

Narration and Selfhood: An Exploration of Use of Pronouns in the Narratives of Female Survivors of 1947 Migration

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Abstract

This study is based on the discourse analysis of forty narratives of female survivors of 1947 migration. The analysis is conducted through an exploration of linguistic choices of pronominal categories used by the narrators. It focuses on the ways; the narrators project their identities in the capacity of individual and collective protagonists and personalize and depersonalize their experience assuming the roles of protagonist, observer or affectee in their narratives. The analysis highlights the use of pronominal categories for representation of self as an individual and as a member of group i.e. women folks and Muslim community; and cultural significance of switching between pronouns in the course of narration. The analysis of data reveals that the migrants were socio-centric narrators. They used the pronoun we to relate the most precarious incident of their migration experience to give it a touch of reality as it was a collective experience of millions of up-rooted Muslims. They felt shielded under the umbrella term of we which served to distance the enemy. The use of narrative voice, we for Muslim community heightened the effect of tragedy being so huge and disastrous. Use of we for Muslim women, emphasized a sense of solidarity and the aspiration of women for seeking the approval of social authority at any cost. The respondents have exhibited their multilayered identities including the gender, cultural, ethnic and religious identities, shaped in the light of approved cultural norms.

Keywords: Narrative, discourse, pronominal categories, identity, culture, Muslims, gender, migration

1. Introduction

An analysis of the representation of self can highlight the role of female individuals versus collectivity that signify the traditional expectations and the particular cultural and social context, in which the migrants survive and the cultural practice of the narration of collective experiences. This study explores forty personally recorded narratives of the female survivors of 1947 migration to find out the role of linguistic and discursive features used by the respondents in constructing their religious and gender identities. The linguistic strategies, I have focused on, for this analysis, are the pronominal choices and referential expressions in representation of self by the narrators. The analysis focuses on the use of first person pronouns and switches between these pronouns (*I* and *we*) in the course of narration.

The exploration of pronominal choices as a window is a long-standing practice into the linguistic analysis of identity. One of the early experts of the pragmatic function analysis of pronouns, Benveniste (1971), described them to be empty signs, having the role “to provide the instrument of a conversion that one could call the conversion of language into discourse” (p.219-220). Positioning oneself or the interlocutor, being a reflexive act can only be understood with reference to the social and immediate context of the communication. Pronouns can be viewed as primary

elements of establishing connection between context and language. Benveniste states that, saying *you* or *I* fasten language to the context of utterance by creating an inevitable reference to actual speakers.

2. Literature Review

Early studies on pronouns (Brown & Gilman 1960; Silverstein 1976; Friedrich 1979; Urban 1989; Mulhausler & Harre 1990) have revealed that pronouns, in a systematic manner, encode 'the social identities of participants or the social relationship between them, or between one of them and persons and entities referred to' (Levinson 1983, p.89). In the discipline of political discourse, many scholars have focused on the ambiguity and the multiple functions of pronouns. For example, Maitland & Wilson (1987) and Wilson (1990) explained how the politicians used the pronouns to highlight their alignment or disagreement towards the discourse participants or the issues of debates. Switching between the pronouns (particularly between *I* and *we*) and the doubt in the referents, developed and promoted through such switches have been described to represent strong instruments for conveying stance of involvement or distance in political discourse (Zupnik 1994; De Fina 1995) besides public debates (Conor- Lynton 1995) and job interactions among people in subordination or in position of power (Stewart 2001).

Exploitation of pronoun with unspecified reference for example *we* has proved active in generating ambiguity with regard to the types of identities demonstrated by the speakers besides being connected to the affirmative self assertion by new public agents. Martin Rojo (1997) explored the manners in which switching between the non pronominal and pronominal reference, leads to the construction of new identity in Spanish women. Suggesting an analysis of identity that considers identification with others besides the type of image associated to self, she asserts that "nosotras" (*we*, feminine) is exploited to express solidarity and to reinforce collective authority hence overlooking individual accountability.

The discursive functions of switching between pronominal choices for example conveying disalignment, association or unity with issues and members, and expressing dependability or lack of it too play a decisive function in narrating the accounts. A primary attribute of narrative as a discourse is invoking a double world: the narrative telling world and the narrative world. Meanings at these two planes are indexed by the pronominal choices. At one plane, the selection of specific pronominal choice signifies the nature of role that the narrator allocates as a character to herself or himself in the narrative world. By choosing certain pronouns, the narrator may opt to characterize her or himself as a part of a group or as an individual may emphasize accountability in performing action or point out lack of involvement in them. At another plane, switching between the pronouns indicates association in the story telling world between the members and narrator as the pronouns may also be exploited to involve the listener in evaluating the action, or to take the hearer into the narrative world De Fina (2003). O'Connor' (1994) examined how on many instances the use of the pronoun *you* in the autobiographical narratives of prisoners represented distancing of self despite being a character in the narrative world besides participation of the listener in the assessment of the action, hence expressing a lesser extent of accountability than they would have generated by using the pronoun *I*.

