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Code-Switching in English Language Classroom: A Socio-Pragmatic Study at Undergraduate Level

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Abstract: *The present study is concerned with the significance of code-switching as an inevitable pedagogical tool for language learning at the undergraduate level. This research deals with the understanding of language, particularly in the classroom, keeping in view, the context of language learning, using code-switching as a language learning technique to fulfil the socio-pragmatic needs of students. Code-switching is inevitably significant in language learning as many of students come from diverse backgrounds. The participants of the study were undergraduate students at the University of Lahore Sargodha campus. Data was collected through a questionnaire distributed among the participants. The results of data analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between the students' attitudes towards code-switching and learning language in an English language classroom. Codeswitching is beneficial for both teachers and learners because code-switching in English language classrooms can enhance students' socio-pragmatic understanding and acts as a bridge between teachers and students.*

Key Words: Code Switching, Undergraduate Students, Socio-Pragmatics, Bilingualism, English Language Learning

Introduction

The present study deals with the use of code-switching in English language classrooms at the undergraduate level as a useful pedagogical tool to fulfill the socio-pragmatic needs of students. When we switch from one language to another language, it is called code-switching.

Alternation of language I.E code-switching commonly occurs in the classroom

where the target language differs from the first language. As Urdu is the national language of Pakistan. Therefore, it is unavoidable for English language teachers to switch from English to Urdu to connect the learners' pragmatics to meet their social understanding. In the English language classroom, the implementation of code-switching is inescapable. Teachers employ code-switching from Urdu to English and from English to Urdu in order to meet

students' socio-pragmatic needs. Because students from diverse background are unable to understand the entire lecture in the target language. They lack mastering of vocabulary in the target language so to bridge the gap; teachers are bound to be bilingual during English language class. Because it is very important to understand the needs of students related to language learning and then to fulfill their needs accordingly. The ultimate goal of teaching is to make the learning as effective as possible.

Teachers can deliver lectures in the target language as teachers of English language can master both languages, but to avoid the ineffectiveness of the lecture and to make language learning more effective teachers switch from English to Urdu so that students can better understand the lecture. Usually, students do not feel comfortable to participate in the target language and to convey their ideas during English language class. The restriction to use only target language is a hurdle which makes the students uncomfortable. Letting students to speak their native language, i.e., Urdu, makes them comfortable and allows them to participate and interact with teachers during language class which builds their confidence. Switching from English to Urdu during English language class is an effective pedagogical tool to deliver the lecture in context. The current study discusses the value of code-switching in an English language classroom setting.

Literature Review

Code-switching, according to Gumperz, is "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems" (Gumperz, 1982). (1982:59). Rodman and Fromkin (1998) further described code-switching as "the introduction of a word or phrase from a language other than the one being spoken into a single sentence, or the switching

between two languages or dialects" (Rodman & Fromkin, 1998: 522). [Cook \(2000\)](#) has added the interlocutors to Rodman and Fromkin's definition - "moving from one language to the other in the middle of a speech when both speakers know the same two languages" ([Cook, 2000:83](#)).

"When a speaker alternates between two or more language varieties in the same discussion," code-switching, or language mixing, occurs (Shartiely, 2016, p.215). According to Mabule (2015, p. 340), code-switching is "the moving of a speaker from language A to language B." Furthermore, most academics make no distinction between code-switching and code-mixing; they are defined and used interchangeably (Suek, 2017). According to Hasan and Akhand (2015), code-switching and code-mixing are interchangeable. Code-switching is now widespread among the bilinguals' speech and their communication (Halim & Maros, 2014). Code-switching is prevalent in a bilingual environment (Suek, 2017). According to Bullock and Toribio, bilinguals can separate their language communication capacity in speech production, like having knowledge that when to use both their first language and second language or switching to another language or code (2009, as referenced in Grima, 2013). As a result, it is possible to say that codeswitching and codemixing are equivalent in theory.

Code-switching is used to describe when a speaker use to switches or changes from one language to another in discourse. When it comes to Pakistani classrooms, this is something that happens frequently. It is considered both positive and bad perspective, which leaves its impacts on the human body and mind. An initial study was conducted to determine how Pakistani students viewed code-switching by their teachers during English lectures at the graduation level. The point of view of various students on code-switching of professors/lecturers in the classroom are

expressed differently. It is vital to investigate if moving between two different codes in an English classroom is beneficial or not and how students perceive this codeswitching behavior. The researchers used a questionnaire of a five-point Likert scale and twelve open-ended questions to assess students' impressions of English language teachers' code-switching during lectures to gather their data. According to the study's findings, students have a positive attitude towards their professors' code-switching; however, some students believe that their teachers' code-switching results in their exposure to the English language being limited. Codeswitching, English as a second language, and the use of Urdu as L₁ are just a few examples ([Fareed, Humayun & Akhtar, 2016](#)).

