

A Pedagogical Evaluation of Code-Switching at English Medium Secondary Schools of Gujrat

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Abstract

Code-switching is a prominent feature of English medium classes in the schools where English is taught as a foreign language. The instructors of English medium schools are asked to promote English speaking environment in the premises of institutes. The students mostly switch from L2 to L1 while speaking the English language. This study aims to find out the first language interference on second language learning regarding the Pakistani English classrooms. This study investigates the reasons behind the switching of teachers from English to the Urdu language in Pakistani English classrooms and explores the facilitation of code-switching in second language learning in English classrooms. For this purpose, two samples from the population were selected by the researchers consisting of 25 students and 10 teachers. Questionnaires were used as data collection tools. The collected data from the sample was analyzed with the help of SPSS software. It was found that it is hard to communicate only in the English language continuously even in English medium schools. Students' attitude towards code-switching was found positive. The study recommends that code-switching is a legitimate and useful tool for students as well as teachers but it should be used carefully and according to the need and levels of the learners. It is a positive teaching technique, so it should not be banned even in English classes. But it should be used sparingly and where needed.

Key Words: Code-Switching, English Medium Schools, L1 & L2 Mixing, Pedagogical Evaluation, Secondary School

Introduction

Human beings all over the world communicate with each other. Their survival in a society is only possible when they have the strong ability to exchange their ideas and opinions with their fellow beings. All human beings cannot fulfill all of their needs themselves. They need others' help in a variety of ways. There are a lot of needs and requirements for the survival and maintenance of social life. In one way or the other, communication is an ardent need of human beings. Man must express his needs, wants, feelings, liking, and disliking. Hence, it can be said that communication is the lifeblood for social life and its survival. It has already been noted that Urdu is our national language and English is the official language in Pakistan. Both the languages are used on a large scale. But to begin with, how English got the status of official language is quite important. While delivering his speech at the University of Dhaka, the founding father of Pakistan, Mr. Jinnah stated that Urdu could be the only language used in offices of Pakistan. So it is clear from his speech that Urdu was the only official language at that time. Jinnah called Urdu the "State language of Pakistan". But Bengalis stirred up against it because Bengali was not given the status of the national language. It would be an agreed agenda by all if Jinnah had called all provincial languages as national languages and Urdu as an official language.

Code-switching has been known since the beginning of the twentieth century. Recognizable observations were made related to bilingual research in this era. But no great investigation was carried out on this issue for a long time. It was thought that code-switching occurred randomly because of the insufficient and imperfect knowledge of L2. But Gumperz (1972) put forward a new and altogether different view about code-switching. He is view that people speak two dialects or languages according to specific situations. Now researchers are doing dedicated efforts to produce various models predicting code-switching. In Pakistan, more than one language is taught in schools and colleges. Urdu is taught

as it is the national language. English is taught as a compulsory subject because it is the language of modern science and technology. Arabic is also taught because of religious needs. So, Pakistan is a multilingual society where many languages are learned and spoken. So the issue of linguistic switching is a common one. As Pakistanis have knowledge of two or more languages, they switch from one language to another quite frequently during their conversation.

In schools and colleges, teachers do code-switching and perhaps the reason is that English is the major compulsory subject and is also a medium of instruction. The reasons for code-switching for Pakistani students have not been investigated yet. But this phenomenon is very popular among teachers of L2 in Pakistani institutions. The term code-switching refers to the alternation between two or more languages, dialects, or language registers in the course of conversation between people having the knowledge of more than one language in common. Many linguists and researchers have defined the term code-switching according to their own perceptions and observations. According to Poplack (1979), code-switching is the alteration of two languages within a single discourse, sentence, or constituent. But Romaine (1989) says that code-switching could be referred “not only two different languages but also two varieties of the same language as well as styles within a language”. We can say that code-switching is a natural and very frequent phenomenon that is strongly associated with a bilingual or multilingual environment.

