AN ANALYSIS OF OVERWHELMING TRENDS OF ENGLISH CODE-MIXING AMONG PROFESSIONALS IN PAKISTAN

Mahmood Ahmad Azhar[1], Muhammad Waqas[2], Tenzila Khan[3]
[1]Dr., Lahore Leads University, dr_azhar1@yahoo.com
[2]Lahore Leads University, mwaqas569@gmail.com
[3]Lahore Leads University, tenzila2012@gmail.com

Abstract

Present study sets out to investigate the phenomenon of code-mixing in the Pakistani multilingual and bilingual society. Since the Independence in 1947 there has been somewhat harmonious coexistence of English and Urdu, the state language, in Pakistan, which is a monolingual country at national level. But substantial command over English is considered as a linguistic passport to the arena of globalization and competitive professional job market, especially the non-government ones. It is also considered as necessary element for socio-economic upward mobility. The growing of multinational companies along with the private ones in the recent years has acted as a socio economic factor underlying the increasing consciousness in learning English. This job related factor has given English language the status of a career oriented language with a colonial touch of aristocracy and high prestige. So there is an increasing trend among Pakistani professionals to learn English not only for mutual communicative purpose but also to compete in the job market. Now in Pakistan English is associated with better professional job, which earns a person better social prestige. Here, a person's socio-professional identity can be better understood from the nature and amount of his spoken language. Mostly service holders and professionals are found to mix Urdu and English in their conversation. This article is mainly based on investigating the deliberate conversational code mixing in the repertoire of Pakistani professionals. Research findings reflect the increasing interest of Pakistani community in English language.

Keywords: Bilingualism, Code Mixing, Global language vs native language, Professional repertoire

1. INTRODUCTION

Code-switching and code-mixing are well-known traits in the speech pattern of the average bilingual in any society the world over. Urdu language has its origin in Turkish, Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit. The history of English in the language behavior of Pakistani community dates approximately 200 years back when the British began to get hold on sub-continent along with their language. When they became the sole rulers of India after the Independence War in 1857, the people of India were forced to learn English, the official language, to get jobs under British government. So the students in universities focused on learning English

and getting good command over it for professional purposes. Low or no command in English meant least job opportunities under British rule.

At first the Muslims of India resisted to learn and adopt English under the influence of religious leadership, but with the worthy efforts of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan Muslim intellectuals felt the dire need of learning English to compete with other nations regarding professional jobs and government services. In 1947, the people of sub-continent got freedom from the British colonial rule and there happened the emergence of two independent states i.e. Pakistan and India. In Pakistan Urdu was given the status of national language and certain steps were taken for the enforcement of Urdu in place of English as official language. But amazingly English continued to sustain its influence over linguistic domain in Pakistan.

English is taught at primary, secondary, and higher levels in schools and colleges in Pakistan. At university level, though there is formal emphasis on Urdu, but in actual practice English is promoted. As a consequence, students of all academic levels have varied range of expertise in English. On the other hand when we examine professional job market in government services, national and multinational companies, international projects, semi and non-government organization, banks and renowned private companies we find a strong requirement of proficiency in English language there. It acts as a strong motivational factor for the professionals to be proficient in English. All the factors mentioned above lead towards a linguistic environment where we find the embedded element of English language in Urdu which is the common language of communication of whole Pakistani society.

1.1. Objectives of Study

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Find out the causes and patterns of code-mixing among Pakistani professionals.

2. Help in understanding the sociolinguistic culture in the country.

3. Point out the fact that English language in Pakistan has been tailored as a compulsory requirement in professional setting.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several scholars have attempted to construe code-switching and code-mixing. Among them are Hymes (1974), Amuda (1989), Atoye (1994), Belly (1976) and Wardhaugh (1992). Hymes (1974) defines only code-switching as "a common term for alternative use of two or more languages, varieties of a language or even speech styles" while Bokamba (1989) has also given his interpretation of these concepts. Spolsky (1998:45) says, "It is very common that people develop some knowledge and ability in a second language and so become bilingual".