Psychological and anthropological studies have proposed a close link between different types of personality traits and particular cultures (Bourguignon 1979, p.75-116). A cultural psychologist,

Matsumoto (1994), states that one aspect of cultural variation is the disagreement between collectivism and individualism that indicates the level to which a culture promotes individual desires, values, wishes and needs over collective ones and group. This aspect has been recognized as central in the delineation of cultures. Duranti (1993) asserts that in many non-western cultures for instance Samoan, a similar type of impersonal notion of the self is found which is obvious in their handling of accountability in social discourse.

Hanks (1990) investigated how selection of possessive and personal pronouns in Mayan represent socially recognized spatio-temporal framework besides social principles about the individual roles in the different spheres of society. He asserts that the exploitation of deictic in interaction determine social roles. Mulhauser & Harre (1990, p.106) have investigated about how the Wintu's notion of self as open and not precisely detached from others reveals in the language system of self-reference particularly in the exploitation of pronominal suffixes.

Hill (1989) brought into light a parallel standpoint to her investigation of storytelling in Mexico by Mexican speakers. She also discovered the concept that some cultures demonstrate a less defined idea of self than developed cultures of western societies. In this viewpoint, she viewed narrative strategies on a scale between socio-centric and individualistic notions of the self. On one end of the scale is the idea of self which views the individual as basically a member of a society; at the converse end there is the notion that considers an individual as free and distinct from others. Hill defines Mexican speakers as sociocentric in contrast to egocentric Americans of middle class. The concept of socio-centric notion of the self suggested by Hill in relation to pronominal choice has been used by social psychologists, Veroff, Chadiha, Leber, & Sutherland (1993); Dreyer, Dreyer & Divas (1987).

Baynham (2003) investigated about Moroccan immigrants to UK, and found that they narrate the account of their experience of migration in general form, presenting their personal experience as archetypal of the whole migrant group. This type of depersonalization can be understood in relation to the tactics of depersonalization in the interview context. The immigrants are asked about their personal life experiences and choices in the interviews but the emergent discourse in interviews is not conversation of personal level, it is linked to and gives voice to other discourses and perspectives existing in society.

De Fina (2003) investigated the discourse of identity construction among Mexican immigrants to the USA. She conducted an analysis of thirty five personal experience narratives for exploring the exploitation of pronominal choices and switches. The stories that centered on the personal perspective were as many as those focusing on collective point of view. One third of the stories contained considerable change in outlook of experience between collectivity, personalization and depersonalization. The analysis revealed among the narrators, a trend of deemphasizing either their position as protagonist in the narrated world or the importance of the experience as individuals. The narrators did not concentrate on what their thoughts or actions have been in the story world and they regularly avoided directing the attention on themselves as primary actors even in the narratives where they portrayed themselves as protagonists. These trends towards the depersonalization and collective perspective were substantiated by the considerable evidence of pronoun switches (from *yo* (*I*) to *nosotros* (*we*)).

3. Material & Research Methodology

For present study, I interviewed 40 female survivors of 1947 migration who migrated from India (East Punjab) to Pakistan (West Punjab) between the age of thirteen years and above. They had to migrate from East to west Punjab when Subcontinent got its freedom from colonial rule and was subsequently divided into Pakistan and India. The Muslims settled in the areas allocated to India had to migrate to Pakistan which was created for Muslims. The interviews of female survivors of 1947 migration, based on the most precarious event (when they felt their life was at stake) during their migration experience were recorded in 2011. The narratives were numbered from 1 to 40 as N1, N2 --- N40, and the same is used when the examples from the narratives are quoted in analysis. My respondents spoke Urdu, Punjabi, Mewati and Rangeri languages, which being the central and the regional languages of Punjab do share certain lexical items including pronouns specifically the first person singular i.e *mein*, which means, *I* is used as the only choice to refer to oneself in all the four languages mentioned above. However, the situation is totally different when we consider the first person plural i.e *we* for which these languages have four different verbal equivalences including *ham*, *assi*, *assin*, and *apaan*. I have given below the first person pronouns in these languages, supplemented with their corresponding English pronominal categories:

Table 3.1: **First Person Pronouns in Urdu and regional languages of Punjab**

Singular	Mein (It is used invariably in all the four languages.	<i>I</i>
Plural	Ham, am, assi, assin, apaan (these are the words, used for the first person plural in the languages mentioned above)	<i>We</i>

There is exclusively no one word in all these languages used for *we*. Even within one language there might be variation according to the mood of the speaker. The interesting aspect in the use of plural pronouns' is that it was observed that one respondent may use *ham* and *assi* (N36) parallel in narration or *ham* and *apaan* (N17) in the same manner. There is no definite boundary in these languages, as far as the use of plural personal pronoun is concerned. I have chosen to use *I* and *we* to refer to the use of pronominal categories since there is no definite one word used in all those languages for *we* though there is one for *I*. I will use *I* and *we* to maintain uniformity in the analysis.

