

Impact of Lexical Deviations in Pakistani English Newspapers on the Language of their Readers: A Gender-wise Analysis

Muhammad Uzair

Arshad Mahmood

Department of English (FC)
National University of Modern Languages
Islamabad, Pakistan

Ubaidullah Khan

Department of English Language & Applied Linguistics
Allama Iqbal Open University
Islamabad, Pakistan

Abstract

This study explores the impact of lexical innovations which have been regular feature of the Pakistani English newspapers on the readership of male and female genders. For this study, 473 participants were selected through stratified sampling. A questionnaire was administered to get demographic information of the participants which was followed by a written test to find lexical deviations in their language. The study found that female participants reflected greater lexical innovations in their language as compared to the male participants.

1. Introduction

The language of newspapers published in Pakistan carries many linguistic characteristics taken from local linguistic features for the sake of successful communication with the local readership so that there is no 'barrier to communication' to restrict the conveyance of the meaning (Grover, Nishi, Deepak, 2004 :15). The newspapers while making choice of the language items take into consideration the cultural and social values of their readers for effective communication. The inclusion of local linguistic trends and characteristics make interaction with the readership easier. As a result, they often deviate from the native norms of the language adopting many indigenous linguistic features to make their tasks easier in order not only to facilitate but to attract people's attention. The deviations from native norms of English, of course, have some impact on the language of the readership of these newspapers. That is why the theoretical framework given in the coming section includes studies done by the researchers through Pakistani newspapers because they form its basis. However, it is relatively new idea to find the impact of lexical deviations on the language of male and female readers of the newspapers.

1.1 Research Question

Do the lexical deviations made by Pakistani English newspapers have an impact on the language of male and female genders?

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the present study are to:

1. Find the impact of lexical deviations, which are a regular feature of the Pakistani English newspapers, on the language different genders.
2. Find which of the gender reflects more lexical deviations promoted by the Pakistani English newspapers.

1.3 Significance of the study

The present study is important because it finds out how the language of English newspapers affects the development of English as a foreign language among readers of these newspapers. It particularly focuses on the analysis of how language of newspaper has different impact on the readers of different genders (male or female) as it tries to find out which of the said genders reflects lexical deviation made by newspapers more in their use of English language.

1.4 Delimitation

The researchers have delimited his enquiry to the impact of only lexical features on the language of the readership of the newspapers. The deviation that are a part of semantics and syntax are not part of the present inquiry.

2. Literature Review

The functions of language in the non-native world differ according to the needs of the audience users and the ecology it works in. This different ecology results in the transformation to the language in such a way that might appear unfamiliar to the native people. The sources that promote such a variety are the modern means of communication. News papers are one of these means. Naturally, the newspapers published in Pakistan are also seen as a source of promotion of Pakistani English language as a separate variety.

If we consider the idea of such a linguistic change to the overall get up of a language, we will find some logic in it. The logic behind this sort of change is that “an effective communication not only requires the ability to talk and write fluently but also the ability to make one understood and to understand others” (Grover, 2004:15).

The idea of change to a language has been addressed by different schools of thought. Linguists have differences regarding this type of change in language in non-native areas.

Purists, who stress the use of common core worldwide, argue that if the “control of the future of the language passes to non native speakers to “determine its future structure” (Kachru, 1992: xvi), the language will suffer disintegration which will result in mutually unintelligible languages.

Conversely, the sociolinguists have different point of view. According to them,

“The sociolinguistic aspects of English in its international context are still not well understood”. He further adds to it by saying that “Attitudinally there is a conflict between perceived linguistic norms and actual language behavior”. (Kachru, 1985: 11). Hassan (2004: 1) also indorses the point of view of the sociolinguists. According to him a language grows from a number of elements in a given society when it is taken by one community from another. Baumgardner shares the same point of view and goes on to elaborate it further through the language of Pakistani newspapers.

Talking about deviations in the language of news papers published in Pakistan Baumgardner (1985: 248) asserts that what perhaps “appear to be errors in complementation in Pakistani newspaper English are in reality instances of a systematic but variable linguistic code”. He further strengthens his claim by producing a number of evidences from the local Pakistani newspapers by developing them (the deviations) into different types.

The first type of innovation is word borrowing. Baumgardner (1993) observes a large number of loan words from “Urdu and the regional languages of Pakistan” which have made their way into common use. These borrowed words also find their way into print in Pakistan. (Baumgardner 2006: 245). Not only this but borrowed words also have been used with English grammatical system. Words like “goondas” and “jirgas” (Baumgardner 2006: 245-255) have been picked from the local languages but used with English suffix –s. He also discusses another type of word formation. It is achieved with the help of prefix de- as in de-notify, de-load etc. He also mentions the use of suffixes in this regard. Here he lists the words that take Suffixes -ee, -er and -ism as they appeared a number of times in the newspapers.

