



RESEARCH PAPER

English Verb Switching in Balochi: Patterns, Functions and Sociolinguistic Implications

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the phenomenon of English verb switching into Balochi, a growing sociolinguistic trend in Balochistan. The objective of this research is to examine the intensity, patterns, and sociolinguistic motivations behind the use of English verbs in Balochi discourse. Data were collected from seven districts of Balochistan, Quetta, Hub, Turbat, Gwadar, Jafarabad, Sibi, and Lasbela representing diverse sociolinguistic contexts. A total of 1,050 participants (150 from each district), aged between 12 and 50, were interviewed in different educational institutions, language centers, and marketplaces focusing on situations where English verb switching was most likely to occur. The English verb switching was transcribed and analyzed to gauge the influences of verb switching. The results of the Chi-square software specified a considerable number of English verbs switching into Balochi in the urban areas than the rural ones. This is very alarming for a language which has already been ignored and marginalized.

KEYWORDS Code-switching, English Verb, Balochi Verb, Sociolinguistic Implications

Introduction

English is considered to be the lingua franca throughout the globe. It's the language of scientific knowledge and the source of information technology. Most of the academicians throughout the world navigate through the internet to explore research material through this language. The dominance of English language has laid a great impact over the other languages of the globe.

In 1834, the British Empire occupied the land of Balochistan and made English as the official, administrative and the language of educational institutions, while Balochi was used in local communications. The agenda of the colonial masters was to marginalize the Balochi language and diminish its usage in offices and educational institutions. The simultaneous practice of English in administration, education and other spaces of life rested a great impact on the Balochi language.

After the foundation of Pakistan, the situation of languages became more multifaceted, while it was mentioned in the Constitution of Pakistan (1973), Article 251 that Urdu will be the national language and it will replace English with Urdu for official and administrative purposes within fifteen years. The article further illustrates that provinces will be permitted to promote and preserve their languages with the consent of their provincial assemblies.

In Balochistan, the largest province of Pakistan and home to a majority of Balochi speakers, Balochi has remained largely excluded from formal domains such as education,

administration, and the media. Despite repeated demands by Baloch intellectuals, scholars, and writers to include Balochi as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges, government policies have largely favored Urdu and English. The rapid proliferation of English-medium private schools, encouraged and sometimes subsidized by the provincial government, has further marginalized Balochi. While such initiatives have increased literacy in English, they have simultaneously weakened the intergenerational transmission of Balochi, reducing its functional load in formal and semi-formal communication.

It's alarming that, from 2014 till date the Balochi language books are being confiscated and bookstalls are closed down in different districts of Balochistan, while the English language is appreciated and English medium schools are encouraged in rural and urban areas of Balochistan by the government officials. This singularity has reduced the interest of youth to read and write their own language.

The immediate usage of English in offices, educational institutions and language centers has changed the verbal structure of Balochi as well as other minor languages in Balochistan. This study investigates the English verb switching in Balochi and impacts on the Balochi language.

Literature Review

Capt. Leech (1838) who first produced a grammar book in Balochi, as well as the Brahui, Punjabi and some other languages of this region. Gladstone (1874) also a pioneer who wrote grammar book in Balochi and illustrated the contact of Balochi with Sindhi and Lahenda

Apart from this, Maj. Mockler (1877) and Maj. Marston (1877) extended the grammatical books of Mockler and Martson. Dames (1904) is the one of the influential orientalists who carried out research on the eastern dialect of the Balochi language and classical literature.

In the mid of twentieth century, Grierson (1921), in his monumental *Linguistic Survey of India*, devoted a section to the Balochi language, documenting its phonological and morphological features. Morgenstierne (1932) carried out a linguistic mission to north-western India, contributing detailed observations on Iranian languages, including Balochi. Sokolova (1953), provided comparative phonetic descriptions of Iranian languages, offering a basis for situating Balochi within the wider Iranian languages' family.

At the end of twentieth century, research on Balochi became more focused and sophisticated. Faridi (1968) explored the historical and cultural background of the Baloch, while Elfenbein (1983) made significant contributions to the study of Balochi. Longworth Dames' (1988) *Popular Poetry of the Baloches and the textbook of the Balochi language* had documented oral traditions, classical poetry and the Balochi language grammar.

The late twentieth and early 21st centuries saw a shift toward sociolinguistic, phonological, and dialectological studies. Jahani (1989) addressed issues of standardization and orthography, while Jahani (2002) examined the impact of state control on language use in Balochistan, highlighting the sociopolitical dimensions of language maintenance. Archer (2003) studied multilingual repertoires in Quetta, demonstrating how speakers negotiate multiple linguistic codes in daily life. Korn (2003) investigated Balochi historical phonology, while Farrell (2003) documented linguistic influences on Karachi Balochi.

