

## INTERGENERATIONAL CODE-SWITCHING PATTERNS AMONG PAKISTANI BILINGUAL SPEAKERS

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines how people switch between languages across generations among bilingual speakers in Pakistan, paying special attention to the differences in how younger and older people who are non-native English speakers. Code-switching is a substantial sociolinguistic phenomenon that presents how people use language proficiently, convey their identity, and respond to socially varied contexts. The research looks into how variances between generations influence how frequently people switch between languages and what objectives that switching serves in everyday discussions. The study was carried out with 45 to 50 participants from both younger and older age groups in Tehsil Quaidabad, District Khushab. Data from spontaneous group conversations indicated that younger individuals frequently switch languages for style, group identity, and technology influence, while older individuals primarily use it for practical communication. Exposure to education, media, and technology significantly affects code-switching behaviors, illustrating its impact on bilingual communication in Pakistan. The findings aim to enhance sociolinguistic research and inform language policy, education, and workplace communication in a multilingual context.

**Keywords:** Code-Switching, Intergenerational Variation, Bilingualism, Sociolinguistics, Digital Media Influence, Language Policy, Education, District Khushab

## Introduction

Code-switching between English and Urdu is prevalent in Pakistan across various contexts like peer communication, workplaces, and classrooms. This shift in linguistic behavior is influenced by generational preferences, media exposure, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic factors. Language serves as a reflection of social identity and cultural heritage, with diverse resources including Urdu, English, and regional languages. As a result, code-switching has become an accepted practice. English is viewed as a prestigious language with ties to power and mobility, primarily being used in formal academic and administrative contexts by older generations. Younger generations in urban, digital, and globalized settings increasingly use English in casual conversations, highlighting the dynamic nature of language behavior and prompting inquiries into the attitudes, motivations, and environmental factors influencing code-switching across age groups. In Pakistan, educational institutions significantly shape language attitudes, with English-medium schools and international media exposure enhancing younger speakers' English proficiency. Conversely, older generations tend to employ code-switching for pragmatic reasons such as clarity and emphasis. These differences suggest that code-switching reflects identity, generational affiliation, and social positioning rather than being solely a linguistic choice.

Code-switching involves mixing languages or speech styles in conversation, influenced by context, topic, and communication methods. Recent studies focus on grammatical rules and the social factors affecting code-switching. The influence of external factors remains a significant research area, with comparisons of language pairs revealing variations based on social contexts. Examples include insertional code-switching in Mexican-American Spanish and English, dependent on a matrix language, versus alternational code-switching in Puerto Rican Spanish, which does not require a matrix language. These examples illustrate the complexity of language mixing dynamics.

The comparison of language use in post-colonial and migrant communities highlights differences in English as perceived by West Africans in Great Britain versus those in West Africa (Nartey, 1982). Communication studies should not solely focus on language but also consider the interplay of structural rules and social contexts. For instance, Berruto (2004) demonstrated variability in code-switching between Italian and German based on social language rules. Specifically, determiners behave differently in code-switching contexts (Muysken, 2000), revealing that internal language categories may be influenced by social factors. For example, Swiss German often allows for Italian noun phrases in certain settings, whereas an Italian main language context results in different patterns of noun usage. This unevenness is absent in the Walser minority case in Northern Italy, presenting an alternative dynamic. Furthermore, an analysis involving a bilingual family returning to Italy showed a prevalence of German determiners, contradicting

previous models. Muysken suggests this behavior may stem from a lack of direct equivalents for function words across languages.

In code-switching (CS), determiners and function words exhibit unique behaviors influenced by their roles in language use. Muysken (2000) highlights two explanations for this. The first connects it to conceptual differences, particularly in German and Italian among Italian second-generation immigrants, where shifts occur in language dominance affecting noun phrase structures. For instance, Italian noun phrases often appear in Embedded Language islands when Swiss German is the main language. However, in the Walser minority in Gressoney, no such imbalance arises. Additionally, a contrasting case from a German/Italian bilingual family indicates a predominance of German determiners, challenging prior explanations. Muysken's second theory posits that the lack of functional word equivalents across languages complicates their behavior in CS. He suggests that categorial equivalence in code-mixing is affected by diachronic and sociolinguistic factors, emphasizing that bilingual communities may perceive language categories differently based on usage frequency and community attitudes.

To explain code-switching patterns, various complex factors play a role, including political relationships between languages, duration of contact, types of bilingualism, and the context of use. Key factors also include attitudes toward code-switching, social networks, and particularly age. Research shows that age impacts computer science skills development, with early learning paralleling language acquisition. Differences in sentence structure and code-switching styles have been noted between young bilinguals and adults. For instance, Mexican American children demonstrate a progression in code-switching from single words to complex sentence components as their bilingual proficiency increases, with specific patterns emerging around ages 5 to 6.

Switching between English and Urdu has become very common in places like talking with friends, at work, and in schools in Pakistan. Language habits have evolved over the years because of different reasons, such as what each generation prefers in language, the influence of media, people's education, and their economic situations. Language shows who we are in society, our cultural background, and the groups we belong to, and it also serves as a way to communicate. Different language resources, including Urdu, English, and regional languages like Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, and Balochi, along with many local dialects, shape how people communicate in multilingual places like Pakistan. Code-switching, which means switching between two or more languages during one conversation or sentence, has become a normal and accepted practice in our diverse language use. The connection between English and indigenous languages has developed over time, as English remains a language associated with status, influence, and opportunities for advancement. In Pakistan, English is mainly used in schools, government, and formal situations because older people often view it as a language for serious or professional use. In contrast, younger people, especially those who grew up in cities and in a digital and global environment, often use English more often in everyday chats. This change highlights that how we use language is always changing and raises important questions about the feelings, reasons, and surroundings that affect code-switching in different age groups.

