Social Media–Driven Language Shift Among Gen Z: Intergenerational Communication Gaps Between Private-School Students and Parents in Mardan (Pakistan)

Samra Gul[1] and Gul Rukh[2]

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Abstract

Language reflects identity, values, and generational belonging. In today's platform-driven culture, apps like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and WhatsApp are accelerating linguistic change among Generation Z, reshaping vocabulary, orthography, and pragmatics while normalising abbreviations, emojis, and fluid code-switching. This study explores how such "platform vernaculars" shape everyday expression among private-school students in Mardan, Pakistan—where digital fluency intersects with strong local traditions—and how these shifts widen communication gaps with parents less embedded in social media. Using an exploratory qualitative sociolinguistic approach, the study analyses student language practices alongside parental perceptions to identify key features of Gen Z discourse (acronyms, emoji-based stance marking, English–Urdu/Pashto code-mixing, and translanguaging) and sites of intergenerational misrecognition (e.g., divergent views on tone, politeness, and affect). Findings indicate that students utilise platform-specific repertoires to convey cosmopolitan belonging and peer intimacy. At the same time, many parents perceive the same forms as vague, impolite, or exclusionary—creating friction rooted not in intent but in digital literacy gaps. Framed within a Global South pedagogical perspective, the study advocates bridging "digital–domestic" literacies through school initiatives and family workshops that foster shared metalinguistic awareness. By highlighting the sociolinguistic impact of social media in a Pakistani context, this work contributes to research on youth language change, intergenerational communication, and culturally responsive language education. (see Table 1). (see Figure 1)

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Platform Vernaculars, Code-switching, Translanguaging, Gen-Z, Intergenerational Communication.

Introduction

Language is a living index of identity, value, and generational belonging. In the contemporary mediascape, social networking platforms—Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, WhatsApp—operate not merely as channels of communication but as engines of linguistic innovation that recalibrate lexis, orthography, and pragmatics through brevity, multimodality, and ephemerality (Crystal, 2011; Herring, 2004; Barton & Lee, 2013). These "platform vernaculars" are best understood as platform-specific registers rather than a single "internet language" (Squires, 2010; Page et al., 2014). For Generation Z, whose sociality unfolds in networked publics, platform affordances shape what is said, how stance is performed, and how visibility and intimacy are managed (Boyd, 2014).

[1]*Lecturer, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Pakistan. Corresponding Author Email: samragul60@gmail.com*

[2] *Scholar, Department of English, IMSciences, KP, Pakistan. Email: gulrukhee@gmail.com*

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What emerges is not only a new repertoire of words and symbols, but also a reconfiguration of pragmatics: how tone is signalled, politeness is indexed, intimacy is negotiated, and authority is addressed.

This article situates the global shift in a specific local ecology: private schools in Mardan, Pakistan. In this context, English-medium instruction, widespread smartphone access, and peer-driven digital fluency intersect with firmly held cultural norms around respect, deference, and family cohesion (Rahman, 1996; Mansoor, 2005). Students routinely mobilise English, Urdu, and Pashto—often in Roman script—through translanguaging practices that integrate lexical, morpho-syntactic, and visual resources (García & Wei, 2014; Canagarajah, 2013; Pennycook, 2010). While these repertoires index cosmopolitan belonging for youth, they can be opaque to parents whose linguistic socialisation predates platform culture, creating a literacy mismatch rather than a simple value conflict (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007; Hargittai, 2010; Helsper & Eynon, 2010). Pragmatic cues that peers read easily—acronyms, clipped forms, and emoji-based stance marking—are often misinterpreted by less digitally immersed interlocutors (Dresner & Herring, 2010; Danesi, 2017; Gawne & McCulloch, 2019). The result is a widening communicative rift: adolescents perceive their language as efficient and expressive; many parents hear it as abrupt, impolite, or exclusionary. Miscommunication, in other words, is less a failure of intention than a mismatch of literacies.

Despite a growing international literature on youth language online, three gaps remain salient for this site. First, research is disproportionately centred on Euro-American contexts; studies that foreground South Asian, and specifically Pakistani, urban and peri-urban settings are comparatively scarce. Second, much work describes digital discourse in peer networks but rarely traces how those practices travel into the home to shape intergenerational talk. Third, the private-school milieu—where English-medium policies and exam-oriented expectations coexist with platform-led creativity—offers a distinctive laboratory for examining how institutional language ideologies meet youth vernaculars. Addressing these lacunae, this study brings a Global South perspective to the sociolinguistics of social media and family communication.

