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## Trending Bilingualism in Pakistani News Talk Shows and Future Implications for Urdu Language

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**Abstract:** This study explores Urdu-English code-mixing in Pakistani news shows, analyzing data from "Capital Talk" and "Jirga" using Hoffman (1991) and Muysken (2000) theories of code-switching. The speech of anchors and guests is examined to identify types, instances, motives, and implications of code-switching for the Urdu language. Findings show that inserting English words is dominant, suggesting that English's popularity in mainstream media is overshadowing Urdu, potentially weakening the Urdu language and deteriorating cultural identity.

**Keywords:** *bilingualism, code-switching, code-mixing, Pakistani media, talk shows*

### Introduction

Language as defined by Chomsky is “a set of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements” (1957, p. 13). As a means of communication, it allows us to convey and exchange ideas, views and experiences. Sociolinguistics, a subfield of linguistics studies the reciprocal relationship existing between language and society. Being social creatures, human beings need to interact with the people around them. The social interaction may take place using one or more languages. Defining media, Rasul (2006) says that the term media encompasses both print media (newspapers, magazines, journals) and electronic media (television, radio, internet). According to her, people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are increasingly reliant on electronic media for sharing and transmitting information. The relationship between media and society is two-way. Media both reflects and contributes to society trends such as urbanisation, globalisation, professional mobility, literacy and vice versa. The technological advancements have caused the media to transcend the societal boundaries and become global media, reaching every part of the world. This also led to widespread popularity and use of English language that emerged as a

lingua franca bridging cultures and nations. However, it also paved the way towards strengthening bilinguality/bilingualism.

According to Beardsmore (1982), bilingualism is the process by which a speaker speaks two languages with a balanced degree of competence and proficiency level akin to that of native speakers. It is the individual's ability to communicate effectively in two languages which is usually manifested in the form of code-switching and code-mixing.

The terms code-switching and code-mixing, initially used interchangeably, have been defined differently by different scholars since 1971 with particular reference to sociolinguistic, semantic, psychological and grammatical aspects (Gumperz & Hernandez-Chavez, 1971; Timm, 1975; Lipski, 1978; Pfaff, 1979; Poplack, 1980; Poplack et al., 1988; Singh, 1985; Myers-Scotton, 1993). Brown & Attardo (2000) consider code-switching as the process whereby two languages or dialects co-exist in a particular conversation. The phenomenon of shifting whereby the speech begins in one language and subsequently shifts to another language by inserting lengthy structures, such as sentences and clauses is called as code-switching (Wei, 1998; Milroy, 1987; Goyvaerts, & Zembele 1992; Swigart, 1992). Defining code-switching, Yau (1997) asserts that it happens when the speakers employ two languages within the same communicative interaction. It usually occurs at three levels; intra-sentential, inter-sentential, and tag-switching. The switching marked by the insertion of a word or phrase within a sentence or clause is termed as intra-sentential switching. Intersentential switching occurs at the level of a sentence or clause boundary while tag-switching is the insertion of a tag from one language into a speech that is otherwise in a different language. Different linguists have different views about the term code-mixing. To Nababan (1984), it is the process characterised by the language mixing done by the speakers in a speech act with no such context or condition that necessitates it. According to Kachru (1986), it refers to creating a new and restricted or partially restricted code of interaction entailing the transfer of linguistic elements from one language to another at the intersentential or intrasentential levels. Maschler (1998) claims that code-mixing refers to the process whereby a new third code emerges by incorporating items into structurally definable patterns. The increasing number of English speakers across the globe shows that speakers in every society use this language along with their native languages. This has led to the rise of phenomenon of bilingualism which has become prevalent in the media too (Baudrillard, 1982:172).

## Research Objectives

This research aims to:

1. Identify and categorise the different types of code-mixing and code-switching employed by the speakers in the news talk shows.
2. Identify the reasons behind the frequent practice of English code-mixing and switching.
3. Explore the implications of code-switching and code-mixing for Urdu language in Pakistan.

## Research Questions

1. What are the types of code-mixing and switching used by the speakers in the news talk shows?
2. What are the possible reasons behind English code-switching and code-mixing?

3. What does English code-mixing/switching implicate for Urdu language in Pakistan?

This study is significant in terms of providing a deeper insight into how languages in a particular social context affect each other and how media employs language. Moreover, this study is supportive in exploring the current status of Urdu and English languages in Pakistan which can be used as a tool in not only determining the present linguistic scenario but also in predicting its future linguistic scenario.

