

STUDENT'S PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS' CODE-SWITCHING IN PAKISTANI ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Code-switching is a strategy used by the teachers to teach the English language. Code-switching is defined as a shift from one language to another language by a speaker during a conversation. The present study investigates the perceptions of the students toward their teachers' code-switching. Students have both positive and negative perceptions of the teachers code-switching, but we try to investigate whether or not it is helpful if a teacher switches languages in an English classroom. The study used a mixed-method approach using a questionnaire consisting of 10 close-ended questions and 1 open-ended question to investigate the perceptions of the students. Findings of the research demonstrated that the majority of the students showed a negative attitude towards teachers' code-switching; however, some of the students were in favor of code-switching for the ease of instruction.

Keywords; code-switching, English classroom, conversation.

INTRODUCTION

Code-switching refers to the phenomenon of altering one's linguistic code or switching between languages, dialects, or registers within the same conversation or interaction (Lin, 2013). A common practice occurs naturally in multilingual communities where individuals are fluent in more than one language. Code-switching can happen at any level of language, including the use of vocabulary, grammar, intonation, and even nonverbal cues (Alvarez-Cáccamo, 1990).

Initially the term code switching was used by the sociolinguist Gumperz in the 1960s (Gumperz, 1964). In code-switching, the term code refers to the language, dialect, or style of speech. Whereas the term switching refers to the alternation or shift between the different varieties of language or dialect. This phenomenon occurs in multilingual communities where speakers shift

their language or dialect at a sentence level, clause level, or even at the phrase level.

The practice of code-switching can be seen in various contexts, such as in the workplace (de Socarraz-Novoa, 2015), in education, or in social settings. For example, a bilingual employee may switch between languages when communicating with different clients, while a student may switch between languages when interacting with classmates from different cultural backgrounds (de Socarraz-Novoa, 2015).

Code-switching has both positive and negative implications. Researchers have positive as well as negative assumptions about this phenomenon of code-switching. On the one hand, it can help individuals to establish social connections and build rapport with others who share their linguistic and cultural background. It can also facilitate communication and aid in the

expression of complex ideas that may be better conveyed in a particular language or dialect (Aichum, 2003).

On the other hand, code-switching can also lead to misunderstandings, as individuals may not be proficient in both languages and dialects being used. Some researchers thought that code-switching while teaching a second language is a hindrance and creates a sort of distraction, so it should be avoided. Additionally, code-switching can reinforce existing power dynamics, as those who are fluent in dominant languages may hold a higher social status than those who are not (Diaz, 2004).

Researchers established the fact that the use of mother tongue while teaching a second language is no longer considered a negative phenomenon; rather, it must be incorporated in the classrooms (Cook, 2016; Mustafa, Jamshaid & Fahad, 2023).

The study of code-switching has become increasingly important in linguistics and sociolinguistics, as it provides insights into the ways in which language is used and how it reflects social and cultural norms. Researchers have found that code-switching is not random or haphazard but rather a strategic and intentional practice that reflects a speaker's identity and social situation. Many applied researchers are concerned with the occurrence of code-switching in multilingual contexts. (Woolard, 2004).

Code-switching is a complex and dynamic practice that reflects the diversity and fluidity of language use in multilingual communities. By understanding the patterns and motivations behind code-switching, we can gain a deeper appreciation of the ways in which language shapes and reflects our social and cultural identities.

Hoffman (1991) categorizes the code-switching that teachers use in their English classroom into two types:

- Intrasentential code-switching
- Inter-sentential code-switching
- Tag switching

Intrasentential code-switching

Code switching that happens within the clause or sentence. In this type of code switching, a teacher may switch parts of clauses or sentences. Yet, both languages incorporate certain

grammatical aspects of the other language when switching within a sentence. A teacher may say, "He considered her as **bap sa ziyada dost (friend rather than a father).**"

Inter-sentential code-switching

Code switching that happens outside the clause or sentence boundary. In this type of codeswitching, a teacher may complete one clause or sentence in one language, let's say in L2 (English) and the next sentence in L2 (Urdu). However both languages retain their grammatical independence. As teacher telling their students hair care and says "you can make your hair long and beautiful **sarson ka tel liga karo (apply mustard oil)**".

Tag switching

One word or a tag phrase can be switched from one language to another. An example of tag switching is how teachers use some Urdu boundary words like "**laken**" (**but**) and "**sumaj**" (**understanding**) while speaking English.

