A Phenomenological Study of Multilingual Memory and Lexical Access

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: A Phenomenological Study of Multilingual Memory and Lexical Access

Bilingual memory has been a subject of psycholinguistic experimental studies for last 6 decades, whereas, the study of multilingual memory has so far largely been excluded. Moreover, the psycholinguistic studies, though proven highly insightful, have always excessively relied on the experimental tasks used in them to the extent that subjects as language users were overshadowed. These were the two concerns that led the present study to examine two of the psycholinguistic phenomena, multilingual memory and lexical access, phenomenologically without disregarding the insight gained from psycholinguistic studies. Under the phenomenological framework, lived experiences of Punjabi-Urdu-English (P-U-E) trilinguals were explored in order to find out the processes these trilinguals employed for learning the three languages and making them work. Three of the phenomenological methods: semi-structured lifeworld interviews, focus group discussions and essay writing, were used for eliciting the experiences of 40 P-U-E trilingual participants, chosen from three different age groups (18-23 years, 30-40 years, and 50-60 years or above) to observe developmental changes in the learning and use of the three languages over a long period of time. Data explicitation was carried out using Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process, especially formulated for keeping the essence of the participants’ experiences of the phenomena intact. Major findings were: (1) the effect of the age of acquisition on the learning of new languages, L2 as well as L3, (2) Dependence on Urdu for using English and translation asymmetry at lower L3 proficiency levels, (3) Developmental aspect, (4) The need to exert conscious control for stopping interference from the other two languages in order to speak one language consistently, and (5) Proficiency as the most significant factor in lexical selection. The findings of this phenomenological study when compared with the results of psycholinguistic experimental studies, a phenomenological model emerged that attempts to capture the trilingual memory structure of a P-U-E trilingual, i.e., how the three lexicons are organized, how they interact with each other, and how lexical access is accomplished.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

P-U-E Punjabi-Urdu-English
RHM Revised Hierarchical Model
R-2HM Re-Revised Hierarchical Model
MHM Modified Hierarchical Model
IC Inhibitory Control
CSM Concept Selection Model
SbP Selection by Proficiency
FGD Focus Group Discussion
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To my father,
whose loving prayers have been a consistent source of strength, guidance and motivation

&

My son,
who rightfully deserved the time I spent working on this project
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“In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you
and crown your efforts with success.” Proverbs 3:6

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Edwards (2006) seems to be making a somewhat sweeping, yet largely true, generalization when he says, “Everyone is bilingual … there is no one in the world (no adult, anyway) who does not know at least a few words in languages other than the maternal variety” (p.55).

In the same vein, Meisel (2006) offers a strict criticism on monolingualism when he regards it as an outcome of “an impoverished environment where an opportunity to exhaust the potential of the language faculty is not fully developed” (p. 92).

Clearly, the above-mentioned authors are emphasizing that bi/multilingualism is a widespread phenomenon and of course is growing very fast so much so that it is becoming a norm. This rapid trend towards using multiple languages is partly due to technological advancement in the present era and largely due to certain economic factors which are making it imperative to have knowledge of more than one language, one of them in most of the cases being English. For the last few decades, there is an increasing trend towards learning English as a second or a third language, thus rendering a large population of the world bilinguals or multilinguals. On the appropriateness of the term ‘bilingualism’ or ‘multilingualism’ to refer to the use of multiple languages, Cenoz, Hufeisen, and Jessner (2003) point out that “the word ‘bilingualism’ which includes the Latin prefix ‘bi’ (two), is not appropriate to refer to more than two languages. In contrast, the term ‘multilingualism’ seems the right nomenclature as it encompasses not only ‘bilingualism’ but also additional languages, three, four, or more, and is the most
appropriate term to be the cover term for phenomena involving more than one language” (p. 1-2).
Keeping this in mind, this study uses the term ‘multilingualism’ for referring to the use of multiple
languages.

In developing countries, including Pakistan, multilingualism is increasingly becoming an
everyday experience with most of the literate population. A literate Pakistani mostly ends up learning
three languages: a regional language (Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Balochi, etc.) as L1, Urdu, the national
language as L2, and English, the language of higher education as well as the official language in Pakistan,
as L3. For such multilingual population, each of the three languages has its own niche, as in most of the
cases the three languages are used every day in different contexts for carrying out specific tasks. Such
population can literally be called trilingual as they learn three languages and use their three languages
almost every day. Thus, it can be safely generalized that trilingualism, a form of multilingualism, has
become a norm with Pakistani literate population. Since the mid of the last century, the study of
bilingualism and bilingual memory has dominated the field in the technologically advanced countries;
however in the present decade, there is a gradual, yet marked, shift towards the study of multilingualism
and correspondingly towards the study of multilingual memory.

1.1 Background of the study

As already pointed out, in the 21st century, the subject of major concern is multilingualism, whereas, near
the middle of the last century, bilingualism was a growing trend. It was largely due to an enormous focus
on bilingualism at that time that aroused interest in the study of bilingual memory. Many psycholinguistic
studies attempted to establish how individuals speaking two languages, in comparison to monolinguals,
organized their memories for those two languages and what was the nature and extent of interaction
between them. Related to memories was the issue of lexical access in bilinguals which caught the
attention of psycholinguists.
However, a systematic study of bilingual memory began with Weinreich (1953), who was the first to propose a lexical-conceptual distinction in bilingual memory, that is, separate stores for verbal and nonverbal memory, and also put forward three discrete types of bilingual memory systems, namely, coordinate, compound and subordinate. Weinreich based these distinctions on the bilinguals’ experiences of learning a second language under three different conditions, viz. learning of two languages in entirely different contexts, simultaneous learning of two languages, and learning of second language as a direct translation of the first language respectively. This seminal work by Weinreich, in fact, laid the foundation for a whole long tradition of research in the field of bilingual memory, which continues till today. Most of the subsequent researches focused on investigating the lexical-conceptual distinction in bilingual memory, which largely confirmed this distinction.

Another significant contribution in the field owes to Kolers (1963), who with the help of an experimental study on bilinguals, using interlingual and intralingual associations, was able to establish that there were two separate or independent memory stores for the two languages of a bilingual, and thus took Weinreich’s (1953) lexical-conceptual distinction a step further by indicating a possibility for two separate memory stores for the two languages of a bilingual. Later, Scarborough, Gerard, and Cortese (1984), through an experimental study using word recognition task, not only validated Kolers’ findings, but also demonstrated that the two lexical stores of a bilingual had two separate conceptual stores, which is in line with Weinreich’s (1953) coordinate system, and that there were no common linguistic representations at any level for the two languages of a bilingual. Kolers’ findings stimulated a number of subsequent researches of substantial significance to the field.

One such study was carried out by Potter, So, Eckardt, and Feldman (1984), who set out to determine the types of links between the two separate lexicons of a bilingual. They put forward two hypotheses: (a) word association, where second language words were directly associated with first language words just like Weinreich’s (1953) subordinate system, and (b) concept mediation, where second language words were not directly associated with first language words but both the lexicons were
associated with a common non-linguistic conceptual system. Using experimental tasks of word naming, single word translation, and picture naming, the researchers were able to show that there was no direct association between the two lexicons, but strongly supported a common conceptual representation for the two languages of a bilingual. The study, thus, stood in direct contrast to Scarborough et al.’s (1984) study, which had favored two separate conceptual stores for the two languages of a bilingual.

A long tradition of controversy began with the contrasting results of the two studies, Scarborough et al. (1984) and Potter et al. (1984). Some of the studies (e.g., Gerard and Scarborough, 1989) supported separate conceptual stores for the two languages, whereas the others (e.g., Potter, Kroll, Yachzel, Carpenter & Sherman, 1986) supported a common conceptual store for the two languages of a bilingual. However, a significant study that further tested and somehow established Potter et al.’s (1984) claim was carried out by Kroll and Stewart (1994). This study was actually a culmination of the series of experiments which started with Kroll and Curley (1988). They showed that the two hypotheses put forward by Potter et al. (1984), namely: word association and concept mediation, in fact, formed a hierarchy – word association worked at lower second language proficiency and concept mediation came into play after the bilingual had acquired a certain higher level of proficiency in the second language. This led to the formulation of Revised Hierarchical Model (henceforth, RHM) of bilingual memory representations, which is undoubtedly the most influential model of bilingual memory so far and has dominated the field for more than two decades. The RHM favored two separate lexicons but a common conceptual store for the two languages of a bilingual. It also proposed asymmetry between L1 and L2 processing, and a developmental shift in bilinguals. The model also throws considerable light on the types of links that exist between the two lexicons and also with the non-linguistic conceptual memory.

In a later study, Kroll & Stewart (1994), through rigorous experimentation, further confirmed the claims of the RHM. While this theory successfully suppressed the separate-common conceptual store controversy by lending strong support to Potter et al. (1984), it also gave rise to some new controversies
at the same time. Yet, it proved to be highly productive in the sense that it stimulated a huge body of research in the field and is still continuing to do so.

The RHM has, thus far, been the most popular model attempting to explain bilingual memory representations. Though the model has been repeatedly challenged yet it has stood the tests largely due to its ability to effectively explain the memory representations of a bilingual speaking any two languages and being capable of showing the types of connections between the two lexicons and how the connection strengths vary with change in proficiency and thus accounts for the developmental shift in bilinguals. In a more recent study, Comesana, Soares, and Lima (2010) lent further support to the RHM by using a translation recognition task and validated its claim that L2 was lexically mediated at low L2 proficiency, while the conceptual links between L2 lexicon and conceptual memory were initially established through L1.

Yet another strength of the RHM is that it elucidates how bilinguals access words from the two lexicons at different proficiency levels, and is thus able to throw considerable light on lexical processing in bilinguals. A number of studies have been carried out to explain such controversial issues in lexical processing as selective vs. nonselective lexical selection. A significant model explaining lexical processing in bilinguals is Schwieter’s (2007) Selection by Proficiency (SbP) Model, formulated using word translation and picture naming tasks. The model aims to account for lexical processing in both highly proficient and less proficient bilinguals. Moreover, the SbP model, like the RHM, claims developmental shift in bilinguals and somehow resolves the controversy of selective vs. nonselective lexical selection by showing the selective nature of lexical processing in more proficient bilinguals and nonselective nature in less proficient ones.

In a more recent study, Schwieter and Sunderman (2009) further established RHM’s claim on lexical processing that less proficient L2 learners lexically mediated (through L1 with the help of lexical association) their L2, while more proficient bilinguals were able to conceptually mediate (directly access
the nonverbal conceptual memory) their second language. It seems obvious that the RHM has been serving as a guiding star in the study of bilingual lexical processing as well.

While the psycholinguistic experimental studies have been highly productive and insightful, and their contribution to the understanding of bilingual memory is immense, their heavy reliance on out-of-context experimental tasks casts shadow on their findings. These studies clearly fail to take into account the language users themselves (humans and their individuality), generally referred to as subjects, thus disregarding the key component of the entire process. That is to say psycholinguists have not treated bi/multilinguals as experiencing beings, who not only use the languages that they speak but also ‘experience’ the learning and using of their languages. If the subjects’ experiences were allowed for, it is quite likely that the results would probably have been more consistent as well as dependable.

It is also evident from the above that psycholinguistic studies have almost entirely focused on bilingual memory (a memory that deals with two languages) and largely tended to exclude multilingual memory (memory dealing with more than two languages). Talking about bilingualism versus multilingualism Cenoz, Hufeisen, and Jessner (2003) criticize researchers for not focusing on the latter and complain that: “Bilingualism has received a lot of attention in psycholinguistics and applied linguistics in the last few decades but most researchers have not gone beyond bilingualism and have limited their theoretical proposals and empirical work to two languages” (p. 1). This observation fully applies to the study of memory as well. Whereas a number of attempts have been made at explaining bilingual memory, there are hardly a few (e.g. Abunawara, 1992; de Groot & Hoeks, 1995; Francis & Gallard, 2005; Duyck & Brysbaert, 2008), which address the phenomenon of multilingual memory, trilingual to be specific.

The situation described above clearly calls for two things. Firstly, the phenomenon of multilingual memory may be examined closely with a view to attesting the theories developed for bilingual memory as well as gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon itself. Secondly, the
results of all the psycholinguistic experimental studies carried out so far have been subject to the kinds of research tasks used in them. In order to make the psycholinguistic studies more dependable, the methodological issues need to be reconsidered (Grosjean, 2006). The bi/multilingual memory needs to be looked at from the perspective of the language users without ignoring their experience of the process of learning and using the languages that they speak. It is expected that inclusion of subjects’ experience will enrich our understanding of how memory is organized and in what fashion lexical access is gained.

With the above in view, this study intends to investigate, as a case for multilingual memory, the trilingual memory of some of the literate Pakistanis, living in Lahore (a city of the Punjab, a province of Pakistan), who speak the three languages: Punjabi, Urdu, and English, and henceforth will be termed as P-U-E trilinguals. These trilinguals acquire Punjabi as their first language, mostly learn Urdu their second language soon after Punjabi, but learn English their third language beyond the age of early childhood, face a number of difficulties while learning English, and in most of the cases it is during/after their university education that they become proficient enough in English to use this language other than the classroom context. Keeping all this in view, a P-U-E trilingual seems to be an interesting case for investigating a multilingual memory structure, which can be specifically called a trilingual memory. Furthermore, a P-U-E trilingual memory has never been the subject of a research study before, and thus awaits exploration.

However, the study intends to take a different methodological stance by complementing the results of psycholinguistic experimental studies with the missing element of experience in them, and that can be done by shifting the focus of the research from research tasks to research participants (subjects), in the present case P-U-E trilinguals, and to their direct experiences of learning and using the three languages. In its attempt at accounting for the participants’ experiences of learning and using the three languages, the study is interested in combining the insight gained from psycholinguistic studies with the theoretical framework offered by phenomenology, which is the “science of pure phenomenon” (Husserl, 1982, xvii) and is based on having a direct experience with the world we live in, the life-world. As
language provides the medium for interacting with and within the life-world, it becomes an inseparable part of experience as it is lived. The phenomenological idea of lived experience is of special significance to the present study that sets out as an inquiry into the lived experiences of P-U-E trilinguals in their learning and usage of the three languages. Furthermore, complementing phenomenology with the psycholinguistic experimental studies on bi/multilinguals is expected to introduce such research methods that shall help to study human beings in more human terms, and at the same time provide a more profound and deeper understanding of the two phenomena, multilingual memory and lexical access.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

In the light of the above, the specific objectives of the study are as below:

- To critically review major psycholinguistic theories (e.g. the RHM) on bi/multilingual memory
- To implement phenomenological framework for eliciting the experiences of P-U-E trilinguals
- To gain insight into the P-U-E trilinguals’ languages learning and usage experiences through an intensive account/narration of their experiences
- To describe the languages learning and usage experiences of P-U-E trilinguals with a particular focus on developmental changes over a long period of time
- To compare the facts based on the participants’ experiences with the results of some of the dominant psycholinguistic studies on bi/multilingual memory
- To revisit the RHM in the light of the findings of this study
- To investigate what strategies P-U-E trilinguals adopt when they have got lexical choices (lexical processing)

1.3 Significance of the Study

Because of the rapidly increasing trend towards multilingualism, the study of multilingual memory cannot be ignored. As it is most likely the case in other parts of the world, in Pakistan too multilingualism,
particularly trilingualism, is increasingly becoming a norm with the literate population. P-U-E trilingualism is one of the diverse forms of multilingualism prevailing in Pakistan. Unfortunately, the rich diversity of multilingualism in Pakistan has been given very less attention, and absolutely no attention (at least to my knowledge) has been paid to studying the multilingual memory structure of the Pakistani multilinguals. Therefore, the need to fill this gap in the knowledge noticeably stands out. The study, thus, intends to bring the trilingual memory structure of the P-U-E trilinguals into limelight as it might draw researchers’ attention to the other hitherto unnoticced forms of multilingualism, and correspondingly multilingual memory, prevalent in Pakistan as well as in other parts of the world. In short, it is expected to hold significance not only for P-U-E trilinguals but also for multilinguals in general.

The study on its completion hopes to add substantially to the understanding of the two phenomena, multilingual memory and lexical access. As the first study to implement phenomenological framework for studying these two phenomena, it is going to look at them from a totally new perspective. The inclusion of the missing element of human experience in the study of multilingual memory is expected to open new vistas of research in this field. Furthermore, combining the two frameworks, psycholinguistics and phenomenology, is expected to lead to a deeper and richer understanding of multilingual memory as it is an attempt at combining phenomenological research methods with the essence of 60 years of research in the field of experimental psycholinguistics on bi/multilingual memory. Therefore, the study anticipates being of special significance to experimental psycholinguists as it is going to offer a workable solution for reducing their heavy reliance on experimental tasks by using human experience as a resource. In brief, the study is expected to be valuable not only to phenomenological researchers but also to experimental psycholinguists at large.

1.4 Research Questions

The study addresses the following specific research questions:
1. What are the ‘lived experiences’ of Punjabi-Urdu-English trilinguals in terms of learning and using the three languages?

2. How are the L1, L2, and L3 lexicons in Punjabi-Urdu-English trilinguals organized and how do they interact with each other?

3. What factors influence P-U-E trilinguals’ lexical access?

1.5 Methodology

As the study intends to investigate the trilingual memory structures of P-U-E trilinguals, the P-U-E trilinguals would be taken as research participants for this study. The study views a P-U-E trilingual as a person who speaks the three languages Punjabi, Urdu, and English on regular basis and has learned the three languages in this order: Punjabi the first language, Urdu the second, and English the third language. The P-U-E trilinguals would be chosen from Lahore, a metropolitan city of the Punjab, a province of Pakistan. A fairly large majority of the people living in Lahore speaks Punjabi as their first language, and most of the literate population has acquired/learned the three languages Punjabi, Urdu and English in the required order and use them on daily basis, and thus qualify to be called P-U-E trilinguals. For exploring the phenomenon of their trilingual memory, the study chooses phenomenology as research methodology.

Phenomenology as a research methodology holds great promise for such a qualitative research as the present study. Phenomenological research methods mainly involve three interconnected steps: phenomenological reduction, looking for the essence of experience, and description. Phenomenological reduction is the researcher’s freedom from presuppositions and prejudices. It is the act of bracketing any preconceived ideas or beliefs that might hinder the researcher’s ability to perceive a phenomenon in its own objective context. The next step is to look for the essence of the experience which requires having an intuitive insight into the essential nature of things in order to capture them in their objectivity. The final step is description in which lies the essence of Husserl’s phenomenology. It is the act of describing the true essence of a phenomenon in its objectivity having bracketed off one’s own subjective experience.
of that phenomenon. In this way, description marks the culmination of phenomenological method. In short, phenomenological procedures of phenomenological reduction (bracketing), looking for the essence of experience, and description make it an ideal methodology for this qualitative inquiry into the lived experiences of P-U-E trilinguals.

For probing into the lived experiences of P-U-E trilinguals, the study intends to employ phenomenological methods of semi-structured life-world interviews, focus group discussion, and essay writing. The three methods would help to look into the languages experiences of P-U-E trilinguals more closely. Semi-structured life-world interviews would hopefully be a great opportunity for me to deal with the participants in a one-to-one manner, while listening to them with an intuitive insight as well as empathy. Focus group discussion would be another prospect for listening to the participants’ experiences as they would share and discuss their languages learning and usage experiences in a group. During essay writing, the participants would be given a chance to ponder upon and describe as closely as possible their experiences of learning and using the three languages. As the study is seeking phenomenological data based on lived experiences of the participants, these three methods are expected to work very well in keeping with the objectives of the study.

For the phenomenological analysis of data, the study intends to employ Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process for the analysis of interview data. This process is chosen in accordance with the demands of the phenomenological method, which emphasizes on keeping the essence of the phenomenon intact. Hycner’s 15-step process for the analysis of interview data, though highly rigorous, is formulated in such a way that it does not let go of the essential objectivity of the phenomenon, and moreover, helps to describe its true essence in such a way that its individuality is not harmed. That is why the same process would be adopted for the analysis of the data culled from three different methods, namely: semi-structured life-world interviews, focus group discussions, and essay writing. It is hoped that Hycner’s 15-step process for the phenomenological analysis of interview data would work equally well for the data from three sources.
1.6 Organization of the Study

In order to proceed with the study in a step-wise manner, a tentative road map is presented here:

In Chapter 2, the literature on bi/multilingual memory will be discussed. It will include a review of the major theoretical models explaining bilingual memory proposed in the field of psycholinguistic experimental studies. All the dominant works explaining bilingual memory and lexical processing will be talked about and their implications for P-U-E trilingual memory considered.

In Chapter 3, the key elements of phenomenology as a research methodology will be discussed. The research design of the present study including the selection process of participants, data collection methods to be used, ethical considerations, and data analysis procedures will be delineated.

In Chapter 4, the data culled from the three data collection methods will be presented under the themes that would emerge after employing Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process for the phenomenological analysis of interview data.

In Chapter 5, the results that would emerge after the analysis (explicitation) of the data will be presented. The results will also be discussed in this chapter where the results of the study would be weighed against the claims of psycholinguistic experimental studies on bilinguals and the theoretical implications drawn.

In Chapter 6, a conclusion of the study would be presented along with recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is mainly interested in exploring the phenomena of multilingual memory and lexical access in P-U-E trilinguals under the framework of phenomenology while borrowing light from psycholinguistic experimental studies. Though the earliest studies on bilingualism can be traced back to Cattell in 1885, it was only in the beginning of 1950’s that bilingual memory became a subject of more systematic research studies. Since then, a large number of experimental studies have been conducted in the field of psycholinguistics on different aspects of human language(s) and a number of theoretical models proposed to explain the organization and working of bilingual memory. However, the study of multilingual memory has been given much less attention. That is why, in order to study multilingual memory, the insight has to be sought from the studies on bilingual memory.

In order to determine if the models of bilingual memory shed considerable light on the working of trilingual memory, Section 1 of the chapter critically reviews some of the prominent studies on bilingual memory starting from Weinreich (1953) and moves on in a chronological order up to the Revised Hierarchical Model (Kroll and Stewart, 1994), which has so far been the most influential model explaining bilingual memory representations. A particular focus has been maintained on research tasks used in those studies and how different research tasks have led to different results, sometimes even conflicting results.

Section 2 of the chapter introduces the phenomenon of lexical access and discusses what the RHM and some other psycholinguistic experimental studies have to offer on lexical access in bilinguals.
The issue of selective/nonselective lexical access has also been taken into account, and prominent works reviewed.

In the light of what the first two sections of the chapter reveal, Section 3 discusses phenomenology as a theoretical framework for this study.

2.1 Models of Bilingual Memory up to the Revised Hierarchical Model (RHM)

Weinreich (1953) was the first to study bilingual memory as a system and not only that he proposed three distinct types of bilingual memory systems: coordinate, compound, and subordinate. In the co-ordinate system, a bilingual was thought to be maintaining two separate conceptual systems. The justification offered for two separate systems was bilingual’s two distinct cultural experiences. In the case of a Russian-English bilingual, Weinreich presented the co-ordinate system in this way:

A compound system, according to Weinreich, was developed when the two languages were learnt simultaneously, so the two conceptual systems merged into a single system. For a Russian-English bilingual, he showed the compound system in this way:
Whereas a subordinate system, according to Weinreich, was developed when a new language was learnt with the help of an already learnt language, that is, by the translation method. In this case, a second language word was a direct translation of the first language word. For a Russian speaker, who was learning English, /book/ would be a direct translation of /kniga/, which he showed in this way:
However, Weinreich did not see these classifications as mutually exclusive. It was possible for a subordinate system to develop into a compound one. It can be said that he was not unmindful of the developmental element in language learning.

It is to be particularly noted that Weinreich’s bilingual memory systems included two different types of memory: a conceptual memory where meanings were stored, which he called ‘semantemes’ (p. 9), and a lexicon where lexical items and their relevant information was stored. This lexical-conceptual distinction was highly crucial and gave rise to a new tradition in research, which has survived till today. It can be safely said that systematic cognitive research on bilingualism began with Weinreich in 1953.

The bilingual memory systems briefly outlined by Weinreich in 1953 were further explained in greater detail by Ervin and Osgood (1954). Owing to their behaviorist background, they added a behavioristic perspective to that of Weinreich’s and explained the classifications offered by him in terms of how languages were acquired, and not from the perspective of internal memory organization. They took into account the importance of context of acquisition during the process of L2 acquisition. They discussed in great detail two of Wenreinch’s (1953) bilingual memory systems, namely coordinate and compound, which we now know as coordinate bilingualism and compound bilingualism. According to them, “… a compound system can be characteristic of bilingualism acquired by a child who grows up in a home where two languages are spoken more or less interchangeably by the same people and in the same situations” (p. 140). In this case, a shared conceptual system can be established where, according to Ervin and Osgood, none of the two languages can pronounce dominance, though the issue of language dominance is a debatable one. However, a coordinate bilingual, according to them, is the ‘true’ (Ibid.) bilingual, who has learned to speak one language in one context, may be at home with his parents, and the other language in an entirely different context, such as in school or at work.

However, Ervin & Osgood’s (1954) formulation of compound-coordinate bilingualism was severely criticized by Kolers (1963) on the basis that it was limited in its ability to describe the psychological
processes underlying bilinguals’ successful use of their two languages. Kolers re-introduced the issue of organization in bilingual memory. He put forward the Independence/Interdependence Hypothesis, and brought into question whether bilinguals organized their two languages in a single memory store or in two separate memory stores. He worked with 34 bilinguals whose native language was either German, Spanish, or Thai, and all of them were fluent in English, which was their second language. The stimuli used were 55 nouns in English, which were also translated in each participant’s native language, that is, German, Spanish and Thai. In the experiment, conducted in small groups, the participants were required to respond to a stimulus word by writing the first word that came to mind, other than the stimulus or its translation. The experiment was conducted under four conditions: stimulus in English and response in English (E-E), stimulus in native language and response in native language (N-N), stimulus in English and response in native language (E-N), and stimulus in native language and response in English (N-E).

A major finding of this experiment was that bilinguals tended to give different associations to a word in their native language from those they give in English to the translation of that word. In other words, the results showed that there was no common linguistic representation at any level for the two languages of a bilingual; rather memories were stored in the language in which a bilingual experienced a situation. In other words, the results of this experiment fully supported two separate or independent memory stores for the two languages of a bilingual. On the basis of this finding, Kolers argued that in order to describe the events in one language which were encoded in the other, one would require some sort of implicit translation. Consistent with the ‘Independent’ or separate memory stores hypothesis, he further claimed that similar experiences yielded similar associations for the words representing them. Moreover, according to him, experiences related to concrete objects such as chair, boy, paper and tree were more likely to be nearly identical than were the actions and experiences related to more conceptual ones.

Kolers’ findings that there were two independent memory stores for the two languages of a bilingual were further tested by Scarborough, Gerard, and Cortese (1984). They set out to determine how an event experienced in one language was transferred to situations involving the use of the other language. For
this purpose, they chose to test language independence in a word recognition task. In their experiments, they created such circumstances that there was no reason to integrate the two languages. Two experiments were conducted; both of them used the lexical decision task. The research participants, Spanish-English bilinguals, were instructed to respond positively to words from one language, and to take words from the second language as non-words. The experiment included actual non-words along with words from the non-target language, which included translations of the previously shown first language words in the first experiment, while in the second experiment, other words from non-target language were included, means the words which were not the translation of first language words. The results showed that the participants were able to treat words from the non-target language as non-words. The authors concluded that in the lexical decision task, subjects could access memory in a way that was language specific. Explaining the results, they maintained, “… a bilingual’s lexicon may be partitioned by language, and lexical look up is selective with respect to which lexicon is accessed” (p. 97). Therefore, translation equivalents may not have a common conceptual representation that is readily accessed during word recognition. They also pointed out that bilinguals might have considerable control in the way they access lexical knowledge. The results not only supported Kolers’ (1963) assumption that the bilinguals organized their languages in two separate lexicons, but went even further in pointing out that they were able to access one lexicon without accessing the equivalent representations of the second language. Simply putting, Scarborough et al. favored two lexicons with two separate conceptual systems, which is reminiscent of Weinreich’s co-ordinate system.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that the participants in Scarborough, Gerard and Cortese’s (1984) study just had to recognize whether a word was from one language or not. Word recognition is simply a visual, surface level activity and does not require activating the underlying representations, that is, the conceptual level. Thus, the study raises a big question: Can a word recognition paradigm be dependable enough in suggesting whether translation equivalents have common representations or not?
Building upon Kolers’ (1963) findings, another study was carried out by Potter, So, Eckardt & Feldman (1984), which aimed at determining what types of links were there between the lexical items of the two languages if a bilingual had two separate lexicons for the two languages. The researchers proposed two hypotheses: the **word association hypothesis**, and the **concept mediation hypothesis**. According to the word association hypothesis, words in the second language are directly associated with the words in the first language, particularly for those second language learners whose second language is weaker than the first language.

![Fig. 2.2 (a) Word Association Hypothesis](source: Kroll & Stewart (1994))

On the other hand, the concept mediation hypothesis holds that second language words are not directly associated with first language words, but both language words are associated with a non-linguistic conceptual system which is common to the two languages.
Both the hypotheses are based on lexical-conceptual distinction, which was first proposed by Weinreich (1953), that there is a distinction between lexical items and their concepts or meanings. In order to test these two hypotheses, Potter et al. carried out two experiments. In both experiments, the participants were instructed to read written words aloud, to translate those words into the other language, or to name pictures in one or the other language. The principal aim was to make comparison between picture-naming in the second language and translating from the first to the second language. The first experiment was conducted with proficient Chinese-English bilinguals, and the second with non-fluent English-French bilinguals. The prediction was that for proficient bilinguals of Experiment 1, concept mediation hypothesis would hold good and it would take no longer in naming a picture in the second language than in translating a first language word into the second language. For Experiment 2, the prediction was that word association hypothesis would hold good, as the participants were non-fluent bilinguals, so longer reaction times were expected for naming a picture in second language than for translating a first language word into the second language. However, the results of both the experiments favored concept mediation hypothesis as it was found that, in both the experiments, response to a picture in second language was made faster than to a first language word. Therefore, this study strongly supported a common conceptual representation for two languages, and offered no support for a direct
association between two lexicons, but tried to show that the two lexicons are directly associated to concepts that are non-linguistic.

The contrasting results of the two studies, Scarborough et al. (1984) and Potter et al. (1984), gave rise to a long tradition of controversy, with some of the research studies supporting Independent/Separate conceptual stores for two languages, while others supporting Dependent/Common conceptual stores. The 1984 studies of Potter et al., which strongly supported common conceptual representation for the two languages, were further put to rigorous testing by a number of researchers. One such study was conducted by Kroll and Stewart in 1994. This study actually marked the culmination of a series of experiments, including a study by Kroll and Curley in 1988 which led to the proposition of the Hierarchical Model of Bilingual Memory Representations. It followed another study by Kroll and Stewart in 1990, which further tested the findings of the Hierarchical Model and led to the formulation of a Revised Hierarchical Model (RHM) of Bilingual Memory Representations. In 1994, Kroll and Stewart further substantiated the RHM through more rigorous testing.

As pointed out earlier, Potter et al.’s (1984) finding that concepts universally mediate the connections between a bilingual’s two languages regardless of the level of second language proficiency, was challenged by a number of researchers in that field. Kroll and Curley (1988) replicated Potter et al.’s (1984) study. Kroll and Curley thought that Potter et al.’s less fluent bilinguals might have already gone through an early critical period of second language development in which the languages are lexically mediated. In order to test this hypothesis, they used a wider range of bilingual subjects, including those who had studied L2 for a period of less than two years. Their results supported a developmental hypothesis. Less fluent bilinguals, who had studied L2 for less than two years, produced data in line with the word association hypothesis. Their translation into L2 was faster than picture naming in L2. However, subjects who had studied L2 for more than 2 years produced results consistent with those reported by Potter et al. (1984), that is, in line with the concept mediation hypothesis. Thus, Kroll and Curley (1988) found that less fluent bilinguals lexically mediated their two languages, while more fluent
bilinguals conceptually mediated them. So, there is a developmental shift in second language learning from lexical mediation to conceptual mediation of the two languages. The two models, the word association and the concept mediation, were found to be making a hierarchical organization in a bilingual’s memory, such as, in a less fluent bilingual, the two languages are lexically mediated, but as the bilingual develops into a more fluent one, there develops a concept-mediating for the two languages. Kroll and Curley (1988) also included a second test of the concept mediation hypothesis. They made the subjects name words, translate words, and name pictures in L1 and L2 under two different list conditions. In one condition, the lists of words or pictures were semantically categorized; while in the other, the lists contained a random mixture of items from a number of different semantic categories. The researchers predicted that the bilingual subjects who were relatively fluent in L2, and therefore conceptually mediated their two languages, would benefit from the semantic organization of the lists. They found that the translation performance of the more fluent subjects was surely influenced by the semantic organization of the lists but, to their surprise, the effect was not of facilitation but of interference. More fluent subjects took longer to translate into L2 when the lists were semantically categorized than when they were randomly mixed. In the same way, all subjects took longer in naming pictures in L1 when the lists were categorized than when they were randomly mixed. These results also supported the claim that there was a development shift from word association to concept mediation because only the more proficient bilinguals, who demonstrated concept mediation, also showed category interference in translation. However, it is still confusing that category interference was observed there rather than category facilitation.

In order to account for the translation asymmetry, Kroll and Stewart in 1990 put forward a revised version of the hierarchical model (RHM). According to this model, both types of links, lexical and conceptual, are active in bilingual memory, but their strengths differ with bilingual’s proficiency in L2 and also with relative dominance of L1 to L2.
Fig. 2.3 Revised Hierarchical Model of Lexical and Conceptual Representations in Bilingual Memory.

Source: Kroll & Stewart (1994)

In this model, L1 is shown as larger than L2 on the basis that for most bilinguals, even for those who are relatively fluent, more words are known in the first than in the second language. Lexical links from L2 to L1 are hypothesized to be stronger than the lexical links from L1 to L2 due to the fact that second language learners first acquire the translations of new L2 words. However, the associations between words and concepts are thought to be stronger for L1 than for L2.

According to this model of asymmetric strengths, when a person acquires L2 beyond a stage of very early childhood, there is already a strong link established between L1 lexicon and conceptual memory. During early stages of L2 learning, L2 words set up lexical associations with the L1. As the person becomes more proficient in the L2, direct links with the conceptual memory are also established. The lexical links, however, do not disappear when the conceptual links are acquired. The model also hypothesizes that both types of links, lexical and conceptual, are bidirectional, but they differ in strengths. The lexical link from L2 to L1 is thought to be stronger than the lexical link from L1 to L2 because L2 words were initially linked to L1. In the same way, the link from L1 to conceptual memory is hypothesized to be stronger than the link from L2 lexicon to conceptual memory. Thus, the model clearly implies that there are two routes to translation; the translation from L2 to L1 would be lexically mediated,
while the translation from L1 to L2 would be conceptually mediated. In other words, translation from L1 to L2 would be more influenced by semantic or conceptual factors.

The assumptions made by the Revised Hierarchical Model (1990) were put to rigorous testing by Kroll and Stewart in 1994. They carried out three experiments in which picture naming and bilingual translation were performed in the context of semantically categorized or randomized lists. In Experiment 1, they tested the category interference effect in picture naming, which was already observed by Kroll and Curley (1988). In this experiment, using their first language only, subjects named briefly presented pictures or words one at a time. The pictures and words were made into lists that were either semantically categorized or randomly mixed. The results from Experiment 1 showed that pictures produced category interference when they were presented in a semantically organized list. On the contrary, words did not show sensitivity to the semantic categorization of the list. This finding was consistent with Potter et al.’s (1984) claim that word naming shows activity primarily at the lexical level of processing, and does not seem to activate the conceptual level. Moreover, the finding that picture recall was influenced by semantic categorization while word recall was not offers further evidence that picture naming asks for concept mediation whereas word naming does not. Furthermore, Kroll and Stewart (1994) hypothesized that the category interference in picture naming was caused by increased conceptual activation that engaged a multiple set of corresponding lexical representations, thus producing inference in the retrieval of the most suitable candidate as the name of the picture. Thus produced deeper processing also results in better recall. Therefore, the results of Experiment 1, which replicated the category interference effect in picture naming as reported by Kroll and Curley (1988), not only confirmed the category interference effect in picture naming but also suggested that the source of semantic interference in picture naming was in the mapping between semantic representations and lexical candidates.

In Experiment 2, the authors tried to reduce the requirement for prolonged conceptual access by spacing picture naming trials. Subjects were made to name pictures and words used in Experiment 1 in lists that were either semantically categorized or randomly mixed. However, in each list, there was an
alternation of picture naming and word naming. As already pointed out by Potter et al. (1984) and others (e.g., Potter, Kroll, Yachzel, Carpenter, & Sherman, 1986) that word naming can be done without conceptual access, the alternation of words and pictures in Experiment 2 should reduce the degree of conceptual activation as compared to Experiment 1. The major result of Experiment 2 was that the category interference effect in picture naming was eliminated when picture naming alternated with word naming. Apart from that, a comparison of Experiment 1 and 2 showed that word naming took longer because of the alternation of word and picture naming, whereas picture naming took almost the same time in both the experiments. Experiment 2 showed that it was not only increased lexical activation that produced category interference in picture naming, but prolonged access to related concepts produced increased activation at the conceptual level that made it more difficult to select the most suitable lexical candidate that named the picture.

The first two experiments were, in a way, a sequel to Kroll & Curley’s (1988) study and showed category interference effect in picture naming and that it could be eliminated when picture naming alternated with word naming. However, Experiment 3 aimed at determining whether category interference would occur in bilingual translation with a sample of highly fluent bilinguals. The second goal of this experiment was to test translation asymmetry, that is, to see if bilinguals could translate from L2 to L1 more quickly than from L1 to L2. In their previous study (Kroll and Stewart, 1990), the authors had already proposed that translation asymmetry was due to two distinct routes to translation, that is, translation from L2 to L1 was done on lexical basis, whereas translation from L1 to L2 called for concept mediation. The very process of concept mediation requires additional time in the same way that picture naming takes longer than word naming, and therefore the time to translate from L1 to L2 should be longer than the time to translate from L2 to L1. The Revised Hierarchical Model (RHM) was proposed by Kroll and Stewart (1990) in order to accommodate the translation asymmetry. The model’s claim that there are two routes to translation clearly implies that the two directions of translation differ in the degree to which they are conceptually influenced. Translation from L1 to L2 is assumed to be more sensitive to semantic
or conceptual manipulation; on the other hand, translation from L2 to L1 should be relatively free of this type of manipulation. In Experiment 3, the authors tested category interference in translation. The RHM clearly predicted that category interference should occur for fluent bilingual subjects only when they translated from L1 to L2. In this experiment, the authors not only compared the two directions of translation when performed in categorized and randomized lists, but they also took into account a set of naming conditions to find out the role of lexical-level processing in L1 and L2. Moreover, an incidental recall was performed at the end of the experiment to further look into the consequences of translating in both directions. The RHM predicts that recall after translation from L1 to L2 should be better than recall after translation from L2 to L1 because translation from L1 to L2 requires concept mediation. Twenty-four fluent Dutch-English bilinguals participated in this experiment. Results from this experiment confirmed the prediction of the RHM that translation from L1 to L2 was conceptually mediated and thus took longer, whereas translation from L2 to L1 was accomplished lexically. Furthermore, the category interference effect was observed for translation from L1 to L2 that was assumed to require concept mediation. However, translation from L2 to L1 was not influenced by semantic context of the lists, and it is consistent with the claim of RHM that translation from L2 to L1 is lexically mediated. Moreover, incidental recall was found to be higher for words that were named. Also, it was higher for words in categorized lists than for words in randomized lists. On the whole, the results of Experiment 3 fully supported the predictions of the RHM, that translation from L1 to L2 was conceptually mediated and was also influenced by the semantic context, that is why it took longer to translate from L1 to L2 than from L2 to L1 whereas translation from L2 to L1 seemed to be lexically mediated, like word naming, and was uninfluenced by the semantic context of the task.

Summing up, Kroll and Stewart’s (1994) study, Experiment 1 shows category interference for picture naming in semantically categorized lists. Experiment 2 shows that category interference is eliminated when picture naming alternates with word naming. Whereas, Experiment 3 shows that L1 to L2 translation is analogous to picture naming in that it is conceptually mediated, and also produces
category interference. They have hypothesized that only L1 to L2 translation requires concept mediation. Translation from L2 to L1 is faster than translation from L1 to L2 and does not show category interference effect, which supports the claim that L2-L1 translation is lexically mediated. Moreover, category interference effect is also observed for cognates when translation is done from L1 to L2, which implies concept mediation though the lexical features are shared.

The results of Experiment 3 fully support the predictions of the Revised Hierarchical Model (RHM) of bilingual memory representations (shown in Fig. 3). Translation from L2 to L1 is lexically mediated and it is faster than translation from L1 to L2, which is conceptually mediated. Furthermore, there is category interference only for L1 to L2 translation, which is conceptually mediated. Translation from L2 to L1 is not affected by semantic context. It is also observed that category interference results in category facilitation in recall which demonstrates the advantages of having translated through conceptual rather than lexical mediation. In this study, the authors also undertook an analysis of reaction time differences in naming Dutch words and English words, which supported the assumption of the RHM that L2 lexicon was smaller than L1 lexicon, and therefore required additional time to access. Moreover, the authors have repeatedly pointed out the phenomenon of developmental shift, that is, the strengths of the connections between L2 lexicon and concepts gradually increase with the increase in L2 proficiency. The developmental shift phenomenon is a very important feature of the RHM, which is of particular significance to Pakistani P-U-E trilinguals.

Thus, the Revised Hierarchical Model (RHM) of bilingual memory representations, which was first proposed by Kroll and Stewart (1990), was further tested and substantiated by Kroll and Stewart (1994). The 1994 study of Kroll and Stewart clearly marks the culmination of a series of rigorous empirical research which began in 1988 with Kroll and Curley.

The main features of the RHM can be outlined as follows:

i. Makes a clear distinction between lexical and conceptual representations
ii. Makes a distinction between the L1 and the L2 lexicons, and therefore it is possible to assume a selective access to one or the other lexicon

iii. Asymmetry between L1 and L2 processing is clearly outlined

iv. Advocates developmental shift in bilinguals

It is the above-mentioned features of the RHM which have been inspiring a lot of research since 1994. Most of the studies have dealt with one feature of the RHM at a time. Quite recently, Brysbaert, Verreyt, and Duyck (2010) conducted a critical survey of the studies testing the RHM’s predictions. They tabulated 165 published studies on the RHM in a chronological order from 1993 to 2009 that further indicates that the RHM is not only valid till today, but also modern till now and is stimulating more and more research. Out of those 165 studies, Brysbaert et al. reported that 64 studies had been conducted on asymmetry between L1 and L2 processing, 30 on the developmental change in bilinguals, 13 studies on common conceptual system shared by L1 and L2, and 6 on the RHM’s notion of two separate lexicons and the selective view of lexical access. Above 65% of these studies found evidence in line with the RHM while 35% did not, but that does not undermine the huge contribution the RHM has rendered to the field of bilingual language processing. From this report, it can also be noted that the two most studied aspects of the RHM are:

i. The asymmetry between L1 and L2 processing

ii. The developmental change in bilinguals

It is these two aspects of the RHM that the present study is the most interested in with reference to Pakistani Punjabi-Urdu-English (P-U-E) trilinguals because translation asymmetry is a phenomenon that is widely experienced by Pakistani English language learners. Moreover, a developmental shift in trilinguals is also a common experience.

As mentioned earlier, since 1994, a number of research studies have been conducted to test various features of the RHM till very recently. In a way, the RHM has become a tradition, continuing
from nearly two decades. However, a few attempts have been made to modify this model. One such
testament was made by Heredia (1996), who introduced a re-Revision of the Hierarchical Model. In
a previous study, Heredia (1995), he had highly proficient Spanish-English bilinguals as participants, and
manipulated word frequency (high frequency words; word frequencies higher than 40 occurrences per
1,000,000) and word concreteness (concrete vs. abstract) as variables. The bilinguals participated in a
translation task and in a translation-recognition task. He found that both translation directions, L1 to L2
and L2 to L1, benefitted from the word concreteness effect. But, in the abstract word conditions, L2 to L1
translations were slower than L1 to L2 translations in the translation task as well as in the translation
recognition task. These results do not comply with the RHM. In the first case, under the concrete word
conditions, the predicted language asymmetry was not seen. The results showed that both L1 to L2 and
L2 to L1 translation directions were sensitive to conceptual factors. Secondly, under the abstract word
conditions, quite contrary to the RHM, L2 to L1 translation took longer than L1 to L2 translation,
suggesting that L2 to L1 translation was probably more sensitive to conceptual factors.

In order to reconcile the results with the RHM, Heredia (1996) explains that the participants in his
1995 study were highly proficient in both Spanish and English, but English though their L2, had become
their dominant language because they had received most of their formal education in English and it was
their more active language in everyday activities. Heredia comments that the RHM is a model of
language proficiency, and does not take language dominance into account. He suggested that “this model
(RHM) can only explain bilingual memory for early bilinguals and not for highly advanced bilinguals’
(p.4). That is why he tried to modify the RHM. Therefore, he asserted that the Re-Revision (R-2)
Hierarchical Model should not be concerned with the order in which the languages (L1 and L2) were
learned, but with which language is the More Dominant Language (MDL) and which is the Least
Dominant Language (LDL). As this model does not distinguish between L1 and L2, Heredia points out
that it leaves a possibility for a bilingual’s L2 to become the more dominant language. He further points
out that the Re-Revisioned Hierarchical Model (R-2 HM) does not suggest that the LDL lexicon is smaller
than the MDL lexicon, but the information in the LDL lexicon is not readily available due to underuse. However, the nature of lexical links between MDL and LDL and of their conceptual links with the conceptual store remains the same as was hypothesized in the RHM.

Fig. 2.4 Re-Revised Hierarchical Model (R-2 HM)

Source: Heredia (1996)

There is no doubt that the R-2 HM can account for both high and low proficiency bilinguals, and for those bilinguals whose L1 is more dominant, as well as for those whose L2 is more dominant. But, despite its all encompassing nature, Heredia’s R-2 HM could not become as popular as the RHM is till today.

Long after Heredia (1996), another attempt to modify the RHM was made by Pavlenko in 2009. She based this modification on three models of bilingual memory representation. The models are: the Revised Hierarchical Model (RHM) (Kroll & Stewart, 1994), the Distributed Feature Model (DFM) (De Groot, 1992), and Shared Asymmetrical Model (SAM) (Dong et al., 2005). Though she reviews the three models and examines their strengths and weaknesses, the model she proposes is largely built on the RHM, and this is why it is named the Modified Hierarchical Model (MHM). According to Pavlenko, her model retains the developmental progression of the RHM from lexical to conceptual mediation in L2 learners, while from the other two models, the DFM and the SAM, it borrows the idea of shared and partially shared representations.
The first distinguishing feature of the MHM is the organization of the conceptual store. Whereas the RHM hypothesizes a unified conceptual store, the MHM’s conceptual representations can be fully shared, partially overlapping or entirely language-specific. Due to this feature, the MHM is capable of explaining factors such as code switching, lexical borrowing, and context-dependent nature of bilingual competence. The second distinguishing aspect of the MHM is the recognition of the phenomenon of conceptual transfer. Pavlenko differentiates between semantic and conceptual levels of representation. She asserts that the MHM is able to account for the discrepancies in a bilingual’s performance.

