Functions of Code-Switching in EFL Classroom in

Multilingual Context of Quetta, Baluchistan:

By

[1]Zarghona Bibi, [2]Ghulam Rasool Khajjak

Abstract:

This study aimed at investigating the functions of Code-Switching in EFL classroom in multilingual context of Quetta Baluchistan. The switching in classroom was mainly from English to Urdu and vise-versa. Simple Sequential Mixed Method was used for data collection employing translanguaging as theoretical framework. Two hundred and seventy four EFL learners of undergraduate studies of various disciplines from different public universities and colleges participated in the process of study for data collection. Data was collected in two phases; first through quantitative method using questionnaires, then through qualitative method, using semi-structure interviews from twelve participants of same population. The findings indicated that, Code-Switching plays several functions in English language learning classroom.

Keywords: Code-Switching, Translanguaging, Multi-lingual, EFL Classroom, L2.

Introduction:

Among human beings the best source of interaction and communication is language. Through means of language individuals can express their thoughts, knowledge, ideas and feelings (Oktaviani, 2019). Across the world, more than seven thousands languages are spoken (Harwath, Torralba et al. 2017). In most of countries of the world, more than two languages are spoken for interaction among individuals. This phenomenon is known as multilingualism (Clyne, 2017). Pakistan is also a

[1]M.Phil. scholar Department of English Literature University of Balochistan Quetta Pakistan

[2]Dr. Ghulam Rasool Khajjak Lecturer Department of English Literature University of Balochistan Quetta Pakistan

multilingual country, where more than sixty seven languages are spoken (Rahman, 2003). Major languages spoken in Pakistan are Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, Pashto, Brahuvi. Urdu is national language of the country and also used as a lingua-franca (language of interaction) among people of the country.

Code-switching is a common practice in multilingual society (Al-Qaysi, 2016). Codeswitching refers to the combination of two or more languages in a single discussion. It is commonly observed in oral communication in multilingual societies worldwide (Pratapa, Bhat et al. 2018). Similarly, according to Gumperz (1982), "Code-Switching is the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or sub systems" (p. 59) Moreover, code-switching is the ability of bilingual individuals to switch back and forth between two languages in their conversation (Gulzar, 2010).

In multilingual context of Pakistan, Code-Switching is not only practiced in social context but also in academic context. In social context, majority of the people switch from their mother tongue and vise-versa (Mushtaq & Rabbani, 2016). On other the educational policies of the country are highly bilingual, therefore in academic context of Pakistan Code-Switching mostly takes place from English to Urdu and some time to local languages in English language learning classroom (Malik, 2014).

In this study, the importance of code-switching is discussed in EFL classrooms in Quetta Baluchistan. Baluchistan is a multilingual province of Pakistan where, the teachers and students are from different linguistic backgrounds. Like in other educational institutors of the country, also in educational institutions of Quetta Baluchistan English is learned as a foreign language. This is because of the growing need and historical importance of English language. Furthermore,
English is official language of the country according to the constitution of Pakistan (Rasool & Winke, 2019). According to Rauf (2018), in multilingual context of Pakistan, the teachers do code-switching in English classrooms because English is not only made as medium of instruction but also taught as compulsory subject even at primary level.

Research Objectives:

The objective of present research is to investigate functions of Code-Switching in EFL classroom in public universities and colleges of Quetta, Pakistan. Quetta is the capital of Balochistan where people living are from

different linguistics background. Especially in academic institutions in such a multilingual context code-switching is unavoidable practice. Therefore, it was necessary to investigate the roles of Code-Switching in EFL classroom.

Research Questions:

What are the functions of Code-Switching in English Language Learning classroom?

How does Code-Switching facilitate language learning process?

Literature Review:

A study was conducted by Park (2013) about the potential utilities of Code-switching and translanguaging in multilingual classrooms. According to him, in the past, code-switching practice was not welcomed in traditional classrooms of Second language (L2), as people considered the alternate switching between languages due to incompetence in language in which the communication or conversation was initiated. He further argued that, code-switching is now employed by language instructors and curriculum developers to facilitate the practice of language learning for speakers of multilingual context. Furthermore, he added that translanguaging is a comparatively modern term used in line with code-switching. However, he concluded that, it has not yet been determined that to what extent translanguaging and Code switching practices in classroom facilitate the language learning process of multilingual speakers (Park, 2013).