The simplest definition of a bilingual is a person who has some functional ability in a second language. This may vary from a limited ability in one or more domains, to very strong command of both languages. Wardhaugh (1992:107) says, "Conversational code-mixing involves the deliberate mixing of two languages without an associated topic change." Hudson (1996:53) defines code-mixing as a case "where a fluent bilingual talking to another fluent bilingual changes language without any change at all in the situation." He also says, "To get the right effect the speakers balance the two languages against each other as a kind of linguistic cocktail." According to Haugen (1953:280), "The strongest possible motive for language learning is the need of associating with the speakers of the language"

Mesthrie, Swann, Deumert and Leap (2000: p146) determines code switching a "switch back and forward between languages, even during the same utterance". Romaines (1995:p.121) cites Gumperz (1982:p.52) views code switching as linguistic juxtaposition. Poplack (1980) asserts that there are three types of code switching: Inter-sentential, Intra-sentential and Tag switching. Lieberson (1981:173) says, "The linguistic demands of the work-world are among the most important forces influencing the acquisition of a second language". Investigations on the causes of this phenomenon, for instance, have revealed sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic factors. One is bilingualism or language contact that results in lexical borrowings and mixture of English and vernacular expression.

According to Rasul (2009:p.42) with the establishment of Pakistan Urdu was given status of national language, but "certain factors-the colonial background, controversial issues of official language, and, prestige factor attached to English, industrialization and globalization-have added to the atmosphere of English with the rising of every dawn". Thus English has occupied the linguistic domain of Pakistan and it is producing an alarming situation for the national language. "The rush of English through the communication channels has

added to exposure to English. One of the consequences is the frequent code switching and code mixing, which in turn has resulted in the desertion of certain lexical items of Urdu (Rasul 2009).

3. METHODOLOGY

For data collection 50 professionals and government service holders are chosen. The respondents include employees of banks, teachers, engineers, employees of private and multinational companies and NGOs, and journalists. Lahore, the capital of Punjab, has been selected to collect primary data as Lahore is a city in which people from almost all districts of Pakistan gather and reside for professional and business purposes.

A questionnaire was prepared comprising of the laconic questions keeping in mind the exploration of patterns and causes of code mixing. The questionnaire was provided to all respondents individually, Respondents were instructed about the provision of proper and honest response. They were assured to use their symbolic names and identity to conserve confidentiality and since our population consisted of professionals so responsible response was expected.

Interview method was also adopted to get socio-cultural details and related linguistic behaviors of our chosen group. Respondents were personally interviewed with planned questions about their family, life ambition, personal opinion on different current cultural and socio-political concerns, trends towards recreation or festivities and their daily routine of life. These were recorded interviews with consent of interviewees. It was also found that some of the respondents hesitate to tell the truth about some of the aspects asked about in questionnaire and interview. So to avoid any deficiency in this serious study the target group was closely observed regarding their linguistic behavior holding all ethics of privacy. It was found that this observation method contributed a lot to bridge the gaps of both of above mentioned methods and to explicate the phenomenon of code mixing.

3.1. Analysis of data and results

The collected data have been analyzed statistically and following finding are explored through this study.

