

The Use of Roman Urdu on Social Media and its Impact on EFL Students of Intermediate

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Abstract

The modern research focuses on the use of Roman Urdu on social media and its impact on EFL intermediate students. In Pakistan, students use Roman Urdu excessively on social media platforms like whatsapp, Facebook and Instagram. This investigation explores how regular exposure to Roman Urdu affects spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and formal writing. Quantitative descriptive research was conducted among 50 EFL intermediate students using a structured questionnaire for data analysis. The findings elaborate that frequent use of Roman Urdu influences students' English and Urdu writing accuracy, especially spelling and sentence structure. The study concludes that Roman Urdu facilitates informal and non standard communication, and deteriorates the standards of academic writing. This study is advertising standard and formal language use in educational institutions.

Key words: Social media, Roman Urdu, English language learning, writing skills, spelling errors, vocabulary, intermediate students, non standard communication, educational institutions.

Introduction:

Roman Urdu is used for informal communication on social media, internet and text messages. It is defined as “ Urdu language is written in English alphabets rather than nastaliq orthography, it is romanised use of Urdu or Roman Urdu. In this language, alphabets (AtoZ) are used to make Urdu words according to the pronunciation e.g. aap kesy hain?(how are you?). Aap nay kab aana hai?(When will you come?). There is no standard spelling in this language. People use the spelling according to their convenience. It is easy, quick and convenient for informal conversations where there is no grammatical rule to follow. Nowadays it is widely accepted by the youth of Pakistan. According to the Urdu scholar Habib R. Sulemani 2004 in his article delineates: "The conventional Arabic script lovers oppose Roman Urdu. Despite this resistance it is still used by most on the internet and computers. Due to limitations and impediments of technology, they do not have the Urdu script. Although, this script is under development and thus the social media users are using the Roman script in their own ways.

Pakistan is one of the biggest and rapidly-growing digital markets. It is the 10th largest country in the world with 116 million internet users , including 71 million who are dedicated and actively participating on major social media networks. Communication style has modified and modernized in Pakistan as everything has been made simple, accessible and manageable by the use of smartphones and social media platforms, even kids who are smart enough have started using Roman Urdu in digital communication. The use of Urdu in the Roman script among the youngsters is another phenomenon of the global trend of using non-standardized scripts due to the convenience of using computers. (Akbar, 2018).

According to Safdar et al (2020), technology modifies the literacy practices, and this change is noticed in the respondent with a significant shift of Roman Urdu as the new communication tool for daily use. Roman Urdu is a quick and easy way of online interaction , but its widespread and frequent use led to worries about its impacts on learning and proficiency of language.(Arshad et al 2026).

They have created significant educational and sociolinguistic concerns that demand systematic investigation due to their rapid proliferation on the smartphone and social media applications in daily interactions (Furqan et al., 2024).

According to Amjad et al 2026, Roman Urdu plays an important function in digital communication, specifically among students who are eagerly engaged in social networking. Research reveals that Roman Urdu is one of the most widely accepted and easy forms of written communication in Pakistan, especially in text messaging and online interactions. However, the absence of standardized and formal spelling conventions causes multiple spellings for the same word which creates linguistic inconsistency and learning confusion among EFL students. The regular use of Roman Urdu on social media affects their grammar, vocabulary, spelling and formal writing . They use abbreviations, misspelling, informal writing and mixed language expressions which creates confusion between both languages Urdu and English. Rehman 2024 et al highlight this issue in detail that the students mostly use emoticons, homophones, contractions, clippings and acronyms and the netspeak acted as a hindrance in accurate English usage for academic writing. It was also examined that netspeak is an emerging mode of communication that has become entrenched and the students use netspeak intentionally or unintentionally in academic writings and it affects their language proficiency and formal writing.

