

A SOCIOLINGUISTIC INVESTIGATION OF CODE-SWITCHING PRACTICES OF ESL STUDENTS OUTSIDE EFL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

Code switching is a common phenomenon, generally observed in multilingual communities across the globe. A critical look at code switching literature reveals that mostly code switching has been studied in classroom in learning and teaching context while code switching outside classroom in settings such as café, hostel and so on have been the least explored areas. Current research investigated the reasons for code switching in the interactive practices of students and their perceptions regarding the same outside the classroom settings. This paper is the study of the common practice that prevails in the Universities of Sialkot that bilinguals mix two languages when they speak in different class room situations. In Pakistani classrooms where Multilingual are in abundance i.e. they can speak two or more than two languages at the same time, the code switching or language combination is very common. The teachers of Sialkot switch from one language to another consciously or unconsciously while teaching English in the class rooms. This phenomenon has not been explored in the Sialkot's teaching context. In Sialkot private educational institutes does not encourage code-switching whereas the public or government institutes use it frequently. The crux of this research is to investigate and identify the importance of code switching by taking its users in consideration. Survey research method and survey questionnaire will be used to get exact data from teachers and students. We will try to highlight the functions and importance of code switching in foreign language classrooms of Sialkot and will explore why this trend is emerging in Sialkot.

Key words: Code switching, Sialkot foreign language class rooms, bilingual context, use of L1, Importance of L2.

INTRODUCTION

During the last decade code-switching (CS) has gained impetus, which can be gauged from the fact that since 2005, The Linguistics and Language Behavioral Abstracts (LLBA) electronic databases identified nearly 1800 matches to CS (Nilep, 2006). Most of the studies on CS fall into main two categories: grammatical and sociolinguistics.

1. Researchers who approached CS from grammatical perspective focused different structural/grammatical issues such as morphological, syntactic and morpho-syntactic constrains, nature of grammar governing CS. (MacSwan, 1999; Chomsky, 1995; Joshi, 1985; poplack, 1980).
2. On the other hand, the sociolinguistic approach focuses on the functions and meanings of CS.
 1. Macro-sociolinguistic studies of CS,
 2. Micro-sociolinguistic studies of CS.

The macro approach takes CS as collective bilingual phenomenon governed by the norms and



regulations of the community concerned. Studies in this category view CS as orderly and stable phenomenon (Heller, 1988; Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Fisherman, 1972). Fishman (1972) elaborated that in bilingual/multilingual communities mostly each variety has a specific domain of use. The uses of these varieties are predetermined. Therefore, the speakers have very little choice of their own. Their choices are determined by the social and cultural norms of their communities. He added that the topic of interaction is of great importance. Different varieties are associated with Review of Economics and Development Studies Vol. 5, No 3, 2019 498 different topics. Some topics are handled better in one variety than the others. For examples, most of the formal topics are tackled by the formal/standard varieties, while non-formal situations demand for non-formal varieties. In this sense, the use of a language/variety can be predicted if one knows the situation/topic ahead of its actual use.

Code Switching is playing effective role in teaching English as a foreign language. The scientific study of code switching has been ignored to some extent in the past but fortunately now this study is under consideration in Pakistan (Anwar 2009). How languages are different, how language varies over time and between different societies, how language is learn and how language is used for human communication, all these facets of language fall into the domain of linguistics (Milroy and Muysken 1995). Code switching is important because many linguistics argue that code switching creates problems when L2 learners use L1 in the foreign language class rooms (Turnbull 2001). However, none is denying the importance of L1 in learning L2, but this question is debate-able that how and which function of the code switching should be integrated in the practices of foreign language classrooms (Banatao and Malenab-Temporal 2018). On which format the code switching should be allowed and why it should be banned (Mahbub-ul-Alam and Quyyum 2016). Unfortunately, in Sialkot the educational purpose of code switching is ignored and it is time to develop the understanding of bilingualism classroom discourse. Furthermore, It is believed that bilinguals outperform monolinguals in many aspects