Effect of Environment

1. Agreed ----------------70%

2. Slightly differed------25%
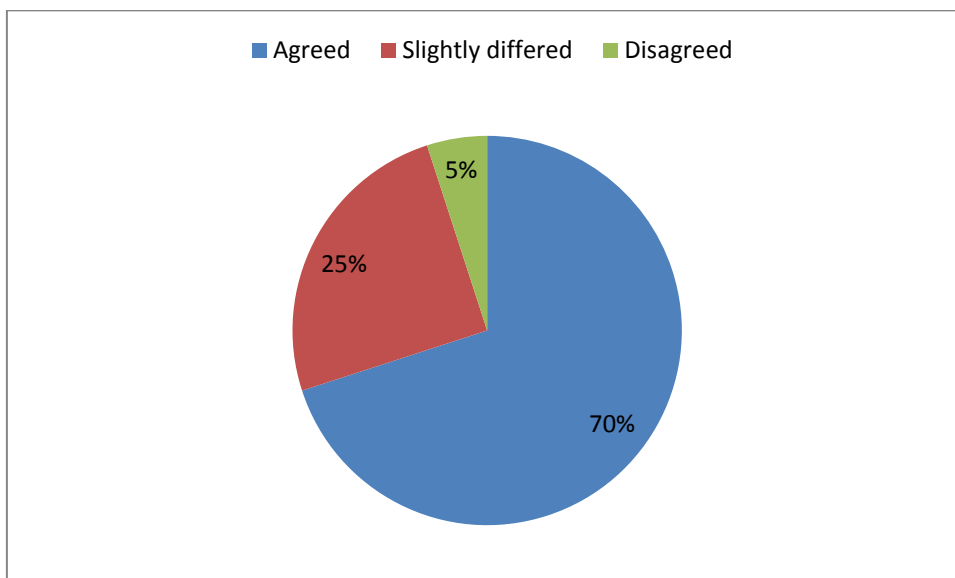
3. disagreed--------------05%

Fig.1

Office environment, with its stimulating factors and official requirements, has its major role in mixing of English in Urdu. In offices, courts, most of educational institutes, banks, national and multinational companies the whole documentation happens in English language. In multinational companies and English medium schools and colleges the language of verbal communication is also English. Consequently, in such linguistic environment employees' switching to English in their conversation is natural though its ratio varies

depending upon the situation and formality level. Usually, it is observed, this embedding of English in Urdu is directly proportional to formality level of speakers and the situation in which conversation takes place. For instance, in an official meeting there would be massive mixing due to formal official environment while conversing with colleagues about office matters in a café the extent of mixing will be low. Sometimes, in order to grant seriousness and importance to their speech people get support of mixing and switching to English.

Arena of Code mixing:

i.   Official ceremony-------------------- 12%

ii.   Evening parties ---------------------- 06%

iii. During shopping -------------- ------- 07%

iv.   Commonly in all situations--------- 40%

v.   In sms composing ------------------- 13%

vi.   Social meeting----------------------- 08%

vii. Family function---------------------- 04%

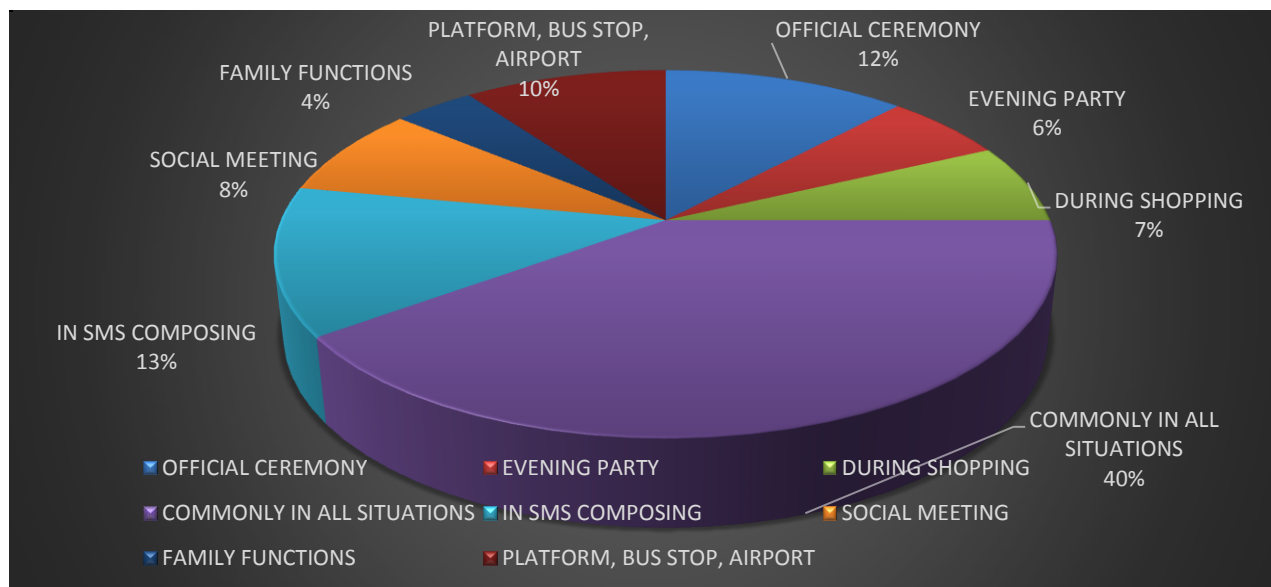viii. At platform, bus stop, airport---------10%