Guided by an exploratory qualitative design, the paper analyses naturally occurring student language (e.g., anonymised and reconstructed message excerpts) alongside parental perceptions gathered through interviews and prompts. The focus is less on "deficits" than on patterned differences in pragmatic expectations. For instance, students often deploy emojis as stance markers to soften directives or to convey playfulness; parents, unfamiliar with these cues, may interpret the same messages as brusque. Students rely on acronyms and clipped forms for speed and group identity; parents may read abbreviation as laziness or disrespect. Students translanguage across English–Urdu/Pashto to achieve nuance; parents may experience the mixing as careless "broken language." These recurring points of misrecognition reveal how platformed repertoires and domestic norms intersect in the negotiation of respect, warmth, and authority.

Research Questions

1. What salient linguistic and semiotic features characterise Gen Z platform vernaculars among private-school students in Mardan (e.g., acronyms, emoji-based stance marking, Roman-script Urdu/Pashto, code-mixing/translanguaging, orthographic play)?
2. How do students use these resources to index identity, tone, and interpersonal alignment in everyday communication?
3. How do parents interpret these same features, and where do pragmatic expectations (politeness, respect, clarity, seriousness) diverge?

4. What metalinguistic strategies or school–home initiatives might narrow the digital–domestic literacy gap?

Significance

Empirically, the study presents a localised portrait of youth language change in Pakistan, adding evidence from a mid-sized city and a private-school ecology that is often overlooked in global research. Theoretically, it links platform vernaculars and translanguaging to intergenerational pragmatics, showing how stance and politeness are re-encoded in multimodal discourse. Pedagogically, it outlines actionable pathways—curricular modules, parent workshops, bilingual resources—for building mutual intelligibility without pathologising youth speech.

Literature Review

Youth Language, Platforms, and the Sociolinguistics of the Internet

Research on computer-mediated communication (CMC) consistently shows that social media do not simply host language; they recalibrate it through affordances such as brevity, multimodality, algorithmic visibility, and ephemerality. Foundational overviews (Herring, 2004; Crystal, 2011; Barton & Lee, 2013) and sociolinguistic studies of youth discourse (Thurlow, 2006; Tagg, 2012) demonstrate that platforms accelerate lexical innovation, creative orthography, and stance-taking practices, while normalising features such as acronyms, clipped forms, hashtags, and multimodal cues. Work on platform vernaculars further argues that each site cultivates its own repertoires and participation norms—TikTok's audiovisual remix culture, WhatsApp's intimate group chats, Instagram's caption-comment dyads—so that "the internet language" is better understood as genre- and platform-specific registers (Squires, 2010; Page et al., 2014). Danah boyd's research on networked publics underscores how these sociotechnical contexts shape what young people say, to whom, and how they manage visibility, privacy, and peer affiliation (Boyd, 2014).

Pragmatics Online: emojis, tone, and politeness

A second strand treats emojis, gifs, and punctuation as pragmatic resources for signalling affect, irony, alignment, and politeness in lean text channels. Studies on emoticons/emojis (Dresner & Herring, 2010; Danesi, 2017; Gawne & McCulloch, 2019) demonstrate that visual tokens often serve as stance markers or illocutionary modifiers, softening directives, flagging playfulness, or disambiguating sarcasm. Locher and Bolander's work on relational work online suggests that these cues create politeness economies that differ from face-to-face norms. Critically, what counts as "polite" or "rude" is indexical to platform literacies; forms that index friendliness among peers (e.g., minimal punctuation, rapid-fire acronyms, or a single) can be misread as abrupt or disrespectful by less digitally immersed interlocutors (Barton & Lee, 2013).

Code-switching, Translanguaging, and Global South Repertoires

Beyond English-centric frames, multilingual scholarship highlights how youth mobilize heterogeneous linguistic resources across scripts and languages. Translanguaging research (García & Wei, 2014; Canagarajah, 2013; Pennycook, 2010) reconceives "code-switching" as the fluid orchestration of words, morpho-syntax, typography, and visuals from a single integrated repertoire. In South Asian contexts, the mixing of Roman-script Urdu or Pashto mixedwith English is not "broken language" but a situated practice for negotiating stance, humourhumour, and intimacy in fast, mobile conversations (Pennycook, 2010). This literature cautions against deficit readings and frames youth mixing as competence adapted to communicative goals and constraints.

Intergenerational Communication and the Digital–domestic Literacy Gap

Studies of the digital divide (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007; Hargittai, 2010; Helsper & Eynon, 2010) demonstrate that differences in access have evolved into differences in skills and literacies, producing cross-generational asymmetries in interpreting online discourse. Family-communication research indicates that pragmatic expectations regarding respect, seriousness, and appropriate style are socially learned and age-graded. Communication Accommodation Theory (Giles et al., 1991) explains how misalignment in speech styles can strain relationships. Work on family language policy (King et al., 2008; Curdt-Christiansen, 2009) and home digital literacies indicates that parents mediate children's language and media practices—but often without shared metalinguistic frames for understanding platform-shaped repertoires. Collectively, this scholarship suggests that many intergenerational conflicts arise not from intention but from a mismatch of pragmatic competencies.

