

X – Bar Theory: A Study of Code Mixing and Code Switching in Urdu

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X – Bar Theory: A Study of Code Mixing and Code Switching in Urdu

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to highlight the mixing and switching of codes of English into Urdu through Chomsky's (1970) x – bar theory and to clearly provide the mixing and switching point at syntactic level. Urdu allows mixed approach to prepositional phrase unlike Spanish/English code mixing (see Pffaf, 1979; Bokamba, 1988; Muysken, 2000) as Urdu prepositional phrase is mostly identical to English prepositional phrase from syntactic point of view; whereas, nouns, adjectives and adverbs match with surface word order of both the languages in context (Pffaf, 1979). The shifting of the verb in Urdu always follows the derivational suffix (see Bokamba, 1988) of Urdu infinitive کرنا (*Karna*) changed to suffix کرتا (*Karta:*) and کرتے (*Kart e:*) and auxiliary ہونگی (*ho:ngi:*), ہوگا (*ho:ga:*), ہو (*ho:*), ہے (*ha:*), تھے (*t^ha:*), تھا (*t^ha:*), تھیں (*t^hi:*) etc. Adjunct from English (see Atawneh, 1992) is also mixed in Urdu as both the languages follow almost identical rules.

Keyterms: Translanguaging, Multilingual, Bar Theory, Markedness Model, Infinitival Suffix, And Derivational Suffix.

1. Introduction :

Code mixing and code switching are very common occurrences in the utterance of individuals. A lot of work from grammaticality to different reasons and causes has been made to determine the instincts that lead to code mixing and code switching. Different models like Myers - Scotton's (1997) Markedness Model, Aur's (1998) sequential analysis, Poplack's (1980) equivalent and free morpheme constraint, Giles' (1971) communication accommodation theory and many other models are devised to unlock the reasons, causes, effects and grammaticality in code mixing and code switching. The inhabitants of Sub continent, the present day Pakistan and India, remained bilinguals from the conquest of Arabs and even long before that. English was mainly introduced in the sub continent during colonial rule in 19th century onward. The purpose of this study is to highlight the mixing and switching of codes from English into Urdu through Chomsky's (1970) x – bar theory and to clearly provide the mixing and switching point at syntactic level. Before the discussion of Urdu/English code mixing and code switching in detail, let us have an overview of different models and theories regarding code mixing and code switching.

1.1 Translanguaging and Code Switching :

Translanguaging is a discursive norm in a bilingual or multilingual setting framing one linguistic feature to convey information effectively having a unitary competence for transferring bi- or multilingual competence in a social context or a discourse rather than from a monolingual context (Garcia & Wei, 2014). This suggests that translanguaging doesn't follow the conventional syntactic structures but creates its own linguistic repertoire. Translanguaging and code switching are two unique and peculiar entities found in the discourse of bi- or multilingual. Translanguaging is a discursive entity in which the speaker does not follow the syntactic features

of the either languages in contact; whereas, in a code switching process, the speaker allows the syntactic features from both the contact languages, though mainly from the host language. This happens owing to many reasons which include information on a specific topic, citing others, explaining a point in detail, lexical absence and many more. Consequently, translanguaging is a restricted movement as endless feelings can't be addressed in a restricted emblematic manner and code switching is a limitless activity for depicting endless feelings and sentiments highlighting different features from different contact languages used in a social setting and discourse.

1.2 Markedness Model

Myers – Scotton (1997) suggested a sociolinguistic model, Markedness Model, for code mixing and code switching. It emphasizes the compulsions of a speaker in a communicative process. It suggests that a speaker chooses the codes in a social setting which best suit the notion in establishing a social status commensurate with the principle of negotiation. A speaker shift codes from one language to another when he does not have a clear choice of a language. He does so to keep the social balance in status and dignity in a social setting. In this disequilibrium of the choice of language, a speaker alters codes from Matrix Language (host language) to Embedded Language (guest language) in which most of codes are chosen from matrix language.

1.3 Sequential Analysis

Auer (1998) provides the sequential analysis of code switching. The proper understanding and comprehension of code switching lies in basically answering two questions which are 'why' and 'how'. The answer of the first question creates much obscurity to devise an answer in a clear and coherent way; whereas, the answer of the second question is easy to provide if it is mainly based on the sequential analysis of the discourse in which social norms, social identity and social conduct play a pivotal role. Auer (2005) further augments this analysis that a bilingual or a multilingual finds it hard to put oneself in the social context of the switched language. A speaker often switches codes of those languages which are ethnically and culturally rich in a social scale or a social setting and context.

Equivalent and Free Morpheme Constraint :

Poplack (1980) suggests that the codes in a bound morpheme are hard to insert in a discourse but very easy in a free and equivalent morpheme. Thus, it provides a free and equivalent morpheme constraint which focuses on the grammatical phenomenon pertaining to mixing and switching of codes that clearly make it different from borrowing. Equivalent constraint mentions that if the lexical items of the languages in contact possess the same syntactic order, it is easy to shift from one language to another language.

