



## Codeswitching in Urdu Short Story: A Comparative Study of Ismat Chughtai's *Lihaaf*, Bano Qudsia's *Toaba-Shikan* and Sumaira Naqvi's *Dopeher Ka Khawab*

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**ABSTRACT:** *There is little research that examines codeswitching with historical lenses, particularly, with reference to Urdu short stories, therefore, the objective of the study is to unravel the social functions of codeswitching, based on the analysis of Chughtai's Lihaaf, Qudsia's Toaba-Shikan and Naqvi's Dopeher ka Khawab from historical perspective. The research is qualitative, the theoretical framework is codeswitching and the three short stories served as the primary source of data collection and analysis. In case of Chughtai, the use of codeswitching stems out of 'linguistic necessity', the primary social function of codeswitching. Contrastively, Qudsia and Naqvi's stories have a number of examples of codeswitching, even where the substitutes in Urdu are available and are also used by the Urdu language speakers. It is found that through a gradual process, codeswitching has become a frequently-used phenomenon in Urdu short stories, not only out of linguistic necessity, but also as a communicative strategy, another social function of codeswitching (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2016). Hence, the study will be instrumental in bringing forth the idea that how languages are in a constant process of formation and change, since, the Urdu language has experienced a transformation, under the influence of English language.*

**Keywords:** Codeswitching, Short story, identity, language change

### Introduction

Codeswitching is a change from one language to another language in the same text. This phenomenon is very common in multilingual societies, where two or more than two languages are spoken. Different studies, however, have been carried out in this area and these enhance our understanding about the nature and processes of a language and the relationship between the 'language use' and the 'individuals' who use it as a communicative strategy, to fulfill certain functions within a social and cultural context (Myers-Scotton, 1993, Auer, 1989). The term codeswitching has been spelled variously by different researchers as code switching, with space in-between, with hyphen as code-switching, and without space or hyphen such as codeswitching. Similarly, it is hard to outline the term,

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codeswitching, with any definite meaning, since the scholars have defined it, from their respective perspectives. During 1990s there was an attempt by “Network on Code-Switching and Language Contact”; to develop a consensus regarding its definition, but the attempt was in vain (Milroy & Muysken, 1995, p.12).

Grosjean (1982) defines it as “the alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation” (p.145). According to Bailey (2000) there has been an extensive study on codeswitching, primarily focusing on three issues, first, the syntax or sentence-structure, second, conversation or discourse management functions, and the third is “social and metaphorical functions of codeswitching” (p.165). As the issue of codeswitching undergoes various explanations, therefore, to avoid any difficulty and ambiguity, this research paper adopts the broader definition of codeswitching as: Any admixture of linguistic properties of two or more language systems, be it at phonological level, lexical or grammatical. The current study more focuses on the social and discursive aspects of codeswitching, from historical perspective, by analyzing the selected three Urdu Afsana or short stories by the Urdu short story writers, namely, Ismat Chughtai, Bano Qudsia, and Sumaira Naqvi. The study unearths the phenomenon of codeswitching from a historical perspective. For the three short stories belong to different decades. This gives the writer a fair chance to look as to what social or metaphorical needs contributed to making the codeswitching a norm with the passage of time, for the Urdu-short story writers. It is notable here, that in today’s Pakistani society, many English words are now used by the people who don’t know or have not studied English language. Words: glass, plate, television, dressing table and sorry, are some of them to be mentioned in this regard. These are frequently used in routine communication on regular basis, by Urdu speakers, without being aware of the fact that the code is being switched. The writers have used ‘codeswitching’ in their short stories. They all were writing in a multilingual society. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) used the term multilingual to denote to any situation, where at least two or more than two languages are in use. Accordingly, Pakistan is a multilingual society, because, it has Urdu as national language and English as official language of the country.

Now, codeswitching is present in these three short stories in varying degrees. The foreign words such as “bulb” (p.131), “machine” (p.133), from Chughtai’s *Lihaf*<sup>1</sup>, are purely, based on ‘borrowing’ which refers to using one word item, “from another language in a bilingual speech” (Kovacs, 2001, p.63). In Naqvi’s short story, *Dopeher ka Khanab*<sup>2</sup>, the words, “private affairs”

<sup>1</sup> All the subsequent references to the story are taken from; *Urdu Adab ke Mash’hoor Afsane*. Retrieved March, 17, 2017, from <http://www.urduhost.com/harf>.

