

BETWEEN LANGUAGES, BETWEEN SELVES: ENGLISH-URDU CODE SWITCHING AS A SITE OF YOUTH IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

English-Urdu code-switching has emerged as a defining linguistic practice among Pakistani university students. It is functioning simultaneously as a sign of modernity, social prestige, and identity. In the educational institutes of south Punjab, students often switch between English and Urdu during conversation and consider it a sign of modernity as well as a reflection of their identity embedded in social orientations. Present study explored the code-switching practices among university students to understand linguistic patterns for the construction and expression of youth identity. For this purpose, a purposive sampling technique is employed in two universities, i.e. COMSATS University Islamabad, Vehari Campus and Education University, Vehari Campus. The study figured out that the students from Education University demonstrated stronger prestige orientation and higher English dominance compared to students at COMSATS University. Moreover, the modernity sub-theme constituted 3.38% of all the coded segments that highlighted participant's perception of code-switching as associated with the current generation of youth and global connectivity. The study discovered Trojan horse dilemma which refers to the deep personal internal conflict between appreciating the benefits of learning English and rejecting the unwanted ideologies and cultural ideas that come along with it. The study highlighted that youth is not only learning or speaking English language but also adopting English ways of thinking. It is also observed that due to the educational environment difference participants are unable to understand the code-switching techniques that is demonstrative of their geographical background as well but their ratio was 6.71%. About 3.46% codes focused on emotional dynamics that were only brought by the linguistic conflict. 3.92% participants showed realization of the appropriacy of language usage in a specific context. This study is significant in getting an understanding that the ideological burden carried with English is not only imposed by the foreign bodies but contested and appropriated by its own local users. The study highlighted that university students employ certain patterns to navigate cultural hybridity, modernity, and belonging

Keywords: Language, socio linguistics, Code Switching, English-Urdu, youth identity

1. INTRODUCTION

The split of human civilization depends significantly on language, thus both language and its pronunciation are important considerations.

Speech identifies a person and differentiates them from other multilingual individuals. Multilingual and worldwide influences abound for youngsters, especially those in college. The words used by

individuals mirror their identities and social surroundings. One such sociolinguistic phenomena, code-switching, provides significant understanding on the growth of this identity in a multilingual society. In a multilingual society, where often switching between opposing languages in the same dialogue is frequent, it has sociolinguistic application (Naveed et al., 2023; Awan et al., 2025). Language in Pakistan embodies identity, including wealth and culture, not just a means of communication. Embedded in a bilingual society, university students sometimes utilize code-switching between Urdu and English to convey their culture and social standing. Changing between Urdu and English has become a major linguistic practice mirroring youth identity in academic and social situations (Awan et al., 2025; Naveed et al., 2023).

In Pakistan, the teaching and learning practices in educational institutions particularly use Urdu and English interchangeably. Their practice of code-switching has become a sign of modernity, group participation, or unity among the students in the universities of Pakistan (Butt et al., 2025; Hussain et al., 2025). In any educational context, code-switching assists young people in shaping their social surroundings as it acts as a medium for youth identity construction and validation (Mushtaq et al., 2025). It also captures elements of a person's identity (Shah et al., 2020). Given both custom and modernity, Jamshed and Shakir (2025) noted that Pakistani teenagers also clearly need more from students regarding code-switching. In addition to displaying a multicultural and hybrid culture, it also demonstrates social status while preserving connections to regional linguistic traditions (Kachru, 1992; Rafi, 2010). Such behaviors show how young people view themselves in relation to society and how they set themselves apart from previous generations, particularly in university contexts. Therefore, it is possible to interpret English-Urdu code-switching as a manifestation of the youth's linguistic identities in modern-day Pakistan.

There is a lot of research on bilingualism in Pakistan, focusing on English-Urdu code-switching and its significance for cultural negotiation and social membership. However,

students' perceptions of and use of this technique of English-Urdu codeswitching to express young linguistic identity continue to receive little attention. Previous studies mostly emphasized structural and pedagogical aspects of code-switching, while present research endeavors to explore the social meanings attached to code-switching in everyday academic and peer communication. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to study code-switching as a means through which youth construct and negotiate their linguistic and social identities in both academic and social contexts. It aims to examine English-Urdu code-switching as a sociolinguistic expression of youth linguistic identity. In this regard, the study of English-Urdu code-switching covers social and educational trends at a basic level in relation to the identity of modern youth.

