
Code-Switching in an EFL Classroom: A study of language choice

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Abstract

The study focuses on highlighting the attitudes of teachers and students towards the patterns, functions, factors and influence of code-switching in a foreign language classroom. The main purpose of this study is to identify the significance of each function of code-switching and the specific pedagogical functions code-switching serves in the classrooms. The subjects were selected by simple random sampling technique from among the BS students and teachers from English, Education and Economics Departments of University of Sargodha. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were integrated to analyze teachers' code switching through questionnaires and classroom observation. Questionnaires were used to collect the opinion of the teachers and the students. The lectures were also recorded and analyzed using Gumperz' Model of Code-switching. It was noticed that the code switching was prevalent in the English class in all departments at University of Sargodha. It was concluded that it would play a constructive, positive and pivotal role in the process of teaching and learning of English language.

Keywords: Code-switching, questionnaires, random sampling, attitudes

Introduction

Code switching has become an effective investigating area of study in the arena of second language acquisition (SLA). Code switching received a considerable attention from various fields like sociolinguistics, anthropology, language teaching, formal linguistics, and psycholinguistics. With the foreword of Direct Method, code switching use in the classroom was not considered effective and in the foreign language learning classroom student's use of native language was restricted at the end of the nineteenth century (Cook, 2001). Pakistan is a multilingual society in which English language is given the status of second language. Most of the Pakistan's learning institutions have prescribed English to be the language of instruction in classrooms. The basic insight / perceptivity behind using second language in learning and teaching process are to increase the mastery and competence of local students over English language which is considered to be an asset in quest of service in the commercial realm (Sert, 2005).

Currently immense amount of knowledge and information is accessible to the learners in English language. So, this thing is highly appreciated that the much accessibility and exposure to the English language will increase student's proficiency in English learning classroom. It will pave a path for the students to have an easy access to the information of various multidisciplinary fields. Command over English language will facilitate the learner in acquiring knowledge. Code switching is broadly and mostly used in multilingual and multicultural communities. Study of Code-switching has recently gained much contemplation and consideration in Second language acquisition. Gumperz (1982) has defined code-switching as "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub-systems" (p. 59).

Research Objectives

The purpose of present research is to ascertain that switching of code in a foreign language class by the teacher to Urdu or Punjabi language plays a constructive and positive role in the Sargodha University classroom. This study focused on enlightening the attitudes of the teachers and students of University of Sargodha regarding the different patterns of code switching, various functions that code switching performs in the classroom, numerous factors of the code switching and influence of the code switching in the classroom. Following are the research objectives of the study:

- To analyse the functions of code switching in UOS English language classroom.

- To analyse the dominant pattern of code switching in UOS English language classroom.
- To analyse the reasons of code switching in UOS English language classroom.

Research Questions

Given below are formulated research questions of the present study.

- What are the attitudes of teachers and students towards code-switching in the classroom?
- What is the dominant pattern of teachers' switching to the L1 in classroom?
- What are various functions of code-switching used by the teacher in classroom?
- What are the reasons/factors of teacher's code-switch in classroom?

Significance of the Research

This present research would be precisely helpful in multilingual classroom settings and interactions. This research offers a profound vision about the key reasons and functions of code-switching in multilingual classroom environment. For social scientists, study of code-switching has become the area of special interest. They are paying much consideration to code switching as code switching becomes widespread form of communication in some communities. Code switching also functions as to develop community membership and to cultivate social status (Gumperz, 1982).

Literature Review

The phenomenon of code switching is a very common in bilingual countries as people have directly exposed to more than one language in their daily life. Studies throw light on the fact that in language teaching and learning classes certain lapses and gaps exist due to student's lower level of comprehension and proficiency in second language (Greggio & Gil, 2007). To study the phenomenon of code switching in Malaysian schools, Yahaya et al (2009) carried out the research among the science and math teachers. Researcher sought out that while delivering lectures in classroom teacher face problems. Particularly when explaining the concepts to students in target language rather than in their native language. Very often they have to consult the English language teacher to cope with the problems and issues which they countered. When we utilize the language in the classroom which is very much familiar to the students as well to the teachers then it guarantees the accurateness in transmission of various concepts in class. (Then & Ting, 2011). Appel and Muysken (1990) noted code switching as a condition in which a person is much competent to speak and handle two or more than two number of languages at a time present without any difficulty. Hall (1995) has chiefly connected the occurrence of bilingualism and multilingualism to school context. Bilinguals are having dissimilar point of view

regarding language as compared to monolinguals (De Klerk, 1995). Baker (1996) is of the view having mastery over multiple languages, assists one in developing uniqueness, smoothness, and flexibility and develops rational in creative thinking hypothesis. Code switching serves an approach in classroom which bring improvement in learning and teaching process (Olugbara, 2008). In short CS is a tool by which one can deal with more than one language at the same time, and it is a common practice in all the multilingual societies.