<sup>2</sup> All the subsequent references to the story are taken from the writers’ collection of short stories; *Naqsh e Raigaan*, (2006).

(p.83), “gate” (p.75), a few to be named here, and from Qudsia’s *Tooba-Shikan*<sup>3</sup>, English words such as “remuneration” (p.216), “picture”, “profession” (p.216) and “culture” (p.216) may be seen as examples of codeswitching. Nevertheless, unlike Chughtai, Qudsia and Naqvi’s English words have their Urdu equivalents which are used in everyday communication by the Urdu speakers. Contrarily, the latter two writers preferred to switch the code and it is not done without any valid reason. To us, this is an example of ‘marked code’, since the usable alternatives to the switched words have been compromised. There are two approaches to study codeswitching: a linguistic and a social approach. In linguistic approach, one concentrates on identifying the principles and constraints that “govern the use of codeswitching in any given sentence” (Winford, 2003, p.126). On the other hand, the social approach focuses on the motives and social meanings of codeswitching. This study will investigate the ‘social function’ of codeswitching, in the selected three Urdu short stories, because, in Indian subcontinent, language mixing, whether in the form of intra-sentential or inter-sentential mixing, is inevitable, catering “distinct socio-psychological effects” (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2016, p.2). Likewise, they also regard dual and multiple language- mixing; a norm in South Asian communities.

This study is unique in its essence, since it investigates the codeswitching from a historical perspective, for this purpose, three Urdu short stories representing different eras have been selected. The study will be instrumental in bringing forth the idea that how languages are in a constant process of formation and change. So far, little study has been done, to examine codeswitching in distinctive communicative settings or contexts, with historical lenses, to unravel the functions of the phenomenon of codeswitching. The current research paper is an effort to fill the said gap. It examines the linguistic form of Urdu-English mix, besides, of course, exploring the socio-cultural implications, with codeswitching as a qualitative method of analysis in the background. The aim of the study is to compare and contrast the selected short stories with respect to codeswitching. It is argued that apart from constructing the social identity for the respective characters in the given short stories as multilingual speakers, codeswitching, with the passage of time has become a communicative strategy for the Urdu short story writers. The introduction to the study can be further divided under following headings:

### ***Codeswitching as an Index of Social Identity***

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Faisalabad: Misaal Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> All the subsequent references to the story are taken from; *Urdu Adab ke Mash'hoor Afsane*. Retrieved March, 17, 2017, from <http://www.urduhost.com/harf>.

While looking at these writers it is pertinent to discuss the concept of social identities defined as: “the linguistic construction of membership in one or more social groups or categories” (Kroskrity, 2000, p.11). It means that speakers of a language construct their identity through the use of different lexical forms or linguistic varieties. In this way, the defining feature of identity then is not as “something” that we “have”, rather, it is “something” that we “do” (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p.72). The interesting point is that the identity is contrastive as well as fluid and language plays a significant and decisive role in its formation and construction: “the study of language and identity is the study of the linguistic means through which membership assignments are made and how language is used to create, embrace, resist, or alter group boundaries” (p.73). To the researchers, this code-alternation serves as a mark of social identity, for the characters who switched the code in the stories under evaluation. It is a deliberate act on the part of the writers. Since, it gave them an opportunity to truly depict their characters, to make them ‘true to life’. For, in a ‘multilingual community’ it is a norm, to switch codes. The same has also been pointed out by Rampton (as cited in Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015, p.73). He studied the London teenagers, from different families such as those from England, Pakistan, or Jamaica within these multi-ethnic groups, the teenagers were observed using the codes such as Indian English and London English dialects in various ways, particularly in order to index various stances and identities.

The purpose of mentioning this example is not to directly apply the same results on the selected short story writers, rather, the researchers just want to illustrate that the identity could be constructed through linguistic medium. This is the case here, in the three short stories under discussion. The important element of multilingual identities is that language choice is an effective means to establish a social identity. The identity is not viewed as fixed or settled one, rather, it carries the seeds of instability within itself, since it is purely a construction of cultural and linguistic forces. As Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) remark: “we certainly do use language to construct our social selves” (p.104). Hence, the first and the foremost reason behind codeswitching in these three short stories may be the desire of the writers to construct their identity on multilingualism, instead of monolingual lines. Since, English is a global language and also “the medium of instruction in schools. It is viewed as the language that facilitates communication among the different ethnic groups” (Gwee & Saravanan, 2016, p.1).