4. Analysis and Discussion

While conducting the analysis, Initially, I separated the narratives that were told in exclusively *I* form and *we* form and the narratives in which the narrators switch between *I* and *we*. In analysis, not only the explicit pronominal references were taken into account but the sentence structure and verb agreement besides possessive pronouns were counted as the emphasis of study was to find out whether the narrators share their experience as an individual experience or as an experience of community or family. These languages are inflectional and the direct pronoun may be missing, still the reference is derivable through the syntactic structures.

The narratives were divided on the basis of use of first person pronouns i.e. *I* and *we* to find out the role of narrator as a single protagonist or as a collective protagonist. On the basis of use of pronouns *I* and *we*, the narratives emerged as following types:

Table 4.1: Narrative types

Type of narrative	Number
<i>I</i> narratives	01
<i>We</i> narratives	09
Mixed pronoun narratives	30

Later on, the fourth category was added as the analysis revealed that pronoun *I* used once or twice among the narratives labeled as mixed ones did not signify any identity, it was rather an indication towards some physical details. The detail of the types of narratives is given above and the analysis will be presented in the same sequence:

Out of 40 the narratives, only one narrative (N17) could be classified as *I* narrative (not exclusively *I* narrative though), as the frequency of personal pronoun *I* in comparison to *we* is maximum in this narrative (30:05) as compared to the remaining 39 narratives where the personal pronoun *we* outnumbers *I*.

There are 9 narratives (N3, N9, N12, N15, N19, N25, N29, N30, N35,) which are exclusively *we* narratives as narrators use personal pronoun *we* only throughout the narration.

In 5 narratives (N2, N20, N21, N24, N32) the personal pronoun *I* is used only one time.

Remaining 25 narratives though are primarily *we* narratives as narrators frequently use pronoun *we*, however, they switch to pronoun *I* when it is inevitable.

I narratives:

The analysis of data provided with just one narrative i.e. N17 narrated in first person singular pronoun. In this narrative, the respondent relates her journey from India to Pakistan and all the sufferings she underwent and witnessed people facing different hardships, the story was told by using primarily personal pronoun, *I*. She has used the pronoun, *we* to refer to the women, present there during the attack or for the group of people including herself who survived the deadly attack. Number of pronoun *I*, outnumbers *we* so it is classified as *I* pronoun narrative. The protagonist of this story is an individual woman who is narrating it. She starts it with introduction of her family at the time of upheaval.

14- Mera beta, mera khawand te mein tenu thay ghar
14- My son, my husband, and I, three (of us) were home

She shares her husband's distrust on her by being viewed as a typical weak woman who could not be trusted for the protection of her son, she establishes her identity as an individual woman, who plays an active part throughout the action of story, assuming role of an individual protagonist:

22- Pind day vich aa gaey Sikh, mein vi dorr kay na jithy sab pind diyan aurtaan ti othy chali gai
22- Sikhs entered the village, I too ran and went to the place where all the women of village had (gathered)
23- unhaan nu kahiya vi kunda kholo sikh aa gaey menu vi andar band kar lo
23- (I) asked them to unbolt the door, that Sikhs had reached, lock me up inside too.

She does not switch from *I* to *we*, rather reproduces the speech, she made to them using *we* inclusive:

- 25- Fir mein kahya vi apaan hun kundi khol dieay
 25- Then I said that we should unbolt the door then
 30. Mein kahndi aan v hun chhat putan lag gaey vi hun khol do kunda apaan.
 30- I say, that now (they) had started undoing the ceiling that now we should unbolt (the door)

It is not the narrative voice, rather just reproduction of her words when she suggested the women, locked in that big room to open it. Same is the case in the below given remaining 3 instance of use of *we*. In line 44, she uses the pronoun *we* to refer to the women who had jumped in the well including herself.

- 44- mein kahiya haan mein hay gi aan beta assi sariaan kunwain ichay aan tusi na rasay liao.
 44- I said, "yes son, It's me, we all are in the well, you bring the ropes"
 78- Fer rat assi ghar a gaey koi kapry nai see, meri qameez phati hui see.
 78- Then we came home in the night, there were no clothes, my shirt was ripped.

In line 78 she establishes her gender identity through highlighting her consciousness of being in rags. She wanted to wear some decent dress but there were no clothes left behind. The narrator first associates herself to the group of Muslim survivors but later tends to share her personal experience highlighting how shameful it was for her to roam in street with ripped clothes

In line 69 and 78 she uses *we* for the survivors of the attack. She does not narrate the story in plural voice. This use of *we* is to include the other people besides herself among the survivors.