## Literature Review

The technological advancements and globalisation have significantly contributed to the spread of bilingualism across the world. Consequently, English being the lingua franca has gained immense popularity and have attracted millions of speakers across the world. In many countries, it holds the status of official language while in others many people learn it as foreign or second language and use it alongside their regional languages. Apart from daily conversations, the phenomenon of bilingualism is now observed in the media as well. The discourse of Pakistani media is not an exception in this regard. Many studies have been carried out on the topic of code-switching and code-mixing which provide supportive evidence to the current study. Some of them are reviewed below:

Channa et al. (2021) examined the discourse of the entertainment channels of Pakistan with the aim to investigate the frequency of English words. The channels PTV, ATV, Hum TV, Geo TV and Hum Masala were chosen for this purpose. For data analysis, the statistical methods such as mean, median and mode were applied to the transcribed codes. It was found that discourse of the entertainment channels is altered with an English lexical item after every three Urdu lexical items with the percentage of code-mixing and code-switching in the discourse being twenty-five. The findings of the study suggested two factors behind the use of codes from English. First, the codes help in the communication process by quickly transmitting messages in a social setting. Second, they are used to avoid awkward comments, mitigate misconception and to highlight social class.

Hayat (2019) carried out research to study how the phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing operates in Pakistani advertisements and how it influences the young generation. The objective was to investigate the usage of English words in twenty on-air commercial chosen from the three Pakistani channels: Hum TV, Geo TV and ARY Digital. For determining the influence of code-mixing, a survey questionnaire method from 50 respondents was employed. The exploration of the commercials revealed that ten per cent of the words despite having their equivalent terms in Urdu were borrowed from English language. The results of the survey demonstrated that code-mixing affects the memorization process, understanding of the viewers, cultural norms and values. The study came to the conclusion that the restricted vocabulary of the writers, change in trends as well as technological advancement are the underlying factors behind the practice of code-mixing and code-switching.

Rasul (2006) studied the language hybridization and code mixing in Pakistan. The data source consists of ten television programs, eight taken from Geo television and two taken from PTV World. Kachru's framework (1978), consisting of three categories i.e. insertion, hybridization

and synthesis was employed as a theoretical framework. After the analysis of code-mixed linguistic patterns, it was found that there were 2914 instances of insertion and 2041 of hybridization. The instances under the third category consisted of heterogeneous instances which could not fit into the first two categories indicating the different ways in which code-mixing is used and how within one category, innovation and creation exists. The findings of the study suggested that social and attitudinal perspectives must be considered for better understanding of code-mixing and language hybridization in Pakistan. It was concluded that the process of shift, change, maintenance or desertion characterise the linguistic behaviour of Pakistani speakers with reference to code-mixing.

Akhtar et al. (2018) carried out research to study language mixing and its processes in Pakistani Urdu newspapers. The sample for the study consisted of two national-level Urdu newspapers. Front page and the international news page were chosen to collect various news types as data. The linguistic analysis of data in the light of Muysken (2000) theory of code-mixing revealed that the words from English were code-mixed at word and phrasal level with high number of occurrences of hybridised items. The study concluded that the frequent usage of English words in Urdu texts is the result of writers' negligence, the lexical gap in Urdu language, and the dominance of English over Urdu.

Ehsan & Aziz (2014) explored Urdu news in terms of extent, type and level of code-mixing. Thirty on-air news from a private Pakistani news streaming channel were used as data for the study and qualitative research approach was adopted to find out whether Urdu language has corresponding items for the inserted English words or not. The results of the study showed that code mixing occurs unconsciously and frequently in Urdu news. It was concluded that the majority of the terminologies used in Urdu news have equivalent terms in the Urdu language, however they are no longer used due to a rapidly shifting perception and attitude of people towards both English and Urdu languages. Apart from effectively communicating with the audience, code-mixing was thought to be the lack of effort on the part of people to find the equivalent word in Urdu.

Rasul (2013) studied the borrowing and code-mixing practices in two children's monthly magazines Hamdard Naunehal and Taleem-o-Tarbiat published in Pakistan. The study focused on examining the nature, causes, frequency and functions of code-mixed patterns by analysing data through the lens of content analysis technique. In the first magazine, there were 493 instances of borrowing and 213 instances of code-switching while 108 instances and 194 occurrences were found in the second magazine. It was discovered that the majority of them were hybridised and comprised of compound words or phrases with greater instances of verb hybridised compounds. The study came to the conclusion that words and phrases from the English language were used for the convenient and easy transmission of ideas and because of the prestige associated with English.

