

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF URDU ENGLISH CODE SWITCHING IN PAKISTANI DRAMAS: A SOCIOLINGUISTICS INVESTIGATION

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Abstract

This research examines the Urdu-English code-switching in Pakistani TV dramas from a sociolinguistics lens, investigating how language uses identity, class, gender, and generational affiliation. The study utilizes the theoretical framework of Conversational Code Switching introduced by John J Gumperz (1982). It scrutinizes the specific scenes from the drama "Chaudhary and Sons", inspecting the bilingual speech of an elderly female character who alternates between Urdu and English. A qualitative method involving discourse analysis design is used to explore the function of language to communicate humor, power, and social accommodation. The analysis underscores several major functions of code switching given by Gumperz, including quotation, reiteration, interjection, and message qualification. It communicates that these linguistic changes are not arbitrary but socially navigate role shifts. The character's English marked by a Punjabi accent in mixed discourse illustrated cultural negotiation between conventional identity and contemporary declaration. The results indicate that in the context of Pakistani media, bilingualism transcends mere class aspirations; it serves as a dynamic manifestation of identity across generational and cultural boundaries. The research ultimately demonstrates that code switching within media language serves as a vibrant confirmation of the evolving linguistic landscape in Pakistan, with hybridity marking resilience, adjustment, and the continuous development of social identity.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Code-switching, Urdu-English bilingualism, Identity, Pakistani Dramas.

Introduction

Language is the main source of communication in the world. It is the marker of identity, our social relations, and culture. An individual can use more than one language in their communication. The phenomenon of using more than one language is called Code switching or Code mixing. Pakistan is a country of linguistic diversity and plurality. The vibrant sociolinguistic landscape has been created in Pakistan due to the coexistence of different languages. The code mixing and code switching of Urdu and English in Pakistan has become a trend. English is usually associated with modernity, the elite class, and is considered the language associated with prestige. Urdu speakers are often assumed to middle class, less educated people despite the fact that Urdu is our national language and identity. This mixing and switching of languages is often reflected in Pakistani dramas to give a clear picture of Pakistani society. The characters directing such a type of linguistic boundaries highlight social tensions, humor, and the classist system in society. Gumperz(1982) states that conversational code switching is actually the coexistence of two different speech segments from two different grammatical systems. Usually, in a conversation, a speaker uses two consecutive sentences to convey the message. The shift from one sentence to another causes him to shift from one language to another, either to make his message comprehensible or to respond to the listener.

The changes in the Pakistani society are reflected through the multidimensional function of language. It exhibits that the language is not restricted to any specific function. Bilingualism plays an important role in identity formation in different social contexts and emotional backgrounds. It has been delineated by employing the English language. Bourdieu gave the theory of Linguistic Capital, which explains professionalism and social mobility. The Pakistani drama characters using English in conversation demonstrate their class superiority and urge to blend in the modern world (Kanwal, Rashid, & Khan, 2025). Code mixing has become a common endeavor for communication in Pakistani dramas. It serves several functions beyond communication. It is the sociolinguistic feature of personality and society that marks the development of identity, a base for cultural nuances, and an area to discuss the sea change in generations (Hamid et al., 2025).

This research emphasizes pattern, form, types, and communicative role of the language to carry out the sociolinguistics analysis of the Urdu-English code switching and mixing in Pakistani Entertainment dramas. This paper closely observes the impact of code switching and how its behavior varies in the Pakistani context and television dramas by the factors of age, gender, and class. These interferences of languages reflect the linguistic diversity of Pakistan.

This study conducts a deeper analysis that how the television discourses are shaping Pakistan's complex bilingual identity in significant media. This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the social meanings reflected by code switching and code mixing across age, gender, and social classes in Pakistan.
2. To determine the impact of bilingualism in Pakistani dramas on our social identity and class distinction.
3. To analyze the influence of the use of English and Urdu on generational language patterns.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is that it explores how code switching and mixing between Urdu and English mirror the social meanings related to age, gender, and social class. It helps us to have a close look that how the bilingualism in Pakistani television dramas is shaping identity, power relations, and cultural hybridity. Linguistic preferences in television reflect how the blend of the English and Urdu languages is influencing the perception of the use of languages. This study also displays how the popular discourse is representing and creating the wrong narratives regarding languages, prestige, and class culture. In addition, it reveals and confines the importance of language as a tool of communication. Furthermore, the explication of modern linguistic patterns has practical implications and suggestions for language policy and television dramas.

Research Gap

Many studies have analyzed Urdu-English code switching in Pakistani political speeches, youth speeches in Pakistani dramas, classrooms, and social media interactions; limited attention is paid to how the elderly characters in television dramas are portrayed as bilinguals. Their language hints at and investigates identity crisis, personality issues with humor, emotional sensitivity, and the urge to blend among the youth. Code switching has been focused on as an indicator of modernity and education among younger speakers, but the linguistic struggles of older generations to get accepted by society and youngsters have been overlooked. The use of English with Urdu in one of the regional Punjabi accents welcomes a unique sociolinguistics phenomenon. The adaptation of this phenomenon of code switching also allows the elders to travel back to their young age, reflect on the sense of humor and identity negotiation in the conversation. It is a sign of how elderly

characters in Pakistani dramas and society are using code-switching as an instrument to get inclusion and freedom of self-expression in a multilingual society.