Amjad 2026 et al describe as Roman Urdu has many advantages in text messaging, its drawbacks cannot be overlooked. Due to its wide acceptance among students, it is significant to observe how the use of Roman Urdu on social media influences English language proficiency, particularly reading, writing, spelling, grammar and vocabulary development among EFL intermediate students. This study will help the students and teachers to cope with the issues regarding language and introduce the modern and effective ways of learning which meet the demands of time.

Statement of the Problem:

In Pakistan, the use of social media such as facebook, instagram, whatsapp is common nowadays. The students use roman language for online interaction which is easy to write and convenient to use. This widespread trend left negative impacts on English learning of EFL students of intermediate. The regular use of Roman Urdu on social media affects their grammar, vocabulary, spelling and formal writing . They use abbreviations, misspelling, informal writing and mixed language expressions which creates confusion between both languages Urdu and English. Therefore, this research aims to investigate the linguistic challenges and language proficiency skills by the use of roman Urdu or social media language on EFL Intermediate students.

Research Objectives:

1. To examine the impact of social media language on the reading and writing skills of EFL intermediate students.
2. To explore the regularity of EFL students to use the social media
3. To probe the effect of Roman Urdu on spelling and vocabulary of students.

Research Questions:

- What is the impact of Roman Urdu on Reading and writing skills of EFL students?
- How regularly do EFL students use Roman Urdu on social media?
- Does Roman Urdu affect the spelling and vocabulary of EFL students ?

Significance of the Study:

This study will help to highlight the issues of English proficiency skills by Usage of Roman Urdu used by EFL intermediate students. This investigation will improve the pedagogical strategies and assist the teachers, policymakers and curriculum developers to elevate the English writing skills while accepting the modern and contemporary practices of communication. This analysis will cater the students to cope with and overcome the linguistic challenges they face due to the use of Roman Urdu and they learn new and effective ways of learning.

Literature Review:

Youth is the backbone of every nation. They decide the future of the nation and contribute to the progress and success of a country. Students should focus on seeking knowledge and nurture their abilities, talent and potential skills because the young people are trend setters and introduce the nation to new and modern ways of fashion, technology, digital or social media platforms, innovation in language, job opportunities etc. Nowadays students have a growing tendency to use Roman Urdu as a social media language for digital communication. This craze is widely spread among the students who are actively engaged on social media platforms like Facebook, whatsapp and instagram.

Former studies demonstrate the social media language or Roman Urdu influences on students' writing habits. Roman Urdu is frequently used in digital interaction. Researchers claim that enormous use of Roman Urdu produces complications in spelling and grammatical rules. Some studies also show that it assists fast, easy and convenient communication but adulterates formal language skills.

According to Bilal et al 2017 Roman Urdu contributes an important and critical role in digital interaction, among students who are actively involved in social networking. Research shows that Roman Urdu is a famous form of written communication on social media in Pakistan. However, there is no standardized spelling convention, no rule to write the words, no method of checking grammar and pronunciation. It created multiple spellings for the same word, which causes linguistic inconsistency, ambiguity and inefficiency.

Khan et al. (2020) elaborated that Roman Urdu has no standard spelling rule, which produces linguistic incompetence and challenges in language acquisition. The lack of a uniform writing system may also influence learners' comprehension of accurate spelling patterns and written language practices .

Qutab, Malik, and Arooj (2020) discerned that Roman Urdu has become one of the influential and effective languages on social media platforms in Pakistan. Its extensive use illustrates its importance in modern digital communication. However, the increasing acceptance for Roman Urdu over formal Urdu orthography has raised problems among students, educators and linguists regarding its potential effect on literacy and language acquisition.

It is obvious that prior studies highlight that Roman Urdu is firmly rooted in Pakistan digital culture. Its usage made the conversation easier, faster and convenient. But the impact of Roman Urdu on the EFL intermediate students cannot be neglected. It affects the student's proficiency and learning ability. The frequent use of Roman Urdu for online communication disrupts the reading and writing skills particularly spelling, vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar in EFL students of intermediate. Therefore further research is needed to indicate the concerns regarding language challenges among intermediate students in Pakistan.

