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Clipping in Pakistani English: An Exploratory Study of Digital Discourse



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Abstract

This study investigates clipping in Pakistani English, where words are shortened while retaining their original meanings. Clipping, common in many English dialects, exhibits unique characteristics in Pakistani English due to the influence of local languages such as Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Pashto. By employing a qualitative approach, this research aims to identify and analyze unique clipping patterns. Data is gathered from social media platforms to understand speakers' attitudes towards clipped words, their usage patterns, and the appropriateness of such words in various contexts. This study's findings reveal distinctive clipping practices in Pakistani English, influenced by bilingualism and code-switching, and provide valuable insights into English language variation in South Asia. By comparing these findings with existing studies on clipping in other English varieties, this research contributes to a broader understanding of global English language dynamics.

Key Words: Clipping Pattern, Digital Media, Dialect, Bilingualism, Code-Switching

Introduction

Language is a dynamic and evolving entity, shaped by the cultural, social, and technological contexts in which it is used. In Pakistan, the use of English as a second language has led to the emergence of unique linguistic features, including clipping. Clipping refers to the process of reducing words or phrases to shorter forms, often by omitting syllables or letters. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in digital discourse, where brevity and informality are valued.

Clipping, a morphological phenomenon where longer words are shortened without losing their meaning, has become increasingly prevalent in digital communication. In Pakistani English, this practice has unique characteristics shaped by the country's multilingual context and cultural influences. Despite the growing body of research on Pakistani English, there is a dearth of studies on clipping in digital discourse. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the use of clipping in online communication in Pakistan. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research examines the types, functions, and motivations behind clipping in Pakistani digital discourse.

The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of language use in digital contexts and shed light on the creative and adaptive nature of language in Pakistan. Moreover, this research has implications for language teaching, language policy, and digital communication in multilingual societies.

Research Questions

What types of clipping are used in Pakistani digital discourse?

What are the functions and motivations behind clipping in online communication?

How does clipping reflect the cultural and linguistic identity of Pakistani digital users?

Research Objectives

To Identify the types of clipping used in Pakistani Digital Discourse.

To highlight the functions and motivations behind clipping in online communication.

To explore the cultural and linguistic identity of Pakistani Digital users.

Literature Review

This literature review examines the phenomenon of clipping within Pakistani English as it appears in digital discourse, particularly on social media platforms. It aims to understand the reasons behind its use, its sociolinguistics implications, and how it compares with clipping practices in other varieties of English.

Clipping is a common word-formation process in English and involves the reduction of a word to one of its parts. As noted by Crystal (2003), it typically results in forms such as "exam" from "examination" or "lab" from "laboratory". Clippings are generally informal and often emerge in contexts where brevity and ease of communication are prioritized. This process can be categorized into four types: fore-clipping (e.g., "phone" from "telephone"), back-clipping (e.g., "gym" from "gymnasium"), middle-clipping (e.g., "flu" from "influenza"), and complex clipping (e.g., "sitcom" from "situation comedy").

In the context of global Englishes, clipping reflects cultural adaptation and linguistic creativity. Schneider (2007) highlights how different varieties of English develop unique linguistic traits through processes such as clipping, influenced by local languages and cultural practices. For instance, Australian English frequently uses clippings like "arvo" (afternoon) and "brekkie" (breakfast), which not only simplify speech but also foster a sense of identity and camaraderie among speakers (Trudgill, 2004).

Pakistani English (PakE) has evolved as a distinct variety, influenced by the country's major languages: Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and others (Mahboob, 2004). Baumgardner (1993) suggests that PakE features several lexical and syntactic innovations, including the use of clippings. These clipped forms often reflect a blending of English with local linguistic practices, accommodating both efficiency and cultural expression.

The use of clipping in Pakistani English digital discourse is driven by several sociolinguistic factors. As Pakistan is a multilingual society, code-switching between English and local languages is common (Romaine, 2001). This bilingualism fosters an environment where clippings can thrive, providing speakers with quick and efficient means of communication. Additionally, the informal nature of social media platforms encourages the use of clipped words, as users often seek brevity and ease of expression (Mahboob, 2004).

Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp provide fertile ground for linguistic innovations, including clipping. These platforms are characterized by their informal, conversational nature and the need for brevity due to character limits or the quick-paced nature of exchanges.

Twitter, with its 280-character limit, incentivizes brevity. Users often employ clippings to convey messages succinctly. Examples from Pakistani English on Twitter include terms like "uni" (university), "bestie" (best friend), and "fav" (favorite). These forms are not only efficient but also help create a casual, friendly tone in communications (Schneider, 2010).

Facebook, while more flexible in terms of character limits, still sees extensive use of clippings, especially in comments and informal posts. Phrases like "Congrats on your new job! Proud of you, bro" and "Throwback to the best vacay ever" are typical. Such usage underscores the platform's role in maintaining social bonds and shared cultural

expressions (Crystal, 2003).