### ***The ‘Markedness Model’ of Codeswitching and Multilingual Speakers***

The markedness model is proposed by Myers-Scotton (1989, pp.334-35), the model favors that language choice can be of two types, the unmarked choice and marked choice. The model played a significant part in explaining

the motivations that lead the speakers to go for alternation, by mixing up the two distinct languages. The unmarked code is the one which is expected in a given situation. It is found in Chughtai's story, *Libaaf* (the Quilt). Because, she switched the code, whenever, she did not find any alternate to English word in Urdu language. The English words "machine" and "sweater" (p.131) and "doctor" (p.129) may support the stance.

However, in case of Qudsia and Naqvi, both, the marked and unmarked choice can be observed, since, they both have used English words, even, where the substitutes to the foreign expressions are available in Urdu. In this regard, the readers do come across with the phenomenon of marked choice, in Qudsia and Naqvi's short stories. For example, the following English-switched words can be translated to Urdu language, such as, "terminal" (p.77) as *adda*, "paper" (p.75) as *Imtihan*, "glasses" (p.71) as *ainak/chashma*, "table" (p.78) as *mez*, "gate" (p.75) as *darwaza*, are a few to be mentioned from Naqvi's story, *Dopeher ka Khanb* (noon-dream). Likewise, from Qudsia's *Toaba-Shikan*, the words such as, "fine-arts", "profession" and "culture" (p.216) have Urdu equivalents, *funoon e latifa*, *pesha* and *saqafat* respectively. Such instances of codeswitching may be interpreted as examples of 'marked-code choice' on the part of both the writers, Qudsia and Naqvi.

The markedness model does not hold the view that the speakers use invariably the unmarked code in their speech, rather, the concept of marked choice can also be visibly observed in the multilingual speech community and therefore can serve as a means to analyze the phenomenon of codeswitching (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015).

### Literature Review

Bloom and Gumperz (1972) are considered the pioneers in studying the phenomenon of codeswitching. They worked on multilingual discourse and introduced the concepts such as situational and metaphorical codeswitching. The former is a variety that is used in a certain setting. On the other hand, the metaphorical codeswitching implies some symbolic meaning, that is the language switched to serves or fits the desired message.

Poplock (1980) considered the distinctions between codemixing and codeswitching of central importance and proposed three level criteria to analyze the non-native items in any bilingual conversation, namely: phonological, morphological and syntactic integration. To him, any type of non-native item may be regarded as phonologically, morphologically and syntactically integrated item. Nevertheless, it is also argued that the distinction between codeswitching and borrowing is a problematic one, due to the following factors. First, such distinction was not easily comprehensible or clear to bilinguals. Second, the transitions which were morphophonemic

in nature could be equally applicable to switches and borrowings, since both were adapted to “the recipient language phonetically and morphologically” (Winford, 2003, p.107).

In any speech event, if the code-choice is based on, “expected rights and obligations, set between participants”, then, this is called “unmarked codeswitching”. On the other hand, a “marked-code” moves from the “expected relationship” among the participants, in order to readjust the “social distance” (Myers-Scotton, 1989, p.334). In other words, the ‘marked code’ is an unexpected one in any speech situation among the participants.

Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) are of the view that codeswitching is instrumental in minimizing and reducing the ‘social distance’. Their study set the stage for the research which addressed peculiarly, the question of why do the speakers switch the codes. They have also examined the research related to the contemporary sociolinguistic theories. For this, they applied critical approaches to study the language as used in any given society. They also examined the issue of codeswitching in details, by taking into account the implications of codeswitching, which is the construction of identity through linguistic medium along with functioning as communicative norm for multilingual individuals. However, they preferred to use the term, multilingual discourse, instead of codemixing or switching, since they thought that the latter terms implied a normative monolingual ideology, and these terms were also at odds with contemporary research trends in language contact.

Hudson’s (1996) “Sociolinguistics” is an introductory textbook on the study of language in relation to the society and people who use it. The book covered such topics as: the balance between individuality and conformity in language usage, the notion of dialect, the significance of pidgins and creoles and the attitudes of the language-speakers to the use of codeswitching. The assimilation aspect of codeswitching has also been brought into account. All in all, these reviewed works provided theoretical underpinnings for the current study, in order to highlight the social functions of codeswitching: the linguistic necessity, the construction of social identity and last but not the least the communicative strategy.

