

CODE-SWITCHING IN NON-NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS' DISCOURSE: A SOCIO-COGNITIVE CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY OF SIALKOT STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates code-switching in the discourse of non-native English teachers at the University of Sialkot through a socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis (SC-CDA). Employing a qualitative approach, the research utilizes semi-structured interviews with 15 items to examine students' language use, code-switching practices, and their underlying motivations in classroom settings. Audio-recorded data reveal that code-switching serves specific communicative purposes, such as clarifying concepts, exemplifying content, and maintaining conversational flow. The analysis highlights contrasting perspectives between teachers and students regarding the social and cognitive roles of code-switching in educational contexts. Teachers view code-switching as a strategy to reduce language anxiety and enhance student engagement. In contrast, students believe that reliance on it may hinder long-term language proficiency, leading to potential drawbacks in language skill development. The findings suggest that code-switching, while facilitating immediate communication, poses challenges to sustained language learning outcomes. This research offers significant implications for English language teaching stakeholders in Pakistan, guiding informed pedagogical decisions to optimize language instruction practices.

Keywords: *code-switching; non-native speakers; cognitive process; ideological stances; language anxiety*

INTRODUCTION

This study falls under applied linguistics. Linguistics is the scientific study of language, but when it is applied in real-life communication and situations, and when language-related topics are examined, they fall under applied linguistics. In the classroom, in particular, several issues might emerge that lead to code-switching. Due to current worldwide changes, code-switching is becoming more common in English Language classrooms. 'Code' in the word *code-switching* refers to dialect. According to Meyer (2008), when speakers of a second dialect (L2) incorporate snippets of their native tongue into their speech, they use a phonetic word. As per Istifci (2019), intra-sentential changes are referred to as *code mixes* and *code-mixing*, whereas supra-sentential changes are referred to as *code switches* and *code-switching*. In English language teaching, most of the teachers think that code-switching fulfils various pedagogical and social purposes which need a research probe.

This research studies the cognitive and social aspects of the social implications of code-switching employed by non-native English instructors at the University of Sialkot. At the University of Sialkot, code-switching by non-native English teachers fulfils social and pedagogical purposes, and they consider that code-switching is not bad. Understanding these behaviours via the lens of socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis may offer insightful knowledge about the interaction of language, cognition, and social context in learning environments. Neuro-scientific methods can be a big help in observing the brain's instantaneous reaction to code-switching and determining its neurophysiological

implications to determine the neurophysiological correlates of code-switching (Ruigendijk et al., 2016; Van Hell et al., 2018). However, because of the limitations of the experimental frameworks, neuroscientific approaches tend to concentrate on a limited range of code-switching structures. Consequently, they have difficulty explaining processing in the context of the different code-switching patterns detected in daily life. To account for the diversity of code-switching, the research has explored the cognitive demands associated with different forms of code-switching using creative methodological strategies.

This study has been conducted under Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). When two people, two parties and two communities are engaged in communication and interaction with a specific ideology, identity, philosophy, cognition and creed, the CDA agenda comes into play in a big way. This study basically focuses on the exploration of the participants in the field when they take one of three kinds of action: when they use only English discourse, when they use only Urdu discourse and when they use English and Urdu mixed discourse in the English classrooms. CDA lenses help explore the teachers' ideology, identity, cognition and creed of the participants. They can provide insight into various aspects, including identity development, educational practices, and power dynamics. This is to analyze how interactions with students, teacher preparation courses, and instructional materials help non-native English speakers develop their professional identities. It analyzes power dynamics to understand how these teachers create their credibility and power in the classroom. It also analyzes how institutional policies and procedures place non-native teachers and considers how these teachers respond to and contest this positioning. CDA is used to examine how non-native English speakers interact with their students, with a specific ideology, cognition and creed and focuses on how they resolve linguistic and cultural hurdles in the classroom. Student comments and observations of the classroom are crucial to gain insight into how students view and react to non-native English teachers' teaching strategies.

Statement of the Problem

Diverse teaching techniques in Pakistani English language schools raise issues due to varying governmental direction (Silverman, 2013). The use of code-switching, English-only, or Urdu-only methodologies by educators unmindfully affects pupils' language performance and competency (Hamdi, 2022). This study examines the socio-cognitive elements influencing non-native English instructors' speech practices at the University of Sialkot, emphasizing their cognition, ideologies, and pedagogical motivations for code-switching. This research uses Van Dijk's socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis paradigm to examine teachers' views and the educational roles of code-switching and code-mixing in classroom interactions.

Research Objective

- Investigating how the perceptions of students about code-switching reveal English language teachers' creed and ideology.

Delimitation of the Study

The study focuses on non-native English teachers, which delineates its scope from examining code-switching among native speakers or students. This focus allows for a more in-depth understanding of the unique challenges and strategies employed by non-native educators. Utilizing a socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis framework limits the study to particular theoretical perspectives, potentially excluding insights from other relevant frameworks that could offer additional dimensions to understanding code-switching. The methodology employs

socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis only, rather than interdisciplinary theories. This study does not consider the level of proficiency of the selected non-native English-speaking teachers. The sample size includes semi-structured interviews of only 25 non-native English-speaking teachers; this could have been conducted on a larger sample quantitatively as well. The study does not consider different attitudes towards code-switching in non-native English-speaking teachers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Code-switching or language alternation happens when a speaker switches between two or more languages, or language varieties, through the course of a single conversation or scenario. Code-switching is not the same as plurilingualism, which refers to an individual's capacity to use numerous languages. In contrast, code-switching is the act of employing multiple languages simultaneously. The term *code-switching* was first documented in print in 1953 by Voegelin and Sebeok in *Results Conference of Anthropologists & Linguists*. Initially, during the 1950s, many scholars viewed code-switching as a substandard linguistic practice. However, attitudes shifted over time, and since the 1980s, most scholars have come to regard it as a normal and natural phenomenon in bilingual and multilingual language education programs. In the 1950s, linguist Einar Haugen coined the term *code-switch* to characterize people's ability to transition between languages and dialects. Linguists investigate when people code-shift, while sociologists investigate why they do it.

Psychologists are now working to better understand the psychological costs and advantages of code-switching, particularly for persons from underprivileged backgrounds. People speak different languages, have different customs, and hold various beliefs. Interlocutors can learn and exchange cultures with this application. According to Chaer (1995), someone who masters more than one language is considered bilingual, whereas the ability to use more than one language is referred to as bilingualism. One cannot divorce oneself from the consequences of speaking two languages while engaged in two distinct cultures and languages. One of the results is the overlapping usage of two distinct language systems from one language element into another (Poplack, 1998). Language is a complex tapestry that unites identities, histories, and civilizations. The phenomenon of code-switching, a language dance performed by people and societies throughout history, is contained within this intricate mosaic. Code-switching is deeply ingrained in human communication evolution. According to Gumperz's frequently cited definition, Code switching refers to *the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems* (1982). Currently, code-switching continues to be a rich area for academic analysis. This is largely due to its widespread occurrence across various aspects of life, particularly in mass media, social media, trade, commerce, and education. Code-switching is employed outside the classroom for various reasons.

Code swapping occurs in printed media such as novels, ads, books, magazines, articles, and newspapers, as well as in television shows like talk shows, interviews, speeches, movies, music channels, and reality shows. Code swapping has become more widespread in modern-day society. Many researchers have studied switching, but very few have done so in an interview context. There is little information about code-switching in interview settings such as a university campus (Blommaert, 1987), government office (Heller, 1992), workplace (Morais, 1998), classroom (Sridhar, 1996), home (Kuang, 2002), kindergarten (Kow, 2000), campus (Zuraidah, 2003), courtroom (David, 2003), and others.

Speaking only one language, as opposed to being multilingual, is known as monolingualism. When non-native English teachers speak only in their mother tongue and are not fluent in the target language, English, they are said to be monolingual English language teachers. This can have some negative effects on both the teachers and the students. On the other hand, the concept of bilingualism involves using two or more languages simultaneously on one occasion to cover the knowledge needed to master the language. According to Moore (2010), bilingualism involves using two or more languages, the impact of two or more languages on one or more languages, and the four English language skills. This phenomenon is not limited to the English language learning process; it also occurs with other foreign or second language learners of the target language. Bringing two or more languages into a conversation is a crucial aspect of bilingualism (Myers-Scotton, 2000). Since its inception, research on bilingualism has been a source of divergent opinions and assessments. Divergent opinions also exist over the definition of "bilingualism." Since then, numerous theories have been proposed, and empirical investigation has been done to obtain conclusive evidence supporting each school of thought. Due to the social nature of language, bilingualism studies have surpassed linguistic explanations to include more important social elements that both influence and are influenced by bilingualism (Gumperz, 1982; Romaine, 1994). As a result, bilingualism now addresses social, religious, political, and demographic issues as well.

The practice of utilizing three or more languages in daily social interactions is known as multilingualism. The purposes of using these languages include acquisition, linguistic modification, and property (Sumarsih, 2014). The definitions of bilingualism are nearly identical; both are concerned with using multiple languages in conversation. However, it can be observed that multilingualism only addresses social phenomena in daily life due to changes in property and social conditions. In contrast, bilingualism covers Linguistic practice for using the target language in conversation.

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach to CDA has three components: society, cognition, and discourse. The text's meaning, as highlighted by Van Dijk (1998), is ingrained in the discourse by language creators; therefore, it exists and is reflected in their minds. Consequently, the cognitive aspects of Participants' discourse are highlighted as part of the contextual analysis in his framework. Van Dijk (1993, 2002) describes the 'ideological square' as a paradigm for assessing speech comprehension and production in relation to the sociological context.

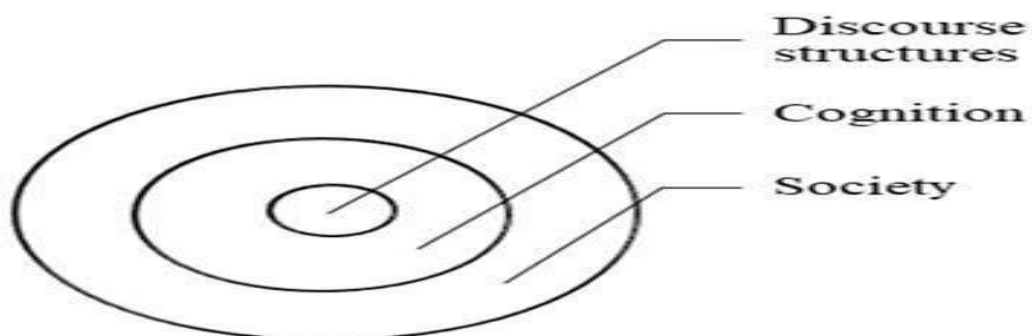


Figure: Van Dijk's A Socio-Cognitive Critical Discourse Analysis Model

The Socio-Cognitive Critical Discourse analysis framework is utilized in this research to

study code-switching, which helps to understand how code-switching reflects and shapes social structures, power dynamics, and ideologies through the cognitive processes of individuals and groups. This model shows the complex relationship between society and discourse. The main focus of this model is how discourse and society are interlinked. There are three main elements of this model: cognition, society and discourse.

Discourse (Teachers' Discourse Production and Consumption)

Society (English Language Teaching and Learning Community)

Cognition (Teaching Creed, Ideology, Identity and Philosophy)

Discourse Structure

Van Dijk (2002) opines that when two people are engaged in communication, there is always a discourse production or discourse consumption. Sometimes discourse is produced by teachers, sometimes discourse is consumed by teachers. Sometimes discourse is produced by learners, while sometimes discourse is consumed by learners. There is always a hidden ideology, identity and cognition behind. It can be explored through the patterns of linguistic utterances. Specific speech patterns, such as themes, arguments, metaphors, lexical choice, and rhetorical figures, among many others, can influence the contents and architecture of mental models in ways that speakers like. Forest (2009) describes the abstraction of specific mental models to more general frameworks of knowledge and ideology, such as immigration, terrorism, and the economic crisis. Such general cognitive structures benefit the recipients by giving them useful social information or education. However, they may also harm the recipients through epistemic or ideological manipulation and indoctrination (Winn, 1983).

Society and Cognition

To explain the terms society and discourse, Dijk introduced the term cognition or social cognitive process. He has explored how individuals and groups process and understand the language in social contexts. It is about acquiring a language in a society, which is how language is acquired or learned by individuals and groups of people. There are basically two things: language acquisition and language learning in social community i.e. English language classroom. Van Dijk's socio-cognitive theory explains how social structures can influence and be influenced by discourse structures. It focuses on how people's behaviour, circumstances, and personal characteristics interact dynamically. The study of mind control assumes the traditional separation between personal or autobiographical memory and generic, socially shared "semantic" memory (Tulving, 2002). More particularly, we believe that episodic memory depicts people's own experiences through multimodal mental models (Johnson-Laird, 1983). Mental models, also known as situation models (Dijk & Kintsch, 1983) are subjective representations of the events, acts, or situations covered in a discourse. As a result, such models are referentially semantic in character. Understanding or interpreting speech about specific events, such as stories and news reports, requires the creation of a subjective model of the scenario being discussed.

Research Gap

The qualitative method is used in this research to discover the research gap. Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model has been used in this research because qualitative approaches fit well with the model's emphasis on the complex interactions between discourse, cognition, and social structures. There is an analytical gap in this research. Since it is a small-scale study, only Van Dijk's socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis framework has been applied.

Much of the existing literature on code-switching primarily focuses on native speakers or bilingual communities. Further, students can collect a lot of data on code switching from inside the university and outside the university by using an analytical framework.

While critical discourse analysis has been employed to study language use, there is a need for deeper exploration into the socio-cognitive aspects of code-switching using another analytical frameworks. Future research may apply more cognitive models to explain the code switching. Teachers use it to identify and value the linguistic origins of their students' Classroom Contexts to create inclusive and culturally sensitive learning environments. They also use it to recognize and appreciate their students' language backgrounds. The teaching environment impacts code-switching in inclusive classrooms to promote engagement and learning. ESL teachers who want to maximize their instructional strategies, support linguistic diversity, and establish inclusive language learning settings must comprehend and navigate these patterns.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study utilizes a qualitative research technique to examine students' views of code-switching in the discourse of non-native English instructors at the University of Sialkot. Data is collected via semi-structured interviews, utilizing audio recordings to document their perspectives. The socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis (SCCDA) framework by Teun A. van Dijk is employed to investigate how pupils discern concealed ideologies, power relations, and cognitive mechanisms inherent in instructors' code-switched communication. This approach amalgamates social constructionism, cognitive linguistics, and critical discourse analysis to elucidate students' perceptions of social reality, viz., teachers' use of code-switching, partial one or none, highlighting open-ended enquiries that concentrate on personal interpretations, themes, and patterns in students' replies.

The theoretical approach based on SCCDA integrates discourse, society, and cognition to examine code-switching as a phenomenon in which pupils recognize transitions between English and other languages (e.g., Urdu) in instructors' talk. Frameworks such as Poplack's (1980) typology—inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag-switching—and the work of Mattsson and Burenhult (1999), have also been brought it to emphasizes cognitive mechanisms, including mental models and schemas that affect students' understanding of bilingual communication. It highlights social cognition, wherein students' attitudes, beliefs, and cultural identities influence their perceptions of code-switching, demonstrating its effects on learning processes, classroom dynamics, and power relations without emphasizing conflict-oriented perspectives.

The data analysis employs a thematic methodology in accordance with Creswell (2009) and Braun and Clarke (2006), encompassing familiarization with transcribed interviews, coding, theme development, review, and refinement to address research enquiries on students' perspectives. This encompasses examining perspectives on English-only, mixed, or Urdu-only education; the pedagogical roles of code-switching; and its psychological impacts on communication and academic achievement. The SCCDA lens facilitates a thorough analysis of how students get meaning from instructors' speech, enhancing awareness of language as a mechanism for assessing social phenomena in EFL situations.

DATA ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis is done in this research. Interviews with students from the University of Sialkot are collected. The research question is designed in light of the research objective. The research instrument of semi-structured interview includes 5 items. Interviews are collected in a natural setting in the form of recordings after the students' permission. Data

Analysis of Students' Interviews

Interviews were conducted with six students from the ADP English, six students from BS-English, six students from MS-English, and six students from Ph.D. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and printed in order for analysis in light of RQ stemming from the objective of the study: How do the perceptions of students about code-switching reveal English language teachers' creed and ideology? The following were the fixed items in the semi-structured interview:

1. How do you view English-Only, English-Urdu Mixed and Urdu only by your English teachers as the medium of instruction and communication?
2. What, in your opinion, is the impact of using English-Only, English-Urdu Mixed and Urdu only by your English teachers on the learning process and the classroom environment?
3. Why, in your opinion, do the teachers switch between English and Urdu or another language while interacting with you inside and outside the classroom?
4. What are the challenges you face in dealing with different mediums of instruction and communication by your teachers, such as English-Only, English-Urdu Mixed and Urdu-Only?
5. How do students' attitudes towards English-Only, English-Urdu Mixed and Urdu-Only affect their academic performance?

Thematic Analysis

Theme 1: Code-Switching as a Tool for Capturing and Clarifying Complex Ideas

This theme highlights the pedagogical necessity of code-switching (CS) in addressing complex ideas, especially for learners with limited language proficiency.

- ADPS-1 strongly advocates for using Urdu alongside English in the classroom to help students understand challenging concepts and vocabulary. He argues that code-switching bridges cognitive gaps caused by linguistic limitations, particularly for students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.
- ADPS-2 echoes this by stating that students have varying calibres, and not all can grasp concepts taught purely in English. Using minor Urdu in instruction aids comprehension while avoiding linguistic overload.
- MSS-2 supports CS as a means for clarification, allowing students to substitute unfamiliar English terms with their native equivalents, thus maintaining communicative flow and comprehension.
- PhDS-1 and PhDS-2, however, argue against the necessity of CS at higher education levels, suggesting that language proficiency among adult learners allows for full instruction in English without compromising understanding.

Analysis: CS is pedagogically effective when used strategically for clarifying abstract or technical content. However, its relevance diminishes as learners develop higher-order cognitive and linguistic competencies.

Theme 2: Code-Switching and Students' Limited Language Exposure

This theme explores how over-reliance on CS may hinder immersive language learning and reduce English language exposure.

- BSS-1 warns that CS can negatively affect students' academic performance and future prospects, especially in contexts (e.g., IELTS or studying abroad) where English proficiency is critical. According to BSS-1, the underlying cause of CS is often students'

hesitation, not genuine necessity.

- MSS-1 and MSS-2 stress that limiting exposure to English constrains language acquisition. MSS-1 emphasizes that full immersion motivates learners and increases their confidence in using the target language.
- PhDS-1 and PhDS-2 also point out that continued exposure to English in advanced academic settings leads to better cognitive development and understanding of complex scientific concepts.

Analysis: While CS supports immediate comprehension, it may create dependency that limits language immersion and inhibits fluency. The tension between accessibility and immersion is a recurring dilemma in bilingual classrooms.

Theme 3: Code-Switching Shapes Learning Routines and Classroom Culture

This theme explores how habitual code-switching influences classroom routines, learner expectations, and teaching practices.

- BSS-2 views frequent CS as unethical to the subject of English. Excessive use of Urdu in English classrooms creates bad learning routines, misleads high-performing students, and erodes academic rigor.
- MSS-1 suggests that consistent use of English fosters discipline, motivation, and fluency, whereas alternating languages may cause confusion and a lack of consistency.
- PhDS-1 highlights how a strictly English-medium environment cultivates higher-order thinking skills, suggesting that pedagogical routines affect not only language learning but also cognitive development.

Analysis: Classroom routines are shaped by language policies. When CS becomes the norm, it may dilute the immersive environment essential for second language acquisition. On the other hand, strict monolingual routines may alienate learners with limited exposure.

Theme 4: Code-Switching as a Motivational Strategy

This theme examines how CS affects student engagement and motivation.

- MSS-1 considers English-only instruction motivational when done with simple language. It fosters confidence and encourages students to develop fluency.
- MSS-2 argues that CS allows students to stay engaged and avoid communication breakdowns, thereby maintaining motivation and self-efficacy in language use.
- Digital interaction tools (highlighted by MSS-1) provide learners with access to global English-speaking communities, making motivation a practical outcome of immersion in English rather than CS.

Analysis: While CS can reduce anxiety and encourage participation, long-term motivation is more sustainable through structured exposure to English, especially when supported by accessible teaching strategies and digital tools.

Theme 5: Code-Switching and Clarification of Meaning

This theme focuses on CS as a strategy for making meaning more accessible, particularly in linguistically diverse classrooms.

