline, linguistic research consistently argues that such contact-induced change reflects functional adaptation rather than erosion. The existing literature, therefore, underscores the need for empirical investigation into Urdu language change that moves beyond prescriptive attitudes and examines borrowing as a natural outcome of sociolinguistic realities.

Theoretical Framework

The present study is grounded in the theoretical perspectives of language change theory and language contact theory, which together explain how and why linguistic systems evolve over time. Language change theory, as articulated by Aitchison (1991) and Hock and Joseph (2009), conceptualizes change as a rule-governed and natural process driven by internal psycholinguistic mechanisms and external sociolinguistic pressures. Internally, speakers unconsciously restructure linguistic forms through processes such as analogy, reanalysis, phonological simplification, and grammatical regularization in order to enhance cognitive efficiency and communicative economy. Externally, language is shaped by sociocultural forces including education, media, globalization, and shifting speaker's attitudes. This framework rejects prescriptive views of linguistic purity and instead treats change as an adaptive response to communicative needs, providing a foundational lens for examining structural and lexical developments in Urdu.

In addition, the study draws on language contact and borrowing theories to explain the increasing presence of English lexical items in Urdu. Haugen's (1950) model of borrowing provides a systematic account of how foreign lexical forms are adopted when recipient languages encounter lexical gaps, particularly in domains such as technology, administration, and education. Myers-Scotton's (1993) markedness model further explains borrowing and code-switching as socially motivated choices influenced by power relations, prestige, and identity construction. Within this framework, Urdu–English contact is understood as a consequence of historical, institutional, and ideological factors rather than linguistic deficiency. By integrating language change theory with contact-based models, the theoretical framework enables a comprehensive analysis of English-induced lexical change in Urdu, situating linguistic outcomes within broader cognitive and sociocultural contexts.

Methodology

Methodology is simple the method that a person adopted to do work. Meanwhile, a research methodology means a planned scientific method of doing work whose steps are planned in a scientific and systemic way. Following these steps, a researcher collects the required data and results are compiled. In this section, the researcher defines her/her area of working, target population and sample size etc.

Population

A population means the sum of large number of objectives or individuals. Meanwhile, a research population means a population that is going to be selected for the query. For the data collection, 38 individuals were selected for interviews. These were intermediate students and their parents. 18 students and 18 parents were selected for interviews. However, six interviews from students and six interviews from the parents were rejected due to incomplete interviews or due to lack of interest in participation. The data was collected from the various high schools of district Rahim Yar khan.

Sampling

Sampling can be defined as “the small group of objectives, information or individuals that are collected from large target population to seek required query”. In the current study, random sampling techniques were used. For the data collection, 38 individuals were selected for interviews. These were intermediate students and their parents. 18 students and 18 parents were selected for interviews. However, six interviews from students and six interviews from the parents were rejected due to incomplete interviews or due to lack of interest in participation. The data was collected from the various high schools of district Rahim Yar khan.

Research Methodology

The study was performed through survey. In the survey, both intermediate students were asked to put their comments on education system, education policy and employment issues in society. The topics were validated from the Department of English (Humanities and social Sciences), Khawaja Fareed University of Engineering and Technology, Rahim Yar Khan.

Interview

An interview is a verbal conversation between two people with the specific objectives of collecting relevant and important information for the research study. Interviews are considered an appropriate technique to gather in-depth information about people's personal experiences, their thoughts, feelings and opinions about various issues. Through interviews, an interviewer can get more authentic information about different issues and problems of the required research topics. Interviews are usually measured to be a more useful technique for acquiring detailed knowledge of the participants' personal experiences. Via conducting interviews, the interviewers can pursue insightful knowledge regarding certain research topics. To follow **up** certain research respondents, interviews are thought to be a more useful tool for collecting the precise data of the research. In this way, face-to-face interviews are regarded as more suitable for data amassing.

In qualitative research, it is a face-to-face conversation between two people about some particular issues of the research where an interviewer interviews various research respondents. Interviews are the one-way direction to collect data for the required research topic. Interviews are mainly considered helpful for obtaining particular and detailed knowledge of the different research topics.

