

CODE SWITCHING: A PEDAGOGICAL TECHNIQUE IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Zunaira Rehman,

COMSATS University Islamabad, Islamabad Campus zunairarehman42@gmail.com

Aimun Zaka,

MPhil (Applied Linguistics) Scholar, Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore

aamitarar786@gmail.com

Bushra Asad,

MPhil (English Linguistics) Scholar, University of Education, Lower Mall Campus, Lahore

bushraasad586@gmail.com

Abstract

It has been observed that code-switching is a social practice in multilingual societies. Code-switching is the interaction of two languages in a single conversation. In multilingual interactions, it results in effective communication among speakers. Social, cultural, and contextual factors are aligned with code-switching. A significant number of studies are available on code-switching but limited research is available on code-switching as a pedagogical technique. Therefore, applying descriptive quantitative methodology using a closed-ended questionnaire, the current study aims to explore code-switching as a pedagogical technique. The study highlighted that code-switching in the learning of English as a second or foreign language is an effective pedagogical technique that serves as a strategy to find gaps in learning English as a foreign language. Code-switching in the classrooms enhances the confidence level and motivation of students. It is helpful in the comprehension of complex concepts of language. Code-switching is a systematic strategy to understand the structure, grammar, and vocabulary of the target language. Code-switching by teachers ensures the progress of learners, it creates a comfortable room for learning. It is helpful for learners to participate in class. It is suggested that code-switching must be allowed for teachers in English as foreign language learning classrooms.

Keywords: Code-switching, English as Foreign Language, Regional language, Sociolinguistics

Introduction

English language is enjoying the status of universal lingua Franca in the current era. It has an essential importance among a significant number of nations. A great number of professions require the use of the English language as a mode of communication. Professionals who can speak English fluently have a good status in the workplace. Technology, education, and communication are dependent on the English language. It has become a socio-social foundation of interaction. The mode of learning and teaching at educational institutes is the English language. Indeed, it is the second or foreign language of students.

Code-switching has gained a considerable amount of attention because it has become a part of multilingualism. It is the choice of code, code-switching is usually common among the speakers of bilingualism and multilingualism (Wardhaugh, 2006). Code-switching is comprised of two words “code” and “switching”. Different scholars define code differently. In general, code means a language or dialect. It deals with how people use language within communication. Code-switching means a shift between two languages within a single communication.

When an individual switches from one language to another in a single conversation is called code-switching. In code-switching language or dialect may be changed but the topic of discussion remains the same. It is adopted for a better understanding of the topic. A person switches from the target language to the native language in the code-switching. The phenomenon can be related to bilingualism. However, bilingualism occurs when two different language speakers interact. Code-switching is the use of target and native language in a single discussion.

English is a second language or foreign language for persons whose mother tongue is different. In Pakistan, the English language is implemented as a core subject in the institutes. Moreover, the mode of communication in the classroom context is only English. Students and teachers are supposed to speak in English. As English is a foreign language for students. In the early stages, students cannot speak English properly. Then, for learning and teaching students and learners switch from the target language to the native language for better understanding. Students in the English classroom feel confident and motivated to switch to their native language. Code-switching can be done accidentally or on purpose. Teachers in the classroom mostly switch to the native language for a better understanding of the course. The switch in language takes place when students may not have enough vocabulary to convey the message.

Code-switching is an essential factor for teaching at the foundation level. It boosts the progress level of students. It must be allowed in the classrooms when it is a matter of learning a new language.

Literature Review

Code-switching is considered one of the alternatives to bilingualism which involves the use of two or more languages. Code-switching is very beneficial for people when they are sharing their ideas and knowledge during conversation. Even teachers are using code-switching as a strategy or technique in their lectures for better understanding of concepts, especially in language classes Hymes, D. (1974). A different view is seen that the use of code-switching as an effective model of the target language in the classroom can be fruitful for learners of English as a Foreign Language Krashen, S. (1988).

Code-switching is considered a conversational technique by which people shift from one language to another for inter-individual relations because, through this strategy, people can share their knowledge as well as feelings in an appropriate manner Wardhaugh (2006). When people from different backgrounds contact each other than code-switching is used for the sake of communication. In learning and teaching the English language as a second or foreign language code-switching is used for better understanding (Yusuf, 2009). The switching of language from one to another in teaching in the classroom context is effective. It makes the environment more interactive for engaging and learning Fachriyah, E. (2017).

In the pedagogical environment, teachers prefer code-switching for effectiveness. Code-switching if done at the selected and preferred areas appeared as an effective tool. Training must be given to the teachers for the effective use of code-switching in EFL, English as a Foreign Language classroom. The study was conducted by interviewing teachers and it revealed that teachers feel essential to switch the language for a better understanding of the target language Grant, L. E., & Nguyen, T. H. (2017).

Furthermore, research is conducted to know the perceptions of students toward code-switching in the EFL, English Foreign language classroom by Hakim, B. M., Arflida, F., & Satriani, I. (2019). A questionnaire from thirty students and interviews from nine students were conducted for the data collection. The results showed that students are in favour of using code-switching in the classroom. It helps students to learn quickly and efficiently. The teachers who use code-switching during teaching are popular among students. Learners feel that code-switching helps them to understand complex ideas and it ensures the passing chances in the assessment.

Additionally, the use of code-switching in the classroom leads to a positive effect on the confidence level of the learners and engagement among trainers and learners OLIVERA, L. C. (2021). Language trainers can use pedagogical implications for better learning of a second language in the classroom. By using code-switching, a teacher can boost the confidence of the learner to speak confidently and motivation to participate in classroom discussions. The

language teacher can minimize the anxiety of the learner, boost confidence, and balance the emotional feelings of the learner with the help of code-switching.

The use of difficult vocabulary, comprehension of new concepts, and pronunciation of the target language are the main reasons to switch to the native language for a better understanding of the English language as a foreign language. These are some factors that cause code-switching. The teachers and students have a positive attitude towards code-switching. According to teachers and students, code-switching is helpful in the comprehension of English language concepts easily Dema, D. (2022).

Moreover, the use of code-switching in multilingual classrooms is highly appreciated. A study was conducted in Indonesia, in which data is collected by observation, interview, and recording and analyzed as a qualitative approach. Code-switching is crucial in pedagogy for comprehension of curriculum, classroom management, and teacher-student relationships. Learning the English language along with the native language in the classroom helps to maintain the status of vernacular. A learner can be bilingual with the use of code-switching Hafid, H., & Margana, M. (2022).

It is also argued that code-switching occurs in the learners who are not good in their language. As it is apparent, mostly code-switching occurs when one is at the loss of words and it questions one's fluency. Students are more expressive when they are allowed to use two or more languages during lectures. Mother tongue has a great influence on the learning of English or any other foreign language.

It is summarized that; a significant number of studies are available on code-switching but limited study is available on code switching as a pedagogical technique in learning English as a foreign language. Code-switching is appreciated by various scholars and at the same time it's use is criticized in English learning classrooms. So, there must be a pedagogical technique on its use.

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative approach. The surveys are conducted to collect quantitative data objectively and systematically (Almeida, 2017). The data is collected from students of a university. These students are learning English as a foreign language. The survey is conducted to find the opinions of students regarding code-switching in the learning of English or any foreign language.

The participants of the study were selected on a purpose Trochim, William. (2007). A specific number of people $N=35$ was selected from two different groups to participate in the survey. The participants of the study are in the early stages of learning the English language. Few questions of questionnaire include the five-point Likert scale to know the exact level of opinions of the students. Several questions were asked by giving options accordingly. The questions were closed-ended.

The collected data is analyzed descriptively with the help of MS Word using the percentage method to find out the perceptions of students on each asked question in the questionnaire. The main purpose is to find out the opinions of students about code-switching in learning English or any foreign language.

Hypothesis:

Applying code-switching techniques to students with low English proficiency has a positive impact on language learning.

Research Questions:

How code-switching is beneficial for students and allows them to move forward with confidence?

How does a teacher's code-switching affect a learner's success?

What do learners think about code-switching in the classroom?

Objectives:

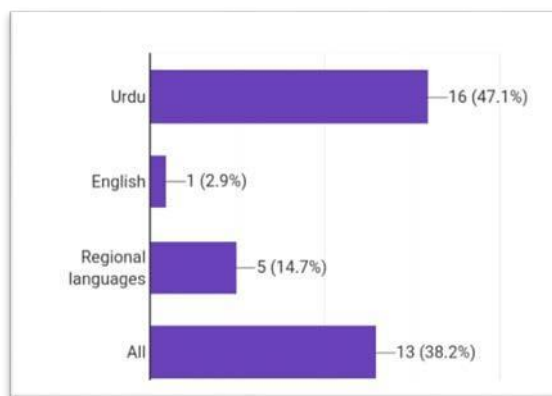
- To explore the benefits of code-switching for students to move forward in learning with confidence.
- To investigate the effectiveness of teacher’s code-switching on the learner’s success.
- To figure out the learner’s opinion about code-switching in the classroom.

Data Analysis and Findings

The data was collected from the participants via a questionnaire in which a few questions were asked. The questionnaire revealed the opinions of students towards code-switching. English is a medium of instruction and learning in the classroom context. In the questionnaire, the use of language in the classroom with classmates, preference of language in learning, and role of code-switching in learning such type of questions are asked.

The first question was **“Which languages do you usually use to communicate with your classmates?”**

According to the responses of learners of the English language, it is interpreted that the majority of students are comfortable talking in their native language with their classmates. Learners think that talking in their native language makes it easy to convey the message. English is the medium of instruction and mandatory in formal contexts but in early stages, it is difficult to talk with classmates in English. The responses were analyzed as students switched to their native language (Urdu) while talking to their classmates.

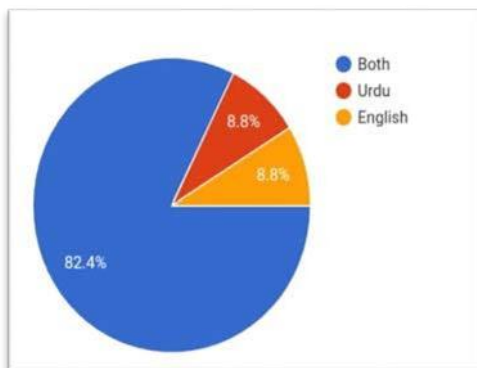


It is seen that 47.1% of the respondents are comfortable talking in Urdu with their classmates. Students are fluent in Urdu as English is a foreign language and they are in the early stages of learning the English language. Only 2.9% of respondents speak English with their classmates. A significant number of learners prefer the native language with their classmates. Code-switching with classmates from English to their native language helps to connect culturally and it maintains the social identities among peers.

The next question **“In your opinion, which language must be applicable for teaching at institutes?”**

The results showed that students agreed to the application of both English and Urdu language in the classrooms. Students say that the use of their native language with the learning of a foreign language helps them to learn the target language more smoothly and quickly. The use

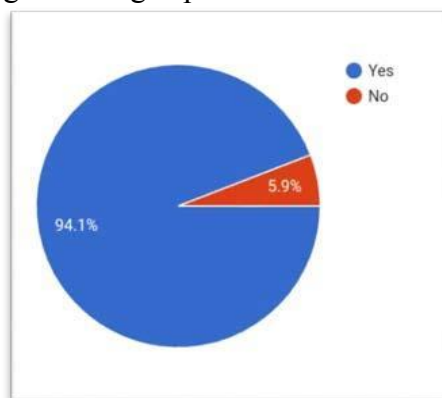
of native language in the classrooms enhances the motivation and confidence level of the students. Three options were mentioned English language, Urdu language, or both. According to the responses, 82.5% of respondents choose both, 8.8% choose Urdu and 8.8% choose English language. It showed that students are in favour of code-switching. The use of both English and Urdu language side by side must be implemented for teaching in the institutes.



Code-switching helps learn the complex ideas of a foreign language in an easier way. Students encouraged the use of both the native and the foreign language as a teaching tool. Only the use of the English language for teaching makes it hard to understand all the concepts in the English language. In the early stages, teachers must be allowed to switch between native and target languages. It will make the learning easier and faster for the students.

In addition, the next question was **“Does code-switching help you in learning English as a foreign language?”**

In the analysis of this question, it is clear that 94.1% of learners responded yes and only 5.9% responded no. A significant number of students are in favour of code-switching in learning English as a foreign language. Code-switching deals with the alteration in the language to convey the message. Students interpret that with the help of code-switching from the English language to the native language learning is possible.

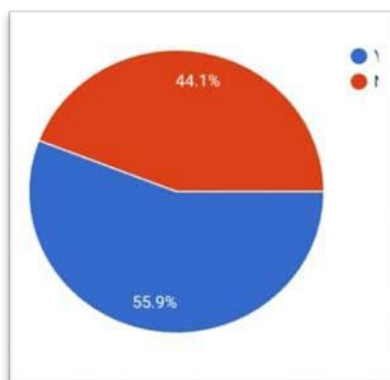


Code-switching makes learning engaging and accessible. From the responses, it is analyzed that code-switching allows learners to comprehend the complexities of the English language. It helps to understand the structure and grammar easily. Moreover, code-switching is crucial to learn the vocabulary. With the help of native language learners can learn the vocabulary of the target language easily.

As a learner of the English language, a student faces problems in fluency and vocabulary. English language only as a tool to communicate can be a communication barrier. Code-

switching helps to boost the confidence of students and it reduces the anxiety level. By switching to the native language, students can speak in the classroom to clear the complex ideas of English. In this way, students have positive attitudes towards code-switching.

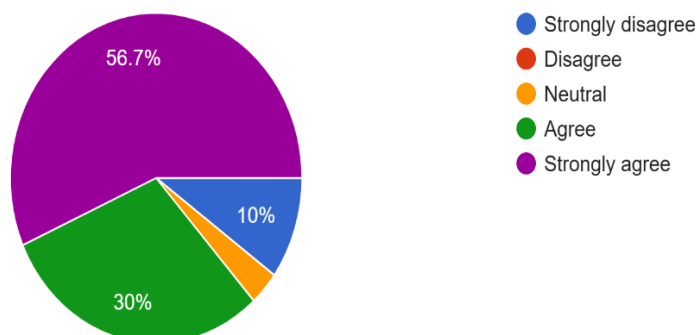
Moreover, **“As a multilingual student, do you prefer code-switching in your classroom?”** 55.9% of respondents preferred code-switching in the classroom. These are the learners who find code-switching as a cognitive tool. This cognitive tool helps the learners to understand the complex rules of the target language. It boosts the understanding level of challenging structures and ideas.



44.1% of respondents are not in favour of code-switching. The reason is that these students may want to focus on the foreign language only for immersion in the target language. However, the majority of learners are in favour of code-switching. These students think that it is the most effective strategy in learning and teaching. Code-switching facilitates a better understanding of English as a second or foreign language.

The final question was **“As an English learner, do you think code-switching helps you to become a quick learner and fluent in the language?”**

In this question, according to the Likert scale, five options were given. 86.7% of students agree that code-switching helps them to become quick learners and fluent in the target language. The results showed that code-switching is crucial in the classroom for better learning. Students learn efficiently with the use of native language.



Code-switching helps the learners to become fluent in the target language quickly. Learners make code-switching in the classrooms to comprehend the significance of the English language and to move from the basics to the advanced stages. All these responses justify that

code-switching is considered an effective pedagogical and conversational technique which helps learn and understand English and any foreign language.

It is summarized that; learners of the English language prefer the use of native language to communicate with their classmates because it enhances their social and cultural identities. The mode of teaching in the classroom is English but learners feel comfortable communicating in their native language with classmates. It is a shift in code to use native language with classmates for better understanding. It helps the learners to convey the message directly to their classmates.

Learners preferred that the use of English and Urdu language be implemented in the educational institutes as the mode of teaching. Teachers must be allowed to speak both languages in the classrooms. The use of both languages indicates code-switching. Teachers must follow the rules of code-switching to explain the ideas, grammatical rules, vocabulary, and complex structures to the learners of English as a second or foreign language.

Code-switching helps learners to learn easily and sharply. Teachers who switch the code in the classroom are most popular among learners because these teachers make the concepts easy for students to learn. Learners feel comfortable learning in the matter of code-switching. Code-switching helps the students to internalize the new material of the target language. It makes a productive learning environment in the classroom.

In a classroom context, students are from different areas and they speak different languages. A significant number of students are multilingual in the classroom context. So, these students prefer code-switching in the learning of the English language. As beginners of learning English as a foreign language, learners feel motivated and confident in code-switching.

As an English learner code-switching helps the students to become quick learners. Students who understand the concepts of target language by code-switching, these students can learn quickly as compared to others. Because these students relate the vocabulary word or rules with their native language. In this way, code-switching assists the learners in learning the target language easily and quickly.

Conclusion

It is concluded that code-switching is a strategy by which learners can share new ideas. In the classrooms, code-switching is a productive tool for instructing and learning a foreign language. English has replaced many regional and national languages. English is the only language that is used in the educational institutes. Urdu speakers or learners of English as a foreign language consider it hard to understand the complex ideas of the English language. Learners switch from the target language to the native language for the sake of better conveying of message in the classroom. Students prefer code-switching to grasp the rules of a new language. It is revealed that code-switching boosts the confidence level and motivation of learners to learn a foreign language and to participate in classroom discussions. It is suggested that code-switching must be allowed for teachers in the classrooms. It will help the learners to feel comfortable in the learning of the English language. As a pedagogical technique, teachers and learners maximize the use of target language but sometimes for complex and new ideas, code-switching can be used.

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