

# CODE-SWITCHING AND GENDER IDENTITY

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## ABSTRACT

Pakistan is a socially close-knit, multilingual society where a major population is either bilingual or multilingual. A large population speaks local languages as their mother tongue; Urdu as the national language and educated Pakistanis also know English, which is language of academia. The multilingual speakers switch from one language to another to achieve communicative goals. The current paper takes a sociolinguistic approach to investigating the use of code-switching as a communicative strategy to achieve social goals including the construction of gender identity in informal interaction between multilingual educated Sindhi women students of University of Sindh, Jamshoro, in Pakistan, in their daily interaction to construct the female gender identity. Drawing on the code-switching existing theories of code-switching, this article focuses on the on the meaning and interpret on shift in language as potential communicative tool. Using the qualitative methodology, the findings reveal that majority of the students preferred English language to construct gender identity.

**Keywords:** *Gender, Code-Switching, Identity.*

## INTRODUCTION

Pakistan is a multilingual country where social network ties are close-knitted. In this region the majority speaks five main native languages: Sindhi, Punjabi, Sarieki, Balochi and Pashtu as their mother tongues; Urdu as the national language, and one or two other indigenous languages. The educated Pakistani community also understands English, the language of academia in state. Hence Pakistan's language and education policies provide opportunities to communicate in more than one language and switch between the different languages as a communicative strategy to achieve some social functions. This shift from one language to another in a single speech turn is known as *code-switching* (Gumperz, 1957). The sociolinguistics believes

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that code-switching is spontaneous as well conscious language strategy to be used to gain various social functions including identity construction. The present paper explores the use of code-switching by Sindhi women in their daily interaction to construct the female identity. Woman's use and choice of language has been described as a medium to identify her social status in her scenario. She negotiates her identity using a particular code as tool to differentiate herself from man and children (Farida, 2018). She is sensitive in terms of choice of language and when she employs code-switching it is interpreted as a signal to negotiate her position and ideology (Garcia, 2010). The use of code-switching becomes important especially when interpreted by a Sindhi woman who lives her life under the heavy surveillance of a patriarchal family. However, hardly any studies exist at either the micro- or macro level concerning the use of code-switching in Sindhi, English or Urdu by Sindhi women to index their gender identity. The significance of this paper is that it is the first research focusing on the use of code-switching by multilingual Sindhi women as a language strategy used to index gender identity and boost their perceived social standing in the patriarchal society. Thus, it aims to fill this gap in the sociolinguistic research and in so doing, the intricate, multilingual socio-linguistic topography of Sindh is uncovered which provides an understanding of the complex social meanings and significance of code-switching to highlight the male-female gender-divide in the (Sindhi) society.

## **SINDHI WOMEN'S SOCIAL STATUS**

Pakistan presents an image of a male-controlled society where the gender gap is wide (Ansari, 1995). Pakistan's constitution provides equal rights to women although the social reality is very different; the status of women is largely determined by Islamic religion and the conservative male-dominated culture. This discernible male dominance, sexism, religious restrictions and culture boundaries seriously restrict women's freedom and they are largely expected to play roles such as wife, daughter and mother, with opportunities for careers outside the home facing significant restriction (Khokhar, 2009). In Pakistani social scenario, women are presented as loyal wives who raise children, cook, clean and care for their families (Bhanbhro et al., 2013). This gender segregation and the Islamic ideology linking woman with family honour have restricted female's role in society (Farida, 2018). Such restrictions also tend to deprive a large proportion of the female population from education. Only 45.2% women are literate and the majority is from urban areas (UNICEF, 2015). Around 42% of girls do not attend school

although they have access to Islamic religious education in their homes (UNICEF, 2015).