For the data collection, 38 individuals were selected for interviews. These were intermediate students and their parents. 18 students and 18 parents were selected for interviews. However, six interviews from students and six interviews from the parents were rejected due to incomplete interviews or due to lack of interest in participation. The data was collected from the various high schools of district Rahim Yar khan.

Data collection for interviews

Sample	Count	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Total
Parents	12	50%	50%	50%
Students	12	50%	50%	50%

Demography of selected data

Sample	Count	Percentage	Cumulative percentage	Total
Parents	12	50%	50%	50%
	6 M	25%	25%	25%
	6F	25%	25%	25%

Students	12	50%	50%	50%
	6M	25%	25%	25%
	6F	25%	25%	25%

Data Analysis

Introduction

This chapter deals with the findings of the results acquired through the detailed process of the study conducted at elementary level school students. In this chapter, results have been presented in detail in the form of graphs and charts. The required results of the questions of the study have been shown with the help of charts and tables very clearly. The process of data collection has been discussed in research methodology. Now in this chapter the researcher has analyzed and interpreted the data through the process of statistical descriptive analysis method to get to the results.

The interviews from male parents were taken on the education system was as given

1 - ان دنوں میں بنائی گئی یالیسی بہت خوش آئند ہے - یہ پہلی حکومت جس نے ایک سلیسی شائع کیا ہے - اب امیر اور غریب کا بیٹا/ بیٹی ایک ہی سلیسی پڑھیں گے - اب آکسفورڈ کا سکول ہو یا گورنمنٹ کا ادارہ، سب ایک سلیسی پڑھیں گے

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the first interview
(Parents-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
5/45	11.11%

2- پاکستان میں تعلیم کا معیار دن بہ دن کم ہو رہا ہے - گورنمنٹ ایسی یالیسیان بنا رہی ہے جس سے بچے جرائم کر رہے ہیں - پریکٹیکل ایکسیوٹر بچوں کو بہت کم دیا جاتا ہے - اس کے ساتھ ساتھ بچوں کو ہمیشہ کہا جاتا ہے کہ بس کریں گے compete کریں جو کہ تبدیل ہونا چاہیے

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the second interview
(Parents-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
5/45	11.11%

3- In our education policy چیزوں میں خاصا فرق ہے - جتنا لوگ تعلیم یافتہ ہو رہے ہیں اس حساب سے jobs ہیں آرہیں - تعلیمی معیار jobs creation کی طرف سے اس پر کافی کام کرنا باقی ہے

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the third interview
(Parents-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
8/41	19.51%

4- میرا خیال ہے policy بنانے والوں کو عام آدمی کے مسائل کا نہیں پتا - وہ لوگوں کو criming اور بے روزگاری کی طرف لے جا رہے ہیں basic مسائل کے بارے میں نہیں پڑھایا جا رہا tgovernment کو اس طرف ضرور توجہ دینی ہو گی

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the fourth interview
(Parents-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
4/43	9.30%

5- پچھلی بھی حکومتیں گزری ہیں کسی نے اس طرف توجہ نہیں دی کہ ملک میں ایک بھی syllabus کو نافذ کیا جائے- بہت مدت بعد یہ ایک اچھا اقدام ہے اس governament کی طرف سے- اس طرح تعلیمی اخراجات کم ہوں گے اور school کے governament مستحکم بھی

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the fifth interview
(Parents-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
4/50	8.00%

6- اساتذہ کو خاطرخواہ سہولیات مہیا نہیں کرتی جس سے لوگ اپنے بچوں کو eprivat اداروں میں داخل کروانا زیادہ پسند کرتے ہیں Governament schools میں سہولیات کی کمی ہے اور اساتذہ کو train کرنے کا کوئی خاص نظام بھی نہیں ہے

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the sixth interview
(Parents-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
5/41	12.20%

7- ہمارے بارے میں English medium کا معیار Education میں tdifferen different societies ہے- کوئی Academy system سے پڑھنا ہے- اس کے علاوہ اساتذہ کی اچھی training میں staff بھی کم ہے- بہت سارے مسائل بین جو توجہ طلب ہیں

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the first interview
(Parents-Female)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
13/50	26.00%

