



UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS URDU AND ENGLISH IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to look into how university students felt about using English and Urdu in both formal and informal settings. Language is a basic component of human communication and is essential in forming a person's identity. The study examined how students perceived language choices and how language impacted social situations, interpersonal connections, and academic learning in a university setting. It was conducted at the University of Education, Lower Mall Campus, Lahore. The investigation of students' language attitudes, communication environments, context, and social identities was done using Social Identity Theory (SIT). Prejudices the participants held about English, the relationship they saw among language and status, as well as the impact on identity occurred in line with the idea of social identity. Fifteen undergraduate and graduate students were interviewed in order to collect data, which was then analyzed to determine the attitudes, language preferences, and topics of the students. Thirteen questions were asked during the interview to find out how university students felt about using English and Urdu in both professional and casual settings. Students from the University of Education, Lahore (Lower Mall Campus) made up the study's population. The findings demonstrated how a range of variables interact in complex ways to affect language choices, including comfort levels, perceived benefits, cultural prejudices and biases, and identity expression. The research's conclusions can aid in improving knowledge of students' language attitudes among educators, legislators, and language academics.

Keywords: *language attitudes, formal and informal communication, Urdu and English language usage, University of Education.*

Introduction

Language is a basic component of human communication and is essential in forming a person's identity. In educational contexts, language is employed as an instrument for instruction and is an important component of human life. Language can be used by both teachers and pupils to exchange ideas. For pupils, it becomes challenging to explain ideas that come from different origins.

The Urdu-Bengali conflict was caused by a language movement that started in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) following the establishment of Pakistan in 1947 (Mahboob, 2002). More significantly, Pakistan's first Governor General and founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, said unequivocally that "Urdu will be the only language recognized as the official language of Pakistan" (Jinnah, 1948, p. 183). Thus, the 1948 language strategy represented the roles of the Urdu language as "a national identity emblem and assimilation to prevent local autonomy" and the English language as a "language of compromise" (Haque, 1983).



Since Urdu is the official language of the nation and its national language, it has been incorporated into this study. Pakistan recognized Urdu as the sole national language one year after the country's independence (1947) (Bughio, 2014; Ali, 2011). It is the original language of those who left India to go to Pakistan during the subcontinent's split. Due to their education, they are limited in number but control a large portion of Pakistan's bureaucracy (Rahman, 2006).

English is both an international language and Pakistan's official language, as reported by Manan & David (2014). English is still used for legislative, judicial, and administrative activities even after 70 years of independence, claim Ansari, Mehmood, and Mangool (2015) and Rahman (2003). Stronger demographic groups frequently use it, and it is regarded as an indicator of status. The breadth of educational contexts in which English is taught demonstrates the language's importance in this country. English is also the language of teaching in schools (Soomro, 2016). English is seen as a path to a better future because it is the power language (Umrani & Bughio, 2017).

Mansoor (2004) studied the use of regional languages in Pakistani higher education. According to study, Pakistan, being a bilingual nation, faces numerous challenges when it comes to the planning of language in higher education. The study looked at students' backgrounds, proficiency in using their native tongue or regional language, and the function of regional languages in the classroom. According to the research, the majority of students speak in their mother tongue both in formal and casual settings and have inadequate skills.

According to Anwar (2016), Pakistan is complicated historically because of its multilingual populace. Urdu is the official language of Pakistan and is mostly spoken in cities. It is the mother tongue of 8% of Pakistani people, in accordance with the 1998 census. Language disputes have persisted in the country since its founding. In 1948, Quaid e Azam declared in Dhaka that only Urdu would be the official language of the nation. This proclamation set off a bitter movement in Pakistan's eastern region that persisted until 1966. Nonetheless, a survey indicates that although students prefer Urdu for both formal and casual contact, they want English to be their language of instruction. In a similar vein, academics who know that subjects have to be taught in English still utilize Urdu. According to the study, if educators and learners adopt goal-specific language attitudes and practices, they can effectively utilize English as a medium (Anwar, 2016).

Language is extremely important in Pakistan, a multilingual along with culturally varied nation, and it affects many facets of everyday life, education, and social relationships. Pakistani university students speak a diverse range of languages, including official, national, and regional tongues, therefore it's important to comprehend their attitudes towards language. The purpose of this study is to investigate how university students feel about using English and Urdu in both formal and informal settings.

Finding out about students' language attitudes can give important insights into the nuances of language use in social contexts, academic settings, and classroom communication. Language plays a major role in identity, communication, and cultural expression. Different populations speak different languages, with official, national, and mother tongue languages being of utmost importance. Any institution, such as a university, brings together students from different language backgrounds for social activities and educational purposes. Examining university students' formal and casual social contacts is crucial to understanding their views towards various languages.



