

LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow

Volume 12 : 11 November 2012

ISSN 1930-2940

Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.

Editors: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.

Sam Mohanlal, Ph.D.

B. A. Sharada, Ph.D.

A. R. Fatihi, Ph.D.

Lakhan Gusain, Ph.D.

Jennifer Marie Bayer, Ph.D.

S. M. Ravichandran, Ph.D.

G. Baskaran, Ph.D.

L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.

Assistant Managing Editor: Swarna Thirumalai, M.A.

An Analysis of Code-Mixing in Television Commercials

Hammad Mushtaq, M.S. English

Taskeen Zahra, M.A. English

Abstract

This study sought to analyze the extent and impact of code-mixing in various advertisements shown on widely seen channels of Pakistan. Data for this quantitative research was taken from three Pakistani channels: Geo TV, ARY Digital and Hum TV. The recorded data ranged over the duration of three days. The data was first recorded from the channels and then analyzed in order to determine the extent of code-mixing in the commercials; later a questionnaire was devised and then distributed among a sample of thirty students, and the data thus was analyzed in order to determine the impact of code-mixing on the viewers of Television Commercials. The population selected for this research was one hundred and thirteen students belonging to the undergraduate programs of English and Mass Communication Departments of Foundation University, while the sample consisted of thirty students. The sample was selected through convenience sampling. After analyzing the questionnaire and the response of the audience, it was concluded that code mixing is prevalent in advertisements to a great extent and it leaves a very strong impact on the viewers and serves the purpose of effective communication. The results show that code-mixing is being accepted by the youngsters as an important aspect of linguistic communication. This study plays a very important role in a society like ours, which has people belonging to different regions, who tend to speak a variety of languages, and where code hybridization is a common factor.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 11 November 2012

Hammad Mushtaq, M.S. English and Taskeen Zahra, M.A. English

An Analysis of Code-Mixing in Television Commercials

Key words: code-mixing, Television Commercials, extent and impact of code-mixing, convenience sampling, linguistic communication.

Introduction

Code-mixing is the moving from one language to another within the similar statement, utterance or within the same oral or written text. Sometimes more than two languages are mixed up and code mixing becomes a common feature of language usage. In linguistics, the term code mixing is often used interchangeably with code-switching that creates confusion. It is, however, necessary to understand that unlike code-mixing, code-switching refers to the switch or shift from one language to the other which involves longer stretches of language as the clause or sentence boundary; while generally code-mixing does not involve shifts beyond smaller units of language such as words or phrases (Milroy, 1987; Wei, 1998; Swigart, 1992; Goyvaerts and Zembele 1992).

In the previous three decades there has been broad research done on language and culture communication or interchange. Myers-Scotton, Gumperz, Auer, Stacks and Poplack are some of the names of the scholars that have influenced literature. There is a considerable quantity of literature on the topic of mixing languages, but there are no unchanging definitions of these notions that clarify these conditions. Code-mixing may be defined as shifting back and forth between two languages, especially in a solitary discourse (Crystal, 47; Skiba, 1997). Code-mixing plays a very significant role in language and language variation, and also provides an insight into the socio-cultural phenomena taking place in that area or region, through the linguistic choices of people. In most of the languages of the world, code-mixing is done.

Kachru (1986) asserted that ‘mixing’ means the transfer of the units of code A into code B at intersentential and intrasentential levels”, and thus evolving a new code of linguistic interaction. The advent of English as lingua franca in the modern years has resulted in the rise of the practice of code-mixing of English with the local languages all over the world. As far as the phenomenon of code mixing in Urdu is concerned, it is not new as a linguistic process; it dates back to the partition of the subcontinent. Through this process new language emerged from the old ones. Grierson’s 1991 census report on the mother tongues spoken in India mentioned the situations in which the natives blended the phrases and words of English in their own language. The Urdu language is said to be a mixture or amalgamation of various languages with comparatively dominant role of Hindi, Arabic and Persian (Grierson 2005).

The reactions and opposition towards code mixing also exist in the form of condemnation and approval. Wardhaugh (1992) asserted that monolinguals are very critical of code-mixing. They even use peculiar expressions to describe the supposed results, that is, Spanglish (Spanish and English), Frananglais (French and English) and Tex-Mex (English and Mexican Spanish in Texas).