He also cites “Notorious history sheeter” where a purely English word has been exploited by the newspaper in an unusual manner. Similarly, English suffixes are also combined with Urdu suffixes in English in Pakistan. For this he mentions the word “Ziaism”. The story does not end here interestingly. He presents another type of deviation. It is hybridization. He has picked the words like “lathi-charged”, “double-roti”, “Paan- Shop” etc from Pakistani English.

Another characteristic of Pakistani English at word level is the use of obsolete words. The words like “botheration”, “conveyance” and “thrice” etc are some examples. Besides, a number of English words have also adapted themselves to the local demands: to baton-charge, to brickbat, chargesheet, eveninging, history-sheeter, time-barred, and wheel-jam strike are some such examples. (Baumgardner: 2006: 245-255).

Looking at the example cited above, one can see the socio-cultural impact on the language of newspapers quite easily.

Writers borrow words, use hybridization or mould words according to their convenience in such a way as to remove the social barriers which may occur if the foreign language is used as it is used by the natives. In other words, such an avoidance of the standard norms is a deliberate effort.

If this change is natural according to the point of view of the sociolinguists, the question arises as to what sort of impact it has on the social stratum that interacts with it. Since the newspapers of non native countries do not strictly follow the exact model of the standard language, they affect the language of the readers. Such impact can clearly be seen in the linguistic performance of the readers.

Looking at the whole picture from the reader's angle, we observe something deeper: the impact of the language of the newspapers on its readers. Since the readers are taking a lot of linguistic input from these newspapers, their language is heavily influenced by it. The present study finds the influence of these deviations on the readership comprising both male and female readers.

3. Research Methodology

This study is descriptive as it examines the phenomenon of language change due to the influence of the language of newspapers without changing or modifying the situation under investigation. It is a quantitative research because analysis of the result is presented in the form of numerical data. It is an ex-post-facto research in which the independent variable is not manipulated. This research was done in two phases given below.

a. Phase One

A survey was conducted by the researcher through a simple questionnaire and those males and females who were used to studying any one of these newspapers and were not having any other reading habit were selected as sample of the research.

b. Phase Two

In the second phase an open book test was given to the participants. The test consisted of an essay on "Problems faced by Pakistani Nation".

3.1 Data Analysis

This part analysis the lexical deviation made by the participants. The subcategories investigated, cover the whole range of the deviations from Standard British English which has become regular feature of Pakistani English newspapers. The result of each category is presented in the form of the tables given below:

Table 1: Gender wise Result of Borrowed words

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Female	12.0%	11.21%	11.63%	6.98%	3.59%	4.01%	5.28%	0.00%
Male	8.25%	11.20%	9.09%	6.13%	2.12%	3.81%	4.43%	0.21%
Grand Total	20.3%	22.41%	20.72%	13.11%	5.71%	7.82%	9.73%	0.21%

The table given above presents the gender-wise result of borrowed words. Column A presents the title of the genders whereas columns B to I show the result of the participants who used one to eight borrowed denoted by the numbers given in row one of the table. Grand total is given in row 5 of the table analysis of which shows that 20.3 percent of the participants used one borrowed word out of which 8.25 percent of the participants were male whereas 12.0 percent of the participants were female. This number increases in case of female participants if we take into consideration row C to H, which means that female readers of the newspapers are getting influenced by the language of the newspapers published in Pakistan as far as this item is concerned. However an exceptional case is found in row I where no female participants used 8 words whereas 0.21 male participants used 8 words.

Table 2: Gender wise Result of Borrowed Words with English suffix –s

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6
Female	15.01%	14.38%	17.33%	5.71%	1.7%	0.63%
Male	12.68%	13.73%	11.42%	5.28%	1.68%	0.43%
Grand Total	27.70%	28.12%	28.75%	10.99%	3.38%	1.06%

The table presented above shows the gender-wise result of borrowed words with English suffix “s” used by the participants. Column A of the table shows the title of the genders whereas columns B to G show the result of the participants who used one to six borrowed words denoted by numbers given in row two of the table. Row 3 and 4 group the participants according to the number of innovations under discussion. Grand total is given in row five of the table, analysis of which shows that 27.70 percent of the participants used one such item, out of which 12.68 percent of the participants were male whereas 15.01 percent of the participants were female. This number increases in case of female participants if we take into consideration row C to G which means that female readers of the newspapers are getting influenced by the language of the newspapers published in Pakistan more than the male participants as far as this item is concerned.

