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Negotiating Linguistic Identity in Multilingual Classroom: A Narrative Inquiry

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Abstract

The study scrutinizes how multilingual learners negotiate their linguistic identities in Pakistani multilingual classrooms, where institutional monolingual norms frequently clash with students' diverse linguistic realities. For theoretical underpinning, Bonny Norton's theory of *Investment* (2013), García's standpoint on *translanguaging* (2013) and Bourdieu notion of *Linguistic Capital* (1991) have been exploited to analyze reflective narratives; uncovering the lived experiences of minoritized students (from a public college). In classroom settings, their native languages are affirmed, adapted or repressed during peer-group interactions that's why the personal retrospective narratives of the participants, in the form of semi structured interviews assisted in analyzing internal linguistic affiliations and preferences in academic spaces that have direct influence on identity construction. For deductive thematic analysis that is a top -down approach for analysis, *Nvivo* software has been employed to generate themes related to the predefined theoretical framework. The results of the narratives explored all the agentic strategies such as translanguaging, code-mixing, code-switching as an active form of resistance against the monolingual pedagogical practices that are in voyage; claiming their unique voices and reclaiming the non-material cultural nuances of the marginalized past under the subjugation of the colonizers. In this way, ESL learners exhibited a sense of self-authorship, critical thinking and self-valuation on higher academic landscape. The narratives reflected that their multilingual repertoire can be beneficial for their cognitive build-up rather than being a deficit capital. In due course, this article propagates a critical tanslanguaging pedagogical stance, rejecting the pre-existing subtractive monolingual language teaching practices. This research offers an actionable plan for language instructors, administrators of institutions, researchers, policy makers and higher academic stakeholders to see linguistic diversity as a positive gesture which can prove to be a cognitive leverage for ESL learners in multilingual classroom setting and learner can boast up their identities instead of being ashamed and silenced.

Keywords: *Identity, Identity Negotiation, Multilingualism, Translanguaing, Linguistic Capital*

Introduction:

The present research is an endeavor to highlight the factors that are responsible for identity negotiation, formation and projection in ESL multilingual classroom where language works as a commodity rather than being a passive communication tool. In the recent area, Pakistani ESL classrooms present a diversified linguistics spaces inheriting varying cultural and personal histories. The intersection of heterogeneous identities creates a vibrant contact zone and develops a psychological and cognitive reflexiveness in learners. Here, identity works in a state of flux or gyre rather than being static and stable unified entity and it is continuously negotiated construct. As Bonny Norton (2013) argues, identity must be understood as "the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future". The monolingual polices of the administrators and teachers continuously force the leaners to supress their native linguistic reservoir with the power hierarchies of target language to navigate linguistic identities. In such scenario, a language learner's identity becomes what Norton (2016) conceptualizes as a "site of struggle", wherein students keep trying actively to defend their legitimate voice. Zhang & Song

(2022) opine that under the influence of language standardization, "learners may internalize the assumptions that there is one 'correct' or 'proper' way of speaking a language, which can create nervousness and self-doubt when their own linguistic expressions are deemed 'incorrect' or 'non-standard".

The nexus of power, language and ideology provides a lens to observe how minoritized ESL learners navigate their linguistic identity and personal practices within sociological constructs through linguistic choices. Within public colleges in Pakistan, language functions as a form of "linguistic capital" (Bourdieu, 2003) since academic institutions promulgate target language currency to legitimize the power structures within the society and marginalize the languages of the powerless. This uneven distribution of linguistic power heavily influences a learner's "investment" (Norton, 2013), the socially constructed, power-inflected commitment to acquire and perform a target language in hopes of securing material or symbolic resources". Anwar, M. S. (2026) quotes that "the dominance of English can operate as a form of symbolic power that privileges certain linguistic competencies while marginalizing others." Aligning with the notion of *symbolic violence* propounded by Bourdieu, such inequalities in the choice of linguistic capital create an apartheid between dominant and subjugating strata of society. A viable solution is proposed by the proponents of translanguaging perspective who provided the basis for a collaborative environment. Modern sociolinguistics conceptualizes identity as a single, fluid, and unitary "translanguaging repertoire" (García, 2013). This collaboration between local and unitary pedagogical modes permits researchers and instructors to understand how leaners' linguistic assets prove beneficial when communicating in multilingual market place.

In present ESL classrooms, learners use agentic strategies to reclaim their marginalized identity and want to have free will in the choice of linguistic input in order to maintain and sustain their appropriate identity. "Current empirical research indicates that fluid linguistic practices, such as code-switching and translanguaging, serve as critical tools of agency and micro-resistance within dominant educational spaces (García & Li Wei, 2014)." In order to shield their emotional spaces and secure their personal cultural narratives, the learner switch between various language choices i.e., their native languages and institutionally mandated languages to lessen the intricate linguistic divide. They deliberately do so by raising their inner voices. This tactical disposition enables ESL learners to convert *linguistic deficit* into a profitable self-authorship and critical outlook. As a result, student can boast of multifaceted identities in the global market and a sense of ownership which inculcates self-awareness, realization of utility, cognitive leverage, and an autonomous investment is promoted.

In this changing world where parameters for pedagogical excellence are constantly changing according to the need of the hour, the collaboration between institutional objectives and individual ideological perspectives is the dire need. The raw nuances of learner's personal experiences need to be catered with providing an appropriate framework where student may invest their linguistic capital without facing rigidity. Traditional qualitative research methodologies are insufficient to cope with the erratic nature of identity negotiation and eradicating the burgeoning identity clashes of ESL learners with the mandated language. Such phenomenon can be traced within their personal narratives through which they reflect their personal struggles and use language as an *investment* to fit into imagined communities and achieve the goals. "To preserve these narratives, researchers increasingly utilize the "narrative turn" in applied linguistics, positioning storytelling as a primary tool for self-discovery and

critique (Pavlenko, 2007)". Aneta Pavlenko (2007) asserts that narratives have become a norm in research because "narrative emerged not merely as an oral or literary genre, but as the central means by which people give their lives meaning across time". Ultimately, Gary Barkhuizen (2014) concludes that, "narrative inquiry provides an unvarnished window into the student experience, exposing the hidden battles fought by multilingual writers as macro-level institutional power constraints collide with micro-level personal choices in real-time."

The present research is an attempt to deconstruct power dynamics within multilingual classroom and promote a critical translanguaging framework because this "critical approach goes beyond mere pedagogy; it centers social justice by validating the fluid linguistic practices of minoritized students as legitimate cognitive assets, thereby destabilizing the supremacy of the monolingual norm (García, 2013)". Literature in previous researches aligns with same concepts specially in western and Hispanic-American context but in Pakistan context such narrative based researches are not found where voices of the consumers of the linguistic capital are addressed. By utilizing a qualitative reflective narrative methodology, this study fills this gap. It provides researchers, policymakers, and educators with an action plan against the contrasting/subtracting monolingual and translingual policies to preserve the identity of ESL leaners in multilingual classroom settings.

Aim and Objectives:

The present qualitative research employs a reflective narrative thematic analysis methodology for the examination of the learner's narratives in multilingual Pakistani public college settings. The primary focus of this research is to critically evaluate how minoritized multilingual learners in Pakistani public colleges navigate and negotiate their linguistic identities in classrooms where monolingual policy is appreciated and enforced as a standard. Specifically, this study undermines such practices and aims to explore the internal and external factors that are responsible for shaping their linguistic preferences as a form of academic "investment" to compete the linguistic asymmetries and hierarchical restraints. It favors agentic strategies such as code switching, code-mixing and translanguaging to create a sense of ownership in the learners and claims self-authorship with indigenous pride. The main objectives of this research are the following:

- To critically evaluate how ESL learners in minoritized Pakistani ESL classrooms invest their linguistic capital against normative academic monolingual policies.
- To identify constructive factors behind personal narratives of the students and contextual clues pertaining to their lived experiences and patterns of thought which determine their linguistic repertoire within ESL classrooms.
- To suggest some practicable, narrative-informed, critical translanguaging strategies to empower the multifaceted identities of Pakistani ESL learners

Research Questions:

The objectives have been turned into the following research questions:

1. How do Pakistani ESL learners *invest* their *linguistic capital* to negotiate their multiple identities in classroom where monolingualism is an appreciated norm?
2. Which factors are responsible for shaping linguistic identity of multilingual learners and how on the basis of their lived experiences they combine linguistic identities to compete the global market and reach the imagined communities?
3. How can a critical translanguaging framework be implemented into Pakistani public colleges to create a sense of self-authorship and empowerment?

