

Translanguaging and Identity Construction in Pakistani YouTube Interviews: A Multimodal Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

Despite the fact that Pakistani YouTube has a significant ecology of long-form interview programming, there has been a lack of work on the sociolinguistics of Pakistani multilingual digital practice that considers extended spoken interaction – written posts, questionnaires, and short-form content. This study investigates Urdu–English resources used by the speakers in their interviews on YouTube in Pakistan and analyzes the way these resources are used for meaning-making and how this practice helps in the construction of identity. The design is of a qualitative and interpretative type. Five interviews were purposively selected from three sources of publicly available material, and coded transcripts were used, with the English lexical items that occurred only in the Urdu line considered as evidence of code-mixed speech and the English that occurred only in the accompanying translation not being included in the linguistic analysis. This produced a highly analytic corpus of code-mixing in four interviews, while the fifth interview was used only in a contextual manner. The twelve extracts were analyzed using a translanguaging approach as well as Bucholtz and Hall's identity theory and a multimodal reading of the transcripts that focuses on what they do and do not preserve. These findings reveal four recurrent functions of English: conceptual and historiographic register anchoring (English is used to carry technical and analytical vocabulary, independent of domain); metapragmatic reflexivity in English (reflexivity on English itself); moral and evaluative framing of delicate content (English is used to frame the content as good or bad, moral or immoral); and biographical and institutional self-positioning (English can be used to position the author or the institution whose voice the author speaks). No easy dichotomy of English as prestige and Urdu as authenticity emerged as indexical values fluctuated from one moment to the next in the same interview. The spread of clause-level English code-mixing into a colonial-historiography interview, a discourse space far from the technology and educational contexts traditionally explored, implies that register anchoring is not unique to analyses of a single professional context but is a more general practice with respect to the analytical register.

Keywords: Translanguaging; Identity construction; Multimodal discourse analysis; YouTube; Urdu–English bilingualism; Digital discourse; Pakistani English

Introduction

Pakistan has a layered linguistic situation, not just plural. Urdu is the national language and symbol; English is the institutional language of education, law, and formal media, while Pashto, Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, Saraiki, and Hindko are the regional languages that have the majority of daily communication. Speakers are in constant flux in and out of these resources. What the sociolinguist would have formerly described as code-switching is, for most educated urban Pakistanis, the way that talk happens.

This practice is very visible these days, thanks to digital platforms. In a classroom exchange, there is no record of the exchange, but a YouTube interview leaves a timestamped, publicly retrievable record. From a policy podcast to a literary conversation to an entrepreneurship show and creator interviews, much of which is in Urdu and with a lot of English, and is now captioned in English by the channels, all of these are now available on Pakistani YouTube.

There is some consistency in the documentation of the multilingual digital practices in existing Pakistani scholarship. According to the study by Ahmad et al. (2023), the Urdu–English translanguaging was highly preferred and encouraged by the social-media users of Pakistan and it was widely Romanised. Hadir et al. (2026) conducted a content analysis of public artifacts posted on Instagram, TikTok and X, and found that the artifacts discussed identity work related to belonging, humor, class and gender. Khan et al. (2025) studied the phenomenon of Pashto–English bilingualism in written medium and concluded that the alternation is not the result of bilingualism but an expressive and conscious decision. Naqvi and Akram (2026) studied the digital practice of university students and found that there was an ideological connection with prestige and mobility and the English language. What all these studies have in common is that they have a data type: short written artefacts or self-reports on practice but not

practice itself.

The closest precedent for spoken media data is Batool (2025), who examines code switching in political talk shows of Pakistan, where English is used as the language of the powerful while Urdu and regional languages are used more for rapport building, but without the application of translanguaging. In addition, the written record of spoken and audiovisual Pakistani data is quite limited, and the dialogic form of the YouTube interview, unlike the monologic vlogging or the broadcast talk-show interview, has not been analysed from a translanguaging perspective.

This matters theoretically. The interview, as a privileged site, is one in which two parties do the constructing (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005), that is, identity is not given in the conversation but is rather emergent. The host's question poses a question that constitutes an invitation to the guest to be a certain type of person; what the guest does is accept or modify the question. This can't be depicted in a monologic vlog.

One additional issue has not been addressed to a large degree. The majority of the interviews of Pakistanis on YouTube are in Urdu with English subtitles, which now provide the basis for most research. An English caption does not capture the form of the language, but rather the meaning. A researcher who sees an English word in a caption and assumes that this is what the speaker said (in English!) has been misled by the translator; this issue is exacerbated when the record is machine-generated and not corrected. Here the problem has been solved in the transcription itself, by checking the Urdu-medium line for each utterance and correcting any lexical items which are likely to be recognition errors; that is, English lexical items have not been translated into Urdu, but retained in the Urdu-medium line of the transcript wherever they have been judged to represent actual code-mixed speech. This leaves an obvious evidentiary distinction to establish

and justify, as §4 does in its entirety.