- 69- Fir oh gathan day vich paer phansa phansa kay fir assi bahar aye.
 69- Then, by placing our feet in the gaps, then we came out (of well)

She assumes the role of protagonist throughout the narrative and uses mainly the pronoun *I* and performs the roles of actor, observer and reporter. She starts the narrative by introducing her family and the concern of the couple i.e her and her husband's for saving the life of their young child. Then she ran to the room in which women were locked and the scene shifts to that room. She narrates the incidents that happened in that room with others as an eye witness and group representative. She talks about the particular case of her relative and her bravery to remind the attackers of their mean background even when death and abduction at the hands of those attackers were imminent.

- 30- ...nujawaan meri chachi bht khobsurat tay sikh nay us da bazo pakar liya.
 30- ...my very pretty aunt was in her youth, and a Sikh got hold of her hand.
 30- Meri chachi kahen lagi chorey sady gharaan da khaa kay, chad mera bazoo
 31- My aunt said, "mean, having eaten food from our houses, leave my arm".
 32- Aik kanhda dekh musli kis tarhaa phonkdi ay unhay gardan utar diti.
 32- One (of them) said, 'see how this Muslim (woman) barks' he chopped her neck.

She assumes the role of leader when the young boys happen to come near the well, she had jumped. She reproduces her speech showing her commanding status towards those boys and dominance over Batool, her cousin who had also jumped in the same well. There are no details about what Batool did or felt in the well. She keeps herself in the foreground:

- 63- Mein kahen lagi vi mein sharifaan aan
 63- I said that I was Sharifaan
 64- Tay aik meray kol batool ay
 64- And that I had Batool too with me.

In this narrative, three kinds of identities were shown through the use of *we*, as a female member of threatened community, as a member of Muslim female group, and as a leader of group of Muslim survivors. The narrator does not switch her identity from individual protagonist to collective rather she assumes the role of main protagonist to express her bravery as a woman, as an observer and as an affectee, being member of the victimized community. She does not depersonalize the details. She introduces the murdered woman as her own relative. Later, the description of devastation also shows its direct effect on her. She wanted to change her clothes but the attackers had taken away even the soiled ones. Similarly she did not find any water or milk left back to be drunk after the attack was over. The description of incidents, she overheard in the well is having an element of depersonalization though. At the discursive level, this is a story of an individual protagonist, though the pronoun *we* is also used but not as narrative voice. Occurrence of personal pronoun *I* is very strong so this narrative can safely be classified as exclusively an *I* narrative

4.1 We narratives

In these narratives, the narrators used only personal pronoun, *we* which suggests that instead of projecting their individual identity, the narrators prefer to associate themselves to a group; social, religious or gendered. There are 9 narratives (N3, N9, N12, N15, N19, N25, N29, N30, N35) in which the narrators exclusively use *we* to emphasize their collective identity. In these narratives, the narrators completely avoid using *I*. whereas, *we* is used to refer to the caravan, family, women and Muslim community on the whole.

In N 9, the narrator projects only one identity of being a member of the Muslim community by using *we*. The narrator talks about the issue of up rootedness of Muslims in general and no gendered issues are highlighted on the part of the Muslims women. Though, she says that the Muslims had brought home 3 or 4 non-Muslim girls when they attacked and set alight the villages of non Muslims. The Muslims had sufficient weapons and their village was known to be very strong one so the non Muslims did not attack it. They rather had been negotiating with Muslims. While talking about the Muslim men, who had been negotiating with the non Muslims, she uses pronoun *they* for Muslim men because she cannot include the women among the group of men involved in negotiation with non Muslims. She depersonalizes herself and women in general but still she is part of the community going to be affected by the negotiation. The use of *we* in the speeches of Muslim men signifies the personal pronoun *we* for them on behalf of the whole Muslim community. There is no use of *we* to indicate the gendered identity or *I* indicating the thoughts or apprehensions of the narrator. The narrator is very much confident of being protected and sheltered that is why there is no hint on women's insecurity. Women are kept in the

background there are only men negotiating with the enemies. This is contrasting to N 17 where the narrator was directly exposed to the calamity and had to manage the situation at her own.

16- unhaan kahiya bhi hamla ham nai kranda aslaha hmary pas vi aa tay aslaha tumhary pas vi aa

16- They said, "We would not allow for attack, we have weapons and so do you"

The speech of Muslim men, involved in negotiation is reproduced using pronoun "ham" which means *we* but it signifies just those men so the line quoted above suggests that the collective identity is being highlighted, it refers to all Muslims who were struggling against the same enemy.

The incident when their carts were snatched is reported in apparently depersonalized collective terms. She tells about the confiscation of carts but does not specify whether her own family had one or was already walking on foot.

22- Gaddy thay pas unhaan chukwa liey thay Nawazabad mein, na kisi kay palay bail rahay na kisi k palay gadday rahay

22- (We) had carts with us, they snatched them in Nawazabad, nobody was left with either bulls or carts anymore

However, later, while talking about the journey, she refers to all the travelers including her as *we* though the explicit pronoun is missing. She gives expression to her personal experience of journey and the hardships it involved. She constructs a personalized identity in generalized terms.