Significance of the Study:

The present research has multidimensional implications due to its exuberant, practicable, theoretical and methodological implications in the areas of sociolinguistics, pedagogical policy making, and linguistic inquiry on higher educational landscape. Its theoretical significance lies in its intersectional approach which reduces the gap between traditional methods of language education while promoting the standardized models for pedagogical instructions. Learners from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and geographical locations bring with them linguist assets of their own which influence their identity construction. This study traces all those factors that are responsible for their identity construction in multilingual classrooms. From methodological perspective, it completely rejects the worn-out, outdated and in voyage practices and employs a reflective narrative analysis method to trail the dynamic and fluid approaches to analyze the personal monologues and internal voices of the participants. Their lived experiences as first-hand sources of knowledge to showcase the multiple nuances of identity construction during the course of their academic journey. As far as its practical execution is concerned, the friction between the monolingual policies of institutions and the learners' aspired identities can be minimized by offering implementing this empirical research methodology. Since the present research is an endeavor to suggest a translanguaging perspective of ESL teaching in Pakistani multilingual classroom settings and it can reform the educational landscape of higher education in Pakistan by providing a conductive environment for identity negotiation. The inclusive practices can be replaced with exclusive practices that can ensure the linguistic investments of the learner as a profitable asset.

Limitations and Delimitation:

The present research primarily unravels how ESL learners negotiate their linguistic identity in multilingual Pakistani classroom settings. Participants' narratives provided an actual reflection of their linguistic preferences and representation of identity as a dynamic and fluid construct. For inductive narrative analysis, this qualitative research sampled 14 participants at BS level from specific public college (GGCW S/T Gujranwala). Though their narratives unpacked multiple issues regarding identity negotiation yet the data obtained from these narratives is insufficient to be claimed as generalizable in all teaching/learning situations and conditions. The findings preferred depth over breathed and are context dependent. Another noticeable feature is that participants have provided their subjective standpoints and their reflective interview may possibly echo misrepresentation of events as they may romanticize, distort and fail to recall

certain emotional experience over the period of time. Their individual biases may risk the objectivity but generally represent an overall scenario in ESL classrooms. The geographical, socio-economic and linguistic realities of students in a public college in Pakistan differ significantly from those in elite private universities or low-resource rural schools. At the same time institutional gatekeeping, peer dynamics, role of teachers, individual's goals all influence identity negotiation. Other quantitative methods can provide a deep understanding of this this subject by utilizing large data set.

Literature Review:

Language and identity are interrelated and interdependent in nature. Language identity is a fluid, constantly evolving and power disseminating singularity through which leaners' social and linguistic spaces are navigated and learners' world view is constructed. Presently, language is treated as active commodity rather than being a passive utility in growing linguist market places. Norton (2013) views language, "a site of struggle, a site in which identity is constantly negotiated and renegotiated over time and space". Mostly, ESL leaners under the influence of mandated language influence suppress their abundant native linguistic reservoir and hesitate to invest the linguistic capital. In the present scenario, applied linguist is more concerned about the issue related to learner's motivation, well-being, identity negotiation because such issues can have far reaching effects. As Cummins, J. (2000) opines that, "student success or failure is determined largely in the process of identity negotiation between teacher and student... Identities are not static or fixed but are constantly being shaped through experiences and interactions, and there are multiple facets to identities". Students' agency, active participation in multilingual classroom can be realized only if their native identities are not marred or suppressed and it depends upon priorities of the administrators and teachers in educational settings. Self-authorship and empowerment can be claimed if the learner have right to talk and their personal voices are not silenced.

Bony Norton (1995) views language not in the form of chain and choice relations but interdependent on socio-political dynamics with in the society. Power hierarchies determine what is to be communicated and to whom. According to Norton, language learning/ acquisition is not a psychological or cognitive process. On the contrary, aligning with Pierre Bourdieu, she perceives language as fluid construct embedded in power hierarchies. "When a language learner speaks, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers; they are also constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world," says Norton's. The significant addition in the previous literature is the concept of *motivation* along with *investment*. "If learners 'invest' in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital", claims Norton (1995). Linguistic capital is not about knowing the structure of language but also using this dynamic entity to communicate across the global market. Norton's research demonstrates that unequal power relations can silence highly motivated learners by denying them the social space for practice. "Power relations... determine what opportunities are available for learners to speak, and the extent to which their linguistic capital is valued. (1995)" Norton views linguistic capital as part of a triad

alongside identity and ideology. In a globalized and digital world, systemic ideologies constantly shift the "value" of a learner's linguistic capital across different spaces. "To invest in a language is to invest in an identity... systemic patterns of control, or ideologies, serve to preserve the power of dominant groups by designating what forms of capital are considered legitimate (1995)".

According to Bourdieu (1991), a classroom is not a neutral space of learning, but a highly competitive linguistic market. Within this market, different languages, dialects, and accents are assigned an arbitrary economic and social value. The institution establishes a "legitimate language", usually standard, academic English which acts as the supreme currency. The leaners who are fluent in target language can easily become the members of the imagined communicates and reflect desired identity whereas linguistic inferiority, mispronunciation, regional dialects, broken sentences lead to nowhere. For Bourdieu, an ESL student negotiating their identity is essentially trying to survive in a market where their primary currency has been rendered worthless, forcing them to choose between economic assimilation or social bankruptcy. Bourdieu (1991) frames this linguistic interaction as an inherently relational site of conflict: “These linguistic market spaces are "sites of struggle and competition where individuals or agents strive to maintain or alter their position and where their capacity to compete is determined by the volume of capital they possess”. The role of the teacher in the multilingual classrooms should be that of the facilitator and they should develop critical perspective because "In order for teachers to provide agency and opportunities to their students to engage in (multilingual) identity education, they first need to acquire critical linguistic awareness and sociolinguistic knowledge themselves... [advocating for] the deconstruction of pernicious language hierarchies and ideologies, and the promotion of equity and social justice.", quotes Becker, C. (2023)

Bourdieu (1991) argues that every time we speak, we are entering an unspoken market where our words are treated as goods. The value of these goods is not determined by how clear or grammatically correct they are, but by the social authority of the person speaking them. He argues that linguistic exchanges are fundamentally relations of power, representing an "economy of symbolic exchanges" rather than just communication. The linguistic market acts as a mechanism of "price formation". An utterance's value is not intrinsic, but determined by the social context (e.g., street slang vs. a boardroom). “The value of an utterance is determined by the power relation between speakers and their capacity to use language appropriately in a given situation (Bourdieu, 1991)”. Bourdieu notes that dominant, institutionalized language acts as linguistic capital. Those possessing this capital (often through formal education) have an advantage, as the market validates their speech while marginalizing others. Individuals use their linguistic habitus to pre-appraise a market, leading to self-censorship or adaptation based on the expected social "price" or penalty of their speech. As he puts: “Speech acts are encounters between an individual's "linguistic habitus" and the market's "system of sanctions and censorship". Bourdieu explicitly rejects the idea that words possess a magical, intrinsic power to make people listen or obey. Instead, he argues that linguistic power is outsourced from social institutions. A speaker can only wield linguistic power if they are socially authorized to do so. "The power of words is nothing other than the delegated power of the spokesperson, and his

words—that is, the substance of his discourse and, equally, his way of speaking—are at most a testimony, and one among others, to the guarantee of delegation which is vested in him." (Bourdieu, 1991). Power operates most effectively when it is invisible. Bourdieu explains that marginalized individuals become complicit in their own oppression when they accept the dominant language as naturally superior, a phenomenon he terms "symbolic violence". As he quotes: "symbolic power is a power of constructing reality... It is a power of co-optation, which is exercised only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it. (1991)".