Table 3: Borrowed words from Noun to Verb

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6
Female	12.69%	16.07%	19.66%	4.86%	1.05%	0.42%
Male	11.42%	16.07%	13.11%	2.75%	0.85%	1.06%
Grand Total	24.10%	32.14%	32.77%	7.61%	1.90%	1.48%

Gender wise result of the participants who changed the grammatical class of borrowed words from noun to verb is shown in the table given above. Column A group the participants according to gender they belong to whereas column B to G group them according to the number of such item which they used in their tests denoted by the number in row second of the table ranging from one to six. The grand total is given in the last row of the table analysis of which shows that total number of participants who used one such item is 24.10 percent out of which 11.42 percent were male whereas 12.69 percent were female as shown in column B. The percentage of both of the genders is same in case of two such items as shown in column two but it creased in case of female participants if we take into consideration column D to F. However, the male participants exceeded the female participants in case of six such items.

Table 4: Gender wise Result of English Words from Noun to Verb

A	B	C	D	E	F
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	5
Female	13.32%	21.56%	16.48%	3.17%	0.21%
Male	12.69%	19.67%	10.57%	1.90%	0.42%
Grand Total	26.00%	41.23%	27.06%	5.07%	0.63%

The table given above presents the gender-wise result of English words used in grammatical class different from Standard English. Column A presents the title of the genders whereas columns B to F show the result of the participants who used one to five such items denoted by the numbers given in row one of the table. Grand total is given in row five of the table analysis of which shows that 26.0 percent of the participants used one such item, out of which 12.69 percent of the participants were male whereas 13.32 percent of the participants were female. This number increases in case of female participants if we take into consideration row B to F, which means that female readers of the newspapers are getting influenced by the language of the newspapers published in Pakistan as far as this item is concerned. However an exceptional case is found in column F where 0.21 percent of the female 0.42 percent of male participants used five such words.

Table 5: Gender wise Result of Borrowed Words with English Suffix “-ism”

A	B	C	D	E
Row Labels	1	2	3	4
Female	22.61%	18.18%	13.95%	0.00%
Male	17.56%	16.70%	10.79%	0.21%
Grand Total	40.17%	34.88%	24.74%	0.21%

The table presented above shows the result of borrowed words with English suffix “ism” used by the participants representing both genders. Column A of table shows the title of the genders whereas the columns B to E show the result of the participants who used one to four such words denoted by numbers given in row two of the table. Row 3 and 4 group the participants according to the number of innovations under discussion. Grand total is given in row five of the table, analysis of which shows that 40.17 percent of the participants used one borrowed word out of which 17.56 percent of the participants were male whereas 22.61 percent of the participants were female.

This number increases in case of female participants if we take into consideration row C to E, presenting 1 to 4 such words which means that female readers of the newspapers are getting influenced by the language of the newspapers published in Pakistan more than the male participants as far as this item is concerned.

Table 6: Age, Gender and Qualification-wise Result of Hybrid form of Words

A	B	C	D	E	F
Row Labels	1	2	3	4	5
Female	12.05%	15.42%	20.93%	5.70%	0.64%
Male	10.15%	14.81%	16.07%	4.03%	0.21%
Grand Total	22.20%	30.23%	37.00%	9.73%	0.85%

The gender wise result of the participants who used hybrid form is shown in the table given above. Column A group the participants according to gender they belong to whereas column B to G group them according to the number of hybrid words, which they used in their tests denoted by the number in row second of the table ranging from one to six. The grand total is given in the last row of the table analysis of which shows that total number of participants who used one such word is 22.20 percent out of which 10.15 percent were male whereas 12.05 percent were female as shown in column B. If columns D, E and F are taken into consideration it found that the percentage increased in case of female participants. However, the male participants exceeded the female participants in case of six such items.

Table 7: Gender wise Result of Obsolete Words

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Labels	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Female	19.45%	15.85%	10.15%	5.50%	3.17%	0.63%	0.00%
Male	17.34%	12.69%	8.03%	4.65%	1.90%	0.41%	0.21%
Total	36.79%	28.54%	18.18%	10.15%	5.07%	1.06%	0.21%

The table given above presents the gender-wise result of obsolete words. Column A presents the title of the genders whereas Columns B to H show the result of the participants who used one to seven obsolete words denoted by the numbers given in row one of the table. Grand total is given in row 5 of the table analysis of which shows that 36.79 percent of the participants used one obsolete word out of which 17.34 percent of the participants were male whereas 19.45 percent of the participants were female. This number increases in case of female participants if we take into consideration row C to H, which means that female readers of the newspapers are getting influenced by the language of the newspapers published in Pakistan as far as this item is concerned. However an exceptional case is found in column H where no female 0.21 percent male participants used seven obsolete words.

