Islamic Identity and Discourse: A Sociolinguistic Study in the Pakistani Context

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Abstract

This paper employs Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to investigate the interconnectedness of two facets of identity (i.e. Islamic identity and cultural identity) in low-income group of Pakistan. Using semi-structured interviews conducted at a hospital in Multan, this study intends to investigate whether afore-mentioned facets of identity are congruent or in-congruent to socio-cultural milieu of Pakistan. The analysis showed that the two facets of identity are inter-connected. Although cultural factors do make an impact on the interpretation of religion and Islamic practices, 'religion' remains the foremost identity marker for the people of Pakistan. The Islamic identity is foregrounded by the Pakistani Muslim through adapting different cultural practices in congruence to the teachings of Islam. In short, the sociocultural traditions have an unmistakable impact on Pakistani Muslims' religious identity. Through such conception of selfhood, Pakistani Muslims connect themselves with Arab and Muslim world on the one hand and with Indo-Pakistani sociocultural traditions on the other.

Keywords: Discourse, Identity, Faircough, Semi-Structured Interviews

Introduction:

According to Thornborrow[1], "how you talk along with other kinds of social codes as how you dress and how you behave, is an important way of displaying who you are, in other words indicating your social identity" (138). The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to examine the linguistic instances from the interviews of a low-income group of Pakistani Muslims which would lead to map their religious identity which it has been assumed is intertwined with their sociocultural identity. Identity is something which individuals constantly keep building and negotiating all their lives through their exposure to different cultures and contacts with the people coming from different contexts. Language is a powerful means of exercising social control – if one wishes to belong to a particular social group, this means adopting the linguistic conventions of that particular group. This both captures the agency of speakers and views language as a social action[2]. The perception of identity and selfhood is produced either through deliberate, strategic manipulation, or through out of awareness linguistic practices. Therefore, the issue of identity in any context is always multifaceted and a wide range of factors "enter into the definition of ethnic and social identity: racism, nationalism, stratification into classes and castes, status and role, solidarity, and distance, social stereotypes"[3]. These myriad facets of human identity prompted the following research questions:

(a)   What are the multiple facets of religious identity of the low-income group of Pakistani Muslims?

(b)   What experiential values do the discourse practices of the low-income group of Pakistani Muslims carry which in turn reveal their religious identity?

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[1]   Joanna Thornborrow, "Language and identity", In *Language, Society and Power: An Introduction*, ed. Linda Thomas & Shaun Waering, (London: Routledge, 2004), 135-50.

[2]Paul Kroskrity, "Identity", *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 9 no.2 (2000): 111-114.

[3]David Crystal. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. (New York: Cambridge, 1987).

This paper argues that the concept of identity is a dynamic one, and not amenable to fixity and stability within a context. Hence, the answers to identity related questions (i.e. what does it mean to be a Pakistani Muslim?) could not be absolute or final. Focusing on this dimension of identity, this research provides a critical view of the cherished identities related to the discourses of the low-income group of Pakistani Muslims. Somewhat similar efforts to gauge the construction of Malaysian national identity has been made by Abdullah[4], who while proposing a discursive model of Malaysian national identity writes:

(In)　　Structured multicultural contexts, (the) sourcing of meaning and experience in the discourse is framed via principal dichotomic (but not necessarily anti-thetic) sets of strategies serving a broad meta-narrative of inclusive national ideologies that transcend inter alia ethno-cultural, socioeconomic, and gender differences, and a narrower one that celebrates nationalist ideologies to the relative exclusion of identifiable sub-national identities respectively.(125)

Following the same tradition, Polovina-Vukovic[5] studied the representation of social actors in media discourse. It is in this connection that this work seeks to explore the construction of religio-sociocultural identity as it is incorporated in the discourse practices of Pakistani Muslims.

