

EIL Usage on Facebook posts of Pakistani Youth

Farah Anbreen¹, Dr. Rahila Huma Anwar², Dr. Sajida Zaki³, Javeria Ali Wadho⁴

Lecturer, MS Applied Linguistics, Maymar Smart Higher Secondary School & College, Ned University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi. Email: farahanbreen@gmail.com

Associate professor, Associate Fellow (AFHEA) (UKPSF), Humanities Department, Ned University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi. Email: rahilaanwar@live.com

Professor of English, Applied Linguistics and Language, Ned University of Engineering & Technology. Email: drzaki@neduet.edu.pk

MS Applied Linguistics, Lecturer at National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences. Correspondence: alijaveria9@gmail.com

Abstract

Ever since the first diaspora, the English language has been expanding across the globe, and it has evolved constantly with the changing times and the needs of the speakers. English is the global language and is frequently used to communicate across diverse cultures through face-to-face interactions and on social media as well. As the English language is flexible to change, it was important to observe the current trends in communication on social media. In this regard, Facebook was selected for its observation of the changing landscape of the English language. This research is designed to observe the assumptions of EIL and its implications on Facebook in a Pakistani context. The purpose of this study is to investigate the English language used for communication on Facebook by Karachi youth. The data was collected from undergraduate students who use Facebook for social interaction. This study was conducted using a qualitative approach, where data was collected on Facebook over four months from 25 students selected from different universities. The data was analysed using content analysis, and thematic analysis was done to investigate the assumptions of EIL by analysing the Facebook data of the selected participants. This research identified the use of English among the participants' communication at the word, phrase, and utterance levels. The students used English as an international language on Facebook. Hybrid words and code switching reflected the influence of the first language on the English language. The hybrid words collected were considered a contribution to Pakistani English.

Key words: English as International Language (EIL), Facebook English, Karachi youth, English as Lingua Franca, Pakistani English

I. Introduction

English is used extensively throughout the world as the common language of intelligibility. With this growing popularity and spread, English has acquired the status of

an international language, where it is not a language of any one nation or country, but rather it now belongs to all who are speakers of English in all its manifestations. Baxter (1980) characterizes EIL as a descriptive language, as it is spreading now with the demand for the English language and the utilitarian values attached to it.

As observed by Anbreen (2014), there is a difference between learning the English language by using textbooks and learning it via web tools. The usage of English needs the involvement of both formal and non-formal texts because this makes the learning of the language effective and efficient.

Pakistan is a multilingual and multiethnic society, and it is one of the countries in the outer circle where English is an official language along with Urdu, and it is taught as a single compulsory language in the schools (Anbreen, 2014). Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites for interaction among students in Pakistan and also for learning English at the same time. Students from different cultures communicate in written comments, like and dislike the statuses of each other, share views, and act as a community while interacting on Facebook. Students also share blogs, news, hybrid words, and code-switching on Facebook from different educational institutes and sectors in Pakistan. Therefore, English at large is being used as an international language in the Pakistani context. It is observed by Valeyeva (2014) that the linguistic behaviour of a powerful social and cultural population in a multilingual region could reduce national differences. In the context of globalization, there is a relationship between languages and the social structure of society.

Thus, the widespread status of English as an international language with all its different manifestations and varieties across the globe makes it necessary to investigate these different varieties of English, which have given English an international status. Pakistani youth are increasingly using English to interact with each other via web tools and applications as well as social media, and this brings an inclination to study the type of English that is used by Karachi youth on Facebook. Therefore, this research is about the assumptions of English as an International Language (EIL) and its usage in the context of undergraduate students in Karachi, Pakistan, at a social networking website, i.e., Facebook. The concept of English as an international language and its use on Facebook by Karachi youth are adapted due to the extensive use of EIL. In fact, English used for networking purposes in digital spaces contributes more to the assumptions of EIL than the language in classrooms, which is more textual and formal.

In Pakistan, English is given a great preference for academic and professional success. Therefore, learning English is found to be really necessary for progress in all fields, be it art or literature, business and management, or science and technology. In an

attempt to observe EIL in action in the Pakistani context, researchers planned to investigate the characteristics of English used on Facebook at the word, phrase, sentence, and utterance levels, as well as how much preference is given to Standard English.

The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

Q 1. What are the characteristics of English used by Karachi youth on Facebook?

The study also focused on the following two sub-questions:

- How are the second language learners and foreign language learners using English at the word, phrase, and utterance levels?
- Does Karachi's youth show preference for Standard English while communicating on Facebook?

