



RESEARCH PAPER

Language Vitality and Impetus behind Code-Switching in English Language in Pakistan: A Study at EFL Teachers and Learners in District Rahim Yar Khan

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ABSTRACT

The present study is an exploratory and descriptive investigation into several dimensions related to language use in the Urdu-speaking context. The research is focused on discerning the preferences of certain individuals to utilize the English language when conversing in Urdu, examining the consequential impact of English language usage on the economic security of individuals, quantifying the prevalence of English code-switching during Urdu communication in Pakistan, and assessing the ramifications of English code-switching on the vitality of the Urdu language. This study adopted a quantitative research design. The collected data underwent rigorous quantitative analysis using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The present study investigated the nuanced dynamics influencing language choice, revealing a complex interplay of psychological factors rooted in the legacy of British colonialism. Notably, the findings underscored that the individuals perceived English as a source of economic security.

KEYWORDS Code-switching, Economic Security and Anglicization, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Language Choice

Introduction

English and Urdu are the official languages of Pakistan along with approximately 60 other languages holding the domains of power, government, corporate sector, media, education etc. English is granted the status of a commercial language in order to plod along the challenges of globalization, technological changes and economic developments in the world. English is included as a compulsory subject which is to be taught in all public and private educational institutes (Ehsan& Aziz, 2014; Gulzar & Qadir, 2010; Rehman, 1996). Learning English vocabulary guarantees many benefits during higher education, promotion and career development. Eligibility for jobs requires advance proficiency in English language.

English bestows its users with privilege and stature in almost every sphere of life. English holds a strong position as English and Urdu have coincided for centuries in the sub-continent (Rafi, 2013; Mohammad & Mahmood, 2012). Pakistanis privilege the members of English-speaking class. A vast majority of Pakistanis are found switching codes between English and Urdu during their conversation in formal and informal setting. In Pakistan, speakers of Urdu language lose their unique linguistic treasure because of their inferiority complex which is the sore impact of the former British colonization. The prevailing psychological, economic and cultural factors compel Pakistani speakers to practice English-Urdu code-switching frequently in Urdu speaking contexts. This gives

rise to Anglicization of Urdu language from different dimensions. The code-switching leads to a situation where Urdu is being overlooked and may lose its vitality. The objectives of the research are: a) To find out the reasons for preference of some people to use English language while speaking Urdu. b) To study the impact of English language on economic security of the people. c) To find out the ratio of English code-switching while speaking Urdu in Pakistan. d) To study the impact of English code-switching on the vitality of Urdu language.

Literature Review

Bilingual communities that speak two languages make advantage of code-switching to enhance and deepen communication. Code switching is described by Halmari (2004) as "the blending of two or more languages within a single verbal episode". Code mixing and code switching are distinguished by some linguists. According to some studies, code-mixing refers to the blending of different linguistic units (affixes, words, phrases, and clauses) from two different grammatical systems within the same sentence and speech context

Pakistan, a Multilingual Country

Pakistan is claimed as a multilingual country having six major and over fifty-nine small languages spoken by its natives, among which two languages function as official languages i.e. English and Urdu, while the other languages are used in everyday and colloquial speech (Dr. Tariq Rehman, 2007). The two-language regime created numerous challenges for Pakistanis which still persist to this day. Firstly, Urdu is the mother tongue of merely less than 8 percent Pakistani population (Berlitz, 2023). The official language of Pakistan, English is still active in all significant power domains since it is a legacy of British conquerors (Manan & David, 2014). English is still frequently used for executive, legislative, and judicial functions even after 70 years of decolonization (Ansari, Mehmood, & Mangool, 2015; Rahman, 2003).

English granting Economic Security

Given that English is the language of status and power, it is regarded as the ticket to a bright future (Umrani & Bughio, 2017). English is learnt by Pakistani learners for seeking further education and achievement of economic security. Due to the swift expansion of globalization, e-commerce, and scientific advancements in English, English has emerged as the benchmark for assessing the credibility and suitability of individuals aspiring to secure positions in high-ranking designations offered by government and private sector. The lower-level employment opportunities are granted, provided that the candidates possess a foundational or basic level of English proficiency.