8- ہم اپنے بچوں کو خود پڑھاتے ہیں- اپنی خاص توجہ سے ہی بچوں کو دینی اور دنیاوی تعلیم دیتے ہیں- ہمارے بارے میں اساتذہ کی اس طرح training نہیں کہ بچوں کو دونوں طرح کی تعلیم دے سکیں

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the second interview
(Parents-Female)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
2/38	5.25%

9- ہماری Basic need Education کے جو کہ tgovernamen کو بر طرح سے پوری کرنی ہے- جس طرح کی governament policies بناتی ہے اور جتنا fund رکھا جاتا ہے وہ باقی مالک کی نسبت کم ہے- اسے پڑھانا چاہیے

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the third interview
(Parents-Female)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
8/39	20.51%

10- ہمارے بارے میں Education کا مقصد اچھا انسان بننا نہیں بلکہ Empylement کو سمجھا جاتا ہے- سب سے پہلے بمیں اس پہ کام کرنے کی ضرورت ہے- اس کے لیے Training Teachers کی Program کے پروگرام تیار کیے جائیں- لوگوں کو خود مختار بنایا جائے نہ کہ غلام

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the fourth interview
(Parents-Female)**

Code mixing count	Percentage

4/46	8.70%
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11- جہاں تک Education policy کی بات ہے میرا خیال ہے اس Government نے بڑا اچھا قدم اٹھایا ہے۔ جس میں ملک بھر میں Single syllabus نافذ کیا گیا ہے۔ اس سے شہری و دیہاتی والا فرق ختم ہو گا اور تمام بچے اپنی صلاحیتوں سے بھرپور فائدہ اٹھائیں گے

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the fifth interview
(Parents-Female)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
5/48	10.42%

12- میرا خیال ہے بمارے training سب سے بڑا factor ہے جو توجہ طلب ہے۔ اساتذہ اخلاقی اور علمی لحاظ سے مضبوط نہیں ہیں۔ most of the teachers بچوں کے ساتھ نرمی اور اخلاق سے پیش نہیں آتے اور بچے بھی دوسروں کے ساتھ ویسا برtao کرتے ہیں

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the sixth interview
(Parents-Female)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
8/53	15.09%

Similarly, students were also interviewed in which they are asked to speak on their daily educational activities. They were interviewed as given below.

1 - میں صبح جلدی اٹھ جاتا ہوں۔ میرے والدین مجھے سکول چھوڑ کر اپنی jobs پہ چلے جاتے ہیں۔ Almost school کا سارا وقت Lectures لینے میں گزر جاتا ہے۔ چھٹی کے وقت Babe لینے آتے ہیں۔ واپس جا کر Home work کرتا ہوں اور گیم کرتا ہوں

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the first interview
(Students-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
7/47	14.90%

2- میں صبح سویرے جلدی اٹھ کر نماز پڑھتا ہوں، پھر steacher نے جو home work دیا ہوتا ہے وہ revise کرتا ہوں۔ School time سے پہلے ناشتہ تیار ہوتا ہے وہ کر کے پھر بس سے سکول آ جاتا ہوں

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the second interview
(Students-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
6/38	15.79%

3- رات کے "نقریباً" 12 یا 1 بجے تک پڑھتا ہوں۔ صبح دیر سے اٹھتا ہوں۔ وہ بھی School time کی وجہ سے امی اٹھا دیتی ہیں۔ اس کے بعد 5 minute پیدل چل کر school جاتا ہوں۔ سارا دن سکول میں us continuo lectures کی وجہ سے تھکاوٹ ہو جاتی ہے۔ باقی کام 1 گھنٹہ سونے کے بعد کرتا ہوں

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the third interview
(Students-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
6/58	10.35%

میرا صبح جلدی اٹھنے کا دل تو نہیں کرتا لیکن امی جگا کے نماز پڑھنے کا کہنی ہے۔ ساتھ اپنا سکول کا کام ڈرای کر دیتے ہیں اور چھٹی کے وقت بیبیپر کرنا ہوتا یا رواز کرنا ہوتا یا بیبیپر فرست کے بعد ابو بیبیک پر کول پک کر لیتے ہیں

