

Language Variation and Lexical Development among Urdu-Speaking School Children: The Role of Social Stratification in Aligarh

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Abstract

Language development is influenced by children's home environment, school experiences, and social background. In multilingual countries like India, children are exposed to more than one language from an early age, which affects the way they learn and use vocabulary. Although many studies have examined vocabulary learning and bilingual education, very few have explored how social background influences language variation and lexical development among Urdu-speaking school children. This study examines the relationship between social stratification, language variation, and lexical development among Urdu-speaking learners in Aligarh.

The study is based on data collected from 100 Urdu-speaking students studying in four schools affiliated with Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). It focuses on three main areas: vocabulary development, phonological variation, and English lexical borrowing. A quantitative descriptive research design was used, and the findings were interpreted using sociolinguistic and educational linguistic perspectives.

The results show that students from higher socio-economic backgrounds generally used a wider range of vocabulary and more English loanwords than students from lower socio-economic groups. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds showed greater phonological variation and relied more on commonly used Urdu vocabulary. These differences do not reflect differences in language ability. Instead, they are linked to differences in language exposure, literacy practices, and educational opportunities.

The study concludes that language variation is a natural part of children's language development and should not be viewed as a weakness. It also shows that lexical development involves not only learning new words but also using them appropriately in different situations. The findings highlight the importance of language-rich classrooms, multilingual teaching practices, and equal learning opportunities for children from different social backgrounds.

Keywords: Language Variation, Lexical Development, Urdu-speaking Children, Social Stratification, Sociolinguistics, Multilingual Education, Vocabulary Acquisition

1. Introduction

Language plays a central role in children's learning, communication, and overall development. It helps them express their thoughts, understand new ideas, and participate effectively in school and society. Among different language skills, vocabulary is especially important because it supports reading, writing, speaking, and academic learning. Children with a rich vocabulary usually perform better in school and communicate more confidently. However, vocabulary development is influenced not only by a child's ability to learn but also by the environment in which the child grows.

In India, language learning takes place in a multilingual environment. Many children speak one language at home and learn another language in school. Urdu-speaking children, for example, usually use Urdu in their families and communities while learning English through formal education. They may also come into contact with Hindi and other regional languages in everyday life. This regular interaction between languages influences their vocabulary, pronunciation, and communication patterns.

Children learn language through everyday experiences. Family conversations, classroom activities, reading habits, friendships, and digital media all contribute to vocabulary growth. Children who are regularly exposed to books, meaningful discussions, and educational resources often develop a broader vocabulary than those who have fewer learning opportunities. Therefore, differences in vocabulary are often linked to differences in language exposure rather than differences in intelligence or learning ability.

Social background also affects children's language development. Factors such as parental education, family income, school environment, and access to learning materials shape the amount and quality of language that children experience every day. These factors influence not only how many words children learn but also how they use language in different situations. Understanding language development, therefore, requires attention to both educational and social conditions.

Another important aspect of multilingual communication is language variation. Children do not always speak in the same way. They may pronounce words differently, use different vocabulary, or mix English words into their Urdu. Such differences are common in

multilingual societies and should be seen as natural features of language rather than mistakes. They reflect children's everyday experiences and the communities they live in.

English has become an important language in Indian education, technology, and public life. As a result, many English words are now commonly used by Urdu-speaking children in daily communication. Words such as *mobile*, *computer*, *project*, *class*, and *homework* are frequently used because they are part of school life and digital communication. Their use shows how multilingual children combine resources from different languages to communicate effectively.

Although previous studies have examined vocabulary learning, bilingualism, and multilingual education, limited research has explored how social stratification, language variation, and lexical development are interconnected among Urdu-speaking schoolchildren. Most studies focus on vocabulary size or academic performance without examining how children's social experiences influence their everyday language use.

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the relationships among language variation, lexical development, and social stratification among Urdu-speaking schoolchildren in Aligarh. It focuses on vocabulary diversity, phonological variation, and English lexical borrowing to understand how social and educational experiences shape children's language. The study also offers practical suggestions for teachers and policymakers to support multilingual learners and create more inclusive language classrooms.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Language Variation and Social Stratification

Language is not the same in every community. People speak differently because of their education, family background, occupation, and social environment. These differences can be seen in pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and speaking style. Sociolinguistic studies show that such variations are a natural part of language and follow clear social patterns. They should not be considered language mistakes.