### **Research Methodology**

This is a qualitative research based on three short stories serving as the primary source of data collection and analysis. The theoretical framework is codeswitching. Code-mixing/Codeswitching, these both terms have been used interchangeably, so, any type of alteration whether inter-sentential or intra-sentential can be categorized as codeswitching (Pandit, as cited in Kovacs, 2001, p.62). Contrastively, Winford (2003) is of the view that in

some situations, these were used as complementary terms; this meant that codeswitching can be applied in cases where there is alteration of language at sentence-level and code-mixing for such instances where the mixing of languages take place within-sentence limit. Hudson (1996) has also pointed out the same rule regarding the terms under discussion. Nonetheless, the present study used the term codeswitching, to incorporate code-mixing within it and these could be considered as two types of what Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015, p.97) called “multilingual discourse”. Thus, the term codeswitching served as the central term to interpreting the selected short stories.

Three key concepts, which played a significant role in the creation of codeswitching, multilingual identity of Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015), linguistic necessity and loan-words of Hudson (1996) and the marked/unmarked model of Myers-Scotton (1989), have been applied on the selected Urdu short stories. It is argued that with the passage of time, Urdu short-story-writers have made a shift from merely treating English as a linguistic necessity to a broader perspective of dealing with it, as Winford (2003, p.125) puts it: “a communicative strategy”, a key factor, in turn, for establishing a multilingual identity of the writers at hand. To attain these objectives, the following research questions will be addressed, to what extent, codeswitching, in the selected short stories is based on the phenomenon of ‘loan-words’? And to what extent, with the passage of time, it became a communicative strategy, in order to establish ‘multilingual identity’?

### **Data Analysis**

#### ***Linguistic Necessity or Lexical Borrowing: an Analysis of Ismat Chughtai’s Urdu Short Story, Lihaaf***

The story revolves around the nostalgic feelings of very young girl, who confronts a mature lady, Begum Jan, who is married to a Muslim household, but, is unhappy with her lot. The story is narrated in the voice of young girl, as she has a limited stock of foreign/English vocabulary, therefore we find a very few instances of codeswitching, approximately nine in all, only on word-level. In other words, this type of codeswitching demonstrates the loan-words such as, “doctor” (p.129), “shawl” and “school” (p.132), “machine” and “sweater” (p.131), “bulb”, “button” and “foot” (p.133). We can see that more or less these all words have been assimilated to Urdu and are almost considered as part of Urdu language-vocabulary now. This is where Hudson’s (1996, p.54) idea of “linguistic cocktail” seems to be appropriate, that is the use of a few words from one language and then a few ones from another language and then coming back to the source language and so on. The idea is applicable to the story under evaluation, for, all instances of codeswitching are within the limits of

sentence-structure, or more specifically in “linguistic cocktail” fashion. (For details on loan-words in the story, see the Table 1)

**Table 1**

English Loan-Words in *Lihaaf* by Ismat Chughtai

Page No.	English words	Urdu alternatives to these words
128	---	---
129	Doctor,	طبيب
130	---	---
131	Machine, Sweater.	مشین، سویٹر
132	School, Shawl, Green Button,	مدرسہ، شال، سبز بٹن
133	Foot, Button, Bulb,	فٹ، بٹن، بلب

***‘Linguistic Necessity’, ‘Phonological Codeswitching’ and the ‘Characters’ Multilingual Identity’: a Threefold Analysis of Bano Qudsia’s Toaba-Shikan***

*Toaba-Shikan* is a short story about the love-affair and marital life of a professor. It is written by Bano Qudsia, a prominent Urdu short story writer. The concept of codeswitching is relevant here from three different viewpoints. First, there are some instances of ‘phonological codeswitching’, purely at word-level, the following illustrations may support the point, “slipper” (p.209) as (slɪ:pr), “program” as (progra:m), “photographer” (p.214) as (photo:gra:pher), “college” (p.212) as (ca:lɪge), “scheme” (p.219) as (ɪski:m), and “stand” (p.220) as (ɪstand). These all are the examples of ‘phonological codeswitching’. The writer has indigenized or assimilated the above mentioned English words to the Urdu-style of pronunciation, to meet the needs of the speakers of her community, by modifying the original sounds of the words at hand. It is quite natural among the speakers of a foreign language to assimilate and “replace the foreign sounds with native sounds” (Hudson, 1996, p.57).

