

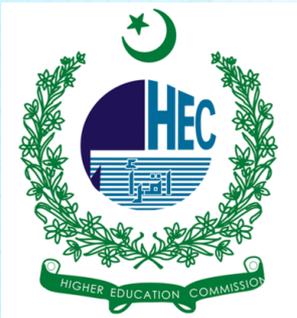
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**LANGUAGE MIXING IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES: A
SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF CLASS-BASED VARIATION**



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Abstract

This paper investigates the sociolinguistic phenomenon of language mixing including code-switching and code-mixing within multilingual societies, specifically examining how these practices vary across different social classes. While language mixing is often viewed as a singular byproduct of globalization, this analysis argues that it serves as a distinct marker of socioeconomic identity and cultural capital. The survey technique is used for this research paper. The research population of this study were the social classes of district Rahim Yar Khan, from which researchers selected targeted population of 300 participants from these classes by using purposive sampling technique. The researchers meets these contributors which were head of the families and distributed questionnaire among them as data collection instrument. The questionnaire was contained on three parts; part A contains on demographic statistics of the research participants; part B comprises on nine close-ended questions and part C consist of one open-ended question. The collected data was later analyzed by using SPSS software and presented in tables and figures. The findings showed that Pakistani social-classes mix languages in a different way due to some economic factors that are effecting language mixing behaviors in Pakistani social-classless. In the end some suggestions were presented by researchers on the base of these findings.

Keywords: *Language Mixing, Multilingual Societies, Sociolinguistic Analysis, Class-Based Variation Comparative analysis.*

Introduction

In many contemporary multilingual societies, the ability to speak multiple languages is not merely a tool for communication; it is a dynamic social practice that reflects and reinforces social hierarchy. When speakers alternate between languages or combine them within a single utterance a phenomenon known as code-switching or code-mixing their linguistic choices often signal their education, economic status, and social affiliation. A sociolinguistic analysis of these behaviors reveals that language mixing is rarely random; it is highly structured and varies significantly across different social classes.

The Sociolinguistic Landscape of Multilingualism

Language is a social phenomenon that embodies identity, power dynamics, and hierarchy. In multilingual contexts, such as those found in Pakistan, India, or urban hubs in Africa, speakers often navigate between a local language, a national language, and a global language (frequently English). These languages rarely hold equal status. Instead, they are stratified, with some carrying more prestige than others.

Code-mixing the blending of two or more languages in a single conversation or sentence serves multiple communication goals, including lexical need, conveying a message properly, or expressing social identity.

Class-Based Variations in Language Mixing

Sociolinguistic studies indicate that social class significantly influences how, when, and why people mix languages.

1. The Elite and Upper-Middle Class: Prestige and Global Identity

For the upper-middle and elite classes, language mixing is often used to show education, sophistication, and familiarity with global trends. In many post-colonial societies, this involves interspersing local languages with English, particularly in professional and social settings. This type of mixing is often characterized by:

- **Intra-sentential mixing:** Shifting languages within a sentence to demonstrate high proficiency.
- **English as a Matrix Language:** Using English for technical, academic, or professional terms (lexical borrowing) while maintaining the local language for the sentence structure.
- **Prestige markers:** The use of English phrases serves as a marker of social mobility and educational background.

2. The Middle Class: A Balancing Act

The middle class often engages in code-switching to manage social situations and navigate between different environments, such as the workplace (where English may be preferred) and the home (where local languages prevail). This group uses language mixing as a strategic tool for social advancement, often blending formal and informal registers of languages to suit the context.

3. The Working Class: Localized Mixing and Solidarity

Conversely, the working class typically exhibits a different pattern of language mixing, which is often more localized. Their mixing may involve integrating different local dialects or regional variations rather than elite languages.

- **Solidarity and Identity:** Mixing is often used to establish rapport and indicate shared group affiliation.
- **Contextual constraints:** Their language choices may be more influenced by immediate surroundings rather than the pursuit of prestige.

Institutional Influence on Class-Based Mixing

Education systems play a key role in shaping these variations. Private institutions often encourage, or even mandate, the use of English, creating a habitus of English-Urdu or English-Local language mixing among students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. In contrast, public sector schools, often attended by lower-income families, may rely on local languages, leading to different patterns of language exposure and, consequently, different, less "prestigious" mixing behaviors.

