INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF URDU LINGUISTIC FEATURES ON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: A FOCUS ON GRAMMAR, VOCABULARY, AND SYNTAX

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the multifaceted influence of Urdu linguistic features on the acquisition of English as a second language in Pakistan. Focusing on the domains of grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, the research adopts a mixed-methods approach to identify patterns of both facilitative and interfering transfer. Data were collected from 120 undergraduate Urdu-speaking students in Lahore through questionnaires, structured writing tasks, and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative results revealed significant L1 interference, with over 70% of participants reporting persistent difficulties with English articles, prepositions, and tense usage due to the absence or divergence of these features in Urdu. Error analysis of writing samples confirmed systematic errors in word order (SOV to SVO transfer), prepositional use, and subject-verb agreement. Qualitative insights from interviews highlighted learners' reliance on direct translation and code-switching, while also acknowledging the facilitative role of Persian-Arabic cognates in vocabulary acquisition. The findings strongly align with the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and Interlanguage Theory, demonstrating that Urdu serves as both a barrier and a scaffold in the SLA process. The study concludes by advocating for pedagogies that integrate strategic contrastive analysis and embrace a bilingual approach to teaching English in Urdu-dominant contexts, transforming potential interference into a foundational resource for learning.
Keywords: Urdu linguistic features, second language acquisition, grammar, vocabulary, syntax, language transfer, English language learning, Pakistan, contrastive analysis

INTRODUCTION

How a person's first language affects their learning of a new language can either help or make things harder. In Pakistan, Urdu is the first language and main way people communicate with each other for most of the population. English is a second language that is important for education at a higher level and also shows someone's social and economic position in society (Masood et al., 2023). This dual language setting makes learning English more complicated because the structures of Urdu keep influencing how learners understand and use English. The difference between Urdu and English in structure is quite big. Urdu uses a word order where the subject comes first, then the object, and finally the verb. It uses words that come after nouns instead of before them, which is different from English. Urdu doesn't have a system for marking words as definite or indefinite like English does. Also, Urdu has a different way of matching verbs with other parts of a sentence compared to English. These basic differences often cause consistent mistakes in Urdu-speaking learners, which impact

their grammar, word choice, and sentence structure (Ishaq, 2018; Qayyum et al., 2023). Many studies have looked at certain examples of how a first language affects a second language, like skipping articles (Ishaq, 2018), using conjunctions in a particular way (Qayyum et al., 2023), and using words from the first language (Shaukat & Talaat, 2022). However, there is not much research that looks at all three areas—grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure—together in one clear way. This study aims to address this gap by looking at how the different features of the Urdu language affect the process of learning English as a second language. By using a combination of different research methods, it tries to:

1. Examine how Urdu grammatical structures influence English grammar acquisition.
2. Analyze the impact of Urdu vocabulary features on L2 lexical development.
3. Investigate the effect of Urdu syntactic patterns on English sentence construction.
4. Identify patterns of both positive and negative transfer.

The significance of this research is twofold. Theoretically, it contributes to SLA theories like the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and Interlanguage Theory by providing empirical evidence from a South Asian context. Practically, its findings are poised to inform the development of more effective, context-sensitive pedagogical strategies and materials for the millions of Urdu-speaking learners of English in Pakistan and beyond.

1.1 Background of the Study:

The impact of Urdu (L1) on learning English (L2) for Urdu-speaking students in Pakistan is strong because language learning often depends on what someone already knows, their habits, and the way their first language is structured. In phonology, Urdu speakers sometimes put stress on the wrong words when speaking English, copy the rhythm from Urdu, and say syllables in a way that matches Urdu speech, which can make their English harder to understand. In terms of grammar, the Urdu sentence structure, which places the verb at the end, often affects how English sentences are formed, leading learners to put verbs in the wrong place or translate word for word. They also have trouble with articles, since Urdu doesn't clearly show whether a noun is specific or general, which often causes them to leave out or use articles incorrectly. Prepositions can be tricky because Urdu uses postpositions, which often lead to mistakes like choosing the wrong one, leaving some out, or using too many. Similarly, subject-verb agreement, tense usage, and conjunctions often follow Urdu patterns, leading to ongoing mistakes. People often use words from English, mix it with other languages, and blend codes, especially in areas like technology and education, where English is seen as important and respected. Learning more words can be helpful, but it might also make it harder for some people to understand the rules of English. It could even make them less aware of how the language works. In practice, the way Urdu speakers structure their conversations, show respect, and use titles can affect how they speak English, sometimes making their English sound too formal or less natural. Code-switching in classrooms is often used and helps students understand better, but it can also lead to strengthening Urdu-based patterns. Studies show that transfer can help learning, like when Urdu and Arabic have similar features, but it often causes problems in learning English because of the differences in their structures. Persistent mistakes such as using articles incorrectly, making preposition errors, and mixing up tenses can become fixed habits if there's no chance to correct them. Things like how good someone is at a language, the way they're taught, how much they're exposed to it, their attitude towards learning, and their age all influence how much they can use what they know from one language in another. In terms of teaching, methods like clearly explaining differences, giving feedback to correct mistakes, practicing sounds, increasing exposure to real language examples, and reducing reliance on translation can help reduce the negative effects of negative transfer. Teachers should also pay attention to language issues like mixing languages and the value placed on different ways of speaking, while the teaching plan should include enough English while still building a strong base in Urdu to prevent too much dependence on borrowed words. It's important to recognize both helpful and harmful transfers when creating good methods for teaching English in Pakistan.