Another study was conducted in Indonesia by Cahyani, de Courcy et al. (2018) to check the sociocultural and academic purposes of Code-Switching by teachers in tertiary bilingual classrooms in Indonesia. In these classrooms, the language of instruction was English whereas, learners were allowed to switch to Indonesian languages. The participants were three teachers from different classrooms who were fluent in both languages (native language and English). The data revealed that, the teachers practiced Code-switching for four purposes; classroom management, knowledge building, interpersonal interaction and effective meaning.it was concluded that the frequent function of Code-switching in bilingual classrooms acted as translanguaging that is the integrated use of two languages for obtaining better communication and cognitively involving learners in language learning. They suggested that code-switching /translanguaging should be seen as a positive strategy for effective communication.

In the context of Pakistani EFL classrooms, a study was conducted by Fareed, Humayun and Akhtar (2016). The purpose of this study was investigating the views of English languages learners toward the practice of shifting between languages by teachers in classroom. The participants of the study were selected from private and educational institutions. The opinion of the participants revealed that Code-Switching facilitates their content of learning. However, some learners indicated that the frequent practice of Code-Switching may cause hindrance in their way of learning English. Therefore, they stated that the attitudes of learners vary toward code-switching.

Similar research was taken in the multilingual context of Pakistan Bahawalpur by Gulzar (2017) in five different schools that conduct GSCE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) classes. The purpose of the study was to know the functions, reasons, pattern and opinion about Code-switching practice in EFL classroom. Gulzar (2017) also stated that "code-switching can be taken as an extra aid to be applied in ESL classroom to achieve a certain enhancement in learning". (p,148). The result findings revealed though code-switching facilitate the learners yet to some extent its frequent use obstructs communicative ability of the learners.

To study the significance of code-switching, a study was conducted by Obaidullah (2016) in different universes of Bangladesh. The aim of this study was investigate Code-switching practice by learners and teachers from different perspective. Both the teachers and learners mentioned several utilities of Code-Switching in multilingual EFL classroom. They illustrated that; Code-switching is practiced to understand the lecture, difficult concept and grammatical points. They also mentioned that Code-Switching is used to bridge the relationship between teachers and students. Both teachers and learners had positive opinions about the use of codeswitching in classroom. However, they stated that code-switching has both pros and cons. The learners must not use it continuously in language learning classroom because it may affect their language learning process. Similarly, teachers must avoid frequent use of code-switching, because it reflects their incompetency in English language.

The overall studies indicate that, fluctuating between languages is a common phenomenon in multilingual societies. In the field of education, especially in language learning classrooms, it is unavoidable strategy due to its significance. It performs several functions in language learning classrooms both for teachers and learners. For instance, it helps to comprehend the lesson, difficult concepts and terminologies and also

builds intimacy between students as well as between teachers and learners. However, the modern researchers argue that a relatively new term in line with code-switching is translanguaging. Historically, code -switching started from social context and reached bilingual or multilingual classrooms, whereas, translanguaging started from bilingual classroom and reached outside classroom.

Theoretical Framework:

In present study Translanguaging theoretical framework is used. Translanguaging is a theoretical lens of pedagogy which was first used in English language learning classroom of Welsh where the language choice was reversed by teachers and their students. The teachers tried to teach in Welsh and their learners responded in English. It was found as a useful strategy to facilitate teacher and learners to improve their understanding of the language and to solve their language problems (Vogel and García 2017).

When multilingual speakers use their languages as a combined communication system, this practice is known as Translanguaging (Wei, 2018). According to Liu & Fang (2020)
"translanguaging is a practical theory of language, particularly for English language classroom contexts where multilingual language learners use 'dynamic and creative linguistic practices that involve flexible use of named languages and language varieties as well as other semiotic resources' in their linguistic performance. (p. 3). Code-switching in classroom is also the alternate use of more than one language in a single conversation whether by teachers or learners (Lin, 2008).