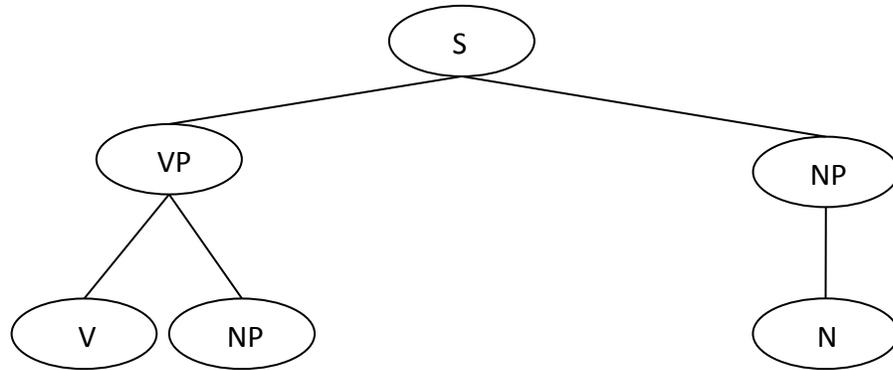
1.5 Null Theory :

Chan (2008) argues that the functional and the lexical categories of lexical items work in a different way in the discourse of a bilingual when he switches from one code to another. He is of the opinion that in code switching, the head from functional point of view follows different word order. Thus, this claim provides a different state which is unlike most of the constraints found in code switching that lead to provide null theory in code switching. This theory suggests that the use of language or grammar in a social context remains same for code switching and the host languages. According to this theory, code switching does not create its own grammar but a mixed grammar of the languages in contact. People switch in the discourse owing to have a contact with different languages in a social setting, 'socio – cultural motivations'.

1.6 X – Bar Theory:

Chomsky (1970) proposed a theory, namely X – bar theory which is based upon Harris' (1951) approach to different syntactical categories in a discourse. In this theory, a lexical item is mainly represented with a head X which is to be mentioned with a bar, generally denoted as X'. It suggests that a sentence consists of phrases, namely a noun phrase and a verb phrase instead of binary division as a subject and a predicate which includes verb, object and complement. Chan (2008) argues that the functional and the lexical categories of lexical items work in a different way in the discourse of a bilingual code switching. Chomsky (1970) proposes that the brain of a human does not possess different constraints in a communicative process or a languages rather it follows a common syntactical rules, comprises of different rules called "universal grammar".

The syntactical theory formed out of this is known as bar theory, X – bar theory. This theory claims that the sentences used in a discourse are composed of phrases which is 'the mental grammar' of every language, used by humans. Every language possesses the same syntactical organization shown below.



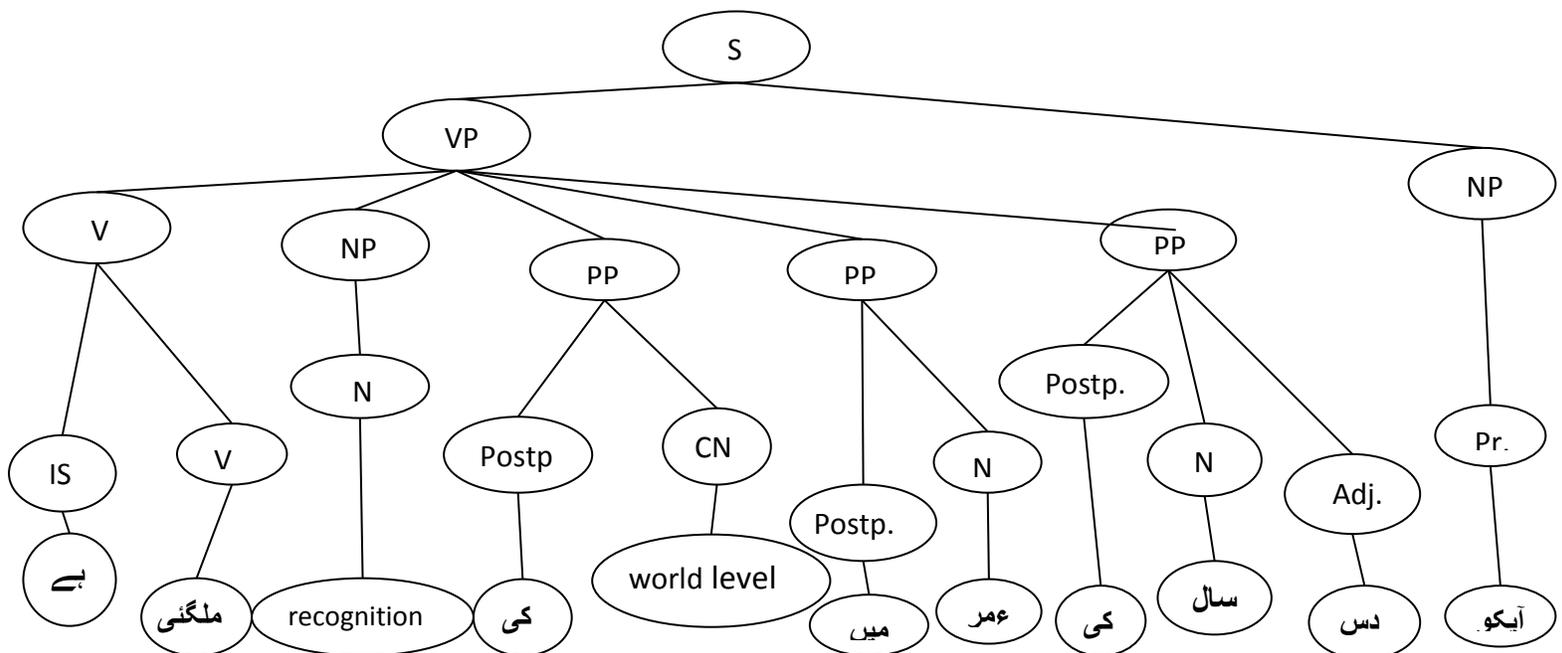
This theory suggests that every sentence is composed of different phrases which have a head which determines the category of the phrase. If the head is a noun, it is to be called a noun phrase; if the head is a verb, it is to be termed as a verb phrase; if the head is a preposition, hence it is to be called preposition phrase. So the bottom-most level of this structure is called the head level, and the top level is called the phrase level. What about the middle level of the structure? Syntacticians love to give funny names to parts of the mental grammar, and this middle level of a phrase structure is called the bar level; that's where the theory gets its name: X-bar theory.