Statement of the problem

Research on Pakistani students' attitudes on the languages of Urdu and English is limited. Despite the existence of language policy frameworks and linguistic diversity, there is a paucity of comprehensive information addressing university students' perspectives towards the use of many languages in various areas, such as academic writing, social settings, and classroom communication. Unfortunately, there isn't much study on students' linguistic attitudes in formal and informal communication. Instead, most existing research focuses on policies regarding language, their framework, English language learning, using English as a medium of instruction, etc. This study helps to investigate how students feel about using English and Urdu in formal and casual university interactions as well as in the classroom.

Research Objectives

The aim of this study is to;

- Investigate how students' linguistic attitudes impact their learning and relationships with others in the classroom.
- Examine the language preferences of university students in both official and casual communication.
- Examine how the linguistic choices of the kids are influenced by their cultural or social identities.

Research Questions

The current research is based on the following questions;

- 1- What effects do students' language attitudes have on their learning and interpersonal interactions in the classroom?
- 2- What language do students prefer to use in both formal and casual settings?
- 3- How is the relationship between the language choices of students and their cultural or social identities examined?

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will contribute to our understanding of how university students feel about the English and Urdu languages. This study will focus on the linguistic perspectives of university students in formal as well as informal social settings, as well as their identities and backgrounds. This study is significant because it will support the following goals:

- Highlighting and advancing multilingualism in Pakistan;
- Educating language policymakers so they may make better language choices based on student preferences.
- Contributions to Academics: Future researchers in this field will undoubtedly refer to this study as a guide.
- Curriculum creation for establishing criteria for students based on their preferred language and the state of university social and classroom environments.
- Instructors should evaluate their pupils' performance, pinpoint their areas of weakness, and adjust their teaching strategies in accordance with students' needs of language.

Delimitations of study

This study examines how university students, particularly those at the University of Education, feel about using Urdu and English in both formal and casual communication. As a result, the analysis cannot be applied to other universities. Only a small number of students are



involved in the data processing and sampling processes. It denotes the use of particular languages, such as English and Urdu, while disregarding other regional tongues or languages spoken in Pakistan. Only undergraduate students at the University of Education (Lower Mall Campus), a public university, are included in the sampling process for data collecting in order to conduct interviews.

Literature Review

Every civilization uses language in some form for a variety of purposes, according to Idrees (2012). Linguists estimate that there are about 6,000 languages spoken throughout the globe. Language is the medium via which all people convey their thoughts, feelings, and social behaviors to one another. It is also the instrument used in international trade and the conveyance of philosophy, literature, science, and technology (Idrees, 2012).

Abbas & Iqbal (2018) aimed to assess Pakistani teenagers' perceptions of English, Urdu, and Punjabi as languages in a linguistically similar context. These languages stand out on their own and are important to the country. The present study aimed to explore the reason behind acquiring these languages, both instrumental and integrative, and to analyse their global significance and social position. The study employed a mentalist technique in its quantitative investigation paradigm and used questionnaire as a research tool. According to the study, participants linked instrumental motivation to the English language, but integrative motivation to Urdu and Punjabi (Abbas & Iqbal, 2018). Even though fewer than 8% of L1 users are native speakers of Urdu, Urdu is still very essential (The Ministry of Statistics, The government of Pakistan, 2017). It provides a unifying language for communication between speakers of various languages (Kothari, 2015). Additionally of being the national language, it is also utilized as a teaching instrument in educational institutions (Javed, 2017).

Which language should be used as the primary language in Pakistani administration, law, and education has long been a source of contention between Urdu and English speakers. The most recent attempt to practically replace English with Urdu as the official language was the announcement in 2015 that English will take its place (Abbas, Pervaiz & Arshad, 2018). Two of the most important languages in the region have been Urdu and English since the founding of Pakistan and even before that. A careful study of history demonstrates that Muslims and Hindus toiled ceaselessly for almost a century in order to be free of British rule (Khan, 2017; Prasad, 2016). Even though their paths finally diverged, they launched the liberation struggle and the freedom movement together. For several reasons, the language barrier played a significant role in the conflict and divide between Hindus and Muslims. Hindus wanted Hindi to be the official language of the nation after independence, whereas Muslims wanted Urdu to take the place of English (Metcalf, 2014; Rahman, 2007; Ayres, 2009). The Urdu-Hindi debate was a major factor in Muslims' decision to split from Hindus and think about founding their own sovereign nation (Jiang & Ya, 2016; Rahman, 2007).

After the British were forced to surrender in the face of the Indian people in 1947, the Indian Subcontinent was divided into India and Pakistan two independent states (Khan, 2017). A significant section of the Muslim community was forced to migrate from India to Pakistan as a result of these circumstances. One year after Pakistan attained independence in 1948, it was decided that Urdu would be the only official language in the nation (Bughio, 2014; Ali, 2011). In addition, English is still widely used in government, education, and the legal system, among other



important spheres of society. In spite of 70 years of independence, there is continuous competition between these two languages for dominance in the country (Abbas, Pervaiz & Arshad, 2018).