Misrecognition (méconnaissance) is the process by which the arbitrary, socially constructed nature of power and inequality is masked and accepted as entirely natural, neutral, and legitimate. When applied to linguistic capital, misrecognition occurs when society mistakes a prestigious dialect or standard accent (which is actually just the cultural inheritance of the wealthy) for evidence of superior personal intelligence, talent, or professional merit. Rather than recognizing that schools, corporations, and state institutions are rigged to reward the specific speech habits (linguistic habitus) of the elite, both dominant and marginalized groups internalize the belief that standard speech is inherently "correct" and superior. "Power relations are perceived, not for what they objectively are, but in a form which renders them legitimate in the eyes of the beholder." (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). According to Borrdieu, "the different social classes are characterized by structural variations in their linguistic practice, which are bound up with variations in their conditions of acquisition (1991). As marginalized individuals attempt to acquire the dominant language later in life, they become acutely aware of the social penalties attached to their natural speech. This creates a psychological shift that reinforces the social hierarchy. Speakers from lower social strata often practice self-censorship because they anticipate that their acquired language will be judged as inferior in formal settings. In an effort to climb the social hierarchy, upwardly mobile individuals often display "cultural goodwill." They obsessively over-correct their grammar and speech, which ironically signals to elites that they do not naturally belong to the upper class or they adopt the policy of Silencing. Bourdieu stresses that the most devastating power of dominant social structures is that they enforce order silently without needing explicit physical coercion. When marginalized speakers are forced into the dominant market (like a formal courtroom or an elite classroom), their silence can be a physical manifestation of realizing they lack institutional capital. As he put forth: "Those who lack the legitimate competence are condemned to silence or to a specialized market where their speech is penalized (1991)."

Bourdieu's analytical framework was further extended by Jan Blommaert (2015) who addressed the issues like global citizenship, cult of migration which posthumously sensitizes the need for a *polycentricity* in unified linguistic market place. The centralized global market encourages polycentricity where leaners can navigate multiple linguistic identities at the uniformed time and space. As an after effect of immigration, it has been observed that ethnic linguistic identity may provide leverage in the native vicinities but in formal global spaces leaners may face inferiority due to the deficit linguistic capital. Monica Heller (2010) views how in shifting cultural perspectives, local linguistic economy can play a vital role in global economy.

She illustrates, “how traditional, localized linguistic identity markers are often suppressed or carefully packaged to serve international corporate structures, turning language into a commodified form of capital”.

Rahman, T (2002) and Mahboob, A (2002) have critically analyzed how language policies in Pakistani higher education landscape are implemented. In their view, our colonial subjugation, and postcolonial history created a divide between local expectations and institutional priorities/practices. Our social realities demand a different mind set to deal with rigid monocentric language policies encouraging the foreign culture. In Pakistan, most people are multilinguals whereas, “public higher education institutions frequently enforce rigid, subtractive monolingual practices that prioritize English as the language of global capital and Urdu as the national unifying symbol”. This situation is not going to benefit us in anyway. This *deficit model* is bound to produce unauthoritative, submissive teachers and learners.

Block (2007) laid stress on solving and resolving the issues and looking forward into different directions where our political economy and linguistic representation are inseparable. Several internal and external factors influence our linguistic behavior i.e., educational background, ethnicity, economic class, social class, gender, race etc. As a result, learners from diverse linguistic background develop a sense of devaluation in their native linguistic repertoire and start complying institution demands. "Consequently, the multilingual abilities of these youth remain typically unnoticed or ignored in the classroom, and little is specifically known about their histories, cultures, expectations, and achievements... The findings reveal narratives of ascribed identities, racialization, and perceived language hierarchies in the participant's daily life, quote Kiramba, L. K., & Oloo, J. (2021).

Within these public college classrooms in Pakistan, language functions as a form of "linguistic capital" (Bourdieu, 2003), where only the institutionalized varieties yield social and academic currency, rendering the native languages of minoritized students effectively powerless. This uneven distribution of linguistic power heavily influences a learner’s "investment" (Norton, 2013) which is a socially constructed, power-inflected commitment to acquire and perform a target language in hopes of securing material or symbolic resources.

Critical sociolinguists and postcolonial theorists building upon Bourdieu argue that if the "legitimate market" is fundamentally rigged, silence can shift from passive defeat to an active shield. Scott (1985) introduced *silence* as a strategic act, constitutive of power relations yet with multiple and situated meanings. According to him, “We argue that silence acts both to forge a form of contestation that dares not speak its name and to constitute a space for the development of an alternative conduct to reclaim independence. Specifically, we identify four tactics using silence as a form of resistance, silence to escape accountability and control; silence to negotiate an alternative; silence to reclaim independence; and silence to retain power and authority. We then discuss the potential and limits of such silent resistance to support the emergence of alternative conducts.” Critical scholarship has positioned translanguaging practices as a means of resisting power imbalances in education, providing space for marginalized linguistic identities (Flores, 2013; García & Kleyn, 2016).

By legitimizing the linguistic practices of minoritized students, translanguaging disrupts

deficit narratives and promotes equity-oriented pedagogy. This is particularly relevant in English-medium higher education settings, where the dominance of English often marginalizes local and heritage languages. Ofelia García's (2013) frames translanguaging as the natural and authentic way multilingual individuals utilize their entire language repertoire to make sense of the world. García's (2013) concludes: "Translanguaging theory builds on scholarly work that has demonstrated how colonial and modernist-era language ideologies created and maintained linguistic, cultural, and racial hierarchies in society. It challenges prevailing theories of bilingualism/multilingualism... to disrupt the hierarchies that have delegitimized the language practices of those who are minoritized.

The present research synthesizes the frameworks of Ofelia García (2013), Pierre Bourdieu (1991), and Bonny Norton (2013) to propose a new perspective to observe how linguistic identities in Pakistani Classrooms are negotiated and addressed. Together, these scholars bridge the gap between cognitive fluidity, institutional power, and personal human agency. García establishes what a multilingual brain is naturally capable of doing; Bourdieu exposes the institutional barriers that penalize that natural behavior; and Norton details the deeply personal, strategic ways that learners navigate these structural constraints to reclaim their future selves. Based on these theories, the employed research methodology has been devised.

Methodology and Research Design

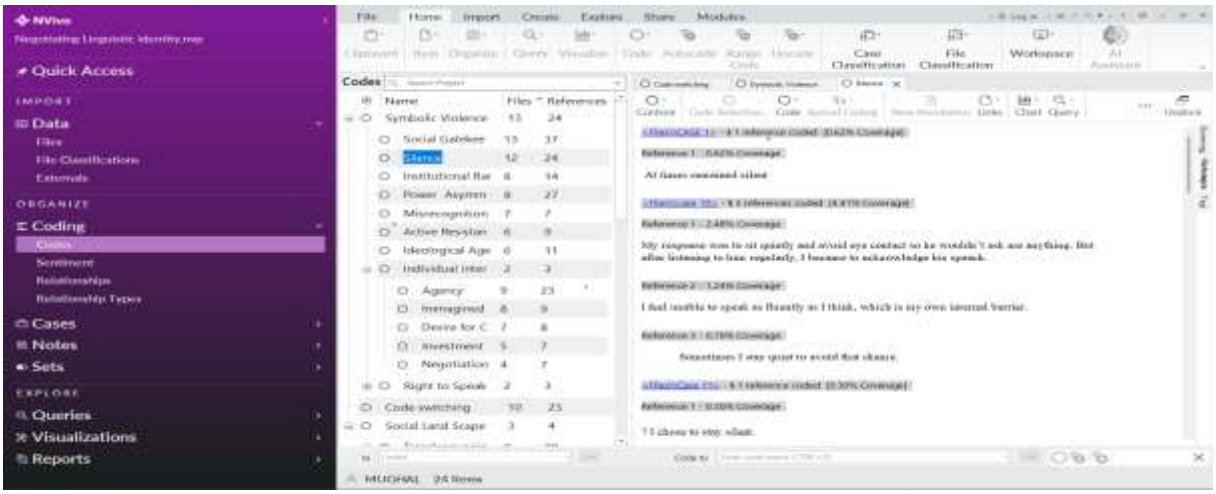
This qualitative research employed a reflective narrative analysis design to explore, within a public college (GGCW S/T Gujranwala), the awareness among learners regarding the linguistic identity formation in the multilingual classrooms. The nature of classroom struggles and conflicts that arise due to diverse backgrounds of the students and as well as the degree to which they have adapted their positionality in response to emerging dynamics of diversity were the areas under investigation. Reflexive thematic analysis is an easily accessible and theoretically flexible interpretative approach to qualitative data analysis that facilitates the identification and analysis of patterns or themes in a given data set (Braun and Clarke 2012). The reflexive approach to thematic analysis (henceforth TA) highlights the researcher's active role in knowledge production (Braun and Clarke 2019). Codes are understood to represent the researcher's interpretations of patterns of meaning across the dataset.