2. Methodology

The data for this study has been collected from different entertainment channels. This study falls in the category of qualitative research providing descriptive and exploratory analysis of code mixing and code switching from TV talk shows, interviews and morning shows from the media of Pakistan in particular the electronic media. The collection of the data is primarily based on secondary data focusing on the concepts of bilingualism and multilingualism focusing mainly on code mixing and code switching. The collected video clips are downloaded, transcribed and then analyzed. The isolated data is initially elaborated and figured out with particular reference to Chomsky's (1970) x bar theory. The x bars are denoted as sentence (S), noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP), prepositional phrase (PP), noun (N), compound noun (CN), pronoun (Pr.), adjective (Adj.), determiner (Det.), adverb (Adv.), preposition (Pre.), postposition (Postp.), adjunct (Adjun.), conjunction (Conj.), infinitival suffix (IS) and abbreviation (Abbre.). Later, the isolated items of code mixing and code switching are explained with particular reference to different and unique research and constraints (Timm (1975); Pfaff (1979); Bokamba (1988); Muysken (2000); Atawneh (1992)) employed in the area of code mixing and code switching. These constraints and research are used to make this study reliable and valid.

3. Findings and suggestions :

1)



You got world level recognition at the age of nine/ten years.

Pfaff (1979) writes that it is difficult to insert a prepositional phrase in Spanish/English code mixing e.g. in *la casa* (the house). Bokamba (1988) argues the same as a violation of the constituent. He assumes Spanish as the matrix language and English, the embedded language for a sentence, 'I went to the *Chiquita* house' or 'I went to *la casa Chiquita* (*I went to the little house*)' and rejects this on the basis of violation of, what he considers an atomic syntactic unit of both the languages. The word '*Chiquita*' is considered as the diminutive case of the word '*Chica*'. The word '*Chica*' is referred to a sexy girl and '*Chiquita*' to a pretty little girl in Spanish. '*Chiquita*' can be placed attributive or predicative. But in Spanish, an adjective normally follows a noun it modifies; whereas in English, an adjective is preceded by a noun, it modifies. Thus according to Bokamba (1988), it, in either of the cases, 'I went to the *Chiquita* house' or 'I went to *la casa Chiquita* (*I went to the little house*)', violates the syntax of the host language and the guest language, which is unacceptable in code mixing and switching. Muysken (2000) comments that mixing at internal prepositional phrases (PPs), English nouns into Spanish, occurs far more than mixing at prepositional phrase boundaries. But the case in Urdu prepositional phrase is quite different from Spanish/English. Urdu allows mixed approach to prepositional phrase.

2)

I	Put	the	Book	اس	table	پر
				This		On
I kept the book on this table.						

(Bhatt, 1997)

3)

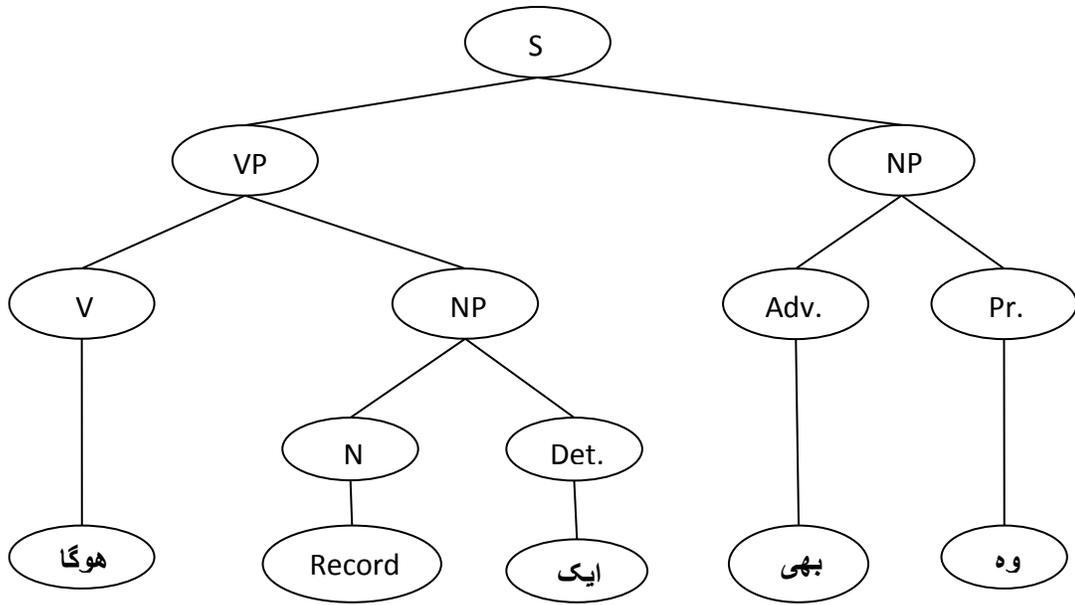
تھی	رکھی	کتاب	Table	اس	on	میں
	Keep	Book		This		I
I kept the book on this table.						

