

# The Practice of Code Mixing and Code Switching among Students of ELDC Muet Jamshoro

SHAHIDA BALOCH SHOUKAT ALI LOHAR  
Mehran University of engineering and technology Jamshoro, 71000, Sindh Pakistan

## Abstract

This research study is about the practice and influence of using English code mixing and switching among students of ELDC MUET Jamshoro. The students are Sindhi/Urdu speakers and mix these languages for communication. This study investigates the causes and effects of code mixing and switching. It reveals the factors which cause failure and success in exams and understand how to avoid this practice of code mixing in English language classrooms of ELDC. In this study all the theories are mentioned which are used in theoretical framework such as the theory of grammar and its usage, language acquisition, imitation theory and inter-language theory. In this study, qualitative research method is applied; content analysis is used for data collection, its analysis and also presentation. The results and findings show that code mixing and switching has great influence on language performance of students, it causes failure and success in exams, and students feel shy to speak English in front of teachers and other students. This practice creates lack of confidence in students and they fail to master the skills of English language. This study also indicate that teachers are the main roles to avoid this practice of code mixing and switching, they are needed to avail trainings and strategies of pedagogy to apply in language classrooms.

**Keywords:** code mixing; switching; students; classroom; language

**DOI:** 10.7176/JLLL/77-03

**Publication date:** March 31<sup>st</sup> 2021

## 1. Introduction

### a. Background of research problem

Language is one of the most convenient methods of communication. Adebo (1995) explained that language is the only source for human beings to express their thoughts, ideas and even feelings. There is no other way to continue the understanding of communication in shape of experience and there will be no learning. English is considered as global lingua franca to maintain the social, political and educational relationships between communities and states. As it is considered that English is an international language, many countries implemented English as second language and official language. In Pakistan, English is working as official language as well as it is the medium of instructions. English is spreading rapidly in all over the world, due to this people even started to switch words from native language to English. The process of shifting words and sentences from one language to another is known as code mixing and code switching. The code mixing denotes the mixing of different language words at sentence level whereas code switching means shift from one language to other language at intra sentential level to make language prestige. (Mehboob 2009) reported that in Pakistan English was first introduced after its inception 1947 due to the influence of British rulers. English has its own value socially as well as culturally; people mix English words with Urdu to make conversation expedient.

(Dilshad 2007) presents perspective on social factors which influence the frequency and nature of code mixing and switching based on geography, gender, education and socioeconomic issues to introduce social identity to make inter relation between linguistic choices and social context for valid patterns of code mixing and code switching.

Niazi (2003) analyzed that students in private schools are bilingual and they find it convenient to use two languages Urdu and English interchangeably for understanding of various things. Kauser (2006) has worked on frequency of code mixing and switching in radio programs which shows the increasing usage of code mixing at structural level.

According to Myers Scotten and Jake (2001), Code switching is the way of utilization of different languages among multilingual people used as a source of communication. CS is having different levels for analyses as well as discourse analysis in speech. It is not only a tool of conversation but a way of making identities among different states to maintain and establish a multilingual society. SC in terms of sociolinguistics has examined its importance in context of political use and social entity. In Gibraltar, English and Spanish are used as conversational strategy. SC has a vast and rich field of study based on different theoretical perspectives and models with different research methods. The main perspectives of SC are grammatical and sociolinguistic. It is known as macro approach to see the function of languages, their ideologies and context. Contrary it can be seen that the grammatical approach is also psychological approach to understand the models of multilingual process of language and its usage. In addition it can be taken to understand that grammar can be micro level or perspective with syntactic structures developed by Chomsky after generative grammar. SC is a process of internalizing language by local language code selection and bridge a gap of restrictions in languages.