English is not a language that is indigenous although it is recognized in the constitution because of its colonial past. One sign of the English language's aristocratic supremacy, which lasted long after the country attained independence in 1947, is the fact that the the country's constitution is written in that language. English is also used as a teaching language in the education sector (Soomro, 2016). In Pakistan, knowing English is viewed as a status symbol and a path to financial success (Umrani & Bughio, 2017). An individual who speaks English well has more opportunities than someone who doesn't. English has been a tool for modernization, economic prosperity, and scientific and technological achievements at the individual as well as national levels, according to Shamim (2008). English is seen as an indicator of power and status in Pakistan. English is frequently utilized in the executive, legislative, and judicial sectors (Ansari, Mehmood & Mangool, 2015; Rahman, 2008). According to Manan and David (2014), that as a holdover from the British Empire, the English language is still employed in all major power domains.

In Pakistan, English is considered a second language, according to Pennycook (2017). This language, which dates back to British colonialism, is typically spoken by the most prominent members of society and is regarded as a status symbol. English is valued as social capital, and many educational institutions stress the language's eternal significance to the country (Haidar, 2017). It is viewed as a status symbol and a vehicle for upward mobility due to its increasing prominence in the upper socioeconomic groups (Parveen & Mehmood, 2013). Even before Pakistan was established, Urdu as well as English were considered important languages in this area. Rahman (2011) claims that both English and Urdu are the languages that hold power and are utilized in various spheres of society, including education. They have been competing for a teaching role as well as a higher post. The first argument stems from Lord Macaulay's suggestion of an English-medium school (Macaulay, 1835) and the demand of Sir Sayyed that Urdu be the principal language of instruction (Waseem, 2014). Pakistan's founding saw the effective promotion of Urdu, but it was ineffective to replace English in places of power (Raheem, 2015). As was previously indicated, Pakistan's 1973 constitution declared that Urdu will become the official language in fifteen years, replacing English. Unfortunately, this goal was not accomplished. Consequently, the practice of teaching in English continued and even became more common. The issue with the situation is that despite numerous attempts by governments, English remains essential. The current state of things may be largely attributed to the globalization and internationalization of English, but equally likely to blame is the authorities' lack of interest and willingness (Abbas, Pervaiz & Arshad, 2018). The Pakistani government started a campaign to make Urdu the national language in 2015 (Malik, 2016). The translation of the country's constitution and other important laws is being done as part of this initiative. In practical terms, this means that Urdu—rather than English—will soon become the official language. This period of transition was ensured by the 1973 constitution, therefore it is now critical to assess how the public views these two languages (Abbas, Pervaiz & Arshad, 2018).

Abbas, Pervaiz, and Arshad (2018) state that there is still intense competition between Urdu and English for the top jobs in the country. While English is used to facilitate global connectivity, people understand the importance of Urdu within the context of national connectedness. English



has a better academic value than Urdu since it is used for domestic as well as global conferences and seminars.

The language preferences of Pakistani youth regarding Punjabi, Urdu, and English were studied by Abbas & Iqbal (2018). Each of these languages is widely spoken and significant in the country in a different way. The goal of the current study was to look into the instrumental along with integrative reasons behind these languages and to assess their global social significance and standing. The study employed the mentalist approach and a questionnaire as research instruments in a quantitative manner. Data was collected from 445 participants in the survey, and SPSS was used to examine the data using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study concludes that whereas respondents identify Urdu and Punjabi with integrative drive, they relate instrumental motivation and the feeling of superiority with the English language. According to the report, school language plans should be changed to create an environment that values indigenous languages and encourages the fair development of all languages (Abbas & Iqbal, 2018).

According to Zulfikar, Dahliana, and Sari (2019), a person's attitude towards language acquisition is correlated with their choices for language learning activities. An individual's attitude is their propensity to respond either positively or negatively to anything (an idea, item, person, or circumstance).

Students' attitudes regarding language acquisition have been the subject of many studies in the discipline of EFL learning. The majority of research indicates that having a happy attitude has a favourable impact on learning outcomes and vice versa (Wang, 2010). A favourable perspective towards language acquisition has a good effect on how those people acquire the language, according to Brown (2000). In order to promote successful language acquisition, teachers should concentrate on helping students develop positive learning attitudes. This will increase the possibility that students will achieve academically (Mantle-Bromley, 1995).