2. Literature Review

English has developed and expanded in a number of ways over the years, with each developmental stage being different according to changing times and situations around the globe. In present time, English is enjoying a global status as the language that is not only spoken largely but also used widely for writing and social networking. Extensive usage of English and its worldwide popularity have initiated a number of innovative approaches to English language teaching. The basis of these approaches is the need to interact and improve human relations by improving communication technology.

As English is now seen as a language for “all.” Thus, English has become an international language (Talebinezhad, 2001). Matsuda (2017) defines EIL as a function in multicultural and multilingual societies in which speakers behold their own varieties of English while communicating, reshaping them with their own cultural references. Also, according to McKay and Brown (2016) and Sharifian (2009), the English language carries the characteristics of being an international language.

2.1 Beliefs about English as an International Language (EIL): voices from Persian-speaking English teachers

Several other terms with similar conceptual models developed for ESL/EFL, such as English as an International or Intranational Language (EIL) (Smith, 1978); English as an International Auxiliary Language (EIAL) (Smith, 1983); and English as a World Language (EWL) (Nunan, 2000), aim to overcome the weaknesses in the previous model and also fulfil the growing demands of the language learners, influenced by the changes of globalization. This research attempted to evaluate the English as an International

Language (EIL) model by Talebinezhad (2001) and its basic assumptions with the need of investigating the effects it is having on learners of EIL. Talebinezhad's model incorporates all the other models named here. The three concentric circles of Kachru (1982) separated the English users around the world, but the usage of English according to culture, traditions, and countries of the world gave the English language an identity: "English as an International Language." These assumptions are part of EIL usage. There is a different usage of a variety of words in all of English, specifically related to their culture, traditions, and perceptions.

Lee and Ranta (2014) observe that the popularity of Facebook in society cannot be underestimated. Pugh (2010) also mentioned that there is a dramatic change in the landscape of identity construction and that internet technology has mobilised people to re-conceptualize their image. Facebook is a medium for people to express themselves around the world. Facebook has opened all the doors to engage people in communication around the world by using different options of sharing (blogging), games, comments, chat, joining different pages, writing on each other's walls, etc. Such activities involve the interaction of students using English language to communicate on Facebook. Students who frequently use Facebook share their communication related to their cultural context or, sometimes, communication related to international issues.

English, due to its massive spread, does not depend on the number of people using it as a mother tongue, but the ownership rests with the people who use it. McKay (2002) defines English as an international language that is used for cross-cultural communication by native and bilingual speakers. English can be used in a country with diverse cultures and languages spoken within the country as well as a global language between speakers of different nations. English is not only progressing in the expanding circle, but it is also adding expansion to native members and outer circle users.

According to Anbreen (2014), local and global English both are helpful for communicating with people. It is also beneficial for student motivation to learn English for many purposes, such as professional development, identity, interaction, etc. Social media platforms are not only aiding in the development of new varieties, but also in the formation of identities as English language speakers.

2.2 Facebook as a Tool for Communication

English as an International Language (EIL) is widely used for communication on Facebook, as Godwin-Jones (2008) views Facebook as a platform to enhance communication. Roth (2009) emphasised the usage of technology as it is used for realising Plato's rules and because it can be more effective, interactive, and far from passive reading. Thus, social media is defined as a group of Internet-based applications.

Bizen, Sadikoglu and Sadikoglu (2014) found that there is a positive effect of social networking sites on learning foreign languages. The tools for language learning and teachers, along with facilities, help students improve their language while communicating with the target population.

2.3 English and Technology in Language Teaching and Learning

Students use Facebook regularly, especially undergraduate students at universities and colleges. They maintain their accounts on a daily basis and update their status from time to time. "Technologies can enable new methods and approaches to learning and teaching" (Chun, 2016, p. 101). The use of technology, mostly classified as Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 technologies (e.g., email, forums, chats, blogs, wikis, podcasts, videos, social networking sites, virtual worlds, massively multiplayer online games), allows for various kinds of communication, interaction, and collaboration, whether the communication is between the learner and computer or among people (i.e., learners in and outside of the classroom or speakers of the target language anywhere in the world) (Chun, 2016). (Golonka et al. 2014) reviewed over 350 studies of effective use of technology in language learning and teaching due to changes in the use of English language in different settings. They found that due to the use of technology in language learning, vocabulary, speaking proficiency, and motivation for learning a new language were enhanced. The use of online communication created opportunities for "temporally" and "geographically" situated communicative interaction (Chen, 1994). Social media platforms are helping students not only with language learning but also with the development of interpersonal skills cross-culturally. Jin (2015) reported that communicating on Facebook provides opportunities to develop intercultural competence.