Indeed, many linguists view code-mixing as an unavoidable by-product of language interaction and evolution, and consider it a natural consequence of language contact. Chan (1998) asserted the same view and claimed that as far as code-mixing is concerned, there is little

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 11 November 2012

Hammad Mushtaq, M.S. English and Taskeen Zahra, M.A. English

An Analysis of Code-Mixing in Television Commercials

or no conscious learning. Citing other linguists (Myers-Scotton 1993 and Romaine 1995) supporting this point of view he writes that code mixing is a kind of impulsive behavior of bilinguals and it is uncertain whether bilingual consciously makes a choice before he or she mixes code. They ought to take into consideration the point that code mixing is one of the expected consequences of language communication. As far as Pakistan is concerned, mixing of English words in Urdu language is a prominent feature of the present sociolinguistic scenario.

McChesney (1997) asserted that the scope of communication has broadened very much in the modern-day societies through the help of media. The advent of new technologies has facilitated man's life to a great extent. Kasturirangan and Rangarajan (2000) summarized the communication requirements of modern societies as 'instantaneous connectivity with anybody, anywhere, at any time'. Media and advertisements go side by side. Advertising is any salaried form of non-personal demonstration of ideas, goods and services by a recognized sponsor, as defined by the American Marketing Association, Chicago. It is the work of television advertisement sponsors to create advertisements that can interrupt the chaos of television programs in order to get attention, to communicate the exclusive marketing plan of a product that is being advertised (Currie 1995). These commercials are very important in making use of various codes and the phenomenon of code-mixing is common in them.

The purpose and aim of this research is to identify the extent of code-mixing in the television commercials on Pakistani channels, and to analyze the impact of code mixing on the viewers of these channels. Due to British rule in the subcontinent, the prestige factor attached to English has been on the rise, and television advancements have brought a striking and notable transformation in the linguistic image of Pakistan. The national language of Pakistan, Urdu, is gradually losing its prestige and vitality. English has been embraced as a replacement for Urdu in various fields. The occurrence of the mixing of English words in everyday Urdu discourse is increasing day by day. The mingling or hybridization of language cannot be labeled as a mere linguistic modification; it is rather a socio-cultural phenomenon that needs to be studied.

Research Objective

The objective of the research is to find out the magnitude of code-mixing done in the television commercials on Pakistani channels, and also to determine the impact of code-mixing on the viewers of these channels.

Sampling

From the population of 113 students belonging to the undergraduate programs of English and Mass Communication Departments of Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the sample of thirty students was selected through convenience sampling and the questionnaire was distributed among them. Convenience sampling involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population which is close to hand, and it includes people who are easy to reach.

Significance of the Study

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 11 November 2012

Hammad Mushtaq, M.S. English and Taskeen Zahra, M.A. English
An Analysis of Code-Mixing in Television Commercials

The phenomenon of code-mixing is very common in all the bilingual and multilingual countries, like our own country. This study related to the phenomenon of code-mixing, plays a very important role in a society like ours, which has people belonging to different regions speaking a variety of languages, where code hybridization is a common factor. This research also highlights the fact that the electronic media in Pakistan does not seem to have any firm rules about the use of language. Channels have their own policies regarding the use of language. Thus this study reflects on the extent of code-mixing present in the advertisements of Pakistani Channels and provides awareness about the impact of code-mixing on the viewers of various code-mixed advertisements on the television channels. The results of this study are helpful in finding answers to the questions that are hard to obtain through interviews and observations.

Procedure

The data collection procedure took three days. Data for this research was taken from three Pakistani channels, Geo TV, ARY Digital and Hum TV. The advertisements showed various instances of code-mixing recorded between 8 pm to 9 pm. The data was obtained in two phases. The data was recorded first from the channels and then analyzed; in the second phase, questionnaires were devised and then distributed among the sample of thirty students from the population of the undergraduate students of Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; and thus data was generated and analyzed. The students were asked to fill the questionnaires based on three-point rating scale and give their opinions about the use of code-mixing on media for a detailed insight into the code-mixing phenomenon. They were also told that their answers and responses would only be utilized for the purpose of research and their names will not be publicized. After collection of data, the responses were analyzed and the results were generated.

Research Questions

- i. To what extent, code-mixing is prevalent in advertisements?
- ii. What is the impact of code-mixing on the viewers?