Pavlenko’s Modified Hierarchical Model (MHM) no doubt offers an insight into the organization and working of the conceptual store of a bilingual, and explains a number of factors relevant to a bilingual’s conceptual representations including code switching, lexical borrowing and conceptual restructuring. However, it seems to be more of a model of second language acquisition, and discusses at length most of the aspects pertaining to second language acquisition. Moreover, the MHM repeatedly talks about the “target-like” and “non-target-like performance” (p. 149, 150), and also about the “development of target-like linguistic categories” (p. 150), which should not be the aim of a model of bilingual memory representations. And, if “target-like performance” is the same as native-like proficiency, then that is a debatable issue in itself.

After discussing Heredia’s (1996) and Pavlenko’s (2009) modifications of the RHM, it can be said that, though unpopular yet, but attempts have been made to modify the RHM. These attempts mainly focused at including those factors in the RHM which it was apparently incapable of explaining, such as Heredia (1996) attempted to include the issue of language dominance into the RHM, and Pavlenko (2009) included partially or fully shared, and entirely language-specific categories, so that it could explain code switching, lexical borrowing, and conceptual restructuring. Even though they suggested some modifications to the RHM, both Heredia’s and Pavlenko’s models dealt with explaining bilingual memory representations, just as the RHM did. Surprisingly, no attempts have so far been made to extend
the RHM to multilingual memory so that it could explain the organization and working of three or more lexicons. Explaining why such attempts are important, Dijkstra (2003, p. 24) maintains:

Assuming that the theoretical frameworks that have been proposed for monolinguals and bilinguals also apply to multilinguals is the most simple theoretical viewpoint, and for reasons of parsimony, we should adhere to that view unless new evidence shows it is not psychologically valid. Language processing in general is so complex, and multilingual processing even more, that this may be the best research strategy to follow until we have collected more evidence.

So, what needs to be done is to collect more evidence on multilingual processing, and not just stick to the models proposed for monolinguals and bilinguals, but in the light of ‘new evidence’ try to extend them to multilinguals. The case of Pakistani P-U-E trilinguals is not only an interesting one, but also holds great promise for a multilingual study. Developmental aspect, a hallmark of the RHM, is clearly noticeable among P-U-E trilinguals. Kroll and Sunderman (2003) point out: “RHM is explicitly a developmental model. It assumes that the connections between words and concepts in bilingual memory change with increasing proficiency in the L2” (p. 115). Out of scores of psycholinguistic experimental studies, it is largely because of its developmental aspect that the RHM is the main focus of this study. The second most significant characteristic of the RHM is translation asymmetry, which needs to be explored in P-U-E trilinguals experiences of dealing with the three languages.

2.1.1 Some of the studies examining the RHM

As already mentioned in the previous sub-section, a number of studies have been conducted examining the RHM, most of them finding support in favor of the RHM while some of them against it. A trilingual study that lent support to the RHM was conducted by de Groot and Hoeks (1995). They examined the developmental hypothesis of the RHM and also the development of multilingual lexico-semantic organization in 48 unbalanced Dutch-English-French trilingual adults, whose native language was Dutch, and of the two foreign languages, English was stronger and French relatively weak. The main purpose of the study was to test the developmental hypothesis that predicted word association in the case of the native language and a less fluent foreign language (French in this case), and concept mediation in the case
of the native language and a more fluent foreign language (English in this case). Word translation tasks of translation production and translation recognition were employed. The participants were made to translate from their native language Dutch to both of the foreign languages, English and French. The data strongly supported concept mediation in the Dutch-English translation conditions and word association in Dutch-French conditions and thus indicated that their Dutch-English-French trilingual participants seemed to be possessing word-association structure for their Dutch-French pair, and concept-mediation structure for their Dutch-English pair of languages. The study also rendered support to the developmental hypothesis by showing that: “the bilingual lexico-semantic system develops from a word-association structure to a concept-mediation structure as proficiency in the nonnative language increases” (p. 713).

Significant support to the RHM comes from another trilingual study conducted by Francis and Gallard (2005), who examined ‘concept mediation in trilingual translation’. For this purpose, they elicited translation responses from 48 English-Spanish-French trilinguals. Francis and Gallard pointed out that the bilinguals translated in two directions but trilinguals were able to translate in six directions, and it was the availability of more translation directions than languages that provided a better opportunity for the study of underlying cognitive processes. In this trilingual study, translation response time and error rates were measured for unrehearsed items in all six directions of trilingual translation. Translation response times were predicted to reflect relative proficiency of the trilinguals in the six available translation directions. In this study, different translation directions were chosen with the view to facilitate word comprehension and word production processes that were employed during concept-mediated translation. The authors predicted that translation directions with the same stimulus languages would share word comprehension processes, and translation directions with the same response language would share word production processes. Similarly, they hypothesized that translating from a stimulus language to different response languages would facilitate word comprehension processes, and translating from different stimulus languages to one response language would facilitate word production processes. In the light of the RHM, the authors expected that translation from the most fluent language (English) to the
least fluent language (French) would be concept-mediated, whereas the opposite translation (FE) would be word-mediated. The participants were tested individually on each of the six possible translation directions (ES, EF, FE, FS, SE, and SF). The authors found that response times and error rates exhibited a systematic pattern which was consistent with the proficiency, language exposure and recent usage as was reported by the participants in a language background questionnaire. Testing participants’ performance for translation with different combinations of the trilinguals’ three languages showed that translation asymmetry varied with the difference in proficiency between the two languages involved. This finding is consistent with the RHCM. However, word mediation for French-English (from least fluent to the most fluent language) translation was not supported, which is consistent with the results from other studies on balanced bilinguals (such as: Zeelenberg and Pecher, 2003; and Basnight-Brown and Altarriba, 2007), but not consistent with the findings from unbalanced bilinguals.

Investigating the way in which newly learnt vocabulary is connected to the semantic memory, Comesana, Soares, and Lima (2010) in a recent study explored the role of learning method (L2 learning as direct translation of L1 vs. L2 word-picture method), and the type of L2 words (cognates or noncognates) to be learned in the early stages of new vocabulary acquisition. There were 42 participants, who were native speakers of European Portuguese. None of them had previously learnt Basque, which was used as L2 in the study. The participants were divided into two groups and made to learn 42 high frequency Basque nouns: one group learnt the new vocabulary as a direct translation of L1, while the other group learnt new L2 words by associating them to pictures. Later, the participants were tested on translation recognition task. Of the two groups, the one with participants that had learnt new L2 vocabulary through L1 translation showed larger semantic interference effect, which indicated stronger conceptual links between L2 words and concepts. Moreover, the participants learnt cognates more easily than the non-cognates which show stronger lexical links. The results of the study provide full support to the RHCM showing that the conceptual processing of the new L2 words in L2 beginners is lexically accomplished through L1, and that conceptual links between L2 words and concepts are initially
established through L1. The findings of the study also have important implications for second language acquisition.

Considerable support to the RHM comes from studies examining asymmetrical cross-language priming effect. Priming is a phenomenon in which a word (e.g., rain) is responded to faster when preceded by a related word (e.g., cloud), than when preceded by an irrelevant word (e.g., dog). In a bilingual study, the prime may be in L1 and the target in L2, or vice versa. Generally, cross-language priming is obtained when an L2 target is preceded by a related L1 prime, which is consistent with the RHM because accessing L2 words through L1 requires conceptual mediation (Heredia, 2008; p. 56).

One such study was conducted by Perea, Dunabeitia, and Carreiras (2008). In this study, they tried to examine whether there was an automatic semantic priming effect across languages for non-cognates with highly proficient bilinguals. Three experiments were conducted. A notable aspect of Experiments 1 and 2 was that the participants were early, simultaneous Basque-Spanish bilinguals as they had been exposed to the two languages on daily basis since birth. That is why the authors did not use the terms L1 and L2 to refer to Basque and Spanish. Moreover, no asymmetries were predicted in terms of L1-L2 and L2-L1 priming effects, as none of the two languages of the participants could be called an L1 or an L2. Experiment 1 was designed to examine between-language associative/semantic priming effects using non-cognates for both Basque-Spanish and Spanish-Basque prime-target pairs. The results showed that highly proficient bilinguals showed significant associative/semantic priming effects across languages for non-cognate pairs in lexical decision task. The results were similar for Basque-Spanish pairs and Spanish-Basque pairs, which further confirmed that the participants were balanced, highly fluent bilinguals. In Experiment 2, another group of balanced, highly fluent bilinguals participated. This Experiment differed from Experiment 1 in that the word targets were always Spanish words, and the primes were always Basque word. The results of Experiment 2 showed that the magnitude of the associative/semantic priming effect for non-cognate pairs was very similar between and within languages. Thus, the results suggested the presence of a common, language-independent conceptual store.
Experiment 3 differed from the previous experiments in that the participants in this Experiment were relatively late bilinguals. They were all native speakers of Spanish and started learning Basque at the age of six at school. The materials and the procedure in this experiment were the same as in Experiment 2. Once again, the authors found that the magnitude of the associative/semantic priming effect for non-cognate pairs was very similar between and within languages. The priming effect obtained with relatively late, proficient bilinguals was similar to the priming effect observed in Experiment 2 with early, simultaneous highly proficient bilinguals. Thus, the results render support to the RHM which predicts that highly proficient bilinguals have access to a common conceptual store for the two languages. Moreover, a support to the developmental aspect of the RHM can also be inferred.

Zeelenberg and Pecher (2003) tested cross-language repetition priming in conceptual implicit memory tasks. They tried to establish that the previous studies failed to find cross-language repetition priming because they employed tasks that largely required lexical or orthographic processing of the stimuli instead of conceptual processing. For this purpose, they performed a series of five experiments with relatively fluent Dutch-English bilinguals. All the five experiments had two phases each: a study phase and a test phase. In Experiment 1, in both phases, the participants were instructed to make an animacy decision task, that is, if the presented word represented a ‘living’ thing or a ‘non-living’ thing. This task obviously required conceptual processing. Experiment 2 employed a lexical decision task in both phases as the participants had to identify words from non-words. The authors obtained substantial cross-language repetition priming in animacy decision task, which was a conceptual implicit memory task. However, the results of Experiment 2 showed no evidence for cross-language repetition priming in lexical decision task. These results are in line with the hierarchical models of bilingual processing that hypothesize common conceptual representations but separate lexical representations for translation equivalents. The authors further tested these findings in Experiments 3-5. Experiment 3 combined both Experiment 1 and Experiment 2, means the animacy decision task in the study phase was followed by lexical decision task in the test phase. In Experiment 4, cross-language repetition priming was tested in a
lexical decision task with a study-test interval that was shorter than that in Experiment 1. In Experiment 5, in both the study and the test phases, the participants were required to make a man-made decision task whether the presented word represented a ‘man-made’ object or a ‘not man-made’ object. The most significant findings were obtained from Experiments 1 and 5, in which the authors obtained evidence for cross-language repetition priming in two conceptual implicit memory tasks namely: animacy decision task and man-made decision task. On the whole, these results show that cross-language repetition priming is obtained in tasks that require conceptual processing, but not in tasks that require lexical processing alone. It shows that different tasks provide different answers to the question of whether translation equivalents have common conceptual representations or not. This study clearly shows that translation equivalents have separate representations at the lexical level, but common representations at the conceptual level. This finding is consistent with the RHM. However, the absence of cross-language repetition priming in Experiments 3 and 4 shows that conceptual representations were accessed directly from the L2 lexical representations and not through the L1 lexical representations. Therefore, asymmetry between L1 and L2 processing is not supported. Explaining the results, the authors maintain that the lack of asymmetry is due to the fact that the participants were fluent Dutch-English bilinguals.

Inspired form the studies on the organization of bilingual memory, Basnight-Brown and Altarriba (2007) undertook an empirical work with the view to determine whether each language in a bilingual’s memory is represented in a separate language store or both languages share a common conceptual (memory) store. For this purpose, the authors examined lexical memory organization in Spanish-English bilinguals under highly constrained experimental conditions. Two experiments were conducted with a group of highly proficient but unbalanced Spanish-English bilinguals who had experienced a language dominance shift, that is, their L2 (English) was their more dominant language. Experiment 1 examined cross-language priming with semantically related and translation word pairs in both language directions (L1-L2 and L2-L1). Experiment 2 used the same materials as Experiment 1, but included a mask with the view to reduce visibility of the prime. The authors claim this study to be the first that examines both
semantic and translation priming in both masked and unmasked paradigms in the same bilingual population. The results of Experiment 1 showed that translation priming was found in both languages directions (L1-L2 and L2-L1), but semantic priming was found only in the more dominant language to less dominant language direction. In Experiment 2, which employed a masked priming paradigm, no semantic priming was found in either language direction, however, considerable translation priming was found in both language directions. These results suggest that translations are probably stored in a manner different from semantically related word pairs. Whereas the RHM would predict asymmetrical translation priming across languages, the two experiments in this study show similar (symmetrical) priming for translation equivalents for the two language directions. These results indicate that either the conceptual links for L1 and L2 are equally strong, or the priming ‘across the two languages’ is done through lexical mediation. The results of these two experiments failed to show the asymmetry in priming predicted by the RHM. The authors attribute this lack of asymmetry in priming to the fact that “the bilinguals in this experiment acquired both of their languages within a few years of each other. Although it is apparent that these participants were dominant in one language over the other, they did have ages of acquisition for both languages that were less than 6 years old. Due to the young age at which they learned both of their languages, it is possible that they had more access to conceptual and semantic information, as compared with individuals who leaned their L2 during or after adolescence” (p. 963).

Hatzidaki and Pothos (2008) examined the role of bilingual memory during translation as proposed by the RHM. Their main aim was to test the hypothesis that first language to second language (L1-L2) translation involves mainly the semantic memory, whereas, the second language to first language (L2-L1) translation involves lexical memory. For this purpose, the authors conducted three experiments: Experiment 1 with Greek-English and English-Greek bilinguals and Experiment 2 and 3 with French-English and English-French bilinguals. All the three experiments consisted of two parts. In the first part, the bilinguals were tested on an oral translation task in the L1-L2 and L2-L1 directions. While in the second part, they were tested on a word recognition task. The results from the translation task supported
the RHM hypothesis that translation from L1 to L2 was more conceptually mediated, while the translation from L2 to L1 was more lexically associated. However, the results from recognition task did not support the RHM, because the bilinguals in the L1-L2 direction did not show any conceptual mediation just like the bilinguals who performed in the L2-L1 direction. Interpreting the conflicting results of the two experimental tasks, the authors emphasized the significance of the nature of the task employed in how language was processed in the experiments that were conducted on bilinguals. They pointed out: “the controversial results of certain studies … may be because of differences between experimental tasks, bilinguals’ level of proficiency in the nonnative language, and the kind of material or word type used” (p. 144-145). These three factors are significant and have repeatedly been pointed out in almost all of the studies discussed in this section.

It should be noted that most of the studies reporting evidence against the asymmetry between L1 and L2 processing have used highly proficient bilinguals as their research participants, which is not actually counter to the predictions of the RHM. Rather this evidence is further supportive because the RHM, being a developmental model, predicts asymmetry in less proficient bilinguals only, while in the case of highly proficient bilinguals, the RHM predicts that the conceptual links are developed between L2 lexicon and conceptual store, so L1 and L2 processing becomes more similar (as pointed out by Dunabeitia et al., 2010; and Zeelenberg and Pecher, 2003). However, it is worth pointing out that the RHM does not hold good for simultaneous bilinguals, who develop strong conceptual links with both of their lexicons since very beginning (as shown by Perea, Dunabeitia, and Carreiras, 2008).

However, there are some studies which suggest that there may be direct conceptual access to the L2 lexicon even at early stages of L2 learning (such as: Altaribba and Mathis, 1997; Comesana, Perea, Pineiro, & Fraga, 2009; Duyck and Brysbaert, 2004 and 2008). Summarizing the results of their study with Dutch-English-German trilinguals, Duyck and Brysbaert (2008) maintain: “we have obtained evidence for semantic access in backward translation (that is, L2-L1), but not in forward translation (that is, L1-L2)” (p. 111, emphasis added). These results are directly contradictory to the RHM, which
assumes that forward translation (L1-L2) is semantically mediated while backward translation (L2-L1) is conceptually done.

Another contradiction to the RHM comes from a study by Menenti (2006), who found evidence for lexical mediation in highly proficient bilinguals. Though her study confirmed the occurrence of developmental pattern in highly fluent German-Dutch participants, but showed that even highly proficient bilinguals made use of lexical mediation in a lexical decision task. Studying L2-L1 word association in proficient German-Dutch bilinguals through phonological priming effect in lexical decision, she found that lexical mediation was dependent on task demands. She interestingly noted: “The same bilinguals appear to use the direct conceptual route when doing semantic decision, and the lexical route when doing lexical decision,” and continued thus, “Further research will be necessary to investigate what task demands influence the use of the lexical link. This is important because neither lexical decision nor semantic decision are very natural tasks. It therefore remains to be seen how much L1 word form access is likely to happen in an everyday context” (p. 24).

In short, though a number of studies have found evidence supporting the RHM’s significant features of developmental aspect and translation asymmetry, yet there are some studies reporting evidence against the RHM and should not be ignored. For instance, Menenti (2006) found evidence against concept mediation in highly proficient bilinguals and raised serious concerns regarding the research tasks used in psycholinguistic experimental studies not being ‘natural’ but detached from ‘everyday context’. Likewise, after obtaining conflicting results on the RHM, Hatzidaki and Pothos (2008) put forth a similar concern. They said: “the nature of a task could induce the participants to use a combination of cognitive mechanisms that may not have been employed otherwise” (p. 143). Here, ‘otherwise’ apparently seems to mean natural, everyday context, which is exactly what Menenti pointed out. So, there is something that is missing, and needs to be taken care of. As the criticism is mainly on the nature of research tasks that are used in the RHM and other psycholinguistic experimental studies in general, therefore, the research
tasks need to be reassessed keeping in view their relevance to the use of language(s) in natural, everyday context.

2.1.2 Section Summary

This section briefly reviews some of the prominent psycholinguistic experimental studies that have been conducted to explain the working of bilingual memory. Weinreich’s (1953) seminal work on bilingual memory introduced three different bilingual memory systems: coordinate, compound and subordinate. A major development in the field advanced by Weinreich was a distinction between lexical and conceptual memory systems. Ervin and Osgood (1954) explained two of Weinreich’s systems in behavioristic terms and took into account the context of L2 acquisition. Criticizing their formulation on the basis of its inability to account for the working of a bilingual’s two languages, Kolers (1963) put forward the Independence/Interdependence Hypothesis, that is, the bilinguals organized their two languages in two separate memory stores, or in a single memory store. Working with 34 bilinguals, he was able to show that the bilinguals stored their two languages in two separate or independent memory stores. Kolers’ results were put to further investigation in two separate studies. One of them was carried out by Scarborough et al. (1984) whose results supported Kolers’ findings that a bilingual’s memory was organized in two separate lexicons and further added that the two lexicons had two separate conceptual systems. The second study based on Kolers’ findings carried out by Potter et al. (1984) proposed two models to explain the working of bilingual memory: word association model and concept mediation model. Both the models were based on Kolers’ assumption that there were two separate lexicons but a single conceptual store for the two languages of a bilingual. The two studies, Scarborough et al. (1984) and Potter et al. (1984) led to the controversy of separate vs. common conceptual stores for the two languages of a bilingual. Potter et al.’s (1984) study was put to rigorous testing by Kroll and Curley (1988) who showed that the two models, word association and concept mediation, were able to explain the working of bilingual memory when put in a hierarchical order, word association in a less fluent bilingual and concept mediation when the bilingual becomes more fluent. The model that they proposed
in this way was termed the Hierarchical Model of Bilingual Memory Representations. Kroll and Stewart (1990) found that the Hierarchical Model was not able to account for translation asymmetry in bilinguals, and so updated the model to the Revised Hierarchical Model (RHM) of Bilingual Memory Representations, which was able to explain translation asymmetry in bilinguals. Kroll and Stewart (1994), through more rigorous testing, further substantiated the RHM, which stands unchallenged till today. Major features of the RHM are: lexical-conceptual distinction, two separate lexicons for the two languages of a bilingual, asymmetry in L1 and L2 processing, and developmental shift in bilinguals. Quite recently, Brysbaert, Verreyt, and Duyck (2010) proposed that the RHM should be replaced with another model as it has been a subject of research for 15 years, but did not come up with a model which could match the rigor of the RHM. Heredia (1996) proposed a modification to the RHM so that it could account for the issue of language dominance. Pavlenko (2009) also proposed a modification to the RHM in order to make it explain conceptual restructuring of a bilingual, but laid greater emphasis on second language acquisition. In short, the two modified versions of the RHM, Heredia’s (1996) and Pavlenko’s (2009), could not gain much popularity with the bilingual memory researchers, and thus did not yield much research. Hence, it can be said that the RHM stands out as the most robust model explaining the working of a bilingual’s memory from less proficiency level to that of high proficiency, and seems to hold great promise for P-U-E trilinguals. Towards the end of the section, some studies examining the RHM have been reported, most of them supporting the RHM, whereas, a few coming up with conflicting findings owing to the irrelevance of research tasks used in the RHM and other psycholinguistic experimental studies in general.

2.2 Lexical Access in Bilinguals

No doubt a number of mechanisms are involved in bilingual memory including lexical access, lexical selection, lexical transfer, and many more. This section will particularly focus on the phenomenon of lexical access in a bilingual in order to see the implications for a multilingual. More importantly, it will focus on the contribution of the RHM in explaining lexical processing in bilinguals.
If lexical access is defined as the process of activating the ‘right’ word at the ‘right’ time, then it can be said that lexical access is an ability not limited to bilinguals only, but equally operative in the monolinguals as well. However, in order to make it more specific to bilinguals, lexical access can be defined as ‘the ability to access the right word in the right language’ (French and Jacquet, 2004, p. 89). In short, the question of interest is: How are the appropriate form and meaning accessed when bilinguals speak any one of their two languages? And, in the case of multilinguals the question becomes: How are the lexical form and meaning accessed when multilinguals speak any one of their three or more languages? The situation seems all the more complex in the case of multilingual lexicon(s) and lexical access. A number of psycholinguistic studies have addressed this issue in bilinguals. The RHM also has something to offer on this.

The RHM, which is considered so far the most influential model of word translation (Duyck and Brysbaert, 2002), and thus is able to account for bilingual performance in language production that of course cannot be accomplished without lexical processing. As the RHM is a developmental model, two distinctions in lexical access can be viewed:

i. Lexical access at low proficiency level

ii. Lexical access at high proficiency level

As already discussed in Section 1 of the chapter, the RHM is a combination of the two models proposed by Potter et al. (1984), namely: word association model and concept mediation model. The RHM hypothesizes that during early stages of second language acquisition, L2 words are associated with their L1 translation equivalents for the purpose of accessing meaning. Therefore, strong lexical links are developed from L2 to L1 lexicon, whereas the L1 to L2 lexical links are assumed to be relatively weak. Thus, at the early stages of L2 acquisition, only word-to-word connections link L2 lexicon to L1 lexicon. In other words, during the initial phase of bilingual proficiency, the word association model is more operative in L2 lexical access. However, with increasing L2 proficiency, direct conceptual links from L2
lexicon to concepts begin to develop, in other words, concept mediation becomes increasingly operative. Thus, more proficient bilinguals have direct access to concepts for both of their languages. However, the conceptual links will be stronger for L1 than for L2. It can be said that, according to the RHM, even for the balanced bilinguals, L1 remains the more dominant language to which concepts are always readily available. Nonetheless, the asymmetry between L1-L2 and L2-L1 processing reduces with increase in proficiency.

A study examining lexical access at the two levels of bilinguals’ proficiency was carried out by Kroll, Michael, Tokowicz, and Dufour (2002). In this study, two experiments were conducted that examined the process of lexical access for both L1 and L2 during L2 acquisition. In both the experiments, the performance of less and more fluent bilinguals was compared in language production tasks that required word naming or single word translation. In Experiment 1, there were two groups of native English speakers, one group more fluent than the other in French as their L2. Each participant in both the groups was made to perform a word naming task. The authors found that the less proficient bilinguals were slower in naming and translating words into L2 than their more fluent counterparts. There was also observed an asymmetry in translation performance in such a way that forward translation was slower than backward translation. The less fluent bilinguals were also slower than the more fluent ones to name words in English, which was the L1 of both the groups. In Experiment 2, again the performance of two groups of second language learners was compared on word naming and single word translation tasks. One group consisted of non-fluent learners at very early stages of second language learning, while the other group was of relatively fluent bilinguals. In this experiment, the proficiency difference of the two groups was greater than it was in Experiment 1; the purpose was to see differences in lexical processing more clearly. In this experiment, a reading span task was also included in order to examine individual differences in participants’ cognitive capacity. In the second experiment, similar results as in Experiment 1 were obtained on word naming and translation tasks. On the reading span task, the fluent bilinguals scored higher than the learners, providing evidence for the greater cognitive capacity.
of the fluent bilinguals over learners. Supporting the predictions of the RHM, the main results of these two experiments showed that L1 to L2 translation took longer to perform than L2 to L1 translation, and that this asymmetry was larger for the learners than for the more proficient bilinguals, thus providing evidence that with increasing L2 proficiency, learners became faster in naming words in L2 and in translating words from one language to the other. In this way, these experiments provided evidence for the development of conceptual links between L2 lexicon and conceptual store with increase in L2 proficiency. Though apparently it seems that the RHM favors selective view of lexical access (an issue to be discussed in the next section), but the two lexicons (L1 and L2) are heavily dependent on each other. Moreover, the two lexicons influence each other to a considerable extent, and it is just because of this mutual influence that the less proficient bilinguals are slower to name words in their L1 when compared to more proficient bilinguals on the same task, as seen in this Kroll et al. study.

Another study examining lexical access through the RHM was conducted by Dunabeitia, Perea and Carreiras (2010). The purpose of this study was to examine bidirectional (that is, L1 to L2 and L2 to L1) masked translation priming effects for cognates and non-cognates with balanced simultaneous bilinguals. The authors claim that this study is the first examining completely balanced simultaneous bilinguals in a masked translation priming experiment. They define masked priming as a paradigm in which a mask, lowercase prime is presented briefly (for about 30-60 milliseconds) and is subsequently replaced by the upper case target. In this study, all the participants were balanced and simultaneous Basque-Spanish bilinguals. Because of the participants in this study being balanced simultaneous bilinguals, the authors refer to them as bilinguals with two L1’s (comparable to Perea et al.’s (2008) study, discussed in Section 1.1). For such participants, the RHM would predict similar processing (and therefore, similar translation priming effects) in the two language directions. The authors found that balanced simultaneous bilinguals showed translation priming effects for both cognates and non-cognates, however, masked translation priming effects were greater for cognates than for non-cognates.
Furthermore, no clear asymmetry between the magnitude of the translation priming effects across the two languages (Basque-Spanish and Spanish-Basque) was found. This study, thus, provides empirical support for the RHM by showing that highly proficient bilinguals have access to the shared conceptual store for the two languages. It also supports the second phase of the RHM, which predicts that more proficient bilinguals develop conceptual links with their L2 lexicon also, and therefore their L1-L2 and L2-L1 processing becomes more similar, thus less asymmetry should be observed. As the authors had already predicted, they maintain that the “lack of asymmetry observed in the present experiment is a consequence of the proficiency level of these bilinguals—who have native knowledge and daily usage of both languages, which implies more stable lexical representations and stronger interlingual connections” (p.105). In short, on the basis of translation priming effects for both cognates and non-cognates, this study has shown that completely balanced simultaneous bilinguals develop symmetrical between-language links, and are able to access words from both the lexicons through concept mediation. The results, thus, fully support the predictions of the RHM.

Some of the studies discussed in Section 1.1 also throw light on the way lexical access is accomplished in less proficient and highly proficient bilinguals. For example, de Groot and Hoeks (1995) were able to show that their Dutch-English-French trilingual participants lexically mediated their less fluent foreign language, French, but conceptually mediated their more fluent foreign language, English, and further supported that with increasing proficiency, the word-association structure of the less fluent language develops into a concept mediation structure. Similarly, Comesana, Soares, and Lima’s (2010) study also showed lexical mediation in L2 learners.

All of the studies discussed above show that the RHM assumes two distinct routes to L2 lexical access at two different levels of proficiency in L2, that is, low and high proficiency levels, and the two routes to lexical access are word association and concept mediation respectively.
2.2.1 Bilingual Lexical Access and the Issue of Selective/Nonselective Lexical Selection

As discussed in the previous sub-section, lexical access can simply be defined as accessing the right word from a lexicon. But, this definition seems too simplistic in the case of a bilingual, and all the more so for a multilingual. There, the issue is of accessing the right word from the right lexicon while ignoring its equivalent in the other lexicon(s), and this process is called lexical selection. There are two contradictory views regarding lexical selection: selective and nonselective view. According to the selective view of lexical selection, in a bilingual at the time of language production, only the target language is activated. On the other hand, according to the nonselective view, both the languages of a bilingual are activated to a more or less equal degree. A number of studies investigating lexical selection in bilinguals have been carried out during the last two decades, some of them providing support to the selective view of lexical selection, while others supporting the non-selective view of lexical selection. Next, some studies from both the conflicting sides will be reviewed. The purpose is not only to explore the nature of this unresolved issue in bilinguals, but also try to find out why the two contrasting sides actually contrast each other and if reconciliation between the two is possible.

A good point to start with the issue of language selection is Levelt’s (1999) model of monolingual production, which is a culmination of his decade long (beginning in 1989) empirical work. According to this model, production of words is a stage-wise process, from conceptual preparation to articulation. He proposes six stages of this process, namely: conceptual preparation, lexical selection, morphological encoding and syllabification, phonetic encoding, articulation, and self monitoring. At the heart of conceptual preparation, the first stage in this process, lies the speaker’s intention to communicate which triggers off the complex process of word production. Levelt’s, however, is a model of monolingual language production, therefore a single lexicon is involved and the question of selective or nonselective mechanism does not come into play. But, there are models of multi/bilingual language production that are developed on the basis of Levelt’s monolingual production model. And, when it is multi/bilingual language production, the issue of selective or nonselective lexical access is very pertinent. de Bot’s
multilingual processing model is one of those models. This model includes all the six stages as proposed by Levelt (1999), the only difference being at the first stage of conceptual preparation, which in this model of multilingual processing not only includes the speaker’s intention to communicate but also includes the language in which the multilingual speaker wants to say something. Thus, according to this model, language is selected at the conceptual preparation stage, which is a preverbal stage, and it is the inclusion of language at this stage which qualifies it as a model of multilingual processing. As the language of an utterance is determined at the preverbal stage, de Bot’s (2004) model clearly favors selective view of lexical access. Another model of bilingual language production based on monolingual production model of Levelt (1989) was proposed by Poulisse and Bongaerts (1994). This model assumes three levels for language(s) production, namely: conceptual level, lemma level, and phonological level. Here again, the conceptual level is the most significant one as it contains conceptual cues (for the selection of content of the utterance) as well as a language cue (for the selection of language of the utterance). In this model, lexical access is supposed to be language nonselective up to the lemma level.

In 1997, Frenck-Mestre and Prince carried out a study that showed that the two lexicons of a bilingual were able to function independently. This study aimed at testing the degree of “autonomy” acquired within the second language. The authors defined autonomy as the “performance that does not involve L1 lexical representations” (p. 482). They studied priming in a lexical decision task. Two experiments were carried out. In Experiment 1, there were sixty participants who were examined for priming in synonyms, antonyms, and collocations. In this experiment, the sixty participants were equally divided into three groups: native English speakers, proficient non-native speakers, and non-proficient non-native speakers, who were learning English. The native language of the non-native speakers was French. The main purpose behind comparing the second language performance of more proficient and less proficient bilinguals was to see if the ability to process second language independently was limited to highly proficient bilinguals only. The results of this experiment showed that both the groups of bilinguals indicated the effect of priming in the second language, however, in the non-proficient group, the effect
was much smaller as compared to the proficient group of bilinguals. Experiment 2 further tested the working of the second language lexicon by examining the effect of priming in words with multiple meanings, called homographs. There were 48 participants in this experiment, and the performance of a highly proficient group of bilinguals was compared to that of a less proficient group, as in Experiment 1. The results of this experiment showed that more proficient bilinguals were able to access both the dominant and subordinate meanings of homographs while reading in their second language. Discussing results the authors pointed out that the non-native speakers were able to show a certain degree of autonomy when processing their second language, however, the degree of second language autonomy depended not only on the level of proficiency of the non-native speakers, but also on the type of lexical relationships (that is, antonyms, synonyms, collocations, or homographs) that were examined. They stated, “…..the second-language lexical network of non-fluent bilinguals displays a structure similar to that of native speakers, but the activation of links within the network is more transient and weaker” (p. 494). In short, in the less proficient bilinguals, lexical access is more non-selective as the L2 lexicon is not well-developed enough to function independently. But, in the more proficient bilinguals, lexical access is more selective as the L2 lexicon has attained autonomy and, therefore, does not involve L1 lexical representations. The results seem to be directly supporting the RHM, which assumes that with the increasing L2 proficiency, the reliance on L1 lexicon gradually decreases, and there is a time when both the lexicons are able to access the conceptual store directly, and thus function independently.

Another study that discusses the means by which bilinguals control their two language systems was carried out by Green (1998). He proposed an Inhibitory Control (IC) model that was based on the principle that there are multiple levels of control. The IC model was used to elaborate upon the effect of category blocking in translation as was proposed by Kroll and Stewart (1994). Green is of the viewpoint that, whereas most experimental research in bilingualism requires individuals to perform just one task (such as, picture naming, lexical decision etc.), there might be a potential competition between different tasks that could be instigated by a particular stimulus, e.g., repeating the visually presented word again
and again, counting the number of letters or syllables in it, translating it into another language, writing it
down, etc. Therefore, according to Green, a bilingual participant is potentially encountered with the
problem of selecting between alternative responses. To Green, this selection problem seems to have a
direct connection with the problem of how words are represented in the minds of bilingual speakers. As a
solution to this problem, he proposes the inhibitory control (IC) model that assumes that the desire or
intention to perform a specific language task is expressed by means of a supervisory attentional system
(SAS), which effects the activation of language task schemas that compete to control output. These
schemas, through functional control circuits, exert control by activating or inhibiting tags at the lemma
level, which is a sub-lexical form. According to the IC model, a language task schema can be prepared
beforehand, but as the mechanism of inhibition is reactivate, in order to activate specific lemmas, a
certain input is required either from an external source (e.g., hearing words or reading them) or internally
from the conceptual system. Green defines schema as “mental devices or networks that individuals may
construct or adapt on the spot in order to achieve a specific task and not simply to structures in long-term
memory” (p. 68). Thus, according to the IC model, there is a lexicon external device that inhibits the
activation of the lexical items of the non-target language, and ensures that their activation levels are lower
than the lexical items of the target language. So, according to Green, the lexical selection process is
language non-selective in that it considers the lexical items of both languages for selection, and then
selects the lexical item with the greatest level of activation. As the activation of the lexical items of non-
target language is inhibited, so this process results in the selection of a lexical item from the target
language though the selection mechanism is language non-selective.

In order to resolve the issue of lexical selection, Costa et al. (1999) performed a series of
experiments. Their major concern was to see if the lexical items in both the lexicons were considered for
selection, or only the lexical items in the target lexicon were considered for selection. In other words,
they wanted to determine if bilingual lexical access involved language specific or language non-specific
selection. For this purpose, they employed the picture-word interference paradigm with highly proficient
balanced Catalan-Spanish bilinguals. In the picture-word interference experiments, the participants were required to name a picture and ignore a distracter word that was superimposed on the picture. The distracter was either in Catalan or in Spanish with three different possibilities: the name of the picture (identity condition), a semantically related word, or an unrelated word (control condition). A series of seven experiments was conducted. The response language was Catalan (L1) in all the experiments. Through the course of these experiments, the researchers found that picture naming was faster when the distracter was a translation equivalent of the picture’s name in Catalan. They explain this effect in terms of activation occurring within one lexicon. The results also showed that semantically related distracters, in both Catalan and Spanish, interfered equally and thus led to slower responses. However, Costa et al. clearly state that their findings are only applicable to highly proficient balanced bilinguals like the participants in their experiments. They maintain, “…the functioning of the language-specific selection mechanism may depend on both the bilingual’s proficiency and the response language. It is reasonable to assume that the more proficient a bilingual is, the easier it is to restrict lexical selection to only one language” (p. 389).

In another study, Costa & Caramazza (1999) further tested the results of Costa et al. (1999). It was another attempt at determining if there was competition between the two lexicons of a bilingual during lexical selection. In order to further test Costa et al.’s results, Costa and Caramazza chose to work with English-Spanish and Spanish-English highly proficient but less balanced bilinguals, whereas the participants in Costa et al.’s study were highly proficient balanced Catalan-Spanish bilinguals. It is to be noted that Catalan and Spanish are similar languages where 73% of the words are cognate and both are overtly marked for gender, but English and Spanish are highly dissimilar languages. Assuming that both the response and the non-response lexicons were activated in picture naming, they employed the picture word interference paradigm (the same as in Costa et al.’s study). The researchers firmly believed that “the three variables – language proficiency, response language (L1 vs. L2), and language similarity – affect participants’ performance in the picture-word interference paradigm” (p. 234). Two experiments
were conducted, one with Spanish-English bilinguals and the response language was L1, and in the second experiment, the participants were English-Spanish bilinguals and the response language was L2. The results were similar to Costa at el.’s study. They showed that picture naming was faster when the distracter word was either the name of the picture or a translation equivalent of the picture’s name, called the identity facilitation effect. Furthermore, the picture naming was slower when the picture and the distracter word were semantically related. Therefore, the results supported language-specific hypothesis as the identity facilitation effect indicted that the two language lexicons of a bilingual did not compete during lexical access. In the light of the results of these two studies, Costa & Caramazza concluded that the similarity between a bilingual’s two languages does not affect the bilingual’s ability to keep them separate during lexical access in speech production. Moreover, the language-specific mechanism works equally well with proficient non-balanced bilinguals. And, the ability to keep lexical selection to only one lexicon applies to both languages of a proficient non-balanced bilingual, to dominant as well as to non-dominant language. However, the researchers thought that a possible reason for the results they obtained could be their participants’ high proficiency in L2. Though they had observed language-specific selection mechanism working in both proficient balanced as well as non-balanced bilinguals, yet raised a concern:

...it is not clear at which stage in second-language acquisition this mechanism becomes functional. Indeed, it may be that at early stages of L2 acquisition, this mechanism is not yet functional. In such cases, we should expect an identity interference effect between languages (when speaking in L2) rather than a facilitatory effect. (p. 240, emphasis original)

This finding is reminiscent of the “developmental aspect” in the RHM, that with the increasing proficiency in L2, the two lexicons become more and more independent.

Contradictory results of the studies on bilinguals have always been raising more and more concern among researchers. Elaborating such results of the studies on language selection, Costa (2005) once again points out the developmental aspect in bilinguals as he remarks:

The experimental evidence is mixed in the sense that some results favor the language specificity of the lexical selection mechanism, and others favor the notion of language non-specific lexical selection. A possible way to reconcile the seemingly contradictory data is to assume that, in nonproficient bilinguals, the activation of the
lexical nodes of the nonresponse language may affect production performance, but
that bilinguals shift from language non-specific processing toward language-specific
processing when they become more proficient bilinguals.” (p. 322)

This observation was further tested by Costa, Santesteban, and Ivanova (2006) in a series of four
experiments examining language switching performance in a picture naming task. The participants were
highly proficient Spanish-Catalan bilinguals who were learners of English as their L3 and had even
weaker L4-French. In Experiment 1, the language-switching task involved Spanish and Catalan (L1 and
L2); Experiment 2 involved Catalan and English (L2 and L3); Experiment 3 involved English and French
(L3 and L4); Experiment 4 involved L1(Spanish) and newly learned vocabulary. The results of these
experiments confirmed Costa’s (2005) observation by showing that highly proficient bilinguals made use
of a different control mechanism when compared with less proficient bilinguals. The highly proficient
bilinguals in this study made lexical selection by means of language-specific selection mechanism. On
the other hand, less proficient bilinguals made selection by means of inhibitory control mechanism (as
proposed by Green, 1998). However, the authors suggest that, in some cases, even the highly proficient
bilinguals need to resort to inhibitory control mechanism in order to perform lexical selection.

Another attempt at solving the issue of lexical selection was made by La Heij (2005). He
proposes Concept Selection Model (CSM) that is closely similar to Levelt’s (1989) Monolingual
Production Model. The CSM has two significant characteristics. The first and most important
characteristic is a complex preverbal message that contains all conceptual, pragmatic and affective
characteristics of the word to be produced along with a language cue to ensure the language in which the
bilingual intends to speak. Secondly, the actual selection of a word is comparatively a simpler process
largely based on the activation levels of lexical representations. La Heij characterizes this model as
“complex access, simple selection” in contradiction to the other models of lexical access that he
characterizes as “simple access, complex selection”. He criticizes all the other models of lexical access in
language production for not taking into consideration the nonverbal representations that go with a lexical
representation. He asserts, “…..in a bilingual speaker the intention to speak in L1 or a second language
(L2) is part of the preverbal message, just as the intention to use formal language, a slang word, a category name, or an euphemism” (p. 301). More precisely, he remarks, “...the content of the preverbal message has to be very specific to ensure that the correct word is selected” (p. 297). It is mainly due to complex nature of the preverbal message that he has referred to this approach as “complex access, simple selection.” In short, the CSM favors more or less selective access and assumes that target language selection takes place before lexical retrieval, that is, at the conceptual level.

![La Heij's (2005) Concept Selection Model](source)

Fig. 2.5 La Heij’s (2005) Concept Selection Model

Source: La Heij (2005)

Not very long before, Bloem and La Heij (2003) had already established the language selective view of language production, and that language selection takes place at the conceptual level (that is, the CSM). This study was a Stroop translation task, and the participants were highly proficient Dutch-English bilinguals. Therefore, it is quite clear that the notion of language selection at the preverbal stage in based on studying language production processes in highly proficient bilinguals only. Whether or not it holds equally good for less proficient bilinguals seems to be a debatable issue.

Though La Heij’s (2005) solution to the issue of lexical selection seems quite straightforward, Finkbeiner, Gollan, and Caramazza (2006) point out another difficulty at the point of lexical selection that they call the “hard problem”, which can be stated as, “by virtue of having a shared semantic
representation, if two translation equivalent lexical nodes are activated to more or less equal levels, the lexical selection mechanism would find it highly difficult to decide between the two” (p. 153). They review three proposed solutions to the hard problem, namely: Green’s Inhibitory Control Model (1998), Costa and Caramazza’s language-specific selection view (1999), and La Heij’s Concept Selection Model (2005). After thoroughly reviewing these models, the authors posit that Costa and Caramazza (1999) solved the hard problem by suggesting that lexical selection mechanism does not take into consideration the non-target lexicon, but they have ignored the language effect, that is, the target language distracters interfere more than non-target language distracters in picture-word interference task. La Heij (2005) also offers a solution to the hard problem that lexical nodes belonging to the target lexicon are activated to a much higher degree than lexical nodes belonging to the non-target lexicon, but this model does not account for the identity facilitation effect observed during picture-word interference task. Green’s Inhibitory Control Model (1998) also addresses the hard problem by suggesting that lexical nodes belonging to the non-target lexicon are reactively suppressed however, it has been revealed that language suppression is limited to those instances only where bilingual stimuli are involved. After reviewing these three models as a solution to the hard problem, the authors propose a selection by threshold mechanism which postulates that the first lexical node whose activation level reaches threshold will be selected for production. They maintain: “If lexical selection occurs on the basis of a threshold mechanism, then the solution to the hard problem is within reach” (p.164). But, when they say that: “all that is needed to ensure correct selection of target language lexical nodes is to increase the rate of activation of target-language lexical nodes relative to that of non-target-language nodes” (Ibid), the solution to the hard problem that they propose seems very similar to that of La Heij’s (2005).

In 2007, Schwieter explored the role of language backgrounds, proficiency, and age of acquisition in lexical selection in bilinguals. Apparently, there are two distinct theories guiding his research: Green’s Inhibitory Control Model (1998), and La Heij’s Concept Selection Model (2005). However the major impetus for this study comes from Costa and Santesteban’s (2004) study, which suggested that both
Inhibitory Control and Concept Selection may be accurate but sensitive to the proficiency level of bilingual participants. In other words, they suggested that the Inhibitory Control Model can account for lexical processing in less proficient bilinguals, whereas the Concept Selection Model can only represent lexical processing in highly proficient bilinguals. Schwieter carried out this study to investigate Costa and Santesteban’s (2004) claim, and to explore further the factors that affect lexical selection in bilinguals. A total of 68 English-Spanish and Spanish-English bilinguals were further categorized as less proficient language learners, native speakers, and highly proficient language learners. Two experiments were conducted. Experiment 1 was a word translation task in which the participants translated second language words to their more dominant first language, in the presence of a distracter picture or word that was either semantically related or unrelated. Experiment 2 was a picture naming task in which the participants were instructed to switch between their two languages. The results of these experiments establish proficiency as the most important element in lexical selection during bilinguals lexical processing. The results support Costa and Santesteban’s (2004) and Costa’s (2005) findings that, with increasing proficiency, bilinguals become less prone to inhibitory mechanisms. On the basis of these results, he proposes a developmental shift from inhibitory control in less proficient bilinguals to language-selective mechanism in highly proficient bilinguals. These findings led him to formulate Selection by Proficiency (SbP) model, as shown in Fig. 2.6:
This model captures the selective nature of lexical processing in highly proficient bilinguals and the non-selective nature in less proficient L2 learners. The main underlying feature of this model is the ‘developmental aspect’ in bilinguals, which is the hallmark of the RHM.

Schwieter and Sunderman (2009) carried out a study that further tested the role of proficiency in determining lexical selection mechanism in bilinguals. This study aimed at investigating differences in the predictions of La Heij’s (2005) Concept Selection Model (CSM) and Kroll and Stewart’s (1994) Revised Hierarchical Model (RHM), and thus can be called an attempt at bridging the gap between the CSM and the RHM. The CSM’s prediction that lexical selection takes place at the conceptual level has been based on highly proficient bilinguals. If the CSM is able to account for lexical selection in less proficient bilinguals, who may not yet have a direct access to the conceptual system, is a very pertinent question. It should be noted that the RHM and the CSM were formulated using two distinct experimental tasks: picture naming and translation tasks for the former, and Stroop word translation tasks for the latter. The second important point is that the Stroop word translation task has not been performed with less
proficient bilinguals. Schwieter and Sunderman argue that this experimental task will clearly investigate the predictions regarding lexical and conceptual mediation. In a Stroop word translation task, it seems possible that less proficient bilinguals would be able to ignore distracter pictures if lexical access, for them, is not a conceptually mediated process but a lexically mediated one. On the other hand, keeping to the claims of the RHM, more proficient bilinguals would be able to conceptually mediate. In order to test these predictions, two groups of less and more proficient English–Spanish bilinguals were selected. To investigate lexical selectivity in language learners, Stroop translation task was performed in which the participants were required to translate L2 words to their L1 in the presence of a distracter item, a word or a picture that was either semantically related or unrelated to the target word. The results showed that more proficient learners were increasingly, if not entirely, using concept mediation. Facilitation observed in the condition of context picture for more proficient learners provides support for the CSM as it shows that more proficient learners were able to make lexical selection at the conceptual level. On the other hand, the less proficient language learners showed facilitation in the context of distracter words, and showed interference in the context of distracter pictures. These results provide support for the RHM that less proficient language learners lexically mediate. The overall results, therefore, suggest that the CSM does not hold for the less proficient language learners, but only for more proficient learners. However, the claims of the RHM hold for both the less and the more proficient language learners. The data provides evidence that lexical links are strongest in less proficient language learners, but with increased proficiency, the learners begin to conceptually mediate.