Fig.2

Addressees with whom code-mixing occurs:

Then it is observed that the ratio of code mixing among the respondents varies while conversing with various addressees. They have their conversation with their friends, colleagues, clients, in their home and office and at public place and the ratio of mixing changes accordingly.

i.   Common visitors------------ 40%

ii.   Family------------------------ 45%

iii. Relatives---------------------- 53%

iv.   Friends ---------------------- 68%

v.   Customers -------------------72%

vi.   Colleagues ------------------ 87%

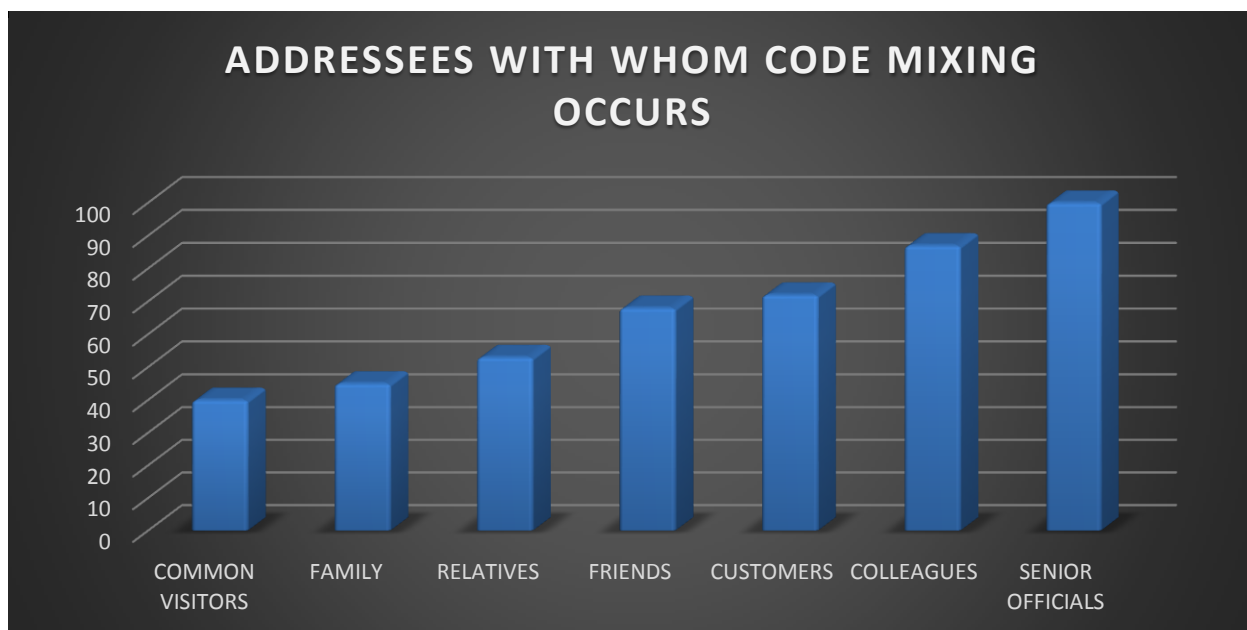vii. Senior Officials------------- 100%

Fig.3

Patterns of code-mixing:

Intra-word mixing:

In their conversation speakers use the words and phrases in which we find the combination and mixing of both Urdu and English. This intra-word mixing often leads to the formation of many regular words of Urdu language.

e.g. Istri Stand. Chati race. Barqi fan. Paanshop. etc.