Pakistan is ranked 120<sup>th</sup> on the Gender-sensitive Development index and widespread violence is evident against women (Moihuddin, 2007). In rural Sindh, women are at risk of *karo-kari* (honour killing) if they are suspected of or proven to be engaged in emotional or illicit pre-marital or extra-marital relations with a man. The female is labelled a *kari* (sinner) and the male a *karo* (sinner) (Khokhar, 2009). The family and tribe of the woman consider it a matter of family honour and they kill both the woman and the man involved. Such homicidal acts are generally committed by fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, or any other member of the tribe. According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, in 2017-18 around 933 women were victims of honour killing in Pakistan; of which 602 women were of Sindhi origin. The actual number may be greater because many cases go unreported.

In general, women's social status varies according to their socioeconomic position and locality. In Pakistan, the lifestyles of affluent and urban women tend to be very different from the less-affluent and rural women. Affluent, urban women enjoy a near-equal social status to men. They tend to be well-educated, have opportunities to take on lucrative careers and play an active role in the country's politics. In comparison, urban, middle-class women are educated to an extent and share the financial burden of their families, although their economic contribution is seldom recognised by the (male) head of the family (Bhanbhro et al., 2013). Women from rural and lower socioeconomic classes are deprived of the rights to education, choice of marriage partner, ownership of property etc., although she shares the financial burden of her family by taking low-paid, agricultural jobs or within the garment industry as seamstresses, for instance.

However, women's status in Pakistan has recently experienced a shift due to the increase in the female literacy rate. Both government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are working for the betterment of women's position in society. Today, Pakistani women can be increasingly seen playing roles in religion, politics, education, the armed forces, law, education and medicine etc. The Government has increased reserved seats for women in the National and Provincial assemblies as well as in local councils by 33%. This, to some extent, has increased women's involvement in the decision-making processes at local and national levels. The first Muslim female Prime Minister, Muhtarma Benazir Bhutto, and the head of the Pakistani State Bank Dr Shamshad Akhtar were both Sindhi women.

Nowadays, women from urban backgrounds are becoming increasingly involved in the public and private sectors.

Thus, women's increasing involvement in the professional arena has served to shift their social status which is ultimately causing changes in their language use. However, due to a lack of gender-based sociolinguistic research in Pakistan, the accuracy of this notion remains unclear. That said, according to the researcher's observation, nowadays, one of the reasons why multilingual Sindhi women use code-switching in their daily interactions is due to their exposure to other languages in their academic, professional, and social lives. The linguistic repertoire of these educated and professional women blends diversified linguistic communities which, in turn, are replacing the traditional tribal lifestyle with a more modern and linguistically diverse one.

The article is grounded on the hypothesis that in educated Sindhi women utilize code switching in order to achieve the various social functions including the construction of gender identity. The research question of the current study is:

*How do multilingual Sindhi women use code-switching as an expression to construct gender identities?*

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND TERMINOLOGY**

Code-switching is an umbrella term. Gumperz (1957-82); Blom and Gumperz (1972); Gal (1979); Heller (1988); Myers-Scotton (1993) etc. define it as shifts from one to another language both across as well as within sentence boundaries. Scholars such as Auer (1984); Muysken (1987); Romaine (1989); Gardner (1991); Milroy (1987); Hoffman (2001); Poplack (1980), Kachru (1983) etc. called it code-mixing. For sociolinguists code-switching is language behaviour indicating the sociolinguistic norms of speech communities to achieve some social the functions. In this regard Blom and Gumperz (1972) have given two broad categories of code-switching: situational and metaphorical code-switching. Speaker using one code in one situation and another in another situation is called situational code-switching. For instance, use of formal code in office and informal in the home or friends' circle. Metaphorical code-switching expresses the speakers' intentions to be interpreted (Blom and Gumperz, 1972). Gumperz (1982, pp. 82-84) further clarifies the metaphorical code-switching enumerating in the following typology: question; addressee specification;

interjection; reiteration; message qualification; personalization versus objectivization. In this typology the last function of personalization and objectivization is related to the construction of various identities. One such identity, Gumperz explains is we-code and they-code as a metaphorical codeswitching referring for ethnic identity. However, Gal (1979), Heller (1992) and Auer (2005) believe that the basic motivation for the we-code and they code is to construct ingroup and out-group identities on the basis of social-cultural, gender and religious differences. In the same vein Gal (1979) used the self and others typology and Bucholtz and Hall (2005, p. 598) used dichotomy of sameness and differences in the rationality principle theory for in-group and out-group identity through code-switching.