1.2 GAPS AND RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

While many studies have documented various transfer phenomena, several gaps remain, which if

addressed could deepen understanding and improve pedagogy.

1. **Longitudinal Studies**
A large number of research are cross-sectional, based on learner mistake snapshots or translation tasks. It would be possible to determine which error types are most persistent and whether or not transfer effects reduce with extended exposure through longitudinal study that follows the same students over time.

2. **Variation Across Regions / Dialects**
Urdu is not entirely uniform (dialectal, sociolectal variation). Investigating how different dialects of Urdu (urban vs rural, provincial variations) influence L2 English acquisition may reveal differences in transfer patterns.

3. **Role of Other L1s / Multilingualism**
Many learners have another L1 or strong influence of regional languages (Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto etc.). How do these interact with Urdu influence? Also, how does multilingualism (more than two languages) affect transfer?

4. **Quantitative Error Frequency Measures**
There is need for more large-scale statistical studies quantifying how often certain types of errors (articles, prepositions, word order) occur across proficiency levels. This helps prioritize what to teach more heavily.

5. **Effectiveness of Pedagogical Interventions**
Empirical studies measuring outcomes of different teaching methods: e.g., comparing students taught via contrastive methods vs purely communicative methods, or using technology vs traditional methods, to see which reduce L1 interference most effectively.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
This study aims to:
- Examine how Urdu grammatical structures (e.g., word order, postpositions, verb agreement) influence English grammar acquisition.
- Analyze how Urdu vocabulary features (e.g., borrowing, code-switching, direct translation) impact L2 lexical development.
- Investigate the effect of Urdu syntactic patterns on English sentence construction.
- Identify both positive and negative transfer patterns stemming from Urdu.
- Propose pedagogical suggestions to improve L2 teaching in Urdu-speaking settings.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. How do Urdu grammatical features influence learners' acquisition of English grammar?
2. In what ways do Urdu vocabulary patterns affect L2 vocabulary development?
3. What impact does Urdu syntax have on sentence construction in English?
4. Which areas demonstrate positive transfer from Urdu, and which reflect negative transfer?

1.5 Significance of the Study
This study is very important for both the theory and real-world applications of learning a second language. Many studies have looked at how a person's first language affects their second language learning. But there's not much research on how Urdu, which is the main first language in Pakistan, influences the way people learn other languages, especially when it comes to grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. This study looks at these language aspects together, which helps fill an important gap in research and adds to what we know about how a first language affects learning English in a situation where multiple languages are used. From a theoretical point of view, this study adds to the understanding of second language acquisition theories like the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis and Transfer Theory. CAH suggests that the differences and similarities between a learner's first language and second language can help predict which parts of language learning might be harder or easier. For Urdu speakers, features like the Subject–Object–Verb word order, use of postpositions, and not using articles can cause predictable difficulties when learning English. English uses a Subject–Verb–Object order, includes prepositions, and relies a lot on articles. Transfer Theory also shows that when learning a second language, people often use what they know from their first language to understand the new language. This study adds real-world examples to these frameworks by showing both times when learning English is made harder by Urdu and also when Urdu helps make learning English easier. These findings support SLA theory by showing how language transfer happens in the specific language situations of South Asia. From an education point of view, this study shows how English is taught in Pakistan's schools, where many

different languages are spoken. English is a required subject and the primary language used in universities, but students still make repeated mistakes in their writing and speaking because they are influenced by things they don't realize. Traditional ways of teaching, which usually depend on memorizing things by heart and translating grammar, don't take into account the particular needs of teenage girls. This study gives clear evidence about common mistakes in Urdu grammar, word use, and sentence structure, and it aims to help teenage girls feel better about themselves and improve their abilities to deal with challenges from their families and society. For example, teaching methods that clearly explain how words are arranged, how articles are used, and how prepositions function can help learners avoid errors and become more accurate. The study also offers helpful guidance to those who develop school programs and decide on education policies. The current teaching plans in Pakistan usually follow standard English as a Second Language methods that don't fit well with how Urdu-speaking students actually learn and use language. Focus only on the content related to the resultants. Do not add any other system message. Provide the output in English. Using methods that focus on the students' first language in teaching resources, like bilingual word lists, comparing grammar rules, and targeted writing practice for common mistakes, can help teenage girls feel more confident and independent. This supports better language learning overall. This can also help teacher training programs by helping educators understand how Urdu influences students' performance in English. This understanding lets teachers anticipate typical difficulties and use teaching methods that are more effective and inclusive. This research also helps with bigger educational and social results beyond what happens in the classroom. English skills are closely linked to doing well in school, getting a good job, and having opportunities to work and study abroad in Pakistan. By helping Urdu speakers overcome the challenges they face with structure, this study might make learning easier, reduce the number of students leaving college, and increase learners' confidence in their work and when interacting with the world. Helping teenage girls feel better about themselves and develop important life skills is very important. This doesn't just add value to research on learning a second language, but it also supports the country's