The purpose of present study is to examine the patterns and functions of English-Urdu Code Switching among university students in everyday communication. Its objective is to investigate how Code-Switching practices, contribute to the construction and expression of youth identity, and to explore students' attitudes and perceptions toward Code Switching as a marker of social belonging, modernity, and prestige. For this purpose, the study focused on following Research Questions:

1. What are the common patterns and communicative functions of English-Urdu Code Switching used by university students?
2. How does English-Urdu Code Switching reflect and construct youth identity in academic and social contexts?
3. What attitudes and perceptions do university students hold about Code Switching in relation to identity and social belonging.

In this way, the study is significantly contributing to the field of linguistics as it advances the sociolinguistics' comprehension of bilingualism by connecting identity construction frameworks with Code Switching. It articulates the South Asian diasporic views on smooth blending of English and Urdu conversation. The study is helpful in understanding the voices and lived linguistic experiences of young bilingual speakers. It is full of insight about the language use by young people

to express their identity as their belonging and individuality. It is significant as it develops understanding of language as reflecting cultural hybridity and social positioning through the Code Switching as both a communicative and identity-driven act.

2. Literature Review

As a multilingual society shaped by colonial history, globalization, and the institutional dominance of English in higher education, Pakistan provides a rich context for examining how language choices construct and negotiate identity. Among youth in particular, English-Urdu Code-Switching functions not merely as a communicative strategy but as a symbolic resource through which students' express modernity, social affiliation, academic competence, and group belonging. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this phenomenon can be understood as a marker of linguistic hybridity and identity performance, revealing how young speakers actively shape their social identities through language practices. Sociolinguistics has extensively studied the integration more than two languages or dialects within a sole conversation (Gumperz, 1977; Gardner-Chloros, 2009). Awan et al., (2025) have discovered linguistic and cultural coding systems that are switched between in multilingual Pakistan, where Urdu is the neutral multilingual language and English is the socially dominant language. According to Awan et al., (2025), social interaction participants alternate between languages and cultural code systems. Code Switching is a social identity marker and a communication strategy used by social interaction participants. It forces students to develop social vocabulary, feelings of solidarity, or social relationship positioning with peers and broad social frameworks (Butt et al., 2025; Shah et al., 2020). There are a number of scholars who discussed code-switching as a proper model to understand its practices in a society like Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model (Rafiq et al., 2022) that asserted that the language an individual use reflects on the sociolinguistic 'rights and obligations' of a specific situation. This theory has its importance in Pakistan in the field of

pragmatics and building bilingual identity among youth (Ali, 2021; Awan et al., 2025). On the contrary, the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), presented by Giles and Coupland in 1991, focused on how much a speaker uses language to communicate with other people or how much they wish to distance themselves from the conversation. When it comes to Pakistani youth, CAT helps understand why students use English to identify educated elites and utilize it in a discourse context, or why they switch to Urdu as their primary language of communication to engage in peer conversations (Shah et al., 2020).

2.1 Sociolinguistic Function of Code Switching

Sociolinguistic methods to Code Switching help scholars to distinguish and identify the aspects that affect Code Switching as well as help in shaping the roles of Code Switching in dissertation. Two methods/approaches have been distinguished so far in the literature. Gardner-Chloros (2009) discusses the sociolinguistic approach that inspects Code Switching from a larger perspective where Code Switching is observed intra-language use in a speech community to check out how affiliates in this speech community use it, in what circumstances and for which purposes. According to this method, Code Switching is observed not mostly as an issue of ability, but is mainly affected by the macro sociolinguistic aspects of the formal setting and the macro-societal context (Gardner-Chloros, 2009). On the contrary, there is the interactional method that point to inspect certain roles of specific snippets in discourse where of Code Switching is observed. The analysis using this technique, can be executed by exploring multilingual switches in specific conversational settings, given the fact that speakers give senses to their language choices since speakers are the ones who pursue to realize certain communicative wishes in their explicit language choices (Gardner-Chloros, 2009).