These results yet lead to another question. If less proficient language learners are not able to make lexical selection at the conceptual level then, using Finkneiner et al.’s (2006) phrase, how do they solve the ‘hard problem’? There must be a cognitive procedure working during lexicalization. Schwieter and Sunderman (2009) offer Selection by Proficient (Sb P) Model (Schwieter, 2007) as a solution to the ‘hard problem’ in less proficient bilinguals. The SbP Model (as already discussed) proposes that, in the case of less proficient bilinguals, target language selection takes place at the lexical level through
inhibitory control (as proposed by Green, 1998). Whereas, in the case of more proficient bilinguals, target language selection takes place during preverbalization (that is, at the conceptual level) with the help of a language cue (as proposed by La Heij, 2005). In short, the SbP Model posits the selective nature of lexical processing in highly proficient bilinguals, and the non-selective nature in less proficient bilinguals. Proficiency, therefore, stands out as the most significant factor in lexical processing. It had already been pointed out by the RHM much long before the SbP Model was proposed.

### 2.2.2 Section Summary

The section mainly focuses on the role of the RHM in explaining bilingual lexical processing. Two studies, Kroll et al. (2002) and Dunabeitia, Perea and Carreiras (2010), examining lexical access at the two levels of bilinguals’ proficiency have been reported. The former study used word naming and single word translation tasks, whereas the latter employed masked translation priming. Both the studies found evidence in favor of the RHM that less proficient bilinguals access words through lexical mediation whereas more proficient bilinguals access words through concept mediation. Lexical access has further been extended to the issue of selective/nonselective lexical selection. A number of studies have been brought into focus and their proposed solutions revisited. Levelt’s (1989) and Levelt et al.’s (1999) models of monolingual production propose that lexical selection is accomplished at the preverbal stage, and so do the bilingual production models based on Levelt’s models, such as: de Bot (2004) and Poulisse and Bongaerts (1994). Frenck-Mestre and Prince (1997) in a lexical decision task showed that lexical selection was more nonselective in less proficient bilinguals, but it was more selective in more proficient bilinguals as the two lexicons became more independent with increase in L2 proficiency, and their results thus fully supported the RHM. Before long, Green (1998) put forth the IC model, which assumed that the activation of the lexical items of the non-target language was inhibited in order to ensure their lower activation levels as compared to the lexical items of the target language. Thus, according to the IC model, lexical selection was a non-selective process as the lexical items of both the lexicons competed for selection. However, Costa et al. (1999) performed a series of experiments with highly proficient
bilinguals using picture-word interference paradigm and found evidence in favor of language-specific, that is, selective view of lexical selection. The same was about Costa and Caramazza (1999), who owe their results to the fact that their bilingual participants were highly proficient in both of their languages. Costa, Santesteban, and Ivanova (2006), who examined language switching in a picture naming task, were able to show that highly proficient bilinguals made lexical selection through language specific mechanism, whereas less proficient bilinguals made lexical selection through the IC mechanism (Green, 1998). In 2005, La Heij proposed Concept Selection Model (CSM), another model based on Levelt’s (1989), which assumed selective access and posited that language selection took place at the conceptual level long before lexical retrieval. This model was based on a study utilizing Stroop translation task with highly proficient bilinguals. On the other hand, Finkbeiner, Gollan, and Caramazza (2006) proposed selection by threshold mechanism that a lexical node whose activation level reached threshold was chosen for selection, and thus favored non-selective view of lexical access. Schwieter (2007) working with both less proficient and highly proficient bilinguals in word translation and picture naming experiments showed that there was a developmental shift in bilinguals for lexical selection: inhibitory control (IC) in less proficient bilinguals to language-selective mechanism in highly proficient bilinguals. In another study, Schwieter and Sunderman (2009) working with both less and more proficient bilinguals in Stroop translation task showed that La Heij’s (2005) CSM was able to explain lexical processing in highly proficient bilinguals only, whereas the RHM could explain lexical processing in both less and highly proficient bilinguals.

2.3 **Theoretical Framework for the Present Study**

It goes without saying that all the bilingual studies in the field of experimental psycholinguistics carried out so far and all the theoretical models proposed warrant a lot of credit as they provide considerable insight into the organization and working of bilingual memory. The only aspect that seems lacking is that the findings and results of bilingual psycholinguistic experimental studies have not been tested on the basis of everyday human experience in order to see if that is exactly what humans experience and feel
when they carry out similar tasks in everyday context. And, perhaps that is also a reason of their coming up with conflicting results. Grosjean (2004), after giving a long list of controversial findings in psycholinguistic experimental studies on bilinguals, voices similar concerns, “… some of the difficulties encountered by researchers, and some of the conflicting results they have obtained, could perhaps have been lessened, if not avoided, had close attention been paid to methodological and conceptual issues” (p. 33).

Menenti’s (2006) concern also needs to be reinstated here: “Further research will be necessary to investigate what task demands influence the use of the lexical link. This is important because neither lexical decision nor semantic decision are very natural tasks. It therefore remains to be seen how much L1 word form access is likely to happen in an everyday context” (p. 24). Criticizing two of the most often used research paradigms, lexical decision and semantic decision, in psycholinguistic experimental studies on bilinguals, she brings forth the possibility of using ‘natural tasks’ and ‘everyday context’ as research frameworks for such studies. As language is something we all interact with, externally as well as internally, most of our time, being a bilingual or a multilingual is an experience that needs to be studied in its fullness, not in certain out-of-context fragments of one or more languages.

The present study mainly seeks to fill this gap by testing the assumptions of the RHM, the most influential of the theoretical models on bilingual memory representations, and some other psycholinguistic studies (such as: de Groot and Hoeks, 1995; Schwieter, 2007; Schwieter and Sunderman, 2009, etc.) on the basis of language experiences of P-U-E trilinguals to see if those psycholinguistic studies, including the RHM, are able to shed some light on the way P-U-E trilinguals organize their three lexicons, access words, and make lexical selection. Because of its major emphasis on ‘experience’—the way P-U-E trilinguals experience the learning and using of their three languages, the present study chooses to work under the framework of phenomenology, which is a philosophy as well as a methodology that “seeks to clarify the lived evidence of experience itself” (Reeder, 2010, p. 23). In other words, this study aims at combining the insight gained from psycholinguistic experimental studies, the RHM in
particular, with the phenomenological conception of experience as it is “actually lived by its practitioners” (Ibid, p. 24).

2.3.1 Phenomenology-background and foundational concepts

Phenomenology is a German philosophical movement that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century when Europe was devastated by World War I (1914 – 1918). Vividly describing the situation, Eagleton (1983, p. 47) writes:

The social order of European capitalism had been shaken to its roots by the carnage of the war and its turbulent aftermath. The ideologies on which that order had customarily depended, the cultural values by which it ruled, were also in deep turmoil. Science seemed to have dwindled to a sterile positivism, a myopic obsession with the categorizing of facts; philosophy appeared torn between such a positivism on the one hand, and an indefensible subjectivism on the other; forms of relativism and irrationalism were rampant, and art reflected this bewildering loss of bearings.

At the time of those political, economic, cultural, and philosophical crises, Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938), a German mathematician and later a philosopher, tried to establish a new philosophical method that could “lend absolute certainty to a disintegrating civilization” (Ibid). Husserl was critical of the fact that the modern science had fallen a prey to positivism, and reduced the world of nature to atoms and molecules, and certain forces, fields, and laws governed by science. That is why Husserl sought to restore the world back to its concrete, sensuous state, which is fully evident in the spirited slogan ‘back to the things themselves’ (Eagleton, 1983, p. 48). He called this new philosophical method phenomenology, ‘a science of pure phenomena’ (Husserl, 1982, xvii). Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) further elaborate, “Phenomenology is critical of modern natural science for having distanced itself … too far from its basis in everyday life, in this way creating an abstract world of its own, without having sufficiently analyzed the foundations of ordinary human experience upon which it rests” (p. 36).

Resting on this claim, two major concepts in phenomenology are: life-world and intentionality.
Husserl’s Lebenswelt, the life-world, is a key concept in phenomenological thought. It is in fact Husserl’s attempt at restoring the world of nature to its original humanistic state, in contrast to the positivistic world of atoms and molecules governed by certain forces and laws. Held (2003) remarks, “Husserl’s consideration of the life-world includes a radical critique of the spirit of the modern sciences” (p. 32). Therefore, the life-world is the world of objects around us as we perceive them and experience them. He further states that Husserl referred to the life-world as “nothing other than a comprehensive world” (p. 60). The life-world, thus, is a human world that we live in; it is the world around us that we think about and talk about. It is a humanly relational and intricately meaningful world where we carry out our everyday activities and interactions. Finlay (2008) puts it so, “The term life-world directs attention to the individual’s lived situation and ‘social world’ rather than some inner world of introspection” (p.1, emphasis added). A similar argument was forwarded by Schutz back in 1936, when he stated, “The starting point of the social sciences has to be the ordinary social life of people” (cited in Aspers, 2009, p.3). Thus, it is the ‘ordinary social life of people’ that constitutes Husserl’s ‘life-world’. As the life-world is a ‘social world’, therefore, language must hold a special significance to it. The life-world has already been characterized as being ‘humanly relational’ and ‘interactive’ and both of these are vaguely possible without language. Dahlberg et al. (2008) maintain, “The overall aim of life-world research is to describe and elucidate the lived world in a way that expands our understanding of human being and human experience” (p. 37). That, of course, cannot be done without taking into account the language used by a particular people. Making it more clear, Valle, King, & Halling (1989) maintained, “The life-world is not a construct of consciousness: It is co-constituted or co-created in the dialogue of person and world” (p. 9). There has to be a role of language ‘in the dialogue of person and world’. And, because the world is becoming increasingly multilingual, so the complexity of that ‘dialogue’ and thus of the life-world is also increasing even more. Consider two individuals as an example: to carry out their daily activities and interactions, one uses just one language while the other has to use three or more different
languages. Imagine the difference in complexity of the life-worlds of the two individuals, and how the phenomenon of multilingualism would be adding not only to the intricate meaningfulness of the life-world, but also to the richness of the lived experience of the individual.

Finlay (2009) points out, “A variant of life-world research is a reflective and practical focus on lived experience,” (p. 9, emphasis original). Husserl gave primary importance to experience; his own words, “The world is the sum-total of objects of possible experience and experiential cognition” (1982, p. 6), clearly show how closely associated for him were the concepts of life-world, experience, and humans as experiencing beings. He considered this world as the site for experience, which is a unique human attribute. It is the concreteness and richness of the lived experience that makes it a valuable source of data in the realm of phenomenological research. Phenomenology, therefore, with its heavy reliance on lived experience can be called the ‘science of experience’. The phenomenological conception of lived experience is of great significance to the present study, which seeks to explore the lived experiences of P-U-E trilinguals in their learning and dealing with the three languages.

ii. Intentionality

The concept of intentionality is at the heart of phenomenology. Sokolowski (2000) defines intentionality as “it is essentially “consciousness of” or an “experience of” something or other” (p. 8, emphases original). Defining intentionality, Smith (1982) highlights the etymology of the word:

The term ‘intentionality’ derives from the Latin verb ‘intendere’, meaning “to point to”; and in the sense of being the consciousness of something, each intentional event of consciousness can be said to “point to” or to “be directed toward” something. Thus, intentionality is often characterized as the “directedness of consciousness. (p. 1, emphases original)

It is evident from the above that the phenomenological concept of ‘intending’ is not the same as intending as a purpose behind an action, that is, the literal meaning of the word. Consider this sentence: ‘He left this place because he intended to move to a better apartment.’ In phenomenology, however, “intending” means “the conscious relationship we have to an object” (Sokolowski, 2000, p.8). The medium for that
‘conscious relationship’ in all or most of the cases is language. Let’s consider Smith’s (1982, p. 2) examples of ‘desiring’, ‘perceiving’, ‘hoping’ and ‘judging’ for that matter. If one is desirous of something, the desire is expressed, both internally as well as externally, through language and the same would be true in the case of other such intentional acts. Thus, language is not only a medium of relationship between consciousness and the object of consciousness, but can also be called the expression of intentionality, as intentionality would be expressed, internally as well as externally, through language.

The idea of intentionality in this sense can very well be applied to the study of multilingual memory. Multilinguals not only have a consciousness of the language they are speaking/using at a certain time, but they also have a consciousness of the languages they are not speaking/using at that time. So no matter what language they are speaking at a certain time, they are in relation to all of their languages all the time. Just as Finlay (2008) puts it, “When we are conscious of something (an ‘object’) we are in relation to it and it means something to us, in this way, subject (us) and object are joined together in mutual co-constitution” (p. 2, emphases original). Multilinguals can also be said to be in “mutual co-constitution” with all of their languages all the time. Moreover, it is obvious that the concept of intentionality is closely related to the concept of life-world because intentionality is always directed toward objects, persons and phenomena in the world that we live in. We are always conscious of the objects present around us, the people around us, and the things happening around us. Reeder (2010) has aptly remarked, “Thus phenomenology, which begins with an experience in the naïve attitude, begins also with unreflective natural language, and then controls and refines it in methodologically restricted ways to clarify its connection with lived experience through gradual, reflexive descriptions of meaning-intentions and their role in our life” (p. 145).

Though both the concepts, life-world and intentionality, are relevant to the present study, however, the concept of lived experience, as a variant of life-world, holds special significance to this study, which is largely interested in understanding and describing the lived experiences of P-U-E trilinguals, the way they deal with their three languages in their respective life-worlds. As it has
repeatedly been pointed since the beginning of this study that the RHM has a special relevance to this phenomenological study, it is worth pointing out that the RHM also has a component of experience in the form of developmental aspect, which is undoubtedly an important feature of the RHM as well as an inseparable part of a bilingual’s or a multilingual’s linguistic career. Phenomenology seems to offer great promise for such a study as it aims for “fresh, complex, rich descriptions of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived” (Finlay, 2009, p.16). That is why the present study has chosen to work under phenomenological framework while borrowing light from psycholinguistic experimental studies on bi/multilinguals.

However, it is important to note that the present study is not the first one to deal with a psycholinguistic issue phenomenologically. Schwartz’s (2002), *Tip-of-the Tongue States: Phenomenology, Mechanism, and Lexical Retrieval*, is a precedence of such a phenomenological endeavor. Elucidating the causes of the tip-of-the tongue (TOT) states, the work mainly deals with the question, “Why do we experience TOTs at all” (p. ix)? Throughout this work, the author has referred to TOT as “a conscious phenomenological experience” (p. 153), and he refers to phenomenology as a “person’s subjective experience” (Ibid). Yet, the present study is a unique endeavor of exploring the two phenomena of multilingual memory and lexical access using phenomenological framework without losing sight of the developments made by psycholinguistic experimental studies.

**2.3.1 Section Summary**

In its attempt to include the missing element of human experience in psycholinguistic experimental studies, this section introduces phenomenology as the theoretical framework for this study. The section briefly traces the historical background of phenomenology and also discusses its two fundamental concepts: life-world and intentionality. Phenomenology’s heavy reliance on experience, lived-experience, qualifies it as the most appropriate framework for this study, which aims at exploring and
understanding the languages experiences of P-U-E trilinguals to see how they learn and use their three languages.

2.4 Chapter Summary

The chapter begins with discussing major psycholinguistic experimental studies explaining bilingual memory representations and the working of bilingual memory. The discussion begins with Weinreich’s (1953) theoretical formulations of co-ordinate, compound and subordinate structures of bilingual memory, and moves on reviewing such landmark studies as Kolers’ (1963), which showed two independent stores for the two languages of a bilingual, and Potter et al.’s (1984), which proposed and tested word association and concept mediation models. The argument finally reaches the RHM (Kroll and Stewart, 1994), which hitherto stands out unchallenged after more than 15 years of its initiation, and is still yielding a lot of research. Prominent assumptions of the RHM are: asymmetry in L1 and L2 processing, and developmental shift in bilinguals. Some studies examining the RHM’s assumptions have also been reported, some of them finding evidence in favor of the RHM while other against it. Next, the phenomenon of lexical access is discussed with particular reference to the RHM, which assumes L2 access through lexical mediation for less fluent bilinguals and through concept mediation for more fluent ones. The issue of selective or nonselective lexical selection has also been brought into focus and major works reviewed which end up suggesting that proficiency is the most crucial factor in lexical selection. While reviewing all these works, a special focus has been maintained on research tasks used in them. The chapter concludes with pointing out that the research tasks used in psycholinguistic experimental studies have been leading to controversial results, and offers phenomenology as a solution for resolving the controversies. As the prime emphasis of phenomenology is on experience, looking at psycholinguistic experimental studies from a phenomenological perspective suggests that the results of those studies should be tested on the basis of bi/multilinguals’ experiences of using their two or more languages in everyday context. Combining this phenomenological perspective with the insight gained from
psycholinguistic experimental studies, the present study sets out to explore and understand the languages experiences of P-U-E trilinguals, the way they organize and access their three lexicons.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes a brief discussion of the key elements of phenomenology as a research methodology. Furthermore, the research design of the present study including the selection process of participants, the instruments to be used, ethical considerations, data collection and data explicitaion procedures have also been outlined.

The main objective of this phenomenological qualitative endeavor is to examine the uniquely human phenomenon of multilingualism in relation to memory, as experienced by the Punjabi-Urdu-English (henceforth P-U-E) trilinguals living in Lahore (a metropolitan city and the capital of Punjab, a province of Pakistan). The aim is not to investigate the causes of multilingualism, nor to make predictions about the phenomenon, but to understand the most intimate and immediate experience of being a multilingual, and of carrying out lexical access. Thus, the purpose is to explore and understand the ‘what’, not the ‘why’ of the lived experience of being a multilingual, and in so doing bring to light the structure of the phenomenon of multilingual memory, that is, how it works, how the different lexicons interact, and how the lexical items are accessed. This phenomenological study will be using in-depth interviews, a focus group discussion, and phenomenological essays to explore the experiences of the participants. The study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the ‘lived experiences’ of P-U-E trilinguals in terms of learning and using the three languages?
2. How are the L1, the L2, and the L3 lexicons organized in P-U-E trilinguals, and how the three lexicons interact with each other?

3. What factors influence lexical access in P-U-E trilinguals?

Based on Groenwald (2003) and Schwartz (2002), I found phenomenological research methodology as the best approach for pursuing this qualitative research endeavor. The rationale behind opting for phenomenological research was my feeling of dissatisfaction with the traditional scientific methods, as the chapter on Literature Review has tried to reveal the gaps in research on multilingual memory which could not be satisfactorily filled by positivist scientific methods. Therefore, as quoted earlier, I felt the “need to study human beings in human terms” (Finlay, 2009, p. 14).

3.1 Phenomenology as a Research Methodology

Amedeo Giorgi (1997) was the one who molded the philosophical concepts of Husserlian phenomenology into methodological concepts of phenomenological research. He repeatedly emphasized that the phenomenological research methods involved three interlinked steps: phenomenological reduction, description, and search for the essence of the experience. The three procedures are of fundamental significance to qualitative research. Below, I shall briefly highlight the three procedures one by one.

3.1.1 Phenomenological Reduction

Husserl asserts that “an epistemological investigation that can seriously claim to be scientific must satisfy the principle of freedom from supposition” (cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 45), which is termed as phenomenological reduction, and in phenomenological terminology, it is called bracketing or epoche’. It is a probability that Husserl borrowed the term ‘bracketing’ from mathematics. Keeping in view Husserl’s background of a mathematician, Cox (2012, p. 26) elucidates ‘bracketing’ using a mathematical analogy:

In solving algebraic equations, for example, the mathematician places the various components of the formula into brackets and works on solving each problem placed in
brackets one at a time so that, at the conclusion, each limited solution can be applied to resolving the problem of the entire equation. In a similar way, although Husserl did not use the *epoche*’ to doubt the existence of the external world, he suspended judgments about it so that, like a mathematician, attention could be focused on another part of the equation … By placing in brackets previously held beliefs or assumptions derived from the natural standpoint, the observer allows pure phenomena to speak for themselves.

This process is referred to as phenomenological reduction. Through this process, the researchers are able to suspend and hold in abeyance their own preconceived ideas and beliefs, thus, making it possible for them to become receptive and open to accepting and perceiving a phenomenon as it exists in its very context. When practicing phenomenological research, the phenomenological reduction shows up as the researcher’s attempt to bracket off from awareness those knowledges - linguistic, cultural, historical, scientific, or ideological – which may prejudice or incorrectly inform their observations of the phenomenon being described (Giorgi, 1970).

Bradfield (2007) puts it more clearly when he states that phenomenological reduction is “a dismantling of those prejudices which could misdirect our description of the essence of a phenomenon” (p. 3). As the researchers are also experiencing beings, therefore, it is very important for them to employ phenomenological reduction so that their own experience of the same phenomenon does not interfere with the descriptions of the ones being researched. This enables the researcher to focus on a phenomenon from the perspective of other experiencing beings as they experience that phenomenon in their respective lived worlds. In short, phenomenological reduction essentially means “to remain open to the manifold possible meanings” (Ibid, p. 4), which could be disclosed through a person’s interaction with his/her world. However, it does not mean to undermine the researcher’s own experiences, rather its attempt at opening up and becoming more responsive to others’ experience as they have experienced it being conscious experiencing beings. Under this assumption, phenomenological reduction allows us “to recollect our own experiences and to empathically enter and reflect on the lived world of other persons in order to apprehend the meanings of the world as they are given to the first-person point of view” (Wertz, 2005, p. 168). This turns phenomenological reduction into a significant tool for qualitative research, making the researchers more responsive and empathizing so that they are able to witness a person’s world through
his/her own eyes, and in so doing describing the person’s experiences as closely as they were actually experienced.

3.1.2 The Essence of the Experience

A phenomenological research also seeks to find the essence of the experience of a phenomenon. Husserl uses the term ‘Eidos’ (Husserl, 1982, P. 9), which means “form, idea, or essence, to see into the meaning of the phenomena encountered while in the state of bracketed consciousness or epoche” (Cox, 2012, p. 28). In order to grasp the true essence of a phenomenon, Husserl proposed the procedure of eidetic intuition, which means to have an intuitive insight into the essential nature of things. Under this view, eidetic intuition asserts ‘objective’ knowledge and can, thus, be seen as a tool for achieving ‘objectivity’. Thus, the main concern of phenomenology is to dig deep down the surface in order to grasp the essence of phenomenology. According to Husserl, “Experiencing, or intuition of something individual can become transmuted into eidetic seeing (ideation) a possibility which is itself to be understood not as empirical, but as eidetic” (Husserl, 1982, p. 8). Eidetic seeing or insight, therefore, provides access to those essential features that must be present in all possible occurrences of a phenomenon. That is why, Giorgi (1997) defined essence as “a constant identity that holds together and limits the variations that a phenomenon can undergo” (p. 242).

Patton (1990) defined essence as “the core meaning mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced … for example, the essence of loneliness, the essence of being a mother, or the essence of being a participant in a particular program” (cited in Gibson & Hanes, 2003, p. 187). The essence as such, is such an essential property of a phenomenon “without which the phenomenon could not present itself as it is” (Giorgi, 1997, p. 242). The goal of a phenomenological research, therefore, is to disclose the essence of an experienced reality of a phenomenon. The phenomenological concept of essence and the procedure of eidetic intuition are of fundamental importance to qualitative research, which largely aims at exploring the complexity of human existence. Cox (2012) points out, “For Husserl,
the combination of epoche’ and the eidetic intuition were required for the building up of an objective picture of the phenomena of existence” (p. 29). Thus, the procedures of epoche’ and eidetic intuition go hand in hand in a phenomenological research.

3.1.3 Description

The essence of Husserl’s phenomenology lies in direct description of experience. Groenwald (2004) states that, “the operative word in phenomenological research is ‘describe’. The aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts” (p. 5, emphasis original).

Under this view, phenomenological description is a researcher’s describing the true essence (objectivity) of a phenomenon while bracketing off his/her own subjective experience of that phenomenon. Looking at it from this perspective, description marks the culmination of the process of phenomenological research after having employed the procedures of phenomenological reduction and eidetic intuition (that is, search for the essence of the experience). Bradfield (2007) rightly puts it thus, “To describe the essence of an observed phenomenon is to return to the disclosure of that phenomenon in lived experience, such that it may reveal itself in deeper and subtler ways” (p. 23).

Description is a quality of phenomenological research which distinguishes it from positivist research. Marion (1997) highlighted this difference when he stated: “… in general, scientific research is concerned with ‘proving’, while phenomenology is concerned with ‘showing’; showing a phenomenon means to let appearance appear in a way that manifests its most perfect appearing, so that it is possible to receive it in the exact way it gives itself” (cited in Mortari & Tarozzi, 2010, p. 24, emphases original).

Phenomenological research is, thus, a “matter of describing, not of explaining or analyzing” (Merleau – Ponty, 1962, p. VIII). Phenomenology can be referred to as the science of description, as it is the act of description which helps actualize phenomenology’s primary motto “to the things themselves.”
The above discussion clearly shows that the three key features of phenomenological research are: phenomenological reduction (epoche’), search for the essence of the experience, and description.

3.2 Research Design of the Present Study

As mentioned above, the aim of the present research is to understand the experienced reality of being a multilingual, in general, and a P-U-E trilingual in particular. As mentioned in the outset, the aim of this study is not to look into the causes of multilingualism, nor to make predictions about the phenomenon, but to describe the most direct experience of being a multilingual. Therefore, the study explores and seeks to understand the true experience of being a multilingual in order to bring forth the structure of the multilingual memory by gaining insights into its working, the interaction between different lexicons, and the way lexical access is achieved. As Giorgi (1970) states, “it is precisely structure that is the reality that one responds to at the phenomenal level” (p. 179).

3.2.1 Sampling strategy and research participants for this study

According to Palys (2008), “the biggest question any researcher needs to ask him or her self is what exactly it is that s/he wants to accomplish and what s/he wants to know, and the appropriate sampling will follow from that” (p. 697). As it is already made clear that the present research is interested in exploring and understanding the lived experience of being a multilingual, a P-U-E trilingual in particular, and thus understand and uncover the structure of the phenomena of multilingual memory and lexical access, the sample would positively consist of P-U-E trilinguals, the ones whose first language is Punjabi, the second Urdu, and the third language is English. In order to study development in the learning and use of the three languages, particularly in English (L3), over a long period of time, three age groups were chosen:

i. 18 – 23 years (the years of university education, where the medium of instruction is English, the group somewhat less proficient in English as compared to the other two languages)

ii. 30 – 40 years (the years one gets settled in a professional career after completing their education, the group with high proficiency in English, more or less equal proficiency in the three languages)
iii. 50 – 60 or above (the years one is at the peak of his/her professional career, and the languages they speak have become fully internalized, the group with higher proficiency in English than the previous groups, equal proficiency in the three languages)

On the basis of the purpose of the research, in order to identify primary participants, the sampling technique I employed in this research was purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique and is considered “most effective when one needs to study a certain cultural domain with knowledgeable experts within” (Tongco, 2007, p. 147). All the participants were living in Lahore, which is the central city of the Punjab province where Punjabi is most widely spoken, in most of the instances as first language. Urdu being the medium of instruction at school is the second language and initial learning of English also begins at school. As the main focus of the present research were P-U-E trilinguals, the ones more or less equally proficient in the three languages, I looked for those individuals under the three above-mentioned age-groups in a famous university in Lahore (name not being disclosed, see Section 3.4 on Ethical Considerations). Being an English-medium institution, the students in this university are required to carry out their daily interaction, at least within the university premises, in English. Though they have to struggle in the beginning, especially the ones coming from an Urdu-medium schooling background, yet they actually start speaking English on daily basis. The participants falling under the first age group category were all Baccalaureate students at that university, and the participants falling under the other two age groups were the faculty members.

Tongco (2007) further points out, “Criteria are set on what would make a good informant, and what would make a bad informant. Based on these, a list of qualifications is composed” (P. 151). Therefore, keeping the purpose of the research in mind, it is particularly important for the researcher to be clear about informant / participant qualification. I also laid out the following criteria for the participants:

i. The participants’ languages learning order had to be Punjabi, Urdu and then English.
ii. Only those were selected as participants for this study who had learnt English as a direct translation of Urdu, that is, through Grammar Translation Method (This was to test the predictions of the RHM).

iii. Only those were chosen as participants who belonged to the three afore-mentioned age groups.

iv. For the participants from second and third age group (30 to 40 and 50-60 or above), more or less equal proficiency in the three languages was sought. For the participants from first age group (18-23 years), as a minimum communicative level of L3 proficiency was sought as they were expected to be at lower L3 proficiency levels as compared to the participants from the other two age groups.

Palys (2008) lays out a general principle for purposive sampling qualitative research which stipulates, “think of the person or place or situation that has the largest potential for advancing your understanding and look there” (p. 698). Perhaps that is why purposive sampling is generally considered a biased way of sampling when contrasted with random probability sampling techniques. However, Tongco (2007) fully supporting purposive sampling asserts that, “the inherent bias of the method contributes to its efficiency, and the method stays robust even when tested against random probability sampling” (p. 147).

Subscribing fully to Tongco’s view that the “inherent bias” of the method actually helps the researcher in maintaining the focus for a particular study, I looked for only those persons, to be the research participants for this study, who fulfilled the above outlined criteria.

The outlined set of criteria was further authenticated with the help of a Language History Questionnaire (Appendix 2), which every participant was required to fill in before actually participating.

A primary requirement of this study, thus, was to look for participants with more or less equal proficiency in the three languages, Punjabi-Urdu-English (with a little compromise in L3 proficiency with the participants from the first age group), and this was the major reason for choosing an English-medium university for selecting the participants. In any other university or institution in Lahore, the students or
faculty would not have been consistently exposed to English language, and thus looking for participants with more or less equal proficiency in the three languages would have been almost impossible. Yet, there was a challenge in doing so. As most of the students in this university come from English-medium schooling background, it was difficult to find P-U-E trilinguals with Urdu-medium schooling background. To overcome this difficulty, snowball sampling was employed, that is, I asked the selected participants to recommend others who would meet the same criteria. I, therefore, asked the key participants, those I had already selected using purposive sampling, to suggest at their discretion the names of other persons with the same language history as they had. I later contacted the ones suggested by the key participants to figure out if they fulfilled the above defined criteria, and those who did, were contacted for their consent for participation in this research.

It is worth-mentioning that the above-mentioned three age groups were actually taken as a measure of the time period for which the participants had been exposed to the three languages. That is why only those P-U-E trilinguals were considered potential participants for this study who were either students or faculty members in an English medium university, and thus were bound to be exposed to English language for certain number of hours for five days every week, as they spoke the other two languages, Punjabi and Urdu, in their homes and other places, e.g., grocery stores, markets, doctors’ clinics, barber shops, etc. On the contrary, other P-U-E trilinguals, such as businessmen, office workers, or housewives, might not have been using the three languages on daily basis, particularly English, and therefore were not considered potential participants for this study.

For eliciting the languages experiences of these P-U-E trilinguals from the three age groups, three phenomenological methods were chosen: interviews, focus group discussions, and essay writing. Whereas Creswell (1998) recommends ‘long interviews with up to 10 people’ as desirable for a phenomenological research, I chose 12 participants, 4 from each age group in order to have equal participation from the three age groups. Later, I found that 4 long interviews from each age group were enough to reach ‘saturation’, that is, when no new perspective on the topic was introduced (Groenwald,
In addition to 12 long interviews, another 12 participants (4 from each of the three age groups) were recruited to write essays on their experiences of languages learning and usage. Besides, 16 participants were chosen for two focus group discussions (FGDs): the first FGD with 6 participants from the first age group, and the second FGD with 10 participants from the other two age groups. Altogether, 40 P-U-E trilingual participants were recruited from the three age groups: 12 for interviews, 12 for essay writing, and 16 for FGDs. The rationale for choosing three methods for data collection was to achieve data triangulation, which is the “mixing of data or methods so that diverse viewpoints or standpoints cast light upon a topic” (Olsen, 2004, p.3).

Below, the three methods used for data collection are discussed in greater detail.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

“The most outstanding quality of data sought by the phenomenological researcher is detail of lived situations rather than hypotheses or opinions about, explanation of, interpretation of, inferences, or generalizations regarding the phenomenon” (Wertz, 2005, p. 171).

In order to ensure concrete and detailed descriptions of ‘lived situations’, the methods mostly used by phenomenological researchers include: long in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, phenomenological essays, participant observation, memoing and other such methods which not only help capture the lived experiences of the participants but also describe them, ‘description’ being a true ideal of the phenomenological research.

Due to the constraints of time and space and also keeping in view the objectives of the study, of the above mentioned methods, three phenomenological methods were chosen for this study, viz. interviews, focus group discussion, and essay writing. These three methods were particularly intended to help the participants narrate their lived experiences of the phenomena, just as Bradfield (2007) envisions phenomenology as “an attendance to the lived world of the experiencing individual that is grounded in the individual’s narrations of the experience” (p.1).
Therefore, it was my major interest in the participants’ ‘narrations’ of their lived experiences of learning and using the three languages that led me to choose the following three methods for gathering data:

i. Interviews

ii. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

iii. Essay writing

I shall discuss each one in detail below.

3.3.1 Interviews

Kvale (1996), at the very outset of his famous book, *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*, makes a very important point, “If you want to know how people understand their world and their life, why not talk with them?” (p. 1). Kvale, through his above-mentioned work, helped in establishing interviews as an important research instrument in qualitative research. He considered interview an “interview, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest” (p. 2). He introduces the notion of ‘semi-structured’ life-world interviews’, which he defines as “an interview whose purpose is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (p. 5-6).

Adhering to Kvale’s (1996) principle, I conducted 12 ‘Semi-structured life world interviews’, 4 interviews from each of the following three age-groups:

i. 18 – 23 years

ii. 30 – 40 years

iii. 50 – 60 years or above

After getting appointments, either telephonic or in person, I interviewed one participant at a time. Before the interview, I requested the participants to read through an Informed Consent Form (Appendix 1), and
sign it. The Form served to provide the interviewees with a context for the interview as it briefly defined the situation and the purpose of the interview and also outlined the purpose of this research study. After they had gone through the informed consent form and signed it, I asked the participants if they had any questions regarding this research interview and answered the questions to their satisfaction. With the permission of the participants, the interviews were audio-recorded using an OLYMPUS voice recorder, model VN-6800PC.

Keeping in mind the guidelines for ‘semi-structured life world interviews’ put forth by Kvale (1996), an interview guide was developed with the view to address the phenomenological lived experiences of languages learning and usage. The interview guide was a set of tentative questions, largely meant to keep a track of the conversation, which were modified or rephrased according to the demand of the situation or the demand of the age group I was dealing with at a certain time.

Four research questions guiding this research study have been given in the beginning of this chapter. The following six questions in the interview guide were meant to explore the lived experiences of P-U-E trilinguals, and thus addressed the first research question of this study.

1. Could you please share in detail your experiences of leaning the three languages: Punjabi, Urdu, and English?

2. Which language did you find the most difficult to learn? What reasons do you see for that?
   Discuss the difficulties in detail.

3. What is your experience of using and maintaining the three languages? Do you think it’s a difficult job and keeping the three languages working calls for an extra effort? If yes, which language calls for greater effort, and why?

4. How do you choose to speak a particular language in a particular context? When there is no hearer and you are communicating to yourself, what language do you prefer to use and why?
5. Do you feel any hesitation or fear of making mistakes while speaking any of your languages? What reasons do you see for that?

6. In which language do you think you express yourself the best? Why and why not in the other two languages?

Similarly, the following five questions in the interview guide were meant to address the second research question. These questions mainly focused to probe into how the L1, the L2 and the L3 lexicons interacted with each other, and to see if the predictions of the RHM were able to hold any good for the P-U-E trilinguals.

1. When using English, how often do you feel the need of translating implicitly from Urdu into English? When learning Urdu, how often were you translating implicitly from Punjabi? Why or why not?

2. If you have to translate (explicitly) a paragraph from English into Urdu, and a paragraph of the same length from Urdu into English, which one would you find easier and less time-consuming, and why?

3. Have you ever translated from Punjabi into English, or from English into Punjabi? To what extent was it easier/more difficult than translating to/from Urdu into English, and why?

4. As a learner of English through Urdu usage, your English usage is largely dependent on Urdu.

   Was your Urdu usage, in the beginning, dependent on Punjabi? If so, why and if not, why not?

5. Now, as a university student, you have to use English every day. Do you think, for using English, your dependence on Urdu is decreasing day by day, or it is increasing? Why so?

Likewise, the following four interview questions were developed with the purpose of addressing the third and final research question. They looked into the issue of lexical access, to see if it was selective or non-selective, how it was accomplished, what factors influenced and determined it.
1. When speaking any one of your three languages, to what extent are you aware of the presence of the other two languages? If you are aware of the presence of the other two languages, how do you stop yourself from using them and speak one language consistently?

2. Do you think the other two languages help you or hinder you in the speaking of one language?

3. Do you mix words of the three languages? If so, why and how often? When speaking in English to another P-U-E trilingual, do you tend to mix more words from Urdu, or you mix more words from Punjabi? What reason can you give for that?

4. Being a multilingual, you may tend to mix words when talking to another multilingual like yourself, but you don’t when the other person is a monolingual? If so, why? What stops you from mixing words from other languages when your hearer is a monolingual?

At the end of the interview, the participants were asked to add something if they wished to do so with regard to their experience of languages learning and usage. They were also given the opportunity to ask questions about the interview if they had any. Each interview lasted 35 to 45 minutes, average time being 40 minutes. During the interviews, I was fully receptive and open to the participants’ responses. The participants were allowed to express themselves freely, and were not stopped or interrupted at any point, so that the personal meaning could emerge. Being a P-U-E trilingual myself, I resisted any temptation to interfere with the meanings presented by the participants and, therefore, engaged in the phenomenological epoché, which at this point can be called the first level of bracketing. So, I listened cautiously and responsively to each participant, maintaining a focus on the participants’ lived experiences of languages learning and usage, the true experience of being a P-U-E trilingual.

After interviewing the 12 participants, I realized that I had actually lived up to the phenomenological way of intimately and empathically sharing the lived experiences of the participants. The way each participant willingly and overwhelmingly shared the essence of his/her experience of multilingualism made me feel satisfied about interviewing and sharpened my interest in the study even more, as now I had a broader understanding and a wider exposure of it through the eyes of my
participants. Gibson & Hanes (2003) have aptly put it: “The interviews… provide concrete and detailed
descriptions of their experiences with the phenomenon, and these descriptions become the text that the
researcher uses to uncover the essences of that phenomenon” (p. 187-8).

### 3.3.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Carey (1994) defines focus groups as ‘using a semi structured group session, moderated by a group
leader, held in an informal setting, with the purpose of collecting information on a designated topic’ (cited

Thus, focus group is a small group of participants who, led by a moderator, interact sharing their
experiences on a certain phenomenon in an informal way. The group’s interaction based on their
experiences makes a rich source of data that is valuable to a phenomenological researcher. Morgan
(1996) identified ‘interaction’ as a major component of focus groups, and emphasized ‘interaction’ as a
source of data. One of the biggest strengths of focus groups that he identified was the ability to generate a
large amount of interaction on a certain topic in a limited period of time.

Just as Morgan observed, in a focus group it is possible to generate a large amount of purposeful
interaction in a short period of time. This very quality of focus groups makes them a suitable data
gathering method for qualitative researchers pursuing diverse issues, and even using diverse
methodologies. On this account, Gray-Vickrey (1993) claims, “Focus groups are well-suited for a full
range of qualitative studies including grounded theory, ethnography, and phenomenology” (cited in Webb
& Kevern, 2001, p. 800).

Wong (2008) suggests 6 to 12 participants for a focus group, but further explains, “the number of
participants depends on the objective of the research; for example, smaller groups (four to six
participants) are preferred when the participants have an intensive experience to share about the topic or
when the researcher wants participation from each subject” (p. 257, emphasis original). The length of
time Wong suggests for a focus group is 45 – 90 minutes.
In the light of the above, two FGDs were conducted. The first FGD (coded as FGA) had 6 participants, all from the first age group of 18-23 years. In the second FGD (coded as FGB), there were 10 participants: 4 from the second age group of 30-40 years, and 6 participants from the third age group of 50-60 years or above. The reason behind holding a separate FGD for the participants from the first age group was their being at a lower level of English proficiency as compared to the participants from the other two age groups as the FGD was to be conducted in English. Secondly, all the participants from the first age group were Baccalaureate students in a university, whereas, the participants from the other two age groups were faculty members in different departments of the same university, and therefore the first-age-group participants might not have felt comfortable, and thus not been able to fully express themselves, in the presence of the participants from the other two age groups. On the other hand, the participants from the second and third age group were together in the second FGD (FGB) for two reasons: firstly, their unavailability due to their diverse engagements at other times, and secondly, all of them were at a higher level of English proficiency and could comfortably share their experiences in a group with the participants from the other age group.

Before recruiting participants for the two FGDs, I established their suitability for participating in this research through directly talking to them about the languages they had learned and also about the order and mode of languages learning. Then, I invited them to be participants in either of the FGDs according to their age group, and sought their availability for the date and time I had chosen for that particular FGD, FGA or FGB. At the time of seeking their consent and availability, I informed the participants that the focus groups will be video-recorded, and asked if they had any objections to that. Luckily, none of the participants had any objections.

In both the FGDs, all the prospective participants arrived on time. I welcomed them, and made them each go through the informed consent form, which provided them with a context for this research study as well as with a purpose for this focus group. After reading through the form, they signed it to show their consent for this study. Each participant also filled in the language history questionnaire. After
that, I welcomed them again, introduced myself and told them some rules for the focus group, which included:

i. Everyone should participate in the discussion and share his/her experience, also being tolerant of and responsive to others.

ii. Be sure of confidentiality, whatever you say will stay in this room.

iii. Focus group is being video recorded.

I had already developed a question guide for the focus group with the view to elicit responses from the participants on their lived experiences of languages learning and usage. The FGD guide was a set of open-ended questions developed with the purpose of keeping the discussion focused, and not letting it go off the main purpose for conducting the focus group.

In the FGD guide, the following four questions were meant to explore the lived experiences of P-U-E trilinguals, and thus addressed the first research question of this study.

1. *Could you please one by one share in detail your experiences of learning the three languages: Punjabi, Urdu, and English?*
2. *Of the three languages, which language did you find the most difficult to learn, and why?*
3. *Urdu-learning and English learning, of these two experiences which one was closer to L1 (Punjabi) learning for you and how? In what ways were the two experience different from L1 learning?*
4. *How do you choose to speak a particular language in a particular context?*

In the same way, the following four questions in the interview guide were meant to address the second research question of this study. These questions were mainly intended to probe into how the L1, the L2 and the L3 lexicons interacted with each other, and to see if the predictions of the RHM were able to hold any good for the P-U-E trilinguals.
1. When using English, how often do you feel the need of translating implicitly from Urdu into English? How often did you have to do that when you were a learner of English?

2. When translating explicitly, which translation do you find easier and less time consuming, Urdu to English or English to Urdu, and why?

3. Which translation would you find easier, English to Urdu or English to Punjabi, and why?

4. Do you think, for using English, your dependence on Urdu has decreased with the passage of time, or it has increased, and why?

Likewise, the following five FGD questions were developed with the purpose of addressing the third research question for this study. These questions looked into the issue of lexical access, to see if it was selective or non-selective, how it was accomplished, what factors influenced and determined it.

1. We are all trilinguals here, conversing in English. Where are our other two languages at the moment? Are they equally present, or they are absent?

2. If all the three languages are equally present then what is making us speak English consistently?

3. When speaking one language, do you use/mix words from the other two languages? How often and why?

4. To what extent does your choice of language mixing depends on your hearer?

5. What stops you from mixing words from the other two languages when your hearer is a monolingual?

With this I closed the FGDs, thanking all the participants for genuinely sharing their experiences and also for participating actively. Over the refreshments, which followed both the FGDs, the participants asked me some questions, and also interacted with each other. They were, in fact, excited about what they had shared during the discussion.

The FGA lasted for 40 minutes, whereas, the FGB lasted for one hour. Rich discussions were generated on the questions in both the FGDs and I, being the researcher, could feel that both the
discussions were fully data-laden as all the participants in both the FGDs had freely shared their subjective experiences of being P-U-E trilinguals. They were not only listening to each other patiently but also interacting responsively, thus making the FGDs proceed smoothly.

During both the FGDs, being the moderator, I was fully receptive and open to the participants’ responses. Though the participants were allowed to express themselves freely, but in order to ensure that every participant had equal chances of participation, I saw to it that none of them dominated the discussion. Being a P-U-E trilingual myself, just as I did when conducting interviews, once again I resisted any temptation to interfere with the meanings presented by the participants and, therefore, employed phenomenological epoche’, the first level of bracketing.

3.3.3 Essay Writing

Essay writing is also a data gathering method commonly used in phenomenological researches, and gaining popularity with qualitative researches at large. A phenomenological research mainly aims at the search for ‘essences’- essential characteristics of the phenomenon, and to achieve this, the participants are asked to, ‘respond to a research question, either by interview or description’ (Giorgi in Webb & Kevern, 2001, p. 800). Here, Giorgi has clearly differentiated between ‘interview’ and ‘description’, which shows that by ‘description’ he means written description. Furthermore, Finlay (2009), on behalf of phenomenological researchers claims “we aim for fresh, complex, rich descriptions of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived” (p. 6). Thus, description, be it verbal or written, mainly aims at the ‘concreteness’ of the data, that, is lived experience of the participants. Gibson & Hanes (2003) also mention the use of ‘written narratives’ (p. 195) for gathering data in phenomenological research.

In this light, I selected twelve P-U-E trilingual participants, 4 from each of the three age groups chosen for this study, i.e., 18-23 years, 30-40 years, and 50-60 years or above. I requested these twelve participants, one at a time, to write detailed descriptions of their experiences of learning and using the three languages. Before seeking the participants’ consent for writing essays, I confirmed their suitability
for participating in this research by directly talking to them. Once their suitability was established, I gave them the informed consent form and the language history questionnaire. After they had gone through the consent form, signed it, and filled in the questionnaire, I ensured their clarity about the context for essay writing, and answered their questions. Then I presented them with the following request printed out on a piece of paper:

*Share your experience of learning three languages: Punjabi, Urdu, and English. Describe in detail how the three experiences were similar to or different from each other, and also mention the difficulties (if any) you faced learning these languages. Which language did you find the most difficult to learn, and why? Also discuss your experience of translating from one language to the other: English to Urdu and Urdu to English, English to Punjabi and Punjabi to English. Of these four translation directions, which do you find easier or more difficult, and why? Also mention your experience of dealing with the three languages, the way you choose one language over the other or a specific word from one of the three languages, and make yourself speak one language consistently when talking to a monolingual. Don’t concern yourself with grammar, spellings, or word limit.*

The essays, the participants wrote, were kept safe in separate files, each with an assigned code, for example, Essay Writing Participant 1-Group A (for more detail on assigned codes for essay writing participants, see Chapter 4, Section 4.3), and the date on which the essay was written.