The present study is an endeavour to identify the types as well as reasons for code-mixing and code-switching done by the anchors and the guests in the news talk shows. Furthermore, exploring the implications of code-switching and code-mixing for Urdu language in Pakistan is also the focus of the study.

## Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach for the analysis of data. The data for this research consists of two news talk shows Capital Talk and Jirga chosen from Geo News channel. Capital Talk is the flagship political talk show hosted by the renowned journalist Hamid Mir. It usually discusses political and current affairs of Pakistan. Jirga hosted by Saleem Safi revolves around discussion on political, fiscal, social and international affairs with the aim to suggest or recommend solutions for the crisis in hand in order to foster a better future for Pakistan. The selected news talk shows have been retrieved from Youtube. Roman script has been used for transcribing Urdu speech of speakers. Bilingual theories of code-mixing and code-switching given by Hoffman (1991) and Muysken (2000) have been combined and chosen as the theoretical framework of the current study. The following figure illustrates the theoretical framework being utilized for the present study;

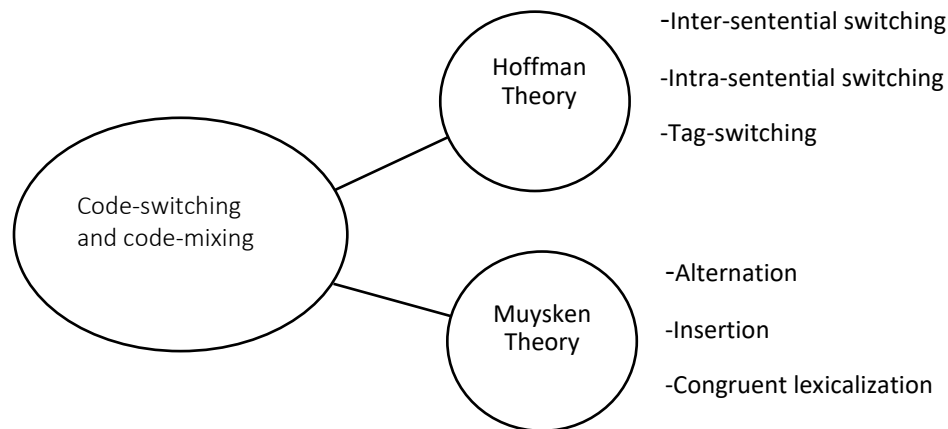


Figure 1

## Data Analysis and Discussion

Data analysis is done in three steps. First, categorization and quantification of code-mixed linguistic patterns in the light of theoretical framework. Second, identification of the reasons behind code-switching/mixing and third, exploring the implications of this practice for Urdu language in Pakistan.

Drawing upon Hoffman (1991) and Muysken's (2000) theories, the instances of code-switching and code-mixing from the two news programs have been identified and categorised under the following four headings;

Category A: Intra-sentential code-switching/Insertion

Category B: Inter-sentential code-switching/Alternation

Category C: Tag-switching

#### Category D: Congruent lexicalization

After analysis of the collected data, 236 instances of code-switching/code-mixing were found in the first program while 230 instances were found in the second program.

#### Category A: Intra-sentential code-switching/Insertion

According to Hoffman (1990), intra-sentential code-switching occurs when the language switch takes place in the mid of or within the sentence usually without hesitation, pause or interruption. Muysken (2000) defines insertion as the practice of code-mixing where the words or phrases from one language are incorporated into the structure of the second/another language with no change in the grammatical structure of the sentence. Out of the total instances of code-switching/code-mixing found in both the programs, 211 instances from the first program while 229 instances from the second program belonged to the category of intra-sentential code-switching or insertion. Some of the instances (highlighted words) from both the programs are listed below:

#### Instances from Program 1, Capital Talk

1. Agr **DG** Khan k **result** aa saky hen to yahan se hamare dur **far flung area** k **result** aa gaye thy.
2. Kyu k **party decision** jo hoga ye to aisy **supporter** jo hen wo purjosh hoty hen.
3. Hamne kaha bhae hame sath bithao **once ap result compile** kar rahy hen.
4. Ab **voter** kisi ki baat nahi sunta hai, **voter** inko **vote** deta jo Raja Zafar-ul-Haq jo **language** istemal karty thy **in previous days**.
5. Phr ye hai **load shedding** bhi ziada hogae, aur inho ne aik aur sarkon k **survey** karwa rhy hen aur idhr eenten phenk rahy hen **election** se phly.