Methodology

The situation was analyzed in this study as a whole. No participants was excluded. The investigation focused classroom interaction, so all the participants were observed. All sort of interaction in the classroom was the focus of the study. If the teacher spoke in the English language but the student responded in Urdu, was observed. In classroom setting, discourse analysis means the analysis of the language that is spoken and used in any interaction, expression and utterance by the students as well as by the teachers (Allwright & Bailey, 1991). Moreover, discourse analysts transcribe the data which is collected by means of audio-recording.

Research Design

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used for the research. The selection of methodology in research is significantly reliant on the specific purpose of the study. As this study is descriptive investigation of the daily life phenomenon, the qualitative method was used with an intention to find out the possible answers to the research questions. There was no compulsion on the subjects to give the answers but the subjects were permitted to express opinions according to their own point of view. Hence, conversation extracts during classroom interactions were collected which were supportive in interpreting the meanings of the observed phenomenon.

Questionnaires

For the purpose of collecting data from the foreign language classrooms, separate questionnaires were formulated for the teachers and learners regarding the use of code switching. Both questionnaires were slightly different for the teacher and students. The questions would focus on finding the functions and reasons of code switching by the teachers and the learners in a foreign language learning classroom.

The Data

The data was collected from the English Department, Economic Department and Education Department of University of Sargodha. The main reason for collecting data from three

different university departments was to acquire a more wide-ranging look on the code switching in English lessons. So, the data came from three different departments and classrooms of Sargodha University. Lessons of English language are recorded and transcribed which will serve as data of the investigation. All the participants of the study are English language teachers. A questionnaire was given to teachers with necessary introduction and explanation. Each question in questionnaire consisted of four possible answers.

Students' questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section A of the questionnaire dealt with the biographical information of the students who participated in the research. The section B of the questionnaire dealt with the functions and reasons of code switching in the English language classroom. Teachers' questionnaire comprised two sections. Section A dealt with the demographic information of the teachers. Section B of the questionnaire dealt with the questions which investigated the attitude of the teachers towards code switching.

Analysis and Discussion

The recorded conversations were carefully listened and hence transcribed word for word. They were read several times. The conversations were analyzed critically using Gumperz' model of code switching. This section shows the findings of both quantitative and qualitative analysis of data.

Teachers' Responses

Q1. What is the attitude of teachers and students towards code-switching in the classroom?

Table 1. Response of teachers and students towards attitude of code-switching

Attitude towards code switching	Teachers answer		Students Answer	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	12	30%	70	23.3%
Agree	14	35%	142	47.3%
Disagree	08	20%	64	21.3%
Strongly disagree	06	15%	24	7%

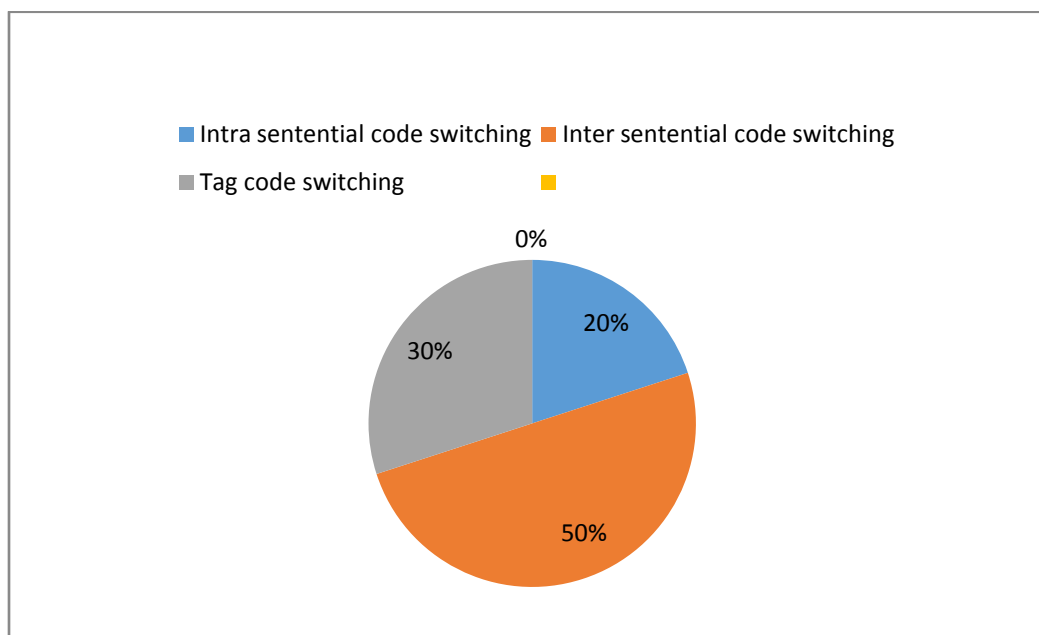
The above mentioned table displays the reaction of forty teachers out of the 50 teachers and 300 students. Teachers who give response to this question belonged to different gender, educational background, age group and medium of instruction. The table 1 shows that both teachers and students have nearly the same point of view towards the attitude of code switching in the classroom. Table depicts that 12% of teachers and 23.3% of students were strongly agreed with the usage of code switching in class. A high percentage 35% of teachers and 47.3% of students was highly agreed with the use of Urdu and Punjabi in classes. Also 20% of teachers disagreed and 21.3% of students disagreed with the practice of this phenomenon. 15% of the