2.2 Code Switching and Identity Construction

According to Barth and Bailey (2007), Identity is "a boundary that groups construct between themselves, rather than the characteristics of

group members”, that emphasizes the subjective, social reality of human actors since categories are formed by their decisions and actions rather than by fixed personal traits. Two subjective processes determine social identity: "self-ascription," or how an individual defines themselves, and "ascription by others," or how others describe an individual. Thus, the questions of how, when, and why people are considered members of specific groups are central to identity analysis. As a result, identity analysis occurs in linguistic contexts, and we are able to identify the speaker using this definition. One of the most significant and crucial problems to address is how far people's freedom of choice and options allow them to transcend socially imposed language barriers and identity frameworks. According to Sepideh Hozhabrossadat (2015), "identity is an emerging process at the crossroads of the road and the structure." This actually implies that the development of identity is viewed as the integration or misunderstanding of social variables and governance institutions rather than just the result of these structures. According to Vivian (2007), "speakers use one or other of the choices available to them to express aspects of a fluid social identity as they move through a multidimensional sociolinguistic space" during conversations. It has been observed that a group of people's language might serve as a sign of an underlying sense of identity and group purpose. Additionally, it is stressed that Code Switching should be valued "for the speaker' identity in the social context where it occurs." People are naturally inclined to use Code Switching as a way to negotiate their identity, role, and place within a group. In general, people's language choices reflect the identities they want to project to others—personal, social, and collective. Languages are being mixed at multiple syntactic, structural, and lexical levels as a result of the rise of diverse populations worldwide, and in the UK specifically, where varied practices occur in many economic, educational, and political spheres. For instance, in the majority of the UK, Muslims communicate primarily in English. However, Muslim immigrants appeared to be in the midst of an identity conflict because all Muslims are required to adhere to all rules and teachings of

their faith, including acquiring Arabic for the sake of knowledge or for worship. Additionally, Vivian (2007) contends that these statements appear to predominate anytime Muslims interact, regardless of the subject being addressed, the context in which the conversation occurs, or the participants' social relationships. Even among younger generations who have never spoken Arabic as their first language, these "world" statements are nevertheless utilized in their original language despite having equal translations in other languages.

2.3 Code Switching and Youth Identity

Code Switching was another significant factor in Pakistan, and youth identity was the primary subject of many earlier studies. Hussain *et al.*, (2025) examined Multan's multilingual speakers' perceptions of Code Switching, code-mixing, and identity construction. A mixed-method approach comprising surveys and interviews was used by numerous authors. The authors came to the conclusion that Code Switching aids in the formation of a multicultural composite identity. Students will be able to connect with the local multicultural groups and get a lot of information through that. The lecture will exhibit the Pakistani's manner of Code Switching in communication with people belonging to different cultures and languages. At the same time, Butt *et al.* (2025) have done in-depth research on Code Switching along with the identity to be constructed through this medium for the Pakistani students. The researchers took qualitative discourse analysis as the method. They illustrated the students' situation where the students switch between Urdu and English to make intellectual credibility in the classroom and using the social norms. The finding illustrated that Code Switching is a difficult but a common tendency that comes with one's identity amongst Pakistanis, and not a random act. This underlines the prestige of English as it is the distinguishing factor in the educational system of the country where the language is the medium in higher education. Shah *et al.* (2020) moderated students' responses through participant observation and ethnographic methods in semi-structured

interviews at a university in Pakistan to evaluate the role of literature in the shaping of identity among young adults. The participants who used more than one language showed their capability to claim power and disturb the hierarchy to further negotiate and classify their relationships. Educational institutions preserve the vertical power relationships and the political power configurations. Research into the sociolinguistic preferences of young people is also seen outside the educational environment. Abbas and Iqbal (2018) looked into the linguistic attitudes of young Pakistanis towards Punjabi, Urdu, and English. The two authors drew their conclusions based on the results of a comparative survey, which revealed that English was the best language for all academic and professional purposes, while Urdu was rich in culture and thus limited. Consequently, the study points to the widespread occurrence of Code Switching and the deliberate creation of identities in areas that are purposely changing socio-linguistically. Zia et al. (2024) present their view on the impact of slang on Pakistani youth from a cultural and sociological perspective. They argue that the use of both Code Switching and slang help the young people to distinguish themselves and at the same time to collaborate within the group. Although English-Urdu Code Switching was not the main point of the research, it nevertheless suggests the role of language behavior in the identity performance of the Pakistani youth in a subtle manner.

