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**Code-Switching Dynamics Among Pakistani Multilingual Speakers: A Theoretical Perspective**
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**Abstract**

*The present study investigates the use of code-switching in everyday interactions of the multilingual speakers in Pakistani context. The purpose of this study is to explore why multilingual speakers in the Pakistan make code switching from one language (Urdu or Punjabi to another particularly English in the everyday formal or informal interactions. The study explores how by doing so, bilingual speakers demonstrate identity,, emotions, polite humor, and social status. It shows that practice of code switching is a purposeful and meaningful for social interactions. A qualitative approach was used to describe and explore speakers' natural language behaviors. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data from 20 multilingual adult speakers (aged 25–35) who were regular in the use of Punjabi, Urdu, and English in their informal, academic, and professional contexts. The data were analyzed by applying thematic analysis. This analysis drew on the theoretical framework of situational and metaphorical code-switching and interpreted speakers' choices to reveal social relations and emotions. Findings revealed that speakers made code-switching as a strategy according to the context. By this strategy, they actually show emotions and social status, build social relations, and regulate academic relations. The study also concluded that use of Punjabi and Urdu expressed emotional intimacy and cultural associations, whereas English revealed speakers' formal, professional sense of superiority. Finally, findings contribute to the Interactional sociolinguistics theory by showing how Punjabi, Urdu, and English are systematically mobilized to scale intimacy and cultural affiliations versus symbolic power and professional authority in their academic and social contexts.*

**Keywords:** Professional authority, Code-switching, Interaction, strategy, Pakistan

**1. Introduction**

Pakistan is country where people belong to multilingual societies. In such a multilingual societies, language is used for communication as well as to reveal identity, power relations academic and social prestige. This situation provides Pakistani Urdu-English speakers a multilingual ground for social interaction in formal or informal setting (Idrees et al., 2025). In Pakistani societies, several speakers shift between three to four codes (languages) and it depends on the situation, audiences to address, and the

purpose to reveal. This situation is termed as codeswitching. Although this term is common in everyday speech but it is often construed with, as a communication deficiency or inadequate language. But there is not do much scholarly work in Pakistan as on how bilingual speakers employ code switching in their conversations (Gumperz, 1982).

Research on language has only looked at the structural organization of narrations (Zubair et al., 2025a, 2025b) while previous researchers have investigated the role of numerous communicative contexts e.g., classroom, media, and formal or official setting. The missing area was the understanding which is related to the productive use of language in daily conversations. Therefore, understanding the frameworks of natural code-switching to express emotions and social prestige is necessary to explore. Previous research literature has focused on either grammar and designed construction of code-switching or has entirely neglected the speakers' allocation in communication as the social prestige, identities, and aims that practices of code-switching serve. Hence, present study was intended to investigate process of code-switching in everyday context and to explore the reasons why bilingual speakers mostly practice code-switching.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

1. What are the motivations that cause bilingual speakers to practice switching from one language to other?
2. How do contextual relations, professional and social environments affect the bilingual language choices?
3. How identity, polite humor, emotions, or social status are reflected through code switching?

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

1. To identify the motivations that cause multilingual speakers to practice switching from one language to other.
2. To explore how contextual relations do, professional and social environments affect the speakers to make multilingual choices.
3. To contribute to theories: interactional sociolinguistic theory to understand the multilingual practices in the Pakistani context.

### **1.3 Significance**

For the interpretation of bilingual communication in the Pakistani multilingual society, research holds the significant stance. First, it can fill research gap by investigating the formal as well as the informal bilingual perspective (Idrees et al., 2025). It is a point on which little available research was found in the past even though it was a significant element of social communication. Second, it can offer necessary academic information on the everyday practice bilingual or multilingual context, as against the formal or controlled context. Third, research focuses remains on the creativeness and intentional language innovation wherein people are engaged. Fourth, this renounces prevailing stigma that code-switching indicates a language incompetency or deficient language use. But present research reveals that switching in language is a regular, analyzable, and important behaviour which possesses significant social and communicative functions.