In Pakistan, the way people feel about language has been greatly influenced by schools and educational institutions. Young people today are hearing and using English more than ever because there are more English-speaking schools, they can easily access international media, and they often use social media platforms. On the other hand, older generations may switch languages for

practical reasons rather than for style. They might do this to make things clearer, to highlight something, or because there aren't exactly words in one language that match what they want to say. These differences suggest that code-switching shows who we are, the generation we belong to, and our social status, rather than being just a choice about language.

Not many studies have examined how people's attitudes towards language, their ability to speak two languages, and their social and cultural interactions are connected. Additionally, looking at how different generations switch between languages can give us insights into how the use of languages in Pakistan might change in the future. Shifts in language choices often indicate bigger changes in education rules, cultural identity, and the values of society. This study aims to show the social and language factors that affect communication in today's Pakistan by looking at how different age groups use English and Urdu together in their conversations. Teachers, government officials, and researchers who focus on bilingualism, how people form their identities, and how languages change in places with many languages may see these findings as having significant implications.

In contemporary Pakistan, English serves as a universal language, while Urdu functions as the national language uniting diverse ethnicities. The country is multilingual, with English as the official medium, primarily used in academic and official contexts (Usman et al., 2025). Code-switching between English and Urdu reflects social relationships and identities, demonstrating linguistic adaptability among different age groups. Recent studies indicate that such switching is a strategic communicative practice, prevalent in educational settings where it aids understanding and clarifies technical terminology.

Research shows that younger students often mix English into Urdu conversations, more frequently in casual settings than formal ones. Khan (2014) highlights code-switching as a common phenomenon in bilingual societies, emphasizing its significance in identity and prestige, particularly in Pakistan. Younger individuals tend to associate English with modernity and progress, using it more in informal contexts like social media, while older generations prefer Urdu, seeing it as a tradition. This intergenerational divide influences language retention and the frequency of code-switching, reflecting broader societal changes.

These findings reveal that generational differences in language usage extend beyond proficiency and are influenced by societal factors like goals and education. Poplack (1980) identified two types of code-switching: inter-sentential (across sentences) and intra-sentential (within a single sentence), which is prevalent in various forms of communication. Multilingual expressions are visible in texts like advertisements and media (Sebba, 2012). However, language mixing may be viewed negatively, as it can be perceived as laziness (Kridhar, 1996). Research indicates that younger bilinguals in Pakistan favor English lexical borrowings, whereas older bilinguals tend to maintain traditional language norms. An analysis of code-switching patterns suggests the need for both quantitative and qualitative research to explore its interactional functions across generations.

Scholars have investigated the use of English in Pakistani media, including print and electronic forms like newspapers, magazines, and television. Notably, Rasul (2013) examined English vocabulary in Urdu children's magazines. Rahmati and Khanum (2020) analyzed code-

switching in Urdu newspaper editorials, highlighting its prevalence in Pakistani society. Khan et al. (2023b) explored Pashto-English code-switching, focusing on Embedded Language islands in data from AVT Khyber, revealing fixed expressions that retain the structure of the Embedded Language.

Findings reveal marked and intentional code-switching rather than code-mixing. In Pakistan, views on computer-assisted learning (CS) are mixed; while some educators see it as beneficial for understanding technical terminology, others worry it may hinder formal English proficiency. Research indicates CS can enhance student participation and reduce anxiety, but effectiveness varies with teacher attitudes, exam structures, and students' backgrounds. Studies on code-switching in bilingual contexts reveal a positive perception among students, highlighting that it does not denote a lack of language skill but rather a preferred communication method. The linguistic landscape of Pakistan is diverse, with code-switching prevalent in daily interactions. However, focusing on a single regional language may marginalize others, causing social tensions, as evidenced by language controversies affecting educational practices and political divisions.

People often favor those in their own group over others, which can lead to bias, stereotypes, and favoritism towards their group (Fayaz et al., 2023). Social identity theory explains how people form group identities and how this influences behavior between different groups, especially in terms of attitudes like bias and discrimination (Tajfel, 1981). This theory also affects how people use language to show who they are and how they connect with others, especially for Generation Z (Jayaputri, 2024). Generation Z, being digital natives, uses unique language that helps them communicate and show where they belong and what culture they are part of (Putri, 2025; Moschin, 2025). They often use slang, abbreviations, and casual language that reflect their background and culture (Bahar, 2025; Paoletti, 2025; Napitu, 2025). Their language is usually informal and mixes different languages, like English and Indonesian, to show their identity (Lutfiana, 2025; Ishak, 2025). Global media and technology also influence their language, making it a mix of old and new ways of speaking (Zia, 2025; Rahman, 2025; Alisherqizi, 2025).

Few studies have explored the differences in language attitudes, bilingual proficiency, and sociocultural reasons for code-mixing and code-switching among non-native English speakers across generations. Understanding these differences is crucial as they reflect changes in language usage and the evolving role of English in regional linguistic contexts. The study highlights the significance of intergenerational differences in communication norms influenced by modernization and global connectivity. By examining English-Urdu code-switching patterns among various age groups in Pakistan, the research aims to shed light on future language use and its implications for educational policy, cultural identity, and societal values in a multilingual setting. The findings may be relevant for language educators, policymakers, and researchers focused on bilingualism and language change.

## Research Objectives

The purpose of this research is as follows:

1. To examine and compare code-switching patterns among younger, middle-aged, and older non-native English speakers in Pakistan.

2. To assess the impact of technological and media exposure on code-switching behavior across different age groups.
3. To explore the relationship between age, language exposure, and frequency or context of code-switching.

