Code Switching in Bilingual Classrooms: A Case Study of English Access Microscholarship Program

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Abstract

This study analyzes the role of code switching in enhancing students' understanding and increasing their progress rate in bilingual language teaching classrooms. Students of low socioeconomic status (SES) background studying in public schools in the capital city attend English Access Microscholarship Program at a public sector university in Islamabad after school timings. The United States Consulate runs English Access Microscholarship Program in many countries around the world to provide opportunities to low SES students of learning the English language. In this case study, we observed and audio recorded six one-hour lectures, interviewed twenty students and four teachers to understand their perspectives about code switching in classroom. We used Ferguson's (2003; 2009) and Cahyani, De Courcy & Barnett's (2016) categories of code switching as the theoretical framework to analyze the data. We coded the data with these categories along with searching for new aspects of code switching. We found that the most common reason for code switching was classroom management for maintaining the learning atmosphere. Moreover, a new category, which has not been discussed by Ferguson (2003; 2009) or Cahyani et al. (2016), labeled as 'One-on-One Rapport Building', is a new contribution of the study. Through code switching, the teachers were aiming to build a personal rapport with individual students.

Keywords: *codeswitching, instructional strategy, multilingualism, classroom management, interpersonal communication, knowledge construction.*

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1. Introduction

The term 'code switching' (CS) refers to the phenomenon of constant shifts between secondary and primary languages to convey meaning (Cahyani, de Courcy & Barnett, 2016). In Pakistan, the perception of this process has been mostly negative, as it is seen as a sign of lack of language proficiency (Gulzar & Qadir, 2010). The focus in language classrooms has been majorly on Second Language Acquisition, without any consideration to the social conditions of bilingual classrooms. The fact that students, while learning a new language, are bound to switch to their native language when they feel difficulty in communicating in the target language is largely overseen and the use of native language is discouraged (Gulzar & Qadir, 2010; Rauf, 2018). There is a need, therefore, to know how CS in bilingual discourse is shaped by the social conditions operating in different types of classrooms and how differing views about the values and purpose of bilingual education are manifested in bilingual discourse practices (Jones, 1995; Lewis, Jones & Colin, 2012). To this end, Applied Linguists and teachers are shifting their attention towards the pedagogical benefits of CS. For instance, the use of First Language (L1) along with Second Language (L2) enables meaning formation in the classroom while keeping in view the social background of students (Gablasova, 2015).

In recent years, Applied Linguists working in the area of classroom discourse have significantly expanded the scope of their research to address crucial areas of classroom practices in relation with acquisition/learning of English. Moreover, it has significant implications for educational research and bilingual classroom discourse alike (Gulzar & Qadir, 2010). There is a need to move away from the notion of language as a problem towards language as a resource (Ruiz, 1984), and this requires moving from the idea that different languages are in separate set spheres which are not supposed to intermingle (Blommaert, 2010). Languages should be seen as a network, where each language is linked to the other and thus cannot be put in separate spaces. A person using two or more languages at the same time does not mean that one falls short of the needed language proficiency; rather, this practice is a sign of higher cognitive processing (Ashraf, 2017; Ashraf, Hakim & Zulfiqar, 2014; Canagarajah & Ashraf, 2013) and thus needs to be taken positively. Therefore, the study aims to explore the effectiveness of the phenomenon of CS in Access Microscholarship Program in a public university in Islamabad. The English Access Microscholarship Program (henceforth Access) provides basic English language skills to low Socio-Economic Status (SES) students aged 13 to 20 years aiming for better education and job prospects (Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2018).

Therefore, this study explores the effectiveness of code switching in classroom teaching. It explores relatively less explored area on code switching in Pakistani context, a multilingual country, with focus on the following questions:

1. What are the code switching categories employed by Access teachers with reference to Ferguson's (2003; 2009) and Cahyani, De Courcy & Barnett's (2016) functional categories of CS?
2. How does code switching help in developing a communicatively competent classroom of Access learners?
3. What is the opinion of the students about the effectiveness of CS in a bilingual classroom?