Above are some of the examples of insertion of English nouns, phrases, verbs, abbreviations or clause in structure of matrix language (i.e. Urdu sentences). Such instances in the program Capital Talk are abundant and are an indication of how frequently and fluently speakers of news talk shows alter their code from Urdu to English. Though for many English lexical items, Urdu equivalents are available, e.g. 'Intikhabaat/Chunao' for election etc., code-mixing has become a sociocultural phenomenon with educated classes in Pakistan to consistently switch between Urdu and English. Borrowed term like 'vote' has no Urdu equivalent and although a bit similar Urdu term "Parchi" is available, it cannot completely convey the meaning of vote and therefore, the term 'vote' is used as it is by Urdu speakers. Thus, Urdu language also at times relies on English borrowed lexical items. This lack of equivalent words in Urdu, is also a reason why Pakistani people switch to a foreign language in their talk.

#### Instances from Program 2, Jirga

1. Dekhen sir bunyadi tor pe PTI ne farwari me jo novambar me **IMF** k sath **agreement** hua tha usko **breach** kya aur ye uski **violation** thi jo unho ne **petrol** ki **prices** ko **freeze** kiya, **freeze** kar k balke ye tk kaha k june tk hum **prices** ko kam bhi kiya or kaha k barhayen gy nahi.
2. **IMF lender of last resort** samjha jata hai k jab hum **IMF** k pas jayen gy chun k hamari **external side** ki **problem** hai to **IMF** usko hal karega.

3. **Finally budget** pesh kiya, **budget** pesh karny k baad usko **revise** kya, **revise** karny k bad aik **staff level agreement** hogaya.
4. *Lekin me samajhta hun k is me IMF k sath jo agreement kiya hai flexible exchange rate or jo law k andar change ki hai PTI ki hakumat ne uske nateeji me bhi State Bank js had tk halan k reserves kam hen lekin phir b uski ijazat nahi di ja sakti k speculators jo hen wo Pakistan ki puri forex markeet ko dictate karna shuru kar dey.*
5. *Lekin ye jo bilaterals hen wo ye kehty hen bhai jan ap har chhay mahiney k bad aik deposit ki request ya debt payment bhi kuch mangny k lie ajaty hen.*

In the program Jirga, scores of occurrences of insertion are observed as can be seen above. Some terms are used as it is because their replacements in Urdu are not available e.g. IMF, budget, and bank. For all the rest, equivalents are present in Urdu language but the frequent switch exhibits that the participants feel more comfortable to articulate in English.

### Category B: Inter-sentential code-switching/Alternation

According to Hoffman (1991), inter-sentential code-switching is observed between phrases, clauses or at sentence boundary usually in the beginning or end of a sentence where the speaker utters one sentence in one language and the next sentence is in the other language. Muysken (2000) defines alternation as a type of code-mixing which takes place at the level of structures. In this case, the switch occurs between the structures from different languages. The structures may include discourse marker, tag form or clause.

The analysis of the collected data from both the programs revealed that there were 20 instances of inter-sentential code-switching/alternation in the first program Capital Talk, while only 1 instance was found in the second program. The instances from both the programs are listed below:

#### Instances from Program 1, Capital Talk

1. *Agr DG Khan k result aa sakti hen to yahan se hamare dur far flung area k result agaye thy **but why they held this result** jo bilkul sath tha.*
2. *Aur usk jb close hota gaya, close hota gaya two sixty-five jab polling stations aye **I was still leading by two hundred and sixty-five votes.***
3. *Ye jo choda se pandra seaten jeeta hai ye mushkil se hamare jtny bhi log hen khawateen bhi pohanch jati hen pindi se **now whole pindi was there in my constituency.***
4. *Kyu k party decision jo hoga ye to aisy supporter jo hen wo purjosh hoty hen wo lga dety hen **but I don't think so** k aisi bat hai.*
5. *Mery sath Murtaza Satti Ex-MNA. **He was my election agent. We have tried our level best** sath hamare MPA thy.*

The above mentioned examples reflect that after every two or three Urdu sentences an English sentence is added by the speakers of the program. The increased frequency of such instances attests to the command of the participants on English and Urdu language structures, and smooth alternation of one language structure after the other.