Bray and Iswanti (2013), and Hirotnani and Fuji (2015) reported in their studies that students experienced both linguistic and intercultural competence by using Facebook. Özdemir (2017) conducted a study on Turkish students to see the Intercultural Communicative Effectiveness (ICE) and found that students were more comfortable in an online classroom discussion via Facebook and could develop the intercultural competence by engaging in discussions with different cultural backgrounds.

2.4 Conceptual Framework of English as an International Language

In this world of technology, where English is used in computer programs, websites, etc., it is no longer owned by the native-speaking community but also shared by non-native speakers. Because of the expansion of English (Modiano,1999), an idea of EIL was delivered. Within this context, EIL is established as a proper term for the majority of users around the world, specifically for those platforms where interaction takes place between native and non-native speakers. It has been observed that EIL is far

behind in becoming a coherent, concise language variety (Llurda, 2004). Jenkins (2000) made an important contribution to describe the phonology of international varieties of English, to offer rich ideas, and to further establish EIL as a recognised variety. The proposed models for EIL by Talebinzihad (2001) are English as an international or intranational language (EIL) (Smith, 1978), English as an international auxiliary language (EIAL) (Smith, 1983), and English as a world language (EWL) (Nunan, 1999/2000).

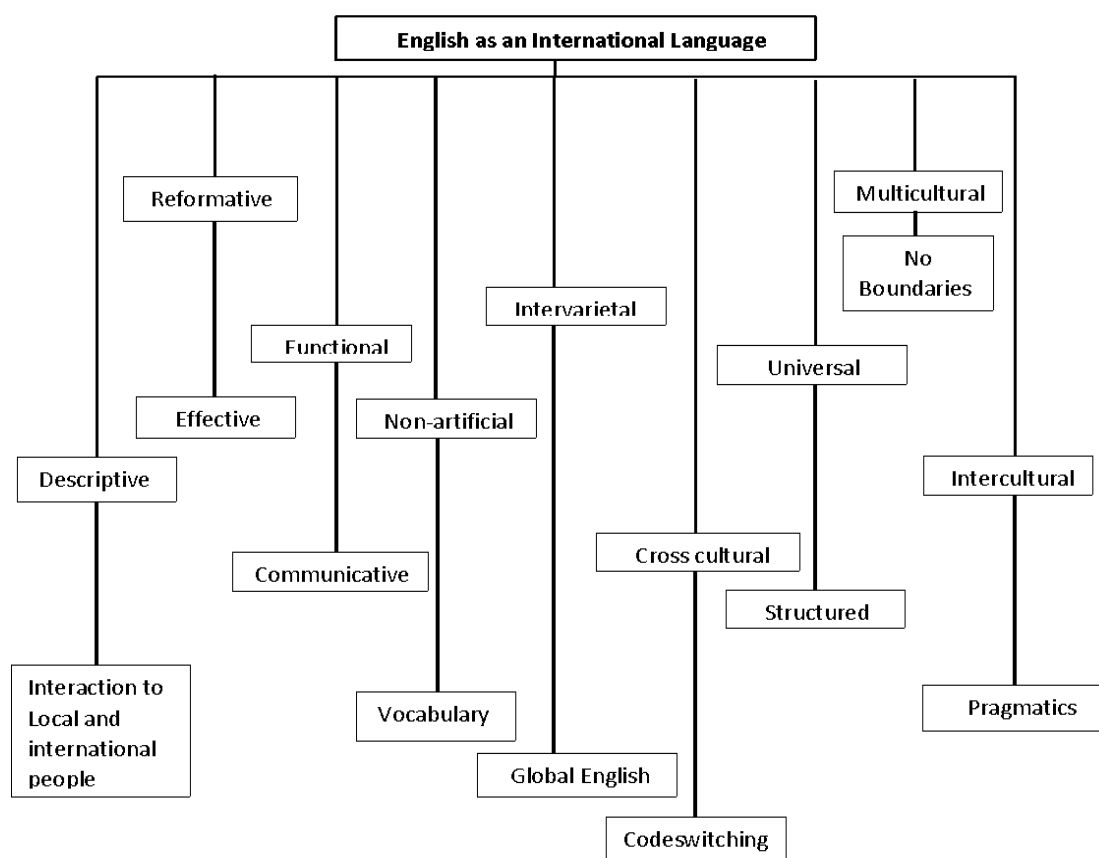


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework Developed upon the Assumptions of EIL given by Talebinezihad (2001)

2.5 Assumptions of English as an International Language (EIL)

Following are the assumptions of EIL made by Talebinazehad (2001).