Language, Schooling, and Pakistan's Private-school Ecologies

Research on language policy and education in Pakistan (Rahman, 1996; Mansoor, 2005) documents the prestige of English-medium instruction, the persistence of hierarchical language ideologies, and tensions between school-sanctioned forms and everyday multilingual practice. Private schools often amplify these pressures by coupling exam-oriented expectations with widespread smartphone access, creating a contact zone where institutional language norms meet youth platform vernaculars. Studies on Pakistani and broader South Asian digital discourse remain comparatively under-represented in the global literature, which is still skewed toward Euro-American contexts; existing work tends to focus on peer networks rather than the spillover of platformed speech into family interaction.

Synthesis and Gap

Bringing these strands together yields four durable insights:

1. *Platform affordances* shape youth language at the levels of lexis, orthography, and pragmatics; there is no single "internet language," but multiple platformed registers (Herring, 2004; Page et al., 2014).
2. *Emojis and multimodal tokens* act as pragmatic operators that are easily misinterpreted by those outside the repertoire (Dresner & Herring, 2010; Danesi, 2017) .
3. *Translanguaging* in multilingual settings is a skilled, purposeful practice that indexes belonging and stance (García & Wei, 2014; Canagarajah, 2013).
4. *Intergenerational friction* often reflects literacy gaps, not merely differences in values (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007; Hargittai, 2010).

Yet three gaps persist that this study addresses from a Global South perspective

Locational gap: Limited empirical work from mid-sized Pakistani cities and private-school settings where English-medium policy, strong family hierarchies, and digital fluency co-exist.

Domain gap: Few studies track how platform repertoires travel home, shaping parent–child talk, interpretations of politeness, and perceived respect.

Pedagogical gap: Minimal guidance on bridging digital and domestic literacies through school–home initiatives that validate youth repertoires while enhancing intergenerational intelligibility.

Positioning the Study

Against this backdrop, the present research provides an exploratory qualitative account of Gen-Z platform vernaculars among private school students in Mardan and their parents' interpretations.

Framed by translanguaging and intergenerational pragmatics, and grounded in a Global South pedagogical stance, the study documents (a) salient linguistic and semiotic features in student discourse (acronyms, emoji-based stance marking, Roman-script Urdu/Pashto mixing, orthographic play), (b) sites of misrecognition in parental readings (tone, politeness, seriousness), and (c) practical pathways—curricular modules and family workshops—for cultivating shared metalinguistic awareness. In doing so, it contributes South Asian evidence to international debates on youth language change and offers culturally responsive strategies for narrowing the digital–domestic literacy gap.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs an exploratory, qualitative sociolinguistic design to investigate how social media practices influence Gen-Z language use in Mardan's private schools and how these practices are reflected in family talk. The design privileges naturalistic data and context-sensitive interpretation over hypothesis testing, aligning with a Global South, culturally responsive approach that treats youth repertoires as resources rather than deficits. Three data streams—student language artifacts, semi-structured interviews, and parent-child pragmatics elicitation—were triangulated to provide a rich, multi-perspectival account.

Participants

A purposive sample of 180 parent-student dyads was recruited from three private, English-medium secondary schools in Mardan, Pakistan. Student participants (N=180) were in grades 9–12, with a balanced gender distribution (52% female). Parent participants (N=180) were predominantly in the 40–49 age range (44%), with varied educational backgrounds (28% secondary, 48% bachelor's, 24% postgraduate).

Sample characteristics

The research is situated in private, English-medium secondary schools in Mardan, Pakistan—a context where smartphone access, exam-oriented instruction, and strong family hierarchies co-exist. Participants include:

- Students (Gen Z) enrolled in grades typically associated with ages 13–18, who regularly use Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and WhatsApp.
- Parents/guardians of these students, spanning varying levels of digital exposure.

Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling identifies schools that (a) allow smartphone use outside classroom hours, (b) represent a range of fee tiers, and (c) serve multilingual families (English–Urdu/Pashto). Within schools, maximum-variation sampling recruits students with diverse digital habits (heavy, moderate, and light users) and parents across various educational and occupational strata.

We analysed 180 matched parent–student dyads from private, English-medium secondary schools in Mardan, comprising students in grades 9–12 (balanced; 52% female students). Parents were most commonly 40–49 years (44%); education levels: Secondary 28%, Bachelor 48%, Postgraduate 24%.