#### Instances from Program 2, Jirga

In the second program, more instances of insertion/intra-sentential switching are observed and only one instance of intra-sentential switching/alternation is found as mentioned “me ab zara solution k taraf bhi, **solution is very important, solution is very important**”. This reflects less control of the speaker over the structures of both languages (or at least the English language), and more comfort in mixing/inserting single words or phrases in the structure of matrix language (i.e. Urdu sentences).

### Category C: Tag-switching

Tags are usually words or phrases which are used as fillers to grab the attention of the listeners. They are syntactically independent and do not contribute any significant meaning to the discourse. This means that the structure of the sentence remains intact even if they are removed. Examples include ‘well’, ‘you know’, ‘I mean’, ‘isn’t it?’ etc. They are more often used in informal discourse. Usually, the political discourse on media or assembly floors is a formal one therefore, in the collected sample of news talk shows, a tone of formality and seriousness prevailed, and consequently, no instances of tag- switching could be found in the selected programs.

### Category D: Congruent Lexicalization

This type of switching involves insertion or incorporation of linguistic elements from either language into the shared structure. The present research takes into account Urdu and English code-mixing and code-switching. Therefore, for this phenomenon to occur, the languages must share grammatical and lexical structures wholly or partially and generally come from the same language family. Here the matrix language is Urdu which does not belong to the family of English language and does not share grammatical structure with it, and consequently, only a few instances of this type of switching/mixing are found. In these few instances of congruent lexicalization, both languages partially share the grammatical structure. The five instances collected from data are given below:

1. *Two thirty-six mein I was leading by three thousand eight hundred.*
2. *Me apko keh sakta hun ap mje keh sakti hen whatever you feel appropriate.*
3. *What they excused k andar jaga nahi hai hamare pas.*
4. *Once I reached centre of Liaquat baagh peechy dhamaka hua.*
5. *Aur at the end of the day forty-nine pe inho ne harwa dya.*

In the above sentences, each Urdu sentence consists of two parts, out of which one part neatly adjusts English phrasal/clausal structure in the matrix language. The continuous insertion of words, chunks and sentences from English in Urdu by the speakers in the programs demonstrates the popularity of the English language in Pakistan and Pakistani media.

The table below provides the details about the number of instances of the types of code-mixing and code-switching found in both programs:



Program No.	Instances of Intra-sentential code-switching/Insertion	Instances of Inter-sentential code-switching/Alternation	Instances of Tag-switching	Instances of Congruent Lexicalization	Total
1	211	20	0	5	236
2	229	1	0	0	230

*Table : Details about the instances of code-switching and code-mixing in the programs*

### Reasons for Code-Switching and Code-Mixing

The following reasons are observed behind the frequent practice of English code-switching/mixing:

#### 1. Prestige

The spread of English as lingua franca is the product of globalisation and colonialism. It seems to play different yet dominant roles. In many countries, it holds the status of foreign or second language. It is also used as an official language and a medium of instruction in educational institutes in many countries, for example India and Pakistan etc. As a result, it has acquired the status of prestigious language and therefore the people who can speak English well are considered more prestigious. This is one reason why many people in our society prefer to speak in English. The code-switching done by the hosts and the guests between English and Urdu in the talk shows also demonstrates that they attempt to gain prestige and may want to convey that they know the prestigious language and hence they are prestigious people.

#### 2. Show-off Education and Expertise

In our society, the individual's level of qualification is judged based on his/her English-speaking skills. In educational institutes of Pakistan, English is used as a medium of instruction and to continue and complete their education, people must learn and know English. Therefore, knowing and using English language is a means to show-off their qualification, education or expertise. Those who cannot speak properly in English are assumed to have a low level of education even though they may have knowledge and skill in other fields. People belonging to higher social class also use it as a tool to show-off their modernism. Switching from Urdu to English using the jargon of politics, the hosts and the guests indicate that they are very well-educated people who know how to convey their thoughts and ideas regarding any politics-related issue using the English language effectively.

### **3. Impressing Opposition Members**

In modern times, people who are able to communicate/exchange their thoughts or ideas/information in English language, grab the attention of others. Therefore, nowadays speaking in English is considered a social plus, not to mention mastering it. Speaking in English on different public platforms is a way to impress others and show-off your English language skills. It can be said that the hosts and the guests in the shows switched between Urdu and English to impress each other with their bilingual ability and English language speaking skill.

