

The Effect of Code-Switching between English and Urdu on Teaching and Learning at University Level: A Case of GCUH

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Abstract

The term code-switching means shifting from one code (language/dialect) to another at the same time. The prime goal of the current research study is to investigate the role of code-switching from English to Urdu in undergraduate classrooms according to teachers' and students' perspectives. The main objective of the current study is to analyse code-switching and its types used by teachers at Government College University Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan. The study also investigates the reasons of code-switching and the effect of code-switching on teaching and learning at GCUH. The study focuses only on code-switching within two languages (English and Urdu). The qualitative method is followed to conduct this research. The data have been collected from both teachers and students teaching and learning at Government College University Hyderabad. The participants include from ten departments of the university. The unstructured interviews have been conducted to know the views of participants. The theory of 'Markedness' by Myers Scotten (2002) is considered as theoretical framework to analyze the collected data from participants. The findings of this research show that code-switching from English to Urdu in undergraduate classrooms has a positive effect on both teaching and learning. The teachers use this strategy for the sake of their students' understanding in different concepts related to subject. It creates interactive environment of class. The overall results show that code-switching by teachers in classrooms promote good communicative atmosphere of class and also help teachers in their teaching strategy.

Keywords: Code-switching, Code-mixing, English, Urdu

1. Introduction

A process of moving from one language to another is known as code-switching (Yule, 2013). It is the process of shifting from one language or a variety to another. It usually occurs for the sake of effective communication. It is also a process in which two or more languages or varieties of a language are used in a sentence. The term code-switching is combination of two words 'code' means 'a language/a variety' and 'switching' means 'moving/shifting'. It allows one to move from language to another as well as one variety/dialect to another. The term was introduced in 1950s (Gumperz, 1982; Yule, 1996; 2013; Heller, M., (ed.). 1988; Jacobson, R., 1988; Jacobson, R. (ed.). 1990; MacSwan, J., 1997; Dar, M. R., Akhtar, H., & Khalid, H., 2014; Fachriyah, E., 2017; Irfan, H., Butt, M., & Rizwan, A., 2022; Kasim, U., Yusuf, Y. Q., & Ningsih, S. R. J., 2019).

This process commonly occurs at different situations such as meetings, conferences, discussions, debates and classrooms. Gumperz (1982: 59) defines code-switching "as the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passage of belonging to two different grammatical system or sub-system". Norrish (1997) argues that teachers switch between codes when the courses are taught and the students failed to understand what teachers deliver. Myer-Scotton (2006) defines code-switching as the use of two or more languages in the same conversation without a noticeable phonological assimilation from one variety to another.

Code-switching is normally used for the ease of a speaker or listener. Sometimes speakers cannot make themselves understood in one language that is why they shift from one language to another, and sometime they shift between two codes for the ease for listeners. Teachers often shift between two codes for the ease of students. Students sometimes cannot get everything in one language (e.g. English) that is why teachers move from English to their local or regional language (David, 2016). However, there are many situations where teachers feel anxiety to explain things in English which is why they move to their national/local language so that they may explain things properly. In simple words, we can say that code-switching means using multiple languages at the same. Such cases are very common in Pakistani perspective where keep on moving from language to another, because it is a multilingual country. Native speakers of minor or less dominant languages tend to alter to the dominant language in order to have an effective communication or social acceptance. Sometimes people shift to other language for the sake of society and friends. There are some situations where people switch to different code in order to show level of formality. Code-

switching is very obvious in classes where teachers usually switch between two or three languages in order to make their students understand easily (Kasim, U., Yusuf, Y. Q., & Ningsih, S. R. J., 2019; Mushtaq, H., & Rabbani, R., 2016; Nikuigize, E. S., 2016; Parameswaran, M. D., & Lim, J. W., 2018; Raza, N., Raza, A., & Ramzan, A., 2022; Safitri, L., Harida, E. S., & Hamka, 2017; Sakaria, S., & Priyan, J., 2018; Song, J., 2019).

There are different types of code switching.

1.1. Tag switching

It is a kind of switching where one starts a sentence in one language and ends at a tag/a word/a phrase from other language. It is small kind of language; a word or a set of words attached at the end of a sentence. Such words are usually from other languages.

For example,

You are going tomorrow, *hai na?* (You are going tomorrow, isn't it?)

I know you *na?* (I know you.)

I know you, *baba*. Or *Baba*, I know you. (I know you, dear.)

Kal ap hamare sath arahe ho, *right*. (Tomorrow you are coming with us, right.)

Perso hum class lenge, *isn't it?* (We will take a class day after tomorrow, isn't it?)