English-Urdu code-switching in Pakistan

In the post-independence era, Urdu has continued to evolve and adapt to changing social, cultural, and technological contexts. It has incorporated words and phrases from English language particularly in domains such as science, technology, and administration. The ever-increasing English dominance accentuates the occurrence of phenomenon such as code-switching, code-mixing, borrowing and loan translation in bilingual and multilingual communities. Asghar (2004) found code-switching in English language in many textbooks. Learners and teachers may use English for its technical terms, such as computer, calculator, software and internet etc.

English-Urdu code-switching decoding Pakistani shop names

The compound noun, “caravan mobile” being composed of Urdu word, “caravan” (the word caravan means home in 19th century) and English word, “mobile” (the word mobile has its roots in Latin and French which means convenient to be moved) is used in Pakistan (Waseem, Shah, and Hussain, 2020). Pan Shop, Ayesha Fabrics, Punjab Decorations, Akbar Boutique, Maher Hotel and Gundum Store are name of shops common in Pakistan which are formed by borrowing English words (Waseem, Shah, and Hussain, 2020).

English code-switching found in everyday conversation:

A notable occurrence of code-switching can be observed among Pakistani from higher to lower socioeconomic backgrounds, specifically among individuals employed as servants and maids. It is common for these individuals to spontaneously use the phrase "time pass k liye." Usually, to express our possession of brands or views about brands, a person may use the names of brand and switch codes, such as, "Maine recently iPhone liya hai.". There are no widely used counterparts in Urdu for specific vocabulary words related to many different fields; the researcher, Jami (2003) names such a weakness of a language as a “lexical lag”. Bilingual speakers give cover to Urdu’s weakness by using substitutes of the global language, English.

Psychological reasons behind English-Urdu code-switching in Pakistan

Muslims’ subjugation towards British emperors during the lapse of the imperative experience of British colonization shaped Muslims’ ideology unconsciously in a way that they begin to disassociate themselves from their language and culture (Nawaz, S., Umer, A., Anjum, F., & Ramzan, M., 2012). It became mandatory to revere English and, as a result, people overlooked their mother tongue since no one wants to be out of the mainstream and ostracized. The pressing effects of colonialism in Pakistan identified the whimsical concept of inferiority complex. In postcolonial era, Pakistanis eagerly utilize English to satisfy the sense of superiority or to stand from shoulder to shoulder with elite class.

Hybridization of Urdu and English in Pakistan

Languages become more linguistically hybridized as a result of code-switching, code mixing, usage of loan words, borrowings, and literal translations (Asghar et al., 2013). Additionally, the structural differences and implications between Urdu and English were discovered by Rafi (2013). Pakistanis have started to synthesize their own modified English and Urdu words and phrases which are found incorrect for example, they may use the word, kebabs, Sunnis, Shias and Sufis (plural words formed by using English morphological rules of pluralization). Pakistani bilingual speakers continuously borrow words and grammar rules of English language. One may come across the incorrect phrases such as “Friday wale din” (following Urdu’s syntactic rules), and “mjhe ache English ati h” (using Urdu translation). Common hybridized words such as open kachery, qabza mafia, and tehsil councils, white dupatta, and orange kameez etc. are prevalent (Gul, 2022). This hybridization in Pakistan results in Anglicization of Urdu, as a result Urdu is losing its originality and vitality.

English supremacy with Urdu obsolescence

Continuous English code-switching has led to a threat that Urdu equivalents might suffer obsolescence. Josh-E-Nashnas etc. are Urdu words which have gone archaic. Several people use address terms of English such as Mister, Missus, Miss, Ma’am and Sir etc.,

however the Urdu equivalents for these words i.e. Janab, Sahib, Sahiba, Ustaad and Ustani etc. are already present. There are people who do not use the equivalents of Urdu such as, "khatar", "wazeefa" and "shumaar kananda" for English words, laptop, scholarship and computer respectively. The linguistic meaning of Urdu words might also change as a result of code switching and code mixing. Urdu terms are not utilized in their original context, for instance, the original meaning of the word "nai" is incorrectly perceived by more recent generations as barber (the intended and perceived meaning in the context of Punjabi language) although the correct meaning is a person who works as a messenger or a carrier of invitations in bygone times (Mushtaq, Hashmi, & Maryam, 2022).