A new trend of mixing is also noted in making the plurals of some Urdu words by adding (s) to these words especially nouns on the pattern of plural formation in English language. Though it is comparatively latest practice but is being adopted by many Urdu speakers. e.g. *Charpai***s**, *Masaalah***s**, *Ghunda***s**, *Halwa***s**, *Minaar***s**.

Intra-sentential mixing:

Intra-sentential mixing of English in Urdu is so much common in the society. People hardly speak a sentence which comprises all words of pure Urdu language. Here are some examples of this common type of mixing. The words in italics are Urdu words.

- *hmen* encouraging *aur* positive response *nai mil raha.* (We are not getting any encouraging and positive response)

- *Tmhen* promise *krnahogake tum meri* help *kroge.* (Youwill have to promise that you will help me)

- *hm*en early morning *is*programme*ko* start*krnachahey.* (We needto start this programme early morning.)

- Education *km hone k bawjoodwoak* witty person *he.* (In spite of low education he is a witty person).

Types of Language Alternation:

Here are some ratios of patterns of mixing regarding language alternation which has been observed and concluded from the conversation of participants.

    i.   Only words and phrases------- 100%

    ii.   Sentence----------------------- 63%

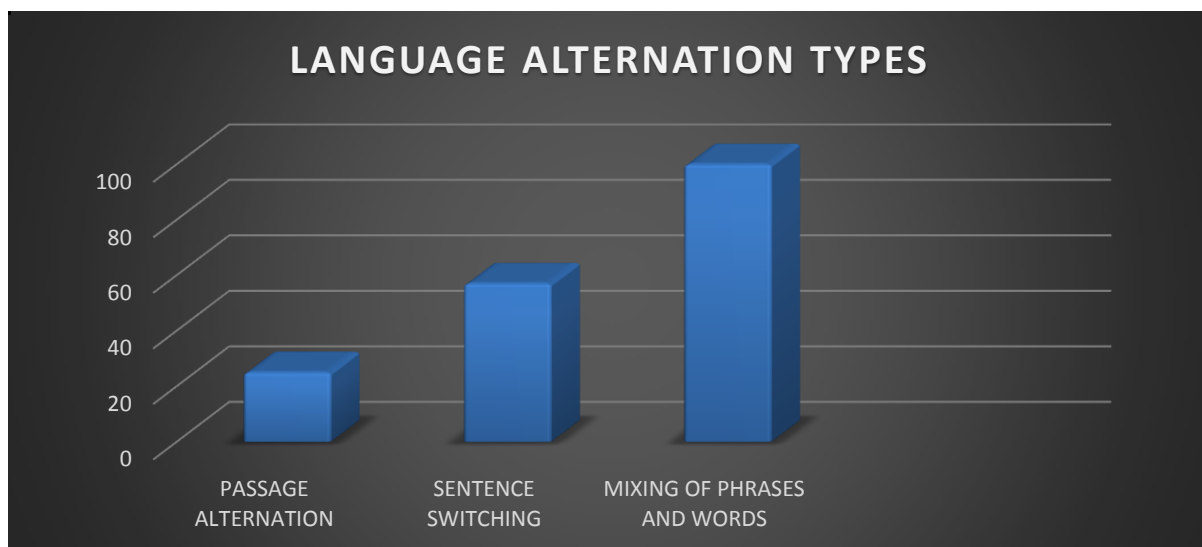   iii.   Whole passage----------------- 30%

Fig.4

Response from listener:

The response of listeners to the speakers' mixing of both languages was also observed. Calculations based on their response are following.