Research Methodology:

A quantitative descriptive research is used to investigate the use of Roman Urdu on social media and its impact on EFL intermediate students. This research method will help the researcher to collect the data regarding the practice and perception of the participants. The sample of the study consisted of 50 intermediate level students which are enrolled in colleges or higher secondary institutes. These participants are regular users of social media

i.e. facebook, whatsapp and instagram. A structured questionnaire is used as the primary tool of data collection. Close-ended questions on a five-points likert scale are included in this questionnaire to analyse the data.

Data Collection and Analysis:

The present research intended to seek the impact on the use of Roman Urdu by EFL intermediate students. Data was collected by using quantitative descriptive research techniques. She improvised to gather required data touching research objectives and questions. After having the important details, information and facts, the researcher scrutinised the data and arranged the entities in the form of findings.

Evaluate the research Questions:

- **What is the impact of Roman Urdu on Reading and writing skills of EFL students?**

Answer: Roman Urdu has adversely affected the reading and writing skills of EFL students by intensifying spelling and grammatical mistakes in English. It may cause confusion and perplexity between standard English and non-standard Roman Urdu writing patterns. Frequent use of Roman Urdu can also recede exposure to accurate and factual English vocabulary, sentence structure, and formal writing conventions.

- **How regularly do EFL students use Roman Urdu on social media?**

Answer: The result disclosed that EFL intermediate students use Roman Urdu frequently, extensively and habitually on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. Most participants stated that practicing Roman Urdu for daily online conversation is due to its convenience and ease of typing. The regular use of Roman Urdu indicates its powerful influence in students' digital communication practices.

- **Does Roman Urdu affect the spelling and vocabulary of EFL students ?** Answer:

The study delineated that excessive use of Roman Urdu adversely affects the spelling

and vocabulary development of EFL students. Many participants revealed that making spelling mistakes in English is due to the ascendancy of non-standard and informal

- Roman Urdu text. The findings also elaborated that extensive and inordinate dependence on Roman Urdu may hinder the students' exposure to factual English vocabulary and formal language structures

Finding, Result and Discussion :

Finding:

1. The use of Roman Urdu on social media increases the spelling mistakes among EFL Students.
2. More than 60 percent of students are weak in formal writing. They don't know the standard grammatical rules.
3. Many students have confusion in spelling. They are ignorant about the correct spelling of the words.
4. Because Roman Urdu is easy and convenient and most of the time youth uses it for fast and quick online communication.
5. Most of the students are from humble backgrounds and peripheries and they have no exposure towards English and that's why they use roman Urdu for online communication.
6. The frequent use of social media such as whatsapp weakens the vocabulary of the students. They don't even strive for acquisition of vocabulary rather than write in roman urdu.
7. Regular use of social media deteriorates the both languages. Many students are unaware of the spelling of Urdu and English.
8. The screen time of 65% of students is more than five hours. It is dangerous for their critical thinking and hinder their creativity.
9. More than 80% of students use roman language frequently in online chatting. It enhances their participation and confidence in digital conversations.
10. Roman Urdu debilitates the competence of students to write formal English effectively. That's why they use abbreviated words or wrong spelling in their academic work.
11. Many students have neutral opinions about the usage of formal English on social media.
12. More than 50 % students strongly agree that the frequent use of Roman Urdu deteriorated the formal writing.

Result:

The widespread use of Roman Urdu on social media makes online interaction quick, easy and convenient but its excessive use among EFL students has a negative impact on English academic writing. They prefer abbreviations, misspelling and incorrect grammar rather than formal and standard spelling in formal writing. Students should be encouraged to use standard English and Urdu in online communication. Therefore developing awareness of the use of standard language in various contexts can encourage EFL intermediate students to improve their academic performance and English acquisition.