English is currently the most widely used language for communication worldwide, according to Shaw (1981). It is the first language of about 275 million people, and millions more speak it as a second or foreign language. It is used as a language of science, international trade, and technical innovation as well as a means of communication between nations and areas of nations. It is also seen as a remnant of British control and a result of American cultural imperialism (Shaw, 1981).

Research Methodology

The study's methodology employs qualitative research approach to carry out the investigation of university students' attitude towards Urdu and English in Formal and Informal Communication setting. Qualitative research is the examination of phenomena' underlying character. It is particularly suitable for examining the reasons behind certain phenomenon observations, evaluating intricate multi-component therapies, and emphasizing the enhancement of interventions (Busetto, Wick, Gumbinger, 2020). The study utilizes interview as data collection tool. This study utilizes 13 interview questions to collect data. Simple random selection of learners at the Lower Mall campus of the public sector university, University of Education served as the basis for determining the target audience. This research employs 15 undergraduate and post graduate students of University of Education as sampling for the data collection.



Theoretical Framework

Social identity theory has been used to carry out the research findings. To analyse students' linguistic attitudes and social identities, Social Identity Theory (SIT) is used. According to Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory, a person's social group membership contributes to their sense of self. Language use can be a prominent component of social identity and can be influenced by the need to maintain and convey group identity. University students group themselves based on their linguistic identities, which may include being a member of groups that speak English or Urdu, when it relates to language attitudes. One "grand" theory is social identity theory. Its core concept is that, in a lot of social situations, people would rather perceive themselves as members of a group than as distinct individuals (Ellemers & Haslam, 2012). By shedding light on the complex interactions that exist between social identity and language interests within the university community, this approach offers the groundwork for a fuller understanding of the use of language in a variety of circumstances.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews with a sample of fifteen University of Education students were done to collect data for this study. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for a compromise between the freedom to probe deeply into the participants' ideas and the use of pre-planned questions. The questions were designed to find out the students' opinions regarding the use of Urdu and English in formal and informal university communication situations. All of the interviews were recorded and meticulously transcribed in order to facilitate a deeper analysis of the diverse perspectives about language preferences and communication methods among postgraduates and undergraduates. Throughout the data gathering process, strict adherence to ethical norms such as informed permission and confidentiality was maintained.

Thematic analysis had been used to look over the qualitative data obtained from the interview. The primary goal of this method is to use the data collected to gain some understanding of the investigation's problem. It could be improved to yield more accurate results and insights. The thematic analysis of this study comprised five processes, according to Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarizing oneself with the data, generating preliminary codes, searching for themes, identifying and characterizing themes, and composing the final report. The theme idea highlights a significant discovery that was made from the information relevant to the study topics.

The responses were first word-by-word transcribed and then at least twice examined to ensure that everything made sense. Microsoft Word was used to code the data in the second stage. Furthermore, after pertinent codes were classified, thematic analysis was used to generate and draft themes and mind maps (Thomas 2006). The themes were cross-checked against the retrieved codes in order to confirm the presence of a consistent theme pattern with discernible changes (Gani et al. 2020). The following represents the views that interviewees had regarding the attitudes of university students towards the use of both Urdu and English in formal and informal communication. These topics are the results of the analysis of the interview data:

1- Comfort and confident in Urdu language use

The "comfort and confident in Urdu language use" theme was extracted through the use of codes, which were generated using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step theme analysis approach. The codes included expression of thoughts, ease of use, mother tongue, formal and informal



communication, native language, national language acquisition, high vocabulary, confident, proficient, and comfortable.

In answer to one of the questions, how comfortable are you using Urdu in formal educational settings? Numerous participants demonstrated comfort and confidence when using Urdu in formal academic settings. Participants state with confidence that they are at ease and skilled in both formal and informal conversations while utilizing Urdu, which is both their mother tongue and a component of their universal grammar. “Yes, without a doubt, we are confident when we use Urdu in academic situations,” said one of the participants. Why? Since it is a component of our UG universal grammar and is spoken in our native tongue. It is not necessary for us to learn more. We feel comfortable utilizing Urdu in our academic work because we are self-assured and well skilled in it” (Participant 1, December 4, 2023). Participant 1’s declaration indicates that they are competent and at ease speaking Urdu in academic settings.

One person felt that it was easier to use English rather than Urdu and held a different perspective on the matter. As mentioned, “I do prefer to speak in English in formal academic settings where it is preferred.” Although I am comfortable with Urdu, teachers and I both prefer English (Participant 12, December 4, 2023). In contrast to certain other participants, Participant 12 supports the use of English in formal academic settings. The participant indicates an affinity for English, citing their lecturers’ preferences as justification, despite conceding the comfort and easiness of Urdu. Though one participant said they preferred speaking in English, it appears that practically all of the participants exhibited confidence when using Urdu.