### 3.4 Ethical Considerations

Halai (2006) aptly puts, “Sound research is a moral and ethical endeavor and should be concerned with ensuring that the interests of those participating are not harmed as a result of research being done” (p. 5).

No doubt, research in general is a ‘moral and ethical endeavor’ but a phenomenological research is all the more so. A phenomenological research is concerned with exploring the life-world and thus lived experiences of the participants, and therefore touches something that is very personal to the participants. The participants might hold those experiences very intimate, and not have talked to anyone about them.
before. In that scenario, a phenomenological research has the huge responsibility of maintaining ethical standards. Walker (2007) is of the same view, and cautions the phenomenological researcher thus, “Adherence to ethical standards is arguably heightened when researching the lived experience, calling for creative strategies in the research design and careful deliberation of the potential risks involved” (p. 43, 44).

That is why, in a phenomenological research, there is an utmost need for “offering respect and protection to research participants through assurance of confidentiality of information shared and anonymity by not revealing the identity of the individuals and institutions involved” (Halai, 2006, p. 6).

To ensure ethical research, I made use of informed consent form (Appendix 1). According to Polit and Hungler (1999), “informed consent means that participants have adequate information regarding the research, are capable of comprehending the information, and have the power of free choice enabling them to consent or decline participation in the research voluntarily” (cited in Walker, 2007, p. 40).

The informed consent form that I developed was intended to give the participants a complete overview of the research study. It communicated to the participants the nature and purpose of the study, procedures involved, risks and benefits of participating in the study, and ensured the confidentiality of their information. It also stated the participants’ freedom to participate in the research, or to decline or withdraw at any point. The participants were requested to read through and, if willing, sign the informed consent form before each of the three data collection methods used in this study: interviews, FGD, and essay writing, to show their willingness for providing their views and insights about the topic of the research study, and also to give full assurance of the confidentiality of their responses. The signed informed consent forms would be safely retained for the period of 3 years.

3.5 Data Explicitation

I have deliberately avoided using the term “analysis” here as Hycner (1985) cautions the phenomenological researcher that the term analysis “usually means ‘breaking into parts’ and therefore
often means a loss of the whole phenomenon” (p. 300, emphasis original). Instead, he suggests using the term “explicitation, which means an investigation of the constituents of a phenomenon while always keeping the context of the whole” (Ibid). Though the terms ‘explicitation’ and ‘analysis’ would be interchangeably used in this study, my main purpose here is ‘explicitation’ of the data because I do not want to lose the essence of the phenomenon by ‘breaking it into parts’, on the other hand, I intend to search for the essence of the phenomenon while ‘keeping the context of the whole’.

3.5.1 Explicitation of the Interview Data

Hycner (1985) proposed a complete set of guidelines for the explicitation of the interview data. His proposed explicitation process consists of 15 steps. For the explicitation of the interview data, I relied on Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process. I have briefly outlined the 15 steps below:

i. **Transcription**

The first step in explicating the phenomenological interview data is to transcribe the recorded interviews, which include literal statements as well as non-verbal and paralinguistic communication. So, I transcribed all the interviews one by one, after listening to each one a number of times.

ii. **Bracketing and phenomenological reduction**

The second step, which is of utmost importance, is to employ Phenomenological reduction when listening to the recorded interviews and reading the transcriptions. I, as phenomenological researcher, suspended my own meanings and interpretations of the phenomenon and let myself empathize with the participants so that I could fully share their experience of the phenomenon. Just as Wertz (2005), a counseling psychologist, brings up about the phenomenological analysis of the data.

The researcher strives to leave his or her own world behind and to enter fully, through the written description, into the situations of the participants. The researcher empathically joins with the participants in their lived situation(s). This sharing of the experience is the basis for later reflection on meanings and experiential process… This attitude is free of value judgments from an external frame of reference and instead
focuses on the meaning of the situation purely as it is given in the participant’s experience. This is the implementation of the phenomenological epoche’. The researcher not only attends to what is experienced but also reflects on the how—the psychological processes: bodily, perceptual, emotional, imaginative, linguistic, social, behavioral, and so on that are involved in its constitution (p. 172).

Likewise, according to Hycner, engaging in phenomenological reduction is the second step for the analysis of the interview data.

iii. **Listening to the interview for a sense of the whole**

Having employed phenomenological reduction, in order to get a sense of the whole, I listened to the recoding of every interview a number of times as well as read the transcriptions. This was meant to provide a context for the emergence of specific meanings which would later on lead to an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon. I particularly focused on the non-verbal and para-linguistic features of communication, such as, intonations, emphases, pauses, etc.

iv. **Delineating units of general meaning**

Having transcribed the interviews, bracketed my presuppositions, and listened to each interview a number of times, I began the highly rigorous process of going over each and every bit, verbal or non-verbal, of the interview with the purpose of obtaining the participant’s meaning. “This is a process of getting at the essence of the meaning expressed in a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph or significant non-verbal communication. It is a crystallization and condensation of what the participant has said, still using as much as possible the literal words of the participant” (Hycner, 1985, p. 282). While staying very close to the literal data, as proposed by Hycner, I delineated units of general meaning, which are “those words, phrases, non-verbal or para-linguisitic communications which express a unique and coherent meaning (irrespective of the research question) clearly differentiated from that which precedes and follows” (Ibid, emphasis original).
v. Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question

After the units of general meaning had been pointed out, I addressed the research questions to them to see if the participants’ responses shed some light on the research questions of this study. If so, then it was taken as a unit of relevant meaning in a manner similar to the previous step. The statements irrelevant to the phenomenon were excluded. Though I had bracketed my presuppositions in the beginning of this process, here at this step, I had to use my judgment to determine if a certain unit of meaning was relevant to the present research or not, and therefore was to be retrained or not.

vi. Training Independent judges to verify the units of relevant meaning

The purpose behind carrying out this step was to maintain reliability. Training other researchers to carry out steps 4 and 5 independently would help in establishing the rigor of the study, and also indicate that, I as phenomenological researcher, had bracketed my own presuppositions while analyzing the interview data. Therefore, I trained two of my colleagues by explaining to them the context and the research methodology of the study, laying special emphasis on employing Hycner’s (1985) data explicitation process and the significance of phenomenological reduction. Later, they independently carried out the steps 4 and 5 in order to verify the findings, and thus carried out the reliability check. However, no significant differences in the findings were observed, and the minor differences that they came up with were worked out easily through discussion separately with both of them. This step ensured the reliability of the findings of the study.

vii. Eliminating redundancies

After completion of the above steps, I looked at the entire list of the units of relevant meaning and eliminated those which were evidently redundant. I did not solely relied on the literal content but also on the number of times a certain meaning was mentioned by a participant and the way it was mentioned, because it indicated the significance of that meaning for the participant. Non-verbal and paralinguistic features of the communication were also taken into consideration.
viii. Clustering units of relevant meaning

After the list of non-redundant units of relevant meaning was compiled, I once again bracketed my presuppositions and tried to remain as true to the phenomenon as possible. I, then, tried to see if any of the units of relevant meaning clustered together, in other words, I looked for some common theme or essence that united several distinct units of relevant meaning. A rigorous examination of each individual unit of relevant meaning was required for such an essence to emerge, and then I tried to elicit the essence of every unit of meaning in that very context. Hycner (1985) cautions that, in this step, there is a chance of interference of the researcher’s presuppositions, so he suggests “to train other independent judges to repeat the process to see if they come up with the same clusters” (p. 288). Following Hycner’s suggestion, I once again requested the two colleagues of mine, who had already rendered their help on step 6, and had an understanding of the context of this study. Both of them separately went through the clusters I had come up with. Whatever minor discrepancies they came up with were resolved after discussion. In fact, this step requires a lot of rigor. I constantly had to go back and forth from the transcriptions to the units of relevant meaning and then to the clusters of meaning. The two colleagues of mine, as independent judges also had to do the same. It was only then that I was sure of having reached the essence of the phenomenon.

ix. Determine themes from clusters of meaning

At this stage, I cross-examined all the clusters of meaning to find out if there were one or more central themes which could express the essence of those clusters.

x. Writing a summary for each individual interview

After completion of all the above steps, I went back to the interview transcription and wrote a summary of the whole interview inserting the themes that had been drawn from the interview data. Each individual summary not only gave a sense of the whole, but also provided a broader context for the emergence of themes.
xi.  **Return to the participant with the summary and themes**

This step was more like conducting a second interview, and served to provide a validity check. So, I one by one returned to each participant with his/her written summary and themes, and engaged in a dialogue with them regarding what I had found by then. Out of 12, most of the participants (interviewees) showed satisfaction that the essence of the first interview had been appropriately and fully grasped. However, there were few, exactly 4, who asked me to add some further information. So, I interviewed those 4 participants the second time especially focusing on those issues that were not taken into consideration in the first interview.

xii.  **Modifying themes and summary**

On the new data from the second interviews from 4 participants, I applied the steps one through ten again. After that, I examined all the data as a whole and modified or added themes as required. The individual summaries of those 4 interviews were also accordingly modified.

xiii.  **Indentifying general and unique themes for all the interviews**

After completing all the above steps, I began looking for the “themes common to most or all of the interviews as well as the individual variations” (Hycner, 1985, p. 292). I not only looked for essences but also for individual differences. The first step in this process was to look for themes common to all or most of the interviews, and then clustering the common themes from the individual interviews as general themes. I was cautious not to forcibly cluster those themes together that indicated significant differences. The second step was to determine those themes that were unique to a single or to a minority of the interviews. At this point, Hycner (1985) cautions the researcher thus: “… when the themes from individual interviews are clustered into a general theme, this should not obscure significant variations within that theme manifested in the individual interviews. The variations may indicate the significance of the theme” (p. 293).
As Hycner suggests at this point, once again I requested the two colleagues of mine, who had been trained as independent judges, to carry out the validity check and establish the rigor of general and unique themes for all the interviews.

xiv. **Contextualization of themes**

After the general and unique themes had been written down, they were again placed back “within the overall context or horizons from which these themes emerged” (p. 293). It is to be noted that overall context is provided by all the interviews, and not just by one interview or by a part of an interview.

xv. **Composite summary**

Finally, I wrote a composite summary of all the interviews grasping the essence of the phenomenon being studied. The composite summary endeavored to capture the ‘life-world’ of the participants in general as experienced by them.

That was how I utilized Hycner’s 15 – step process for the explicitation of the interview data as described in detail above. It clearly shows that phenomenological analysis of the interview data is a highly rigorous process requiring the researcher to constantly go back and forth from the interview transcripts to the general themes. It is only then that the researcher is able to capture the essence of the lived experience of the participants. Just as Wertz (2005) notes, “The researcher continually moves from part to part and from part to whole in order to grasp the structural organization and interdependence of parts that make the lived experience” (p. 172).

3.5.2 **Explicitation of the Data from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process for the explicitation of interview data was also utilized for the explicitation of the data from the two FGDs with certain modifications in step 1, transcription. When analyzing the interview data, all the 12 interviews were transcribed separately, whereas, the transcriptions of the FGDs were done in two steps. Firstly, the whole of the FGDs were transcribed, with one FGD at a
time, first FGA and then FGB. Secondly, from those composite transcriptions, each participant’s
transcript was separated out. In this way, 6 transcripts from FGA and 10 from FGB were obtained. On
all those 16 transcripts, taking one transcript at a time, steps 2 through 15 of the Hycner’s (1985) process
were applied.

3.5.3 Explicitation of the Data from Essay Writing

For explicitation of the data form essay writing, once again Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process was
exploited. Again, it was the step 1, transcription that required modification, which in this case can be
called simplification. Here, the data was already in written form, so did not require to be transcribed.
Steps 2 through 15 of the Hycner’s process were applied to the participants’ written descriptions.

3.6 Summary

The chapter mainly focuses on discussing phenomenology as a research methodology with major
emphasis on the three key steps involved in phenomenological research method, which are:
phenomenological reduction, search for the essence of the experience, and description. The chapter also
highlights the importance of these three key features of phenomenological method to the present research.
Research design of the present study is also discussed with details of the sampling strategy and research
participants for this study. In order to achieve data triangulation, the study makes use of three different
data collection methods: long in-depth interviews, focus group discussion, and essay writing. The
procedures for these three methods have been discussed at length. Furthermore, to qualify the moral and
ethical standards of a qualitative humanistic research, the ethical considerations have also been dealt with.
Finally, a 15-steps process for the explicitation of interview data as proposed by Hycner (1985) has
briefly been outlined in this chapter. The same process is adapted for the explicitation of the data from
FGD and essay writing.
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND EXPLICITATION OF DATA

The main focus of this chapter is the presentation and explicitation of the data obtained from the three data collection methods used in this study, namely: semi-structured life world interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and essay writing. A detail of the data collection methods for this study is given in Chapter 3 on Research Methodology (see Sections 3.3). Sampling strategy and details of the research participants for this study are also discussed in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.2). The procedure for data explicitation is also outlined in the previous chapter (see Section 3.5). Keeping to the spirit of phenomenology, this chapter mainly aims at describing the language learning and usage experiences of P-U-E trilinguals, as exactly as they were experienced by the participants, neither commenting on them nor interpreting them, but presenting them uncontaminated and unchanged. In this chapter, the data culled from the three data collection methods is presented in three separate sections: the first section deals with the data from interviews, the second with the data from FGDs, and the third with the data from essay writing.

4.1 Data from semi-structured life world interviews

There are 12 semi-structured life world interviews conducted from research participants from three different age groups, which are:

i. 18-23 years

ii. 30-40 years
The rationale for choosing these three age groups is to observe the development in languages learning and usage over a long period of time. Four participants were selected and interviewed from each age group. Below, the data from these three age groups will be presented in separate sub-sections for the sake of greater clarity and convenience.

### 4.1.1 Interview data from the first age group (18-23 years)

Among the participants from the three age groups, this was the group with a low proficiency in English as all the participants in this group were university freshman, who had started speaking English after joining the university. Their proficiency was further determined with the help of Language History Questionnaire (Appendix 2). For the sake of convenience in referencing, the following codes were allocated to the four participants of this group:

- Interview Participant 1 Group A = IPA1
- Interview Participant 2 Group A = IPA2
- Interview Participant 3 Group A = IPA3
- Interview Participant 4 Group A = IPA4

The data from this group will be presented under the following eleven themes, which emerged when Hycner’s (1985) 15-steps process (discussed in Chapter 3, Section 6.1) for the explicitation of the interview data was exploited. The eleven themes sustained for the all the three groups of interviewees.

#### i. Experience of learning Punjabi

As Punjabi was the first language of all the participants, it was acquired naturally without any obvious difficulties. This is what all the four participants from this age group said about their experience of learning Punjabi. Their responses were:
IPA1: ‘Punjabi I learnt easily from my interaction with other people.’

IPA2: ‘Punjabi is my mother tongue and I faced no difficulty while learning Punjabi.’

IPA3: ‘My first language is Punjabi; I learnt it from my mother. So, it was not so difficult, as children don’t have much problem in learning their mother tongue.’

IPA4: ‘I have been exposed to Punjabi since my birth. So, it’s my mother tongue. I just started speaking it, without even knowing that I was learning a language.’

There was a general consensus among all the four participants regarding the learning of Punjabi that all of them had learnt it unconsciously as a result of their ‘interaction with other people’, as stated by one of the participants (IPA1).

ii. Experience of learning Urdu

The following were the responses from the participants regarding their experience of learning Urdu, their second language:

IPA2: ‘If you talk about Urdu, I didn’t learn Urdu from anyone. I learnt it from society, while listening to and then talking to people in my locality.’

IPA3: ‘Urdu, again, I learnt from my mother because my mother wanted me to learn to speak in Urdu before I joined school. And then, in my school, I always talked in Urdu.’

IPA4: ‘I started learning Urdu in my school. It was easy to learn. Even before school, my mother sent me to a teacher, who used to speak Urdu with me. So, I think I started learning Urdu from there.’

IPA1: ‘Even learning of Urdu was quite a difficult task for me because Punjabi is given prime importance in my village. I had to strive hard to learn Urdu.’
So, there were three different patterns observed regarding the learning of Urdu. One of the participants (IPA2) had learnt Urdu unconsciously, the same way as Punjabi was learnt. Two of the participants (IPA3 and IPA4) had learnt Urdu soon after learning Punjabi so didn’t find it much difficult. Yet, one of the participants (IPA1) started learning Urdu at the age of 10 years so ‘had to strive hard’ to learn it.

When the participants were asked about their dependence on Punjabi for speaking Urdu in the beginning, they came up with the following responses:

IPA2: ‘When I was learning Urdu, I never had to depend on Punjabi for speaking Urdu. You can say I was exposed to both the languages at the same time, so never had any problem with speaking Urdu.’

IPA3: ‘I don’t think I ever translated from Punjabi to Urdu for speaking Urdu because I learnt both the languages from my home.’

IPA1: ‘When I started learning Urdu, at that time I had to think in Punjabi and then translate into Urdu. But now, I don’t have to think in Punjabi for speaking in Urdu.’

IPA4: ‘I had to translate from Punjabi into Urdu when I started speaking Urdu.’

There are two contrasting sets of observations. Two of the participants (IPA2 and IPA3) did not have to depend on Punjabi for speaking Urdu in the beginning, while the other two (IPA1 and IPA4) had to. IPA1 had started learning Urdu very late, that’s why had to depend on Punjabi for speaking Urdu in the beginning, whereas IPA4 had learnt Urdu soon after learning Punjabi and found it easy to learn, but still had to depend on Punjabi for speaking Urdu in the beginning.

iii. Experience of learning English

Sharing their experiences of learning English, the participants came up with the following responses:

IPA1: ‘English was more difficult for me to learn. When I joined college for my intermediate, I had to learn English language. But I faced great difficulty because I belong to a village where it is not important
to learn English. I learnt English alphabets in 6th grade, when I was 11 or 12 years old, so it became very difficult for me to learn English because I had never been exposed to the language. However, after joining university, I learnt a lot about English.’

IPA2: ‘I started learning English in the real sense after joining university. Before that, I wasn’t able to communicate in English. Now, that I have taken a course in Communicative English in my university, I think I can speak, understand and write English, not very well though, because learning process is not yet over.’

IPA3: ‘The most difficult experience was of learning English. After joining university, I realized that English should be learnt. So, I took a course for learning English. It was a good experience of learning English and talking in English. It was difficult in the beginning but now I am satisfied that I can talk in English.’

IPA4: ‘While it was in my college that I started learning English, but in the university I started speaking or communicating in English. I had real difficulty in the beginning.’

It is evident from the four responses that there was a long gap between the learning of second language (Urdu) and the learning of third language (English) of the participants. Though they had learnt English alphabets in school, mostly in Class 6th, and learnt some rules of grammar in the school, but learning of English as a language, as a means of communication, occurred only after joining the university, that means after the age of 18.

Talking about the difficulties and challenges associated with the experience of learning English, the participants had the following to share:

IPA1: ‘While learning English, I had to start from the basics and had to go through the rules, also faced problem with vocabulary learning. There was a frightening thing about English and that is still present.'
There is a fear associated with English that it is very difficult to learn. But, it was not that much difficult. I have gone through the experience, and think that I have to some extent adjusted to this language.’

IPA2: ‘While learning English, the most difficult times were speaking English in front of the whole class, and I also faced difficulty with the learning of articles, and the learning of sentence structure of English language was also very difficult.’

IPA3: ‘When I started learning English, I was always confused. I was always thinking how I could talk to others in English, if they would understand me or not.’

IPA4: ‘I faced many difficulties while learning English. Most of all, I had no confidence. If I had confidence, I could speak or communicate to others in a much better way.’

With the experience of learning English language, the participants associated such things as: lack of confidence, lack of vocabulary, and the fear of English as a dreadfully difficult language.

Moreover, a fear of making mistakes and lack of spontaneity were a part of the experience of learning English. The participants shared their feelings thus:

IPA1: ‘Still there is a fear of making mistakes while speaking English, but now I try to make corrections. In the beginning when a correction was made by someone, I felt ashamed that I am not learning the language, and not coming up to the standard. The fear is still present. And, if the other person is more fluent than me, I lose confidence.’

IPA2: ‘In the beginning as an English learner, I was slow. So, when someone asked me a question, I couldn’t answer at once. I remember once my teacher asked me a question and I couldn’t answer him quickly. I wasn’t spontaneous when my teachers or classmates talked to me in English. Moreover, there was a fear of making the wrong use of tenses and the wrong use of articles in English.’
IPA3: ‘I was slow in the beginning. I would take much time about a minute or two in managing my words and then I would say something. But even then, I would think that maybe I was wrong and didn’t speak proper English. There were some of the feelings that discouraged me in the beginning.’

IPA4: ‘There was a great fear of making mistakes, and still I have that fear. When I have to talk to someone very fluent in English, I feel that I’m not able to speak, and I mispronounce some words. I fear that he/she would comment on my English. So, I have that fear, and that’s why I try not to communicate in English.’

It can be seen from the above responses that a fear was associated with the learning of English, and then every participant mentioned having a fear of making mistakes. Moreover, all of the participants associated lack of spontaneity and lack of confidence with the speaking of English in the beginning.

iv. Dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning

On the question of dependence on Urdu for speaking English, again all the four participants had similar experiences.

IPA1: ‘While speaking English, I have to translate from Urdu to English because vocabulary problems are still there, and when I have to speak about a complex idea, then I have problem. I have to stop for few moments, think and then speak. I think in Urdu, then look for more suitable words in English, translate and then speak in English.’

IPA2: ‘For speaking in English, I first think in Urdu, then translate into English and then speak. Still, I have to translate from Urdu into English in my mind and then I speak or write.’

IPA3: ‘In the beginning, I used to think in Urdu and then translate into English, whenever I had to speak in English.’
IPA4: ‘In the beginning, I would first of all make up a sentence in Urdu, then translate into English and then speak to the other person, and then again think whether I was right or wrong.’

There was a general consensus among all the four participants on their dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning. Not only in the beginning but two of them (IPA1 and IPA2) thought that they still had to think in Urdu, translate, and then speak in English.

v. Similarities/Dissimilarities in the three learning experiences

Comparing/contrasting the three language learning experiences, the participants came up with the following responses:

IPA1: ‘Comparing Urdu and English, English was more difficult for me to learn because Urdu is mostly used on our mass media and I used to watch TV.’ The participant continued, ‘Even Punjabi learning and Urdu learning were not similar in my case. I had to learn Urdu. In my village, we are very much possessive about Punjabi, so Urdu is not that much used there. Perhaps that is why for learning Urdu, I had to work hard. It was a different thing from Punjabi. Though there are similarities between Punjabi and Urdu, but they are different languages.’

IPA4: ‘I don’t think Punjabi and Urdu are similar languages. The way we speak, the way we write, and vocabulary items, everything is different about the two languages. Punjabi learning and Urdu learning were also not similar. However, English is an entirely different language and so was its learning.’

IPA2: ‘I think Punjabi and Urdu are the same, as learning both these languages I faced no difficulty. I learnt them from my surroundings.’ Further, the participant added, ‘If you talk about Punjabi, I have not learnt it from anywhere, and the same is the case with Urdu that I have not learnt it from anywhere. But, English I have learnt from my teachers. English is more difficult than both Punjabi and Urdu languages. English is also different from both Punjabi and Urdu.’
IPA3: ‘I think there are similarities between Punjabi and Urdu as there are many Punjabi words that we use in Urdu and vice versa. So, their learning supports each other. But, that is not the case with English. Each and every English word is a new word for a beginner. That is why the most difficult experience was of learning English.’

Two different patterns were observed in participants’ experiences. Two of the participants (IPA1 and IPA4) viewed the three languages as different from each other, but English more distant from the other two. The other two participants (IPA2 and IPA3) declared Punjabi and Urdu as similar languages, and also considered Punjabi learning and Urdu learning as similar experiences but English as a very different language, and its learning as a very difficult experience.

vi. Experience of Translating from one language to the other

As translation from English-Urdu and Urdu-English is a part of English language teaching in Grammar Translation Method, which is still prevalent here in Pakistan, the participants shared their experiences of the two translation directions as follows:

IPA1: ‘I find translation from English to Urdu easier, and I think I take less time in translating from English to Urdu because then I just have to go through the thing and write down whatever comes to my mind, but for translating from Urdu to English, I have to be conscious of the use of good vocabulary, grammatical patterns, sentence structure, etc. So, I take less time translating from English to Urdu.’

IPA2: ‘English to Urdu translation I find easier, and do it faster because for translating from English to Urdu, I have good Urdu vocabulary.’

IPA3: ‘English to Urdu translation is easier because that was practiced more in the school even in the college. Moreover, converting English to Urdu is easier than converting Urdu to English, maybe because we have better vocabulary in Urdu.’
IPA4: ‘I find English to Urdu translation easier. Though I can do both, but I would find English to Urdu translation easier.’

All the participants agreed that they found English to Urdu translation easier, and the reason generally forwarded by the participants was their having better Urdu vocabulary than English vocabulary. One participant (IPA1) also mentioned lack of command on ‘grammatical patterns, and sentence structure’ of English as a reason for Urdu to English translation being more difficult.

However, no participant had an experience of translating Punjabi-English or English-Punjabi, as Punjabi is not taught in the schools. This is what they affirmed one after the other.

IPA1: ‘I never had to translate from English to Punjabi or vice versa. I think translating from English to Urdu would be much easier than translating from English to Punjabi because English and Urdu both are learnt in school, and we are trained for translation in these two languages.’

IPA3: ‘I think translating from Punjabi into English would be much more difficult than translating from Urdu, because there are many Punjabi words that I am not familiar with. Punjabi also varies from one area to the other. So, it would be more difficult.’

IPA2: ‘I have never translated from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi. I have no experience of that. But if I ever have to translate from Punjabi into English, I’ll first translate the Punjabi text into Urdu, and then I’ll translate from Urdu into English. Only then, I think it will be easy for me.’

IPA4: ‘If I have to translate form Punjabi into English, I would first translate from Punjabi into Urdu and then from Urdu into English. This way I’ll be able to do it in a good manner. I won’t be able to translate directly.’

All of the participants agreed that they would find Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi translation very difficult, even more difficult than Urdu to English or English to Urdu. Two of the participants (IPA2
and IPA4) came up with a very interesting remark that if they had to translate from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi, they would use Urdu as an intermediate language.

vii. Development in languages usage with the passage of time

This is what the participants thought about their development in the use of English language with the passage of time.

IPA2: ‘In the beginning, I used to think in Urdu and then translate into English whenever I had to speak in English. But now I don’t have to translate. Now, I think I am able to think in English.’

IPA4: ‘In the beginning, for speaking English, I had to think in Urdu, then translate and speak in English. These things take time, but now I feel improvement. Now, I feel that I can think in English. Sometimes I still have to think in Urdu and then translate into English, but most of the times I can think in English.’

IPA1: ‘After joining university, I learnt a lot about English. Then, it was a great experience for me.’

Two of the participants (IPA2 and IPA4) conveyed their reduced dependence on Urdu for speaking in English with the passage of time, while another (IPA1) talked about the change of experience from a difficult one to a wonderful one.

viii. Consciousness of other languages when speaking one of the three languages

All of the participants thought that when they spoke any one of their languages, they were aware of the presence of the other two languages.

IPA1: ‘When speaking any one of my languages, the other languages are always present there because if there is a concept that needs to be conveyed in any of the other two languages, then I adjust accordingly. But, all the time I am aware of the presence of the three languages.’

IPA2: ‘When I am speaking any one of my languages, I am aware of the presence of the other two languages.’
IPA3: ‘When speaking one language, the other two languages are present in my mind. I can’t skip them.’

IPA4: ‘Yes, when speaking any one of my languages, I am aware of the presence of the other two languages.’

So, there was a general consensus among the participants as all four of them thought, rather strongly asserted, that when they spoke any one of their languages, the other two languages were present at that time and they had an awareness of them.

ix. Stopping interference from the other two languages

When asked about how they stopped interference from the other two languages if they thought all the three languages were present, the following were the responses:

IPA1: ‘While speaking in one language, though I am conscious of the presence of the other two languages, but I will keep in mind that I have to speak in one language, and make my point-of-view clear to the other person using that language. I will have to do that consciously, mean through a conscious effort.’

IPA2: ‘When a teacher asks me a question in English, I answer the question in English only. At that time, there is a continuous struggle within me to stick to one language. When I am speaking Punjabi or Urdu, the same thing happens.’

IPA3: ‘I stop interference from the other two languages by self-control and self-management because I know I have to speak English to my teachers, so I don’t try to use Urdu. But when I am at home, I don’t think of using Urdu or English because I know my mother can’t understand those languages.’

IPA4: ‘Keeping in mind the person I am talking to, I control the other two languages. I consciously do that keeping in mind that the other person might not understand my other two languages. So, I control consciously.’
Once again, there was a general consensus among the participants on consciously controlling the other two languages from interfering. Such words as, ‘conscious effort’, ‘struggle to stick to one language’, ‘self-control’, and ‘control consciously’ clearly showed the strategies employed by the participants for stopping interference from the other two languages not used at a certain time.

x. Languages mixing when talking to a multilingual

On asking if they mixed words from the three languages, the participants’ responses were:

**IPA1:** ‘I do mix words from the three languages, very often. It has become a habit. When speaking Urdu, I stick to Urdu. I hardly mix. But, when speaking Punjabi, I mix words, sometimes from Urdu, sometimes from English. When speaking English I don’t mix words from Urdu or Punjabi because, at that time, I am very much conscious of the fact that I am speaking English.’

**IPA2:** ‘Yes, I do mix words. I think I mix more when I am speaking Urdu and Punjabi. In both Punjabi and Urdu, I mix English words. But when I am speaking English, I don’t mix Urdu or Punjabi words. I just speak English because I make myself very conscious that I am speaking in English.’

**IPA3:** ‘I mix words from the three languages. When I’m confused while speaking English, I mix certain words from Urdu. I mix more when speaking in English, and I do that unconsciously, when I can’t make a sentence or can’t use an appropriate word. But, in Urdu, I don’t mix English or Punjabi words.’

Two different patterns of language mixing can be seen in these responses. Two of the participants (IPA1 and IPA2) mentioned that they mixed English words in Punjabi and Urdu, but did not mix Punjabi or Urdu words when speaking English because of a higher level of consciousness. However, another participant (IPA3) mentioned an unconscious mixing of Urdu words in English whenever s/he was short of words in English.
Control on languages mixing when talking to a (Punjabi, Urdu, or English) monolingual

When asked how they stopped mixing of words when talking to a monolingual, the participants responded thus:

IPA2: ‘When talking to a Punjabi monolingual, I don’t mix English words because at that time I am conscious of the fact that the other person understands Punjabi only. I keep this thing in my mind that the person to whom I am talking does not know the other two languages. So, I do that very consciously.’

IPA3: ‘When talking to an English monolingual, I don’t mix Urdu words because if I mix, the person will not understand. So, I try not to mix when talking to a monolingual, and I do that through a conscious effort.’

IPA4: ‘When talking to an English monolingual, I would keep in mind that the person knows just one language. S/he does not know Punjabi or Urdu. So, I would speak in English. I would consciously make myself speak in one language.’

Again, there was a general consensus among the participants on conscious control of language mixing when they had to talk to a monolingual.

Summing up, all the data from the first age group (18-23) reveals that Punjabi being the first language of all the four participants was acquired unconsciously. In the case of their second language, Urdu, majority (3/4) of the participants had either acquired it unconsciously or learnt soon after acquiring Punjabi, so didn’t find it difficult to learn. Only one of the participants, who had started learning Urdu quite late (at the age of 10), associated difficulties with its learning. Out of four, two of the participants notified their dependence on Punjabi for speaking Urdu in the beginning. Learning of English was referred to as the most difficult of the three experiences, challenging as well, because all the participants had started learning English in their schools as 6th graders at the age of 11 or 12, but a practical use of English started only after joining university in each of the four cases. With the experience of learning
English language, all of the participants associated such feelings as: lack of confidence, lack of vocabulary, lack of spontaneity, fear of making mistakes, and a fear of speaking English publicly. All the four participants stated their dependence on Urdu for using English in the beginning. Two of them thought that they still had to depend on Urdu for using English. Two of the participants regarded Punjabi learning and Urdu learning as similar experiences but learning of English as a very remote and difficult experience. However, the other two participants considered all the three language learning experiences as different from each other, learning of English being the most difficult. All the four participants agreed that they found English to Urdu translation easier than Urdu to English translation because they had better Urdu vocabulary as compared to their English vocabulary. There was a general consensus among the participants on Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi translation being more difficult than Urdu to English or English to Urdu; moreover, two of them remarked that if they had to translate from Punjabi to English or the other way they would use Urdu as an intermediate language. The participants felt that with the passage of time their dependence on Urdu for using English had reduced. There was a general agreement among the participants that at the time of speaking any one of their languages, they were aware of the presence of the other two languages, and further on all the participants agreed that they controlled interference from the other two languages, not being used at a certain time, through a conscious effort. Majority of the participants concurred that they mixed English words in Punjabi and Urdu, but did not mix Punjabi or Urdu words in English due to a higher level of consciousness when speaking English. All the participants were in agreement on their consciously controlling language mixing when they had to talk to a monolingual.

4.1.2 Interview data from the second age group (30-40 years)

All of the four members in this group had completed their university education (above Masters in most of the cases), and were working in different capacities in a university. So, this group had a higher proficiency in English as compared to the previous group of university students, which was further
ascertained with the help of Language History Questionnaire (Appendix 2). For the sake of convenience in referencing, the following codes were allocated to the four participants of this group:

Interview Participant 1 Group B = IPB1

Interview Participant 2 Group B = IPB2

Interview Participant 3 Group B = IPB3

Interview Participant 4 Group B = IPB4

The data from this age group will be presented under the following eleven themes. As mentioned earlier, the themes are the same as were for the previous group of interviewees.

i. Experience of learning Punjabi

Punjabi being the first language of all the participants was acquired naturally without any noticeable difficulties. This is what all the four participants from this age group said about their experience of learning Punjabi.

**IPB1:** ‘Punjabi was learnt unconsciously, without any effort.’

**IPB2:** ‘Punjabi is my mother tongue, moreover, it was spoken all over the area where I live in my childhood. So, I just absorbed it from the environment.’

**IPB3:** ‘Punjabi is my mother tongue so I didn’t have to spend much time on learning Punjabi.’

**IPB4:** ‘I acquired my first language, Punjabi. The easiest experience of learning languages was that of Punjabi because I was totally surrounded by the speakers of this language, and the objects in this language. From the day of my birth, I was being injected with Punjabi language. So, I just acquired it.’

So, all the four participants’ experience of learning Punjabi was similar as all of them had learnt it unconsciously because they were surrounded by people who spoke Punjabi.
ii. Experience of learning Urdu

Sharing their experience of learning Urdu, the participants came up with the following responses:

**IPB1:** ‘Urdu was also learnt unconsciously, just like Punjabi, as my parents were bilinguals – spoke both Punjabi and Urdu.’ About speaking Urdu in the beginning, the participant said, ‘I never translated from Punjabi into Urdu when I had to speak Urdu. When I have to speak Urdu, I speak Urdu, and when I have to speak Punjabi, I speak Punjabi. No translation in the case of Punjabi and Urdu.’

**IPB2:** ‘I learnt Urdu at the same time as I learned Punjabi, and more or less equally unconsciously, because these were the two main languages being spoken in the environment where I lived.’ Further, the participant added, ‘In the case of Punjabi and Urdu, I was never at lack of words. So, I never had to translate between these two languages or depend on one for speaking the other.’

**IPB3:** ‘Urdu I learnt from my environment, so I didn’t have to exert myself in learning Urdu.’ The participant also mentioned, ‘When I started speaking Urdu, I didn’t have to translate from Punjabi into Urdu. It just came naturally.’

**IPB4:** ‘I started learning Urdu language when I got admission in a city school. In my village school, up to class 4, I used to talk and converse in Punjabi. Before that, I was introduced to Urdu alphabets in Class 1, but there was no Urdu spoken in my village school.’ The participant further added, ‘In the beginning of Urdu speaking, I had to translate from Punjabi, but that translation came to an end within a couple of months because of constant practice, and also because everybody in my new school spoke Urdu.’

In majority of the cases, three out of four, the experience of learning Urdu was not very different from the experience of learning Punjabi as Urdu was learnt unconsciously, without exerting much effort, and these three participants did not have to depend on Punjabi for speaking Urdu in the beginning. However, one of the participants (IPB4) had a different experience of learning Urdu, which was effortful and more typical
of a second language learning experience; moreover, the participant had to depend on Punjabi for speaking Urdu in the beginning.

iii. Experience of learning English

Learning of English, the third language, was not an easy job with most of the participants. They shared their experiences thus:

**IPB1:** ‘English learning was a tough job, because I was living in a village and was not exposed to English. It was when I joined university that my teachers encouraged me to speak and listen to English. So, developing English language skills was not only a conscious effort, but was a real hectic job for me.’

**IPB2:** ‘Learning English was problematic for me, and this continued for some time. Basically, English is not a language that our environment encourages, so one has to put in a lot of hard work in learning English.’

**IPB3:** ‘I came across English, in the form of English alphabets, when I was perhaps 11 years old, in class 6th. That was a totally textual experience, means we were required to read few words in English with Urdu translation and copy them in our notebooks. I don’t think we were encouraged to speak even a few sentences in English. It was clearly very difficult to learn an entirely different language in this way.’

**IPB4:** ‘I was in sixth grade when I was introduced to English alphabets for the first time. I didn’t find it challenging and tough, rather I was taking interest in it that a new word is being used for an object, like if I talk about an object, let’s say ‘gharra’, an Urdu word for a pot used for carrying water, I came to know that it was also called ‘pitcher’. So, it was something different and interesting for me.’

So, the experience of learning English was somewhat similar in all the four cases, particularly in three out of four cases. All the participants had started learning English at the age of 11 or 12, and they found the language difficult and tough. Moreover, according to them, it was not taught properly. Only participant
(IPB4) stated the experience as an interesting one though in this case too English learning started at the age of 11 or 12, and the way of teaching was also the same as was for the other three participants.

About the difficulties and challenges faced while learning English, and the fear or hesitation associated with it, the participants shared more or less similar experiences.

**IPB1:** ‘In the beginning, I was afraid of speaking in English that I might be wrong. I was afraid of making mistakes. Some grammatical patterns I had real difficulty with. I had to make myself real conscious of not using them wrongly. And, I had difficulty with pronouncing few words also.’

**IPB3:** ‘In the beginning when I started speaking English, I was not much confident. There was a fear of making mistakes, of mispronouncing words, or speaking incorrect sentences. There was a fear that people around would laugh at me, which was a discouragement and that fear cut my speed of learning.’

**IPB2:** ‘I spoke English for the first time when I was being interviewed at the time of my admission in university. When I shifted from Urdu to English, I was a bit confused while expressing my ideas; rather I was feeling barriers, lack for words to express myself.’ The participant further added, ‘After joining university, I was afraid of being in the company of those who were fluent in English, however, felt comfortable with those who were even less fluent than me.’

**IPB4:** ‘The first experience of speaking English occurred at intermediate level in the college. But even then, there wasn’t any environment of speaking English language. I didn’t find a single classmate of mine who could speak in English.’ The participant further maintained, ‘There was shyness, there was a fear of making mistakes, then there was a fear that I might not be able to speak correctly in English. And if I spoke to a person who was highly proficient in English, first of all there was a fear that he might point out my mistakes, that he would find out that I can’t speak their language. So, why should I speak their language? Yes, there was much reluctance.’
In almost all the four cases the experience of English speaking occurred very late and it was associated with a fear of making mistakes, a fear of wrong usage of words and sentence structure, and a fear of being mocked by others. Shyness and lack of confidence were also associated with the speaking of English in the beginning.

iv. **Dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning**

About their dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning, the participants came up with the following responses:

**IPB1:** ‘In the beginning, I had to think in Urdu, translate and then speak in English. That was pretty much the case.’

**IPB2:** ‘In the beginning speaking English was very funny, like I would try to reproduce the exact structure as it was in Urdu.’

**IPB3:** ‘When I started speaking English, I had to think in my mind first in Urdu and then I used to translate that sentence into English.’

**IPB4:** ‘I had to think for a few seconds when I had to utter a word or a sentence, only then I would have accomplished English communication. I had to think in Urdu and then translate in order to utter something.’

Dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning was a common experience with all the four participants.

v. **Similarities/Dissimilarities in the three experiences**

When asked about similarities/dissimilarities in the three language learning experiences, the following were the responses from the participants:
**IPB2:** ‘In the beginning, I didn’t realize that Urdu and Punjabi were two different languages, as I was getting small instruction from my mother in Urdu and, at the same time, when I was being exposed to my neighborhood, I was getting Punjabi. So I didn’t realize how quickly and easily I acquired these two languages. As far as English is concerned, I would say that I learnt it, not acquired it, through struggle and structure I adopted it.’

**IPB3:** ‘Both Urdu and Punjabi have similarities. We actually put the same stress when we speak Urdu or Punjabi. Likewise there is a commonality in sound system. And another thing is that both these languages belong to the same region. So, there are a lot of common points between these two languages. However, English is totally different. It is a product of different culture. We cannot compare English with Punjabi and Urdu. In so many respects, English language is different from Punjabi or Urdu.’

**IPB4:** ‘There was a great difference in all the three experiences. I think I acquired my first language, that is, Punjabi, whereas I learnt the other two languages, Urdu and English. And, these three were entirely different experiences and the easiest experience of learning was that of Punjabi.’ Comparing the experiences of Urdu learning and English learning, the participant continued, ‘Overcoming Punjabi dependence for speaking Urdu was easier for me than overcoming Urdu dependence for speaking English. So, English learning was not only harder but many times harder than Urdu learning, I should say it was 5, 6 times harder. I think it’s because of the non-availability of that environment, non-availability of the people who could converse with you in English.’ Elaborating upon the similarities/dissimilarities between the languages, the participant said, ‘I think Punjabi language has great similarities with Urdu. So, it is very easy to switch from one of these languages to the other for the people of Pakistan. However, English is totally a foreign language; it has different text, and entirely different vocabulary. So, I think it makes sense why learning English is many times harder than learning Urdu.’ The participant not only pointed out similarities/dissimilarities between the three languages in detail, but also related them to the respective experiences of learning these three languages.
For two of the participants (IPB2 and IPB3), Punjabi and Urdu were similar languages and their learning was also similar, English was entirely different and difficult as well. However, for a third participant, who had had a markedly different experience with the three languages, all the three languages were different and so were the three experiences, but learning of English was many times more difficult as compared to Urdu.

vi. Experiences of translating from one language to the other

The participants expressed their views on the experiences of translating between English and Urdu thus:

**IPB2:** ‘Now it’s not a problem for me to translate Urdu to English, or English to Urdu. Both would be appealing to me, maybe I would see the content in them. But in the beginning of English learning, I think I was comfortable translating from English to Urdu.’

**IPB3:** ‘I can easily translate from English to Urdu, or Urdu to English, no problem for me. Not since very beginning, but it developed with the passage of time. In the beginning translating from English to Urdu was easier for me, but translating from Urdu to English was a bit difficult. The reason I think is that when I translated from Urdu to English, I had to look for words, vocabulary was a problem, and also the sentence structure, grammar, and all these things were there. But, when I translated from English to Urdu, it was not a problem for me, the sentence structure was not a problem, and how to arrange words or finding words was not a problem. So, in the beginning, translation from English to Urdu was easier for me. But now, I find both translations equally easy.’

**IPB4:** ‘I think translating from Urdu to English is easier and English to Urdu is quite difficult because I think it’s very easy to find equivalents of Urdu words in English. To find equivalents of Urdu words in English is very difficult. I think translating from English to Urdu will take longer time for me than from Urdu to English.’

**IPB1:** ‘I think it would be easier for me to translate from Urdu to English, and that would be a better translation than from English to Urdu.’
Translation from English to Urdu and Urdu to English is the basis of Grammar Translation Method, which is mostly used in Pakistan for teaching/learning English. That is why each participant had the experience of translating between English and Urdu. There were two types of responses. Two of the participants stated that though they could translate equally easily from English to Urdu and Urdu to English, but in the beginning they found English to Urdu translation easier. However, the other two participants mentioned that they would find translation from Urdu to English easier, but didn’t talk about the experience of translation between these two languages in the beginning of their learning English.

About translating from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi, the participants came up with the following responses:

**IPB1:** ‘I have never tried to translate from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi. I have no idea how I would do that if I have to. That would really be very difficult because we have been trained in Urdu language in our schools and never trained for Punjabi. Our competency in Punjabi is limited to the spoken part only, and other skills are never exercised in Punjabi.’

**IPB2:** ‘I never tried to translate from English to Punjabi or other way because for me Punjabi is only oral or verbal. It’s not like Urdu. For me translating from Urdu to English would be easier than translating from Punjabi to English though I am fluent in Punjabi and like to speak Punjabi.’

**IPB3:** ‘So far, I have no experience of translating from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi. But I can do that because I have started understanding all the three languages. The only thing that creates a problem is writing Punjabi. Otherwise, translating from or to Punjabi would not be a problem.’

**IPB4:** ‘I have translated many times from Punjabi to English in my mind on my own, but never done that outwardly or explicitly.’
None of the four participants had ever had an experience of translating from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi though two of them (IPB3 and IPB4) were little positive about translating between these two languages but had some reservations.

vii. Development in languages usage with the passage of time

With regard to development in the usage of English with the passage of time, the following were the responses:

**IPB1:** ‘In the beginning I had to implicitly translate from Urdu for speaking in English, but now I think I can think in English as I don’t feel there is any dependence on Urdu anymore for speaking English.’

**IPB2:** ‘For using English, I still have to translate from Urdu sometimes, but not as much as it was in the beginning. Now, I am overcoming it and able to use English directly. But, in the beginning, that was the only thing I did whenever I had to speak or write in English.’

**IPB3:** ‘In the beginning, I could express myself better in Punjabi and Urdu, but as time passed, I think now I can express myself equally efficiently in English also.’

**IPB4:** ‘In the beginning, I had to think in Urdu and then translate into English in order to say something. But now, as we are talking in English, there is no translation of course. I think I can think in English now.’ On overcoming the fear of speaking English, the participant said, ‘There were different fears, different kinds of fears associated with speaking English. But now, of course those fears are not there. I have overcome them and can comfortably express myself in English wherever and whenever there is a need to do so.’

All the four participants had something to share on the development in English usage with the passage of time. They talked about their reduced dependence on Urdu for using English, their increased proficiency in English, and also about overcoming the fear of speaking English and speaking it comfortable.
viii. Consciousness of other languages when speaking any one of the three languages

In response to the question of: When speaking any one of your three languages, if they were aware of the presence of the other two languages, the following responses were forwarded:

**IPB1:** ‘In my subconscious, all the three languages are always present. When speaking one language, if I remember a witty remark from the other language, I want to incorporate that, and sometimes I do that. So, they are always present. It’s not like one is present and the others are absent.’

