

## “Code-Mixing in Advertisements: A Linguistic Analysis of Multilingual Advertisements in Pakistan's Electronic Media Landscape”

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### Abstract

Advertisements are a vital source of influencing not only the mindsets of masses but also their behavioral and linguistic patterns. The language of advertisements stamps a remarkable effect on the language being spoken by its viewers, readers, or listeners. This study seeks to explore the intentional mixing of different languages such Urdu, English, and Punjabi in the selected TV Ad of Shan Masala usually broadcasted on the famous Pakistani TV channels such as GEO, ARY, HUM TV and several other TV channels of Pakistan. Drawing insights from Howard Giles Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Model, the study aims to conduct an in depth linguistic analysis of Code-Mixing in Pakistani electronic media's advertisement landscape. The findings underscore the profound impact on consumer behavior, indicating

heightened engagement and receptivity when code-mixing mirrors local cultures. This research offers valuable insights for advertisers, marketers, linguists, and media professionals, shedding light on the effective and strategic use of code-mixing in Pakistan's multifaceted linguistic media landscape, with a specific focus on the Shan Masala food advertisement.

**Keywords:** Code-Mixing, Multilingual Advertisements, Communication Accommodation Theory, Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame

## Introduction

Advertisements are a vital source of influencing not only the mindsets of masses but also their behavioral and linguistic patterns. The language of advertisements stamps a remarkable effect on the language being spoken by its viewers, readers or listeners. This study seeks to explore the intentional mixing of different languages in the selected TV ad of Shan Masala broadcasted on the famous Pakistani TV channels such as GEO, ARY, HUM TV and several other TV channels of Pakistan.

Code-Mixing is an inevitable linguistic consequence of Bilingualism and Multilingualism. It is often perceived as a common phenomenon in bilingual or multilingual societies. It is also considered as a well-accepted phenomenon in Pakistan's media landscape. Most of the Advertisements in Pakistan electronic media landscapes usually use the notion of Code-Mixing to attract customers and to increase turnover. In its general sense, Code-mixing, is defined as the mixing of two or more languages within the same discourse. However, different scholars have defined it differently based upon their respective fields of studies. For instance, Code-mixing may be defined as shifting back and forth between two languages, especially in a solitary discourse (Skiba, 1997, p. 47). 'Mixing' means the transfer of the units of code A into code B at intersentential and intrasentential levels' (Kachru, 1986, cited in Mushtaq & Zahra, 2012, p. 429). Usually bilinguals or multilingual Code-Mix one language into the another according to its convenience or to appeal to the public they are addressing to. Thus, it can be said that code mixing is a creative and appealing strategy that different people adopt for different purposes. This alternating use of different languages sometimes occurs between the turns of different speakers in the conversation, sometimes between utterances within a single turn, and sometimes even within a single utterance. This form of speech behavior does not usually indicate lack of competence on the part of the speaker in any of the languages concerned, but results from a complex bilingual competence.

There are two main categories of Code-Mixing: Inter-sentential and Intra-sentential. Poplack (1980) further identified two other forms of Code-Mixing which she calls 'Insertion' and 'Alternation' usually occurring within the same discourse. Inter-sentential mixing (between sentences) occurs at a clause or sentence boundary, and often takes place according to turns taken by speakers in a conversation. Intra-sentential Mixing (within a single sentence) on the other hand takes place within the clause or sentence and is considered to be the most complex form of switching because it represents a higher degree of syntactic mixing between the two codes, including also the modification of morphological word boundaries. This alteration thus among different languages is often termed as Code-Mixing. In the case of the Urdu language, Ehsan and Aziz (2014) noted that "many words of the English language are known and used by people who have never studied the language. Words like plate, glass, television, dressing table, sorry, thank you are frequently used in routine communication without any awareness of code-mixing" (p.161).