Auer (1995) redefined Gumperz's functions of code-switching using the following typology: reported speech; change of participant constellation; parenthesis or side comments; reiteration i.e. quasi translation; change of activity type; topic shift; puns, language play, shift of key and topicalisation, topic/comment structure. Kachru (1983, p. 197) explains the main of code-switching: i) for registering identification, ii) as formal clues for style identification, and iii) for clarification and interpretation. Appel and Muysken (1987) provide six functions of code-switching: referential; directive; expressive; phatic; metalinguistic and poetic. However, Malik (1994) suggests a long list of ten functions of code-switching: lack of facility; lack of registeral competence; semantic significance; address a different audience; show identity with a group; emphasise; express the mood of a speaker; habitual expressions; for pragmatic reasons; and to attract attention.

In the lists of functions of code-switching one common category appears identity construction. One cannot understand the worth of an identity until one knows who is speaker; the society s/he lives in, and the language s/he speaks. Tajfel (1982, p. 225) defines identity as 'part of individual's self-concept' that makes him/her aware of "knowledge of their membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership". Tajfel (1982) describes the implementation of membership in three stages. During the first stage of *social categorization*, people have an inbuilt tendency for automatic categorisation into one or more groups depending on their attachment to them. The second stage, *social identification or self-definitions* are when an individual associated to a group or groups may construct 'dual' or 'nested' identities, i.e. multiple identities based on class, creed, cast, religion. In the third stage an individual compares the identity of his/her group with other groups on the grounds of high status (e.g. power, economics, intellectual etc.) (Tajfel, 1982).

The third stage is more related to Gumperz's (1982) dichotomy of *we-code* and *they-code* where the *we-code* is used unified collective identity' for in-group and *they-code* as an out-group. Gumperz (1982) states that *we-code* and *they-code* are used in to negotiate ethnic identity. However, broadly speaking *we-code* and *they-code* act as social process to index in-group and out-group identities based on social, religious, ethnic and gender similarities and differences (Farida, 2018). In the same vein Myers-Scotton states that the use of code-switching is the main "possibility of social-identity negotiation" by using unmarked (expected) and marked (unexpected) code index two identities: "negotiation about the speaker's persona (who the speaker is) and the speakers' relation to other participants" and social norms of their speech community (1993, p. 11). In other words, the choice of unmarked code reveals the high degree of intimacy of the speaker with interlocutors but the marked code can create the boundaries within the group. By using two codes in two different codes, the speaker encodes two identities (Myers-Scotton, 1993). On the same line of *we-code* and *they-code*, Bucholtz and Hall (2005) suggest the notion of *sameness and differences* in 'the rationality principle'. The notion of rationality principle states that identities cannot be autonomous rather they are dependent on other identities in terms of sameness and difference (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005). In other words, people compare the sameness and difference between his/her and speaker and 'construct identities. Meyerhoff (1996) presented the same views in his notion of *social identity* which concentrates on an individual-identity in relation to a group-identity.

Such shift of language has implications on the broader scale as it influences the social structure and because it is not the matter of used of pronoun *we* and *they* in an interaction for in-group or out-group association or disassociation rather these pronouns convey the attitude of the speaker as well as the relationship of speaker with interlocutor. The speaker is a social actor and by changing the language used, the speaker reveals subjectivity of social actors and in social relations in form of inequality and the gender boundaries (Schmidt, 2016, Garcia, 2010). People switch to prestigious languages to reveal their power and affluent social status creating prestigious identity and maintaining social boundaries. This change of code establishes the speaker's identity while their utterances, working as social processes, influence the social structure (Wei, 2008). Hence, switching of code in isolation will not provide the complete information that why the speaker resorted on a particular code.