(Talaat 2005) has worked on code mixing in media of Pakistan. He stated that code switching is a vital social function posed by English similarly it is linguistic phenomenon. It is justified by electronic media and print media which show its worth in practices of language and linguistic change. Some other linguists' term code alternation at clause level as inter-sentential code switching, other linguists termed it as a part of code mixing at inter-sentential mixing. (Odlin 1989) argued that language mixing can be defined as the merging of characteristics of two or more languages in many verbal communications so he provided a scope for the inclusion of clause and sentence level alternation in code mixing. Similarly Hammink (2000) includes switching that take place at the clause level in intra-sentential switching and mixing. Wardhaugh (1992) and Fasold (1984) have defined code mixing in such a way that they included higher-level insertions such as phrase and clauses in area of code mixing. Whereas no such instance under this category is found, which shows that code mixing on higher level is avoided generally in Urdu language and English.

### **1.1 Problem statement**

The habit of code mixing and code switching among students of English Language Development Centre (ELDC) Mehran University of Engineering and

Technology (MUET) Jamshoro Sindh is a serious and crucial study because there is a little study has been done on this problem. This practice of mixing words and sentences between English and native language (Urdu/Sindhi) is increasing day by day which cause the linguistic deficiencies in learning languages. The most common errors are seen in grammatical structures and advanced linguistic terms. It needs attention to understand the causes and effects of code mixing and switching among students of ELDC. Therefore the researcher aims to take case study of ELDC Muet Jamshoro.

### **1.2 Objectives of the study**

#### **1.2.1 Main Objective**

To analyze the habit of code mixing and code switching between English and Urdu/Sindhi among the students of English Language ELDC Muet.

#### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

**The specific objectives include:**

1. To find out the reasons for Code mixing and switching among students of ELDC
2. To understand how code mixing and switching plays role in success and failure of learning language
3. To analyze the ways how to avoid the practice of code mixing and switching during classroom.

### **1.3 Research Questions:**

Following questions guided the study after studying all objectives.

1. Why the teachers and students are habitual of mixing words in classroom during lecture?
2. How and in which manners code switching and mixing affect the failure or successful progress of students of ELDC
3. What could be the remedies to avoid the practice of code switching and mixing during English learning classes?

### **1.4 Study Purpose**

The interaction between students and teachers while English language classes is observed, in this regard this study will analyze and contribute deep knowledge to the current literature which is based on code mixing and switching among students of ELDC Muet. More over this work will also contribute to understand the different ways of getting rid of code mixing and switching in classes of Muet by using ELDC as a case study.

### **1.5 Study Limitation**

This study is limited to ELDC department, bachelors and masters classes because of linguistic atmosphere.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature review is based on English language in Pakistan, Sindh and Mehran University of engineering and technology Jamshoro. It also includes the use of English code mixing and switching into Sindhi and Urdu language in classrooms. There is huge work in this area which shows this practice in learning language, in forms of newspapers, news channels, music, entertainment and advertisements. These studies will help in understanding the reason of code mixing practice among students and teachers.

### **2.1 English Language in Pakistan**

For understanding any language, the historical roots are necessary to study. The history of English in Pakistan is

related with India. The British government introduced English in subcontinent during 16<sup>th</sup> century. The works of Ahmar Mehboob (2002) shows that English language in subcontinent received its recognition after passing of Macaulay's minutes in 1835. The strong foundation can be seen that even after independence in 1947, Pakistan continue English language in new state socially as well as politically. People learnt English through communication and formal schooling. In schools, English was taught as a subject and the Grammar translation method was used to teach learners. English continues to maintain its supremacy and demand in Pakistan.

## **2.2 English Language as a Subject in Educational Institutions of Pakistan**

Pakistan is a multilingual country, in schools bilingual languages are used since its inception. Teachers use Urdu and English for teaching. Students also feel easy in learning with two languages. Similarly, in the case of English language, as it is taught as a subject rather than a language, different types of translation methods and activity based techniques are applied in educational institutions. In the trainings of the teachers both private sector and government sector, two languages are used. English got prestige over other local and native languages. Teachers are instructed to deliver lectures in English language, communicate with students in English language, even the whole curriculum is designed in English.

