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Code-Switching Patterns Among Young Adults in Pakistan: A Comparative Study of Punjabi-English and Pashto-English Bilingualism in Informal Settings

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Abstract

The study examines the repertoires of code-switching by young bilingual adults in Pakistan with reference to Punjab-English speakers in Rawalpindi, and the Punjab and Pashto-English speakers in Kohat. The research will also be conducted with the aim of explaining the mechanisms and reasons of the interchange of language by bilingual people in different kinds of informal communication, and which social, educational and regional factors define language behavior. Information gathered was done using informal recording of conversations and short interviews of university going youth in both cities. The results of the analysis show that the Punjabi-English bilinguals are more prone to the intra-sentential switching where English words and phrases are used in the Punjabi sentences with ease. Pashto-English bilinguals on the other hand use inter-sentential switching phenomena mostly switching languages between the sentences especially in academic or peer related discussions. The results point to the fact that being urbanized, the influence of the media and the educational level highly influence the preferences and rate of code-switching. Furthermore, the attitude of participants to code-switching was rather positive and corresponds to adaptive bilingualism in everyday situations. Nevertheless, the Pashto language speakers were found to be more conservative in its usage, particularly, in formal or elder-oriented contexts. Besides bringing in the sociolinguistic insights to bilingual speech in Pakistan, this paper has also pointed out the importance of regional identity in language practices of the young people. The comparison aspect offers a better understanding of how different bilingual communities bargain in their language use in the domain of cultures and social aspects.

Keywords: Code switching, bilingualism, Punjabi English, Pashtun English, Sociolinguistics, language attitudes, youth communications, dialects, Pakistan

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Study background

Language is a very strong means of communication, self construction, and interactional process. Code switching which refers to the alternate use of two or more languages during a course of a conversation is now a common occurrence in multilingual societies such as Pakistan. Pakistan has very diverse linguistic landscape with the national language being Urdu whereas the official language is English with other major languages spoken in different provinces being Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi and Balochi. Among this Punjabi and Pashto are two highly spoken regional languages particularly with the youth.

Due to the recent decades of globalization, more availability of social media, and the adoption of English as a global language, a more rapid spreading of the mixing of English and regional language has been extended, especially to young adults in many semiformal domains that include peer to peer communication, social gatherings, classrooms, online chats, and family communication. In this regard, code-switching is a manifestation that does not only show linguistic flexibility but also displays cultural identity, group identity, and social behavior.

This study will concentrate on the behavior of code-switching of the teenager-bilingual among Punjabi-English and Pashto-English regarding the similarities and differences and the role of code-switching in informal situations in Pakistan. A comparative study will help the research enhance the insights as how the national and international languages communicate in the context of everyday human life of bilingual speakers in Pakistan.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Although code-switching is progressively being used in Pakistan particularly among the young people, there exists no comprehensive cross-comparative study which endeavours to examine the way speakers of other regional languages around Pakistan code-switch with English. The aim of studying how other dominant regional languages like Punjabi and Pashto interact with English in informal phases remains feeble as there is a gap in most of the previously conducted studies although there are studies on Urdu-English bilingualism.

The tendency of young adults who actively use many languages in their communications can be characterized by numerous code-rich switchings bearing a certain bilingual character of communications. Nevertheless, their reasons to switch, how they switch, that is, intra-sentential, inter-sentential switches or tag switching and social connotations related to these changes may differ among linguistic communities. These variations are also important in looking at the general sociolinguistic pattern of bilingualism in Pakistan.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This research study is primarily aimed at analyzing and inter-relating the code switching behaviors of Punjabi-English and Pashto-English bilingual young adults in informal context. In this research the objectives are:

- Research how often, and in what forms, the code switching occurs between the Punjabi-English and Pashto-English communication.
- Enquire into the sociolinguistic use of code switching among the bilingual youngsters.