First Phase

In the 1st phase, data was collected from three different channels and then analyzed in order to determine the extent and scope of code-mixing in advertisements.

Number of commercials shown on Hum TV	number of code-mixed commercials	Total No. of Words in all the commercials	No. of English words	Percentage of English words
---------------------------------------	----------------------------------	---	----------------------	-----------------------------

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 11 November 2012

Hammad Mushtaq, M.S. English and Taskeen Zahra, M.A. English

An Analysis of Code-Mixing in Television Commercials

9	6	289	33	11.42%
---	---	-----	----	--------

On Hum TV, out of 9 advertisements, 3 had no code-mixing of English language in Urdu and the overall percentage of English words was 11.42%.

Number of commercials shown on ARY Digital	number of code-mixed commercials	Total No. of Words in all the commercials	No. of English words	Percentage of English words
10	7	322	29	9.01%

On ARY Digital, out of 10 advertisements, 3 had no code-mixing of English language in Urdu and percentage of English words was 9.01%.

Number of commercials shown on Geo TV	number of code-mixed commercials	Total No. of Words in all the commercials	No. of English words	Percentage of English words
9	7	435	63	14.48%

On Geo TV, out of 9 advertisements, 2 had no code-mixing of English language in Urdu and percentage of English words was 14.48%. This analysis shows that code-mixing of English words in Urdu language is prevalent and frequently existent in the commercials of Pakistani channels.

Second Phase

In the second phase of the research, a questionnaire based on three-point rating scale was distributed among the sample of thirty students belonging to Foundation University Islamabad. The purpose and aim of devising this questionnaire was to determine the impact of code-mixing on the viewers of these channels. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-five items in which twenty-four questions were close-ended questions while the last question was open-ended, asking about the general views of the selected sample. All the thirty questionnaires were received back and were valid. Due to space limitation, only some of the important questions and their results are shown in the bar-graphs below.

Fig. 1. Code-mixing usually happens in advertisements of every Pakistani Channel.

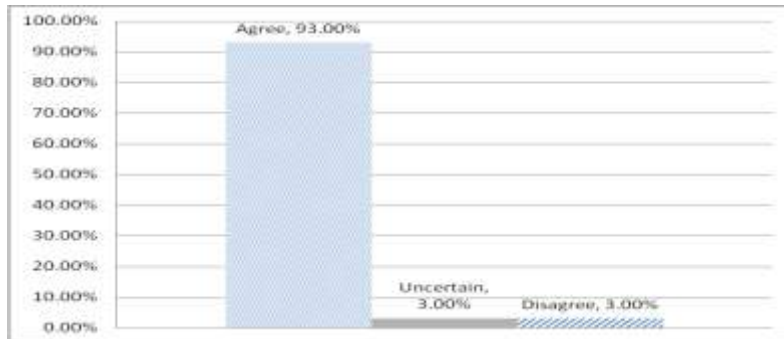


Fig. 2. Code-mixing is a strong communicative tool.

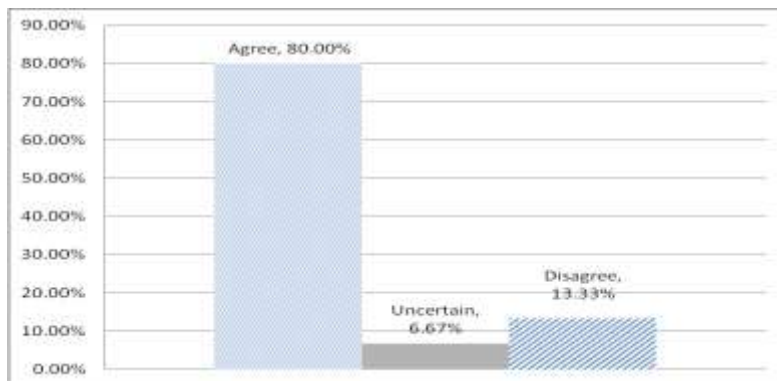


Fig.3. Code-mixing helps the viewers to memorize the commercials.