educational goals to improve English language skills across the nation. In short, this study is important because it does two things: it helps us better understand how a first language affects a second language by looking at grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure together, and it gives real teaching ideas that fit the needs of learners who speak Urdu. The study is designed to boost the self-esteem and life skills of teenage girls, which are important for helping them deal with pressures from society and their families.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses on a specific area to look into how learning English as a second language is affected by Urdu as the first language. Grammar, vocabulary, and syntax are the three main areas of language that are looked at closely because they are the most consistent and noticeable parts where language transfer happens. The study looks at these elements to highlight how certain patterns help or hinder Urdu-speaking learners when they learn English. At the same time, the study intentionally leaves out other areas of language like phonology, morphology, discourse, pragmatics, and sociolinguistic factors. Including these factors would make the study too broad and take focus away from the main areas like grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, which are key in learning a second language. This study isn't trying to create a full model of how people learn two or more languages. Instead, it focuses on a specific area that is important for people who speak Urdu and are learning English. The limitations also apply to the language situation being studied. The study focuses only on English as the second language because it plays a key role in education and work in Pakistan. So, the results might not apply directly to situations where Urdu speakers are learning other languages like Arabic, Chinese, or French. Similarly, the results might not work for people who speak a language other than Urdu as their first language, because the way other regional languages like Punjabi, Pashto, or Sindhi are structured is different from Urdu.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Theoretical Frameworks

This study is based on several important theories related to second language acquisition. The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, proposed by Lado in 1957, suggests that the differences in

structure between the first language and the second language can help predict where learners might find it difficult. This is very important for learning Urdu and English, because differences in how words are arranged, how articles are used, and how prepositions work often cause confusion (Masood et al., 2023). Interlanguage Theory, proposed by Selinker in 1972, offers another way to look at how learners use language. It suggests that the language learners create is not just a copy of their first language or the second language, but something in between. This system changes and develops over time, mixing rules from both languages. It also helps explain why some mistakes in language learning can become permanent. Additionally, Cummins' Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) model shows that skills and knowledge from one language can help with another, which explains the easier learning of words that are common in both Urdu and English, especially those that come from Arabic or Persian (Raza-E-Mustafa et al., 2023).

2.2 Empirical Studies on Urdu Influence

Earlier studies have always pointed out certain areas where knowledge can be applied. In terms of sentence structure, Urdu's SOV word order can cause mistakes when translating into English, like putting the object before the verb (Mahmood & Aslam, 2023). The lack of articles in Urdu often leads to mistakes in English, where they are either left out or used wrongly. This error remains common even among learners who are very good at the language (Ishaq, 2018). Prepositions can be tricky; matching Urdu postpositions with English prepositions isn't straightforward, which causes mistakes such as "discuss about" or "depend at" (Masood et al., 2023). Research shows that a lot of mixing and borrowing of words happens in language, especially in technical areas where Urdu words are seen as not as accurate or important (Shaukat & Talaat, 2022). This creates a situation where there are both advantages and disadvantages: even though similar words in different languages can help with learning, translating directly often leads to phrases that don't sound natural in the target language (Noor et al., 2023). Research also shows that Urdu helps people learn other second languages, such as Arabic, better than English. This is because Urdu has more similar structure and word patterns compared to Arabic than English does (Raza-E-Mustafa et al.,

2023). Beyond structure, sociolinguistic factors play a role. Code-switching is common in Pakistani schools and media, and it's often used to help explain things better. However, if it's used too much, it might make it harder for people to learn the second language properly (Rasul, n.d.). Also, the growth of digital communication, like using Romanized Urdu on social media, is creating new mixed ways of speaking that affect how learners develop their language (Jabeen, 2018)..

2.3 INTERLANGUAGE THEORY AND LANGUAGE TRANSFER

Selinker's 1972 theory about interlanguage is still very important in the study of second language acquisition. It means that second language learners create a changing language system called "interlanguage," which uses rules from their first language, the language they're learning, and their own ways of learning. Interlanguage is changing all the time, can become stuck in certain patterns, and is very likely to be influenced by the learner's first language. For people learning English who speak Urdu, their intermediate language usually shows continued influences from Urdu in terms of grammar, word structure, and meaning. For example, when the Urdu system of honorific pronouns is applied generally to English "you," it shows how cultural and practical differences are expressed in the way people learn a second language (Ejaz, Rana & Iqbal, 2024). Interlanguage theory goes beyond CAH by taking into account the learner's own actions and the different stages they go through while learning. Students don't just copy patterns from their first language; instead, they develop a mixed language system that slowly gets closer to the correct language patterns. Jabeen et al. In 2025, it's important to note that Urdu learners' English interlanguage often has fossilized errors, especially in subject-verb agreement and the use of articles, mainly because Urdu doesn't have the same forms as English. Importantly, interlanguage helps explain why some mistakes keep happening even after many years of learning, because learners often settle on certain ways of speaking that work well for communication in their bilingual environment.