**IPB2:** ‘Yes, the other two languages are also present, when I am speaking any one of my languages.’

**IPB3:** ‘The other two languages are always present. They are there in my mind.’

**IPB4:** ‘When speaking any one language, I am conscious of the presence of the other two languages, especially when I am talking with people from my own community, those who are trilinguals or multilinguals like me. However, I think when I am talking to a foreigner, who can talk only in English, then I’m not or I’m less conscious of the other two languages.’

All of the participants agreed that they were conscious of the presence of the other two languages when they spoke any one of their languages. However, one participant (IPB4) further added that consciousness of the other two languages was there when talking to a multilingual, but in the case of talking to a monolingual, the consciousness of the other two languages was less pronounced.

ix. Stopping interference from the other two languages

When asked about how they stopped interference from the other two languages when speaking any one of them, the following were the responses:

**IPB1:** ‘I don’t stop interference from the other two languages when speaking one of the three languages. I mix until and unless it is compulsory for me to speak in one language. So, while speaking to a
monolingual, I don’t mix because I have no choice. Then, there is a conscious effort involved at that time. Because of the restriction, I will be speaking in one language.’

**IPB4:** ‘In order to stop interference from the other two languages, I have to try very hard. For instance, when I am teaching an English class in my university, sometimes there comes a word which has a very beautiful or very apt explanation in Urdu, then I can’t stop mentioning that word and my students laugh at me. But there are times when intentionally and forcibly I have to stop myself from uttering words from another language. In order to speak one language consistently, I think a conscious effort is required.’

**IPB2:** ‘In order to make myself stick to one language, I have to consciously control my vocabulary for the other two languages, like first I would think, make up my mind, and then I would say whatever I’ve got to say, not speak in one go. I would definitely think. In the beginning, it was more like stop and think, stop and think, but now I have improved my fluency and spontaneity, and sticking to one language is not that difficult though I have to make myself very conscious about the one language that I am speaking at a particular moment.’

**IPB3:** ‘In the beginning that was difficult because speaking one language and ignoring the other two was not easy. Somehow or the other, the other two languages did intervene and that created a problem for me. But now, as I have a command on all the three languages, conscious effort of stopping one language from interfering in another is not that difficult.’

There was a general consensus among all the four participants that a conscious effort was required for stopping interference from the other two languages not being used at a particular moment. However, two of the participants (IPB2 and IPB3) further related the aspect of stopping interference from other two languages with the developmental aspect of languages learning, that with the passage of time as they had improved their fluency and spontaneity stopping interference from the other two languages and sticking to one language was not very difficult for them.
x. **Languages mixing when talking to a multilingual**

This is what the participants said about mixing words from the three languages that they speak.

**IPB1:** ‘Yes, I mix words.’

**IPB4:** ‘I frequently mix Urdu and Punjabi words in English.’

**IPB2:** ‘When I am speaking Urdu, I mix English words. And, even I mix Punjabi words when I am speaking Urdu. I enjoy when I’m mixing words from the languages that I know.’

**IPB3:** ‘Though I believe in speaking pure English, pure Urdu, or pure Punjabi, but words from the other two languages do intervene when speaking any one of my languages. It happens that talking with a multilingual you find yourself at liberty. You freely allow other languages to intervene.’

All the four participants agreed that they mixed words from the other two languages when they had to talk to multilinguals like them. However, no peculiar pattern of language mixing emerged from the four responses.

xi. **Control on language mixing when talking to a (Punjabi, Urdu, or English) monolingual**

About controlling their mixing of words from the other languages when talking to a monolingual, the following were the responses:

**IPB1:** ‘When talking to a monolingual, I have to force myself not to mix words from the other two languages. I am so much in the habit of mixing words from all the three languages that I actually have to exert an extra effort to stop myself from mixing and sticking to words from one language only.’

**IPB2:** ‘Most of the times I interact with people who have the same exposure to languages as I have, so when I mix words, I know they will understand. Otherwise, I won’t mix. But, I don’t feel any difficulty when I talk to a Punjabi monolingual, or even Urdu monolingual. Maybe while talking to an English monolingual I would not express myself as fully as I would do in Punjabi or Urdu.’
IPB3: ‘For instance, when I’m talking to an American, I keep this thing in my mind that an American doesn’t know Urdu, or he doesn’t know Punjabi, so I have to stick to one language, which is English.’

IPB4: ‘Even if I am talking to a pure Punjabi speaker, I have to try very hard not to bring in English words, and then I have to try equally hard to bring in equivalent Punjabi or Urdu words. For example, when I have to talk to a farmer in my village, who is a monolingual Punjabi speaker, then I have to try very hard not to switch to a single word in English that he might not understand.’

There was a general consensus among the participants that in order to stop themselves from mixing words from the other two languages and to stick to one language, they would require an extra effort.

Encapsulating, the data from the second age group (30-40) exposes that all the four participants had acquired Punjabi unconsciously and informally as it was their first language. In majority of the cases (3/4), Urdu was acquired at the same time as Punjabi was learnt, so it was learnt equally unconsciously. Only one out of the four participants had an effortful experience of learning Urdu, and also had to depend on Punjabi for using Urdu in the beginning. All the four participants had started learning English at the age of 11 or 12 and found the experience of learning English as the most difficult one. Moreover, all of them had started speaking English after their university education began, and in each case the experience of speaking English in the beginning was associated with a fear of making mistakes, shyness and lack of confidence. Dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning was found to be a general phenomenon. Majority of participants (3/4) thought that Punjabi and Urdu were similar languages and so was their learning, whereas English language and its learning were too distant from the other two languages. Only one participant declared all the three language learning experiences as entirely different from each other, with the experience of learning English being many times harder than that of learning Urdu. About the experience of translating between English and Urdu, majority of the participants (3/4) thought that they would find both translation directions equally easy, but half of them agreed that in the beginning they found translating from English to Urdu easier than translating from Urdu to English.
None of the participants had ever translated from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi, though two of the participants showed some willingness for it. There was a general consensus among the participants that with the passage of time, their dependence on Urdu for using English had reduced, and their proficiency in English increased, and also they had overcome the fear of speaking English, and started speaking it comfortably. All of the participants were in agreement that they were conscious of the presence of the other two languages when speaking any one of their languages, however, one participant thought that the consciousness of the other two languages was more pronounced when talking to other P-U-E trilinguals, but less pronounced in the case of a monolingual in any of the three languages. There was a general consensus among the participants that a conscious effort was required for stopping interference from the other two languages for using any one of their languages consistently, however, half of the participants (2/4) further added that as they had improved their fluency and spontaneity with the passage of time, stopping interference from the other two languages and speaking one language consistently was not very difficult for them anymore. All the four participants stood together on mixing words from the three languages and further agreed that they would require an extra effort for stopping them from mixing words from the three languages and thus sticking to one language at a time.

4.1.3 Interview data from the third age group (50-60 or above)

Among the three groups of interviewees, this group had the highest proficiency in English, which was established with the help of Language History Questionnaire (Appendix 2). All of them were university professors and had been using English for more than 30 years in each case. For the sake of convenience in referencing, the following codes were allocated to the four participants of this group:

Interview Participant 1 Group C = IPC1

Interview Participant 2 Group C = IPC2

Interview Participant 3 Group C = IPC3
Interview Participant 4 Group C = IPC4

The data from this group will be presented under the following eleven themes, which are the same as for both the previous groups.

i. **Experience of learning Punjabi**

On the experience of learning Punjabi, the participants shared the following:

**IPC4**: ‘Learning Punjabi was something I don’t know how I learnt it. I was exposed to a lot of Punjabi at my home. I was living among Punjabis. So, there was a lot of exposure and I learnt it the way we normally learn a first language, without any problem, without any difficulty, without applying any technique as a matter of fact.’

**IPC3**: Punjabi I have learnt informally from my mother, who first started talking to me, and then from other family members. It was a daily routine to speak with people around and Punjabi was a common language.

**IPC1**: ‘It was not a conscious effort to learn Punjabi. Quite unconsciously, unintentionally, I learnt it, without even knowing that I was learning a language.’

**IPC2**: ‘I learnt Punjabi from my home because everyone there, my parents, my sisters, brothers, servants, everybody used to speak Punjabi. It was the language for communication in my home. So, I acquired Punjabi in a very natural manner.’

With all of the four participants, Punjabi being the first language was acquired naturally, unconsciously and without any difficulty, simply through exposure to it.

ii. **Experience of learning Urdu**

On the experience of learning Urdu, the participants had the following to share:
IPC4: ‘Urdu once again was to me like Punjabi. I started learning it at the age of 7 or 8 when I was in my 2nd or 3rd grade, but I remember I learnt it without any effort. Something that really boosted up my Urdu learning was the presence of many Urdu books in my home. My father and my elder brothers and sisters used to read them. I also started reading them, and that helped me a lot in quickly developing my Urdu learning. I would say that I learnt Urdu without any problem, without realizing that I was learning it or had learnt it. So, I learnt Urdu the way I had learnt Punjabi, I mean very easily.’

IPC1: ‘Urdu was learnt more or less at the same time as I was learning Punjabi, without putting much effort, and without taking any pressure of learning another language.’

IPC2: ‘Urdu I learnt in my school. Initially, I remember I had to force myself to speak this new language and there were constant reminders from the teachers and parents as well to speak Urdu. But that was for a very short time I remember. I think it took me just a few weeks to get myself adjusted to this language, and then I never had any problem with the speaking of Urdu.’

IPC3: ‘When I got admission in school, then I came to know that there was another language and that was Urdu. And, in the case of Urdu, definitely teacher was behind all that learning. And I was also little eager to learn this language. So, I improved my Urdu as I grew in my age and experience.’

About learning Urdu, the second language, there were two sets of experiences. Two of the participants (IPC4 and IPC1) had learnt it informally and unconsciously in almost the same way as they learnt Punjabi, while the other two (IPC2 and IPC3) had had a formal experience of learning Urdu, which started after joining school.

The two participants, who had a formal experience of learning Urdu, shared the following about their dependence on Punjabi for speaking Urdu in the beginning:

IPC3: ‘In learning Urdu, there was no problem because Urdu was a common language spoken by everybody around, so I didn’t feel reluctant or shy when started speaking Urdu.’
Of the two, one participant didn’t have the experience of dependence on Punjabi for speaking in Urdu, while the other participant, though had a difficulty in recalling, but mentioned having had such an experience in the beginning for a short period of time.

iii. Experience of learning English

Learning of English, the third as well as a foreign language, was quite an experience with all the participants. They responded thus:

**IPC4:** ‘I started learning English at the age of 12 or maybe 13. Learning English was really a problem, the way you learn a second language, the way you learn a foreign language. I mean I had to go to school, and face all those problems, and learn principles by rote, rote learn rules of grammar and tenses, and this is how I learnt. And I don’t think I’m really good at English even now. Yes, that was an experience where I remember I had to work hard, and acquire or learn a bit of it.’

**IPC3:** ‘At the age of 11 or 12, I was taught English alphabets in my school and that was yet another experience. As in the case of Urdu, here again I would give all the credit to my teachers, who took greater interest in teaching us English. Afterwards, my interest in English grew greater than it was in Urdu, and I started giving more time to learning English.’

**IPC1:** ‘I think I was 10 years old when I started learning English because my formal learning of English began when I was in 6th class. English learning was of course effortful, and a slow process. A lot of drill was involved in the beginning for learning English alphabets, capital and small letters, and then learning it bit by bit. In the school, the emphasis was just on reading and writing, and writing too was more through
rote learning. I think it was my own interest in the language which helped me learn it, otherwise the environment and the conditions were not conducive for English learning.’

IPC2: ‘Learning of English was I guess the most conscious sort of learning. It required a lot of hard work and effort. It was a slow process I remember, and one required a lot of patience. Had the teachers not been encouraging me and appreciating my efforts, I would never have learnt it.’

All the four participants declared the experience of learning English a very difficult one, which required a lot of effort and hard work. The participants also mentioned the learning of English as a slow process, requiring a lot of patience, which could only be accomplished due to teachers’ hard work, encouragement and appreciation. The participants also talked about inadequate practices for the teaching of English in their respective schools.

Talking about the fear and hesitation associated with the experience of learning of English language, the participants came up with the following responses:

IPC3: ‘In terms of speaking I can say I was little slow and it was not actually a matter of my weakness but it was a social pressure. Nobody ever spoke English in public at the place where I lived. So, I was little hesitant and reluctant to speak. Otherwise my interest towards English speaking, reading, writing was always very good. So, I had that hesitation, which was mainly due to the public pressure that people laughed at those who would speak English.’

IPC4: ‘In the beginning there was a fear of making mistakes. In the beginning, like every learner, there is a problem, and that was the case with my English speaking as well. I was a little shy, reluctant, and I always thought I didn’t have enough vocabulary. But as I grew in experience, the things became comfortable.’
**IPC1:** ‘Yes, in the beginning, when we were just learning, we could just translate in a perfect way. But, as far as the speaking was concerned, that was little bit difficult because we were not habitual of speaking in English.’

The three participants shared their feelings of fear, shyness and reluctance associated with the speaking of English in the beginning. One of the participants (IPC3) also mentioned the fear of ‘public pressure’, and also of being mocked by the people around. Not having enough vocabulary was also a hindrance in the speaking of English in the beginning, as stated by one of the participants (IPC4).

iv. **Dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning**

As far as dependence on Urdu for speaking English was concerned, the following were the responses from the participants:

**IPC1:** ‘In the beginning, of course, I had to think in Urdu and then translate in English in my mind and then speak.’

**IPC2:** ‘Yes, in the beginning, I had to think in Urdu before speaking English. When I had to write an essay, I didn’t cram or learn by heart, as other students did, but I would think in Urdu and then write it in English.’

**IPC3:** ‘In the beginning, I always thought of a situation in Urdu and then converted it into English.’

**IPC4:** ‘I think for speaking English in the beginning I translated from Urdu to English, but perhaps very rapidly, automatic sort of,’ then, continued to recollect, ‘I think I used to translate. I translated, yes.’ And, then finally remarked, ‘Even now, I’m not sure if I am speaking direct English or I’m translating from Urdu to English.’
There was a general consensus among the participants on the question of dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning. One of the participants (IPC2) also mentioned the dependence on Urdu for writing something in English in the beginning.

v. Similarities/Dissimilarities in the three experiences

Two of the participants had the following to share on the similarities/dissimilarities in the three language learning experiences:

IPC4: ‘Punjabi learning and Urdu learning were similar experiences, while learning English was totally different.’

IPC2: ‘In my situation, all the three experiences were different from each other. But, I think learning of English was an entirely different experience, it was far more demanding as compared to learning Urdu. While Punjabi just came naturally.’

Two different patterns were observed. One participant (IPC2) viewed all the three languages as different from each other, but English as more distant from the other two. However, for the other participant (IPC4), the experiences of Punjabi learning and Urdu learning were similar, but the experience of learning English was entirely different.

vi. Experiences of translating one language into the other

The experience of translation cannot be ignored in our language learning, especially English language learning, scenario. About their experiences of translating one language into the other, the participants had the following to share:

IPC1: ‘Even in the beginning I was good at translating from both sides, but I think I found English to Urdu translation easier than Urdu to English because sometimes it is difficult to find English substitutes for Urdu words. That is why at that time I found English to Urdu translation easier.’
IPC4: ‘I am very sure and clear about it that translating from English to Urdu is very easy and from Urdu to English is really challenging, it’s very difficult as a matter of fact because, when you are translating from English to Urdu, you’ve already been given all the words and finding Urdu substitutes is very easy. But, when you are translating from Urdu to English, you have to think for suitable English equivalents, which is not very easy. This is what I think because we’ve been more exposed to Urdu.’

IPC2: ‘I think I could translate from Urdu to English or English to Urdu equally easily even in the beginning.’

IPC3: ‘I have translated from English to Urdu or Urdu to English for exam or test purposes only. To me both translations are similar. I don’t find any difference. In the very beginning too, it was the same.’

Again, two different patterns were observed in the participants’ experiences. Two of them (IPC1 and IPC4) thought that they had found English to Urdu translation easier in the beginning, while the other two participants (IPC2 and IPC3) thought that they could translate in both the translation directions equally easily even in the beginning.

About translating from English to Punjabi or Punjabi to English, three responses were forwarded:

IPC1: ‘Yes, I have translated from English to Punjabi. Once, I translated an English poem into Punjabi. That was a wonderful experience.’

IPC2: ‘I have never translated from English to Punjabi or Punjabi to English. But, if I have to, I would easily do that.’

IPC3: ‘I have never translated Punjabi to English or the other way. That has never happened in my life. I didn’t get any chance. If I’m asked to do that, I’ll definitely try.’ The participant further continued, ‘But, translating from Punjabi or the other way would be difficult for me, while translating from Urdu to English or the other way would be far easy for me.’
IPC4: ‘To me, Urdu and Punjabi is the same. I’m translating from Punjabi into English or Urdu into English, it’s the same thing for me. I’m equally fluent in Punjabi and Urdu. But, I’ve never translated from Punjabi into English or English into Punjabi.’

Whereas one of the participants mentioned having had an experience of translating from English to Punjabi, majority of the participants, three out of four, had never had such an experience. But, the responses from the three participants significantly differed from each other. One of the participants wouldn’t find any difficulty if asked to do that. The other thought that translating from English to Urdu or the other way would be easier. While, the third stated that translating from Urdu to English or Punjabi to English was ‘the same thing’.

vii. Development in languages usage with the passage of time

Shedding light on their experience of development in languages learning and usage with the passage of time, the participants came up with the following responses:

IPC2: ‘Now I find both Urdu to English and English to Urdu translations equally easy,’ and then continued, ‘I don’t have to think in Urdu anymore.’

IPC3: ‘I don’t have any problem with speaking any of these languages now.’

IPC4: ‘Now I think I can think in English for using English.’

IPC1: ‘Urdu dependency for speaking English reduced with the passage of time, and now there is no dependency at all.’

Talking about their development in language usage with the passage of time, majority of the participants, three out of four, mentioned that their dependence on Urdu for English usage had completely come to an end and that they were able to use English directly. One (IPC2) also mentioned the development of equal
ease in translating from English to Urdu or Urdu to English. Another participant (IPC3) referred to developing the same comfort and ease in using all the three languages with the passage of time.

viii. **Consciousness of other languages when speaking any one of the three languages**

With regard to consciousness of the other two languages when speaking any one of their languages, the participants had the following to share:

**IPC1:** ‘When I am speaking one language, I am aware of the other languages also because the substitute words are always there. Sometimes I would like to use those words because there are times when you don’t find an exact word to represent something in one language, but only in the other language. So, the other languages are there. They are never absent.’

**IPC2:** ‘I am aware of the presence of the other two languages when speaking any one of my languages.’

**IPC3:** ‘The other two languages are always present.’

**IPC4:** ‘Yes, when I am speaking any one of my languages, the other two languages are present. They are there. Of course, they are there. I mean I can anytime switch to Punjabi, Urdu, or to English, so they are there.’

There was a general consensus among all the four participants on the consciousness of the presence of the other two languages when speaking any one of their languages. Two of the participants (IPC1 and IPC4) put forth the ease in switching between the languages as an evidence for the presence of the other two languages, though not being used at a certain time.

ix. **Stopping interference from the other two languages**

To the question of stopping interference from the other two languages, participants responded in the following way,
IPC1: ‘I have to forcefully stop myself from using the words of another language into one language. There is a conscious effort required for doing that.’

IPC2: ‘It is due to requirement that I stop the other two from interfering. When I am required to speak any one language, I have to consciously stop the other two languages from interfering.’

IPC4: ‘Stopping interference from the other two I think is the urgency effect. For example, when I’m teaching an English class, I know I have to speak English. So, I speak English. I think it’s more like making yourself consciously alert of the one language that you should be speaking in a particular situation.’

IPC3: ‘I think stopping interference is different for different individuals. I can select one language at one time, without interference from the other two languages.’

Majority of the participants, three out of four, agreed upon exerting a conscious effort for stopping interference from the two languages not used at a certain time. However, one of the four participants (IPC3) declared having a command on selecting ‘one language at a time, without interference from the other two languages’.

x. **Languages mixing when talking to a multilingual**

About mixing of words from the three languages, the participants came up with the following responses:

IPC1: ‘Yes, I do mix words off and on, and that is intentionally done, sometimes intentional, in majority of cases unintentional.’

IPC2: ‘I always mix words from the three languages. I think I mix more in Punjabi because I speak Punjabi at my home. When I speak Urdu, I mix English words into it.’

IPC3: ‘I mix Urdu and English but I never mix Punjabi. If I speak Punjabi, I will only be speaking Punjabi. But, if I speak Urdu, I will definitely mix English words. But if I speak English, I’ll never mix
Punjabi or Urdu. This is because I don’t think I have good words of Urdu available with me. I have better words in English that I can use in Urdu. It makes me more comfortable to convey my message to others.’

**IPC4:** ‘I don’t like mixing Urdu and Punjabi but mixing Urdu and English is what I commonly do. When it’s not a formal situation and I’m talking to my friends, I mix Urdu and English words.’

Most of the participants, three out of four, admitted their mixing of English words in Urdu speech. Two of them (IPC3 and IPC4) further mentioned their speaking pure Punjabi and pure English, but mixing English words in Urdu.

**xi. Control on languages mixing when talking to a (Punjabi, Urdu, or English) monolingual**

On controlling their mixing of languages when talking to a monolingual, the participants had the following views:

**IPC1:** ‘When talking to a monolingual, I don’t mix and that is again a conscious effort, otherwise the other person won’t be able to understand what you are saying. So, I’ll have to stick to that particular language.’

**IPC2:** ‘When I talk to a monolingual, I don’t mix. Like, when I go to my village, consciously I try my best not to mix a single Urdu or English word. So, at that time there, I have to put a conscious effort. The same is the case when talking to an English monolingual.’

**IPC3:** ‘If I have to speak to a person who can understand only one language, for that matter I’ll have to take special care, I’ll have to put an extra effort – a conscious effort I mean.’

**IPC4:** ‘When talking to an English monolingual, I don’t mix because I know mixing would be of no use at all. Yes, there will be an extra effort involved but I think I can make it.’
There was a general consensus among the participants for putting an extra effort, that is, a conscious effort, to make them stop mixing words from the other languages when talking to a monolingual.

Summarizing, the data from the third age group (50-60 or above) reveals that Punjabi being the first language of all the participants was acquired unconsciously, simply through exposure to it. However, about the learning of Urdu, half of the participants (2/4) had learnt it informally and unconsciously, while the other half had learnt it formally after joining school, and of them, only one participant described having an experience of dependence on Punjabi for speaking Urdu in the beginning. All the participants agreed that the experience of learning English was a very difficult one, and a slow process, which required a lot of patience. The participants in general associated the feelings of fear, shyness, reluctance and a lack of sufficient vocabulary with the speaking of English in the beginning. There was a general consensus on dependence on Urdu for using, speaking as well as writing, English in the beginning. Half of the participants (2/4) thought that learning of Punjabi and Urdu were similar experiences while learning of English a more distant one, however, the other half were of the opinion that all the three experiences were different from each other, learning of English being the most drastically different. Half of the participants (2/4) shared that they found English to Urdu translation easier in the beginning, while the other half believed that even in the beginning they found Urdu to English translation easier than the other way. Whereas majority of the participants (3/4) had no experience of translating from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi, one participant mentioned having had such an experience and, of the rest, two of the participants thought that they wouldn’t find it difficult to translate between Punjabi and English. The participants generally pointed out that with the passage of time their dependence on Urdu for using English had come to an end, furthermore, the participants talked about their developing equal ease in translating from English to Urdu and Urdu to English, and developing the same comfort level with all the three languages. There was a consensus among all the participants on having a consciousness of the presence of the other two languages when speaking any one of their languages; they put forth an ease in switching between the languages as an evidence for the presence of
the other two languages when speaking any one of the three languages. Majority of the participants (3/4) were in agreement on their need to exert a conscious effort for stopping interference from the other two languages not being used at a certain time, however, one of the participants declared having a command on choosing one language at a time without interference from the other two languages. Majority of the participants (3/4) agreed on mixing English words in Urdu, though two of the participants stated their speaking pure Punjabi and pure English, but mixing English words in Urdu. There was a general consensus among the participants on stopping them from language mixing when talking to a monolingual through a conscious effort.

Collating the data from the three age groups of interviewee shows that there were a number of points where the data from the three age groups of interviewees converged. For example, as Punjabi was their mother tongue so all the participants in all the three groups had acquired it unconsciously mainly through interaction with the people around them. Urdu in half of the cases was learnt at the same time as Punjabi, so it was learnt equally unconsciously, whereas in the rest of the cases Urdu was learnt through formal training in the school and was associated with some difficulties. English learning, in all the twelve cases, started at the age of 11 or 12 and there was a general consensus among all the participants from all the three groups that learning of English was the toughest of the three experiences, and the learning of English and its speaking in the beginning was associated with such feelings as lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, lack of sufficient vocabulary and lack of spontaneity. All the participants in all the three groups were in agreement on their dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning. Another point of convergence among all the participants from the three groups was their consciousness of the presence of the other two languages when speaking any one of their languages. All the twelve participants agreed on their mixing words from the three languages and further concurred that when talking to a monolingual in any of their languages, they had to stop mixing words from the other two languages through a conscious effort.
There were certain points where the data from the three age groups of interviewees diverged. Such as, on the question of translating between English and Urdu, all the four participants in the first age group (18-23) found English to Urdu translation easier than Urdu to English translation due to their better vocabulary and sentence structure skills in Urdu. In the second age group (30-40) majority of the participants thought that they would find both translations equally easy, however, two of them agreed that in the beginning they found English to Urdu translation easier than the other way. In the third age group, majority of the participants mentioned their equal ease in both the translations; however, half of the participants thought that they found English to Urdu translation easier in the beginning, whereas the rest of them thought that even in the beginning they found both translation directions equally easy.

Another point of divergence among the data from the three groups of interviewees was on the question of translation from Punjabi to English and English to Punjabi. In the first age group (18-23), all the four participants thought that Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi translation would be far more difficult as compared to Urdu to English or English to Urdu translation, and further half of them added that if they had to do that they would first translate Punjabi to Urdu and then Urdu to English, they won’t be able to translate from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi directly. In the second age group (30-40), though none of the participants had ever tried to translate between Punjabi and English, but two of them showed some willingness for it. In the third age group (50-60 or above), one of the participants had an experience of translating from English to Urdu, whereas none of the rest had ever had such an experience but two of them thought that they wouldn’t find it any difficult.

Another point of divergence among the three groups was the degree of dependence on Urdu for using English and overcoming it with the passage of time. In the first age group (18-23), half of the participants thought that they had to think in Urdu for speaking English in the beginning but they had almost overcome it, whereas the other two participants mentioned that they still had to depend on Urdu for using English. The participants in the second age group (30-40) generally agreed that with the passage of time their dependence on Urdu for using English had considerably reduced. Whereas, the
participants in the third age group (50-60 or above) had a general consensus that their dependence on Urdu for using English had come to an end, and they were able to use English directly.

On the question of controlling interference from the other two languages, there were subtle differences in the responses from the three groups of interviewees. The participants in the first age group (18-23) were in general agreement that they controlled interference from the other two languages through a conscious effort in order to speak any one of their languages consistently. Though participants in the second age group (30-40) also thought that a conscious effort was required for stopping interference from the other two languages, but two of the participants were of the view that as they had improved their fluency and spontaneity, therefore, stopping interference from the other two languages and sticking to one language was not that difficult anymore. In the third age group (50-60 or above), though majority of the participants thought that they required an extra effort for stopping interference from the other two languages, one participant stated having a command on choosing one language at a time without interference from the other two.

Yet another point of divergence among the three groups was observed in the way the participants mixed words from the three languages. The participants from the first age group (18-23) generally agreed on mixing English words in Punjabi and Urdu, but they did not mix Punjabi or Urdu words in English because at the time of speaking English they had a higher level of consciousness. The participants from the second age group (30-40) reported their mixing words from all the three languages. In the third age group (50-60 or above), majority of the participants agreed on mixing English words in Urdu, whereas half of the participants stated their speaking pure Punjabi and pure English, but mixing English words in Urdu.

As evident from the above discussion that there are a number of points where the data from the three age groups converges, and at the same time there are certain points where the data from the three age
groups diverges. Both the points, of convergence as well as of divergence, hold great significance to the present study.

Data from semi-structured lifeworld interviews at a glance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data from first age group (18-23 years)</th>
<th>Data from second age group (30-40 years)</th>
<th>Data from third age group (50-60 years or above)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience of learning Punjabi</strong></td>
<td>Unconsciously acquired by all the 4 participants.</td>
<td>Unconsciously acquired by all the 4 participants.</td>
<td>Unconsciously acquired by all the 4 participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience of learning Urdu</strong></td>
<td>3/4 had acquired Urdu unconsciously and informally; ¼ had learnt Urdu through formal instruction.</td>
<td>3/4 had acquired Urdu unconsciously and informally; 1/4 had learnt Urdu through formal instruction.</td>
<td>2/4 had acquired Urdu unconsciously and informally; the other 2/4 had learnt Urdu through formal instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience of learning English</strong></td>
<td>Generally declared the most difficult of the three experiences, associated with a number of difficulties.</td>
<td>Generally declared the most difficult of the three experiences, associated with a number of difficulties.</td>
<td>Generally declared the most difficult of the three experiences, associated with a number of difficulties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning</strong></td>
<td>Experienced by all the 4 participants.</td>
<td>Experienced by all the 4 participants.</td>
<td>Experienced by all the 4 participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Similarities/Dissimilarities in the three learning experiences</strong></td>
<td>2/4 considered all three languages learning experiences different from each other; the other 2/4 considered Punjabi and Urdu learning experiences similar but that of English totally different.</td>
<td>3/4 considered all three languages learning experiences different from each other; 1/4 considered Punjabi and Urdu learning experiences similar but that of English totally different.</td>
<td>2/4 considered all three languages learning experiences different from each other; the other 2/4 considered Punjabi and Urdu learning experiences similar but that of English totally different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience of Translating from one language to the other</strong></td>
<td>English to Urdu translation found easier than Urdu to English by all 4 participants. None had an experience of translating between Punjabi and English.</td>
<td>3/4 found both translation directions equally easy. At the same time, 2/4 thought that they had found English to Urdu translation easier in the beginning. None had an experience of translating between Punjabi and English.</td>
<td>Generally found both translation directions equally easy. None had an experience of translating between Punjabi and English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development in languages usage with the passage of</strong></td>
<td>Dependence on Urdu for using English had</td>
<td>Reduced dependence on Urdu and increased</td>
<td>Dependence on Urdu had come to an end.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1: Summary data from semi-structured lifeworld interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Consciousness of other languages when speaking one of the three languages</th>
<th>Stopping interference from the other two languages</th>
<th>Languages mixing when talking to a multilingual</th>
<th>Control on languages mixing when talking to a monolingual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reduced with the passage of time.</td>
<td>A consensus among participants on having a consciousness of the presence of the other two languages.</td>
<td>A general agreement on the need of putting a conscious effort for stopping inference from the other two languages.</td>
<td>Consciously controlled languages mixing when talking to a monolingual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>proficiency in English.</td>
<td>A consensus among participants on having a consciousness of the presence of the other two languages.</td>
<td>A general agreement on mixing words from the three languages.</td>
<td>Required an extra effort for preventing languages mixing when talking to a monolingual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A general agreement on consciously controlling languages mixing when talking to a monolingual.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Data from focus group discussions (FGDs)

Two focus groups were conducted: first, with 6 participants from the first age group of university students, that is, 18-23 years, and the second with 10 participants from the other two age groups, that is, 30-40 years, and 50-60 years or above, where 4 participants were from 30-40 years age group and the rest of the 6 from the age group of 50-60 years or above. As already mentioned in Chapter 3, the reason for arranging a separate FGD for 18-23 years age group was that they were less proficient in English as compared to the participants from the other two age groups (their proficiency levels were determined with the help of Language History Questionnaire-Appendix 2), and as the FGD was conducted in English, they might not have felt comfortable in the presence of the other two groups and thus would not have been able to fully share their experiences. The participants from the other age groups were in the same FGD for two reasons: firstly, their unavailability due to their job commitments, and secondly the participants

...
from both the age groups had higher proficiency in English and were able to comfortably share their experiences in the presence of the other group.

As already discussed in detail in Chapter 3 (see Section 4.2), the researcher being the moderator for both the FGDs, made sure that all the participants in both the FGDs participated and no single participant dominated. While analyzing the data from the FGDs, I, as the researcher, made sure that every voice was captured and tried at my best not to let any single voice go unheard no matter how insignificant that seemed at the face value.

For the sake of convenience in referencing, the first FGD with participants from 18-23 years has been coded as FGA (i.e., Focus Group A), and the second FGD with participants from the other two age groups has been coded as FGB (i.e., Focus Group B). All the participants from both the FGDs have also been allocated codes. For the first FGD with participants from 18-23 years (FGA), the codes were: FGA1 (Focus Group A Participant 1) through FGA6 (Focus Group A Participant 6). Likewise, for the second FGD with participants from the other two age groups (FGB), the codes were: FGB1 (Focus Group B Participant 1) through FGB10 (Focus Group B Participant 10).

The data obtained from the two FGDs is presented below in two sub-sections, one devoted to each FGD:

4.2.1 Data from FGA-- the first focus group discussion with the participants from 18-23 years age group

The data from FGA is presented under the following ten themes, which emerged when Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process for the explicitation of data (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.2) was employed.

i. Experiences of learning the three languages

Sharing their experiences of learning the three languages, the participants came up with the following responses:
FGA1: ‘I learnt Punjabi from my home. I started speaking Urdu after joining school, and started learning English after joining high school, but didn’t know much about it before I joined university.’

FGA2: ‘Punjabi is my mother tongue. I faced little difficulty with Urdu learning and a lot of difficulty with English. My school was totally Urdu-medium, so I actually started learning English after joining university.’

FGA3: ‘Punjabi is my mother tongue which I learnt from my home. I started learning Urdu when I joined school and took great interest in Urdu speaking and writing. I started learning English when I was a 6th grader, but that was very basic learning. I could not speak or write independently in English before joining English language classes in the university.’

FGA4: ‘All three learning experiences were different. My mother tongue is Punjabi. I started learning Urdu in my school, but even in my school and college, we were not encouraged to speak Urdu. So, for most of the time, we spoke Punjabi in the school as well as in the college. I started learning English, in the true sense, after joining university though I was taught some of the basics in my school.’

FGA5: ‘My mother tongue is Punjabi. When I joined school, I faced a lot of difficulty in learning Urdu, but till my intermediate I had fully acquired Urdu, but not English. I started learning English in a proper way after joining university and now I think I am getting better at it day by day.’

FGA6: ‘The first language that I learnt was Punjabi because everybody in my home spoke Punjabi. After joining school, I started learning Urdu. I started learning English also at the same time with Urdu, but in my school I couldn’t learn very good English as my school was totally Urdu-medium. Though English was taught there as a subject but speaking or writing was not encouraged and the whole emphasis was on reading and translation.’
All the six participants had acquired Punjabi, their L1, unconsciously through interaction with the people around them. They all learnt Urdu, their L2, after joining school. They also started learning English, their L3, in their schools but were not able to use it for speaking or writing before joining university.

ii. The most difficult of the three languages learning experiences

Throwing light on the most difficult of the three languages learning experiences, the participants shared:

FGA1: ‘Learning English was the hardest experience because since my birth I have been exposed to Punjabi.’

FGA2: ‘Learning English was the most difficult of the three experiences.’

FGA3: ‘English learning of course was the hardest, and also took a very long time but still is not over.’

FGA4: ‘English learning was the hardest experience because I started learning it when I was a 6th grader.’

FGA5: ‘Learning English was the hardest experience.’

FGA6: ‘The hardest learning experience is that of English because I am all the time surrounded by people who speak either Urdu or Punjabi.’

Unanimously, learning of English language was declared the most difficult of the three language learning experiences. Two important reasons forwarded by the participants were: lack of exposure and learning it beyond the age of early childhood.

iii. Experience of dealing with the three languages

When asked about their experiences of dealing with the three languages, the participants shared the following:
FGA1: ‘It is difficult to deal with three languages because I think in Punjabi all the time so it becomes difficult for me to deal with other two languages, especially with English.’

FGA2: ‘It is difficult to deal with all the three languages, the hardest being English, because I speak very less English as compared to the other two languages.’

FGA3: ‘Yes, it is difficult, especially in the case of English.’

FGA4: ‘Yes, maintaining three languages is a hard task because most of the time I speak Punjabi, so Punjabi is my strongest language and the other two weak, English being the weakest.’

FGA5: ‘Using three languages is a difficult task because all the three languages are different from each other, but English is the hardest to deal with.’

FGA6: ‘It is very difficult to maintain three languages and the hardest to maintain is English because I don’t speak much English in my daily life.’

All the six participants were in agreement that dealing with three languages was a difficult task, dealing with English language being the hardest part of the task.

iv. **Dependence on Urdu for using English**

On the question of dependence on Urdu for using English, the responses were:

FGA1: ‘When you ask me a question in English, first I translate it in Urdu and then try to answer it in English. I think it is a tough job. I always have to translate in my mind.’

FGA2: ‘Whenever I listen to something in English, first I translate it in Urdu and then I am able to understand it. When I have to answer a question, I think in Urdu, translate and then answer in English.’
FGA3: ‘Yes, I first have to think in Urdu, then translate into English, and then say that thing in English. It is a difficult job because I have to keep translating in my mind all the time. But, slowly and gradually, I think I’ll be able to overcome this.’

FGA4: ‘When I listen to someone, in my mind I first translate in either Punjabi or Urdu, and then respond to it which is again dependent on either Punjabi or Urdu.’

FGA5: ‘When I hear something in English, first I translate in my mind in Urdu or Punjabi, and then answer for which again I have to think in Urdu or Punjabi. Mostly, I think in Urdu. The same thing happens for writing in English as well.’

FGA6: ‘Whenever I listen to something in English, first I translate it in Urdu and then I make an answer in Urdu, and then I translate back and respond in English. I think this is the worst problem with me that I cannot speak English directly.’

Dependence on Urdu for using English was found to be a common phenomenon among the six participants. The participants had to depend on Urdu, and even Punjabi in two of the cases (FGA4 and FGA5), not only for speaking in English, but also when listening to English, and reading or writing in English. FGA1, FGA3, and FGA5 shared their discomfort about it and considered it a difficult job. FGA3 also pointed towards a possibility for developmental aspect.

v. Translating between Urdu and English

On the question of which translation they found easier: Urdu to English or English to Urdu, the responses were:

FGA1: ‘Translating English to Urdu is easier because we have been trained to do that in schools as well as through exams.’
FGA2: ‘It is easier for me to translate from English into Urdu because my English vocabulary and grammar is not very good, so translating from Urdu to English would be difficult for me.’

FGA3: ‘English to Urdu translation is easy for me because my Urdu vocabulary is very good, but my English vocabulary is not very strong.’

FGA4: ‘Translating from English to Urdu is very easy for me because we’ve been trained to do this in school. Urdu to English would be very difficult.’

FGA5: ‘English to Urdu translation is easier because my English grammar is not very good.’

FGA6: ‘It is easy to translate from English to Urdu because I have a better command on Urdu sentence structure and grammar so I can apply it very well when translating from English to Urdu.’

All the participants agreed on their greater ease in translating from English to Urdu as compared to the translation from Urdu to English. Two main reasons that they pointed out were: their greater command on Urdu vocabulary, sentence structure and grammar, and their schools’ training them for English to Urdu translation.

vi. Translating between Punjabi and English

On the question of translating from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi, the participants shared the following:

FGA1: ‘It is very easy for me to translate English into Punjabi, but I’ll do it better if I first translate English into Urdu, and Urdu into Punjabi. But, translating Punjabi into English would be very difficult.’

FGA2: ‘Translating English to Punjabi is easier.’

FGA3: ‘I think English to Punjabi translation would be easier.’
FGA4: ‘For me, English to Punjabi translation would be very easy. For Punjabi to English, first I will translate from Punjabi to Urdu and then from Urdu to English.’

FGA5: ‘It would be difficult but I think English to Punjabi would be easier than Punjabi to English.’

FGA6: ‘I think it would be very easy for me to translate from English to Punjabi because I know very good Punjabi.’

There was a general agreement among the participants that they would find English to Punjabi translation a lot easier than vice versa. One participant (FGA4) thought that for translating from Punjabi to English, first Punjabi to Urdu translation would be required.

vii. **Decrease in dependence on Urdu with the passage of time**

On the question of ‘if their dependence on Urdu for using English was increasing or decreasing with the passage of time’, the following were the responses:

FGA1: ‘I think this habit is increasing, not decreasing, because the more I read in English, the more I think in Urdu, or I can say in one way it is decreasing, but in another way it is increasing.’

FGA2: ‘It is decreasing. Most of the time, I speak English to my friends and all the lectures are also in English. That is why, it is decreasing.’

FGA3: ‘Yes, dependence on Urdu is gradually decreasing as here in university, all the time I listen to people speaking English, and also I have to read a lot of stuff in English.’

FGA4: ‘It is decreasing. Now, most of the times, I understand English without translating into Urdu.’

FGA5: ‘Dependence on Urdu is decreasing day by day. Now, I don’t need to translate every time.’
FGA6: ‘This habit is decreasing day by day because in university most of the time we are exposed to
English through listening, and also our books, notes, everything is in English. Now, sometimes I can
speak without translating.’

There was a general consensus among participants that their dependence on Urdu was gradually
decreasing with the passage of time, however, FGA1 put it in a very different, rather paradoxical, way.

viii. Consciousness of the other two languages when speaking any one of the three languages

On asking about the presence of the other two languages when speaking any one of their languages, the
participants shared the following:

FGA1: ‘When I speak English, the other two languages are there and it is a tough job to ignore them.
But, when I speak Punjabi, then I forget about the other two languages and the same is about Urdu.’

FGA2: ‘Only Urdu is present in my mind when I speak English because first I think in Urdu and then I
speak in English. It is a hard job and I have to put a lot of effort in my mind to focus on what I have to
speak.’

FGA3: ‘The other two languages are there, especially when I have to speak English. The words from
other two languages keep coming to my mind, but I have to kind of push them back and concentrate on
using English words only.’

FGA4: ‘When I speak Punjabi or Urdu, ignoring the other two languages is easy. But when I speak
English, at that time, it is very difficult to ignore the other two languages. So, I have to be very
conscious.’

FGA5: ‘Yes, Urdu and Punjabi are there in my mind because I don’t have a very good command on
English so far, that is why Urdu and Punjabi are there as there are translation processes going on in my
mind about what you are asking and what I am answering.’
FGA6: ‘Yes, the other two languages are present because mostly the thought process is in Urdu or Punjabi when I’m speaking English.’

All the participants agreed on having a consciousness of the other two languages, particularly when speaking English. The reasons they generally forwarded were: their dependence on Urdu for using English and their lesser command on English language. Two of the participants, FGA3 and FGA2, also pointed towards their suppressing or inhibiting words from the other two languages.

ix. Mixing words from the three languages

When asked about mixing words from the three languages, the responses were:

FGA1: ‘When I speak English, I just speak English. I don’t mix words from the other two languages.’

FGA2: ‘When I speak English I don’t mix words from the other two languages because I am very conscious at that time.’

FGA3: ‘I mix words from the three languages when talking to my friends, but when I speak English in more formal situations, I don’t mix words from the other two languages and just speak English.’

FGA4: ‘I mix words from the three languages. Even when speaking Punjabi, I mix many words from English.’

FGA5: ‘Yes, I mix words from the three languages. When I speak Urdu and Punjabi, I mix the three languages. But, when I speak English, I just speak English because I am very conscious at that time.’

FGA6: ‘I think I don’t mix Punjabi and Urdu words in English. But, I mix Punjabi and Urdu, and also mix English words in both these languages.’

All the participants agreed on mixing words from the three languages when speaking Urdu and Punjabi, but not mixing Urdu or Punjabi words in English. FGA2 and FGA5 clearly mentioned their being ‘very conscious’ when speaking English.
x. Experience of talking to an English monolingual

On asking about their experience of talking to an English monolingual, the responses were:

FGA1: ‘It is very difficult for me to understand them.’

FGA2: ‘Very difficult.’

FGA3: ‘Yes, it is difficult to talk to the foreigners who speak English only, but I try to avail every opportunity of talking to a foreigner because this way I think I will overcome this difficulty.’

FGA4: ‘I find it very difficult.’

FGA5: ‘It is very difficult for me to talk to a foreigner who speaks just English, especially listening to the person would be the most difficult part.’

FGA6: ‘Very difficult.’

All the participants agreed that they would find talking to an English monolingual very difficult. One difficulty mentioned by two of them (FGA1 and FGA5) was their inability to understand the English monolinguals’ speech.

Summing up the data from FGA, all the six participants had acquired Punjabi (L1) subliminally and informally, Urdu (L2) after joining school, and some basics of English (L3) also in their schools, but started learning and using English as a language after joining university. All the participants declared English learning as the most difficult of the three language learning experiences, which was largely attributed to their learning it very late (about the age of 11 or 12), and to the lack of exposure to English language. There was a general agreement among the participants that dealing with three languages was a difficult task, particularly in the case of English language. All the participants commonly shared the experience of depending on Urdu, even Punjabi in two of the cases, for using English and they referred to it as a difficult job because they always had to translate in their minds. About the experience of
translating between English and Urdu, the participants were in agreement that they found English to Urdu translation easier than vice versa, and that was largely attributed to their greater command on Urdu and to the training they were given in their schools. The participants generally agreed that they would find English to Punjabi translation very easy, but Punjabi to English translation very difficult. They also agreed that their dependence on Urdu for using English was decreasing with the passage of time. They were all in agreement on having a consciousness of the other two languages when speaking any one of their languages, particularly English as at the time of speaking English it was difficult for them to ignore words from the other two languages. There was a consensus on mixing English words in Urdu and Punjabi when talking to other P-U-E trilinguals, but not mixing Urdu or Punjabi words in English because of a higher level of consciousness when speaking English langauge. They all agreed that they would find talking to an English monolingual very difficult because of their lower proficiency in English.

4.2.2 Data from FGB-- the second focus group discussion with the participants from the two age groups 30-40 years, and 50-60 years or above

The data from FGB is presented under the following eight themes, which emerged when Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process for the explicitation of data (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.2) was employed.

i. Experiences of learning the three languages

Sharing their experiences of learning the three languages and talking about the challenges or difficulties that were faced at that time, the participants came up with the following responses:

FGB1: ‘At my home, there was a bilingual sort of situation, both Punjabi and Urdu were spoken were spoken simultaneously. Urdu was mostly spoken from the children’s side and Punjabi from the parents’ side. So, both these languages were learnt unconsciously and simultaneously, whereas English was learnt quite late in the school.’
FGB2: ‘I learnt Urdu and Punjabi without knowing that I was learning these two languages. As far as English is concerned, I started learning English in the school through Grammar Translation Method.’

FGB3: ‘Punjabi was my first language. That came naturally because everyone around was speaking Punjabi. So, hardly I thought about learning Punjabi. Urdu was learnt through school. English was also learnt at school. It was an Urdu-medium school. So, I struggled with memorizing and all that. It was after joining my Masters classes in the university that I actually learnt English in a more comprehensive way. But, even there, initially I had to face great difficulty.’