Literature review:

Based on the premises of discourse study that discourse is not only constructed by the society but also constructs the society, this literature review investigates the view of discourse as an instrument which facilitates social construction of identity[6]. Fundamentally, a number of anthropologists and social scientists suggest that social practices have an element of reflexivity [7,8,9]. Reflexive elements of practice refer to the 'constant generation of representation': people never simply act, they produce the representations of their action as well[10] (168). Identities, identification and social relations manifest social construction of reality and are constructed by social practices[11]. Regarding social construction of reality, Berger and Luckmann[12] are of the view that persons and groups interacting together in a social system form over a period of time, form certain mental representations of social practices. These representations eventually become habituated into reciprocal roles played by social actors in relation to one another. The reciprocal social roles lead to the institutionalization of certain social practices. The

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[4]Faiz Sathi Abdullah, "Prolegomena to a Discursive Model of Malaysian National Identity", in *Systemic Functional Linguistic and Critical Discourse Analysis,* eds. Lynn Young and Claire Harrion, (New York: Continuum, 2004), 123-138.

[5] Dragana Polovina-Vukovic,"The Representation of Social Actors in the Globe and Mail during the Break-up of Former Yugoslavia in Young". In *Systemic Functional Linguistic and Critical Discourse Analysis,* eds. Young Lynn and Claire Harrison. (New York: Continuum, 2004), 155-172.

[6] Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language and symbolic power*. (Cambridge; Polity Press, 1991).

[7] Giddens, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity*. (Cambridge; Polity Press, 1991).

[8] Giddens, Anthony. *New Rules of Sociological Method*: *A Positive Critique of Interpretive Sociologies*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

[9] Fairclough, Norman. 2000. 'Discourse, Social Theory and Social Research: The Discourse of Welfare Reform'. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4:2 (2000).163-195.

[10] Fairclough, Norman. *Critical Discourse Analysis*, (New York: Longman, 1998).

[11]Berger, Peter L. &Luckmann, Thomas. *The Social Construction of Reality. (*London: Penguin, 1966).

[12]Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. (Baltimore; John Hopkin University Press, 1974).

institutionalized practices associated with dissemination of knowledge and ideologies become embedded into the social fabric and pave the way for social construction of identity. The institutionalized social practices are reflexive in the sense that their actions simultaneously produce representations of such actions in a particular context; it means that all social practices inherently possess semiotic resource that can be interpreted as identification resource. Therefore, discourse analysis treats both linguistic and non-linguistic identity clues as the representations of discursive practices or texts [in a Derridean sense: 'there is nothing outside text'[13, 14].

Foucault considers discourse as practices that constitute the very object or subject which the discourse is about. A little elaboration might help to understand how discourse constructs identities, identification and social relations: when one uses a semiotic resource to express something, one represents his/her mental schema of reality in s symbolic form. That represents one's identification paradigm. An individual, perhaps by means of certain lexical choices, identifies her/himself in relation to the others (individuals or groups), which explains the way discourse configures both individual and group identities. By defining the identities, the social relation between the individual and group is outlined.

Overview of method:

As stated above, the primary object of this research is identification of linguistic instances in discourse practices of low-income group of Pakistani Muslims which would invariably give clues about their religious identity as compared to their sociocultural identity. In this study, the income below Rs. 20000- per month has been considered the low-income.For data collection, the method of direct interview with the informants has been preferred. Formal interviews were conducted in April, 2010 at a hospital in Multan, city of Southern Punjab Pakistan, with 12 low-paid staff members (nurses and ward boys). It is very important to make sure that this is done in such a way that the information cannot be associated with the named individuals, and that the privacy of the informants is protected. To achieve this end, the information about the exact location of interview site has been withheld. The entire interviews were conducted in Urdu and tape recorded, and then the text was transcribed word for word translated into English. This transcribed text makes the data for this research. The data thus collected has been analysed for its textual and thematic content borrowing Fairclough's [15] framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

The analysis is based on three broader dimensions of discourse i.e. experiential, relational and expressive, which make up the crux of all the questions posed above. The definitions of these terms: experiential, relational and expressive, are of great importance to the understanding of critical discourse analysis. Experiential values, according to CDA seek to unveil how the text producer's experience of the natural or social world reflects in the text. On the other hand, relational value may identify the perceived social relationships between the producer of the text and its recipient. The third dimension expressive value, provides an insight into 'the text producer's evaluation of the bit of reality it relates to'[16]. These three dimensions of the language provide sufficient indication required to uncover the identities of the text producer.

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[13] Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. (London; Tavistock, 1972).

[14] Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power*, (Essex: Longman, 1989).

[15] Andrew Atkins, *Critical Discourse Analysis of a Letter,* Retrieved May 16, 2010. (http://www.cels.bham.ac.uk, 2001)

[16] Fairclough, *Language and Power,* 115.