2-Factors Affecting Language Choice

The second theme that emerged from the codes is the factors affecting language choice. The class setting, topic complexity, educational level, instructor preference, motivating teachers, confidence level, formality, complexities, setting, and academic level are the codes that are used to determine this theme. The selection of language demonstrated a dynamic process of decision-making, where formality and the intricacy of the topic were factors. This subject demonstrates how participants weigh a range of factors, including the topic’s complexity and environment, while deciding between Urdu and English. Participants select one of the two languages based on a variety of characteristics, such as the level of complexity of the issue, the formality of the setting, and the classroom environment.

As provided by one of the question’s, what factors influence your choice of language during class discussions—Urdu or English? A participant answered, “there are undoubtedly some characteristics that we enjoy, such as the formality of the classroom setting. How much formality is required in the classroom? The topic’s complexity is the second issue. We will absolutely speak Urdu if we find that it helps us grasp a subject better. If the issue can be understood in plain English, we will favour English; otherwise, we would prefer Urdu (Participant 1, December 4, 2023). Participant 1 explains that there are situations in which using Urdu or English during class discussions makes more sense. These include the level of formality in the classroom setting and the difficulty of the material being addressed. The participant’s response reveals a practical approach, employing suitable language after considering the formality of the circumstance and the complexity of the subject.

As one of the participants statement, “I guess it depends more on the topic of inquiry and what language teacher favors to speak in class or academic situations.” (Participant 4, December 4,



2023). This demonstrates the instructor's preference as a factor in language selection. Participant 4's point of view highlights how discussion topics and teacher preferences impact language choice in the classroom. According to Participant 7, "The main thing is fluency and my fluency in Urdu makes me to use Urdu rather than English because I feel embarrassed to talk in English" (Participant 7, December 4, 2023). This participant demonstrates that language preference is influenced by fluency in Urdu.

The factors that influence language choice in formal academic conversations include the formality of the environment, the complexity of the issue, the academic level, the long-lasting imprint, teacher motivation, teacher preference, and language fluency.

3-Conversation with classmates in Urdu

The data gathered through interviews indicates that peer interaction in Urdu is a recurring subject. Participants prefer to utilize Urdu because it is less uncomfortable and allows for more concept expression while speaking with friends. The following codes—comfortable, mother tongue, trilingual, informal conversations, preference, entertainment, message, convey, easily, own language, mother tongue, and slangs—have been used to extract this subject.

Which language, if any, would you rather use for informal interactions with peers—Urdu or English? Why? "I prefer Urdu with peers because I am more at ease with it," said one participant (Participant 2, December 4, 2023). "Urdu is mostly preferred when we make humorous remarks and casual talks," one participant retorted (Participant 5, December 4, 2023). Both Participants 2 and 5 indicate that they would rather speak casually or informally in Urdu with their peers. Participant 2 indicates a certain ease with the language, even though Participant 5 states clearly that Urdu is typically chosen in lighter contexts like jokes and casual discussions. These responses show that, because Urdu is more comfortable and may create a more relaxed atmosphere, peers generally choose to utilize it when conversing in social and informal settings.

In one instance, a person who speaks three languages with their peers said, "Obviously Urdu but occasionally Punjabi with my fellows." I do occasionally switch to English, making me a trilingual individual (Participant 12, December 4, 2023). This reflects the opinion of the participants regarding the usage of Urdu in informal interactions with peers because of the use of slang. The study's conclusions show how differently the participants used and preferred different languages when interacting with peers.

In answer of a question, which language do you feel yourself most at ease using in informal social settings? Why? One participant replied "I will prefer Urdu because it is my favorite language. My mother tongue is Saraiki but I will prefer Urdu in informal setting" (Participant 6, December 4, 2023). Although having Saraiki as mother tongue, Participant 6 states that he strongly prefers Urdu in casual social contexts, calling it as favourite language. It seems that the participant's preference for Urdu was influenced by personal affinities.

In casual communication, Urdu was favored by the majority of participants, with two individuals exhibiting trilingualism.

4-Encouragement of Bilingual Communication

This topic suggests that participants are aware of the significance of promoting Urdu and English in the classroom and emphasises the diversity of linguistic backgrounds within the university. The participants thought that in order to create an inclusive environment, bilingual communication should be encouraged in academic contexts. The following codes are used to extract this theme:



mother tongue, English, Urdu, English literature, international language, encouragement, cultural background, bilingual communication, international relevance, and distinct cultures. To respond to a question: Do you think it is appropriate for academic environments to foster communication in both Urdu and English? Why? According to one of the participants, “I believe that English is more supported in these kind of scenarios because of its global significance and because many people connect to different backgrounds of culture can comprehend English similarly or frequently so that is more preferred” (Participant 2, December 4, 2023).