FGB4: ‘I learnt Punjabi at my home and I learnt Urdu in my school, and it was very difficult for me to speak Urdu in the beginning. Later, in the school, I learnt English through Translation Method. Now, with practice, experience and effort, I am able to speak English.’

FGB6: ‘Punjabi and Urdu we were learning without knowing that we were learning something. But, English definitely was learnt when we went to school.’

FGB7: ‘I grew in a Punjabi household where Punjabi was spoken by all the family. But, my parents spoke to me in Urdu. I picked up both the languages simultaneously. English I learnt at school because no one spoke at home.’

FGB10: ‘I belong to a Punjabi speaking family, but due to different reasons, speaking of Urdu was emphasized more. So, I acquired both the languages simultaneously though my proficiency in Urdu is greater than my proficiency in Punjabi. But, I started speaking English after doing my Masters when I became a teacher, not in any of my classes as a student.’

In majority of the cases, five out of seven, the two languages Punjabi and Urdu were learnt unconsciously, that is, without any conscious effort from the learners’ side. However, in rest of the two cases, the experiences of leaning Punjabi, Urdu, and English constituted three different experiences, as Punjabi was learnt unconsciously, whereas the other two languages, Urdu and English, through conscious effort;
however, of the two languages, English had required a much greater amount of hard work and longer practice. The experience of learning English was similar in all the cases.

ii. **Dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning**

Discussing the issue of dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning mainly in the form of implicit translation, the relevant pieces of information that I extracted from the discussion were the following:

*FGB1:* ‘In the beginning, I remember, yes, I had to translate from Urdu to English for using English.’

*FGB2:* ‘For speaking English, I had to translate from Urdu for quite some time, may be till my Masters.’

*FGB3:* ‘Yes, in the beginning, I had to struggle, may be translate also from Urdu to English or sometimes mix words.’

*FGB6:* ‘Maybe sometimes while preparing my presentations at college level, it was a problem and I had to think in Urdu for speaking in English.’

There was a general consensus among the participants on the issue of dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning though one of the participants (FGB6) showed some doubt or maybe had a difficulty in recalling the experience.

iii. **Development in languages usage with the passage of time**

Discussing developmental aspect of the ease and convenience in the use of languages with the passage of time, the following responses were extracted out of the discussion:

*FGB1:* ‘In my case now I think in English more than in Urdu and that is just because of the orientation so far. I now feel more comfortable thinking in English because mostly I am dealing with people who talk in English.’
FGB2: ‘When I started my job, I started feeling more comfortable while conversing in English, without translating and now most of the times I feel I think in English. So, I can say English has got internalized.’

FGB3: ‘The three languages are now independent phenomena for me. When I have to speak Punjabi, I speak Punjabi and never think about Urdu or English. The same is about Urdu, and the same is about English.’

FGB4: ‘I feel there is a connection between exposure, language, and thinking. Now, most of the times, I use English so I think in English.’

FGB6: ‘I think the more we grow the more perfect we become. And then we become able to keep the three languages in separate compartments and not always require to translate.’

All the participants, who responded to this question, agreed that after having learnt and used English for many years, they didn’t have to depend on Urdu for using English, or they were able to use English directly. Two of the participants (FGB3 and FGB5) also mentioned their acquiring the ability to keep the three languages separately and independently.

   iv. Experience of translating one language into the other

Talking about the experience of translating from English to Urdu and Urdu to English in terms of their convenience, the participants came up with the following responses:

FGB1: ‘English to Urdu is easier to translate.’

FGB3: ‘English to Urdu translation I would find easier because of practice and experience.’

FGB5: ‘I would find English to Urdu translation easier. Urdu to English I think would be more challenging and demanding.’
FGB10: ‘English to Urdu translation is easier I think,’ and, further explained, ‘I think it’s again a matter of exposure. If you’ve been using English for a long time, then it becomes difficult to translate into Urdu. It would be otherwise if you’ve been speaking Urdu for a long time. So, I think it’s a matter of exposure.’

FGB4: ‘I think Urdu to English translation would be easier.’

FGB9: ‘I think I would find Urdu to English more easy to translate.’

FGB7: ‘I find both translations equally easy.’

FGB2: ‘I would find both the translations equally easy.’

Half of the respondents, four out of eight, shared that they found English to Urdu translation easier than the other way. Two of them found Urdu to English easier, while the remaining two mentioned their equal ease in both the translations. FGB10 pointed towards a positive impact of exposure to a language on its learning.

v. Consciousness of the other two languages when speaking any one of the three languages

On asking about their level of awareness for the other two languages when speaking any one of the three languages, the participants came up with the following responses:

FGB3: ‘Yes, the other two languages are very much there. They are at the sub-conscious level.’

FGB5: ‘Yes, they are there in my mind. I can approach my Punjabi in a split moment, so it is very much there.’

FGB6: ‘It’s like you have salt container, you’ve pepper container, you’ve sugar container, and whatever you like you pour out of that container. It’s like that. So, the languages are there contained separately. They are equally there. I can access them equally easily.’
FGB1: ‘The other languages are there but in a different proportion. For me, Punjabi comes only when you use the term Punjabi and suddenly something comes to mind, otherwise no. So, it depends upon the conversation, and the kind of vocabulary being used, only then I can float into that. Otherwise, it is somewhere camouflaged. But, I don’t think the three languages are equally present.’

FGB2: ‘In this setting, I am not consciously aware of the presence of the other two languages.’

FGB4: ‘I don’t know where my Punjabi is right now. Whenever I would need it, I would speak. But, predominantly it is English in my mind.’

Of the participants who responded to this question, majority, four out of six, affirmed the presence and equal accessibility of the other two languages when speaking one of their languages. One of the participants (FGB1) thought that the other two languages were present but not in the same way as the one being spoken. However, the remaining two participants (FGB2 and FGB4) declared that there was no conscious awareness of the other two languages not being used at a certain time.

vi. Stopping interference from the other two languages

When asked, ‘If the other two languages were present when speaking any one of their languages then how the participants stopped interference from those two languages,’ the responses were as follows:

FGB5: ‘It is the demand of the situation that makes us speak one language consistently.’

FGB6: ‘We are speaking in English consistently because you started in English, so we started talking to you in English. If you start speaking to us in Punjabi, we all will speak Punjabi.’

FGB2: ‘We are speaking consistently in English because you set the mode, otherwise there is no conscious effort involved in keeping the other two languages aside.’
Three of the participants who responded to this question generally agreed that it was the ‘demand of the situation’ which made them stop interference from the other two languages and speak one language consistently, so it was more of an external influence which made them stick to one language.

vii. Languages mixing when talking to a multilingual

On the question of languages mixing when talking to a multilingual, the following responses came up:

FGB1: ‘I think mixing of words is totally audience-based. When I know the person is a trilingual, I simply get started, mixing words from all the three languages.’

FGB5: ‘Mixing of words is something more convenient than making yourself stick to one language because if we try to speak one language in its pure form, we’ll be searching for words only in that language. But, when we are in a position of mixing words, we select just any words that are readily available in any language.’

FGB6: ‘We mix words from the three languages because that is a more convenient way of speaking. So, we mix according to our comfort level.’

The three respondents showed a general agreement that languages mixing was done out of convenience, that mixing readily available words from all the three languages was more convenient than sticking to just one language.

viii. Control on languages mixing when talking to a (Punjabi, Urdu or English) monolingual

On asking about how they stopped themselves from mixing the other two languages when the other person was a monolingual in any of the three languages, the participants thus shared their experiences:

FGB1: ‘When the person I’m talking to knows only one of my languages, then I’ll have to make myself more conscious of not mixing words from the other two languages that the person I am talking to does not know.’
FGB5: ‘When talking to a monolingual, I don’t have to code mix and that is done through a conscious effort.’

FGB10: ‘When I talk to my maid I don’t use Urdu or English words. At that time, I have to make a conscious effort to use Punjabi words only.’

There was a general consensus among the respondents that when talking to a monolingual in any of the three languages, control on languages mixing was accomplished through a conscious effort. They had to consciously stop the other two languages from interfering into the one language being spoken at a certain time.

Summing up, the data from the FGB disclosed that in majority of the cases the two languages Punjabi and Urdu were learnt unconsciously, that is, without exerting much conscious effort. Only two out of the ten participants thought of the three language learning experiences as entirely distinct from each other. The experience of learning English was similar in all the cases as it was learnt through conscious effort after putting in a lot of hard work and practice. Though all the participants had had the experience of depending on Urdu for using English in the beginning but mentioned that after having used English for many years they didn’t feel the need to depend on Urdu for using English anymore and thought that they were able to use English directly. Half of the participants found English to Urdu translation easier than Urdu to English, however, two of them thought translating Urdu to English was easier, yet another two participants thought that they could translate in both directions equally easily. Majority of the participants thought that when using any one of the three languages the other two languages were equally present and equally accessible. Further, they declared that as the other two languages were equally present and accessible, it was the demand of the situation which made them use one language consistently. The FGB participants generally agreed that languages mixing was done out of convenience as sticking to one language was a task requiring greater effort on the part of the speaker. The participants also agreed on
controlling language mixing through a conscious effort when they had to talk to a monolingual in any of
the three languages.

Collating the data from FGA (with 6 participants from 18-23 years age group) and FGB (with 10
participants from the other two age groups: 4 from 30-40 years and 6 from 50-60 years or above), the
participants’ experiences of learning Punjabi and Urdu were similar in the two groups; even the initial
experiences of learning English were also similar, however, as the participants of FGB had gone through
a much longer period of learning and using the English language and had also been exposed to it for a
much longer period of time, so they had stopped depending on Urdu for using English, although they had
to do so in the beginning just like the FGA participants. Whereas all of the participants in the FGA found
English to Urdu translation easier than the other way, half of the participants in the FGB found English to
Urdu translation easier, of the rest, two found Urdu to English translation easier, and yet the other two
thought that they would find both translations equally easy. The participants in both the groups generally
agreed on the presence of the other two languages when speaking any one of their three languages,
particularly with English in the case of FGA participants; whereas, the FGA participants had to exert a
conscious effort to ignore the other two languages, the FGB participants thought that it was the demand of
the situation which made them use one language consistently. The participants from both the groups were
in agreement on mixing words from the three languages when talking to other P-U-E trilinguals, however,
the FGA participants thought that they did not mix Urdu or Punjabi in English because they were highly
conscious when they spoke English language. Whereas the FGB participants thought that they had to
consciously control languages mixing when talking to a monolingual, the FGA participants shared that
they would find talking to an English monolingual very difficult, where major difficulty would be in
understanding that person’s speech.

Data from FGDs at a glance:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>FGA (with participants from first age group 18-23 years)</th>
<th>FGB (with participants from second, 30-40 years, and third age group, 50-60 or above)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiences of learning the three languages</td>
<td>All had acquired Punjabi subliminally and informally; Urdu was learnt after joining school; English learning was declared the most difficult of the three experiences.</td>
<td>Majority had acquired both Punjabi and Urdu unconsciously; for 2/10, the three languages learning experiences were distinct from each other; English was learnt through conscious effort in all the cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence on Urdu for using English in the beginning</td>
<td>Generally experienced by all the participants.</td>
<td>Generally experienced by all the participants in the beginning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development in languages usage with the passage of time</td>
<td>Dependence on Urdu for using English was gradually decreasing.</td>
<td>Dependence on Urdu for using English had come to an end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of translating one language into the other</td>
<td>Generally agreed that English to Urdu translation was easier than vice versa. None had an experience of translating between Punjabi and English.</td>
<td>5/10 found English to Urdu translation easier; 2/10 could translate in both directions with equal ease; 2/10 found Urdu to English translation easier. None had an experience of translating between Punjabi and English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciousness of the other two languages when speaking any one of the three languages</td>
<td>General agreement on having a consciousness of other two languages when using any of the three.</td>
<td>Majority of the participants thought that when using any one of the three languages the other two languages were equally present and accessible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopping interference from the other two languages</td>
<td>Generally agreed on the need of putting an extra effort for stopping interference from the other two languages.</td>
<td>The demand of the situation made them use one language consistently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Languages mixing when talking to a multilingual</td>
<td>Agreed on mixing English words in Urdu and Punjabi, but not mixing Urdu or Punjabi words in English.</td>
<td>A general agreement was observed on mixing words from the three languages, which was done out of convenience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control on languages mixing when talking to a (Punjabi, Urdu or English) monolingual</td>
<td>Generally expressed having a greater difficulty in talking to an English monolingual.</td>
<td>Language mixing was controlled through conscious effort when taking to a monolingual.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Summary data from FGDs
4.3 Data from Essay Writing

There were 12 participants for essay writing, 4 from each age group (viz. 18-23 years, 30-40 years, and 50-60 years or above). The detailed procedure for essay writing has been given in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.3.3). Below, the data from these three age groups is presented in three separate sub-sections.

4.3.1 Essay Writing Data from the first age group (18-23 years)

As repeatedly mentioned before, the P-U-E trilingual participants from this age group were university freshman who had low proficiency in English, which was ascertained using a 5-point scale in Language History Questionnaire (see Appendix 2). For the sake of convenience in referencing, the following codes were allocated to these four participants for essay writing:

Essay Writing Participant 1 Group A = EWA1

Essay Writing Participant 2 Group A = EWA2

Essay Writing Participant 3 Group A = EWA3

Essay Writing Participant 4 Group A = EWA4

Below, the essay writing data from these four participants is presented under the nine themes, which emerged when Hycner’s (1985) data explicitation process (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.3) was applied to the accounts of their experiences.

i. Experiences of learning Punjabi and Urdu

On the experiences of learning Punjabi and Urdu, the participants wrote the following:

EWA1: ‘Punjabi learning and Urdu learning were similar experiences. I learnt both these languages from my home as both Punjabi and Urdu were spoken in my home for different purposes.’
EWA2: ‘I started learning Punjabi and Urdu right after my birth because both these languages were used in my home. I learnt Punjabi from my grandparents because they used to speak Punjabi. But, my parents used to speak Urdu, so I learnt Urdu from them. This is how I learnt these two languages and I didn’t face any difficulty in learning them.’

EWA3: ‘I learnt Punjabi and Urdu almost at the same time. My parents spoke Punjabi with each other but right from the beginning they encouraged me and my siblings to speak Urdu. So, sometimes we would speak Punjabi, sometimes Urdu, and sometimes a mixture of the two. However, before I started going to school, I could speak both these languages. The only difficulty that I can remember regarding the learning of these two languages is confused or mixed vocabulary that sometimes I was not able to decide whether a certain word was from Punjabi or from Urdu, and that sometimes resulted in funny situations.’

EWA4: ‘Punjabi is my mother tongue. Most of my family members are well-educated, so Urdu is also spoken in my home. But, as we live in a village, all the people in our village speak Punjabi, though Urdu is not something unfamiliar to them. Almost everyone can understand and speak Urdu language there. So, Punjabi and Urdu are common languages in the area where I live. Therefore, the learning of these two languages was not difficult. I don’t remember exactly how I learnt these two languages. But, I think, I started speaking Urdu in a fluent manner after joining school.’

There was a general agreement among the four participants on learning both the languages subliminally, Urdu either simultaneously with or shortly after Punjabi. No difficulty was associated to the learning of these two languages by any of the participants.

ii. **Experience of learning English**

About the experience of learning English, the participants wrote:
EWA1: ‘English was the most difficult language to learn. The major difficulty I think was because of the grammar problems. Even now, sometimes, I get confused while speaking English.’

EWA2: ‘I faced difficulty in learning English. I started learning English in my school. But, my first experience of listening to English language and also of speaking it is associated with watching cricket matches. Whenever I watched a cricket match, I listened to the commentators very carefully and later when I played cricket with my friends, I used to copy the commentators. Now, when I look back, I feel that the practice of listening to the commentators and copying them helped me familiarize with the language. However, formal learning of the language was not easy.’

EWA3: ‘My experience of learning English is a very difficult one because English learning was not emphasized in my school. That is why, after joining university, I faced lots of difficulties because of not being proficient in English. For the same reason, I have taken English language courses many times, and learnt much from them, more than I had learnt in my entire school and college life.’

EWA4: ‘I started learning English when I was 11 or 12 years old. But, I think, I always took it as one of the subjects taught in the school. It is only here in the university that I have started learning English as a language. I really find it very difficult. My teachers encourage me and support me, and that is why I am learning gradually.’

In all the cases, learning of English was a tough experience, accompanied with lots of difficulties. The participants’ use of the words like ‘the most difficult’, ‘not easy’ and ‘very difficult’ convey the nature of their experience. Major difficulties that the participants associated with the learning of English were: lack of exposure, difficulty with English grammar and inapt teaching methods at school.

iii. Dependence on Urdu for using English

About their dependence on Urdu for using English in the beginning, the participants shared the following in their descriptions:
EWA1: ‘I have to be a little more careful when speaking or writing English, because still I depend more on Urdu for using English. But, even for that, I have to be very careful because Urdu and English are two very different languages, and they have different rules for grammar.’

EWA2: ‘I have to depend on Urdu for using English. Not only for speaking, but also for listening, reading and writing, I have to do all the thinking in Urdu, which obviously makes the job harder.’

EWA3: ‘With English language still I don’t feel very comfortable. Even for speaking or writing in English, I am more dependent on Urdu because I have to think in Urdu and then translate to English.’

EWA4: ‘Dependence on Urdu is there whenever I have to speak or write in English, because all the time I think in Urdu. So, there are translation processes going on in my mind whenever I have to do something in English.’

All of the participants stated their dependence on Urdu for particularly for speaking and writing in English and generally for all the four skills, including listening and reading as well. The participants clearly stated that they had to think in Urdu and, therefore, translate to English in their mind for doing something in English. Two of the participants (EWA2 and EWA3) mentioned their discomfort on this heavy dependence.

iv. Similarities/dissimilarities in the three experiences

With regard to similarities or dissimilarities in the three language learning experiences, the participants had the following to share:

EWA1: ‘Though I use both Punjabi and Urdu in my daily routine, but now I feel that Punjabi is more difficult as compared to Urdu. The reason perhaps is that we learn Urdu at school and college level, but Punjabi is never learnt. English, however, was the most difficult to learn.’
EWA2: ‘My experience for all the three languages was different. Learning of Punjabi and Urdu was somehow similar but I had some real bad experiences in learning English.’

EWA3: ‘Punjabi and Urdu are common languages in the area where I live, but English language is totally different. Learning of Punjabi and Urdu was also very easy, but the learning of English language is difficult and slow process.’

Three of the participants wrote about similarities or dissimilarities in the three language learning experiences. One of them thought that all the three language learning experiences were different from each other. What made the learning of Punjabi and Urdu different was the fact that Punjabi was learned and used at home only, while Urdu was further learned in school through formal teaching. English learning, however, was declared the most difficult of the three experiences by all the three participants.

v. Experiences of translating one language into the other

About their experiences of translating one language into the other, the participants wrote the following:

EWA1: ‘Experience of translating English to Urdu was very easy because in our school, when we started learning English, the first thing that we were taught was translating from English to Urdu, whereas the other translation Urdu to English came later. Another reason was that it was easy for me to translate from English to Urdu, grammatically correct Urdu, while English grammar I always found difficult. So far as, translating between English and Punjabi is concerned, I think it would be easier to translate from English to Punjabi but very difficult from Punjabi to English.’

EWA2: ‘I have an experience of translating from English to Urdu and Urdu to English. I always found English to Urdu translation easier because this is how I learnt English language, translating each and every word of English into Urdu. Translation from Urdu to English would be more difficult for me as my English vocabulary is still not very good. So, I’ll be searching for words if I am asked to translate from Urdu to English. I have never translated from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi.’
EWA3: ‘Though translating from Urdu to English is not very difficult, but translating from English to Urdu would be easier for me. I have never tried to translate from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi. I think it would be very difficult.’

EWA4: ‘I was taught to translate in my school. Mostly, I used to cram those translations for exam. But, now I think that was a wrong way of doing that. If I have to translate now I think English to Urdu I would find easier because my Urdu vocabulary is better than my English vocabulary. If I translate from Urdu to English, I think that would be full of mistakes as my English grammar is not very good. But, translating from Punjabi to English or from English to Punjabi would be the most difficult.’

All of the four participants agreed that it was easier for them to translate from English to Urdu. Major reasons forwarded by them were: lack of English vocabulary, lack of command on English grammar, greater command on Urdu grammar and vocabulary, and also the role of school in emphasizing English to Urdu translation more than the other way translation. None of the participants mentioned having an experience of translating between Punjabi and English and all of them thought of it as very difficult. However, one participant (EWA1) thought that translating from English to Punjabi would be easier than translating from Punjabi to English.

vi. **Experience of dealing with the three languages**

About their experience of dealing with the three languages, the participants wrote:

EWA1: ‘Gradually I am becoming more and more comfortable dealing with the three languages. But, even now, I have to be a little more careful when speaking or writing in English.’

EWA2: ‘I use all three of these languages everyday but I love to speak Punjabi. So, I prefer speaking Punjabi with my friends and family members. But, if there is someone who wants to speak Urdu, I’ll
have no problem speaking Urdu. I speak English only in the university. I think my proficiency in English is increasing day by day.’

EWA3: ‘So far as the question of dealing with the three languages is concerned, I have no problem with Punjabi and Urdu. But, with English language, still I don’t feel very comfortable. Whenever I have to speak or write in English, I feel that I would do that in a better way in Urdu. In short, I cannot express myself fully in English, and I think that is because English is not my mother tongue, and I started learning it very late.’

EWA4: ‘As Punjabi is my mother tongue, so I feel comfortable speaking Punjabi. I can say I have a great command on Punjabi. I also speak Urdu very well. But, I face difficulties in speaking English.’

Of the four participants, two declared their highest comfort level with Punjabi, with good proficiency in Urdu. Rest of the two participants stated their equal proficiency and thus comfort with Punjabi and Urdu. However, all the four participants, in one way or the other, stated their least comfort with English as they could associate some difficulties with it.

vii. Choosing a specific word from a language

About choosing a specific word from a language, the participants described:

EWA1: ‘Mostly I face difficulty in choosing a specific word from a language, particularly English, especially when the word is not a very common one because there are always Urdu words in my mind already present, which make it difficult for me to choose a specific English word that I want to choose.’

EWA2: ‘Sometimes it is very difficult to choose a specific English word. It is because of the presence of Urdu and Punjabi words in my mind, but more difficult because of Urdu words.’

EWA3: ‘Choosing specific English words mostly becomes difficult for me when I am speaking or writing in English, and that is mainly because of my larger Urdu vocabulary.’
EWA4: ‘I don’t face any difficulty when I have to choose Punjabi and Urdu words. But, for choosing English words, I mostly have problem because of Urdu words coming to my mind.’

All the four participants described their facing difficulty when making lexical choices, particularly in the case of English. They particularly mentioned the competition offered by equivalent Urdu words when they wished to choose English words.

viii. Mixing of words from the three languages

About their mixing of words from the three languages, the participants shared the following:

EWA1: ‘Sometimes I mix the three languages, especially when I am at my home. I mostly mix Urdu words in Punjabi, and also mix Urdu words in English. But, when I speak English, I don’t mix words from Urdu and Punjabi because mostly I speak English with my teachers.’

EWA4: ‘I mix words from the three languages when I am in informal situations, for example, with friends. But, in more formal situations, just as when talking to my teachers, I speak English. At that time, I don’t mix Urdu or Punjabi words in it and just focus my attention on speaking good English.’

Two of the four participants wrote about their mixing of words from the three languages. They stated their mixing of the words from three languages in informal situations, but speaking English in more formal situations without mixing words from the other two languages. One of them (EWA4) also pointed towards a higher level of consciousness when speaking English.

ix. Control on languages mixing when talking to a (Punjabi, Urdu, or English) monolingual

About controlling their mixing of words from the three languages, the participants wrote:

EWA1: ‘It would be difficult to talk to a Punjabi monolingual because I mix Urdu words in Punjabi. But, if I try a little harder, I can do that. Speaking to an Urdu monolingual will not be a problem for me.'
However, for talking to an English monolingual, I’ll have to be more conscious of speaking good English, and not to give many pauses.’

EWA2: ‘Speaking one language consistently is not that difficult. If I make myself conscious about speaking in just one language, Punjabi, Urdu, or English, I would do that. I’ll have to be more conscious in the case of Punjabi because sometimes I don’t even know that I am mixing Urdu words in Punjabi. Speaking Urdu alone will not be a big problem. Speaking English alone would also not be a problem because I am already very conscious when I speak English. I don’t mix Urdu or Punjabi words in English because I speak English in very formal situations where I cannot mix.’

EWA3: ‘If I have to talk to a Punjabi monolingual or an Urdu monolingual, I’ll have no problem. But, talking to an English monolingual would be quite difficult for me. I’ll have to put in a lot of extra effort to make myself speak just English. I think it might be equally difficult for the person I would be talking to, because I would be very slow in talking because I have to think in Urdu for talking in English. The person might get annoyed and go away.’

EWA4: ‘If I have to speak only one language without mixing words from other languages, I’ll have no problem speaking Punjabi and Urdu. But, I’ll have problem with speaking English. I might not be able to convey myself fully, and say less than I actually want to say.’

All the four participants generally agreed that they would not have much problem when talking to a monolingual in Punjabi or Urdu, though one of them (EWA4) mentioned the chances of having some difficulty in talking to a Punjabi monolingual due to the habit of mixing Urdu words in Punjabi. Three of them thought that talking to an English monolingual would be very difficult for them. However, the only remaining participant (EWA2) thought that talking to an English monolingual would not be very difficult because of always having a higher level of consciousness when speaking English.

Recapitulating all the data from the essays of four participants from the first age group (18-23 years), we come to know that all the participants had learnt both Punjabi and Urdu unconsciously and
informally due to their interaction with the people surrounding them. However, English was learnt formally in all the four cases and was generally considered the most difficult of the three languages learning experiences. Dependence on Urdu for using English was found to be a general phenomenon with all the four participants. Half of the participants found all the three language learning experiences different from each other, whereas the learning of English was generally referred to as the most difficult of the three experiences. All the participants were in agreement that translating from English to Urdu was easier than translating from Urdu to English. However, none of them had an experience of translating between Punjabi and English, and they generally thought it to be very difficult. All the four participants declared their greater comfort level with Punjabi and Urdu, and stated their least comfort with English. There was a consensus among participants on facing difficulty when they had to choose English words because of the presence of the other two languages, particularly due to Urdu. Only two of the participants wrote about their mixing Urdu words in Punjabi and also English words in Urdu and Punjabi, but not mixing Punjabi or Urdu in English because they spoke English in formal situations only with a higher level of consciousness. Majority of the participants (three out of four) declared their great difficulty in talking to an English monolingual, while talking to a Punjabi or an Urdu monolingual would not be very difficult for them.

4.3.2 Essay Writing Data from the second age group (30-40 years)

As already mentioned, the P-U-E trilingual participants from this age group had all completed their university education, were working in a university in different departments, and had a higher proficiency in English, which was established using a 5-point scale in Language History Questionnaire (Appendix 2). For the sake of convenience in referencing, the following codes were allocated to these four participants:

Essay Writing Participant 1 Group B = EWB1

Essay Writing Participant 2 Group B = EWB2

Essay Writing Participant 3 Group B = EWB3
i. Experiences of learning Punjabi and Urdu

On the experiences of learning Punjabi and Urdu, the participants wrote the following:

**EWB1**: ‘I learnt Punjabi by listening to the people around me because that is my first language. I didn’t have any difficulty learning Punjabi. But, I started learning my second language, Urdu, at the age of 10. I faced many difficulties while learning Urdu. First of all, it was very difficult for me to convert Punjabi into Urdu because of some barriers, like not being used to the language and, most of the time, I would mix Punjabi and Urdu, and then I did not have Urdu vocabulary. I always tried to gain control over Urdu, but was unable to do so until the age of 12.’

**EWB2**: ‘I speak Punjabi very comfortably and easily because I got this language from my family, my society and surroundings. No one taught me Punjabi, I just learnt it on my own and without putting any effort. I started learning Urdu after joining school. In the beginning I found it very difficult. But soon, I think within a year, I was able to speak Urdu comfortably.’

**EWB3**: ‘My mother tells me that, when I started speaking, I was a pure Punjabi speaker, and that was due to my playmates, the children who lived in our neighborhood and spoke Punjabi. Moreover, in my home, my grandparents were Punjabi speakers and all the family members including me communicated with them in Punjabi, and that further increased my proficiency in Punjabi. When I started going to school, I started speaking Urdu because the teachers and fellow students there used Urdu as a medium of communication. So, as time passed, my proficiency in Urdu also built up.’
EWB4: ‘Punjabi was my first language. Nobody taught me to speak this language. I just started speaking it because all the people around me in my family spoke Punjabi. For the first 3 or 3 ½ years of my life, I spoke just Punjabi. Then, my parents told me that you would be going to school very soon, so you should start speaking Urdu because in the school everybody would be speaking Urdu. But, when I tried to speak Urdu, my Urdu was more like Punjabi. However, after joining school, I think within days I started speaking Urdu in an acceptable manner.’

All the participants had acquired Punjabi unconsciously from their surrounding environment without facing any difficulty, however, Urdu learning, which started after joining school, was a formal experience with all of them. With one of the participants (EWB1), learning of Urdu started very late, at the age of 10, and was associated with a number of difficulties.

ii. Experience of learning English

About the experience of learning English, the participants wrote:

EWB1: ‘I had lots of problems when I started learning English. I could not understand even a single sentence, and I did not have any idea about the sentence structure and vocabulary. In the school, learning of English was limited to reading some childish books and translating them, but there was no practical use of English language. Then, I started cramming sentences, and whenever I had to appear in a test or exam, I wrote those sentences that I had memorized. Then I thought of translating Urdu into English in my mind, and it was little bit helpful, but did not have a long lasting effect on my studies. Finally, at the age of 19 when I joined university, I started learning English as a language, and started practicing English for speaking, writing, listening, etc.’

EWB2: ‘I faced many difficulties in learning English. It was really very difficult for me because it required a lot of practice and time.’
EWB3: ‘Learning English was really difficult. It was learnt only in the classroom, while I spoke Punjabi in my home and Urdu in my school with teachers and classmates. So, English was something that was not practiced, and that is why I faced difficulty in learning English.’

EWB4: ‘Learning of English was a difficult and challenging experience. Though I had started learning English from Class 1 in the form of English alphabets, but in my school till 10th grade and even in the college, learning of English was more based on translation and rote learning. These were the only things that we were made to do in the school, translation from English to Urdu and sometimes from Urdu to English, rote learning of different rules for English writing, and learning of words and their meanings. I think it was my own interest in English and my personal efforts that led me to learn English faster than other children in the school, and the confidence that I knew better English than other students in my class helped me to speak English in a satisfactory way whenever I needed to.’

In all the four cases, learning of English was a tough experience, accompanied with lots of difficulties. The participants’ use of words like ‘very difficult’, ‘really difficult’, ‘difficult and challenging’ clearly describes the nature of their experience. Major difficulties that the participants associated with the learning of English were: inadequate way of teaching English at school, and lack of exposure to the language.

iii. Dependence on Urdu for using English

About their dependence on Urdu for using English in the beginning, the participants shared the following in their descriptions:

EWB1: ‘Translation from Urdu to English helped me in the beginning to write something in English or whenever I had to say a few sentences in English. It was like writing or speaking English with the help of Urdu.’
EWB2: ‘In the beginning of learning English, translation was the core part. Even now, I just need to translate everything into English and then speak. An advantage of doing that is that there are less grammatical mistakes.’

EWB3: ‘Dependence on Urdu was definitely there in the beginning, whenever I had to speak, write or even read in English. All these things were accomplished with the help of Urdu as a mediator.’

EWB4: ‘Though I managed to speak or write reasonably good English after my college, but that was only done through translation from Urdu to English in my mind. We were taught grammar rules for translating Urdu to English in the school. I applied those rules for translating from Urdu to English in my mind, and most of the times that worked.’

There was a general consensus among the participants regarding their dependence on Urdu for using English in the beginning. One of the participants (EWB2) still felt the need to depend on Urdu for speaking in English.

iv. **Similarities/dissimilarities in the three experiences**

With regard to similarities or dissimilarities in the three languages learning experiences, the participants had the following to share:

EWB1: ‘All the three languages are totally different from each other and I had entirely different experiences of learning them.’

EWB2: ‘I think these three languages, Punjabi, Urdu and English, are very different from each other.’

EWB3: ‘I learnt Punjabi just by listening to others, so there was no formal training. But Urdu and English learning were in one way similar because I learnt both these languages from school. But, English language is somehow very different from both Urdu and Punjabi.’
EWB4: ‘I learnt the three languages separately, one at a time. So, all the three experiences were different for me. But, Urdu was not difficult to learn and so its learning was closer to that of Punjabi. Learning of English was a totally different experience.’

All the four participants were in agreement that all the three language learning experiences were different from each other. What made the learning of Punjabi and Urdu different in most of the cases was the fact that Punjabi was learnt at home informally, while Urdu was learnt in school through formal training. English learning, however, was declared the most difficult of the three experiences by all the participants.

v. Experiences of translating one language into the other

About their experiences of translating one language into the other, the participants wrote the following:

EWB1: ‘I think Urdu to English translation is easier because when I started speaking or writing in English, most of the time I was translating in my mind from Urdu to English. So, I find Urdu to English translation easier because that had become a habit. But, I don’t think English to Urdu translation would be much difficult for me because I have a good Urdu vocabulary. I have no experience of Punjabi-English translation, so cannot say anything about that.’

EWB2: ‘Though I can do both the translations equally easily, but I would find English to Urdu translation easier. Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi translation sounds something really strange.’

EWB3: ‘I remember I was good at translation in my school, especially at translating from English to Urdu. I found that easier. Urdu to English was harder at that time because I think that required more practice and more knowledge of English. I don’t think I would find any problem with any of these two translations now. However, I am not sure about Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi translation. I have never tried to do that.’

EWB4: ‘English learning was totally based on translation, but I found English to Urdu translation much easier in the beginning, because in the school we were given more practice in English to Urdu translation,'
and also because my proficiency in Urdu was much better at that time. Now, if I have to translate, I might find both translations equally easy, but there is greater possibility of a better Urdu to English translation because now I am much better equipped with English vocabulary. But, translating between Punjabi and English would be really very difficult.’

Majority of the participants, three out of four, clearly stated their equal ease in both translation directions, even then, one of them (EWB2) would find English to Urdu translation easier than the other way. One participant (EWP1) considered Urdu to English translation easier than vice versa due to the habit of translating from Urdu to English implicitly for speaking or writing in English. However, none of the participants mentioned having an experience of translating between Punjabi and English, and referred to it as very difficult and strange.

vi. Experience of dealing with the three languages

About their experience of dealing with the three languages, the participants wrote:

**EWB1:** ‘Now, I am able to comfortably deal with the three languages that I speak though it was not the case in the beginning.’

**EWB2:** ‘Dealing with three languages is not a difficult job anymore though I had to struggle with English for a very long time.’

**EWB3:** ‘My experience of dealing with the three languages has been different from time to time. In the beginning, I found it difficult especially in the case of English. But, with the passage of time, the things settled down and now I feel it is not difficult to deal with three languages.’

**EWB4:** ‘Now I am comfortable speaking all the three languages. I use the three languages everyday and don’t face any difficulty.’
All the four participants generally agreed on having experienced a development in their dealing with the three languages, particularly in the case of English as mentioned by EWB2 and EWB3.

vii. Choosing a specific word from a language

On the issue of choosing a specific word from a language, the participants had the following to offer:

**EWB1:** ‘In the beginning, it was difficult to choose a specific word from one language, particularly English, because the other two languages were always there with their alternatives. This problem is not yet completely over.’

**EWB2:** ‘When I have to choose a specific word from a language, many times I have to face competition from the other two languages. No doubt, greater competition is from Urdu when choosing some difficult English words.’

**EWB3:** ‘When choosing a specific word from a language, there is interference, particularly between English and Urdu words.’

**EWB4:** ‘Choosing a specific word from a language used to be a big problem, especially in the case of difficult English words, some equivalent Urdu words were always there. But, now, things have become much easier.’

The participants unanimously agreed on facing interference from the other two languages when choosing words from a specific language, particularly they mentioned the interference from Urdu in the case of English words. They also agreed that though the interference had reduced with the passage of time but was not completely over.

viii. Mixing of words from the three languages

About their mixing of words from the three languages, the participants shared the following:
EWB1: ‘I keep mixing words from all the three languages. I feel more comfortable doing that. When speaking Urdu or English, I sometimes even mix whole sentences. I think that is the fun of speaking more languages.’

EWB2: ‘I mix words from the three languages, especially English words in Urdu.’

EWB3: ‘Mixing words from all the three languages has become a habit.’

EWB4: ‘I mix words from the three languages, Urdu and English more often. Mixing the languages that you know is more convenient instead of using words from just one language.’

All the four participants agreed on mixing words from the three languages, particularly on mixing English and Urdu. Two of the participants clearly mentioned their greater comfort and convenience in mixing words from the languages that they speak.

ix. Control on languages mixing when talking to a (Punjabi, Urdu, or English) monolingual

About controlling their mixing of words from the three languages, the participants wrote:

EWB1: ‘Talking to a monolingual in any one of the three languages would not be much difficult anymore.’

EWB2: ‘Talking to an Urdu or Punjabi monolingual would be little difficult because of the habit of mixing English words in these two languages, but can be done with some extra conscious effort.’

EWB3: ‘I can talk to a monolingual in any of the three languages though I might require a little more extra effort because of the habit of mixing words from the three languages.’

EWB4: ‘I’ll have to make myself very conscious of not mixing words when talking to a monolingual in any of the three languages. Talking to a Punjabi monolingual would be the most difficult.’
All the four participants agreed that they would be able to talk to a monolingual in any of the three languages; however, the participants EWB2, EWB3, and EWB4 mentioned their requiring a little more conscious effort because of their habit of mixing words from the three languages. Participant EWB4 particularly mentioned greater difficulty in talking to a Punjabi monolingual for the same reason.

Summing up the data from the essays written by these four participants from the second age group (30-40 years) revealed that all the participants had learnt Punjabi, their L1, unconsciously as well as informally from their home and surrounding environment, whereas they had learnt Urdu formally in their schools and could associate some difficulties with this experience. English was also learnt formally in all the four cases and was described as an experience that was very difficult and challenging, requiring a lot of hard work and practice. Dependence on Urdu for using English in the beginning was found to be a general phenomenon, whereas one participant still mentioned the need to depend on Urdu for using English. All the four participants found the three language learning experiences different from each other, whereas the learning of English was referred to as the most difficult experience of the three. Three of them agreed that translating from English to Urdu or Urdu to English would be equally easy, whereas one of them thought that Urdu to English translation was easier than the other way. None of them had an experience of translating between Punjabi and English. All the four participants reported development in dealing with the three languages, particularly with English. There was a general consensus among the participants on facing interference from the other two languages when they had to choose a specific word from any one language; particularly they had to face interference from Urdu words when choosing English words. Mixing words from the three languages was commonly done by all the participants, especially the mixing between Urdu and English. All the participants though that they would not find talking to a monolingual in any of the three languages much difficult thought it would require a little more conscious effort to stop mixing words from the other two languages.
4.3.3 Essay Writing Data from the third age group (50-60 years or above)

As mentioned before, the P-U-E trilingual participants from this age group had long been working in a university as faculty members in various departments and had a higher proficiency in English (L3), which was determined with the help of Language History Questionnaire (Appendix 2). For the sake of convenience in referencing, the following codes were allocated to these four participants:

Essay Writing Participant 1 Group C = EWC1

Essay Writing Participant 2 Group C = EWC2

Essay Writing Participant 3 Group C = EWC3

Essay Writing Participant 4 Group C = EWC4

Below, the essay writing data from these four participants is presented under the nine themes, which emerged when Hycner’s (1985) data explicitation process (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5.3) was applied to their written descriptions:

1. Experiences of learning Punjabi and Urdu

On the experiences of learning Punjabi and Urdu, the participants wrote the following:

**EWC1**: ‘Punjabi is my mother tongue. So, I had not to make an effort to learn it because my father, mother, all spoke Punjabi. I learnt Urdu from my school but I don’t think I had to make much effort to learn it because I didn’t find much difference between the sentence structure and vocabulary of the two languages.’

**EWC2**: ‘I learnt Punjabi from my home, from my mother and other relatives. I started learning Urdu after joining school and learnt it with the passage of time.’
EWC3: ‘Punjabi I learnt from my home as it is my mother tongue. Urdu I learnt in school, maybe from Class 1. Urdu was used in more formal situations, to talk with teachers and classmates in school, but in my home and with friends, I used to speak Punjabi.’

EWC4: ‘I learnt Punjabi from my home as everybody in my home spoke Punjabi. I started learning Urdu from my school, but didn’t find it much difficult and very soon I was equally proficient in both these languages.’

All the participants had acquired Punjabi unconsciously from their home and surrounding environment without facing any difficulty. However, Urdu, in the case of all the participants was learnt in a more formal manner after joining school but none of the participants mentioned having faced any difficulty with the learning of Urdu.

ii. Experience of learning English

About the experience of learning English, the participants wrote:

EWC1: ‘I started learning English almost the same time with Urdu. From the very beginning, I had interest in learning English, so I didn’t find any difficulty in learning it although the structure of English is very different from both Urdu and Punjabi.’

EWC2: ‘English was the most difficult to learn. I started English in Class 6th. All the subjects at that time were in Urdu except English. When I joined F. Sc., all the subjects were in English and that was very difficult, like a burden on my mind. Up to university level, I was not able to speak English, but after my Masters, and joining this college as lecturer, I started to speak English.’

EWC3: ‘I started learning English after joining school at the same time with Urdu because the school I was sent to was a so-called English-medium school where I started learning English from Class 1, but that learning was very basic and even up to matriculation, speaking or writing in English was not encouraged.’
EWC4: ‘English learning was no doubt the most difficult of the three experiences. As I lived in a village at that time, there was absolutely no exposure to the language, but I took it as a challenge. With a lot of extra effort and applying myself to the learning of English, and of course with the help of my teachers, I managed to excel others in my class or even in the whole school. Later, in college and even in university, I was better at speaking and writing English than anyone else.’

The participants generally agreed on the learning of English language as the most difficult and challenging of their language learning experiences; however, two of the participants (EWC1 and EWC4) particularly mentioned their taking special interest in the learning of English which made this experience comparatively easier for them as compared to others as well as more successful.

iii. Dependence on Urdu for using English

About their dependence on Urdu for using English in the beginning, the participants shared the following in their descriptions:

EWC1: ‘When I started speaking English, I had to think in Urdu, translate and then speak in English. Even now, if there is any topic which is unfamiliar to me, then I think in Urdu, translate and then speak in English, and for writing as well. But now, most the times, I can speak directly so I can say that dependence on Urdu has reduced to a great extent.’

EWC2: ‘In the beginning for speaking English I always had to translate in my mind. Even now, when I am reading something in English, I have to translate it to Urdu in my mind to understand in a better way. But, for speaking English, I don’t have to translate anymore. It took me about 15 years to overcome that.’

EWC3: ‘In the beginning I had to translate in my mind from Urdu whenever I had to speak English, but after I joined college, the things became easier. However, it took me about 8 to 10 years to overcome the dependence on Urdu for using English.’
EWC4: ‘In the beginning, yes, I had to depend on Urdu for using English. That was the only way I could use English in the beginning. I overcame that dependence soon after joining university.’

There was a general consensus among the participants about their dependence on Urdu for using English in the beginning which took them a very long time to overcome. Two of the participants (EWC1 and EWC2) still felt the need to depend on Urdu for using in English, EWC1 for talking about unfamiliar topics in English and EWC2 for reading something in English.

iv. Similarities/dissimilarities in the three experiences

About similarities or dissimilarities in the three languages learning experiences, the participants had the following to share:

EWC1: ‘There are similarities between Punjabi and Urdu. There is no difference between the sentence structure of Urdu and Punjabi. Both are written in the same way. Even some vocabulary items are similar. So, I don’t think there is much difference between Punjabi and Urdu in speaking and writing. English, however, is very different from both Urdu and Punjabi. My experience of learning these three languages was pretty much related to the similarities or dissimilarities in the languages themselves.’

EWC2: ‘There is similarity between Punjabi and Urdu as far as vocabulary is concerned. Whereas, English is different in vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, pronunciation, everything is different about English. Perhaps, that is why learning of English was much harder than the other two languages.’

EWC3: ‘All the three language learning experiences were different, but English took me the longest time to learn.’

EWC4: ‘All the three language learning experiences were different, the learning of English being more remote from the other two.’
All the participants were in agreement that the three language learning experiences were different from each other. What made the learning of Punjabi and Urdu different in most of the cases was the fact that Punjabi was learnt at home informally, while Urdu was learnt in school through formal training. However, the learning of English was unanimously declared the most difficult of the three experiences.

v. Experiences of translating one language into the other

About their experiences of translating one language into the other, the participants wrote the following:

**EWC1:** ‘I would find both translations, English to Urdu and Urdu to English, equally easy. But, in the beginning, I found English to Urdu translation easier. So far as translating between Punjabi and English is concerned, formally I have never translated from Punjabi to English, but maybe sometimes for speaking English I might have translated from Punjabi to English. But, for translating between English and Punjabi, I think I’ll have to first translate in Urdu.’

**EWC2:** ‘I find English to Urdu translation easier. I have never translated from Punjabi to English or vice versa, but if I have to then I will first translate into Urdu and then into Punjabi or English.’

**EWC3:** ‘Urdu to English translation I would find easier. I have never translated between Punjabi and English.’

**EWC4:** ‘I found English to Urdu translation much easier in the beginning. Now, if I have to translate, I might find Urdu to English translation much easier. So far as translating between Punjabi and English is concerned, I have never done that but I think I would be able to do that with some extra effort.’

Three different patterns were observed among the four participants. Two of them (EWC3 and EWC4) thought that they would find Urdu to English translation easier, whereas, EWC2 would find English to Urdu translation easier; the fourth participant (EWC1) mentioned having an equal ease with both translation directions. Moreover, two of the participants (EWC1 and EWC4) also mentioned that in the beginning as English learners they found English to Urdu translation easier.
vi. Experience of dealing with the three languages

About their experience of dealing with the three languages, the participants wrote:

EWC1: ‘I don’t think dealing with three languages is a difficult job, rather it is very easy. Maybe 40 or 50 years back when I was less proficient in English, I felt difficulty at that time, but now it is like a part of life.’

EWC2: ‘Dealing with three languages is not difficult. I speak Punjabi at home, Urdu with my colleagues, and in the classes I speak English.’

EWC3: ‘Dealing with or using three languages is not difficult at all.’

EWC4: ‘Using or maintaining three languages is not the least difficult now. In the beginning, when I was at learning stages, at that time I had to struggle with three languages, particularly with English.’

All the four participants generally agreed that dealing with three languages was not a difficult task for them, however, two of them (EWC1 and EWC4) clearly stated their having gone through a long developmental period, where in the beginning they had difficulty in dealing with the three languages.

vii. Choosing a specific word from a language

On the issue of choosing a specific word from a language, the participants had the following to offer:

EWC1: ‘Choosing one specific word from a language sometimes becomes difficult because words from the other two languages are also present there. It is very difficult to separate one language from the other two and then speak it. But, when you have a greater command on all the three languages, then it becomes easier to ignore the other two languages and speak one consistently. But, for a beginner, it requires a lot of effort to ignore the other two languages and speak one, especially in the case of English.’
EWC2: ‘I always have Urdu in my mind because when I have to say something in English, first that thing comes to my mind in Urdu, and then it is automatically translated into English. So, Urdu is always there when I am speaking or writing in English.’