Reflexive thematic analysis is considered a reflection of the researcher's interpretive analysis of the data conducted at the intersection of: (1) the dataset; (2) the theoretical assumptions of the analysis, and; (3) the analytical skills/resources of the researcher (Braun and Clarke 2019). Multiple codes have been generated in Nvivo to analyze the phenomenon under discussion. The process of coding (and theme development) is flexible and organic, and very often will evolve throughout the analytical process (Braun et al. 2019). Progression through the analysis will tend to facilitate further familiarity with the data, which may in turn result in the interpretation of new patterns of meaning. This is converse to the use of code books, which can often predefine themes before coding. Through the reflexive approach, themes are not predefined in order to 'find' codes. Rather, themes are produced by organizing codes around a relative core commonality, or 'central organizing concept', that the researcher interprets from the data (Braun and Clarke 2019).

For coding *data driven* or deductive approach has been employedto produce codes that are solely reflective of the content of the data, free from any pre-conceived theory or conceptual framework. In this case, data are not coded to fit a pre-existing coding frame, but instead 'open-coded' in order to best represent meaning as communicated by the participants (Braun and Clarke 2013). Coding process consisted of six phases:

1- **Familiarization with the Data** (familiarization entails the reading and re-reading of the entire dataset in order to become intimately familiar with the data).

2- **Generating Initial Codes** was the second step. The process of coding is undertaken to produce succinct, shorthand descriptive or interpretive labels for pieces of information that may be of relevance to the research question(s). It is recommended that the researcher work systematically through the entire dataset, attending to each data item with equal consideration, and identifying aspects of data items that are interesting and may be informative in developing themes. Codes should be brief, but offer sufficient detail to be able to stand alone and inform of the underlying commonality among constituent data items in relation to the subject of the research (Braun and Clarke 2012; Braun et al. 2016).



Extract of Preliminary Coding

3. **Generating themes:** The coded data is reviewed and analysed as to how different codes may be combined according to shared meanings so that they may form themes or sub-themes. The related themes were dragged under relevant themes in order to avoid divergence and provision of generalizability in a compact way. The researcher tried to let go of codes or prospective themes that may not fit within the overall analysis.

4. **Reviewing Potential Themes:** This phase requires the researcher to conduct a recursive review of the candidate themes in relation to the coded data items and the entire dataset (Braun and Clarke 2012, 2020). The analysis was conducted at this phase involved two levels of review. Level one was a review of the relationships among the data items and codes that inform each theme and sub-theme. If the items/codes form a coherent pattern, it was assumed that the candidate theme/ sub-theme made a logical argument and may contribute to the overall narrative

of the data. At level two, the candidate themes are reviewed in relation to the data set.

5. **Defining and Naming Themes:** At this phase, the researcher was tasked with presenting a detailed analysis of the thematic framework. Each individual theme and sub-theme was to be expressed in relation to both the dataset and the research question(s). As per Patton's (1990) dual criteria, each theme should provide a coherent and internally consistent account of the data that cannot be told by the other themes. However, all themes should come together to create a lucid narrative that is consistent with the content of the dataset and informative in relation to the research question(s). The names of the themes are revised according to sub-themes at this point. At this point three main codes that were generated are as follows: **Symbolic violence** (Social Gate Keeping, Silence, Power, Misrecognition, and institutional barriers), **Social Landscaping** (Right to speak, Identity, Individual interaction, imagined communities, Ideological stance, Agency, Adaptability, and Active Resistance) and **Translanguaging** (Cognitive ability, Changing self and Multifaceted self).

6. Producing the Discussion based Analysis:

This was the final stage where themes were analyzed critically in detail to provide a conducive pedagogical framework to preserve the native and expected identities of the ESL leaners in a multilingual classroom. Code-book facilitated in finding all relevant themes together that have been discussed below. After developing themes, three-layered analytical process was used for thematic analysis.

At macro-level all the possible psychological, economic and cultural factors were studied within participants' narratives i.e., their agency, individual inclinations, social interactions and inner dialect. Social environment creates a subtractive pressure in the form of imposing monolingual deficit language model on the learners. This environment determines the institutional policies according to the demand of linguistic market and restricts them to the realistic demands and utility. This framework establishes their world view in general and unified agency in particular. At this stage, determine their social landscape for scaffolding their internal interest. The conflict between aspired status and personal native identity leads to a decisive situation in which they have to market their linguistic capital according to the demands of dominant linguistic capital. Sometimes they modify, neglect, suppress their cultural assets at the altar of aspired identity.

In the third cycle begins with the realization of accepting translangauaging as a pedagogical model for creating equitable identity formation. It functions to promote critical reflections, a sense of self-authorship, cultural pride and personal autonomy. The ultimate goal of any pedagogical practices is to inculcate primacy of unitary agency and blending the local with foreign as per required situations by subverting the traditional monolingual hierarchy. The narratives of the students provided the blue print for more flexible, unitary and combined system of collective interest where transition from local identities towards elite linguistic repertoire is seen not a flee but as an agentic strategy. Below given model clarifies how fluid, dynamic and ever-changing identity works within different strata of society.

Conceptual Framework Model (Figure 1)

Micro Level Themes

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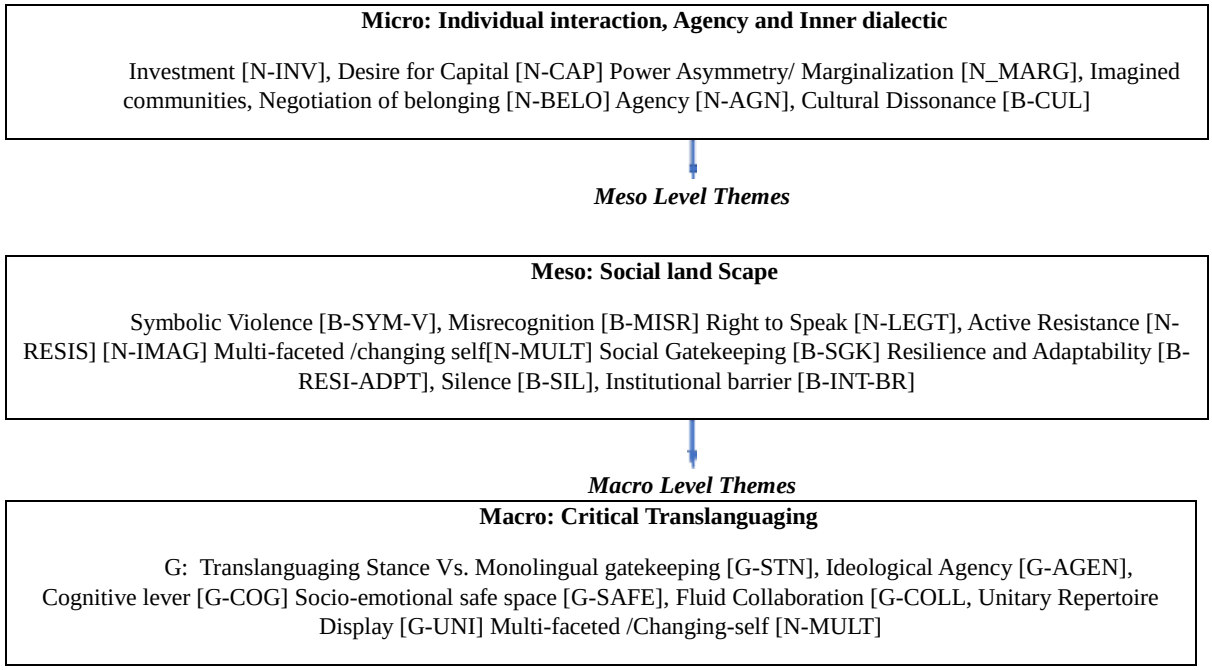


Figure 1: *The Cyclical Relationship of Linguistic Identity Negotiation in Pakistani Multilingual Classroom*

Population and Sample:

For this qualitative study, purposive sampling is chosen to focus on navigating students' English learning journey and their personal affiliation with English language. The sample consists of 14 students of English language (8th Sem) at GGCW Satellite Town Gujranwala. The intensive ethical considerations have been taken into account during the data collection through informed consent and a promise of confidentiality and anonymity**.**

Data Collection:

Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews which provided the space to the participant to disseminate their voices through their personal narratives. In alignment with Creswell (2013), semi-structured interviews provided a consistent structure across participant groups while allowing flexibility for elaboration and depth. Invitations were sent to participants via Whatsapp and interviews were scheduled at times convenient for the participants. All voice-recoded interviews were transcribed for analysis and thematically coded in *Nvivo* software for analysis.

