

# **STEREOTYPES ABOUT ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE**



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“If it is to be, it is up to me.”

## Abstract

This research work has been undertaken to assess the stereotypes about English as second language. The relation between stereotypes about English and adherence of students towards the stereotypes is explored. To take it a step further, it is examined that whether there is any relation between age, gender of students and the stereotypes about English as second language.

Quantitative analysis of the topic under study involves a comprehensive questionnaire which was formulated to study the prevalence of stereotypes about English in a rational way.

Given the popularity of English in the world in general and in Pakistan in particular, this research work aims at exploring that to what extent the young generation (students) is engraved with the concept of acquiring English language. The concept of English has become a metaphor for success and prosperity. This research work identifies various aspects of the stereotypes by breaking the large concept of “dominance of English” into small units so that they are identifiable and measurable as well. This research work enables to enlighten three important factors as stereotypes. These factors are English accent, code mixing, and image of target English population. The extension of scope to see how stereotypes affect age and gender of students thereby illuminates a certain pattern existent in our societal education system, along with recommendations for future research.

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## Chapter.1

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Purpose of the study:

This research tends to explore different questions related to stereotypes about English as second language. The research will identify different kind of stereotypes people of Pakistan associate with English. It will determine how people conceive English as second language and how they relate with English. This study tends to explore the degree to which the people of Pakistan associate with Englishmen and their language. The inclination of Pakistani people towards English and target group is determined so that it can be made explicit that what language they are striving for and to what extent. This will show that whether Pakistani people are trying to acquire a new identity or they want to stick to their own culture and language. In this way the study reveals that which language is being projected and eulogized in our society. It was important to determine this because the relation of language is directly linked with the mindsets of people and it also shows that what they are striving towards. The pursuit of English and everything associated with English has become so inherent in people that they forget to differentiate their true identity from the one they have constantly struggled to acquire.

This research tends to explore the extent of acculturation present in our students. Through this the research will find answers to the idea that whether students have stereotypes towards English accent, amalgamation of English with Urdu and what kind of stereotypes students hold for the English people. In addition, to take it a step further, it will also be explored whether stereotypes differ with the age and gender of students.

#### 1.2 Background of the study:

It has been a common phenomenon that in countries that are ruled by another power at some point in time has some features of the nation they were ruled by, or they try to impose those features on themselves. In post colonial era it becomes different for countries to detach themselves from the nation they were ruled by. So they constantly associate superiority with others and not with their own selves. This not only shows a chasm in the esteem of people as nation rather it also shows the deficiency of portraying themselves as different and unique nation having their own independent qualities which they could savor. English, no doubt has become the global language and we cannot actually survive in this world successfully if we are devoid of the ability to learn and adopt English. There has become a need for us to learn to use English and to be able to communicate in English since all the education systems now support it and pay much importance to the acquisition of it. It's becoming a trend that people like sending their children to schools that are not only English medium rather also they implement English speaking in their schools as an integral part of their environment. This attitude cannot be criticized since parents want their children to develop and so they want them to have a sound basis where they can excel. But this ongoing, never ending effort to be good in English has become an aim prior to the acquisition of knowledge. (Klerk 1996) People prefer those who can speak English to those who have knowledge but cannot communicate it in English.

### 1.3 Objectives of the study:

1. This study will identify that do the students conceive the ability to speak English an important part of a good personality?
2. The study explores that even if students acquire English, do they give any importance to the accent of English or is it just the intelligibility of English that is important?

3. This exploration will determine that the need to acquire English has become an obsession which has led our youth to become stereotypical about certain views about English.
4. It will also be explored that how and why students tend to mix Urdu and English. Is it a form of modernization of Urdu or an effort to remain close to English in some way or another?
5. The study will also relate the importance of English for Pakistani students and their stereotypes about Englishmen.

#### 1.4 Significance of the study:

1. This research will prove to be important because it will add up to the existing knowledge of stereotypes that are present in different countries in general and in Pakistan in particular.
2. This study will identify the problem which is the first and foremost part of an issue without which the solution cannot be determined.
3. The major problems of stereotyping English will also open up facts that will clearly lead us to the solution.
4. The study will not only refer to problems that are created by individuals themselves but also by nation and our system as whole.
5. As this study revolves around students, the study will provide further topics for potential research with an aim to be implemented at a larger educational level.

#### 1.5 Research questions to be answered:

1.5.1 Are students embracing stereotypes related to English language?

1.5.1.1-Is correct English accent considered vital part of English language by students?

1.5.1.2-Does students hold positive stereotypes or negative stereotype for the target English population?

1.5.1.3-Is the addition of English words while talking in Urdu considered more desirable by students?