Furthermore, this study expands knowledge about how multilingualism or bilingualism may help in formation of self and social identity of a speaker. It also reveals how bilingual speakers strategically use language to control audience, to express their social roles, and to exhibit in their interpersonal dynamics. Besides, this research highlights the role of code-mixing in communicating emotions. All speakers can reveal their feelings and adapt to various situations by which they show their social adaptability of multilingualism, whereby individuals adapt themselves to many social contexts.

## 2. Literature Review

Previous research on language contact between 2004 and 2025 reveal a change from traditional structural conceptualization of code-switching to a more dynamic conceptualization of sociocognitive multilingual practices. This literature typically stated code-switching as using two different systems of languages that follow grammatical rules or informal patterns. In the past 20 years, researchers, although, paid more focus on the fact that bilingual speakers did not work within the limitations of languages but they rely on consolidated collection of language to produce meanings and identities as well as to engage in numerous social settings (García & Wei, 2013).

According to classical models of languages, code switching is a rational decision-making operation wherein speakers are able to exchange their social roles, rights, and obligations. Whereas, conversational strategies focus on the ways in which changes in switching language serve the purpose of conveying contextual messages thereby determining the meanings and direction of communication (Wei, 2018). Instead, these available models contributed a lot in understanding the social relationships set in order through code switching, they guided to the hypothesis that every language is based on separate and limited system. Besides, a significant change in this domain was the appearance of the Translanguaging notion. This notion came out as an objection to the notion of multilingualism which provided alternate between independent languages. This notion claimed that speakers would select features that related to a common linguistic repertoire based on the needs of communication at a specific time (Wei, 2018). This change placed code-switching as an agentive practice and accent shifted to these boundaries on switching to the potentials of meaning-construction, innovations, and positionings (Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

In the construction of meaning, one of the latest themes in the current research is “the identity construction”. The researchers are of the view that translanguaging and code switching help speakers in making hybrid identities that is not classified within cultural conventions, or linguistic units. Owing to these behaviours, people are able to perform many parts of their self, or to identify with a group or misidentify with a specific identity. In a communities, multilingual speakers’ conduct normally serves as a boundary marker, indication of belonging or non-belonging, and commonality or confrontation. In the youth culture, a sportive approach to using a language serves as disrupting established cultures and standards in order to construct the other forms of identity (Auer, 2004).

Besides, practical and functional characteristics of code switching have also been enhanced. Various studies (e.g., Wei, 2018; Wei & Liu, 2020; Zhu, 2022) indicated that code switching involved in the expression of feelings, humor, in the reconfirmation of social bonds, and in the advancement of interpersonal relations. Findings of these studies highlight that multilingual communicative practices are not merely structural manifestation but an effective communicative resources also which characterize social relations. Another important shift in the available literature is the globalization through online communication. In the digital world, multilingual users incorporate language resources to act as networking subjects which simultaneously presents multilingual communities to the national and international worlds. Digital version of the code switching has become a significant mode of marking belonging, negotiating cultural belonging, and finding a better place in the transnational relationships. According to digital school of thought, using languages is not merely a demonstration of social limitations but bring about and reproduce cross cultural relations also (Wei & Liu, 2020). Besides, communication is not merely a way of conveying information but a resource for strategic social types also, as speakers address interpersonal requirements in different contexts (Zubair et al., 2025).

Moreover, this shift has also left several pedagogical implications. Older monolingualistic educational system is largely criticized by research scholars who suggest instructional techniques that will entirely

support in learners' linguistic repertoires. Applying trans-languaging in the classroom is revealed to have a positive impact on the cognitive engagements, power relations, and overall learning, as it permits students to utilize all available linguistic tools. In short, current sources reveal that code switching and Translanguaging are important mechanisms of multilingual interaction. These are not only deviations to language norms but intentional as well as socially valuable practices which help speakers in finding ways through the global world with all its complexities (Gosselin & Sabourin, 2023). Though code-switching was widely looked at by the researchers, but there was limited qualitative portion to explore lived experiences as well as motivations of the Urdu-English bilingual speakers in Pakistan.

### **3.1 Methodology**

In the present study qualitative descriptive research method was used. This type of method is more suitable to investigate the language practices and lived experiences of the language pair in natural settings. By using qualitative approach, the researchers was able to get deep insights into how each Urdu-English speaker practiced code-switching and touching points of emotional and sociocultural facets of decision-makings in language. The characteristics of qualitative description are aimed to help research participants to give voice to their feelings without extravagant hypothetical or complex interpretation (Idrees et al., 2025). Therefore, this is the most suitable method to investigate the speakers' natural behaviour.