Elfenbein started working on the Balochi dialectology in 1960s. His studies on Balochi phonology (1997), Eastern Hill Balochi (2009), and dialectology (2006) remain influential. Jahani (2013, 2016) documented the status of Balochi in Iranian Balochistan and described efforts in developing Balochi language resources through the Balochi Language Project. Farrell (2008) examined metaphorical usage in Balochi, reflecting deeper semantic and cultural processes.

More recent contributions have addressed the impact of language contact and the sociolinguistic consequences of globalization. Korn (2009, 2010) analyzed Balochi within the broader Iranian language family, including its connection to Parthian. Soohani (2017) provided a comprehensive phonological analysis of Iranian-Balochi dialects, while Mayer (2017) compiled an English-Balochi dictionary, facilitating bilingual studies.

In the contemporary period, there is growing attention to language shift and code-switching. Ali, Hasan, and Sabir (2023) discussed the phonological evolution of Balochi under language contact, while Aysha Tahir and Baloch (2023) examined the switching of Urdu nouns into Balochi, offering valuable methodological parallels for the present study on English verb-switching. Collectively, these studies highlight the dynamic nature of Balochi, its historical depth, and the ongoing challenges it faces in the context of multilingualism and linguistic dominance of Urdu and English.

Research on verbal switching in Balochi has emerged relatively recently, yet it is particularly significant in today's globalized world. Studies on code-switching indicate that verbs are among the most commonly borrowed components in contexts of linguistic contact, as they hold substantial communicative value and demonstrate both syntactic and semantic blending. Within the Balochi-speaking community, individuals frequently incorporate English verbs into Balochi sentence structures, especially in city environments and among the educated youth. This behavior not only enhances communication in areas where English prevails, like education, technology, and governance, but also conveys notions of social status, modernity, and alignment with international linguistic practices.

The intrusion of English verb switching has brought internal changes in the verbal structure of Balochi. This study illustrates the frequency, pattern of adaptation of English verb in Balochi.

Material and Methods

Carrying out this research data were collected from seven major districts of Balochistan especially, Quetta, Hub, Turbat, Gwadar, Dera Allah Yar, Sibi, and Lasbela. These districts were deliberately selected to identify the variations of English verbal code-switching in Balochi speakers at the educational institutions of Balochistan.

A total of 1,050 respondents were included in this study, with 150 individuals selected from each district of Balochistan. The participants were from 12 to 50 years, surrounding school students, university students, working professionals, and individuals from marketplaces and public spaces. The sample was designed to balance gender representation, educational background, and social class in order to provide a comprehensive summary of the phenomenon. For conducting this research, the qualitative and quantitative analyses were used. The qualitative analysis focused on the functions of English verb switching into Balochi discourse, identifying patterns of insertion and integration. The quantitative analysis measured the frequency and intensity of verb switching across different age groups, genders, and regions.

The analysis of data conducted using Chi-Square software to determine the verbal code-switching of English into Balochi. In the data it was to identify the mode, median, and standard deviation were calculated to describe the influence of English verb usage into the daily life Balochi language.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
English Verb Switching in Balochi at the Educational Institutions in Quetta

English Verb Switching in Baloch at the Educational Institutions in Quetta						
Balochi	Area	English verb in		Mean	N	Std Deviation
		Age				
Loc	Quetta	12-15		26	1	.
		16-20		7	1	.
		21-25		14	1	.
		26-30		11	1	.
		31-40		15	1	.
		41-50		6	1	.
		Total		13.1667	6	7.25029

(Interviews conducted: 8th March, 2022 KBC, and PC, Quetta; 9th March, 2022, IT University, Quetta)

According to the data results, the most affected age group of 12-15 years in Quetta district is 26%. It indicates a high ratio of English verb switching in Balochi, while in the other age groups, for example the age group 31-40 years illustrates the ratio as 15%, while 21-25 is 14% and 16-20 years is 7%, while 41-50 years is 6%.

The total mean of code-switching in all groups is 13.1667, and the standard deviation is 7.25029, which shows a higher changeability among the participants. This lays a great impact in the verbal system of Balochi language in the urban areas especially in the educational institutions of Quetta.

Table 2
English Verb Switching in Balochi at Educational Institutions in Hub

Area	Age	English verb in Balochi		Std Deviation
		Mean	N	
Loc	Hub	12-15	2	1
		16-20	10	1
		21-25	10	1
		26-30	10	1
		31-40	5	1
		41-50	5	1
		Total	7.3333	6

(Interviews conducted: 14th March 2022, best light School Hub; 15th March 2022, at Global School and Boys Degree College, Hub., Balochistan)

The scenario in Hub, Balochistan is not so different. According to the collected data, the age groups of 16-20, 21-25, and 26-30 years each exhibit a 10% rate of English verb-switching within Balochi. This indicates that the younger and early adult populations are equally influenced by English lexical intrusion, reflecting the growing dominance of English in both educational and social communication domains.

