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Analyzing Paklish in the English Department of a University: A Focus on Spoken Language

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Abstract
This research investigates the emergence of Pakistani English (Paklish) as a distinct linguistic variety within Kachru's (1984) *World Englishes* model, employing his three concentric circles as the theoretical and analytical lens. Positioned within the *Outer Circle*, Paklish is compared with the *Inner Circle* varieties of Standard English, such as British and American English, to identify linguistic differences shaped by local context and sociocultural factors. The study explores how Paklish has evolved through unique lexical, grammatical, structural, and spoken features for example, *copy* for *notebook*, *I like junk foods* for *I like junk food*, and *Today, I will meet you* instead of *I will meet you today.* In spoken communication, expressions like *give exams* are commonly used in place of *take exams.* Adopting a qualitative approach, this study focuses on the spoken language used within the English Department of **Hamdard University, Main Campus, Karachi.** It analyzes frequently occurring phrases and expressions to illustrate how Paklish diverges from, yet meaningfully coexists with, Standard English norms, contributing to the broader understanding of localized English varieties in multilingual contexts.

Keywords: Pakistani English, Paklish, spoken language, World Englishes, Outer Circle, Inner Circle.

Introduction
Overview
English in Pakistan functions as both a global and local language. It holds official status and serves as the primary medium of education and professional communication. Over time, English has undergone a process of indigenization, evolving into a localized variety known as Paklish or Pakistani English. This variety reflects the linguistic and cultural blending of English and Urdu and is marked by distinctive lexical, syntactic, and phonological features. Examples such as "My pencil is finished," "I am just coming," or "Rub the board" illustrate the influence of Urdu thought patterns and expressions on English usage.

English in Academic Contexts
In academic contexts, particularly within English departments of Pakistani universities, English is both a subject of study and a medium of interaction. Yet, even in these formal spaces, speakers frequently employ forms of Paklish in classroom discussions, casual conversations, and social exchanges. Such usage challenges traditional notions of "Standard English" and raises questions about linguistic identity, competence, and contextual appropriateness. Despite the ubiquity of Paklish in daily communication, there has been limited empirical research focusing on its spoken manifestations and social meanings within higher education settings.

Purpose of the Study
This study aims to explore how Paklish appears in the spoken interactions of students and teachers in an English department and how these speakers perceive their use of such hybrid forms. Employing a mixed-method approach, the study combines quantitative data from a Paklish Usage Questionnaire with qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and recorded conversations. This design allows both the measurement of frequency and the interpretation of contextual meanings behind Paklish expressions.

Objectives of the Research

General Objectives
1. To study how people in Pakistan use English in their own special way, called Paklish?

Specific Objectives
1. To find out what kind of linguistic structures and lexical items make Paklish different from standard English?
2. To understand why do people mix English with Urdu language in daily speech?
3. To examine how Urdu influence the spoken form of Paklish?

Research Questions
The research seeks to answer the following questions:
1. What are the most commonly used Paklish expressions among students and teachers in an English department?
2. How frequently do speakers use specific Paklish forms in their spoken English?
3. What linguistic features and social functions characterize these forms?
4. How do participants perceive their own use of Paklish in academic and informal communication?

Significance of the Study
By addressing these questions, the study contributes to the broader understanding of World Englishes and language hybridity in postcolonial contexts. It highlights Paklish not merely as a deviation from Standard English, but as a dynamic and contextually meaningful linguistic practice that reflects the bilingual identity of Pakistani speakers.

Literature Review
Paklish is a type of English spoken in Pakistan, where people mix English with their local languages. It has a unique style because the way people pronounce words and choose expressions is different from standard English. In universities and everyday conversations, many students use this mixed form naturally, often without realizing it. This makes Paklish a common and normal way of speaking English in Pakistan.

Pakistan is the third largest country in Asia, and English is widely used here. The English spoken in Pakistan is called Pakistani English or Paklish. According to Qureshi et al. (2022), Pakistani English is a non-native variety that developed by combining English with local languages like Urdu, Sindhi, and Balochi. Kachru's three-circle model (1985) classifies English varieties worldwide. The inner circle includes countries like the US, UK, and Australia. Countries like Singapore, Nigeria, India, and Pakistan, which were colonized by English-speaking nations, use English in education, law, and administration (Haidar & Fang, 2019). Expanding circle countries, such as China, Japan, and Russia, use English mainly for international communication (Yano, 2009). Paklish belongs to the outer circle. After British colonial rule, Pakistani English became an institutionalized variety with its own lexical, syntactic, and phonological features (Asgher, 2023). Language is the main tool for communication

(Aprianto & Zaini, 2019). According to Zhuang (2013), English is the most widely spoken, read, and taught language worldwide. Out of 195 countries, 118 use English for communication. English is used differently around the world depending on social, cultural, and ecological factors (Yasir et al., 2021). The English spoken in Pakistan is clearly different from standard English. Pakistani English (Paklish) developed after 1947 when English, introduced earlier by missionaries and British colonizers, continued to grow in the country (Jadoon & Ahmad, 2022; Sarfraz, 2021). In 1835, English became an official language (Khan, 2012). Educational settings also show this language shift, as students often switch between Urdu and English in classrooms and academic writing (Talaat & Anwar, 2010). Qureshi et al. (2023) point out that borrowing words from local languages adds to the variety, but it can cause problems in international contexts if standard English proficiency is weak.