The target population of this study is the youth aging 25-35 years. Youth of this age is expected to demonstrate higher level of variables and flexible patterns of language practices. Therefore, participants in this study include Urdu-English adult speakers who could speak two or more languages (Urdu and English etc.). Besides, the youth have more possibilities provided in multilingual society, multicultural educational environment, and technology. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data from 20 speakers in District Sahiwal. Using convenient sampling technique helped to gain access to individuals in social, work, and informal network code-switching clusters in University of Sahiwal(5), office of the District Education Officer (5), Government Post Graduate College Sahiwal (5), Superior College Sahiwal (5) in Punjab, Pakistan.

Semi-structured interview were conducted to collect data from the participants by using self-mobile recording system. Prior approval was obtained to schedule the interviews and recording from each participant. Therefore, participants were given freedom to articulate their personal experiences. But still the researcher had the liberty to engage through various topics related to the research to gain the deeper understandings on the phenomena of code-switching.

### **3.1 Theoretical framework**

This study is based on two theories: the interactional sociolinguistic theory to understand the bilingual practices in the Pakistani multilingual society and situational and metaphorical code-switching theories which explains socially acquired motivations behind the exchange of languages by bilingual speakers.

#### **3.1.1 Interactional Sociolinguistics Theory**

This study first based on "Interactional Sociolinguistic Theory" which presents an analytical framework to examine code-switching among Urdu-English speakers in bilingual context of Pakistan. As this study focuses on how bilingual speakers make choices to frame meanings within their social interactions. So, this theory perceives code-switching not as a random alternates rather as contextual cues by which speakers reveal their social roles, relational alignments, intentions and emotions. In multilingual settings of Pakistan, switching between Urdu and English acts as interactional resources that scales authoritative, academic, cultural or formal affiliation. Urdu is usually used to reveal emotional belonging, shared cultural identity and solidarity, whereas use of English shows professionalism, social prestige, and institutional power. Thus, Interactional Sociolinguistics helps in examining how individuals negotiate

interpersonal relations and social status strategically while making language choices in particular communicative contexts. This theory highlights a dynamic interplay between linguistic forms, meaning-constructing practices, and social contexts in the bilingual discourse.

Second, Situational Code-Switching discusses the phenomenon that takes place due to variations in the social as well as physical contexts. These changes take occur in the context, interlocutors, formality level, subject of discourse, or social roles during conversations. For example, a speaker might be in the work context and can talk in English, and then switches to Urdu while speaking with his family members. Besides, speaker can switch from one language to another if communication is technical and subject specific. This context needs technical jargon. In such examples, code-switching is quite relevant without social implications in a context.

Third, metaphorical code-switching has the similar context in which speaker expresses change of languages due to various relationships. This switching might occur to reveal politeness or to add humor, stress, and soften criticism. It might also intend to strengthen relationships and indicate a modern style. Besides, this shift may function socially to construct the context and meaning of conversation. So, theoretical framework adds in systematizing and analyzing reasons to the phenomena of code-switching or change in language. This framework provides a means of recognizing the intersection of situation, sociability, and identity regarding phenomenon of bilingual communication (Zhu, 2022).

### **3.2 Instrument and Data Collection Procedure**

In this study, a qualitative descriptive approach was applied to collect data, wherein the primary method to collect data was the semi-structured interviews. The study was aimed to probe practices of natural language as used by bilingual adult speakers. Interviews were conducted with the participants which lasted between 15 to 20 minutes. Participants were requested to inform about their everyday communication habits, change of language contexts. They were also asked to describe social or emotional reasons due to which code-switching takes place. The interview was divided into four parts:

- (1) Information about use of Language in everyday life.
- (2) Instances to language change according to situations
- (3) Language shifts due to social, emotional and psychological reasons
- (4) Reflections on identity, communicative comforts, and self-expression

Each participant was asked to give personal views about their real-life context in which code-switching takes place, while talking to friends, colleagues, family members or in online communication. Additional data, such as audio recordings or whatsapp messages, were analysed to reveal more realistic patterns of switching. This helped acquiring situational and metaphorical code-switches.