Critical discourse analysis of interview data

4.1 Experiential values:

As stated above, the experiential values, according to CDA, targets to expose the text producer's experiences of the natural or social world which make up his/her ideologies and worldview. In the following sections of the paper the experiential values of the research participants' discourse have been looked at under three broader headings:
—   Classification schemes
—   Meaning relations
—   Role of agency

All these three headings have been dealt with in detail in the following discussion sections.

4.2 Classification schemes:

A classification scheme is a 'particular way of dividing up some aspects of reality which is built upon a particular ideological representation of that reality'[17]. It leads one to infer that the language preference of an individual 'exhibits a dual classification scheme that seems to map opposing values'[18]. Following these lines, a dual classification scheme to gauge the religious identity of the respondent in association with their sociocultural identity has been drawn. We can call these opposing schemes 'sociocultural identity' versus 'Muslim identity'. This classification scheme is manifested in terms of:
1. Code-switching
2. Naming conventions
3. Clothing preferences
4- Plural marriages
5. Sectarian diversity
6. Religious personalities

The table 1 given below indicates the discursive and non-discursive (i.e. clothing preferences & plural marriage) practices followed by a common Pakistani to index these two aspects of their identity.

Table 1: Classification schemes – Sociocultural identity vs. Muslim identity

	Sociocultural identity	Muslim identity
1.1 Code-switching		
	Urdu-English code switching: Photocopy, condition, style, mistake, respect, teacher, television, husband, bomb blast, planning, trend, fair, sorry, fitness, disturb, leader, problem, choice, daily, routine, respect, normal (23 lexemes)	Urdu-Arabic code switching: alhamdulillah (x3), subhanallah, Allah (x 11), nabi (x3), momin (x2), sunnat (x5), innamal amalu binniyat (x3) surahs: surah alhamd, surah qul ho wallah, surah inna aatayna (the respondents mentioned surahs with these personally coined titles.)
1.2 Naming conventions		
	Name with Sanskrit/Gujarati origin: Seema	Names with Arabic origin: Fazilat, Rukhsana, Humera, Bashir, Abdul Qadeer, Jameel, Qaiser, Names with Persian/Arabic origin: Shama, Shazia

[17] Fairclough, *Language and Power*.

[18] . Chng Huan Hoon, 2004. "Celebrating Singapore's Development: An Analysis of the Millennium Stamps" in *Systemic Functional Linguistic and Critical Discourse Analysis*, eds. Lynn Young and Claire Harrison, Claire, (NewYork: Continuum, 2004), 139-54.

1.3 Clothing preferences		
	dupatta, shalwar kamiz, jeans, t. shirt, keffiyeh (Middle Eastern headdress)	Scarf, prayer scarf, taqiyah, also spelled tagiyah (a short, rounded cap worn by Muslim men)
1.4 Plural Marriages		
	Aik hi shadi karni chahiye (One should marry only once.)	do shadian majboori ki haalat mein jayiz hain (Polygamy is allowed under certain compulsions.)
1.5 Sectarian Diversity		
	Deobandi sect, Brelvi sect	Shiism, Sunnis
1.6 Religious Personalities		
	Allama Tahir-ul-Qadri	Hazoor-e-Pak Muhammad (saw), Hazrat Umar (ra), Hazrat Bilal (ra), Hazrat Imam Hussain (ra),, Bibi Zainab (ra)

All the words, phrases, clauses and strands mentioned in the Table 1 are multi-dimensional and give indication about the way the research participants perceive themselves. It confirms that their concept of selfhood is linked with multiple factors, e.g. naming, education, society, culture, psychology, and of course religion. Now, all the sections of the Table 1 would be discussed in detail:

4.3 Code-switching:

Almost all Pakistanis demonstrate some aspects of experiential values when they make use of English and Arabic lexemes in their discourse practices. These are their experiences in their particular contexts which make them go for certain linguistic choices (e.g. the status of English language as the language of prestige, and the status of Arabic as the langue of spirituality, holiness and divinity) They do not know the meaning of most of the Arabic words they use in their everyday conversation, the surahs they daily recite, the names they themselves have and the names they give to their children and so on. It is their upbringing and cultural habits which make them consider Arabic a language of God and an assurance to get closer to Him:

Ex.1   I know many surahs. I can recite surah qul ho wallah, but don't know its title. I even don't know what it means.