4)

تھی	رکھی	کتاب	پر	table	اس	میں
	Keep	Book	On		this	I
I kept the book on this table.						

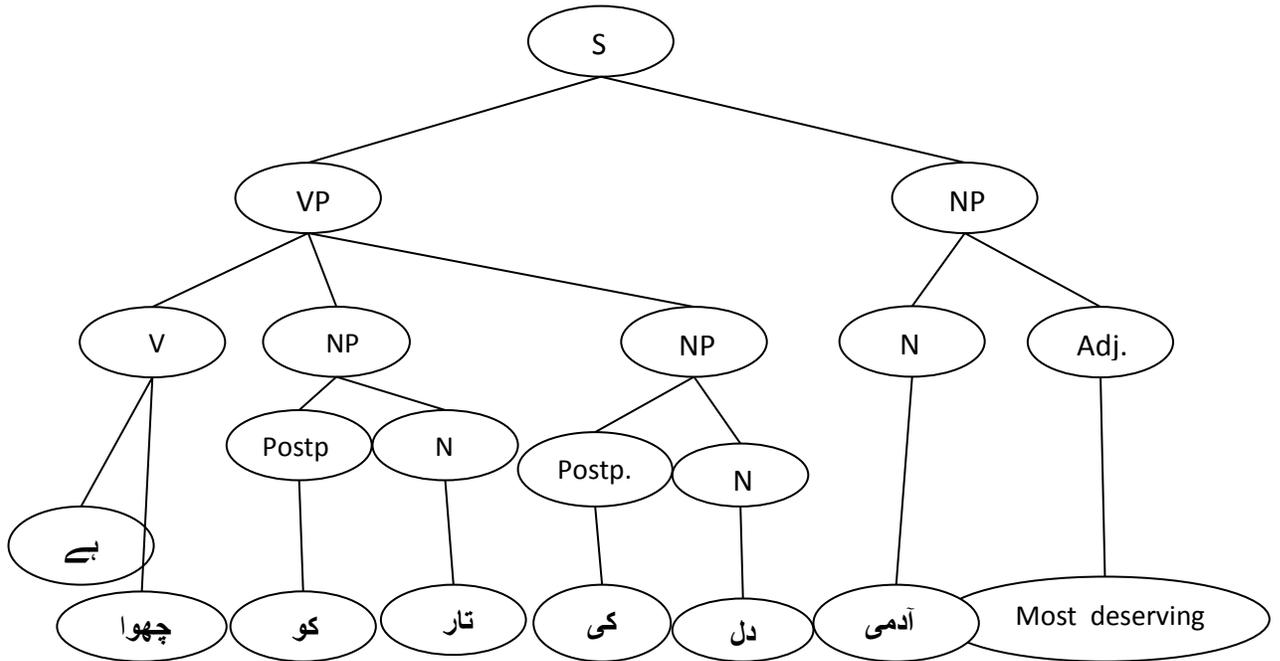
The syntactic structure of English prepositional phrase, when applied to no. 2 and no. 3, shows grammatical awkwardness and violation of syntax. Though no. 2 follows the syntax of Urdu, adjective, noun and postposition, yet it is unacceptable because the prepositional phrase in Urdu is mixed with the sentence (English) which is quite different from the syntax of English. Meanwhile, in no. 3, the prepositional phrase is also unacceptable because it is against the syntax of Urdu. No. 4 is acceptable code mixing as it follows the Urdu structure of a prepositional phrase. Discussing the syntax of prepositional phrase in Urdu, most of the prepositional phrases in Urdu consist of adverb/adjective, noun and postposition or noun and postposition as in no. 1 where a prepositional phrase, '*world level*' (a Compound Noun) is mixed with *کی* (*ki*) (an Urdu Postposition). Though this type of alternation is prohibited in Spanish/English, yet it is mostly found in utterance in Urdu/English code mixing because it does not violate the syntax of the either languages as postpositions are also used in English and are always followed by a noun phrase e.g. '*the whole week through*' and '*all the year round*'.

5)