All interviews were recorded in a mobile device recording system and transcribed without revealing participants' identity. The collecting data involved rich and detailed accounts that reflected bilingual speakers, using language accurately to negotiate identities, politeness, emotions, humors, and social belongings in everyday conversation.

### **4. Data Analysis**

Four themes emerged in the data analysis which are discussed in the following sections.

#### **4.1 Contextual and Topical**

In 15 interviews, contextual and topical consistency pattern emerged as a first theme wherein the participants revealed code-switching as a situational phenomenon based on their communication they were involved in e.g., topic under discussion, and the role they were playing. It was observed that English was used in the institutional and task-based communication e.g., discourse in universities, technical talks, and meetings and drafting professional texts. Besides, Urdu was informal language that was used relational proximity and domestic life. So, this operational tendency is in keeping with situational code-

switching type. In this type, speaker takes shifts in language according to the social context.

Hence, this is an important contextual division which reveals how students contextualize language use in their Universities. One student said that, "I often speak in Urdu and English in my daily routine. At home, I often speak in Urdu but English dominates when I am with my friends in university hours." Another student informed that at home, sometime I speak Urdu and English at university, partially I use Punjabi in my daily conversation." This shows that academic environment is taken as one in which speakers speak in English and perceived English as suitable linguistic code by which they succeed in their educational career.

The influence of topic on language choice is another aspect within same speakers and in a similar context. For this, future as well as intellectual issues were contained pertaining to English. One of the female participants told "how she switches Urdu or Punjabi to English when talking about serious issues: as she said "I often switch to English when I talk about academic things, or highly important matters, e.g., assignments, future plans or presentations." Likewise, one more student also informed that English is used in particular talks such as career-related or inspirational etc. He said, "When business or future talks are taken place usually students use English words or phrases." This report shows that English is not only associated with academic context but subject matter of academic situation, personal development, and professional life.

Therefore, professional context augmented this situational patterns. Some of the respondents told that English has been a default code in the workplace communication such as meetings, technical discourse etc. A software developer reported that although Urdu is understandable but English is still speakers' preferred choice, even if it is not compulsory. An excerpt of the interview reveals as under: "*At workplace, English language is used by default, specifically in formal meetings and discussions. Even all understand Urdu but English is considered more suitable in professional discourse.*"

Similarly, a business firm manager associated English language with work legitimacy and competence. For example, following excerpt from his interview is mentioned; "English is always needed at work because it is an indication of power and ability." Such evidences reveal that English is marker of ability to be used as a standard in profession, which is perceived as a level of seriousness, conformity, and professionalism to the organizational requirement.

Code-switching is situational as this is evident when speakers commit micro-shifts within the same conversational setting. For example, respondents identified formal as well as informal workplace conversation and interaction among fellow-workers. Code switching is also noted during break time as the same software developer reported: "When I talk to my colleagues in an informal way in break time, we usually switch to Punjabi or sometime Urdu which turns the setting into friendly manner." In such cases, workplace setting does not change, but the communicative situation shifts from formal to informal social interaction. This communicative shift is synchronized by language shift. This shows that situational code-switching is affected not only because of place but due to activity type also e.g., framework, and interpersonal goals of the interactions.

Academic power structure has also informed similar changes that occur due to social roles in languages e.g., an excerpt from interview of an undergraduate student indicates: "When I communicate with my teachers, I try to speak English out of respect." It shows that English is also used as a symbol of respect, while Urdu or Punjabi is used when it interaction at home life and personal level is required. Hence, language choice is changed into a means of conforming to the social or academic norms as student-teacher interaction is established as a situation in which English should be used, whereas peer and family interaction permits the use of Punjabi, Urdu or mixture of languages.

Besides, another pattern was pertinent to the profession situational spheres in which the channel was

spoken or written. In this regard, an excerpt from one of journalists provided detailed language choice example based on communicative activity: He reported as: "Interviews in public or private departments are conducted in Urdu but written tests are conducted in English." It clarifies that situational code-switching is not limited to only social settings but connected to communicative modalities also. Oral communication is connected to Urdu due to its attentiveness and relationship comforts. Whereas, professional writing in English provides brevity and precision. The respondents' framing indicates that language choice is emerged by what specific professional task is afforded by each language code.