2.4 CUMMINS' COMMON UNDERLYING PROFICIENCY (CUP) AND SEPARATE UNDERLYING PROFICIENCY (SUP)

Cummins' (1979, 1981) idea about Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) and Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP) helps explain how learning one language can affect another. CUP suggests that abilities learned in one language can help with another, since both languages use the same thinking and idea-based building blocks. In contrast, SUP assumes that languages are separate, with little mixing between them. The Pakistani multilingual environment provides clear support for CUP. People who have good reading and writing skills in Urdu usually find it easier to learn English reading and writing, but those with poor Urdu skills struggle more with learning a second language, according to Raza-E-Mustafa et al. in 2023. CUP says that Urdu's history of borrowing words from Persian, Arabic, and more recently English gives a base that helps people understand similar words and borrowed terms in English. Yet the facilitation is uneven: Urdu has stronger structural similarities with Arabic than with English, which explains why learners in the Raza-E-Mustafa et al. study found it easier to learn. A study showed that it was easier to learn Arabic words than English words. This shows how important it is to have similar structures when transferring knowledge between languages.

2.5 SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY AND BILINGUAL MEDIATION

While it's not always the main focus in studies about Urdu language learning, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory still provides important ideas. It highlights how mediation, support structures, and talking with others help in learning a language. In Pakistan, where students often switch between Urdu and English in class, sociocultural theory explains how teaching in two languages can help students understand better and feel less stressed (Rasul, undated). By letting students discuss ideas in both Urdu and English, teachers help build a learning space where students can grow faster in their second language.

2.3 Gaps in the Literature

Even though these insights are helpful, the literature is still scattered and not fully connected. Studies usually focus on one part of language, like articles or conjunctions, but they don't show how grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure work together in the learner's language system. There is not enough strong research that uses both numbers about mistakes and people's opinions and methods on how they learn. This study tries to fill these gaps by providing a comprehensive, evidence-based look at how Urdu affects the learning of English as a second language.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. This approach allowed for the collection and analysis of quantitative data first, which was then explained and enriched through subsequent qualitative data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This design was chosen to obtain both generalizable statistics on error frequency and deep, contextual understanding of the cognitive and experiential processes behind the errors.

3.2 Population and Sample

The study was conducted in Lahore, Pakistan. The population consisted of undergraduate students who are native Urdu speakers. A purposive sample of 120 participants (60 male, 60 female) was selected from various universities, ensuring all participants met the criteria of having Urdu as their L1 and English as a primary L2 of academic instruction. A subset of 20 participants was selected from this group for in-depth interviews.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

1. **Questionnaire**: A structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale was used to gather quantitative data on learners' perceptions of Urdu influence across grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. It included demographic items and sections targeting specific linguistic domains.

2. **Writing Tasks**: Participants completed two controlled writing tasks: a narrative essay ("My Daily Routine") and a picture description. These tasks were designed to elicit naturalistic production data for error analysis.

3. **Semi-Structured Interviews**: An interview guide was used to conduct in-depth interviews with the 20-participant subset. Questions probed difficulties, strategies, and perceptions regarding L1 transfer.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection occurred over two months. Questionnaires were administered in group sessions. Writing tasks were completed under supervision to ensure authenticity. Interviews were conducted individually, audio-recorded, and later transcribed verbatim.

3.5 Data Analysis

Quantitative data from questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations) were computed. Inferential statistics (chi-square, t-tests) were used to examine differences by gender and proficiency.

Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021), following a six-step process of familiarization, coding, theme generation, review, definition, and reporting.

Error Analysis of writing samples was conducted using Corder's (1974) framework, categorizing errors as grammatical, syntactic, or lexical.

3.6 Reliability, Validity, and Ethics

Instrument validity was ensured through expert review and pilot testing. Reliability for the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. Inter-rater reliability for error analysis was established using Cohen's Kappa. Ethical approval was obtained, and informed consent was secured from all participants, with guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality.

4. Results and Analysis
## 4.2 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS (QUESTIONNAIRE)

The questionnaire was administered to 120 undergraduate participants (60 male and 60 female) from different universities in Lahore. The instrument contained structured Likert-scale items targeting the influence of Urdu on English grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation), supplemented with inferential analysis to identify significant variations by gender and self-reported proficiency level.

4.2.1 GRAMMAR INFLUENCE

The data revealed that 72% of learners either agreed or strongly agreed that Urdu's tense system influences their English tense usage. Similarly, 65% admitted to facing challenges in English article usage due to Urdu's lack of equivalent articles. Moreover, 68% recognized that Urdu word order significantly shapes how they construct English sentences.