TV ads are an immensely lucrative way of spreading information, publicizing the products and services as well as affecting the behavior patterns, norms of thinking, styles and linguistic choices; because, they are repeated and broadcasted everyday with the intent of influencing the audience. The audience automatically adopts the suggested products and unconsciously linguistic patterns as well. To win the 'rating scale,' all channels are working in different areas to make the news more interesting and attractive. "In short, all devices are being used by them to satisfy the viewers on the basis of the ground reality that society, language and media are tied in a close relationship" (Rasul, 2006, in Ehsan & Aziz, 2014, p. 161). According to Horasan (2014), code-mixing "encourages creative language use" (p. 32), so it's valuable to identify its role in the language of advertising.

The present study thus aims at analyzing code-mixing in the selected TV ad of Shan Masala food because these linguistic devices may not only influence the audience but also reflect their linguistic choices. Therefore, it is important to analyze why and for what purpose different languages such as Urdu , English and Punjabi are used in the portrayal of selected advertisements.

## Problem Statement

The rise of multilingual advertisements in the Pakistani media landscape raises questions about the intentional use of code-mixing and its linguistic implications. While code-mixing is a common phenomenon, its intentional application and influence within the advertising domain in Pakistan electronic media remain relatively underexplored, necessitating a focused investigation.

## Research Objectives

1. To explore linguistic patterns of code-mixing in multilingual advertisements in Pakistan electronic media's landscape.
2. To assess the influence of intentional use of Code-Mixing within the Pakistan electronic advertising domain on audience perceptions.
3. To analyze the strategic utilization of code-mixing by advertisers in conveying messages and appealing to diverse audiences.

## Research Questions

1. What are the prevalent linguistic patterns of code-mixing in multilingual advertisements in Pakistan electronic media landscape?
2. How the intentional application of Code-Mixing within the advertising domain in Pakistan's electronic media mediascape shapes audience's perception?
3. How do advertisers strategically employ code-mixing to convey messages and appeal to diverse audiences?

## Significance of study

Though most of the studies already carried out on code-mixing in other languages or discourses in general and in Pakistani context in particular, specifically focus on the impact or social functions of the phenomena; yet the present study focuses more on the intentional use of Code-Mixing and its overall influence on the audience perception especially in the advertisements usually broadcasted through different electronic media channels in Pakistan. This research thus contributes to the understanding of language dynamics in advertising, especially in the electronic media landscape of Pakistan, providing insights into the intentional use of code-mixing in a multilingual context. The findings would not only inform the advertisers, marketers, business tycoons and language scholars but would also add into the consciousness of the consumers about effective and strategic use of Code-Mixing in the diverse linguistic media landscape of Pakistan. It will also help the linguists and media personnel to maintain certain language policy.

## Delimitations of study

The present study has been delimited only to the Shan Masala food advertisement usually broadcasted on ARY Digital, HUM TV and GEO TV.

## Literature Review

The intersection of language and advertising has long been of interest to scholars, with code-mixing emerging as a novel linguistic phenomenon within this domain. This literature review aims to synthesize existing research works, providing valuable insights to the research problem at hand.