Literature Review

English-Urdu code mixing and code switching is a researched domain in the Pakistani context. But, in Pakistani dramas, this study needs more attention and care. As dramas are the portrayal of society, so the amalgamation of English and Urdu in dramas reflects social linguistic variations and constraints. These phenomena are indicative of identity formation, social distribution, and competence. Televisions have become another medium to showcase this phenomenon, where code mixing and switching highlight class distinction, age, and gender desire to speak English with Urdu to adjust among youth. The ideas of professionalism, globalism, and prestige are associated with English speakers. These research conclusions summarize the sociolinguistics changes and societal viewpoint towards English (Mahmood, 2020, as cited in Khan, Ilyas, & Mustamar, 2025). Code switching in Pakistan is pertinent to the idea and phenomenon of bilingualism (Khan, 2014).

Inter-sentential and intra-sentential are the two main categories of code switching and code-mixing dominating in Pakistan's linguistic context. Intra-sentential code-switching means that the elements of two different languages occur in the same utterance or sentence. The example is given in the study as "*I need to buy some samaan for dinner*". And inter-sentential code switching is the use of two different languages in alternating sentences. It is transpired between sentences as shown in the dialogue: "*I will call you later. Mjhe abhi kaam hai*" (Awan, Begum, & Khan, 2025). Gumperz in 1982 discussed many examples of conversational code switching in his book "Discourse Strategies" and he introduced many major functions of conversational code switching, like allusion and recipient details to recapitulation, communication criteria, and individual stance. In Pakistan, the importance of language is observed through this ideology that the proficiency and accent of the language should be like the British and impressive (Zafar, 2024).

The Pakistan television drama industry is one of the growing fields in Pakistan. These dramas reflect the social realities. —Zindagi Gulzar Hai, by Umera Ahmad, is a renowned example of such realities. The knot of Urdu English is very precisely illustrated in this. This linguistic version exhibits the phenomenon of code switching and mixing for the progress of a character and paints the harsh reality of society towards class and gender bias by analyzing it socially (Iftikhar, 2024). As Pakistan has a multilingual social history, Urdu-English code switching is one of the ordinary features of it. This is displayed in urban discourse and popular television dramas. Zindagi Gulzar hai has been elucidated in many studies to talk about language shift between Urdu and English and to show how this shifting is aiding individuals to deal with emotions, identify their identities, and understand semantic meanings (George et al., 2025). Saleem and Anwar stated in 2025 that class-based language patterns have been developed to judge anything according to the choice. These linguistic patterns can make an occupation taboo and can also make it sound sophisticated. These socioeconomic practices are labeling people's lives. Language and identity have always been the most controversial issues of Pakistan since its birth (Bangash, 2018).

The book, "Language and symbolic power," discusses how social institutions like school, administration, media, and legislation empower and promote the use of a particular language, which they associate with power and prestige, and neglect and corner all other dialects and languages. He stated that if one language has to be selected for discussion among two, it should be the one which achieved the status of being legitimate. Others should be marked and recognized as illegitimate languages (Bourdieu, 1991). Riaz in 2019 stated that the employment of declarative,

imperative, and interrogative English phrases in Urdu demonstrates that it is used to convey meanings. The artists are considered as of great social and cultural capital that can converge their language with English phrases (Shakir & Saeed, 2021). Trudgill in 1972 realized that people are using language not only for communication but also to demonstrate their social identity and class. He carried out the research on Norwich people, after which he introduced the terms Covert Prestige and Overt Prestige. According to his studies, covert speech is used by the WC of society to show solidarity, muscularity, and local culture. While overt speech is used by the women of the society to show their upper-class, literacy rate, and advancement. Similarly, in Pakistan, English is considered the language of the upper class and used to show supremacy, while Urdu and other regional dialects reflect social belonging and middle-class status. A study investigated the code mixing in the Pakistani dramas by analyzing it stylistically and gave the findings that the characters are the main providers and propagators of linguistic variations in the society. These variations are indicated by their social class, education, and cultural assimilation. The incorporation of English phrases and words in the Urdu language in the modern age of post-colonialism represents and advocates the power of the people who were once colonized. So, the people are using the language of colonizers to answer them in their own language. This use of power is not confined only to the field of politics but also encapsulates the social settings (Rafi & Iqbal, 2022). Social media impacts on contemporary language can be seen by the addition of new words, changes in accent, formation of initials, and popularization and integration of the English and Urdu languages (Maryam et al., 2025).

The changing of speech patterns and language of a person in a specific context and environment is called code switching. In Pakistani dramas, the unprivileged characters are seen changing their language and accent according to the social context, specifically while talking to the rich. This phenomenon of code switching is very popular in dramas where poor characters adapt such behaviors to fit in with the upper class in society. This sudden shift in language due to the prevalent sociolinguistic convention portrays a deprived and less fortunate background who have to modify its vocabulary and accent when interacting with elites. There are different reasons for such behaviors. These include the desire to be accepted as the educated, classy, and subtle or to ignore the biases and discrimination due to the socioeconomic status one has (Yousaf et al., 2023). The addition and popularization of new words, abbreviations, and hybrid expressions to the English vocabulary in Pakistan is one of the most obvious influences of social media.