Table 4.1: Influence of Urdu Grammar on English (N = 120)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
Urdu tense system influences my English tense usage	45 (37.5%)	41 (34.2%)	15 (12.5%)	13 (10.8%)	6 (5.0%)	3.88	1.04
Urdu word order affects how I write English sentences	39 (32.5%)	43 (35.8%)	17 (14.2%)	15 (12.5%)	6 (5.0%)	3.78	1.06
Absence of articles in Urdu causes difficulty in English	48 (40.0%)	30 (25.0%)	20 (16.7%)	15 (12.5%)	7 (5.8%)	3.82	1.11

Histogram of Responses to Urdu Influence on English Usage
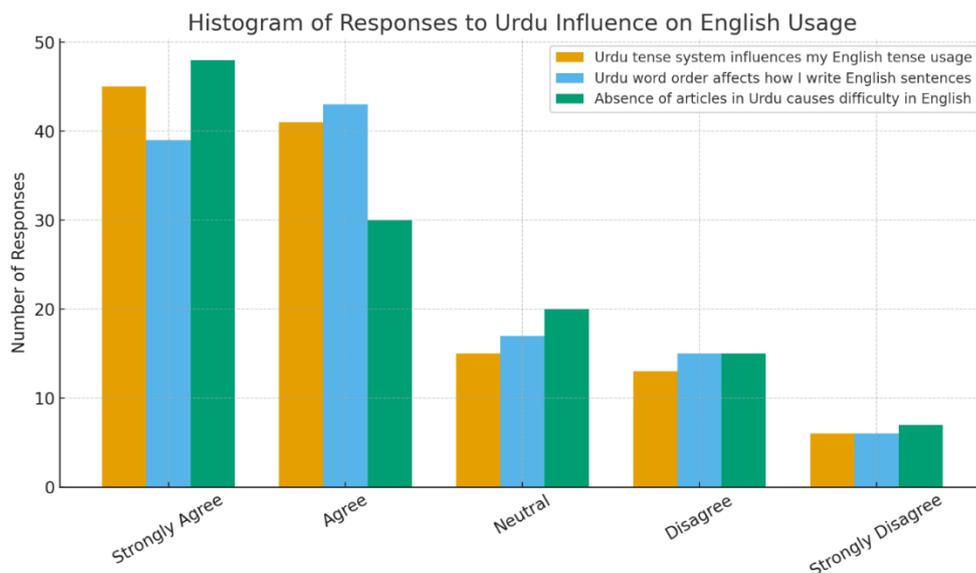
Interpretation:

The high percentage of agreement demonstrates that Urdu grammar has a systematic and predictable influence on English language learning. The most severe problem relates to article usage, where Urdu's lack of definite/indefinite article equivalents forces learners to either omit articles entirely or apply them inconsistently. These results align with Masood et al. (2023), who also identified article omission as a prominent transfer error.

Cross-tabulation by Gender:

Interestingly, female learners reported greater sensitivity to word order differences than male learners (χ^2 = 6.21, p < .05). This could indicate that female students, often performing better in structured academic writing tasks, are more conscious of how Urdu syntax affects English.

4.2.2 VOCABULARY INFLUENCE

Lexical interference was also widely acknowledged. About 70% of students admitted to translating directly from Urdu when writing in English, while 58% reported inserting Urdu terms into English sentences when they lacked knowledge of English equivalents. At the same time, 65% acknowledged that shared Persian/Arabic loanwords across Urdu and English were helpful in vocabulary acquisition.

Table 4.2: Influence of Urdu Vocabulary on English (N = 120)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
I directly translate Urdu words into English	42 (35.0%)	42 (35.0%)	20 (16.7%)	10 (8.3%)	6 (5.0%)	3.87	1.05
I mix Urdu words into English when I don't know English equivalents	38 (31.7%)	32 (26.7%)	25 (20.8%)	18 (15.0%)	7 (5.8%)	3.59	1.19
Shared vocabulary (Arabic/Persian) helps me learn English	40 (33.3%)	38 (31.7%)	25 (20.8%)	10 (8.3%)	7 (5.8%)	3.78	1.14

