

EXPLORING VARIATION IN COMPREHENSION OF ENGLISH PHRASES DUE TO LOCAL CULTURE IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract: This research investigates the diverse interpretations of English phrases within the local culture of the Faisalabad region in Pakistan. This study aims to enhance understanding of how English phrases are comprehended differently based on cultural and educational backgrounds. It highlights the significance of such variations, which can lead to language conflicts and misunderstandings. The research adopts a comparative approach, examining interpretations across three age groups: school level, college level, and university level. Using open-ended interviews and a stratified random sampling technique, data from 30 participants were qualitatively analyzed to reveal these variations. The findings demonstrate significant differences in comprehension based on age, educational level, and exposure to English.

Keywords: English phrases; Local culture; Faisalabad region; Language interpretation; Age groups

1 INTRODUCTION

The analysis of speech variation is crucial for understanding the Pakistani speech community. The linguistic landscape in Pakistan includes a diverse range of dialects and vernaculars. English, as a significant component of this landscape, exhibits varying interpretations across different regions and social groups. This study addresses the gaps in understanding how local culture influences the comprehension of English phrases, focusing on the Faisalabad region. The research also explores the role of age, education, and social media exposure in shaping these interpretations.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Kachru's model of Three Concentric Circles is instrumental in conceptualizing the pluricentric nature of English globally. According to Kachru [1], English is spread across three circles: the Inner Circle (native English-speaking countries), the Outer Circle (former British colonies where English is a second language), and the Expanding Circle (countries where English is a foreign language). Critics argue that this model oversimplifies the complex dynamics of English usage [2-3]. In Pakistan, English functions as a second language and is influenced by local linguistic and cultural norms [4]. This research aligns with Kachru's model, examining how Pakistani English speakers interpret English phrases through their cultural lens[5-7].

3 METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design, using open-ended interviews to gather data. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 30 participants from three age groups: school level (ages 10-15), college level (ages 16-19), and university level (ages 20-25). Each group comprised 10 participants. Interviews were conducted to collect interpretations of selected English phrases. The responses were analyzed to identify patterns and variations in comprehension.

4 PHRASE INTERPRETATIONS

"Kick the bucket"

School level: Varied interpretations, including literal meanings (e.g., hitting buckets) and incorrect usages.

College level: More accurate, though some misconceptions persisted.

University level: Predominantly correct understanding as a euphemism for dying.

"The apple of the eye"

School level: Diverse interpretations, some literal (e.g., an apple with an eye).

College level: Mixed but leaning towards correct usage.

University level: Largely accurate as a term of endearment.

"Once in a blue moon"

School level: Varied, with many incorrect or literal interpretations.

College level: Generally understood as something rare.

University level: Predominantly accurate understanding.

"Go, Nawaz, Go"

School level: Interpreted mostly in a political context.

College level: Consistent political interpretation.

University level: Political interpretation with nuanced understanding.

"It's too hot"

School level: Literal interpretations related to temperature.

College level: Mixed, including figurative uses.

University level: Accurate, encompassing literal and figurative meanings.

"A piece of cake"

School level: Varied, with many incorrect interpretations.

College level: Mixed but improving towards correct understanding.

University level: Predominantly correct as something easy.

"To judge a book by its cover"

School level: Mixed, with many literal interpretations.

College level: More accurate but still varied.

University level: Predominantly correct understanding.

"Feel under the weather"

School level: Varied, with many incorrect interpretations.

College level: Mixed but improving towards correct understanding.

University level: Predominantly correct as feeling unwell.

"She breaks down"

School level: Mixed, with many literal interpretations.

College level: More accurate but still varied.

University level: Predominantly correct as feeling sad or overwhelmed.

"Get out"

School level: Mostly negative interpretations.

College level: Consistent negative interpretation.

University level: More nuanced, including non-negative uses.

5 DISCUSSION

The findings reveal significant variations in the comprehension of English phrases across different age groups. School-level students exhibited the most diverse and often incorrect interpretations, likely due to limited exposure to English. College-level students showed improved understanding, though some misconceptions remained. University-level students demonstrated the highest accuracy, reflecting greater exposure to English and better comprehension skills.

These variations highlight the impact of local culture, educational background, and exposure to media on language comprehension. The differences in interpretations can lead to misunderstandings and language conflicts, underscoring the need for tailored English language education that considers these factors.

6 CONCLUSION

This research underscores the importance of understanding how local culture influences the comprehension of English phrases in the Faisalabad region of Pakistan. The study reveals significant differences in interpretations based on age, educational level, and exposure to English. These findings have implications for English language teaching and highlight the need for educational strategies that address these variations.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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