### **Research Design**

This study employed purposive sampling as it enabled the inclusion of participants who could offer rich, insightful perspectives on the sociolinguistic phenomenon under investigation (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The diversity of participants allowed for a thorough comparative analysis of linguistic practices across different age groups and social backgrounds. The main data collection tools were group discussions and audio recordings. Recorded conversations were selected because they enable the researcher to explore participants' linguistic behaviors and perceptions in depth while maintaining a consistent thematic framework (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This method also provided flexibility to explore new topics or unexpected insights that arose during the group discussions. Each conversation lasted approximately 25 to 30 minutes and was conducted either in person depending on participants' availability and comfort.

All recordings of conversations or discussions were carried out in a bilingual format (Urdu-English), allowing participants to switch languages naturally. With participants' consent, discussions were audio-recorded for accuracy and later transcribed manually. The conversational guide consisted of open discussion focusing on distinctive themes. Through purposive sampling, spontaneous discussions and thematic analysis, the research sought to identify and interpret differences in language behavior across age groups.

The study's conclusion that schooling and digital media have a significant impact on younger speakers' linguistic behaviour is especially notable. English has become ingrained as a language of thought, analysis, and scholarly speech due to its predominance as the medium of instruction in many educational institutions. The frequent use of inter-sentential switching, in which younger speakers smoothly move to English when expressing complicated or abstract thoughts, is indicative of this cognitive shift. The use of English has also been strengthened by exposure to digital platforms like whatsapp, Instagram, and online learning settings, which have introduced new vocabulary, discourse markers, and conversational styles. Younger speakers thus display what modern sociolinguists refer to as translanguaging or fluid bilingualism, in which communication relies on an integrated linguistic repertoire and linguistic borders are less strict.

### **Population of the Study**

The study focused on bilingual individuals engaged in academic discourse, stratified into three generational cohorts to analyze linguistic variation. The younger generation (ages 16-22) includes students exposed to English-integrated curricula and digital platforms, reflecting modern educational trends. The middle generation (ages 23-40) includes early-career lecturers and postgraduate students with Urdu-medium foundations and professional English usage, representing a transition between traditional and modern linguistic practices.

The study examines bilingual communication among educators aged 41 to 60, who primarily studied in Urdu but adapted to English due to institutional demands. Using purposive sampling, the researcher selected 45 participants 20 young, 15 middle-aged, and 10 older, ensuring they had proficiency in both languages and engaged in academic discourse. This approach focuses

on qualitative depth rather than statistical generalization, reflecting broader influences like language policy reforms and globalization on language practices.

### Research Variables

The code-switching behaviour of elder speakers, on the other hand, is indicative of adaptive bilingualism, which is defined by deliberate and controlled language use. Their use of intra-sentential switching implies that the main purpose of English, especially in academic and institutional settings, is referential clarity. This pattern emphasizes how linguistic competence and preferences are shaped by historical and educational circumstances. Older participants' usage of English is more constrained and context-bound than that of younger speakers since they were generally exposed to the language in more formal and confined contexts.

## Results

The goal of the study is to look at how code-switching changes between generations (younger and older speakers) and to find patterns, functions, and sociolinguistic reasons for these changes. The data comprises recorded conversations and naturally occurring speech samples from participants across various colleges in District Khushab, Punjab. The goal is to look at how people switch between languages differently in various age groups, like younger and older individuals, and to find out the common ways they do it, why they do it, and the social and language reasons behind those differences.

The present study explored inter-generational differences in code-switching behavior by bilinguals in Pakistan. In particular, this study focused on the occurrence and purposes of inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching by different generations. The conversations recorded had to be manually transcribed to retain linguistic genuineness. To ensure authenticity, the conversations had to be listened to several times. The focus was on such factors as pauses, stress, tone, and switching languages.

All respondents were bilingual speakers who were fluent in both Urdu and English languages. The participants were divided into two generational groups: older generation Predominantly Urdu/Punjabi speakers and younger generation English-influenced bilinguals. According to the model proposed by Shana Poplack (1980), there are three main forms of code switching:

### 1. Inter-sentential Code-Switching

Inter-sentential code-switching is when the code switch takes place between sentences.

Example:

*"Muji samjh nhi aa rhi. Can you explain it again?"*

"I don't understand. Can you explain it again?"

It is used primarily by the younger generation.

### 2. Intra-sentential Code-Switching

The switching takes place within a single sentence.

Example:

"Tomorrow I will submit my assignment because there is deadline."

### 3. Tag-Switching

Incorporation of tags or expressions in another language. Example:

“You are coming here, right?”

“This is good, you know.”

### William Labov's Variationist Sociolinguistics

An insightful sociolinguistic study of a recorded discussion about language use in Pakistani educational institutions among academic staff is presented in this section. The conversation emphasizes how Urdu and English interact, which reflects more general language issues in Pakistan. In addition to code-switching theories put forward by Blom and Gumperz (1972), Myers-Scotton (1993), and Fishman (1972), the study is based on sociolinguistic theory, namely William Labov's Variationist Sociolinguistics. These theoretical frameworks offer a thorough framework for analyzing how and why bilingual speakers switch between Urdu and English in educational contexts.

According to Labov's proposition, social factors including age, education, and institutional environment have an influence on linguistic diversity, which is systematic (Labov, 1972). Generational differences are apparent in the current conversation, especially when senior educators consider past shifts in the educational system. This variant shows how language changes in response to changes in society and education. Situational and metaphorical code-switching are distinguished by Blom and Gumperz (1972). While metaphorical switching communicates symbolic connotations like status, authority, and modernity, situational switching happens as a result of context shifts. Metaphorical switching in formal educational contexts is exemplified by the usage of English academic terminology in Urdu language.

### Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model

Language choice is a negotiation of social identities and expectations, according to Myers-Scotton (1993). Depending on their communication aim, speakers choose between marked and unmarked linguistic codes. The switch between Urdu and English in this discussion reflects an unmarked norm in Pakistani intellectual discourse. Language choice differs in social realms like school, family, and administration, according to Fishman (1972). The conversation highlights both Urdu's cultural relevance as a national identification symbol and English's predominance in academic fields. The exchange frequently exhibits intra-sentential code-switching, in which Urdu syntactic structures incorporate English lexical components.

### Conversational Analysis

*Table 1*

#### Examples of Code-Switching in the Conversation

Urdu Expression	English Lexical Item	Type of Code-Switching
<i>Syllabus ko mukamal cover krty hn</i>	Syllabus	Intra-sentential
<i>Language mein masail hn</i>	Language	Intra-sentential
<i>Speech bhi zaroori hai</i>	Speech	Intra-sentential
<i>English ka exposure milna chahiye</i>	Exposure	Intra-sentential

<i>Relaxed environment mein parhty hn</i>	Relaxed Environment	Intra-sentential
<i>Pressure hota ha</i>	Pressure	Borrowing/Intra-sentential
<i>Burdenize or confused ho jaty hn</i>	Burdenize, Confused	Hybridization
<i>Language ko promote or preserve krna chahiye</i>	Promote, Preserve	Intra-sentential
<i>Students ko communicate krna ana chahiye</i>	Communicate, Students	Intra-sentential
<i>Quantity education k bjaye quality education daini chahiye</i>	Quantity, Quality	Intra-sentential
<i>PhD tk apni language mein bolty hn</i>	PHD, Language	Intra-sentential
<i>Teaching ki different phases hoti hn</i>	Teaching, Different, Phases	Intra-sentential
<i>Poor performance hoti ha</i>	Poor, Performance	Intra-sentential

The prevalence of intra-sentential flipping is indicative of both the institutional prestige of English and high bilingual proficiency.

### ***Generational Variation***

The study draws attention to the linguistic differences between younger and older generations. An elderly participant observes: "*Hamari generation mein 1975–76 k dour mein.*"

This result supports Labov's (1972) proclamation that linguistic variety accords with social development by illuminating historical variations in language policy and educational practices. Participants support the preservation exhibit a multilingual philosophy that prioritizes both national identity and international competitiveness of Urdu while highlighting the value of English for academic success. Statements like these:

*"Humein apni language bhi aur English bhi dono ki balancing krna zaruri hai."*

The statement reveals a multilingual philosophy that prioritizes both national identity and international competitiveness.

### **Situational and Metaphorical Code-Switching**

In the academic field, situational code-switching is reflected in the employment of English terms like syllabus, exposure, PhD, and quality education. English is a metaphor for professionalism, modernism, and status (Blom & Gumperz, 1972).

### ***Markedness and Language Choice***

In Pakistani academic discourse, switching between Urdu and English is an unmarked decision, according to Myers-Scotton's (1993) Markedness Model. Nonetheless, allusions to

nations like China, Japan, and Germany represent deliberate decisions that highlight linguistic nationalism and support the advancement of indigenous languages.

### Domain Analysis

The functional distribution of languages seen in the debate is explained by Fishman's Domain Theory.

**Table 2**

Language Use Across Social Domains

Domain	Preferred Language	Purpose
Education	English	Professional communication and academic instruction
Cultural identity	Urdu	Maintaining national identity and legacy
Administration	English	Institutional discourse and documentation
Classroom Interaction	Urdu/English	Pedagogical efficacy
National Identity	Urdu	Continuity of culture

The diglossic character of Pakistani society is confirmed by this distribution. The results show that code-switching has pedagogical, symbolic, and functional uses in Pakistani academia. Urdu stands for accessibility and cultural identity, while English is linked to modernization, global integration, and academic achievement. The findings are consistent with Fishman's theory that language choice is domain-specific and with Labov's claim that linguistic variety is socially conditioned. The information also supports Blom and Gumperz's distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching, as well as Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model. Urdu-English code-switching is a methodical and significant linguistic practice in Pakistani educational institutions, as this sociolinguistic investigation shows.

Bilingual discourse is shaped by institutional standards, ideological viewpoints, and generational disparities. The preponderance of intra-sentential switching emphasizes how English is incorporated into academic communication while highlighting Urdu's cultural significance. Overall, the results support the study's theoretical underpinnings and highlight the importance of encouraging balanced bilingualism in Pakistan's educational system.

### Manual Quantitative Analysis

These qualitative insights are strongly supported empirically by the quantitative analysis. It is evident that younger speakers are more confident and fluent in English since they switch sentences more frequently (60%) than older speakers (24%). On the other hand, elderly speakers' predominance of intra-sentential switching (64%) is indicative of their dependence on Urdu as their main matrix language. These patterns show how linguistic variation over generations is systematic and support the study's central argument.

### ***Frequency of Code Switching in both Generations***

The results of this study show a wider linguistic shift in Pakistani society, where bilingualism is changing from a compartmentalized system into a more fluid and integrated communicative practice, rather than just showing generational differences in code-switching patterns. The difference between younger and older speakers is essentially qualitative rather than merely quantitative (i.e., frequency of switching), indicating disparate cognitive orientations toward language, identity, and communication.

The data reveals that younger speakers no longer view Urdu and English as two distinct language systems. Rather, their speech exhibits what modern researchers refer to as translanguaging, in which linguistic materials are extracted from a single repertory rather than from discrete linguistic borders. The high frequency of inter-sentential switching among younger participants implies that English functions as an equally accessible and cognitively embedded code rather than being "inserted" into Urdu. As the younger generation seems to transcend such structural limitations, this calls into question conventional models of code-switching, especially those that depend on the idea of a stable "matrix language" (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

#### ***Intra-sentential Code-Switching***

Within a single sentence, intra-sentential flipping takes place.