Loss of vitality of Urdu

The elite's bigotry is that they find that English can differentiate them from the lower classes (Dr. Tariq Rehman, 2007). This language shame has unprivileged large reservoir of Urdu language (Dr. Saiqa Imtiaz Asif, 2009). Peers especially parents now-a-days prefer to talk to their children in English language which may hinder intergenerational transmission of language from parents to children, thus leaving Urdu at the verge of language shift (Fishman, 1991). In his study titled "Language policy, Multilingualism and Language Vitality in Pakistan," Dr. Tariq Rehman (2007) asserts that elites and the government favor English over native tongues but do so in the name of efficiency and modernization, he says, the members of this elite had a keen interest in maintaining English because it sets them apart from the rest of the population (Rehman, 2007). English-Urdu code-switching has subdued the purity and vitality of Urdu. In the wake of English dominance, it is hard for Urdu to retrieve the process of its development as a powerful language. Speakers of Urdu must stop relying on English if they do not want to maintain the latter's supremacy. A determined effort must be made to revitalize the Urdu language's long-dormant technical vocabulary.

Material and Methods

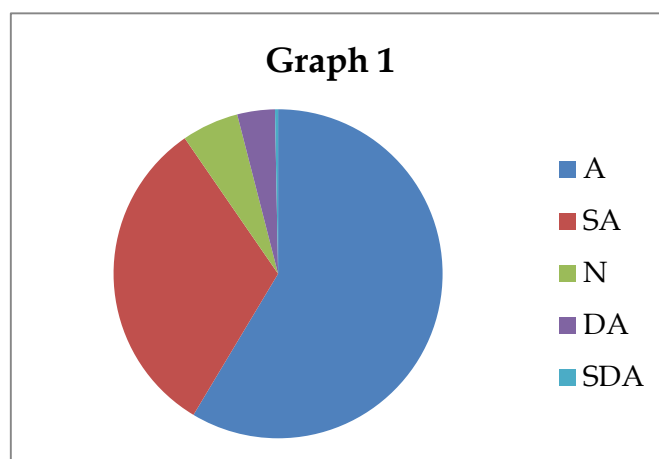
The researcher employed descriptive research method as the research required to answer question based on analysis of existing phenomenon such as ratio and effects of English-Urdu code-switching in Pakistan as well as the impetus behind people's preference for using English words over Urdu. However, in order to study the impact of English on economic security of people living in Pakistan, the researcher has used explanatory or causal research along with descriptive research as this question goes beyond description.

The research tool used in this study is close-ended questionnaire with thirty items. The questionnaire was distributed to three esteemed and graduate level public sector colleges and university in Rahim Yar Khan District. The researcher chose EFL (English as foreign language) learners and EFL teachers of the English department as participants. The escalation of English usage has created awareness among Pakistani EFL learners to further their higher education in English language.

Results and Discussion

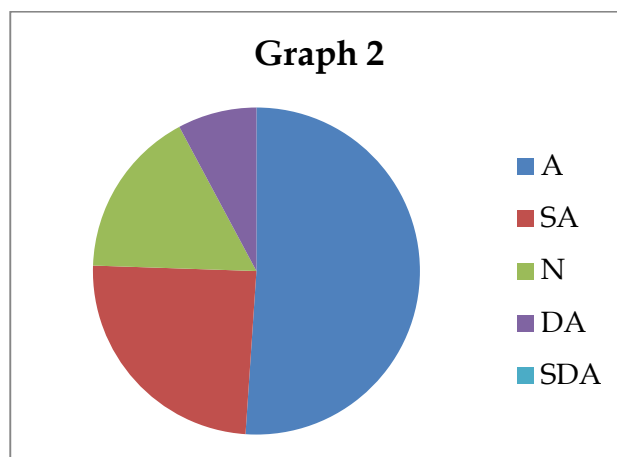
The analytical process entailed the utilization of a diverse array of methodologies and instruments, systematically employed to derive substantiated and meaningful insights from the unprocessed raw data. Thirty questionnaires' items were labeled as 30 variables on the SPSS software. The ordinal measurement scale was used for variables with distinct categories that can be ordered in a meaningful way. The five-point Likert scale values

ranging from agree, strongly agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree for each variable were labeled as 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. The measure used was kept ordinal.