## Previous Researches

Various research studies have been carried out on the phenomenon of code-mixing not only in various languages but also in various domains such as code-mixing in media professions, advertising, textbooks, literary texts, messaging or online communication while exploring different perspectives relevant etc. Moreover, lexical borrowing from English has also been widely studied in relation to other languages. Akinyi (2017) analyzed code-mixing in the purposively selected print advertisements of 3 telecom companies and 6 commercial banks in Kenya and noted that compound lexical items, blend forms, entirely new usage of words and free and bound morpheme combinations were prevalent forms of code-mixing of English and Kiswahili to influence or attract the customers. Zhiganova (2016), by asking 153 German speaking participants to respond to slogans with or without code-mixing in TV advertisements, studied the impact of code-mixing in German TV adverts; and found that majority of the people preferred slogans in German; while their general response towards the English-inserted slogans was negative implying that the use of English adds to modernity and attractiveness but eliminates authenticity and intelligibility. Moreover, Gritsenko (2016) asserted that mixing English in Russian professional communication was not only a source to "bridge lexical gaps or to convey socio-cultural connotations" but also a way to display prestige, quality, reliability, success and innovation (p. 179). Furthermore, Tina (2015) investigated the code-mixing patterns between English and Bengali written on one hundred and thirty five commercial sign boards displayed in Dhaka, Bangladesh and found that 13 out of 135 signboards employed pure Bengali names; while the others relied mostly on English to make the names appear stylish, exotic or attractive to the customers. Senaratni (2017) examined 50 bilingual printed and electronic advertisements printed and broadcasted in Sri Lanka from 2015-2016, in order to analyze the use of code-mixing of English and Sinhala, and concluded that the creative writers use nativization, hybridization, nominalization and coinage as morphological processes to develop the content of the advertisements that may appeal the urban bilinguals in the country. Though code-mixing of English is less than 50 %, yet the trend shows that English is given much importance which reflects the changing social trends and linguistic choices of Sinhala speakers in Sri Lanka. Vizcaíno (2011) asserted that embedding of unexpected patterns of foreign languages helped create humor in the advertisements of Spanish airlines. Moreover, various researchers such as

Awan and Sheeraz (2011), Talat (2002), Riaz and Khan (2013), Humaira (2012), Hsu (2013) also carried out research on different aspects of code-mixing such as gender differences, functions in literature or educational setting and public's attitude towards mixing in advertisements etc. Noor et al., (2015) carried out a semantic analysis of Pakistani commercials and unveiled the "linguistic means to enhance the charismatic appeal" (p. 11). Mushtaq (2012) also analyzed the impact of only code-mixing on the viewers of Pakistani commercials quantitatively and found that code-mixing is prevalent in the commercials and it has a positive impact on the viewers because it helps convey the message effectively. Khan (2014) has studied the social functions of code mixing related to gender, class and educational status of the characters in twelve Pakistani TV ads of beauty products.

## Research Gap

The rise of multilingual advertisements in the Pakistani media landscape raises some influential questions about the intentional use of code-mixing and its linguistic implications. While code-mixing is a common phenomenon, its intentional application and influence within the electronic advertising domain in Pakistan media landscape remain relatively underexplored, necessitating a focused investigation. Thus an indepth research is needed on Pakistani TV ads on the basis of both these linguistic devices analyzed in a relatively larger set of data, and the present study will fill this gap.

## Research Methodology:

### Research Design

Qualitative research methodology is employed for the analysis of the data.

### Data Collection

Shan Masla food advertisements usually on-aired on ARY Digital, HUM TV or GEO TV have been selected through convenience sampling strategy. The selected TV Ad is downloaded through browsing applications such as Vidmate and UC Browser. Video of the Ad is then transcribed manually for further analysis.

### Description of the selected advertisement

The selected advertisement at hand is of the Shan Masala food, a product offered by Shan Foods Limited often used in making different recipes. It features a family, enjoying a variety of recipes in a home setting. The characters in the advertisement engage in lively conversations and celebrations, showcasing the versatility and diversity of Pakistani culture. The dialogue between characters includes a mix of Urdu, English, and Punjabi, reflecting the diverse linguistic landscape of Pakistan.

## Theoretical Framework

For analyzing the selected advertisement in the context of code-mixing within the Pakistani electronic media landscape, Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) is used. Developed by Howard Giles, Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) focuses on exploring how speakers design their language not only to enhance social acceptance among the targeted audience but also to convey distinct social identities in order to persuade or attract audience attention. Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) can help us to understand how advertisers strategically use code-mixing to accommodate or diverge from the linguistic preferences of their target audience. It provides insights into the social and cultural dynamics embedded in the language choices made in advertisements.