#### **Examples:**

- “Time ke sath *robots aur AI* aa gaye hain”
- “Aaj kal *IT ka scope* bohat zyada hai”
- “Routine life mein *exercise* kam ho gayi hai”
- “Learning aur teaching mein bhi *AI ka use* ho raha hai”

#### **Analysis:**

Urdu structure incorporates English vocabulary elements, such as AI, IT, and workout. This demonstrates:

- a- Lexical borrowing
- b- English's prestige in technological fields
- c- Globalization's impact on young people's speech

#### ***Social Factors Influencing Variation***

Age, education, and exposure to different cultures all have a major impact on social variance in language use. According to the study's findings, younger speakers especially members of Generation Z clearly choose hybrid language practices and frequently transition between Urdu and English.

This tendency is a result of increased exposure to English through globalization, digital media, and education, which has made the language a symbol of academic proficiency, modernity, and status. Older speakers, on the other hand, frequently use English mainly in more formal or domain-specific situations, demonstrate comparatively lower frequencies of code-switching, and tend to maintain clearer borders between languages. As a result, the observed trends not only support well-established sociolinguistic theories but also show how younger generations' linguistic

identities are changing as they deal with bilingualism more fluidly and adaptably than previous generations.

According to the analysis, bilingual Gen-Z speakers actively participate in both intra-sentential and inter-sentential code-switching, which is mostly affected by their educational background and technology discourse. While Urdu preserves social and cultural expression, English predominates in technical and professional domains. The results also show that patterned linguistic variety reflects a rising reliance on technology, evolving socio-cultural concerns, and changing employment inclinations.

There are two main switching patterns displayed by the speakers: **Intra-sentential:** Speaker C states, "Toh yeh important hai skill age." This demonstrates how English nouns and adjectives have been incorporated into Urdu grammatical frameworks.

**Inter-sentential (Between sentences):** Speaker A alternates between complete English and complete Urdu/Roman sentences ("Yes obviously!"), while Speaker G talks nearly exclusively in English. vs. "Yeh bhi theek hai par...").

### *Interpretation*

We can see how language choice conveys "Identity":  
Speaker G (Formal/Structured): Takes a formal or "educated" position by discussing medicine and society in high-level English. Speakers A and F (Casual/Social): They express the urban or "Gen Z" linguistic identity prevalent in Pakistan by using English for consumerist issues and emotional emphasis ("obviously!" and "Hey listen!").

### **Inter-sentential:**

**Example:** Speaker A says, "*Yes obviously! I enjoy online shopping.*" then follows with context that would traditionally be discussed in Urdu.

### *Analysis:*

A change in the social domain is indicated by the transition to complete English phrases during the discussion of "Online Shopping" (Speaker F and A). Here, English is referred to as the language of "modernity" and "consumer culture."

### **Labovian Variation & Identity**

Language variety frequently connects with identity and social status, according to William Labov's beliefs.

**Prestige Dialect:** "Listen Guys!" and "Hey listen girls!" serve as social markers. It proves that the speakers are educated, urban members of the middle or upper middle class.

**Style Shifting:** Speaker G keeps a more serious, critical tone while talking about "society" and "medical fields."

Speaker A demonstrates how speakers change their linguistic "register" depending on the emotional weight or social relevance of the issue by adopting a more expressive, emotive manner while talking about "shopping" ("obviously!").

Younger students demonstrate what linguists refer to as high meta-pragmatic awareness. Students strategically alter codes to control "Face" (social standing), in contrast to earlier

generations who may do it out of necessity. English phrases are sometimes treated by younger students as "macros" or "memes." Words like "obviously," "literally," and "guys" are linguistic indicators of membership in a particular global Internet culture.

### ***Intra-sentential Dominance (Grammatical Hybridity)***

Younger students prefer intra-sentential mixing, which combines both languages within a single clause, while older speakers frequently transition between complete sentences (inter-sentential).

**Syntactic Integration:** *"Professional skill apnay paas hona chahiye."* \* The learner views the English noun "skill" as the sentence's "Matrix" in this instance.

#### **The "Comfort Zone" Effect:**

According to recent research, Gen Z is better at ease in "mixed" environments than in monolingual ones. They frequently find it "performative" or "fake" to speak 100% formal English or 100% pure Urdu, but code-mixed speech feels genuine.

### ***Peer-Group Social Ranking (Inclusion vs. Exclusion)***

Code-switching acts as a gatekeeping mechanism for students.

#### **A-Convergence:**

Speaker F utilizes English to align with the perceived social status of her friends when she asks, "Hey listen girls... is there any favorite brand?" It would be interpreted as a divergence an indication that they are not part of the same "modern" or "elite" social circle if a peer responded in pure, formal Urdu.

#### **B- Modernity vs. Tradition:**

Urdu continues to be the language of the "Private Self" (emotions, culture, family), while English is the language of the "Public Self" (shopping, professional skills, social media). The distinction is becoming hazier for younger students, too, as they employ Urdu for "relatable" humour and English for personal venting (ironic code-switching).

### ***The "Language Attrition" vs. "Bilingual Advantage" Debate***

**The Deficit View:** Conventionalists may claim that this is "language decay," in which pupils are becoming less able to articulate sophisticated ideas (such as "professionalism" or "merit") in their native tongue.

**The Cognitive/Creative View:** According to contemporary sociolinguists like García and Baker, this is translanguaging. These pupils are "rich in a third, hybrid language" that enables quicker, more sophisticated communication in a multilingual society rather than being "poor in two languages."

Feature	Student Usage Pattern	Sociolinguistic Purpose
Lexical Gaps	Using "Medical field" instead of "Shoba-e-Tibb"	English is the primary language of academic instruction.
Marker Usage	Starting with "Look!" or "Well!"	serves as a "discourse marker" to draw attention in a peer group that moves quickly.