There are still a few gaps in the expanding array of research on Code Switching in Pakistan. First, there is little attention paid to the conception that university students themselves understand Code Switching as an identity marker, despite the fact that many studies concentrate on media, classroom, or regional language use (Hamid et al., 2025; Jamshed and Shakir, 2025). Few studies examine the subjective meanings that youths assign to their bilingual activities, whereas the majority of the literature now in publication examines functions and patterns (Shah et al., 2020; Butt et al., 2025). Second, in order to capture identity building from an insider viewpoint, fewer studies in Pakistan have used in-depth qualitative interviews; instead, the majority

of research has used surveys or discourse analysis (Ahmad, 2024; Naveed et al., 2023). Ethnographic and interactional methodologies have been used in international research, especially in Africa and Europe (Shartiely, 2016; Gardner-Chloros, 2009), which could also improve the Pakistani environment. Third, while Code Switching is frequently associated with modernity and prestige, little research has examined how it relates to gender, class, or marginalized communities in Pakistan. Identity building among transgender speakers, for example, was noted by Naseer et al. (2024), but there is an absence of comparable study among university students from varied backgrounds. Finally, although research on Code Switching in media has been done by Mushtaq et al. (2025) and Hamid et al. (2025), it is necessary to look at how these mediated representations affect students' everyday language choices and self-perceptions

Previously, Abubakar et al. (2019) did their research on the application of English as a foreign language to Kurds pointed out that the students in Iraq showcased the use of Code Switching as a marker. The learners were using both Kurdish and English to not only show off their bilingualism but also their connection to a global audience. This is quite similar to the situation in Pakistan where English is linked to better opportunities and higher social status. While, Al-Azzawi et al., (2018) combined research activities into the audience and classroom involvement of Senegalese international students attending Iraqi colleges. The research outcome suggested that Code Switching was a tactic for both survival and integration. It is a case of a person with a disability who through the flexible use of a language can gain social standing and integration. While, in Indonesia, Simatupang and Amalia (2019) investigated Code Switching in relation to social media and international students. They demonstrated how identity disparities and identity formation are reflected in the theme alternation between English and Indonesian. communal media thus contributes significantly to the rejection of communal identity and the advancement of personal identity.

In Africa, similar trends were observed, for example, Shartiely (2016) carried out a case study at Tanzania's University of Dar es Salaam. He noticed that during class discussions and learning, students frequently switched between Kiswahili and English. He clarified that Code Switching is a learning technique and a means of undermining peer solidarity or reputation. In Europe, comparative studies are also conducted. In order to explain the social factors like, prestige, solidarity, and pragmatics, Gardner-Chloros (2009) demonstrated the sociolinguistic features of Code Switching. To a large degree, these are comparable to those seen in South Asia. Likewise, Sallo (2011) investigated Code Switching at universities in the West and the Middle East. He was confirming that bilingual students intentionally used codeswitching in order to communicate effectively. Additionally, it contributes to position each person's identity. The universality of Code Switching as a sociolinguistic behavior is emphasized by these global viewpoints, which also show how regional cultural and educational circumstances influence its uses. The international similarities serve as a reminder to Pakistani youth that Code Switching is a component of a larger global trend of

multilingual identity work.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Participants and Data Collection

A purposive sampling technique was employed to recruit the interviews from undergraduate students (aged 18–25) from COMSATS University Islamabad, Vehari Campus and the University of Education, Vehari Campus. The two universities were selected to ensure diversity in socioeconomic background, academic discipline, and degree of English exposure.

Initially, 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted. Following a systematic review of the recordings and transcripts, 20 were excluded from the final analysis because some responses were incomplete as the participants did not follow the full interview protocol. Some interviews were with poor audio quality due to noise in the background that reduced the possibility of accurate transcription. There are some interviews where the participants demonstrated insufficient instances of English-Urdu code-switching to contribute meaningfully to the thematic analysis. As a result, the final dataset, therefore, included 10 interviews and 26 survey responses. The details are expressed in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Summary of Final Participant Sample

Data Source	Institution	N	Method of Collection
Semi-structured interviews	COMSATS University	5	Audio-recorded, face-to-face
Semi-structured interviews	University of Education	5	Audio-recorded, face-to-face
Survey responses	COMSATS University	13	Structured questionnaire
Survey responses	University of Education	13	Structured questionnaire
Peer group conversations (recorded)	Both institutions	10	Naturalistic audio recording
Total data sources		46	

The interviews and conversations were analyzed using Poplack's (1980) Code Switching categories and thematic coding for identity expressions (e.g., solidarity, prestige, belonging). Recorded conversations were transcribed and coded for Code Switching patterns (e.g., insertion, alternation, tag-switching) using categories proposed by Poplack (1980) and Myers-Scotton