EWC3: ‘When I have to choose a specific word from a language, the presence of the other two languages makes it little harder. I have to make an effort to stop them from interfering.’

EWC4: ‘Choosing a specific word in English is not a problem for me now. But, if I have to choose a specific word in Urdu, then it sometimes becomes difficult because of the competition offered by English words and sometimes even Punjabi words.’

The participants unanimously agreed on facing interference from the other two languages when choosing a specific word from a language. Participant EWC2 particularly mentioned the interference from Urdu at the time of choosing English words; whereas, the participant EWC4 mentioned interference offered by English words when choosing a specific word in Urdu.

viii. Mixing of words from the three languages

About their mixing of words from the three languages, the participants shared the following:

EWC1: ‘I mix words from the three languages because it is very convenient.’

EWC2: ‘I mix all the three languages when talking to my friends who also speak these three languages. At that time, I mix English and Punjabi words in Urdu.’

EWC3: ‘I mix words when talking to other trilinguals. I mostly mix Urdu and English words not Punjabi.’

EWC4: ‘I mix words from the three languages if the ones I am interacting with also speak these three languages. Not just at word level, but I mix them at sentence level too.’
All the four participants agreed on mixing words (even sentences, in the case of EWC4) from the three languages when talking to other P-U-E trilinguals like them.

ix. Control on languages mixing when talking to a (Punjabi, Urdu, or English) monolingual

About controlling their mixing of words from the three languages, the participants wrote:

**EWC1:** ‘When talking to a monolingual, I have to make an extra effort for not mixing words from the other two languages.’

**EWC2:** ‘For talking to English monolingual, I’ll have to make an extra effort, but not with Punjabi or Urdu monolinguals.’

**EWC3:** ‘For talking to a monolingual, I have to make a little more effort particularly in the case of English, not that much for talking to Punjabi or Urdu monolinguals.’

**EWC4:** ‘Talking to an English monolingual would not be a problem for me, not even talking to a Punjabi monolingual. But, for talking to an Urdu monolingual, I’ll have to make myself more conscious of not mixing words from English.’

All the four participants generally agreed requiring some extra effort for talking to a monolingual in order to stop them from mixing words from the other two languages; EWC2 and EWC3 particularly mentioned their having some difficulty while talking to English monolingual, whereas, EWC4 mentioned requiring extra conscious effort when talking to Urdu monolingual.

Summing up all the data from the essays written by these four participants from the third age group (50-60 years or above) revealed that all the participants had learnt Punjabi, their L1, subliminally and informally, whereas they all had learnt Urdu formally in their schools but did not associate any difficulties with that experience. Learning English was generally declared the most difficult and challenging of the three experiences. All the participants had had the experience of depending on Urdu
for speaking English in the beginning; two of them still occasionally felt the need to depend on Urdu for using English. The participants generally agreed that all the three language learning experiences were different, English being the most demanding of the three. Half of the participants (2/4) thought that they found Urdu to English translation easier, whereas, one had the opposite view. Yet, the fourth participant mentioned having equal ease with both translation directions. None of them had the experience of translating between Punjabi and English; however, two of them thought that they would be able to do that by first translating into Urdu. All the four participants agreed that with more or less equal proficiency in the three languages, dealing with the three languages was not a difficult task for them anymore. The participants were in agreement on facing interference from the other two languages when they had to choose a specific word from any of the three languages. They all agreed on mixing words from the three languages when talking to other P-U-E trilinguals. Though all the participants agreed on requiring some extra effort when talking to a monolingual, two of them mentioned requiring extra effort when talking to English monolingual, whereas, one participant required extra conscious effort for talking to an Urdu monolingual.

Collating the data from the three groups for essay writing, some points of convergence among the three groups were observed. Such as: the participants in all the three groups had acquired Punjabi, their L1, from their home without making a conscious effort, whereas Urdu, their L2, in all the cases of second and third age groups, was learnt formally at school; however, all the participants of the first age group had learnt Urdu without formal instruction just like their L1. Learning of English was considered the most difficult of the three language learning experiences by all the participants in the three groups. All the participants in the three groups had experienced depending on Urdu for using English in the beginning as English learners. The participants in all the three groups agreed that all the three languages learning experiences were distinct from each other, English being the remotest of all. Another significant point of convergence among the three groups of participants was that all of them faced interference from the other two languages when they had to make lexical choices, though the magnitude of interference decreased
with increase in proficiency in the three languages. The participants from all the three groups agreed on mixing words from the three languages, though the participants from the first age group consciously avoided mixing words from the other two languages in English. They also agreed that when talking to a monolingual in any of the three languages, they would require some extra effort (though, the amount of extra effort varies in the three groups) to stop themselves from mixing words from the other two languages. Yet, another point of convergence among the three groups was that none of the participants in any of the groups had ever had the experience of translating between Punjabi and English.

Two significant points of divergence were observed among the three groups. Whereas all of the participants from the first age group thought that they found English to Urdu translation easier than vice versa, in the second group, majority (3/4) of the participants stated their equal ease with both translation directions, and in the third age group two of the participants thought that they would find Urdu to English translation easier, the third participant considered both translation directions equally easy while there was only one participant in this group who found English to Urdu translation easier than the Urdu to English translation.

The second point of divergence among the three groups was the varying level of comfort in dealing with the three languages. Whereas all the participants in the first age group declared their least comfort in dealing with English and associated certain difficulties with it, in the second age group all the participants mentioned their having gone through development in dealing with the three languages particularly in the case of English; however, in the third age group, all the participants were in agreement that dealing with the three languages was not a difficult task for them anymore.

All the points of convergence as well as divergence in the data from the three groups of essay writing participants are of potential significance to this study.

Data from essay writing at a glance:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Data from first age group (18-23 years)</th>
<th>Data from second age group (30-40 years)</th>
<th>Data from third age group (50-60 years or above)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience of learning Punjabi and Urdu</td>
<td>Both Punjabi and Urdu were acquired unconsciously by all the participants.</td>
<td>Punjabi was acquired unconsciously by all the 4 participants; Urdu was learnt through formal instruction.</td>
<td>Punjabi was acquired unconsciously by all the 4 participants; Urdu was learnt through formal instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of learning English</td>
<td>Generally declared the most difficult of the three language learning experiences, associated with a number of difficulties.</td>
<td>Generally declared the most difficult of the three experiences, associated with a number of difficulties.</td>
<td>Generally declared the most difficult of the three experiences, associated with a number of difficulties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence on Urdu for using English</td>
<td>Generally experienced by all the 4 participants.</td>
<td>Experienced by all the 4 participants.</td>
<td>Experienced by all the 4 participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarities/dissimilarities in the three experiences</td>
<td>All the three language learning experiences were different; learning of English being the most distinct.</td>
<td>All the three language learning experiences were different; learning of English being the most distinct.</td>
<td>All the three language learning experiences were different; learning of English being the most distinct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences of translating one language into the other</td>
<td>English to Urdu translation found easier than Urdu to English by all the 4 participants. None had an experience of translating between Punjabi and English.</td>
<td>3/4 found both translation directions equally easy. None had an experience of translating between Punjabi and English.</td>
<td>2/4 found Urdu to English translation easier; ¼ found both translation directions equally easy; ¼ found English to Urdu translation easier. None had an experience of translating between Punjabi and English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience of dealing with the three languages</td>
<td>Least comfort in dealing with English.</td>
<td>Had gone through development in dealing with the three languages, particularly in the case of English.</td>
<td>Almost equally comfortable with the three languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing a specific word from a language</td>
<td>Had to face interference from the other two languages.</td>
<td>Had to face interference from the other two languages.</td>
<td>Had to face interference from the other two languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing of words from the three languages</td>
<td>Consciously avoided mixing Urdu and Punjabi words into English.</td>
<td>Mixed words from the three languages.</td>
<td>Mixed words from the three languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control on languages mixing when talking to a (Punjabi, Urdu, or English) monolingual</td>
<td>Consciously controlled languages mixing when talking to a monolingual.</td>
<td>Required an extra effort for preventing languages mixing when talking to</td>
<td>A general agreement on consciously controlling languages mixing when talking to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Chapter Summary

The chapter mainly focused on portraying P-U-E trilinguals’ experiences of learning and using the three languages. The major concern, in this chapter, was ‘describing’ as closely as possible the experiences of the participants, without interpreting them or commenting on them, with the purpose to keep the essence of their experiences intact. The data was collected using three different methods: semi-structured life world interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and essay writing from P-U-E trilingual participants, who were chosen from three different age groups: 18-23 years, 30-40 years, and 50-60 years or above. The three age groups were chosen with the view to observe developmental changes in the use of the three languages over a long period of time. To the data obtained from these three methods, Hycner’s (1985) data explicitation process (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5) was applied, which led to the emergence of general themes from the data. In this chapter, the data from the three data collection methods has been presented in three separate sections. In each section, the data has been presented under the themes that emerged as a result of explicitation of the data.

Section 1 of the chapter dealt with interview data from the three above-mentioned age groups. Four participants were interviewed from each age group. The data from the three age groups revealed that all the participants in the three groups had acquired their first language Punjabi without making a conscious effort, in majority of the cases the second language Urdu was also learnt unconsciously while in the rest of the cases it was learnt through formal instruction. English, however, constituted the most difficult of the three languages learning experiences, which was associated with a number of difficulties in all the cases. All of the participants in the first age group found English to Urdu translation easier than the other way, however, in the other two age groups, though majority of the participants agreed that though they had found English to Urdu translation easier in the beginning as English learners but at that moment would find both translation directions equally easy; some of the participants in the third age...
group even thought that they would find Urdu to English translation easier than the other way translation. Dependence on Urdu for speaking English in the beginning was found to be a common phenomenon, however, the dependence reduced with the passage of time (as was the case with the second age group), and finally came to an end (as with the third age group). Fear of speaking English was also commonly experienced in the beginning but also came to an end with the passage of time. Consciousness of the other two languages when speaking any one of their languages was also found to be a common experience with the participants, and for speaking any one language consistently most of the participants agreed on putting a conscious effort, however, half of the participants from the second age group and one participants from the third age group were of the view that as they had grown in their experience of using the three languages, stopping interference from the other two languages and sticking to one language was not difficult for them. Mixing words from the three languages also came out as a common experience, and for controlling language mixing when talking to a monolingual, the participants from all the three groups agreed on requiring a conscious effort.

Section 2 of the chapter dealt with the data from focus group discussions (FGDs). Two FGDs were conducted: FGA and FGB. In FGA, there were 6 participants, all from the first age group of 18-23 years. In FGB, there were 10 participants, 4 from the second age group of 30-40 years, and 6 participants from the third age group of 50-60 years or above. Collectively, the data from FGA and FGB revealed that the participants’ experiences of learning Punjabi and Urdu were quite similar in the two groups; even the initial experiences of learning English were also comparable, however, as the participants of FGB had gone through a much longer period of learning and using the English language and had also been exposed to it for a much longer period of time, so they had stopped depending on Urdu for using English, although they had to do so in the beginning, like the FGA participants. Whereas all of the participants in the FGA found English to Urdu translation easier than the other way, half of the participants in the FGB found English to Urdu translation easier, of the rest, two found Urdu to English translation easier, and yet the other two thought that they would find both translations equally easy. The participants in both the groups
were in agreement on having a consciousness of the other two languages when speaking any one of their three languages, particularly English in the case of FGA participants; whereas, the FGA participants had to make an extra effort for ignoring the other two languages, the FGB participants thought that it was the demand of the situation which made them use one language consistently. The participants from both the groups were in agreement on mixing words from the three languages when talking to other P-U-E trilinguals, however, the FGA participants thought that they did not mix Urdu or Punjabi in English because they were highly alert when they spoke English language. Whereas the FGB participants thought that they had to consciously control languages mixing when talking to a monolingual, the FGA participants thought that they would find talking to an English monolingual very difficult, major difficulty they would find with understanding that person’s speech.

Section 3 of the chapter dealt with the data from essay writing. There were 12 participants for essay writing, four from each of the three age groups, i.e., 4 participants from the first age group of 18-23 years, 4 from the second age group of 30-40 years, and 4 from the third age group of 50-60 years or above. Collectively, the essay writing data from all the three age groups revealed that participants in all the three age groups had acquired Punjabi (L1) from their home without making a conscious effort, whereas Urdu (L2), in all the cases of second and third age groups, was learnt formally at school; however, all the participants of the first age group had learnt Urdu unconsciously just like their L1. Learning of English was considered the most difficult of the three language learning experiences by all the participants in the three age groups. All the participants in the three groups had been through the experience of depending on Urdu for using English in the beginning as English learners. The participants in all the three groups agreed that all the three languages learning experiences were different from each other, English being the most distinct of all. In the three groups, all the participants described their facing interference from the other two languages when they had to make lexical choices, though the degree of the interference decreased with increase in proficiency in the three languages. The participants from all the three age groups agreed on mixing words from the three languages, though the participants from the first age group
consciously avoided mixing words from the other two languages in English. They also agreed that when talking to a monolingual in any of the three languages, they required some extra effort for stopping themselves from mixing words from the other two languages, though the amount of extra effort differed in each group. Whereas all of the participants from the first age group thought that they found English to Urdu translation easier than vice versa, in the second group, majority (3/4) of the participants stated their equal ease with both translation directions, and in the third age group two of the participants thought that they would find Urdu to English translation easier, the third participant considered both translation directions equally easy while there was only one participant in this group who found English to Urdu translation easier than the Urdu to English translation. However, none of the participants in any of the three groups had the experience of translating between Punjabi and English. Among the three groups a varying level of comfort in dealing with the three languages was observed. While all the participants in the first age group declared their least comfort in dealing with English and associated some difficulties with it, in the second age group all the participants mentioned their having gone through development in dealing with the three languages particularly in the case of English; however, in the third age group, all the participants generally agreed that dealing with the three languages was not a difficult task for them any longer.
CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The explicitation of the data, in the previous chapter, was carried out applying Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process to the data gathered using three of the phenomenological methods, namely: semi-structured lifeworld interviews, focus group discussions, and essay writing. This chapter presents the findings that were obtained after the explicitation of the data and discusses them in comparison with the results of dominant psycholinguistic experimental studies on bi/multilingual memory, the RHM in particular. Therefore, Section 1 of this chapter has been devoted to a presentation of the findings of this study. In Section 2, the data gathered from the three different phenomenological methods has been triangulated. Section 3 thoroughly discusses the findings of the study in the light of psycholinguistic models (discussed in Chapter 2), whereas, Section 4 expounds on the theoretical implications of this study for the structure and working of P-U-E trilingual memory as well as for the major psycholinguistic experimental studies, particularly the RHM (thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2).

5.1 Findings

While presenting the findings, the focus is maintained on ‘description’, which is a hallmark of phenomenological research, so that the data is not misinterpreted or misconstrued and the ‘essence’ of phenomenological experience is not lost. As mentioned above, three methods were used for collecting data: 12 semi-structured lifeworld interviews, 2 focus group discussions, and 12 essays. The three methods were used with the view to achieving data triangulation. The findings from the three methods
are based on the themes that emerged after the explicitation of the data using Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5, for details of this process). Thus, the themes that emerged after applying this highly rigorous process to the data represent the ‘essence’ of the data, which is presented below in three sub-sections, one devoted to the findings from each of the three methods.

5.1.1 Findings from semi-structured lifeworld interviews

For semi-structured lifeworld interviews, 12 P-U-E trilingual participants were chosen, 4 from each of the three age groups, viz. 18-23 years, 30-40 years, and 50-60 years or above. So, there were three groups of interviews, 4 from each age group. As already mentioned, the three age groups were chosen with the view to observing developmental changes, in the way P-U-E trilinguals dealt with their three languages, over a long period of time. The primary purpose behind using this method for collecting data was eliciting the lived experiences of P-U-E trilinguals in order to gain insight into their trilingual memory structure. A detailed procedure for conducting semi-structured lifeworld interviews has been delineated in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1. The data from these 12 interviews, 4 from each of the three age groups, were explicated using Hycner’s (1985) process for data explicitation (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5) which led to the emergence of relevant themes. The following findings have been drawn from those themes. For the sake of conciseness, clarity and convenience, the findings from 12 interviews are presented in bullet points below:

i. Punjabi, being the first language was acquired, unconsciously simply through exposure by all the 12 participants from the three age groups.

ii. Majority of the participants (8/12 in the three groups) had learnt Urdu unconsciously before going to school, either simultaneously with Punjabi or shortly after it, and did not associate any difficulties with learning Urdu.
However, rest of the participants (4/12 in the three groups) had started learning Urdu after joining school, and also associated some difficulties with it including dependence on Punjabi for using Urdu in the beginning.

iii. Learning of English in all the 12 cases started at the age of 11 or 12 and was considered the most difficult as well as the most demanding of the three language learning experiences. However, a practical use of English as a language, in all the cases, started after joining university.

iv. Majority of the participants (7/12 in the three groups) thought that the learning of Punjabi and Urdu were similar experiences, but learning of English was an entirely different experience. The rest of the participants (5/12) were of the view that all the three language learning experiences were different, learning of English being more detached from the other two.

v. All the 12 participants in the three groups stated their dependence on Urdu for using English in the beginning. The dependence was in the form of implicit translation – first thinking in Urdu, then translating into English in their mind, and then speaking or writing in English.

vi. On the experience of translating between Urdu and English, the three groups of interviewees differed from each other. In the first group, all the four participants found English to Urdu translation easier than Urdu to English translation. In the second group, 3/4 found both translation directions equally easy. In the third group, all the four participants expressed their equal ease with both translation directions. Interestingly, half of the participants in both second and third groups (2/4 in each) agreed that, in the beginning as English learners, they had found English to Urdu translation easier.

vii. Of all the 12 participants from the three groups, only one participant from the third age group mentioned having had an experience of translating from English to Punjabi. Whereas, all the participants in the first age group thought that they would find translating between Punjabi and English very difficult and might use Urdu as an intermediary language, the second group participants showed willingness for translating between Punjabi and English, and 2/4 of the third group participants thought that they wouldn’t find it any difficult.
The participants agreed that their dependence on Urdu for using English was reducing (the first age group), had reduced to a great extent (the second age group), or had completely come to an end (the third age group).

All the participants in the three groups agreed that, when speaking any one of their three languages, they were aware of the presence of the other two languages.

All the participants in the first and second groups and 3/4 in the third group agreed that a conscious effort was required for stopping interference from the other two languages and speaking one language consistently. One participant in the third group declared having a command on choosing one language at a time without interference from the other two languages.

Though all the three groups agreed on languages mixing, three different patterns were observed. The participants from the first age group stated their mixing English words in Punjabi and Urdu, but not mixing Punjabi and Urdu words in English because of having a higher level of consciousness when speaking English. In the second group, all the participants agreed on mixing words from all the three languages. In the third group, 2/4 stated their speaking pure Punjabi and pure English but mixing English words in Urdu.

All the participants in the three groups agreed that, when talking to a monolingual in any of the three languages, they had to put extra conscious effort for stopping them from languages mixing.

### 5.1.2 Findings from focus group discussions (FGDs)

Two FGDs were separately conducted, FGA and FGB, FGA with 6 participants from the first age group of 18-23 years and FGB with 10 participants from the other two groups of 30-40 years and 50-60 years or above. The main purpose behind using FGDs as a method for data collection was to bring P-U-E trilinguals together in manageable groups where they could interact with each other and share their experiences of learning and using the three languages. The detailed procedure for conducting the FGDs has been explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2. The data from the two FGDs was explicated using
Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5). Below, the findings from the two FGDs are presented:

i. Punjabi, being the first language, in all the 16 cases was learnt without making a conscious effort, simply through exposure to it.

ii. In the case of FGA, all the 6 participants had learnt Urdu formally after joining their schools. In the case of FGB, majority of the participants had learnt Urdu unconsciously simultaneously with Punjabi.

iii. All the 16 participants had started learning English after joining school but that was very basic learning, and practical use of English as a language began after joining university.

iv. All the 16 participants thought that learning of English was the most difficult of the three language learning experiences firstly because of learning it very late (at the age of 11 or 12) and secondly due to lack of exposure to the language.

v. In the case of FGA, all the 6 participants thought that dealing with three languages was a difficult task particularly in the case of English.

vi. All the 16 participants in both the FGDs agreed that they had to depend on Urdu for using English in the beginning. Whereas the dependence was gradually reducing for FGA participants, the FGB participants thought that they had overcome their dependence on Urdu after having used English for many years.

vii. All the 6 participants in FGA thought that English to Urdu translation was easier.

In FGB, half of them (5/10) found English to Urdu translation easier. Of the rest, 2 participants considered Urdu to English translation easier. Yet, another 2 considered both translation directions equally easy.

viii. All the 6 participants in FGA thought that they would find English to Punjabi translation easier than Punjabi to English. When translating from Punjabi to English, they would use Urdu as intermediary language.
ix. All the participants in both the FGDs agreed on having a consciousness of the other two languages, when using any one of them. The FGA participants thought that it required a lot of effort to ignore the other two languages, particularly Urdu, when speaking English. The FGB participants, having acquired a greater command on the three languages, thought that it was the demand of the situation which made them speak one language consistently.

x. All the 16 participants in both the FGDs agreed on their mixing words from the three languages. Whereas the FGB participants thought that they mixed words from the three languages out of convenience, the FGA participants agreed that though they mixed words from the three languages but they did not mix Urdu or Punjabi words in English because of a higher level of consciousness at the time of speaking English.

xi. In the case of FGA, all the participants agreed that they would not find talking to a Punjabi or Urdu monolingual difficult, but talking to an English monolingual would be very difficult, particularly listening to that person.

In the case of FGB, all the participants agreed that, when talking to a monolingual in any of the three languages, they had to make a conscious effort to stop mixing words from the other two languages.

5.1.3 Findings from essay writing

For essay writing, 12 P-U-E trilingual participants were chosen, 4 from each of the three age groups, viz. 18-23 years, 30-40 years, and 50-60 years or above. So, there were three groups for essay writing, each with 4 participants from the same age group. The purpose behind choosing this method for collecting data was making the P-U-E trilinguals share in detail their lived experiences of learning and using the three languages through written descriptions. A detailed procedure for essay writing has been outlined in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3. The data from the 12 essays, 4 from each of the three age groups, were explicated using Hycner’s (1985) process for data explicitation (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5), which led to the emergence of themes. The findings from essay writing are presented below:
i. All the 12 participants had acquired Punjabi, their first language, unconsciously simply through being exposed to it.

ii. All the 4 participants from the first age group had learnt Urdu, their second language, unconsciously and informally, just like Punjabi.

All the 8 participants from the second and third age groups had learnt Urdu through formal instruction in their schools, and could associate some difficulties with its learning.

iii. English was learnt formally in all the 12 cases and was described as an experience that was very difficult and challenging.

iv. For all the 12 participants in the three groups, dependence on Urdu for using English in the beginning as English learners was found to be a general phenomenon.

v. Half of the participants (2/4) in the first group and all of the participants in the other two groups (8/8) agreed that all the three language learning experiences were different from each other, but learning of English was referred to as the most distinct of the three experiences.

vi. All the 4 participants in the first group agreed that translating from English to Urdu was easier than translating from Urdu to English.

In the second group, 3/4 agreed that translating from English to Urdu or Urdu to English would be equally easy for them. The remaining one participant thought that Urdu to English translation was easier.

In the third group, half (2/4) of the participants thought that Urdu to English translation was easier, however, one participant had an entirely opposite view. The fourth participant found both translation directions equally easy.

vii. None of the 12 participants in the three groups had an experience of translating between Punjabi and English and thought that it would be very difficult. However, 2 of the participants in the third group thought that they would be able to do that by first translating into Urdu.

viii. In the first group, all the participants stated their greater comfort with Punjabi and Urdu, and their least comfort with English.
In the second group, all the participants mentioned their having gone through development in dealing with the three languages, particularly with English.

In the third group, all the participants agreed that, having acquired almost equal proficiency in the three languages, dealing with three languages was not a difficult task any longer.

**ix.** All the 12 participants from the three groups agreed on facing interference from the other two languages when they had to choose a specific word from any one of the three languages. However, all the 8 participants from the first and second group particularly mentioned interference from Urdu words when choosing English words.

**x.** All the 12 participants from the three groups generally agreed on mixing words from the three languages. However, the participants from first and second group pointed towards some specific patterns in their languages mixing.

In the first group, all the participants agreed that they did not mix Punjabi or Urdu words in English because they spoke English in formal situations only with a higher level of consciousness.

In the second group, the participants generally agreed that language mixing was mostly done between Urdu and English.

**xi.** In the first group, 3/4 declared their great difficulty in talking to an English monolingual, but not in talking to a Punjabi or Urdu monolingual.

In the other two groups, all the 8 participants agreed that they would require some extra effort for controlling languages mixing when talking to a monolingual in any of the three languages.

### 5.2 Data Triangulation

From the unconscious acquisition of first language, Punjabi, to the effortful learning of third language, English, and from basic English learning at school to becoming highly proficient in English, the data from the three sources: interviews, FGDs, and essays, converges on a number of points. The most significant points where the data from the three sources converges are:
1. Those P-U-E trilingual participants, who had learnt Urdu, their second language, through formal instruction in schools after a few years gap from their acquisition of Punjabi, associated some difficulties with the learning of Urdu, including their dependence on Punjabi for using Urdu in the beginning. Though some of those participants agreed that there were some structural similarities between the two languages (Punjabi and Urdu), but the gap of 5-6 years in the learning of two languages and the difference in their modes of learning (unconscious acquisition vs. conscious learning) made the learning of Punjabi and Urdu two different learning experiences for them. However, those participants who had started learning Urdu even later (at or near the age of 10) did not consider Urdu and Punjabi as similar languages at all.

2. Learning of English, their third language, was generally considered the most difficult of the three learning experiences, associated with a number of difficulties, by all the participants from the three different sources.

3. Dependence on Urdu, in the form of implicit translation, for using English at low proficiency levels was a very significant point on which none of the 40 participants showed even the slightest of disagreement.

4. The experiences of translating between Urdu and English were highly similar across the three age groups among the three sources of data.

5. Likewise, the experiences of translating between Punjabi and English were also highly similar across the three age groups as revealed by the data from the three different sources.

6. Decline in dependence on Urdu for using English with increase in proficiency was also reported by all the participants to varying degrees according to their period of exposure to the English language.

7. Consciousness of the presence of the other two languages, when speaking any one of their three languages was another very significant phenomenon pointed out by the data from all the three sources.
8. On requiring a conscious effort for stopping interference from the other two languages, in order to speak one language consistently, again there was an agreement among the three types of data.

9. The data from the three sources also converged on languages mixing, different patterns of languages mixing observed in the three age groups, and the way the participants stopped them from languages mixing when talking to a monolingual in any of the three languages.

Besides, there is one significant point of divergence observed among the data from the three sources. The interviews and essay writing participants from the second and third age groups thought that for controlling languages mixing, when talking to a monolingual in any of the three languages, they had to make an extra conscious effort, whereas, the FGB participants belonging to the same age groups thought that it was the demand of the situation which made them speak one language consistently.

Apart from this, no other significant divergence in the findings from the three sources could be noted.

5.3 Discussion

Keeping to the phenomenological approach of describing, the previous section primarily dealt with the presentation of the findings, which were obtained after the explicitation of the phenomenological data culled from the three different methods. This section is mainly concerned with discussing the above-outlined findings of this study in the light of psycholinguistic models, discussed in Chapter 2, in order to determine if the findings of this study, which used phenomenological methods for the collection and explicitation of data, lend any support to the previously discussed psycholinguistic theoretical models. In so doing, the basic purpose is to understand the P-U-E trilinguals’ experiences of learning and using the three languages in terms of how they organize their three lexicons and make them work, especially when they have to make lexical choices. From the above findings, the following general points could largely be inferred:
5.3.1 Age of acquisition and Similarity/dissimilarity between languages

The findings of this study clearly show the importance of the age of acquisition for both second and third language. Though Punjabi and Urdu share some structural similarities, but the participants who had started learning Urdu, their second language, at/near the age of 10 had experienced great difficulty learning it. They did not consider the two languages, Punjabi and Urdu, as similar languages, as their experience of learning Punjabi and that of Urdu were entirely different from each other. Moreover, these late bilinguals also thought that in the beginning as Urdu learners they had to depend on Punjabi (in the form of implicit translation, i.e., thinking in one language, then translating into the other language in one’s mind, and then speak or write in the other language) for using Urdu. On the other hand, the participants who had learnt the two languages, Punjabi and Urdu, simultaneously or one shortly after the other did not find the learning of second language difficult, and also thought that the two languages were similar and they never had to depend on Punjabi for using Urdu, not even in the beginning. Therefore, on the basis of their learning of the first two languages, the participants of this study can be divided into two distinct groups: there is a larger group of simultaneous/early bilinguals, the ones who had acquired both Punjabi and Urdu either simultaneously or one shortly after the other; and there is a smaller group of late bilinguals, those who had learnt Urdu quite late, at/near the age of 10. Thus, the P-U-E trilinguals’ experiences of learning Punjabi and Urdu, their first two languages, reveal that the age of acquisition is more dominant a factor than similarity or dissimilarity between languages.

Interestingly, as Punjabi-Urdu bilinguals, the P-U-E trilinguals of this study can be compared to Basque-Spanish bilinguals of Dunabeitia et al. (2010). The results of the study showed that simultaneous balanced bilinguals were able to access both of their languages through concept mediation (For more detail, see Chapter 2, p. 45). Similarly, the findings of the present study suggest that the simultaneous balanced bilinguals of Punjabi-Urdu are able to access the two languages through concept mediation as they are not dependent on Punjabi for using Urdu at any stage of their second language (Urdu)
acquisition. However, Dunabeitia et al.’s findings do not apply to the Punjabi-Urdu late bilinguals unless they acquire a high proficiency in Urdu.

Besides, all of the participants in the present study were late trilinguals as they had started learning their third language, English, at the age of 11 or 12, and that too as a direct translation of Urdu, their second language. No wonder, they all described the learning of English as the most difficult of the three experiences, and not only could associate a number of difficulties with the learning of their third language, but also it took them 6-7 years of learning before they could speak English for communicative purposes in everyday context. Furthermore, not only did they learn English quite late, long after their early childhood, but English as a language for them was also highly dissimilar (structurally) from both Urdu as well as Punjabi. The non-availability of English speaking environment, i.e., lack of exposure to the language, is a noteworthy factor in this regard.

Quite interestingly, these findings are reminiscent of Lenneberg’s (1967) Critical Period Hypothesis which advocated that late learners of second languages learn consciously with great effort and also not very successfully as far as acquiring the pronunciation of new languages is concerned.

5.3.2 Implicit translation and Lexical access

All of the P-U-E trilinguals mentioned their dependence on Urdu for using (speaking or writing) English in the beginning. However, in the case of Punjabi and Urdu, only late bilinguals mentioned their dependence on Punjabi for using Urdu in the beginning. This dependence was clearly in the form of implicit translation, that is, thinking in one language and then translating and speaking in the other. It is clearly evident in the following response of a Punjabi-Urdu late bilingual from the first age group of participants:

IPA1: ‘When I started learning Urdu, at that time I had to think in Punjabi and then translate into Urdu. But now, I don’t have to think in Punjabi for speaking in Urdu.’
It is important to note that implicit translation in the context of bilingual memory organization was brought into focus by Kolers (1963), who was the first to come up with the notion of independent or separate memory stores for the two languages of a bilingual. He argued that for an event, which was experienced in one language, to be described in the other language, a bilingual would require some sort of implicit translation (For more detail, see Chapter 2, p. 16-17). This is exactly what was experienced by all of the P-U-E trilingual participants in the case of English, and for Urdu only by late bilinguals.

In the case of P-U-E trilinguals of this study, implicit translation or dependence on the second language (Urdu) for using the third language (English) is the same as word association because, for using English, they first accessed Urdu lexical items which were then translated to English lexical items. Consider the following three responses from the first age group of participants, from each of the three sources of data:

**IPA2:** ‘For speaking in English, I first think in Urdu, then translate into English and then speak. Still, I have to translate from Urdu into English in my mind and then I speak or write.’

**FGA2:** ‘Whenever I listen to something in English, first I translate it in Urdu and then I am able to understand it. When I have to answer a question, I think in Urdu, translate and then answer in English.’

**EWA4:** ‘Dependence on Urdu is there whenever I have to speak or write in English, because all the time I think in Urdu. So, there are translation processes going on in my mind whenever I have to do something in English.’

So, there was an obvious word association at low proficiency stages which continued for a long time about 8-10 years in the case of English-Urdu, but lasted for a short time, few months in the case of Punjabi-Urdu (for late bilinguals only) before they were able to conceptually mediate, and directly access the lexical items in the desired language.

Implicit translation also mirrors the way lexical access is carried out at low proficiency levels. Dependence on Urdu for using English in the form of implicit translation clearly shows that L3 words were accessed with the help of lexical connections to L2, and not directly using conceptual links to conceptual memory. An interview participant from the second age group shared the following:
**IPB4:** ‘I had to think for a few seconds when I had to utter a word or a sentence, only then I would have accomplished English communication. I had to think in Urdu and then translate in order to utter something.’

An essay writing participant from the second age group has described it more aptly:

**EWB3:** ‘Dependence on Urdu was definitely there in the beginning, whenever I had to speak, write or even read in English. All these things were accomplished with the help of Urdu as a mediator.’

The fact that implicit translation is employed by the participants at low proficiency levels helps to infer that such participants have stronger lexical links between L2 and L3, especially from L2 to L3, and much weaker conceptual links for L3. So, the only way to access L3 words at low proficiency levels is through lexical links with L2. However, as the L3 proficiency increases, the participants gradually become able to access L3 lexicon directly without the help of L2 lexical links, and thus begin to conceptually mediate.

In short, it can be safely said that the P-U-E trilingual participants with low proficiency in English, interview participants from the age group of 18-23 and essay writing participants who were also of the same age group, produced data that supported the word association hypothesis (Potter et al., 1984; for more detail, see Chapter 2, p. 19-20) as for using English they all had to depend on Urdu in the form of implicit translation. Moreover, all the participants from the other two age groups, who were at higher levels of proficiency, mentioned their dependence on Urdu in the form of implicit translation for using English in the beginning when they were at low proficiency levels. Thus, the participants at low proficiency levels accessed L3 words lexically, through word association to L2 lexicon, whereas the participants at higher levels of proficiency were not dependent on L2 any longer and could carry out lexical access through concept mediation. Consider the following responses, one from the second age group of interviewees and the other from one of the FGB participants.

**IPB4:** ‘In the beginning, I had to think in Urdu and then translate into English in order to say something. But now, as we are talking in English, there is no translation of course. I think I can think in English now.’

**FGB2:** ‘When I started my job, I started feeling more comfortable while conversing in English, without translating and now most of the times I feel I think in English. So, I can say English has got internalized.’
The following response of an essay writing participant from the third age group not only describes development from word association to concept mediation with increase in L3 proficiency, but also informs about the length of time it took the participant to acquire that level:

**EWC3:** ‘In the beginning I had to translate in my mind from Urdu whenever I had to speak English, but after I joined college, the things became easier. However, it took me about 8-10 years to overcome the dependence on Urdu for using English.’

The data from the three age groups clearly renders support to the RHM (Kroll and Stewart, 1994; see Chapter 2, p. 24-27), which predicts word association at low proficiency levels and concept mediation at high proficiency levels.

### 5.3.3 Translation asymmetry

Almost all of the P-U-E trilingual participants had been experiencing translation asymmetry. When translating between Urdu and English, all of the participants with low English proficiency, thought that they found backward translation (translation from English to Urdu) easier than the forward translation (Urdu to English) because of their larger Urdu vocabulary and their greater familiarity with Urdu sentence structure. Consider the following three responses, one from each of the three types of data from the first age group of participants:

**IPA1:** ‘I find translation from English to Urdu easier, and I think I take less time in translating from English to Urdu because then I just have to go through the thing and write down whatever comes to my mind, but for translating from Urdu to English, I have to be conscious of the use of good vocabulary, grammatical patterns, sentence structure, etc. So, I take less time translating from English to Urdu.’

**FGA6:** ‘It is easy to translate from English to Urdu because I have a better command on Urdu sentence structure and grammar, so I can apply it very well when translating from English to Urdu.’

**EWA2:** ‘I have an experience of translating from English to Urdu and Urdu to English. I always found English to Urdu translation easier because this is how I learnt English language, translating each and every word of English into Urdu. Translation from Urdu to English would be more difficult for me as my English vocabulary is still not very good.’
No doubt, the reasons put forth by the participants for their greater ease in backward translation are very valid ones. They definitely have a larger L2 vocabulary at low L3 proficiency levels, and a greater command on L2 sentence structure. Moreover, they can relate backward translation to their experience of learning English. However, with increase in English proficiency, the asymmetry in the two translation directions decreases as majority of the participants with higher proficiency in English mentioned their equal ease in both translation directions. For example, consider the following responses from second age group of participants:

**IPB3:** ‘I can easily translate from English to Urdu, or Urdu to English, no problem for me. Not since very beginning, but it developed with the passage of time. In the beginning translating from English to Urdu was easier for me, but translating from Urdu to English was a bit difficult. The reason I think is that when I translated from Urdu to English, I had to look for words, vocabulary was a problem, and also the sentence structure, grammar, and all these things were there. But, when I translated from English to Urdu, it was not a problem for me... So, in the beginning, translation from English to Urdu was easier for me. But now, I find both translations equally easy.’

**FGB10:** ‘I think it’s again a matter of exposure. If you’ve been using English for a long time, then it becomes difficult to translate into Urdu. It would be otherwise if you’ve been speaking Urdu for a long time. So, I think it’s a matter of exposure.’

**EWB3:** ‘I remember I was good at translation in my school, especially at translating from English to Urdu. I found that easier. Urdu to English was harder at that time because I think that required more practice and more knowledge of English. I don’t think I would find any problem with any of these two translations now.’

This is clearly in accordance with the RHM that predicts translation asymmetry at lower L2 proficiency levels which reduces as the L2 proficiency increases.

How the RHM would explain the translation asymmetry experienced by P-U-E trilinguals is that at initial levels of L3 proficiency, the lexical links from L3 to L2 are assumed to be stronger than the lexical links from L2 to L3, mainly because the participants had learnt L3 as a direct translation of their L2, that is, associating each new L3 lexical item to an already familiar L2 lexical item. That is why they are assumed to develop stronger lexical links from L3 to L2 as compared to the lexical links from L2 to L3, which are later strengthened with the passage of time. The stronger lexical links from L3 to L2 help the low L3 proficiency participants in faster and more convenient lexical association from L3 to L2.
Therefore, they find greater ease in backward translation (L3 to L2) as compared to forward translation (L2 to L3).

On the other hand, there was a general unwillingness for translating between Punjabi and English, the first and the third language of the participants. Out of a total of 30 participants, only one had an experience of translating from English to Punjabi. All the rest of the participants thought that translating between Punjabi and English would be much harder than translating between Urdu and English. Some of the participants from the first age group (with low proficiency in English) notably pointed out that for translating between Punjabi and English, they would first translate from English or Punjabi to Urdu, and then from Urdu to Punjabi or English. Consider the following responses:

IPA2: ‘I have never translated from Punjabi to English or English to Punjabi. I have no experience of that. But if I ever have to translate from Punjabi into English, I’ll first translate the Punjabi text into Urdu, and then I’ll translate from Urdu into English. Only then, I think it will be easy for me.’

IPA4: ‘If I have to translate form Punjabi into English, I would first translate from Punjabi into Urdu and then from Urdu into English. This way I’ll be able to do it in a good manner. I won’t be able to translate directly.’

FGA4: ‘For me, English to Punjabi translation would be very easy. For Punjabi to English, first I will translate from Punjabi to Urdu and then from Urdu to English.’

It is obvious that, for translating between Punjabi and English, Urdu would serve as an intermediary language. These observations indicate Punjabi lexicon of a P-U-E trilingual being at a greater distance from English lexicon as compared to that of Urdu lexicon and that Punjabi lexicon is accessible to English lexicon only through Urdu. Therefore, a very weak connection between Punjabi and English lexicons of a P-U-E trilingual can be predicted. Notably enough, the kind of dependency effect shown by the data between L1 (Punjabi) and L2 (Urdu) for translating between L1 (Punjabi) and L3 (English), at least to my knowledge, has not been pointed out by any of the psycholinguistic studies thus far.

5.3.4 Organization of the three lexicons
The previous two sub-sections (5.2.3 and 5.2.4) considerably inform about the organization of the three lexicons of a P-U-E trilingual.

Implicit translation, as pointed out by Kolers (1963), indicates separate memory stores for the two languages of a bilingual. In the case of P-U-E trilinguals, implicit translation was experienced by all of the participants for L3 (English) at low proficiency levels, and by some of the participants (late bilinguals) for L2 (Urdu) also. Linking this data to Kolers’ (1963) findings, it can be hypothesized that P-U-E trilinguals possess three separate lexicons for their three languages. Moreover, the way lexical access is carried out at both low and high levels of proficiency provides considerable insight into the organization of the three lexicons of a P-U-E trilingual. For instance, comparing P-U-E trilinguals of this study to the Dutch-English-French trilingual participants of de Groot and Hoeks’ (1995) study (See Chapter 2, p. 32-33), the P-U-E trilinguals who are less fluent in English (L3), lexically mediate their L3 and thus seem to possess word-association structure for their English-Urdu pair of languages. However, they conceptually mediate their L2 (Urdu) and thus possess concept-mediation structure for their Urdu-Punjabi pair of languages. At initial stages of Urdu (L2) learning, a word-association structure can be assumed to exist even for Urdu-Punjabi pair of languages that later develops into a concept-mediation structure after a considerable increase in proficiency. Similarly, it can be assumed that word-association structure of English-Urdu pair of languages for those less fluent in English develops into a concept-mediation structure when a proficiency level more or less comparable to L1 and L2 is acquired.

The P-U-E trilingual participants’ experiences of translation asymmetry also provide significant insight into the organization of their three lexicons in general, particularly into the connection strengths of the bidirectional lexical links that exist between the three lexicons. As already discussed (See sub-section 5.2.3), at low levels of L3 proficiency, the lexical links are stronger from L3 to L2 than from L2 to L3, which is evident in the participants greater ease in backward translation (English to Urdu), whereas they find forward translation (Urdu to English) a lot more challenging. Besides, very weak lexical links exist between L3 (English) and L1 (Punjabi) lexicons as the links between them are never exercised neither in
formal, classroom context, nor in informal everyday context. Another significant observation made by
the low-proficiency-in-English group of participants was that they had a larger Urdu vocabulary which,
according to them, caused their greater ease in translating from English to Urdu (backward translation).
This observation provides further support to the RHM, which also hypothesized that the L1 lexicon of a
bilingual was bigger than the L2 lexicon.

5.3.5 Lexical selection (selective/non-selective)

In the first two age groups of P-U-E trilingual participants, all the participants reported experiencing non-
selective lexical selection as when speaking any one of their three languages, they thought that they were
aware of the presence of the other two languages and that they had to stop interference from the other two
languages through conscious control. However, it was only in the third age group that some of the
participants (3 out of 9) thought that they were able to selectively access the lexical items from the one
language that they wanted to speak at a certain moment without interference from the other two
languages, whereas the majority (6 out of 9) of the participants from this age group, like the participants
from the other two age groups, were of the view that a consciousness of the other two languages was
always there when speaking any one of their languages and that they stopped interference from the other
two languages by exerting an extra effort.

It can be inferred from the data that though lexical selection becomes more non-selective with an
increasing proficiency in the three languages, especially in L3, but there are rare chances of fully selective
lexical selection as an awareness of the presence of alternative items is there in most of the cases. The
data from P-U-E trilinguals reveals that most of the participants even in the third age group, who have
actually acquired a very high level of proficiency in L3, still feel that they are aware of the presence of the
other two languages when speaking any one of their languages, and also that they feel more comfortable
in situations where mixing of words from the three languages is possible, that is, when talking to other P-
U-E trilinguals like them.
Desmet and Duyck (2007) have rightly observed: “it is not possible during speaking or listening for people to ‘switch off’ their native language or even their second language and process language in a purely monolingual mode” (p. 169). It further supports Grosjean’s (1989) observation that a bilingual is not the sum of two monolinguals, which can further be extended to imply that a trilingual is not the sum of three monolinguals.

5.3.6 The role of proficiency in lexical selection

Though it has just been discussed that the chances of achieving fully selective lexical selection are rare, a thorough investigation into the experiences of P-U-E trilingual participants of this study revealed that the proficiency level of the participants was highly crucial in determining how they carried out lexical selection. For instance, all the participants of the first age group declared that, in order to use lexical items of one language only, they had to make use of an extra effort. Consider the following responses of participants from the first age group:

**IPA2:** ‘When a teacher asks me a question in English, I answer the question in English only. At that time, there is a continuous struggle within me to stick to one language. When I am speaking Punjabi or Urdu, the same thing happens.’

**FGA2:** ‘Only Urdu is present in my mind when I speak English because first I think in Urdu and then I speak in English. It is a hard job and I have to put a lot of effort in my mind to focus on what I have to speak.’

**FGA4:** ‘When I speak Punjabi or Urdu, ignoring the other two languages is easy. But when I speak English, at that time, it is very difficult to ignore the other two languages. So, I have to be very conscious.’

**EWA1:** ‘Mostly I face difficulty in choosing a specific word from a language, particularly English, especially when the word is not a very common one because there are always Urdu words in my mind already present, which make it difficult for me to choose a specific English word that I want to choose.’

The majority of participants from the second age group having a high proficiency in English also thought that they had to put a conscious effort into stopping interference from the other two languages. Three of the responses from second age group, one of an interview participant, the other of an FGB participant and the third of an essay writing participant, proved considerably enlightening on this issue:
IPB4: ‘In order to stop interference from the other two languages, I have to try very hard. For instance, when I am teaching an English class in my university, sometimes there comes a word which has a very beautiful or very apt explanation in Urdu, then I can’t stop mentioning that word and my students laugh at me. But there are times when intentionally and forcibly I have to stop myself from uttering words from another language. In order to speak one language consistently, I think a conscious effort is required.’

FGB10: ‘When I talk to my maid I don’t use Urdu or English words. At that time, I have to make a conscious effort to use Punjabi words only.’

EWB2: ‘When I have to choose a specific word from a language, many times I have to face competition from other two languages. No doubt, greater competition is from Urdu when choosing some difficult English words.’

Majority of the participants from the third age group also thought that they required a conscious effort for stopping interference from the other two languages. Consider the following responses:

IPC2: ‘It is due to requirement that I stop the other two from interfering. When I am required to speak any one language, I have to consciously stop the other two languages from interfering.’

FGB1: ‘When the person I’m talking to knows only one of my languages, then I’ll have to make myself more conscious of not mixing words from the other two languages that the person I am talking to does not know.’

EWC1: ‘When talking to a monolingual, I have to make an extra effort for not mixing words from the other two languages.’