Ex.2   Though I do not know the meanings of surahs but the words give me comfort as they are in the Arabic language.

The section 1.1 of Table 1 enlists some of the Arabic lexemes, phrases and clauses which respon-dents used in their talk in order to manifest their urge to identify themselves with Arab Muslims. On the other hand, their colonial past also reflects in their prefrence for Urdu-English hybrid code for everyday conversation Despite coming from very humble educational background (see Table 2), the respondents liked to use English lexemes in their talk. This attitude not only projects that they are staunch Muslims (who are proud of their Islamic identity), but also expresses a status oriented psychological bent[19] . By mixing English code in their talk, the respondents, in fact, attempted to associate themselves with socially and economically well-off strata of the society.

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[19] Crystal. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*.

Table 2: Educational Background of the Research Participants

Sr. #	First Name	Qualification
1	Fazilat	Matriculation
2	Humera	Intermediate
3	Seema	Matriculation
4	Shama	Middle (8th Standard)
5	Rukhsana	Middle (8th Standard)
6	Shazia	Intermediate
7	Qiaser	Matriculation
8	Qadeer	Matriculation
9	Ansar	Matriculation
10	Bashir	Middle (8th Standard)
11	Jamil	Primary (5th Standard)
12	Ahmad	Primary (5th Standard)

4.4 Naming conventions:

The section 1.2 of Table 1 indicates how Pakistani Muslims identify themselves both with Arab/Persian Muslims on one hand and with Indo-Pakistani cultural traditions on the other. This is reason that a majority of first names of the respondents come from Arabic and Persian origin. Only one name, Seema, comes from Sanskrit origin. It establishes the fact that Pakistani Muslims identify themselves more with Arab and Persian culture than the culture of their own land, i.e. the Indian sub-continent. Most of the time they do not even know the meaning of their names, but they do believe that their names originate from the Arabic language. As it happened in the case of a woman, named Seema. When she was asked if there is anything she has to say about her name, she said:

Ex 3   My name is Seema. Seema means symbol or a sign. This word comes from *Qur'ān*. This is an Arabic word.

But actually Seema comes from multiple sources. The girl name Seema comes from the Sanskrit word which means, "border; limit." It also stems from Gujarati source which means, "limit." It also stems from a hebrew word which means, "treasure".
Table 3 shows the first names of the respondents along with their meanings and origin.

Table 3 Naming conventions of Pakistanis: Sociocultural identity vs. Muslim identity

Sr. #	Respondents' Names	Origin	Meaning
1	Fazilat	Arabic	Superiority,
2	Shazia	Arabic	Precious, Unique
3.1	Seema	Sanskrit	Boundary,
3.2	Seema	Hebrew	Treasure
3.3	Seema	Gujarati	Limit, Boundary
4	Rukhsana	Persian	Star, Bright, Dawn
5	Shama	Arabic,	Light, Flame, Candle
6	Humera	Arabic	Reddish
7	Qaiser	Arabic	Emperor, Ceaser
8	Qadeer	Arabic	Competent, Capable
9	Bashir	Arabic	Well-educated, Wise
10	Ansar	Arabic	Helpful, Supporter

| 11 | Jamil | Arabic | Handsome |
| 12 | Ahmad | Arabic, Turkish | Worthy of Praise |

The rest of the categories of this classification scheme (dress code, plu¬ral marriage and sectarian diversity), though discussed in this section of the paper, overlap with the third dimension of discourse, i.e. expressive value, because these categories out¬line respondents' evaluation, preferences and judgments etc. regarding certain so¬cio-cultural practices. In the interview data, the expressive value has been ex¬pres¬sed either through negation or modality.

4.5 Clothing preferences:

The section 1.3 of table 1 provides the inventory of Pakistani Muslims' clothing preferences. Out of them, scarf is the symbol of Muslim identity for women and prayer cap is a symbol of Muslim identity for men. The Muslim prayer cap is called 'taqiyah', (also spelled tagiyah) which is a short, rounded cap. These clothing preferences not only emit the Islamic traditions cherished by the Pakistani masses but also reflect Pakistani Muslim's fervour to look educated and modern. Re-garding his dressing habits one of the respondents comments:

Ex.4.   (Yes. I like to wear jeans and T-shirt. We are educated, after all. Only shalwar kamiz is not enough. We have to wear (jeans, pants, T-shirt etc.) on one occasion or the other.