1-Criticizing behaviour---------------24%

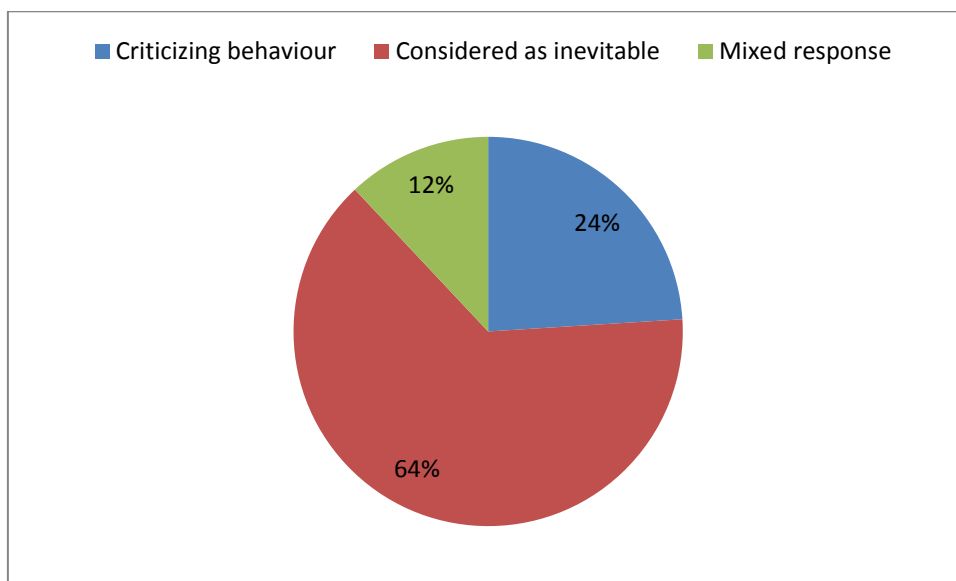2 -Considered as inevitable---------- 64%

3 - Mixed response-------------------12%

Fig.5

The following calculations display the psychological status of the speakers when they mix two languages.

1 Feeling pride and joy---------------------- 35%

2 Do it unwillingly ------------------------- 20%

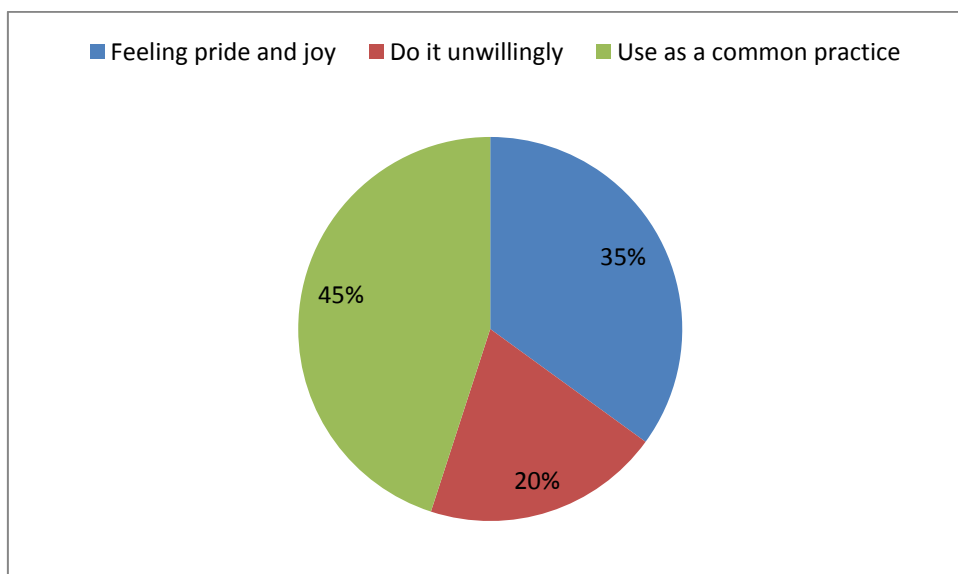3 Use it as common practice---------------- 45%

Fig.6

Reasons behind shift of language:

i) **The medium of education is English:** The medium of education is English in almost all educational institutes in Pakistan. The books provided by Education department in all of its public schools are in English. At higher level most of the books are written by foreign authors and are in English. So the students adopt English as their second language and when they speak Urdu they do embedding of English in Urdu as a natural consequence of their educational background.

ii) **Lack of vocabulary**: Sometimes people use English words and phrases while speaking Urdu because they do not find appropriate translation equivalent of those English words in Urdu. It is a somewhat related to instant borrowing as mostly it happens when we, instead of searching for exact Urdu word, make hurry in the use of English vocabulary.