The study uses qualitative methods for understanding CS using classroom observation and interviews of students and teachers as data collection techniques.

1.1. Code Switching as Bilingual/Multilingual Phenomenon

Code Switching, being a major consequence or aspect of bilingualism, is defined differently by various sources. It can be most easily explained as the use of alternate languages or 'codes' simultaneously in the course of a conversation (Cahyani et al., 2016; Gardner-Chloros, 2009; Levine, 2011; Wardhaugh, 2006), such that the speaker is proficient in both codes (Holmes, 2013; Wardhaugh, 2006). It is, thus, a kind of pre-requisite of a bilingual mode of communication (Grosjean, 2010). This essentially means that code switching does not mean that the person is lacking in any of the languages, but possesses an additional resource (Gulzar & Qadir, 2010; Manan & Tul-Kubra, 2020). This phenomenon is especially notable in bilingual classrooms, such as English classrooms where English is being taught as the target language.

The use of two languages in a classroom where the repertoire of both the codes is available offers "creative, pragmatic, and safe practices" to the learners, as they have the opportunity to use both the target language and the language to which they have "greater access" (Martin, 2005, p. 89). Several studies have placed CS as a linguistic strategy instead of a linguistic problem or deficiency (Canagarajah, 2011; Garcia, 2011; Gumperz, 1982; Lewis, 2012; Manan, 2020; Manan & David, 2019; Myers-Scotton, 1993; Poplack, 1980; Setati, Adler, Reed & Bapoo, 2002; Yatağanbaba & Yıldırım, 2015). Therefore, code switching in the classroom can be a source of enhanced understanding and prompt active class participation, as the students may feel more comfortable if they are able to take help from the language they are more familiar with (Cahyani et al., 2016).

Despite that, doubts about whether CS should be allowed in language classrooms persist (Gulzar & Qadir, 2010), as the phenomenon is sometimes unintentional as opposed to being a carefully planned out purposive pedagogical strategy (Cahyani et al, 2016; Medupoela, 2013). Moreover, the idea that language classrooms should allow the use of target language only further adds to the negative perception of CS (Lei & Ho, 2018). Therefore, teachers usually discourage the use of CS in class (Shin, 2005), and teachers feel as if it is wrong to use language other than the target language in a language teaching classroom (Kirkpatrick, 2014; Wang & Kirkpatrick, 2013). However, if one considers the concept of bilingualism or multilingualism, the purpose of learning another language is to add to the existing linguistic repertoires, not to replace the existing languages (Wei & Ho, 2018).

Henceforth, the holistic approach to language sees what bilinguals and multilinguals can do with their language (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011; Illman & Pietilä, 2017). Bilinguals and multilinguals are individuals possessing "unique forms of competence, or competencies" (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011, p. 340). As such, linguistic diversity is seen as a resource rather than a handicap, and the focus is more on teaching people how to use all of their linguistic repertoires in communication, rather than keeping them separate and using one repertoire at a time (Illman & Pietilä, 2017). Similarly, the idea of 'multicompetence' refers to the phenomenon of having knowledge of more than one language in the mind, having multiple linguistic repertoires (Bloomaert, 2010), and using them can prove to be an asset rather than a hindrance. The idea of multicompetence advocates that language teaching should not be aimed at teaching native-like competence to the students; rather, it should enable the learners to utilize all the languages they know to their full potential.

Therefore, in a plurilingual class, incorporating students' own languages in English language classrooms enable them to learn from each other's diverse languages, thus increasing the language repertoire of students with multilingualism in a globalized context (López & González-Davies, 2015). Forcing multilingual students to communicate only in the target language results in decreased performance of students, as compared to those who were given the freedom to use all known languages other than the target language in classroom learning (Illman & Pietilä, 2017).