Problem Statement

In this ethnographical research evaluates that how diverse social-classes mix languages and how do economic factors effect language-mixing behaviors in Pakistani social classes; which is the common issue in the modern era. Social linguistics is branch of linguistics which studies language and how it is affected by various factors alike regions, social classes, and genders. In the Pakistani perspective there are mainly three types of social groups upper class middle class and lower class; the people of these classes mix languages firstly the researcher wants to analyze that how these different social classes mix languages and secondly, he wants to determine that how do economic factors affect language mixing behaviors in Pakistani social classless. To fulfil this purpose the

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researcher selected equally members from these three classes to investigate the problem stated above, to find expected outcome will be presented next. The main purpose of this study was to find the following objectives.

Research Objectives

The present research aim not only to find out that in Pakistani context how individuals from different social classes' mix languages but also to determine that how economic factors effect language mixing behaviors in Pakistani social classes.

Research Questions

1. How different languages are mixed by people of different social classes in multilingual societies?
2. How economic factors effect language mixing behaviors in different Pakistani social classes in multilingual societies?

Research Significance

The research work is newfangled, which will prove helping and beneficial for the researchers and scholars in the field of social linguistics. This research is also significance as it's conducted in the context of Rahim Yar Khan; which is a famous city of South Punjab; moreover, the population and sampling is covering all three majors' classes of social groups. The researchers equally selected family heads from all three social groups for the purpose to compose data; the purpose of selecting heads is to get better information from all family members. Concerning the validity of the research researchers preferred to face to face meeting with research contributors by sidestepping electronic sources which are not more reliable than face to face method.

Research Limitations

There are some limitations in the present research work as the research is limited only to two research questions. The number of the research questions can be increased to get better results of the research study. The research is limited only to one district of Rahim Yar Khan not only ignoring other districts of Pakistan but also sidestepping other contexts as divisional, provincial and national settings. The population of the research is also limited to the head of the families while educational institutes and many other peoples and places are disregarded. The selected sample size for the present study was 300 heads of the families, the sample can be increased to find the better results. Instead of all these limitations the current research is valuable in itself.

Literature Review

A literature review is a comprehensive survey and critical analysis of published scholarly works such as journal articles, books, and conference proceedings on a specific topic (Ahmad et al., 2021; Ansari et al., 2025; Yousaf et al., 2025; Rashid et al., 2026). "Review of the literature summarize and evaluate the text of writing of the definite theme, and provide frame work to think about the possible consequence of innovative study" (Ahmad et al., 2023). It "may only be a clear overview of the sources, in an organizational pattern, and its function is to estimate and summarize the previous writings linked to current topic" (Ahmad et al., 2024). This literature review explores the sociolinguistic, class-based, and contextual factors influencing language mixing (code-switching

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and code-mixing) within multilingual societies. Drawing on research from various contexts notably Pakistan and India—this review examines how socioeconomic status, educational background, and institutional structures dictate how different social classes utilize language to establish identity, display status, and manage communication.

Key Concepts and Definitions

- **Language Mixing & Code-Switching:** The alternating use of two or more languages within a single utterance or conversation, common in bilingual and multilingual communities.
- **Code-Mixing (Intra-sentential):** The insertion of words, phrases, or clauses from one language into another, often at a word-internal level, signifying high linguistic integration.
- **Sociolinguistic Variation:** Language variation is rarely arbitrary; it is heavily marked by social class, reflecting underlying socioeconomic divisions in vocabulary, pronunciation, and, importantly, code-switching patterns.

Class-Based Patterns of Language Mixing

Research suggests that while language mixing is common across all levels, the purpose and intensity differ by class:

- **Upper-Class and Elite:** The upper class frequently mixes English with regional languages (e.g., Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi) to showcase social status, educational background, and "show-off" attitude. This often involves the use of English as a, sometimes "prestige" marker.
- **Middle-Class:** Middle-class speakers often use code-mixing to navigate between local cultural identity and the need for English proficiency for educational and professional advancement.
- **Lower-Class/Working Class:** Language mixing in lower-income groups may be less about prestige and more about navigating functional, multilingual environments.

Factors Influencing Class-Based Variation

1. Education and Institutional Structures

- **Private vs. Public Education:** In many post-colonial settings, private school systems prioritize English, leading to higher levels of English-vernacular mixing. Conversely, government schools may focus on native languages (e.g., Urdu), resulting in different, often limited, and patterns of English integration.
- **Language Policy:** Institutional policies, such as "English-only" rules in classrooms, mold the language behavior of students, creating distinct linguistic habits between socioeconomic groups.

2. Economic Factors

- Economic status influences access to quality education, which in turn dictates proficiency in dominant international languages (e.g., English). Therefore, economic, and educational backgrounds are tightly intertwined with linguistic choice.