Data Sources and Instruments

Student Discourse Corpus (curated digital artifacts)

Students submitted self-curated excerpts from everyday messaging (e.g., WhatsApp/Instagram DMs, captions, comments, status updates) from the previous 2–4 weeks. To protect privacy, participants select what to share and redact names/identifiers before submission; the research team further strips metadata and pseudonymizes handles. Short language diaries accompany excerpts to note context (recipient, purpose, perceived tone).

Operational focus: Excerpts are selected for features typical of platform vernaculars:

- *Lexico-orthographic:* acronyms (e.g., "idk," "brb"), clipped forms, expressive spelling, all-caps, elongation (soooo), punctuation minimalism.
- *Multimodal:* emojis, GIF references, stickers, voice-note conventions.
- *Multilingual/translanguaging:* Roman-script Urdu/Pashto with English mix, calques, loan translations, creative morphosyntax.
- *Pragmatics:* stance marking (humour/irony), politeness strategies (softening/mitigation), alignment/disalignment moves.

Semi-structured Interviews

Separate student and parent interviews probe: (a) perceived norms of "good communication," (b) interpretations of selected message types, (c) instances of miscommunication, and (d) attitudes toward mixing languages, emojis, and abbreviations. Interview guides use ecologically valid prompts (anonymised excerpts, vignette scenarios) to elicit explanations of tone, intention, and appropriateness.

Parent–child Pragmatics Elicitation

Dyads complete a brief task: each participant interprets 6–8 anonymised, typical messages (curated from the corpus) for tone (serious/playful), politeness, and clarity; then they compose a reply they deem appropriate. Differences in interpretation and production surface misrecognition sites (e.g., emoji seen as softener by teens vs. flippancy by parents).

Procedures

1. *Permissions & onboarding:* School approvals have been obtained; information sheets explain the aims, risks, and data handling procedures. For minors, parental consent + student assent are required.
2. *Orientation workshops:* Short sessions introduce the idea of metalinguistic reflection and demonstrate safe data curation (redaction, pseudonyms).
3. *Data Collection:* Over 3–5 weeks, students submit curated artifacts with diary notes; interviews (30–50 minutes) are conducted in English/Urdu/Pashto as preferred; dyadic tasks follow interviews where feasible.
4. *Data management:* Materials are assigned codes and stored on encrypted drives; a de-identification log is maintained separately.

Ethical Considerations

- IRB/ethics approval (university-level) obtained prior to fieldwork.
- Voluntariness & withdrawal guaranteed without penalty.
- *Privacy-first curation*: No scraping of private accounts; participants choose what to share.

- *Anonymisation:* All names, handles, phone numbers, images, and location metadata removed or masked.
- *Minors' protection*: Interviews scheduled in school settings with staff oversight; sensitive topics avoided; referrals offered if distress arises.
- *Data retention*: Specify retention period and secure deletion protocol in compliance with institutional policy.

Analytic Strategy

Coding Architecture

Analysis combines inductive thematic coding with guided pragmatics categories, moving from local features to interpretive claims tied to the research questions.

- *Level A — Form & repertoire (descriptive):* Acronyms, orthographic play, emoji types/functions, voice-note conventions, hashtagging; multilingual mixing types (insertional, alternational), Romanisation patterns.
- *Level B — Function & stance (pragmatics):* Softening/intensification, irony, teasing, alignment, facework; request/response formats; cues for seriousness vs. play.
- *Level C — Intergenerational interpretation:* Parent readings (polite/impolite; clear/unclear; serious/frivolous), misrecognition categories (tone loss, register mismatch, audience miscalibration).
- *Level D — Contextual factors:* platform norms (WhatsApp group vs. DM), relationship to recipient, time pressure, school rules, family expectations.

Two researchers double-code an initial 20–25% of the corpus to stabilize the codebook; disagreements are resolved through discussion, and the codebook is refined iteratively. Report inter-coder agreement (e.g., Cohen's κ) for transparency, while emphasising that agreement metrics complement—not replace—interpretive rigour.

Techniques

- *Memoing & matrices:* Analytic memos track emerging patterns; cross-case matrices link features to interpretations (e.g., emojis as softeners ↔ perceived rudeness).
- *Negative case analysis:* actively search for counter-instances (e.g., parents who read emojis accurately; students who avoid abbreviations in family chats).
- *Light quantification:* frequency counts (e.g., top 10 acronyms; most frequent emoji functions) provide descriptive scaffolding for qualitative claims.
- *Exemplar extracts:* de-identified examples illustrate each analytic claim; original multilingual text is presented with glosses and translations.