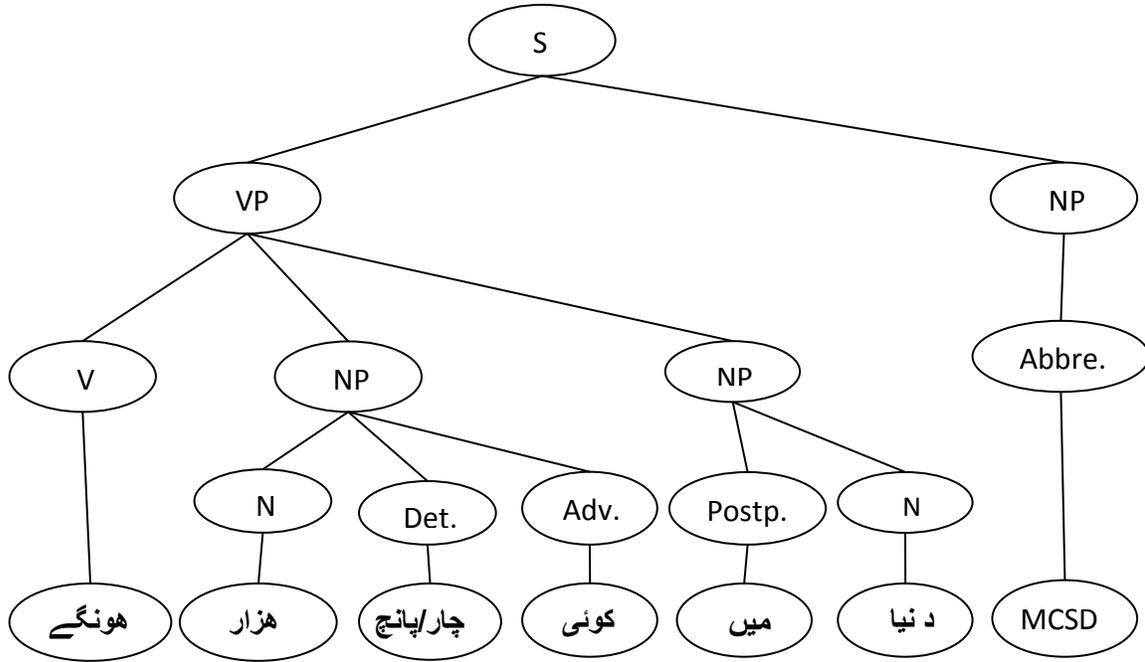
It will also be a record

6)



The most deserving person touches the strings of the heart.

7)



There would be only four/five thousand MCSD who had done MCSD.NET.

While the bar structures no. 5, no. 6 and no. 7 show the insertion point at noun, adjective and abbreviation. Nouns, abbreviations and adjectives are inserted without violation of the syntax of the either language. Pfaff (1979) describes that adjective/noun mixes must match the surface word order of the languages in contact. No. 5 shows the shifting at noun level which is mostly found in different talks at all levels, either general talk in common masses or debates in the electronic media. The word, 'record' used as a noun, is preceded by the adjective of Urdu, ایک (ek). This shifting between noun and adjective can be reversed. The speakers may shift from English adjective to Urdu noun as in no. 6, in which, the adjective, 'most deserving', is mixed with the noun in Urdu, آدمی (a:dmī). It can be used in various ways as follow.

8)

ہے	لڑکا	Handsome	وہ
Is	Boy		He
He is a handsome boy.			

9)

ہے	Boy	اچھا	وہ
Is	Boy	Handsome	He
He is a handsome boy.			

A thing is important to note here that we don't find the use of article in this shifting. The article, the, is normally used with superlative degrees; whereas the article, a or an, is placed before the singular countable common noun even if it is preceded by an adjective just as in translation of no. 8 and no. 9 which is not found in this mixing. It will create an awkward position if an article is mentioned with adjective as in no. 10 but sometimes an Urdu article is used instead of English article as in no.11 below.

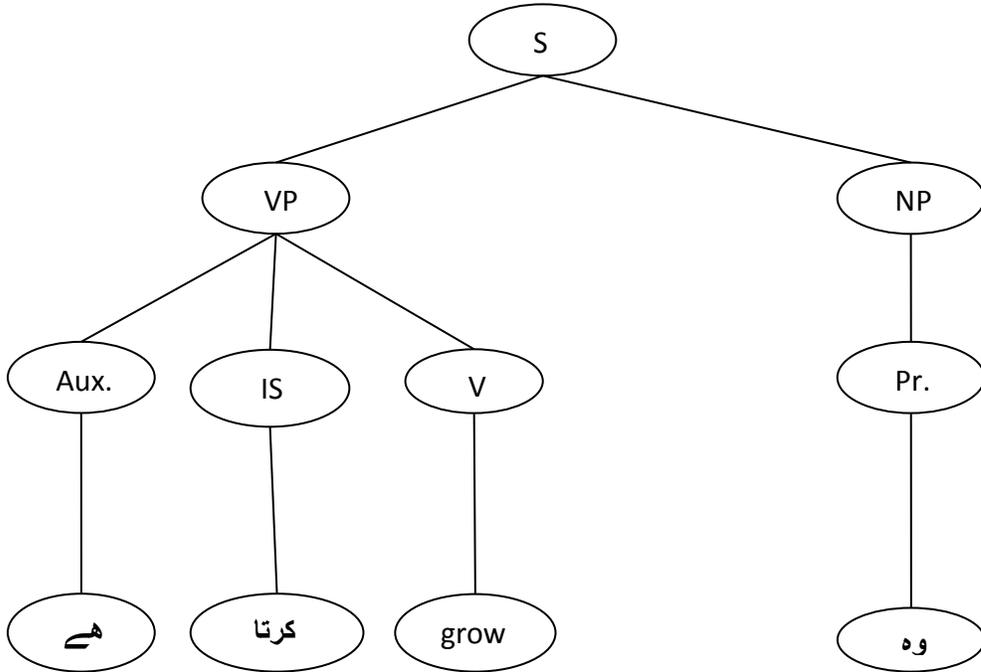
10)

ہے	لڈکا	Handsome	A	وہ
Is	Boy			He
He is a handsome boy.				

11)

ہے	لڈکا	Handsome	ایک	وہ
Is	Boy			He
He is a handsome boy.				

12)



It grows.