Research shows that university students often use code-switching or Paklish in speaking to make learning easier and to feel comfortable in the classroom. This helps them gain confidence, stay attentive, and participate actively (Nawaz, Atta & Naseem, 2023). However, code-switching should be done carefully and with a purpose, rather than randomly, to get the best results and avoid negative effects (Nawaz, Atta & Naseem, 2023).

Some undergraduate students, however, are worried that switching back to Urdu may harm their English skills (Nawaz, Yali & Hameed, 2023). Studies also suggest that code-switching should be used according to the context and not too often; overuse can reduce fluency and slow down language development (Nawaz, Yali & Hameed, 2023). Overall, many studies focus on written Paklish, but there is little research on spoken Paklish. This is the gap that this study aims to address by exploring how students and teachers use Paklish in spoken communication.

Research Methodology
Overview
In this chapter, the research design, participants, research tools, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis used in this study are described. This chapter also explains how Pakistani English (Paklish) is spoken by students in the English Department of Hamdard University.

Research Design
The current study follows a qualitative research design because it aims to investigate people's linguistic behavior, attitudes, and perceptions in their real-life contexts, rather than measuring variables numerically. The qualitative method helps to understand how Pakistani speakers use Paklish in daily interactions. This approach examines the interpretive and descriptive aspects of language, observing how meaning is created in social settings and how linguistic patterns naturally emerge in communication. This method is suitable for studying Paklish, as it reflects cultural, social, and linguistic influences.

Research Tool
Semi-structured interviews were used as the main tool in this research. This tool was chosen because it provides flexibility and allows participants to give detailed answers, while still ensuring that all participants are asked the same core questions. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes and was conducted in a comfortable environment within the university to encourage a natural flow of conversation. The interview questions focused on academic and social contexts, exploring how participants use English, including their use of localized expressions and their awareness of Paklish features. With participants' prior consent, all interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed word-for-word for thorough analysis. Field notes were also taken to record contextual observations and non-verbal cues.

Sampling and Population
Purposive sampling was employed for this study, which is a non-probability technique commonly used in qualitative research. The participants were selected because they frequently use English in both

academic and informal settings within the university department. The sample consisted of 30 students enrolled in MPhil Linguistics and Literature, as well as PhD Linguistics and Education programs. All participants were bilingual in English and Urdu. This group was considered suitable for examining spoken Paklish, as they represent advanced learners who actively engage with English in the context of Pakistani higher education.

Data Collection
Data were gathered through face-to-face semi-structured interviews. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes and was conducted individually to ensure comfort and privacy. Participants were encouraged to speak freely about their linguistic experiences and everyday spoken practices. The interviews were recorded digitally using a cellphone and later transcribed for both linguistic and thematic analysis. The focus was on naturally occurring expressions, code-mixing, and localized uses of English that reflect Paklish. Confidentiality and ethical guidelines were properly followed throughout the entire procedure.

Data Analysis
The data were analyzed using the thematic analysis framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Following transcription, the data were thoroughly examined to identify the linguistic, structural, and pragmatic dimensions of Paklish. Recurring lexical items, expressions, and sentence structures were coded and organized under themes including lexical variation (e.g., *pouch* for *pencil case*, *discuss about* for *discuss*), syntactic patterns shaped by Urdu influence, and the pragmatic use of code-mixing and localization. The study investigated how participants used these English forms to express meaning, identity, and a sense of belonging. The findings were interpreted within Kachru's (1984) World Englishes framework, positioning Paklish within the Outer Circle as a variety shaped by cultural context and bilingual practices.

Ethical Considerations
Ethical approval for this study was secured from the Department of English at Hamdard University. Participants were briefed beforehand regarding the study and their right to withdraw, and informed consent was obtained prior to recording. All personal data were safeguarded and used solely for academic research.

Summary
This chapter described the qualitative methodology adopted for this study, covering the research design, participants, data collection tools, and analysis procedures. Using semi-structured **interviews** and thematic analysis, the study investigated how Paklish is produced and interpreted by students in a university English department. The next chapter presents the analysis and findings of the collected data.