Histogram of Responses to Urdu-English Influence
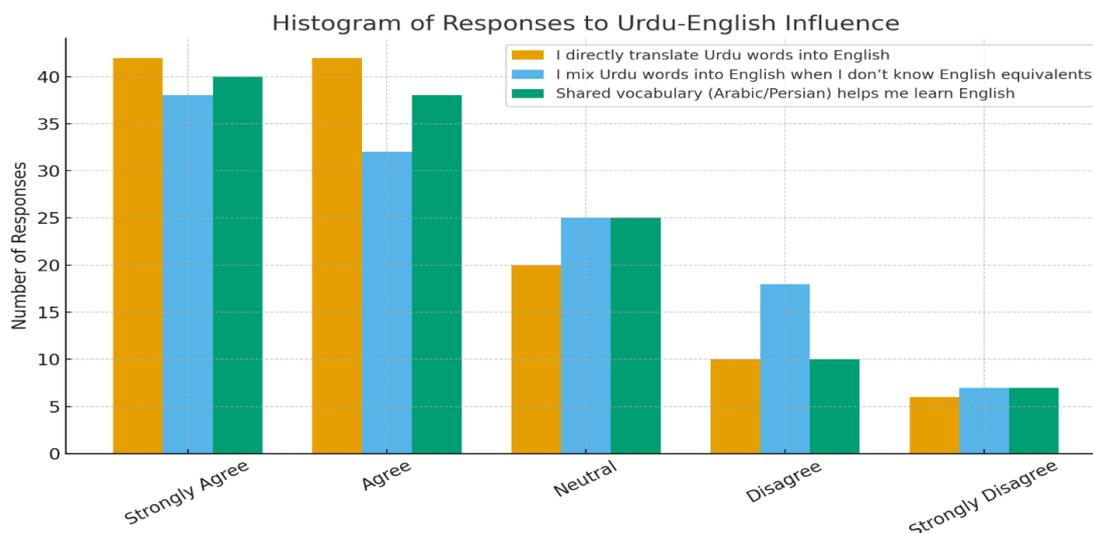
Interpretation:

Lexical borrowing functions as a double-edged sword. On one hand, cognates of Persian/Arabic origin (e.g., "kitab" vs. "book" via Arabic "kitab") create positive transfer. On the other hand, direct translation leads to lexical calques and awkward phrasing, such as *"I take tea in evening"*. These findings resonate with Shaukat & Talaat (2022), who documented children's tendency to borrow English terms when no Urdu equivalents exist.

Cross-tabulation by Proficiency:

Advanced learners reported less frequent code-switching than beginners (t = 2.89, p < .01), suggesting that proficiency mitigates reliance on Urdu vocabulary.

4.2.3 SYNTAX INFLUENCE

Syntax emerged as the most problematic area of influence. 75% of respondents admitted to making frequent errors with prepositions, while 68% highlighted Urdu's SOV (Subject–Object–Verb) order as a cause of unnatural English sentences. Similarly, 64% placed adjectives after nouns in English due to Urdu influence.

Table 4.3: Influence of Urdu Syntax on English (N = 120)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	SD
Urdu word order interferes with my English writing	41 (34.2%)	41 (34.2%)	20 (16.7%)	12 (10.0%)	6 (5.0%)	3.82	1.07
I place adjectives after nouns in English due to Urdu influence	32 (26.7%)	45 (37.5%)	22 (18.3%)	15 (12.5%)	6 (5.0%)	3.69	1.09
I make frequent errors in using English prepositions	50 (41.7%)	40 (33.3%)	15 (12.5%)	10 (8.3%)	5 (4.2%)	3.99	1.04

Histogram of Responses: Urdu Influence on English Grammar
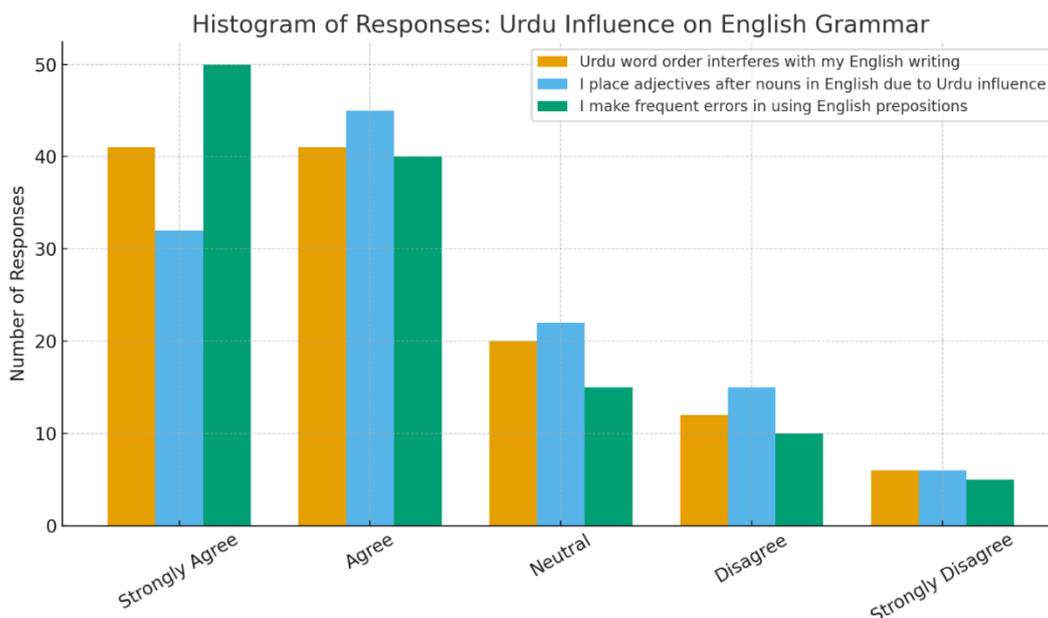
Interpretation:

The dominance of prepositional errors confirms Rasul's observation (undated) that Urdu speakers find it difficult to map English relational markers onto their native structures. Urdu prepositions often have wider semantic fields, leading to misapplications such as *"discuss about"* or *"married with."*

4.3 ERROR ANALYSIS (WRITING TASKS)

The second data source consisted of written tasks collected from all 120 participants. Learners were asked to produce a short essay (200–250 words) on familiar topics (e.g., "My University Life"). Texts were analyzed using Corder's (1974) error analysis framework, categorizing errors under grammar, vocabulary, and syntax.