teachers and only a small number of students 7% strongly disagreed with the practice of code switching. Though, we can comprehend through the table that a high percentage of students and teachers hold a positive attitude regarding the usage of the code switching to Urdu or Punjabi.

Q2.What is the dominant pattern of teachers' switching to the L1 in classroom?

Table 2. Response on dominant pattern of teachers' switching

Dominant pattern of code switching	Teachers answer	
	Total	Percentage
Intra sentential code switching	08	20%
Inter sentential code switching	20	50%
Tag code switching	12	30%



The table shows that the dominant pattern of code switching which is used by the majority of the teachers in the classroom is inter-sentential code switching. Teachers code switch from one language to other in classroom. So, the code switching is employed in different pattern according to the need and demand of the situation. Only 20% teachers used intra sentential code switching in the classroom. While 50% of the participants employed inter sentential code switching. 30% teachers from three departments employed the tag code switching in the classroom context.

Q.3 What are the reasons of teacher's code-switch in classroom?

This question highlights various reasons due to which a teacher uses code switching in English language classrooms. The table given below demonstrates the reasons of code switching in language classrooms.

Table 3: Clarification is the main reason that encourages CS in classroom.

Clarification	Teachers' Answers	
	Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	04	10%
Agree	29	72.5%
Disagree	05	12.5%
Strongly Disagree	02	05%

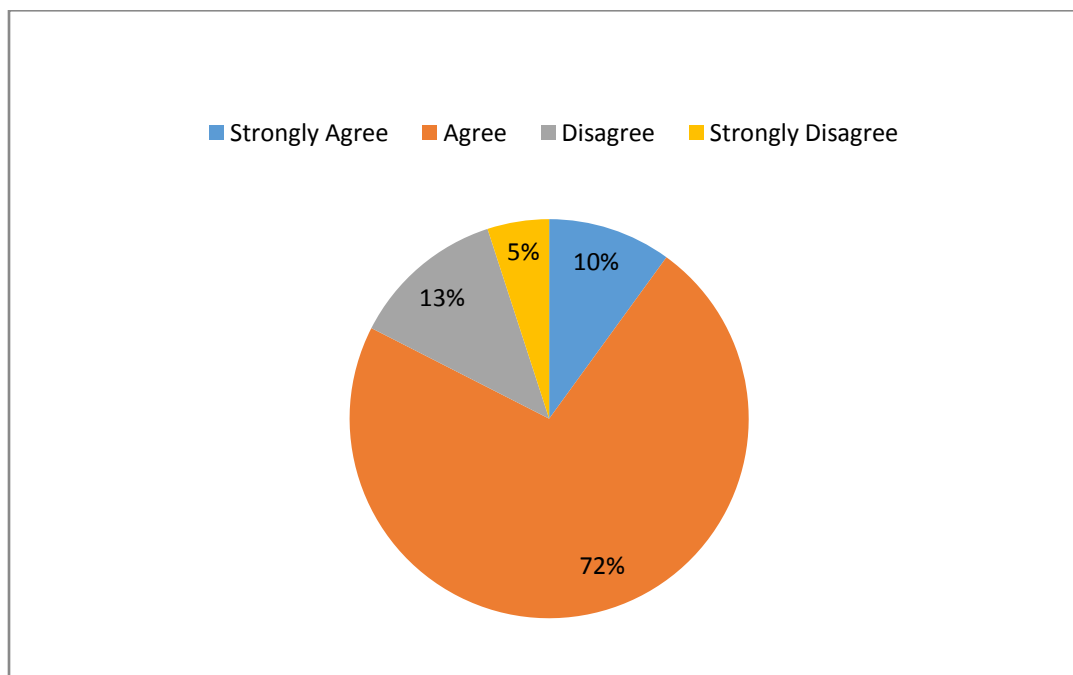


Table 3 displays the response of forty teachers. 10% strongly agreed to the notion of code switching to clarify the any given idea in the class, but 72.5% highly agreed to the same reason. In short 82.5% of the teachers proved the notion that CS does perform the function of clarification in the class. 12.5% of the population disagreed, 5% teachers strongly disagreed the function that CS was used to clarify any message or idea to the learner. On the whole 82.5% of population confirmed the above mentioned stance, while 17.5% of respondents rejected this stance.