In addition to this, teaching situations are also observed where situational code switching occurs because of communicative requirements and audience's needs. Excerpt of a school teacher's interview explained that English is the institutional requirement, but Urdu fulfills speakers' understanding: "In the classrooms, writing tasks are carried out in English, but when students require to understand, teachers' switch to Urdu." It highlights that code-switching is a teaching strategy that is used in a particular situation.

Finally, community work environment revealed situational code-switching that addressed diverse audiences. In this regard, comment of an NGO worker are following; "working with numerous communities, I change my languages every minute." In such matter, situation is set by cluster of people as well as the demand to establish relationships. It pointed out that switching is not an activity of one time rather a continual process that happens daily. It uncovers a multilingual society gathering wherein an individual must adjust according to varied interlocutors and societal needs to interact effectively.

#### **4.2 Metaphorical Emotional Expression**

Second theme that emerged as frequent trends in all the data that were collected in all interviews is "using code-switching for metaphorical emotional expression. Choice of languages in such context is not directed by alteration in the physical position, subject matter, or the personality of a partner in conversation rather it happens due to internal emotional choice of speakers. This type of switching is like a metaphorical code-switching, in which meanings are emotional and symbolic. It is rather chosen to add emotional inception. In all interviews, participants gave their remarks that they committed switching to Urdu or Punjabi for love, emotions, intimacy, and credibility whereas English is devoid of emotion, closed, or analytical.

Some participants accepted that emerging intense emotion was due to the automatic code-switch to Urdu or Punjabi. As one of the university students describes this in the following way: "In my anger or extreme happiness, I automatically turn to Urdu or Punjabi as I know that it becomes more vocal." The word automatically shows that emotions instinctively spark the choice to another language rather than intentionally. In this regard, Urdu and Punjabi are alternatively come allowing exit of strong emotions, specifically when it comes to intense emotions.

These feelings in the conversation were further revealed by participants engaged in various activities or learning experiences. One of participants from marketing professionals observed a gap in emotions among three languages showing that "English feels in control while Urdu and Punjabi feel real." This statement shows the status of English due to which people refrain their emotions and feelings while Urdu and Punjabi possess the status due to which people keep unfiltered, real and pure emotions. The recurrence of the adjective real or pure in the interviews also suggested that speakers believe that Urdu and Punjabi factually correspond to their inner emotions.

Another point is emotional regulation that motivates the metaphorical code-switching. It was found that Punjabi and Urdu were languages to exit emotions and English was used to give a sense of calmness at the time when someone is nervous or anxious. This dual role was revealed in the interview of first-year university student: ".....when I am anxious or nervous, I start speaking English to feel calm. However,

when I am emotional, I begin to speak Punjabi and Urdu intermittently." These remarks reveal that speakers of multilingual society strategically or instinctively draw on the emotional affordances of each language. They use English for domination and Urdu or Punjabi to exhibit vulnerability. Here, it is obvious that code-switching acts as a psychological instrument to manage emotional states.

Frustration and stress also trigger human emotions. In this regard, a female school-teacher's remarks explain in following way; "When I feel frustration, Urdu and Punjabi quite instinctively come out. They help releasing my emotions." The phrase "instinctively" shows the unconsciousness metaphorical and emotional expression in code-switching. Urdu and Punjabi serve as an exit point when they are emotionally triggered. In this context, Urdu and Punjabi that are languages in which a speaker can exhibit pure feelings that might be felt repressed in speaking English.

Besides, emotional safety and comfort are also reasons that affect speakers' decisions to make choice in using language in sensitive conversations. Few participants also told that it is for them to express personal emotions and feelings in Punjabi and Urdu. This difference was noted in the interview of student from Psychology department, who stated, "To express feelings or emotions, Urdu and Punjabi are better. In English, it is difficult because English is more analytical." This implies that English is far more intellectual, whereas Punjabi and Urdu easy going and provide secure exit of emotional expression. The fact that the Punjabi and Urdu languages are preferred choice in such cases, this implies that multilingual speakers do not base their perceptions merely on communicative impact, rather on languages' power to make them sensitized to feelings.