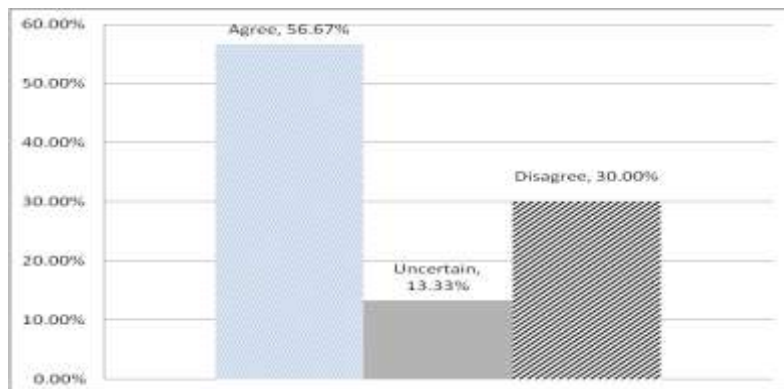


Fig.4. Code-mixing gives a person an educated outlook.

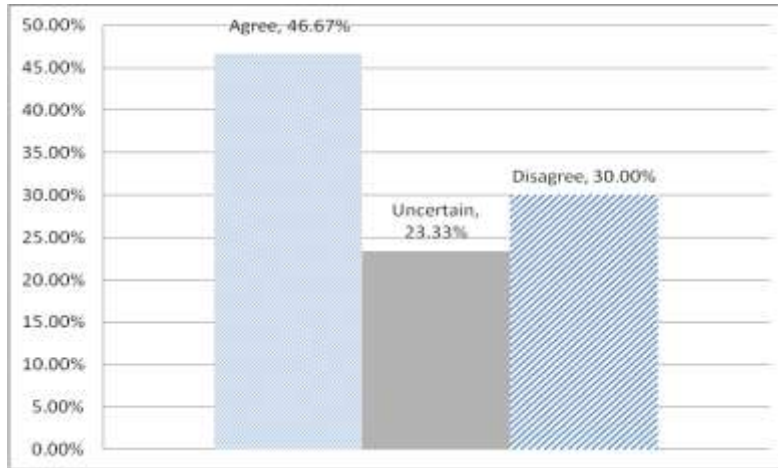


Fig. 5. Viewers are generally impressed by those advertisements which make use of Code-mixing.