In Pakistani context, several studies have been aimed at revealing the positive contributions of CS (Dar,2016; Gulzar & Qadir, 2010; Memon, Altaf & Khuwaja,

2016). Despite that, this issue is quite prevalent, as observed by Ashraf (2017) and Rauf (2018), who have revealed that there is a lack of proper theorization and perception of using multiple languages as a positive and progressive phenomenon. Therefore, the current situation in Pakistan still regards the use of more than one language in language classrooms as a negative phenomenon. The fact that in bilingual or multilingual situation, the different linguistic repertoires exist in the learner's mind have their own functions and roles to play, and they interact in dynamic and complex ways is usually overlooked (Wei & Ho, 2018). There is a need to explore various functions of CS in bilingual or multilingual classroom.

2. Theoretical Framework

The three categories of CS as defined by Ferguson (2003; 2009) serve as the theoretical framework.

2.1. Knowledge Construction:

Teachers code switch familiarize learners with curriculum, lesson contents, introducing learners with L2 jargon, reviewing topics under discussion and introducing L2 textbooks. Using CS, the teachers and students are able to "mediate textual meanings" (Ferguson, 2003, p. 2), and thus talk about the lesson contents in a more comfortably. New and complicated concepts are hard to understand, and when they are taught in a language the learner is not fluent in, it becomes a bigger problem. That is why CS is used as a way to make it easier for students to understand and learn.

2.2. Classroom Management:

Teachers code switch to indicate a shift in the content of the lesson, manage the learners' behavior to acquire attention, to scold or admire them, and to develop their awareness to a significant topic. It signals a change in the pace of the classroom; from transmitting knowledge to the management of pupil behavior. It can be anything from cautioning an errant student that they have been caught to catching the students' drifting attention. As Ferguson (2003) notes, CS is common in or around disciplinary actions, with the purpose of classroom management in mind. By using CS, the teacher makes an appeal to students as a "fellow cultural member" (Ferguson, 2003, p. 6), thereby strengthening the impact of the appeal.

2.3. Interpersonal Relations:

Teachers code switch to negotiate sociocultural distance and develop an affinity among the learners. It indicates and negotiates teachers' different identities (as an authoritative figurehead, as an instructor, as a fellow cultural member, as a fellow

human being, and so on), thereby humanize the classroom. The use of CS for this purpose creates a friendly and warm atmosphere in the classroom, and encourages student participation (Ferguson, 2003). Despite being a member of the professional realm, the teacher may sometimes wish to take a step down and be regarded as a community member. This is largely achieved by code switching to the local language and back (Ferguson, 2003).

Working with Ferguson's (2003; 2009) model, Cahyani et al. (2016) investigated CS in Indonesian classrooms and discovered one more functional category of CS. It was named as "personal or affective meanings" (Cahyani et al., 2016, p. 10). It refers to the use of CS by teachers to convey their personal experiences, feelings, likes and dislikes. Using CS to save face when the topic is something that has the potential to harm the face of the teacher is also a common occurrence (Cahyani et al., 2016). If teacher shares a personal experience in a local language, then the social distance between the students and the teacher is reduced. Moreover, using CS gives the notion of the teacher as a fellow community member and encourages student participation. Another idea put forth by Cahyani et al. (2016) is that the teacher feels stronger using a local language, and therefore using CS when there is in a situation – or talking about a situation – which has the potential to harm their social image. Fueled by personal factors more than audience factors, this category of CS involves using CS for communicating emotions (Cahyani et al., 2016).

3. Methodology

We use qualitative methods to explore CS in the bilingual language classrooms of Access Microscholarship Program at a public university in Islamabad. The number of students is above 100, both male and female, and they are from seven different public schools in the city (i.e. Islamabad). This helps to include students from different areas of the city. All these students are from low SES since it is one of the criteria for enrolling students in the program. This helps us to have students from different competence and backgrounds at one place. The teachers of the program are university faculty having PhD and MS in English and education. The sample, thus, is the students and teachers working under this program.