Translanguaging is the integrated use of languages in classroom by teachers or students for the purpose of understanding the complex content and text and for facilitating mental process of learning. It is considered the newer version shifting between languages (Vogel & García 2017)

Similarly, translanguaging as a strategic use of code-switching relating mental engagement in a multilingual context in integrated form where the teachers and learners use more than one language for classroom input and output. It focuses more on functions and learning process of language than its outcome (Cahyani, de Courcy et al., 2018). Discussing the advantages of translanguaging Cahyani, de Courcy et al. (2018) indicated following functions of classroom translanguaging : deep understanding of the lesson , facilitating in language learning process, helping in second language learning development, both translanguaging

and code-switching have been considered as positive occurrences in the bilingual context to improve communication as well as to achieve pedagogic objectives of language learning classroom.

Thus as the focus of my study is Code-Switching practice in EFL classroom in multilingual context, translanguaging is also a theory of language use in English language learning classroom having bi/multilingual context.

Research Methodology:

In this study Sequential Mix Method Design was followed. According to Creswell (1999),

"A mixed method study is one in which the researchers incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis in single study" (p. 455).

Data was collected sequentially in two phases; first through quantitative method using questionnaires. In this phase questionnaires were distributed among the undergraduate EFL learners of different degree colleges (both male and female) and among students of different universities. In first phase, the respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire consisting close ended questions. In qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with willing participants from the same population.

Research Participants:

In the present study 247 participants took participation for data collection. They were undergraduate students enrolled in BS program in different disciplines in government colleges and universities (both girls and boys) of Quetta Baluchistan. Participants were taken for data collection both from colleges and universities because undergraduate (BS) program is currently started at colleges level, in different degree colleges of Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan. I selected only those colleges in which the B.S program was fully functionalized.

Data Collection Process and Instruments:

Before collection of the data, the nature of the research was explained to all the respondents.

In order to facilitate the participants the instructions were given both languages; English and Urdu. Then questionnaires consisting thirty two

items, were distributed among the respondents and they were given proper time to fill the questionnaire carefully with honest answers. Furthermore, from the same population who filled questionnaires twelve participants were interviewed.

Data Analysis:

Data of the present study was analyzed through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

According to Marshal and Jonker (2010), "These methods are numerical procedures or graphical techniques e.g. bar charts, histograms, frequency polygons and pie charts, used to organize, present and describe the characteristics of a sample". According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic statistics analysis is an approach of data analyses that identify the data, analyze it and report themes within the data. In this process, first all the interviews were transcribed. After the transcription, the data was coded and main themes and ideas were extracted and major themes were analyzed.

Findings:

Reliability Analysis of the Questionnaire:

Before analyzing and answering research question, it is necessary to present the result that shows the reliability and validity of the questionnaires. For measuring the reliability of the questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire consisting thirty two items was checked as shown in the table below, which is (.854). Hinton et al.,(2004) describes the reliability statistics of Cronbach's as;(0.90) and above indicates excellent reliability,(0.70) to (0.90) is high reliability, (0.50) to (0.70) shows moderate reliability while (0.50) and below is considered low reliability. According to the above mentioned description about Cronbach's Alpha value, my questionnaire is found reliable.

Table 4.1   **Reliability the Questionnaire**

Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
32	.854

Mean Value and Standard Deviation of Scales:

The main objective of the current study was investigating the functions of code-switching in classroom in multilingual context of Quetta Baluchistan. To know the views of learners, data was collected first through questionnaire consisting thirty items. After collection data was entered in

SPSS (version 25.) and coded into four scales. To know the findings of quantitative data, descriptive statistics measurement was applied extracting mean value and standard deviation. The Mean values and SDs of all the four scales were (4.99), (4.87), (5.04) and (4.36) respectively. Table 4.2 shows all means and std. Deviations.