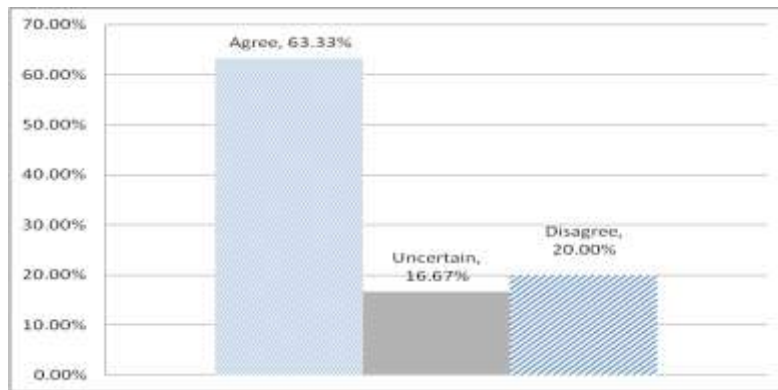


Fig. 6. Code-mixing makes language convincing

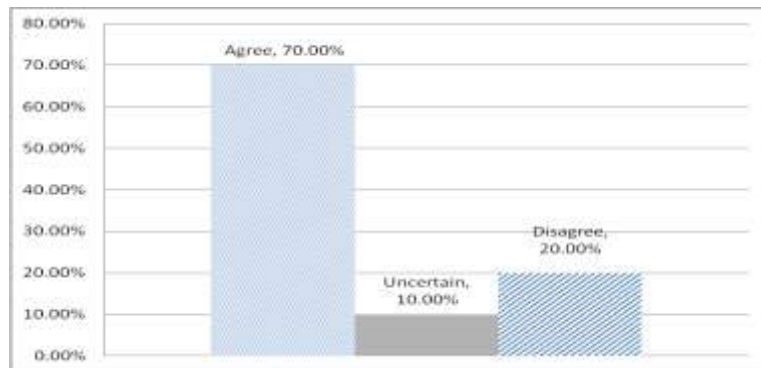


Fig. 7. Code-mixing creates a strong impact on the mind

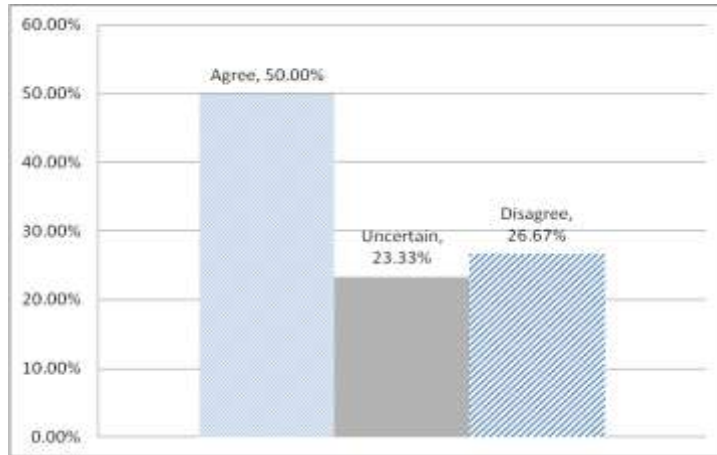


Fig. 8. Code-mixing is a sign of inter-cultural harmony

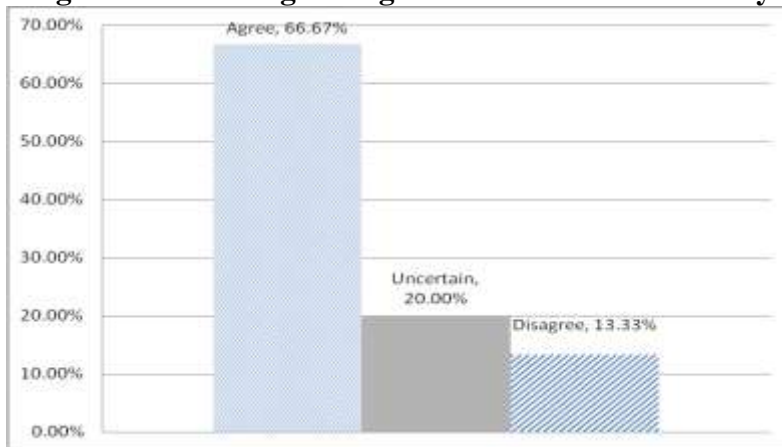


Fig. 9. Code-mixing brings novelty to advertisements

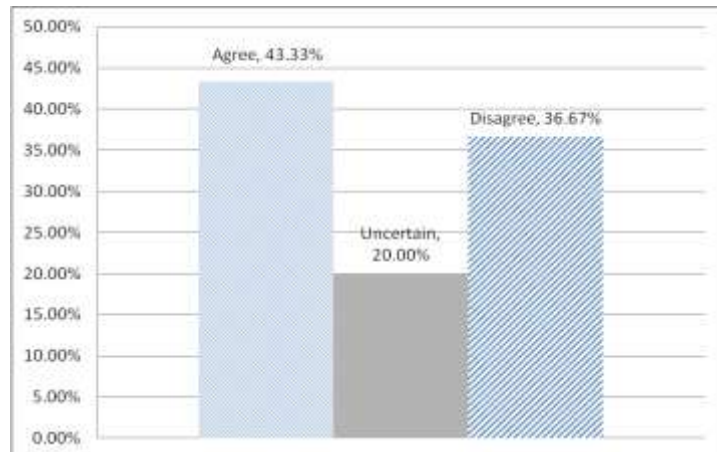


Fig. 10. Because of Code- mixing, people are forgetting the vocabulary of their mother tongues