Children begin learning language at home, but their language continues to develop through school, friends, and the wider community. As they interact with different people, they learn

new words and different ways of speaking. Their language therefore reflects both their personal development and the social environment in which they grow up.

Social background plays an important role in language development. Children from families with better educational and economic resources usually have greater access to books, libraries, technology, and quality education. These opportunities expose them to a wider range of vocabulary and communication styles. In contrast, children from less advantaged backgrounds often learn language mainly through family and community interaction. Although their vocabulary may differ, it reflects their daily experiences rather than lower language ability.

Recent research suggests that language differences should be explained through differences in language exposure instead of differences in intelligence or ability. This view is especially important in multilingual societies like India, where children regularly use more than one language in everyday life.

2.2 Lexical Development in Multilingual Contexts

Vocabulary development is an important part of language learning because it supports communication, reading, writing, and academic achievement. Children continue learning new words throughout their school years as they interact with teachers, classmates, family members, books, and digital media. Vocabulary learning is, therefore, a continuous process that develops through regular language use.

In multilingual settings, vocabulary development becomes more dynamic because children learn words from different languages at the same time. Urdu-speaking learners usually speak Urdu at home while learning English in school. They may also hear Hindi and other regional languages in their daily lives. This multilingual environment helps children develop flexible vocabulary that they use according to different situations.

Researchers now believe that vocabulary development should not be measured only by the number of words children know. It should also include lexical diversity, which means using different words correctly in different situations. A child with a diverse vocabulary can communicate more effectively than someone who simply knows many isolated words.

Schools also play a major role in vocabulary development. Reading activities, classroom discussions, storytelling, group work, and project-based learning expose children to new

words and encourage meaningful language use. These experiences help learners build confidence and improve communication skills.

2.3 Social Environment and Vocabulary Development

Children learn language through everyday interaction with the people around them. Parents, teachers, friends, and classmates all influence vocabulary growth by providing opportunities for communication. The quality of these interactions often affects how children learn and use new words.

The home environment is the child's first language-learning space. Children who regularly participate in conversations, storytelling, and shared reading usually develop stronger vocabulary than those with fewer opportunities for language interaction. These early experiences continue to influence language development throughout school.

Schools further strengthen vocabulary by introducing academic language and subject-specific terminology. Classroom discussions, reading tasks, presentations, and writing activities encourage children to use language in different contexts. Such activities improve both vocabulary knowledge and communication skills.

Digital technology has also become an important source of language learning. Mobile phones, educational websites, online videos, and social media expose children to new vocabulary every day. Much of this vocabulary comes from English, making multilingual communication a regular part of children's lives. Together, home, school, and digital media create the language environment that shapes children's vocabulary development.

2.4 English Lexical Borrowing and Multilingual Communication

English has become an important language in education, technology, and everyday communication in India. As a result, many English words are now commonly used by Urdu-speaking children. This process is known as lexical borrowing, where words from one language become part of another.

Words such as *computer*, *mobile*, *teacher*, *project*, *homework*, and *internet* are now commonly used even when children speak Urdu. These words are familiar because they are regularly used in classrooms, textbooks, and digital communication. Their use makes communication easier, especially in educational settings.

Many researchers view lexical borrowing as a natural result of multilingual communication rather than language interference. Multilingual speakers often choose words from different languages depending on the situation. This flexibility helps children communicate more effectively and reflects their growing multilingual competence.

The increasing use of digital technology has further expanded English vocabulary among school children. Online learning, educational applications, and social media introduce new English words every day. Consequently, English lexical borrowing has become a normal feature of language development among multilingual learners.

2.5 Research Gap

Previous studies have examined vocabulary development, bilingual education, and language variation from different perspectives. However, very few studies have explored how social stratification, language variation, and lexical development are connected among Urdu-speaking school children in India.

Most research focuses on vocabulary size or academic achievement, while giving less attention to lexical diversity, pronunciation patterns, and English lexical borrowing in everyday communication. Similarly, many studies discuss multilingual education without examining how children's social background shapes their language experiences.

