



EXPLORING GENDER DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION: THE IMPACT OF INTER- AND INTRA-SENTENTIAL CODE-SWITCHING

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine code-switching (CS) among Urdu–English bilinguals in Gujrat region, with particular focus on gender-based variation. A total number of 20 participants were selected, comprising 10 male and 10 female speakers, and data were collected through *audio-recordings* of natural conversations. The recordings were transcribed into Roman Urdu for analytical purposes, and the data were analyzed using statistical tests in conjunction with the sociolinguistic framework proposed by Cheshire and Gardner-Chloros (1998), which identifies four types of code-switching: turn-switching, single-word switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. The findings reveal notable gender differences, with female participants exhibiting a higher frequency of various types of code-switching. These results suggest that gender plays a significant role in shaping communicative practices within Urdu–English bilingual communities, influencing conversational strategies and contributing to the dynamics of language alternation. The study enriches existing literature by underscoring the crucial role of gender in bilingual communication and highlighting its impact on the smooth functioning of sociolinguistic interaction in society.

Keywords: *Code-Switching, Qualitative, Single-Word Switching, Turn-Switching.*

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1. Introduction

The present research study basically aims to investigate the types of code-switching based on gender in natural communication. As Code-switching is defined as “the alternation of two languages within a single discourse” (Addin, 2026; Poplack, 1980). It is an interesting domain of contact language observed in communities globally (Rahman, 2002; Malik et al., 2016). It primarily demonstrates two distinct forms: intra-sentential switching vs. inter-sentential switching. The shift that occurs within a clause is considered as intra-sentential whereas entire sentences alternate between languages is called inter-sentential switching (Akbar et al., 2024; Butt et al., 2021; Sohail et al., 2014). These are basically two different language strategies employed by the bilingual speakers in sociocultural and identity-related functions within the conversation. See the examples given below (1a-1b).

1a. *“Today we’ll discuss morphology, aur yeh topic bohot interesting hai”* (intra-sentential switch).

1b. *“Today we’ll discuss morphology. Yeh topic bohot interesting hai.”* (inter-sentential switch)

In example (1a), two languages are used within a clause domain, *ye topic bohat interesting hai*. In this sentence, Urdu as well English words are added into the single sentence. It is basically the strategy of language use by the bilingual speakers in Pakistani communities (Malik et al., 2026). Although this phenomenon has long been considered in sociolinguistics, demonstrating the dynamic association between language, identity, and social context. According to Gumperz (1982), “code-switching is not a random act but a socially meaningful choice that indexes group membership, solidarity, or distance.” In this way, it is observed that bilingual speakers strategically alternate between languages to negotiate relationships and signal social positioning. Within this area, Myers-Scotton (1993) presented her arguments that code-switching works within the matrix language frame. In this frame, there are two languages, matrix which develops the structures of the clause while the embedded language additionally adds nuance, identity, markers, and emphasis for conversational purposes.

Code-switching has raised as a significant domain of knowledge in linguistics and sociolinguistics particularly in multilingual communities where speakers frequently change languages due to language shift and social power, social status, and language usage in the social settings. According to Labov (1972), language is social tool that operates in society and in society individuals exist for social interaction. Individuals are divided categorized based on gender-male and female (Afzal & Haider, 2025). However, this study particularly examines the impact of inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching among Pakistani male and female speakers. It basically demonstrates how gender influences language practice in daily use in social settings. This study aims to explore the

frequency, patterns and communicative function of both types of code-switching. This is the main research gap that this study is going to address. For this, the research objectives have been given below:

1.1. Research Objectives

To explore impact of inter-sentential and intra sentential code-switching in daily conversations of Pakistani male and Female speakers.

To compare the code-switching practices of male and female speakers and identify variations among them.

2. Literature Review

Code-switching is a language used in natural settings among the speakers. It is basically defined as using two languages interchangeably in a single sentence within and across the sentences. It is widely used in bilingual communities of the world. It also refers to identity, power, and communicative strategies. Gumperz (1982) emphasized that “code-switching is not random act but a socially meaningful choice” situating it as an instrument for negotiating solidarity and distance in multilingual interactions. Within this domain, Myers-Scotton further explains this issue formulating matrix language frame model. Switching within language has been divided into two types in terms of Poplack (1980) model which presented two types of switching including (i) inter-sentential switching, and (ii) intra-sentential switching. According to him, intra-switching occurs at the clause boundary while the inter-sentential switching occurs between languages. Intra-switching is more accessible and frequently used in everyday conversation. According to Auer (1998), “the choice of switching point is itself a conversational strategy,” constructing how bilingual speakers must align with or distance themselves from interlocutors.

Gal's (1979) examined Hungarian-speaking village in Austria the dynamic language shift from Hungarian and German. The study found that Hungarian was strongly associated with traditional peasant values. Women became the principal agent of linguistics transition, actively promoting the adoption of German as a means of social mobility and identity reconfiguration. Chambers (1992) claimed that women show greater linguistics proficiency. Based on this Chamber's claim, women's active role in initiating the shift toward German exhibits not simply a rejection of nonstandard forms, but a broader capacity to recognize and strategically adopt linguistics resources aligned with social mobility and identity transformation. Valdés Fallis (1978) advanced the study of bilingual interaction by giving various kinds of code-switching and their different functions including conversational (Batoool & Akram, 2025; Karim & Kanwal, 2013). She focused on Mexican American bilingual speakers positing the term, sequential switching. This special type of switching is observed when a speaker adopts the language employed by the preceding interlocutor, thereby facilitating as an indicator of conversation mutual cooperativeness. The findings of her showed that American and Mexican women used

sequential switches more frequently than men in natural conversation. It is suggested that the greater orientation toward cooperative discourse. This study also gave a systematic tool for investigating male-female differences in bilingual contexts. Within the context of gender based, Akbar et al., (2024) explored gender-based code-switching conversation in students who are involved in presentations. This study confined to only 12 presentations presented by male and females. In the presentations, the presenters used more frequently intra-sentential switching, lexical- items and single word switching, on the other side male students showed stronger tendency toward inter-sentential switching. Despite these differences, inter-sentential switching emerged as the most common type overall, with tag-switching being the least frequent. The findings of this study reveal that female students display greater linguistic flexibility in formal academic contexts, particularly through intra-sentential and inter-sentential alternations, underscoring the need for educators to consider gender dynamics when fostering effective communication strategies. Gulzar et al. (2014) similarly focused on the teacher's behavior in routine discussions. The study focused on ISPCM bilinguals, and it stated that symptomatic of incomplete mastery of two language, ethnographic analysis showed its consistent used in classroom. Teachers both male and female used ISPCM to get the difference in frequency of code-mixing. Female teachers showed greater variation in their usage of different switching patterns, proposing a more dynamic use of bilingual resources in classroom conversation and communication. The most importantly, the findings of this study lay stress that ISPCM is not only deficiency but a pragmatic instrument that teacher used to crystalize concepts of learning and bilingual engagement in conversation in academic formal setting. Kane's (2020) studied Wolof-French bilingual speakers to investigate how their men and women differ in bilingual speech conversation. It shows gender variation in code-switching. The data has been collected from 12 students who worked in an office (Saleem & Usman, 2025). The study is quantitative in nature, and it gets frequencies of both men and women to investigate how men and women represent sociolinguistics and it played greater linguistic flexibility. The study also reveals that intra-sentential switching is the mostly occurring type of code-switching across both genders, with different ratio including women (61.44%) and men (56.66%). Importantly, men (13.02%) used more inter-sentential switches than women (12.53%), proposing a preference for sentence level alternation. A notable gendered linguistics marker got in this study. As a whole, the study by Kane represents that while both genders rely heavily on intra-sentential switching, women's higher frequency of code-switching and men's distinctive use of discourse markers highlight subtle but significant gendered patterns in bilingual communication. These findings contribute to the broader understanding of how gender shapes language variation in multilingual contexts. Rahmat et al., (2019) examined different functions of code-switching used in lecturers in Malaysian public university. The study also focused on inter-

sentential and intra-sentential switching. The study is very important with respect to empirical insights on lecturers' switching conversation across age, experience, and faculty differences have been confined. The study used a survey method and 85 lecturers selected from six faculties. After completing the analysis, the study found that lecturers work in public universities very strategically and used intra-sentential switching to manage classroom, showing different meaning, accommodating students; linguistics repertoire. The findings showed that variations across different faculties, integrating that disciplinary contexts influence the frequency and function of code-switching.

Pakistani scenario is multilingual characterized by multilayered multilingualism (Rehman, 2002). In Pakistan English performs a function of "power language and elite language," Urdu offers a role of national lingua franca, and national language, followed by regional languages such as Punjabi, Pashto, Sindi, Balochi define ethnic identity (Ashraf et al., 2025; Mansoor, 2004). In this linguistics landscape, code-switching emerges as a persuasive communicative strategy, specifically in educational context. Studies show that teachers often alternate between English and Urdu in classroom setting to offer facilitation to the students and second language learners and to reduce their barriers to learning second language (Aqsa, 2023). In this way, these outcomes lead to bridges a gap between policy-driven English instruction and students' linguistics background, it also shows deeper sociolinguistics dynamics of identity and power. Rahman (2002) basically criticizes the ideological privileging of English, warning that it perpetuates socioeconomic inequality, whereas Mansoor (2004) represents the discrepancy between policy idealism and classroom realities. All these findings also propose that code-switching functions as an adaptive mechanism in response to structural linguistics inequalities. However, much previous research remains survey-based, lacking discourse-level analysis and mixed method approaches that integrate qualitative classroom observation and quantitative comprehension measures. In addition, Emerging research on gendered code-switching such as Akbar et al. (2024) and Bilal (2025) show that female speakers tend to employ inter-sentential code-switching more frequently, enhancing relational engagement, while male speakers favor inter-sentential code-switching in Pakistan is not merely pedagogical tool but a sociolinguistics practice that negotiates identity, power, and gendered communication patterns, while also revealing critical gaps in discourse-level and mixed-method research.

Despite the previous studies have examined Pakistani's multilingual ecology and adaptive role of code-switching in classroom (Mansoor, 2004; Rahman, 2002; Saram et al., 2023), most research remain survey-based and lack discourse-level analysis. Moreover, while recent studies demonstrate gendered differences in code-switching, there is still no systematic study of how inter-sentential and intra-sentential switching construct everyday communication among male and female speakers in Pakistan (Khan & Khanam,

2026). This research particularly fills this research gap combining qualitative and quantitative methods to examine gathered code-switching practices in daily interactions.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to capture both the structural and functional dimensions of code-switching. As Creswell (2014) notes, “mixed methods provide a more complete understanding of research problems than either quantitative or qualitative approaches alone.” This design is particularly suited to sociolinguistic inquiry, where discourse-level analysis must be complemented by statistical measures of frequency and variation.

3.2. Participants

The participants of this study have been gathered from Gujrat Region both male and female bilingual speakers, selected through *purposive sampling* to ensure representation across age groups and educational backgrounds (Jamil et al., 2025). The details of participants have been given in the following table-1.

ID	Gender	Age	Educational Background	Context
P1	Male	20	BS English	Classroom discussion
P2	Male	22	BS IT	Personal conversation
P3	Male	25	MBA	Personal meeting
P4	Male	28	MA Literature Linguistics	Academic Setting
P5	Male	30	MS English Literature	Academic setting
P6	Male	24	BSPHY	Informal gathering
P7	Male	27	LLB	Group discussion
P8	Male	21	BS Sociology	Classroom discussion
P9	Male	26	BSCS	Workplace conversation
P10	Male	29	BS Edu	Classroom conversation
P11	Female	20	BS English	Classroom discussion
P12	Female	23	BS IT	Personal conversation
P13	Female	25	MBA	Workplace conversation
P14	Female	28	MA Literature and Linguistics	Academic setting
P15	Female	30	BS IT	Academic setting
P16	Female	24	BS Edu	Informal gathering
P17	Female	27	LLB	Group discussion
P18	Female	21	BS Sociology	Classroom conversation
P19	Female	26	BSCS	Workplace conversation
P20	Female	29	BS Edu	Classroom conversation

Table-1: Participant Demographic information

3.3. Data Collection

Data is very crucial for any research study. As for this study, data were collected using a tool, *audio-recording* of naturally occurring conversation among Urdu-English

bilingual speakers. For specifying data collection, a balanced sample of ten male and ten female participants were purposely selected to represent the gender. The research conducted audio-recordings in different contexts including classrooms, home setting, campus setting and informal gatherings. Each selected participant was systematically recorded in the specified setting and it reflected everyday linguistics conversation and provided authentic evidence of code-switching behavior. After collecting the audio-recording, all recordings were transcribed by the researcher into roman scripts, and their English translation and transliteration were given for each sentence. All the obtained sentences were separated with respect to inter-sentential code-switching and intra-switching. This coding scheme also helped to analyze statistical testing to get difference among the gender.

4. Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis will involve discourse analysis of recorded conversations, focusing on the communicative functions of code-switching (solidarity, authority, identity negotiation. Quantitative analysis will employ descriptive statistics (frequency, percentages) and inferential tests (Independent *t*-test, ANOVA) to compare male and female patterns (Cheshire, 2004; Gardner-Chloros, 2020; Ilyas et al., 2023). Cheshire & Gardner-Chloros (1998) gender-based sociolinguistics framework will serve as a theoretical lens for categorizing structural patterns.

5. Results and Findings

In this section, the researcher presents the results of the study based on gender. For this consider table-2.

Table-2: Descriptive Statistics

Conversation	Gender	Valid	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Total Switches	Female	10	69.000	3.232	65.000	74.000
	Male	10	53.600	3.169	47.000	57.000

In the above demonstrated table-2, it is represented statistical results that shows females Urdu-English bilingual speakers adopted more switching behavior in the conversation than the male, with a mean of 69 compared to 53.6 (Munir & Anwar, 2025). Overall, the current table shows a clear gender effect with women consistently engaging in more switching than men and the difference in means is large enough to warrant inferential testing.

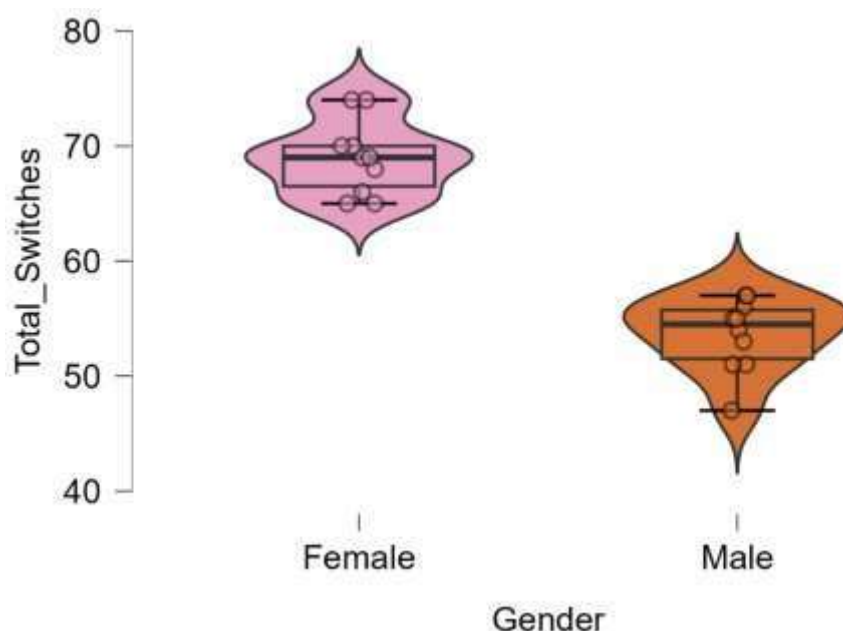


Figure-1: Gender Differences

In the above stated figure, there are two boxplot naming as female vs. male with different placement in the figure. The boxplot which is upper side shows high volume of using switching among female on the other side the lower boxplot put in the lower side represents the lower usage of switching in male. In this way, the figure-1 clearly shows the difference among the usage of switching among male and female with different percentage. Now, the researcher examined the difference in gender-based switching. For this the researcher used ANOVA test to get differences. See table-3.

Table-3: ANOVA - Total Switches

Cases	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P	ω^2
Gender	1185.800	1	1185.800	115.751	< .001	0.852
Residuals	184.400	18	10.244			

In the table-3, It is observed that male and female used difference switching in conversation. It shows a highly significant effect of gender on total code-switches. The sum of both gender groups mean was 11185.800 with 1 degree of freedom, compared to a residual sum of squares of 184.400 with 18 degrees of freedom. This indicates F-value of 115.751 with a p-value less than .001. The effect size ($\omega^2 = 0.852$) indicates that gender accounts for approximately 85% of the variance in total switching behavior, which is an exceptionally large effect. Formally, these findings confirm that female participants engaged in significantly more code-switching than male participants, and that gender is a dominant factor influencing bilingual data of Urdu-English code-switching. After

examining the gender-based difference, now, the researcher is going to analyze each type of switching. For this, look at table-4.

Table-4: Independent Samples T-Test

Type of Switching	T	Df	P	Cohen's d	SE Cohen's d
Turn Switching	4.949	18	< .001	2.213	0.667
Single Word Switching	6.129	18	< .001	2.741	0.759
Inter Sentential Switching	6.746	18	< .001	3.017	0.809
Intra Sentential Switching	9.485	18	< .001	4.242	1.049

For getting the different switching, the researcher used t-test, an independent samples *t*-test. It basically compares male and female participants across the four types of code-switching, namely turn-switching, single-word switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching. For each type, first, turn switching, yielded $t(18) = 4.949$, $p < .001$, with a Cohen's d of 0.667, representing a medium effect in which females used switched turns significantly more often than males in Urdu-English bilingual speakers (Ashraf et al., 2021). As for single-word switching, the data reveals $t(18) = 6.129$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.759$, exhibiting a large effect of confirming that Urdu-English bilingual females used more single-word switches. For inter-sentential switching, the analysis provided $t(18) = 6.746$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.809$, again a large effect, with females favoring sentence-boundary switches. Lastly, intra-sentential switching, the test was $t(18) = 9.485$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 1.049$, which is a very large effect, revealing that Urdu-English bilingual females integrated bilingual structure within sentences far more frequently than males. As a whole, the table-4 demonstrates that across all four categories, female participants engaged in significantly more code-switching than male participants, with effect sizes ranging from medium-to-very large, underscoring gender as a strong predictor of switching behavior in this dataset.

5.1. Gender-based Difference of Urdu-English Bilingual Speakers

In this section, the researcher is going to analyze the switching according to Cheshire & Gardner-Chloros (1998) framework of conversation. It basically states four types of switching including turn-switching, single word switching, inter-sentential switching, and intra-sentential switching in Urdu-English bilingual speakers in Gujrat region (Farida et al, 2018; Fatima & Kousar, 2025).

5.2. Turn-Switching

Q–A exchanges where the interviewer asks in Urdu and the participant responds partly in English. Example: *Ap social media par kon ci apps zyda istemal krti hy?*

In the above given example, two participants were talking about social media. The interviewer asked the interviewee that Which apps of social media you used the most. But the interviewee responded to the interviewer using turn-switching. According to Cheshire & Gardner-Chlores (1998), turn-switching is “*changes of language äs compared with the*

language just used by the previous Speaker.” The previous speakers used the other language, but the second speaker used different languages (Khan & Badshah, 2024; MacSwan et al., 2019). It indicates that, turn taking in conversation may shift the language in the conversation and its ratio between male and female is quite different. Speakers used this strategy for accommodation and cooperativeness.

5.3. Single-Word Switching

Frequent insertions of English words: “assignment submit karna hai deadline se pehle”; “PhD complete krni hy DR. vla title lgvana hy.”

In the above documented example, it is the most commonly occurring strategy of switching. In the above example, speakers used single word from other language as it is noticed that *assignment*, *submit*, and *deadline* words belong to English, but the whole sentence is based on Urdu. It is observed that single words are excessively used in switching.

5.4. Inter-sentential Switching

Example: “online taleem achi hy, travelling issue resolve ho jata hy... I want to do business in future.”

In the above stated example, the sentence is in mixed formation, and it has words from two different languages, English and Urdu. It has also two clauses, including principal clause and subordinate clause. The subordinate clause is in the formation of total English, “*I want to do business in future.*” It is the subordinate clause it depends on main clause. The interesting point is that the main clause is in mixed word both from Urdu and English. This switching point shows sentence boundary to at which the speakers used different language and code-switching and its types.

5.5. Intra-sentential Switching

Example: “Mai Adan Academy mai AI ka course kr rhi hun aur E-commerce ka course b kr rhi ho.”

In the above given example, the sentence is single, but it contains language items from two different languages in single sentence. It is called intra-sentential switching. The sentence main grammar belongs to Urdu, but it has Urdu words and English words in a single sentence. This typical example is called intra-sentential switching. It is observed that Urdu and English are blended in a single sentence because of Urdu-English speakers’ cooperativeness and accommodation.

6. Conclusion

In summary, the present study concludes that code-switching has four types turn-taking, single word switching, intra-sentential switching, and inter-sentential switching. Urdu-English bilingual speakers in Gujrat Region used different behavior in switching based on gender. In our Gujrat region the ratio of female education is very high, and they are more proficient than males therefore, they behave more proficient in using code-

switching in daily conversation and communication. This has been confirmed by the quantitative results obtained by using statistical tests. Furthermore, the study also reveals that there are not two types of code-switching used by Urdu-English speakers but there are four types what I have observed in my data. My data is based on daily conversation among the different genders and levels of education. The individuals showed a strong preference for code-switching and its types in Gujrat Region.

In the sociolinguistics point of view, gender is the main factor that shapes bilingual discourse. It also establishes a strong preference that shows women's greater flexibility in language use without any hesitation in daily life and daily conversations and institutional setting as well as home-setting. It also gives the insight that language in society is negotiable for identity, social roles, and communicative nuance. It indicates that that language is associated with society.

Together, these findings underscore gender as a dominant sociolinguistic factor shaping bilingual discourse, aligning with established scholarship that highlights women's greater flexibility in language use to negotiate identity, social roles, and communicative nuance. This study therefore demonstrates that code-switching is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a socially patterned practice, with gender exerting a powerful influence on its frequency and form.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest associated with this study.

Data Availability

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author.

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