Contrarily, women are expected to follow the traditional dressing conventions. Talking about the women who wear western dresses the same respondent said:

Ex.5.   (The girls should not wear jeans and t-shirt. They don't look decent in jeans and t-shirt. They can wear this dress if they like. It is their choice. Scarf looks better as it covers their entire face.)

Similarly, all the other respondents (both male and female) shared somewhat homogenous views. Some of them are reproduced below:

Ex.6   The girls should not wear jeans and t-shirt. Dupatta looks good on girls and so does scarf.

Ex.7   It (jeans and,t-shirt) is not our identity. We must follow the way that Holy Prophet (PBUH) showed us and women have been strictly told to observe veil.

Ex.8   I never wished to wear jeans and t-shirt. Shalwar Kamiz covers us (women) well. It fulfills the covering requirement for women. That's why it is the best dress.

Let us have a look at the linguistic choices in above given statements. We can see how negative expressions have been used by the respondents while disapproving western clothing for women. Use of modality marks the personal opinion of the individuals with no claim of the authenticity of the propositions they are making. Women's clothing preferences collocate with dhuka hua (covered) and parda (veil). As far as men's clothing prefrences is concerned, Western clothing, supposedly, is a requirement for them if they are educated. This fact has been illustrated in Ex.3 through the use of transitional device, i.e. jo (after all).

4.6 Plural marriages:

The identity of Pakistani Muslims does not always conform to the socio-cultural traditions of Arab Muslims. Pakistani Muslims' identity stands in contrast to the Arab culture in many ways. One of such context is general stance held by the majority of Pakistanis over plural marriages. Immersed in their sociocultural discursive set-up, where monogamy is considered a norm and polygamy a deviation, almost all the respondents contend that they would never approve of polygamy:

Ex.9   Bigamy should not be allowed in any circumstances. But this sort of men (bigamous or polygamous) is common in our society. But we do not happen to relate to this sort of men, thanks God.

Ex.10   A man should not have two wives. I would rather suggest, if his wife dies, he should commit suicide by taking pills.

Ex.10   Whenever Holy Prophet (SAW) told Allah's commandments regarding four marriages, it was only in case if a man could afford.

Here the first two instances (i.e. Ex.8 & Ex.9) come from the women, who strongly disapprove polygamy. In the first (i.e. Ex.8) statement, the woman is thanking God as God has saved her from the men who are polygamous. The second woman (in Ex.9) gave a very interesting statement because she believes that a man should prefer death over bigamy. Interestingly, men do not go to this extreme as far their stance on second marriage is concerned. They believe a well-off man who can afford is allowed to have as many as four wives (Ex.10). To them, polygamy is not questionable and is a settled and established norm. But they also want to establish that Islam does not encourage polygamy. So, they make use of conditional sentences where conjunctive device agar (if) joins the clauses with supportive claims. Through this sort of conditional statements, they express an urgency to conform to the general views held by the general populace in their particular sociocultural context.

Before winding-up this section, it has to be added that the non-discursive practice (like observance of certain clothing preferences and monogamy) are an outcome of overall discursive space of a culture. According to Foucault, there is nothing outside discourse. Thus, the ideology invested non-discursive practices have to be legitimized by the dissemination and propagation of certain discourses. Once internalized, such discourses could be realized via different linguistic means. For example, in the case of plural marraiges related discourse on Pakistan, the discurive situation of Pakistan is generally realized by the people in the form of cautionary advices or suggestions. It is generally observed that a majority of people always advises against bigamy or polygamy, and the same could be observed in the instances quoted above.

4.7 Sectarian diversity:

The Muslims coming from different sectarian backgrounds have been coexisting in the Indian sub-continent for centuries (see Table 1 section 1.5) The sectarian diversity to this extent is quite unheard of in the rest of the Muslim world. Such sectarian diversity could be attributed to the cultural borrowings from local traditions of the Indian sub-continent. The best Sufi scholars did not hide the fact that they borrowed profusely from what they found attractive about older Indian traditions.