(Hofweber, Marinis et al. 2019). In this paper we will explore the functions of code switching in Sialkot bilingual classroom context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Barandagh, Zoghi et al. 2013) suggested that in Iranian Foreign English Language classrooms the teacher used English for a limited portion only while they employ Persian for all major activities. Teacher switched code consciously and sometimes the code switching was as a response to the question of the learners. Switching to the mother language made the task easy for the students (Barandagh, Zoghi et al. 2013). The teacher moved from one activity to another in case the student could not recall any suitable word for it in L2. Teacher switched from L2 to L1 on need basis. Teacher ignored the education and mental level of all students and utilized code switching while focusing on the weak student in particular. The code switching is need based either it is the need of the teacher for explanation or the need of the student. Code switching is not serving all the participants equally, how the mentor utilized code switching for some activities and ignored the same for a number of activities? How he decided which dialect for code switching is more suitable for the participants?

(Chowdhury 2012) has suggested that code switching performs very important role in language classrooms; the L2 is mainly used to maintain discipline and to instruct the students. The important issues are highlighted and the attention of the students is gained using L1. In large class rooms the students are not able to understand complex concepts and code switching becomes very vital in that case. Not only this, it can serve significant effective function in language classrooms where teachers can interact with their students efficiently (Flyman-Mattsson and Burenhult 2009, Chowdhury 2012) suggested that code switching can easily help the students who are trying to adjust themselves in L2. (Chowdhury 2012) suggested that code switching helps in improving the class discipline, the use of code switching for discipline maintainers may affect the learning of students. The researcher has emphasized that he has employed code switching for discipline maintenance. Banning of mother tongue or using code switching in language class rooms is equal to depriving the students from the unique linguistic treasures (Dar, Akhtar et al. 2014).



(Gulzar and Qadir 2010) Suggested that code switching improves the performance of the teachers and it can be useful teaching technique. It is in contrast with the competency of the teacher, a teacher who is unable to deliver his complete lecture in L2s may not attain linguistic proficiency in his life. (Gulzar and Qadir 2010) have suggested in total eleven reasons and claimed that bilingualism is the part and parcel of Pakistani classrooms. The researcher suggested that the learners will not be able to learn complete language in L2 and the use of L1 is inevitable. Hence he has completely ignored the role of L1 that is essential for the average minds.

History of Code Switching

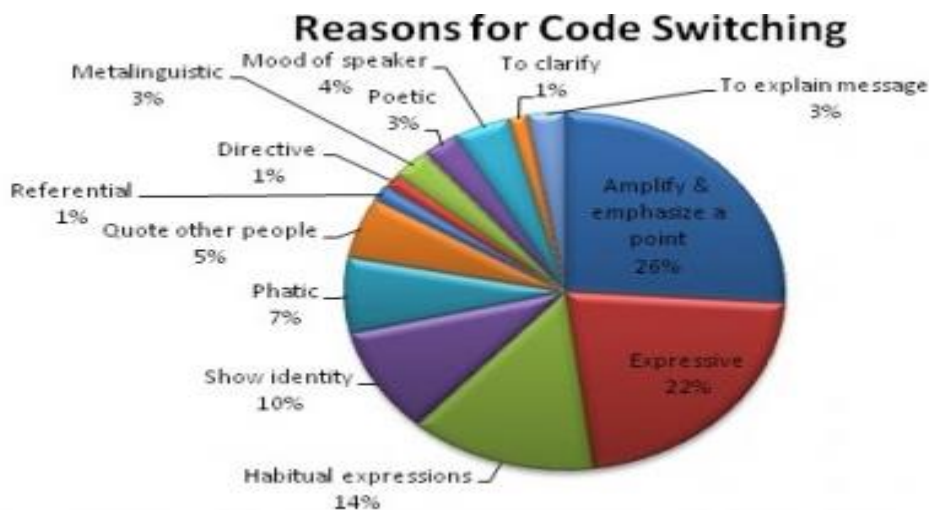
Code switching is not a new or recent phenomenon, Code switching is in practice since last decade of 19th century, in the early era of 20th century progress was made in the realm of code switching (Ronjat 1913, and later Leopold 1939-49). It is pertinent to mention that code switching remained veiled till the second decade of 20th century and no inquiry was initiated in this field i.e. what is the reason of employing code switching in language teaching or why teachers employ this technique while teaching second language? In 1972 Blom and Grumperz wrote an article on Norwegian dialect and after this research many researchers started writing on this topic. In 1940 many scholars regarded code switching as a sub standard form of language usage. Later on in 1980 many researchers proved that code switching is essential while teaching second language.

