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Conversation Analysis and the Negotiation of Gender Identity in Pakistani Multilingual Context

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Abstract

The current study attempts to address the negotiation of gender identity in the Pakistani multilingual context to explore the gender identity of male and female speakers through conversation features of opening, topic shifting, interruptions, and silence. The recorded and transcribed data of six peers in an academic setting in the University of Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan, is analyzed in the light of the list of commonly occurring features of masculine and feminine talk suggested by Holmes (2006). The study reveals that men and women exhibit varied verbal behavior and negotiate their identities through discourse. The stance taken in this paper is that of respecting the differences among genders without labeling their talk as inferior or superior. The paper lays an early brick to the present repository of research in gender and language because the conversation analysis in the Pakistani multilingual context is still an area that needs further exploration.

Key Words: Conversation Analysis, Gender, Identity, Peer Discourse

Introduction

Conversation analysis as an approach to the study of talk-in-interaction has its roots in ethnomethodology attributed to Garfinkel (1967). Conversation analysis as a bottom-up approach has its distinct principles and procedures to analyze talk, revealing empirical information about talk, unfolding patterns about gender, culture, power relations, and other aspects that are bi-products of analyses of conversations. The basic principles of conversation analysis, according to Seedhouse (2005), can be summed up as follows:

- i. Talk is systematically organized, structured and methodic.
- ii. Talk in interaction is context-based, and its analysis can be done only concerning the sequential environment.

- iii. Due to its empirical orientation, all aspects of conversation are significant for the researcher.
- iv. Since it follows a bottom-up approach, the data in Conversation analysis should not be prejudged or theoretically pinned to any concept before actual analysis occurs.

Talk is not simply a proposition to be taken at face value, but it is an utterance with a contextual space that permits the researchers to unleash speakers' identities, their social and cultural affiliations, and their beliefs and norms. This interest has led to a wide interest in conversation analysis because it provides empirical linguistic clues to see how people establish relations, negotiate identities,

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and create social realities through the process of conversation. The conversations seem natural, incoherent, informal, and unplanned, but this very natural and unplanned conversation is a storehouse of different aspects and an array of meanings that can be inferred once conversation analysis tools are applied to this data set. Moreover, the conversation is always systematic and context-dependent. For instance, let us imagine how friends talk in their circle is a different speech event from the conversation between parents and children. The conversation norms of topic initiation, turn-taking, adjacency pairs, etc., may be considered to understand the nature of conversations in different contexts.

There is much research in conversation analysis, especially in classroom interaction and the studies of second language acquisition ([Hellermann, 2006](#); [Lee, 2007](#); [Koshik, 2010](#)). The research focuses on the organization of talk in the classroom and how it can be a useful resource to understand and improve the teaching-learning process. Thus, applied linguistics has ample space to offer conversation analysis, which is a valuable and practical framework to bring about innovative findings in the area ([Sert & Seedhouse, 2011](#)).

The topic, gender, and talk are not only fascinating as an area of research for linguists or other social scientists but also of general interest for anyone interested in probing how men and women talk, their differences and similarities, and their gender identity is negotiated during the conversation. Gender and discourse as an area of interest among the contemporary researchers help the evaluators of text and talk to state, through pieces of evidence of actual recorded or reported data, how men and women organize their propositional content with the distinct style of their discourse that lends them a unique masculine or feminine identity. There are several research areas in this broad field of gender and discourse. It orients itself on the cultural norms, social fabric, and belief system responsible for gender stereotyping and dominance relations among different groups of individuals we term male and female. Thus, in many cultures, men assume a dominant position and often lead conversations and decide finality, and women take inferior positions, and acceptance and resignation in talk characterize

their discourse. [Coates \(2015\)](#) answers the question of differences in a gender-related talk by presenting evidence from anthropology, dialectology, ethnography, and other related fields of discourse and sociolinguistics. The point of departure for her research is to establish how linguistic variation concerning gender can provide ample ground to deduce about construction and negotiation of gender identities.

This interest in gender and talk is at the heart of current research. Since there is currently a dearth of research on talk in the Pakistani context, this paper examines how men and women are involved in the conversation as distinct genders with their specific verbal attributes. Their conversations serve as an arena where their identities are constructed, negotiated, and construed. For the present study, group discussions of class fellows are recorded for conversation analysis. The research is carried out at the University of Sargodha, and the participants are six post-graduate fellows, including male and female students in an equal ratio (3 male and three female participants). Their recorded conversations are analyzed for different conversation aspects and then characterized based on masculine and feminine interactional styles adapted from [Holmes \(2006\)](#).