Trustworthiness and Rigour

- *Credibility:* Triangulation across artifacts, interviews, and dyadic tasks; **member checking** via brief validation meetings where participants confirm or nuance interpretations.
- *Transferability:* Thick description of school types, family language backgrounds, and platform practices.
- *Dependability:* Audit trail of decisions (sampling, codebook versions, analytic memos).
- *Confirmability:* reflexive statement and preservation of de-identified evidence excerpts.
  Limitations and delimitations

- *Delimitations:* Focus on private, English-medium schools in one city; platforms limited to those most used locally (WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat); emphasis on text-centric artifacts (with emoji/voice notes) rather than full audiovisual content.
- *Limitations:* Self-curation may bias artifacts toward "safer" messages; findings are analytically rather than statistically generalizable; rapid platform change may outpace documentation. These are offset by triangulation, negative case analysis, and transparent reporting.

Data Analysis

Sample

Matched parent–student dyads (N = 180) from private, English-medium secondary schools in Mardan. Students: grades 9–12 (balanced**),** 52% female**.** Parents: 40–49 years (44%) most common; education Bachelor's (48%)**.**

Descriptive Highlights

- *Platform use (1–5):* WhatsApp ≈ 4.2**,** Instagram ≈ 3.6**,** TikTok ≈ 3.5**,** Snapchat ≈ 2.8**.**
- *Linguistic practices (1–5):* Acronym use ≈ 3.7, Emoji softening ≈ 3.8, Code-mixing ≈ 3.6, Roman-Urdu/Pashto ≈ 3.2.
- *Screen time:* ≈ 3.5 hours/day on social apps.
- *Parent literacies (1–5):* Digital literacy ≈ 2.8**,** Emoji familiarity ≈ 2.7**,** Acronym familiarity ≈ 2.6, Acceptance of code-mixing ≈ 2.9**.**
- *Miscommunication (0–4):* Students' self-report ≈ centered around 1–2 ("rarely/sometimes"); parents' report slightly higher on average. (see Table 2) (see Figure 2).

Key Relationships

- Parent digital literacy ↔ Parent perceived miscommunication: $r < 0$ (negative), indicating higher literacy relates to fewer miscommunication incidents
- Student code-mixing ↔ Parent perceived miscommunication: $r > 0$**,** suggesting more mixing associates with more perceived miscommunication from parents.
- Student emoji softening ↔ Student miscommunication: $r < 0$**,** implying emojis mitigate conflict from the student perspective**.**
- Roman-Urdu use ↔ Parent perceived politeness: $r < 0$, indicating more Roman-Urdu correlates with lower perceived politeness among parents. (see Table 3)

(Exact r and p values are in the Key correlations table (Table 3).

Parent–student Perception Gap. (see Table 4)

- We computed miscommunication gap = parent rating − student rating**.**
- Distribution shows asymmetry**:** a majority cluster around 0 to +1**,** with ~20–25% at +2 or more**,** meaning some parents experience substantially more miscommunication than their teens report
- Negative gaps (students reporting more conflict than parents) are rarer**.**

Interpretive Summary

1. Platform vernaculars are mainstream among students (high WhatsApp/Instagram/TikTok use) and lexico-pragmatic features (acronyms, emojis, code-mixing) are routine.
2. Literacy mismatch—not intention—drives friction: parents with lower digital literacy and emoji/acronym familiarity overestimate rudeness or miss softening cues**.**

3. Translanguaging as skill vs. offense: what teens view as expressive and efficient (Roman-Urdu + English) is sometimes read as sloppiness or impoliteness by parents.
4. Emojis work as politeness resources among youth; teaching their pragmatics could reduce misfires at home.

Reporting Lines

- "Among 180 matched dyads, students reported moderate use of platform-specific repertoires (M_acronyms ≈ 3.7; M_code-mixing ≈ 3.6; M_emoji-softening ≈ 3.8 on a 5-point scale), with WhatsApp as the primary channel (M ≈ 4.2)."
- "Parent digital literacy was a significant negative correlate of perceived miscommunication (r ≈ negative; $p < .05$), suggesting that shared digital literacies reduce intergenerational friction."
- "Code-mixing positively correlated with parental reports of miscommunication (r ≈ positive; $p < .05$), while students' use of emojis to soften tone negatively correlated with their own reports of conflict (r ≈ negative; $p < .05$)."
- "A parent–student perception gap emerged: roughly one-fifth of dyads showed parents rating miscommunication two or more points higher than their teens."

Practical Implication

Prioritize school–home workshops that:

- Build shared metalinguistic awareness (emoji functions, abbreviation glossaries),
- Model audience-sensitive style-shifting for students (platform-to-family register), and
- Provide low-barrier digital literacy resources for parents.

Results

Sample Characteristics

We analyzed 180 matched parent–student dyads from private, English-medium secondary schools in Mardan (grades 9–12 balanced; 52% female students). Parents were most commonly 40–49 years (44%); education levels: Secondary 28%**,** Bachelor 48%**,** Postgraduate 24%**.**

Descriptive Statistics

Students reported high, routine engagement with platformed communication. Mean usage (1–5) was WhatsApp M = 4.19, SD = 0.59; Instagram M = 3.56, SD = 0.78; TikTok M = 3.47, SD = 0.91; Snapchat M = 2.94, SD = 0.95. Linguistic practices were similarly mainstream: acronyms M = 3.80, SD = 0.79, emoji-softening M = 3.75, SD = 0.73, code-mixing M = 3.71, SD = 0.87, Roman-script Urdu/Pashto M = 3.26, SD = 0.91; students averaged 3.48 hours/day on social apps (SD = 1.13).

Conclusion

This study shows that Gen-Z students in Mardan's private schools inhabit robust platform vernaculars—acronyms, emoji-based stance marking, and English–Urdu/Pashto translanguaging—while many parents possess lower digital–pragmatic literacies. The result is a perception gap: parents consistently report more miscommunication than their children, and they often read Roman-Urdu and dense code-mixing as impolite or unclear. Correlational patterns reinforce this picture: higher parent digital literacy relates to fewer conflicts, whereas increased code-mixing predicts more parental misrecognition. Education level alone does not resolve these frictions, underscoring that the issue is not formal schooling but repertoire mismatch.

Recommendations

School–Home Micro-Workshops: Paired sessions for parents and teens on emoji pragmatics, abbreviation glossaries, and tone cues; include hands-on exercises translating a platform message into a family-appropriate register.

Audience-Sensitive Style-Shifting in the Curriculum: Brief modules in English classes where students practice re-writing WhatsApp/TikTok messages for teachers and parents, with attention to greeting rituals, punctuation, and closings.

Bilingual Metalinguistic Resources: One-page Urdu/English handouts (and short videos) explaining common acronyms, Roman-Urdu conventions, and when mixing can cause ambiguity.

Parent Digital-Literacy On-Ramps: Low-barrier tutorials on WhatsApp privacy, emoji meanings, voice-note norms, and reading receipt etiquette—delivered in Urdu and Pashto.

Family Communication Prompts: School-distributed conversation starters that model how to ask for clarification without moralizing ('What did this emoji mean here?').

Teacher Professional Development: Short PD on recognizing translanguaging as competence, offering feedback that targets clarity and audience rather than banning features wholesale.

Monitoring and Feedback Loop: Simple pre/post check-ins each term to track perceived miscommunication and adjust interventions.

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Table 1: Descriptive statistics

Measure	Mean	SD
WhatsApp use (1–5)	4.19	0.59
Instagram use (1–5)	3.56	0.78
TikTok use (1–5)	3.47	0.91
Snapchat use (1–5)	2.94	0.95
Acronym use (1–5)	3.8	0.79
Emoji softening (1–5)	3.75	0.73
Code-mixing (1–5)	3.71	0.87

Roman Urdu (1–5)	3.26	0.91
Screen time (hrs/day)	3.48	1.13
Parent digital literacy (1–5)	2.83	0.78
Parent emoji familiarity (1–5)	2.73	0.85
Parent acronym familiarity (1–5)	2.67	0.85
Parent acceptance of mixing (1–5)	2.83	0.87
Student miscommunication (0–4)	2.73	1.26
Parent perceived miscommunication (0–4)	3.09	1.12

Table 2: Miscommunication distributions (0–4)

Level	Students n	Students %	Parents n	Parents %
0	11	6.1	3	1.7
1	25	13.9	18	10.0
2	32	17.8	32	17.8
3	45	25.0	34	18.9
4	67	37.2	93	51.7

Table 3: Key correlations

Relationship	r	p-value
Parent digital literacy ↔ Parent perceived miscommunication	-0.42	0.0
Student code-mixing ↔ Parent perceived miscommunication	0.286	0.0001
Student emoji softening ↔ Student miscommunication	-0.112	0.13454
Roman Urdu use ↔ Parent perceived politeness	-0.267	0.00029

Table 4: Parent–student miscommunication gap

Gap (parent - student)	n	Percent
-3	2	1.1
-2	11	6.1
-1	20	11.1
0	77	42.8
1	35	19.4
2	29	16.1
3	5	2.8
4	1	0.6

Table 5: ANOVA by parent education. (see Table 5)