1.5.2 Is there any relationship between stereotypes and age of students?

1.5.2.1 -Is there any association between correct English accent and age?

1.5.2.2 -Is there any association between code mixing and age?

1.5.2.3 -Is there any association between liking target group and age?

1.5.3 Is there any relationship between stereotypes and gender of students?

1.5.3.1-Is there any association between English accent and gender?

1.5.3.2-Is there any association between code mixing and gender?

1.5.3.3-Is there any association between liking target group and gender?

1.6 Hypothesis of research:

1.6.1 Embracement of stereotypes related to English language.

1.6.1.1-H<sub>0</sub> :- Correct English accent is not considered vital part of English language by students.

H<sub>1</sub> :- Correct English accent is considered vital part of English language by students.

1.6.1.2-H<sub>0</sub> :- Students do not hold positive stereotypes for the target English population.

H<sub>1</sub> :- Students hold positive stereotypes for the target English population.

1.6.1.3-H<sub>0</sub> :- The addition of English words while talking in Urdu is not considered desirable by students.

H<sub>1</sub> :- The addition of English words while talking in Urdu is considered more desirable by students.

1.6.2 Association between age of students and the stereotypes about English

1.6.2.1-H<sub>0</sub> :- There is no relationship between stereotypes and age of students.

H<sub>1</sub> :- There is a relationship between stereotypes and age of students.

1.6.2.1.1-H<sub>0</sub> :- There is no association between stereotyping correct English accent and age of students.

H<sub>1</sub> :- There is an association between stereotyping correct English accent and age of students.

1.6.2.1.2-H<sub>0</sub> :- There is no association between code mixing and age of students.

H<sub>1</sub> :- There is an association between code mixing and age of students.

1.6.2.1.3-H<sub>0</sub> :- There is no association between liking target group and age of students.

H<sub>1</sub> :- There is an association between liking target group and age of students.

### 1.6.3 Association between stereotypes and gender of students.

1.6.3.1-H<sub>0</sub> There is no relationship between stereotypes and gender of students.

H<sub>1</sub> There is a relationship between stereotypes and gender of students.

1.6.3.1.1- H<sub>0</sub> :- There is no association between English accent and gender of students.

H<sub>1</sub>:- There is an association between English accent and gender of students.

1.6.3.1.2-H<sub>0</sub>: - There is no association between code mixing and gender of students.

H<sub>1</sub> :- There is an association between code mixing and gender of students.

1.6.3.1.3- H<sub>0</sub> :- There is no association between liking target group and gender of students.

H<sub>1</sub> :- There is an association between liking target group and gender of students.

### 1.7 Research procedure:

Descriptive research design was used to find out answers to the research questions. Quantitative data was collected through survey method. The questionnaire was designed with carefully worded questions and it was distributed among 300 students. Out of 300, 240 questionnaires could be selected for analysis. The sampling procedure used was convenient sampling because of

the restraints of time and money. The subject of the study were students whereas the population comprised of native Urdu speakers (students). The students of both genders were selected and the age ranged from 15 to 22 specifically because the ideas of youth are being explored in this research. Before taking data from a large population, pilot testing was done to remove any errors in the research instrument and then its reliability was calculated through Cronbach alpha. The value of reliability came out to be 0.865 for all 30 items of questionnaire. The questionnaires were carefully administered so that students can ask about any ambiguities. To eradicate any extraneous variables the environment for conducting questionnaire filling was kept neutral and the students were not told about the research questions to avoid bias. The answers of students were told to be kept confidential so that they can freely fill up the questionnaires sincerely.

#### 1.8 Limitations:-

This study was conducted on the students studying in Lahore (Punjab). Because of the constraint of time and money this study could not be extended to Pakistan as whole. Another limitation of this research was to find students who were willing to fill the questionnaires because if students were unwilling, they could fill the questionnaire to distort the results.

#### 1.9 Overview of the thesis:

This research work comprises of four chapters. The first chapter provides literature review to provide a broader knowledge of the area under study. This chapter not only brings focus to the study rather it also clears the methodology. In addition to this it develops the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study. Second chapter is allocated to explain the research methodology. This chapter will provide information about the research design, sample, population and variables under study. Third chapter focuses on the quantitative analysis. It

depicts the statistical analysis of the variables under study and provides frequencies and reports.

Fourth chapter focuses on discussing and explaining the statistical analysis and answers the research question by interpreting the statistical analysis and provides conclusion of the study.

Questionnaire used as a research instrument forms the part of appendix of this research.

#### 1.10 Conclusion:

The results indicated that students have positive stereotypes about English language and English people. Although students as a whole showed high inclination towards stereotypes however females tend to be more inclined towards better use of English and age group 17-20 was found to be more positively stereotyped than age group 15-16, 21-22.