The present study addresses this gap by examining vocabulary development, language variation, and English lexical borrowing within a single sociolinguistic framework. It investigates how social and educational experiences influence the language of Urdu-speaking school children in Aligarh. By combining these aspects, the study provides a broader understanding of multilingual language development and highlights that language differences are mainly the result of unequal language exposure rather than unequal language ability.

3. Research Objectives, Research Questions and Theoretical Framework

3.1 Research Objectives

The main aim of this study is to examine how social stratification influences language variation and lexical development among Urdu-speaking school children in Aligarh. The

study also explores how children's educational and social experiences shape their vocabulary and everyday language use.

The specific objectives are:

- To examine patterns of language variation among Urdu-speaking school children from different socio-economic backgrounds.
- To study the relationship between social stratification and lexical development.
- To analyse the use of English lexical borrowing in children's daily communication.
- To examine the role of family, school, and multilingual exposure in language development.
- To understand language variation as a natural part of multilingual communication rather than a language problem.

3.2 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ1. How does social stratification influence language variation among Urdu-speaking school children?

RQ2. What is the relationship between socio-economic background and lexical development?

RQ3. How does English lexical borrowing influence children's multilingual vocabulary?

RQ4. How do family, school, and multilingual experiences affect children's language development?

3.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on three related approaches: Variationist Sociolinguistics, Educational Linguistics, and Language Contact Theory. Together, these approaches help explain how children's language develops in a multilingual environment.

Variationist sociolinguistics explains that language naturally changes across different social groups. People from different backgrounds often use different pronunciations, vocabularies, and speaking styles. These differences are not mistakes; they reflect the social and cultural

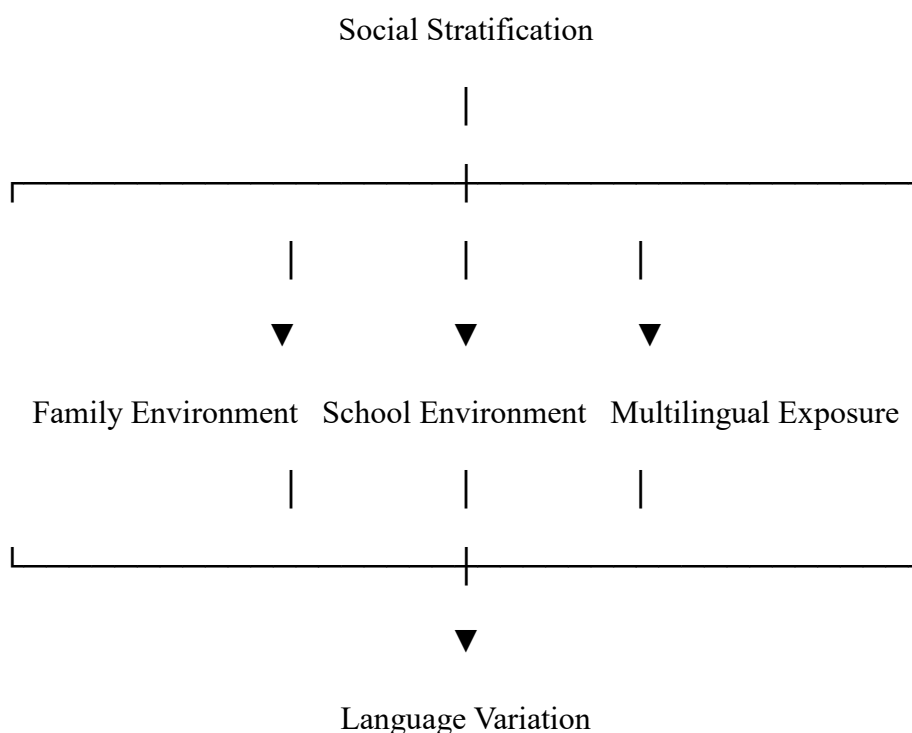
environments in which people live. In this study, language variation is viewed as a normal outcome of children's interaction with their families, schools, and communities.

Educational linguistics focuses on the role of learning environments in language development. Children improve their vocabulary through classroom teaching, reading, conversations, and regular interaction with teachers and classmates. The quality of these experiences influences how children learn and use language. Therefore, differences in vocabulary often reflect differences in educational opportunities rather than differences in learning ability.