Discussion:

The result elaborates that Roman Urdu is extensively used on social media by EFL intermediate students. This inquiry determines that frequent use of Roman Urdu adversely affects formal and standard writing skills. Students face problems and hazards in spelling, language rules and sentence structure. They become habitual of informal writing which impinges their academic performance.

Recommendations:

1. Teachers should depreciate the use of roman language in English classrooms.
2. Instructors should emphasise on the correct use of spelling, vocabulary and grammar of English
3. Students should practice standard and formal writing of English and they should write Urdu in nastaliq script.
4. Encourage the students to talk in English with proper pronunciation.
5. Teachers should arrange group activities like newspaper and articles reading in class to improve accent and pronunciation.
6. Students should be encouraged to read English books and magazines.
7. Workshops, seminars and conferences should be organised to educate pupils about the significance of the correct use of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation of language.
8. Social media literacy programmes should be conducted to help in distinguishing the students in formal learning and informal communication.
9. Both parents and teachers should keep an eye on the online language practice of students and discourage the wrong spelling.
10. Further research and investigation should be conducted on the far-reaching consequences of Roman Urdu on language proficiency and learning at different educational levels.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

The Use of Roman Urdu on Social Media and Its Impact on EFL Intermediate Students

Instructions: Please tick (✓) the option that best reflects your opinion.

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD) 2 = Disagree (D) 3 = Neutral (N) 4 = Agree (A) 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Gender:

☐ Male

☐ Female Class:

☐ Intermediate Part I

☐ Intermediate Part II

Part 1 Use of Roman Urdu on Social Media

1. I frequently use Roman Urdu on social media.

SD ☐

D ☐

N ☐

A ☐

SA ☐

2

Roman Urdu is easier to type than Urdu script.

SD ☐

D ☐

N ☐

A ☐

SA ☐

3

I use Roman Urdu while chatting with friends and family.



SD ☐

D ☐

N ☐

A ☐

SA ☐

4

I prefer Roman Urdu over Urdu script for online communication.

SD ☐

D ☐

N ☐

A ☐

SA ☐

5

I should use English rather than Roman Urdu on social media platforms.

SD ☐

D ☐

N ☐

A ☐

SA ☐

Part 2: Impact on English Writing Skills

6

Roman Urdu affects my English spelling.

SD ☐

D ☐

N ☐

A ☐

SA ☐

7

I sometimes use Roman Urdu spellings in English writing.

SD ☐

D ☐

N ☐

A ☐

SA ☐

8

Regular use of Roman Urdu causes spelling mistakes in English.

SD ☐



D☐

N☐

A☐

SA☐

9

Roman Urdu influences my English grammar.

SD☐

D☐

N☐

A☐

SA☐

10

Roman Urdu affects the quality of my academic writing.

SD☐

D☐

N☐

A☐

SA☐

Part 3: Impact on Reading and Vocabulary No.

11

Roman Urdu affects my English vocabulary development.

SD☐

D☐

N☐

A☐

SA☐

12

I face difficulties in recognizing accurate English spellings.

SD☐

D☐

N☐

A☐

SA☐

13

Roman Urdu limits my exposure to standard English vocabulary.

SD☐

D☐



N☐

A☐

SA☐

14

Roman Urdu influences my English reading comprehension.

SD☐

D☐

N☐

A☐

SA☐

15

I find it challenging to switch from Roman Urdu to formal English writing.

SD☐

D☐

N☐

A☐

SA☐

Part 4: Perceptions of Roman Urdu

16

Roman Urdu makes online communication faster.

SD☐

D☐

N☐

A☐

SA☐

17

Roman Urdu helps me to express my ideas easily.

SD☐

D☐

N☐

A☐

SA☐

18

Roman Urdu is an important part of social media communication.

SD☐

D☐

N☐



A ☐

SA ☐

19

Students should use standard English in academic writing.

SD ☐

D ☐

N ☐

A ☐

SA ☐

20

Excessive use of Roman Urdu can negatively affect English language proficiency.

SD ☐

D ☐

N ☐

A ☐

SA ☐