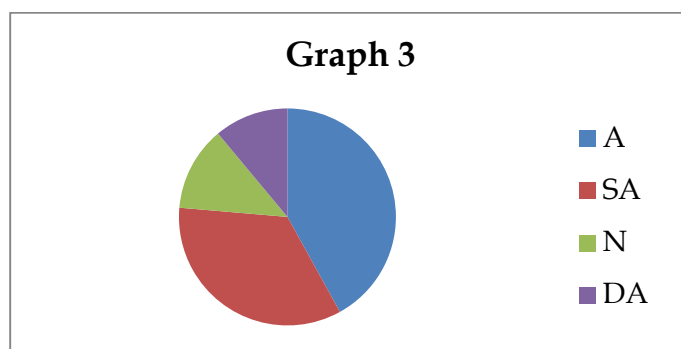
Graph. 1 Usage of English vocabulary differentiates elite class from lower classes.

Graph. 1 shows that 58.6% of EFL respondents (60.1% learners and 48.8% teachers) agreed with this statement that usage of English vocabulary differentiates elite class from lower classes, 31.8% of EFL respondents (30.2% learners and 41.9% teachers) strongly agreed with this statement and 5.6% of EFL respondents (5.3% learners and 7% teachers) expressed a neutral stance, 3.7% of EFL respondents (3.9% learners and 2.3% teachers) disagreed and 0.3% of EFL respondents (0.4% learners and 0% teachers) strongly disagreed with this statement. Given graph A illustrates the response of respondents towards the statement.



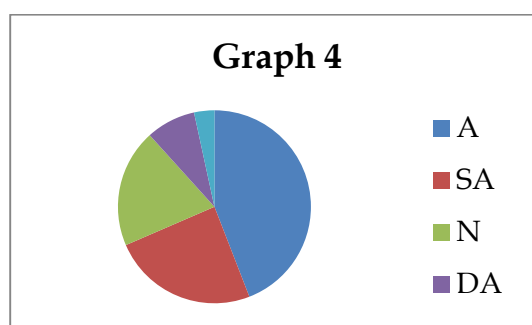
Graph. 2. English to gain social prestige.

Table 4.2 shows that 50.3% of EFL respondents (50.5% learners and 48.8% teachers) agreed with this statement that they use English words in their conversation to gain social prestige, 24.1% of the EFL respondents (22.8% learners and 32.6% teachers) strongly agreed with this statement, 16.4% of the EFL respondents (16.0% learners and 18.6% teachers) adopted a neutral position when confronted with this statement, 7.7% of the EFL respondents (8.9% learners and 0% teachers) disagreed with this statement and 1.5% of the EFL respondents (1.8% learners and 0% teachers) strongly disagreed that they use English words in their conversation to gain social prestige. Pie graph B illustrates the response of respondents towards the given statement.



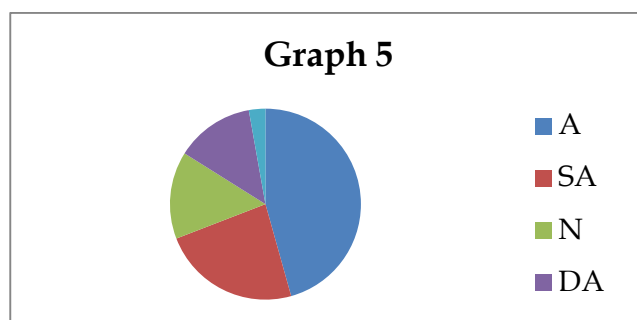
Graph. 3 Less use English Vocabulary

Graph. 3. demonstrates that 41% EFL respondents (42.3% learners and 32.6% teachers) agreed with the research item positing that individuals who infrequently employ English vocabulary are not regarded as possessing a high level of education, 33.6% of EFL respondents (31.0% learners and 51.2% teachers) strongly agreed, 12.3% of the EFL respondents (12.8% learners and 9.3% teachers) adopted a neutral position when confronted with the statement, 10.8% of EFL respondents (11.7% learners and 4.7% teachers) disagreed with this statement and 2.2% of EFL respondents (2.1% learners and 2.3% teachers) strongly disagreed with this statement. Graph C elucidates the responses of respondents to the statement.