Timm (1975) restricted the switching of verb. This switching is found mostly with Urdu boundary/infinitival suffix and auxiliary of a verb as pointed out no. 12. Bokamba (1988) allowed the shifting of a verb *kocomprend-re* in Lingala Language. This word consists of the Lingala infinitival prefix, *ko-*, the French verb root *comprend-* and the infinitival suffix *-er*, realized on this verb as *-re* which results in a double infinitive. So is the case with 'grow' in Urdu, but *ہے کرتا ہے* (*Karta: ha:*) is an Urdu infinitival suffix and auxiliary respectively highlighted in no. 12. In *kocomprend-re*, it is infinitival prefix, but it turns into infinitival suffix in no. 12. Two kinds of infinitives are usually added in Urdu as suffixes. The infinitive *نا* (*na:*) is combined with the infinitive called اصلی (*asli*) such as *کھیلنا* (*k^helna:*) (to play), *دیکھنا* (*dek^hna:*) (to watch) as a derivational suffix. While, the infinitival suffix *کرنا* (*Karna:*) is added to an infinitive called *جعی* (*ja:l*) such as *کام کرنا* (*ka:m Karna:*) (to work), *صاف کرنا* (*sa:f Karna:*) (to clean) as derivational suffix. The infinitive *کرنا* (*Karna:*) when used alone as a verb, works like 'Do' in English such as:

13)

تم	کیا	کرنا	چاہتے	ہو۔
you	what	To do	want	
What do you want to do?				

The infinitival suffix کرنا (*Karna:*) when used with the verb جعلی (*ja:li*), serves as an infinitive. The infinitival suffix اصلی (*asli*) in Urdu consists of a single word, in which usually a noun is added with morpheme, نا (*na:*) as suffix, while the infinitive جعلی (*ja:li*) in Urdu consists of two words, a noun and a derivational suffix کرنا (*Karna:*). The suffix کرنا (*Karna:*) will change into کرتا (*Karta:*) and کرتے (*Karte:*) to show singular and plural respectively as in no. 14 and no. 15 below.

14)

وہ	دوسروں	کے لیے	کام	کرتا	ہے۔
he	others	for	work		
He works for others.					

15)

ہم	دوسروں	کے لیے	کام	کرتے	ہے۔
We	others	for	work		
We work for others.					

The tense of a sentence is mentioned with an auxiliary in Urdu. In order to highlight different tenses, this, change into derivational suffix, is comprised of suffix کرتا (*Karta:*) and کرتے (*Karte:*) and auxiliary ہونگی (*ho:ngi:*), ہوگا (*ho:ga:*), ہو (*ho:*), ہے (*ha:*), تھے (*th:a:*), تھا (*th:a:*), تھیں (*thi:*) etc as in no. 16 and no 17 below.

16)

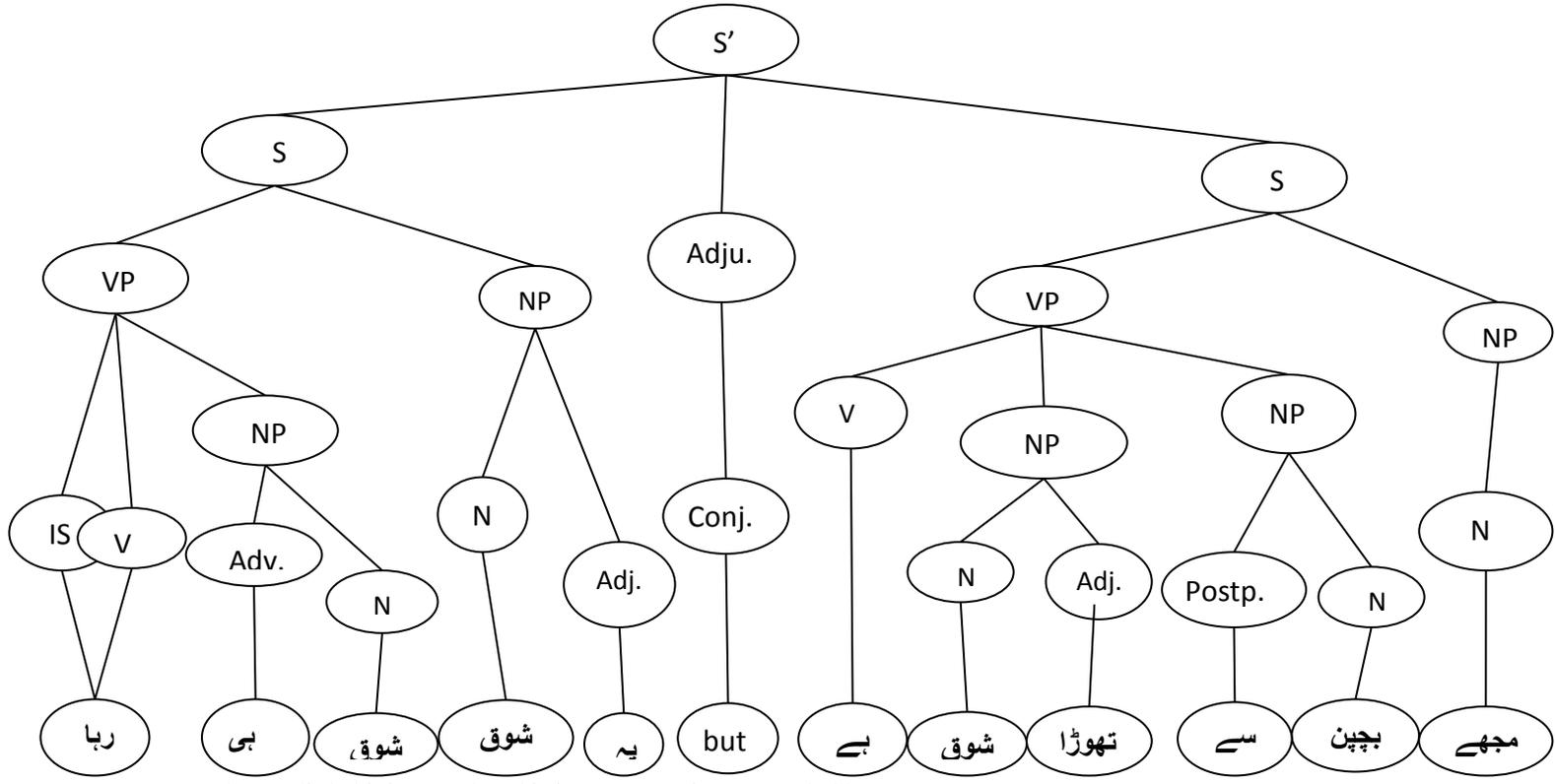
وہ	ہماری	مدد	کرتا	ہے۔
He	us	help		
He helps us.				