Table 4: Giving instructions effectively as reason that encourages in classroom.

Giving instructions	Teachers' Answers	
	Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	06	15%

Agree	25	62.5%
Disagree	06	15%
Strongly Disagree	3	7.5%

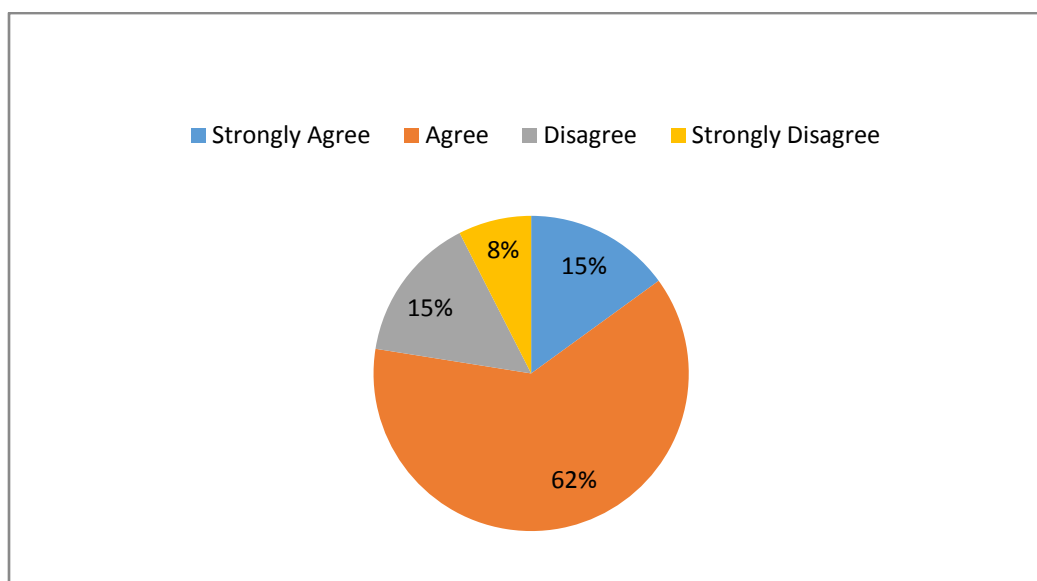


Table 04 shows the response of the question which proposes that code switching is done to give instructions in an effective manner. 77.5% agreed that teachers code-switched to the native language of learner for effective instructions. 15% strongly agreed to this stance while 62.5% agreed to this reason. 15% disagreed to the same reason on the other hand only 7.5% strongly disagreed to it. On the whole 77.5% of population confirmed the above mentioned stance and on the other hand 22.5% of respondents rejected this reason.

Table 5: Translation as reason that encourages CS in classroom

Translation	Teachers' Answers	
	Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	07	17.5%
Agree	25	62.5%
Disagree	05	12.5%
Strongly Disagree	03	7.5%

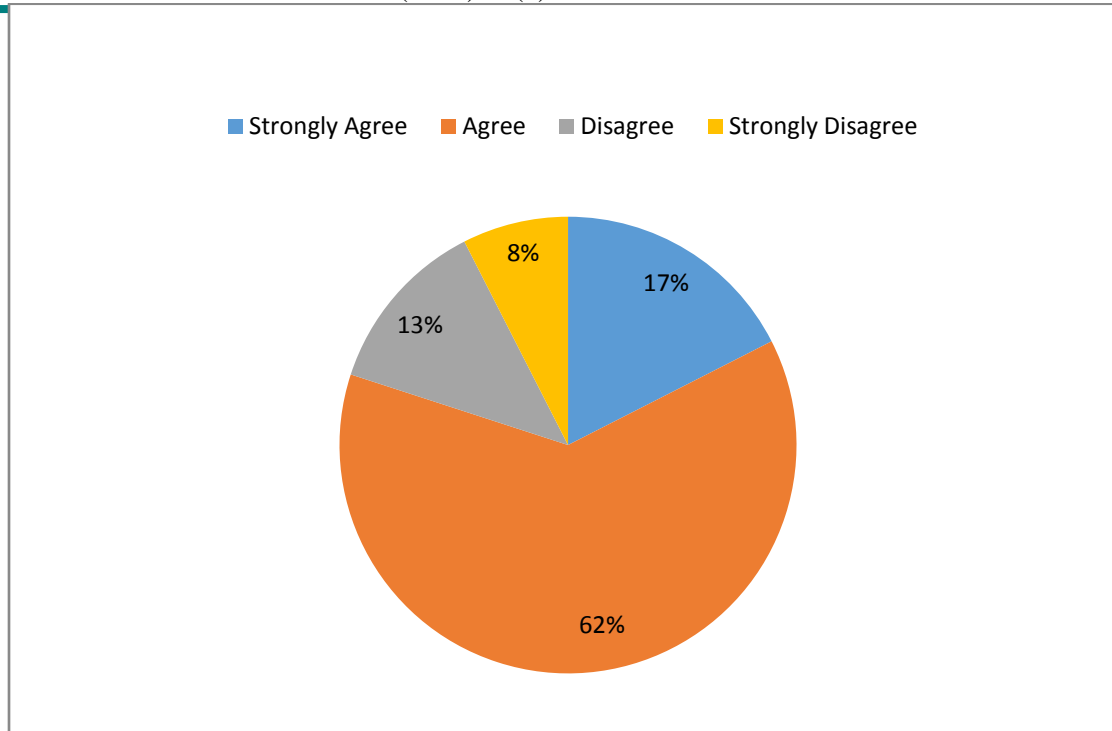


Table 5 notices the reactions of the teachers who answer to the purpose that code switching is done in English classroom to translate the unfamiliar terms and difficult terminologies. 62.5% of the teachers agreed the reason. They believed that translation is one of the major reasons of CS. In order to clarify the meaning and any difficult concept translation into the native language of learner was done. 17.5% strongly agreed that code switching is used to translate the things. 12.5% disagree while 7.5% strongly disagreed that translation is the reason of CS in foreign language classrooms. On the whole 80% of population confirmed the above mentioned stance and on the other hand 20% of respondents rejected this reason.

Table 6: Socializing as reason that encourages CS in classroom

Socializing	Teachers Answer	
	Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	03	7.5%
Agree	25	62.5%
Disagree	11	27.5%
Strongly Disagree	01	2.5%

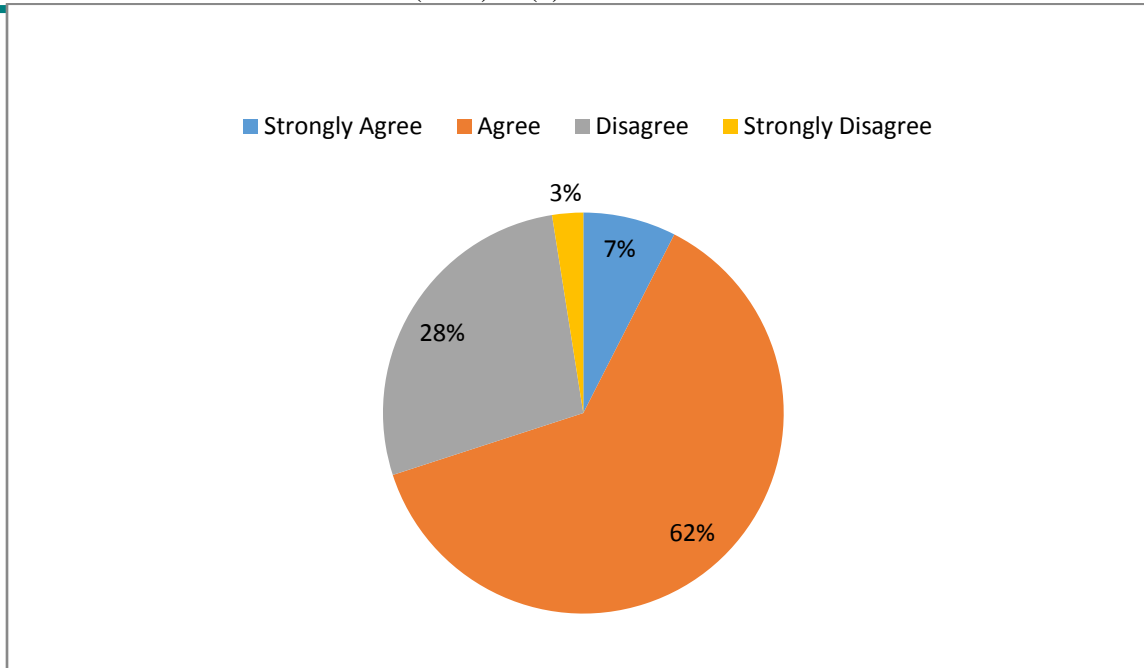
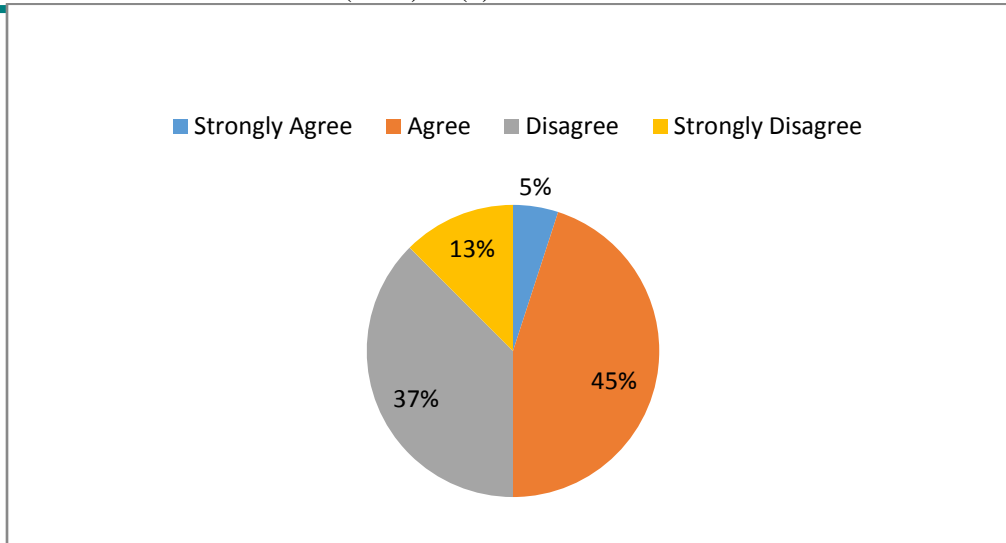


Table 6 validates the effectiveness of the reason of the socializing .Instead of foreign code students are more socialize in a better way when a teacher switch to native code . A large number of respondents showed their agreement to the said notion. 62.5% agreed while 7.5% of population strongly agreed. Only 2.5% of teachers strongly disagreed while 2.5% disagreed to the proposed reason of socializing for code switching in classroom On the whole 70% of population confirmed the above mentioned stance and on the other hand 30% of respondents rejected this reason.

Table 7: Linguistics competence and insecurity as reason that encourages CS in classroom

Linguistics competence and insecurity	Teachers Answer	
	Total	Percentage
Strongly Agree	02	05%
Agree	18	45%
Disagree	15	37.5%
Strongly Disagree	05	12.5%



When the respondents were inquired if linguistic competence and insecurity were the reasons that encouraged CS in classroom, the response was amazing. Half of the teachers agreed to this point and half of the teachers disagreed. Numerically 5% of respondent agreed to the point that teacher code switched due to linguistic competence and insecurity. 45% of teachers agreed and verified the reason of code switching. However, 37.5% disagreed to it and 12.5% strongly disagreed to this question. On the whole, 50% of population confirmed the stance and on the other hand 50% of respondents rejected this reason. The result to this notion confirmed that half people believed that linguistic competence and insecurity were the chief reasons for code switching but at the same time half people accepted that this was not the main reason of code switching in classroom. On the whole 50% of population confirmed the above mentioned stance and on the other hand 50% of respondents rejected this reason.

Students' Responses

Q1. What are various functions of code-switching used by the teacher in classroom?

Table 1. Students' feedback on code switching when starting a new topic in class.

Code switches from English (L2) to Urdu (L1) when starting a new topic in class.	English Department Students' Response	Economics Department Students' Response	Education Department Students' Response
	Number	Number	Number
Strongly Agree	40	12	30
Agree	48	82	64
Disagree	10	4	06
Strongly Disagree	02	2	00

Table 1 shows the result of 300 students from English, Economics and Education

Departments of University of Sargodha. The aforementioned table displays the view of students from three different departments about the various reasons of code switching in class. Table 1 presents the feedback of students in response to the reason of code switching when teacher shift to a new topic in classroom while teaching to learners.

Out of the 300 students 40% students from English department, 12% students from economics department and 30% students from education department strongly agreed that code switching functions to start a new topic the in the class. On the other hand 48% agreed from English, 82% agreed from economics and 64% agreed from education. The percentage of English department is low as compared to other two departments. Overall 64% of the students verified that CS was done for topic switch. While 10% disagreed in the response from English, 4% disagree from Economics, 6% disagree from Education. However 2% from English department and 25 from Economics department strongly disagree to the notion that CS is used to topic switch. The larger number of the sample testified the above mentioned reason of CS had the positive response. On the whole 64% of students confirmed the above mentioned stance and on the other hand 32.5% of respondents rejected this reason.