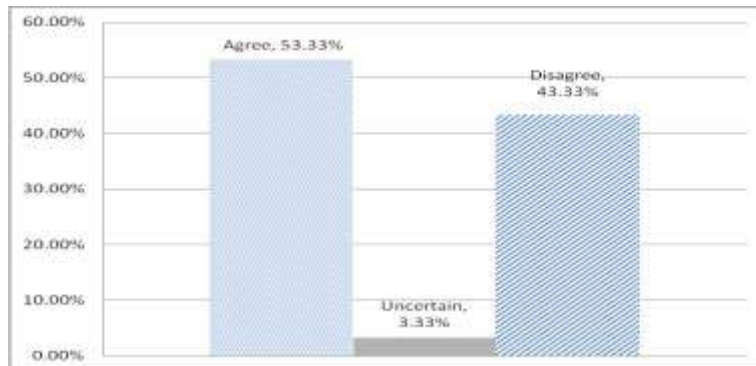


Fig. 11. Code-mixing is leaving a negative impact on our culture

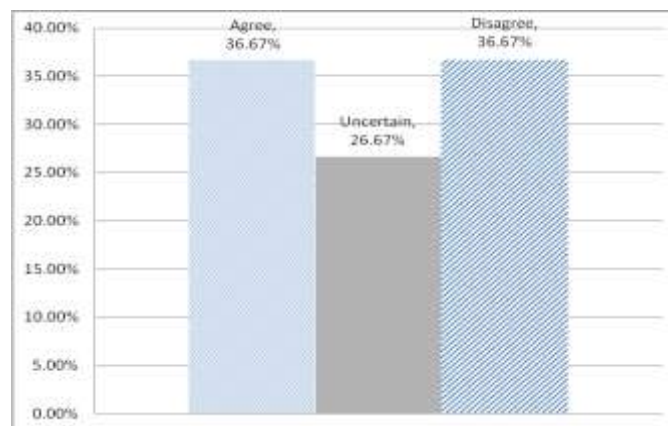


Fig. 12. Code-mixing leaves negative impact on our language

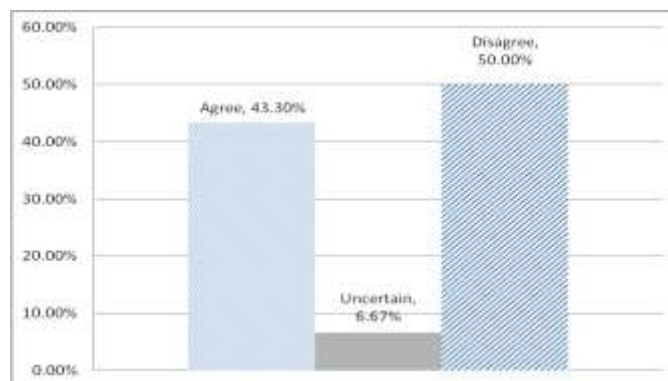
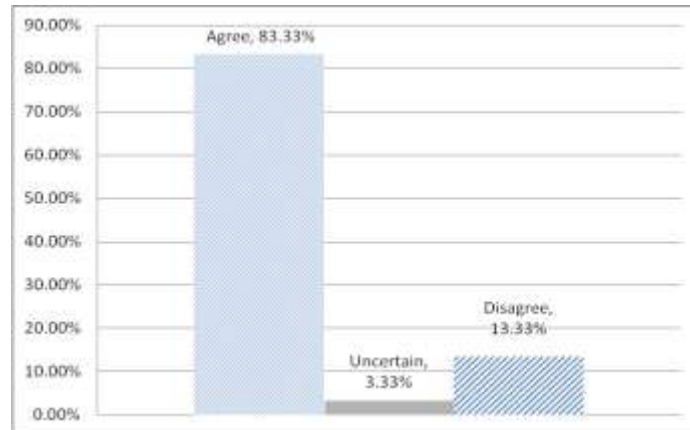


Fig. 13. Code-mixing in Pakistani advertisements promotes values of the Western culture.



Findings

After analyzing the instances of code-mixing in the commercials in the first phase, it was observed that code-mixing of English language in Urdu occurs very frequently in these advertisements, despite the fact that the English code mixed words had alternatives in Urdu language. In these advertisements, code-mixing was intensively employed to a large extent.

In the second stage of the research, the responses of the questionnaire are as follows:

1. 93% of the students agreed that code-mixing usually happens in advertisements of every Pakistani Channel.
2. 80% students agreed that code-mixing is a strong communicative tool.
3. 56.6% students agreed that code-mixing helps the viewers to memorize the commercials.
4. 46.6% students agreed that code-mixing gives a person an educated outlook.
5. 63.3% students agreed that viewers are generally impressed by those advertisements which make use of code-mixing.
6. 66.6% students agreed that code-mixing makes a language convincing.
7. 50% students agreed that code-mixing creates a strong impact on the mind of the viewer.
8. 66.6% students agreed that code-mixing is a sign of inter-cultural harmony.
9. 43.3% students agreed that code-mixing brings novelty to advertisements.
10. 53.3% people agreed that because of code-mixing, people are forgetting the vocabulary of their mother tongue languages.
11. Survey shows that the percentage of students who agreed and those who disagreed is the same i.e. 36.67% about the statement that code-mixing is leaving a negative impact on our culture.
12. 43.3% of the students agreed to the notion that code-mixing leaves negative impact on our language.
13. 83.3% of students agreed to the notion that code mixing in commercials promotes the values of Western culture.