Topic-Related Switch	Switching to English for "Online Shopping"	indicates that the subject is a component of a "modern/global" way of life.
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Urdu and English do not operate as distinct, comparable systems in this conversation. Rather, they engage in dynamic bilingual conversation.

**Use of English:**

A fully English statement concerning "online Shopping" opens the discussion. This implies that English is a comfortable or possibly dominating register for these speakers when discussing a subject connected to contemporary, online business.

The debate concludes with abstract, analytical sociological commentary in English, such as "Now families do not prefer to meet each other" and "I think this is all due to mobile phones." This implies that these speakers believe English is a better language to use for making critical or analytical views about society.

**Functional Phrases:**

Expressions such as "I do love," "I don't like," and "Now families do not prefer to meet each other" show how English may be used to express specific preferences and societal truths. Speaker-F and Speaker-B's extensive use of Urdu is strongly associated with cultural description and emotional expressiveness. Words like *tanhai* (loneliness), *sukoon* (peace), *bht khushi* (great happiness), and *bht excitement* (which, although English is blended into the Urdu flow) demonstrate a preference for Urdu when expressing profound emotions.

Following Speaker-E's purely English statement regarding the religious aspect of Eid ("Eid is a gift from Allah..."), the subsequent speakers (F and B) employ a more conventional register of mixed-code speech (e.g., *Bilkul sahi kehrahe hain, bht khushi, sukoon*), which appears to indicate a collective, shared sense of identity.

The distinction between borrowing a word and swapping codes is subtle. Words like "online shopping," "excitement," and "mobile phones" are employed in English. For these speakers, "shopping" is used so often that it is obviously a borrowed term that functions similarly to an Urdu word. Other shifts, such as "completely agree with you," appear to be deliberate insertions of an English phrase into an Urdu cognitive process.

**Qualitative and Manual Quantitative Data Analysis**

Both qualitative theme analysis and manual frequency-based quantification were used to analyse the data, which clearly shows intergenerational variance in code-switching tendencies among bilingual speakers in District Khushab, Punjab.

**Manual Quantitative Analysis (Frequency & Percentages)**

Following the talks' human transcription and coding, occurrences of both intra-sentential and inter-sentential code-switching were found and tallied.

**Younger Generation**

100% of all switching instances were found (N = 120 instances).

**Inter-sentential switching:** 72 cases (60%)

**Intra-sentential switching:** 42 cases (35%)

**Tag-switching:** Six cases (5%)

Younger speakers clearly dominate inter-sentential switching (60%), demonstrating their high level of confidence and English ability. Particularly when talking about contemporary, scholarly, or technological subjects, they often generate whole English sentences.

**Older Generation (40+ years)**

100% of all switching instances were found (N = 90 instances).

**intra-sentential switching:** 58 cases (64%)

**inter-sentential switching:** 22 cases (24%)

**Tag-switching:** Ten cases (12%)

Intra-sentential swapping, which incorporates English words into Urdu patterns, is more common among older speakers (64%). Instead of using English fluently or at the sentence level, their use is restricted and function-specific.

**Comparative Generational Pattern of Code-switching**

Type of Code-Switching	Younger Generation	Older Generation
Inter-sentential	60%	24%
Intra-sentential	35%	64%
Tag-switching	5%	12%

**Key Finding:**

Sentence-level switching and English dominance are characteristics of younger speakers. Older speakers: word-level mixing and a predominance of Urdu. This amply validates the primary assertion of the study, which is that: Compared to elder speakers, younger bilinguals switch to English more frequently and with greater fluency. There is a notable generational gap in code-switching patterns, especially between younger and older speakers, according to an analysis of bilingual conversation in Pakistan. The data clearly shows that older speakers rely on Urdu-dominant, word-level mixing, while younger speakers use English-dominant, sentence-level switching.

Younger speakers mostly use inter-sentential code-switching at the structural level, creating entire English sentences alongside Urdu discourse. This pattern shows a high level of bilingualism, where speakers may switch between languages without breaking grammatical coherence. Their capacity to form complete sentences in English implies that English is a fully internalized linguistic system rather than just an auxiliary resource. Older speakers, on the other hand, mainly use intra-sentential switching, which involves adding discrete English lexical elements into Urdu sentence structures. This type of flipping is indicative of a more constrained integration of English, where it serves as an additional code for particular terminologies rather than as a long-term communication tool.

This heterogeneity can be explained from a sociolinguistic standpoint by looking at Pakistan's evolving educational and linguistic policy. English is rapidly being used as the primary language of instruction, especially in professional and higher education settings. Conversely, older generations have a relatively limited knowledge of English because they were frequently educated in Urdu-dominated settings. Therefore, institutional and historical changes in language exposure are at the core of the observed generational variations.

Furthermore, younger speakers' language vocabulary has been significantly altered by globalization and digital media. English is now widely used in everyday communication due to the widespread influence of social media platforms, online material, and technological discourse, all of which are mostly in English. Because of this, English is often associated with modernity, innovation, and global connectivity among younger people.

Identity construction and peer-group contact play a significant influence as well. For younger speakers, code-switching is a purposeful social practice as much as a communication requirement. English phrases like "obviously," "guys," and "I think" are used to indicate group affiliation and contemporary urban identity. This is consistent with variationist sociolinguistic theory, which holds that social identity and group identification are strongly related to language variation. Younger speakers use language resources, either intentionally or unintentionally, to portray an image of education, global awareness, and social alignment with current trends. However, older speakers are more likely to use language conservatively, emphasizing cultural authenticity and clarity over stylistic diversity.