iii) **For professional purpose**: Some respondents claimed that the dexterous use of English in their conversation helps them to convince their clients and customers as the use of English terms has good impact in the presentation of different sale products. We find the best display of code mixing due to this reason in renowned companies' sale process.

iv) **To show off their status**: From the psycho-social analysis of different respondents through observation method we find a psychological cause behind the insertion of English words. People do this to show off their socio-linguistic status. To them the good expertise in English is a proof of superior educational background and social status.

v) **To impress the opposite sex:** The data analysis also shows an interesting cause of code mixing among youth. Young generation is making the abundant use of English in their conversation to attract and impress the opposite sex especially in colleges and universities. They think that the use of English language in their conversation adds to their personality and image.

vi) **Euphemism**: sometimes we find ourselves in a critical situation where we have to use some harsh and corrosive words in our speech. There we use English words for euphemistic reasons because the use of exact Urdu wording there may cause unpleasant situation. Moreover talking about sensitive matter like love, sexuality, some of physical diseases we use English terminology as the equivalent words in Urdu sound odd or may distort the real meaning. People, sometimes, abuse others in English to maintain the level of sophistication.

vii) **Spontaneity**: 85% of the respondents claimed their spontaneity in language shift. According to them, they do it because they can do it with full ease and command and they have to do it for socio-economic prestige and requirement.

Attitude towards code-mixing:

Pakistan is a country which is multilingual at regional level and monolingual at national level. English is a

foreign language for Pakistani community but, surprisingly, it has occupied the linguistic domain as second language. The attitude of people towards the use of English in their conversation in the form of code mixing and switching, is very complicated and controversial. Some people consider this overwhelming mixing of English in Urdu as debasing their linguistic identity in the world because Urdu is a symbol of national pride for Pakistani community. So, according to them, English should be used only in that situation where it is so much necessary.

Many language scholars harshly condemn this uncontrolled embedding of English into Urdu. In their opinion it will eclipse the supremacy of Urdu in the linguistic domain of Pakistan. But, ironically, the analysis of recorded conversation of these opponents shows that those who condemn this mixing, themselves, use a large number of English words in their speech. Some people consider mixing of more and more English as snobbery. According to Wardaugh, people have mixed feelings of both admiration and envy towards bilinguals.

There are also some people who feel very happy in mixing English in Urdu. Actually there are some psycho-social reasons behind this linguistic behavior. People think that knowing English is a matter of social prestige and it is a symbol of socio-linguistic status. One interesting fact is that almost all bilingual Pakistanis remain always concerned lest they should make any mistake in English, and then they switch to Urdu.

Limitations of the Study:

There are some limitations in this research also. Some respondents provided the information which does not match the data obtained through observation. For instance, when they were asked about their fluency in English they, instead of telling the actual command, exaggerated in it considering the less expertise in English as a matter of humiliation. Talking about reasons of mixing of both languages most of them concealed some of the causal elements especially psychological ones. Moreover this research is confined to professionals; as a result the behavior of code-mixing among other social categories such as students, merchants, housewives, market workers and household servants has not been included categorically in this study. Much scope of further studies is still found in this field.

4. CONCLUSION

This research throws light on the wider use of English as prestigious language among Pakistani professionals especially and whole Pakistani community generally, though their ratio of its use varies according to their expertise in English. This situation is leading towards an informal alienation towards their national language though, formally, they seem to oppose the domination of English over Urdu. Today, to resist this language shift is as difficult as to stop cultural shift. Urdu with its absorbing nature is accepting different words and terminology of English in it. But this flow of adaptation can also lead to distortion of purity of spoken Urdu. And the day is not far when pure Urdu language will be confined to books only. So Pakistani community should pay heed to this alarming fact and they must practice Urdu maximally to preserve their linguistic identity in the world. Urdu linguists must build maximum vocabulary of pure Urdu so that nobody could denounce Urdu with the charge of possessing insufficient vocabulary. Linguists must also work on Urdu syntax and phonology in order to introduce Urdu language at international level like any other lingua-franca so that other inhabitants of this global village may also get familiarity with Pakistan's national language.

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