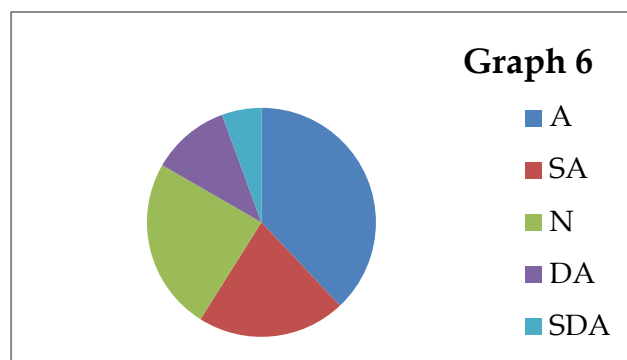
Graph. 4. English vocabulary in formal and informal gatherings.

Graph. 4 shows that 44.1% of EFL respondents (43.1% learners and 51.2% teachers) agreed with the statement that they feel superiority over others if they use English vocabulary in formal and informal gatherings, 24.4% of EFL respondents (22.1% learners and 39.5% teachers) strongly agreed, 19.8% of EFL respondents (22.1% learners and 4.7% teachers) conveyed a neutral stance when confronted with the statement, 8.3% of EFL respondents (9.3% learners and 2.3% teachers) disagreed and 3.4% of EFL respondents (3.6% learners and 2.3% teachers) strongly disagreed with this statement. Graph D illustrates the response of respondents towards the statement.



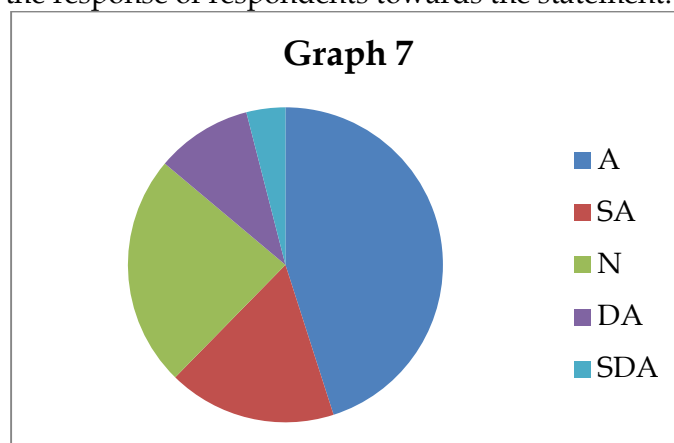
Graph. 5. Inferiority Complex

Graph. 5 shows that 45.7% of EFL respondents (43.8% learners and 58.1% teachers) agreed that they feel inferiority over others if they use English vocabulary in formal and informal gatherings, 23.5% of EFL respondents (22.1% learners and 32.6% teachers) strongly agreed, 14.8% of EFL respondents (16.4% learners and 4.7% teachers) conveyed a neutral stance when confronted with the statement, 13.3% of EFL respondents (14.9% learners and 2.3% teachers) disagreed and 2.8% of EFL respondents (2.8% learners and 2.3% teachers) strongly disagreed when confronted with the statement. Graph E illustrates the response of respondents towards the given statement.



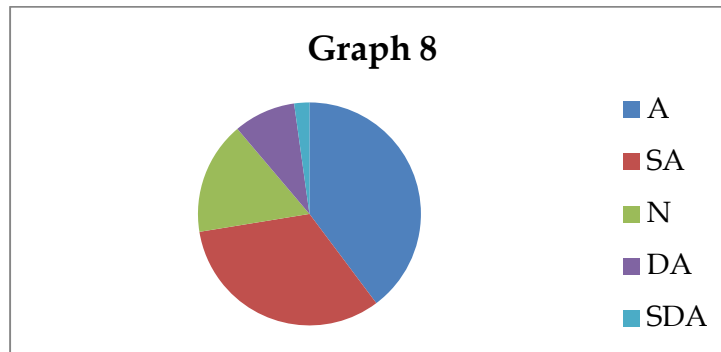
Graph. 6. Preference to Use More English Words

Graph. 6 shows that 38.0% of EFL respondents (35.9% learners and 51.2% teachers) agreed that they prefer to use more English words than that of Urdu as they want to disassociate themselves from their language, identity and culture, 21.0% of EFL respondents (18.5% learners and 37.2% teachers) strongly agreed with the statement, 24.4% of EFL respondents (26.7% learners and 9.3% teachers) maintained a neutral position, 11.1% of EFL respondents (12.8% learners and 0% teachers) disagreed and 5.6% of EFL respondents (6.0% learners and 2.3% teachers) strongly disagreed with the statement. Graph F indicates the response of respondents towards the statement.