## **2.3 Code Switching and Mixing in Classrooms**

From many years, the teachers and learners are comfortable with two languages. The researchers examine studies on pedagogical purposes and their effects by using code switching as they consider English as second language and English as foreign language. Malik (2010) conducted research on practice of alternating languages which can be traced in teaching back to the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, during this time; the Direct Method was first introduced in the field of education. Malik (2010) further explains the different functions and importance of code mixing. He worked on 11 major functions from 406 school teachers of Pakistan. The results show that code mixing and switching plays a vital role in classrooms.

Kamisah and Misyana (2011) had worked on code switching for many reasons; they argued that code switching takes place due to participants' needs and discourse related. The major results include topic change signals, differentiating texts, social relations maintenance and explanation of lessons. They also presented the fact that there is a big influence of technology in behavior of students to adapt code mixing in their speech.

Ayeomoni (2006) conducted a research from community of Nigeria. Yoruba is native language of Nigeria where 90% people are monolingual. He was of the view that how children communicate when they first enter schools, how they talk with teachers and other fellows. He noticed that Yoruba and English both are carried together equally from primary level which identifies bilingual right from beginning. This is beneficial for learning grammar of both languages.

Liu (2010) in Chinese scenario conducted a study in more than two universities in array to prove that the code-switching in Chinese plays positive role in the classrooms of universities of China. The research was carried out in both qualitative and quantitative methods. In this Liu (2010) distributed a questionnaire to 261 undergraduate students from three universities in China to investigate their attitudes towards their teachers code-switching in classroom. In another work, Liu (2010) collected data from universities, recorded lectures more than 50 to analyze the practice of code switching. The results proved that 65% of students agreed with the habit of code mixing among students and teachers. The final results showed three major reasons. The first one is to explain the basics of grammar, the second is class management and last is to translate and understand the new vocabulary.

In (2006), Gwee conducted research on code switching from Singapore schools. She collected data with the help of tape recording and transcription. He collected data from primary classes of English, Mathematics and Science. The results concluded that it is efficient to use code switching in classrooms for understanding lessons and it avoids unrealistic taste of reading.

## **3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The researcher mentions the techniques and methods in this chapter, he divides it into research design, reasons, and data collection procedure. It also includes sampling, sampling techniques, class observation and interview.

### **3.2 Design of Research**

Descriptive design also known as diagnostic design is used in this research, the reason is that the researcher wants to analyze the practice of code mixing and code switching in classrooms as description research design is well known for accurate results which helps researchers to find out solutions for the specific problems.

### **3.3 Study Area**

This research was conducted from English language development center (department) Mehran University of engineering and technology, Jamshoro, Sindh Pakistan. In this university, English is medium of instructions in all

departments. So it is expected that this study will help students to understand the pros and cons of code mixing and switching and its influence on their academic performance.

### **3.4 Study Strategy**

This study is based on qualitative research strategy which involves direct experience at the place to interpret and understand the setting and ideas of participants.

### **3.5 Tools for Data Collection**

There are two methods of data collection used in this study, class observation and interviews. These methods helped researcher to collect data and understand it properly. Both methods are explained under.

### **3.6 Class Observation Method**

Observation is one of the valid techniques to see the real setting and surrounding. It helps researchers to understand the research problem from all perspectives. Similarly, in this study, the researcher used non participants' observation technique to see the natural scenario to get results in detail. Patton (2002) said that observation allows the researcher the chance to learn things that people would be not ready to share during the interview method. This enabled the researcher to verify some of the responses from the interviewees.

The class observation was conducted by researcher from two classes, one was BS English 2019-2020 session (morning) based on 45 students present, and other from MS applied linguistics 2019 batch (evening) consisted of 43 students. The time duration for both classes were two hours each class, total time was 4 hours. The researcher was sitting at the end of the class. He wrote observation notes as he perceived linguistic patterns in the classrooms.