Many linguists have tried to define the terms code-switching and code-mixing. Some linguists differentiate both terms by saying that code-switching is the mixing of words, phrases, and sentences from two distinct grammatical systems within the same event. While code-mixing is the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes, words, and clauses. Code-switching is not because of a lack of knowledge of the speaker, rather it is a means of expression of the range of meanings. Bouman says that code-mixing and code-switching are the same. (Bouman, 1998). Code-switching is used synonymously with code-mixing. It is intra-sentential code-switching. According to new research, code-mixing is defined as the use of two languages in such a way as a new code may emerge. But both the terms are often used synonymously. The term borrowing means to take words and phrases from other languages and make them an integral part of one’s language (Baker, 2008). Some sociolinguists, specifically Myers Scotton (1993) claims that there is no difference between the two terms. The easy way of finding whether a word is borrowed or not is to check whether that particular word is spoken and used by the monolinguals of that language or not. Code-switching is a technique used only by bilinguals and multilingual, while borrowing is used by monolinguals of a given language. But some linguists say that the process of integration happens gradually and some forms of borrowing cannot be differentiated easily from code-switching.

Literature Review

Code-switching can be defined as the mixture of two languages in the same speech or the same discourse. One of the earliest definitions of code-switching belongs to Weinreich (1953). He is of the view that code-switching is the ability of people who can speak more than one language. They switch from one language to another in the conversation they are involved in. Human beings all over the world communicate with each other. Their survival in a society is only possible. Heller (1988) defines code-switching as the use of more than one language in the same conversation. Muskyen (1995) has also similar views about code-switching. He says that it is the use of more than one language in the same talk.

Mayer Scotton (1993) defines code-switching as the choice of structure from two or more linguistic variations by a bilingual or monolingual in the same discussion. Cook (2011) says that code-switching is an alteration of language during speech when the speakers know both languages. Halmari (2004) defines code-switching as the mixture of more than one language in the same talk. According to Carter and Nunan (2001), code-switching is a linguistic feature and ability of bilinguals to switch from one language to another in the same discourse. Valdes Fallis (1981:95) defines code-switching in the following words: “Code-switching may be defined as the alternating use of two languages at the word, phrase, clause, or sentence level.” Zentella (1981) has defined the term code-switching in the following

words: “The ability of bilinguals to alternate between languages in their linguistic repertoire is generally referred to as code-switching”.

It is very important to explore the difference between code-switching and code borrowing so far as the present research is concerned. Code-switching means shifting from one language to another in the same discourse. But code borrowing is a quite complicated phenomenon as language is a diachronic process. It is very difficult to trace at what time a word was borrowed from another language and how it became part of another language. Myers Scotton (1993) advocates the idea that the difference between two terms need not be explained. She also disagrees with the linguists who say that borrowing means to fill the lexical gaps in the recipient language. Gumpers (1982) points out that borrowing means the insertion of single words or idioms from one language to another. Eastman (1992) states “efforts to distinguish between code-switching, code-mixing, and code borrowing are doomed.” So it is quite clear now that code borrowing is not simple to define as there is no pet clue about when a particular word or phrase was borrowed. One more term particular to bilingual and multilingual speakers is code-mixing. Many researchers consider these two the same concept, but some consider these two-term quite different from each other. Bhatita and Rieche (2004) consider code-mixing as the mixing of two dissimilar linguistic patterns from the different grammatical systems inside a sentence. Beardsome (1991) rejects this term and says that code-mixing refers to code-switching.