Language Contact Theory explains how languages influence each other when speakers use them regularly. Urdu-speaking children are exposed to English through school, technology, books, television, and digital media. As a result, many English words become part of their everyday communication. In this study, English lexical borrowing is treated as a natural feature of multilingual communication rather than a sign of language interference.

By combining these three perspectives, the study provides a broader understanding of how social background, educational opportunities, and multilingual experiences influence children's language development.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study



(Pronunciation and Vocabulary)



Lexical Development



Multilingual Communicative Competence

Figure 1 shows the main idea of the study. Social background influences children's family environment, school experiences, and exposure to different languages. These factors shape language variation and vocabulary development, which together help children develop multilingual communication skills.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study used a quantitative descriptive research design to examine the relationships among language variation, lexical development, and social stratification among Urdu-speaking school children. The study focused on how children's social background influences their vocabulary, pronunciation, and use of English words in everyday communication.

A cross-sectional design was adopted because the data were collected at one point in time. This approach enables comparison of language use among students from different socio-economic backgrounds while studying under similar educational conditions. The findings were interpreted using sociolinguistic and educational linguistic perspectives to understand how children's social and educational experiences influence language development.

4.2 Participants

The study included **100 Urdu-speaking students** from **Class VIII** studying in four schools affiliated with **Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh**. The sample consisted of **50 boys and 50 girls**, ensuring equal representation of both genders.

All participants used Urdu as their first language at home and learned English as part of their school education. This made them suitable for studying vocabulary development and language variation in a multilingual setting.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	50	50%
	Female	50	50%
Residence	Urban	81	81%
	Rural	19	19%
School Status	Day Scholar	83	83%
	Hosteller	17	17%
Total Participants		100	100%

4.3 Sampling Technique

A **purposive sampling technique** was used because the study focused specifically on Urdu-speaking students. Participants were selected based on the following criteria:

- Urdu was their first language.
- They were studying in Class VIII.
- They were enrolled in AMU-affiliated schools.

These criteria ensured that the participants shared a similar educational background while representing different socio-economic groups.

4.4 Socio-economic Classification

To examine the effect of social stratification, participants were divided into four socio-economic groups based on parental education, occupation, and family background.

Table 2. Socio-economic Distribution of Participants

Socio-economic Group	Frequency	Percentage
Lower Middle Class	45	45%
Working Class	28	28%
Middle Class	19	19%
Upper Middle Class	8	8%
Total	100	100%

The distribution allowed meaningful comparison of language use among students from different social backgrounds.

4.5 Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured vocabulary task designed to measure children's productive vocabulary. Students completed activities that encouraged them to use words naturally in meaningful situations instead of recalling memorized lists.

The responses were recorded, checked, and classified according to vocabulary use, pronunciation patterns, and English lexical borrowing. The same procedure was followed in all four schools to maintain consistency.

4.6 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and group comparisons. These results were then interpreted using sociolinguistic principles to understand how social background influenced language variation and lexical development.

The analysis focused on identifying patterns of language use rather than judging children's speech as correct or incorrect.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary. The identity of all participants was kept confidential, and the data were used only for research purposes. The findings are presented in summary form, and no individual student or school has been identified.

Methodology Summary

This methodology combines quantitative analysis with sociolinguistic interpretation to examine how children's social background influences vocabulary development and language variation. It provides a suitable framework for understanding language differences in multilingual educational settings.

5. Results and Analysis

5.1 Lexical Development across Socio-economic Groups

The findings show that children's vocabulary development differs across socio-economic groups. Although all participants attended similar schools and spoke Urdu as their first language, they did not use vocabulary in the same way. Differences were found in vocabulary diversity, word choice, and the use of English loanwords.

Students from the **middle-** and **upper-middle-class** backgrounds showed greater lexical diversity. They used a wider range of words and included more academic and English vocabulary in their responses. Their language reflected regular exposure to books, classroom discussions, technology, and other educational resources.

Students from **working-class** and **lower-middle-class** backgrounds mainly used familiar words that were common in daily conversation. Their vocabulary was strongly influenced by family interaction and community language use. However, this does not mean that their language ability was lower. It simply shows that they had different language experiences and learning opportunities.

Overall, the findings suggest that vocabulary development is closely related to children's language exposure. Access to reading materials, educational support, and multilingual communication helps learners develop a richer vocabulary.