- MSS-2 asserts that CS is an effective tool for clarification, especially when students are unfamiliar with particular terminology or expressions. However, MSS-2 also acknowledges the cultural-linguistic complexity of CS, indicating that it's not merely a matter of translation but also of navigating between different cultural norms and language rules.
- ADPS-1 emphasizes that using Urdu helps students grasp difficult ideas more

efficiently, particularly in the early stages of learning.

Analysis: CS plays a vital role in scaffolding meaning for learners, particularly in lower proficiency contexts. However, it should be carefully moderated to avoid fostering reliance.

Theme 6: Language Fluency and the Tension between Bilingual Support and Immersive Learning

This theme illustrates how CS intersects with learners' language development goals.

- BSS-1 suggests that fluency requires restrictions on Urdu in English classrooms. According to BSS-1, full fluency is hampered when students frequently revert to their native language due to hesitation or lack of confidence.
- MSS-1 views English fluency as both a motivation and a goal, facilitated by immersion and global exposure. Gamper (1998) and other referenced literature align with this perspective, warning that overuse of L1 in L2 instruction may hinder fluency.

Analysis: Fluency development requires careful balancing. Strategic CS supports comprehension, but immersion supports long-term fluency. Teachers must consider student proficiency levels and learning goals to make informed language choices.

Summary

Emerging Theme/Insights

- Complex Ideas and Clarification
CS helps learners grasp abstract concepts and technical vocabulary
- Limited Language Exposure
Overuse of CS restricts English language immersion and fluency
- Establishment of Learning Routines
Language policies shape classroom culture and learning expectations
- Motivation Strategic use of CS reduces anxiety, while immersion promotes long-term engagement
- Clarification and Cultural Mediation
CS facilitates understanding but involves navigating multiple linguistic norms
- Language Fluency
Long-term fluency is enhanced through immersive English use, not habitual CS

The data reveals a nuanced landscape regarding code-switching in English language classrooms. While CS is instrumental for comprehension, particularly at beginner levels, it poses risks when overused—especially in terms of long-term fluency, academic integrity, and learner autonomy. An effective approach would be a strategic, proficiency-sensitive use of code-switching that gradually transitions students into immersive English use as their competence increases.

CONCLUSION

The socio-cognitive critical discourse analysis (CDA) of code-switching in the discourse of non-native English teachers at the University of Sialkot, based on Van Dijk's theoretical framework, demonstrates the intricate relationship among language, cognition, and social dynamics within educational contexts. Van Dijk's approach to critical discourse analysis emphasises the importance of uncovering the cognitive processes, ideologies, and social agendas that influence communication, rather than solely analysing discourse. This study examines the relationship between code-switching and teachers' cognitive processes and instructional strategies within the educational community. The analysis indicates that code-switching is not a homogeneous practice; certain educators utilise English exclusively, others integrate English with Urdu, while some predominantly employ Urdu

in English language classrooms, resulting in diverse learning experiences. This research utilises Van Dijk's model to examine the impact of these practices on students' linguistic and cultural identities, highlighting both opportunities and challenges within the classroom environment.

Code-switching serves as a complex mechanism that aids communication, strengthens cultural identity, and improves educational outcomes. When employed strategically, it aids students in navigating the complexities of English as a second language, thereby fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. Excessive reliance on the native language, such as providing instructions in Urdu following English, may impede language acquisition and diminish the emphasis on the target language. This study illustrates that Van Dijk's CDA framework effectively reveals these dynamics, providing insights into the influence of teachers' linguistic choices on educational outcomes. Future research should explore code-switching in various educational contexts to enhance its application, enabling educators to effectively balance the use of target and native languages for optimal learning outcomes. Through the intentional application of code-switching and adherence to professional standards, educators can utilize this strategy to improve student engagement and academic achievement.

Recommendations

Code-switching is good, but at the beginning level. When the class is here and the language proficiency is very poor, the teachers' goal is to use code switching as a strategy, but doing it in the first two semesters and in the fourth semester onwards is considered a crime. Why, because it spoils the learning process and teaching. Code switching can be used as a pedagogical strategy, when the intake is very poor and when there are students who are from Urdu medium schools and who have not gone through the process or habit formation, so their use Urdu or L1 should be allowed with careful planning and with careful direction of occasions when to use not for interaction but for translation of difficult words.

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