Types of Code Switching:

We may found code switching in following 03 types.

- **Inter-sentential CS:** In this type of code switching, code switching happens in the boundaries of the Sentence.
- **Intra-sentential CS:** Code-switching happens in the middle of the sentence.
- **Extra-sentential CS:** In this type we include words/Tags/Tokens from another language.

Reasons of Using Code-Switching



This figure taken from (www.hub.com) shows the reasons of code switching in Pakistani classrooms.

Objective of the study

The need of the project is to examine the importance and the functions of the code switching in Sialkot’s bilingual English classrooms. We will explore prevailing types of code-switching i.e. inter-sentential and intra-sentential code switching and their importance in the English class rooms of Sialkot. How code-switching is benefitting the students and teachers in the long run? We will further explore the utility of code switching for the teachers in foreign language classrooms and will evaluate different trends of mentors about the utility of code switching.

Research Questions

1. Why do the students get engaged in CS outside classroom?
2. What are the common perceptions of students about CS outside class?



METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in a public sector universities in Sialkot, Pakistan. The University is located in Punjab, a province situated in the North East of Pakistan. Punjabi language is the dominant and native language of majority of the people in the province. Broadly speaking Punjabi is mostly in the domestic and social settings while English is mainly used as the medium of instruction in higher educational institutes. In addition, Urdu being national language of the country is also used by most of the speakers. In such multilingual environment the emergence of CS is a natural phenomenon. I have employed survey and interview technique as a primary source in my research. The main data of this research was collected using these two techniques whereas scholarly published articles on the topic of code-switching were considered as a secondary source. The populations of 1000 students were selected for this research. Majority of populations belong to University of Management and Technology, Sialkot having Bachelor level English in their credit. 500 male and 500 female were selected. Majority of participants belongs to 18-30 years of age. All the participants were able to speak both English and Urdu at the time of research.

Data Collection

A survey questionnaire was designed to collect data. 18 Questions were included covering the basic/academic information of recipients. A number of questions were asked to estimate self-proficiency and assessment of English language. Data was collected from different teachers.

The aim of this study is to highlight the usage of code switching outside English language classrooms. The research highlighted why and how students and teachers use code switching in their daily life.

Results of Data Analysis:

The researcher found following results after evaluation of Data.

The numbers of students involved in this research were 100 students.

Respondents' Age Group

Serial Number	Age	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	15-18	150	15%
2	18-21	100	10%
3	21-24	200	20%
4	24-27	150	15%
5	27-30	400	40%
	Total	1000	100%

Table: 1

Table 1 indicates the number of respondents i.e. we have 15% students who fall in the age of 15-18 and we have 15 respondents from this category. We have recorded highest number of responses from 27-30 years of age that constitute 40% of this research.

Respondents' Gender

Serial Number	Gender	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	Male	500	50%
2	Female	500	50%
	Total	1000	100%

Table: 2

Table 02 indicates the gender of the participants i.e. total 100 students participated in the research and we have equal gender distribution of 50 male and 50 female respectively.

Academic Background

Serial Number	Medium of instruction	No of Responses	Percentage
1.	Urdu Medium	600	60%
2.	Private Urdu Medium	200	20%
3.	Madrassah Education	100	10%
4.	English Medium	100	10%



Total	1000	100%
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Table: 3

Table 3 indicates the educational background of the participants i.e. how many students belong to Urdu/English and Madrassah system gradually.