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the fourth interview
(Students-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
8/45	17.77%

5

میں صبح جلدی اٹھتا ہوں-نماز ادا کرنے کے بعد بیا لوچی اور کمسٹری ریوائیز کرتا ہوں-ناشته کرنے کے بعد رکشہ سے سکول جاتا ہوں۔ بہت کنسٹریشن سے لکچرر سنتا اور نوٹ کرتا ہوں

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the fifth interview
(Students-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
7/37	18.92%

6

میں صبح کے وقت جاگ جاتا ہوں جیسے ابو گھر سے جاتے ہیں۔ میں سو جاتا ہوں-مماز بردستی اٹھا کے ناشته نہیں لگتا۔ لیکچرر اینڈ بوتے بی و اپس کرواتی ہے اور سکول بھیجتی ہے۔ لیکچرر لینے میں بھی کوئی خاص دل آکے سو جاتا۔

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the sixth interview
(Students-male)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
5/37	13.51%

Similarly, interviews were also conducted from female students. They were very excited to participate in the interview, and their interviews were recorded as given

7

ما کے جاگنے بی میں جاگ جاتی ہوں۔ نماز کے بعد امی کی کیجن میں بلی کرتی ہوں۔ ناشته کے بعد بابا سکول رست کے بعد ہوم ورک کرتی ہوں۔ ڈرای کرتے ہیں۔ لیکچرر کے بعد بابا یک کرتے ہیں۔ کچھ دیر کے

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the first interview
(Students-Female)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
9/38	23.68%

8

صبح سویرے اٹھنے کا دل نہیں کرتا بیٹھ ماما جگا دیتے۔ کیجن میں بھی ماما کی ہلیں کرنا پڑتی۔ تیار ہو کہ سکول جانا ہوتا ہے۔ سکول میں کنٹینیوس لیکچرر بہت تھکا دیتے ہیں۔ و اپس آکے و بی کیجن کا کام اور ہوم ورک کرنا ہوتا ہے

**Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the second interview
(Students-Female)**

Code mixing count	Percentage
10/42	23.81%

9

سکول کی روٹین مجھے ذرا ٹف لگتی ہے۔ صبح صبح جلدی جاگنا پڑتا ہے۔ جلدی جلدی بریک فاسٹ کرنا ہوتا۔ اتنی لیکھرزاں اور ٹیچرزاں اتنا ہوم ورک دے دیتے ہیں کہ دیر میں رکھے والا یک کرنے آ جاتا ہے۔ سکول میں وہی بورنگ بندہ اور کوئی اکٹیویٹی تک نہیں کر پاتا۔

Table 4.21 Code switching number and percentage recorded from the third interview (Students-Female)

Code mixing count	Percentage
14/44	31.81%

10

میرا سٹڈی میں بلکل دل نہیں لگتا۔ سکول جا کے ٹیچرزاں اتنا روڈ بیپیو کرتی ہیں کہ موڈ مزید خراب ہو جاتا ہے۔ اور سے اگر کسی دن لیسن نہ یاد ہو تو سب کے سامنے انسٹل کرتی ہیں۔ ٹیچرزاں کو با اخلاق ہونا چاہیے۔

Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the fourth interview (Students-Female)

Code mixing count	Percentage
9/42	21.43%

11

کیونکہ میں سٹڈی میں اچھی بوں اس لیے گھر والے بھی اس معاملے میں بہت سیورٹ کرتے ہیں۔ مجھے گھر کے کام کا ج بھی نہیں بتائے جاتے اس لیے میرا زیادہ تر ٹائم یڑھنے میں گزرتا ہے۔ ناشته اور کھانا بھی سٹڈی روم بی امی دے دیتی ہیں۔

Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the fifth interview (Students-Female)

Code mixing count	Percentage
5/47	10.64%

12

ہم تین بہن بھائی ہیں۔ میرے ابو پڑھے لکھے نہیں ہیں۔ وہ ایک رکشہ والے ہیں لیکن ان کی خواش ہے کہ ہم تینوں ضرور پڑھیں۔ امی جان بھی پورا سیورٹ کرتی ہیں۔ کیجن کے کام بھی کم سے کم بتاتی ہیں تاکہ ہماری پڑھائی میں کسی قسم کا نقصان نہ ہو۔