Research Questions

The research paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Do men and women talk differently from one another?
2. What strategies of dominance do men employ to lead the conversation?
3. How do females negotiate their identity through conversation?

Significance of the study

The research in Pakistani conversations is an area yet to be explored. This paper examines how male and female participants in Pakistani English and other varieties contribute to revealing the stereotypical aspects of their gender. The purpose is not to see the conversation style of one gender as superior and the other as pejorative. However, the study is significant since it draws on actual conversations in an

interactional context to analyze the characteristic features of male and female talk breaking down the barriers of dominance and establishing the distinct character of talk of the two genders. The study will significantly contribute to this young area still to be investigated in Pakistani multilingual verbal discourse.

Literature Review

Several pieces of research have been carried out to see conversation patterns with interest in how people exhibit their identities in real talk. Within Sociolinguistics, Conversation analysis (CA) has its roots in ethnomethodology, and it seeks to address issues of identity formation and construction of social reality through social competence in communicative events. CA is a highly systematic and organized process. The torchbearers in this area of inquiry are [Sacks, Schegloff, and Jafferson \(1974\)](#), providing theoretical and methodological tools for the analysis of everyday interactions in a systematic way.

Participants involved in the conversation are sensitive to the context in which interactions take place. The contextual relevance of talks contributes towards identity formation. For example, teachers and students, doctor and patients, buyers and sellers, etc., negotiate their distinct identities in communicative events ([Wooffitt, 2005](#)). Conversation studies also correlate with psychological and sociological features of people undergoing interactions. Thus, talk is a fascinating area of scientific study that translates emotions and propositions to conclude participants in the interactional setting under investigation.

[Korolija \(1998\)](#) uses 24 multiparty conversations to see the coherence patterns in talk and links it with the meaning-making potential of situated interactions. The study reveals coherence to be context-dependent and achieved through a division of communicative labor among the participants. Lindstrom (1999) studies casual Swedish conversations to generalize turns-at-talk and concludes that language and social action are interdependent. [Keevallik \(2003\)](#) investigates interactional patterns from 319 phone calls recorded in 1997-1998 in Estonia to reveal the relevance of

syntagmatic structures to the social actions carried out during sequential positions in interaction.

Conversations depend on the socio-cultural environment in which they occur, so they are influenced by culture-specific phenomena of the communities undergoing identity formation through conversations ([Sidnell, 2007](#)). [Chatwin \(2014\)](#) studies interactional patterns of patients in care homes through conversation analysis, emphasizing the critical role CA can play in improving patient care in such unique settings.

The study of gender concerning various social norms and practices is a leading area of research in the current times where feminist stance has led to a debate on several issues concerned with the negotiation of gender. The post-modern shift has brought several changes in the worldview and outlook towards ideas previously marked by fixity and finality. Gender is one such entity. With the recent influx of research in this area, there is a change in the perception and reception of gender and language. The publication of such works as *Men are from Mars, Women from Venus* (1992), and *The Essential Difference: Men, Women and the Extreme Male Brain* (2004) opened up new debates on androcentric, difference and deference, folk linguistics, and gendered talk. According to [Coates \(2015\)](#), language and gender have moved from relative fixity towards a fluid and dynamic complexity, which allows us to view multiple masculinities and femininities instead of gender as clearly defined mere binary opposites.

Despite many efforts to bridge the gap between the genders, it is pertinent to mention that gender has always been a cultural construction. Therefore, the distinctiveness of genders, the hierarchical status of genders, or quality between genders is culturally constructed and manifested in social performance. The relation of gender and discursive practices are investigated in many pieces of research, including the works of [Lakoff \(1973\)](#), [Tannen \(1990\)](#), [Itakura \(2001\)](#), [Jefferson \(2004\)](#), and [Holmes \(2006\)](#). Conversation analysis is instrumental in revealing the relevance of gender and talk with the speaker's orientation. However, it should also consider the cultural and common sense knowledge of

participants and analysts to be considered more authentic in the claims it makes about gender (Stokoe & Smithson, 2001). Gender, therefore, cannot be addressed as a concept in isolation, and it is codified through cultural norms and manifested in the speakers' linguistic choices. A study conducted on recorded conversations of Persian EFL learners reveals that men dominate and take precedence over females through frequent interruptions, questions, and topic shifting (Pakzadian & Tootkaboni, 2018). Dunbar (2015) finds out how emotions significantly reveal gender identities during conversations. A participant less emotional is considered fit to lead and decide the course of the conversations. In the same way, non-verbal resources shed light on gender identities and the interactants' verbal behavior.