(1993). Interview transcripts were analyzed thematically to identify students' perceptions of identity construction, attitudes toward bilingual practices, and contextual motivations for Code Switching. Codes were clustered into broader themes (e.g., solidarity, prestige, academic authority, modernity) to address the research questions. NVivo software was used for coding to

organize and manage data systematically. So, the analysis was proceeded through open coding, theme development, and interpretation in light of the study's research objectives

Two complementary theoretical frameworks explain this investigation:

1. Code Switching decisions are explained by Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model (1993, 1998) as identity-driven and socially significant. This theory was helpful for examining students' choice of language use to "mark" their identities.
2. The Sociocultural Linguistic Theory of Identity by Bucholtz and Hall (2005): offers a framework for analyzing how students create and negotiate their identities through Code Switching in various circumstances and conceptualizes identity as emergent, relational, and interactive. Both structural analysis of Code Switching functions and interpretive analysis of identity construction are made possible by this dual approach.

3.

3.2 Ethical Considerations

The researcher has taken the ethical approval for this study. It was obtained from the relevant

institutional authority. There is an informed consent from all participants. They were well-versed of the purpose of the study. A written consent was also provided to all the participants prior to participation. It was also communicated to them that confidentiality would be maintained during data collection by anonymizing all identifying information in the transcripts.

4. Data Analysis: A Thematic Discourse Analysis for the use of English-Urdu code-switching amongst students/youth

The analysis is based on information gathered from 26 survey responses from students at COMSATS University and Education University in Pakistan, 10 semi-structured interviews, and ten recordings of natural group conversations. Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model (1993) and Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) Sociocultural Linguistic Theory of Identity served as the foundation for the thematic analysis of the data, which followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. There are five primary sections in the chapter. Using Poplack's (1980) typology.

4.1- Frequency Distribution of CS Patterns

The analysis identified a total of 1,369 coded segments across all data sources.

Table 4.1: Frequency distribution of CS patterns.

Theme and Code	Frequency	CS pattern
Linguistic Context:	50	
English Proficiency	38	Fluency of English has been improved because of presentations and seminars.
Resistance	12	My parents some time tease me about mixing languages. I always prefer our national language.
Prestige:	100	
Academic Status	41	People think that code-switching make someone appears educated.
Higher Social Status	45	Yes, English is associated with higher social status.
Rural vs Urban	14	Due to lack of education and environment it differs among rural and urban students.

Structural Code-Switching:	276	
Alteration Code Switching	8	“Would you like to pass me my bottle. Mujhy bht piyas lag rahi ha.”
Communication Functions:	203	
Emphasis	10	Emphasis ky liye English use krta hon.
Friend’s dynamics	32	I often switch language during conversation with friends.
Humor & Nostalgia	21	I switch language for humor.
Politeness	27	English soften the statement.
Solidarity:		

In-group belonging	33	Mein group mein fit hony ky liye language style change krti hon.
Modernity	30	Definitely mixing language is just the vibe of our generation.
Peer Group	27	It’s almost like an unwritten rule among us to mix language when to talk.
Teacher-Student dynamics	23	Teachers k sath hum etiquette sy bat krty hein.
Insertion Code Switching	13	“Mujhe aaj ke presentation ke liye bohot tension hai.”
Full sentence switching	10	I switch full sentences.
Phrase Switching	21	Phrases are switched more frequently than complete sentences.
Single Word Switching	21	I usually switch single words.
Emotional dynamics	34	Jb mein friends ky sath cafeteria ya free hota hon to naturally English ar Urdu language switching krta hon.
Formal vs Informal	8	I normally speak in English because that's formal. Aur friends k sath it's mostly Urdu and informal.

Table 4.1 illustrates the relationship between themes and codes obtained from surveys, interviews, and discussion groups conducted with undergraduate students at COMSATS University and the Education University. The map provides a hierarchical representation of the data, starting with raw data (first stage in Braun & Clarke, 2006) which is then developed into initial codes (second

stage in Braun & Clarke, 2006) and eventually leading up to the main overarching theme of the Trojan Horse Dilemma (final result of Braun & Clarke, 2006). The map illustrates how each individual code can be grouped together into broader thematic categories that relate to the use of code-switching as a means of constructing identity for youth in Pakistan.

4.2. Initial Coding Layer of Raw Data

The thematic map starts with raw data from participant comments. Each verbal excerpt illustrates a lived experience of how students move back-and-forth between English and Urdu on a daily basis. The initial coding layer has created a framework which will be used to analyse the instances of code-switching identified in the data set.