A participant remarked that “English is a much favored language over Urdu. Professors prefer to talk in English since I study linguistics” (Participant 12, December 4, 2023). According to participant 12, in their academic environment, English is chosen over Urdu as the primary medium of communication. As a student of linguistics, students notice that teachers usually prefer to converse in English. This suggests that English is recognized as the preferred language for academic discourse and linguistics instruction.

Overall the responses demonstrate that, for the most part, Instructors support English in the classroom due to its significance on a global scale.

5-Language’s influence on employment prospects

The significance of language in one’s future working life and employment prospects is outlined in this theme. The codes utilized for this theme are: social media opportunities, translation, teaching second languages, societal inclinations, job opportunities, multilingualism, business language, global language, positive affect, companies’ demands, status, proficiency, Pakistani society, freelancing, and professional relationships. To answer a question, what potential effects do you think utilizing English or Urdu will have on your prospects for employment or professional relationships in the future? The majority of participants favored English as a prestigious, high-status language.

One of the participants stated, “The majority of sectors and firms in Pakistan prefer English, thus it’s the greatest language for our future professional relationships or employment chances. Urdu has a bad impact since most people and businesses don’t require it. Compared to Urdu, they favour English (Participant 3, December 4, 2023). Participant 3 highlights the value of knowing English for contacts in the business world and future employment opportunities. He pointed out that since Urdu is not widely utilized, employing it could be harmful because many companies and businesses in Pakistan chose to operate in English. This frame of view is in line with the idea that proficiency in the language is required for success in particular professional contexts across the country.

One participant said, “In our Pakistani society, a person who speaks English receives an elevated status in our society. If we are using English in our professional life, it would make you more preferred.” Thus, we may conclude that proficiency in English is more desirable for employment prospects and future career advancement (Participant 1, December 4, 2023). The statement made by Participant 1 highlights the idea that in Pakistani society, proficiency in English serves as a barometer of chances and social standing. They call attention to the pervasive notion that people who speak English more fluently are more significant and prestigious. This is consistent with a broader social tendency that associates knowledge of the English language with education, sophistication, and easier access to employment opportunities. In the context of professional life, the participant suggests that English is not only preferred but also frequently seen as essential for



career advancement. They contend that those who speak English fluently are more likely to succeed in their careers and find their ideal jobs. This point of view is in line with the global trend that English is increasingly being used for academic pursuits, international trade, and diplomacy; proficiency in the language can increase one's marketability and competitiveness.

According to one participant, who chose both languages because they were more convenient for doing business with, "Urdu is unavoidable since in the companies we have to interact with Urdu with consumers or clients. If we seek for employment in Pakistan, we should utilize English. We benefit from multilingualism going forward. (Participant 6, December 4, 2023). The sixth participant is in favour of employing both languages, recognizing that while Urdu is helpful when doing business with customers or clients in Pakistan, English is required for job applications.

English seemed like a suitable choice for employment in the future due to social preferences, which might have an impact on career trajectories. The fact that the participants acknowledged that fluency in English is a necessary skill for a successful career shows that they are aware of social norms and how language affects employment opportunities.

6- Social and Cultural Context's Effect

The topic of how cultural origin and social environment affect language choice is very important since these factors affect the language we choose to use in various contexts. Social, culture, context, norms, society, mother tongue, audience, conversation, language choice, cultural backdrop, informal setting, formal discussion, translanguaging, cultural norms, and adaptation are the codes for the issue of the influence of social and cultural context.

Is the language you prefer to employ in different communication scenarios influenced by social or cultural factors? In answer to this question a participant responded, "Yes, social and cultural setting influences greatly in selecting to choose a language. In social settings, for instance, we converse with our audience in a more formal manner. If we are able to speak English well, we will prefer it in professional settings as well. Furthermore, using English is not required while speaking with friends or relatives. We can speak Urdu, our mother tongue, or even both languages" (Participant 1, December 4, 2023). Participant 1 highlights how language choice is influenced by cultural and social context, saying that context dictates whether to choose Urdu or English. In social contexts, the person prefers to speak in their mother tongue or Urdu, however because of its formality, English is favored in professional settings.

"Yes, context influences the language choice," said one of the participants, citing three settings and the employment of multiple languages in different situations. "I have to speak Saraiki together with my family as I'm from a village and it's my mother tongue. Additionally, I like speaking Urdu in casual settings with my peers and fellow citizens. However, I like using English when having serious discussions with professors" (Participant 11, December 4, 2023). Participant 11's response clarifies how context influences language choice by illustrating how individuals navigate different linguistic settings based on the circumstances.

The participants' vocabulary was influenced by their cultural and social context, and they adjusted their speech to fit the rules of the situation. This subject demonstrates the participants' understanding of social and cultural standards and emphasises how adaptive language use is in a variety of social and professional contexts.