Overall the sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics have consensus on a mutual ground that study of code-switching is the identity exploration of *who I am* and *what can I do?* (Tajfel, 1982). The speakers' linguistic competence "provides a wealth of potentially harmonising or antagonistic symbolic associations which constitute the very fabric of identity construction" (Perez Casas, 2006, p. 81). The bilingual and multilingual are conscious of their linguistic abilities and employ a particular language as a conscious linguistic strategy to project, negotiate and even challenge their identity.

In the discipline of discourse analysis studies on code-switching by the scholars like Bolonyai (2005); Perez Casas, (2006); Farida (2018) etc. focusing on the construction of gender identity concluded that an individual nests their identity on gender categorizations such as *self* and *other* or *we-code* and *they-code* for in-group and out-group gender bases. This indicates a strong correlation between code-switching and gender revealing the socio-cultural scenario where the study is conducted.

## METHODOLOGY

In this research paper qualitative methodology is opted using audio recordings in the natural settings outside the classroom. The data collection process started with the permission of the Directors and Chairpersons of various departments of University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan.

I also I decided to record spontaneous, informal conversations among friends and classmates in non-classroom environment with the belief that more spontaneous and natural spoken exchanges would be captured. All the recordings took place outside classrooms, e.g. girls' common rooms, university lawn and corridors.

Participants of the study were the female graduate students belonging to various departments of University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan. Primary factor in the selection of participants was Sindhi ethnicity because this study is intended to investigate instances of code-switching used by multilingual Sindhi female. Another reason of participants' ethnic choice related to the fact that Sindhi educated women are multilingual due to the education policy. They learn Sindhi as L1, Urdu as L2 as national language and English as their L3 that is their sole academic language after grade 10<sup>th</sup>. The selection of the participants was aided by the university teachers who introduced some groups who were either friends or classmates. First, those participants who were interested in joining this research were handed a consent form to sign

in order to ensure that they would not have any objection to the recording. Then the participants were informed about the venue and time of recording. The same information was conveyed to the head of the department at their request, so they would know the details of the research's activities on the departments' premises. After the completion of all formalities, the recordings took place.

Participants were briefed that research aimed to investigate their informal, spoken conversations. At this stage, they were not told about the project's focus on code-switching. This was done in order to encourage spontaneous interaction. Total eleven recordings were collected involving 41 women. The varieties of size of groups were collected including two recording of small group involving two participants; six were middle size group comprising 4-5 participants; three relatively bigger groups involving 6-7 women. The participants discussed a variety of topics ranging from informal daily-life affairs to more formal topics related to their academic subjects.

In the second stage the data is transcribed by paying special attention to Sindhi, Urdu and English code-switching within a speech turn. After the transcription, every utterance was translated into English. Of these, only utterances is analysed in which code-switching appeared to be deployed as a deliberate language strategy to construct gender identity. In the audio-recording the following convention of transcription is used: code-switching into English into bold; Urdu code-switching into italicised; Sindhi into lower case; loanwords into underlined and translation into parentheses.

In the present research, all relevant ethical concerns were addressed properly. In terms of data collection, the official permission of the Director and chairpersons of the participating department were obtained. The Director and head of the departments were informed that student's natural conversations were to be recorded on the department premises. The researcher personally, and in writing, gave them assurance of confidentiality; that data would be used for academic purposes only. Participation was voluntary and participants were made aware of their right to withdraw or repeal initial consent to recording at any time or to skip any question in the questionnaire. They were provided with my email addresses and contact numbers so they could approach me in case they wanted to withdraw their participation. The participants were given due attention and respect, thus data was collected in a friendly and sociable manner.