4.2.1 Theme Development: Solidarity

Solidarity is the main theme that can be drawn from the initial coding effort. Within this theme, five sub-codes are identified i.e. Peer Group; Belongingness in Group; Friendship Dynamics; Humor and Nostalgia; and Teacher-Student Dynamics. Survey data indicate that 33 participants noted that they changed their language style to fit in with their peers, with support from the quote *Mein group mein fit hony ky liye language style change krty hon* (I change my language style to fit with my group). Furthermore, 27 respondents stated that using code-switching was an unwritten rule among peers; 21 participants noted that they used language-switching for humour. The frequency of these coding instances indicates that the Solidarity Theme is the primary motivator for code-switching.

4.2.2 Theme Development: Privilege

The privilege theme constitutes the second primary grouping of themes in the data; subcategories of privilege are Academic Prestige, High Social Prestige, Modernity, and Proficiency in English (e.g. speaking English). Also, one other contextual code area was added; that area is Rural vs. Urban. In the survey data, 41 participants agreed that when one engages in code switching they appear to be well educated. In addition, 45 participants specifically mentioned that speaking or using English is associated with high social prestige. Also, 30 participants indicated that code switching is “the vibe of our generation” and that mixing language and code switching is an important aspect of contemporary youth culture and being current with the times. The Rural vs. Urban code has a smaller number of responses,

14; however, this sub-code provides some contextual nuance by acknowledging that the code switching practices in a geographically rural area will be different than the code switching practices in an urban area and that these differences are due in part to the educational backgrounds of the students in both areas. It is noted that students from rural areas are likely to be less exposed to English, and therefore, the patterns of code switching for students from rural areas would differ from the patterns of code switching for students from urban areas. This theme supports Bourdieu's theory of Linguistic Capital. In effect English functions as a marker of class privilege and is, therefore, considered a gatekeeper to economic opportunity.

4.2.3 Linguistic Hegemony and Resistance theme

The Linguistic Hegemony and Resistance theme captures the tension and ambivalence of participants as it relates to English-Urdu code-switching. There were 38 participant responses expressing that academic activities (e.g., presentations/presentations) improved their English-speaking ability; however, 12 participant responses indicated resistance to code-switching. A participant noted that their parents “have a habit of teasing me about mixing languages” and reiterated that “I always prefer our national language” (meaning that this participant made a conscious decision to use Urdu over English). Similarly, the Emotional Dynamics response code had 34 responses indicating that code-switching occurs naturally (i.e., through relaxed settings), as noted in the participant's commentary: “When I'm in a cafeteria and free, I naturally switch between the English and Urdu languages.” Although responses under the Formal versus Informal code were infrequent (only 8 total responses), they are critical, as one participant noted, “I normally speak in English because that is formal.”

4.2.4 Trojan Horse Dilemma

The Central Overarching Theme is the Trojan Horse Dilemma as represented by “Trojan Horse” from Work of Cooke and mentioned by participant in their expressions related to learning

the English language in a post-colonial country like Pakistan. "English is like a Trojan horse; you think you're learning a language, but you're actually learning about culture and way of thinking." As a result of their mixed feelings about learning English, participants pursue learning

English so that they can speak the language fluently for both status and function (socio-linguistic diversity), and in addition, will use Urdu as a form of resistance to their prior colonial experiences while navigating through many different identity spaces.