Table 4.2 Mean value and Standard Deviation of Scales

Scales	Mean	Std. Deviation
Code-Switching for Understanding the Lessons	4.99 .887	
Code-Switching for Communicative Purposes	4.87 .929	
Code-Switching for Concentration in Classes	5.04	.957
Suggestions of Learners about Code-Switching	4.36	.991

Analyses of Qualitative Data:

For qualitative phase, data was analyzed using thematic analysis. In this process all the interviews were coded and transcribed. After transcription the following major themes were extracted which are being analyzed:

Code-Switching Helps in Understanding the Lessons:

The responses of the participants showed that, the key function of code-switching in classroom is to understand the lessons. They stated that, code-switching helps us to understand grammatical points, difficult concepts and vocabulary. They believed that if the teacher does not explain difficult concepts and vocabulary in Urdu, they have to consult Google Browser or dictionary, which is a very difficult and time consuming task.

Code-Switching Helps to Maintain Communication:

Another main function mentioned by the participants was that, it helps them to maintain the flow of communication. They stated that, if they find themselves stuck in conversation with their teachers and peers while the language of speaking is only English, they switch to Urdu or regional language. In this way them, they maintain communication. Another communicative function mentioned by the learners was that, whenever, they do not understand any concept, they ask the teacher to explain the concept in Urdu for them.

Code-Switching Concentrates and Motivates Learners:

Moreover, the interviewees stated that, code-switching in classroom also a source of motivation for them. They take interest in classroom activities while practicing code-switching.
This is because, when any task is given to them, the teacher explains it in Urdu for the learners. The learners understand the situation of the task and therefore they are more concentrated in class. They believed that,   if the task was not explained for them in Urdu, they would unable to understand it. Therefore, they would to be concentrated and motivated in class.

Suggestions of Learners about use of Code-Switching:

During investigating the utilities of Code-Switching in English as Foreign Language learning classroom, the participants were also asked about continuing the practice of Code Switching by teachers. In this regard they responded that, code-switching should be practiced according to the requirement of class like for explaining the lecture, grammatical points, difficult concepts and vocabulary and for maintaining communication. However, the use of codeswitching should be minimized because classroom will lose its true sense that is language learning.

The Discussion of Findings:

The discussion sections answers the research questions, which are, **1. "**What are the functions of Code-switching in EFL classroom? 2. "How does it facilitate language learning process?" The findings of both the qualitative and quantitative data revealed that code-switching is very significant in EFL classroom in multilingual context of Quetta Baluchistan. The learners reflected through their responses that they practice code-switching in classroom for several purposes. The major functions of code-switching include; Code-switching understanding the lessons, Switching of code for communicative purposes, and code-switching for concentration in classroom.

Codes-Switching for Understanding the Lessons:

The findings of both qualitative and quantitative data revealed that most of the learners and teachers practice Code-switching for understanding the lessons. Among the participants who favored code-switching for understanding the lessons, the mean of their responses remained (4.99). This indicates that the participants found a useful practice for understanding the lessons. Understanding the lessons include, understanding grammatical points, explaining difficult concept or vocabulary**.** The learners also expressed the same functions in their interviews. They stated that they will unable to understand the meaning of difficult words and grammatical points of the target language if the teachers do not explain for then in their first language. For instance students 4 expressed that,

Student: 4. *"There are several reasons/ functions of code-switching but the main reason is that when students are unable to understand the lecture, they switch to Urdu or local language. Therefore code-switching helps in understanding the lecture better."*

Almost all the twelve participants expressed similar views about the functions of switching between local or native language and language of learning.