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3. Social Identity and Solidarity

- **Identity Negotiation:** Language mixing serves as a marker of identity. Youth, for example, may mix English with Urdu and regional languages to feel both "modern" (English) and "connected" to their culture (Urdu/Regional).

- **Solidarity vs. Prestige:** While some mixing is to show off, it is also a tool for solidarity and intimate communication, often depending on the speaker's social context.

Literature indicates that language mixing is a dynamic, complex, and socially embedded process. It is not merely a linguistic phenomenon but a "socially constructed norm" that mirrors the hierarchy and power structures of society. Further research is needed to explore the evolving nature of code-mixing among younger generations in digital spaces, which might challenge traditional class-based, or socioeconomic, boundaries.

Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework for a sociolinguistic analysis of class-based language mixing (code-mixing) in multilingual societies requires integrating variationist sociolinguistics, theories of bilingualism, and social stratification theories. It explores how language mixing acts as a marker of social class, education, and social identity.

Previous Related Researches

Schatzman and Strauss, (1955) analyzed two social classes by selecting sampling ten equally from both middle-class and lower-class, statistics was composed by interview. The findings revealed that communicating style of the both social classes were was varying from each other, especially in usage of vocabulary and grammar. Ghafournia, (2015) studied relations between linguistic varieties and intellect skills of the speakers of languages constructed on the theory of Bernstein and critics. When individuals speak specific varieties of languages, they show their attraction with a particular social-group isolating themselves from other social-groups. The individuals' use this kind of language to mark their identity in the society, and this kind of linguistic varieties is are extensively contributing in shaping their identity in the society. It means peoples of having higher positions and statuses in their societies they must be careful while using language because their speaking style styles leave deep effects on the attitude of others because they are often imitative by others to gain anticipated prospects. Moreover, she pointed out that infect social-class is base of variances among the languages it is more significant societal implication than other implications. Individuals of lower-class which are living in society adopted the language used by the high-status people, therefore, language of dominant class have impact on the language used by lower class. Moreover, relationships among varieties of languages and intellectual capability of the speakers are built on philosophy of Bernstein. Sodah, (2019) studied that there can be seen that in each society diverse strigiform are found on the basis of financial condition. Commonly it is observed that the status and positions of persons are make variance between them in the same society. Moreover, many people and families are divided in the same society on the base of economy, gender base, age base, national base, and ethnic groups' base, these are the leading aspects encouraging partitions inside the society. The study mainly focusses on social-status that triggers lexicons shifting in the families of Lembar society. The major purposes of this research were to find those factors which are causing lexicons change moreover it also tries to find the place of these changes principally occurs. The researcher selected twenty research contributors as a research sample for this study belong to the lower social

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economic position. Focusing on the demographic information researcher found that their ages were minimum twenty years and maximum fifty years; but the researcher sidestepped the gender by discounting it. The data was gathered from the research participants and analyzed; the research findings evidently displayed these inclinations of persons to admired varieties come as they wish themselves to become like upper-class. Moreover, the findings also showed that social networking and motilities which people often use is also among those factors which influences language. But there is no single research which is conducted on exact theme. So, the researcher decided to conduct her research on this topic which was ever ignored by the preceding researchers. The present study is an effort towards fill this gap.

Material and Methods

Research methodology is the systematic and theoretical blueprint of a study. It justifies why specific methods were chosen and explains how they align with the research aims (Ahmad et al., 2025; Yousaf, Abro & Ahmad, 2025; Riaz et al., 2026). “Design of the research comprises of the whole procedure which is conducted research” (Ahmad, et al., 2022, p524). The survey technique is used for this research paper. The research population of this study were the social classes of district Rahim Yar Khan, from which researchers selected targeted population of 300 participants from these classes by using purposive sampling technique. The researchers meets these contributors which were head of the families and distributed questionnaire among them as data collection instrument. The questionnaire was contained on three parts; part A contains on demographic statistics of the research participants; part B comprises on nine close-ended items and part C consist of one open-ended question. The collected data was later analyzed by using SPSS software and presented in tables and figures.

Demographic Analysis

The part A of the research questionnaire was contained on demographic analysis. The demographic analysis of the present study tells us about the gender, location, education, profession, annual income, and annual savings etc.

Table. 01 Demographic Information of the Participants.

Item	Frequency		Percentage	Total
Locality	Urban	180	60%	300 100%
	Rural	120	40%	
Profession	Businessman	100	33.33%	
	Employer	100	33.33%	
	Labor	100	33.33%	
Education	Master's	100	33.33%	
	Bachelor's	100	33.33%	
	Intermediate	100	33.33%	

Item 01. Locality: there was total 300 research participants selected from the heads of the families; they contributed in this research. The 180 (60%) were selected from urban areas and the 120 (40%) were selected from the rural areas of the district Rahim Yar Khan.