2.5.1 EIL is Inter-varietal

There is no distinction between native or non-native speaker in EIL and a native accent is not needed. This diversity of learning English is seen as a global spread of English from an EIL perspective, where the speaker could be of any language. Acquisition of language to use language like a native English speaker is not the ultimate objective of the majority of the learners. This diversity reflects the global spread of English, a trend that has been accelerated by globalisation (Jenkins, 1998).

2.5.2 EIL is Descriptive

People are using English as a tool now to maintain relationships. It is the right of language seekers to use English for their aims, for which different varieties of English are expected. (Baxter, 1980) identifies it as a description of how it functions nowadays because it deals with people connecting with each other; therefore, a rise in different varieties of English has been observed.

2.5.3 EIL is Reformative

EIL emerged as a new reformation towards English language learning, and it is more effective than ESL and EFL. It is a new achievement that emerged after growing similarities between EFL and ESL and justifies the previous approaches. Due to the deficient models of EFL and ESL, a new achievement known as EIL has resulted (Baxter, 1980).

2.5.4 Interactors are Unpredictable

In EFL/ESL, the interactions are unpredictable. In ESL, interactors may be non-native speakers communicating with native speakers.

2.5.5 EIL is Functional

EIL is the language concerned with people using English to communicate with one another. It is neither basic English nor ESP. Harden (1979) found out that international communication cannot be limited to any specific domain or pattern of communication.

2.5.6 EIL is non-Artificial

Because several countries broadcast radio in English, English is the language of radio broadcast, making it non-artificial. According to Kachru (1982), a natural language

has achieved the status of an international language, and by all standards, English is a natural language that has achieved this status.

2.5.7 EIL is Cross Cultural

Objectives in EIL are broader for cross-cultural communication. Diversity in a learner's background, linguistics, and cultural behaviour is a fact. Smith (1983) proposed that cosmopolitan English is independent of any cultural background.

2.5.8 EIL is Multicultural

When English is taught and learned as an international language, there are no boundaries of culture, and speakers from diverse backgrounds can communicate regardless of any culture. Kramersch (2006) also argues that a language can transform in its meaning due to translations when used in a multicultural and multilingual setting. Therefore, it is important to understand that language, and specifically the English language, can play an important role by being flexible in terms of exchanging cultures through communication.

2.5.9 EIL is Universal

Crystal (1992, cited in Talebinezhad, 2001) argues that non-native speakers of English comprise more than two-thirds of native speakers, and thus, a process of interaction automatically begins. It is the most frequently used language for trade, diplomacy, and tourism (Smith, 1983). Due to globalisation and the excessive use of information technology, English is now an international language.

2.5.10 EIL is Intercultural

Every country has a different way of speaking English, but the English language is not bound by any culture or country. Every country understands that their speaking patterns and discourses are different from each other. So, EIL cannot be used for knowledge of the details of a nation, country, or culture.

The conceptual framework comprises several components that are derived from the existing literature on English as an International Language. The assumptions of EIL are used for analysing the collected data following the spread of English as an international language by Talebinzhead (2001); the conceptual framework is built upon these assumptions of EIL. This framework allowed us to examine the characteristics of the English language used on Facebook accounts for communication. The use of the English language was observed at the word, phrase, and utterance levels. As Seidlhofer

(2003) stated, a better general description of EIL can be achieved through corpus building.

3. Methodology

This study is based on a phenomenological research approach and was conducted using a qualitative paradigm. The qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for, and explaining the data—in short, making sense of the data in terms of the participants' definitions of the situations and noting patterns, themes, categories, and regularities. Qualitative data, as explained by researchers, is detailed and rich; it often focuses on smaller numbers of people than quantitative data. It also focuses on individuals and their responses. The originality of the collected data is in the direct phrases and sentences; they are more direct than the researcher's words (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

The sample for this research was 25 undergraduate students from different universities in Karachi, Pakistan. Students from different universities were selected to observe the usage of English as an international language.