A new trend of shifting and transforming the language according to the social context in Pakistani dramas is very noticeable. The drama characters very conspicuously shift their registers to high status and adopt jargon according to the situation. This shows the multilingual behaviors of the Pakistani people and their ability to shift from one language to another. This is the bold defiance towards the traditional linguistic hierarchies (Ullah et al., 2025). As the researcher also aims in this study to focus on the age factor, that how linguistic variations are affecting the different age groups, a study conducted on such a topic by Ghazanfar et al. in 2024 found that the communication skills of different age groups are absolutely influenced by the contemporary social and texting forms.

Methodology

The study uses a qualitative research design to identify the profound sociolinguistic implications within the bilingual speech of a female elderly character in a Pakistani television drama. A qualitative approach allows a detailed and nuanced comprehension of the data. It is subjective and interpretative in nature. It relates the researcher to real-life experiences. In sociolinguistics, it

advocates that language is not an isolated text or data to study but a social and cultural practice. In this study, this approach helps researchers to unveil the sociolinguistic meanings of the elderly female character of Pakistani dramas that is bilingual and speaks in a Punjabi accent. This research design will help to explore and interpret her identity crises, nostalgic and humorous behavior, and her desire to move back to her youth. This helps researchers to deal with the thematic and textual analysis rather than dealing with numerical data. The data collected through this approach conveys underlying meanings of language in society, revealing how society and cultural practices shape language.

The data is analyzed through the lens of sociolinguistics theory. It decodes the interpretations of meanings, code switching in the Pakistani context, and the role of language in society, instead of numerical frequency. The theory of Code switching as a conversational and social strategy, given by Gumperz in 1982, is drawn on the data to analyze it. This theory helps to operate identity, strengthen solidarity, and recognize the position of an individual in the social setting. The researcher evaluated the data through textual and thematic analysis to translate the reasons for code switching, the role of humor associated with older characters' language, and linguistic hybridity in generations.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on John J. Gumperz's groundbreaking theory of Conversational Code switching. According to this theory, Gumperz identified and put forward that code switching in conversation is not a deficiency of someone's language pool, but it is actually a unique type of social practice in which speakers use two different types of languages and dialects in the same conversation. Discourse Strategies, written by Gumperz in 1982, attempts to deal with the issues of linguistic interpretations. The main idea put forward by Gumperz was contextualization cues, a linguistic idea by which the speaker can understand the contextual, pragmatic, and social meaning of the utterances. This makes code-switching an essential phenomenon of conversation, rather than just the chaotic intermingling of two languages. Gumperz explained several functions of code switching. These include quotation, addressee specification, interjection, reiteration, message qualification, and personalization in opposition to objectivization. Quotation refers to the process of copying another person's exact words in a different language, in a different context, and tonality. In the process of addressee specification, a speaker makes a shift in his speech and dialect from one language to another to grab the attention of the listener. Another function of code switching, given by Gumperz, is Interjection. These are the short, expressive words and phrases inserted in the conversation as expressions. They ensure the natural flow and emotional depth of the conversation. Reiteration is associated with repeating the message in another language for clear understanding and comprehension. Researcher employed these functions of code switching in Pakistani television dramas to highlight hierarchies and boundaries formed in the society due to English-Urdu code switching. When the elderly woman character speaks in Urdu English codes with a Punjabi accent, her attitude shows her struggle to have her identity in the youth-oriented linguistic society. It showcases the assertion of authority with the color of humor.

Data Analysis

The data is centered on the language competence of an elderly female character who is lively and multilingual and constantly switches between Urdu and English in a Punjabi accent from Pakistani TV drama, "Chaudhary and Sons". Her language usage portrays the dynamic relationships between humor, identity, and intergenerational accommodation. Through the analysis of her interactions,

this study demonstrates how multilingual practices on Pakistani television serve as means of identity negotiation, critique of society, and humor. This analysis employs Gumperz's (1982) model of conversational code-switching functions to explain the sociolinguistic significance of Dadi's language practice. She preserves her traditional values but claims humor, authority, and modernism by employing her hybrid language as a social strategy and a communicative tool, the analysis suggests.

Function of Code- Switching

Code switching in Pakistani dramas is an essential sociolinguistic resource. In —Chaudhary and sons drama, it acts as a tool that allows characters to move between social meanings, identity, and relations. The use of exaggerated alternating codes between Urdu and English is observed in Dadi's speech in her specific Punjabi-accented style, which conveys several communicative functions. Dadi, who is intelligent and lively, elderly character who dominates the discourse through her humor, authority, and inter-generational accommodation. Extracting from Gumperz's (1982) taxonomy of conversational functions, this section of research explores that bilingualism is not just a linguistic accident rather it is a social strategy to deal with multigenerational groups.