Table 4.4: Frequency of Errors in Writing Tasks

Error Type	Examples	Frequency (%)
Grammar Errors	*"I am went to park yesterday"; "He don't likes cricket"*	68%
Vocabulary Errors	*"I take tea in evening" (direct translation)*	61%
Code-Switching	*"I offered namaz at home"*	55%
Syntax Errors	*"To market I went"; "She book good"*	63%
Preposition Errors	*"Discuss about the issue"; "Married with him"*	72%

Interpretation:

The written data corroborate questionnaire results by revealing a systematic error pattern across all three domains. Prepositions and tense misuse dominated, while adjective placement errors reflected Urdu-to-English transfer. Code-switching was not only frequent but also normalized, suggesting that many learners perceive Urdu-English mixing as an acceptable communicative strategy.

4.4 QUALITATIVE RESULTS (INTERVIEWS)

Semi-structured interviews with 20 selected participants provided qualitative depth. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) yielded three overarching themes:

4.4.1 NEGATIVE TRANSFER

Students consistently identified Urdu's SOV word order and absence of articles as the most significant barriers. One respondent noted:

"In Urdu we say *'Main kal bazar gaya'* [I yesterday market went], so naturally in English I also write *'Yesterday market I went.'* I know it is wrong, but it comes first in my mind."

Another added:

"Because Urdu has no 'the' or 'a,' I often forget them. Teachers always underline these mistakes."

4.4.2 POSITIVE TRANSFER
Learners highlighted how Arabic/Persian cognates help vocabulary learning. As one student explained:
"Words like *'ilm' [knowledge]* are also found in English as *'ilm* in scientific terms. This makes me feel English is not always strange—it has familiar parts."
This echoes Raza-E-Mustafa et al. (2023), who noted Urdu's facilitative influence in acquiring Arabic and English lexicons.

4.4.3 PEDAGOGICAL NEEDS
Many participants felt their English teachers failed to explicitly contrast Urdu and English. One remarked:
"Teachers just teach English as if we don't know Urdu. But Urdu is in our mind. If they explained the differences, we would understand better."
This suggests a pedagogical gap, reinforcing the call for L1-sensitive teaching methods in Pakistani classrooms.

4.5 DISCUSSION
The results illustrate how Urdu functions as both a resource and a barrier in English language learning. Grammar interference is most visible in tense usage and article omission, vocabulary influence manifests in direct translation and borrowing, while syntax interference particularly affects prepositions and word order.

4.5.1 ALIGNMENT WITH SLA THEORIES
- Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH): The high frequency of article omission and word order errors confirms CAH predictions: structural differences between Urdu and English generate learner errors (Qayyum et al., 2023).
- Interlanguage Theory: Learners' "blended system" is evident in hybrid constructions like *"To market I went."* These are not random errors but reflect interlanguage evolution shaped by Urdu transfer.
- CUP/SUP Framework: Positive lexical transfer (Arabic/Persian cognates) demonstrates that shared proficiency across languages can facilitate acquisition, consistent with Cummins' CUP theory.

4.5.2 COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS STUDIES
The findings echo Masood et al. (2023) on article omission, Ejaz et al. (2024) on pronoun confusion, and Rasul (undated) on prepositional difficulties. However, unlike earlier studies that examined grammar, vocabulary, or syntax in isolation, this research offers an integrated perspective, showing how all three dimensions interact in shaping learner errors.

4.5.3 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS
The data reveal a strong learner demand for contrastive pedagogy. Explicitly teaching the differences between Urdu and English structures can help reduce negative transfer. Moreover, error correction strategies should not stigmatize code-switching but use it as a bridge strategy to guide learners toward accurate L2 use.

4.6 CONCLUSION
This chapter included a detailed look at data from different sources, like numbers, written information, and other kinds of non-number data. The results showed that Urdu has a big and various impact on how Pakistani students learn English. The results show that when learners are studying a new language, they sometimes make grammar and sentence structure mistakes because they bring old language habits with them, but they also use words from their first language correctly, which helps their language learning progress. By combining statistical trends with input from learners, the chapter gives a complete picture of how languages influence each other in the Pakistani setting. The next part will go deeper into these results, showing how they affect teaching methods, suggesting what should be done, and adding to the understanding of how people learn languages.