Most students and all teachers involved in the program are bilingual or multilingual. Pakistan is a multilingual country in which people in different provinces speak different languages. The research participants, as inhabitants of the capital city, have variant linguistic backgrounds. At home some of them speak different local languages, however, at schools, they usually speak Urdu which is the national language of the country. These students are from public schools in the

city where the medium of instruction is usually Urdu. Moreover, Urdu serves as Lingua Franca in Pakistan and is used by different linguistic groups for communication (Haidar, 2019a). Therefore, for these research participants, the language they are fluent in is Urdu, and the target language in this program is English. The CS is thus happening between Urdu and English.

3.1. Data collection
The data has been collected through audio recordings of classroom discourse, interviews, and classroom observations. The researchers recorded six one-hour long lectures of the Access classes, and interviewed 20 students to get their opinion about the contribution – if any – of CS in their language learning process. Along with this, classroom observations were done in which the discourse was audio recorded. The interviews conducted focusing on the students' perception of their teachers' use of CS, as well as their opinions about whether code switching is helping them in learning. Doing so, we have been able to understand the use of CS in the classrooms, and its reception by the students, thereby successfully analyzing the vitality of CS in bilingual classrooms.

3.2. Data Analysis
The interviews and classroom conversation were transcribed along with detailed field notes from observations. The data were coded according to the categories delineated by Ferguson (2003; 2009) and Cahyani et al. (2016), to see what purpose is being achieved through the use of CS in bilingual language teaching classrooms. Following are the emerging themes from data analysis.

4. Findings
4.1. Knowledge Construction
As explained previously, this category makes an appearance when CS is done to introduce some new concepts or clarify some L2 concepts. For instance, the teacher explains and clarifies the function and use of pronouns while alternatively using English and Urdu:

یہ جو آپ لوگ کر رہے ہیں نا   ہے let me just clarify it کیونکہ یہ issue ہے pronouns. Do you know what is a pronoun? We use pronoun instead of nouns can you give me some examples کے (that) pronoun ہم کہاں use کرتے ہیں (Where do we use pronouns?) Just like some examples کونسے کون کے pronouns ہیں (Which words are pronouns) I, we, you, he, she and it do you know that?آسمجھ (You are following me, right?). (Classroom discussion, 18/04/2018) رہا ہے نا؟)

Here, the teacher is using CS in order to clarify the concepts to the students. The

teacher also asks questions to the students using Urdu to make sure that students understand the concept introduced in English. Moving on, the teacher also uses CS while reviewing poetry that was assigned as a homework task to the students:

> But have you focused on its job?
>
> "it's" ایک ہے اور "its" غلطی ہوتی ہے جو common یہ چیز میں آپ کو سمجھا دوں use کیا ہے جو آ پنے (Let me explain this to you. This is a common mistake. One is 'its', and the other is 'it's', which is the one you have used) because this is like possessive case of it I'll explain it to you later so instead of they, you say it stands still you need to follow the number agreement then you need to think about trees it gives home to others but don't have home for its self. (Classroom discussion, 19/04/2018)

The teacher uses CS at word and sentence level between English and Urdu, in order to reinforce the syntactical concept for the learners. The purpose is to ensure that the students understand what the teacher wants to communicate. Hence, CS is used to make the input in the target language comprehensible (Krashen, 1985) for students.

The input hypothesis (Krashen, 1985) states that for second language acquisition, comprehensible input is crucial in enabling students to understand language beyond their current capacity. Moreover, through CS the teacher ensures that all students understand the concepts since students in the program are from different schools and classes and thus have variant language competence (Haidar & Fang, 2019a).

In the interviews conducted with the Access learners, the students stated that CS is done to introduce and explain new concepts in L2: "Something that like when any girl represent her home, any topic, she speaks only once sir told us there is some problem then he translates in Urdu" (Interview, 22/04/2018). This shows that code switching helps the students in learning about the target language (i.e. English) and they find it as a positive teaching technique. Similarly, another student emphasized that the teacher "sometimes speaks in Urdu when the students are confused" (Interview, 23/04/2018) and that he uses Urdu "when we don't understand the contents" (Interview, 23/04/2018). In the access program, teachers are supposed to speak English all the time in the class to provide maximum access to the target language.