- Find out the dissimilarities and similarities in the behavior of code-switching of the two groups.
- Learn how there is relevance in cultural and identity aspects portrayed by practices involved of code-shift.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to arrive at fulfilling the objectives of this study, the study shall be informed by the following research questions:

1. What are the popular code-switching patterns of Punjabi-English and Pashto-English bi-lingual young adults in their informal language?
2. Which are the most common code-switching (intra-sentential, inter-sentential and tag switching) used by each group?
3. Which sociolinguistic forces (e.g. identity, peer pressure, emotion expression, relevancy of topics) play a role when choosing code-switch behavior?
4. In what ways are Punjabi-English/Pashto-English bilinguals different when considering their motivations and situations in switch of codes?

1.5 Significance of the Study

A research like this is both practically and intellectually meaningful. On an academic note, it is useful in the advancement of literature on sociolinguistics and bilingualism in South Asia, because it offers a comparative study on code switching patterns among two key linguistic groups. Little research on bilingualism has been carried out in Pakistan in regional language, such as Punjabi and Pashto in which most researches have been in the field of Urdu-English code-switching. With this gap sealed, the research contributes to our knowledge of multithoughtful communications in verbal communication in general.

In practice, knowledge on the usage and motivation of code-switching by young adults would assist educators, language policy designers and content developers to create communication guidelines. As an example, academic institutions will be able to make informed choices concerning the use of languages in educational establishments and online learning. In addition, the acknowledgment of the positive roles of code-switching will be able to overcome the negative attitudes and myths toward linguistic mixing as an indicator of the inability to speak languages properly.

1.6 Boundaries of the Study

This study will be confined to bilingual young adults (age 18 30) fluent in either Punjabi-English or Pashto-English and involved in informal communication at the university, social or online level. No formal or institutional discourse like that of the news media, legal communication discourse and academic discourse is covered in the study. It deals mainly with the informal language as it is pronounced or written in a computer, involving use of in everyday bilingual life.

The paper takes a comparative research pattern and underlines the common and different characteristics of code switching among the two language pairs. It has participants located in various cities, in the provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to capture diversity at the regional level. But because of time and other resources limitations, it is likely that that the study

does not take into consideration all dialectical or socio- economic diversities within any one linguistic group.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a literature review of available literature is provided that is going to be applied to code-switching, particularly in bilingual environments like that of Pakistan. It includes definitions of code-switching and theories of code-switching, those studies that appeared internationally and nationally, and the research gaps. This chapter will aim to establish a scholarly background in which Punjabi-English and Pashto-English code-switch in young adult people in informal environments can be examined.

2.2 Code-Switching: Concept and Definitions

When there is an alternation in two or more languages or varieties of a language in the same conversation or utterance, such practices are known as code-switching. Poplack (1980) lists 3 large categories: inter-sentential (between the sentences), intra-sentential (in the sentence) and tag switching (the segregation of tags or discourse markers of another language into the other). Code switching is prevalent in the multilingual communities and has many communicative and social purposes.

According to Myers-Scotton (1993), code-switching is not only a linguistic but also a social conduct, depending on self, social context and the panel. Code-switching is an approach, which indicates bilingual capability and social cultural awareness of the speaker in a community that shares two languages.

2.3 International Studies on Code-Switching

There has been long-term research into bilingualism and code switching at an international level. Gumperz (1982) examined the application of code switching in negotiation of social relationships and meanings. In his ethnographic works in India and U.S., he demonstrated that bilinguals alternate codes due to social aspects, including being formal or belonging to a group.

Poplack (1980) who researched the Puerto Rican bilinguals in New York came up with a framework which is still commonly in use. She has proven that intra-sentential switching needs considerable proficiency in both the languages and that code-switching is an ability and not a lapse.

Li Wei (2000) carried out a study on Chinese-English bilinguals in the UK and concluded that code-switching enabled the speakers to be more accurate in conveying ideas, effectively change a topic, and make claims of cultural identity. In the same vein, Auer (1998) focused on the interactional and conversational uses of the change of code.