For the past two decades, the topic of code-switching (CS) has grabbed people's interest. This exploratory anthropological study reveals the current state of classroom Code-switching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses in Libyan institutions. Its goal is to study how EFL teachers use code-switching to help with the teaching/learning process. This study included 6 EFL teachers and their students from 3 different Libyan universities. A total of 15 hours of classroom observation and 24 student interviews were undertaken. The findings demonstrated that on occasion, classroom participants' primary language L₁, Arabic, was used for educational and social purposes. "Clarification, Repetition, Recapitulation, and Socialization" are the functions. Teachers and students are enthusiastic about using the teacher's code-switching to address pedagogical and social challenges (Adriosh & Razi, 2019).

The research conducted by [Josefsson, 2010](#) demonstrates that code-switching is improvised and dictated by classroom circumstances in most scenarios. Most teachers are agreed that English should be used in the English classroom to the greatest

extent. Still, they also agreed that by using the first language might help students in learning, particularly when teaching grammar and vocabulary ([Josefsson, 2010](#)).

According to [Nordin, Ali, Zubir & Sadjirin 2013](#) Many English language teachers and ESL students in Malaysia are well-known for using more than one language code in official classroom contexts, even in the United States (Then & Ting, 2009). There are various factors that may contribute to the prevalence of code-switching, if we say in other words, code-switching should be linked with certain communication objectives. Specifically, this study aims to understand how ESL students perceive the use of code-switching functions by English teachers at the college level. Does it respond to the research questions posed in the preceding paragraph: (1) What are the opinions of ESL students on the practice of code-switching in English classes? Secondly, when does code-switching best for ESL students in an English-language classroom environment? The 45 diploma students who took part in this study were chosen randomly from a pool of applicants. An online survey questionnaire was used in the study to gather information about students' views about code-switching in their classroom and their usage of the topic. According to the statistics, code-switching was supported by most ESL students. Code-switching is a technique that can be used to assist ESL students in better understanding the target language. So students are required to use their first language in the classroom to understand English. ([Nordin, Ali, Zubir & Sadjirin 2013](#)).

In today's world of globalization and technological growth, the bulk of the world's population is using L₁ and L₂ rather than being monolingual. The number of people who speak many languages is always growing. The number of languages one knows has a significant influence on one's chances of success ([Ahmad and Jusoff, 2009](#)). As a result, many educational institutions

and institutions of higher learning have students who are fluent in a second or foreign language. In Nigeria, Oman, Tanzania, Bangladesh, and Malaysia, English is generally required at both primary and secondary level as well as at higher education (Fasanmi, 2011; Al- Hussein, 2006; Foo & Richard, 2004; Ministry of Education, 2011).

Jacobson emphasized the importance of bilingualism. According to Jacobson, code-switching is essential as it [1] provides students with adequate knowledge of both languages to deal with grammar and lexical information; [2] allows students to varying language proficiency to concentrate on the understanding the different concepts being presented; and [3] establishes equal status for both languages within the class while learning a language which is likely to encourage a balanced and favorable viewpoint (Jacobson, 1983). This is supported by the research findings conducted by Martin (1999). Teachers of foreign languages, according to her, code-switch in their classrooms for seven reasons: [1] To distinguish between 'performing a lesson' and 'talking about a lesson,' it is necessary to use the phrase 'performing a lesson'. 'Performing a lesson' is distinguished from 'talking about the lesson,' and 'talking about a lesson' is distinguished from 'talking in a lesson,' Fourteenth, to switch the tone or make an aside; Fifteenth, to distinguish between questions and debates, Sixteenth, to bring out the distinct voices of distinct characters within a story, and the Seventh one, to distinguish classroom management comments.

Milroy and Musyken (1995) are of the view that it is possible to switch codes between different speakers' turns or between articulations in any single turn in a conversation. It can even happen within any single sentence. The constructions required by researchers focusing on code-switching are particularly major for peruses to track down the reasons or portions of

codeswitching. Furthermore, to the extent that discussion coarseness, clarifications joining code-switching are ambiguous from those of a singular phonetic blend. In that breaking point, while switching between languages occurs in a single sentence, the parts from the two languages are routinely prosodically related together. Different codes, tongues, or styles of an indistinguishable language can give semantic arrangement in code-switching (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

According to Leshite (1988), Code-switching, as stated in Mncwango (2004), does not imply that the speaker cannot express himself well in any of the languages he combines. Due to a variety of factors, it is the best-suited combination. According to Baker (1996), code-switching emphasizes a certain notion, replaces an unfamiliar word or phrase, explains specific points, relieves stress, provides humor, exercises authority, and increases efficiency. According to Duran (1994), Chinese individuals turn on to project a sense of prestige and westernization.

Eldridge (1996) perceives that code-switching is used when a message has been sent presently isn't regarded. Also, the speakers impel the code to make, stress, and explain their message (p. 303). Code-switching is a strong learning approach for understudies who have confined sales of the English language (Ahmad, 2009, p. 49; Probyn 2010). In multilingual conditions, cook (2001) confides in it as a brand name and customary response. Also, Li (2000) sees code-switching as an inside and out OK and routine penchant rather than a sign of bluntness when a bilingual upgrades codes while visiting with another bilingual

Research Question

Is Code-switching an effective tool for teaching to enhance the socio-pragmatic needs of English language learners at the undergraduate level?

Objective of the Study

To study Code-switching as a pedagogical tool in English language class room at the undergraduate level.