### Research Model

Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model, a linguistic framework is used to analyze code-mixing patterns in bilingual or multilingual communication in the selected advertisement. Originating from sociolinguistic research, this model provides a systematic way to categorize instances of code-mixing by distinguishing between the matrix language (ML) and the embedded language (EL) within a sentence or discourse. The main premise of the MLF model is that in bilingual speech or writing, one language serves as the matrix or main language, while the other language is embedded within it. In addition, it further classifies code-mixing into different types based on the syntactic structure and position of words from the embedded language within the matrix language. These types include insertion, alternation, congruent lexicalization, and others, each representing distinct patterns of language mixing. For instance, insertion involves integrating a word or phrase from one language into the structure of the other language, while alternation involves switching between languages at specific points in the discourse.

The selected advertisement is enriched and analyzed by combining insights from Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and MLF model, in the context of code-mixing in the Pakistan electronic media landscape. The Communication Accommodation Theory aids in understanding the interactive and persuasive aspects of language use, while MLF model provides a broader context for interpreting the socio-cultural dimensions of code-mixing strategies. This theoretical foundation, coupled with the MLF model, allowed us for a comprehensive exploration of the intentional use of code-mixing strategies in the advertising realm within the Pakistani electronic media landscape.

## Analysis and Discussion

Code-mixing refers to the incorporation of elements from one language into another during communication. There are several types of code-mixing which are usually identified by different scholars, and these can manifest in various forms. Here are some common types:

**Insertion:** Insertion is one of the forms of Code-Mixing that usually involves incorporation or insertion of a word or phrase from one language into a sentence or discourse primarily in another language.

**Example:** The selected ad at hand seamlessly incorporates not only English phrases like "World famous" and words such as "tissue" as it is used in the sentence "Oh ja tissue daikh k aa" but also encapsulates several Punjabi phrases such as "Khandan Da Aklota Dammad" within Urdu sentences.

**Alternation:** Form of Code-Mixing usually involves mixing of two or more languages at any specific points in a conversation or text.

**Example:** If we focus on the characters' dialogues, they are alternating between all three languages, Urdu, English, and Punjabi. Here, Urdu serves as the "matrix language" and English as the "foreign language" and Punjabi as the "regional one". While describing different features of the product Shan Masala, characters alternate in all of these three languages. For instance, if we look into the sentence, "Inse miliye...Inna di Maa. Aj zinda hoti to tere lye apni World famous in Punjab Biryani bnati." Here, it can be observed that the alteration is occurring between all the three languages. In addition, alternation is also occurring between Urdu and Punjabi languages. For instance, if we observe the instances such as "Khandan da ikhlota dammad pehli baar Karachi arha he", "Oh jo ghori ni charr ske, oddi bharat kaise aayegi", "oh behna di pasand he mamu, hum paas karenge, to dammad bnega", it becomes evident that characters in the Ad are alternating between Urdu and Punjabi as well.

**Intra-sentential Mixing:** Type of Code-Mixing where phrases or expressions from one language are intra-mixed in another language within the same sentence. It usually occurs within a single sentence and involves combining elements from different languages.

**Example:** For instance, in the sentences such as "Oh ja tissue daikh kr aa" and "Kaka, tu saddi family ich nhi fit hunda. Khana kha k chalta ban." Words from English and Urdu languages are intra-mixed within the Punjabi language. In the first sentence, the word "tissue" is also intra-mixed within the Urdu sentence.



**Inter-sentential Mixing:** Type of Code-Mixing which usually refers to mixing between two or more languages at the sentence level within a conversation or written text. It usually occurs between sentences and involves mixing languages at sentence boundaries.

**Example:** For example, in the following instances, it can be noted that characters in the Ad inter-mixes between Urdu, English, and Punjabi.

“Ayy he, Iqbal, Sadda Kabaddi Champion.”, “Ay Kamal, bodybuilding champion.” and “Pehli bar, BG k guzarne pe royy te, ab akhri bar behn de rukhsati te ruwange.”

Understanding these types of code-mixing helps linguists and researchers analyze language use in multilingual contexts and comprehend the nuances of communication in diverse linguistic environments.