So the main purpose of code-switching is to facilitate students conveying the ideas when only one language is not sufficient. The teacher takes help from the first language (Urdu) to convey his/her idea more clearly, and they return to using their native tongue after that. Code switching means mixing of

- Languages, like English and Urdu (two languages).
- At least two different variations.

1.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of code-switching, which is a phenomenon of shifting between two or more languages or language varieties in a single conversation or sentence, can include

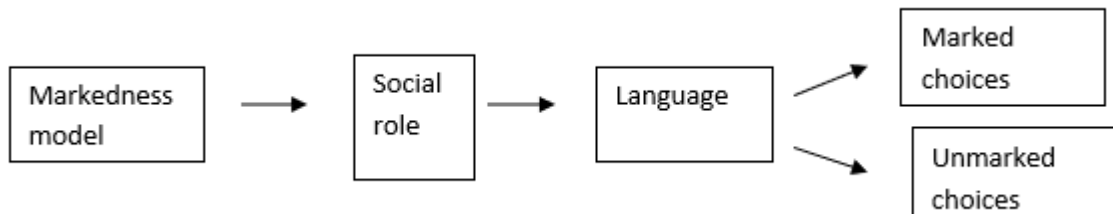
1. Understanding the social and cultural factors that influence code switching.
2. Examining the cognitive processes involved in code switching, such as how bilinguals choose which language to use in different contexts.
3. Investigating the communicative function of code switching, such as its use for identity construction or as a marker of social solidarity.
4. Exploring the effects of code switching on language development and language maintenance in bilingual communities.

1.1 Theoretical frameworks

Theory of Markedness by Myers-Scotton (1983) provided the theoretical framework for this study, as it's a very helpful and significant model in the research of code switching. This theory describes the social impact of a particular choice.

Speakers, in terms of unclear and/or unmarked linguistic choices, use code-switching for certain purposes.

Items which are switched are known as the marked choices which are collected and also analyzed through data analysis method.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to the growing importance of code-switching, many researchers have recently worked on code-switching for several languages and natural language processing tasks. Many researchers view the impacts of code-switching in advertisements, fashion, political speeches, education, and a lot more other dominos of daily life.

According to Vestergaard & Schrøder (1985), advertisers use code-switching language resources to grab people's attention and get them to behave like consumers. The language is flexible and persuasive, meaning it can be used as a contextualization and signaling mechanism to convey cultural specifics (p. 11). Code switching is function-driven and represents discursive, morphological, and stylistic devices. It has a look-up function and is, therefore, used as an advertising technique for the symbolic and economic value of language in the context of globalization. (p. 161). Heller (2020) believes that code-switching is a form of language practice in which individuals fall back on their own conversational language resources; these resources have different values in existing markets.

Noor, Anwar, Muhabat, & Kazemian (2015) conduct their research to highlight the process of code-switching in Punjab textbooks. The data analysis of their study shows that code-switching is observed at the morpheme, word, phrase, and clause level in Punjab textbooks. Their study also shows that the frequent use of code-switching in written text results in language change. The study shows the process of code-switching in written text, but the present study shows the process of code-switching at the spoken level. The research highlights that what

are the circumstances under which a teacher switch their language and what is the students perceptive on the teacher's code switching and weather it is helpful or not. Nadeem, Shafqat and Mustafa (2025) also highlight the differences in the second language acquisition process among male and female students.

Yao (2011) conducts research to investigate the process of code-switching at Three Gorges University in China. His research focuses on how teachers and students perceive the patterns and causes of code-switching in Chinese university EFL classrooms. Based on the analysis of the data, his study shows that L1 is prevalent in EFL Chinese university classrooms and plays a positive role in the learning process of the English language (p. 10). However, there are some differences in attitudes of the teachers and students towards code-switching. These differences imply that the use of code-switching in EFL classes has to change to reflect actual instruction (Yao, 2011).

Wardhaugh (2021) believes that code switching is a spontaneous process and often an unconscious phenomenon. However, many researchers, like Trudgill, point out that code-switching is not a spontaneous process; for him, people consciously switch their language to manipulate others or to influence the situation as they want.

According to Görlach (2001) English is in contact with many European languages. In the "Dictionary of European Anglicisms." Görlach provides a comparative analysis of the integration of Anglicisms in 16 European languages, including German. The dictionary contains a "preliminary picture of the situation as presented in early 1990." The process of borrowing English words is quite complex

because the degree and the integration speed depend not only on the structure of the two languages involved but also on the individual elements showing different levels of integration at different levels (p. 10).

Pakistan is a multilingual country, having more than 70 languages spoken there. But the national language in Pakistan is Urdu, and the official languages are English and Urdu. Since Urdu and English coexisted before the time of independence, English has a significant position, not only in one domain but all over the country. Code switching and code mixing are the two important factors of the massive spread of English in Pakistan. Using mother tongue or the process of code switching (English-Urdu) in an English classroom is just like depriving the learners of their linguistic knowledge. Gulzar (2010) believes that code-switching is not only helpful in improving the performance of teachers, but it is also a very helpful teaching strategy. This idea of Gulzar is completely contrastive with the researchers who observed that code-switching by the teachers is a sign of their linguistic incompetence.

Mattsson & Burenhult (1999) Codeswitching due to the incompetence of teachers has negative effects on the language learning process of students, and students may lose their confidence.

3. METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the phenomenon of code-switching deployed in teaching at the university level in Pakistan. Data

for this study were collected through the questionnaire method with 10 close-ended questions and 1 open-ended question. The guidance for tool development was taken from the different studies, e.g., Ahmad & Jusoff (2009) and Alenezi (2010). The questionnaires focused on what the situations are under which code-switching is done, whether it is helpful or not. Why students need code-switching, and if they need it, to what extent teachers should switch their language from L2 to L1.

The survey also focused on how many times teachers should allow switching their language in an English classroom in one lecture. Either it is the demand of the students or it is the course type that forces teachers to do code-switching.

Validity of research is also very important; if the piece of research is not valid, then it is worthless. Validity is also very important in terms of telling whether the findings of the research can be generalized to all the population or not.

3.1 Population and Sampling

A sample of the research is the 95 students taken from three different public sector universities and two private sector universities in Pakistan. All participants that are present in this research were studying English language as a subject in the following disciplines: BS, MS, M.Phil.

The target population of the research is students of the English language in public as well as private sector universities from Punjab, Pakistan. Further information about the sample is given below.

Table 1
Details of the sample

| Degree | |
|--------------|----|
| BS students | 15 |
| MS students | 30 |
| M.phil | 55 |
| Universities | |
| Public 1 | 26 |
| Public 2 | 25 |
| Public 3 | 23 |
| Private 1 | 11 |
| Private 2 | 10 |

3.2 Hypothesis

H1: There is a unique and powerful relationship between code-switching and

positive and negative emotive of learning state of students.

H2: There is a unique and powerful relationship

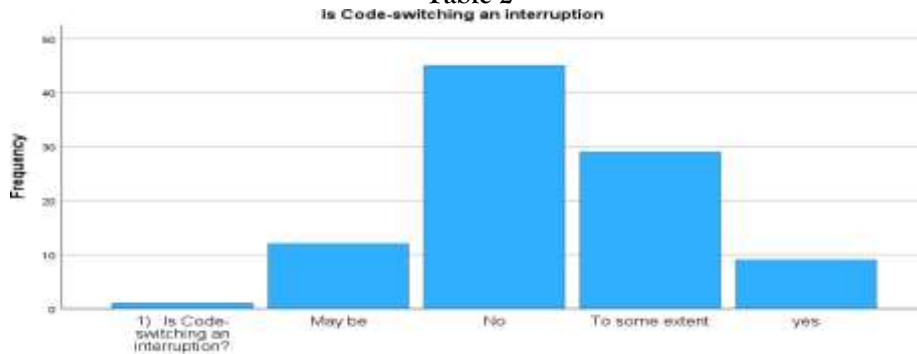
between code switching and the learning success of the students.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

For the purpose of data analysis, SPSS software was used. Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate close-ended questions, whereas thematic analysis was used to examine open-ended questions. Tables are the best way to provide complete and detailed information

about each close-ended question. The evaluation not only includes the majority responses, but other responses were also included. Out of 95 responses, 46.8% of students thought that code-switching is not an interruption. Students believe that they are not distracted when their teachers switch their language, but other than 46.8% of students, they think it is a very great interruption in their learning process.

Table 2



53.2% of students prefer code-switching when there are difficult words, vocabulary, concepts,

and ideas in the lecture. The rest of the students can understand what they were taught.