### **4. Socio-cultural Phenomenon**

When people possess bilingual ability i.e. the ability to speak in two languages, they frequently switch from one language to another during social interaction with others. Since prestige is associated with English language, people usually switch from Urdu to English for social-uplift. In this way, code-switching and code-mixing have become social phenomena. Code-switching has become a cultural phenomenon as well because there are many cultures where certain cultural norms and values are better explained by using lexical items from another language. For example, people use English euphemistic expressions, interjections, greeting words, food names, attire names as sometimes their equivalents are not available in matrix language. Thus, a foreign language i.e. English better facilitates the expression of thoughts, desires, values, practices by the Urdu speakers. In short, embedding English in day-to-day speech has become completely normal here in Pakistani context without which people consider their speech to be deficient of modernity, sophistication and stature.

### **Implications for Urdu Language**

The data analysis testifies to some subtle but alarming implications for Urdu, the national language of Pakistan. It reflects the dynamic nature of Urdu language which is negatively impacting the Urdu language causing it to lose its true essence and becoming hybridized. Since language is closely tied to cultural identity, the insertion of English words or segments in Urdu discourse may result in the weakened sense of identity and pride in the language. Frequent practice of English code-mixing and code-mixing and the prestige factor associated with the use of English may lead the Urdu-speaking communities to reframe their perspective and change their attitude towards the Urdu language, the result of which could be the decline in its use. Switching from Urdu to English language in day-to-day discourse or media may also lead the speakers to prefer and shift towards more English-centric linguistic landscape endangering the linguistic heritage associated with Urdu language. The prevalence of code-mixing and code-switching in Pakistan may also pose some serious challenges in the way of promotion efforts for the Urdu language. The emergence of English as lingua franca has started tough competition for survival/maintenance among the languages in almost every society let alone Pakistani society. Being the language of the super power countries of the world, it has a significant impact on the countries lying on peripheries with their weaker economies. So, the under-developed languages are under the impact of English imperialism. Thus, frequent bilingual practices are weakening the roots of Urdu while English language is rapidly strengthening its roots in the societal structure of Pakistan which implies that Urdu may be gradually replaced by English in near future.

## Conclusion

The present research study examined the types of code-switching and code-mixing in the speech of the anchors and the speakers of the two selected Pakistani news talk shows. The data analysis is done in the light of Hoffman (1991) and Muysken (2000) theories of code-mixing and code-switching. Apart from identifying the different types of code-switching and code-mixing, the study also aimed at highlighting the possible motives behind frequent practices of English code-mixing and switching. The exploration of the implications of code-switching and code-mixing for Urdu language has also been a focus of the research study. The analysis and categorisation of collected instances of code-mixed linguistic patterns demonstrated that instances of intra-sentential switching/insertion abound in both news talk shows. The greater instances of intra-sentential switching is an indication of the fact that speakers are more familiar and comfortable using this type of code-switching. It also manifests the transition stage of bilinguals from low proficiency level to the mid proficiency level and finally reaching the high level of proficiency where they will adopt the foreign language as their first/native language. The research study establishes the following reasons behind the linguistic switch; the prestigious status that is being imparted to the speakers because of the globalization of the English language. Besides, English is also an important indicator of a higher level of education and expertise. Therefore, English in Pakistan is also spoken by the people to boast their qualifications and impress other people. Lastly, it is observed that the use of two languages or relying on bilingualism has become a socio-cultural phenomenon in Pakistan i.e. it is a social and cultural practice that is strengthening its roots in Urdu-speaking communities. Thus, it is crystal clear that bilingualism has become a common practice in media discourse and pure Urdu is no longer used in media.

The gradual uprooting of Urdu and implanting of the English language through its frequent use in the media industry is the consequence of language contact between Urdu and English in the context of Pakistan. It implies that linguistic landscape of Pakistan is fast undergoing a change where Urdu is being replaced by English. It also implies that in future people may completely shift to English language as English is not only being used for communication purposes but in every sector such as advertising, education, medical treatments, legal procedures, etc. In short, the dominance of English in Pakistan reflects the linguistic imperialism of English language. English being the language of the core countries, is rapidly putting scores of regional/indigenous languages of peripheries in the zone of endangered languages.

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