23- saman vi athawan apny bachiaan vi uthanwaan koi kisi hal na turiyaa jawey

23- (We) would carry the luggage, as well as our children; it was hard to walk anyway

In narrative 30, *we* is used 30 times, however only two types of identities are projected through it, one as a Muslim woman and other as a member of Muslim family. She, most of the time does not use explicit pronoun of *we* rather depends on the inflection signifying the first person plural pronoun. She talks about the departure using an implicit *we*, signifying her family. She establishes her identity as a member of group of women which needs to be protected by the male members.

26- Jadon pindon niklay, timian timian thi, bas aik sada banda tha

26- When (we) left village, all the women were there, just one of our men was there.

Later, she tells about her family's journey and uses *we* for her family, giving women the privilege to ride the cart. She constructs her identity as a member of uprooted community which was facilitating the women during the course of journey. She personalizes the situation in generalized terms. She does not specify herself as a woman rather prefers to be the part of the group including all the travelers regardless of gender.

77- Assi tay siraf aik jori ti baldan di aik gadda taa.

77- We had only a pair of oxen and a cart

78- Jori baldan di jis par znaniyan nay bethna taa, bandiyan nay pedal turna

78- Pair of oxen (cart) which, the women would ride, men would walk on foot

In the later part of the narrative, however, she constructs her identity as a member of the group of women who were prone to the threat of being accessed by the enemies so they were given packets of poison and were made to stand on margins of well so that they could be pushed in the wells or forced to lick the poison in case they were attacked. She uses 'we' in line 126 for the girls only. She narrates the incident in generalized terms about women as the bearers of honor of the family and the Muslim community and concludes in a neutral tone that they were destined to have long lives to live so the situation did not demand the girls to sacrifice their lives.

- 121- Sada jehra chacha see unhain sanu zehar day k na khoh day oper khara kar dita
 121- Our uncle, after handing over poison, made us stand on the well
 126- Bas feer assi kharay rahay sadi wadhi hui thi
 126- So we kept on standing there, we had long lives ahead

The narrator, in this story associates herself to the group of Muslim women and travelers in a caravan, rather than narrating her own experience. She narrates the incident on behalf of the other women who were with her. Instead of personal experience, it can be described as a collective experience of the Muslim women who were riding the bull carts and were ready to sacrifice lives for the family honor (cooking is specifically associated with females, so here she refers to only Muslim women). It also refers to the collective cultural identity of the Muslim women. Another projection of identity is that of the narrator referring to her family, identity is again collective instead of individual as instead of being a sole protagonist, the narrator views herself as a member of the displaced family.

(3).

In 5 narratives (N2, N20, N21, N24, N32) personal pronoun *I* is used one time only.

N 02 is primarily narrated using *we* pronoun for the Muslims of her village, her family and for women i.e. the narrator and her mother. She starts the narration with an informational note about people of her village, getting evicted empty handed all of a sudden:

1. Sanu khali hath utha lia aglian nay
 1. We were expelled empty handed by them (Hindus)

She continues talking about the Muslims of her village in general:

3. Fer uthon assin kamp maan chalay gaey, Ludhiyana day kamp ichay
 3. Then from there, we went to the camp, the camp in Ludhiyana

Then she gives some details, using *we* for the Muslims of her village who were already informed about the likely attack by non Muslims:

6. hamlay da tay sanu rat nu pata lag gaya tha na
 6. We had come to know about the attack in the night you know

Having shared the general information, she starts talking about her family who had a huge live stock and lot of stuff there but could not carry anything along due to the sudden and shocking eviction and height of threat:

13. ...maal saada othay...
 13. All our live stock was there...
 20. Din maan assin tay nikal gaey thay, rat nu mery dohay pai niklay.
 20. We had left in the day, my other brothers left in the night

She maintains the separate identities of her family members in the later part of the narrative. She talks about her mother and herself who were left behind while the other family members succeeded in catching the train. She uses the pronoun *I* as she has to specify who was left behind besides her mother when the train left but she immediately switches to *we*:

36. Othay aik main reh gai ik meri maan reh gai assin 2 hi thalay rah gaian kharian
 36. Just I and my mother were left there, just two of us were left standing down there
 40. Feer assin onhan naal ralian fer edhar vi sipahi edhar vi sipahi vich nu fer sadian
 gaddian langaian
 40. Then we joined them, then there were soldiers on the both sides and our vehicles
 passed in the middle

In line 40 she uses *we* first for the two of them i.e. she and her mother and later for the Muslim convoy with which her brothers were travelling.

N 20 is narrated in *we* narrative voice. The narrator uses the pronoun *we* for the Muslim community as she talks throughout the narrative about the village folks and convoy and camp residents as a group.

- 13- Ham athara din rahay bhukay, Kamp lagiya
 13. We starved for eighteen days, camp was established

In following lines in N20, the narrator switches from *we* to *I*:

42. Mein 17-18 saal ki thi, shadi ho gait hi meri
 42. I was 17-18 years of age and was already married

In the same way in N 24, the narrator uses personal pronoun *I* to share information about age, it was not used to project any identity.