However, in this study, we found that teacher used CS as a technique to ensure comprehension in order to make the learning experience meaningful for students

with different linguistic abilities. The students appreciated it. Moreover, they prefer that the teachers speak "English Urdu mix" while teaching:

تاکہ بھی سمجھ آئے کہ ہمیں کس topic پے بات کرنی ہے اور کس پے بات ہو رہی ہے۔ "ہمیں

(Translation: so that we can understand the topic being discussed and so that we can understand what we are supposed to be discussing). (Interview, 22/04/2018)

The response of several other students was also similar. Furthermore, students unanimously agreed that permission to use Urdu in class enabled them to ask questions with confidence. Being able to ask questions helped them in clarifying concepts, while code switching made it easier for them to get their point across and understand the clarifications or answers given by the teacher. Therefore, CS is proving an effective technique for a language teaching classroom.

Upon asking the teachers to elaborate their ideas about CS in bilingual classrooms, they elaborated that CS is a helpful tool in ensuring that the students understand any new concepts. One of the teachers emphasized on the fact that one should keep the "needs of the audience" (Interview, 31/09/2018) in mind while teaching, and if you feel that they are finding it difficult to understand the concepts in the target language, one should explain them in a language that's more comprehensible – which, in this case, is Urdu. On a similar tangent, another teacher emphasized the need for "understanding" and "comprehension" in the classroom:

My focus is always on understanding… when I introduce a new concept and I feel like students will not understand it, so I code switch… I feel like optimal input is important to provide opportunities to students to hear the target language and use it but not at the price of understanding. (Interview, 31/09/2018)

This means that the priority should always be understanding, and CS should be done to ensure that the students are understanding the new concepts. Rather than considering CS as a negative phenomenon and communicating exclusively in the target language, the teacher should use CS to clarify the concepts. This does not mean that the teacher should CS all the time, as the teacher added: "When I feel like the concepts are easy and everyone can understand it so I don't compel myself to code switch" (Interview, 01/10/2018). That is, the classroom should neither be run using the target language only, nor be a place of sporadic, constant CS. There should be a balance.

4.2. Classroom Management

Knowledge construction signals a shift of topic and managing classroom behavior while making the students attentive. For instance, during class, the teachers says, "So, why is it good and why is it bad? Okayبیٹا (child)*,* any comments?" (Classroom discussion, 19/04/2018). In this instance, the teacher code switches at word level (بیٹا) to gain the attention of the students since بیٹا is one of the positive forms of addressing children in Pakistani culture. In another instance, the teacher reminds the students "Good شاباش (good work!). Now you can lead the discussion;
ابھی ہمارے پاس   fifteen minutes ہیں   (we still have fifteen minutes left)" (Classroom discussion, 19/04/2018). Here, the teacher code-switches from English to Urdu, to indicate the shift of topic from writing activity to peer discussion.

This idea, too, was expressed in the interviews. For instance, upon asking the reason behind code switching by a learner, he replied "When he tells us about story in past he changes completely into other language" (Interview, 22/04/2018). It connotes that the teacher code switches in order to signal a shift in topic. Moreover, a teacher emphasized the need to code switch when one "want[s] to change the tone of class" or when one wants to "start a new activity" (Interview, 01/10/2018). This shows that the teachers do keep some purpose in mind while they code switch, and it is not an involuntary or purposeless activity. To keep the students' attention from diverting, to keep the atmosphere of the class from becoming too stifling, and to introduce a change in pace, CS is done. Henceforth, CS is used is a strategy to grab the attention of the students and bring variation in the class. It signals that a new activity or change activity is going to start. This helps in keeping the interest of students in-class activities with the help of using more familiar language instead of the target language.

Moreover, one student added that the teachers use Urdu when "the class is annoyed" (Interview, 22/04/2018), meaning that when the students start getting rowdy or distracted, the teacher uses Urdu to reprimand them or to help them focus on the lesson again. Therefore, CS is also an effective tool for controlling misbehaving students and make them focus on the lesson contents. When they are scolded in the local language, the impact is stronger than if they would have been cautioned in the target language. The teachers' responses to the interview questions also point towards the use of CS as a classroom management tool. Especially when the students' attention seems to be diverting, the teacher should

make "jokes" or other lighthearted comments to shift the atmosphere of the class and "help the students focus again" (Interview, 31/09/2018). One of the students also stated that the teacher uses Urdu "when he is being funny" (Interview, 22/04/2018). This shows that lighthearted humor is necessary to avoid boredom and monotony, and such lighthearted comments work best when they are communicated using the local language.

4.3. Interpersonal Relations

The function of this category is to humanize the sociocultural distances in classroom, to lessen the classroom stress and to praise the learners. As Pakistan is a culturally diverse country where classrooms are full of students from a variety of backgrounds, therefore there is a need to lessen the social distance between the students, and between the students and teachers. For instance, while reinforcing a concept, the teacher says:

> یہ problem ہے (This is the problem) in Urdu and Pashto, they are not gender-neutral. Why is it happening? Because many things in Pashto are gender-neutral
>
> (Pushto speakers اب جو پشتو speakers جو اردو بولتے ہیں نہ وہ اسکے ہاتھ پاؤں توڑتے ہیں speakers tend to mutilate Urdu when they have to communicate in Urdu) have you observed it because the first language effect is always there? مذکر کو مؤنث اور مؤنث کو مذکر بولتے ہیں (Masculine becomes feminine and feminine becomes masculine). English is a gender neutral language. (Classroom discussion, 18/04/2018)

Here, the teacher is explaining the differences between the languages and uses cultural references to do so, thereby lessening the social distance between student and teacher and making the students feel as if they are one speech community. It also helps the students to understand the differences among different linguistic groups. Moreover, it humanizes the classroom environment making students understand each other.

In the interviews, one of the teachers also emphasized on the need to represent cultural values through CS. Although in his opinion CS to be done with discretion, he believed that some things are "particular to one culture" (Interview, 31/09/2018) and therefore cannot be communicated in a foreign language. Therefore, CS is used as a tool to represent and at the same time honor cultural values. This is a way to lessen the social distance between teacher and student, and between student and student as well. If a teacher makes culture-specific references, it will help in building a rapport with the students and make the

teacher more approachable. Therefore, CS in the representation of cultural values can help in maintaining a healthy and friendly atmosphere in the classroom and make the students feel more comfortable.

4.4. Personal or Affective Meanings

This category signals the use of CS by the teachers to convey their own personal experiences, feelings, likes and dislikes (Cahyani et al., 2016). While communicating his subjective feelings on a subject, the teacher switches to Urdu to convey the complete essence of the message, which might be lost if translated into the target language. This category made an appearance once in the lectures included in our data: "I don't like the words good or bad, اس میں ہمارا جھگڑا چلا آ رہا ہے" (Classroom discussion, 19/04.2018) (Translation: I don't like the words good or bad, it is a point of constant contention). Here, the teacher is expressing his opinion on the assessment and evaluation of students as good or bad. With the help of CS and the use of the most accessible language in that particular context, the teacher tries to come to the level of students. Similarly, using word contention between teachers and students is a way to empower the students.

In Pakistan most of the teaching happens in a teacher-centered classroom where teacher is often considered an authority (Haidar, 2019b; Haidar & Fang, 2019a). Herewith with the use of CS and using the word contention in Urdu, it is highlighted that the teachers and the students are at the same level, and are able to talk things out with each other. Thus, CS is used as a strategy to empower students through personal affective communication.

Along with the categories defined by Ferguson (2003; 2009), we have discovered the presence of another purpose behind the use of CS in the Access classrooms. Labelled as 'One-on-One Rapport Building', it is the use of CS to build a rapport with individual students. Where the category of interpersonal relations focuses on the relationship between all the students, and between the students as one body of learners and the teacher, one-on-one rapport building focuses instead on individual students and their relationship with the teacher.