4. Conclusion

From the analysis of the data and study of the researches cited above, it can be concluded that the language of newspapers reflects the mindset of people of that particular society. One can see the socio-cultural impact on the language of newspapers quite easily. This language, if seen closely, reveals culture-specific features that are normally used by the writers to render the emotional attachment to the readers in writing on such themes which may not be strictly of the interest to these readers. By this the researchers means that this influence of various factors on formation of the variety of language is not accidental but rather intentional, especially at word level. Writers borrow words, use hybridization or mould words according to their convenience in such a way as to remove the social barriers which may occur if the foreign language is used as it is used by the natives. Such barriers occur if the language used does not carry any references or allusions etc which may be of the interest of the foreign readers. But if vice versa is true, the reader may take more interest in reading the newspaper than they would in the case stated above.

4.1 Finding

The lexical deviations from the native norms which have been regular feature of the Pakistani English newspapers have been reflected in the language of readership of these newspapers from both of the genders. However, this impact is seen in the written test of the female participants more than male participants.

The borrowing of words and pluralizations of borrowed words, grammatical class of borrowed words from Noun to Verb, the change in the grammatical class of English words from Noun to Verb, the use English suffix –ism with the borrowed words, the different use of English suffix –ism with the English words, the Hybrid form of the words which appeared in the newspapers and the obsolete words which appeared in the newspapers were found in the language of the readership.

4.2 Suggestions and Recommendations

The media should play its part to minimize its intelligibility gap. Further research on intelligibility of the language can be carried out to know how much intelligibility problems occur. As the acceptability of a new language variety depends on intelligibility so it should not be compromised and media could play its part in removing the barriers in intelligibility of this variety so that it becomes more acceptable to the native and the rest of non native world. The authentic material (the English newspapers) should be used in English language classes to make the learning meaningful and relevant. Pakistani English should be presented as a variety so that the students could understand the difference between the standard variety and Pakistani variety, just like they would understand the difference between British and American English. As the present research excludes the spoken variety of Pakistani English, an exclusive research can be carried out on this area. Just like written form of Pakistani variety, Spoken form should also be not only encouraged but also promoted through media.

References

- Baumgardner, R. (2006). *The Indigenization of English in Pakistan*. World Englishes: Routledge.
- Baumgardner, R. (1993). *The English Language in Pakistan*: Oxford University Press.
- Baumgardner, R. (1992). *English in Pakistan*. Islamabad: National Book Foundation.
- Bednarek, M. (2006). *Evaluation in Media Discourse: Analysis of a Newspaper Corpus Continuum*: International Publishing Group.
- Braj B. Kachru, (1992). *The other Tongue: English Across Cultures*, Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press
- Edgar, W. Schneider (2007). *Postcolonial English: Varieties Around the World*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press..
- Grover, I, Nishi, S, Deepak. G (2004). *Hand of Communication and Media*, (Udaipur : Agrotech Publishing Academy.
- Hussain, W (2002). *Linguistic Analysis of The Nation and The Guardian*: NUML. Islamabad.
- Jenkins, J. (2007). *English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity*: Oxford University Press.
- Prendergast, C. (2008). *Buying into English: Language and Investment in the New Capitalist World*: University of Pittsburgh Press
- Kachru, B. B. (1985). *Standards, Codification and Sociolinguistic Realism: The English language in the Outer Circle*, *English in the World*, London, Cambridge University Press.
- Ronald, W. (2010). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*, 6th Edition. Oxford: John Wiley and Sons.
- Schneider, E. (2007). *Language Arts & Disciplines Postcolonial English: varieties around the world*: Cambridge University Press.
- Sidhwa, B. (1992). *New English Creative Writing: A Pakistani Writer's Perspective*. English in Pakistan. Islamabad: National Book Foundation.
- Talaat, M. (1999). *Lexical Variations in Pakistani English*: English in Pakistan. Islamabad: National Book Foundation.
- Smit, U. (2010). *English as a Lingua Franca in Higher Education: A Longitudinal Study of Classroom Discourse*: Walter de Gruyter.