Table 3. Lexical Development across Socio-economic Groups

Socio-economic Group	Lexical Diversity	English Vocabulary	Overall Development
Lower Middle Class	Moderate	Low	Moderate
Working Class	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Middle Class	High	High	High
Upper Middle Class	Very High	Very High	Very High

Interpretation

Table 3 shows that lexical diversity gradually increases across socio-economic groups. Students with greater educational opportunities demonstrated richer vocabulary and greater confidence in using English loanwords. This finding suggests that language exposure plays an important role in vocabulary development.

5.2 Phonological Variation

The study also found clear patterns of phonological variation among the participants. Differences were mainly seen in the pronunciation of certain Urdu consonants. These pronunciation patterns appeared regularly and followed similar trends within each socio-economic group.

Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds showed more phonological variation than those from higher socio-economic groups. This may be related to differences in home language, community speech, and exposure to standard Urdu through formal education. However, similar variations were found in all groups, showing that pronunciation naturally varies among speakers.

The findings support the view that phonological variation is a normal feature of spoken language. It reflects children's language environment rather than their language ability.

Table 4. Common Phonological Variations

Standard Sound	Common Variant	Type of Variation
/q/	/k/	Sound substitution
/x/	/kh/	Sound simplification
/ʃ/	/s/	Consonant change
/y/	/g/	Sound substitution
/z/	/j/	Pronunciation shift

Interpretation

The most common changes involved replacing difficult sounds with simpler ones that are more common in everyday speech. These variations reflect children's regular language use and should be understood as natural language patterns instead of pronunciation mistakes.

5.3 English Lexical Borrowing

English words were found in the speech of students from every socio-economic group. However, their use was more frequent among students who had greater exposure to English through school, reading, and digital media.

Most borrowed words belonged to education and technology. Words such as *homework*, *project*, *teacher*, *mobile*, *computer*, and *internet* appeared frequently because they are commonly used in classrooms and daily life. Students generally used these words naturally while speaking Urdu, showing that English vocabulary has become part of their multilingual communication.

Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds also used English loanwords, but mostly in school-related contexts. This suggests that English borrowing is influenced by educational experience rather than by social background alone.

Table 5. Common English Loanwords

Domain	Examples
Education	homework, class, notebook, project, exam
Technology	mobile, computer, internet, laptop
School	teacher, principal, library
Sports	cricket, football, match
Daily Communication	okay, sorry, thank you

Interpretation

English loanwords are mainly linked to school, technology, and daily communication. Their frequent use shows that multilingual children naturally combine Urdu and English during communication.

5.4 Relationship between Social Stratification and Language Development

The overall findings show a clear relationship between social stratification and language development. Students from families with better educational opportunities generally demonstrated greater lexical diversity, more English vocabulary, and fewer pronunciation differences.

At the same time, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds showed strong communication skills based on their home and community language. Their language reflected everyday experiences rather than limited ability. This finding highlights that language development is shaped by the quality of language exposure instead of social status alone.

The study also shows that family support, school environment, reading habits, and multilingual exposure work together to influence children's language development. These factors help explain the differences observed among the participants.

Figure 2. Relationship between Social Background and Language Development

Social Background

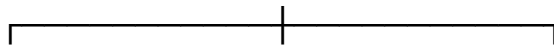
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Educational Opportunities



Language Exposure



Vocabulary Pronunciation English

Development Variation Loanwords



Multilingual Communication

Interpretation

Figure 2 shows the overall relationship identified in this study. Social background influences children's educational opportunities and language exposure. These factors affect vocabulary development, pronunciation, and the use of English loanwords, which together shape multilingual communication.