1.2. Intersentential switching

This type of code switching normally occurs at the sentence or clause level. It usually takes place outside of a sentence or a clause. It is also termed as extra sentential code switching where switching occurs outside of the sentence.

For example,

I am hungry. *Kuch bana ke do*. (I am hungry. Make me something.)

Aj thak gaya hon yar. *Please get me a coffee*. (I am tired today. Please get me a coffee.)

Zeesan chaa thyo? Kal waly forms download hue? (Zeesan what happened? Did you download the yesterday's forms?)

Che hale? Kal chon a aae? (How are you? Why did not you come yesterday?)

1.3. Intrasentential switching

In this type of code switching, switching occurs within a sentence or a clause. A sentence starts in one language and ends at the other one. In other words, a sentence or a clause starts with the characteristics of one language and ends at the characteristics of the other language.

For example,

Main chae banana jarhi hon would you take? (I am going to make tea would you take?)

Wo larka you see *jump marega*. (That guy you see will jump.)

Ye banda *I know* ossy *cheat* karega. (This person I know will cheat him/her.)

Ahmed I am sure will get *boht zabardast* marks. (I am sure Ahmed will get great marks.)

1.4. Inword Switching

Inword switching takes place at word level or a morpheme boundary. A word of one language gets morphological/morphemic change (inflection) at the other language. In this type of code switching, the morpheme change occurs normally in terms of number (characteristics of plurality from other language).

For example,

Aj to saari he dukans band hain. (Today all the shops are closed.)

Nawa mall ty nawyan shopaan kuliane. (New mall and new shops have opened.)

Teacherein aai hn. (Teachers have come.)

Boyson ko bataya mene. (I told the boys.)

Code-switching is combination of two grammatical systems (Gumperz, 1982). This ability is almost found in those people who are bilingual or multilingual and this situation occurs during communication. Code switching will be clear to both the listener and the speaker, and they easily understand to one to other.

There are some examples of Sindhi and Urdu code switching.

Maan school tho wanjaa, kia tm chalogi?

Safia tu copy aandi, kitni dafa main tum class walon ko bolongi

Code-switching occurs in a multilingual community. It is very much common in Pakistan almost in every situation, especially in classrooms where teachers switch between English and Urdu for transferring and sharing their knowledge with students.

2. Background

Code switching has different aspects in the study of bilingualism. Code switching is the phenomena where we see the linguistic performance of speakers. It is also known as grammatical approach where we see linguistic competence of speakers. There is plenty of work on different kinds of code switching (Shahida, et al., 2021). The successful code switching speakers and listeners both understand each other easily in their communication. This is very common in today's era to shift from one code to another as our young generation has multilingual society. Stern (1992) argues that bilingualism is the usage or practice of using two languages or codes simultaneously. Clyne (20023) claims that code switching point out that trigger-words that facilitate transversion (=switch).

Francechini (1998) argues that use of code switching does not present a satisfactory answer as the basic problem remains there as the speakers do use code switching without knowing why do they use it. Sometimes, speakers use it as they do not know/find word/words in the code they start with. Triggering is also discussed in which two words are used at the interaction of two language system. Clyne (1991) defined lexemes item which are belonging to more than one language which means it is about the bilingual speakers and also said that triggers is the part of the language. Gross (1988-1995) points out that bilingual has two type of language network, one is the morphological and the other one phonetic features both are independent and connected with each other. During the code-switching the speakers are aware of speech errors. In code-switching, the speakers concentrate on utterance not on content. In bilingualism, speakers have the activate language to utterance, monolingual speech does not belong to the bilingual community because it is quite different from bilingual process.

Language is one of the most important factors in all other activities as it is used in communication. Language is used for to communicate, interact or transfer knowledge from one source to another. Pakistani people are multilingual speaker as the country is a multilingual and a multicultural country where Urdu is the official language of the country. However, in the current times, English has more prestigious role than any other language in the country. English is termed as the language of science, education, information and above all the language of success. English is not only the official language but also medium of instructions in all higher education institutions in the country which is why it is mandatory for everyone to learn it. People are mostly applying process of code switching in their speeches and switch from one code to another.

According to Stern (1992), code switching is the use of two languages at the same time without any hindrances. Linguists have studied/discussed various types of code switching, such as intra sentential code switching, intersentential code switching, intraword switching and tag switching. In the past, the process of code switching was not an important subject of scientific research study, but now it has become more attracted. Code-switching could be the main purpose of teaching; it is widely used to understand the contents and context in the bilingual classrooms. The study of code-switching is acquiring second language. In code-switching, bilingual/multilinguals share their knowledge easily with each other. Group of bilingual classrooms of French in which teachers are conveying their message through code-switching and in through this process teachers clearly and easily share their knowledge with their students.