### **3.7 Interviews**

Interviews are flexible as data collection tool; it allows wide option for better answers for participants when they are asked additional questions. Interviews are collected when things are not clear in observation. Here the researcher has used semi structured interviews for both teachers and students. The reason is to get complete information regarding influence of English language on learners and their habit of code mixing and code switching. Here the researcher used open ended questions. Such questions helped participants to answer in detail according to their perceptions, by using own words and language for rich answers. The questions were prepared in both languages English and Sindhi because the common language was Sindhi among students. Even during interview, students and teachers were mixing words. Five teachers were involved in interviews being expert of language teaching and learning. All interviews were recorded by the researcher by using tape recorder in cell phone for attentive responses. There were 40 students who appeared in interviews. Students were happy and willing to share issues regarding problems in learning language, which they do not share with their teachers. The researcher used native language and found that interviews are richest source for data collection. It provides open room to students to discuss all things about code mixing and code switching in classrooms.

### **3.8 Sampling**

The aim of sampling is to find out the effect of using code mixing and switching in classrooms by students and teachers. In this study, 5 teachers and 40 students were participants. All were from similar field that will help researcher for better outcomes. The sampling was random from classes of BS and MS applied linguistics.

### **3.9 Reliability and Validity**

The studies which use more than one method give more accurate results. In this study, the researcher used observation and interview as tools for validity and results which were reliable for upcoming scholars. Reliability and validity depends on the selection of tools and data which clears the queries of the people and these techniques increase the level of reliability.

### **3.10 Procedures of Data Collection**

This study is preceded by qualitative method to analyze the data in detail. It was followed by certain steps which are given below:

The first step was recording of interviews, their transcription and translation. The notes which were written during observation were also maintained properly. The second step is related with the first one, after translation, data coding took place to answer the relevant information. The third step is also related with both; it is called proper categorization of data which was done during interpretation. The fourth and last step is writing down the final report, its discussion and presentation.

## 4 DISCUSSIONS AND DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Reasons of Using Code Mixing and Code Switching in English Language Classrooms of ELDC

The main reason behind the usage of code mixing and switching in English language classroom is the medium of instructions. When teachers teach in English language, at some time they need to utter the words of native language to clear the concepts as similarly, students feel difficulty to understand the whole lecture in English because of inadequate vocabulary and knowledge.

### 4.2 Language Observed in Classrooms of English Language Teaching

The researcher observed the lecture of BS English class; the teacher was using English language for delivering lecture as well as communication. He was describing a topic of Morphology. He divided sub topics among students. At some places the teacher was mixing words, especially at the time of examples. Those were taken from real life, to connect them with topic, students and teachers took support of switched words. Some transcription is given here.

*Teacher: yes beta, so you know how we use morphemes.*

*Student: ji sir. To understand the tense. K past me bat ki gai hy, present me ya future me.*

*Teacher : yes exactly. Kuj examples ahin. Jean like, when we put s, it becomes likes, with ed, liked. Hinan khe sffix aen affix b chawnda ayun.*

In class of MS applied linguistics (2019) batch, things were different. The whole lecture was in English language expect some words, the teacher was switching words from English to Sindhi. Mostly the words were, *hin khe asan chawandasi behaviorism, kachru languages je bare me chayo,*

These above mentioned data shows that teachers and students both use two languages English and sindhi/urdu during lecture as well as conversation.