Data Analysis

This qualitative research employs reflective narrative design to explore how multilingual learners negotiate and construct their identities within the multilingual classroom. Narrative inquiry recognizes that identity is structurally negotiated and fundamentally storied. Qualitative researchers use narrative approaches to explore the stories of participants and to understand the ways these stories were constructed and positioned. According to Huber (2002), "Identity is a storied life composition, a story to live by. Relying solely on the structured interview metrics

reducing the learners lived reality to static data points. This design aligns with Kim's (2016) assertion that narrative inquiry actively invites researchers to rethink entrenched views by engaging closely with an evolving situation.

Micro level Themes: Initially the following themes were traced out and in narratives of the participants and discussed below: Investment, Desire for Capital, Power Asymmetry/ Marginalization, Imagined communities, Negotiation of belonging, Agency, Cultural Dissonance. These themes provided the answer to research question one.

The analysis of accumulating data clearly demonstrates that the majority of learners consider that in a monolingual systemic structure, Pakistani ESL learners quickly realize that their native linguistic repertoire (Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, etc.) is stripped of its institutional value.

1. *As the class policy was to speak only in English. (*Case 4).

2. *There was a huge difference between my mother tongue and English. There was nobody at home with whom I could practice speaking near like natives*. (Case 4)
3. *I can use it to visualize myself in the hierarchy of English speakers* (Case 3)
4. *Although, we are free to speak in Urdu but it seems like an obligation to speak or respond to other in English but perhaps it's just a societal norm set by ourselves which makes the language as haunting to us not comforting as our first language to us.* (Case 10)
5. *I felt deeply excluded when the school implemented "English Only" zones, criminalizing our native speech. Exclusivity was felt when wealthy peers discussed foreign media and pop culture that I had.* (Case 8)

From these narrations it can be traced that monolingual structures operate on a compromised market where only a highly idealized, often Eurocentric or native-like English possesses currency. In the process of acquiring symbolic capital, mostly Pakistani ESL learners forget their personal spaces to counter systemic exclusion. Norton (2013) has also discussed, "If learners 'invest' in a language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital." Nevertheless, in Pakistani educational landscape, learners' local identities are depreciated and an unavoidable conciliation exists to enter into a promising investment. Their primary identities are repressed as linguistically deficient commodity in the process of accommodative silence and hyper-conformity.

Moreover, linguistic *investment* is the manifestation of post-colonial mind set and it is class signifier that works as a filter such as covering the upper ladder of hierarchy learners. Learners equate fluent English with high intelligence, and superior social class. For them English operates like a brutal class filter behind which their localized linguistic variations are kept hidden. Only if they have command on proper accent and better linguistic patterns in communication, they can enjoy the right to speak. Participants' descriptions about power dynamics are as follows:

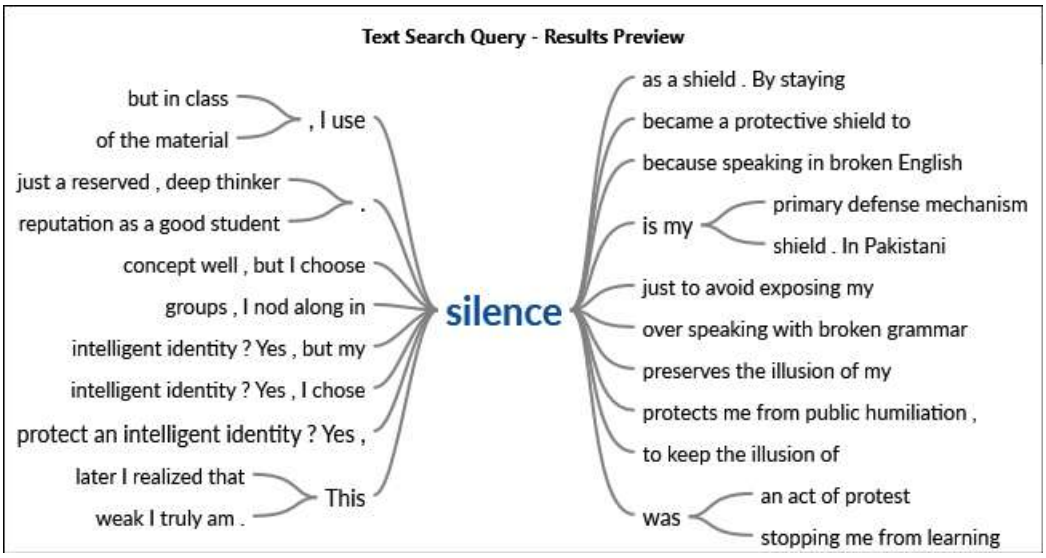
1. *English is not just a language; it is a class signifier. Teachers in Pakistan hold an immense amount of power over our linguistic self-worth. At school, I am told that English is the language of intellect and success, implicitly making me feel like my home language*

is inferior. If English were a person in Pakistan, they would be an arrogant, feudal landlord. (Case 11)

2. *In Pakistan, English operates as a brutal class filter, an elite, unapproachable bureaucrat sitting*. (Case12)
3. *I thought that native speakers had the edge and they could speak English in a better way, but we couldn't.* (Case 2)
4. *I would keep on covering the upper ladders of this hierarchy.* (Case 3)
5. *I wrongly equated fluent English with high intelligence and superior social class. I saw English as a vital tool to secure higher education and employment. Students use English to claim intellectual superiority and authority in groups. English is a demanding, elite mentor* (Case 7)
6. *I saw it as a systemic bias. I viewed the obsession with perfect English as a lingering colonial mindset in our society. I wanted to learn the "language of power". Teachers who fined us for speaking L1 made me view the school system as authoritarian*. (Case 8)
7. *I feel linguistic inferiority every single day when I am around fluent English speakers.* (Case 9)

For Bourdieu, speech is not a universal right; it is a social privilege. The social structure dictates who is allowed to speak, what they are allowed to say, and how they must say it. Within power hierarchies *silence* is the outcome of implicit censorship imposed by the authoritative group. Sometimes in ESL classrooms learners face *linguistic deficit* and prefer silence to avoid censorship by the peer groups or teachers. At the same time, they realize the significance of monolingual linguistic capital that ensures better future perspectives for them. This phenomenon is termed as ***méconnaissance*** or misrecognition by Bourdieu (2013) which prepares the learner for passive acceptance of dominant group's agendas, illegitimate suppression, and prejudices. The figure given below explains that student use silence as a shield to protect their identity or as a primary defense mechanism to save their reputation which is a form of accommodative silence. Sometimes, silence is used as an intelligent identity as well in order to feel confident about their own linguistic efficiency. This text search query shows that symbolic violence acts in the form of public humiliation such as discouraging attitude towards broken sentences and mispronounced words and student employ silence as an act of protest. Such psychological constraints halt the process of learning and thought clarity.

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The findings also indicate that multilingual classrooms are literally a *site of struggle* for ESL learners to save their symbolic worth. Norton and Toohey (2011) highlight this power dynamic: "Power relations play a crucial role in determining the extent to which learners can access the social networks of the target language community and the extent to which they can practice the target language." This struggle results in burdening the learners with cognitive load and constantly put a pressure to them to prove themselves as legitimate and confident speakers. This persistent scuffle is constant and passive input that leaner labor in silence. The below given extracts show that student have multiple objectives behind their *linguistic investment* such as getting better job opportunities, highly paid jobs and becoming the member of global community.