English is used in different institutions and it has become more necessary for everyone. Without knowledge of English, it is almost impossible to have higher education in today's world. English has now become the medium of instruction (or a target language) throughout the world (Greggio, S. & Gil, 2007).

This process of code switching is commonly used in Pakistan where people speak three or more than three languages at the same time (Native language, Urdu, and English). Urdu plays the role of Lingua-Franca in Pakistan which is why everyone can convey their message to others. Same is the case with teachers in Pakistan, they feel more easy and comfortable in delivering things in Urdu than English. Not only teachers, but both teachers and students feel comfortable in classroom to have code switching between Urdu and English. Code-switching usually takes place in various forms like situational code switching, intersentential, intrasentential, tag switching, intra word and conversational switching.

Regarding classroom setting, code switching usually refers to bilingual or multilingual setting where teachers and students switch between codes (languages) for their ease or for others to understand the lectures, presentations in their mother tongue or in the dominant language of that particular society. It is very common in or outside of the classroom setting in Pakistan. Code switching is a practice that helps learners or people to learn or acquire things easily, learning or presenting things in one's mother tongue is very easier than in any other or target language. Code switching is very common in classroom interactions in any bilingual or a multilingual society like Pakistan. However, at the same it is assumed that excessive use of code switching ends at poor knowledge in both L1 and L2. One of drawbacks of code switching is that speakers become semilinguals having poor language competence and performance as compared to monolinguals. There are many researchers and linguists claiming that code switching has a biased approach as it generates stereotype terms such as Pakish, Urduish, Sindhish, Punjabish, and Germanish, Itlish, Spanglish, etc. There are some other linguists who argue that code switching occurs due to incompetency in the language, while some linguists claim that it as a sign of laziness (Shahida, et al., 2021). Borg (2001) believe that such people neither speak L1 nor L2, they just pick chunks and use it as a source of communication. Use of two codes at the same time in a single sentence, speech or a talk is not a random phenomenon. Sometimes, code switching terms to be highly effective as it helps to understands others and get understood by others. It is claimed that code switching has many functions such as identity marker, style shifting, reiteration, personalization, address specification, etc. Code switching in classroom helps to cope up with complex diction, translation, teaching vocabulary or grammar through mother tongue translations. It also helps to manage classrooms, complex terms' explanation, showing sympathy as well empathy to learners. Code switching helps to emphasize the important terms through shifting from target language to L1. Some teachers prefer code switching as it helps to equally deal with high and low proficiency learners in English, everyone can understand the lecture easily (Badrul Hisham Ahmad, 2009).

One of the common phenomena of the bilingual classrooms is that teachers usually shift one one code to another for the sake of effective teaching and learning. Fraeed, M. et al., conducted a study on the perspectives of teachers regarding code switching in Pakistani classrooms context. Their main objective of the study was to find out reasons and factors of code switching in the English language classroom in the country. The study was qualitative in nature. The researchers selected 12 participants from Karachi (10 females and 2 males) and took semi structured interviews. The participants were enrolled in postgraduate programme MS Applied Linguistics. The respondents were divided into two groups school level and tertiary level. The study

found that there were fourteen reasons of code switching in English language classroom by teachers. The teachers in Pakistani classrooms switch from one language to another to make environment energetic for every individual in that everyone can talk easily without fear and hesitation. The most significant factor may be incompetence of teacher in language due to this they do code switching.

Another research was conducted in 2021 by Shahida, Zahid Ali, and Noor Muhammad. This study deals with the reasons and purpose of doing code-switching in bilingual or multilingual classrooms in Bela, Pakistan. In this study, teachers have used different types of code-switching including inter-sentential, intra-sentential, tag-switching and intra-word. The study adopts the qualitative method with descriptive and explorative design and collects data through observation and recording of teachers' lectures to find out the reasons and purpose of code-switching between Lasi and Urdu. Analyzing the useful role of code-switching "The markedness model of Myers Scotten (2002)" has been used in a classroom. The results indicate that teachers use code-switching to improve learning and acquire things in a classroom. Teachers find this process beneficial and a comfortable learning environment to share ideas and express feelings in both codes. This study underlines the significance of code-switching in overcoming language hindrances and underlines its role in depicting cultural and social contexts (Aguirre, A., Jr., 1988; Ahmad, B. H., 2009; Ali, Z., 2021; Ali, Z., & Azam, M., 2021; Shahida, Ali, Z., & Muhammad, N., 2023; Amin, M., & Ali, Z., 2021; Pathan, M.S.K 2023, Pathan, M. S. K. (2022), Pathan, M. S. K. (2023); De Mejía, A., 1988; Grosjean, F., 1982)

The current study therefore hypothesize that teachers switch between English and Urdu for their ease as compared to students'. However, it could be the other way; teachers switch for the sake of students' learning.