In the context of Pakistani conversations, a few studies have been carried out to investigate different conversation styles of men and women based on the choice of linguistic features during their talk (Kanwal et al., 2017). Khan and Shahid (2019) see the role of interruptions as agenda specific in political talk shows on Pakistan Television (PTV). Gender and relational practices have been explored to reveal how to talk as a medium employed by both men and

women to achieve relational goals along with the utterance in a specific context (Faiz et al., 2021). These researches except the last mentioned are done on political discussions and TV talk shows. So, there is much potential in this area of research in the Pakistani context. Thus the present research contributes by analyzing actual conversations of Pakistani multilingual speakers to reveal how their gender identity is constructed through their talk.

Theoretical Framework

The current research is a conversation analysis of talk sessions among six post-graduate students conducted at the University of Sargodha. The conversations are analyzed first through essential conversation features like opening a discussion, topic shifting, discourse markers, interruptions, etc. Then, these conversations are studied concerning feminine and masculine interactional styles cited by Holmes (2006).

The following table adapted from Holmes (2006, p. 6) sums up the features of male and female talk:

Features of feminine and masculine interactional style (adapted from Holmes 2000)

Table 1

Feminine	Masculine
Facilitative	Competitive
Supportive feedback	aggressive interruptions
Conciliatory	confrontational
Indirect	direct
Collaborative	autonomous
Minor contribution (in public)	dominates (public talking)
Person/process-oriented	task/ outcome-oriented
Affectively oriented	task/ outcome-oriented

The recorded conversations are studied in the light of the above features to see their contextual occurrence, if at all, in the given interactional context. The participants' talk as males and females can be characterized on the above-mentioned features of feminine and masculine interactional style to see how male and female participants negotiate their gender identities in multilingual peer discourse in Pakistani interactional scenario.

Research Participants and Data Collection

This paper examines the relationship between gender and talk established in the light of the conversation analysis proposed by Holmes (2006) concerning her database of workplace discourse. The sample conversations are recorded from six class fellows' talks at the post-graduate level of study at the University of Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan. The time of each of the six recorded conversations is 30 minutes

and there are six sessions in sum. The participants are informed about the nature of research. Moreover, their identities are not disclosed and the names and other particular details are given pseudo codes to keep the privacy. Hence, for the sake of this study, the three male participants are called M1, M2 and M3 and three female participants are labeled as F1, F2 and F3. Therefore, it is mixed gender data of talk, in which all participants take the opportunity of turn-taking and reveal characteristic features of their gendered identity. The sample conversations are audiotaped, then transcribed using the conversation transcription symbols compiled from Schiffrin (1987) and Tannen (1989) as cited in Fasold and Connor-Linton (2006). For non-native readers, the parts of talk in languages other than English are translated into English for comprehension and clarity. The conversations are studied for opening and closing of conversations, interruption, topic shifting, silence, and the related aspects. These sections of peer talk are then analyzed in the light of the masculine and feminine talk patterns compiled by Holmes (2006). The study reveals how men and women as participants of a communication event exhibit their gender identities by drawing upon discourse resources, with various forms, functions, and styles. These discourse patterns often intervene to stereotype the genders based on their conversation style.

Analysis and Discussion

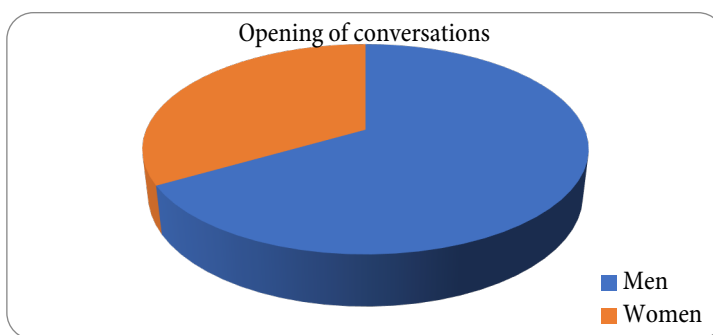
Following are the findings of the conversation analysis followed by a discussion on gender identity negotiation.