1. *My main motivation is to get a good job* (Case 10)
2. *motive of getting a better job.* (Case 3)
3. *I wanted to get better job opportunities, wanted to be lecturer or pass CSS. Gradually, I progressed a lot.* (Case 4)
4. *career advancement, and passing gatekeeping exams, get the job* (Case 8)

The adaptability of monolingual structure is a very interesting phenomenon. Th *investment* which begins as unwilling consent, later on help to absorb multiple identities in fluidity. The initial passive resistance become an active acceptance of dominant culture along with personal local linguistic identities. and they use code-switching and code-mixing to celebrate their authority and self-efficacy. In casual conversation with friends, they switch back to their first language for sharing the emotional empathy and collaboration. The in-group association is promoted in this way. The following lines show that their inclinations towards English are not appreciated by their fellows:

1. *I come from an Urdu-speaking family, so Urdu was my first language at home. I feel proud when I deliver a correct speech but at times, I worry that I am losing the natural flow of my first language.* (Case 10)

2. *"Angrez ban rahe ho?"* (Are you trying to be British?) or *"Urdu bol lo, zyada elite na bano.*(Case 11)
3. *"Wadday Angrez sahib"* (Look at this big British gentleman*). There is a story about the emotional exhaustion of code-switching. People see us sitting quietly and think we are not engaged* (Case 12)
4. *My language journey began with my mother tongue (Urdu and Punjabi)* (Case 14)
5. *In casual conversations with friends, most students switch back to their first language, like Urdu. They use code-switching to balance both. I gave my idea in Urdu instead.* (Case 2)

For Pakistani learners, reclaiming agency means shifting their investment from trying to become a native speaker to invest in English as a tool to project their authentic, multilingual selves. The investment on the part of students systemically works at two levels. Firstly, at the surface level, they manifest bilingual adaptability to achieve better status, material growth and financial rewards. At deeper level, they internally resist symbolic linguistic violence; showing conformity to their native linguistic capital.

In qualitative data analysis, *word cloud* is a powerful mode of visually analyzing the contents of the text; offering a precise and authentic manifestation. Content words usually present the paramount themes embedded in discourse; representing the trends and thought processes emerging in the society. The re-occurrence of words validates the importance of a certain theme or trend. This indication of the subject matter helps reader to have a bird eye view of the crux of text; offering dominant concepts and highlighting emotional tone of text. It is time saving and practical source to have a cursory look into the connected categories of grammatical units.



The higher education policies in Pakistani institutional giants of English and Urdu (as unifying factors) are the medium of instruction and minoritized languages such as Punjabi, Pashto, Saraiki, Sindhi, Balochi are being constantly ignored. Consequently, regional identities do not enjoy the prestigious status due to several deeply rooted forces. The forces are the external and internal factors that determine the hierarchy of languages. The most prominent external

factor is post-colonial legacy of the dominance through language and culture. English still exercises its influence in policy making as a language of elites. Another reason for such prestige association is global accreditation of this language as lingua franca. Secondly, leaners motivation, desire for gaining better position in the market place and a sense of belongingness with aspired community are the other psychological and economic factors which determine their identity. There is often an internal battle between the desire for socioeconomic upward mobility (which demands investing in English) and the psychological need to preserve their cultural roots and heritage identity. A learner's **linguistic self-efficacy**—their confidence in their ability to speak the dominant language are also important. Below are given extracts from the narrative to exhibit how their sense of adaptability force them to shift identity:

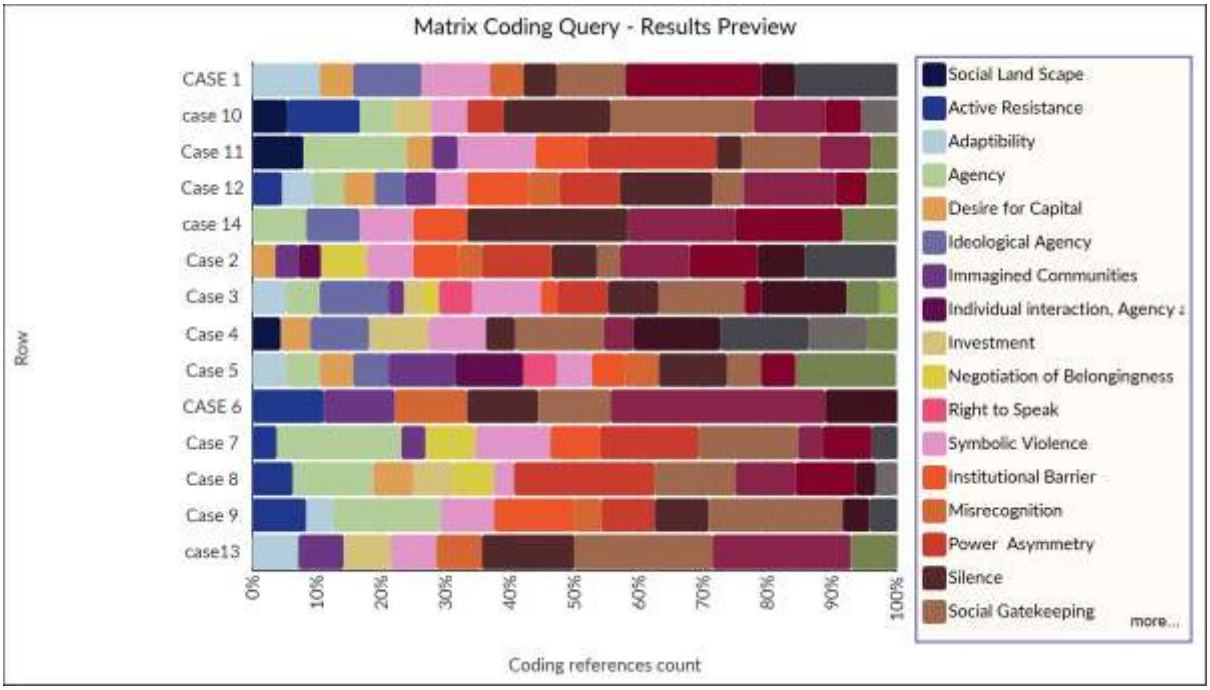
1. *I had many ideas in my mind but could explain in English. I told that to my teacher in Urdu. I felt influence of my mother tongue while speaking, I realized it when I mix-codes or switch-codes.* (Case 6)
2. *I grew up in a vibrant L1-dominant environment where English was virtually non-existent outside of television ….not on sounding like a native British or American speaker….but successfully explaining a complex Western scientific concept to my elders in our L1*. (Case 8)
3. Sometimes I mixed English with Urdu to feel comfortable in conversations. At home we speak Punjabi and Urdu. In class we are free to speak in Urdu. (Case 1)
4. *It was a new culture for me. Attention turned toward new accents, sounds and a new culture* (Case1)
5. *I am trying to build a bridge between my native intelligence and this foreign language that dictates my academic worth*. (Case 12)
6. *If I compare it with the first day when my language repertoire was very low, but now today I can say that I am about to touch the advanced English language learning that today my fluency in English, my vocabulary, and my overall command on English is good.* (Case 3)

Learners actively resist monolingual practices and reject the erasure of personal linguistic repertoire in multiple ways. Most of the time, through code-switching (blending English, Urdu, and regional languages), they negotiate indigenous identities in peer groups. By doing so, they covertly assign a new value to their full repertoire transforming it into a hybrid linguistic identity that allows them to survive the dominant monolingual structure while maintaining their cultural authenticity. From the narratives of the cases, it has been established that critical translanguaging framework can be structurally integrated into Pakistani public colleges to protect and empower minoritized student identities. The solution to anxieties and struggles of ESL learners is in developing translanguaging stance and snubbing monolingual gatekeeping. The learners can develop a cognitive leverage over the monolingual learners which would provide them a socio-emotional safe space for fluid collaboration cross-culturally and they would be able to display unitary Repertoire. At this level their Multi-faceted /Changing-self can foster global citizenship and liberate them from the effects of post-coloniality and linguistic hegemony. The following examples elucidate the

same stance:

1. *Yes, I am a changed person.* (Case 11)
2. *Small improvements in speaking gave me confidence and helped me express my ideas more freely. This shift in mindset has played an important role in my language identity development*. (Case 14)
3. *… now I feel more involved and participated in the discussions, which are used to avoid few years back, right. So, yes, it is changing who I am. I have learned many things.* (Case 3)
4. *I happened to know many words my peers did not know of. But I wouldn't say I felt superior. It was more like I was happy that my knowledge was worth- noticing.* (Case 4)
5. *Writing Competitions. This led me to opt English as my Major. It has been a thought-provoking journey all along. I felt as I have been in direct conversation with everyone around me. With the passage of time, I Learnt to speak of my opinion more openly.* (Case 5)
6. *In the past I felt hesitated but now things are quite better. I am not a different person; I am just a more aware and stronger version of myself.* (Case 13)

Through the Matrix coding query, Nvivo analysis facilitated to analyze the themes projection across all the narratives.