3. Research Objectives

The main objective of the current study is to analyse code-switching and its types used by teachers at Government College University Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan. The current research analyses the different kinds of code switching used by teachers at GCUH. The study also investigates the reasons of code-switching by teachers at GCUH. The study attempts to find out the effect of code switching on teaching and learning at GCUH. The study tries to find out the positive or negative effects on teaching and learning processes.

4. Research questions

The current study attempts to answer the research question 'how are the processes of code-switching applied/used by the teachers at GCUH?'. The study also finds the answers to the research questions 'what could be the main reasons of code-switching by teachers at GCUH? and 'how does of code-switching affect teaching and learning at GCUH?'

5. Research Methodology

This research work use mixed method; qualitative and quantitative together. The study applies qualitative as well quantitative data analysis to the number of teachers using code switching and the quality of teaching through code switching. The study uses descriptive and explanatory research designs (Creswell, 2014). Firstly, the study describes the data whether teachers use code switching or not. Secondly, it is explored to investigate and find out the reasons and effects of code switching on teaching and learning. The data of this study are collected from teachers and students of all departments of GCUH.

The data of this study have been collected through stages; starting from sciences to social sciences and humanities. Random sampling (and convenience sampling, as per needs) have been used to collect data from the teachers and students at GCUH. The researchers select randomly 5 students and 2 teachers from each department, making it 70 participants in total from 07 departments.

The data are collected through questionnaires and classroom observations. The data have been collected through techniques that support the findings of this study. The qualitative research method has been applied to find the quality and the accuracy of data. The interviews have been considered as data collection tool to collect the data. The technique of interview is the most commonly used technique used to collect data. In this technique, researchers ask the open ended questions from participants to know their views. It helps to collect the data by asking related questions of research topic. The interviews are of three types such as structured interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews.

In this study the semi-structured interview is designed to collect data from participants for the purpose of knowing their views in detail. The semi-structured interview is defined as the half knowledge is known and half is unknown to the participants. The purpose of selecting this type of interviews is to aware the participants from the topic and to give them some basic idea without any structured or plan questions. This has some flexibility in asking the questions related to the topic. The participants have no idea what will be questions and this helps the researchers to know the responses correct and immediately within the specific time.

The analytical model has been applied which is a sociolinguistic approach. This approach examines different aspects of a language among bilinguals, and it also differentiates between bilinguals and monolinguals. Communication, verbal interaction and syntactic representation or creations are addressed in this grammatical approach to the study of code-switching. In code-switching verbal interaction, communication, lexemes and all other aspects of this model are used in conversation among teachers through code-switching. Sometime teachers just include one or more lexemes (words or even sounds) of other

language in a sentence; thus, making it a process of code-switching among bilinguals; using two languages in one sentence. It will be seen how, why and how many times teachers shift from English to Urdu and vice versa.

The theory of 'Markedness' by Myers Scotten (2002) has been applied as a model for code-switching in the current study. This theory focuses on social indexical motivation for code-switching. Markedness model is used for analysis of code-switching in conversation. This theory is based on a premise in which speakers and other analysts can easily identify marked and unmarked codes. This theory is also known as sociolinguistic theory. Markedness model is based on the presumption that all speakers have an intrinsic markedness evaluator which permits those to assess the marked and unmarked codes in the given interaction.

6. Findings

The responses of semi-structured interviews show the positive aspect of findings that every teacher changes mode of communication for the purpose on interacting with students in class. Code-switching from English to Urdu in undergraduate classrooms at GC University helps teachers to deliver their lecture in language in which they feel easy and comfortable. They do it for the sake of learners' understanding. Every teacher tries to interact with every other student of the class so they do code-switching to involve everyone in class activities without any language restrictions and barriers. But the intensive use of code-switching shows the negative perspective from students' side. If a teacher switches from English to Urdu in English language classroom, then learners feel that he/she has lack of competency in language. The positive side of these findings can be observed in pedagogy. The main purpose of code-switching in class is to make concepts clear to every student. The teacher who teaches on the level of students and knows their abilities it means he/she is skillful and has expertise in field because the relationship among teachers and students build only when they communicate and interact with each other.