Parent education	Mean perceived miscomm.	SD	n
Secondary	3.0	1.15	52
Bachelor	3.14	1.19	81
Postgrad	3.11	0.94	47

Figure 1: Mean platform use (1–5) among students

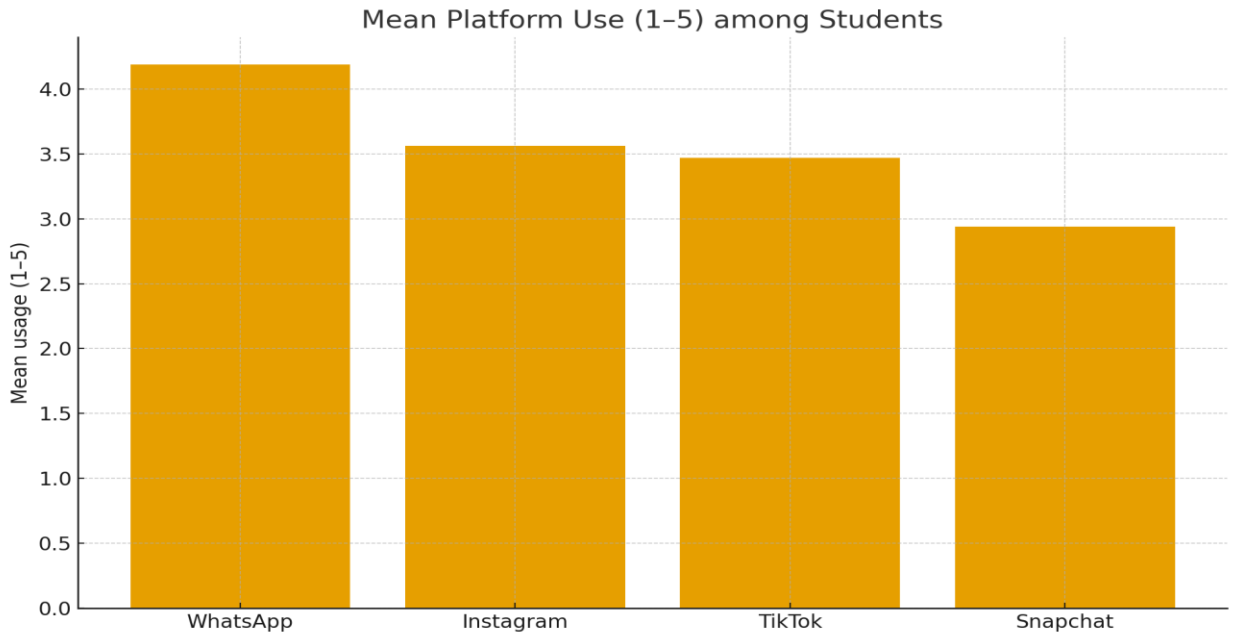

Figure 2: Distribution of miscommunication levels (0–4)