The mean value of code-switching in Hub is 7.3333 and the standard deviation is 5.91623. Though, the general mean is lower than Quetta, but the trend remains concerning, particularly among younger speakers of Balochi. These results strengthen the observation that English-Balochi verb-switching is becoming an increasingly unescapable feature of

linguistic behavior in the educational institutions of southern Balochistan, posing a potential threat to the structural and lexical integrity of the Balochi language.

Table 3
English Verb Switching in Balochi at the Educational Institutions in Turbat

Loc	Area	Age	English verb in Balochi		Std Deviation
			Mean	N	
Turbat		12-15	12	1	.
		16-20	12	1	.
		21-25	10	1	.
		26-30	7	1	.
		31-40	6	1	.
		41-50	8	1	.
		Total	9.1667	6	2.56255

Interview conducted: 22nd March 2022, GMHS & OPF, Turbat, 23rd March, 2022 BHS & GGDC Turbat)

The linguistic situation in Turbat also reflects an alarming condition, where switching of English verb in Balochi with values from 7% - 12%. The ratio of verbal code-switching of English in Balochi in urban centers of Turbat is 9.1667, and the standard deviation of switching is 2.56255, which shows lower ratio than Quetta city.

In Turbat the, the main reason of verbal switching of English into Balochi is the increasing ratio of English language Centers, Private schools and communications to the neighboring countries.

Table 4
English Verb Switching in Balochi at the Educational Institutions in Gwadar

Loc	Area	Age	English verb in Balochi		Std Deviation
			Mean	N	
Gwadar		12-15	12	1	.
		16-20	12	1	.
		21-25	10	1	.
		26-30	7	1	.
		31-40	7	1	.
		41-50	7	1	.
		Total	9.1667	6	2.48328

(Interviews conducted: 29th March, 2022.GDASS & DLC; 30th March, 2022. GGDC, Gwadar)

The findings from Gwadar's educational institutions further illustrate the extent of English verb-switching within Balochi speech across different age groups. According to the collected data, the age groups of 12-15 and 16-20 years exhibit the highest frequency of verb-switching, each recording a mean ratio of 12%. The 21-25 age group follows with 10%, while the 26-30, 31-40, and 41-50 age groups each demonstrate 7% frequency of English verb-switching in Balochi communication.

The overall mean for Gwadar is 9.1667, with a standard deviation of 2.4328, indicating relatively consistent patterns of linguistic behavior across the surveyed groups. Although the variation among participants is moderate, the data reveal a steady and widespread incorporation of English verbs, particularly among younger speakers.

Table 5
English Verb Switching in Balochi at the Educational Institutions in Jafarabad

Area	Age	English verb in Balochi		Std Deviation
		Mean	N	

Loc	Jafarabad	12-15	1	1	.
		16-20	2	1	.
		21-25	3	1	.
		26-30	4	1	.
		31-40	3	1	.
		41-50	2	1	.
		Total	2.5	6	1.04881

Interviews conducted: 11th October, 2022. BHS Dera Allahyar; 12th October, 2022. Suhbatpur city, Dera Allahyar, Jafarabad)

The investigation of English verb-switching in Dera Allahyar Jafarabad area designates a comparatively lower level of linguistic influence than that observed in Quetta, Gwadar, and Turbat. The overall mean across all age groups in Dera Allahyar is 2.5, with a standard deviation of 1.04881, reflecting minimal variation among the respondents.

This is comparatively ratio English verb-switching can be attributed to the limited presence of private and English-medium schools, as well as language academies, in the region. Accordingly, speakers in Dera Allahyar were distant from English language atmosphere, which has helped preserve more traditional patterns of Balochi language use. Nonetheless, while the current level of code-switching is uncertain, continued educational expansion and increased exposure to English media could gradually influence the linguistic behavior of younger generations in the future.

Table 6
English Verb Switching in Balochi at the Educational Institutions in Sibi

Loc	Area	Age	English verb in Balochi		Std Deviation
			Mean	N	
Loc	Sibi	12-15	2	1	.
		16-20	3	1	.
		21-25	1	1	.
		26-30	5	1	.
		31-40	1	1	.
		41-50	1	1	.
		Total	2.1667	6	1.60208

Interviews conducted: 13th October, 2022. GGHS, & GBHS, Sibi; 14th October, 2022. GBDC & GGDC, Sibi)

The data results of Sibi illustrate the slight and the lowest ratio of English verb-switching in Balochi than other regions of Balochistan. The total mean of verbal code-switching in Balochi at Sibi is 2.1667 and the Std Deviation is 1.60208, which shows that participant did not switch to English and it's a good sign for Balochi in Sibi region. The data show that the govt schools are more functional and active than that of the English medium schools. the slow process of urbanization is also a reason, which has kept the youngster away from the influence of English language.