Talk Patterns and Gender Identity

It is evident from the conversation analysis of data under scrutiny that men and women adopt specific positions in interaction due to which they are labeled to be men and women. Although they are a part of a community of practice sharing certain beliefs and norms of the process they are involved in, their talk patterns substantiate their differences and show their identities. In order to seek the answer to this question from the context of our recorded conversations, a few examples may be taken into account with a prior caution that the results of one contextual conversation in CA cannot be generalized or universalized. To conclude about gender identity negotiation through conversation, therefore, remains contextually connected to the

Setting in which the interactions take place.

Greetings typically open conversations. Opening a conversation is one aspect through which genders negotiate their identities during the mixed-sex talk. In the six recorded conversations among the peers, following pattern was observed.



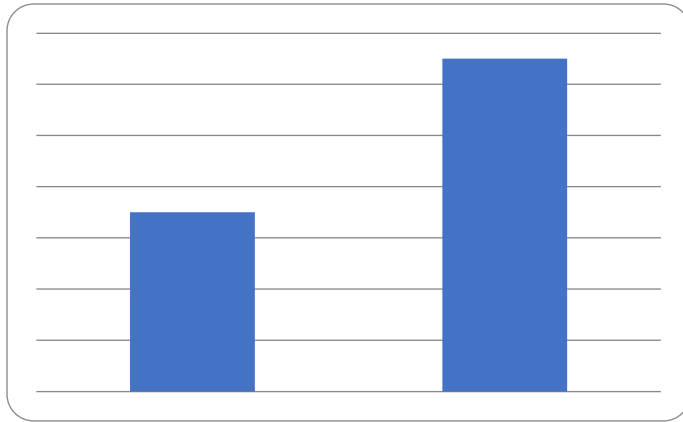
Graph 1: Data about Opening of the Conversation

The above results reveal that men take the lead and dominate the conversations through opening a discussion on a topic or greeting. During the six conversations, four were opened initially by men and two by females. Thus, men and women negotiate

their gender identities by taking leader and follower positions during conversations. Also, related to this aspect is another fact that the maximum time available by men and women also differentiates the two genders. While men open the conversations and take

the leading positions during discussions, the results of this conversation analysis reveal that women occupy more talking time than men. Following trends were observed during this research:

Percentage difference of talk time of men and women



Graph 2: Percentage difference of talk time of men and women

Out of total recorded sessions, the percentage of men talking time was recorded to be 35% as compared to the females, which was 65%. This shows that even if men talk less, they are in a dominant position because stereotypically, women talk is considered as less valuable, more effective, and deviant from the topic at hand. On the other hand, male participants only talk when they have to contribute to the immediate discussion without giving input about personal or domestic affairs, a favorite women's business. So the study on gender identity negotiated through talk empirically demonstrates the stereotypical notion associated with the gender-related talk: men lead the conversations, women follow and, men talk less and talk productively. However, women talk more and keep deviating from the immediate subject towards trivial or emotional affairs that are not relevant.

Another aspect through which female speakers negotiate their identity in a mixed-gender talk is through hedging devices that enable them to show solidarity with their group and convey their stance during discussions. The hedges and modals recorded during these conversations included *might, perhaps, well, I think, may, sort of, could* etc.

Example 1

F1: *I think, we may* discuss this problem with Dr. (name of teacher)

F2: Hmm, I agree.

M1: But first we should ourselves be clear about our line of action.

M2: [That is my point too]

F1: Hmm, right.

F3: We are all on, *sort of*, one page in this matter.

Example 2

M3: What about your projects?

F1: Mujhay to kuch nhe ata, na he time mil ska (I have done nothing, nor could I find time)

F2: No worries, we *may* work together and help you in your assignment.

F3: We *may* offer ours, if you need (with a smile)

F1: So sweet of you dear!

M1 and M2: (Silence)

The use of hedges, modals and indirect forms characterize female style of talk. Thus, in a conversation, females negotiate their identity through team creation evident in the above examples through the use of 'we' instead of I. The use of collective pronoun by females also suggests that women are less likely to take responsibility of action on individual basis and try to distribute it among the group members. It may also be attributed to their lack of confidence and comparative shyness in relation to men in their company.