These traditions brought diversity in Muslims' religious practices and taught them to co-exist peacefully with other religious communities. The same was revealed by the respondents who declared that on the one hand, they are proud of their sectarian traditions and consider their sect better than the other sects; on the other hand, they also talk about religious harmony and peace:

Ex.11   (I do not consider any sect distorted).

Ex.12   (I never thought about sects. Thanks to Allah, I am a healthy and full-limbed human being. I have my hands and feet intact.)

Ex.13   (Well, people generally like to follow their own sectarian tradition).

Ex.14   (First and foremost, a person should be a good human being. Humanity comes before ones' sectarian or religious identity).

The respondents in all these statements acknowledge the sectarian differences but they raise voice for humanity, religious affinity and amicability. On the contrary there was also a section of respondents who took others' sectarian traditions disapprovingly:

Ex.15   The believers of some other sects offer prayers in a wrong way and some do not like to perform funeral rites. The religious traditions that we learnt from our sect, we consider them the best.

Ex.16   Whatever happens, I shall never convert to any other sect.

These articulations manifest the respondents' deep affiliation with their sectarian traditions. The use of adjective *ulti* (meaning wrong, backwards) for namaz (prayer) in the fifteenth example and active construction in sixteenth example displays determined and resolute stance of the individuals as far as upholding their religious traditions is concerned.

4.8 Religious personalities:

As it has been discussed earlier, Pakistani Muslims like to identify themselves with Muslims of the entire world. So, in most of the cases, their role models (Table 1, Section 1.6) have been universally acknowledged religious personalities (e.g. Prophet Muhammad and the rashidun caliphs: i.e. the four orthodox caliphs) who are held in great esteem by entire Muslim world. The rashidun caliphs include:

Hazrat Abu Bakr (RA)
Hazrat Omar (RA)
Hazrat Uthman (RA)
Hazrat Ali (RA)

The word caliph originates from Arabic word khalifa which means a representative or successor. When the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) died in 632 the title was bestowed on his successor as the leader of the Muslim community. The word rashidun,is the plural of word rashid which means "the rightly guided one". The four orthodox rashidun caliphs ruled for the first three decades of the new Islamic era. Their conduct is considered the perfect one, and they are generally considered the ideal human beings after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In Pakistan, they are very well-known figures and the entire sociocultural discourse revolves around them. Their biographies are an essential part of all the text books (whether the subject is religion related or not, e.g. social studies, language and literature etc.). The rashidun caliphs are repeatedly mentioned in political discourse of Pakistan, (e.g. newspaper articles, television talk shows etc.) The names of educational institutions are after them, the names of the mosques and hospitals are after them, the names of roads and markets are after them, the names of military gallantry awards are after them and so on. Therefore, it is not surprising that a common Pakistani considers these religious personalities her/his ideal. The religious figures of the present era are not held in high esteem by the Pakistani masses. Thus, only one living Muslim leader from Pakistan (i.e. Allama Tahir-ul-Qadri) is mentioned by the respondents as their spiritual guide.

4.9 Human relations and binary oppositions:

Lorde[20], who described herself as a "black feminist socialist mother of two" believes that "much of Western European history conditions us to see human differences in simplistic opposition to each other: dominant/subordinate, good/bad, up/down, superior/inferior" (114). Likewise, in this research the participants identified their

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[20] Audre Lorde, *Sister outsider: Essays and speeches*. (New Yok: Ten Speed Press, 1984).

subjectivities through opposite relations with the others. As the res¬pondents belong to low income group, they found themselves standing in con¬trast to the rich who they believe should help them through alms, zakat and fitra¬na etc.One of such binary opposition could be observed in:

Ex.17   the well-offs vs. the poor

In the following list of antonyms, the respondents idealize or give preference to the first concept of each relation over the other:

Ex.18   the best vs. the worst
Ex.19   according to Islam vs. against Islam
Ex.20   this age (the present age) vs. that age (the age of theProphet PBUH)
Ex.21   inadvertently vs. Advertently
Ex.22   Muslim vs. non-Muslim
Ex.23   the sinned against vs. the sinner

The respondents identified themselves as islam ke mutabiq (according to Islam), musalman (Muslim) and mazloom (sinned against). And they wished to make themselves behtarin musalman (the best Muslim) who wishes to be transported to Prophet Muhammad's (PBU)*daur* (age). Similarly while talking about hijab and veil, the women identified themselves with the first quality of the opposite relation given below:

Ex.24   veiled vs. unveiled

Whatever the clothing, Pakistani lower-middle class women make sure that they are observing parda (veil or hijab). Muslim men also wish to see their women baparda, covered in chadars and burqas (shawls and gowns).