Even at workplaces and in social life, metaphorical code-switching has been observed to express emotions. Such ethical and emotional aspects of using language are highlighted in an NGO worker's remarks during a question about linguistic choices when he was engaged with people who had personal experiences. He stated: "Urdu and Punjabi seem more useful when speakers have their stories to tell." Here, Punjabi and Urdu are connected not only to emotional sensations but also to honor and empathy to help their prestige as a traditional, cultural and emotional code of intimacy.

Likewise, these patterns of emotional language are also reported among the participants who used to work in high-tech professional field. An engineer, for example, justifies that English is applied in technical discourses, and Urdu is normally spoken when speaker intends to speak emotionally, "In making jokes or complaints, Urdu and Punjabi are spoken naturally." This further strengthens the notion that multilingual speakers separate languages based on emotional functions: English is used for technical, or controlled and rational discourses, and Punjabi and Urdu are used to express humor and other emotional release etc.

### **4.3 Politeness, Humour, and Social Bindings**

Another theme that emerged out of interview data is the use of code-switching as a politeness, humour and social means to control the process of interpersonal relationships. In all data sets, participants provided examples of making language shifts not because the context, but to have impact on the tone of socialization, provide humour, or reveal solidarity with others. In this regards, code-switching is taken as a relational and an interactive tool by which code-switching helps speakers to manoeuvre social requirements by ensuring that harmonious relations may be kept up.

Important social role of code-switching is to display courtesy and nonthreatening behaviors. Some respondents stated that saying something in Punjabi or Urdu, or in a mixture of utterances rather than merely in English, makes statements look milder. One example a respondent gave about this, was: "Bhai jee....Sorry to say, zara delay ho gaya" looks milder than expressing similar thing merely in English. In this case, placing the Punjabi and Urdu words in English apology changes it to be less formal and a little emotional. It implies to turn colder or impersonal statements into warm and sincere ones. This reveals

how multilingual speakers leverage linguistic resources to keep politeness and good social relations. Likewise, code-switching may be applied in several situations in which discourse and criticism need to be revealed milder e.g., in a professional life. Respondent from Software Company stated that English is used to show authority. Contrarily, Punjabi and Urdu help in minimizing impact of negative remarks as he words are: "To minimize the effect of negative comments, I shift to Punjabi or Urdu because it appears milder." This helps keep up interpersonal rapport, as needs to provide feedback are not considered offensive, and speakers are strongly professional and accommodating. Owing to this feature, code-switching is considered a negotiating device in social relationships.

Humor is another factor that causes code-switching in language. Respondents state that jokes, mocking, and sportive interactions are effective if mixed in communication. Jokes, as one respondent stated that they are more funny when mixed up in codes; English, Urdu and Punjabi. Another respondent also stated similar feelings by saying, "In the company of our friends, I mix up languages so that my language sounds funny or dramatic." These facts point out that code-switching improves joke timing that help speakers controlling tone and register to produce comic intention adding contrast and surprise, and humor to the mutual amusement.

Besides, interaction through code-switching establishes social connectivity among people. It was noted that some participants and their friends made unconscious shifting between languages. One student said: "I just mix up Urdu, Punjabi and English when I talk to my friends while we do not even know this." Language mixing is an expression of in-group identity, which in turn shows social identity, proximity, and familiarity. Another point is the lack of self-monitoring in code-switching because it is no longer manifested in conversation, but an integral part of everyday social lives of urban multilingual youth class. Code-switching also creates a friendly environment that may otherwise be considered a formal or hierarchical situation. One of the respondents shared his comments on the choice between languages that varies in such situations. "When we choose Punjabi and Urdu or combine both languages with English mixture, the situation gets more open." This reveals that switching between languages breaks institutional hierarchy and opens up a more classless interactive environment and leads to the camaraderie relationships.

Alongside politeness and humour, respondents also stated that code-switching plays a more prominent role to create social relationships. A respondent precised this point by saying "Code-switching helps me a lot in the management of relationships because I pick up right tone for the right person." This type of statement shows a higher degree of pragmatic knowledge, pointing out that speakers consciously or unconsciously modify choices of languages in response to the interpersonal dynamics of interaction. Therefore, code-switching is a versatile means to adapt the concerns of various participants' social and emotional needs in communication.