The figure explains the all these themes are interrelated and spread across the narratives of the participants. There is a dire need to develop a framework which would engage all the theories into single unifying unit.

At macro level, **translanguaging** is the process whereby multilingual speakers use their full linguistic repertoire without adhering to artificial, socially constructed boundaries between

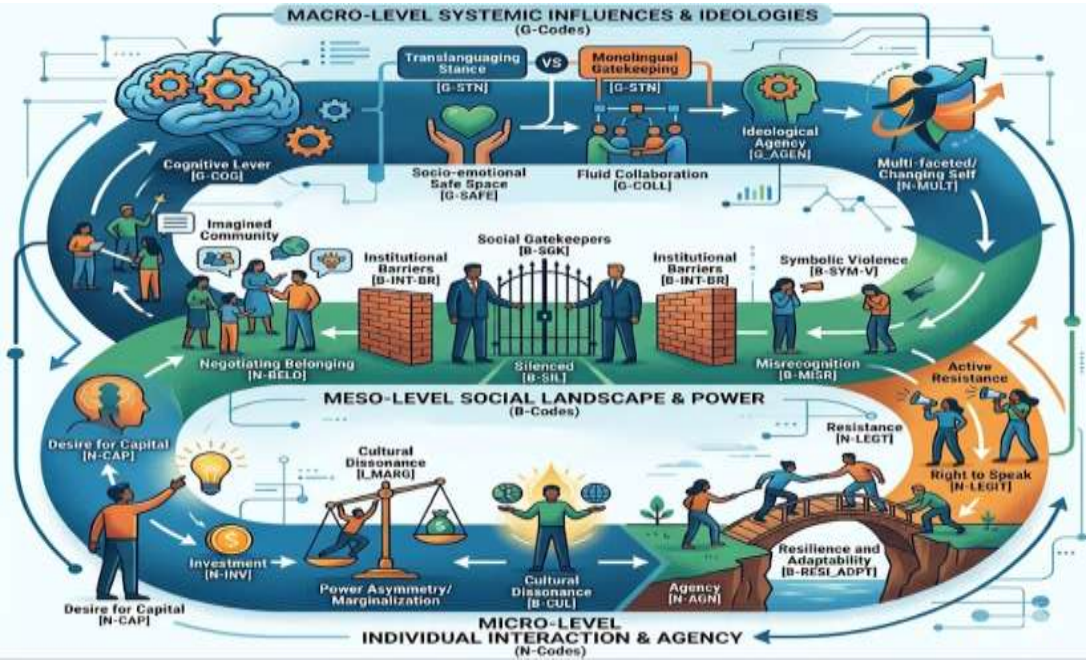
languages, fundamentally transforms a speaker's **self-concept, agency, and identity**. Instead of viewing themselves as "deficient" speakers of individual languages, translanguaging allows minoritized learners to view themselves as whole, capable communicators. When forced to speak only one dominant language, minoritized individuals often feel like they are wearing a mask or performing an alien identity. Translanguaging acts as a mechanism of liberation, allowing individuals to bring their genuine cultural history, emotions, and worldview into the open. "For multilingual subjects, translanguaging is not just a fluid language practice... it is an act of agency, a way of performing their complex identities, and a means of reclaiming their voice in oppressive spaces.", quotes Suresh Canagarajah (2011).

Translanguaging as a **"cognitive lever"** is one of its most powerful dimensions. In educational settings, a "lever" is a tool that amplifies force as it allows a student to lift a heavy intellectual load that would otherwise be impossible to move with a single, restricted language. When applied to minoritized learners, such as Pakistani ESL students navigating complex academic material, translanguaging acts as a cognitive lever by maximizing their mental bandwidth, deepening comprehension, and unlocking higher-order thinking skills. "Translanguaging is a cognitive lever that allows bilingual students to use their full linguistic repertoire to access complex academic content, thereby reducing cognitive load and maximizing learning potential." says Ofelia García and Tatyana Kleyn (2016). The narratives of the ESL learners proved this stance:

1. *It is helping me in developing a broader vision about the world. I have developed my personal ways of thinking. Language identity bestows confidence.* (Case 1)
2. *learning English gives you a chance to explain things in a different way, rather than explaining only in your local language. English has given me confidence I didn't have before. It helps me share ideas with people from other backgrounds. It's more like I now have the ability to share my ideas in more than one language.* (Case 2)
3. *English has opened new vistas for me. I feel myself confident. I developed my speaking skills. I can organize my thoughts better and I feel myself a member of global community.* (Case 4)
4. *It has made me more analytical and open to global perspectives. I express logic better in English* (Case 7)
5. *It helped developing my intellect and capabilities*. (Case 9).

The following diagram shows how all these themes are interconnected to offer a future

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perspective of *translanguaging.*

Discussion:

The findings reveal a recurring tension in how students' identity has become a priority in multilingual classroom settings where patterns of intercultural interaction clearly affirm the value of the intellectual, cultural, and linguistic resources that students bring to institution. Intercultural communication has become a norm in the bilingual and multicultural classroom settings and "this communication is never neutral with respect to societal power relations (Cummins,2002)." This view is consistent with the literature, which describes that multilingual people vie and negotiate identity in terms of language in home, institutional (education/workplace), and digital contexts. Identity negotiation can be placed in a more situated, power-infused, and interactionally driven dynamic influenced by the broader language ideologies, and with practical consequences of more inclusive educational and workplace language policies (NF Iqbal 2025; and Swann et al 2000). The identity is the product of negotiation between individual claims and the availability of identity choices determined by the power relations in social contexts (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Norton, 2000).

Another aspect that has been explored through the narratives of the participants is the use of a diverse set of language, vocabulary and identity roles adopted by students in a multilingual classroom. A multilingual repertoire is the entire collection of the communicative resources of a person across the named languages, styles, registers, and modalities and is used at any rate based on the contexts and purposes (Siebenhütter, 2023). Language ideology is what governs these practices which are social beliefs about what can be considered as good language, who is a real speaker, and what speaking practices are worthwhile or acceptable. Ideologies determine the hearing of speakers and how they expect to be judged (Wei, 2022). Language is not merely seen as an abstract system of grammar and vocabulary, but as a social practice interwoven with power (Norton 1995).

Motivation is also seen as a form of investment which signals that the learners have a

complex social and economic stake in the language. "If learners 'invest' in the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital (Norton,1995). The participants acknowledged that there are multiple reasons behind this investment i.e., desire for capital, to counter power asymmetries or marginalization, and become an active member of imagined communities where there are more chance of power-gain. In this way these multilingual speakers can negotiation a sense of belongingness with the target culture and realize their agency despite cultural dissonance. These findings align with arguments in the literature that such multilingual practices are often referred to as identity work due to the fact that they enable the speakers to index social meanings, such as solidarity, authority, intimacy, or boundaries, through the patterned selection of discourse (Yim et al., 2021). Learning and identity are inseparable, identities can be considered as 'long-term, living relations between persons and their place and participation in communities of practice. Thus identity, knowing, and social membership entail one another; full participation in practice involves becoming part of the community (Lave and Wenger 1991).

Another noticeable aspect was the role of institutions and teachers that can affect the identity of ESL leaners at large in multilingual classrooms. The findings also indicated that some administrators see themselves trapped between policy expectations and pedagogical realities, as they struggle to maintain a balance between supporting innovative teaching practices and safeguarding institutional standards and assessment requirements (Cummins, 2007; Hornberger, 2009 and Menken and García, 2010). The need of the hour is to emphasize that despite their institutional role which requires adherence to formal language policies (monolingual), teachers should be granted flexibility to draw on students' full linguistic resources when appropriate but rigidity on their part can be seen as a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991) where voices of the learners are silenced in the market where words are treated as commodity and goods. It results in the form of misrecognition that is the process by which the arbitrary, socially constructed nature of power and inequality is masked and accepted as entirely natural, neutral, and legitimate.

The ESL learners in multilingual classroom settings should have a right to speak in more than one language and it is now being generally acknowledged that the potential that translanguaging pedagogies offer for enhancement of inclusivity and comprehension, particularly for learners navigating complex academic content in a second or foreign language (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García & Wei, 2014). The findings revealed that monolingual linguistic policies provide a logo centric worldview that fails to recognize lived realities and culturally embedded linguistic resources, thereby closing off the space for identity expression and negotiation. Consequently, promoting English-only education while excluding other languages from the classroom effectively results in a detachment from context, communicative code, and community ties (Canagarajah, 2015).