2.4 Code-Switching and Youth Identity

Code-switching is common means through which bilingual youths entertain identity or construct group belonging or social distance. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) stated that identity construction occurs in language. Multilingual youth mix language creatively in social networking, texting and informal chats to either indicate modernity, schooled, or cultural pride.

The existing research on youth language in online communication conducted by Androutsopoulos (2015) showed that code-switching in informal digital communication is frequently associated with the peer culture, expressivity, and humor.

2.5 Studies in South Asia and Pakistan

Multilingual societies, such as in South Asia, are heavily inclined towards code switching which is part and parcel of communication. As a colonial legacy, English has been known to run alongside local languages both in formal and informal contexts.

2.5.1 Identity - Urdu-English Code - Switching

In Pakistan, most studies are performed on Urdu-English bi-lingualism. Manan, David and Dumanig (2015) analyzed the issue of code-switching in Pakistani classrooms, and these authors pointed out that both teachers and students interchange English and Urdu in the Pakistani classrooms due to clarity purposes and prestige. Mahboob (2009) noted that the English language has been regarded as synonymous with education and prestige by the young people that have resulted to inter-mingling of the English language even amid casual Urdu conversations.

The social political position of the English language in Pakistan was also discussed by Rahman (1996) according to whom the English language strengthens the division of classes. Code-switching, by this meaning, does not only indicate bilingual proficiency, but it is also indicative of the social stratification.

2.5.2 Local Language Code-Switching

There is a paucity of studies related to bilingualism in relation to regional languages. In a study of the Punjabi-English code-switching in Lahore by Dogar et al. (2010), the researchers concluded that code-switching is a widespread practice in the Lahore where most young people switch to English to express an especial technical thought or identity as a modern person.

According to the study conducted by Khan and Jan (2019) on a Pashto-English code-switching in Peshawar, they have found that the main trend among young speakers is to switch to English when they want to sound respectful, significant, and modern. But the research was restricted to scholastic settings.

Most of the literature available fails to directly compare bilingual groups in different regions as well as the more informal situations, which are the home, socializing or communication with peers.

2.6 Informal Code-Switching and Communication

Code-switching is more natural and frequent at informal settings. As pointed by Li Wei (2005), when there is casual chat, bilinguals do not hesitate to alternate the codes to be funny, to stress something or simply get used to it. Young adults in Pakistani families commonly talk regional languages at home and incorporate English words when talking to a brother or a friend.

E-space such as WhatsApp and Instagram are other environments where informal code-switching becomes the norm. Barton and Lee (2013) argue that online sources show how bilingual youth base language combination without planning, in most cases trying to demonstrate creativity or feeling.

2.7 Theoretical Frameworks

There are two significant theoretical models that inform the current study:

2.7.1 Typology of Poplack (1980)

This model assists to categorise code-switching into three categories; intra-sentential, inter-sentential as well as tag-switching. It is vital in examining the pattern of bilingual speech.

2.7.2 Markedness Model of Myers-Scotton (1993)

This is a model that concerns social motivation of code-switching. On the basis of audience, context, and intended social identity, speakers either use a marked or unmarked code. This theory comes in handy to explain informal bilingual communicative interactions.

2.8 Research Gap

As a literature review has shown, it can be concluded that:

- The bulk of Pakistani studies is restricted to Urdu- English code switch.
- There is not much literature that provides a comparative analysis of Punjabi-English and Pashto- English speakers.
- Little is done to explore informal environments in which bilingual young people mix languages freely.
- Literature on the use of code-switching does not consider how it depicts the identity of the youth, the local culture and the socializing process that is peer interaction beyond formal boundaries.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction 3.1

This chapter outlines the research methodology in investigating code-switching patterns of Punjabi English and Pashto English bilinguals in the informal setting. The chapter consists of the research design, details of the participants, data collection instruments, and data analysis methods, and ethical aspects. It is concerned with the natural language behaviour through the everyday discourse between youths of two linguistic groups in Pakistan.