7- Prejudice in language and its stereotypes

Prejudice and discrimination in language are among the most significant themes. This theme is related to a participant question: Do you think there are any prejudices or preconceptions associated with using Urdu and English in a university setting? As a response, a participant said, “That is a stereotype; speaking English makes one feel more prestigious.” (Participant 2, December 4, 2023). Participant 2 acknowledges that there is a perception that associates speaking English with prestige and claims that utilizing the language is perceived as more prestigious. This participant is conscious of how society views language preference and the symbolic importance of English.

“Teachers consider that if a student speaks in English, he is higher-ranking and smart and different from others,” said a different participant (Participant 10, December 4, 2023). According to Participant 10, teachers think that students who speak English are more intelligent, sophisticated, and different from other kids. According to this perspective, language choice and cognitive capacity are seen to be related, with a bias favoring English speakers.

The following codes relate to the issue of linguistic prejudice and stereotypes: teachers, superior, high status, high marks, intelligent, teachers, prestigious, English, stereotype, bias, affection, efficiency, and Urdu. The participants perceived a bias in universities towards English, with encouragement for the language being given precedence over Urdu. The acknowledgement of English bias increases the likelihood of communication challenges in academic settings, especially when people are not accustomed to speaking the language often. But it was thought that this bias might make it harder for people to communicate, particularly for those who weren’t accustomed to using English on a regular basis.

8-Language as a means of expressing identity

The participants’ perception that their decision between Urdu and English has a fundamental impact on their capability to express and construct their identity is at the heart of the observed theme, “Language as means of expressing identity.” This topic involves the theory that language has a strong correlation with an individual’s sense of self, cultural heritage, and societal attitudes. It was thought that the primary tool for expressing one’s identity was language.

“How much do you believe language indicates regarding your identity, and has this notion modified since you have been a student?” was the question posed regarding identity. A participant answered, “Yeah, language helps me to convey who I am. In certain academic contexts, I’m required to speak Urdu whereas in others I speak English. Since I was not a native English speaker prior to being admitted to the institution, the concept has altered since I started attending classes (Participant 4, December 4, 2023). The fourth participant’s statement highlights the dynamic nature of language and its ability to build personal identities. The participant understands that language is a means of reflecting one’s experiences, social position, and cultural background as well as of expressing one’s identity.

“Clearly language expresses identity, as demonstrated by some students’ accents, which allow us to determine their past experiences and cultural identity,” said one participant (Participant 8, December 4, 2023). Participant 8’s comment emphasises how a person’s identity, especially their lineage and cultural history, may be expressed and revealed through language, and accents in particular. Accents are made up of speech rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation. They often



express distinctive qualities that disclose details about a person's linguistic and cultural background.

This theme has been implemented using codes related to Urdu identity, students studying English literature, idea modification, non-native English speaker, identity shift to English, cultural identity, background, and diversity in the classroom. The participants said that, given the status associated with being proficient in English, their choice to stick with Urdu over English was an indication of their cultural heritage and how society perceived them.

9-Urdu Benefits in Coursework

Benefits of Urdu in Coursework The topic of perceived benefits of utilizing Urdu in educational activities is enhanced communication and understanding of challenging material. The advantages of using the national language in educational contexts were highlighted by the participants' reports of feeling more at ease discussing ideas in Urdu. Participants were asked a question about this theme: What are the advantages of using Urdu in academic discussions or homework, in your opinion? "Because we are more proficient in Urdu, we even comprehend the complexity of the topic and communicate our ideas better," said one participant (Participant 1, December 4, 2023). This participant supported Urdu because it facilitates comprehension of difficult subjects.

"In my opinion, there are numerous reasons to use Urdu as we can express our ideas effectively and it can make us more innovative in academic coursework," said one of the participants, describing the language's assistance in creative works (Participant 14, December 4, 2023). Participant 14 highlights the many benefits of incorporating Urdu into academic courses, particularly in terms of fostering creativity and promoting clear and succinct concept communication. The speaker highlights Urdu's potential to provide clear and articulate communication by highlighting the language's capacity to support accurate idea expression. The terms "communication," "ideas," "proficiency," "effective communication," "learning grip," "convey," and "creative in academic coursework" are used to identify this theme.

10- Challenges with Using the English Language

The participants' opinions of the challenges they encountered when using the English language were expressed by the theme of Challenges in English Language Usage. The participants talked about the challenges they face when using English in academic settings, including difficulty finding words, the necessity to seek up foreign phrases, and the impact of not coming from an English-speaking background. In relation to this issue, I would like to know what challenges you encounter and how you resolve them when using English in official university contexts. "We don't have sufficient vocabulary, phrases to speak out, we're not fluent in it, we don't understand the meanings, and we're not quite as confident in speaking English," said one participant (Participant 3, Dec. 4, 2023). The third participant listed some challenges that come up when utilizing English in formal academic settings. First, the participant claimed that they would struggle to find enough words to clarify themselves due to their dearth of vocabulary.