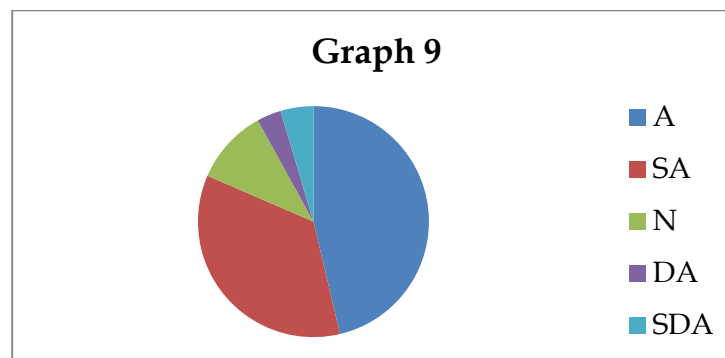
Graph. 7 Entertain a Western Identity.

Graph. 7 shows that 45.1% of EFL respondents (43.1% learners and 58.1% teachers) agreed with the statement that they prefer to use English words more than Urdu because it enables them to develop or entertain a Western identity, 17.3% of EFL respondents (14.9% learners and 32.6% teachers) strongly agreed, 23.8% of EFL respondents (26.7% learners and 4.7% teachers) gave a neutral response, 9.9% of EFL respondents (10.7% learners and 4.7% teachers) disagreed and 4.0% of EFL respondents (4.6% learners and 0% teachers) strongly disagreed with the statement. Graph G indicates the response of respondents towards the statement.



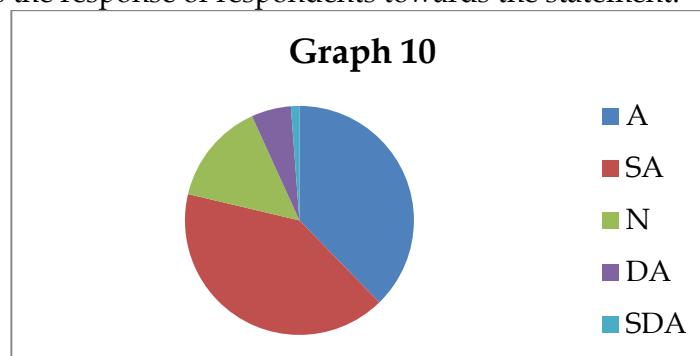
Graph. 8. English proficiency ensures better economic security.

In Graph. 8, it is evident that 39.8% of the EFL respondents (39.9% learners and 39.5% teachers) agreed with the statement that English proficiency ensures better economic security, 32.7% of the EFL respondents (31.3% learners and 41.9% teachers) strongly agreed with this statement, 16.4% of the EFL respondents (17.1% learners and 11.6% teachers) gave a neutral response, 9.0% of the EFL respondents (9.3% learners and 7.0% teachers) disagreed and 2.2% of the EFL respondents (2.5% learners and 0% teachers) strongly disagreed with the statement. Graph H indicates the response of respondents towards the statement.



Graph. 9. English proficiency to Excel Freelancing.

It is shown in Graph. 9 that 46.3% of the EFL respondents (45.9% learners and 48.8% teachers) agreed that English proficiency is necessary to excel freelancing, 35.2% of the EFL respondents (35.2% learners and 34.9% teachers) strongly agreed with the statement, 10.5% of the EFL respondents (10.7% learners and 9.3% teachers) provided a neutral response, 3.4% of the EFL respondents (3.9% learners and 0% teachers) disagreed and 4.6% of the EFL respondents (4.3% learners and 7% teachers) strongly disagreed with the statement. Graph I indicates the response of respondents towards the statement.



Graph. 10 Significant Niche in Government Sectors.

It is shown in table 4.10 that 37.7% of the EFL respondents (36.3% learners and 46.5% teachers) agreed with the statement that people who are well aware of English obtain significant niche in government sectors, 41.0% of the EFL respondents (41.3% learners and 39.5% teachers) strongly agreed, 14.5% of the EFL respondents (15.3% learners and 9.3% teachers) provided a neutral response, 5.6% of the EFL respondents (5.7% learners and 4.7% teachers) disagreed and 1.2% of the EFL respondents (1.4% learners and 0% teachers) strongly disagreed with the statement. Graph J indicates the response of respondents towards the statement.