17)

وہ	ہماری	مدد	کرتا	تھا۔
He	us	help		
He helped us.				

Similarly, the verb 'Grow; is blended with کرنا (*Karna:*), a derivational suffix in Urdu but changed into کرتا ہے (*Karta: he:*) to indicate present simple tense, a derivational suffix and an auxiliary respectively. All the verbs from English, when inserted in Urdu, will change into verb جعلی (*ja:li*) and take suffix کرنا (*Karna:*). They do not abide by the syntax of the verb اصلی (*asli*) but follow the syntax of the verb جعلی (*ja:li*) with کرنا (*Karna:*) e.g. work کرنا (*Karna:*), clean کرنا (*Karna:*), mix کرنا (*Karna:*), switch کرنا (*Karna:*) as in no. 12.

18)



I have a little bit interest but this interest remains up to a hobby.

Adjunct is a joining word in a language which joins words, phrases or sentences. No. 18 shows the shifting of conjunction. In this, two sentences pertaining to Urdu are mixed together with a conjunction from English, *but*. It is similar to conjunction mentioned by Atawneh (1992) in Arabic/French code mixing.

19) Ana tanxarz hadsi kulu ET tan dir I ma.

I take everything out and pour water over. (Atawneh, 1992)

This type of mixing is mostly found in the speech of Urdu bilinguals such as:

20)

چاہیے	مدد	تمہاری	مجھے	because	اؤ	گھر	میرے	تم
Want	Help	Your	I		Come	Home	my	you
You come to my home because I want your help.								

21)

ہے	پسند	لسی	And	چائے	مجھے
	Like	Lassi		Tea	I
I like tea and lassi.					

Such conjunctions pertaining to English are normally mixed in Urdu as in no. 20 and no. 21. In addition to this, the conjunctive adverbs, which are not real conjunctions, are also found in Urdu as in no. 22 and no. 23:

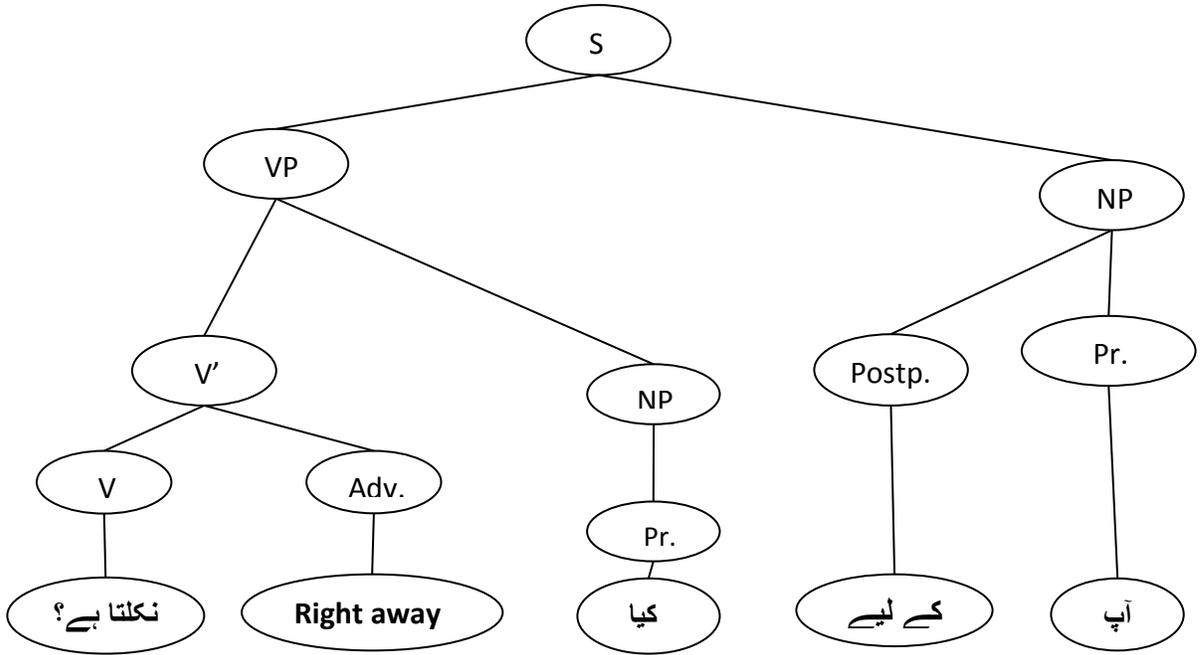
22)

دونگا	سزا	تمہیں	میں	otherwise	بولو	سچ
Give	punishment	You	I		Speak	Truth
Speak truth; otherwise I will give you punishment.						