In N 32, the narrator has followed the same pattern in using personal pronouns. She uses *we* for women and for Muslims as a group of people. She starts the narration in following words defining the group of Muslims of that village Manak Pur, She starts the narration with *we* for the uprooted Muslims and goes on using the same pronoun for the same group of Muslims throughout the narration involving different phases of journey:

1. Jis wakhat ham gaon say niklay na, maara na koi 3/4 mael tation tha
 1. When we left the village, our station was 3 or 4 miles away

There was an attack but the chief of village bribed the police who protected them and the machine guns were removed. She constructs her identity as member of the threatened groups which escaped the danger by bribing police.

28. Bas thanay daar ka munh bhar diya tha wahan
 28- The policeman was bribed there
 29. Nay ham feer bach gaey
 29 - We then remained safe

Later, *weis* used for the same group of Muslims who took refuge in the camps which were set in Anbala, and the travelers were given food there:

37. Wahan ham ko rashan mila kran tha
 37- There we were given ration

Weis used to indicate to the Muslim convoy which travelled in the train to Pakistan:

44. Fair Anbalay maan ham you rail gaari maan betha gay
 44- In Anbala, then we boarded the train

She uses *we* for Muslim girls while sharing her experience of being made to stand on the banks of canal so that they could be pushed in the canal in case there was any threat or attack. The girls were asked to jump in the canal but not let the non Muslims get hold of them.

50. Wahan ham ko nehar par khara kar diyan thi jawan jawan bachian
 50- There we, all of the young girls were made to stand on canal

She uses *I* just once to indicate her ignorance about the name of the station where the train was ruined. Right after mentioning this, she again switches to *we*:

- 102- Youn menu pata nai wo kis tation pay aa k khatam kari Hindwan nay
 102- I don't know, at which station Hindus destroyed it
 103- Fir ham qasoor maan, Musalman rotian liey kharay tay
 103- Then we reached Qasoor, Muslims were standing with food

In these narratives, the use of *I* does not project any identity. The narrators opt to use *I* when they do not have the choice to use *we* as the direct question demands direct answer. The use of *we* is employed to underline the collective identity; the narrators refer to themselves as members of Muslim community and group of Muslim women. The narrators switched to *I* only when a direct reference to themselves was included e.g. about their age and it was unavoidable to use *I* so these narratives can also be categorized as exclusively *we* narratives though narrators use *I* sometimes but its purpose is just to share some personal information rather than projecting any identity through it.

(4)

There are 25 narratives in which though narrators switch between pronouns, *we* and *I*, yet the identity that remains dominant is collective identity projected by the use of pronoun, *we* which outnumbers the pronoun *I*.

N36 starts as a *we* narrative, the narrator shares her experience as a member of Muslim community. She speaks on behalf of the Muslim community, Muslim women and her family when she tells about her father and father in law without using the pronoun *I*. She rather focuses on the male family members and calls them 'my father' and 'my father in law' to indicate her closeness with them. She uses *we* throughout the narration whenever it is necessary otherwise she relies on inflection to indicate the Muslim community even sometimes same inflections indicate collective description and narration in the place of *they* (non Muslims/ enemies) but the syntactic structures make the listener mark the difference between *they* (non Muslims) and *we* (Muslims). From the beginning of the narrative, she relates herself to a group of people who were leaving their homes, though she was asked to narrate her personal experience yet she used pronoun *we* to relate it.

She introduces the situation by telling about two neighboring villages of two brothers in first eight lines. She was inhabitant of one of them. The other village was attacked and the people of her village too were panicked and decided to leave to avoid any likely attacks:

- 1- Ham baghair waja kay hi chalay gaey
- 1- We left without any reason even
- 2- ham bhi kotlay mein chalay gaey...
- 2- We also went to Kotla...

She starts her narration by involving the details about two villages of Muslims. She talks about her people as *we* who left the village without any reason. She goes on talking about how people from so many other villages also reached there and uses *we* for them as well including them in the already uprooted Muslim population.

While telling about the attack on Kotla village, she specifies the details about her family telling that one of her father's Hindu friends protected her family during the attack.

- 41. Jo meray aba ji ka dosat tha us nay qasam dawai
- 41. My father's friend pledged (the attackers)
- 42. Vi es andar nai warna jis andar ham rah rahay thay
- 42. Not to enter the house, where we were staying

She continues focusing on her family in post attack scenario when they left Kotla out of insecurity and lived in a ruined and poor store room.