A third aspect on the basis of which we can differentiate men and women in talk is the conversational aspect of interruption. The male and female participants during the recorded conversations showed different trends of interruption. It is an aspect of conversation that is used by the speakers in a specific context for a certain purpose. The results of this conversation analysis revealed that both men and women adhere to interruption strategies for their own goals. While men interrupt usually to disagree with the stance of the females, the females use interruption as a politeness strategy to show their agreement and familiarity with the topic under discussion without adding any new information to the ongoing discussion. In this way interruption The following examples clarify the use of interruptions by male and female speakers.

Example 3

M1: So I was telling you about my topic (title)

M2: [We already know it]

M1: You know my topic but others need clarification.

F1: Yes, right, I have no background about this topic.

F3: [Exactly]

M2: I think such simple stuff should be at your fingertips.

Example 4

F2: According to my understanding, tolerance ki kami h (there is lack of tolerance)

M1: Nhe! Aqal ki... (No, its lack of sense)

F2: May be you are right but...

M1: M2 [name] is always right (laughs)

M3: (Laughter)

The disruptive interruptions from the female side correspond to solidarity while these interruptions are also a source of humor to lighten the seriousness of situation. Men interrupt when they have to contradict with a proposition and for correction purpose.

Silence is a significant contributor while analyzing negotiation of gender identities during speech events. Silence is a kind of conversational dominance because it is one major feature characterizing male talk. The talk time of the data as

shown above also strengthens the idea that women talk more and male speech is filled with pauses and intervals of silence. This silence thus becomes stereotype of male style of interaction.

Features of Masculine Talk

The interest in the field of gender and discourse has led many researchers to stereotype masculine and feminine discourse based on the data they work with. This domain also takes into account the norms, culture, ethnic and moral practices of a society because these norms become the arena where gender is constructed, performed and negotiated. Thus the significance of cultural or regional specific factors can never be undermined while concluding language and gender. This section discusses the features of masculine talk based on the audio data of peer conversations collected for this study. The male talk is analyzed based on masculine features compiled by [Holmes \(2006\)](#). According to her, masculine conversation is competitive, confrontational, direct, autonomous, has aggressive interruptions, dominates public talking, and is task/outcome-oriented and referentially oriented. It can be seen through the selected examples from the data that males make certain verbal or linguistic choices that are distinctly their deliberate or naturalized norms of conversation assigning them the category of male gender. These features, as highlighted by Holmes (2006), can be studied in relation to the samples of talk collected for the present study.

Example 5

M1: So I was telling you about my topic (title)

M2: [We already know it]

M1: You know my topic but others need clarification.

F1: Yes, right, I have no background about this topic.

F3: [Exactly]

M2: I think such simple stuff should be at your fingertips.

Example 6

Context: While discussing about the deadlines and completion of projects, the discussion takes a competitive turn:

M3: (To M2) Sir ji, aisa na kahen, apki he to hamen support hai! (Respected Sir, please don't say that, you are our strength)

M2: [Han main he support hon Khud kuch na kerna, mera to kaam ho gya hai, ab ap jaano apka kaam.

(Yes you depend on me, never do anything yourself. I have done my deed, now You people take care of yourselves)

M1: I am also safe

F2: But hamen b to safe kren na. (But please save us too)

The data reveals that a sense of superiority and competition marks masculine talk. The confrontational and competitive talk shows masculine identity, which is assertive and authoritative. This masculine discursive style is also characterized by directness, in contrast to indirect speech characterizing the feminine style of conversation.

Directness and autonomy also feature in masculine talk. The above-stated examples from the recorded conversations of peers provide valuable evidence on how males avoid a roundabout manner to give their verdict or opinion on any topic, and their conversation has power and autonomy. Female speakers depend on each other and the male participants to make judgments, but males do so with ease and confidence. Because of the same feature, opening, topic shifts, and decisive closures of conversations are often done by male participants compared to the female participants in peer discourse, professional meetings, and casual talks depending on the socio-cultural ambiance of the discourse event.

Example 7

F1: Sir (to M2) ap suggest Kren is topic ko kesay address kya jaey? (Sir, please suggest how can this topic be addressed?)