## Data Analysis

The current data analysis shows that Sindhi women use code-switching as a device to eloquently discuss issues related to construction of female identity as excerpt (1) shows:

### Excerpt 1

1. Shami: Sindhi aurat khe azadi ahe. Hani burqo b nathee pae.  
(Sindhi women have freedom. Nowadays they do not wear *burqas* [A veil covering the whole body]).
2. Najma: **To take off the *burqa* is not freedom.**
3. Shami: **Freedom** nahe cha? Char dewaran me qaed, **once in a while** nikrandio, ihiob burqe me. **Now they are free to leave home without *burqa*.**  
(Is it not freedom? [In past women were] imprisoned in their homes, once in a while, they were allowed to go out wrapped in a *burqa*. Now they are free to go out without a *burqa*.)
4. Najma: **You are correct** per murdan joon nazroon. **Without** burqo aurat khe sutho nahin samjhanda.  
(You are right but [what about] men's ogling? They [men] think that without a *burqa*, a woman is not good [in character].)
5. Nazia: Aurat cha sirf mani bache **and be a babysitter**. Bas?  
(Is she born to live her life in the kitchen and be a babysitter? Is that all?)
6. Shami: Agar aurat haq gurandee ta **society automatically accept** kandi aurat je **freedom** khe.  
(If women ask for their rights, society [will] automatically accept the freedom of women).

In this excerpt three participants discuss the freedom of women in Sindh. Shami says Sindhi women are now free because nowadays they do not have to wear a *burqa* (turn # 2). Next (turns # 2 and 4), Najma and Shami show their disagreement by alternating between intrasentential and intersentential code-switching in both Sindhi and English and uses the English idiomatic expression 'once in a while' as a stylistic linguistic resource to underline the point made (turn # 3). In turns 5 and 6, both Nazia and Shami, embedding

English into Sindhi, rhetorically emphasise the struggle for women's rights. Their intrasentential switching seems to emphasise their arguments in favour of the freedom of women. Both women attempt to express an anti-conservative and modern feminine identity where women are equal to men in constructing their female identity.

A similar notion is expressed in excerpt (2) where the two participants express their feminist identity by using *we-code* for women and *they-code* for men to distinguish between them.

## Excerpt 2

1. Sorath: Assen auratoon b insan ahio. **We are human being. We are not different from men. Bulke wadheek responsible ahio murd kha.**  
(We women are human beings. We are human beings. We are not different from men in fact, we are more responsible than men.)
2. Moomal: **Yes.** Ghar; baar; dost; maet; **social life;** subh aseem disoon. Murd khe  
ghar me her shae tayar mile thee. **It is we not men**  
joke subh assan wanger disan.  
(Yes. We look after the home, children, friends, relatives and social life. Men get everything ready in the home. It is us [women] not men who look after everything.)

Using Sindhi formal *assen-code* (we-code), Sorath in turn 1, translates the same statement from Sindhi to English that seems to emphasise her longing to secure equal rights for women. In the next turn another participant Moomal also endorses Sorath's statement using Sindhi and English bilingual code-mixing on key words as an intentional language practice specify female gender. This seems a deliberated switching into English, the language of power in Pakistani context, used as an attempt to stress women's prevailing social status. Use of *we-code* and *they-code* indicates that women are defined as the in-group and men as the out-group differentiating men on gender lines. Simultaneously, this also reveals an in-depth social knowledge of Sindhi society where the domestic division of working tends to entail men working to bring in a salary and women taking care of domestic responsibilities. This is similar to Janefer Coat (1986) who suggests that language switching and code mixing is an intentional language practice specific to gender.

In the same connection is the next excerpt in which code-switching in English is used as language strategy for the construction of gender identity.