- 57. phir ham warh gaey toori walay makan maan
- 57. Then we lived in the room used to store silage

She then tells about the girls hiding in a room in order to avoid any likely possibility to be accessible to enemies:

72. Ham sab larkiaan hi thi
72. We were all girls

She continues telling about the looting of attackers and mentions about the golden necklace which the attackers demanded and she amicably handed it over to them. They were curious to know if she still had some valuable items and she reproduces her speech with an addition of 'I said' because there is no other choice than to reproduce her words:

76. Mein kahya vi talashi lay lo hor koi cheez nai hay.
76. I said, "you may search, there is nothing left"

The narrator is not switching her identity she is not involving herself in the action but she is just expressing her experience by using pronoun *I*. She simply tells in line 77 that they had looted all the assets and in line 78 she starts narrating about two young beautiful guys who were killed there during the attack. When she was asked whether she herself saw them being killed, she chose to continue the narration by switching to a collective *we*.

81. Ham nay nai dekha martay huway
82. We did not see (them) dying.
82. jab bahar niklay feer dikhya maray paray thay becharay.
83. When (we) came out, then (we) saw (those) poor (boys) lying dead.

One of the common styles of narration among the respondents was to depend on the inflections and narrate the incidents without explicit use of *we* as the following lines show:

129. Fair subha hui tay chal paray ...
129. When the day broke out, (we) left ...
130. Fair kampon maan ja waray
130. Then (we) went to camps
180. Jalandhar aa gaey, Jalandhar fir Lahore aa gay.
180. (We) reached Jalandhar, jalandhar, then (we) came to Lahore
181. Fair samundri chalay gaey
181. Then (we) went to Samundri

Line # 41 (mentioned above) referred to her father who was an influential person and his Hindu friend had vowed to protect him and his family. The following lines refer to her father in law who too was an influential person and went to Anbala to seek government's help when the attackers came.

58. Tu ye jis waqat aye tu ye mera sora na
58. So when they (attackers) came, my father-in-law you know
59. Is ka dada ghorī par char k anbala gaya
59. (Pointing to her daughter) Her grandfather, went to Anbala riding his mare

As the identity of a woman in sub continent is dependent on the male members of her family, she is referred as someone's daughter, wife or sister so it can be suggested that this narrator is

assuming the same identity. She chooses to remain sheltered in the group, when asked about the mode of transportation of her group she used 'our' subjective collective pronoun rather than 'my'. She does not express her opinion, her answer is "I don't know", though she uses *I* but she is not sure to give her verdict. This narrative is an example of a collective identity narrative.

In comparison with the *I* narratives, the female narrator assumes a passive role here. Rather than establishing her own individual identity, she decides to be a part of the group. The narrator was requested to share her personal life threatening experience of journey but in response, she preferred to share collective experience of migrants using a collective voice.

Below is given an example from N (1) in which narrator switches not only between *I* and *we* but between identities as well

6. Mein na ata mal kay choti choti tikian paka rahi aan
6. I was cooking small loaves of maze after kneading the floor
9. Na chunian lenwan na koi jis tarha bethay uth turay...
9. (We did) not take headbands or anything, (we) left the way we were sitting
10. Chita burka lab kay mein apni maan nu dita...
10. I found a white gown and gave it to my mother
11. Mein odhi banh phar lai apni maan di banh nai chhadi,
11. I caught hold of my mother's arm, and did not let it go
12. Jad assin khoh par aa gaey
12. when we reached the well...

Here the narrator switches between *we* and *I*, *we* refers to her family only, in the first line, the narrator is projecting her cultural individual identity, in sub continent's culture, household chores are associated with females member of the family. Hence she is projecting her cultural identity that before the time of crisis *I* (she) was performing her daily task, in the second line, use of *we* refers to Muslims with a special consciousness of the protagonist on the part of other women too about headbands. This projects the example of religious identity also as *we* includes the Muslim females who are supposed to keep their heads covered especially when they are outdoors, the narrator switches from collective Muslim to feminine identity further to an individual identity by using pronoun *I* and leads the action.

De Fina (2003) has observed that the use and switching of pronouns by narrators can be viewed as strategies representing agency. The selection of particular pronouns designates the nature of the roles that the narrator chooses to opt in the story world. Moreover, the narrator may portray himself or herself as an individual or as a member of specific group, may emphasize on responsibility in performing certain actions or may present lack of involvement in them. Additionally, switching between pronouns indicates the relationship between the narrator and the other people in the story world. The above given analysis shows that the narrators switch between the pronominal categories, *I* and *we*, to present the protagonist of story, primarily as a collective protagonist and to present the experience of migration as a collective experience. They maintain their relationship with individuals, family or community as Muslim women who needed protection, and felt sheltered while identifying themselves with groups, and ready to sacrifice lives to maintain the honor of group, they belong to.

Anna De Fina (2003) takes identity as a way of referring one's self to specific social circle. In the present study, narratives were analyzed on the basis of use of pronouns to study different identities constructed by narrators. The use of personal pronoun, *we* in narratives of my female respondents projected different types of identities. They use it to project their membership in family so it referred to their identity as a member of Muslim family; it was also used to construct their identity as Muslim women, as part of the Caravan and the Muslim community.