M2: (Silence)

F2: Ji Sir, please guide us.

M2: Mujhay kyu kehtay hen, khud try kren. (Why do you ask me, try yourselves)

M1: Because you are an expert in this topic.

M2: (laughs)

M3: Let us come to the point.

M2: Ok, my idea is you should read two to three books before developing Your point of view.

F1: Lo ji, ghar main itnay kaam hotay hen kon 2,3 books perhay! (...there are so many commitments at home, reading 2 to 3 books is very difficult)

The above example from the peer discourse shows that males responses are not always verbal but they take aid of silence and laughter to convey their meanings. The silence gives them a dominant position and superior identity as discussed in the previous section, because it shows that not all questions need a direct answer, but men may remain silent to exhibit worthlessness of the question they think should remain unanswered. The discursive practices of men revolve around the topic. According to [Holmes \(2006\)](#), the masculine ways of talking are task/ outcome-oriented relying mainly on the subject under discussion. This is observed in the data collected for this research as well. Men are serious about their tasks and use minimal sentences to remain to the point. Their conversations hardly contain personal issues, while feminine style, which will be discussed in detail in the coming section, allows women to vent their personal feelings and domestic affairs even during professional or academic talk among colleagues and peers. The masculine style is referentially oriented as well. The male speakers in this activity were more concerned about sharing the information or content rather than emotions and personal feelings. This is a feature of masculine style which gives a distinct identity to male speakers.

The above findings and discussions on how male speakers negotiate their gender identity during mixed-gender conversations answer the research question that men talk differently than women. Their interactional style is linguistically loaded with certain choices that allow them to exercise their discursive power during the interaction.

Features of Feminine Talk

The above discussion was the conversation analysis of masculine ways of negotiating gender identity during the talk. This section exclusively highlights normatively feminine discursive patterns which recur in their talk. Again, the conclusions about

feminine talk style are based on evidence collected in a particular peer discourse setting which is tested through the parameters of female speech practices and features compiled by [Holmes \(2006\)](#). Her feminine speech style is facilitative, conciliatory, indirect, collaborative, process/ person-oriented, characterized by supportive feedback and a practical stance. All these aspects of feminine talk can be observed in the examples provided. Let us have a look at some more examples from the recorded scripts:

Example 8

Context: All the peers are discussing some academic issues.

M3: Look at the teachers; we should focus on what they expect from us.

F1: Hmmm

F3: [Exactly]

F2: Billkul theek! Is main main mazeed kuch add kron, (Absolutely right! May I further add something to this)

F1: Yes ma'am...

F3: [Yes ma'am...]

Example 9

F1: Han bhai, kuch perha?

F2: Nhe kahan perha jata h, sehet k masail he nhe theek ho rhay. (Not at all, how can I give time to studies while facing so many health issues)

F1: OO, may Allah bless you with health.

F3: Ameen

M2: Ap in sab ko btaen apko jo material chahiye, mil jaey ga. (You tell your fellows, whatever material you need will be provided)

F1: Exactly ma'am, we are there to support you.

F3: hmmm, ap tension na len please. (Please don't stress yourself)

The above examples demonstrate a typical feminine behaviour. In a mixed gender conversation, women tend to be more polite towards each other and towards the male participants. Their linguistic choices show their polite strategies to facilitate the other peers by giving emotional and tangible support. They also give supportive feedback using hedges, modal, and other agreement expressions. The females use hedging devices to create a welcoming tone when conversations are stressed, creating a face

threatening value. So they try to bring serenity and peace instead of aggravating the members through the use of hedges, passive expressions and collective pronouns. Women have used more collective pronouns such as *were* and *us* in these recorded conversations than men. This means that their discursive practice is more solidarity-oriented and relational.

Moreover, their behaviour implies suggestion rather than assertion. This feature can be contrasted with masculine way of talking, as discussed in the previous section, where men were more aggressive and competitive in order to win an argument. Examples of feminine discursive behavior demonstrate that females avoid confrontation by giving supportive feedback and passing conciliatory remarks. Their linguistic repository from which they make discursive choices are collaborative and team-creating lexico-syntactic items. This is evident from Example 6 in the previous section. Men are involved in competitive discourse, while women try to avoid blame on anyone and bring the peers to an agreement and solution through her linguistic choices of empathy and creating team via talk.