Table 3

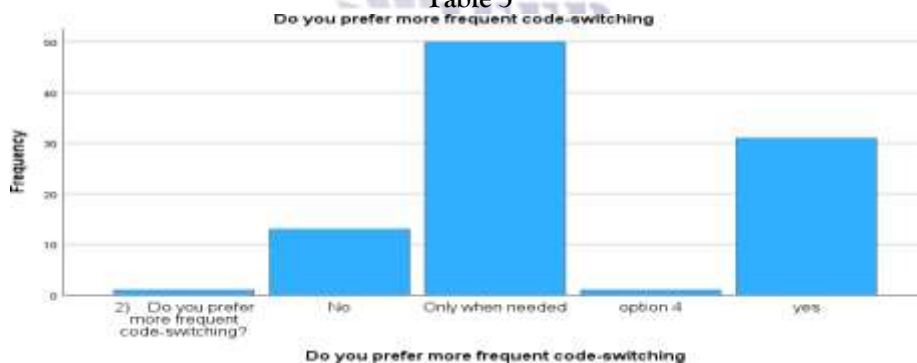
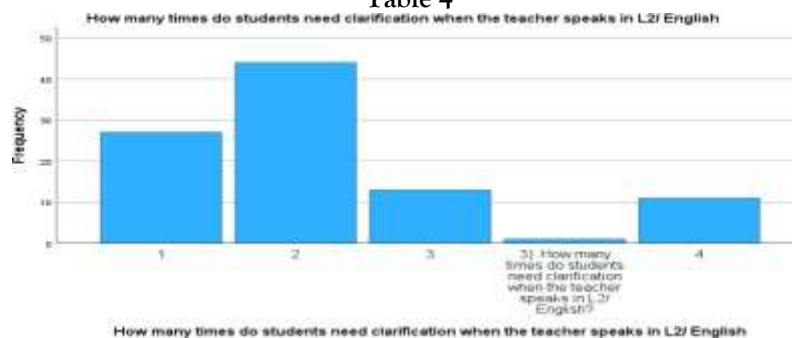


Table 3 Similarly, 46.8% of students believe that they need more clarifications whenever their teachers deliver lectures in English. The reason is that there are some concepts that can be better

understood if they were delivered in Urdu. But the majority of the students don't need code-switching for better understanding (Table 4).

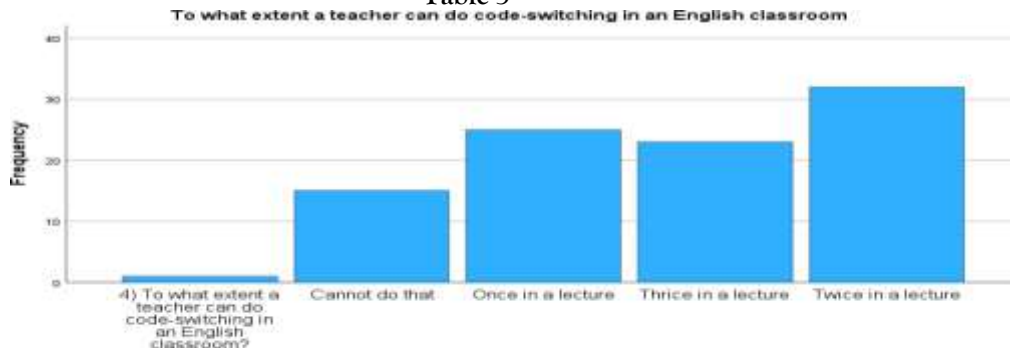
Table 4



Our data tells us that only 38.3% are in favor of using L1 Urdu. Meanwhile, other students are not in favor of using Urdu in English classrooms. Similarly, according to students

responses, teachers should be allowed to switch their language only 34% of the time, which indicates that students are not in favor of teachers code-switching (Table 5).

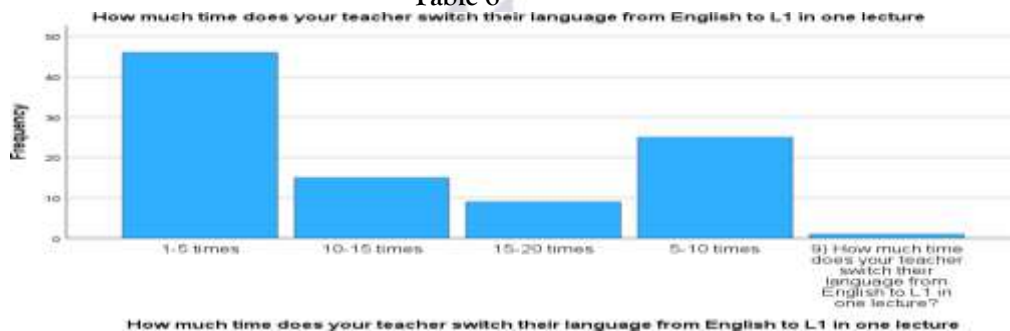
Table 5



54.3% of students's point of view is that they don't need much code-switching, but 45.7% of students need it. The majority of the responses are not in favor of code-switching. From the point of view of language development, the majority of responses tell us that code-switching

may or may not be a barrier. When the students were asked, How much time does your teacher switch their language from English to L1 in one lecture? only 48.6% of students were in favor of code-switching; the majority of the responses disagreed with them (Table 6).