Table 7
English Verb Switching in Balochi at the Educational Institutions in Lasbela

Loc	Area	Age	English verb in Balochi		Std Deviation
			Mean	N	
Loc	Lasbela	12-15	1	1	.
		16-20	8	1	.
		21-25	7	1	.
		26-30	4	1	.
		31-40	5	1	.
		41-50	3	1	.

Total	4.6667	6	2.58199
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Interviews conducted: 25th October, 2022, GGHS & GBHS Bela; 26th October, 2022, GGDC & GBDC Bela)

According to the data analyses, the District of Lasbela shows a minimal influence of verbal switching of English into Balochi, which is absolutely lower than Quetta, Turbat and Gwadar. The mean ratio of the collected in Lasbela is 4.6667 and its standard deviation is 2.58199 which is not alarming yet as compared to the major cities of Balochistan.

No doubt, the ratio is higher than Sibi and Dera Allahyar but its not so alarming. the reason according to data is the remote areas and scattered population at the suburbs of the Hub city where the medium of English is Urdu instead of English.

Table 8
Overall English Verb Switching in Balochi

		English verb in Balochi			
	Area	Age	Mean	N	Std Deviation
Loc	All areas	12-15	8	7	9.36305
		16-20	9.1429	7	6.17599
		21-25	9.2857	7	6.47339
		26-30	6.8571	7	2.79455
		31-40	6	7	4.43471
		41-50	4.5714	7	2.63674
		Total	7.3095	42	5.7019

Discussions

A total of 1,050 respondents were interviewed across six major districts of Balochistan, Quetta, Hub, Turbat, Gwadar, Jafarabad, and Lasbela, to examine the phenomenon of English verb-switching in Balochi. 150 respondents were selected from each district and their recorded samples were analyzed by Chi-square testing software. The participants were classified in six age groups: 12-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-40, and 41-50 years.

In Quetta, the age groups 12-15 and 31-40 years were the most affected, where English verb corporation was high in the educational and academic institutions in Balochi. The code-switching mean ratio was 13.1667 the standard deviation was 7.25029, which shows a high variability among the different age group respondents.

In Hub, the age groups 16-20, 21-25, and 26-30 years showed the highest ratio of English verb-switching into Balochi with 7.3333percent and the standard deviation showed 5.91623 percent as Std deviation.

In Turbat, the situation was found to be critical and alarming, particularly among the age groups of 12-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, and 41-50 years old respondents. The mean value of English verb-switching in Balochi in Turbat was 9.1667 and standard deviation ratio was 2.56255 which is a widespread of English verbal code-switching into Balochi.

Similarly, in Gwadar, especially within the private and English-medium schools, the data indicate a severe linguistic shift among students. The age groups from 12-15, 16-20, and 21-25 years were the most affected. The mean value of the data in Gwadar was 9.1667 and the standard deviation got to 2.48328, which is considered to be a high level of influences.

On contrary, the results of data analyses in Jafarabad and Sibi show the lowest ratios of English verb-switching in Balochi. The lower means in these districts may be credited to the limited presence of English medium institutions and English language centers, which restricts the English influence in daily communication. Lasbela, however, showed a slightly higher mean (4.6667; SD = 2.58199) than Jafarabad and Sibi, suggesting a moderate level of linguistic influence.

The collective ratio of mean in English verb-switching into Balochi throughout six districts was 7.3095 and the standard deviation was 5.7019. The age groups from 12–15, 16–20, 26–30, and 31–40 years were most affected, which illustrates that the youngsters and middle-aged respondents are mostly affected.

The overall findings show that linguistic situation in Balochistan is very alarming. The Balochi language including other minor languages are also affected by the English language. English, like the other provinces of Pakistan has a major role in the educational institutions as well as in official and administrative communications, which has brought a structural change in the languages of Pakistan.

In this connection, the government of Balochistan should take measures to preserve the Balochi language as well as other languages of Balochistan to sustained the cultural and regional identities of Pakistan.

Conclusion

The linguistic situation in Balochistan is alarming. English has been penetrating in Balochi and other languages of the province. The daily usage of English in offices, administration and educational institutions, it has influenced Balochi in the urban areas of Balochistan especially in Quetta, Turbat and Gwadar, which are considered to the main centers of learning and education.

Recommendations

English is the language of information technology and the source of scientific knowledge, but it is overcoming other languages of the globe. In Balochistan, English is corroding the Balochi language as well as other languages of Balochistan. Languages are the source of identity and culture of a country. The govt of Pakistan, as well the govt of Balochistan must take steps to safeguard the languages and preserve them from the influences of foreign languages.

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