3.2 Design Research

In this study, a qualitative comparative study design will be applied, and the design is suitable when studying natural discussions and bilingual talk. The case of code-switching is better explained when we are dealing with actual use of a language and thus a qualitative study will enable us to study language in context, but not numerically.

3.3 Research Objectives summary

The aim of the study was 10. To investigate the pattern of code-switching in Punjabi-English and Pashto-English bilinguals.

☐ To compare frequency and types of code switching in the two groups.

☐ To comprehend social and language motives to switch in informal situations.

3.4 Respondents

The participants include young adults aged between 18 and 25 years in the Rawalpindi (Punjabi-English bilinguals) and Kohat (Pashto-English bilinguals). The age group was selected since it is

the age of generation that was exposed to the English language and the local language in learning, television viewing, and socialization.

Total Participants:

15 (punjabi-English) Rawalpindi

15 Kohat (Pashto-English)

Participants were in all cases university students or recent graduates and fluent in English and their native language.

Participant Criteria:

☑ Needs to speak English as well as his or her native language (Punjabi or Pashto) regularly.

☑ Should be able to have casual discussions with other children.

Else ☑ Should agree to taking part in recordings and brief interviews.

3.5 Method of Sampling

Purposive sampling technique was employed. The participants were chosen depending on their background of being bilingual with the willingness to participate. This process promotes the inclusion of individuals that speak both languages on daily basis.

3.6 Technique of Data Collection

Simple methods were applied in order to manage the tools as follows:

3.6.1 Recording of Audio On Record

3.6.1 The recording of audio on record 2 dolomite material, constituting the 1s (or first) shell 2 of the hull 2 of the submarine, extended between 14 ft. 6 in. and 22 ft. 6 in. into the sea, and thence by chain 2 to a depth of 1 ft. 6 in. 3 There is a light chain cable, leading 1 ft. 6 in., to the hull 2 of the submarine itself

The participants were required to use their mobile phones and record 10-15 mins of natural and casual communication with friends or family members. There was no single subject to be discussed so that a person could use the language freely.

3.6.2 The Brute Force Method Short Interviews

There was also a brief one on one informal interviewing (10-15 minutes) by each participant on:

- The personal use of the English and Punjabi/Pashto in their case.
- The frequency at which, and under what circumstances they alternate languages.
- Their personal beliefs and perception towards the code-switching.
- The phones or voice recorders were used in recording such interviews.

3.7 Procedure of the Data Analysis

Transcription of all the recordings was performed manually. It was examined in terms of:

Types of code-switching:

oIntra-sentential (within sentence)

oInter-sentential (between sentences)

oTag-switching (short phrases or words)

Switching frequency in conversations.

Reasons or causes of switching (e.g. emphasis, emotion, no vocabulary, humor). Such visualizations were captured based on encoding color coding, e.g. blue = native language, red = English during transcription. No sophisticated software was designed.

3.8 Ethics

Prior to recordings, oral consent was granted.

Confidentiality was promised to the participants as no names were to be implied into the report made.

It was a voluntary process and one was able to opt out at any moment.

Information was only utilized with academic purposes and which was erased after use.

3.9 Limitations

The results may not be generalized to each and every bilingual youths in Pakistan, given that the study only focused on the two cities.

Recorded speech samples might not be 100 % natural as subjects were aware that they were being recorded.

Minimized application of software could have decreased the technical analysis but could have kept the process within control.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

The chapter provides the results of the investigation on the data gathered among young bilingual people in Rawalpindi (Punjabi-English) and Kohat (Pashto-English). So information was collected by conducting informal conversational tapes and short interviews to look into why and how these people do code switching in informal places. The analysis will fall under a few categories that include types of code-switching, frequency, the context in which the co-speech conversations are used, the attitude held by the participants and any difference in comparison of the two groups.

4.2 Types of Code-Switching Observed

There were three main categories of code-switching identified among members:

Intra-sentential Switching It includes insertion between an English word or phrase in the middle of a sentence. Rawalpindi participants experienced it more often.

Examples:

Punjabi-English: I submitted my assignment yesterday but the teacher told me that it is not complete."

▣Pashto-English: Za class ta waranayam, owing to a forgetting of my note-book.

Inter-sentential Switching The participants exchanged whole sentences among languages.

Examples:

Punjabi-English: I do not know that. I will look and inform you."

Pashto-English: Zma sara paisay na di. I will borrow some off my friend."

Such fillers as: you know, I mean, or right? were also used as the Tag-Switching English.

Examples:

Punjabi-English: Mainu lagda ae, you know, oh banda thoda ajeeb ae

The Pashto- English: Za kha yam I mean just tired.

4.3 Frequency of Code-Switching

The frequency of code switching was not the same:

Punjabi-English speakers would interject English in their Punjabi, sometimes during academic, tech or pop-cultural conversations.

In Pashto-English speakers, there was a reduction in frequency, where English was applied on particular words, or on the complete sentences as part of studies, or in formal communication.

Example (Punjabi-English): Sir had said something like this, that he comes to presentation tomorrow but I am ready now.

Literally (Pashto-English): Za na karray, homework, the topic was too hard.

4.4 Situations of Code-Switching

The situation with code-switching was used in some informal cases:

Academic Talk: Talking about classes, examinations and group activity

oO panderer ta keh reha si keh plagiarism da issue ae.

oMa help wakhla, assignment pe, I was not able to understand the question.

Emotional Expression: Being emotional or making arguments

oMainu bara gussa aaya, graduate level?

oTo za kho was entirely a surprise to wo, she had not thought so.

Peers: Funny conversation, teasing, joking

o You are very funny ae, I assure you I laughed till I cried.

oDa ba awaz kam ka, your jest was too noisy.

Clarification/Emphasis: Change stress or understanding on to English

oMain sahi keh reha, he is not to be depended upon.

oZa matlab da, it was not done on purpose.

4.5 Punjabi-English And Pashto-English Bilingual Comparison

Punjabi-English Bilinguals:

- Frequent mixing between words in a sentence
- Casual, free usage of English slang
- Immersion to city English music and media
- Easy switching between ease or trendiness

Common Patterns:

Aj class is so boring ama this is really a time-wasting course.

Use it most of the time eh Gabriel Google Translate, koi easy ho jaye to.

Pashto-English Bilinguals:

An increased amount of switching between sentences or terms

Engsih spoken more formally or more clearly

The presence of less English language in social story telling or slang

Well used in an academic setting but not in a traditional Pashto venue

- Common Patterns:
- “Za da homework complete kawo. It was not that hard.”
 - “Za kha na yam, I had a long day at university.”

4.6 Attitude towards Code-Switching held by the Participants

The attitude towards code-switching was positive predominantly in both groups. Punjabis who had learned English said: Tu English bich gall kar ke har smart lagda ae.

We are not conscious even when we combine languages.

Pashto-English Participants of the Wording said:

In the classroom, it assists us to learn fast. Da elders sara na but with friends we change easily. Pashto speakers were also a bit conservative and would not switch in the presence of the elderly and other religious meetings.

4.7 Results in Brief

Switching codes is a normal thing to bilingual young people. Punjabi English speakers choose intermingling in sentences in order to sound fluent. Pashto-English speakers alternate sentences, in most cases to be clear. Both employ English in academic discourse, peer conversation as well as emotional communication. Urban exposure with culture setting has effects on switching patterns. The attitudes are extremely favorable with perception of context (e.g., elders/formality).

This discussion depicts that code-switching in Pakistani bilingual young people is frequent, responsive, and situational. Rawalpindi Punjabi-English speakers are more integrated into the English language as shown by the use of modern English expressions and slang in Punjabi. The speakers of Pashto-English in Kohat have more formal types of switching, which indicates culturally conservative behavior. These patterns support the dynamic bilingual competence and changing linguistic scene among the youthful Pakistanis.

