

“SWITCHING TONGUES: EXPLORING ENGLISH–URDU CODE-SWITCHING IN SCHOOL CLASSROOMS: A CASE STUDY OF TEACHERS’ PERSPECTIVES”

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Abstract

This study explores the phenomenon of English–Urdu code-switching in Pakistani school classrooms from the perspective of teachers. Despite its widespread use, code-switching remains underexplored as a pedagogical strategy in school settings, particularly regarding teachers’ motivations, experiences, and its impact on student engagement and comprehension. Employing a qualitative research approach through semi-structured interviews with eight school teachers, the study investigates the factors driving code-switching, its perceived effectiveness, and challenges faced in balancing linguistic accommodation with English language proficiency goals. Data analysis through Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) reveals that teachers strategically use code-switching to converge linguistically with students, enhancing understanding and fostering inclusivity, while also managing classroom identities. Results show that teachers feel comfortable and confident in switching codes, which boosts student participation and accommodates diverse linguistic backgrounds. However, some concerns about overuse potentially hindering English development are noted. The study highlights code-switching as a vital communicative and instructional tool that supports bilingual education in multilingual classrooms. It recommends integrating code-switching awareness into teacher training and language policy to enhance pedagogical effectiveness and inclusivity.

Key words: Code Switching, Classroom, English to Urdu Language, pedagogical effectiveness

1. Introduction

The concept of "code," as defined by Wardhaugh (1986), encompasses any system or manner of communication used by speakers, including languages, accents, dialects, pidgins, or creoles. When referring specifically to writing, this becomes codification. The term "switching" denotes a shift or movement from one form to another. Thus, code-switching refers to the shift from one language or code to another during speech, essentially representing a transfer between languages. According to Cook (2001), this transfer involves the influence of a speaker's first language (L1) on their second language (L2), which can have positive or negative effects on language learning, either facilitating understanding or creating barriers. Language mixing is a common linguistic phenomenon. For instance, in Pakistan, where Urdu is the national language, English words are frequently inserted into Urdu sentences, even by those with limited English proficiency, creating bilingual discourses with social meaning (Kaleem Raza Khan, 2004). Milroy and Muysken (1995) describe code-switching as the alternation between languages by fluent bilinguals within a single conversation, involving the mixing of words and phrases from different codes. Despite its prevalence in classroom interactions, code-switching faces some criticism. Common misconceptions label code-switching as a sign of poor

proficiency in both languages, incompetence, or laziness, sometimes even generating pejorative terms such as "Urdish" or "Spanglish" (Borg, 2001). However, code-switching is not a random occurrence; it is a strategic and effective communicative tool. It serves various functions, including marking identity and solidarity, asserting dominance or prestige, clarifying meaning, shifting style, reiterating points, and managing classroom interactions. In the educational context, code-switching helps in translating unfamiliar vocabulary, explaining grammar, clarifying content, emphasizing concepts, and expressing empathy with students. Teachers often find code-switching to be an effective pedagogical strategy, particularly when working with learners who have limited English proficiency (Badrul Hisham Ahmad, 2009). This study examines the phenomenon of English–Urdu code-switching in school classrooms, focusing specifically on teachers' perspectives. In the context of Pakistani schools, code-switching between English and Urdu is a common and accepted communicative strategy. Although English is frequently the medium of instruction, teachers across different subjects—including science and mathematics—resort to code-switching to enhance students' comprehension. This involves a blend of English, which carries connotations of economic influence and social status, with Urdu, the national language and lingua franca. Code-switching in multilingual classroom environments typically entails alternating between the instructional language and students' native tongue, enabling learners to leverage their primary language as a valuable educational tool. Despite extensive research on code-switching in multilingual education, there is limited understanding of how school teachers in Pakistan perceive and use English–Urdu code-switching as a teaching strategy across various subjects. Most prior studies focus on higher education or workplace contexts, leaving a gap regarding teachers' spontaneous and strategic practices in everyday school classrooms. Additionally, the emotional and relational effects of code-switching on student engagement, inclusivity, and balancing English proficiency with linguistic diversity remain under explored at the school level. This highlights the need for a focused qualitative study that centers teachers' experiences and insights on code-switching in school classrooms.

2. Research Concern

This study focuses on how English–Urdu code-switching functions within school classrooms from the perspective of teachers, who play a pivotal role in shaping bilingual instructional practices. This research is concerned with how teachers negotiate language use to create an inclusive environment that respects students' linguistic backgrounds while maintaining academic standards, especially in subjects taught through English as the medium of instruction. Additionally, the study examines the extent to which teachers are prepared—formally or experientially—to utilize code-switching strategically, and how these bilingual practices influence classroom dynamics, student engagement, and learning outcomes. By focusing on teachers' lived experiences and communicative choices, this research seeks to contribute to more context-sensitive language policy and pedagogical frameworks that recognize code-switching as both a natural and effective educational resource.

2.1. Research objectives

1. To explore the underlying factors, according to school teachers, that contribute to the use of English–Urdu code-switching in classrooms.
2. To examine the perceived effectiveness of code-switching as a pedagogical strategy in school teaching practices.

2.2. Research questions

1. What underlying factors, according to school teachers, contribute to the use of English–Urdu code-switching in classrooms?

2. How do school teachers perceive the effectiveness of English–Urdu code-switching as a pedagogical strategy in their teaching practices?

3. Literature Review

The 2025 study by Naseem titled "Linguistic Hybridity at the Workplace: A Study of Urdu-English Translingual Practices in Pakistan" investigated Urdu-English translingual practices in informal office interactions within a government workplace in Rahim Yar Khan, Pakistan. The research utilized observational methodology along with audio recordings and interviews to examine how employees switched between Urdu and English depending on their social roles and communicative intents. It revealed that code-switching operates as a sophisticated communicative strategy reflecting cultural hybridity and professional pragmatism. The study found that speakers flexibly alternated languages to negotiate identity, maintain politeness, and manage social relationships. The workplace environment was characterized by dynamic bilingual discourse, where code-switching was used contextually according to interlocutor status, topic, and formality levels. The research highlighted the symbolic and functional significance of code-switching as a marker of professionalism and group membership in this Pakistani government office setting.

Ali et al. (2023) studied code-switching practices among high school teachers and students in Bela, Lasbela, Pakistan, where Urdu was the medium of instruction but students and teachers were bilingual or multilingual with Lasi and Balochi as local languages. Through classroom observations, interviews, and teacher reports, they found code-switching from Urdu to local languages facilitated better understanding of difficult concepts, created interactive classroom environments, and was well-received by both teachers and students. The teachers used code-switching as a motivational and pedagogical tool to make lessons more accessible (Ali et al., 2023).

The quantitative research study at a private-sector university in Karachi exploring teacher and student perspectives on code-switching in business communication classes was conducted by Mehak Jawed, Prof. Dr. Col. (R) Akhtar A Khalili, and Dr. Amir Mehmood. The study was published in 2024 and employed a structured questionnaire to collect data from 14 faculty members and 271 students. Using SPSS for data analysis, the study found that 75.6% of students supported using the first language (L1) to enhance learning, compared to 57.2% of faculty. The researchers suggested that incorporating code-switching as an instructional strategy maintains an inclusive classroom environment and improves communication and learning in linguistically diverse higher education settings.

Another research was conducted by Muhammad Younus, et.al in school of education, department of English at Foundation University Islamabad Rawalpindi Campus, Pakistan (2020) on code-switching in ESL acquisition. ESL bilingual instructors in Pakistan employ code-switching (CS) as a communication strategy to teach English to non-native speakers. This research is conducted through quantitative analysis of transcripts from thirty ESL teachers in Pakistani universities. It investigates the impact of CS on ESL learners. It explores both the influence of CS and teachers' attitudes towards its use in ESL instruction. The results of this research shows substantial utilization of code-mixing involving words, phrases, and the smallest language units. Apart from that, the study underscores the frequent use of CS by ESL teachers, emphasizing the combination of common nouns with proper nouns, adjectives, verbs, and abbreviations. Noteworthy words during CS instantiation include lexical items, phrases, compound words, and supportive expressions. This study concludes that CS serves to enhance comprehension and engagement among bilingual learners emphasizing its role in facilitating language acquisition.

Mushtaq and Rabbani (2016) conducted a mixed-method study at a Secondary School in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, involving 30 teachers and 30 students. They investigated pedagogical implications of code-switching between Urdu and English in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Data were collected from questionnaires containing open and close-ended questions. They found that a controlled and deliberate use of code-switching by teachers helped students understand content better, created a supportive learning environment, and boosted students' success. Most teachers also noted that students often initiated code-switching due to lack of confidence and limited speaking skills in English, especially for those from Urdu-medium backgrounds. Teachers consciously switched codes to aid comprehension and motivation in class discussions (Mushtaq & Rabbani, 2016).

The detailed study by S. Rasul (2016) examined bilingual practices and code-switching in Urdu-medium classrooms in Pakistan, focusing on both benefits and challenges. Conducted primarily in high schools in Bela, Lasbela, the study adopted qualitative and descriptive research designs through classroom observations, audio recordings, and analyses of teacher lectures. It highlighted that code-switching between English and Urdu—or between Urdu and local languages like Lasi—serves as a strategic teaching method to aid comprehension among students, especially those with low proficiency in English. The research found that code-switching encouraged better classroom interaction and learning as teachers shifted between languages to explain complex subjects clearly, making the content accessible to bilingual or multilingual students. However, the study also pointed out potential challenges: overuse of code-switching could hinder students' full development in the English language, particularly affecting their fluency and academic competence in L2. The study emphasized the importance of balancing code-switching with English language exposure to avoid dependency and language mixing that might impede English teaching goals. The research involved nine teachers across various subjects in Bela schools and noted that code-switching practices varied, including inter-sentential switching and tag-switching. Teachers and students were generally positive about code-switching as a pedagogical tool but recognized the need for mindful application.

The quantitative study by Malik, " that investigated the role of code-switching from English to Urdu among intermediate-level low English proficient learners was conducted in the rural areas of Pakistan. This research involved a sample of 200 intermediate learners who were surveyed to understand the impact of code-switching on their interest, comprehension, and motivation in learning English. The study revealed that the strategic use of code-switching to Urdu enhanced student engagement and comprehension, suggesting it as an effective teaching method particularly for students with limited English proficiency. Although the exact institution or date of publication is not explicitly reported in the available sources, the study is referenced in academic discourse related to bilingual education and ESL teaching in Pakistani rural contexts

4. Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to the systematic approach and procedures researchers follow to conduct their study and obtain reliable findings. It addresses the question of "how" research is carried out and which methods and processes are employed.

4.1. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research method that prioritizes depth and quality of data. The qualitative approach is chosen because it effectively addresses questions related to "what," "why," and "how." Specifically, it allows an in-depth investigation into why teachers switch from one language code to another, how they do so, and what positive impacts code-switching has on teaching practices.

4.2. Research Design

The study follows an exploratory research design aimed at unveiling the role and effects of code-switching from a teaching perspective. The design systematically examines the research objectives and anticipated outcomes.

4.3. Population and Sampling

The study is conducted at Piggott Memorial Girls Higher Secondary School in Hyderabad, which represents the entire target population. In research, sampling involves selecting a smaller group from the broader population to represent it. In this study, the entire population is represented by Piggott Memorial Girls Higher Secondary School Hyderabad, and sampling was used to select participants.

4.4. Participants

The study focuses on teachers as primary participants. A convenience sampling technique is employed to select eight teachers for the study, ensuring unbiased and non-preferential inclusion.

4.5. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection is carried out using semi-structured interviews, which are suitable for qualitative research. This technique enables the collection of rich, accurate data essential for supporting the study's findings.

5. Data Analysis

The collected data have been analyzed by the framework of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), developed by Howard Giles in 1971, offers a compelling explanation for why and how people adjust their communication styles during interactions. This theory revolves around two fundamental processes:

Convergence: It refers to the behavior where individuals modify their speech, gestures, or accents to become more similar to those of their conversational partner. This adjustment is often aimed at gaining social approval, showing respect, or enhancing mutual understanding. For example, a speaker might switch to Urdu when talking to someone who primarily speaks Urdu, or adopt a British accent when speaking with someone from Britain. Convergence can occur consciously or subconsciously and helps build rapport and positive social connections.

Divergence: It is when individuals deliberately emphasize the differences in their communication style to maintain social distance or assert their distinct identity. This intentional shift can be used to exclude others or to highlight group boundaries. In classroom settings, divergence might occur when a teacher uses specific idioms, slang, or cultural references that only certain students understand, thereby excluding others from the conversation.

CAT explains that speakers either seek to bridge linguistic and social gaps or to maintain distinct group identities through their communicative choices, balancing inclusion and differentiation depending on the social context and interpersonal goals. This theory provides a nuanced lens to understand why individuals switch languages or codes during interactions, highlighting social motives behind language choice beyond mere communication needs.

6. Ethical consideration

In this study, ethical standards were strictly followed: participants were provided with consent forms explaining the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw without any pressure or threat. Participation was completely voluntary, with assurances of confidentiality and respect for privacy. Every participant was treated with equal respect and given equal opportunity to contribute, eliminating any favoritism. Additionally, all questions asked were relevant to the study and conducted within the designated timeframe, ensuring transparency and accountability throughout the research process. These ethical measures uphold principles such as respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, creating a

safe, respectful, and trustworthy environment for data collection and analysis. This approach safeguards participants' dignity and fosters integrity and credibility in the research findings.

7. Findings of semi-structured interviews and interpretation

Q1. What is code-switching according to you?

P1: Code-switching is defined as to switch from one language to another or when you speak language according to audience.

P2: Code-switching means to convert from one language to another such as while speaking Urdu language shift towards Sindhi language.

P3: The code-switching is defined as turning from one language to another or switching between any two languages.

P4: The concept about code-switching that I have perceived is all about moving from one language to another language. For instance, I switch from English to Sindhi or other language while speaking.

P5: Code switching is basically a comfort zone for a teacher to communicate the ideas or to convey the content. The most of the teachers in our institutions switch from one code to another. For example in teaching we are officially told that the mode of communication should be a English but most of the time mostly teachers switch the code from English language to mother languages for communication with the students.

P6: According to my viewsit is language switching.

P7: English is our second language or foreign language. Our native language is Urdu or Sindhi. Students usually can't understand when teacher only talk in second language (English). So, teachers switch from second language (English) to native language (Urdu) time to time. This switching of language is called code-switching.

P8: When we are in classroom and we switch from one language to another, this switching is called code-switching.

Interpretation

Based on the participants' responses, code-switching is understood as the practice of shifting from one language to another according to the communication needs of the audience. It is especially common among bilingual speakers, who switch codes, frequently between Urdu and English, to make their speech simpler and more accessible. This linguistic switching is employed when speakers feel that communicating in a simpler or more familiar language would enhance understanding. Thus, code-switching is essentially the act of changing language codes during communication to match the needs of the listeners or context.

Q2. What are the motivations and reasons behind code-switching in the classroom?

P1: Mostly students do not belong from privileged back ground. Therefore, they do not have good command in speaking English language that is a main reason that teachers do code switching while delivering lecture from English to Urdu and motivation behind this is that teachers need to go ahead with real implementation because it's not enough for students only to read, they need to study and understand as well.

P2: The aspects behind code-switching is that Urdu is our national language so, we can deliver our lecture in Urdu language more better way than in English.....even we can give daily routine examples in simple and easy language comparatively in English. That is the main reason for code-switching.

P3: Code-switching basically depends on the audience we have such as in the class what is their medium of communication and the medium of institution such as English medium school/college or university. In the class we have to look on the needs of students that in which language they feel easy to understand the lecture and feel no any hesitation to communicate.

That is the reason and motivation we switch from one code another because of targeted audience.

P4: I shift from one code to another when I feel that I can explain more clearly and appropriately. The main reason and motivation is to keep the audience in the mind and to speak for them. That is why while speaking and delivering the lecture we switch the medium of languages for the sake of students.

P5: The motivation behind my use of code-switching is to ensure effective communication, especially when I find it difficult to convey my message or notice students are not fully understanding. Since we use different languages at home and school but are required to communicate in English at university level, code-switching helps both teachers and students. It creates balance and facilitates better understanding for all involved.

P6: In class we have different students who have multiple and mostly interior background. For the purpose of communicating we do not make language as barrier because most of the students do not understand English so, I do code-switching from English to Urdu in the class specially for first year students to show flexibility towards them so they may ask their confusions, problems and questions easily. And sometimes I do it for the need of subject. That is the main reason and motivation.

P7: Certainly, teachers feel comfortable when they explain anything using their own language. Sometimes they find it difficult to think about certain vocabulary and structures, it motivates them to switch language. And also, sometimes they believe that certain concepts would be better understood if they switch to native language. Therefore, they use code-switching.

P8: As a teacher, the motivation is to make my students to understand certain things. As English is spoken here as a Second Language (SL) most of the students don't have reliable language skills. So, most of the time they don't comprehend English language well. This is my reason that my students can understand me better.

Interpretation

The interpretation of the responses reveals that teachers primarily use code-switching to ensure that students clearly understand the content being taught. They consider the diverse educational backgrounds of students, recognizing that each learner's proficiency varies. Some teachers believe switching to Urdu is especially important for beginners as not all students comprehend English well. Others find they can communicate more effectively in Urdu due to vocabulary limitations, thus switching languages. It is common practice across classrooms for teachers to alternate between English and Urdu to facilitate easier interaction and comprehension. Students often request explanations or repetitions in Urdu if the original English delivery is unclear, making code-switching a widespread and accepted phenomenon in educational settings.

Q3. Do you feel comfortable while doing code-switching?

P1: Yes! Definitely I feel comfortable while switching one language to another and I think it is comfortable to everyone because it gives a chance to talk in your own native in which you feel more core confident and easy to speak.

P2: Yes..... I feel very much comfortable.

P3: Yeah.... I am fine no any problem while code-switching.

P4: I observe my students through eye contact and their body language. When I feel that they are not getting concepts in English then I switch my code for them. While doing this I personally feel comfortable because I do not find any difficulty in doing so as I can speak in different languages.

P5: Yes, It always gives me a positive sign, obviously when you are able to communicate in different languages then you get different signs from student faces, from their talks and from

their body language. This thing makes me more comfortable and I feel easy to communicate with my students.

P6: Yes.... Because I do not feel any trouble to switch from one language to another.

P7: Yes, very much comfortable. As long as my students gets the clear picture of the terminologies, I talk about specific topics in simple and national language Urdu then I feel very comfortable with switching languages.

P8: Yes, because I know my students are understanding what I'm saying. For me student needs come first.

Interpretation

Most of the teachers feel comfortable while switching from English to Urdu language. The responses from participants show that those who are bilingual or multilingual they can speak in more than one language in classroom because they have rich vocabulary and sentence structure. They do not feel any difficulty to deliver their lecture in English, Urdu and sometimes in Sindhi language for the sake of learners. It is not only for teachers but students also feel easy and comfortable if the teacher speaks in different codes to interact with them. Some express their views in such words that they do it when there is need. They are in moderate stage where they feel neither comfortable nor uncomfortable because according to the requirement of subject. For example, if subject is Functional English for BS students then teachers feel comfortable to speak in English as the need of subject.

Q4. Do you follow any strategically approach while code switching?

P1: Most of the time unconsciously we follow an approach to get students' understanding because if you are good teacher so psychologically you have to understand students' psyche through observation. While delivering a lecture, a teacher does not only see one student but all..... Sometimes teachers have to come at student's level to make them understand in a better way and that's why a teacher needs to switch from English to Urdu.

P2: I got this strategy from my home because my father is Sindhi speaker and mother belongs to Punjabi language so she speaks Urdu usually. We siblings do code-switching from Sindhi to Urdu language when we talk to our father and mother. And also we switch to Punjabi language when we do communication with grandmother.

P3: I do not follow any strategy but being a teacher, my approach is to understand the human psychology and I do it practically because my target is to understand the students' needs.

P4: I do it deliberately.....

P5: Its not a approach we follow. Sometimes, we deliberately communicate in our language or sometimes unconsciously because its pack of the mind when I feel that I am not transferring things in a proper way then I do code-switch..... It is not the matter of understanding of students, if I feel that I am not able to convey my ideas then immediately, I switch my communication mode into my native language.

P6: No any specific strategy or approach only focus on needs of students and content of subject.

P7: Yes, for the sake of weaker students. I switch when I think student does not understand. So, I switch language because it simplifies the concept for students.

P8: I don't think so we can call it strategical approach but yes it is important for me that my students understand me well. For that purpose, I use code switching as an approach to make student understand the things.

Interpretation

The interpretation of these responses indicates that teachers primarily use code-switching to ensure students fully comprehend the material. They consider the varied educational

backgrounds of their learners, acknowledging that not every student has the same proficiency in English. Some teachers switch to Urdu for beginners who struggle with English, while others find expressing themselves in Urdu easier due to vocabulary limitations. Generally, code-switching from English to Urdu is a common and intentional practice aimed at making communication smoother and classroom interaction easier. It is also common for students to request explanations or repetitions in Urdu, indicating this practice is widely accepted and observed across subjects and classrooms.

Q5. Does it engage students to participate actively in the class?

P1: Yes I agree.... Students participate actively.

P2: Yes definitely.....because when you speak in student's native languagehe/she participates actively in the class.

P3: Yeah.... Students show their participation actively if they are communicated in their native language but it should be within limitation because it will be problematic sometimes if one does not take care for the requirements of institution.

P4: Yes....totally agree.

P5: Yeah.... I strongly agree on this.

P6: Exactly..... they perform actively in the class when you show flexibility in language during your lecture. They do their tasks through better understanding. Even I allow them for code-switching when they perform their given tasks so they may present their activities confidently.

P7: Exactly, you will find those students who never talk in the class will also start to respond when they are sure language is not a restriction or barrier anymore.

P8: Of-course yes, sometimes students would ask can you repeat same thing in native language. This employs that they are interested in lecture and listening actively.

Interpretation

This question is asked from the participants and the views are different according to their observation. Some believe that because of code-switching students show active participation in class. The most of teachers even allow their students to show performance in Urdu language. In this way students who do not participate in class they will also show interest in tasks. But some are with this opinion that code-switching should be within limit. It should not be too much because of the requirements of academic institution. It also sometimes, creates problems for learners specially at graduate level due to lack of command in speaking English. While the few say that it does not show its role in active participation in classroom because in every class majority of learners feel shy and hesitant to ask questions no matter in which code the lecture is given.

Q6. Have you ever received any training on how to use code-switching effectively?

P1: Yes..... it is learnt through teaching workshops at different places.

P2: No any particular trainings.

P3: Yes through teachers' trainings and sessions

P4: No..... I have learnt through my teaching experience

P5: No its natural. I guess everybody do code-switch to communicate in their own languages in daily routine.

P6: Yes.... I got teaching trainings through different workshops and seminar in that we are taught to communicate the learners in simple language and deliver lecture according to their needs and understanding level.

P7: No.

P8: No, that's my own innate strategy, haven't learned it from anywhere.

Interpretation

The interpretation of the responses shows that most teachers have not received formal training on code-switching and instead have developed their skills through teaching experience. They adopt code-switching based on the needs of their students and subject content, learning it gradually while teaching. A few participants mentioned gaining insights from seminars and workshops, where they were encouraged to engage students using multiple languages to promote active participation. Overall, experience plays a crucial role in shaping teachers' code-switching practices, although formal training programs do exist to help educators implement new teaching methodologies, including code-switching, to effectively communicate with diverse learners in the classroom.

Q7. How do you think code-switching play effective role in teaching perspective?

P1: I believe that it has positive role to make teaching energetic because a teacher should know how to make good energetic class. It is not enough to teach the students lessons and contents but teacher must have skills to show him/herself in dimension.

P2: Yes....It plays effectively role because at a time teacher balances the good environment of classroom while engaging every student in the class and due to code-switching teacher can interact to the students easily according to their needs.

P3: It plays its role effectively in communication and understanding between teachers and students and teacher show him/herself more confident as has a command over languages for developing good communication skills.

P4: It has positive effect....

P5: Yes, I strongly believe because initially your language learning tool is at home to communicate in your own language so everyone has a very strong foundation for that. When you make practice of it then this will be part of your pedagogy that helps to make you more comfortable while teaching the students who are with different backgrounds. It has a positive side. Teachers should use it because primary objective of teacher is to communicate things properly.

P6: It has good impact in teaching because when a teacher communicates while keeping the learners' need in mind and try to involve every student in class activities, do not make restrictions on language then it means teacher knows how to lead a class effect.

P7: It plays a very effective role in classroom; student understand few things well in their native language. But communication skills or functional English are two subjects in which it plays negative role.

P8: It has a positive effect when it comes to teaching.

Interpretation

The code-switching has positive impact on pedagogy. It helps the teachers to do communication with those students who are with rural background. This makes teaching more energetic for classroom and students. Most of the teachers give positive views on this question that code-switching makes good communicative environment of classroom and also shows the expertise of teacher over languages. The participants also show their suggestions that teachers should do code-switching in their classrooms because it has good impact on teaching and learning. There are some drawbacks according to few participants that in undergraduate classroom if the subject is related to English language learning then instructor have to speak in English. Otherwise it will show negative side of teaching.

Q8. Do you think code-switching play its role in exclusivity or inclusivity of students?

P1: I don't think that there is any cultural diversity because I believe that Sindhi speakers can understand Urdu in a well mannered but Urdu speakers can not understand Sindhi well. If teacher delivers lecture in Sindhi so mostly student say that we are not getting then teacher

have to switch his/her code for the majority of students. But it's a human nature (negative thinking) that many students think that we are excluded but teacher consciously never try to do exclude the rest of students while delivering lecture.

P2: Yes 100% it happens when you only speak one code that obviously creates inclusivity or exclusivity of students in the class I talk about different cultural proverbs, idioms and folk stories during my lecture and try to give examples to the students from cultural perspective so they should know about different culture. That is why, I shift from one code to another code with cultural touch so nobody feel alien.

P3: Our main motive is to make the things understand for learners. So, I switch from English to Urdu for the students to make them clear everything without complexes.

P4: Not at all because code-switching itself reduces this difference.

P5: If teacher moves from one language to another I do not so think it creates a sense of inclusivity or exclusivity of students. Because the purpose of code-switching is to make everyone clear about content and topic equally.

P6: Yes, it is.

P7: Of-course yes! Sometimes I include examples from a specific language that not whole class can understand. Other times I include examples from a common language that everyone could understand in order to include the whole class.

P8: No, I don't think so. But yes sometimes if switching to language other than English or Urdu, in such cases we can see the factor of exclusivity.

Interpretation

The responses indicate a balanced perspective on whether code-switching leads to inclusivity or exclusivity among students. Some teachers believe that speaking only one language, such as Sindhi, may exclude others like Urdu speakers, and vice versa. Others highlight the use of cultural references, idioms, or proverbs unique to a language that might alienate students from different linguistic backgrounds. Nonetheless, code-switching is generally seen as a tool that helps reduce feelings of exclusion by including the entire class in the discussion. Teachers use it intentionally to foster inclusivity and ensure all students feel part of the learning process, rather than to create any sense of superiority or division. Overall, code-switching is recognized as a means to bridge cultural differences and promote a more inclusive classroom environment.

Q9. Have you ever encountered any challenges or negative feedback from students on the use of code-switching?

P1: If teachers have good competence in English, there will not be any challenges for them. But mostly teachers do not have much competence in English and it might be a challenge for them while delivering lecture in English. On the other hand, it can be challenge for those Urdu teachers whose 100% students are Sindhi speaker and their English language is not good so here teacher may confused in which language he is supposed to deliver lecture weather English or Urdu.

P2: Yes..... while doing code-switching the challenge that I face is lack of vocabulary because we are not good speakers of English language so sometimes I forget words during my lecture then I switch to Urdu or Sindhi language. No any negative feedback from students side.

P3: The challenge that I face during lecture in the class is that I am Sindhi speaker so some of the time I deliver my topic in Sindhi but few students do not get it so, I have to change my medium of speaking for them like whole lecture I repeat again from Sindhi to Urdu. This thing sometimes irritates me. And it also creates problem for me when some typical words are not easy to convey in another language. No any negative feedback.

P4: No..... because I can speak in four languages so I do not have any difficulty.

P5: No, when people are benefited.....they encourage things to do so I have never experienced any diversity in switching the code in the class.

P6: No I do not find any difficulty while doing code-switching from English to Urdu because Urdu is our national language so it is easy to speak and understand. I only speak those language in that I have command and I can communicate with others. So, I do not have challenges and there is positive response but some students get it negative because they want to do interaction in target language when they come for learning that language.

P7: No, it makes my students participate efficiently in class and they enjoy the class conversations which includes code switching.

P8: No, it provides confidence to my students to participate actively in class. It also help me to create a learner based classroom; a classroom that is specifically switched for the purpose of analyzing the needs of learners.

P9: Yes, sometimes student think teacher lacks knowledge of English language that's why switching to native language. It also makes students reluctant rather than working on their English they get comfortable with speaking Urdu in classroom.

Interpretation

It is interesting to know from the participants that what are challenges that they face while code-switching. The responses reveal that most teachers find code-switching helpful in explaining concepts clearly when they face challenges in using English, such as limited vocabulary or difficulty with technical terms. Some teachers experience frustration when they have to repeat lessons in another language or switch between languages during the lecture. While students generally provide positive feedback, a few express concerns that frequent switching might indicate a lack of English proficiency on the teacher's part. Some students also worry that excessive use of the native language reduces their motivation to improve their English skills.

7.1. Data Analysis within the framework of CAT

Analysis within the Framework of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) Communication Accommodation Theory (Howard Giles, 1973) explains how speakers adjust their communicative behavior—such as language choice, tone, or style—to reduce social distance, manage identity, or achieve communicative efficiency. The two central strategies are: **Convergence:** Shifting one's speech to be more similar to the audience (to gain approval, ensure understanding, or build solidarity).

Divergence: Maintaining or emphasizing difference in speech (to assert identity, authority, or distinctiveness).

Code-switching, as revealed in your data, aligns strongly with CAT, since teachers switch languages to accommodate students' linguistic needs, backgrounds, and comprehension levels.

Q1: Understanding Code-switching

Teachers defined code-switching as moving between languages, mainly English, Urdu, and Sindhi.

CAT perspective: This represents convergence, where teachers adjust their language to align with students' comprehension levels and reduce barriers. Code-switching is seen as a strategic accommodation that makes communication smoother and fosters solidarity in the classroom.

Q2: Motivations and Reasons

Teachers switch because students often struggle with English. They accommodate by shifting into Urdu or Sindhi for clarity and inclusivity.

CAT perspective: Teachers' responses reflect interpersonal accommodation—adjusting to students' linguistic repertoires to avoid miscommunication. Code-switching here strengthens relational ties (approval motivation) and reduces cognitive load for learners.

Q3: Comfort with Code-switching

Almost all teachers felt comfortable switching codes, especially since it helps students understand.

CAT perspective: This shows normative convergence, where code-switching becomes part of shared classroom norms. Teachers' comfort demonstrates that accommodation is not only functional but also socially reinforced and positively evaluated.

Q4: Strategic Approaches

Most participants said they do not follow a formal strategy, but adapt spontaneously to students' needs.

CAT lens: This illustrates situational convergence—teachers dynamically adjust their speech patterns based on cues like students' confusion, body language, or questions. Some also unconsciously adopt these strategies, showing that accommodation becomes habitual.

Q5: Student Engagement

Teachers observed that code-switching boosts student participation, especially among shy or hesitant learners.

CAT application: This reflects affective convergence, where language accommodation reduces social distance, creating a supportive environment. Students feel included when the teacher speaks in a familiar code, encouraging active participation.

Q6: Training on Code-switching

Most had no formal training; they learned accommodation through experience.

CAT view: This indicates emergent accommodation strategies—teachers naturally develop convergent behaviors to maintain communicative efficiency. Training might formalize what is already instinctively practiced.

Q7: Effectiveness in Teaching

Teachers noted that code-switching makes teaching energetic, interactive, and more inclusive.

CAT connection: Code-switching acts as a pedagogical accommodation strategy, helping teachers align teaching methods with students' sociolinguistic realities. However, a few noted that too much accommodation (excessive Urdu/Sindhi) may hinder English acquisition, showing the tension between convergence (ease) and divergence (language goals).

Q8: Inclusivity vs. Exclusivity

Some teachers said code-switching fosters inclusivity, while others noted it can exclude students when less widely spoken codes (e.g., Sindhi) are used.

CAT interpretation: This duality shows that convergence to one group may cause divergence from another. Teachers aim for inclusivity, but linguistic diversity in classrooms makes total convergence challenging.

Q9: Challenges and Feedback

Teachers reported challenges such as vocabulary gaps, repetition across languages, or perceptions of weak English competence. Some students also felt overuse of code-switching discouraged English learning.

CAT perspective: Here, over-accommodation is at play—when too much convergence (excessive use of Urdu/Sindhi) undermines the pedagogical goal of English mastery. Conversely, under-accommodation (insisting on English only) risks excluding less proficient learners.

7.2. Thematic Representation

Theme	Description
Code-Switching as a Tool for Teachers use	Teachers use code-switching to match students' language skills and strengthen solidarity.
Convergence and Comprehension	
Pedagogical Motivations and Student-Centered Accommodation	Code-switching is driven by learners' diverse needs and used spontaneously to boost inclusivity.
Normative and Situational Accommodation in the Classroom	Code-switching is a normalized practice, adapting to situational cues to aid comprehension.
Affective and Relational Dimensions of Code-Switching	Code-switching fosters trust and linguistic inclusion, increasing student engagement.
Balance between Pedagogical Effectiveness and Language Policy	Teachers balance code-switching to aid learning with maintaining English for language growth.
Inclusivity vs. Exclusivity in Multilingual Classrooms	Code-switching enhances inclusivity but risks alienation if exclusive codes are misused.
Challenges of Over- and Under-Accommodation	Teachers manage the tension between overusing local languages and enforcing English-only policies.
Experience-Based and Emergent Strategies of Code-Switching	Teachers develop code-switching skills mainly through practice and lived multilingual experiences.

7.3. Results

Based on the comprehensive research, the results indicate that English–Urdu code-switching is a prevalent and strategically utilized practice among school teachers in Pakistani classrooms, primarily aimed at enhancing students' comprehension and engagement. Teachers perceive code-switching as an essential pedagogical tool that helps bridge linguistic gaps caused by varied student proficiency levels, particularly addressing the challenges faced by learners with limited English skills. The practice is driven by contextual needs, including students' educational backgrounds and subject complexity, and is often employed spontaneously rather than through formal strategies. Most teachers express comfort and confidence in switching languages, recognizing its role in creating an inclusive classroom environment that respects students' linguistic identities while facilitating effective communication. Furthermore, code-switching is linked with increased student participation and motivation, especially among those who might otherwise hesitate due to language barriers. However, some teachers caution against excessive use of code-switching, noting potential risks to English language development and the need to balance linguistic accommodation with institutional language policies. The study also reveals that while formal training on code-switching is limited, teachers rely heavily on experience and intuition to implement this bilingual strategy effectively. Overall, the findings underscore code-switching as a dynamic communicative accommodation aligned with the theoretical framework of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), serving both convergence and divergence functions to optimize learning and social interaction in diverse classroom settings. These insights highlight the importance of recognizing and integrating code-switching in language pedagogy and policy to support multilingual education in Pakistan.

8. Conclusion

This study conclusively demonstrates that English–Urdu code-switching is not only a widespread but also an intentionally and strategically employed pedagogical practice in Pakistani school classrooms. Teachers utilize code-switching primarily to enhance students' comprehension by bridging the gap between their limited English proficiency and the academic

demands of English-medium instruction. This practice also fosters greater student engagement by accommodating diverse linguistic backgrounds, allowing learners to feel included and confident in the classroom. Although formal training on code-switching as a teaching strategy is limited, educators rely extensively on their experiential knowledge to effectively balance the use of English and Urdu in response to classroom dynamics. The findings align closely with the principles of Communication Accommodation Theory, illustrating how teachers converge linguistically to facilitate understanding and diverge to assert classroom identity and maintain social boundaries. While some concerns exist regarding the potential overuse of code-switching and its impact on the development of English language skills, the study highlights its critical role as a dynamic and flexible communication tool. Overall, code-switching emerges as an indispensable pedagogical resource that supports bilingual education by promoting inclusivity, facilitating knowledge transfer, and responding adaptively to the linguistic realities of multilingual classrooms in Pakistan.

9. Significance of research

The significance of this study lies in its focus on school teachers' perspectives, filling a crucial gap in research predominantly centered on higher education or workplace settings. By highlighting teachers' motivations, experiences, and challenges with English-Urdu code-switching, the research provides valuable insights for language policy makers and educators aiming to develop realistic, context-aware pedagogical strategies. It underscores the necessity to recognize code-switching not as a linguistic deficiency but as a legitimate, functional resource for inclusive education. The findings advocate for incorporating code-switching awareness and strategies into teacher training programs to enhance bilingual teaching effectiveness, ultimately contributing to improved learning outcomes and linguistic equity in Pakistan's multilingual classrooms.

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