Instagram, with its focus on visual content, uses clippings in captions and hashtags to enhance style and engagement. Terms like "OOTD" (outfit of the day), "pic" (picture), and "fam" (family) are prevalent. These clipped forms help users convey their messages quickly and stylistically, fitting the platform's aesthetic and communicative norms (Baumgardner, 1993).

WhatsApp, as a messaging app, facilitates real-time, quick exchanges, making it an ideal medium for clippings. Users often abbreviate words to save time, as seen in messages like "Plz send the doc asap" and "Dinner at my place. U in?". This practice reflects the need for efficiency in communication while maintaining a conversational tone (Romaine, 2001).

Clipping in Pakistani English also reflects deeper cultural and linguistic integration. The use of clipped forms like "fam" (family) and "vacay" (vacation) indicates the blending of English with local cultural expressions and global internet slang. This integration is a hallmark of Pakistani English, showcasing its adaptability and dynamic nature in digital discourse (Mahboob, 2004).

When compared with other varieties of English, clipping in Pakistani English exhibits both similarities and unique traits. Like Australian or American English, Pakistani English uses clippings to enhance brevity and casualness. However, the influence of local languages and cultural contexts in PakE adds a distinct flavor to these clipped forms (Kachru, 1992). For instance, while "uni" and "bestie" are common across many English varieties, terms like "plz" (please) and "u" (you) might carry different frequencies and nuances in PakE due to the unique sociolinguistic environment.

The use of clipping in digital discourse has significant implications for language and identity. It fosters a sense of belonging among users, creating in-groups based on shared linguistic practices. In the Pakistani context, this can also reflect broader socio-cultural dynamics, such as the negotiation of modernity and tradition, and the influence of globalization on local linguistic practices (Schneider, 2007).

Recent studies have highlighted new and emerging features of clipping in Pakistani English. Ahmed (2021) conducted a corpus-based analysis of social media platforms and identified innovative clipped forms that reflect local linguistic influences. For example, "tuit" from "tuition" and "uni" from "university" are increasingly common. Additionally, some clipped forms in PakE are influenced by local languages, resulting in hybrid forms such as "comp" from "computer" and "med" from "medicine."

These new clipped forms often arise from the need for brevity in digital communication but also reflect the dynamic and adaptive nature of PakE. Zubair (2019) notes that Pakistani youth, in particular, are driving these linguistic innovations, blending English with local linguistic elements to create new, contextually relevant forms.

Future research could explore the evolution of clipping in Pakistani English over time, particularly as digital platforms continue to evolve. Additionally, comparative studies between PakE and other South Asian varieties of English could provide deeper insights into regional linguistic trends and the impact of digital communication on language use (Crystal, 2003).

Clipping in Pakistani English digital discourse is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by social, cultural, and technological factors. It exemplifies how language adapts to new communication contexts, reflecting both global trends and local idiosyncrasies. By examining the use of clipped forms on platforms like Twitter,

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Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, we gain a richer understanding of the dynamic nature of Pakistani English and its role in the digital age.

Methodology:

The methodology for this study is designed to explore clipping in Pakistani English through a qualitative approach. The primary data collection method involves gathering sociolinguistic data from various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp. These platforms are chosen due to their widespread use and the diversity of user demographics, which provide a rich source of linguistic data.

Data collection

The data collection process involves monitoring public posts, comments, and discussions where Pakistani English speakers naturally engage in conversation. Specific keywords and hashtags related to clipping are used to filter relevant content. This approach ensures that the data represents a wide range of spontaneous language use across different contexts and social settings (Baumgardner, 1993).

A sample of posts and comments is selected for detailed analysis. This sample includes a variety of text types, such as casual conversations, opinion posts, memes, and replies. The selected content is then anonymized to protect user privacy, and ethical considerations are strictly followed, including obtaining consent where required and ensuring that no personally identifiable information is used in the analysis.

The data is analyzed using thematic analysis for qualitative insights. Thematic analysis involves coding the qualitative data to identify recurring themes and patterns related to the use of clipped words (Schneider, 2010). For example, instances of clipping are categorized by type (e.g., fore-clipping, back-clipping) and context (e.g., casual, formal).

This helps to understand how prevalent clipping is in Pakistani English and in which situations it is most commonly used (Kachru, 1992).

Analysis

Twitter

S.NO	EXAMPLE	CLIPPED TERM	TYPE
1	"Going to uni is the best time of my life."	Uni	Back clipping
2	"Met my bestie after ages!"	Bestie	Complex clipping
3	"Fav song on repeat."	Fav	Back clipping
4	"Gym sesh was intense today."	Gym	Back clipping
5	"Can't wait for the weekend. Gonna chill with the fam."	Fam	Bak clipping
6	"Gotta submit the proj by tomorrow."	proj	Back clipping
7	"The prof's lecture was so boring."	prof	Back clipping