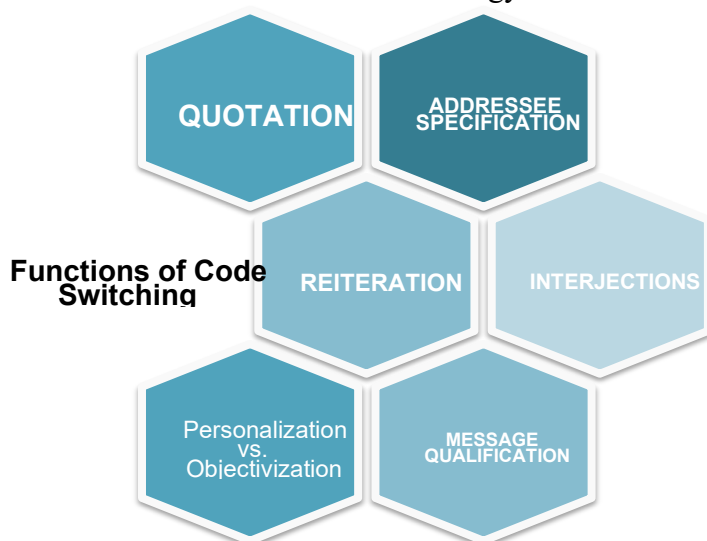


Figure 1: Functions of code switching by John J. Gumperz

Quotation

One of the main functions of the code switching in Dadi's speech is quotation. In this function, the speaker directly quotes phrases from socially prestigious and culturally modern discourse. It is the imitation of phrases from another language to exaggerate meanings. This lexical borrowing is not unintentional, but they are deliberately selected by the individual to get associated with prestige and the upper class. There are gestures in conversations that include tone, mood, and choice of vocabulary and strategy of emphasis. These indicators are called conversation cues (Gumperz, 1977).

In Dadi's case, she quotes the English phrases from elitist language. In one of the instances, she exclaims, *How very rude of you?* another, *Oh my god*, in which she deliberately chooses idiomatic expressions traditionally associated with Western rules, etiquette, and youth culture. These

quotations indicate that she is upset with the behavior of one of the younger members of the family. Her utterances are social commentaries in social hierarchies where English symbolizes class and social rank. In her scenes, her language presents generational awareness. Her quoted phrases vocalize urban modern elites, but her unique Punjabi accent put her in a situation of self-expression. In this way, she somehow tries to negotiate and express her identity by talking to younger and modern speakers in code switching, maintaining her distinctness in her talking style. Her listeners perceive her as an active elderly female character playing with language to remain socially up to date instead of a boring outsider of a language.

Addressee Specification

The Addressee specification serves as the most distinct and formative function of code switching. The speakers shift from one language to another to communicate with interlocutors. Dadi's effortless switch from the Urdu code to the English code while talking to the younger generation symbolizes her movement between generations and evokes nostalgia. As she says to her granddaughter, "*Listen, Burgandy na is dfa istemal kr len hm*. The use of the English verb '*listen*,' expresses how she blurs the generational boundary by breaking the barrier of the youth linguistics register. Her communication style indicates her sense of responsibility while talking to the addressee. It shows that she reads the linguistic choice of the addressee. These are the features of interpersonal communication that show her emotional and linguistic analysis. Her speech shows the fusion of love, affection, and connectedness instead of formality. The interaction between Dadi and the younger generation reflects that selection of language signals generational empathy, showing that English is the bridge to fill the communication gap. A study was conducted in the area of translation from Arabic to English, in which some of the main terms of English, such as goodbye, welcome my friend, hi, Hello, etc, were copied as it is (Alaiyed, 2020).

Humor is also the prominent feature of Dadi's speech. This gets embedded in her speech due to the difference in her age and her contemporary language usage. Like, "*Billo boy, Pyaari pari! Be honest, Ugly bakra*" are her English phrases which convey the sense of humor. These phrases sound melodramatic and hilarious but enduring. She is actually exercising her own autonomy through the code-switching practice. Dadi's address specifications allow her to decide her linguistic code and switch accordingly, aiding her to acknowledge and negotiate her own identity.

Interjections

Interjections are short, formulaic, expressive, and spontaneous English phrases to fill the pauses and gaps. She implies phrases like "*Oh my God, absolutely, gorgeous, okay, etc.*" to fill the gaps. These phrases are implied as a switch of code from Urdu to English. She animates her speech by adding these interjections to reflect modern linguistic patterns. In case of excitement or frustration, she inserted some words with overemphasis, and over-stressed and stretched vowels such as "*Ohhhh Myyy Goddd*", generating immediate humor. The emotional spontaneity, topped with cultural performance, is the portrayal of culturally and linguistically charged moments. These interjections cannot be named and considered as random insertions, but actually, they are a specific feature of the residents of urban areas. The use of the functions of codeswitching, such as personalization and interjections, is similar in both digital and spoken discourse. Some functions are less visible due to online written text, such as reiteration, addressee specification, and referential functions (Ting, 2020). Her conscious or unintentional effort of using Lingua Franca of the younger generation marks that these injections enact as linguistic accommodation at this age group. Her speaking style encapsulates the idea of wrapping English words in a Punjabi accent

arises humor and makes those words particularly hers. Dadi's code switching embodies a linguistic hybridization that causes authenticity and performativity through interjections. Her code-switching indicates that she is rooted in her cultural and traditional values.

Reiteration

Reiteration is the imitation or replication of the message into another language. This function is performed to emphasize, stress, and elucidate the message. The repeated use of English phrases such as *"Yes, yes, yes, little boy. We are done. You can come and pick us up"*, *Gorgeous gorgeous, very bad, rather very very sad, sit down sit down, hurry up hurry up, sure sure*, etc, symbolizes her performative linguistics cadence. The repetition of phrases in bilingual contexts often serves the function of semantic intensification, but Dadi comes with several other functions, including humor and personality negotiation. Her reiteration in English and Urdu mirrors the way Pakistani speakers use English only to show their class and style in mixed settings. When she responds to the compliments with *"Thank you, thank you."* These repetitions maximize her politeness and also mock formalities in communication, displaying her awareness regarding English as a prestige code in Pakistani society. This character is, in a true sense, the manifestation of the deeper interplay of Identity and style. She maintains her linguistic authority in mixed situations by the overuse and recurrence of English words, affirming her self-representation as well well-spoken and social person. This playfulness in her language avoids her language from sounding cold, satirical, and detached. It indicates her linguistic versatility as she copies youngsters' conversational dynamics while retaining her traditional humorous persona. So, the repetition refers to the action of belongingness in language, enabling Dadi to navigate generational and class expectations through code switching.

| Function | Example from Data (Dadi's Dialogue) |
|---|---|
| 1. Quotation | Hein, Feroz Khan kaun hai? ... My God, shaadi to tumhe vahi karni hai! |
| 2. Addressee Specification | Keep quiettt, listen, iss dafa Burgundy hum istemal kar lein kya? |
| 3. Interjection / Insertion | Oh my God, drink it please... You look very weak! |
| 4. Reiteration | Bohat acha hai – it's really good! |
| 5. Message Qualification | Woh serious nahi tha – I mean, he was just joking. |
| 6. Personalization vs. Objectivization | Hamari English ka postmortem baad mein kar lena. |
| 7. Humor and Irony (Extended Function) | Special maal to aise keh rahe ho jaise hum tumse safaid powder ki purian mangwate hain! |
| 8. Class Assertion (Contextual Function) | Do you have any anti-aging treatment for my wrinkles? |

Table 1: Examples of functions of Code Switching

Message Qualification

Another major function of code switching is Message qualification. Code switching adds a reflective and contextual framework to the utterances of the interlocutor. Dadi often precedes her Urdu claims with English fillers like *“Hurry up, you know, I mean, actually, absolutely”*, shaping her speech into a conversational style akin to contemporary practices. For example, she states that, *“Hmen koi modern sai or delicate sai earings dikhaie”*, in another statement, she says, *“Excuse me, please answer me. I am interested in getting some good facial”*. In these sentences, the English tag, *“Excuse me”*, is the meta-linguistics reflective comment which indexes the speaker’s awareness about the emotional and cultural connection and usage of language. It invites the listeners to compare cross-generational values. This language blending situates Dadi both as a place of observer as well a participant in the dynamic cultural modifications around her. She is not just a social commentator of generations but also brings them to life through her language, style, and accent. In the observation of Facebook wall posts of 24 students, 21% message qualification was observed (Ting, 2020). This message qualification shows her capability for meta-communication, indicating the nature of social change due to language. This function of code switching enriches and embellishes her dialogues and communication. This shifting also reflects her awareness of narrative shift in cultural context by the insertion of English words in her Urdu that shape her language according to the modern discourse. With the vibrant use of these linguistic markers, Dadi claims to have linguistic variation and modernity. Her linguistic tags introduce rhythm, sensitivity, and intimacy, displaying the consciousness of the generations. In Pakistani sociolinguistics, where English marks modernity and social status, her intermixing makes linguistic hybridity a source of self-expression.

Personalization vs. Objectivity

Gumperz, in his theory, introduced and distinguished two main points: personalized and objectivized modes of speech. The personalized speech reveals emotion, subjectivity, and intimacy, while the objectivized mode suggests authoritativeness and detachment. This dynamic is vividly demonstrated in Dadi’s speech. The code mixing and switching of Urdu English is so internalized in her that she uses these switches in her every social setting, whether it be emotional, serious, or threatening. These unintentional insertions erupt and blow out humor as she says, *“Pari koi b na ly phly Dadi ko ja kr Mr.Tashi ki wedding k lie jewellery ly kr dai”*, *“Really nice, absolutely beautiful. What do you say, Pari jhumka bareli wala”* Further examples are *“Billo boy hum yhan hn parking mn. Yhan oper eagles ur rhy hn”*, *“Oh Dadi ki choti c Bumblebee”*.

It is noted that when she gets angry with anyone around her, she purely and properly talks in full English sentences. There are many instances noticed in the drama. *“Your Dadi is dead”*, *“Go away, Pari, go away”*, and *“Have you no fear of God, Zulekha”*. These utterances enact distance from emotions through the language associated with belief and self-control. Code switching provides a performative shield to the elderly female character of Dadi in the drama to hide her insecurity and vulnerability, as the assertion of authority is ensured. For her, English is the emblem of preservation of dignity when confronted with aging and generational modification. She tries to assert her power through her language, and the younger as well as the older characters often seem to be influenced by her English, which positions her at a high rank in society. As she says to the postman, *“I was the honorable principal of Hyderabad Girls High School”*. She uses the term Honorable to create the sense of authority and power. Her use of alternative codes demonstrates the way in which elder speakers try to maintain and cope with their emotional exposure, hierarchy,

and respect. Personalization and interjections were the main parts of the Facebook wall posts (Ting, 2020).

So, personalization and objectivization challenge her emotional strength. English allows her to maintain her poise and show her anger, while Urdu allows her to reflect her traditional roots. Code switching put her in the oscillations of psychology between assertion and endearment, with warmth, and between self-determination and belonging.

We Code vs. They Code Alternations

Pakistan has a multilingual society where languages often carry symbolic social meanings. In the Pakistani context, Urdu functions as “We code” representing love, affection, nurturing environment, traditions, and unity. English serves as “They code”, indicating literacy rate, prestige, and modernity. Dadi’s speech moves between these two extremes, personifying her identity recognition in society. In one of the instances when she scolds a shopkeeper for calling her khala, she says, “*Khala, ktni dfa tmhy btaya hai k ye bad manners mn aata hai. Khala khala khala krty rehty ho*”. She exercises the temporary power of modern etiquette, claiming a superior position linguistically. This shows her class consciousness and generational awareness. The book —Social Stratification of language¹ was written by William Labov in 1966. He emphasized the area of the connection between linguistic modifications and division in society. He reinforces that language is used to build differences among the social categories.

The alternations of “We code and they code¹ gave evidence of bilingualism and duality of Pakistani society. It sustains cultural validity and social mobility. Dadi’s character is a live example of this tension. She reshapes modernity according to her own feasibility through humor and her unique accent. Her language is the flawless imitation of the elites with a Punjabi accent, which indexes her Punjabi rhythm and emotions. This medium shift during conversation illustrates her gendered performance. As an old woman in a patriarchal domestic setting, Dadi takes over the English language to gain her voice and visibility. She ensures that age and gender are free from language power. Her speech is evaluating and honoring hierarchies of language. Her bilingual identity captures a wider Pakistani experience where language is not only a tool of communication but to negotiating the social identity of individuals.

Types of Code-Switching

The different linguistic forms of code-switching entail different degrees of integration of the languages. These are intra-sentential, inter-sentential, tag-switching, accentual shifting, and borrowing. Each of these is how the speakers deliberately switch between Urdu and English to produce social, emotional, or stylistic functions. For Dadi, these switches signal humor, identity management, and accommodation to a multilingual setting. If the speaker in the conversation is unable to convey their message, he/she may struggle in this regard and alternate their language to convey the message. For this purpose, code switching is frequently used as a communicative strategy (Muin, 2011).

Intra-Sentential Code-Switching

Intra-sentential code switching refers to the switching and mixing of codes within the same sentence or utterance. In “Chaudhary and sons” drama, Dadi’s speech intermixes Urdu and English languages to paint intra-sentential code switching. She integrates short English phrases and words within Urdu sentences. For instance, in episode 1, Dadi says, “*Tum achi trah janti ho k tmahri Dadi apni beauty pr koi compromise nhi krty*”. The word “beauty” in place of the Urdu word Khobsurti is the symbol of her desire to align with modernism and her linguistic hybridity. She

represents herself as a sophisticated woman of society. This type of code switching is generally observed among the middle and upper classes of Pakistani society, where English is considered the language of overt prestige and honor. Most instances of intra-sentential code switching are *“bring him out ta k hm us k hands chop chop kr sken”*.

Inter-Sentential Code-Switching

The inter-sentential code-switching involves alternating languages between two sentences. Full sentence shift is noticed in this type of code switching. In episode 4, Dadi talks to Pari in inter-sentential code switching as *“How very insensitive of you. Kesi larki ho, pariyan jaisi koi baat hi nhi tm mai”*. This sentence carries emotional depth and conveys pragmatic function. The incorporation of English in Urdu highlights Dadi’s dramatic reactions and her struggle to bridge the gap between her generation and the younger one. It represents the cultural influence and the flexibility of Dadi’s language, which frames her vocabulary across multiple social registers. The use of Urdu in different regions of Pakistan can cause conflicts in many areas. It directly challenges the national harmony (Hussain et al., 2023)

Tag Switching

According to Gumperz 1982 and Poplack 1980, the process of adding a phrase, word, or interjection from one language into the utterance of another language in an individual’s speech, acting as discourse markers, is called Tag switching. These tags are normally added to fill the gaps or pauses in the sentences like *“ok”, “right”* etc. Dadi’s speech is filled with such tags and discourse markers, such as *“Good Lord, wow, exactly, keep quieteeee(In Punjabi accent), oh my God,”* etc. These words fill the pauses and add a dramatic touch to the language. They also gave rhythmic flow and maintained the flow of speech. These interjections express humor, and her exaggerated expressions make her communication more lively and emotionally rich.

Borrowing

When the linguistic elements of one language are adapted by another language as phonological, morphological, and grammatical elements of the language, these words are named as borrowed words. This is similar to the term borrowing in lexical formation, in which a word is permanently adopted and accepted from one language to another. The only difference is that borrowing in code switching is adopted at the individual level, not at the social, cultural, or official level as in lexical borrowing. For instance, Dadi said, *“Hmari English ka postmortem baad mn kr li jie ga”*. In this sentence, the word postmortem is adopted by the Urdu language to represent a specific process. The sentence *“Ab kya kren blood pressure ki dawai ka”* indicates that the English word Blood pressure is morphologically adopted by the Urdu language. The overly exaggerated use of this type of code switching confirms the borrowing of the words and internalization of bilingual norms. Study reveals that inter-sentential and intra-sentential code switching are important alternations of the language (Kanwal, 2025). Post-colonial identity is reflected in the power of the English language in Pakistani society. These borrowed items are termed as native elements in Pakistani speech, which somehow creates identity clashes.

Accentual Modification

Dadi’s English in *“Chaudhary and Sons”* is notable because of its pronunciation style and Dadi’s accent. The unnecessary elongation of the vowel sounds and over-exaggeration of some English words are specific to her accent. She speaks English in a Punjabi accent like *“keep quietttt!”* By adopting this accent, she tries to blend in with the youth. This creates a connection among generations who consider as a fashion tool to showcase their class, identity, and modernism. This

digital age belongs to the media, and the media is the main source of awareness among people of all generations. On the other hand, it may sometimes spread negative views about identities (Nawaz et al., 2025).

This personal accent is the symbol of her identity and sense of homeliness. For her, the code switching and humor in her language gave her the reason and freedom of self-expression and emotional depth as compared to the worldview of the upper class. Similarly, Dadi's dialogue, "*Oh, my Godddd, drink it drink it pleeeaseeee!*" erupted sudden laughter with the mixture of satire and love in her speech that made everyone laugh out loud. This is exemplary to depict how she imperfectly and playfully used the English-Urdu blend to create the sense of comedy, love, and cultural identity.

Thematic Analysis

Humor as Social Strategy

Dadi's ability to speak in Urdu English codes using a Punjabi accent turns her contemporary conversation into a subtle performance, as her unintentional humor emerges as her communicative strategy. She defies sociolinguistics hierarchies by entertaining her audience with a playful blend of Urdu, English, and Punjabi phonology. When she throws her one-liner by saying, "*Special maal to aise keh rahe ho jaise hum tumse koi safaid powder ki purian mangwate hain!*" her humor subverts the artificial sophistication connected to English-speaking elites. Through laughter, she lays bare pretension and linguistically fuses herself with a vehicle of understated social commentary. Her exaggerated joyful declaration of her social positioning allows her to communicate with warmth and intimacy across generations. Rather than a marker of linguistic inadequacy, her wit is a performance of mastery over social signs, and therefore, humor is a negotiation, inclusion, and empowerment in the family and society. A relative study conducted on humor and code switching in Pakistani entertainment was framed on the theory of Attardo and Raskin's General Theory of Verbal Comedy (GTVH) argued that the strategies of code switching, writing against social norms, and overstatements are the most predominant verbal comic strategies (Riaz et al., 2025).

Identity Crisis and Generational Affiliation

Dadi's code switching discloses an active struggle of being self, and identity negotiation in the age of accelerating linguistic change. Her blending of English phrases in Urdu proposes that she is cognizant of the culture of the young generation and desires to stay tuned with the life of one living in this bilingual current generation. When she utters, "*So modern you are!*" or "*Keep quiet, please!*", her tone carries both decisive and devoted undertones reflecting her authority with warmth and affection towards the youth. It demonstrates her yearning to make an accommodation without compromising her seniority. (Ghazanfar et al., 2024) Conducted research in 2025 in the field of sociolinguistics and the effect of language on the age factor reveals that the elders prefer more formal speech. This suggests that they make their power in society through language.

This balancing of languages act reveals that the engagement of older generations with English is a sign of praise and a concern. This code switching does not seem to be a sign of displacement; rather, it highlights the determination of the elders who mold the modern language and accent according to their own rhythms. So, the bilingualism in this character serves as the cultural middle ground between nostalgia and adaptation, enabling her to maintain authority while blending with younger voices.

Class and Gender Distinction

Dadi changed the English markers of elites to the personal broach of empowerment. Her bold statement, *"I was the Honorable Principal of Hyderabad Girls High School,"* illustrates how she employs to establish class respectability as well as intellectual independence. In this instance, English becomes the lever of social mobility, authorizing her to appropriate a sense of power in spheres where elderly females are relegated to the periphery. Her bilingual voice demands respect through her education, humor, and self-confidence. It is supported by the research conducted in the field of language, gender and identity, which proposed five principles on which identity can be determined. Bucholtz in 2005 introduced the assumptions are Emergence, Positionality, Indexicality, Relationality, and Partialness. These ideas propound that empowerment and resistance shape the language choices.

Dadi's linguistic variations and fluency challenge the perception about the passivity of elders, ensuring that language implementation is beyond age and gender. Through Dadi's speech, English becomes less a colonial legacy and more a tool of self-definition, signifying a strengthened womanhood based on nobility and daily life affairs.

Media Reflection on Cultural Bilingualism

The Urdu-English coexistence as intertwined markers of culture and aspirations delineates Pakistan's complex bilingual identity through the Pakistani drama "Chaudhary and Sons". Dadi's effortless switching between the two languages embodies the nature of this coexistence, flowing, eloquent, and distinctly native. She reveals that English is no longer a language of an outsider, but it is a part of our everyday discourse in every context, including the media. It is now a regular medium of humor, social position, and solidarity. This show is the true depiction of natural linguistics mixing and switching, animating as a lived experience rather than an exception to nature and reality.

This series celebrates the changing cultural consciousness of the country by dissolving the linguistic fences. It is also showing the creativity of Pakistan's bilingualism through the series of "Chaudhary and Sons". Dadi's statements accentuate that the identity characterized by the media in Pakistan is independent of linguistic uniformity and is built by having harmony with multiplicity.

Accent and Belonging

Dadi's speaking style of specific Punjabi-accented English is the most notable part of her bilingualism, which situates her among multi-linguals. Her pronunciation, like *"Keep quieeett!"* or *"I am a very modren lady!"* marked with the elongated and stretched vowels with energetic intonations, creates a sense of warmth packed with humor. In this way, she turns imperfection into authenticity. The localization of English by Dadi transposes this language from the hegemonic language of aristocrats to the language of all, with shared emotions attached and expressed by it. Dadi owns her accent and promotes her language and accent in every situation. She claims her authority with pride, showing that confidence in the acceptance of language outweighs the precision of the language. Her accent proved that modernity is inclusive, and one does not have to compromise their accent to match the global linguistic trends and accents. She personifies confident hybridity rooted in her traditional linguistic norms, yet communicative of contemporary Pakistani identity.

Findings and Discussions

This study's findings identify that Urdu English code switching in Pakistani TV dramas functions as a potent sociolinguistic instrument that underscores the social realities. It is the process through which speakers negotiate, build, and perform several layers of identity, indicating that it is not a random stylistic practice. These features are best exemplified by the character of Dadi in one of the chosen Pakistani TV dramas, "Chaudhary and Sons". Her playful use of English Urdu blend infused in Punjabi accent displays humor, resentment, and an adaptive nature to continuously changing generational and social linguistic dynamics. Dadi's linguistic performance confronts the traditional stereotypes associated with elderly speakers as resistant to linguistic modification. Her humorous blending of Urdu and English language indicates her agency and autonomy. She reflects the effect of capitalism and cosmopolitanism through statements like *"How very rude of you!"* or *"Oh my God!"*

Her convergence with younger generations reflects not only her desire for membership but also her ability to manipulate language to maintain social presence. Her wit reframes codeswitching as a performative act that bridges the linguistic divide between the old and the new, transforming her speech into a venue for both humor and critique. This research also discloses that code switching in Dadi's discourse acts as the marker of social hierarchy and a social desire to be part of the upper class. English hints at cultural capital being the language of prestige and education. Urdu is considered the language of emotional intimacy and cultural authenticity. Dadi's confidence to set in all types of social settings is the result of her speech fluidity.

The performative assertion of class and gendered empowerment is the display of her authority. She redefines the linguistic boundaries of Pakistani society by reclaiming the linguistic space typically considered as the property of male and young speakers of Pakistani society. The tension among the Urdu-dominant speakers and English-oriented youth is perfectly captured in her speech. This generational code switching is the mirror of wider social changes in Pakistan, where digital media communication, global exposure, and English mediums of education have reshaped the hierarchies. Her effort to fit into society reflects her identity crisis and urges to travel back to her young age to have a sense of belonging. Her Punjabi-accented English, rather than being a dialect constitutes of hybrid identity. Moreover, the humor in Dadi's dialogues operates linguistic creativity as a social strategy. She was able to engage her audience emotionally with the parody of elitism, which added the bloom of humor and laughter. Through the wider lens, this drama presented the multilingual texture of Pakistani society, where Urdu and English complement each other with tense coexistence. The typical effects of postcolonial linguistics duality are displayed in the character of Dadi. But she also uses English to shatter the stereotype of English being the language of elites by adding a touch of humor to it. By displaying this bilingual practice in Pakistani drama, the media reflected the lived linguistic experience of individuals. She demonstrated the genre of linguistic resilience by internalizing this sociolinguistic practice and navigating the breach of class, gender, and age.

Conclusion

This research is based on the question that how code switching and code mixing convey social meanings across age, gender, and class. It also investigates how bilingualism shapes social identity and class disparities. It also raises the question of how different generations perceive English and Urdu, shaping linguistic attitudes with bilingual communication.

The objectives achieved through this research are Urdu English code switching in Pakistani TV drama are an exploration of identity, generational connections, and cultural transformation across age, gender, and class. This analysis discovers that bilingual discourse in the media is much more important than matters of stylistic choice. It is the strategy that acts as the social communicative function that conveys the idea of joyfulness, a sense of belongingness, and accommodation. Through the bilingual practice of an elder character, the research established language as a vehicle for negotiating modernity and maintaining cultural heritage. The linguistic choice becomes a subtle form of language performance as youngsters' project modernity and confidence through English, and the older ones, like Dadi, implement it to connect with her social roots, thus linking language behaviors with generational views and self-representation. In her narration, Urdu represents intimacy, familiarity, and emotional depth, whereas English represents aspiration, awareness, and social class. Effortlessly switching between the two languages reflected Pakistan's wider linguistic experience, where speakers maneuver through both inherited traditions and evolving societal norms. The use of English with a Punjabi accent infused authenticity, humor, and closeness in interactions, transforming linguistic hybridity from a source of conflict into a unifying force. Overall, the study argues that code switching in the Pakistani context is a society's evolving matter of discussion, neglecting the boundaries of age, gender, and class. So, it is proven that code switching is actually an innovative and adaptive demonstration of cultural resilience rather than a linguistic disorder. In depicting bilingualism as a human trait, Pakistani dramas contend that language is as much about identity and understanding as it is about language.

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