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Item 02. Locality: from the total 300 research participants the 100 (33.33%) were businessmen; the 100 (33.33%) were employer's; and the 100 (33.33%) were labor.

Item 03. Locality: from the total 300 research participants the 100 (33.33%) were master's; the 100 (33.33%) were bachelor's; and the 100 (33.33%) were intermediate.

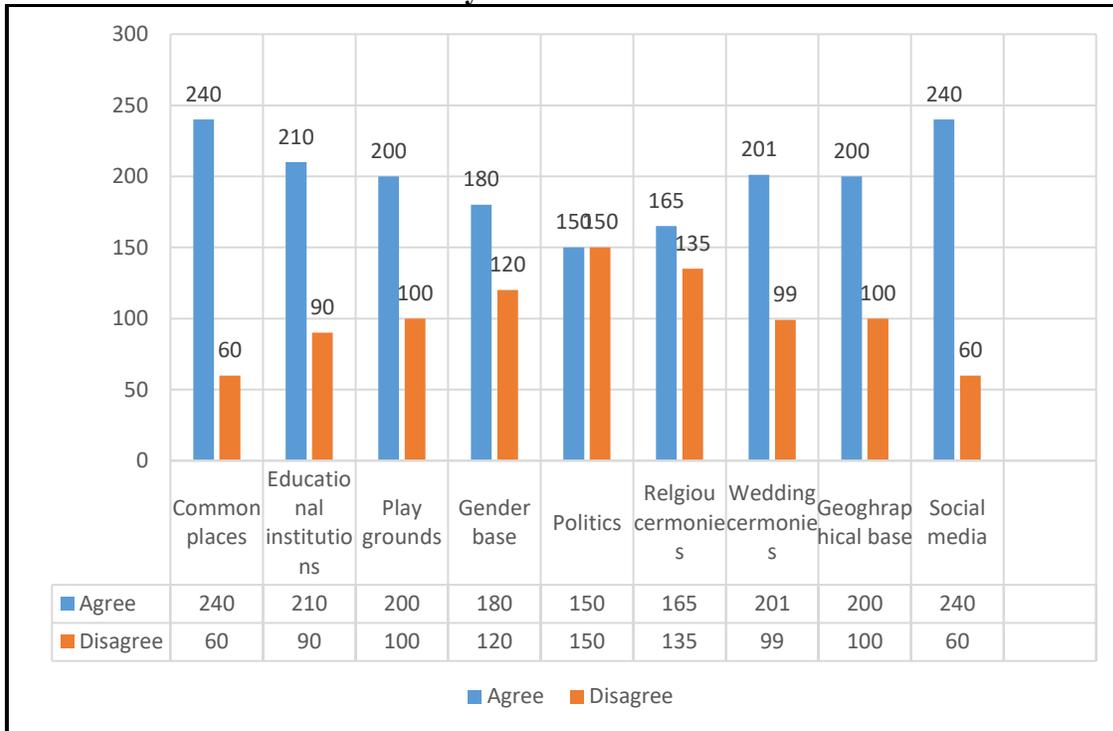
Table: 03

Income and Saving of Social-Classes Participants.

Social Groups	Minimum Income	Minimum income	Minimum Saving	Minimum Saving
Upper class	60,00,000	250,00,000	24,00,000	100,00,000
Middle class	1200,000	60,00,000	300,000	500,000
Lower class	300,000	12,00,000	50,000	300,000

The research participants were selected equally from three social classes as upper class 100, middle class 100, and lower class 100. The income of the upper-class is as (minimum, 60,00,000; maximum, 250,00,000) and saving is (minimum, 24,00,000; maximum 100,00,000). The income of the middle-class is as (minimum, 1200,000; maximum, 60,00,000) and saving is (minimum, 300,000; maximum 500,00,000). The income of the lower-class is as (minimum, 300,000; maximum, 12,00,000) and saving is (minimum, 50,000; maximum 300,000).

Figure: 01
Data analysis of close ended items.