#### **4.4 Self-Presentation through Identity, Power, and Profession**

The final and the fourth theme came out from the interview data is the code-switching importance in self-presentation through identity, power, and profession. In the fifteen interviews, respondents continuously claimed that choice of languages was the act of social positioning; which is aimed either to show strengths, commands, admiration, friendliness or novelty. Conducting various versions of the self-projection at the professional, social and interpersonal levels is not merely the work of a communicative tools in interviews, but also the work of code-switching during conversation.

Several participants considered English to be professional used for the competence, power and prestige particularly at the workplace and within the institution. This connection was more obvious in the interview of a company manager e.g., he stated, "English is compulsory to be used in the workplace which shows power, ability and respect." This is an expression of a standard view that English is a symbol

of prestige in the workplace and serves as a source of authority. Likewise, using English to communicate competence and seriousness was observed by a participant working in the corporate and technical profession. Hence, English is spoken as a tool for self-representation at the workplace and within institution.

Other participants stated that speaking English might create a social distance. So, strategic measures for Punjabi and Urdu languages must be enforced to make English more informal, human-centered and friendly. The same manager of a corporate section named this shift to switching to Punjabi and Urdu when communicating with juniors to show that he is socially friendly and acceptable to them. Code-switching, in this way, is one type of equating status and power. But it is obvious that English shows authority and Punjabi or Urdu show hierarchy. This indicates that, instead of showing compliance to institutional norms, multilingual speakers deal with power dynamics mediated through native languages. The language-based identity negotiation is another aspect among students and young professionals with respect to their confidence and self-image. Other respondents also presented arguments that they speak English for self-image building and to show power in schools or in debates. In this connection, one student stated; "due to English, I feel sound and confident in debate. And Punjabi or Urdu makes me feel relaxed." Besides, Punjabi and Urdu help speakers in Pakistan return to a more emotionally placed self with comfort. Consequently, code-switching can help speakers to easily cross over between identities without being obliged to a single linguistic identity.

Social hierarchy and respect are also the elements connected to identity-related code-switching. The respondents of the present study frequently referred to how they altered the way they used language towards aged people in positions of status and power. One of the working students reports when talking to older people; "I switched to Punjabi or Urdu to get attention and respect." In this connection, native languages are looked as indicators of cultural representation and honor but overusing English is thought unacceptable in the profession. Therefore, language is a method of granting moral respect and status in cultural hierarchy.

Professional identity in the fields involved interaction with leadership, people or representation. One of the journalists in the interview stated that he has to switch in different languages to cover up various professional requirements. This is how he implicitly relates the use of language to fulfill different professional roles. Similarly, one content writer said that she utilizes code-switching in communication as main point to her online identity, as she reported; "to me, code-switching is my core online identity." Her case involved a mixture of Urdu, Punjabi, and English which was stylistic attempt to depict authenticity, culture and relatability. It is due to this that multilingual identity performance is confined not just too physical but also to online communication.

Other respondents particularly referred to code-switching as adjusting their identity, speaking different languages to various audiences to adapt to new environments. That was best summed up by one of the respondents: "Code-switching assists me in making adjustments regarding whom I communicate with." This suggests the position of identity is dynamic and contingent, not fixed. Language sliding allows one to strike a balance between different social positions, such as student, professional, peer, subordinate, or leader, without being conflicted.

It a fact that English is associated with symbol of respect and modernity whereas Punjabi and Urdu are culturally grounded and used to express feelings and emotions. These languages show identity. A participant from department of media studies stated in his interview that switching to another language helped him to express emotions and to reveal modernity simultaneously. The other participant explained the difference between the functions in his remarks e.g., "English is used to show clarity while Punjabi and Urdu provide emotions." These remarks prove why multilingual speakers are not compelled to make

choice between culture, traditions and modernity. Besides, code-switching helps them to fulfill all purposes. So, alternation in languages is the one way of utilizing global and local identities within the same process of communication.

#### 4.5 Discussion

The findings of the present study prove that code-switching among multilingual speakers in Pakistan is neither incidental nor random; rather, it constructs socially embedded, strategic and cognitively connected conversational practices formed by situational, emotional, identity-related, and interpersonal factors. This dynamic nature of code-switching gives a comprehensive answers to all questions and strengthens current sociolinguistics and multilingual frameworks.

Answering research question (1), the results have revealed an affective-functional distinction between Punjabi/Urdu and English. Punjabi and Urdu come up as the preferred medium to emotional expressions, authenticity, and intimacy while English is considered rational, formal, and cognitively distant. Speakers' inclination to adapt Urdu or Punjabi during interaction signifies the role of native languages to highlight personal identity. This finding is well aligned with contextualization theory in which code-switching performs act as a discourse strategy to indicate shifts in framing, footing, or taking emotional stance (Auer, 2004). Recent knowledge also supports the emotional groundings of the native language. This shows that multilingual speakers experience strong impactful resonance in their native languages due to deep sociocultural embedding (Dewaele, 2015; Pavlenko, 2012). Thus, the emotional features of Punjabi and Urdu reflect not only language preferences but also construct sociocultural knowledge.

Regarding research question (2), qualitative data indicates a specific division of language use according to domain. So, English seems dominant in technical, academic, and professional contexts. But, Urdu and Punjabi prevail upon informal and domestic contexts. This organized shifts provides both metaphorical and situational code-switching, as Gumperz (1982) also conceptualized that language choices reflect contextual norms along with symbolic social meanings. The relation of English with institutional authority, global capital, and socioeconomic mobility is according to the research on South Asian linguistic and postcolonial hierarchies (Rahman, 1996; Mahboob, 2009). Besides, a large amount of data on recent research further emphasize that English functions as a form of language capital which indexed education, prestige, and access to networks worldwide (Phillipson, 2017; Kubota, 2020). As a result, multilingual speakers in Pakistan strategically position English to align with competence and professionalism. While Punjabi and Urdu remain languages of cultural continuity and solidarity. Answering the research question (3), findings of this study depict that multilingual Pakistani speakers actively demonstrate code-switching as a discursive means of communication to manage constructing social identities and interpersonal relations. In this regard, respondents reported that switching languages is done to negotiate politeness, assert authority, express humor, and strengthen social relations. This fact reinforces the translanguaging perspective, in which bilingual communication is conceptualized as the dynamic use of integrated linguistic repertory (García & Wei, 2014). Moreover, these findings also vibrate Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) sociocultural framework, which reveals that identity is not a fixed phenomenon which is interactionally emerged and regularly negotiated in linguistic practices. Recent studies also emphasize that code-switching helps speakers to show hybrid forms of identities and maneuver complicated social spaces in multilingual contexts (Li Wei, 2018; Canagarajah, 2018).

As a whole, the present study contributes to advance understandings of multilingual practices by showing that code-switching is an intentional practice of meaning-making that depicts speakers' emotional mindset, identity performance, and contextual demands. Therefore, it is not only language

phenomenon but a social strategy also by which a speaker negotiates belongings, powers, and self-expression in a multilingual context like Pakistan.

### 5. Conclusion

The present study concludes that code-switching among multilingual Pakistani speakers in Pakistan is a purpose-built, meaningful, and socially grounded communication. Hence, it is not merely a symbol of linguistic deficiency. Qualitative data results reveal that it is strategic move of multilingual Pakistani speakers to switch between Punjabi/Urdu and English according to the situation and need of contexts. They do all it to express their emotions, show politeness, and humor, promote social relations, and reveal power relations and identity. Punjabi and Urdu appear to be languages of emotional and cultural intimacy, and close relationships. Besides, use of English is associated to professional, authoritative, formal, and controlled exposition of self.

The analytically looking at the situational and metaphorical framework of code-switching, opens up the fact that choices of language are affected by topic, interlocutors, context, and emotional positions of speakers on one hand and, on the other hand, language choice is affected by their intentions according to their professional and social status. In the end, code-switching provides multilingual speakers a way out to talk over multiple self-identities with the help of balancing their cultural roots as well as by global modernity. By and large, this study reinforces current research findings in the field of sociolinguistics that look at multilingual or bilingual use of codes as a dynamic and context-based phenomenon. Finally. This view highlights the needs for recognizing day-to-day multilingual practices in both academic and social attitudes of the speakers.

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