### Excerpt 3

1. Salam: Aoon chaheedus ta her shaehar me auratin laa walking track aeen **park** hujan.  
(There should be walking tracks and parks for women in every town)
2. Anila: Aoon **oppose** kandus. **I think** assan jo **culture** iho natho **allow** kare. Saje shahar jo murd poe ute milanda.  
(Our culture cannot allow. All men of the city will be found there.)
3. Salma: In kare **female should not go out?**  
(Therefore, female should not go out?)
4. Naseem: **No. Women must live their lives according to their terms and conditions.** Inhan murdan khe cha ahe.  
(These men have nothing to do.)
5. Salma: **True. Walking track is a need for healthy life.**
6. Anila: Per ghar ja murd. **Even our mothers won't allow us.**  
(But our men will not allow.)
7. Zenat: **Throughout life our mother instructs us,** hite hute na diso, **go straight, don't speak loudly in public,** pora dhakio paan ke.  
(Throughout life our mother instructs us, don't see here and there, go straight, don't speak loudly in public, cover your body properly.)
8. Anila: Aeen agar **girls** waree track-suit pae nikran ta poe **culture** tabah theendo.  
(And if a girl will walk in track-suit then our culture will spoil.)
9. Salma: **Why do we think** ta track suit ya jeans kha **culture** khe khatro ahe. Agar **top to toe wrape** thee nikre ta **culture** aeen izat **safe** ahe cha. **Please** yaar **being women** assen ta een na sochioon.

(No. they will wrape themselves from head to toe and then go out. Please dear being women we should not think like that.)

Discussing female issues, when a woman Salma stressed on the need of walking tracks for women (turn 1), her classmate Anila opposes it on the ground that it is not our culture (turn 2) and the male will visit these tracks for ogling purposes. The demand of Salma is for the equal rights of women while her friend's opposition is cultural ground where women are not allowed to go out for walks. Slama used the pronoun I as a self-ascription strategy for self-projection to portray herself as defender of women's equal rights while Anila uses the pronoun I as a self-ascription to project herself as defender of culture. Both used the loanword walking track in the absence of an equivalent in Sindhi. Her other friend Naseem jumps using intersentential switching in English and supporting freedom of women. She demands that women should live according to her conditions, not according to men or culture. Anila's switching to English supports stands on her point when she said even her mother would not allow them to go to walking tracks and parks (turn 6). Zeenat using English as the main language and inserting Sindhi switching criticised the advices of mothers that they always instruct their daughters what to do (turn 127). Such frequent shifts from L1 to L2 reveal her linguistic competence which she uses to reinforce her bond with her culture. In the next turn 8 Anila depicts the picture that if Sindhi women go for a walk in the track suit then it will be a disaster for our culture (turn 9). Salma replies that why do they think that when a woman is in jeans or track suit, then culture and honour is not safe. She requested that please as women they should not think in this way. Her to and fro code-switching into English and Sindhi is intended to express her strong affiliation with the rights of women that constructs her feminine identity. In this turn, by using we-code, Salma is affirming a collective identity with other women. The fact that the frequent switching from Sindhi to English seems to be a metaphorical device used to emphasize their arguments in the code of power asserting their gender and cultural identity. It illustrates their ideologies as members of their culture and the women community. Using the self-ascription strategies participants of this excerpt negotiated identities through code-switching. In the following excerpt four women are discussing the behaviour of their male and female teachers of their institution in a lighter tone using code-switching as expressive tool.

### Excerpt 4

1. Tania: **Female teachers rude** sakht ahin.  
([Our] female teachers are rude)
2. Nazia: Na aurat **teachers** wadeek **cooperative** ahin. Per thoro **reserve** ahin.  
(No, female teacher are more cooperative but they are reserved.)
3. Shahida: Madams suthyoo ahin. **Male teachers** meharban ahin only **on some beautiful faces**. *Sirf chaand chehre*.  
(Madams are good. Male teachers favour some beautiful faces. The moon-like faces.)
4. Tania: *chaand charee* ya waree *chand chehre*. (loud lougher).  
(Ether moon-like faces or a few faces)
5. Nazia: Aeen na cho. **We all are women. We must respect them.**
6. Shahida: Chup kayio ihio **sensitive issue** ahe.  
(Stop this discussion on a sensitive topic.)
7. Nazia: **Madam is also a woman so** zulim na kandee. (loud lougher).  
(Madam [researcher] is a woman. She will not mind it.)