1. Language is mixed in common places (agreed 240, 80% and disagreed 60, 20%).
2. Language is mixed in educational institutions (agreed 210, 70% and disagreed 90, 30%).
3. Language is mixed in play grounds (agreed 200, 66.66% and disagreed 100, 33.33%).
4. Language is mixed in gender base (agreed 180, 60% and disagreed 120, 40%).
5. Language is mixed in politics (agreed 150, 50% and disagreed 150, 50%).
6. Language is mixed in religious ceremonies (agreed 165, 55% and disagreed 135, 45%).
7. Language is mixed in wedding ceremonies (agreed 201, 67% and disagreed 99, 33%).
8. Language is mixed on geographical base (agreed 200, 66.66% and disagreed 100, 33.33%).
9. Language is mixed on social media (agreed 240, 80% and disagreed 60, 20%).

Table: 03

Data analysis of close ended items.

Upper class	Middle class	Lower class
1. Travel to abroad for study.	1. Language used in institutes.	5. Lower-class people try copy the language used by well-educated class.
2. Traveling for business and investment.	2. Impact of courteous language.	6. Language used by actors in films and dramas have impact on lower-class.
3. Immigration to other countries.	3. Impact of official language.	7. Lower-class people often copy of the upper-
4. Language of educated class in cultured.	4. They often interact with different kinds of local	

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5. Educated class use language in polite style.	peoples so the accents and dialects of these people leave impact on this class.	classes.
6. Correct use of words, spellings and grammar.		8. Lower-class people try to adopt the language used by their boss in offices.

Discussions

The researchers by using purposive sampling meet one hundred-fifty head of the families of three classes for data collection. The results of her study revealed that social-classes mix language different from each other on the base of classes, although they are living in the same society. Some findings of the present research match with the research findings of Sodah, (2019 as he analyzed the diverse stratiform in the society similarly, in the present research study three different social classes living in the same society are analyzed on the base of language variances. In his research he found that these variances are on the base of mainly financial condition, status and positions of persons are make variance between them in the same society. Moreover, many people and families are divided in the same society on the base of economy, gender base, age base, national base, and ethnic groups' base, these are the leading aspects encouraging partitions inside the society. Same kinds of factors are detected in the findings of the present study, but the present study differs from this study in sampling as the Sodah used sample size of only twenty participants from lower class but in the present study one hundred-fifty research participants were equally selected from upper, middle and lower classes; one more difference between these two researches is that in the present study researcher select sample from both genders but Sodah in his study ignored gender. In the present study the researcher keeps in mind the statement of Rao et al (2023) that female gender preforms important role in every research. The upper-class contains on wealthy and rich people so they often visit or settled in different countries for various purposes, as education, business or investment, immigration etc. Consequently, the languages and accent of these countries in which they visit or dwell influence on the language of upper-class. The children of the upper-class are educated in top class institutes in which language is taught in well-organized way which brings change in the communication styles and they communicate by mixing languages. The people of this class often visit different places, join different meeting, attend parties from there they got experience by frequently interacting diverse peoples; which bring improvement in their wording, spellings, and they use grammatical rules properly. These linguistic factors affect their language in this way their language is influenced by different languages. The language of the people of the middle-class is influenced by the language used in institutes and offices as they try to copy their boss or managers, the people of this class are mostly job holders and they often visit common places and meet different people so their language is influenced by the language of those people. The people of the lower-class are tend to copy the language used by the well-educated people, or the language spoken by the actors and actresses in theaters, television dramas, filmi dialogues, and sometimes, lower-class people speak language used by upper-class or middle-class people, or which their boss or officers in the office. The findings of this research match with some findings of the previous researches of; (Brown & Levinson, 1979; Guy, 1988; Milroy & Milroy, 1992; Platt & Williams, 2002; Romaine, 2003; Coupland, 2007). But the present research provided complete detail of the problem which is investigated which make it imperious work in the present-day investigates.

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Conclusion and Recommendations

Language mixing in multilingual societies is a powerful, nuanced indicator of social stratification. It serves as a "sociolect" that helps in navigating social boundaries. While higher social classes often use mixing to assert prestige and global connections, other classes use it for solidarity or to navigate day-to-day interactions. Understanding these patterns is crucial for recognizing how language, in its social context, both reflects and helps construct the realities of class-based inequality.

On the base of the results there are some recommendations presented by the researchers.

- This research is beneficial for the research works and researchers of the particular field but instead of this the present research work will contribute to the other researchers in their research works regarding to the techniques which are used in this.
- In the field of sociolinguistics particularly on this topic there is fewer work done on all contextual settings. But in Pakistani context there was no single research on this topic therefore, this research is a newfangled work on the exact theme which will motivate to the contemporary and upcoming researchers to conduct more and more researches in this field.
- The faculty members and young scholars should take responsibility on their shoulders to develop this subject and theme which was disregarded from long time.

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