Participant’s language proficiency

Serial Number	Language	No of Responses	Percentage
1	Punjabi	750	75%
2	Urdu	200	20%
3	Pashto/Sindhi/Balochi	50	5%
Total		1000	100%

Table: 4

Table 4 indicates the language proficiency of the participants i.e. how many language participants can speak; it will help us in determining their ability of code-switching/mixing.

Employed/Not Employed

Serial Number	Employed Yes	Employed No	Percentage
1	600		60%
2		400	40%
Total			100%

Table 5

Table 5 indicates the number of employed and un-employed respondents. It further highlights how employed respondents use code switching in excess.

Foreign Tours

Serial Number	Foreign Tour	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	Yes	250	25%
2	NO	750	75%
Total		1000	100%

Table: 6

Table 6 expresses that only 25 out of 100 visited foreign states and 75 respondents responded in No. It shows a great number of respondents did not visit any country.

Foreign Friends

Serial Number	Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	YES	400	40%
2	NO	600	60%
Total		1000	100%

Table: 7

Table 7 shows that a meager number of language users have foreign friends. Majority of Pakistani students do not have access to modern technologies and they do not communicate with foreign friends.

Previous English Background (In Years)

Serial Number	Duration of Study	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	12 years	1000	100%
Total		1000	100%

Table: 8

Table 8 shows the percentage of the students that we opted for our study, all the students who participated in the study have completed their 12 years of education and they were able to communicate and understand English easily.

Preferred English Language Skill

Serial Number	Preferred Skill	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	Reading	1000	100%
2	Writing	800	80%



3	Speaking	300	30%
4	Listening	250	25%

Table: 9

Table 9 shows the ration of reading, writing, speaking and listening respectively. All the students were able to read and write English but only a few of them were able to speak and listen English language. It shows the problem and main difficulty.

Usage of English words in Daily Life

Serial Number	Usage of English words	Number of Responses	Percentage
1.	Yes	700	70%
2.	No	300	30%
	Total	1000	100%

Table: 10

Table 10 indicates how frequent a user employs the words in his daily routine. 70% Pakistani students employ English words in their daily lives whereas 30% responded in denial.

Speak English at home

Serial Number	Speak English at home	Responses	Percentage
1.	Yes	400	40%
2.	No	600	60%
	Total	1000	100%

Table: 11

Table 11 shows that majority of Pakistani students do not speak English with anyone at home. They have only English speakers in Universities and Educational institutes.

Basic Grammar Background

Serial Number	Grammar Background	Responses	Percentage
1.	Yes	800	80%
2.	No	200	20%
	Total	1000	100%

Table: 12

Table 12 indicates that majority of students have Basic English grammar background and they do not face any problem in the usage of basic grammar.

Do you watch English Movies/Songs

Serial Number	English Movies/Songs	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	Yes	700	70%
2	No	300	30%
	Total	1000	100%

Table: 13

Table 13 indicates that 70% students are interesting in learning English from English movies and Media. Majority of Students watch movies and listen English songs to improve their English speaking capability.

Fond of English writings

Serial Number	English Books	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	Yes	500	50%
2	No	500	50%
	Total	1000	100%

Table 14

Table 14 indicates that 50% students read English novels and books out of interest. Mostly students read poetry and novels.

Code Switching in Speaking

Serial Number	Code Switching	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	Yes	800	80%

2	No	200	20%
Total		1000	100%

Table 15

80% Pakistani students mix the languages together while speaking. We may say that 80% do code switching and employ English words in their day to day conversation.

How frequent you mix languages (Precisely)

Serial Number	How Frequent Code Switching	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	Frequent Daily	150	15%
2	Often	250	25%
3	Off and On	300	30%
4	Never	300	30%
Total		1000	100%

Table 16

Table 16 indicates that majority of students employ code switching off and on. The daily and close to daily users are relatively less than remaining responses.