Table 6



Other than the close-ended questions, open-ended questions were also asked of the students. Some students stated that they can communicate more effectively with their teachers and their fellows in English class while using code-switching. They believe that they can better build a relationship and rapport with the people who are from different backgrounds, cities, and cultures.

Some respondents also said that code-switching by the teacher may have cognitive benefits, as they can memorize difficult lessons and concepts easily in their native language (Urdu).

Students believe that English is an important language and they should learn this, and the classroom is one of the best settings for them to learn English, but code-switching by the teachers is a hurdle for the students to learn accuracy in English.

Students feel that code-switching is a great hindrance in acquiring English; they cannot acquire a complete competence in the English language. When their teachers continuously switch their language from English to Urdu, students get confused and demotivated. They held the notion that when teachers switch their code, students are not able to get a rich exposure to the target language, which is English.

Many respondents blame code-switching for the weak vocabulary. Students also blame code-switching for their weak and poor English-speaking skills, as they are not good at speaking, and they are reluctant to face their English audience.

Data indicates that students have a positive attitude towards code-switching, as it is helpful in English classrooms for many students, but the majority of the respondents are not in favor of

code-switching, as it is detrimental to their language learning skills.

5. DATA DISCUSSION

Data analysis of this study shows that there are a lot more reasons why teachers switch their language in Pakistani English classrooms. As English is not the native and mother language of Pakistani people. So the majority of Pakistani students are not able to understand English or unable to acquire complete competence in English language learning without the process of code-switching.

Sometimes the situation is so bad the students are unable to understand what their teachers are saying. In this case code-switching is the demand of the students. The students' point of view about teachers code-switching is that in Pakistani English classrooms, teachers are found to do code-switching to make their lessons more interesting and less boring and to make them more interactive for students so they can easily understand what is going on.

L1 always acts like a facilitator for the students as it enables them to understand the difficult concepts more easily in their first language. The students' point of view on their teacher's code-switching in the classroom is that it is very helpful for them to understand their difficult lectures. It is also very helpful in terms of understanding difficult and new words, vocabulary, concepts, and ideas.

Classrooms are a mixture of different students; some have low proficiency, some have high proficiency, and some are the mediocre ones. Students' point of view is that CS is very beneficial for the low-proficiency students. Code-switching gives confidence to these kinds of students to take part in classroom activities more actively. It gives them motivation to express their ideas in L1 (Urdu) more clearly.

Code switching is also very helpful for the students who come from backgrounds where English is not spoken. Students believe that the students who come from urban areas are unable to understand their lectures if the teacher delivers their whole lecture in the English language, as they are unable to speak or understand their lectures in the English language.

Teachers not only switch their language for the explanation of the ideas but also to maintain a

social relationship with the students. Students believe that the teachers switch their language to relax their students. If the teacher is continuously speaking in English, it would create a stressful environment for those students who are not good at English. So, sometimes teachers switch their language to remove the anxiety and stress level of the class and to create humor in the class.

Code-switching can be helpful if students are not fluent in the English language, and they may feel left out when everybody is speaking in English in their surroundings.

Code switching may reinforce language barriers and discourage students from learning and improving their English language skills. If students rely heavily on code-switching from their teachers, they may not make the effort to improve their English language proficiency, which can be a disadvantage in academic and professional settings for them.

Code-switching can be disruptive to the learning process, especially if students are not able to keep up with constant switching between languages. It can also make it difficult for students to follow the flow of lessons and understand the material being taught.

Conclusion

Code-switching is a very frequent linguistic phenomenon that can be seen widely in multilingual Pakistani English classrooms. The main aim of this research is to investigate the perceptions of the students towards code-switching in Pakistani English classrooms. The survey method is used to collect data from three public and three private universities in Pakistan to achieve its objectives. Students are from different educational programs: BS, MS, and M.Phil. Data indicates that students have a positive attitude towards code-switching as it is helpful in English classrooms for many students, but the majority of the respondents are not in favor of code-switching as it is detrimental to their language learning skills. This research is limited in that it only contains the perceptions of the students; the perceptions of the students are not included in this research paper. The study concludes that code-switching by the teachers is very frequently used in Pakistani English classrooms in order to facilitate students

learning; therefore, it receives different attitudes from the students.

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