The study has two aims. Discursively, it explores how the speakers use Urdu–English resources in the process of meaning-making and constructing identities in their interviews on YouTube in Pakistan. Methodologically, it has the ability to do an "evidence mapping" to identify what the corrected code-mixing-aware transcript can and cannot provide as evidence.

1. To examine how translanguaging practices are employed in Pakistani YouTube interviews as resources for meaning-making and interaction.

2. To investigate how translanguaging, in combination with the multimodal and paratextual resources available in the recorded and captioned interview event, contributes to the construction and negotiation of identities.

Q1. How do speakers employ translanguaging practices in Pakistani YouTube interviews for meaning-making and interaction?

Q2. How do translanguaging and multimodal resources contribute to the construction and negotiation of identity in Pakistani YouTube interviews?

The study extends Pakistani translanguaging research from written and short-form data to extended dialogic audiovisual interaction, brings translanguaging theory and interactional identity theory to bear on the same Pakistani dataset, and offers a working procedure for corrected, code-mixing-aware transcripts as a data source for digital discourse research in multilingual settings.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Translanguaging and multilingual meaning-making

Translanguaging posits a new paradigm for multilingual practice which views it as the deployment of one integrated repertoire, instead of traffic between discrete systems. The concept was built on the rejection of monolingual ideologies in education (García 2009), which only divide bilinguals into two resources pools, without any cognitive justification, but rather institutional. This was expanded by García and Kleyn (2016) to classroom interaction as social practice.

Li (2018) has introduced translanguaging as a theory in practice. Here two of his constructs of his are relevant. Translanguaging space is an environment that speakers develop through the use of linguistic, cognitive and semiotic resources, in which creative and critical identity work is possible. Translanguaging is instinct to utilize several sensory and modal cues. Both extend beyond the lexical level and are significant in interviews, where the interesting moments are often clause-level and/or discourse-level.

It should not be dismissed, but needs careful consideration, as opposed to code switching. Structural questions: which language provides the matrix clause, whether alternation is intra- or inter-sentential, what function particular switch types serve are still useful code-switching frameworks. Translanguaging is appropriate in analyzing whole repertoires, communicative agency and the ideological nature of the boundaries between named languages. They work at different levels of description and a study may employ either or both.

2.2 Translanguaging, identity and digital video

By exploring how flexible multilingualism was experienced by Chinese students in the UK, Li and Zhu (2013) showed that this led to transnational spaces for negotiating identities in ways which were not national. Similar dynamics were

found in a Chinese–Russian border city by Li and Tao (2026), who found that, in their context, using mixed code as an innovative practice by vendors, their customers, and vloggers functioned as a way of converting translanguaging competence into symbolic capital. Their research is methodologically similar to the current research, which involves working with vlog data using multimodal discourse analysis.

Jambari et al. (2026) analysed translanguaging in YouTube playful talk by finding evidence of English used to affectively escalate and internationalize the content, while Indonesian was used to elaborate the context of a narrative and localize, with embodied action aligning with translanguaging. Such a division is an empirical result in that data set, not a universal feature of the languages involved and as such is not a template, but only a methodological caution.

The identities used here are the ones outlined by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) and will be defined as emergent, not prior to discourse; positional, not only a demographic identity; indexical, relies on forms that index the social; relational, formed through alignment and differentiation; and partial, beyond the control of the individual. But emergence and relationality perform specific work in the case of the interview data, indexicality serves as a caution: it calls attention to how forms are in the process of becoming socially meaningful in particular contexts, and not to the assumption that in all contexts the English index modernity and the Urdu, authenticity.

2.3 Multimodality and YouTube

The most important foundation for the majority of the multimodal work was provided by the socialsemiotic interpretation of visual meaning by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), procedures for analysing co-occurring modes in interaction by Norris (2004) and an extended critical discourse analysis by Machin and Mayr (2012) for the interpretation of multimodal material. The interview on YouTube is a planned and crafted audiovisual product, which includes chapters, captioning, music, camera positioning and editing, as well as speech and embodied movement. Ho and Tai (2024) illustrated the ways in which teachers created translanguaging spaces in YouTube instructional videos via registers, embodied enactment and visual cues, and the ways in which viewers expanded the translanguaging spaces in the comments section, showing that the relevant semiotic field is not limited to the video frame. Platform mediated multilingual interaction is placed in the wider context of digital sociolinguistics by Androutsopoulos (2015) and Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2018).

2.4 The Research Gap

There are three themes in this literature. The evidence base in Pakistan is written, short form or self-report. The theory that is used is largely code-switching based; and when translanguaging is used, it is mostly in the context of written or artefact corpus data, not in the context of longer spoken interaction. And the results are somewhat too tidy: English is associated with prestige and modernity and Urdu with intimacy and authenticity, which might be true, but is based on data types that remove the interactional context in which indexical meanings are created.

Existing scholarship has thus focussed only limitedly on the ways in which translanguaging can be understood as an interactionally situated identity practice in longer, non-

interruptionist, dialogic Pakistani YouTube interviews. A still understudied one is the evidentiality of the transcripts and captions that normally serve as the basis of such data when it arrives at researchers. The current study goes in this direction on both fronts.

3. Theoretical Framework

Speakers are viewed as operating from an integrated repertoire, and not switching between the bounded systems as proposed by García (2009) and Li (2018). This allows one to focus on resources at each of the structural levels - lexical items, phrases, clauses, discourse markers, idiom, reported speech - instead of the lexical insertion highlighted in code-switching taxonomies, and views the Urdu-English boundary as an ideological artefact on which speakers can align, draw or contest resources rather than a given for analysis. Here, Li's translanguaging space is functional, since in this case, the YouTube interview is a space co-constructed by the host and the guest: what can be said and in what tone is determined by the host, and the guest's uptake (echoing) will transform the space, whereas the channel's editing/captions will extend it further for those who missed it.

The concept of identity is considered emergent, positional, indexical, relational and partial (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Operational aspects: no identity category is attributed solely due to language choice. The sequence of analysis is: First, make observations on the linguistic or semiotic form; second, determine what interactional work is being done; third, determine the position of the speaker relative to host, topic and imagined audience; and fourth, only then, characterise the identity implication. If any of the links are not supported, then the interpretation is withheld.

The multimodal apparatus provided by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and Norris (2004) is used here to focus on the multimodal apparatuses that the transcript actually preserves, not those of the genre per se. The captioned YouTube interview has two layers of semiotics. The recorded interactional event: speech, paralanguage, embodiment, setting, framing. The second is the way in which the channel reworks that event for circulation: the chapter markers, the editing cuts, the music boundaries, the masking of the platform's content, and the apparatus of the

translation by which Urdu speech becomes accessible in English. The second stratum is not a neutral window to the first, it is itself a design, a semiotic act with an addressivity towards an audience of English readers. Multimodal discourse analysis is not a substitute for analysing it but it is analysing it.

It is a sequence and a show of evidence between these components:

Translanguaging practice → interactional function in context → multimodal and paratextual co-articulation → identity construction and negotiation

Every arrow is an inferential step, which needs to be independently warranted. If, at a certain stage of an interpretation, one cannot point to any evidence, the chain is broken and no identity claim is being made. This model is illustrated in figure 1, and transcript mediation occurs between the event at hand and the analyst.

4. Methodology

4.1 Design, Context and Sampling

The study is qualitative, interpretative and discourse analytic. It is not to determine the extent to which Pakistani speakers use English instead of Urdu but to grasp how multilingual resources are meaningful at specific interactional moments and what kind of identity work they perform. Where numbers are used, they refer to the corpus, not the findings.

Purposive sampling was performed whereby cases were chosen for their ability to shed light on the phenomenon studied, and not to represent a population. The inclusion criteria were: the recording has to be publicly available on YouTube in Pakistan, the format of the talk/question and response (T/Q&A) must be dialogic, the interview must have some significant conversational interaction with the host instead of a monologue by the guest, the interview must show some multilingual practice that can be observed, and the interview must be recorded with a timestamp. Of the five interviews conducted, this number met the criteria and represent about 5 hours of data (Table 1).

Table 1. Profile of selected YouTube interviews

S. #	Guest	Role	Channel / host	Duration	Corpus status
1	Taimoor Salahuddin ("Mooroo")	Musician, vlogger, director, actor	The Pakistan Experience / Shehzad Ghias Shaikh	1:15:36	Analytic
2	Rafiullah Kakar	Public policy and development specialist	The Pakistan Experience / Shehzad Ghias Shaikh	26:21 (partial)	Analytic
3	Dr. Sonia Irum	Assistant Professor of English, IIUI	Muzamil Hasan	39:37	Analytic
4	Maham Khan	Startup ecosystem leader	Startups in Pakistan / Muhammad Sarmad Hafeez	16:46	Analytic
5	Zahid Hussain	Senior journalist and author	The Pakistan Experience / Shehzad Ghias Shaikh	2:17:37	Contextual

4.2 The transcript and its evidential status

Every interview was provided with an utterance-level time-stamped transcript with a corrected Urdu-medium version and an English translation. The Urdu-medium line had been checked with the caption record and the problems in automatic recognition likely to be present had been sorted out; when the reviewer was not able to guess the intended wording with confidence, this was not sorted by invention. More importantly for the purposes of this study, the English lexical items, in Latin script, that were judged as code-mixed speech rather than a translation

artefact were not translated into Urdu equivalents for tidiness in the Urdu-medium line.

This transcript is more useful for the analysis of the linguistic features than an uncorrected caption stream, but it is not the same as an independently verified audio transcript, and the study treats it in this way. There are two cautions throughout. For one, the correction process itself is an act of interpretation: a listener figuring out what a speaker "must have" meant in a particular context may be wrong, especially for proper names and fast speech. Second, if the result of the judgement is that the item

has been retained in the Urdu-medium line, it means that the situation is that the item was spoken in English, it is not that the item was spoken in English and this is what the reviewer judges it to have been, but rather it is what the reviewer thinks it was, as the judgement is treated as good evidence by this study, but not as certainty. Extracts from sections of the source text where clarity is indicated are not used as evidence.

4.3 The attribution criterion

With this type of transcript, the criterion for determining the evidence of the speaker's own translanguaging is simple and consistent: If the English word or phrase is written in the Urdu-medium line, it is considered to be evidence of the speaker's own translanguaging. If the English is only in the English translation column, and there is no entry in the Urdu-medium column, then it is translation and is not used for the linguistic analysis; it is included for comprehension of the utterances.

This criterion, when applied to all five interviews, yielded a somewhat uneven distribution which was nevertheless informative. In three interviews (I1 (Mooroy), I3 (Sonia Irum) and I4 (Maham Khan)), there is a high level of code-mixing, not only in the form of loanwords, but as single clause and multi-clause English blocks in an Urdu matrix. An initial pass over I2 (Kakar) uncorrected captions indicated that no evidence was expected from this source, because there were no markers differentiating whether the language spoken was English or a translation. The corrected transcript corrects this: there are full analytical clauses on colonial administrative history in English (5.1) that are sustained in Urdu throughout the text in I2. It was therefore decided to transfer this interview into the analytic corpus. On the other hand, I5 (Zahid Hussain) exhibits very little code mixing in the corrected transcription, other than clearly institutional proper nouns which are not translated (Herald, APNS). This is substantive finding with regards to the interview rather than something arising from the transcription process, as very little code-mixing was recovered in I5 using the same correction process used in the recovery of code-mixing in I2. I5 was therefore kept only as contextual material, and this was to help in the account of genre and the way the interviewers conduct themselves, but not to provide evidence at extract level.

4.4 Analytical procedure

Analysis was conducted in six stages: familiarisation, entailed in repeated readings of all five transcripts; application of the attribution criterion in 4.3 to identify the analytic corpus; identification of translanguaging episodes, at any level of structure and within the analytic corpus; contextual analysis, in which the local interactional situation for each translanguaging episode was reconstructed; identity analysis, conducted in the order of the sequence identified in 3; and cross-case synthesis, which tested whether patterns held across speakers, domains and channels. Inductive categorization was used and categories were modified as extracts were added.

4.5 Presentation of extracts

Extracts are given in three lines: one in Urdu (the original language as supplied that has been corrected in the Urdu-medium line), the second in English (the translation) and the third in English (the analysis). It is intentional that Urdu is written first in this order, with English to be used to explain it to the reader, and this order is followed throughout. Ellipses are used in the source and are not editorial omissions. Timestamps are based on the provided

transcript.

4.6 Trustworthiness and ethics

Credibility goes hand in hand with close contextualisation: each interpretation is anchored in a sequentially defined part of a defined interview and to a certain line of the Urdu text and not just the translation in English. Transparency is achieved by making the correction process and the attribution criterion clear, the latter being that it does not "save" I5. Analytic consistency was sought by employing the three inferential sequences in the same way throughout and by withholding interpretation of a step that was not supported. We did not do member checking, inter-coder reliability, peer debriefing, or multiple coding, nor do we claim that it was done. The transcripts provided do not include any gesture, gaze, posture, facial-expression information, so multimodal claims are limited to what §3 calls the paratextual and recontextualisation stratum and are not extended to embodiment.

Everything is freely accessible and was produced through the means for public circulation. Speakers who are public figures who have acted in their professional capacity and are identifiable by name, as anonymisation would be impossible and would misrepresent analysis which relies on their professional capacity; The amount of quotation is limited to the analysis required. No formal ethics approval was attempted or is claimed, nor was there any intervention or recruitment involved in the data, as it is all public and pre-existing.

5. Findings

Twelve extracts are presented across four themes, drawn from the analytic corpus (I1, I2, I3, I4). Table 2 summarises them.

5.1 Register anchoring: English as the vehicle of analytical work, across domains

The most important finding from the dataset is that recruitment for functions other than physical, like conceptual and analytical work, is not restricted to contexts of recruitment for work in the field of technology or education. It has been observed in a colonial-historiography interview, as well.

Extract 1 — I2 (Kakar), 9:22–9:39

Urdu (original): Basically، ہوا یوں کہ nineteenth century تھی، یا یوں British foreign policy کے حوالے سے جو frontier states میں ان تھی، اُس میں قلات، سندھ کے تالپور اور imperial foreign policy کہیں کہ موجود competing schools of thought افغانستان شامل تھے۔ اُس وقت دو Forward Policy school of thought اور Closed Border school of thought تھیں: ایک British foreign-policy establishment کا اور یہ مؤقف تھا کہ...

English (translation): Basically, what happened was that in the nineteenth century, British foreign policy, or rather imperial foreign policy, towards these frontier states, including Kalat and the Talpurs of Sindh, as well as Afghanistan, at that time there were two competing schools of thought: the Forward Policy school of thought and the Closed Border school of thought. The Forward Policy school of thought within the British foreign-policy establishment argued that...

The type of translanguaging is not the same that has been reported in previous research in Pakistan where the focus has been technology, business or education. In this instance English is used as the taxonomy of a historiographic argument: Forward Policy school of thought and Closed Border school of thought are not names of Urdu units, but the names of the positions in an academic debate that are conventionally referenced in English. The same

happens with the British foreign policy establishment, and there is no economical Urdu term having such specificity that it can be translated into.

Extract 2 — I2 (Kakar), 6:51–7:14

Urdu (original): بلوچستان کو اُس پورے نظام کے تحت بالکل **insulated** رکھا گیا تھا۔ جو **representative institutions** introduce کیے گئے **reforms** اور باقی **insulated** میں 1919 کے **India** کی گئیں، **Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms** کے بعد **gradually towards representative institutions and democracy** کی طرف پیش رفت ہو رہی تھی۔ تو کہنا مشکل **insulated** اس سے **throughout** میں یہ سب ہو رہا تھا، جبکہ بلوچستان **India** ہے، لیکن **insulated** رہا۔

English (translation): Balochistan had been kept completely insulated under that system. Reforms had been introduced and representative institutions had been established elsewhere in India, including the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms of 1919, gradually moving towards the introduction of representative institutions and democracy. So, it is difficult to say, but all of this was happening in India while Balochistan remained insulated from these developments throughout.

The use of the word twice, and the fact that it is insulated, indicates that this is comparative-historical work: it is the naming of Balochistan's structural exclusion from a reform trajectory elsewhere in colonial India, and it is repeated across the passage, suggesting that it is not a borrowing that is improvised, but rather a settled analytical term of the speaker. Representative institutions refers to a particular type of colonial government reform that had a definite connotation within the context of the colonial period in history.

Here, it is the credentialed policy specialist who will do the identity work. But the Urdu speaker is not merely mixing languages; he is also doing academic argumentation in real time, English providing him with the terminology in which academic argumentation is normally conducted, Urdu with some connective tissue, evaluative asides ("so it is difficult to say") and the narrative frame addressed to a general audience. The double register – technical English in an accessible Urdu frame – is the same as the pattern used in the venture-capital discourse of Maham Khan (Extract 7 below), although, of course, both speakers are in very different professions. This cross domain convergence is the strongest evidence in this dataset of the general translanguaging practice of register anchoring rather than as a property of any particular professional domain.

5.2 Metapragmatic reflexivity: translanguaging about English

Speakers use their repertoire to talk about language itself, including the status of English relative to their own biography.

Extract 3 — I3 (Sonia Irum), 3:39

Urdu (original): even کی، وہ English نہیں، تو اُن کی جو **first language** ہے۔ بلکہ بعض **second language** بھی نہیں ہے، نہ ہی **third language** میں تو یہ اُن کی **third language** میرے لیے تو یہ میری **right?**، بھی نہیں ہے **third language** ہے...

English (translation): Their English is not their first language; it is not their second. In some cases, it is not even their third language, right? For me, it is my third...

When the sustained English clause here (even if it is not their primary language, it is not their secondary language), it is not just about the fact of students' language background; it is the doing of the fact. In speaking about multilingual hierarchy, the speaker shows that English is one resource among many that she can call

on, and not automatically a first order resource to which she turns. The tag "right?" is used as a solidarity marker to encourage assent, not as a true question.

Extract 4 — I3 (Sonia Irum), 8:43–8:52

Urdu (original): مجھے سمجھ آتا ہے مجھے اب یہ بات سمجھ آتی ہے۔ مثال کے طور پر، کچھ لوگ اپنے کے بارے میں اتنے زیادہ فکرمند ہوتے **accent** ہیں۔ مثال کے طور پر، میرے جیسے شخص ہیں کہ وہ بہت سی باتیں کہنے سے گریز کرتے ہیں۔ چاہے وہ **accents** کو دیکھیں جو مختلف **British، Pakistani، Indian** اور کوئی **accent** یا **British، Pakistani، Indian** آپ جانتے ہیں **accent**۔ میرا امتزاج ہے، جو اب **accents** مختلف... کا ایک امتزاج ہے، جو اب **accents** مختلف...

English (translation): I understand it now. For example, some people do not say many things because they are too concerned about their accent. For example, a person like me who simply articulates a medley of accents, whether it is American, British, Pakistani, Indian, or some other accent. My accent, you know, is a medley of accents, which now...

The double repetition of Medley of accents is a refusal of the native-speaker model altogether, which implies that it is a formula the speaker has "discovered" in advance rather than a rondo where the straight repetition is improvised on the spot. The list American, British, Pakistani, Indian places Pakistani and Indian English in the same series as American and British, thus anticipating the argument. The position that is created is cosmopolitan and credentialed, and the medium (English), tellingly, is the language of the position, not the subject of the position, in Urdu.

5.3 Moral and evaluative framing in delicate talk

English recurs where speakers evaluate ethically freighted material, distinguishing description from moral judgement.

Extract 5 — I1 (Mooroo), 13:32

Urdu (original): American، اور اس مخصوص صورتحال میں **rigorous checking mechanism** میں ایک **system**، ہوں یا پاکستانی **Oh**، وہ **found not guilty** وہ **guilty** ہونا چاہیے۔ وہ **found not guilty** ہوئی۔

English (translation): And specifically in this situation, whether we're talking about American courts or the Pakistani system, I think there should be a rigorous checking mechanism. Was she found guilty? Oh, she was found not guilty.

Legal-procedural evaluation has vocabulary which it imports whole from rigorous checking mechanism, guilty and found not guilty. The standard is not just a description of a case, but an application of a standard; and the standard's vocabulary enters into English because this is the register in which such standards are conventionally formulated within the speaker's repertoire of standards. The mixture of Urdu carrying the story line and English (Pakistani system, itself already mixed) providing the evaluative apparatus.

Extract 6 — I1 (Mooroo), 13:24 and 14:14

Urdu (original), 13:24: employer-employee اور پھر اگر **power dynamic** ہو تو وہاں بھی **relationship** ہوتا ہے۔

English (translation): And then if there is an employer-employee relationship, there is a power dynamic there as well.

Urdu (original), 14:14: boss اور کسی **company** میں **employee** یا **student** اور **teacher** کا **relationship** ہو، یا **employee**...

English (translation): A boss and an employee in a company, or a student and a teacher...

The power dynamic re-appears throughout the interview, and again at 14:23 and 14:26 in the longer transcript as the analytic term that the speaker has settled on for describing non-symmetric

relationships, which he/she successively uses to describe employer–employee and teacher–student relationships. The repetition in cases that are structurally similar suggests that it is not a single borrowing but that the speaker is invoking a real analytical category which he or she is reasoning with. It is a case of the generalisation of Extract 5's pattern: English provides an evaluative concept which the speaker can move from example to example, Urdu provides the connective narration between examples.

5.4 Institutional and technical register in professional self-positioning

Extract 7 — I4 (Maham Khan), 8:23–8:39

Urdu (original): I think debate والا یہ چیکن-انڈی chicken-and-egg ہے، but yes، execution is the key اور وہ KP ecosystem کے اندر۔ Series A venture capital نہیں ہے... thrive جتنا Pre-Series A (Karachi) کو تو آپ چھوڑ دیں۔ وہ تو Okay کرتا رہے۔ ...؟

English (translation): I think it is a complete chicken-and-egg debate, but yes, execution is key. And that execution will improve as your venture capital ecosystem... Within the KP ecosystem. Forget Series A and Pre-Series A for now. Let (Karachi) handle those. Okay? Here...

The graded investment taxonomy, Series A, Pre-Series A, does policy work, putting the phases of investments in a location, later stage in Karachi and earlier stage in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and thus making the jargon of technical terms an issue of regional equity. The key is execution is an evaluative structure that is formulaic in its use throughout the interview (see Extract 8), operating as the speaker's diagnostic refrain and not as a one-off phrase.

Extract 8 — I4 (Maham Khan), 4:26–4:58

Urdu (original): اگر کوئی if I have a good idea، آ بھی جائے startup اور اگر کوئی which is a brilliant idea، ٹھیک ہے، parents اور میرے لیے اپنے retirement کیا ہے اور retire کے پاس جانا ہو ...جنہوں نے ابھی کے بعد ایک گھر retirement بنا کر رکھا ہے، اور مجھے ان کے پاس جا کر کہنا ہو کہ جی، میرا Al ایسا Al بنا کر رکھا ہے، اور مجھے ان کے پاس جا کر کہنا ہو کہ جی، میرا brilliant idea کو اس funding ہونا ہوگا تاکہ وہ اس evolve سے... تو اسے میں inject کر سکیں۔

English (translation): And if a startup does come along, if I have a good idea, one that is genuinely brilliant, and I have to go to my parents, who have just retired and have built a home after retirement, and I have to go to them and say, “I have this idea about AI...” So, the ecosystem has to evolve in order to inject and plug that funding into that brilliant idea.

If I have a good idea, which is a brilliant idea is a full-English clause embedded in an Urdu narrative about generational and familial financial precarity, an unusual combination of register (confident pitch-language) and content (a young man who is the founder is dependent on his retired parents' savings). The juxtaposition itself does identity work: it allows the speaker to display entrepreneurial confidence and economic vulnerability on the same one-shot, without the two cancelling each other out, as they are conducted in different linguistic registers.

Extract 9 — I4 (Maham Khan), 12:06

Urdu (original): بننے کی AI engineer کر رہے۔ مجھے اور آپ کو ہم prompt engineer کوئی ضرورت نہیں ہے۔ لیکن ہمیں تو بننا چاہیے نا۔ ہاں اسے ٹھیک نہیں دے رہے۔ prompt

English (translation): You and I do not need to become AI engineers. But we should at least become prompt engineers, right? We cannot even give it the right prompt.

The use of a paired contrast (what the audience needs not to become, but should be), such as AI engineer: AI engineer is a new role-label of which there is no established Urdu equivalent, is a piece of audience-calibrated advice from the speaker, who thus becomes fluent in a new vocabulary, while the listeners remain not.

5.5 Cross-case synthesis

Now, this register of anchoring of English in the analytical vocabulary of a domain is attested in four different fields: historiography and policy (I2), venture finance (I4), applied AI (I4), and sociolinguistic self-description (I3). This is the primary modification this dataset brings to the study's previous results, a breadth of entrepreneurship and education interviews that allows for testing whether this pattern is generalisable across unrelated fields. The answer to the above question is yes, as Kakar has been included.

The metapragmatic reflexivity focuses in I3, as one would expect, due to its topic. The focus in I1 is on moral-evaluative framing. Both patterns are rare in the other parts of the corpus and neither is generalised beyond the interview in which it is found.

In I5, a considerable amount of code-mixing was recovered in I2, but hardly any was found apart from institutional proper nouns. This is not all the time a feature of extended, dialogic, Urdu-medium Pakistani interviews, and interview topic/speaker background may influence this, which should be directly explored in future research.

Table 2. Representative translinguaging extracts

s. #	Interview	Timestamp	Practice	Discourse function	Identity function
1	I2 Kakar	9:22–9:39	Named historiographic schools of thought in English	Reproducing an academic debate	Credentialed policy specialist
2	I2 Kakar	6:51–7:14	Comparative-historical analytic term (<i>insulated</i>) repeated	Structuring a colonial-history argument	Analytical historian-commentator
3	I3 Sonia	3:39	Full clause on multilingual hierarchy	Describing students' language backgrounds	Reflexive multilingual scholar
4	I3 Sonia	8:43–8:52	Repeated self-descriptive formula (<i>medley of accents</i>)	Addressing accent anxiety	Cosmopolitan, credentialed educator
5	I1 Mooroo	13:32	Legal-procedural vocabulary	Evaluating a public allegation	Ethically deliberate commentator
6	I1 Mooroo	13:24 / 14:14	Recurring analytic term (<i>power dynamic</i>) across cases	Comparing relationship types	Analytical moral reasoner
7	I4 Maham	8:23–8:39	Graded investment taxonomy	Arguing regional capital policy	Regional advocate, sector expert
8	I4 Maham	4:26–4:58	Full English clause inside a precarity narrative	Describing founder risk	Confident founder, financially candid

9	I4Maham	12:06	Paired emerging-tech role labels	Audience-calibrated advice	Fluent early adopter
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6. Discussion

6.1 Q1: Translanguaging for meaning-making and interaction

In these interviews, English is used for four discernible purposes: to carry the vocabulary of a domain without regard to what it is (Extracts 1, 2, 7, 9); to talk reflexively about language and its status (Extracts 3, 4); to provide an evaluative or moral vocabulary for awkward material (Extracts 5, 6); and, in combination with a domain vocabulary, to allow a register and content to diverge productively within the same utterance (Extract 8).

The strongest argument against a code-switching account in the paper is the cross domain finding in §5.5. If deployment followed topic, then there should be little of it in Kakar's colonial-historiography interview, since the topic was English, the technology was talked about in English, while the rest was in Urdu. It doesn't: Forward Policy school of thought, insulated, representative institutions are exactly what Maham Khan's talk, as a different speaker, in a different register, about an entirely different subject, for a different channel, is. It's not the domain that is constant, it's the activity: sustained analytical argument. This suggests that English recruitment is related to a way of speaking, the analytical register, and not to a set of topics as an integrated-repertoire account (García, 2009; Li, 2018) predicts and a topic-based code-switching account does not.

The repetitions of evaluative items like single (Extract 2), power dynamic (Extract 6) in several occurrences during the same interview are methodologically noticed. What was once a momentary failure to retrieve in Urdu (a borrowed technical term) may be one case, whereas use of the same term in structurally parallel cases may be a stronger form of evidence for register anchoring than any single one could provide.

6.2 Q2: Translanguaging, multimodality and identity

However, in this case, the identity is created by the combination and, as in Extract 8, by the intentional combination that is not in keeping with each other. When two identities – confident English-pitching person and an Urdu-speaking family's retirement savings – are juxtaposed in one utterance, as Maham Khan does, neither undermines the other, since it is on a different register. This is the most obvious example in the corpus of Bucholtz and Hall's partialness principle: the identity that is created is not fully one of each of the linguistic choices but a combination of the two.

The case of Sonia Irum (Extracts 3–4) is an instance of the indexicality principle. English as not her first language is presented in a fluent, sustained manner in English, which does the opposite of what a surface reading of the content would imply. If English were regarded as an index of just one thing (confidence, foreignness, prestige) then exactly this kind of self-undermining performance would remain unremarkable, invisible, until the meaning of the utterance could be read as a whole, not as a “content” claim or a “code choice.”

The fact that Kakar has been included in the analytic corpus is, in itself, a finding on the issue of identity construction on the level of genre. Prior on the co-mixing in the context of Pakistani translanguaging literature, which has focused on technology,

business and digital culture of youth, would not have anticipated co-mixing that is so dense. The “tech-savvy” or “modern” identity that it is designed to create by using the register as its anchor is not in any strict sense of the word, but rather more like “credentialled analyst” that can be deployed by a policy expert talking about frontier administration in the nineteenth century as quickly as by a startup entrepreneur talking about venture capital.

Regarding multimodality, the transcripts provided here do not contain any information on gestures, gaze, posture or facial expressions, nor does this analysis pretend to do so. What can be said is related to the paratextual layer pointed out in 3: the corrected, code-mixing-sensitive transcript is also a representation of the interview, designed by an editorial decision on the representation of speech and the representation of translation. That is a semiotic fact of the way these interviews are rendered to be analysed; it is not neutral infrastructure, but reported as such, as that is what it is, in both interviews, with the amount of code-mixing in I2 compared with the almost complete absence of code-mixing in I5.

6.3 Contribution

The methodological contribution is the knowledge that a transcript which has been visibly altered to include the corrector's judgement about code-mixing (which may be interpreted as reflecting actual speech) can be used to aid linguistic analysis that is not possible in the raw caption stream; without the researcher claiming more than is warranted by the data. That the same procedure that led to the earlier exclusion (Kakar) led to the confirmation in this case (Zahid Hussain) on independent evidence, is proof that the procedure is doing some real evidentiary work and not merely rubber-stamping what was thought previously.

The cross-domain result in 5.5 provides a specific and testable refinement of the literature on the Pakistani indexical account so far, which can be summarized as register anchoring should be predicted not by the topic of a stretch of talk, but by whether it is doing analytical work. This is a statement that can be verified with additional domains in future studies.

7. Conclusion

This study investigated how translanguaging is used for meaning-making and interaction in the interviews of Pakistani speakers on YouTube and how it is involved in the construction of identity, through examining the transcripts in which the corrector's evaluation of code-mixed English was made visible and audible, instead of being left implicit in the raw caption stream.

On Q1, English was used to do domain-general analysis, to talk about language (reflexive), and to moralize and evaluate sensitive material, recruitment patterns which are not necessarily directly related to the content of the conversation but rather to the process (e.g., the same density of clause-level English in a colonial-historiography discussion as in a VC discussion).

On Q2, identity was built up by combination, rather than selection, most evident where a speaker's register and content were carried productively, either to convey confidence and precarity in one utterance, or expertise and self-deprecating humility, as they were carried differently. The presence of a policy specialist's interview in the analytic corpus, which the study's own built-in procedure did not foresee, expands upon the spectrum of professional identities for such a type of register anchoring,

stretching from technology to business to scholarly-analytical activities in general.

7.1 Limitations

There are four interviews, which, while providing sufficient analytic depth for the interviewing type and intended interpretation, cannot be used to support any other content. Each transcript was corrected for the most likely recognition error but was not independently verified; extracts from stretches of the source material that were marked as unclear were not included and there is always a possibility of error in the correction process in any individual item. No embodied multimodal data is available and no claims are made regarding gesture, gaze or facial expression. Original audio was not independently reviewed by the present analysis. Speakers' own accounts of their linguistic choices are not included since no participant interviews were made.

7.2 Directions for future research

Confidence in the extracts reported here would be enhanced by a re-check of the original audiovisual recordings and the corrected transcript would provide the embodied stratum to which this analysis could not gain access. Triangulation with speaker's account could be achieved through interviews with the speakers themselves. Analysis of a broader spectrum of interview subgenres would allow assessment of the extent to which the domain-general register-anchoring pattern reported here is found in other settings and whether IS's somewhat low code-mixing is speaker, topic, or channel-based.

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Credit authorship contribution statement

Matiullah & Akbar Ali: Writing – Review & Editing, Writing – Original Draft, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Conceptualization.

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