Now, at the second level, this short story has some examples of codeswitching at phrase-level. As Hudson (1996) is of the view that one of the objectives of this aspect of codeswitching “is to symbolize a somewhat ambiguous situation for which neither language would be on its own quite right” (p.53). In order to come out of such situation, “the speakers balance



the two languages against each other” (p.53), mainly to get the right effect and to convey the message to the readers without any ambiguity. We find this sort of ‘linguistic necessity’ in this short story. For instance, the following English phrases/compound words do not have useable Urdu equivalents. In this case, the shift from Urdu to English may be seen as arising out of ‘linguistic necessity’, so that the message can be transmitted without any ambiguity. The English compound words, “full size photo” and “low calorie-diet” (p.214), “air-conditioned lobby”, “surprise visit” and “dining hall” (p.217), and “dry-cleaner” (p.218) are a few to be mentioned here, to rigorously prove the hypothesis. The compound words quoted above do not have their Urdu equivalents, if they have, then these are not used commonly in every day communication. Hence, these expressions are used out of ‘linguistic necessity’, since, the Urdu alternatives to these words are not in use in everyday communication among the speakers. (For the details of ‘loan-words’ in this story, see the Table 2).

**Table 2**

English Loan-Words in *Toaba-Shikan* by Bano Qudsia

Page No.	English Words	Urdu alternatives to English words based on ‘borrowing’
209	Button,	بٹن
210	Homeopathy, Cutix, Powder , Engine,	ہومیوپیتھی، کیوٹکس ، پاؤڈر، انجن
211	----	----
212	College, Professor,	کالج، پروفیسر
213	Grade, Degree, Pedal, Miss, foot-path	گریڈ، ڈگری، پیڈل، فٹ پاتھ، مس،
214	Convocation, MA	کانووکیشن، ایم اے
215	Bank, Retire, Card, Tuition,	بنک، ریٹائر، کارڈ، ٹیوشن
216	Fees, Idealistic, Passport	فیس، آئیڈیلسٹک، پاسپورٹ
217	Lift, Hotel, Hero-Ship	لفٹ، ہوٹل، ہیرو-شپ

218	VIPS, Icing, Collar, Glass, Cut, Dry-Cleaner,	وی آئی پیز، انسنگ، کالر، گلاس، کٹ ڈرائی کلینر
219	Solt, Book, Fuse, Generator, Cold-Drinks,	سولٹ، بک، فیوز، جنریٹر، کولڈ ڈرنکس
220	Menu,	مینو،
221	Idealist, Idealism	انیڈیلست، انیڈیلزم
222	----	----

Nevertheless, Qudsia does not frequently use foreign expressions, where the Urdu equivalents are available. In her case, this approach shows two things, First, codeswitching in her short story serves as a ‘communicative strategy’ and secondly, her writing could be interpreted in the light of what Hudson (1996) calls “the process of borrowing” (p.55), because the borrowed items as shown in Table 2 have almost become part of the source language, Urdu. However, the speakers of source language know that these words are modeled on words from other language and in this way the ‘foreign flavor’ of such words also continues. As a speaker of Urdu language, one knows that the expressions mentioned above all are treated more or less as Urdu expressions now, although they all come from English language. To quote Hudson (1996): “each language has a distinctive symbolic value for people who use it regularly because of its links to particular kinds of people or kinds of situation” (p.55). But, it is not necessary that the community should recognize such expressions as loan words. One of the consequences of borrowing may be issue of boundary between the languages: “it is common for items to be assimilated in some degree to the items already in the borrowing variety, with the foreign sounds being replaced by native sounds” (Hudson, 1996, p.57). However, such type of ‘assimilation’ is not necessary to be a total assimilation, rather, there can be a partial assimilation and this sort of assimilation is an extremely common phenomenon both in English and in other languages.