Conclusion

The data collected through the advertisements from the three drama channels of Pakistan showed that out of ten advertisements, approximately seven are using code-mixing in them and it was analyzed that code-mixing is prevalent in advertisements to a great extent. Similarly, the result of the questionnaire based survey showed that code-mixing leaves a very strong impact on the viewers as it helps the viewers to memorize the commercials easily and serves the purpose of effective communication. The impact of code-mixing in advertisements on the younger generation is quite significant, as shown through the survey taken from the students of undergraduate studies. During the research it was also noted that majority of the students believed that code-mixing is a very useful tool for making language more effective and it is right to use any language other than Urdu in commercials since it attracts the viewers' attention. As the influence of English language in Pakistan is growing to a great extent, code-mixing is being accepted by the general public as a normal aspect of linguistic communication. It is being used very frequently and has become a part of the routine discourse.

Works Cited

- American Marketing Association*. Chicago. 25 Apr. 2012 <<http://www.contentwriter.in/articles/advertising-marketing/importance-advertising.htm>>
- Chan, M. *Ninth North American Conference on Chinese Linguistics*. Los Angeles: GSIL Publications, California. Volume 2, 35-52, 1998.
- Currie, M. *Importance of TV in Advertising*, 1995. 5 May 2012 <http://www.eBhow.com/about_5349433_importance-tv-advertising.html>
- Crystal, D.. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Goyvaerts, Didier L. and Zembele, T. *Codeswitching in Bukavu*, *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Volume 13, Issue 1-2, 1992.
- Grierson, G.A. *Linguistic Survey of India*, 11 Vols. in 19 Parts. Delhi, Low Price Publ. ISBN 81-7536-361-4, 2005.
- Gumperz, J.J. *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Kasturirangan, K. and S. Rangarajan. *International Telecommunication Union Meeting*, Bangalore, 2000. 3 April 2012 <http://www.isro.org/pressrelease/scripts/pressreleasein.aspx?Jan06_2000>
- Kachru. *Code-mixing, style Repertoire and Language Variation: English in Hindu Poetic Language in India* www.languageinindia.com
12 : 11 November 2012
- Hammad Mushtaq, M.S. English and Taskeen Zahra, M.A. English
An Analysis of Code-Mixing in Television Commercials

- McChesney, R. *Educators and the Battle for Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-35*, Rich Media, Poor Democracy, ISBN 0-252-0244 8-6, 1997.
- Milroy, L. *Observing & Analyzing Natural Language: A Critical Account of Sociolinguistic Method*. Blackwell Publishers: Oxford, 1987.
- Myers-Scotton, C. Social motivations for code switching. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993.
- Myers-Scotton, C. *Multiple voices: an introduction to Bilingualism*. Blackwell publishing, 2006.
- Poplack, S. 'Sometimes I'll start a sentence in English y termino en espanol', *Linguistics*, 18, 581-616, 1980.
- Romaine, S. *Bilingualism*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1995.
- Skiba, R. *Code Switching as a Countenance of Language Interference*, *The Internet TESL Journal*, Vol. III, No. 10, 1997 <<http://iteslj.org/Articles/Skiba-CodeSwitching.html>>
- Swigart, L. *Two codes or one? The insider view and the description of code-switching in Dakar*. *Journal of Multilingual/Multicultural Development*, 13, 83-102, 1992.
- Wardhaugh, R. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992
- Wei, L. *Can You Tell? Towards a Common Sense Explanation of Conversational Code-Switching*. *Journal of Pragmatics* 37:375-89, 1998.

=====

Hammad Mushtaq, M.S. English
Assistant Professor
Head, Department of English
Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
1-New Lalazar, Rawalpindi
Pakistan
hamaadhashmi@gmail.com

Taskeen Zahra, M.A. English
Scholar of M.S. English
Air University Islamabad
Pakistan

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

12 : 11 November 2012

Hammad Mushtaq, M.S. English and Taskeen Zahra, M.A. English
An Analysis of Code-Mixing in Television Commercials