Using English-Sindhi code-switching in turn 1 Tania complains that their female teachers are rude. She translated the word 'rude' in Sindhi to emphasise her argument. Next Nazia defending the female teachers state they are reserve but not rude (turn 2). Her English switching on key word was to show solidarity with female teachers. Another women Shahida and Tania jump in the discussion to defend the female teacher using trilingual code-switching into Sindhi, English and Urdu criticising male teachers' behaviour (turns 3 and 4). Using Urdu Shahida said in a poetic tone that male teachers are dying on moon-faces (beautiful like moon) rhyming same expression using other words to show gender biasness against male teachers. Both participants used Urdu for poetic expression and alliteration to reveal a serious issue in a poetic and lighter tone. Farida (2018) states that sometimes code-switching is mandatory, specially, for poetic expression in order to convey the proper essence of the expression in rhythmical style. Same is revealed in here that use of Urdu code-switching for poetic expression is a metalinguistic and metaphorical strategy to establish common ground

between speakers and interlocutors. In turn 5 Nazia again came to defend the women teachers by switching English asking they would not speak ill against other female because we all belong to same gender. Here using *we code* she is vividly revealing here solidarity with other women students of the campus. In turn 7 when Shahida remind other that they should not talk about teachers, again Nazia shows gender identity by stressing that the researcher is a female and she will not mind it.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of the above data analysis reveal that participants used code-switching when there was an issue of gender identity. For the construction of female identity participants used varieties of code-switching strategies: recycling and translation to give weight to their arguments. Above all the participants employed *we-code* and *they-code* and *self-ascription* strategies to negotiate gender identity.

The findings show that educated Sindhi women construct specific identities to regulate their interpersonal relationships via their use of code-switching on gender grounds in terms of in-grouping and out-grouping. Participants of the study using their linguistic competence, specially, in English, as an attempt to indicate in-group association with other women as personalize or *we-code* and used *they-code* for objectification for male community to keep a distance revealing out-group association. However, results show that participants have not used English *we-code* and *they-code* as described by Gumperz (1982) but, as Sebba and Wooton (1998) arguing that it a complex form of code-switching and in certain societies, where instead of two codes (*we-code* and *they-code*), more distinct codes are available to form in-group and out-group identities (Sebba and Wooton, 1998). According to Farida (2018) this statement is applicable in the Sindhi language because *they-code* (also known as *you-code*) is used in one of the two ways as a stylistic device. The first is the plural *tawha-code* (formal *you-code*) to convey a formal and out-group association and second is the singular *tu-code* (informal *you-code*) which is indicative of a more informal register and signals in-group associations between interlocutors (Farida, 2018). Similarly, in Sindhi, *we-code* is indicated as plural *assa-code* in formal expressions and *aao-code* as a singular *I-code* for more informal communication (Farida, 2018). Such codes act as social processes because “there is social knowledge involved about how to relate constellations of features to social groups, milieus, life-worlds, etc.” (Auer, 2005, p. 13). Tethering formal and informal codes within the Sindhi as well as English languages the participants defined women as

the in-group and men as the out-group here, differentiating between women and men on gender lines indexing their female identity. Simultaneously, this also reveals an in-depth social knowledge of Sindhi society where the domestic division of working tends to entail men working to bring in a salary and women taking care of domestic responsibilities.

The findings show that English is the preferred language of code-switching for participants. Such instances of code-switching to a superior code i.e. English, is considered a prestigious, sophisticated language associated with authority. This finding is similar to Sadiqi (2008) who suggests that choosing the more prestigious English language for key words seems a deliberate attempt to stress women's prevailing social status. Similar are the findings of Farida (2018) in her research on the use of code-switching on multilingual Sindhi women that English is the preferable code of Sindhi for code-switching compared to their neighbor languages like Urdu, Punjabi etc. This reveals that code-switching is not simply language behaviour, it also acts as a social phenomenon to level and maintain established gender boundaries as well as reveals the social status of women in the Sindhi society. In summary, educated Sindhi women's use of code-switching allows them to achieve a much fuller and richer expression in their spoken language compared to using a solely monolingual approach to communication (Perez Casas, 2008 and Rubino, 2014).

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