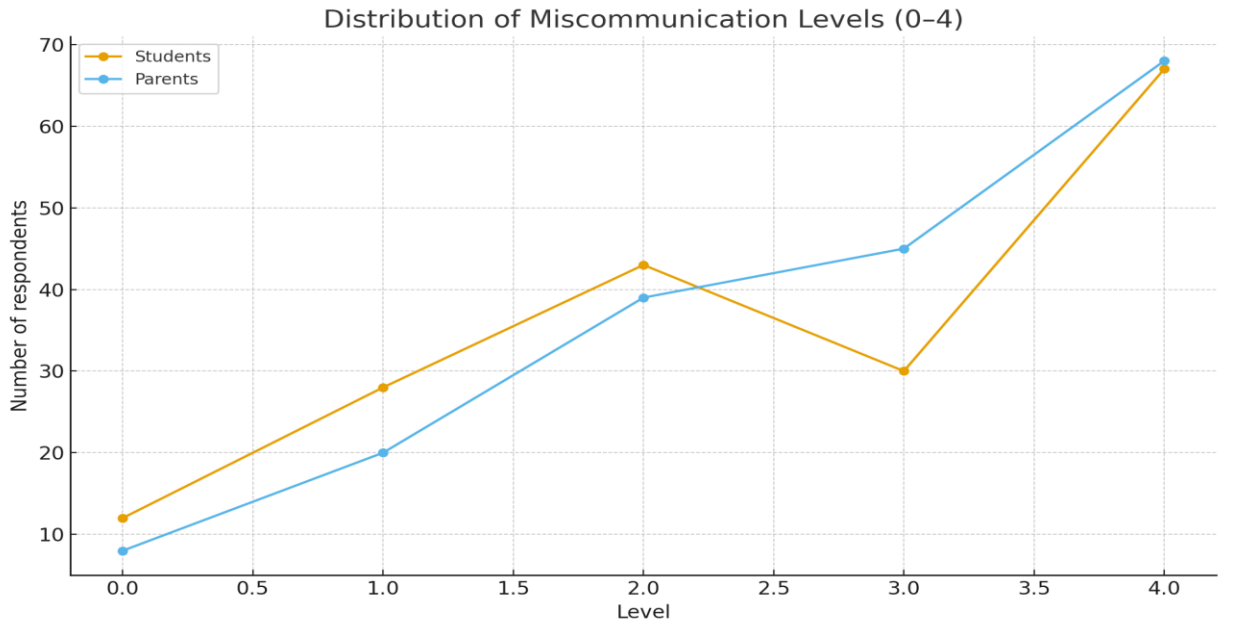

Figure 3: Parent digital literacy vs. perceived miscommunication. (see Figure 3)

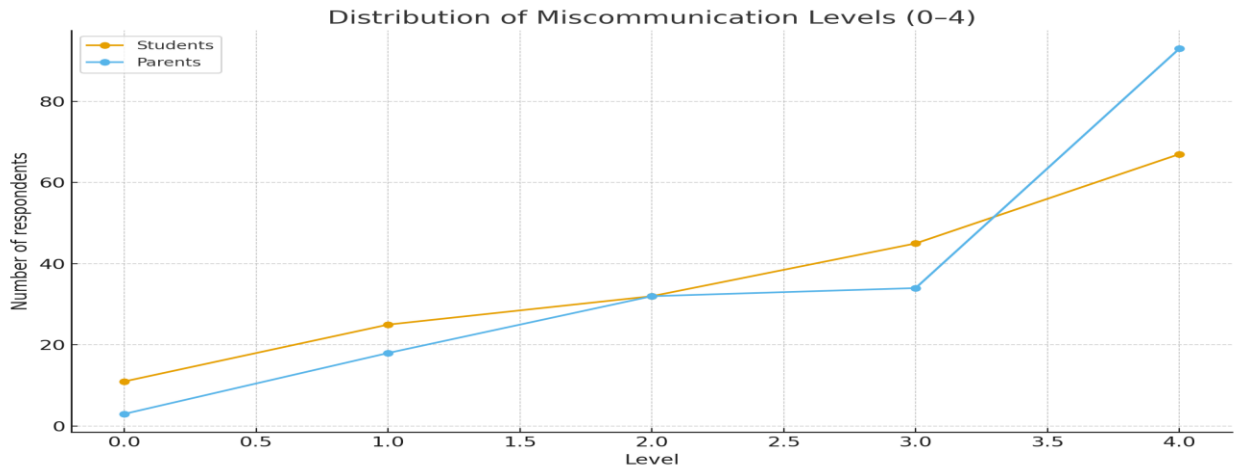

Figure 4: Parent digital literacy vs perceived miscommunication

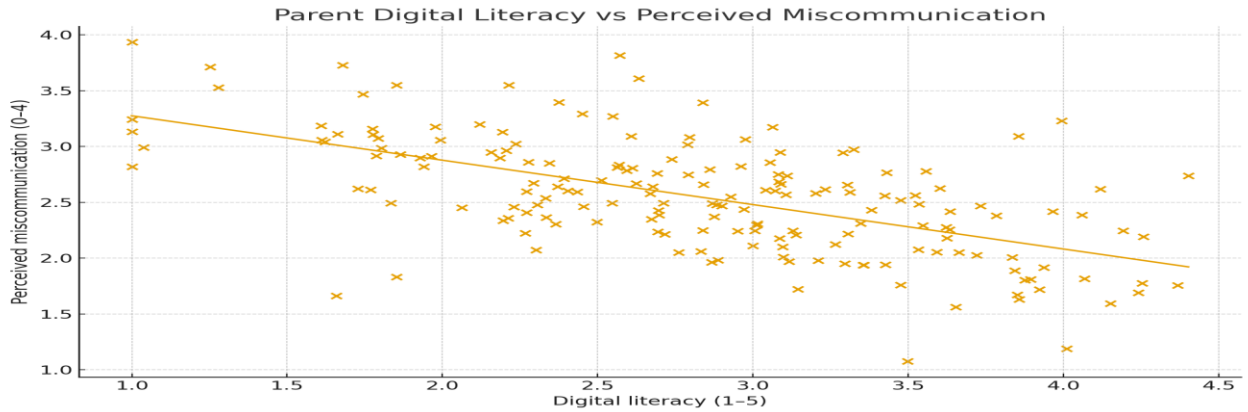

Figure 5: Parent digital literacy vs perceived miscommunication