This use of personal pronoun *we* to project shared identity is line with study of Martin-Rojo (1997) who asserts that Spanish women use personal pronoun, *we* to associate themselves with their community as a whole, moreover, to share their responsibilities with one another as a community. Muslim community and in Subcontinent's culture it was obligatory for women to be accompanied by a male blood relative while travelling, so they assert their religious and cultural identity projected through the use of personal pronoun, *we* in their stories. They assume the role of collective actor, enjoying a sense of being powerful when they refer themselves as part of Muslim community and enjoy a sense of solidarity when they use *we* for women who jumped in the wells with them to fulfill the responsibility of preserving the collective honor of the whole community. Practice of employing *we* rather than *I* in narratives in present study is parallel to the study of O'Connor (1994) who studied pronouns used by prisoners in their autobiographical discourse. According to him, by using pronoun, *we*: rather than *I*, the narrators try to lessen their sense of responsibility. In the same way, the narrators in this study, felt shielded when they presented themselves as a part of group rather than an individual. There were men who took the responsibility of taking care of them and protecting their lives and honor at any imaginable cost.

The culture of the Sub continent can be defined through these narratives as suggested by Matsumoto (1994) who proposed to determine the culture difference on the basis of disagreement between individualism and collectivism. The analysis has shown that the individual values are determined by the collective approval of the social values and determining certain practices as norms and highly recommended, totally ignoring the personal limitations. The narrators, even when caught in a life threatening situation are concerned about finding dupatta N1 and finding some intact shirt N17. They are made to stand on wells and canals and are pledged to jump in wells or lick the poison to save family honor. The individualism is totally surrendered in front of collectivism so much so that they do not talk about the horrific feelings they underwent while jumping in the wells. They said, ultimately one has to die so it was preferable to die than to lose the personal and family honor. The only concern of women indicated in the narratives was to get approval from the collective authority led by men and to identify them with the authority.

The narrators create a story world and are strongly attached to their story world rather than presenting themselves as alien element to their story world. They dragged the interviewer to their world and expressed a strong affiliation to their experiences, though they preferred to express experiences as a whole yet they decided to present them as a personal experience in generalized terms. This aspect of research is striking in the sense that it is completely different from study of Mexican Migrants by De Finna (2003) who observed that sometimes her respondents completely detached themselves from their stories by using third person pronoun for themselves. The Mexican migrants came for job willingly whereas my respondents were forced to leave their place, as they demanded a separate homeland, so they employed personal pronouns to express the

intensity of hardships; they personally faced for this piece of land. They assume the role of either individual or collective actor or affectee.

Identity in the narratives is hidden behind linguistic patterns, used by the narrators which are selected on the basis of the cultural background of the narrators, the story world which narrators want to create and the present in which stories are being told. Although these three elements work together to create a story world yet, the narrators focus on one or other element to highlight a certain type of identity. Interaction between story world and pronominal choices can help us to understand position of narrators in the story world and the roles they assign to others or members of their own group. The present analysis has observed that almost all the female narrators view themselves as a collective group not as individuals; they assign themselves stereotyped roles even in their own story world which shows a strong impact of their culture on them. In the similar manner they refer to two different ethnic groups as a collective group (Hindus & Sikhs) as enemy and are referred as they. It shows a clear cut dichotomy between us v/s them. Wherever 3rd person pronoun is used, it is understood that it is being referred to Hindu and Sikh.

The narratives of female migrants of 1947 reveal certain linguistic patterns, the categories were analyzed to study the identities projected through the exploitation of pronominal categories, moreover, the relation between pronominal choice and personalization or depersonalization within narrative from perspective of narrator was also studied. It was found that the pronoun selection was based on circumstances and the culture of the narrators which is supported by already existing studies on this subject. The analysis of use of pronominal categories in the recorded data indicates that the migrants are socio-centric speakers like the Mexicanos. They follow the culturally approved prevalent social practice of keeping others before themselves. The collective will dominates the individual will so they decide to throw their individual identity in the background by assuming a subordinate and confined role in comparison to collective authority to which they aspire to identify themselves and in order to gain its approval they are ready to sacrifice their lives even. The narrators chose to relate their experiences in collective voice, though they switched to personal singular voice when it was necessary but the dominant and recurrent is collective voice anyway. The narrators use the pronoun *we* to relate the most precarious incident of their migration experience to give it a touch of reality as it was a collective experience of millions of up-rooted people. They feel protected while narrating their experience by keeping men ahead of them and avoid the recurrence of traumatic feelings because they feel they are being shielded under the umbrella term of *we* which distances the enemy. They were protected and led by their men in the actual situation, so they feel closer to the powerful men, hence strengthening their own position by identifying themselves to the men through adopting *we* for narration. The use of narrative voice *we* for Muslim community heightens the effect of tragedy as it was so huge and disastrous, on the other hand it pacifies the narrators when they share their observation that they were not the only ones who suffered rather there were innumerable affectees. When they use *we* for Muslim women, they are highlighting a sense of solidarity and the desire of women for seeking the approval of social authority at any cost, may it be their life.

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