The selected students had 25 friends or more in their Facebook friend list. The research participants were sent Facebook friend requests, were informed about the research, and were added to an existing Facebook account by obtaining their consent. Students from different institutes were found to be active users. Facebook was used for sharing their comments, pictures, events of educational institutes, and pages they liked on Facebook. Data was collected for the period of four months during which the usage of the English language by these students at the word, phrase, and utterance level was observed. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was used for this research to select the participants; each participant was a representative of its university. Content analysis was adopted as a strategy to analyse the acquired data. Content analysis was used to reduce and select the acquired data. Data reduction is the key element of qualitative analysis. It maintains the quality of qualitative data (Neuman, 2015). Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) used a methodology for categorising and organising data in the form of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and all the assumptions of English as an International Language by Talebinezhead. Coding was used to assign units of meaning to the descriptive data using steps for coding adopted from Neuman (2015), which resulted in themes.

4. Findings and Discussion

Content analysis done on the selected data revealed themes that emerged as a result of the data reduction and selection process, where nouns, adjectives, hybrid words, code-switching, and cross-cultural and intercultural aspects were observed and analyzed.

Resulting themes included a variety of emotional sentences: aggression, love for country, greetings, religion, sports, university events, humor, etc. Research identified the use of English among the participants' communication at the word, phrase, and utterance levels. The analysis confirmed the preference for using English as an international language on Facebook. Thus, the research has identified the usage of English as an International Language (EIL) in Facebook communication among undergraduate students in Karachi.

The results of coding the collected data were presented in the form of separate tables for nouns, verbs, and adjectives, hybrid words, and code switching. For the sake of brevity, the entire dataset is described briefly in the given table.

Table 1

Summary of the Entire Data

Parts of speech	Nouns (187), verbs (235), adjectives (142)
Hybrid words	Frequency of hybrid words (13)
Code switching	Frequency of code-switching (17)
Most frequently used word	Happy birthday

4.1 Analyzing the Assumptions of EIL

Results of the analysis are presented here briefly against each assumption of EIL by Talebinzohad (2001):

4.1.1 EIL is Descriptive

It was observed in the collected data that EIL is descriptive. Presently, EIL is not used as a language of imperialism but as an "international tool" that helps people maintain their relationships. Baxter (1980) characterises EIL as a "description" of the way it is working in the existing age. According to Kachru (1982), the demand for English is increasing. There are three concentric circles of English where different varieties of the language are studied based on their needs. As a result, new varieties of English are being observed, and more are expected as a result of language exchange in various locations with various people.

Example: *FB 6: Just be honest with yourself, that opens the door. Vernon Howard*

Interpretation: The use of the descriptive word "honest" and a quotation by Vernon Howard are shared to convey the message in the quotation. This explains the ability of students to understand the hidden meaning of quotations.

These words are the data that was gathered, then classified under the assumptions of EIL using content analysis. Words are counted, then gathered under each assumption of EIL.

Table 2

Results of the Analysis of Assumptions of EIL (1)

Descriptive Words	F.	Reformative Words	F.	Functional Words	F.	Non-artificial Words	F.
Honest	4	Wifi	2	Cake	3	Jalebi	1
amazing	4	XD	1	Gift	2	tour de	3
Good	17	Auntypreneur	1	Need	7	Eidi	2
Happy	27	Tidoptimist	1	Die	21		
Grand	3	Buddy	1	Play	5		
negative	1	Bro	2	Long	5		
enthusiastic	1	Dbeat	1	Miss	17		
mysterious	1	Shit	1	Of	17		
powerful	1	AD '16	1	It	82		
extrovert	1	Poke'mon go	2	At	1		
introvert	1	Proquest 16	2	He	2		
responsible	1	UBIT	6	They	30		
respectful	1	Ubitians	2	That	45		

F*= frequency

Table 3

Results of the Analysis of Assumptions of EIL (2)

Cross-cultural Words	F.	Universal Words	F.	Multicultural Words	F.	Intercultural Words	F.
Skype	1	Okay	1	Gloria Jeans	2	Spewing	1
Poke'mon	1	Naran	5	Revive	1		
formula racing	2	Mother	6	Baotu Spring	1	Entertainer	1
iOS	1	Football	2	Shandong	1	Sphere	1
Android	1	Hahaha	9	William Shakespeare	1	Map	2
Skype	1	Peace	5	incognito browsers	1	Programmer	2
		Congrats	5	Apple (computers)	1	Complete	4
		Dad	2	Batman	1	Mother	7
		Wow	3	Superman	1	Father	4
		happybirthday	23	Ali	3	Battle	1
		Tea	1	American	1	Vowed	1
		Road	6			Force	2

F*= frequency

4.1.2 EIL is Reformative

EIL existed because EFL/ESL models were inadequate for English language learners because English is learned and spoken around the world. It claims to be the most accurate approach for reflecting on the international functions of English. as English has become a global language.