Another aspect of feminine talk is the integration of domestic affairs with business talk. The peer discourse taken as a model for the current research has many instances where females exhibit this behavior revealing their feminine identity, which is negotiated through such linguistic choices. The small talk and deviation from the immediate topic to casual and personal discourse is the characteristic feature of feminine identity, rarely found in masculine talk. Although [Holmes \(2006\)](#) characterizes minor contributions in public as a feature of feminine talk, the results of the data in the present study reveal that women contributed to the speech event more than men. This may be contextually dependent because it was a mixed group of peers, and the results may differ depending upon contrasting contexts and speech communities.

In the previous section, it was concluded that masculine talk that it is task or outcome-oriented. In contrast, the examples quoted above are ample evidence of female talk to be person or process-oriented as suggested by [Holmes \(2006\)](#). Such linguistic behavior is welcomed by other ladies too,

but the silence of men shows their lack of interest in small talk since they try to remain stick to their task. Females tend to create deviation during talk. These digressions about people, family and personal experiences are characteristic of a more feminine way of negotiating gender identity in multilingual peer discourse.

Another characteristic feature of feminine discourse is that it is affectively oriented. This is perhaps the recurrent characteristic in the recorded conversations in the present research. All the examples above show female speech more inclined towards discussing personal feelings and emotions and sympathy for the peers. Thus, gender identity is integrated with the language and the choices that men and women make during conversations.

Example 10

F1: Maine (name) ko samjhaya tha, us k lye bohat masail hen (I tried to help...., she has to face a lot of issues)

F2: We can only pray so that she is out of her crisis.

F3: Hmmm

M1: Ap uski choren, apni fiker kren (You should leave her and think about yourself)

F1: Sir, is tarha chora nhe ja skta na apnay closed ones ko! (Sir, it is not possible to leave our closed ones like that!

M2: (Silence)

Therefore, females use a more collaborative style in interaction with affective discursive choices. This is how the particular way of feminine talk leads us to conclude that their language is itself a way through which they negotiate their gender identity which is stereotypically associated with the females.

The research answers the three questions set in the beginning. The first question was whether men and women talk differently or not. According to the context and norms of the data under analysis, the question may be addressed with an affirmative. The men and women talk in their own distinct way. Therefore, gender is always at play whenever there is interaction. Sometimes, one gender is foregrounded because of an established normative advantage and the other is pushed to the background as its discursive pattern is considered subservient to that of the former. Men and women take turns during talks,

men are initiators while women follow. Men interrupt to contradict while women use interruptions to agree with the ongoing proposition. Silence is a strategy used by men to assert their power and superiority during conversations. Thus the second research question is answered by studying the features of talk employed by men to lead a conversation. Their talk is marked by linguistic choices that are competitive, challenging, referentially oriented with a lack of interest in the emotional or personal talk. The third research questions was about the negotiation of feminine identity through interaction. The question is addressed in the light of examples from the collected data. The females are natural sympathizers. So their talk patterns also reveal their ability to empathize, create affective environment where they can share their personal feelings and affairs. Their responses are usually affirmative, making them good followers in an interaction. They are less silent, use more hedges, and have lesser competitive or contradictory markers. So their overall interaction is effective and socially oriented.

Conclusion

The current study investigated language of men and women as a means of negotiating their gender identity during speech events. For the said purpose, data of six conversations among the peers in their academic sitting was audio-recorded and transcribed. The data was analyzed in the light of the conversation features of opening, topic shifting, interruptions and silence. Further, the features of masculine and feminine verbal behaviour were discussed in the lights of the list of key characteristics of gendered talk given by Holmes. The study shows distinct verbal behaviour of men and women that leads us to conclude that men and women negotiate their identities during peer discourse through several stylistic, linguistic and non-verbal choices. They are linguistically distinct from one another.

The conclusion drawn from this research is to establish the different gender identities of men and women concerning their interaction. This is a demonstration of diversity and richness of discourse associated with the genders and how men and women employ linguistic resources. Gender pervades interaction, but it does not mean that discrimination

and prejudice should filter in interaction regarding male talk being superior and women talking as inferior. There is an effort to address the differences so that these differences are recognized and accepted as distinct norms without regard to these binaries as

superior and inferior. This research is significant because it invited future researchers to explore other areas of gender-related issues in peer discourse that are yet to be identified in the Pakistani multilingual context.

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