Code-Switching for Communicative Purposes:

The respondents who opted that they use code-switching for communicative purposes, the mean of their responses was (4.87). They were found favoring the practice of code-switching for maintaining

communication in class, for expressing their thoughts and ideas in classroom, and asking questions from the teachers to make their concept be cleared. Similar, significance were expressed by the participants in interviews. For Example, the participant 6 also expressed similar views;

Students: 6. *"So, sometimes it is very difficult to convey our message may be due to lack of practice. That things are not coming in our mind what we are going to speak in English. So in order to maintain the conversation we switch between one language to another".*

Code-Switching for Concentration in Class:

The mean value of the responses of the scale about code-switching for concentration in class was (5.04). It means majority of the participants responded that code-switching helps them to concentrate in the class. They were found agreed that code-switching functions to encourage them while talking to teachers and classmates. They expressed that, English is not there first language and while communicating only English in classroom with teachers, they lose confidence. They feel shy while speaking in broken English. Furthermore, the students are more motivated and concentrated in class when code-switching is practiced there. This is because; Code-switching makes everything clear for them. If only English was practiced, the learners would unable to understand the lessons and they would have felt bored. As stated by the participants:

Student 5: "I feel more motivated, concentrated and attentive in class when there is codeswitching. This is because I understand the lecture. If sometimes I don't understand anything, I confidently ask the teacher as well as my classmates".

Code-Switching as a Facilitator in Language Learning Process:

Almost all the participants expressed that Code-switching facilities them while learning English language. They believed that, they learn English as a foreign language and they would unable to be competent in English without the help of Code-Switching practice. As the student 5 expressed that,

Student 5:*"it contributes for the reason that it is not our first language nor or native language rather it is a foreign language. So code-switching increase our knowledge and it does not hamper language learning process."*

However, they also stated that it should be used only for understanding purposes and should not be practiced excessively. This is

because, if Code-Switching is used frequently, it may weakens our language fluency. For example, the student 6 expressed that,

Student 6: *"It can weaken our language fluency of English if we constantly practice it. It can strengthen as well our language process because we will able to communicate if sometime we are unable to understand something only in English"*

Thus, the above mentioned facts not only indicate the functions of Code-Switching practice in language learning classroom in multilingual context but also, show that how Code-Switching facilities language learning process.

Suggestions of Learners about Code-Switching:

When the participants were asked to rank whether they suggest their teachers to practice code-switching in EFL classroom or to what extent Code-switching should be practiced in language learning classroom, most participants were found suggesting their teachers to use codeswitching in classroom. This is shown through mean value mentioned in Table 2 which is (4.36). Similarly, while collecting qualitative data, almost all the respondents were found favoring the use of code-switching in language learning classroom due to its significant role in multilingual classroom. They suggested that Code-switching should be used to minimum extent and practiced only according to need of classroom. For example, the participants responded that,

Student: 4. *"I would prefer the teacher to use both languages during giving the lecture so that the students who are weak in English can better understand the lecture."*

Student: 5. *"Yeah, difficult concepts should be explained in both languages. The normal conversation should be only in English."*

Thus, the findings of both qualitative and quantitative data revealed that code-switching like translanguaging is now used in English language learning classrooms especially in multilingual context for pedagogic purposes. As the focus of this study was EFL classroom of Quetta Baluchistan where the education system is highly bilingual and the context of learners is   multilingual, code-switching was found playing several functions including understanding the lecture, maintaining communication, motivating and concentrating learners in class. They concluded, that code-switching facilitates language learning process but still its use should be minimized. It should be practiced both by teachers and learners according to the requirement of classroom.

Conclusion:

The findings of the study indicate that Code-Switching is a useful strategy, practiced in language learning classroom in educational institutions of Quetta Baluchistan. It shows that, code-switching facilitates language learning process in multilingual classroom where learners are from different linguistics background. The findings also reveal that, English is learned as foreign language and learners are not fluent enough in English language. Therefore, code-switching in such situation is unavoidable. It helps them to understand the lecture which includes grammar rules, difficult terminologies and concepts.

The findings also indicate that, Code-Switching like translanguaging is not only used for content of language learning but also for communicative purposes like maintaining communication and showing intimacy with teachers and peers. The findings concluded that, translanguaging is new term in field of Code-Switching.