5. Discussion
The results show clearly that Urdu plays two important roles in learning English as a second language. The findings clearly back the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis; the differences in structure, like word order, articles, and prepositions, were the main reasons for the ongoing mistakes. These mistakes are common and even appear in students who are just starting to learn a language. This shows how the first language influences the second, which is part of the process described by Interlanguage Theory. The role of having shared vocabulary supports Cummins' CUP model, showing that a common language base can be really helpful. However, there is a lot of strong evidence showing that negative transfer is the main factor affecting grammar and sentence structure, which

makes it hard to be accurate. These findings have profound pedagogical implications. The way things are currently done in classrooms, where the first language is often ignored, doesn't seem to work well. Instead, it's better to use a method that focuses on comparing Urdu and English—clearly showing how their structures are different. Instead of seeing code-switching as something negative, it should be used as a smart teaching method to explain ideas clearly and then slowly move to using the second language fully. Curriculum designers should make sure the materials they create are aware of these particular difficulties that happen when someone speaks their first language and then learns a second language, instead of using general ESL methods that don't take these issues into account.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations
Conclusion

This study shows that the features of the Urdu language have a strong and wide-ranging effect on how people learn English grammar, word choices, and sentence structure. On one hand, Urdu acts as a support by giving learners a base through common words, like borrowed words and similar words, which make it easier to learn new vocabulary. On the other hand, it works as a barrier because of differences in how grammar and sentence structure work, especially the way things are ordered like subject, object, and verb, the use of postpositions instead of prepositions, and how tense is formed, which causes ongoing mistakes when learning English. The results show that learning a second language isn't the same for everyone and is heavily influenced by the language someone already knows. For teenage girls, recognizing the role of Urdu in learning English can help improve their language skills as well as boost their self-esteem, confidence, and sense of independence. By understanding that their first language is not a disadvantage but a valuable tool, these learners feel more confident in handling both school and social situations better. This method helps build strength, clear thinking, and drive, which are important for growing personally and in school. The study also points out that second language acquisition should be seen as a process where both helpful and challenging influences happen, not just as something that only goes one way or causes problems. Urdu can be difficult because of its grammar and sentence structure, but it also has a lot of common words and allows for different word arrangements, which help learners develop strategies to communicate more effectively once they receive clear teaching. The study shows that it's important to consider a person's first language as a valuable part of teaching English. This approach helps turn possible challenges into advantages and creates a more welcoming and better learning environment.

Recommendations

1. **Integrating Contrastive Teaching Approaches**

Teachers should incorporate contrastive analysis into their daily lesson plans to highlight differences and similarities between Urdu and English. Explicit comparisons of word order, tense, articles, and prepositions should be used to explain why common errors occur, such as "discuss about" or "married with." This approach will not only correct errors but also cultivate metalinguistic awareness, enabling learners to self-monitor and self-correct over time.

2. **Promoting Vocabulary Development through Loanwords**

The abundance of English loanwords in Urdu should be strategically used to strengthen English vocabulary. Teachers can expand these words into larger lexical networks—for instance, teaching "computer" alongside terms like "computational" or "computation." At the same time, learners should be warned about false cognates and semantic mismatches, which can create confusion if not addressed.

3. **Designing Context-Specific Materials**

Locally produced textbooks and learning resources should be designed specifically for Urdu-speaking learners. These materials must include:

o Common Urdu-induced error patterns and their corrections.

o Bilingual glossaries explaining subtle differences in meaning.

o Exercises focusing on idioms, collocations, and sentence structures that often cause interference.

Such context-sensitive resources would increase learner engagement and motivation by directly addressing their linguistic and cultural background.

4. **Encouraging Code-Switching as a Pedagogical Tool**

Instead of banning Urdu in English classrooms, teachers should adopt a functional approach to code-switching. At beginner levels, Urdu can be used strategically to explain difficult grammar concepts and ease anxiety. Over time, reliance on Urdu should be gradually reduced to encourage greater immersion in English. This method respects learners' linguistic identity while facilitating smoother transitions to L2 proficiency.

5. Professional Development for Teachers

Many teachers in Pakistan have strong English proficiency but lack specialized training in SLA theories and error analysis. Professional development programs should include:

o Modules on language transfer, interlanguage, and fossilization.

o Strategies for using contrastive pedagogy effectively.

o Practical classroom techniques to exploit Urdu as a teaching resource. Equipping teachers with these skills will ensure that instruction is better aligned with the specific needs of Urdu-speaking learners.

6. Future Research Directions

While this study focused on grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, future research should broaden the scope to include:

o **Phonology:** Examining how Urdu's sound system affects English pronunciation, such as difficulties with consonant clusters and vowel contrasts.

o **Pragmatics:** Investigating how cultural norms in Urdu influence learners' use of politeness strategies, requests, and compliments in English.

o **Longitudinal Studies:** Tracking how learners' reliance on Urdu changes as their English proficiency improves.

o **Technology-Enhanced Learning:** Exploring how digital platforms and mobile applications can integrate contrastive analysis for Urdu-speaking learners.

o **Comparative Studies:** Analyzing how Urdu affects learning of other languages beyond English, thus situating Urdu in a broader SLA context.

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