Figure 3. Distribution of English Lexical Borrowing across Socio-economic Groups

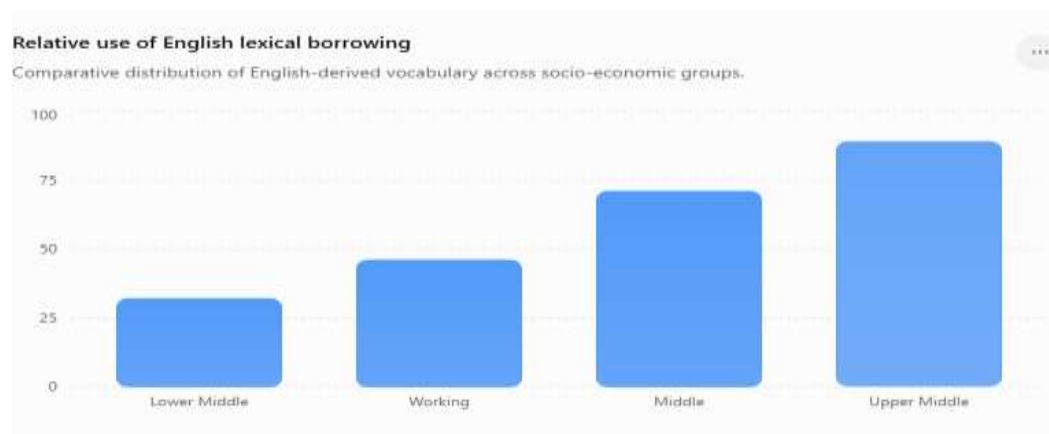


Figure 3 shows that students who were more exposed to English at school and in their daily lives used English words more often in their conversations. This suggests that the use of English words is mainly influenced by regular language exposure rather than by a student's language ability.

Summary of Findings

The study identified four main findings:

- Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds showed greater lexical diversity.
- Phonological variation was a natural part of children's language and reflected differences in language exposure.
- English loanwords were common across all groups and supported multilingual communication.
- Social background influenced language development mainly through educational opportunities, reading habits, and multilingual exposure.

Overall, the findings suggest that language development is closely connected to children's social and educational experiences. Differences in vocabulary and pronunciation should be understood as natural outcomes of multilingual learning rather than differences in language ability.

6. Discussion

This study examined the relationships among language variation, lexical development, and social stratification among Urdu-speaking schoolchildren in Aligarh. The findings show that children's language development is closely connected to their social background, educational opportunities, and multilingual experiences. Vocabulary growth, pronunciation, and the use of English loanwords are influenced by the environment in which children learn and communicate.

One of the main findings is that students from higher socio-economic backgrounds showed greater lexical diversity. They used a wider range of vocabulary and included more English

words in their responses. This difference is likely due to better access to books, reading materials, technology, and supportive learning environments. These findings are consistent with earlier studies that show vocabulary develops through regular language exposure and meaningful communication rather than through classroom instruction alone.

The study also suggests that vocabulary development is more than learning new words. Children who are exposed to different forms of communication learn how to use vocabulary more effectively in different situations. This shows that lexical diversity is a better measure of language development than vocabulary size alone. Therefore, schools should encourage activities such as reading, classroom discussion, storytelling, and collaborative learning to improve students' vocabulary.

Another important finding concerns phonological variation. The pronunciation differences observed in this study followed clear patterns across different social groups. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds showed greater pronunciation variation, mainly because their speech reflected the language used in their homes and local communities. However, these differences should not be viewed as language errors. They are natural variations that develop through everyday communication.

The findings also highlight the growing role of English in children's language use. English loanwords were common across all participant groups, especially in education, technology, and daily communication. Students naturally mixed Urdu and English while speaking because both languages are part of their daily lives. This suggests that English borrowing supports communication instead of replacing Urdu. It also reflects the multilingual nature of Indian classrooms.

Another important observation is that social stratification influences language development mainly through differences in language exposure. Children from families with greater educational resources usually have more opportunities to read, communicate, and use a wider range of vocabulary. On the other hand, children from less advantaged backgrounds rely more on community language practices, which also play an important role in language development. Both groups develop language through their own social experiences, though the nature of those experiences is different.

One of the strengths of this study is that it examines language variation, lexical development, and English lexical borrowing together. Most previous studies have focused on only one of

these areas. By combining them, the present study provides a broader understanding of how children's language develops in multilingual educational settings. It also shows that social and educational factors cannot be separated when studying language development.

The findings have practical importance for language teaching. Teachers should understand that children enter the classroom with different language experiences. Instead of treating language variation as a weakness, schools should use it as a starting point for learning. Respecting children's home language while introducing standard academic language can improve both confidence and learning outcomes. Multilingual teaching methods can also help children develop stronger communication skills in both Urdu and English.