Another question was asked from participants, has there ever been a situation where you found it more difficult to express complicated ideas or thoughts in one language than another? Could you give us an illustration? "Yes, it is really hard to communicate difficult concepts in English language," said one participant. I was initially unable to understand these novels, "A Passage to India" and "Heart of Darkness," because I am a second language student (Participant 15, December 4, 2023). Participant number 15 brought up the challenge of explaining complex ideas in English,



particularly for someone learning the language as a second language. They underlined how challenging it was for them to understand the novels “Heart of Darkness” and “A Passage to India.” Because of these works’ well-known intricate narratives, nuanced themes, and beautiful writing, it can be particularly challenging for non-native English speakers to fully comprehend them.

The following codes are used to talk about the issue of difficulties in using the English language: difficulties with pronunciation, spelling, accents, vocabulary, and fluency; lack of confidence; and vocabulary constraints. The techniques used to get beyond the obstacles include pausing, chatting slowly, code-switching, translanguaging, and transforming words and sentences into understandable language.

Social Identity Theory

The Social Identity Theory developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner offers a helpful framework for understanding how people categorize themselves and other people into social groups, which affects how they behave and think. My research indicates that language, in addition to communicating individual preferences, plays a crucial part in the creation of social identities by expressing societal prejudices and viewpoints.

The idea of social identity is congruent with the participants’ biases towards English, their relationship between language and ranking, and the impact on identity. The themes, which include linguistic prejudice and stereotypes, language as a sign of identity, and the influence of cultural and social circumstances, are consistent with the theory’s emphasis on self-identification and intergroup dynamics. The study broadens our understanding of the intricate connection between language choices and social identities in the context of higher education.

Language as a Social indicator: The In-group and Out-group Dynamics: One could see participant preferences for Urdu or English as a reflection of their social identities. Speaking a language has the effect of dividing people into in-groups (English speakers, for example) and out-groups (Urdu speakers), which has an impact on how people perceive their social status and sense of identity. In any given social situation, people tend to form groups based on shared features, such language.

Stereotypes and Prejudice in Language; Prestige and Bias: The participants’ perceptions of English as having more prestige are in line with SIT, where people could associate English’s higher status with achievement in both the professional and academic spheres. Examples of how stereotypes emerge and reflect intergroup dynamics are biases that give preference to English speakers over Urdu users.

Language as an acronym of Identity; Identity Expression through Language: SIT concurs with the participants’ assertions that their language embodies their identities. Language evolves into a tool for expressing participation in groups and connections, which aids in the development of positive social identities. According to SIT, a person’s identity is greatly influenced by the social groupings to which they belong. In terms of language use, people may identify more strongly with certain linguistic communities—such as speakers of Urdu or English—in order to strengthen their perception of social identity.

Language and Employment Opportunities; Spoken Language and One’s Professional Identity: The notion that learning English enhances one’s chances of finding work is consistent with SIT’s thesis, which holds that a person’s sense of identity and self-worth are positively impacted by their ability to speak and be accepted in the language of their community. The notion that knowing English improves one’s chances of landing a job is based on the premise that speakers of certain languages,



particularly those associated with strong economies or cultures, might benefit socially and monetarily. In many global situations, English is regarded as the language of technological advances, trade, and international communication, making English speakers more employable. Impact of Society and Culture: SIT's focus on how social environments affect behaviour is consistent with how participants modify their language use to fit into various social and cultural contexts. This adaptation reflects the need for a favourable social identity in a range of situations. According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), social settings have a big influence on how people behave. It implies that people feel more valuable and like themselves when they are a part of social groupings, or "in-groups." This theory holds that people alter their activities and behaviors to conform to the norms and expectations of their social environments. This makes them feel more like unique individuals and helps them feel like they belong.

Conclusion

To sum up, the research explores the intricate dynamics of language choice among University of Education students, shedding light on several issues that surfaced throughout the participant interviews. The findings show how Urdu and English have a complicated connection. Comfort or confidence levels, the formality of communication settings, interaction among peers, bilingual communication advancement, language biases and stereotypes, language as a means of displaying identity, perceived benefits of utilizing Urdu in coursework, difficulties in employing the English language, and striking the right balance between formal and informal language in different texts are some of the factors that shape this relationship.

Future studies can focus on a range of topics, including comparative analyses across various academic institutions, assessments of the effects of language policy, investigations into multilingualism and translanguaging strategies, and the effects of digital means of communication on language choice. The research's conclusions can aid in improving knowledge of students' language attitudes among educators, legislators, and language academics.

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