Code-switching consciously or unconsciously

Serial Number	State of Mind	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	Consciously	400	40%
2	Unconsciously	600	60%
Total		1000	100%

Table 17

Table 17 indicates that majority of students mixes the languages unconsciously. They do it because they are habitual of doing this. It shows their mental aptitude and acceptance of English language.

Sr. No.	Code switching in SMS/E-MAIL	Number of Responses	Percentage
1	SMS	1000	100%
2	EMAIL	0	0%
Total		1000	100%

Table 18

Table 18 indicates that all the student's use code switching while writing sms and they avoid the same in E-Mail and prefer to use a single language while writing E-mails.

Interviews:

12 seasoned English teachers were requested to join in interview and share their remarks about Code-switching. All teachers were requested to share their views about usage of Code-Switching irrespective of it is good or bad. Code-switching is trending in Pakistan and almost all EFL teachers are employing code switching. Different teachers have different perspective about code switching and interestingly all teachers have different views about code switching. 7 teachers shared the same views by admitting the code switching has helped them a lot while teaching in the class and they are able to perform better resultantly. Teachers were asked following Questions.

1. Share your views about code switching of students in Pakistan?
 2. Usage of code switching is justified in language teaching in Pakistani perspective?
- 5 teachers denied the vitality of code-switching and denied its role in teaching. They said code switching may harm the learning structure as the students will not be able to learn the language smoothly and they will ignore difficult words. They opine that it is better if students do more hard-work and try to find the meanings of difficult words. It will improve their learning capabilities.

CONCLUSION

We cannot deny the importance of Code-switching in modern world. Modern world has adopted code-switching as a new style and compulsory fashion (Beebe 1977). Students feel themselves stylish



speaker of English while speaking/Mixing languages. Students at all levels mix languages consciously or unconsciously and they are very right in doing so as they see/learn the same in their alma maters, families etc. The result of this research shows that students switch codes even with their friends and foreign friends. Furthermore, results recommend that students and teachers have positive attitude towards code-switching. Media and music industry plays important role in influencing young minds. Code-Switching is a double edged sword, people enjoy speaking/mixing languages but they ignore the basic grammar and syntactic roles while mixing the languages (Pfaff 1979). This research recommends that speaker/code mixers should maintain the principles and norms of both languages.

Appendix: Survey Questionnaire:

Please note that this questionnaire is designed for the native speakers of Punjab Pakistan.

Disclaimer: We are collecting this information for academic purpose only and we will not disclose this information to any one, Please feel free to answer all questions.

[You are requested to read this form carefully and raise your hand in case you are not able to understand any question.

Your Name and contact/E-mail:

.....

I. Personal Information

1. 1. What is your age _____ 2. Your Gender

II. Academic Profile (Please Write YES/NO Only)

2. Please specify your Academic Education: _____
 3. Can you speak any language other than Punjabi or Urdu? _____

III. Economic Profile

4. Are you employed _____
 5. Have you ever visited any country other than Pakistan _____.
 6. Have you foreigner friends or interaction with them in any way _____

IV. English/Foreign Language Learning History

7. You have read English as compulsory subjects for _____ years.
 8. You are able to Read/Write/Speak/listen English. Specify one or all in case you can _____.
 9. Do you employ English words in your daily conversation (Please Write YES/NO Only) _____
 10. Any member of your family speaks English with you? (Please Write YES/NO Only) _____

V. Self-assessed Proficiency Level

11. You have how knowledge of Basic English grammar? (Please Write YES/NO Only) _____
 12. Do you like English Movies/Songs? (Please Write YES/NO Only) _____
 13. Did you ever read English Novel or magazine out of interest (Please Write YES/NO Only) _____

VI. Assessment towards Code Switching/Mixing

14. Code switching means using another language with your native language
 15. Do you mix languages when you speak? (Please Write YES/NO Only) _____
 16. You regularly switch language (Please Write YES/NO Only) _____
 17. You do code switching consciously or subconsciously? _____
 18. Do you use code switching while writing SMS or Email? _____

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