

Language Hybridization and Code Mixing in Pakistani Talk Shows

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Abstract

South Asia is a fertile field for research in language, especially in language change and variation and in this region Pakistan presents a complex linguistic picture where English holds a unique position. The colonial background, prestige attached to English, education policies during the last fifty years, and progress in the field of media and communication etc. have played a pivotal role in determining the role of English in this linguistic scene. Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, has gradually been replaced by English in many walks of life. English words, phrases, clauses, and sentences are frequently mixed in Urdu. Use of code switching and code mixing as linguistic strategies, has become a familiar and well-known phenomenon that is not merely linguistic rather is socio-cultural in nature.

The reciprocal process of language desertion on one hand and adoption of foreign vocabulary items on the other hand in the recent decades, reflects the change in modes of thought and action in the whole society; and can be used as a measuring gauge for the socio-linguistic change in the area.

Within this context the paper aims at exploring the process of language desertion and hybridization by focusing on the phenomenon of code mixing, particularly in electronic media. The linguistic data for the research is taken from a TV talk show ‘Pchaas Minute’; the paper focuses only on the analysis of code mixing of lexical items falling in the noun category such as noun insertions, noun phrase insertions, and hybridization in nouns, and noun phrases etc. It is expected that the research will provide a useful insight into the nature and direction of linguistic/ sociolinguistic change in Pakistan.

Introduction

Code switching is a conversational strategy used to shift from one language to the other on sentence boundary. The linguistic scenario of Singapore is a classic example of frequent code switching used to establish cross or destroy group boundaries; and to create or evoke certain identities. Code-mixing, another important linguistic phenomenon in many countries such as Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, means the mixing up of the words of L2 in L1 to the extent that the speaker changes from one language to the other in the course of a single sentence. Both the phenomena are very common among bilingual speakers.

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Background of Research Problem - Situation in Pakistan

In Pakistan there has been a rapid change in the linguistic scenario during the last few years; and sprinkling of English words in the every day conversation can be heard frequently. This frequent code mixing is not restricted to any specific category of lexical items, rather is found in single words (nouns, verbs, adjectives etc.), phrases, and clauses; language units are hybridized too. Thus, every day we come across such examples of code mixing:

Kitna khubsurat scene hai (noun)

In dono ko compare kuro (verb)

Yeh one-sided report hai (Noun Phrase)

Aj mai nay Kofta curry banaya hai (Noun Phrase Hybridization)

In Pakistan high prestige is attached to English so code mixing of English in every day Urdu speech reflects the conversational strategy of the speakers to identify themselves with the elite, educated, and sophisticated class. The natural outcome of this frequent code mixing in Pakistan is desertion of certain Urdu vocabulary items. Thus, many words of Urdu that had been in use in the past are now considered obsolete.

Since the relationship of language and culture is binary this change in the linguistic scenario is the by-product and indicator of the changed socio-cultural norms, and, reciprocally it has initiated and brought changes in socio-cultural norms/setting. Media, also, in the same way, has a reciprocal relationship with ‘language and culture’; it is a reflector of a culture and its language, and in turn, plays its role in shaping and modifying a culture and a language. Thus, language, culture and media make a trio in which each has an impact on the other two; and in turn, is shaped, influenced, and modified by the others. In Pakistan, too, language used in media, especially in electronic media, is not only a reflector of the socio-linguistic changes occurring in the region but also has its role in determining the nature and speed of this change. The processes of code mixing (of English in Urdu and other local languages), hybridization (of English and Urdu/ local languages), and desertion (of Urdu/ local languages) are going on side by side, and are setting in motion one another.

Significance of the Research

With in the framework of this trio (language, culture and media) the present paper aims at exploring the nature and direction of this linguistic change by analyzing the frequency of code mixing of English and Urdu in a TV talk show ‘Pchaas Minute’ from Geo TV Channel.

The research will be helpful in determining the socio-linguistic dimension of the processes of code mixing, language hybridization and language desertion by documenting the change and determining the frequency of change in different lexical/ structural categories. The paper, however, is delimited to the study of noun category of lexical items only.

Literature Review

We all use language so intensively each day that we take it for granted, but it is highly complex in nature, and hard to define. Culture, another ambiguous term, means far more than it is generally thought to be: it is something more than social, economic, and ceremonial events or arrangements as observable concrete or material phenomena. It is socially acquired knowledge that someone has by being a member of a particular society (Hudson, 1980:74). To Lyons (1981:301-2) it can be interpreted as an antonym to ‘barbarianism’, a reference to excellence in art and literature, or as it is used by ethnographers i.e. the beliefs, behaviors, manners, ways of doing things, customs and traditions etc. To Ward Goodenough “Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behavior or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things. It is the form of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting them” (Dil, A. S. 1976:13).

The inter-relationship of ‘language’ and ‘culture’ is even more complicated and tricky than each of the terms individually and independently is. Man’s environment is physical as well as social, and language serves as the main channel to establish harmony with his environment by transmitting the required patterns of living to him (Halliday 1984: 8). *Vise versa*, as Prucha (1983) examines, language usage and evolution are determined by consideration of extra individual and extra linguistic purposes or social needs.

In today’s fuzzy and blurred socio-linguistic scenario of the world Radio and T.V have played a vital role. The fuzziness of language and culture boundaries are significantly related to the issues of identity that includes, social, and cultural identity which according to Lustig, M. W., and Koester, J. (Eds) (2006:3) is one of the important aspects of human identity.

In different cultures language diversity can be studied along three synchronic dimensions i.e. geographical, social, and stylistic (Dil, A. S. (Ed.) 1976:47). Out of these three, about the social dimension of language variation Yule G. (1987:190) asserts that two people growing up in the same geographical area, at the same time, may speak differently because of certain social factors. Apart from the social identity of the addressor, the addressee, and the person mentioned, there are other factors in the social context that are correlated to ‘linguistic variation’; and it can be safely proclaimed that the strands of ‘code variation’ and the strands of ‘social variation’ move in inter-knitted patterns.

Code-switching and Code mixing as Conversational Strategies

Code-switching and code mixing are related yet different terms used in the field of socio-linguistics with relation to language variation and change. In code switching the speaker makes switches between two or more languages depending on audience, setting and purpose. It can be called the ‘juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems’ (Gumperz 1982: 59). Code switching can be of two types: situational code switching, in which switch depends on change in situation, and no topic change is involved;

Metaphorical code switching, in which a change of topic requires a change of code. Romaine, S (1995, p122) cites Poplack (1980) that code switching can be of three types: tag switching, intra sentential, and inter-sentential. Poplack also claims that intra-sentential switching involves the greatest syntactic risk and demands for better mastery of both the languages.

Code mixing, on the other hand, is the transfer of linguistic elements from one language into another in multilingual speech. Odiliv, Terence (1989:6) asserts, "Language mixing is the merging of characteristics of two or more languages in any verbal communication." Code mixing, as compared to code switching, is more restrained, delicate and subtle to deal with since it requires the mastery to fit in pieces of one language in another language, while the speaker is using that other language as a base. These 'pieces' of the other language are often words, but they can also be larger units such as phrases or clauses. However, linguistic preferences and frequency of mixing at different levels varies from language to language. It not only depends on the two languages that are mixed, but also on the socio-cultural background of the user. Hammink, J, E. (2000) defines intra-sentential switching (code mixing) as 'switching at the clause, phrase level, or at word level if no morphological adaptation occurs' such as '*Abelardo tiene los movie tickets.* (Abelardo has the movie tickets.) Thus, code switching and code mixing are used interchangeably when intra-sentential code switching is referred to. Another term that creates problems is borrowing, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between whether an item is a loan word or is a result of code mixing or code switching.

The claim that speakers who use switching or mixing speak neither language well is palpably untrue. Discussing 'mixing' Kuchru, asserts that "mixing entails transfer of the units of code a into code b at intersentential and intrasentential levels, and thus developing a new restricted-or not so restricted- code of linguistic interaction" (1986:64). He claims that the use of such a code functions at least in a 'disystem'; thus the code mixed system has 'functional cohesion' and 'functional expectancy'.

Code Mixing in Urdu

The phenomenon of code mixing in Urdu as a linguistic process is not new; it predates partition. After independence though Urdu was given the status of national language, certain factors- the colonial background, controversial issue of official language controversy over medium of education, and, prestige factor attached to English, industrialization and globalization- have added to the importance of English with the rising of every dawn. Today the on rush of English through the communication/ media channels has added to the exposure to English. One of the consequences is frequent code switching and code mixing, which in turn has resulted in the desertion of certain lexical items of Urdu.

Instances of Code Mixing in Other Languages

In today's world where (at least partial) bilingualism is the norm everywhere code

mixing is done in almost every society/culture. For instance though in Hong Kong Chinese and English both are official languages, spoken English does not appear in daily communication in general, and there is peer pressure against using English (except code mixing) for oral communication among Hong Kong people. Code mixing in Hong Kong is insertional in nature. Secondly, if there are no alternate expressions in informal Cantonese, code-mixed English sometimes serves “gap-filling function” For example “佢有 offer 啦” means “He got a job offer”, when two fresh-graduates are talking about job seeking, as there is no informal Cantonese for “job offer”. Thirdly, English is mixed to avoid unpleasant words. For example English words toilet/ washroom are used to avoid the Chinese equivalent. (www.ctlwmp.cityu.edu.hk/lingintro/english/lang-soc/code-e.htm). All these three characteristics can be observed in Urdu/ English code mixing in Pakistan.

Some examples of code mixing from Welsh-English data, as given by Deuchar, M. (2004) are as follows:

- 1: *mae'n* hope less (It's hopeless)
- 2: *dw i'n* supportio *Cymru* (I support Wales)

Code mixing can be insertional as well as alternational. For instance in Turkish insertional as well as alternational mixing with other languages is also done as Auer (2000:831) quotes Turkish- Dutch data by Backus, 1996:

- 1) bir sürü *taal-lar-I beheersen* yapiyorken,
“while he knows a lot of languages, ...” (Insertional)
- 2) çok yapınca, *dan is het niet meer erg*, ...
“when many people do it, it's ok, ..” (Alternational)
(Dutch words are italicized)

In Pakistan, apart from Urdu, in vernaculars and regional languages such as in Pushto, Saraiki and Punjabi, too, a lot of mixing is done. For instance:

- 1) *Da Sa Khabra de che* I can't do this. (Pushto/ English)
Point is that I can't do this
- 2) *Unay maynu ap keha si* he would do that. (Punjabi/English)
He himself said that he would do that.

Constraints on Code Mixing

During the process of code mixing often the use of the elements of L1 is unconscious and spontaneous; and it seems to fit perfectly well in speech. However, as Bing asserts, certain questions demand attention such as how two distinct languages narrow down their differences, whether some pattern or rules are followed, if so what are those rules etc. He also refers to the studies during the past two decades that were mostly concerned with the socio linguistic parameters of code mixing and code switching. He points out the works of Gumperz & Hernandez-Chavez, 1972; Hymes, 1972 and others, which mainly dealt with setting, topic, domain, and participants.

However, according to him later on Timm (1975), Kachru (1975), Pfaff (1976 & 1979), Wentz and many others worked on the syntactic constraints on the phenomenon of switching and mixing.

Though initially intra sentential code mixing was considered syntactically more or less random rather than a rule-governed phenomenon, in the more recent works it is suggested that there are syntactic constraints on it. Despite the vast fund of information about ways in which bilinguals mix their languages the search for general, universally valid constraints on code mixing has proved difficult.

Can mixing take place at any point in a sentence? What can be the possible constraints on code switching and mixing? The major linguistic models that have been proposed from time to time to answer these questions are: Context free grammar, government and binding, and the matrix language frame model (Romaine, 1995). Each of these models however, has its own flaws and none can handle all types of cases very well.

Role of Media: Television as an Agent of Language Change

To Hermaan and McCheseny the scope of communication has broadened very much in the contemporary societies; and a diversified range of the ways of communication, including phone, fax, mail, reading and watching the media is available to the modern man (1997:2).

Amongst all the electronic media television is a significant mode of communication Bayer, Jennifer stresses its significant role and asserts that its impact can be in its three-dimensional roles: It is entertainment; it is informational; and it is educational. The pervasive role of TV is transforming the sociolinguistic scene all over the world. According to Hermaan and McCheseny “it is with this world wide surge of commercial television that decisive changes in global media in the 1990s are most apparent” (1997:45). No society can escape the pervasive influence of television, and it has become a part of modern man’s life so, in Japan, for instance, “as an average at the national level, televiewing time is surpassed only by sleeping time and working time” and “televiewing is the most common habit except, of course, sleeping, even if it has been formed in recent years (Eguchi, H. and Sata, K. Eds. 1974:57)”.

As far as the case of Asia is concerned television in Asia has been transformed since the introduction of cable and satellite cross-border channels in 1990s, though previously TV in Asia was restricted and limited to a few terrestrial public service networks (Richards, M & French, D. 2000:22). This process of globalization has consequently played a significant role in linguistic change that includes a worldwide adoption of English, and desertion of national/local languages, which are striving for survival.

Media and Language Change in Pakistan

Today in Pakistan TV channels are multi-lingual. We have, on TV, the creative use of Urdu marked with the phenomenon of code switching, and code mixing which can lead to new and complex linguistic forms in Urdu in future, and which can also lead

speakers of Urdu to shift from their national language to a new hybridized language.

Findings and Analysis For data collection a talk show ‘Pchaas Minute’, that was on the topic of Higher Education in Pakistan, was taken from GEO television. From the program the code mixed lexical items falling in the noun category were analyzed by dividing them in four main categories: Noun insertions, noun phrase insertions, noun hybridization, and noun phrase hybridization. However, the report presented in the program was not included in analysis. The data analysis reflects the following results:

Sr. #	Constituent Category	No. Of Constituents Used
1	Noun	120
2	Noun Phrase	61
3	Noun Hybridization	6
4	Noun Phrase Hybridization	24

Noun Insertion

Poplack 1980, as Jisa, H. (2000:1364) cites, asserts that fluent bilinguals code switch more on inter sentential or higher constituents level (e.g., sentences or clauses); and mixing on intra sentential level, especially of lower level constituents (e.g., nouns, verbs, determiners, adverbs, adjectives etc.) is less frequent. However, a very regular exception to this category is noun. The data analysis reveals that though all the participants in the talk show were highly educated and fluent bilinguals, tendency and frequency of mixing/switching is more in lower level constituents. 120 noun constituents were used in the duration of fifty minutes (see appendix A). Out of these 120, there were 45 nouns that were used once while the rest of 75 are those nouns that have been repeated more than once. *Award, Observation, Education, Policies /policy, Grant/grants, Department, Government, Fee, Vision, Standard/standards, Number, Knowledge, Institute/s, Degree, Measure, Break, and Percent* are the words that were used twice, while *College, Focus, Program/s, List, and Teacher/s* were repeated thrice. *Graduate* and *budget* were used four times during the program. The word *university* was repeated 18 times during the conversation. Note any proper nouns such as the name of an institution, discipline, currency etc that were used in the program have not been counted. It is significant that out of all the nouns used, there were only 8 such items (manager, governor, graduate, graduation, internet, college, program, award) for which there are no equivalents in Urdu or the Urdu equivalent are obsolete, rest of the words have Urdu equivalents that are still in use. For instance ‘university’ has its equivalent ‘*Jamia*’ but the word university was used 18 times in the program, and ‘*Jamia*’ was not used a single time.

Noun Phrase Insertion

As far as the second category that is noun phrase insertion is concerned 62 such insertions were found (see Appendix B). Out of these 62 instances 46 were of the use of

an item once. *Average standard, Nobel laureates, Recurring budget/s,* and *International linkages* were used twice; *Development budget* was used thrice; while *Higher education* was used by the speakers 5 times. All these English noun phrases are inserted in the base of Urdu syntax, following the syntactic rules of Urdu; also notice the absence of article/ determiner in these noun phrases that could have been a part if they had occurred in an English sentence.

Noun Hybridization

An interesting category (see Appendix C) is that of noun hybridization of which six instances were found: *feesain (used three times), classon, schoolon,* and *degreean*. In these instances pattern of mixing of English noun+ Urdu suffix can be observed. It is however to be noted that all the examples of hybridization are done by adding plural suffixes of Urdu to singular nouns of English, and addition of prefixes and suffixes to make hybrids is very restricted in English Urdu mixing. Apart from plural making no such hybridization is found; even in hybridized plurals the use is very limited; and generally on the grade of social prestige and approval attached to language use it falls on a lower level.

Noun Phrase Hybridization

Fourth category (see appendix D) is of noun phrase hybridization where with in a noun phrase constituent lexical items from Urdu/English are mixed. 24 such instances were found in the data; Doctor sahib has been counted once only though it was repeated several times. There are however several varieties within the category. For instance 7 noun phrases by combining English qualifier+ Urdu noun are made; vice versa Urdu qualifier+ English noun are also combined to make noun phrases, though the number is comparatively smaller i.e.3. An interesting instance of the use of Urdu qualifier+ English qualifier+ Urdu noun is **chotay chotay European mulk**. Insertion of an Urdu preposition/conjunction between two English nouns is also done to make noun phrases; it is noteworthy that there is no instance of the use of English connector between two Urdu lexical items.

Conclusion

Communication through television is a significant mode to promote new discourse in bi/ multi-lingual societies. The pervasive presence of the television medium is transforming the sociolinguistic scene in Pakistan too. The opening of multiple TV channels in Pakistan has opened gates to the multicultural and linguistic diversity of the world thus raising the issues of “preservation” vs. “change” with reference to loss/ assimilation or and shift of Urdu. It seems that the processes of globalization will further increase this tendency towards code-mixing and code replacement. Since the acceptance, promotion and development of a language is linked with the avenues it provides for upward socio-economic mobility for individuals in a particular society; English, in this context has a very significant role; and media adds to its power. The

unprecedented increase in the popularity of TV, and its impact on the language of the viewers will probably shrink us from using our national language, and will give way to an unprecedented speed of change and hybridization in Urdu.

Appendix A: Noun Insertions

Minister	Export	Subject	College 3	Budget 4
Panel	Curriculum	Planning	Award 2	Number 2
Internet	Innovation	Government	Graduate 4	Knowledge 2
Rating	Invention	Presentation	Observation 2	Institute/s s
Manager	Student	Resources	Eduction 2	Degree 2
Governor	Feedback	Range	Focus 3	Measure 2
Rating	Merit	Relevance	Policies/Policy 2	Break 2
Fund	Syllabus	Concept	Grants/grant 2	Institute/s 2
Administration	Avenues	Graduation	Program/s 3	Percent 2
Inverviews	Evaluation	Million	List 3	Vision 2
Spark	Sector	Infrastructure	University 18	Standard/standards 2
Improvement	Majority	Research	Teacher/s 3	
Planning	Slary	Bag	Department 2	
Evidence	Facilities	Talent	Government 2	
Allocation Sources	Motivation	Fee 2		

Appendix B: Noun Phrase Insertion

Research	Few days back	Requirement
Left side	Multi national companies all the	Modern university ordinance
Research and technology	world in Pakistan	Co-operative institution
Nobel laureates	Salary structure	Public universities
Lab facilities	Cost of Evaluation	Industrial programs
Quality of education	Average standard 2	Teachnical potential
Higher education 5	Multi disciplinary course	Information Technology
Transference of resources	Nobel Laureates 2	IT experts
Policy makers	Best institutions	Web Development
Associated colleges	Equal opportunity for everybody	Need based system
Important question	Natural Resources	General students
Number of reasons	Development budget 3	Faculty development
Proliferation of degrees	Recurring budget/s 2	Ph.D level
Mushroom institutes	Public sector universities	Research grants
Ph.D faculty members	Highly qualified	International linkages 2
Visiting professor	Federal government	English medium
Medical Representative	National vision	Target oriented
Needorient oriented	Computer chips	

Appendix C: Noun Hybridization

Feesain (used 3 times)	Classon	Schoolon	Degrean
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Appendix D: Noun Phrase Hybridization:

Administrative <i>Zururiat</i>	Motor <i>garian</i>
Knowledge <i>ka</i> measure	Long terraur medium term
Especially <i>humar</i> i country <i>kay liay</i>	Universities <i>ki</i> list
Innovation research and development <i>maen</i>	Choti <i>si</i> break
Average standard <i>jo hai</i> graduate <i>ka</i>	Teachers <i>ki</i> salaries
<i>Bayn-ul-aqwani</i> level	Primaryaur basic education
Chotay chotay European <i>mulk</i>	Advance <i>mulk</i>
President <i>sahib</i>	Important <i>guftgu</i>
Minister <i>Sahib</i>	Curriculum <i>aur uska</i> relevance
<i>Bayn-ul-aqwami</i> linkages	Basically negative contribution
Ph.D <i>ki</i> degrees	<i>is</i> point of view <i>saey</i>
Linkage between the absorption	<i>Bayn-ul-aqwami</i> rating
<i>aur unki jo</i> production <i>hai</i>	Doctors <i>sahib</i> (repeated several times)

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