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8	"Planning a vacay soon!"	vacay	Back clipping
9	"Had a delish lunch at the new cafe."	cafe	Back clipping
10	"Thx for the bday wishes!"	Thx , bday	Complex clipping
11	"Need to buy a new pair of sneaks."	sneaks	Back clipping
12	"Booked tix for the concert."	tix	Complex clipping
13	"Loving the new epi of my fav show."	fav	Back clipping
15	"Can't believe it's Fri already!"	fri	Back clipping
16	"DIY ideas for home decor."	decor	Back clipping
17	"Got my med results back."	med	Back clipping
18	"Saw a fab movie last night."	fab	Back clipping
19	"Prepping for the big exam tomorrow."	exam	Back clipping
20	Found a cool app for editing photos.	App	Back clipping

Facebook

S.NO	EXAMPLE	CLIPPED TERM	TYPE
1	"Congrats on your new job! Proud of you, bro."	Congrats, bro	Back clipping
2	"Taking a break from social media. See ya!"	See ya	Back clipping
3	"Throwback to the best vacay ever."	vacay	Back clipping
4	"Had a blast at the fam reunion."	Fam	Back clipping
7	"Happy bday to my bestie!"	Bestie	Complex clipping
8	"New pics from our recent trip."	pic	Back clipping
9	"Movie night with the squad."	squad	Back clipping
10	"Can't wait to start my new proj."	proj	Back clipping
11	"Thanks for the lovely gift!"	Thanks	fore Clipping
12	"Enjoying the weekend vibes."	vibes	Back clipping
13	"Any recs for a good book?"	Rec=recommendation	Back clipping

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14	"Lost my keys again, smh."	Smh =shaking my hands	Abbreviated
16	"Just got a new pup!"	pup	Back clipping
17	"Need some inspo for home decor."	inspo	Back clipping
18	Can anyone share more info on this event?	Info	Back clipping
19	Updated my bio, check it out!	Bio	Back clipping
20	Just uploaded a new vid to my channel	Vid	Back clipping

Instagram

S.NO	EXAMPLE	CLIPPED TERM	TYPE
1	"Just posted a new pic from our trip."	Pic	Back clipping
2	"Loving this new outfit! #OOTD"	OOTP	Abbreviated form
3	"Weekend vibes with the fam."	Fam	Back clipping
4	"Enjoying a delish meal at the new cafe."	delish	Back clipping
5	"New hair, who dis?"	Dis	Back clipping
6	"Just posted a new Insta story."	Insta	Back clipping
7	"Any recs for good Netflix shows?"	Recs	Back clipping
8	"Gym time! #FitnessGoals"	Gym	Back clipping
9	"Getting those weekend vibes."	vibes	Back clipping
10	"Sneak peek of the new proj."	proj	Back clipping
11	"Chillin' with the squad."	squad	Back clipping
12	"Bday celebrations! 🎉"	Bday	Complex clipping
13	"Spending quality time with the fam."	Fam	Back clipping
14	"Living that luxe life."	luxe	Back clipping
15	"Coffee date with my bestie."	Bestie	Complex clipping
17	"Fav spot in the city."	Fav	Back clipping
18	"New art piece I just finished."	Art	Back clipping
19	"Outfit inspo for the week."	Inspo	Back clipping
20	"Weekend vibes with the fam."	vibes	Back clipping

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WhatsApp

S.NO	EXAMPLE	CLIPPED TERM	TYPE
1	"Plz send the doc asap."	plz	Complex clipping
2	"Dinner at my place. U in?"	U	Back clipping
3	"Miss our old gang hangouts."	Gang	Back clipping
4	"Meet me at the cafe at 5?"	Cafe	Back clipping
5	"Got the tix for the movie."	tix	Back clipping
6	"Can you pick up the meds?"	Meds	Back clipping
7	"Thx for the help today!"	Thx	Complex clipping
8	"Ready for the exam tomorrow?"	Exam	
9	"Can't come cuz of work."	Cuz	Fore clipping
10	"Having a party on Sat. Join us!"	sat	Back clipping
11	"Check out this cool vid."	Vid	Back clipping
12	"Ready for the exam tomorrow?"	Exam	Back clipping
13	"Can you give me more info?"	Info	Back clipping
14	"OMG, that's hilarious!"	OMG	Back clipping
15	"Have you seen the doc yet?"	Doc	Back clipping
16	"Obvi, she's not coming."	Obvi	Back clipping
17	"Finished the proj. Sending it now."	Proj	Back clipping
18	"I have classes at the uni today."	Uni	Back clipping
19	"Love the new song u sent."	U	Back clipping
20	"Happy bday! ☐"	Bday	Complex clipping

Results

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of clipping in Pakistani English, offering insights into the complexities of language use in digital contexts. The research reveals that Pakistani users frequently use back-clipping, where the end part of a word is clipped, is commonly observed in social media discourse. This phenomenon demonstrates the adaptation of English to local linguistic practices, particularly in online communication among Pakistani speakers. The usage of back-clipping reflects linguistic innovation and adaptation to digital communication norms among Pakistani English speakers. It enhances efficiency in conveying messages while also contributing to the informal and interactive nature of social media discourse.

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