Limitation of the Study:

The study was limited to functions of Code-Switching in EFL classroom of Quetta Baluchistan. The present study was conducted only in three public universities and in six degree colleges of Quetta Baluchistan. Only students were investigated about the functions codeswitching and teachers were not included in the process of investigation. The participants of the present study were undergraduate EFL learners including both males and females. The study might had different result if it was conducted on broad level, like including more participants both teachers and learners, and investigating the functions of Code-Switching outside classroom.

Suggestions:

The present study gives some valuable suggestions to future researchers in relation with the practice of Code-Switching in language learning classroom:

As the focus of present study only functions of Code-Switching in English language learning class, the future researchers can take in depth study about the advantages disadvantages of Code-Switching in EFL classroom. In the present study only undergraduate learners were investigated, while the future research can be taken at broader level.

The present study, investigated learners only from Quetta Baluchistan, however, the future research can be taken on province level or even on country level and more participants can be taken for data collection.

The participants of the present study were EFL learners only, while in future only teachers or both teachers and learners can be investigated for data collection.

References:

Al-Qaysi, N. J. M. (2016). *Examining Students' and Educators' Attitudes Towards the use of Code Switching within Higher Educational Environments in Oman* (Doctoral dissertation, The British University in Dubai (BUiD)).

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Cahyani, H., de Courcy, M., & Barnett, J. (2018). Teachers' Code-Switching in bilingual classrooms: Exploring pedagogical and sociocultural functions. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *21*(4), 465-479.

Clyne, M. (2017). Multilingualism. *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, 301-314.

Creswell, J. W. (1999). Mixed-method research: Introduction and application. In *Handbook of Educational Policy* (pp. 455-472). Academic Press.

Dörnyei, Z. (2003). Attitudes, orientations, and motivations in language learning: Advances in theory, research, and applications. *Language learning*, *53*(S1), 3-32.

Fareed, M., Humayun, S., & Akhtar, H. (2016). English language teachers' Code-Switching in class: ESL learners' perceptions. *Journal of Education & Social Sciences*, *4*(1), 1-11.

Gulzar, M., A. (2010). Code-Switching: Awareness about its utility in bilingual classrooms. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, *32*(2), 23-44.

Gulzar, M., S. (2017). *Teachers' code-switching in a content-focused English as a second language (ESL) classroom: Patterns and Functions* (Doctoral dissertation).

Gumperz, J., J. (1982). *Discourse strategies* (No. 1). Cambridge University Press.

Harwath, D., Torralba, A., & Glass, J. R. (2017). Unsupervised learning of spoken language with visual context

Hinton, P., Brownlow, C., McMurray, I., & Cozens, B. (2004). SPSS explained Routledge. *Inc, East Sussex, England*.

Lin, A. M. (2008). Code-switching in the classroom: Research paradigms and approaches. *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, *10*, 273-286.

Marshall, G., & Jonker, L. (2010). An introduction to descriptive statistics: A review and practical guide. *Radiography*, *16*(4), e1-e7.

Obaidullah, M. (2016). Code switching in EFL classrooms: A Bangladeshi perspective. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *6*(5), 924.

Oktaviani, A. (2019). *An analysis of using code switching on listening subject of student's English department of Iain metro in academic year of 2018/2019* (Doctoral dissertation, IAIN Metro).

Park, M. S. (2013). Code-Switching and translanguaging: Potential functions in multilingual classrooms.

Pratapa, A., Bhat, G., Choudhury, M., Sitaram, S., Dandapat, S., & Bali, K. (2018, July). Language modeling for Code-Mixing: The role of

linguistic theory based synthetic data. In *Proceedings of the 56th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (Volume 1: Long Papers)* (pp. 1543-1553).

Rahman, T. (2008). Language policy, multilingualism and language vitality in Pakistan. In *Lesser known languages of South Asia* (pp. 73-106). De Gruyter Mouton.

Rauf, A. (2018). Students' attitude towards teachers' use of Code-switching and its impact on learning English. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, *8*(1), 212-218.

Vogel, S., & García, O. (2017). Translanguaging.

Wei, L. (2018). "Translanguaging as a practical theory of language*".* *Applied linguistics 39*(1), 9-30.