Code-switching in bilingual classrooms is a common phenomenon. It is a natural and conscious language aspect of bilinguals. Valdes (1981) presents three pre-conditions for language switching. He says that both the participants must be bilinguals, both members should belong to the same speech community and both have equal linguistic proficiency and sources to carry on with the wanted and required code-switching. Brice and Roseberry Mickbin (2000) state that “communication in English can be a barrier for many second language learners because English serves both as content subject and also as the means of instruction in the classroom.” In Pakistan education system depends on both English as well as Urdu. English is used as a compulsory subject and a medium of instruction as well. The medium of instruction in the public sector is not very much clear. That is why both teachers and students switch from English to Urdu even in English classes. Cook (1989 in Gulzar) says that: “A use of code-switching in the classroom would provide for a bilingual norm whereby code-switching is seen to be an acceptable method of communication. Students then would feel comfortable switching language within normal conversations providing for a bilingual society”. Cook (1989) says that switching occurs when a person feels some difficulty expressing his views and opinion in the second language. In the classroom, switching can be a very good tool to make students understand a second language. In the Pakistani context, code-switching is a necessary thing with teachers as well as with students. It is very difficult to do away with it while teaching second languages like English and Arabic.

A lot of research has been done on code-switching but in different contexts. Most of the research has been done in the classes where English was a second language. Al-Nofaie (2010) worked on it in Saudi Arabia where Arabic is L1 and English L2. She is of the view that both teachers and students have a positive inclination towards Arabic. But on contrary, in Dweik’s study (2000) the results are the opposite. He found that students had a negative attitude towards teachers’ use of Arabic in English class. They thought that the teacher who did so had weak English. Hait (2014) traced out the functions of switching in secondary school in Jordan. He concluded that teachers and students use code-switching to discuss mainly personal, educational, and pedagogical matters. Rahimi and Jafari (2011) conducted their research on students’ attitudes toward code-switching in Persia. They found that most of the students were not agreed with teachers’ use of Persian in English class though it facilitated the learners. Students thought that it was a negative tool to clarify their points and to answer certain questions. The research in bilingual classes in Malta. She found that English being the official language increased the social gap among people. The teachers use Maltese in English classrooms to make themselves friendly and intelligible. She termed code-switching as an essential tool to communicate effectively.

Many African researchers have researched switching although English is an official language there. All the researchers show that teachers switch from English to their native language. Mokgwathi and Webb (2013) say that most of the teachers use code-switching to facilitate their learners because

learners were not so efficient as to understand English completely. At the same time, they also concluded that switching impeded the fluent learning of English. They say that switching increased their vocabulary and understanding yet it decreased learners' confidence while speaking English. Arshad, Akram, Akhter, Sarfraz, and Younas (2014) conducted research in India. They found that most of the students feel at ease when a teacher switched from L2 to L1 as this decreased the pressure of L2. Most students felt uncomfortable while explaining abstract ideas and things. Elridge (1996) also advocates the same idea that a ban on the use of L1 in L2 situations hinders smooth communication and this increases the gap between learner and teacher. It also decreases the level of informality which is very much needed to boost the confidence of the students.

Material and Methods

Since the present research aimed to analyze the techniques and attitudes of code-switching at matriculation level in English medium schools of Gujrat city. The quantitative approach was applied to prepare a report. The questionnaire was designed to collect data from the students as well as from the teachers. For the said purpose only English medium students of matriculations were considered as the population of the study. Two samples were collected from five English medium schools of Gujrat city, Pakistan with the help of a random selection method. The first sample consisted of 25 students and the in the second sample 10 teachers were selected from the same institutes. No gender restriction was applied while collecting the sample. The samples were collected to get filled the questionnaires made by the researchers. The data was collected through questionnaires both from teachers and students. The teachers and students were given separate questionnaires to be filled out. At the stage of data all the observed facts have been collected, analyzed, categorized and after categorization of the main themes, they have been matched with the objectives of the research to explore how code-switching facilitates the learners in Pakistani English medium schools. Through data, it has been easy to conclude whether code-switching should be promoted or prohibited in our L2 classroom context. The researchers observed the switching of L2 to L1 in different schools of Gujrat. The researchers intended to eradicate this error. For this purpose, the researchers made two questionnaires and took two groups as a sample from five schools of Gujrat city. One group of the sample consisted of 25 students and the second group consisted of 10 teachers. The researchers gave them the questionnaires to be filled out. The collected data was analyzed with the help of SPSS software.

Data Analysis

The data was collected from students as well as the teachers through separate questionnaires. For data collection, five top-ranked schools of Gujrat city were selected where English was the medium of instruction at the secondary level. The researchers made two different questionnaires to collect data. One questionnaire was made to collect data from the students and the other questionnaire was made to collect data from the teachers. 25 students and 10 teachers were selected as samples. The questionnaires were consisted of eleven statements related to code-switching of L2 to L1 and language mixing. The second questionnaire was related to the solution of language mixing. Students (male and female) of secondary classes were given questionnaires randomly. Similarly, teachers teaching at the secondary level in these schools were given separate questionnaires to obtain data from them. Thus the quantitative data were analyzed with the help of SPSS software.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Sr. No.	Statements	Total	Mean	Sta. Dev.
4	Code-switching removes the confusion of students in the class.	25	3.6	3.14
6	Students use code-switching to express themselves freely.	25	3.6	3.14
9	Students use code-switching because of a lack of vocabulary in L2.	25	3.48	2.98
2	Code-switching makes learning easy.	25	3.36	2.88
11	Code-switching is used for socialization.	25	3.36	2.9

8	Code-switching is effective to manage large classes.	25	3.24	2.86
1	L1 helps students in learning L2.	25	3.2	2.73
7	When cultural topics are discussed, teachers switch to L1.	25	3.2	2.71
3	Code-switching hinders the smooth learning of L2.	25	2.64	2.3
10	Code-switching is used in the classroom for reiteration.	25	2.64	2.28
5	Students are more inclined to code-switching than teachers.	25	2.52	2.17

Pakistan is a multilingual country where the majority of the people speak more than two languages. Students speak regional language along with Urdu as a national language and they also speak English at a higher level. So it is very difficult for them to have full command over a variety of languages. That is why in the L2 situation they fall back upon L1 for ease and understanding. Table one shows that most of the students agreed that L1 was very helpful in learning L2. The students were given eleven different statements and the most of students agreed with the statement “Code-switching removes the confusion of students in the class” and “Students use code-switching to express themselves freely”. Both of the statements show that students switch from L2 to L1 to remain easy to convey their message. They feel difficulty speaking English continuously. Many students even agreed that Students are more inclined to code-switching than teachers. This statement has a very low mean but it has a number that agreed to it. Students agreed that they use their mother tongue because they do not have enough vocabulary to speak in the foreign / L2 language. They also agreed that code-switching makes the learning process easy for the students. If the teacher just teaches in the second language, students may feel bored in the class and can’t study interestingly.

The students agreed that code-switching is used for socialization and is effective to manage the class having a large number of students. In a class in which students are 50 plus, there will be the students of all kinds, like dull, brilliant, and average. There is a big challenge for the teacher to teach all such students who are very dull in their study. So, there is a need to use the mother tongue for a better understanding of the students. That is why students agreed that L1 helps students in learning L2. Students can understand the rules of second language in their mother language. The mother tongue is also the mirror of the culture. When the teacher teaches culture then the teacher may convert L2 to L1 as there are words that are culture-related like *dopata*, *saag*, etc. Teachers have no other words so they use their mother tongue for better understanding. After conducting this test, the researchers conducted a second questionnaire from the teachers. For this purpose, ten teachers were selected and they were given questionnaires to get them filled.

Table 2

Sr. No.	Statements	Total	Mean	Sta. Dev.
1	Teachers use code-switching to explain and clarify the ideas which learners do not understand in L2.	10	3.6	3.1
5	Teachers use code-switching for checking the understanding of students.	10	3.6	3.1
2	Code-switching makes learning easy.	10	3.4	2.9
3	Teachers use code-switching to attract learners.	10	3.3	2.86
10	Code-switching is used in classroom routine discussions.	10	3.3	2.79
7	Teachers use code-switching to explain cultural topics.	10	3	2.53
11	Code-switching is used for socialization.	10	3	2.49
8	Code-switching is effective to manage large classes.	10	2.9	2.49
6	Teachers use code-switching to express their emotions.	10	2.8	2.32
4	Teachers use code-switching to cover up linguistic incompetency.	10	2.5	2.1
9	Code-switching is used to motivate the students for a specific task.	10	2.5	2.19

Ten teachers from five well-reputed schools were given separate questionnaires to be filled. From each school, two teachers teaching at the secondary level were selected. Both male and female teachers were included with the same proportion so that authentic data might be collected. Thus quantitative data were collected and then analyzed statistically with the help of SPSS software. The results are given in the above table. The mean value of the statements shows that the teachers agreed with all the statements. The respondents agreed that the teachers use code-switching while teaching a second language. They feel a need to use their mother tongue to get better results from the learners. Students can understand in a good way by using the mother tongue or that language which they know. Teachers' main duty is to help and guide the learners under their supervision. He has to clarify his ideas so that learners may get the maximum knowledge. Clarification is the main reason for teachers' code-switching. When he feels that learners are not following him, he may switch to their native language to make things clear. When the teacher is not sure whether the students are familiar with the vocabulary or expression of the target language used by him, he may switch to L1 to clarify and explain his ideas. The same reason has been found by the present research. Most of the teachers agreed that one of the main reasons for teachers' code-switching is the clarification of the ideas where students feel difficulties understanding things in the target language. During the research, it was noted that in the Pakistani context, teachers use this technique commonly in classes even where the medium of instruction is English. It is especially the case at the secondary level where the learners do not have much proficiency in the target language. Teachers' opinions have been explained through the following pie chart.

Almost all the teachers agree that a mixture of L1 and L2 makes learning easy for the students. Teachers often switch to L1 to translate and explain certain grammatical points and other instructions instead of continuing in L2. The instructors tell an idea in one language and then explain it in their mother tongue or native language. This makes teaching easy as they do not have any need for realia as translation is there. The statistics in this regard show that 6 out of ten teachers agree while 4 out of ten strongly agree with this view that code-switching makes learning easy. This question was given to the learners' questionnaires also. The results of both the learners and teachers are almost similar. One of the reasons for teachers' code-switching given by different researchers is to attract the attention of learners in the class. In Pakistan, many researchers like Gulzar and Ahmed have given similar views. The present research shows almost similar results. Many teachers at the secondary level agreed that the use of L1 is necessary to keep the learners' attention alive. Sometimes students get bored while learning only in the target language. Certain students are supposed to be weak in L2. When they are unable to understand in L2 they cannot keep their concentration focused. Therefore, the teachers have to switch to L1 to grab their attention.

Discussion

In Pakistan, most of the teachers at the secondary level are Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, and Balochi speakers along with many other regional languages. They also speak Urdu as a communicative language. So most of the time they use their regional languages along with Urdu which is the national language of Pakistan. In addition to these languages, they have to speak English at schools where the medium of instruction is English. So most of them are monolinguals. Due to this reason, they sometimes cannot recall a proper word of L2 while speaking in the class. This situation truly exists in the Pakistani context where most of the teachers use Urdu most of the time. That is why they have to fall back upon L1 to cover this linguistic incompetency. So one of the main reasons for teachers' code-switching in the Pakistani classroom context is teachers' linguistic incompetency. In such circumstances, they have to switch to L1 to cover up their linguistic incompetency. But this is not the case with everyone. All the respondents have a different opinion about this aspect of teachers' code-switching.

Checking to understand is another cause of teachers' code-switching. Burenhult (1999) says that a great reason for teachers' switching to L1 of students is to make them comprehend what they say. The present research shows teachers strongly agreed that teachers used L1 in L2 class for checking students' level of understanding. In Pakistan, it is necessary to discover learners' understanding so that desired results of learning may be achieved. That is none of the participants disagreed with this reason of code-switching. One of the reasons for teachers' code-switching in L2 class is to express her emotions

towards certain ideas. There are cultural, religious, and many other social topics where teachers are emotionally tuned. In Pakistan, this is an obvious case with teachers as well as students. It is not easy to give vent to one's feelings in others' language. In other words, we can say that expression of emotions is best conveyed in one's language. During the research, it has been observed that teachers fall back to L1 when some emotional topic comes under discussion. 60% of participants agreed while 10% strongly agreed with this reason of teachers' code-switching in the Pakistani context. Only 30% of respondents disagreed with this reason. This shows that the majority of the population considers it a big reason for teachers' language switching from L2 to L1.

Findings

In this research study, most of the teachers and students agreed that the use of code-switching in the Pakistani context at the secondary level was not a negative phenomenon. Though some of the participants showed negative attitudes and disagreement to certain reasons for code-switching at this level as a whole, their feedback was in favor of code-switching. No reason for code-switching either by the students or by the teachers was rejected. The most accepted reasons for code-switching in students' results (as per mean) are:

- 1- Code-switching makes the learning process easy.
- 2- It removes the confusion of students and makes them confident.
- 3- Students use code-switching due to a lack of vocabulary of L2.

The most accepted reasons for code-switching by the teachers (as per mean) are that they use code-switching:

- 1- To clarify the ideas which were not understood by the learners in L2.
- 2- To cover linguistic incompetency.
- 3- For better understanding.
- 4- For classroom routine discussion.
- 5- For socialization.

In the light of the above analysis, we can say that the results of teachers' and students' feedback correspond to each other. Teachers, as well as students, were mostly in favor of code-switching in the Pakistani context at the secondary level.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that in Pakistan most of the students and teachers at the secondary level wish to be bilinguals. They use English and Urdu simultaneously even in English medium classes. But factually, code-switching is a useful technique that helps the teachers as well as learners in the Pakistani context. This technique can be recommended in the classes while keeping in mind the level of students. At the secondary level, Pakistani students do not have much command over English. That is why every idea cannot be comprehended by them only in English. So the teachers and students shift to Urdu to explain that idea. In this regard, both teachers and students should be aware of the utility and importance of code-switching in bilingual classrooms even where the medium of instruction is English.

The present study has shown very important results to highlight the reasons for code-switching among teachers as well as students at secondary level English medium classes. The most common reasons for students' code-switching found in this study are easy learning, removal of confusion, lack

of vocabulary, and socialization. On the other hand, the most notable reasons for teachers' code-switching at the same level are clarification of ideas for learners, covering linguistic incompetency, checking understanding, and socialization. This study also proves that L1 interferes with L2 in the Pakistani context at many points. The English language cannot be considered as the sole means of learning and teaching. It is one part of the whole. Other languages and their importance cannot be ignored in this process, especially in Pakistan. The study also shows that L1 facilitates learners and teachers even in L2 classes in many ways. It helps them in dealing with large classes, in the expression of some emotions and strong feelings, and discussion of cultural topics.

Recommendations

The present study recommends that code-switching is a legitimate and useful tool for students as well as teachers but it should be used carefully and according to the needs and levels of the learners. The study provides some recommendations and implications for students, teachers, and policymakers for school education. As seen in the results, code-switching is a positive teaching technique, so it should not be banned even in English classes. But it should be used sparingly and where needed.

Recommendations for Teachers

- The teachers should be aware of the positive use of code-switching so the learners can gain benefit from this tool.
- Teachers should use code-switching as minimum as possible, so smooth learning of L2 can be ensured.
- Teachers should try to explain difficult ideas in the target language with the help of authentic material and audio-visual aids.
- Teachers should also motivate the learners to use L2 as much as possible.

Recommendations for Students

- Students should try to follow their teachers.
- They should try to make maximum use of L2 in the class.
- Students should avoid falling back upon Urdu at every of learning difficult items of vocabulary. They should try to solve the matter in the target language only.
- Code-switching should be used only at the most needed moments.

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