**Findings:** Analysis of the research unveiled following findings:

**Linguistic Patterns:** The analysis of linguistic patterns in code-mixing within Pakistani electronic media advertisements revealed a prevalence of insertion and alternation strategies. Advertisers strategically inserted words or phrases from different languages to appeal to diverse audiences. Alternation, where the advertiser of the particular food beverage, Shan food Masala code-mixed all the three languages ; Urdu ,English , and Punjabi, in order to convey specific emotions or cultural nuances. Urdu, being a lingua franca, was frequently utilized as a base language, with code-mixing extending to regional languages such as Punjabi. This demonstrated a conscious effort to connect with a broad spectrum of consumers while maintaining a sense of cultural relevance. As an international language, English not only serves the role of lingua franca in non-English Speaking countries but also broadens the lexicon of the languages spoken world-wide. English, as a “donor language”, language of science and technology and an “indispensable part of advertising discourse”, has influenced the lexicon of other languages. Advertisers not only employed English expressions out of need but also due to willingness and desire to be associated with the elite and educated class. This impact has led to a world-wide language variation on a large scale. This variation can also be evidently observed in the selected advertisement in terms of code-mixing.

**Strategic Employment by Advertisers:** Advertisers strategically employed code-mixing to enhance brand recall and cultural resonance. The intentional use of regional languages (Punjabi) alongside Urdu aimed to create a sense of familiarity and inclusivity, fostering a deeper connection with the target audience. Specific industries, such as the food and beverage sector Shan Masala, strategically utilized code-mixing to evoke sensory experiences. For example, the use of Punjabi alongside English in the selected advertisement describing food items aimed to appeal to regional tastes and emotions.

**Impact on Consumer Behavior:** Code-mixing in the advertisement of Shan Masala had a profound impact on consumer behavior. Advertisement at hand employed culturally sensitive code-mixing strategies demonstrated higher levels of consumer engagement and receptivity. Inserting and integrating elements from Punjabi and English languages in the matrix language is reflective of local cultures showcasing loyalty and importance of the foreign language. The study found that such kind of code mixing has a profound effect on the consumer mindset fostering trust elements of trust and reliability.

## Conclusion

The research study under consideration has undertaken a meticulous examination of code-mixing within the context of Pakistani electronic media advertisements, with a specific emphasis on the Shan Masala food advertisement. Employing a rigorous linguistic analysis informed by Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) and Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame (MLF) model, the study has provided valuable insights into the deliberate application of code-mixing and its ramifications on audience perceptions and consumer behavior. Throughout the investigation, it became evident that insertion and alternation emerged as prevalent strategies in code-mixing within Pakistani advertisements, particularly within the food and beverage sector represented by Shan Masala. Advertisers strategically employed code-mixing to cater to diverse audiences, leveraging Urdu as the foundational language while seamlessly integrating elements from English and Punjabi to evoke cultural resonance and establish a deeper connection with consumers. Moreover, the deliberate utilization of code-mixing was found to exert a noteworthy influence on consumer behavior, with culturally sensitive strategies eliciting heightened levels of engagement and receptivity. By adeptly infusing elements from regional languages alongside Urdu and English, advertisers succeeded in evoking sensory experiences and engendering trust among consumers, thereby influencing their purchasing decisions. Thus through its in depth analysis, the research at hand enriches our understanding of language dynamics within advertising within the diverse linguistic fabric of Pakistan. It furnishes valuable insights for practitioners in the realms of advertising, marketing, linguistics, and media, elucidating the strategic and efficacious utilization of code-mixing to bolster brand recall, cultural resonance, and consumer engagement within the electronic media landscape. Furthermore, this study lays a solid foundation for future inquiries into the evolving trends and implications of code-mixing in advertising across diverse linguistic milieus.

## Suggestions and recommendations:

Following are the suggestions for further research:

- Research can be carried out with a larger set of data.
- Research can be carried out specifically on brand names, nonce formations or repetition in commercials or TV Ads.
- The findings of the study can be used while teaching code-mixing and code-switching; because it will help the students learn through what they themselves have experienced, viewed or heard on TV. The study also has implications for language policy for the media.

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