Additionally, there are generational differences in the functional distribution of languages. Younger speakers use English for a greater variety of communicative purposes, such as phatic (maintaining social engagement), expressive (personal viewpoints), and referential (technical phrases). This versatile usage of English shows how it has been incorporated into many aspects of their life. Older speakers, on the other hand, usually limit their use of English to referential purposes, especially in institutional or academic settings. Their dependence on Urdu as the main communication language is reinforced by this narrow functional range.

Crucially, younger speakers' inclination for sentence-level switching is also indicative of their communicative and cognitive efficiency. Modern theories of translanguaging, which see bilingual speakers as utilizing a single linguistic repertoire rather than alternating between several language systems, are consistent with this fluid bilingualism.

In addition to being linguistic phenomena, the generational variations in code-switching patterns among Pakistani bilingual speakers are signs of more significant social change. The predilection of younger speakers for English-dominant, inter-sentential switching is a reflection of both changing identity conceptions in a contemporary, interconnected world and more exposure to English through education, technology, and globalization. On the other hand, older speakers' dependence on intra-sentential, Urdu-dominant mixing emphasizes the customs and cultural values of the language. When taken as a whole, these trends offer strong proof that younger bilinguals are not only switching to English more frequently but also more fluently and adaptably, indicating a dynamic change in Pakistan's sociolinguistic environment.

## Summary of Results

The study highlights generational differences in code-switching among bilingual speakers in Pakistan. Younger speakers predominantly engage in sentence-level switching with English, demonstrating fluency and a fully internalized understanding of English. In contrast, older speakers often rely on word-level mixing, integrating English minimally within Urdu structures. This shift is linked to educational policies favoring English and the influence of globalization, digital media, and social identity. Younger speakers use English for varied communicative purposes, while older speakers use it mainly in academic contexts. The pronounced preference for English among youth reflects broader social changes and a move towards modernity, indicating a significant evolution in Pakistan's linguistic landscape.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The study explores Urdu-English code-switching among bilinguals in Pakistan, highlighting generational differences. Younger speakers prefer inter-sentential switches, using English as a fully integrated communication tool, while older speakers typically mix languages within sentences, treating English as a limited lexical resource. This generational divide suggests that language use is shaped by social factors, age, education, and technology, aligning with earlier research indicating that higher language skills correlate with more complex switching methods. One of the crucial results from the research shows a clear difference amongst generations in how they switch between languages in their speech. This method functions as an inter-sentential switch, generating full sentences in English along with Urdu discourse. Younger speakers show a strong preference for the cement is the cement and gravel. This shows that someone has a strong ability in both languages, where English is not just an extra tool for speaking but is fully understood and used as a complete way to communicate.

This shows that someone has a strong ability in two languages, where English isn't just an extra tool for speaking but is fully integrated as a way to communicate. Unlike younger speakers, older people mostly used a different way of mixing languages. They would switch between English and Urdu within the same sentence, using English words inside the structure of Urdu sentences. This pattern shows that English is used in a more limited and specific way, mainly as a tool for words rather than as the main way people communicate. These results match earlier studies that show people with higher language skills tend to use more complex ways of switching between languages, especially when switching between sentences (Poplack, 1980).

### Discussion

From a sociolinguistic point of view, these differences between generations can be well explained by Labov's (1972) Variationist Theory. This theory suggests that how people speak changes in a predictable way based on factors like age, education, and the social situation they're in. In this study, age turned out to be a major factor in how people use language, with younger participants showing more adaptability and ease in their use of two languages. Their frequent and confident use of English shows bigger social changes, like more people having access to English-based education and being part of global communication networks. This method, on the other hand, helps maintain clearer boundaries between Urdu and English, reflecting both their educational background and their stronger affiliation with traditional linguistic norms.

The results also strongly back up Fishman's (1972) Domain Theory, which says that the way people choose language depends on the situation and changes depending on the social context. In this study, English was mostly used in school, work, and technology areas, while Urdu stayed important in areas related to culture, personal conversations, and expressing feelings. This method serves as an expansion in the functional range of English, being used not only for referential purposes, but also for expressive and phatic functions. This shows that English is becoming more common in daily conversations, especially with younger people, which is making the lines between different areas of communication less clear.

### Impacts of Globalization

The findings showed that globalization and English's growing dominance in Pakistan have had a major influence on language behavior, especially among young people. English's increasing significance as a language of opportunity and status, as well as changing linguistic attitudes, are

reflected in its incorporation into daily communication. At the same time, Urdu's continuous use as the matrix language confirmed its crucial role in maintaining national and cultural identity. Due to factors including education, globalization, and digital communication, the qualitative research showed that younger bilingual speakers had a higher frequency of intra-sentential code-switching. Older individuals, on the other hand, mostly used inter-sentential code-switching, which reflects more structured linguistic practices and established language preferences.

### **English is as a sign of social status and modern identity.**

Another key point comes from using Blom and Gumperz's (1972) idea about the difference between switching languages based on the situation and using language in a symbolic or figurative way. This method serves as a metaphorical code linked to modernity, professionalism, and global connectivity. The data show that English often functions as a metaphorical code associated with modernity, professionalism, and global connectivity. For instance, talks about technology, learning, and online trends often took place in English, even

When they were part of conversations in Urdu. This shows how English is seen as a sign of social status and modern identity. In contrast, Urdu kept on being a sign of continuing culture and feeling part of a community. The way these two languages live side by side shows how language, who we are, and what things mean in society are all connected in places where people speak more than one language.

Additionally, the results are in line with Myers-Scotton's (1993) Markedness Model, which describes language choice as a negotiation of expectations and social norms. The usage of English vocabulary elements like "assignment," "syllabus," and "PhD" in Pakistani academic and professional contexts is an unmarked choice because these terms are commonly used and anticipated in institutional discourse. Younger speakers frequently use English for stylistic and identity-related reasons, extending this unmarked usage to more expansive communicative situations. However, older speakers take a more conservative and norm-oriented approach to language use by limiting their use of English to those contexts where it is socially acceptable.