Table Code switching number and percentage recorded from the sixth interview (Students-Female)

Code mixing count	Percentage
3/48	6.25%

Table Overall percentage of code switching that the parents used in their language

Sr. No.	Gender	Code switching numbers	Percentage
1	Male	4/45	11.11
2	Male	4/45	11.11
3	Male	8/41	19.51
4	Male	4/43	9.51
5	Male	4/50	8.00
6	Male	5/51	12.20
7	Female	13/50	26.00
8	Female	2/38	5.25

9	Female	8/39	20.51
10	Female	4/46	8.70
11	Female	5/48	10.42
12	Female	8/53	15.09

Table Overall percentage of code switching that the students used in their language

Sr. No.	Gender	Code switching numbers	Percentage
1	Male	7/47	14.90
2	Male	6/38	15.79
3	Male	6/58	10.35
4	Male	8/45	17.77
5	Male	7/37	18.92
6	Male	5/37	13.51
7	Female	9/38	23.68
8	Female	10/42	23.81
9	Female	14/44	31.81
10	Female	9/42	21.43
11	Female	5/47	10.64
12	Female	3/48	6.25

Conclusion

Discussion and Findings

The present study investigated the phenomenon of code mixing from Urdu to English, focusing on generational and gender-based variation. Data were collected equally from students and their parents, with balanced representation of male and female participants, ensuring the avoidance of gender bias. The findings confirm that code mixing is a widespread and systematic feature of everyday speech in the studied Pakistani context, reflecting broader multilingual practices observed in other bilingual societies.

Analysis of parental speech revealed frequent Urdu–English code mixing, with female parents exhibiting higher mean usage (14.33%) than male parents (11%). Female parents also showed greater variability in code-mixing frequency, indicating stronger engagement with linguistic change. These findings align with sociolinguistic research suggesting that women tend to adopt prestige language forms more readily than men, often due to social positioning, identity construction, and sensitivity to overt prestige (Holmes, 1997; Labov, 2001). While earlier studies associated women's linguistic innovation with conscious efforts toward status elevation, later research emphasizes that women's role in language change operates across social classes and includes unconscious processes as well (Labov, 1990; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg).

Similarly, student data demonstrated a high frequency of code mixing, with female students showing the highest mean percentage (19.61%), followed by male students (15.20%). These values exceed those of their parental counterparts, indicating that younger speakers are more actively involved in language change. This generational difference supports sociolinguistic claims that younger speakers are more innovative and receptive to linguistic variation, while older speakers tend to be more conservative and norm-oriented (Mouton). The increased exposure of students to English through education, digital media, and technology further accelerates this tendency. English enjoys strong overt prestige in Pakistan due to historical, institutional, and educational factors, reinforcing its integration into everyday Urdu speech.

The study also highlights that code mixing is largely lexical rather than structural. English words are borrowed primarily to fill lexical gaps created by technological innovation and globalization, where equivalent Urdu terms are either unavailable or unused. This finding is consistent with functional theories of language change, which posit that speakers adapt linguistic resources to meet communicative needs (Halliday, 1986). Despite extensive lexical borrowing, Urdu retains its syntactic and phonological integrity. Within Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame model, Urdu functions as the matrix language, providing grammatical structure, while English serves as the embedded language, supplying lexical items. Consequently, the study concludes that English influence does not threaten the structural stability of Urdu, nor does it render intergenerational communication unintelligible. Overall, the findings demonstrate that Urdu–English code mixing is a natural, functional, and socially motivated process, driven by prestige, education, technology, and generational change rather than linguistic deficiency or decay.

Recommendations

Future research should employ larger and more diverse samples to enhance generalizability. Participants from primary, secondary, and university levels, as well as individuals from varied professional backgrounds such as businesspersons and employees, should be included. Additionally, interviews conducted on a wider range of topics may yield deeper insights into contextual variation in code mixing. Such expansions would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of language change dynamics in multilingual Pakistani society.

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