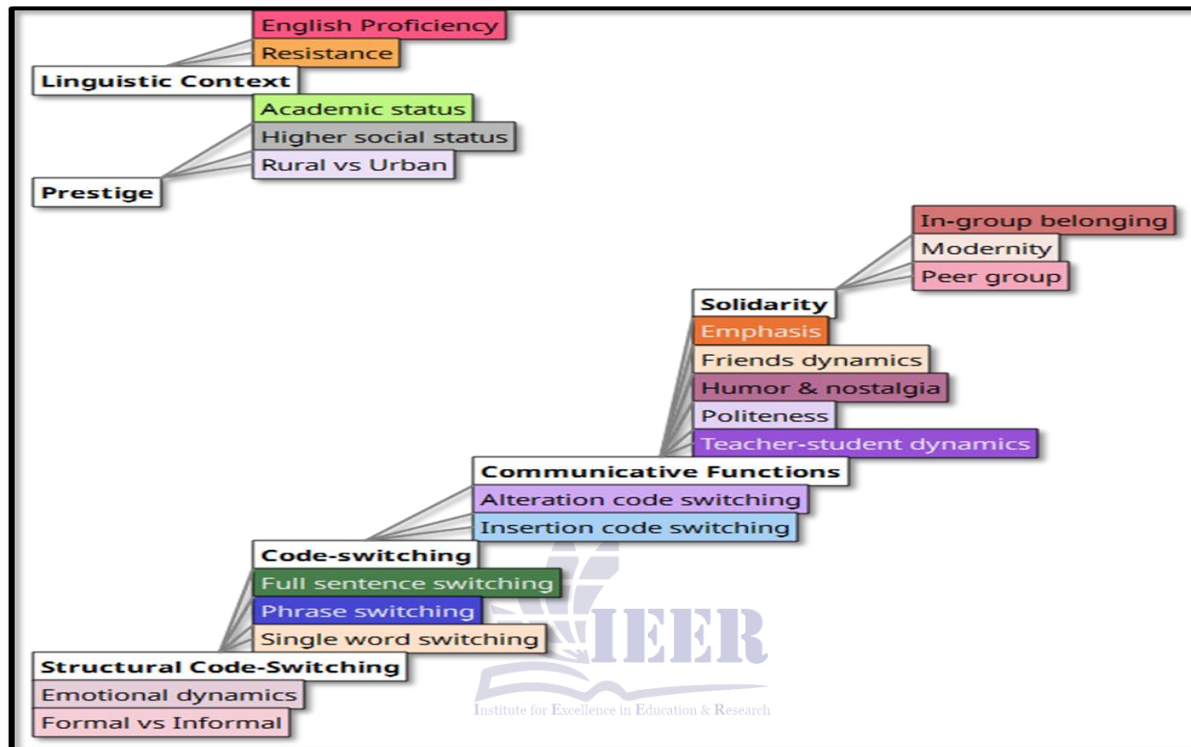


Figure 4.1: Thematic Hierarchy Code switching of main categories

Figure 4.1 is a thematic hierarchy map generated from the coded dataset. It is explanatory to the structural relationship between raw codes and the five overarching thematic categories, that are identified through Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis. The map organized twenty individual codes into five primary themes. These themes are Linguistic Context, Prestige, Solidarity, Communicative Functions, and Structural Code-Switching. According to the thematic hierarchy, the Linguistic Context captures English Proficiency and Resistance. While the Prestige includes Academic Status, Higher Social Status, and Rural vs. Urban distinctions. It is obvious that in Solidarity groups Modernity, Peer Group, Emphasis, Friends Dynamics, Humor and Nostalgia, Politeness, and Teacher-Student Dynamics; Communicative Functions includes

Alteration and Insertion Code-Switching. While the Structural Code-Switching accommodates Full Sentence Switching, Phrase Switching, Single Word Switching, Emotional Dynamics, and Formal vs. Informal registers. The hierarchical analysis discusses that discrete linguistic behaviors and social orientations collectively converge to reflect the multidimensional nature of English-Urdu code-switching as an identity-driven practice among Pakistani university students.

4.3 Cross-Institutional and Inter-Method Analysis

To understand and making a comparison between the two university, the study made a cross institutional and inter-method analysis of the data collected. The analysis is explained through table 4.2 with details as follows:

Table 4.2: Code comparison among groups

Theme and Code	Group interview	Interview COMSATS	Interviews EDUCATION
Academic status	14	10	17
Alteration code switching	4	1	3
Emotional dynamics	16	11	7
Emphasis	6	3	1
English Proficiency	12	14	12
Formal vs Informal	2	5	1
Friends dynamics	13	6	13
Full sentence switching	3	4	3

Higher social status	17	14	14
Humor & nostalgia	8	5	8
In-group belonging	8	13	12
Insertion code switching	5	4	4
Modernity	9	10	11
Peer group	9	7	11
Phrase switching	5	8	8
Politeness	9	5	13
Resistance	7	4	1
Rural vs Urban	5	6	3
Single word switching	5	6	10
Teacher-student dynamics	8	7	8