Also during the interviews, the scholar and respondents (students) were mixing two languages. It was difficult to carry all questions in single language. The example is given under:

*Researcher: twhan je class me teacher kehre zuban me lecture dinda hin?*

*Student: teachers ba zuban use kna hin.*

*Researcher: kehra*

*Student; English aen sindhi, kaden kaden urdu.*

*Translation:*

*R: In your class, how many languages does teacher use during lecture?*

*S: mostly two.*

*R: Which are they?*

*S: Mostly English and Sindhi, sometimes Urdu.*

## CONCLUSION

This study expands some points after findings which are mainly related with the ways, causes and effects of using code mixing and code switching. The main objective answer tells that due to the use of two languages English and Sindhi/Urdu, students face hurdles to learn single foreign language (FL). This is the reason that students are not able to communicate in English because due to this practice, students are not able to understand complete talk in English. This is the cause of failure in exams. Students don't remember the exact words and structures in English. The researcher also states that there are no remedies and efforts are made in order to improve pronunciation of students. They are passing exams with poor structures and pronunciation which become the reason for lack of confidence, interest in learning, participation in various programs, building vocabulary and fluently speaking. They also face difficulty in English writing because the grammatical structures are change in English and native languages. Here the researcher explains the main cause of this error. He says that is because of early practices by teachers. They are mixing words from primary school classes. They influence pupils and they copy teachers to switch words of native language into English. The teachers are of the view that this trend is for assistance of students. They do not understand words and concepts in English and request for translation. This all is linked with policy of education, system of primary education, low competency of teachers and their training for teaching languages. Here the researcher describes the main points which he analyzed after collecting data from bachelors and masters class of ELDC Muet.

The study includes that due to code mixing and switching, students are unable to understand the basic things in English and are filed to communicate in second language (SL). They are not able to write correctly in exams because they don't know the exact usage of grammar, words, adjectives, verbs and tenses. The reasons contain the lack of teachers. They are not involving students in English language learning activities such as quiz, speech, debates, lesson roles, group discussions and other learning programs. They are not guiding students to solve exercises in English composition tasks.

The study further raises the point that there is a big role can be played by government. The policy makers and ministry of education can get strong steps for avoidance of code mixing and code switching. They should make

one language compulsory to deliver the lecture. For this, they should design sessions and trainings for teachers according to the levels such as primary, secondary and higher level. They must visit schools monthly for check and balance. Where the teachers and administration are not following the rule, they should be punished and the language pattern should be similar in private and government sectors. These all are ways to work on this issue for the betterment and future of students.

### References

1. Aphet Johanes(2017). *The influence of code-switching and code-mixing on learning English language in secondary school. The Open University of Tanzania.*
2. M.Fareed (2015), Code-switching in Pakistani English Language Classrooms: *Perceptions of English Language Teachers.researchgate.net/publication/301361632.*
3. Tehseen Zehra(2017), code-switching in classrooms: exploring purposes and needs of code-switching from students perspective
4. Cyprien Tabaro(2013), Code-switching in Rwanda: A case study of Kigali City Secondary Schools. *Southeast Asia: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, Vol 13, 2013, pp 14–26
5. Biseko, J. M. (2013). Handling of morpho-syntactic Learners Errors in Tanzanian English Classrooms. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*. Vol.4.No.6, 1191-1199.
6. Mahoob, A (2003).The English Language in Pakistan: A brief overview of its history and linguistics. *East Carolina University Greenville, N.C., USA.*
7. Malik Ajmal, G., 2010. *Classroom Discourse In Bilingual Context: Effects Of Code Switching On Language Learning In Pakistan Tefl Classroom* (Doctoral dissertation, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad).
8. Connolly, J.H., 2009. Context in functional discourse grammar. *Alfa: revista de linguística*, 51(2).
9. Grimes, Barbara F (ed). (2000) 'Pakistan'. In *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. 14th 2362 EditionmDallas, Texas; Summer Institute of Linguistics. pp, 588-598.
10. Sert, O., (2005). The Functions of Code-Switching in ELT Classrooms. *Online Submission*, 11(8). Skutnabb-Kangas, T. and Toukomaa, P., 1976.
11. Talaat, M.,( 2002). *The form and functions of English in Pakistan* (Doctoral dissertation, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan)