

Code-Mixing as a Marker of Gender Identity in SMS language in Pakistan

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Abstract: *This research deals with the gender based code-mixing in mobile phone SMS texting in Pakistani society. It is generally observable fact that code-mixing is used by both males and females while sending messages through their mobile phones. This research has explored the happening of code mixing i.e. mixing of the two varieties or two different languages, which can mark the gender differences in using text messages. In this research paper quantitative method is used to collect and analyze the data. One thousand non-forwarded conversational SMS were collected through random sampling of 25 males and 25 females with an equal quantity of sample from both counter parts. The findings of the study have shown that there are gender based differences in SMS language used in Pakistan on the basis of Code-Mixing in term of frequency, nature and topic & purpose of conversation. The findings are generalized for all males and females citizens of Pakistan.*

Keywords: *Code-Mixing, code-Switching, non-forward SMS.*

I. Introduction

As mentioned earlier, it is generally observed that in sending messages most of the people mix two varieties or languages during the same conversation. The observation also shows that it is usually not the code switching whether it is the code mixing used in SMS language. There is no doubt that now in most of the cases both males and females mix two varieties in sending messages to each other. According to Baron (2000: 248) there emerges a new variety which he termed as half speech and half writing. Crystal (2001) considers it a new form of communication which is more than just a mixture of speech and writing. The most important fact in this way can be generalized that it is usually used in those countries where more than two languages are spoken and where English is used as lingua franca. Weinreich (1953) is of the view that there is the emergence of a new form of language that uses the Roman scripts to suit their communicative purpose. It is interesting to know that the interaction of two languages most of the time triggers linguistic mixing of the contents and this mixing some time gives rise to a new language. Recent studies on language clearly pointed out that the speakers of two languages continue their code-mixing habit when sending text messages (Deumert and Masinyana 2008). This is because when the speakers of two languages mobile phone send messages, they get access to multiple sources of vocabulary which provides them some extra means for handling the already limited characters.

The current study is concerned with the investigation of mixes of codes of two varieties e.g. Urdu and English by both males and females. The study tries to find out whether or not code mixing is the part of text messages of the males and females of Pakistani society and which gender mixes these two varieties more than the other gender.

1. Research Questions:

- 1.1 Whether or not code-mixing is used by Pakistani males and females in their SMS?
- 1.2 Whether males use mixing of codes more than females or females use mixing of codes more than males?
- 1.3 Whether or not code-mixing is used as communicative strategy during text messages?

2. Significance of the Study:

It has been shown in previous studies that linguistic differences have been found in gender language used in SMS. It is probable to think that mixing of codes is the part of the communication of Pakistani males and females, so the current study is concerned with mixing of codes in SMS by males and females of Pakistan. Likewise, the researcher believes that the findings of this study will be very helpful for the students of sociolinguistics to explore the further aspects of code-mixing. Moreover, this particular research will open new doors for researchers to make advancement in this particular field. This research will also provide a basis for understanding reasons behind code mixing.

3. Limitation of the Study:

One of the major limitations of this study is the fact that it has focus on limited sample of the population as far as time and space is concerned. Sample audience has been selected conveniently from the university students. Another limitation of this research is that this research deals only with code mixing not, with its' another dimension i.e. code switching.

II. Literature Review

The emergence of a new technology i.e. mobile phone gave rise to a new language as there is an instant effect of the invention on the language of the society. Different reasons have been given in this context about the emergence of new form of language e.g. Crystal (2001) suggested that the limitation of characters in one message has triggered the use of new form of a language. Among bilingual speakers codes-switching and code-mixing is commonly used phenomenon. It was the Weinreich who initially discussed about this code-switching and code-mixing in 1953. He defined bilingual people as individuals who switch "from one language to the other according to appropriate changes in speech situation". Further one can see that in recent debate there is controversy in defining this term. It has been defined as the rapid sequence of several languages in a single speech. And code-mixing refers to the cases where there is mixture of grammatical items of the two languages or two varieties within the same sentence. Switching is done when there is shift of one variety from one sentence into another but mixing is normally not done with full sentences from another language with its grammar. Code-mixing is the process of mixing of elements from two languages in one utterance. According to Rabia Redouane (2005) there are two types of code-switching i.e. one is intra-sentential code-switching and inter-sentential switching. The first is concerned with the switching from one language to another whereas the other is concerned with switching within the same sentence. But the endeavor of the current study is to discover the inter-sentential switching which is actually code-mixing. Bentahila and Davies (1983) having the opinion that the,

"the shift of one code from another must be distinguished from the act of mixing the two codes together which might become a third code, codes-switching is the use of two languages within a single conversation, exchange or utterance", (Bentahila et al. 1983:302).

If one moves towards the purpose behind the code-mixing, there may be multifarious reasons i.e. in most of the cases it is the female gender which mixes two varieties because of the lack of complete access toward their non-native language. There may be another reason that there is unpredictability about the females gender, they can shuffle in any mode at any time. Further the purpose of the males behind this mixing that they want to facilitate the others or they are running with the short of time. Recent studies on language have pointed out that the speakers of two languages sending text messages continue this habit during sending text messages (Deumert and Masinyana 2008). The reason behind this is that the multilingual speakers have multiplicity of vocabulary and other language devices. In this regard, Bautista (2004) has suggested that the speakers of two languages through switching or mixing maximize the efficiency of their communication.

The purpose of this research is to determine, in mobile text messaging, the nature of language choice. To study switching in Urdu and English Code-Switching and Code-Mixing is referred as an umbrella terms. One may visualize that societies are divided, on the basis of the frequency of the languages used by their people, into monolingual, bilingual and multilingual. For the last few years the use of text messages has become a common habit of the both gender of every society. Even according to a survey most of the people living any where in this world are bilingual, so for the sake of their convenience they switch from one language to another. This is a general view about code mixing that either the switchers lack knowledge of the second language and unable to convey their complete thought in it. In a country like Pakistan, most of the people are multilingual, here the people take their first language according to their environment which may be Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Blochi, Pothohari and Siraiiki etc. Then these people learn the official language outside their home and ultimately switch to third language which is no doubt standard language i.e. English. Usually being multilingual the people have three languages but while texting they use two languages. Even now a days another trend has been emerging i.e. they are mixing the third language. It has been observed that the people use more than two languages in sending the text in which Hindi words are added for the sake of taste or may be due to the influence of Indian media.

It has been observed that there are multifarious factors are involved e.g. gender, culture, education, context and many more which are necessary for successful communication. Therefore these factors effect good communication even the gender affects communication, which have been accepted by many linguists among like Debora Tannen, Rabia Redouane and Jennifer Coates. Jennifer Coates (1986) did many researches to differentiate language and gender. She says that usually women stick to one topic for a long time and they discuss their private issues. However she is of the view that men are not prone towards discussing their private and personal affairs and they try to dominate in communication. Debora Tannen (1990) in her research points

out that women in conversation have inclination towards relationship, solidarity and intimacy whereas men need independence. According to her, there is connectivity in women's talk they ask more questions, make more request and talk about feelings and relationship. There is the focus, in their talk, on emotions, expressive styles and mixing of two languages and usually fond of high flowery language. They are more sensitive towards the feelings of others and behave more aggressively during conflicts.

Coates (1986) found women when talking to each other reveal a lot about their private lives. They also stick to one topic for long times because they are taught that they must relate to others in order to survive. They talk about people and feelings to enhance personal interaction. Lakoff (1975) is of the view that speaking of women reflects their subordinate position in society. According to her, women use more mitigators e.g. *I think, sort or, may be*, and inessential qualifiers i.e. *really happy, so beautiful*. This language makes women's speech uncertain, powerless and trivial which disqualifies them from position of power and authority.

In this research investigation, the researchers wanted to find out whether or not males and females use two codes more than the other, and what are usually their topics sending the texts messages.

III. Methodology And Procedures

1. Research methodology

The present study used quantitative method to answer the research questions and to make analysis of the code-mixing used by Pakistani males and females in their text messaging.

2. Population

The accessible population for the research was the male and female students of various universities of Lahore, Pakistan.

3. Sample

There was random sampling of 50 participants with the equal distribution of 25 female and 25 male students from the universities of Lahore, Pakistan.

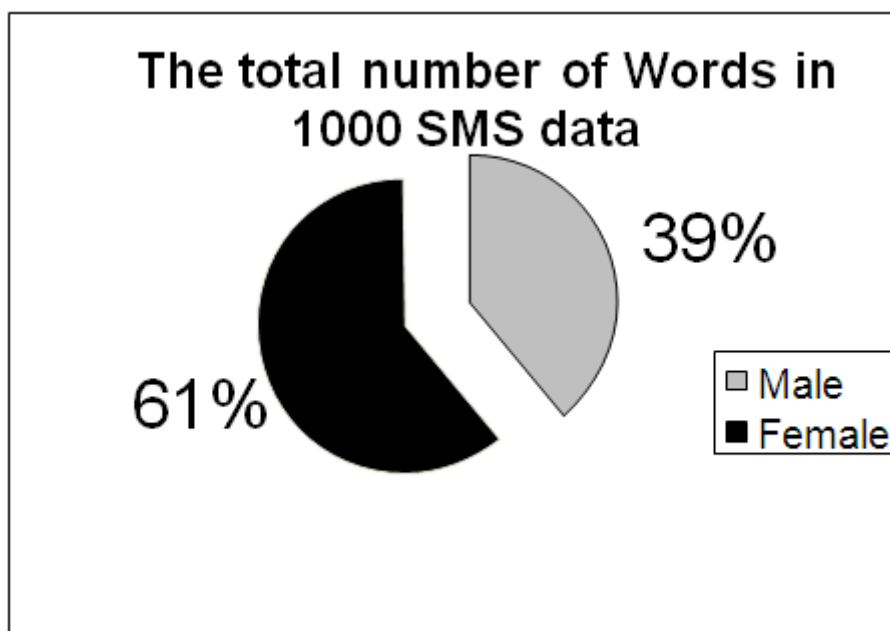
4. Data Collection

1000 messages were collected from both males and females after deleting the forward messages to obtain the genuine communicative data. The researcher managed the confrontation of observers' paradox while collecting the data, on one hand to obtain the unbiased data the message senders were not informed plainly about the use of their texting data for the specific purpose. However, a formal permission was taken once the data was collected.

5. Data Analysis

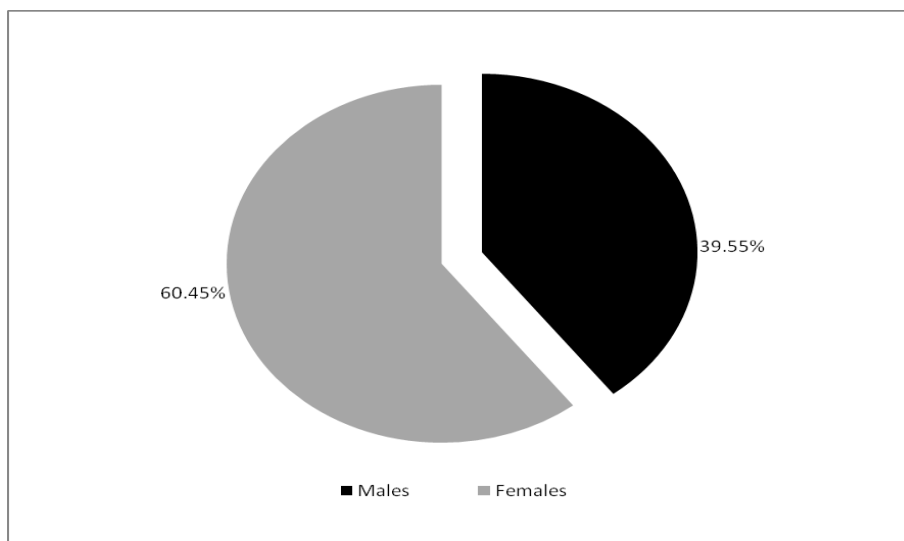
After gleaning the data from the participants, it was analyzed quantitatively by using the statistical devices frequency and percentage with the representation of different charts.

6. Interpretation of Data



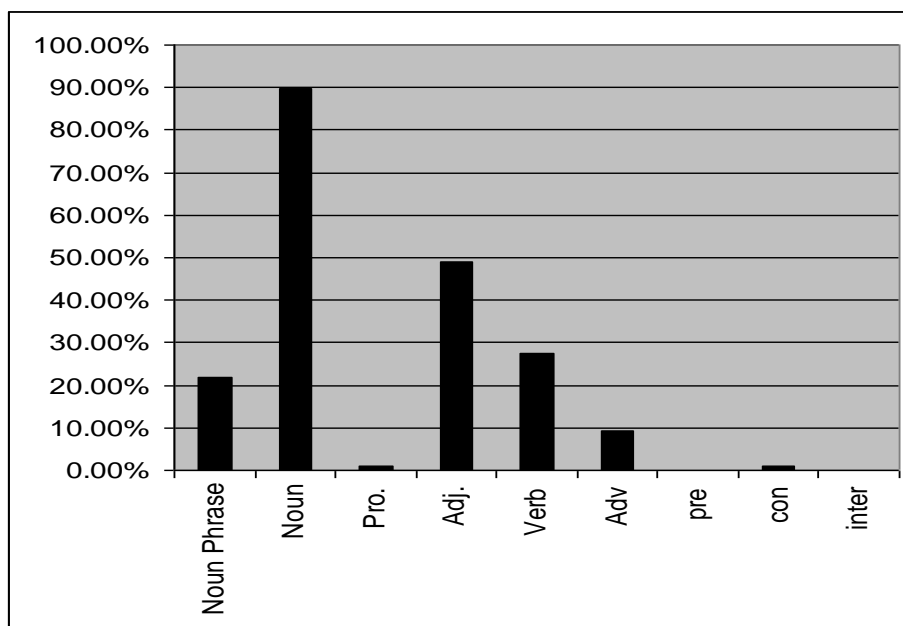
The total number of words used in 1000 SMS is 8259 out of which males have used 3210 words and females have used 5049 words. Pie chart 6.6.1 shows the percentage values of males and females regarding the total number of words used in 1000 SMS. It explains that the total number of words used by males in 1000 SMS was 39%, while the total number of words used by females in 1000 SMS was 61%. Both males and females

collectively have used 8.25 words per SMS. Males have used 6.42 words per SMS while females have used 10.09 words per SMS. So, females use more words in SMS than males.



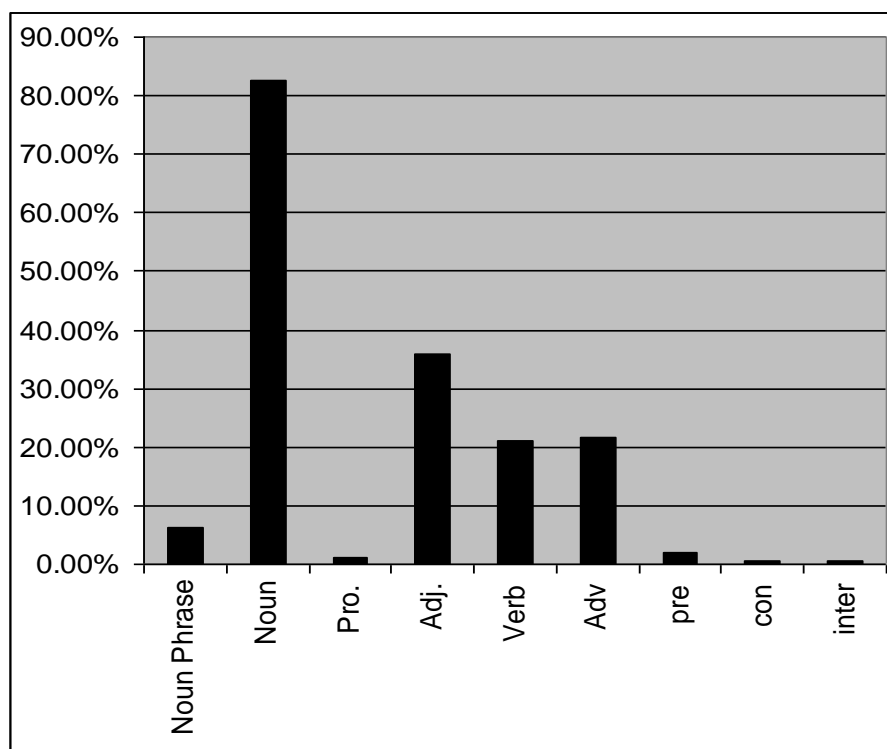
Pie Chart 6.6.2 The Percentage values of males and females Code-Mixing in 1000 SMS:

The total number of Code-Mixed SMS is 268 out of which males have used Code-Mixing in 106 SMS and females have used Code-Mixing in 162 SMS. Pie chart 6.6.2 shows that 39.55% Code-Mixing is used by males and 60.45% Code-Mixing is used by females. So females used more Code-Mixing than males in their SMS.



Graph 6.6.3 The percentage values of individual word category in 106 total males Code-Mixed SMS:

The total Code-Mixed SMS in 500 males SMS were 106. The bar chart 6.6.3 shows the percentage value of individual word category in 106 males Code-Mixed SMS. The most Code-Mixed word category in the case of males was noun, while second Adjective, third verb, fourth Noun Phrase, fifth Adverb, sixth and seventh pronoun and was last conjunction. So males Code-Mixed noun more than other word categories.



Graph 6.6.4 The percentage values of individual word category in 162 total females Code-Mixed SMS:

The total Code-Mixed SMS in 500 females SMS were 162. The bar chart 6.6.4 shows the percentage value of individual word category in 162 females Code-Mixed SMS. The most Code-Mixed word category in the case of females was noun, second Adjective, third Adverb, fourth verb, fifth Noun Phrase, six and seventh preposition & pronoun and last was conjunctions & interjection. So females Code-Mixed noun more than other word categories.

Topics	Education (result/ paper/ exam/ research)	Greeting (Health/ thanking/ excuse/ weather/ accident/ Busy/ complain Meeting)	Employment Job/money/ Business	Personal Family Friends Teacher Home	Romance Love Girl Marriage	Fun Joke	Asking favor	Future plan	Entertainment Music Poetry TV program	Travel/ outing
Male	6	20	8	9	6	4	10	2	0	2
Females	8	12	3	20	2	1	1	1	4	1
%Difference	14.29%	25.00%	45.00%	37.93%	50.00%	60.00%	81.00%	33.33%	100.00%	33.33%

Table 6.6.1 The percentage value in Topics used by Males and Females in their SMS Conversation:

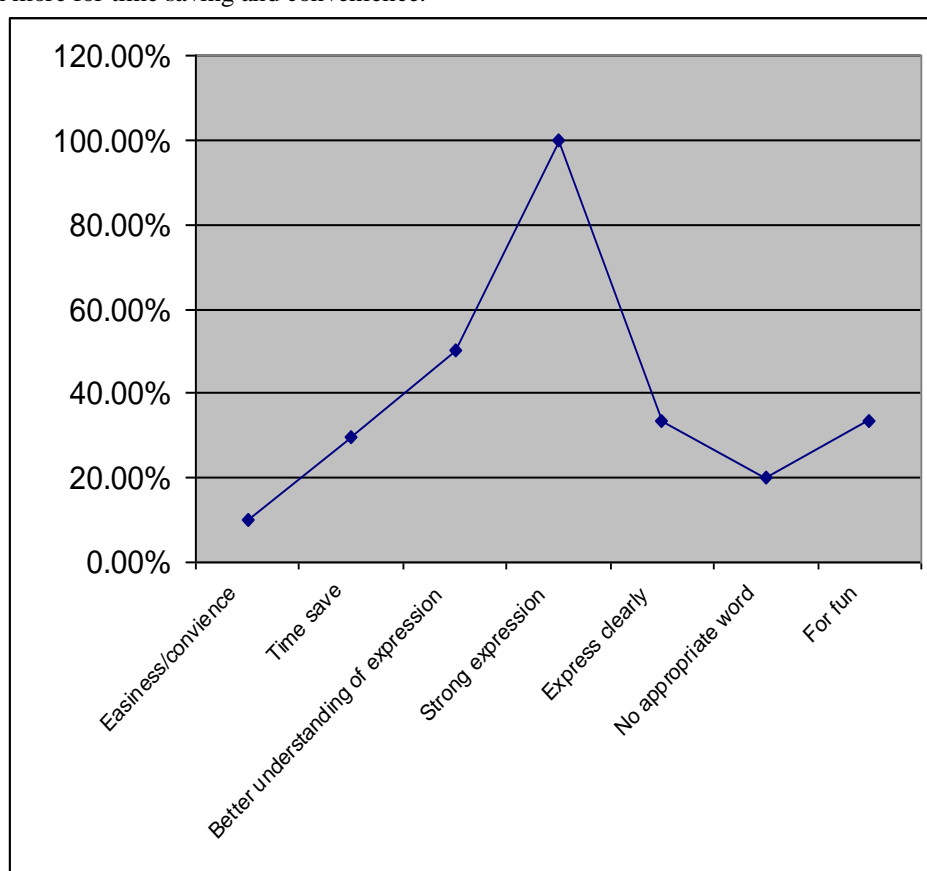
The above table shows that the percentage difference of value was more in the topics related to entertainment: music, poetry, TV programs. Secondly, the percentage difference was found in asking favour, third fun and jokes fourth romance, fifth employment, sixth personal matters, seventh travel, eighth future plan,

ninth greetings and lastly was of education. The percentage difference was considerably more in the topics of entertainment and asking favour.

Gender	Easiness/convenience	Time save	Better understanding of expression	Strong expression	Express clearly	No appropriate word	For fun
Males	22	6	6	4	4	6	2
Percentage	44.90%	35.29%	75.00%	100.00%	66.67%	60.00%	33.33%
Females	27	11	2	0	2	4	4
Percentage	55.10%	64.71%	25.00%	0.00%	33.33%	40.00%	66.67%

Table 6.6.2 Purposes of Code-mixing:

In the above table it was clear that the percentage of Code-Mixing for the purpose of better understanding of expression, for strength of expression, and to express meaning clearly was more in the case of males, while the percentage of Code-Mixing for the purpose of easiness / convenience, time saving and for fun was more in the case of females. Therefore, males mix for lending strong expressions to their sentences while females mix more for time saving and convenience.



Graph 6.6.5 The Percentage difference of Purposes in Males and females Code-Mixed SMS:

The above graph shows that males use Code-Mixing for easiness/convenience, better understanding of expression, express clearly and strong expression more than females and females switch and mix more for time saving and for easiness and convenience. On X –Axis the purposes for the Code-Mixing and Code-Switching are shown while the percentage difference of value of males and females in these purposes is shown on Y-Axis. Code-mixing for the purpose of creating strong expression in SMS shows the highest value of difference.

IV. Discussion and Findings

1. Frequency:

From the data and its analysis it is proved that frequency is the marker of gender identity in male and female in SMS language communication. These are females who most of the time Code-Mixing during their discourse. And it is also observed that females prefer more to use SMS to communicate with their acquaintances. It is relevant with the research of Angel Lin (2000) who conducted research on Hong Kong

College Students' use of mobile phone text messaging with respect of gender identity and the results showed that more females than the males used SMS. It is also relevant to the study of Mahmoud A. Al khatib and Enag h.Sabbah (2008) who conducted research on Language Choice in Mobile Text Messages among Jordanian University Students and the findings of their research investigations also demonstrate that the text writers' gender plays an important role in the process of Code-Mixing. The tendency to use switches is present stronger in females, while males in the contrary, have stronger tendency to use one language totally rather than mix language. It is also relevant with the study of Tayyaba Malik (2009) who says, "women code-mix more because they are talkative and self conscious more than men." Muhammad Shaban Rafi's (2010) research in this contest is also relevant with the research findings of this study; his results show that the differences exist between males and females with respect of number of words per SMS message and in the complexity of the messages. Females generally use lexically dense words in SMS messages while males prefer to use simple, one sentence or one clause messages while the females use many clause structures during their conversation. Ling (2002) concludes in his study that although men were early adopters of mobile telephones yet it is among the women that the greater motor of SMS lives. Sattle (1985), Trichler and Kramarae (1983) and Rosenthal (1985) also conclude that females write longer messages and have a more complex structure than males. However it is against Chambers (1992), who say that men use nonstandard language mean CM more than women.

2. Topic in switching of codes:

Frequency is again the marker of gender identity in the topics of mixing of codes. Males mix more in these topics: Greetings, job, romance, fun, asking favour, future plan and traveling, while females switch more in discussing the topics: Education, personal and entertainment. Males usually discuss variety of topics during mobile phone chatting and use short words more as it is proved from this research while the females usually stick to one topic discussing personal matters more and about their education and entertainment and they maintain a friendly environment according to their nature. As they have limited circle of life, they are confined to their homes, educational institution and television is used for entertainment purpose. So they are less interested to discuss other topics, whereas males are related to social life more so they use variety of topics maintaining their authority and solidarity in conversation.

3. Purpose of switching:

Most of the females mix English into Urdu to make their message easy so that their friends may not face any problem to comprehend message. It is related with the research of Tayyaba Malik(2009) who says, "both men and women like to code mix in order to express their ideas in better and convincing ways." Further she says," majority of people considered code-mixing as an easy and effective way of expressing ideas impressive way because some words are untranslatable or cannot give proper sense if translated i.e. mobile, sim, charger, A.C, (in English) dupatta, kameez and lassi (in Urdu)" it is very convenient to use both the language in one conversation as their medium of instruction is in English and Urdu as a mother language. However their linguistic competence is developed for both of the language and it is already proved from this research and previous researches conducted on SMS communication that the females use more words than the males so when they communicate their inmates they need to observe quickness as well as when they chat whatever suitable word they find from both of the languages they use it first for the easiness and convenience of themselves and second to save time but former is the most frequent reason in this regard and the latter is less frequent in the case of females Code-Mixed SMS as they do not try to conceal anything with the person who is chatting with them and they observe politeness more than the males. Some time they mix because they don't find an appropriate word in one language to express their feelings that is why they need to mix. There are many expressions which cannot be explained in second language that is why they need to use the mother language for the clear and exact representation of thoughts and ideas. Stroud (1998) says, women mix from one variety to another in order to "shift authorship", thus making their attack less. Penelope Gardner-Chloros, Katerina Finnis (2004) in one of their article, "Code-Switching, gender and Politeness asserts that CM is then a form of "double-voicing" in the sense that a code-Mixed utterance is an appropriation of the words, but implies the ownership or authorship of the words lies with someone else. Women and men in bilingual community make use of CM in relation to their politeness strategies. The actual fact of CM allows women to make jokes by defusing any seriousness by referring to shared knowledge, and thirdly by allowing them a second voice as in the example given by Stroud. Both female and male speakers switch to Greek to indicate sympathy or identification and to minimize distance between the speakers, though this function seemed particularly common among women. Women also used CM for solidarity in certain contexts which are directly relevant to them for example talking about mothers and their attitudes towards their daughter's marital status. CM appears to be more of a female strategy. However the purposes of the Code-Mixing of the males English into Urdu is almost same as they also mix from one language to another because of saving time, easiness to type a message, to express their feelings in a more clear way and some time to show strong impressions of the wording. Goggin (2004) says that the

young people take to text messaging as a tactic of consolidating their shared culture, in distinction from the general culture dominated by their parents and other adults. Both the sexes are sometime observed to be mixed to make the other understand what they want to say. As Pual Veddar et al. (1996) says that the aim of parents to mix code is to introduce new concept to the children and to make them understand. Gal (1979), women use more national language and the language of economic and social advancement to adopt more urban and modern lifestyle. So it is proved from the findings of this study that mixing of codes is used as an important communicative strategy in case of gender in SMS language in Pakistani culture.

V. Conclusion

The findings of this study prove that there are gender based differences in SMS language used in Pakistan in term of their Code-Mixing strategies. Females use Code-Mixing more than males to discuss about education, entertainment and personal matters. They usually stick to one topic, while males switch less and discuss variety of topics during SMS communication. Further, the investigation of this study also shows that frequency of Code-Mixing is also the marker of gender identity in the purpose of switching as the females switch more for easiness or convenience, to save time and for creating fun while the males switch for the purpose of better understating of expression, for the strength of expression, to express clearly, and sometimes they mix when they do not find appropriate word in native language. For both the genders mixing of codes serve a communicative strategy in their mobile phone communication.

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