It is obvious from the above responses that though with increase in the period of exposure to a language (from the first age group to the third) there is an increasing ease and comfort in sticking to the desired language in a consistent manner, but the participants in all the three age groups do experience their putting an extra/conscious effort, in varying degrees, when they have to stick to one language only. It can be inferred from the above responses that they carry out lexical selection through inhibitory control (IC) mechanism, proposed by Green (1998), as for speaking any one of their languages consistently they have to stop interference from the other two languages by exerting a conscious control (For more detail, see Chapter 2, p. 49-50). The IC mechanism is able to take into account the potential competition between different lexical items from different lexicons. The competition, according to this model, is resolved with the help of a lexicon external device (supervisory attentional system, SAS) that inhibits the activation of the lexical items of the non-target language. In the case of P-U-E trilingual participants of this study, as
there is a competition between the lexical items from the three lexicons, in order to select lexical items from the desired lexicon, they have to put an extra effort to inhibit the activation of the lexical items from the non-target lexicon, so that the desired lexical items are pronounced.

However, in the two age groups of high-proficiency-in-English participants (30-40 years, and 50-60 years or above), there were few (3 from the second and 3 from the third age group, so 6 out of 26, altogether) who stated that they were able to select one language at a time just because of the demand of the situation, without interference from the other two languages. Consider the following responses from two of the participants belonging to the third age group of P-U-E trilinguals, one of them an interview participant and the other an FGB participant:

**IPC3:** ‘I think stopping interference is different for different individuals. I can select one language at one time, without interference from the other two languages.’

**FGB3:** ‘The three languages are now independent phenomena for me. When I have to speak Punjabi, I speak Punjabi and never think about Urdu or English. The same is about Urdu, and the same is about English.’

The language(s) experiences of these six participants (3 from the second, and 3 from the third age group) signify that they are able to selectively access one lexicon at a time and, therefore, have acquired a proficiency where they can employ La Heij’s (2005) Concept Selection Model (CSM) and selectively access lexical items from one particular lexicon at a particular moment without activating equivalent lexical items from the other two lexicons. According to CSM, which is largely based on Levelt’s (1989) Monolingual Production Model, the intention to speak a particular language is of prime importance (For more detail, see Chapter 2, p. 47-48). The CSM, formulated using highly proficient bilinguals only, favors selective access and assumes that target language selection takes place at the conceptual level. However, it should be noted that when the proficiency levels of all the languages of a bi/multilingual are exceptionally high, only then we can expect the intention to speak a certain language to be just enough to be able to make language selection at the conceptual level, and thus activate the desired lexicon only.
In a nutshell, for those P-U-E trilinguals less fluent in English, lexical selection is non-selective, especially in the case of English, because when they have to use English, their word-association structure for English-Urdu pair of languages becomes activated, and so they make lexical selection with the help of IC mechanism. However, in the case of Urdu or Punjabi, lexical selection is largely selective. Furthermore, for those P-U-E trilinguals highly fluent in English, lexical selection is selective for all the three languages and they are able to select one language at a time without activating the other two, and thus employ CSM. But, this stage is acquired after a long term usage of the three languages on daily basis, especially in the case of L3, English. These results support Schwieter’s (2007) findings that highly proficient bilinguals are less prone to inhibitory mechanisms and thus employ CSM (For more detail, see Chapter 2, p. 53-54). However, it needs to be reinstated here that the chances of achieving fully selective lexical selection, and therefore of employing CSM, are rare as it becomes possible only if a P-U-E trilingual keeps using the three languages on regular basis, almost every day, for a very long time.

5.3.7 Developmental aspect

The results of the study show that there are obvious evidences of developmental aspect throughout the linguistic career of the P-U-E trilingual participants of this study. With increase in proficiency, development is clearly seen in the following three areas of language(s) usage:

i. Implicit translation and lexical access
ii. Translation asymmetry
iii. Lexical selection

As discussed earlier, all the P-U-E trilingual participants of this study had the experience of implicit translation in the beginning, that is, they had to think in their L2, translate to L3, and then speak or write in their L3. However, with the passage of time, their dependence on L2 for using L3, and in certain cases dependence on L1 for using L2, reduced and finally came to an end. Whereas all of the participants from the first age group reported their dependence on Urdu for using English, most of the participants from the
second age group and all of the participants from the third age group shared that they did not have to depend on Urdu (in the form of implicit translation) for using English any longer. Consider the following three responses, one from each age group of participants:

IPA1: ‘While speaking English, I have to translate from Urdu to English because vocabulary problems are still there, and when I have to speak about a complex idea, then I have problem. I have to stop for few moments, think and then speak. I think in Urdu, then look for more suitable words in English, translate and then speak in English.’

IPB2: ‘For using English, I still have to translate from Urdu sometimes, but not as much as it was in the beginning. Now, I am overcoming it and able to use English directly. But, in the beginning, that was the only thing I did whenever I had to speak or write in English.’

EWC4: ‘In the beginning, yes, I had to depend on Urdu for using English. That was the only way I could use English in the beginning. I overcame that dependence soon after joining university.’

The three responses, one from each age group, clearly show a progression from a total dependence on Urdu for using English to either no dependence at all or very less dependence. Furthermore, the above responses also indicate a progression from word association to concept mediation. The participants with low L3 proficiency lexically mediate their L3 lexicon as they are dependent on L2 for using L3, and that is why they implicitly translate from L2 to L3. However, as their L3 proficiency increases, the conceptual links begin to develop between L3 and conceptual memory, and finally there comes a stage when they are able to conceptually mediate their L3 lexicon, and lexical mediation for L3 comes to an end.

Likewise, developmental aspect is also evidently observed on the issue of translation asymmetry. Most of the participants with low L3 proficiency found backward translation (L3 to L2) easier than forward translation (L2 to L3), whereas, most of the participants with high L3 proficiency thought that they found both translation directions equally easy. The following responses, one from each age group, provide clear evidence:

FGA3: ‘English to Urdu translation is easy for me because my Urdu vocabulary is very good, but my English vocabulary is not very strong.’

EWB4: ‘English learning was totally based on translation, but I found English to Urdu translation much easier in the beginning, because in the school we were given more
practice in English to Urdu translation, and also because my proficiency in Urdu was much better at that time. Now, if I have to translate, I might find both translations equally easy, but there is greater possibility of a better Urdu to English translation because now I am much better equipped with English vocabulary.'

IPC1: ‘Even in the beginning I was good at translating from both sides, but I think I found English to Urdu translation easier than Urdu to English because sometimes it is difficult to find English substitutes for Urdu words. That is why at that time I found English to Urdu translation easier.’

The above three responses show a clear progression from translation asymmetry (greater ease in backward translation) to either equal ease in both translation directions or greater ease in forward translation as the L3 proficiency of the participants increases.

It is to be particularly noted here that development in both the areas, overcoming the dependence on Urdu for L3 usage and reduced translation asymmetry, clearly renders support to the RHM which would predict concept mediation for L3 and equal ease in both translation directions as the L3 proficiency of the P-U-E trilingual participants increases.

Another important area of language usage where developmental aspect was observed during this study is lexical selection. All the participants with low L3 proficiency as well as most of the participants with high L3 proficiency thought that they made lexical selection by inhibiting lexical items of the other two lexicons. However, some of the participants with high L3 proficiency were of the view that they were able to access one lexicon at a time without activating lexical items from the other two lexicons. The following three responses, one from each age group, would help to make it clearer:

FGA3: ‘The other two languages are there, especially when I have to speak English. The words from other two languages keep coming to my mind, but I have to kind of push them back and concentrate on using English words only.’

IPB2: ‘In order to make myself stick to one language, I have to consciously control my vocabulary for the other two languages, like first I would think, make up my mind, and then I would say whatever I’ve got to say, not speak in one go. I would definitely think. In the beginning, it was more like stop and think, stop and think, but now I have improved my fluency and spontaneity, and sticking to one language is not that difficult though I have to make myself very conscious about the one language that I am speaking at a particular moment.’
**IPC4**: ‘Stopping interference from the other two I think is the urgency effect. For example, when I’m teaching an English class, I know I have to speak English. So, I speak English. I think it’s more like making yourself consciously alert of the one language that you should be speaking in a particular situation.’

The above three responses clearly show a gradual shift from inhibitory control at low proficiency levels to language-selective mechanism at high proficiency levels. The P-U-E trilinguals with lower proficiency in English can be clearly seen making use of the IC mechanism in order to accomplish lexical selection, whereas the participants with higher proficiency in English clearly indicated their ability to employ the CSM and thus select one language at a time. This observation is in accordance with Schwieter’s (2007) SbP model, which assumes a developmental shift from IC mechanism in less proficient bilinguals to language-selective mechanism (CSM) in highly proficient bilinguals (For more detail, see Chapter 2, p. 53-54).

In a nutshell, the findings of this phenomenological study, which had set out to test the results of psycholinguistic experimental studies on the basis of everyday human experience, clearly ascertain the significance of the age of acquisition for both L2 and L3 for P-U-E trilingual participants of the study. Be it L2 or L3, if the new language is learnt after the age of early childhood, its lexicon is lexically associated to the previously acquired lexicons as initially there are very weak conceptual links, too weak to function on their own, between the new lexicon and conceptual memory. For developing stronger conceptual links with the conceptual memory, the new lexicon requires a certain length of time during which the new language is regularly exercised. In the case of Punjabi-Urdu late bilinguals, such links take few months to develop because of an availability of the Urdu-speaking environment. However, in the case of English L3, as all of the participants of this study are late trilinguals, who started learning English at the age of 11 or 12, the stronger conceptual links for L3 take a very long time to develop. Non-availability of the English-speaking environment can also be an important factor for that matter. Once strong conceptual links are developed for L3, the participants are no more dependent on L2 for using L3, and thus implicit translation comes to an end. Translation asymmetry is also closely related to the development of strong conceptual links. In the absence of strong conceptual links for L3, the participants find backward
translation (L3 to L2) easier than the forward translation (L2 to L3) simply because they lexically mediate L3 and L2, associating each L3 lexical item to an equivalent already familiar L2 lexical item. However, after developing strong conceptual links for L3, the translation asymmetry reduces and the participants begin to find both translation directions equally easy. In this way, the languages learning and usage experiences of P-U-E trilinguals provide considerable insight into the organization and working of their three lexicons. The results of the study also evidently show that the assumptions of the RHM are fully valid for P-U-E trilinguals, in the way they organize their three lexicons and make them work. However, the limitation of the RHM is that it cannot accommodate all the three languages of P-U-E trilinguals at a time. Though, it is fittingly able to explain the working of the first two languages, Punjabi and Urdu, for late bilinguals as well as the working of Urdu and English for late trilinguals, yet it is not able to take into account the working of the three languages of a P-U-E trilingual at a time, as a P-U-E trilingual is not a blend of two bilinguals (Punjabi-Urdu and Urdu-English) in one (which sounds like Grosjean, 1989).

In addition, the P-U-E trilinguals’ experiences of dealing with the three languages also offer significant insight into their lexical processing. Such as, when a P-U-E trilingual is at low proficiency levels for any of the three languages, particularly English in this case, lexical selection is more non-selective as equivalent lexical items from the other two lexicons, particularly Urdu, also become activated, and thus inhibitory mechanisms come into play. However, after the participants acquire a high proficiency in L3, comparable proficiency in the three languages, they are less prone to inhibitory mechanisms, and therefore can select one lexicon at a time, without activating equivalent lexical items from the other two lexicons. These findings establish proficiency as the most decisive factor in lexical selection and, thus, are in accordance with Schwieter’s (2007) SbP model (For more detail, see Chapter 2, p. 55-57), which is a bilingual model of lexical selection and needs to be extended to trilinguals to simultaneously accommodate the three languages of P-U-E trilinguals. On the whole, it can be concluded that the present study has thoroughly investigated and thereby validated the results of some of the major bilingual psycholinguistic studies with regards to the lived experiences of P-U-E trilinguals though some
5.4 Theoretical Implications

As mentioned before, the present study has tested the claims of some of the major bilingual psycholinguistic studies on languages learning and usage experiences of P-U-E trilinguals, and established their validity for them. But, that was not the sole purpose of this study. Another important purpose of the study was to see if the psycholinguistic models of bilingual memory representations, particularly the RHM, offered considerable insight into the structure, organization, and working of trilingual memory representations of P-U-E trilingual participants of this study.

After having thoroughly discussed the results of this study with reference to the findings of some of the psycholinguistic experimental studies on bilinguals, theoretical implications of the study are as follows:

5.4.1 Organization of trilingual memory representations: a phenomenological model

As already discussed, in the case of a majority of the P-U-E trilingual participants of this study, Punjabi (L1) and Urdu (L2) are learnt more or less simultaneously, while English (L3) is learnt beyond a stage of early childhood. As L1 and L2 are learnt almost simultaneously long before L3 is learnt, there can be assumed strong links between the L1 lexicon (Punjabi) and conceptual memory on the one hand, and between L2 lexicon (Urdu) and conceptual memory on the other hand. During early stages of L3 learning, L3 words are attached to this system through lexical links with the L2, as L3 is learnt as a direct translation of L2, and that is also evident in the participants’ dependence on Urdu for using English at low L3 proficiency stages. As the individual (a Punjabi-Urdu bilingual, who is learning English as L3) becomes more proficient in English, direct conceptual links are acquired. With the development of direct conceptual links between L3 lexicon and conceptual memory, the dependence on L2 for using L3 begins to decrease. However, the lexical links do not disappear even when the conceptual links are established.
In the light of the above, Fig. 5.1 below attempts to capture the structure and working of P-U-E trilingual memory:

![Diagram of trilingual memory structure](image)

**Fig. 5.1 A Phenomenological Model of Trilingual Memory Representations**

Building upon the insight gained from psycholinguistic experimental studies, particularly the RHM, this model is based on the phenomenological data from P-U-E trilinguals, the data from their direct experiences of learning and dealing with the three languages. As revealed by the data, L1 Punjabi and L2 Urdu were acquired either simultaneously or L2 soon after L1 and that is why both have strong conceptual links with the conceptual memory as well as strong lexical links between them. However, all of the P-U-E trilingual participants in this study declared Punjabi as their first language and as the language of their home. Moreover, as they speak the three languages on a daily basis for different purposes, they have been speaking Punjabi for the longest period of time in their lives. Thus, Punjabi is
assumed to have a stronger connection with the conceptual memory, even stronger than Urdu, which has been the language of school and, therefore, practiced in a more formal context. That warrants Punjabi’s central place indicating its closest link to the conceptual memory.

The second worth-noting point is that in the proposed model L2 lexicon is a bit larger than either L1 or L3. As it was revealed by the data that from P-U-E trilingual participants of this study that L2, Urdu, is the medium of instruction in schools, whereas L1, Punjabi, is just an oral experience for them. They, in fact, never have to read or write in Punjabi, while Urdu is both an oral as well as a written experience. As the latter is the language of school, they learn academic vocabulary in Urdu which they often come across when reading Urdu and also use that vocabulary when writing. Moreover, they interact with their friends and teachers at school and college level in Urdu, therefore, acquire both academic as well as colloquial vocabulary in Urdu, whereas in the case of Punjabi they just acquire informal, everyday vocabulary. The case of L3 English is entirely different. The growth in L3 vocabulary is very slow in the beginning. It is during the years of university education that they acquire both academic as well as colloquial L3 vocabulary and start using both kinds of vocabulary actively. However, a long term learning and regular use of English for different purposes may lead to an L3 lexicon that is either as big as L2 lexicon, or even bigger than that, as advocated by Heredia (1996) in his modification of the RHM (for more detail, see Chapter 2, p. 29-30).

Remember that according to the RHM, both lexical and conceptual links were assumed to be bidirectional, but they differed in strengths. The proposed model captures the same for P-U-E trilinguals. According to this model, during early stages of L3 proficiency, the lexical links from L3 to L2 are thought to be stronger than the lexical links from L2 to L3, because L3 words are initially only lexically associated to L2, and that is why they find backward translation (L3 to L2) easier than forward translation (L2 to L3). In the same way, the model assumes stronger conceptual links from L2 to conceptual memory than the links from L3 to conceptual memory, which become a cause of implicit translation at initial stages of L3 proficiency. Nonetheless, with the increasing L3 proficiency, conceptual links start
developing from L3 to conceptual memory and finally a stage is reached when P-U-E trilinguals acquire a concept mediation structure for L3 as well just like their L1 and L2. Therefore, the proposed model is able to account for developmental shift in P-U-E trilinguals. For L1 and L2 lexicons, the model assumes symmetrical processing for two reasons: firstly, both L1 and L2 were learnt either simultaneously or one shortly after the other, even in the case of late Punjabi-Urdu bilinguals, asymmetrical processing does not take very long to develop into symmetrical processing due to a regular exposure to the language. Secondly, L2, Urdu, was not learnt as a direct translation of L1, Punjabi, but through direct usage which also led to developing strong connections with the conceptual memory since very beginning. Moreover, the model clearly captures the weakest lexical links between L1 (Punjabi) and L3 (English) because in the experience of a P-U-E trilingual, the two lexicons hardly ever interact with each other, and if there has to be an interaction between the two, that is accomplished with the help of L2 as an intermediary language between L1 and L3.

In short, the proposed model encapsulates the following salient features of P-U-E trilingual memory structure:

i. Three separate lexicons (L1, L2, and L3) for the three languages of a P-U-E trilingual
ii. Bidirectional links between the three lexicons and with the conceptual memory
iii. Strengths of lexical and conceptual links subject to proficiency
iv. Symmetrical processing between L1 and L2
v. Asymmetrical processing between L2 and L3
vi. Processing between L1 and L3 largely dependent on L2
vii. Developmental shift

Superficially, the proposed model might appear as a trilingual version of the RHM, adapted to explaining the three lexicons of a P-U-E trilingual, the way the three lexicons are connected to each other and to the conceptual memory, and the nature of the lexical links between the lexicons and their
conceptual links to the conceptual memory. However, it marks a great difference from the RHM. While the RHM was formulated after carrying out a psycholinguistic experimental study, employing such isolated and out-of-context tasks as picture naming and single-word translation, the proposed model is an outcome of a phenomenological inquiry into the P-U-E trilingual participants’ experiences of learning and using the three languages over a long period of time, and is therefore more holistic in nature. Moreover, the newly proposed model is able to simultaneously take into account the three languages of P-U-E trilinguals and elucidate the working of their trilingual memory and in so doing goes beyond the RHM, which is able to explain the working of two of the languages of a P-U-E trilingual at a time.

Moreover, the proposed model is also able to explain lexical processing in P-U-E trilinguals. For a P-U-E trilingual less proficient in L3, accessing the L3 lexicon is only possible via L2 lexicon, as the strong conceptual links for L3 have not yet developed. As the individual becomes more proficient in L3, the strong conceptual links develop between L3 and conceptual memory, and then the P-U-E trilingual is able to access the L3 lexicon directly. Therefore, when a P-U-E trilingual’s L3 proficiency is low, lexical access is accomplished indirectly through an intermediary lexicon, which is L2 in this case. However, when a P-U-E trilingual has acquired high proficiency in all the three languages, strong conceptual links are there for the three lexicons and direct access to any of the three lexicons is possible. This is a direct extension of the RHM’s claims from bilinguals to trilinguals in the light of the findings of this study.

So far as the issue of selective/non-selective lexical selection is concerned, that is, if lexical items only from the target lexicon are activated at a time or simultaneously from the other two lexicons as well, the data from P-U-E trilinguals of this study clearly reveals that at lower proficiency levels, equivalent lexical items from more than one lexicon are activated which have to be inhibited by consciously employing inhibitory mechanisms. Thus, Green’s (1998) IC mechanism is clearly seen working at low proficiency levels, and in some cases at higher proficiency levels too though with greater ease.
However, of the P-U-E trilinguals in this study, there were some participants in the higher L3 proficiency groups, who reported their ability to select the target lexical items without activating equivalent lexical items from the other two lexicons. Such participants had acquired a proficiency where merely the intention to speak any one of the three languages was enough to be able to make lexical selection at the conceptual level, and thus were able to use La Heij’s (2005) CSM. So, there was observed, in the P-U-E trilinguals, a developmental shift from employing inhibitory mechanisms at low proficiency levels to be able to make use of CSM at high proficiency levels, and this is exactly what Schwieter’s (2007) SbP model proposed. Furthermore, the data from P-U-E trilingual participants of this study also supports Schwieter and Sunderman’s (2009) findings that the CSM is able to explain lexical selection in bilinguals at high proficiency levels only, whereas the RHM is able to explain their lexical processing at both low and high proficiency levels. Whereas these psycholinguistic studies, Schwieter (2007) and Schwieter & Sunderman (2009), are limited to explaining lexical selection at varying proficiency levels in bilinguals only, with the help of the proposed model, they can be extended to explain lexical selection in trilinguals also, particularly in P-U-E trilinguals.

5.5 Summary

This chapter focused on presenting the findings that emerged after the explicitation of the data in the previous chapter. While presenting the findings, the focus was maintained on ‘description’ with the view to keeping the essence of the participants’ lived experiences intact. With the view to achieving data triangulation, three different methods were used for collecting data, viz. semi-structured lifeworld interviews, focus group discussions and essay writing. The findings were presented in 3 sub-sections: one sub-section devoted to the findings from each of the three data collection methods. Moreover, the findings were based on the themes that emerged after the explicitation of the data from the three methods. Surprisingly, substantial correlation was observed in the data from the three methods. Most of the participants in the three age groups had acquired Urdu (L2) unconsciously, either simultaneously with Punjabi or soon after Punjabi, and therefore faced very little difficulty in learning Urdu. English,
however, was generally referred to as the most difficult of the three languages, and the experience of learning was associated with a number of difficulties, including fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, lack of vocabulary, etc. Dependence on Urdu, in the form of implicit translation, in the beginning, was also a common observation. All the participants in the first age group found backward translation (English to Urdu) easier than the forward translation (Urdu to English). However, in the other two age groups, majority of the participants found both translation directions equally easy. All the participants in the three age groups thought that they were aware of the presence of the other two languages when speaking any one of them, and controlled interference from the other two languages through conscious effort. Language mixing was also a common phenomenon among the three age groups, and there was a general agreement on exerting a conscious effort when they had to stop mixing words from the other two languages and speak one language consistently. Developmental aspect, as already mentioned, was a general experience among the three groups to varying degrees, and the development was observed in their reduced dependence on Urdu for using English, overcoming fear of speaking English, developing equal ease in forward translation as in backward translation, and also in stopping interference from the other two languages when speaking any one of the three languages.

The next section of the chapter discussed these findings in comparison with the results of psycholinguistic experimental studies. The RHM was evidently seen working in the languages learning and usage experiences of the P-U-E trilinguals particularly in their dependence on Urdu for using English in the beginning, translation asymmetry and developmental aspect. On the issue of lexical selection, proficiency turned out to be the most decisive factor, thus lending support to Schwieter’s (2007) SBP Model, which proposed non-selective lexical access at low proficiency levels and selective lexical access when a certain high level of proficiency is acquired.

The findings of this study led to the formulation of a phenomenological model of trilingual memory representations. According to the proposed trilingual model, a P-U-E trilingual memory is organized in separate lexicons L1, L2 and L3. Between the three lexicons, bidirectional connections exist
whose strengths are subject to proficiency. There is asymmetrical processing between L2 and L3, whereas the processing between L1 and L3 is accomplished via L2. Because of the adjustable connection strengths, the model is also able to account for developmental shift in P-U-E trilinguals. The data from P-U-E trilingual participants of this study also revealed that lexical processing is subject to proficiency, with Green’s (1998) Inhibitory Control Mechanism working at low proficiency levels and LaHeij’s (2005) Concept Selection Mechanism working at high proficiency levels, thus supporting Schweiter’s (2007) Selection by Proficiency Model and Schwierter and Sunderman’s (2009) study, which explain lexical selection in bilinguals at varying proficiency levels, but with the help of the newly proposed model can be extended to explain lexical selection in P-U-E trilinguals.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study set out with a twofold purpose. Firstly, with the view to examining multilingual memory and lexical access, the study aimed at combining the insight from psycholinguistic experimental studies on bilinguals with phenomenological framework so that the participants’ experiences of learning and using their languages could be taken into account. The idea was to gain a deeper understanding of the two inter-linked phenomena by combining insights from psycholinguistic studies and phenomenological method. To achieve this aim, the study reviewed some of the dominant psycholinguistic experimental studies examining bilingual memory, mainly the RHM, with particular focus on the research tasks used in them. A preliminary survey of psycholinguistic experimental studies had already established their significance, but at the same time revealed their heavy reliance on experimental tasks as well as their grave neglect of the subjects as language users. It was clearly observed that a number of methodological issues and conflicting findings could have been avoided if the results of psycholinguistic experimental studies been tested on the basis of human experience. This was the challenge that the present study took up and decided to accomplish it using phenomenological research methods. Therefore, psycholinguistic studies were used as the basis on which phenomenological investigation was built in order to arrive at a richer understanding of the phenomena of multilingual memory and lexical access.

Secondly, the study aimed at investigating trilingual memory as the researches in the last 60 years had largely focused on studying bilingual memory. To fulfill this purpose, the study intended to explore the, hitherto unexplored, trilingual memory structure of P-U-E (Punjabi-Urdu-English) trilinguals, and in
so doing not only add to the body of research on multilingual memory but also bring this unique multilingual memory structure to researchers’ attention. For this study, the P-U-E trilingual participants were purposively chosen from a university in Lahore, students as well as faculty members, so that diverse experiences could be accommodated. Their experiences of learning and using the three languages and making lexical choices were elicited using phenomenological research methods. Then, the results were compared with those of psycholinguistic experimental studies on bi/multilingual memory, particularly the RHM. A twofold purpose was intended: (a) to provide an in-depth phenomenological account of participants’ experiences of learning and using their languages, (b) to gain a profounder understanding of the phenomenon by juxtaposing the findings of previous psycholinguistic studies and the phenomenological account P-U-E trilinguals.

The study also purported to determine the extent to which the languages experiences of P-U-E trilinguals, elicited under the phenomenological framework, were able to show how, the three separate, yet interrelated, lexicons (L1, L2, and L3) were organized and how these storehouses interact with each other, at the same time, linking the findings with those of psycholinguistic experimental studies, the RHM, in particular. In addition, the study also intended, through the description of participants’ languages experiences, to determine the factors that influenced lexical access in the context of P-U-E trilinguals, and explain the theoretical implications of the findings. Though this study referred to the past psycholinguistic experimental studies whenever they were thought to shed some light on the issue, yet the main focus of the study remained on looking at the phenomena of learning the three languages and making an active use of them in the P-U-E trilingual situation while focusing on the major aspects associated with the phenomenological framework.

These objectives were sharpened up in three research questions as follows:

a) What are the lived experiences of P-U-E trilinguals in terms of learning and using the three languages?
b) How are the L1, the L2, and the L3 lexicons organized in P-U-E trilinguals, and how the three lexicons interact with each other?

c) What factors influence lexical access in P-U-E trilinguals?

Seeking answers to these research questions, three of the phenomenological methods were used for collecting data, namely: semi-structured lifeworld interviews, focus group discussions, and essay writing. The three methods were chosen in keeping with the study’s objective of eliciting the participants’ experiences of learning and using their three languages. Altogether, 40 P-U-E trilinguals were recruited for these three methods: 12 for semi-structured lifeworld interviews, 16 for two focus group discussions, and 12 for essay writing. The data culled from these three methods were explicated employing Hycner’s (1985) 15-step process for the explicitation of data. Hycner’s data explicitation process was chosen to keep intact the spirit of phenomenological research, which emphasized two processes: looking for the ‘essence’ of experience, and ‘description’. The findings thus emerged were compared with the claims of some of the dominant psycholinguistic experimental studies on bilinguals.

It is worth-mentioning that the P-U-E trilingual participants for this study were chosen from three different age groups, viz. 18-23 years, 30-40 years, and 50-60 years or above. The three age groups were chosen with the view to observing developmental changes in the learning and use of the three languages over a long period of time. The age groups were, in fact, taken as a measure of the length of time the participants were exposed to the three languages, particularly to English language as there was a non-availability of English-speaking environment in the context of the P-U-E trilingual participants of this study. The only exposure to English language was possible after joining university, whereas, at school and college level, English-Urdu translation and cramming of grammatical rules were emphasized. Keeping this in view, the P-U-E trilingual participants for the three data collection methods were chosen from the three afore-mentioned age groups: 4 from each age group for interviews, 4 from each age group for essay writing, and for FGDs there were 6 from the first age group, 4 from the second and 6 from the third age group respectively.
The study has yielded an interesting set of findings. As for research question (a), ‘What are the lived experiences of P-U-E trilinguals in terms of learning and using the three languages?’ a number of highly insightful and enlightening facts came to light. For one thing, the study showed that the P-U-E trilinguals were acutely conscious of the processes that they employed when learning a new language (both L2 and L3 in the case of late Punjabi-Urdu bilinguals, for the rest just L3), as well as when using any one of their three languages. Likewise, they were considerably aware of the way they made lexical choices. All the participants were found having a certain consciousness of such psycholinguistic processes and this phenomenon was amply exhibited during the study (for more details, see Chapter 4-Presentation and Explicitation of Data).

The study also highlights the role of the age of acquisition for L2 and L3 in the milieu of P-U-E trilinguals. For instance, L2, Urdu, was learnt either simultaneously with L1 Punjabi or shortly after Punjabi, which happened at an early age. The fact that the participants reported much less or no difficulty in learning Urdu points to the conclusion that age has an important role to play in the acquisition of a language. This sharply contrasts with the learning of English, L3 in this case, which was learnt beyond the age of early childhood, long time after the learning of both L1 and L2. Nearly all the participants associated learning of English with a number of difficulties. This sufficiently establishes the fact that the age at which you learn an L2 or L3 really matters.

Two important facts the study reveals are translation asymmetry and implicit translation. Translation asymmetry refers to the lack of ease in translating between two languages in both directions, for instance, English-Urdu and Urdu-English. The participants with lower L3 proficiency generally reported their greater ease in backward translation, that is, English to Urdu translation, whereas the participants with higher L3 proficiency either reported greater ease in forward translation (i.e., Urdu to English) or equal ease in both translation directions. These findings also pointed towards developmental aspect in these trilinguals. In addition, the participants commonly reported dependence on Urdu, the L2, in the form of implicit translation, for using English (L3) in the beginning, where implicit translation is
thinking in one language, then translating into the other language for using that language. This
dependence took the participants a long time to overcome before they were able to use English directly.
The facts strongly suggest that, for multilinguals in this case P-U-E trilinguals, the languages learned later
in the sequence cause greater difficulty.

Another striking fact that came to light in the study is a strong connection between the freedom
of lexical choice and the level of proficiency. The study clearly demonstrated that there was a
developmental aspect to the linguistic career of P-U-E trilinguals. For one thing, all the participants
reported acute consciousness when making lexical choices at the initial stages of learning a language,
particularly L3 English in this case, the lexical choice did not come spontaneously, but they had to make
deliberate and conscious choices when selecting a particular lexical item from that language. Yet, as they
grew in proficiency level of the newly learned language, the lexical choice in either language became
more and more ‘natural’ and cognitively less effortful, in some cases even completely effortless but only
at a significantly high proficiency level.

Concerning the second research question about the organization of the L1, the L2, and the L3
lexicons in the P-U-E trilingual memory structure, and their interaction with each other, the study
revealed interesting facts as well. Building upon the insight gained from the RHM, the findings of the
study helped to predict three separate lexicons and a conceptual memory store, all interrelated through
bidirectional links which are subject to proficiency in the concerning languages. This further points to
two types of links: lexical links between the lexicons and conceptual links between the lexicons and
conceptual memory. Stronger lexical links are assumed to exist between L1, Punjabi, and L2, Urdu, as
the two languages are learnt more or less simultaneously long before L3, English, is learnt. Moreover,
both L1 and L2 are assumed to have strong conceptual links with the conceptual memory. However,
during early stages of L3 learning, L3 words have strong lexical links with the L2, as L3 is learnt as a
direct translation of L2 in this case, and very weak links with the conceptual memory and this necessitates
dependence on L2 (in the form of implicit translation) for using L3 at lower L3 proficiency levels. As the
proficiency in L3 increases, direct conceptual links begin to strengthen and the dependence on L2 for using L3 begins to reduce. Though all these predictions can be explained with the help of the RHM, but the RHM is able to accommodate only two languages at a time. The three languages of P-U-E trilinguals necessitated a trilingual model.

Quite expediently, the findings of this phenomenological study led to propose the much-needed trilingual model, which is able to explain how the three lexicons of a P-U-E trilingual are organized and how they interact with each other. This trilingual model successfully captures the varying strengths of lexical and conceptual links described above. In addition, the proposed model accounts for the phenomenon of developing proficiency reported by the participants. The fact of asymmetrical processing between L2 and L3 at lower L3 proficiency levels is also allowed for in the model. Moreover, the model clearly provides for the existence of weak lexical links between L1 and L3, assuming that the lexical processing between these two lexicons is largely dependent on L2. Thus, the proposed model evidently goes beyond the RHM as it is able to simultaneously accommodate the three lexicons of a P-U-E trilingual and also captures interaction between them.

As far as the third research question about lexical access in P-U-E trilinguals is concerned, again, the study has useful insights to offer. The findings of this study clearly revealed proficiency as the most crucial factor in lexical processing. For instance, as already discussed, it is only after acquiring a high proficiency in L3, English, that a P-U-E trilingual is able to access the L3 lexicon directly. Secondly, at low proficiency levels, when speaking any one of the three languages, equivalent lexical items from the other two lexicons are activated and have to be inhibited by consciously employing inhibitory mechanisms (Green, 1998). Whereas, at high proficiency levels, the equivalent lexical items from the other two lexicons are not activated, and thus lexical selection is made at the conceptual level (La Heij, 2005). These findings support Scwieter’s (2007) SbP Model, which is a bilingual model though, but with the help of the proposed model can be adapted to explain lexical selection in P-U-E trilinguals.
The study, therefore, successfully achieved both of its predetermined aims: firstly, of combining the results of psycholinguistic experimental studies with the phenomenological perspective and, secondly, of investigating the trilingual memory structure of P-U-E trilinguals. A close comparison of the results of this study with the claims of some of the major bilingual psycholinguistic studies, the RHM in particular, though partly demonstrated a validation of their claims, yet at the same time highlighted a need for taking multilingual memory into consideration, as it is a need of this multilingual era with bilingual times left far behind, and also necessitated psycholinguistic studies to go over their methodological issues so that a niche for bi/multilingual subjects as the ones who ‘experience’ their languages can be created. In a way, the study suggests that the findings of psycholinguistic experimental studies could be tested in everyday context on the basis of lived experiences of bi/multilinguals, the language(s) users, using phenomenological research methods.

Revisiting the claims, the phenomenological model proposed by this study is able to explain trilingual memory representations by showing how the three lexicons interact with each other and with the non-verbal concepts. It is able to explain the interdependence between the lexicons at lower proficiency levels which develops into more or less complete independence with increase in proficiency. Therefore, the model is able to shed light on the nature of connections between the three lexicons and how they change with an increase in proficiency and is, thus, able to take the developmental aspect into account. It is also suggestive of the way lexical access is carried out on both lower and higher proficiency levels. The model is, therefore, capable of illustrating a P-U-E trilingual’s dealing with the three lexicons at different proficiency levels. Furthermore, as the model is formulated using the participants’ own experiences of dealing with the three languages as data, it can be considered as a gaze into the structure of their trilingual memory. Besides, the study sheds considerable light on the way the processes of lexical access and lexical selection are accomplished by the P-U-E trilinguals. Though the study undertook an entirely different methodological stance, it values the insight gained from psycholinguistic experimental
studies and also acknowledges them for providing the impetus for exploring the trilingual memory structure of P-U-E trilinguals.

Another factor that contributed immensely to the success of this study was the choice of participants, P-U-E trilinguals, from three different age groups. The three age groups were chosen keeping in view the fact that the learning of English, their L3, was a very slow process for the ones who were already Punjabi-Urdu bilinguals and then were late trilinguals, as all of them had started learning English at the age of 11 or 12, which is actually beyond the age of early childhood. Secondly, all of them had learnt English as a direct translation of Urdu and were for a long time dependent on Urdu for using English. And, thirdly, there was a complete non-availability of English-speaking environment at the time the participants were learning English. All these factors collectively made the process of learning English highly taxing for the participants. As the study was interested in observing the participants’ development in languages usage with the passage of time, so it was discovered during the course of research that the choice of three age groups was highly decisive in determining the role of proficiency in the linguistic career of a P-U-E trilingual, and thus immensely contributed to a successful completion of this project.

It goes without saying that this study began with a firm belief that research on human subjects should be done in more human ways, and that belief remains intact till the completion of this project. Though the study has validated the claims of some of the psycholinguistic experimental studies, it goes on to suggest that in psycholinguistic experimental research, that involves human subjects, laboratory experimentation should only be considered a first phase of the research. A second phase should be devoted to testing the findings of the first phase, that is, the laboratory experimentation, in natural everyday context in order to verify if that is exactly what humans experience in their everyday lives. This will not only help to resolve, but also keep clear of, the contradictory claims of the psycholinguistic experimental studies as there have been a growing number of controversies in the field of experimental psycholinguistics. This study thus offers phenomenological methods, used in combination with the results of psycholinguistic experimental studies, as a solution to resolving, and also avoiding,
controversial results in psycholinguistic studies, which always involve human subjects as language is purely a human attribute.

It is worth mentioning that choosing phenomenology as the research methodology for this study proved highly fruitful. The phenomenological method was of utmost importance to this study for two main reasons. Firstly, being a P-U-E trilingual myself, it was very important for me as the researcher to employ phenomenological reduction so that my own experience of the phenomenon of trilingualism did not interfere with the experiences of the participants of this research. It was largely due to phenomenological reduction that I could bracket my own perceptions of the phenomenon and focus better on how the P-U-E trilingual participants of this study were and had been experiencing the usage of their three languages in their lived worlds. Secondly, the act of bracketing also enabled me to accurately describe the phenomenon in its objectivity while putting my own subjective experience of that phenomenon aside. After having employed phenomenological reduction, description, which is the hallmark of phenomenological method, allows the phenomenon to manifest itself in its most original form that has not been tainted by the prejudices or misconceptions of the researcher. Thus, the two processes of phenomenological reduction and description proved to be of great significance in capturing the true essence of being a P-U-E trilingual in the case of each participant and then in describing that essence in the fullest of its purity.

Of the three phenomenological methods used for the collection of data, semi-structured lifeworld interviews proved to be the most fruitful in terms of producing the maximum amount of data. One possible reason was that during interviews I, the researcher, being the interviewer was in a position to probe into the experiences of the interviewees as deeply as I wanted to. I was able to help the participants describe their experiences as fully and clearly as they had experienced them. Although during the FGDs also, I, the researcher, being the moderator, was in a position to facilitate the participants in describing their experiences of learning and dealing with the three languages, but I noticed that sharing experiences in a group of six or ten was not the same as I had already experienced in one-to-one sharing during
interviews. It is most likely that in a group the participants were either influenced by each other, or they were trying to have an influence over each other. Though they shared their experience of being trilinguals in the two FGDs quite well, but I kept on having a feeling that if I had interviewed each one of them separately, perhaps I would have been able to look into their individual experiences more closely and vividly. During essay writing, however, least control could be exercised, as the participants (one at a time) were given the topic in which they were asked to describe their experiences of learning and using the three languages. They were not interrupted during their writing, and were completely on their own. As they were free to write, some of them did not stick to the topic, and therefore could not produce highly desirable data. In addition, interviews were more convenient to conduct because getting appointment from one person at a time was much easier as compared to making ten persons available at one time, as was the case with the FGB. From this point of view, essay writing was also convenient but few of the participants did not produce the sought-after data. In short, the semi-structured lifeworld interviews proved to be the most fruitful of the three phenomenological data collection methods as they were the most convenient to administer and also produced the most desirable data.

Another highly important aspect that contributed to keeping the essence of experience intact was the use of Hycner’s 15-step process for the explicitation of data. The process was originally formulated for the explicitation of interview data, but in this study the same process was adapted for the explicitation of data culled from three different data collection methods: semi-structured lifeworld interviews, focus group discussions, and essay writing. Fortunately, the process was flexible enough and able to fit and fulfill the needs of the three different methods. Applying the 15-step process to each individual interview, each individual essay, and every single participant of the focus group discussion was actually very tough and painstaking, but ultimately bore fruit as it led to the emergence of essential themes from the data without harming it in anyway. In short, though Hycner’s 15-steps process for the explicitation of data was highly rigorous but was formulated, and also administered, in such a way that the essence of the phenomenon could be kept alive and fresh.
Clearly, the phenomenological framework guided this research project at each and every step starting from the choice of participants up to the explicitation of data and presentation of results. It is, undoubtedly, because of the use of phenomenological method that this study could propose a model explaining the structure and functioning of the trilingual memory of a P-U-E trilingual. The model is totally based on the phenomenological data acquired from the P-U-E trilingual participants of this study and is led by the insight from psycholinguistic experimental studies. This study began with an investigation of the claims of psycholinguistic bi/multilingual studies and concluded with their phenomenological validation though with certain reservations. In the future, whenever I plan on undertaking another research project, I would like to test the newly proposed phenomenological model of P-U-E trilingual memory using psycholinguistic experimental methods in order to see if it could be validated psycholinguistically. For testing this phenomenological model on psycholinguistic basis, I definitely will have to take an entirely different course of action as compared to the present research. I will have to choose one or more of the psycholinguistic experimental tasks, and perhaps a different set of P-U-E trilingual participants in keeping to the demands of the task. So, there will be a huge difference in the research methods that I have used in the present research and in the one that I intend to undertake. But, this way of going back and forth between psycholinguistic and phenomenological methods will help to fully authenticate the model (the same thing has already been suggested for psycholinguistic studies). In short, though the present study, which was guided by phenomenological methods, reached its successful completion with the formulation of a phenomenological model of P-U-E trilingual memory, but recognizes a need for testing this model on psycholinguistic experimental basis for its complete validation.

As the world is becoming more and more multilingual, there is a growing need to work out the structure and working of multilingual memory in different multilingual contexts. The present study was one such attempt. For further research, this study suggests that the model of P-U-E trilingual memory proposed here should be tested on other trilinguals, the ones who speak any three languages other than
Punjabi, Urdu and English and live in different parts of the world and thus have different conditions for learning their three languages. Testing this model for a variety of trilinguals will help to develop a generic model of trilingual memory, a model that would be able to explain the structure and working of trilinguals’ memory who speak any three languages. Just as the RHM has proved to be a generic model for explaining the structure and working of a bilingual memory, there is a need for developing such a model for explaining trilingual memory as well. After such a model for trilingual memory is established, the next step should be to extend that model for explaining quadrilingual (a multilingual speaking four languages) and pentalingual (a multilingual speaking five languages) memory structures so that none of the different forms of multilingualism is overlooked.

In the end, it is worth emphasizing that the study holds significance not only for P-U-E trilinguals as it explains their trilingual memory structure, but also for multilinguals in general and for the study of multilingual memory as well. Moreover, the study is expected to be of great value to psycholinguists, particularly to the ones interested in studying bi/multilingual memory, as it introduces a new way, a phenomenological way, of venturing into bi/multilinguals’ memory structures through the descriptions of their experiences of the languages that they use. The study thus hopes to stimulate interest in phenomenological research so that the phenomena, in general, and the psycholinguistic phenomena, in particular, can be revisited afresh and the established views reexamined. The study offers a workable solution for resolving as well as avoiding controversies in psycholinguistic studies, and thus opens new avenues for the study of bi/multilingual memory, particularly highlighting the need for studying multilingual memory. It also proposes a model explaining the structure and working of P-U-E trilingual memory, and further suggests the development of a generic model of trilingual memory that can work for a trilingual speaking any three languages, and can further be extended to memory structures of individuals speaking even more than three languages.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX 1

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of study: A Phenomenological Study of Multilingual Memory and Lexical Access
Researcher: Aneela Gill
Institute: Department of AIS&R, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad

Introduction
I am Aneela Gill from Department of AIS&R, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, doing research on multilingual memory and lexical access. I want to see how individuals speaking more than one languages (particularly Punjabi, Urdu, and English) deal with them, and if proficiency has an effect on language(s) usage. Since you are a multilingual (able to speak Punjabi, Urdu and English), I would like to invite you to be a participant in this research study.

Background information
A great variety of languages is spoken in Pakistan. A considerable portion of the literate population is multilingual, trilingual to use the exact term, speaking a native language (e.g. Punjabi, Siraiki, Pushto, etc.) which is mostly their L1, then Urdu as national language in most cases is their L2, and English holds the status of L3 as it is the medium of instruction in many of the schools and it is the official language as well. Thus, the question of multilingual memory is quite pertinent in a setting like Pakistan’s.

Purpose of this research study
Purpose of the study is to see whether memory for one language is the same as that for the other language(s) or not, and to see how multilinguals access words (lexical items) when speaking any one of their languages.

Procedures
As it is a phenomenological study, I will conduct informal interviews, get a few essays written, and arrange a focus group discussion on the above mentioned research problem.
Possible risks or benefits

There is no risk involved in this study except your valuable time. There is no direct benefit to you also. However, the results of the study will add to the understanding of the complex phenomenon of lexical access particularly in the case of multilingualism, and of multilingual memory.

Right of refusal to participate and withdrawal

You are free to choose to participate in the study. You may refuse to participate without any loss of benefit which you are otherwise entitled to. You may also withdraw any time from the study without any loss of benefit which you are otherwise entitled to. You may also refuse to answer some or all the questions if you don’t feel comfortable with those questions.

Confidentiality

The information provided by you will remain confidential. Nobody except the researcher will have an access to it. Your name and identity will also not be disclosed at any time. However, the data may be seen by the Ethical Review Committee and may be published in research thesis and elsewhere without giving your name or disclosing your identity.

Available Sources of Information

If you have any further questions you may contact the researcher, Aneela Gill, Department of AIS&R, National University of Modern Languages on this email address: aneelagill@fccollege.edu.pk

1. AUTHORIZATION

I have read and understand this consent form, and I volunteer to participate in this research study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose to participate, but I understand that my consent does not take away any legal rights in the case of negligence or other legal fault of anyone who is involved in this study. I further understand that nothing in this consent form is intended to replace any applicable Federal, state, or local laws.

Participant’s Name & Signature:
Date:

Researcher’s Signature:
Date:
APPENDIX 2

LANGUAGE HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your age group (please tick one):
   a) 18 – 25 years
   b) 30 – 40 years
   c) 50 – 60 years or above

2. What is your:
   L1 _____________
   L2 _____________
   L3 _____________

3. When (age) did you start learning your L2?
   _____________________________________________

4. When (age) did you start learning your L3?
   _____________________________________________

5. How did you learn your L2?
   a) Informally at home.
   b) At school, directly through Urdu usage
   c) At school, as direct translation of Punjabi

6. How did you learn your L3?
   a) Informally at home
   b) At school, directly through English usage
   c) At school, as direct translation of Urdu

7. At what age did you feel that you could comfortably use your L2 (as fluently as your L1)?
   At the age of ____________
8. At what age did you feel that you could comfortably use your L3 (as proficiently as your L1 and L2)?
   At the age of ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ 

9. Do you use all the three languages every single day?
   Yes/No

10. Approximately, what percentage of your daily communication is done in
    L1 (Punjabi) ______%  
    L2 (Urdu) ______%  
    L3 (English) ______%  

11. Rate your proficiency in the three languages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Highest</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Lowest</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
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