Table 2. Students' feedback on code switching due to lack of vocabulary in target language

Code switching occurs during lesson due to lack of vocabulary in target language.	English Department Students' Response	Economics Department Students' Response	Education Department Students' Response
	Number	Number	Number
Strongly Agree	4	12	26
Agree	34	36	60
Disagree	44	32	10
Strongly Disagree	18	20	04

Table 2 displays the result when the students were interrogated about the reason of code switching. Aforementioned in the table a great number of respondents confirmed the reasons that code switching occur in classroom due to lack of vocabulary in the target language. Numerically 4% from English, 12% from economics and 26% from education department strongly agreed to the reason that lack of vocabulary is the intention for CS. 34% agreed from English, 36% agreed from economics and 60% agreed from education department. Table shows that in education department the percentage of this reason was large as compared to other departments. On the other hand 44% from English department disagreed, 32% disagreed from economics department and only 10% disagreed from education department. Maximum number of students of English

department disagreed to the above discussed response. 18% from English department strongly disagreed, 20% from Economics and only 04% strongly disagreed to the reason. 57.3% agreed the reason but 42.6% of them disagreed. In short, the results favor the reason because 57.3% of the respondents agreed that lack of vocabulary caused switching the code in the classroom. On the whole 67.5% of population confirmed the above mentioned stance and on the other hand 32.5% of respondents rejected this reason.

Table 3. **Students' feedback on code switching** to lay emphasis on the specific points in class.

Code switching is used to lay emphasis on the specific points in class.	English Department Students' Response	Economics Department Students' Response	Education Department Students' Response
	Number	Number	Number
Strongly Agree	34	26	20
Agree	56	38	58
Disagree	6	14	14
Strongly Disagree	04	22	08

Table 3 described the answer of the students in reply to the intention that the code switching from English language to Urdu or Punjabi language occur in order to lay emphasis on the specific points in class in ESL classrooms. 56% of students agreed from English department to above discussed reason of CS in ESL classrooms, 38% of them were agreed from Economics department and 58% agreed from Education department. Again a large percentage of students both from English and Education department agreed to it. On the other hand 34% strongly agreed from English, 26% strongly agreed from Economics and 20% strongly agreed from Education department. 6% disagreed from English, 14% disagreed from Economics and 14% disagreed from Education department. Again a small proportion of population disagreed with the said notion. 4% strongly disagree from English, 22% strongly disagreed from Economics and 8% strongly disagreed from Education department. Still the percentage of students who agreed and affirmed the notion is high. On the whole 67.5% of population confirmed the above mentioned stance and on the other hand 32.5% of respondents rejected this reason.

Table 4. Students' feedback on code switching while apprehending and clarifying the meaning.

Code switching is done for apprehending and clarifying	English Department Students' Response	Economics Department Students' Response	Education Department Students' Response
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the meaning.	Number	Number	Number
Strongly Agree	52	44	36
Agree	42	38	48
Disagree	4	06	10
Strongly Disagree	2	12	06

Table 4 shows the response of three hundred respondents, Out of the 300 students belonging to three departments. 52% were strongly agree from English department that code switching is done for apprehending and clarifying the meaning in the class, 44% were strongly agree too from Economics and 36% strongly agreed from Education department for the same reason. 42% agreed from English, 38% agreed from Economics and 48% strongly agreed from Education department. In short 86.6% of the students attested that in classroom CS was done for apprehending and clarification. On the other hand, 4% disagreed from English, 06% disagreed from Economics and 10% disagreed from Education department. Only 2% strongly disagreed from English, 12% strongly disagreed from Economics and 06% strongly disagreed from Education department. Results show that overall 13.3% students disagree to this reason. Once again the percentage of students who agreed to this belief is greater 86.6% as compared to 13.3% who disagreed.

Table 5. Students' feedback on code switching while translating vocabulary.

Code switching from English language to Urdu language occurs while translating vocabulary.	English Department Students' Response	Economics Department Students' Response	Education Department Students' Response
	Number	Number	Number
Strongly Agree	24	44	22
Agree	46	42	64
Disagree	22	14	08
Strongly Disagree	08	00	06

Table 5 refers to the answers of the students in reaction to the purpose that the code switching from English language to Urdu or Punjabi language took place while translating different ideas, concepts, difficult and unknown vocabulary items in class in ESL classrooms. 46% of students agreed from English department to above discussed reason of CS in ESL classrooms, 42% agreed from Economics department and 64% agreed from Education department. A large

percentage of students of Education department agreed to it. On the other hand 24% strongly agreed from English, 44% strongly agreed from Economics and 22% strongly agreed from Education department. 22% disagreed from English, 14% disagreed from Economics and 08% disagreed from Education department. Again a small proportion of population disagreed with the said notion. 08% strongly disagreed from English, 00% strongly disagreed from Economics and 06% strongly disagreed from Education department. Still the percentage of students who agreed and affirmed to the notion is high with 80.6% while on the other hand only 19.3% of students disagreed to it.

Table 6. Students' feedback on code switching to create friendly environment in the class.

Code switching is employed to create friendly environment in the class.	English Department Students' Response	Economics Department Students' Response	Education Department Students' Response
	Number	Number	Number
Strongly Agree	24	42	36
Agree	56	38	38
Disagree	18	14	14
Strongly Disagree	02	06	12

Results offered in table 6 show the answer of the respondents for using Urdu or language in classroom instead of target language in ESL classrooms to create friendly environment in the class. As there are students in classroom belonging to different social and cultural background and certain type of conflicts may arise in the classroom environment. In order to avoid and resolve encounters and to create a sense of competition among students teachers also code switch to learners' native language. This table provides that 24% strongly agreed from English department, 42% strongly agreed from Economics and 36% strongly agreed from Education department. 56% agrees to above discussed notion of code switching from English department, 38% agreed from Economics and also 38% of students agreed from Education department. The percentage of students agreeing from English department is greater as compared to other two departments. 18% disagreed from English department, 14% disagreed from Economics and 14% disagreed from Education department. Overall 78% agree and 22% disagreed to the above mentioned notion.

Findings and Conclusion

The analysis of both the questionnaires and classroom recordings significantly made a

contribution in outlining the following conclusions and findings. An investigation of the overall outcomes of both questionnaires pronounces the fact that phenomenon of code switching from English language to Urdu or Punjabi language occurs in English classroom of the University of the Sargodha. Due to various reasons teachers and learners both code switch in classroom from English language to Urdu or Punjabi language. In a variety of circumstances Urdu and Punjabi language is used along with the English language in classroom. The findings of present study depicts that both pupil and teachers employ code switching. The analysis helps in determining the following findings according to the research questions.

1. In this present investigation both teachers and students are bilingual. Both students and teachers know Urdu language and English language. So, both teachers and students do code switching from one language to other in classroom. The data which is collected from the questionnaires and recordings of the classroom disclose that code-switching to Urdu on the part of teacher is happening in English classroom. Both the teachers and students of the study declare that code switching is occurring from English to Urdu in their classes. Code switching is used either consciously or unconsciously in the English classroom. The present research exhibits that both teachers and students have a positive attitude regarding code switching. They are in favor of using code switching.
2. Teachers are proficient in speaking and writing both Urdu and English language. Teachers do code switch from one language to other in classroom settings. English class contains the three forms of code-switching including tag, inter sentential and intra sentential patterns. The most dominant pattern of the code switching is inter sentential code switching.
3. Code-switching from English language to Urdu or Punjabi language occurs due to many reasons. Teachers switch code from one language to other for various reason and motives like checking understanding, socializing, giving instruction, and building close relation with students. Teachers in English classroom at University of Sargodha mostly code-switch while clarifying and translating difficult, abstract and innovative vocabulary items.
4. This study shows that main function that code switching performs is apprehending and clarifying and translating ideas in classroom. Besides this function in the classroom code switching also helps in creating a pleasant and friendly environment.
5. Code-switching from English language to Urdu or Punjabi language is a good strategy. Code switching benefits students by increasing their efficiency in the classroom. Teachers and students do code switch when they do not understand the lecture. The phenomenon of

code switching occurs in various department of University of Sargodha in English classroom during lectures and interaction.

6. In foreign language classrooms the learners hold a positive attitudes regarding code switching. Learners think that switching of code from English language to native language increases their possibility of passing exams. There is small number of students and teachers who consider that the code switching disturbs language learning process therefore, in English classroom there should not be switching of codes.

The findings of this research discovered the most important factor of code switching in English classroom is translation of difficult and unknown vocabulary items and comprehension of students. Classroom observation and analysis of questionnaire helps in drawing the conclusion that in bilingual teachers and students' code switching is a natural and common phenomenon. Respondents very much come to an agreement that they switch the codes from English language to Urdu or Punjabi language for various reasons. In brief, switching can prove to be a useful strategy in classroom of University of Sargodha if code switching is used with the sole aim of making meaning clear and to convey the knowledge to students in an efficient way.

Recommendations

Following are the recommendation that can increase the utilization and effectiveness of code switching manifold.

1. University teachers must be supported about the use of code switching in such a way that makes the learner to actively participate in the classroom activities when teacher elucidates the main points and instructions.
2. Students' communicative abilities along with their linguistic capabilities are enhanced when they employ Urdu or Punjabi in English language classroom. Students may code from English to their native language for interpreting and clarifying the main ideas to their peer.
3. In the bilingual settings of Pakistani Universities code switching must be employed in the preparation of textbook and other teaching/learning material for multilingual learners.
4. University authorities should support the use of code switching. They acknowledge that code switching increases the effective learning in Universities.
5. In order to help professors a pre-service training program should be given to them .This will benefit them in developing better practices and preparing lesson plans in the classroom. It will inspire flexibility and also emphasis the improvement of the target language by

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