7. Conclusion

This study investigates the "role of code-switching from English to Urdu in undergraduate classroom according to the teachers' perspectives at GC University, Hyderabad". The main concern of this research is to investigate that how does code-switching play its role in teaching and learning and what are the reasons and motivations behind code-switching in the classroom. This research has been conducted at GCUH and it is based on qualitative method. Only 9 participants are selected from three departments (English, Education and Computer science) through convenient sampling. The data have been collected through semi-structured interviews. The 10 questions are asked from the participants by providing them consent forms within the framework of ethical considerations. The findings of this study represent the estimated results that fulfill the main objective of this research. The collected data from responders is supported by the theory of 'Markedness' by Myers Scotten (2002). This theory focuses on social indexical motivation for code-switching.

Markedness model is used for analysis of code-switching in conversation. This theory is based on a premise in which speakers and other analysts can easily identify marked and unmarked codes. This theory is also known as sociolinguistic theory. Markedness model is based on the presumption that all speakers have an intrinsic markedness evaluator which permits those to assess the marked and unmarked codes in the given interaction. The overall findings of the study show that it is well cleared that teachers at GCUH do code-switching during their lectures for the sake of their students. They do it for many reasons such as to make lecture easy and clear for students, sometimes they do not have good vocabulary to speak in English so they feel easy to switch from English to Urdu. The most of the teachers move from one code to another because they feel very much comfortable because they can speak well in Urdu than English and sometimes they switch for students if they belong to rural backgrounds.

The main motivation behind code-switching is to interact with whole class because in class there are different students who belong to different background. So, teachers try to communicate with them in their language to feel them easy for speaking. The code-switching makes the classrooms more interactive as every student participates actively. The students feel no hesitation for asking questions, they have no fear of language error while speaking. It is common in bilingual society that people switch from one language to another according to need of audience and sometimes they do it deliberately to develop communication and they do it without following any approach. However, the excess use of code-switching in classrooms by teachers impacts negative effect on learners because they feel that teacher is not confident in speaking English. On the other hand, divergence happens when we switch our mode of speaking intentionally to exclude someone from conversation. It is very much common in our surroundings. While speaking people suddenly change their medium of language that will be only unique for one to whom they are addressing on the basis of cultural diversity. In the aspect of divergence, the findings related to this show in class, it reduces cultural diversity among students.

8. Contribution of the Study

Code switching is used to understand the context of conversation/communication. During code-switching students feel easy and comfortable in classroom. One of the significant features of code switching is that people get to know each other and their culture. At the primary and secondary level, students face many problems during the lectures of teachers in classroom. Thus, the process of code-switching may be used in the classrooms. Code switching is better for both teachers and students; teachers may keep on switching between codes for their ease. On the other hand, students get the lecture easily as it is a multilingual/bilingual class. Getting things in one's mother tongue or national/regional language is much easier than in English or in any other target language. The process of code-switching is very beneficial and influential in government institutions where teachers commonly switch codes (mother language to second language) and it is better way to learn and understand the things.

It is seen that many teachers compel their students to use the target language regularly in the classrooms. Teachers also force students not to use their mother tongue in the classrooms. This technique will help students to develop their thinking and critical skills in the target language. However, teachers should motivate students in a friendly manner, so such type of behavior can encourage the students' mentality and students can easily share anything without hesitation. Mejia (1998) argued that code switching is a dual language process in which speaker uses two languages at the same time, where the speaker has language competence in both languages. The process of code switching is used by almost all teachers in Pakistan, particularly focusing on the GCUH. Having seen low English language proficiency and accuracy among students, the process of code switching is very effective in teaching and learning, it proves to be beneficial for students. The observation and data analysis of the study shows that teachers use two languages at the same time; English to Urdu and Urdu to English for the sake of making students understand the topic/concept clearly; as mother tongue helps students understand and learn things quickly. Last but not least, this study contributes to the existing literature on sociolinguistics and mainly on code switching.

9. Delimitations

This research work is limited to study of code switching from English to Urdu. The study is limited in terms of selecting participants from the entire university. The university has around 13-18 departments. However, the current study has taken 70 participants (teachers and students) from 7 departments (Department of English Language and Literature, Education, Mathematics, Chemistry, Zoology, Information Technology, and Business Administration). Majority of teachers apply code-switching from English to Urdu and vice versa, because students are not able to understand the full context of teacher without code-switching. It is a better way to communicate and understand the interaction that's why this process is being used in classrooms. The current work is limited to teachers and students of Government College University Hyderabad as we cannot include every university/institution in this limited work in the limited time span. However, it is recommended to have a comparative study, in future, among a few surrounding universities to see how and why do teachers switch codes during lectures.

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