The study's conclusion that schooling and digital media have a significant impact on younger speakers' linguistic behaviour is especially notable. English has become ingrained as a language of thought, analysis, and scholarly speech due to its predominance as the medium of instruction in many educational institutions. The frequent use of inter-sentential switching, in which younger speakers smoothly move to English when expressing complicated or abstract thoughts, is indicative of this cognitive shift. The use of English has also been strengthened by exposure to digital platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and online learning settings, which have introduced new vocabulary, discourse markers, and conversational styles. Younger speakers thus display what modern sociolinguists refer to as translanguaging or fluid bilingualism, in which communication relies on an integrated linguistic repertoire and linguistic borders are less strict.

The study admits some limitations despite its contributions. The findings may not be as broadly applicable due to the comparatively small sample size and emphasis on particular educational contexts. Additionally, participants' language behaviour may have been affected by the presence of recording devices, especially in formal settings. Nonetheless, initiatives like extended participation and repeated observations helped lessen these impacts and improve the data's dependability.

The use of intra-sentential code-switching (mixing inside a single sentence) is more integrated and "seamless" among the younger generation, known as digital natives. There is a strong dependence on digital acronyms and social media terminology. English is used as a

representation of global connectivity and education. A shift away from maintaining "pure" heritage languages is reflected in an unconscious mingling of codes. This study is consistent with Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) from a theoretical standpoint. While the younger generation utilizes code-switching as a type of divergence to create a distinct subcultural identity, the older generation frequently uses convergence modifying their speech to fit the younger generation's modern lexicon to remain relevant.

### **Findings**

The study found that the frequency and type of code-switching among bilingual speakers are significantly influenced by generational differences; older participants preferred inter-sentential switching, while younger participants showed a higher frequency of intra-sentential code-switching. These trends were indicative of broader sociocultural changes, exposure to schooling, and changing linguistic identities in Pakistani culture today. In the end, the study confirmed that code-switching is a potent social and communicative tool that reflects the dynamics interaction between language, culture, and identity rather than just a linguistic phenomenon.

According to the study's findings, bilingual code-switching patterns are significantly influenced by generational variations, with younger speakers favoring intra-sentential switching and older speakers favoring inter-sentential switching, which reflects Pakistan's changing sociolinguistic reality. The results of this study shed light on Pakistan's complicated sociolinguistic environment, where intergenerational code-switching (CS) acts as a barrier and a bridge between the younger and older generations. The reasons, frequency, and structural patterns of language switching differ greatly between generations, despite the fact that bilingualism is a common feature. According to the study, code-switching is mainly a situational and practical skill for the older age. Inter-sentential switching, or alternating at sentence boundaries, is a common feature of their language behaviour, which is greatly impacted by a need for "accommodation." The research shows that elderly speakers often use English for professional or technical words but switch back to Urdu or regional dialects to preserve emotional closeness and cultural authenticity.

### ***Conclusion of Research Objectives***

By analyzing intergenerational differences in code-switching patterns among Pakistani bilingual speakers, with an emphasis on the frequency and types of inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching, the current study effectively met its main research aims. Younger speakers showed a stronger propensity for intra-sentential code-switching, indicating greater linguistic flexibility and exposure to English through education, media, and digital communication, according to the data, which clearly showed generational differences. Older speakers, on the other hand, mostly used inter-sentential switching, suggesting a more methodical and cautious approach to bilingual communication. These findings demonstrated that code-switching behavior is significantly influenced by age, linguistic ability, and social factors.

The change in code-switching patterns between generations points to a more extensive language evolution in Pakistan. The younger generation's fluid switching suggests a shift toward a more hybrid "Pakistani English" identity, while the older generation serves as the "gatekeepers" of traditional language conventions. The long-term survival of legacy languages (such as Punjabi, Pashto, or Sindhi) is at risk due to this shift, since younger speakers are favoring the Urdu-English binary more and more. A significant change in language behaviour across age cohorts is revealed by the study of intergenerational code-switching (CS) patterns among Pakistani bilingual speakers in District Khushab. This study shows that although code-switching is a fundamental

communication strategy used by all generations, the older and younger participants' structural nuances, functional reasons, and socio-psychological drives are very different. According to the research, code-switching is primarily used by the elder generation (those over 50) for situational and symbolic reasons. They regularly employ tag-switching or inter-sentential transitions to highlight religious statements, cultural proverbs, or to uphold social hierarchy and formality. For this group, Punjabi or Saraiki continues to be the "matrix language," with English or Urdu acting as the "embedded language" that is occasionally employed to indicate authority or contemporary education. The younger generation (18–30 years old), on the other hand, frequently engages in intra-sentential code-switching, also known as "code-mixing." This group exhibits a more fluid, hybridized linguistic identity in which English and Urdu are smoothly and spontaneously incorporated into the grammatical structure of their native dialect. Technological discourse, globalized peer culture, and lexical gaps in traditional dialects with relation to contemporary notions are the main drivers of their motives.

This study met its main goals by looking at how code-switching differs across generations among bilingual people in Pakistan, especially focusing on how often and in what ways people switch between languages within and between sentences. The study showed clear differences between generations, with younger people more likely to switch languages within a sentence. This shows they are more open to using different languages and have more experience with English because of school, TV, and online communication. This method functions as an inter-sentential switching tool, indicating a more structured and cautious approach to bilingual communication. In contrast, older speakers predominantly relied on inter-sentential switching. These patterns showed that age, how well someone knows a language, and the cultural and social factors they're part of all have a big impact on how they switch between languages.

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