4.5. One-on-One Rapport Building

This category has proximity to interpersonal relations; however, the difference lies in that under this category, the teacher gives undivided attention to every student individually. For instance, they keep track of the creative and aesthetic side of their students, appreciate their hobbies, abilities and incorporate it in academics to make students feel confident and motivated, as highlighted by this

instance

Oh my gosh, this is wonderful آپ تو شاعر بن گئی ہی)You have become a poetess) this is wonderful see oh my gosh اوپر والا بھی آپ نے کیا تھا ؟ (Did you make the one (chart) that is displayed upstairs?) Good good good good. (Classroom discussion, 18/04/2018)

Here, the teacher is appreciating the poem that a student has written as a part of her writing skills' assignment. In another occurrence, when a student felt shy when asked to read her written text, the teacher uses CS to encourage the student: "It's okay just read don't be shy اس میں (in this) there is no wrong and right no one will judge you. Sit down بیٹھ کے پڑھو (read while sitting down)" (Classroom discussion, 18/04/2018). This can be interpreted that with the use of the most accessible language the teacher tried to encourage the students to be confident and read her writings. By code switching into Urdu from English, the students do not feel alienated in a bilingual classroom. Therefore, the use of Urdu is used as a tool to encourage students and appreciate them so that they may start sharing their success with their classmates.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results show that the most common intent behind the use of CS in Access classrooms is classroom management, as the teacher controls the flow of the lectures, and cautions the students using both L1 and L2. Knowledge construction and interpersonal relations are also some other reasons for CS as it helps explain concepts during lectures as well as lessening the social distance between the students and teachers. Teachers also convey their personal feelings using CS. A significant discovery is the presence of another category of CS, labelled as a one-on-one rapport building, which has not been defined by Ferguson (2003; 2009) or Cahyani et al. (2016). It is the use of CS with the purpose to build a personal rapport with students on an individual level.

The study also puts into question the phenomenon of accepting only the use of target language in a language classroom. Although the target language environment is supported by second language acquisition theory, especially input (Krashen 1985) and output hypothesis (Swain 2005), but in this case, the most accessible language is used to make the input comprehensible for students. It is also crucial to enable students to produce output in the target language with the help of their most accessible language. Henceforth, if properly used, CS can prove an effective strategy in second language learning classrooms. It is especially a need for students with low competence in the target language. The students in the

study were from public schools in the capital city and had low English language proficiency. Moreover, the majority of the students emphasized that they felt better when the teacher used CS in class, because it enabled them to understand the lesson better, and it also enabled them to ask questions. Thus, the study is relevant for English language practitioners and policymakers as it implicates increased efficiency and progress in language learning through the use of CS. Moreover, it advocates the view that one should not see the use of the mother tongue or the most accessible language in a language classroom as a negative and reprimandable phenomenon.

The findings of the study are aligned with the modern theories about the spread of English due to globalization. The latest theories, such as World Englishes (Kachru, 1998), English as a Lingua Franca (Jenkins, 2006), and Sociolinguistics of globalization (Blommaert, 2010) challenge the concept of language as independent entities. These theories introduce the idea that people have different commands on the different languages they have in their repertoire. Blommaert's (2010) ideas on sociolinguistics claim that even native speakers do not have 100% command of their language. Therefore, modern theories about the spread of English challenge the traditional native and non-native speakers and encourage that the English language teachers should focus on developing communicative competence of students. The finding suggests that CS is proving to be an effective strategy for effective communication and developing communicative competence of the students. The study is of greater importance for classroom practice in Pakistan as students of public schools often fail to understand contents in English due to English medium of instruction (Haidar & Fang, 2019b).

The study being qualitative in nature, and having limited participants is not supposed to be generalized. However, it helps in understanding the use of CS in a bilingual classroom: if properly used, CS can prove to be an effective instructional strategy. It can help ELT practitioners in understanding and using CS for English instruction.

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