Participants' narratives have also revealed that the learners at times intentionally exhibit active resistance to consolidate their affiliation with their local languages to challenge the power asymmetries in the form of silence. This study is an endeavor to propose a translanguaging framework in multilingual classrooms where multilingual abilities of these youth may not remain unnoticed or ignored in the classroom (Mavioglu,2024; Doiz et al. 2013; Llurda, 2007; Ilhan and Aydin, 2015 and García's, 2013). In the global market, learners all sets of linguistic reservoirs

can facilitate the global identity construction and membership and adaptability. The present research aligns with the literature on translanguaging by García (2013) who appreciates the involvement and integration of pre-existing linguistic knowledge of the speakers to create a sense of reflexivity and cooperation. The proposed framework by her rejects the monopoly of one language, rejecting *fractional bilingualism* wherein bilinguals are treated as two distinct monolinguals and their linguistic knowledge of more than one language is compartmentalized in different sections which cannot overlap or be adjusted in a singular unit. The recent researches on bilingualism favor the use of multiple languages as a source of cognitive build up and intricate problem solving. Monolinguals have much greater reservoir of lexical and grammatical bundles and toolkits for syntactic choice which create a completely different world view for them. As a result, this theory of translanguaging legitimizes the use of multiple voices, even though minoritized, to reject the linguistic hierarchal structure within ESL classrooms.

As it has been discussed earlier that Pakistani education system is still under the influence of elite colonial subtractive strategies and dismantles the concept of multilingual legitimacy make it more rigid and out-date. Our national language Urdu, along with other rich regional languages as these have a distinct cultural history of their own, cannot be removed from the educational landscape. An inclusive pedagogical strategy allowing all languages like Pushto, Sindhi, Punjabi and other minoritized languages can provide cognitive leverage and legitimize the translanguaging practices of teachers and students in ESL classrooms. Javaid et al., (2026) in their research findings highlighted that, “in Pakistani ESL milieus, "57% of the respondents said that they used both Urdu and English as the medium of instruction... [and] 88% of them agreeing or strongly agreeing that it should be used to explain grammatical rules”. This emerging framework rejects the mimicry and out of context memorization of target language and brings forth new avenues for learners in more conducive and dynamic environment.

Moreover, *translanguaging* practices can create strong connections and equitable ties within stratified and ethicized sections of the society. Many efforts have been made for the implementation of singular syllabus for all, across the country, to bride up the gulf between elite and public educational market where human capital suffered injustice due to unequal distribution of linguistic capital and resources. Learners from low-income groups have minimum exposure to real life English communicative situations or their accent bias can silence them before more proficient speaker. They suffer from lack of confidence even when they have clarity of conception due to incompetence in the target language. Additionally, when higher education landscape promotes monolingual repertoire, cultural and regional identities of minoritized ESL learners are not navigated. Such inclusive practices restrict the learners to inherently accept the supremacy of English-only policy and their academic discourse cannot encounter colonial hierarchical which position English at the higher stake and minoritize the indigenous languages. Emerging pedagogical practices sanitize the need for a new critical outlook such as translanguaging because, "Traditional pedagogical approaches that advocate solely for target language immersion or monolingual instruction prove inadequate in effectively addressing the linguistic requirements of students navigating multilingual environments" (Ahmad & Mahmood, 2021). Multilingualism is a dynamic process because it views speakers’ linguistic reservoir as unitary cognitive system which utilizes isolated languages in one direction, solving complex issues. It has been observed throughout the narratives of the participants that learners and teachers both favor multilingualism and view it as of great assistance in ESL classrooms but

formal strict implication of English-only policy does not allow its legitimate standing. Despite its organic use, it is not appreciated in elite Pakistani schools and colleges by administrators and stake holders. Even at higher educational level it is expected that student should be able to communicate with ease in mandated language that is English. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) promotes the vision of monolingual modes of instructions in both indigenous and foreign programs. Mushtaq (2025) noted that "the imposition of English... was imposed during the colonial era and it still persists there serving a range of everyday purposes... especially in higher education". Unless the gap between policies and practices is filled, it would remain a source of constant site of struggle for the learners who want to utilize their individual voices and negotiate their identities.

Conclusion:

The study explored the ways in which leaners in multilingual classroom settings can negotiate their multiple identities. After critically evaluating the reflective narratives of the students, it has been traced that language as tool of symbolic power influences the identities of the learners at larger scale. The problem is not limited to the memorization of rules and construction of grammatically correct sentence since language is a fluid, active medium to exercise control and authority. The language of the powerful marginalizes the local languages and learners may voluntarily show active resistance in the form of silence. In the emerging global market places, learner can communicate well by keeping their indigenous identities as well. This mechanism of power works to create social stratification, maintenance of authority, and promotes the applause for the *other* culture. The division between *have* and *have nots* is validated in this way. In the global linguistic market, accents, cultures and values of the dominant class prevail and language merely becomes a tool rather than being a useful commodity. As propounded by Bourdieu symbolic violence in the form of accepting language superiority results in legitimizing elite vernacular, high vocabulary, dominant accent etc. as forms of social capital. The learners feel discouraged to use their own accents and consider them incorrect and unsophisticated. Furthermore, identity is a social construct and develops the world views of the speakers; by accepting the language of the powerful as legitimate, effective and worthwhile.

Secondly, in the pursuit of attaining the native like competence, ESL learners forge their true identity to negotiate the external societal forces. Their personal agency, emotional demeanor, psychological dynamics, a sense of belongingness even the concept of self changes. The literature on bilingualism proved that feelings of empathy and emotions get more pronounced in one's mother tongue. The first language for the learners is a comfort zone within which they can express their childhood warmth, family heritage and personal agency. Apart from self-actualization there are a number of other external factors i.e., institutional education policies, geopolitical migration, better job opportunities, membership of imagined communities constantly challenge their indigenous identities. Subsequently, ESL learners' language identity is shaped by their own personal choices and constantly remains in a state of flux. If their goal is to get global citizenship and become an influential member of linguistic market, they have to comply the rules of dominant institutions which attribute high social and economic value to specific standard dialects. The language asset becomes a source of confidence and guarantees their assimilation with higher systemic power dynamics. Sometimes, the higher socioeconomic mobility demands them compromising their cultural pride and personal choices.

Thirdly, in ESL classrooms, *translanguaging* is employed as an agentic strategy in the

form of code-switching and code-mixing. It minimizes the cognitive load and transform the leaning process; by changing a struggling site into an effective learning space. The use of first language in the classroom and bringing a pool of their whole linguistic repertoire reduces their anxiety. Pedagogically, it provides cognitive leverage as students can brainstorm and discuss many concepts in their first language easily. The participants narratives illustrate that whenever the they counter any difficulty in explaining any idea, they shift to their first language and then translated these ideas into English or they preferred silence. In such situations, teacher encouraged multilingual policy by allowing them to discuss the concepts in their first language though institutional policies demand a contrary action. It has been observed that such practice minimalized their cognitive burden and language acquisition was quite easier for them. The findings suggested that in multilingual classrooms students can negotiate their holistic language identity and sustain their sense of pride and confidence.

Lastly, in our Pakistani multilingual classroom settings, there is dire need of *translanguaging* practices and implementation of multilingual policies which reject the existing outdated English-only strategy because such traditional approaches dismantle the multiple, coherent identities of the students and inadvertently perpetrate *symbolic violence* which fracture and shatters their indigenous cultural identity and history. Being unconsciously influenced by perpetuating hegemony, learners stop negotiating local languages and suffer from lower self-esteem. On the contrary, translanguaging framework of García' (2013) allows them to benefit from their unitary linguistic repertoire and scaffold intricate conceptual problems in order to achieve academic excellence. Another benefit of this approach is that not only in learning process but in teaching tricky concept, this can facilitate the teachers as well. In this way, students can put less effort in problem solving and their cognitive abilities improve their language acquisition capabilities. Finally, this framework acts at micro and macro level to mitigate the symbolic violence and legitimize the lived experiences of ESL learners, providing them a practicable, equitable, inclusive solutions where they can navigate language identities utilizing their personal rhetoric.

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