The study has some limitations. It was conducted in four AMU-affiliated schools and included only Urdu-speaking students from Aligarh. Therefore, the findings cannot represent all multilingual learners in India. Future studies should include larger samples from different regions and compare children from different educational systems. Long-term studies may also help explain how vocabulary and language variation change as children grow older.

Overall, the findings show that language development is closely connected to children's social and educational experiences. Vocabulary growth, pronunciation, and English lexical borrowing should be understood as natural parts of multilingual communication. Recognizing these differences can help teachers, researchers, and policymakers create more effective and inclusive language learning environments.

7. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study offer useful suggestions for language teaching in multilingual classrooms. They show that children's vocabulary development is influenced not only by classroom learning but also by their family background, social environment, and daily language use. Teachers should therefore recognize that students come to school with different language experiences and use these experiences to support learning.

One important implication is the need to create **language-rich classrooms**. Teachers should encourage students to read regularly, participate in discussions, tell stories, and work in groups. These activities help children learn new words naturally and improve their confidence in speaking and writing.

The study also supports the use of **multilingual teaching**. Urdu-speaking students already use Urdu and English in their daily lives. Teachers can build on this by comparing words from both languages, encouraging bilingual discussions, and using examples from students' everyday experiences. Such practices help learners understand concepts more easily and develop stronger communication skills.

Another important point is the treatment of **language variation**. Differences in pronunciation or vocabulary should not be seen as mistakes. They often reflect children's home language and community speech. Teachers should respect these differences while helping students become familiar with standard academic language. This approach creates a positive learning environment and increases students' confidence.

Schools should also provide equal opportunities for language learning. Libraries, reading programmes, language clubs, and digital learning resources can help students improve their vocabulary regardless of their socio-economic background. Such support is especially important for children who have fewer educational resources at home.

Teacher education programmes should also include topics such as sociolinguistics, multilingual education, and language variation. This will help teachers understand children's language backgrounds and use more effective teaching strategies in multilingual classrooms.

Overall, language teaching should build on children's existing language knowledge rather than it. When schools value linguistic diversity, children become more confident learners and develop stronger communication skills in both Urdu and English.

8. Conclusion

This study examined the relationships among language variation, lexical development, and social stratification among Urdu-speaking schoolchildren in Aligarh. It explored how children's family background, educational experiences, and multilingual environment influence their vocabulary, pronunciation, and use of English loanwords.

The findings show that children's language development is closely linked to the opportunities they receive both inside and outside the classroom. Students from higher socio-economic backgrounds generally demonstrated greater lexical diversity and used more English loanwords because they had greater access to books, technology, and language-rich learning

environments. At the same time, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds demonstrated strong communication skills grounded in their home and community language experiences. These findings suggest that differences in language use are mainly the result of different learning opportunities rather than differences in language ability.

The study also found that language variation is a normal part of multilingual communication. Differences in pronunciation and vocabulary reflect children's social and educational experiences and should not be viewed as language errors. Similarly, English lexical borrowing has become a regular feature of communication among Urdu-speaking school children, especially in education and technology. Rather than replacing Urdu, these borrowed words help children communicate more effectively in multilingual settings.

An important contribution of this study is that it brings together language variation, lexical development, and social stratification within one framework. While previous studies have often examined these topics separately, this research explains how they are connected in the everyday language of Urdu-speaking learners. It also highlights the importance of considering children's social and educational backgrounds when studying language development.

The findings have practical value for teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers. Creating language-rich classrooms, encouraging multilingual teaching practices, and respecting children's linguistic diversity can improve vocabulary development and make language learning more inclusive. Children learn more effectively when their home language is recognised as a resource rather than a barrier.

The study has some limitations. It included only Urdu-speaking students from four AMU-affiliated schools in Aligarh. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all multilingual learners in India. Future research should include students from different regions and educational settings. Longitudinal studies may also provide a better understanding of how language development changes over time.

In conclusion, this study shows that children's language development is shaped by the interaction of social background, educational opportunities, and multilingual experiences. Language variation should be understood as a natural feature of communication, while vocabulary development should be viewed as a continuous process influenced by meaningful language exposure. These findings contribute to sociolinguistics, educational linguistics, and

multilingual education, and they provide useful directions for future research and classroom practice.

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