Analysis and Results
Overview
The chapter reports the analysis and results based on semi-structured interviews with students of the English Department at Hamdard University. The analysis examines the linguistic characteristics, frequent expressions, and attitudes toward the use of Paklish in spoken English. The results are discussed according to thematic categories, with representative excerpts from participants' responses.

Data Organization
Thirty interviews were conducted with students enrolled in the MPhil and PhD programs at Hamdard University. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The data were transcribed verbatim to preserve natural speech patterns and local expressions. Through repeated readings, the researcher identified major themes that illustrate how speakers integrate English and Urdu elements in everyday

communication. These themes are presented below.

Lexical Variation and Borrowing
One notable feature of Paklish identified in the data was Urdu-influenced lexical borrowing and word substitution. Participants often used localized terms that vary from Standard English. Examples include:
- "Where is your copy?" (for "Where is your notebook?")
- "I have to give my exams this week." (for "I have to take my exams this week.")
- "Please get your car aside." (for "Please pull your car over.")

These expressions illustrate the direct transfer of Urdu structures into English. Participants noted that this usage feels "natural" and "normal" **in** their daily speech.

Code-Mixing and Switching between Urdu and English
Frequent code-mixing was observed among all participants, with Urdu and English alternating within individual utterances. For example:
- "Acha, ab assignment submit karani hai?"
- "Yaar, mujhe nahi pta tha like itna tough decion mujhse ho paiga."
- "Ary, itni ziyada pure English yaha kon bolta hai?"

Participants employed code-mixing for multiple purposes: expressing emotions, enhancing clarity, and creating an informal, relatable tone. Students perceived this practice as a demonstration of bilingual competence rather than a sign of linguistic deficiency.

Structural Shifts and Syntax Influence
Several sentences in the interviews demonstrated Urdu-influenced syntax, commonly showing changes in word order and article omission. Examples include:
- "Yesterday I attended the class." (instead of "I attended the class yesterday.")
- "She is good in speaking." (instead of "She is good at speaking.")
- "He did not talked to me." (instead of "He did not talk to me.")

Despite being non-standard, these forms were consistently used and understood by participants, reflecting their acceptance as part of local speech norms.

Pragmatic and Cultural Expressions
Expressions reflecting cultural norms and politeness strategies specific to Urdu-speaking contexts were commonly used by participants. Examples include:
- *"Please, rub the board."* (for *"Please, erase the board."*)
- *"Teacher is calling you."* (for *"The teacher wants to see you."*)
- *"What is your good name?"* (for *"What is your name?")*

These forms illustrate the adaptation of English to local communicative conventions, in accordance with Pakistani social norms of hospitality, respect, and indirectness.

Perceptions toward Paklish
In response to questions about their views, most students characterized Paklish as a "natural way of speaking English in Pakistan." While acknowledging its differences from British or American English, they did not consider it incorrect or inferior. One student remarked:
"We are bilinguals and take English as our second language, so it reflects our culture and Urdu background."

Thematic Summary
Findings from the analysis indicate that Paklish operates as a socially meaningful and contextually appropriate variety of English. Its characteristics reflect systematic linguistic patterns rather than

random errors, shaped by speakers' bilingual competence and cultural identity.

The results demonstrate that:

1. Lexical and syntactic localization consistently characterize spoken Paklish.
2. Code-mixing serves multiple functions, including communicative and expressive purposes.
3. Pragmatic choices and expressions of politeness in speech are influenced by cultural adaptation.
4. Speaker perceptions validate Paklish as a genuine form of English in Pakistan.

Relation to Research Questions

1. Commonly used Paklish expressions: Included lexical borrowings like *copy*, *give exam*, and *get your car aside.*
2. Frequency of Paklish forms: These forms appeared consistently across student speech, indicating their regular use in everyday communication.
3. Linguistic and social functions: In student speech, code-mixing serves communicative purposes, marks social identity, and reflects the naturalization of English for local contexts.
4. Participants' perceptions: Students held positive and accepting attitudes, recognizing Paklish as an integral part of Pakistani identity.

Summary

This chapter presented a qualitative analysis of data collected during interviews, highlighting the linguistic and sociocultural patterns that shape Paklish. The findings indicate that Paklish is not merely a deviation from standard English but a contextually appropriate, hybrid variety shaped by local identity and bilingual realities. The next chapter will discuss these findings in relation to previous research and the role of Paklish within the Outer Circle as proposed by Kachru (1984).

Discussion and Conclusion

Overview

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the results presented in Chapter 4 in relation to the research objectives, questions, and relevant literature. It examines the significance of Paklish in the English Department of Hamdard University, focusing on its linguistic, sociocultural, and pedagogical implications. The chapter concludes by summarizing the key findings, outlining the study's contributions and limitations, and offering suggestions for future research.