Every professional needs command over language and communication skills. There are notable differences between American English and British English, with great diversity among them. English in Pakistan is diverse, and it will continue to change. There are a number of irregular spellings, which are expected to increase with the passage of time (Dar, Zaki, & Kazmi, 2010).

Example: *FB 22: Auntypreneur* Noun (Someone whose business is to get in your business)

Interpretation: A new word is introduced to express the way he/she thinks about people who have a hobby of interrupting everyone's work.

4.1.3 EIL is Inter-varietal

Example: *FB 2: Picture with Whis-Sama* (picture with Bisma).

Interpretation: An inter-varietal use of the word "Whis-Sama" was observed; the name of the girl Bisma was written in a different way, which explains the creativity of the user.

4.1.4 EIL is Functional

People from different backgrounds are using English as a language of communication, and therefore, the English language and its usage cannot be limited to one or more ESPs since it is a language and not a corpus, as observed by Hardin (1979).

Example: *FB 22: 3 cakes and every time a different and equally important family.*

Interpretation: The use of functional words in the English language, such as "three cakes," in this sentence was observed, and a simple detail of his or her life was shared.

4.1.5 EIL is non-Artificial

Example: *FB 23: Eating Jalebi*

Interpretation: The word "Jalebi" is used for a desert in Pakistan, and FB user 23 has used English alphabets to write Urdu and also updated his status in recent activity. This

explains the non-artificial property of EIL, which implies that we do not need ESP all the time. There are other ways of using English.

EIL is an approach devoid of any sort of cultural or phonological bias. In EIL contexts, McKay (2001) argued for the concept of thinking globally but acting locally.

4.1.6 EIL is Cross Cultural

Example: *FB 22: John Hanke creator, Poke'mon*

Interpretation: The animation creators are now well known for their work. A world-wide exchange of cultures has made these cartoon and animation creators well known around the world.

Example: *Either I feel I am the ugliest girl or feel like 'afreen afreen' (A song praising beauty) was written for me.*

Interpretation: Conveniently giving reference to an Urdu song that meant to praise absolute beauty while using a perfectly English sentence structure.

Hybrid words were also observed in collected Data.

Example: *Auntyprenur (noun: someone whose business is to get into your business)*

Interpretation: An invention of a new noun for Urdu, greatly influenced by English "entrepreneur," but quite different in meaning.

The variety of hybrid words and code-switching revealed the influence of the first language on the English language; thus, these hybrid words could be considered a part of Pakistani English, which is a part of the globalisation process and has its own ethical boundaries.

The sentence structure observed in the students' conversations while interacting on their Facebook accounts was seen to be standard in terms of syntax and structure, even if the spellings were invented for convenience.

Example: *FB 17: I am very happy becoz today is my birthday*

FB 18: Yup! Looking for a free wifi connection XD

5. Conclusion

The fact that undergraduate students in Karachi, Pakistan, used English as an international language on Facebook proved that the assumptions about EIL were true in the Pakistani context. The assumptions showed that using EIL as a language to talk to people around the world involves making new words, using old words, making new abbreviations, learning new words from different cultures, code switching, and making hybrid words.

The main goal of this study was to look at the different kinds of English (EIL) that undergraduate students in Karachi used when talking to each other on Facebook. To do this, we looked at the sentences, phrases, utterances, and words that were used.

From the results, it's clear that L1 is having an effect on the English people use to talk on social media. The research would add to what's already been written, and the results could be very important by helping to build up the corpus of Pakistani English. Pakistani English already exists, but it's not as well developed as it could be, and Jenkins (2006) and Matsuda (2003a) say that it's time for it to start developing its own characteristics as a variety and be recognised as a valid form of English.

A detailed study could also be conducted only on Roman Urdu because we are still using the English alphabet for writing Urdu in English. This research could be helpful in studying the culture and usage of English alphabets in writing Urdu. Moreover, this study can also be useful for researchers to explore the identity construction of speakers in outer and expanding circles who use English as an international language and on the way of establishing a mutual identity as a speaker.

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