At the third level, codeswitching, in the story under discussion might be the need to depict the characters ‘true to life’. As we see that, in this short story the technique of dialogue is employed at many places, to convey the differing perspectives of the characters involved. The narrator of the story is a lady, who holds a degree of BA from a reputed university. Jamali sahib, another important character of the story is a Hotel Manager. Now, in their

dialogues, we see instances of codeswitching, since the characters are bilinguals, so this seems to be the basic requirement of their dialogue to be constructed on their naturally occurring speech. In this respect, Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) claim: “Identities might align with pre-existent categories such as gender, occupation, ethnicity and so on, but should be thought of as being brought into being through the interaction with others” (p.103).

The following extract of dialogue between the Lady and Jamali may serve the purpose,

The Lady says:

*Mujhy professor Fakhar se mohabbat hai*

(I am in love with Professor Fakhar).

Jamali Sahib:

*Unka coat of armor itna sakht nahi, jis qadar wo samjhate hain*

(His (Professor Fakhar’s) coat of armor is not as strict as he pretends it to be).

Now, in the above dialogue, we have an English phrase, “court of armor” which could be easily substituted with Urdu expression, *dastoor-e-hayaat*, but this is not the case here. The example indicates that the writer deliberately has put this English phrase in the mouth of her character, only and only to make the dialogue as a real-one. Similarly, we see such examples in the dialogues between Professor Fakhar and DC, Zubairi. The words such as, “fine-arts”, “profession”, “culture”, “genius”, “official duty” and “fake” (p.216), which have Urdu equivalents, like, *funoon-e-latifa*, *pesha*, *saqafat*, *laili*, *sarkari/bukumati zimmadari*, *ja’ali* respectively. All these words are used in Urdu, even then, the dialogues between DC Zubairi and Prof. Fakhar are based on codeswitching. (As the Table 3 indicates that the Urdu substitutes to English words have been more or less compromised). The researchers look at this as an essential for proper-characterization. This leads us to what Hudson (1996) concluded that codeswitching is, “the inevitable consequences of bilingualism” and he is therefore of the view that the fluent bilinguals, while taking to another fluent bilingual may change language, “without any change at all in the situation” (p.51).

**Table 3**

Useable Urdu Equivalents to English Expressions in *Tooba-Shikan* by Bano Qudsia

Page No.	English Words	Useable Urdu equivalents to the English words
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209	Ribbon, Tree, Sleeper	فیتہ، درخت، جوتا
210	Baby, Drum, Note, Butterfly,	بچہ، ڈھول، درج کرنا، ، تتلی،
211	Straw, Colony	تنکا، بستی
212	Position,	حالت یا کیفیت،
213	First-Class, Second-Class, Society, Selection, University, Cross, Sir,	اول درجہ دوم درجہ معاشرہ انتخاب جامعہ پار جناب
214	Photo, Photographer, Nose, Student, Political Science,	تصویر، تصویر بنانے والا، ناک، طالب علم علم سیاسیات،
215	Role, Lockers, Share, Size, Social Life,	کردار ، تجوری، حصہ ، حجم، معاشرتی زندگی
216	Remuneration, Government, Profession, Culture, Genuine, Teacher, Fake, Passion, Fine-Arts,	معاوضہ ، حکومت ، پیشہ ، تہذیب، اصلی، استاد نقلی، جنون ، فنون لطیفہ
217	Press, Manager, Surprise-Visit, Dining- Hall	دبا ہوا ، منتظم ، اچانک دورہ، طعام گاہ،

218	Suit, ,	لباس،
219	Swimmer, , Hall, Scheme, Swimming- Pool,	تیراک ، بڑا کمرہ، لائحہ عمل، پیراکی کا تالاب،
220	Master, Leather,	آقا، چمڑا ،
221	Tourist, Case, Plead, Mini-Plant	سیاح ، مقدمہ، پیروی کرنا ، چھوٹا پودا
222	Saint, Cold-Storage	بزرگ، سردخانه

***Codeswitching as ‘Communicative Strategy’, ‘Characters’ Multilingual Identity’ and ‘Phonological Codeswitching’: a Threefold Analysis of Dopeher Ka Khawb by Sumaira Naqvi***

The story is written by Sumaira Naqvi. If we see the dialogues of the story we notice various examples of codeswitching here. As the narrator of the story underhand, is a university student, who can be considered a bilingual narrator in this case. In order to make the character of the narrator true to life, the writer consciously or unconsciously has put some English words in his mouth and this renders codeswitching in her case, more or less a communicative strategy, not based on linguistic necessity as it has been noted above, in case of Chughtai particularly and to some extent in case of Qudsia generally. It is a norm for a bilingual to speak more than one language. The words: “paper” (p.75) instead of (*Imtihan*) and “gate” (p.75) instead of (*darwaza*), “department” (p.75), not (sho’ba) can be noted down in this respect: “In bilingual talk the two languages in the speaker’s mind are put to use in such a way that his or her bilingualism becomes a visible interactional and social fact” (Auer, 1989, p.460).