Discussion of Findings
Lexical Variation and Borrowing

The study found that lexical borrowing from Urdu is a consistent and salient feature of spoken Paklish. Words such as *"pouch"* for *"pencil case"* and expressions like *"rub the board"* for *"erase the board"* demonstrate semantic transfer from Urdu into English. Similar patterns are also observed in everyday conversation, where localized grammatical and lexical forms reflect systematic variation rather than linguistic deficiency, aligning with the observations of Mir, Ashiq, and Shafi (2024). Participants regarded these forms as natural, indicating that lexical adaptation is not arbitrary but a socially accepted norm in both academic and casual communication.

Code-Mixing and Switching

Code-mixing and code-switching between Urdu and English emerged as key communicative strategies. Students frequently blended the two languages within single utterances to convey emotions, enhance clarity, or maintain an informal and comfortable interaction.

For example:

- "Acha, ab assignment submit karani hai?"
- "Yaar, mujhe nahi pta tha like itna tough decion mujhse ho paiga."
- "Ary, itni ziyada pure English yaha kon bolta hai?"

This practice shows how speakers draw on their bilingual abilities and express their identities, reflecting the findings of Nawaz, Yali, and Hameed (2023) and Yaqoob and Aslam (2023). Participants generally viewed code-mixing positively, suggesting that this hybrid use of English is a practical communicative strategy in multilingual settings rather than a sign of linguistic deficiency.

Structural Shifts and Syntactic Influence
Several syntactic features of spoken Paklish carried noticeable traces of Urdu influence, such as shifts in word order and the omission of prepositions or articles. Examples include:
- "Yesterday I attended the class." (instead of "I attended the class yesterday.")
- "She is good in speaking." (instead of "She is good at speaking.")
- "He did not talked to me." (instead of "He did not talk to me.")

According to these patterns, Paklish speakers internalize Urdu syntax and transfer it into English, creating locally acceptable hybrid forms. The findings align with Tabassum (2024) and Wali (2024), who emphasize how localized English syntax operates systematically in everyday Pakistani contexts.

Pragmatic and Cultural Adaptations
Paklish reflects culturally specific pragmatics. Expressions such as "Please, rub the board" or "What is your good name?" allow English to align with Pakistani norms of politeness and indirectness. These adaptations make Paklish a reflection of social and cultural identity. Kachru (1984) supports the view that World Englishes are shaped not only through structural changes but also through localization practices.

Speaker Perceptions
Participants showed a positive attitude toward Paklish, considering it a natural, effective, and socially recognized mode of communication. They acknowledged its divergence from both North American and British English, yet accepted its legitimacy within the local context. This aligns with the view of Awan, Begum, and Khan (2025), who argue that localized English varieties are validated by speakers' perceptions and communicative effectiveness rather than by conformity to Standard English norms.

Implications of the Study
Linguistic Implications
The study reveals Paklish as a distinct variety of English, characterized by lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic features. Its consistent patterns, such as lexical borrowing, structural shifts, and code-mixing, indicate that Paklish should be acknowledged as an Outer Circle English variety within Kachru's (1984) framework, rather than merely a deviation from Standard English.

Sociocultural Implications
The bilingual identity of Paklish reflects Pakistani cultural norms and the hybridization of English. It allows speakers to communicate effectively and maintain social coherence in both academic and social contexts. Paklish has now emerged as a challenge to the notion of a monolithic "standard" English in postcolonial societies.

Pedagogical Implications
Comprehending the salient features and functions of Paklish can motivate English language learners and teachers to raise awareness among their counterparts about this emerging variety of English. They can leverage localized hybrid expressions to enhance understanding, increase student participation, and build confidence, rather than stigmatizing this variety. This awareness can also support the development of curricula and the contextualization of teaching materials for bilingual speakers.

Conclusion
This study investigated the spoken variety of Paklish within the English Department of Hamdard University. The following are the key findings:

1. A systematic and locally influenced lexical borrowing and structural usage were observed.
2. Code-mixing and code-switching are used to achieve communication, social interaction and identity expression.
3. Pragmatic adjustments are influenced by cultural norms and politeness strategies shape language use.
4. Speakers' view affirms Paklish as a legitimate variety of English in Pakistan.

In conclusion, study establishes that Paklish functions as a flexible and context-driven form that operates alongside Standard English. Despite deviations being considered error, this research highlights how this new variety of English mirror sociocultural identity followed by bilingual competence and pragmatic efficiency within Pakistani society.

Limitations and Future Research
Despite its valuable contribution, the study is limited by having the sample of 30 participants from one university. Future research could:
- Expend the study to a broader range of universities in Pakistan to investigate regional diversity.
- Examine spoken versus written Paklish to explore how the two modalities differ.
- Study how Paklish evolves among students over an extended period.
- Investigate methods to include Paklish comprehension as a part of English language instructions.

Future research, with an extended focus can further illuminate the status of Paklish as an authentic World Englishes variety.

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