Delimitations of the Study

The phenomenon of Code-Switching has been tested in the context of the socio-pragmatic aspect of language learning at the department of English, University of Lahore Sargodha campus. Because this study is based on limited, convenient sample size, the study's findings cannot be generalized.

Methodology

This study is quantitative in approach. The data is collected and analyzed quantitatively. The population of research is the total number of students from the selected institutions, from which the sample are collected. Department of English, University of Lahore Sargodha campus constitutes population.

200 students from the English department were taken as the sample of research by using convenient sampling. These 200 students were opted to fill out questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed for the students only. For the present research, data is collected through questionnaires from students.

The questionnaire was based on close-ended questions. Total number of questions in the questionnaire are 20. This technique is useful when it comes to gathering data from a wide number of people. Scheweers (1999), [Tang \(2002\)](#), and Burden's studies were used to create the tool (2001). It was designed with the Likert Scale in consideration. (Likert Scale 5-1) The questionnaire is Coded as:

- 5=Strongly Agree
- 4=Agree
- 3=No opinion
- 2=Disagree
- 1=Strongly Disagree

Results and Discussions

The results of the study shows that the majority of students in English language classrooms have favorable opinions towards code-switching in English language classroom. Out of 200 students, 57.5% students are agreed and 18.5% are strongly agreed that they do not feel confident while speaking in the English language class. 49.5% students are agreed while 35% are strongly agreed that code-switching should be the part of English language class at undergraduate level. 58.5% students are agreed, and 27% are strongly agreed with the statement that teachers should use Urdu in English language class. 43.5% of students are agreed and 46.5% are strongly agreed they give attention to the lectures and understand everything when the teacher uses code-switching in English language class. 45.5% students are agreed and 46% are strongly agreed that the technique of Code-switching helps to understand the lecture in a better way.

27.5% students are agreed, and 61% are strongly agreed that they prefer that the teacher explain each and everything in the lecture in both languages (Urdu and English) for better output. 48.5% students are agreed and 37.5% are strongly agreed that Code-switching is a very interesting phenomenon. 46% students are agreed and 44% are strongly agreed that Code-switching enables them to completely acquire which is being explained in the lectures or the lessons and they can easily prepare them. 49% students are agreed, and 40% are strongly agreed that Code-switching makes the lesson interesting. 54% of students are agreed, and 32% are strongly agreed that they like code-switching in their English class.

When it was asked by the researcher whether Code-switching is a waste of time, 38% of the students are strongly disagreed, 47% are disagreed with the statement. when it comes to the statement that Code-

switching complicates the lesson 29.5% are strongly disagreed 54.0% students are disagreed with the statement 11% of the students are strongly disagreed, 51% are disagreed with the statement that Code-switching retards the pace of the lesson. 63% students are agreed and 25.5% are strongly agreed that they feel confident in learning the lesson through code-switching. 58% students are agreed and 32% are strongly agreed that Code switching helps us to deliver the things quickly with a better understanding in learning English lesson.

61% students are agreed and 22.5% are strongly agreed that code-switching enhances the contextual understanding of the lecture. 14% of the students are strongly disagreed, 50.5% are disagreed with the statement that Code-switching in English language classroom causes hindrance in contextual understanding of the lecture. 7.5% of the students are strongly disagreed, 36.5% are disagreed with the statement that the use of only target language in the classroom can build the sociopragmatic understanding. 64% students are agreed, and 25% are strongly agreed that Code-switching in a native language is an effective tool to develop sociopragmatic competence. 49% students are agreed, and 44% are strongly agreed with the statement that Code-switching is a bridge between teachers and students to fulfill the sociopragmatic needs.

So Based upon the results of the study, it has been clear that there is a significant relationship in attitudes of students towards code-switching and learning language in an English language classroom. The majority of students are agreed that code-switching was most wanted and believed that it makes the course easy to understand. This was shown in the students' responses to the questionnaire. The majority of students are also agreed that teachers should imply code-switching

technique in English language class because they perceive it as a useful teaching technique. Considering the divulgements, it has been clear that there is a fundamental relationship in students' disposition toward code-switching in an English language classroom. All students were agreed that code-switching was truly captivating and perceived that it makes the lesson interesting. This was reflected by the responses of students wherein layout showing the course in Urdu and English may foster the students' prospects in completing the tests, had the most raised degree of discernment. The students immediately jumped all over the chance to get limit with the course expecting that it was associated with their first language and their resulting language. Code-switching behavior of learners is neither moderate nor inventive. Individuals do not use a sort of language fundamentally considering the way that it is having high status or not. Rather, they use a kind of language to suit their necessities for best self-depiction.

Conclusion

To sum up, it is said that the majority of students are agreed that teachers ought to use Code-Switching in English language class. Majority of students see it as an obliging appearance strategy. There is a fundamental connection between students learning and teachers codeswitching.

The inevitable results of this research suggest that using code-switching in English language classroom can help students to meet their sociopragmatic needs. Code-switching is a useful teaching technique which is very helpful in learning English at undergraduate level. Code-switching as a pedagogical technique can bridge the gap between teachers and students to speed up the learning process.

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