As indicated above, in any multilingual society, there does not seem to be any hard and fast rule for which language to speak, Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) maintain: “People must select a particular code, whenever they choose to speak, and they may also decide to switch from that code to another or to mix codes even within sometimes very short utterances” (p.96). So, we can conclude that the bilingual speakers switch the code, sometimes, considering it a symbol of prestige and value that is associated with a particular language. The bilingual code-switchers use it, as Auer (1998) says: “code switching/mixing receives its social function and meaning from a complex of interacting dimensions, among them the prestige and value of the varieties involved” (p.463).

As the narrator of the story is an educated and a university-going student, the writer may have desired to portray the character as having ‘multilingual identity’, a symbol of prestige in Pakistani society. Importantly, most of the English words used in the story under critical appraisal have equivalents in Urdu language, even then, the writer preferred to use the English words. For example: “private affairs” (p.83), in Urdu may be translated as *ẓa’atī Mua’amlāt*, “department” (p.75) as *shoba*, “disturb” (p.80) as *khalall andazī/tang karna*, “cash” (p.81) as *paisa*. (For further details and explanation on such English words with their Urdu equivalents, the Table 4 is given below). This is yet another proof to uphold the idea that in a multilingual community codeswitching might be categorized as a ‘communicative planning’ that the bilingual speakers prefer to adopt. This all shows that language mixing in a multilingual community is a strategy to communicate. Accordingly, Yee Ho (2007) argues:

Code choice does not only bear significance for the individual, it also indexes societal values and attitudes. The use of English ...utterances delineates social stratification more clearly and divides those with good education, great prestige and high social status from those without. (p.7)

**Table 4**

Useable Urdu Equivalents to English Words in *Dopeher Ka Khamb* by Sumaira Naqvi

Page No.	English Words	Urdu equivalents to English words
70	Speed	تیزی
71	Bag, Sun-Glasses	بستہ، دھوپ کی عینک
72	---	---
73	Glasses	عینک
74	---	---
75	Paper, University-Gate, Class-Fellows, Group	پرچہ، جامعہ کا دروازہ، ہم جماعت، گروہ
76	Department, Zero,	شعبہ، صفر
77	Terminal, Hospital,	بس اڈہ، ہسپتال

78	Colony, Bath-Room,	بستی، غسل خانہ
79	Nurse, Doctor, Result,	آیا، طبیب، نتیجہ
80	Papers, Fail, Practical, Disturb,	امتحان، ناکام، عملی امتحان، تنگ کرنا
81	Glasses, Book, Table, Cash, Account,	عینک، کتاب، میز، پیسہ، کھاتہ
82	Bath-Room,	غسل خانہ
83	Private-Affairs,	ذاتی معاملات
84	Take, Surprise,	سہارا، اچانک
85	---	---

On the other hand, in the story, just like Qudsia, we also have some examples of loan-words which in turn, to some extent have been assimilated to the structure of source language, Urdu. Such as the words “Conductor” (p.77), “Department” (p.75), “Phone” (p.73), in the story have undergone a phonological codemixing, since these have been pronounced as “condæctor”, “di:pa:rtment” and “phʌ:ne” respectively. Here comes the idea of appropriating the target language to the phonetic system of the source language, since, “the ultimate reason for code-switching is to achieve effective communication between the writer and reader, or the speaker and receiver” (Stapa & Khan, 2016, p.182). Accordingly, the writer has coined some new words like from “class”, we have “clason” (p.75) instead of “classes”, similarly instead of saying “dollars”, she used the Urdu plural form of the word as “dolaron” (p.73), and it is a clear-cut example of showing the phonological mixing of the target language to the source language, Urdu. The word “cycles” is also made plural in Urdu style as “cyclen” (p.77) not according to the English plural form as ‘cycles’. Bhatia and Ritchie (2016) maintain that language mixing is: “a salient property of the bi/multilingual mind, which triggers bilingual linguistic creativity in terms of creating both new structures and new meanings” (p.10). (For codeswitching based on ‘loan-words’ in the story, see the Table 5).