Table 4.2 presents the frequency distribution of twenty codes across three data sources group interviews, COMSATS semi-structured interviews, and Education University semi-structured interviews. Several patterns emerge from this comparative analysis. First, themes related to prestige and social status, particularly Higher Social Status and Academic Status, maintained consistently high frequencies across all three sources, confirming that the association between English proficiency and social mobility is a deeply embedded and institution-independent perception among Pakistani university students. Second, notable inter-institutional differences were observed in Emotional Dynamics (Group: 16, COMSATS: 11, Education University: 7) and Politeness (Education University: 13, Group: 9, COMSATS: 5), suggesting that emotional expression through code-switching is more natural

in spontaneous peer interaction, while politeness-oriented switching is more prominent in the formal academic culture of a teacher-training institution. Third, Resistance to English hegemony was markedly higher at COMSATS (7) than at Education University (1), indicating that students at the latter institution may have more fully internalized the prestige value of English or felt less comfortable articulating opposition in an interview setting. Finally, structural switching patterns – including insertion, phrase, single-word, and full-sentence switching were distributed relatively evenly across all sources, reinforcing the conclusion that code-switching is a pervasive and naturalized linguistic practice rather than a context-specific behavior. Taken together, these patterns suggest that while the motivations and emotional dimensions of code-switching vary by institution and data collection method, its

fundamental role as a tool of identity construction and social positioning remains consistent across both universities. To conclude, the researcher asserts that Emotional Dynamics appeared far more frequently in group interviews than in individual interviews. It confirms that emotional expression through code-switching is a naturalistic peer behavior rather than a consciously reported practice. The Teacher-Student Dynamics remained consistent across all sources, establishing the university classroom as a stable and universal site of linguistic identity negotiation.

5. Conclusion

This study validates that English-Urdu code-switching among Pakistani university students is not merely a communicative strategy. It is, but a dynamic site of identity construction, social positioning, and ideological negotiation. The data analysis through tables and figures highlighted extensively a persuasive visual representation of the sociolinguistic dynamics influencing contemporary discourse, with the quest for elevated social status serving as the definitive foundation of linguistic conduct. This desire is closely linked to the high frequency of Academic status and English Proficiency, which suggests that speakers see language as more than just a way to communicate, they see it as an important tool for gaining intellectual respect and moving up the social ladder. Interestingly, the structural mechanics of communication like switching between single words and phrases play a secondary, supportive role. They are like the small gears that make bigger social performances possible. In the end, the distribution shows that people often want to move up in social and professional hierarchies more than they want to focus on the more functional or traditional parts of speech, like the differences between rural and urban areas or open acts of resistance. The socio-economic factor of code-switching was reflected in the way in which the participants talked about differences in terms of English competency and access among individuals belonging to different social classes. The participants who belonged to poor economic backgrounds experienced higher levels of cultural discomfort and used more direct

strategies of resistance than those from rich backgrounds. This result is in line with the work of (Jabeen 2019), who examined how English supremacy is maintained through an unjust education system, whereby English language mastery is the privilege of only a few people. There are many significant theoretical implications of the research done by this study. Firstly, they serve to validate (Myers-Scotton's 1993) theory of the Markedness Model in which the researcher asserts that the choices made during code-switching are rational, motivated by the speakers' identities, and influenced by the particular context of communication. It is seen from the findings of the present research that the participants in the study rationally choose different language varieties depending on whether it is appropriate or expected in the context in question. Second, the results agree with (Bucholtz & Hall's 2005) theory of sociocultural linguistics as the theory of identity, in which identity is seen as an emergent, interactive process. Participants in the present study were not characterized by having stable identities but rather created them dynamically during each code-switching instance. Emergent aspects of identity were most noticeable when participants described switching from "university me" to "home me" as different selves using different linguistic styles. Lastly, the research adds to the body of knowledge on linguistic imperialism within the context of postcolonial settings through the empirical demonstration of the 'Trojan horse' dilemma among university students in Pakistan. The study shows how the ideological baggage carried with English is not only externally imposed but also contested and appropriated by its own users.

On the basis of the findings of the current study, it can be said that it is the representation of youth linguistic identity among university students. A number of recommendations are proposed for future students and researchers. First of all, educators should consider codeswitching as a meaningful practice of identity building rather than considering it as a lack in language competence. Lecturers may introduce bilingual or multilingual teaching strategies that allow scholars to express themselves freely while getting

proficiency in both languages, i.e. English and Urdu. Syllabus developers are encouraged to make language policies that allow multilingual realities. Instead of imposing monolingual culture and educational institutes should promote a balanced approach where different languages are valued as equal linguistic resource. Workshops and seminars should be conducted to help scholars in the understanding of sociolinguistic importance of codeswitching. These kinds of initiatives can lower the stigma linked with mixed language implementation. It is recommended for future studies to explore the digital communication sites where codeswitching is widely practiced. This will help learn the developing language patterns among youth in a contemporary manner.

6. References

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