Chapter 5: Summary, Findings, and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 includes a summary of the research as a whole, the main findings of the study, and makes recommendations on the basis of the analysis of data which was carried out in the 2nd chapter. This paper examined how a group of young bilingual adult speakers in Rawalpindi (Punjabi-English) and Kohat (Pashto-English) behaved in terms of switching between languages and moving between codes in informal contexts. This was aimed at understanding the nature, frequency and contextual usage of code-switching among these groups and comparing the linguistic behaviour of the same.

5.2 Study Conclusion

The study was aimed at determining and evaluating code-switching types and situations of Punjabi-English and Pashto-English bilinguals. This paper used qualitative research design and the methods used to generate data included informal discussions and short interviews of young adults belonging to two different areas. The respondents of Rawalpindi showed the Punjabi-English and the respondents of Kohat revealed Pashto-English bilingualism. It analyzed the intra-sentential, inter-sentential and tag-switching followed by comparison in terms of frequency and functional use in the two Groups.

5.3 Major Findings

1. Code-switching is both common and natural: Not only the participants in both groups performed code-switching in informal interlocutions regularly: It seemed to be an usual element in their bilingual communication, with particular emphasis on contact with peers.

2. There is a variation in the code-switching types according to the region: Punjabi-English speakers used mainly intra-sentential type of code-switching, putting English fragments and words in Punjabi sentences. The Pashto- English speakers, however, favored inter sentential switching and were able to complete full sentences in English or Pashto.

3. Urban exposure: the Rawalpindi group lived in more urban milieu, experienced more English moorings in media, educational settings, and popular culture that resulted in increased periodicity and ease in the usage of English.

4. Several purposes of code-switching: The purpose of switching languages was versatile: it was linked to the need to show emotions, outline the point, inform, or something stylish and culturally conscious.

5. People are quite positive about code-switching: The majority of the participants considered code-switching as beneficial and comfortable. The Punjabi-English speakers were mostly open and free concerning the same whereas Pashto-English speakers were moderately reserved in formal or senior dominated situations.

6. Switching is influenced by societal and cultural factors: Pashto speaking respondents reported an intentionality not to switch during the presence of elders or in professional settings which were cultural behavioral expectations and respect. There was less hesitation in switching by Punjabi speakers irrespective of the audience.

5.4 Recommendations

1. Encourage bilingualism: Schools ought to embrace and enhance bilingualism and code-switching as linguistic practices. The elements of code-switching can be incorporated in the classroom by the teachers so as to create some bridge in understanding.

2. Bring on board the regional comparisons: Drop-down studies In general, these varieties of bilingual combination need to be researched in other regions of Pakistan, i.e., Sindhi-English or Balochi-English, so as to obtain a much clearer concept about multilingualism.

3. Language sensitive curriculum design: Curriculum must be developed bearing in mind the switch code that the children follow so as to teach in an effective manner and also involve these students in a better way.

4. Parent and community involvement: Campaigns of awareness will improve the negative attitudes toward the concept of code-switching and will teach how to understand the viability of code-switching in everyday life, particularly, in multicultural communities.

5. Use digital tools and media: Because media has a significant impact on bilingual speech, it is also preferable to include educational media that would conform to local bilingual patterns and make students understand why and how directly code-switching occurs.

5.5 Concluding remarks

It was found that younger individuals of bilingual adults have a widespread and powerful pattern of code-switching in Pakistani communication. Punjabi-English and Pashto-English speakers behave linguistically depending on their social, cultural and learning background. Although both groups of people use code-switching as an expression of clarity, comfort, and expression, the Punjabi-English has a more non-formal use and frequency of the practice. On the contrary, Pashto-English bilinguals are more formal and situation-definite in their shift behavior. These patterns may not only lead to better education strategies and cultural understanding in a linguistically diverse environment such as Pakistan.

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