**Table 5**

Loan-Words in *Dopeher Ka Khawb* by Sumaira Naqvi

Page No.	English Words	Urdu equivalents to English words based on 'borrowing'
70	Note-Book,	نوٹ بک
71	---	---
72	---	---
73	Telephone, Set,	ٹیلیفون، سیٹ
74	---	---
75	---	---
76	Wagon, seat, Notes, Motor-Cycle, Bench	ویگن، سیٹ، نوٹس، موٹر سائیکل، بینچ
77	Wagon, Steering, Seat, Conductor, Stop, Driver	ویگن، سٹیرنگ، سیٹ، کنڈکٹر، سٹاپ، ڈرائیور
78	Table-Lamp,	ٹیبل لیمپ
79	-----	-----
80	Bill, Bank, Cashier	بل، بنک، کیشیئر
81	Cashier, Computer,	کیشیئر، کمپیوٹر
82	Cheque-Book, Jug	چیک بک، جگ
83	Cheque, Switch, Nursery, Pipe, Wiper	چیک، سوئچ، نرسری، پائپ، وائپر
84	Phone	فون
85	---	---

## Findings



The overall findings of the present study suggest that codeswitching has become a cross-cultural phenomenon, along with of course, catering to different social functions. With each passing day, it is being strengthened as it has been the characteristic feature of the short stories under evaluation. It is a model of 'language use' now, for the Urdu short story writers. The aspiring masses also use it as a symbol of their 'social identity'. We have delineated that codeswitching might be taken as a mark of modernization, because, through a detailed analysis of the selected short stories, it is explored that from 'linguistic necessity', there had been observed a shift, to using it as a 'communicative strategy'. The defining cause of codeswitching in Chughtai's story and to some extent, in Qudsia's story was 'utilitarian' in nature. The readers may not have to make an effort to locate the Urdu equivalents of such English words, which refer to either science or technology. Therefore, words of this category may be treated as the part of any language and thus the writers are justified in their use of such words. Moreover, the Urdu alternatives to such expressions may not be the active part of Urdu-speakers' vocabulary repertoire. Consequently, the writers have utilized the English words, to communicate the message unambiguously and effectively.

One of the interesting findings as a result of the explication of Qudsia and Naqvi's stories, which belong to different chronological contexts, is that through a gradual process, codeswitching has become a frequently-used phenomenon, not only out of linguistic necessity, but also as a communicative strategy. The language of Urdu short story writers has experienced a radical shift in the past few decades, from that of pure Urdu, to the mixed and hybridized one, with English language. Thus, in case of Qudsia and Naqvi, even, the Urdu alternatives to foreign expressions have been compromised, keeping in view the change, in the attitude of the society to the languages in question.

The essential outcome, then, is mixing the Urdu-English codes together. The Urdu language has undergone a transformation, under the influence of English language: "To think of abolishing English is one such disquieting thought because, at least for the last century and a half, the people of this part of the world have taken the ascendancy of English for granted" (Rehman, 2003, p.5).

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, we can say that Urdu language has been remodeled under the influence of English language during the past few decades. The speakers had been the defining force behind legitimizing the hybridized use of the Urdu language, in order to ascertain their own multilingual identity. In other words, the hybridization of the languages in contact zones of the societies is a natural phenomenon. We noticed a remarkable shift from

merely using the foreign language, English out of compulsion, to a deliberate use of it by the writers, Qudsia and Naqvi in their respective short stories. In the stories, time and again, we observed that the polyglots determinedly code-switched, in order to assert their corresponding class and socio-cultural upbringings.

In this respect, it can be argued that Pakistani society is making a shift from codeswitching, to what Cahyani, Courcy and Barnett (2016) call “translanguaging”, a newer field that can be defined as “the practice of shuttling between languages in a natural way”(p.2). Translanguaging is different from codeswitching in that, it is not only switching in and out of two independent monolingual codes but also a combination of two languages as a unity to achieve effective communication. Therefore, we would recommend the future researchers to investigate this less researched area in the spheres of Urdu novel and poetry, to pinpoint that to what extent, the multilingual writers of Pakistan are mixing the codes in their respective writings.

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