4.10 Unclear agency:

The data provides many instances where respondents either hide agency or skip the agent in order to distance themselves from certain unwanted actions or pro¬ces¬ses. (see Ex. 25 to Ex. 27):

Ex.25   Many non-Islamic acts happen.
Ex.26   Hell and heaven have been told in Islam.
Ex.27   (We) have been told to offer prayer.

This sort of passive constructions obscure the active participation of the agents in cer¬tain processes. The unclear agency either serves to distance the respondents from certain non-Islamic acts (Ex. 25), or it leads to infer that respondents' knowledge of Islam is unauthentic and is based on certain popular beliefs (Ex. 26 and Ex. 27).

5. Discussion and conclusion:

The analysis reveals that notion of 'identity' or 'selfhood' is not very easy to define. The identity of an individual is constructed as the result of subtle and intricate working of many overlapping yet inter-related factors such as:

—   the context of culture,
—   epistemic order,
—   historical processes,
—   interactional strategies and
—   symbolic (discursive) codes etc.

The analysis detailed above establishes that the identities are always in a state of flux and do not remain stable and fixed. The multiple layering of identity can be looked at sufficiently by critically analyzing and scrutinizing the discourses. The set of values (experiential, relational and expressive) attached with discourse provide a range of

linguistic prefrences which invariably lead one to infer socio-cultural positioning of the individuals and groups. The linguistic preferen-ces/choices found in this study include Urdu-Arabic and Urdu-English code-mixing, the negative evaluation, activated vs. passivated constructions, elliptical 'you', unclear agency and modality. All of these linguistic features lead one to assume that discourses constitute a society and culture by certain Ideological State Apparatuses (e.g. school, church, families etc.)[21]. Through deducing the link between discourse and Ideological State Apparatuses, the identity of groups and individuals could be figured out.

Through limited in terms of sample size, this study nevertheless allows some generalizations to be made based on the research questions which were initially posed:
— What are the multiple facets of religious identity of low-income group of Pakistanis?
— What experiential values do the discourse practices of the low-income group of Pakistani Muslims carry which in turn reveal their religious identity?

As far the answer of first question is concerned, it is clear from the above given discussion that the religious identity of Pakistani Muslims carries the unmistakable stamp of their sociocultural identity. The sectarian diversity, colonial past and the cultural practices related to the Indian sub-continent a distinct flavour to Pakistani Muslims' discourse and make their identity distinct from the Muslims of the rest of the world. Secondly, the discourse practices of Pakistani Muslims express certain experiential values which have been elaborated in the analysis sections of the paper above. The questions remain: to what extent, do identity issues address social problems and how are discourse and identity linked with the power dynamics of a society. These question are left as food for thought and the subject of future research on the same topic.

Appendix:
(The actual interviews were administered in Urdu. This is the translated version of interview questionnaire).
Interview questionnaire

Q.1   Would you like to introduce yourself, please? (i.e. name, marital status, qualification etc.

Q.2   If you are asked, who are you, what would be your answer?

Q.3   Would you like to tell the meaning of your name?

Q.4   Does your name describe you?

Q.5   Would you like to define and describe your ideology?

Q.6   How would you describe a best human being?

Q.7   What good things have you learnt from your religious education?

Q.8   What do you think is the most important for you out of these things: your name, your religion, your region, your family, your country?

Q.9   Your ideal personality?

Q.10   Why should a person offer prayers?

Q.11   Would you like to share some of your family traditions?

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[21] Louis Althusser, *Lenin, Philosophy. And other Essays*, (Michigan: Monthly Review Press, 1972).

Q.12   How do you celebrate religious festivals?

Q.13   How would you compare people of Pakistan with the people from rest of the world?

Q.14   Would you like to make some comments about Pakistani clothing?

Q.15   What do you think about foreign clothing?

Q.16   Your favourite book/festival/ sociocultural tradition?

Q.17   Could a person change his/her faith in any situation?

Q.18   What do you think about plural marriages?

Q.19   Any message for our readers???

Q.20   Feel free to add anything you like.