23)

ہو	صحیح	تم	In fact
Are	Right	You	
In fact, you are right.			

24)



What is drawn right away for you?

Urdu adverb, just like English, normally modifies a verb. The position of an Urdu adverb is used to be attributive; whereas the position of English adverb with verb is attributive or predicative. But, whenever, an English adverb is mixed in Urdu, its position will be attributive not predicative because an Urdu sentence always ends with a verb. No. 24 highlights the shifting at adverb level. An Urdu adverb normally qualifies verb. But it also qualifies an adjective and another adverb such as in no. 25 and no. 26 below:

25)

ہے	لڑکا	Handsome	بہت	وہ
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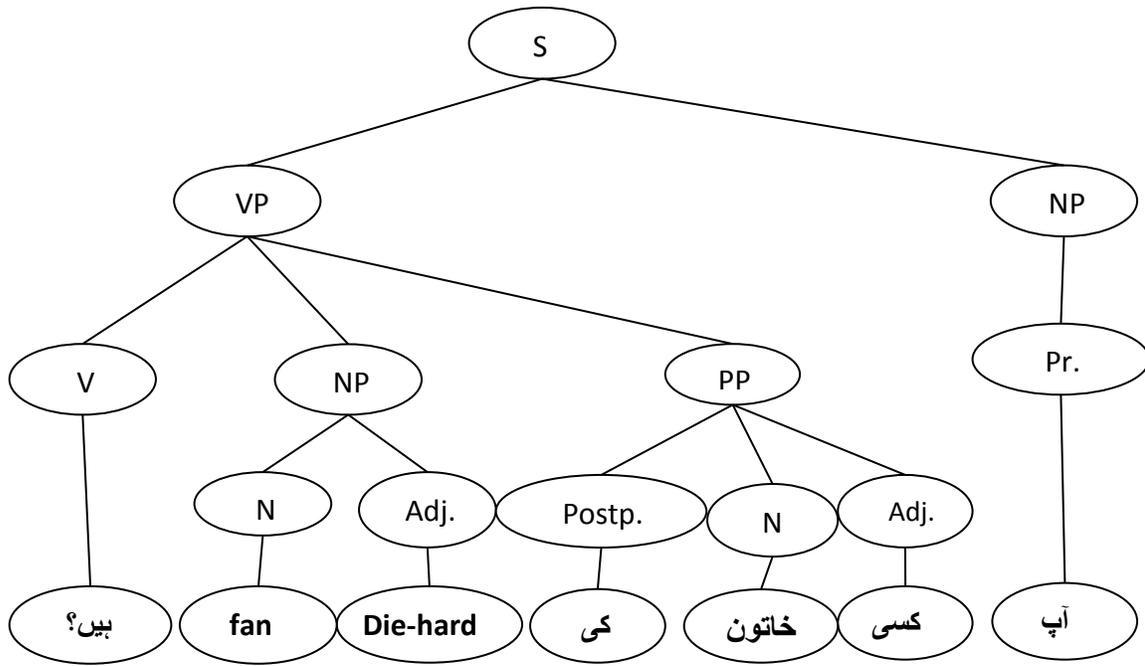
Is	Boy		Very	He
He is very handsome boy.				

26)

ہے	چلتا	Slow	بہت	وہ
	Walk		Very	He
He walks very slowly.				

In an interrogative sentence, an interrogative pronoun or an interrogative adjective is placed between verb and adverb which serves as a NP such as in no. 24 changed to define the x bar clearly. Therefore, the interrogative pronoun, کیا (kija:) equivalent to 'what' in English, is placed as NP.

27)



Are you the die – hard fan of any female?

No. 27 shows the use of an idiom. The shifting of idioms doesn't affect the sense of it but the same is kept intact as in case of 'die-hard fan'. It means that one is completely obsessed with the liking of any game, person, band or movie. The same sense is kept intact here as the host inquires of the feelings of the guest about the favourite film star of Bollywood.

4. Conclusion :

Urdu allows mixed approach to prepositional phrase unlike Spanish/English code mixing (see Pfaff, 1979; Bokamba, 1988; Muysken, 2000) as Urdu prepositional phrase is mostly identical to English prepositional phrase consists of mostly adverb and/or adjective and noun and in some cases noun and postposition; whereas, nouns, adjectives and adverbs match with surface word order of both the languages in context (Pfaff, 1979). The shifting of the verb in Urdu always follows the derivational suffix (see Bokamba, 1988) of Urdu infinitive Karna, changed to suffix کرتا (Karta:) and کرتے (Kart e:) and auxiliary ہونگے (ho:ngē:), ہوگا (ho:ga:), ہو (ho:), ہے (ha:),

تھے (*t^ha:*), تھا (*t^ha:*), تھیں (*t^hi:*) etc Adjunct from English (see Atawneh, 1992) is also mixed in Urdu as both the languages follow similar rules.

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