Discussion

The research claims that language preferences are influenced by perceptions of linguistic superiority or inferiority. The psychological hierarchy has an impact on the selection of language in formal and informal situations. According to a study conducted by Nawaz, Umer, Anjum, & Ramzan, (2012), it was discovered that 30% of the participants believe that engaging in activities such as speaking English, reading English literature and newspapers, watching English movies, listening to English songs, wearing English clothing, and behaving in an English manner has a psychological impact on others. The previous research aligns with the present research' inference of existence of linguistic inferiority as an outcome of psychological impact of colonization. Table 1 has illustrated the fact that shows that 45.7% of EFL respondents agreed and 23.5% of EFL respondents strongly agreed that they feel inferiority over others if they are unable to use English vocabulary in formal and informal gatherings. The results thus infer that language choice particularly English preference over Urdu is stimulated by perceptions of linguistic inferiority and superiority.

Considering the findings which answered the question of studying impact of English on economic security, it is evident that 39.8% of the EFL respondents agreed and 32.7% of the EFL respondents strongly agreed with the statement that English proficiency ensures better economic security. This present research aligns with the previous research conducted by Nawaz, Umer, Anjum, & Ramzan, (2012), that 57% people opine in affirmation, that English ensures better economic security.

A vast majority of EFL respondents concur with the questionnaire items being posit to examine the ratio of code-switching. The queries being affirmed by the respondents include awareness of some English words among people living in rural areas, use of English in formal and informal settings and naturally following different patterns of code-switching such as inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching. It is evident in table 1 that 40.4% of the EFL respondents agreed and 38.9% of the EFL respondents strongly agreed to use at least one word of English in almost every sentence. Thus, the researcher concludes that a majority of EFL learners and teachers at graduate level practice English-Urdu code-switching.

EFL respondents agreed towards questionnaire items positing English dominance compelling parents to encourage their children to learn and use English vocabulary, the existence and impact of anglicization, which is mixing of English words in Urdu, as hinderance in the intergenerational transmission of Urdu language from parents to children. It is evident in the table 1, 42.9% of the EFL respondents agreed and 34.0% of the EFL respondents strongly agreed with the statement that Urdu is losing its prestige and importance in the presence of dominance of English language, Table 1, 41.4% of the EFL respondents agreed and 41.0% of the EFL respondents strongly agreed with the statement that mixing of English words in Urdu affects the originality of Urdu language. Considering the findings of the research, the researcher concludes that the practice of code-switching

from English to Urdu, especially in Urdu discussions, has negative effects on the vitality of Urdu. The infusion of English elements into Urdu, which constitutes the Anglicization process, endangers the language's originality and purity.

Conclusion

The findings of the research underscore the complex interplay of psychological factors such as social standing, academic associations, notions of superiority and inferiority, identity dynamics, and the influence of Western cultural standards, interact in a complex manner and bring about people's preference for utilization of English words over Urdu. This language choice is chiefly affected by the psychological aspects of British colonialism. The findings of the research concluded that English provides individuals with economic security. The study concluded that a majority of graduate level English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and teachers engage in code-switching between English and Urdu to a greater extent during conversational interactions. The researcher concluded that English code-switching in conversation taking place in Urdu leads to Anglicization of Urdu, leading to hinder the development of Urdu language and loss of vitality of Urdu.

Further study recommendations

The researcher recommends further scholarly investigation on the socio-economic, political and cultural factors linked to language preferences. Further research can provide other plausible reasons behind English-Urdu code-switching and it can offer strategies for the successful implementation of change. Sociolinguistic research endeavors to explore the underlying factors that contribute to the phenomenon of code-switching, with a specific focus on diverse social environments including professional settings, online social platforms, and entertainment mediums.

By engaging in an examination of the historical and literary dimensions of language evolution, conducting psychological surveys and interviews, and conducting comparative analyses between Pakistan and other post-colonial nations, a more comprehensive comprehension of the influence of language on self-esteem and cultural identity can be attained. Subsequent investigations may prioritize the examination of the effects of language policies inside educational establishments in Pakistan and their implications for cultural identity.

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