

Students' Perception of Code-Switching as Pedagogical Tool in Multilingual EFL Classrooms: A Social Justice Perspective

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Abstract

The act of switching back and forth between two languages, varieties, or dialects, typically during a single conversation, is referred to as code-switching. In multilingual, bilingual, and translanguaging contexts, code-switching is a significant phenomenon that affects cognition, communication, and students' language acquisition. The benefits and drawbacks of language switching for L2 learners have been hotly debated ever since the 1980s. However, these studies are often more focused on teachers' beliefs and perceptions about code-switching paying little attention to how students perceive the use of code-switching in an L2 classroom. The current article's goal is to gain a better understanding of how students at an English-medium university in a Pashto-majority area of northern Pakistan feel about the practice of code-switching. The study's data was collected using questionnaires that included both closed- and open-ended questions. The results of the study suggest that students are supportive of their teachers' deliberate use of code-switching; however, in the university's multilingual classes, the language that the teacher switches to must be understood by all students to prevent the minority group that does not understand the teachers' native language from feeling excluded. The article concludes with the implication of this study for English as a medium of instruction in higher education in Pakistani and other analogous teaching environments.

Keywords: code-switching, minority language, monolingual, multilingual, cognition, student perception, language instruction

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1. Introduction

Code-switching is an important phenomenon in multilingual, bilingual, and translanguaging contexts, and has a significant impact on cognition, communication, and students' language learning. Code-switching refers to the practice of switching back and forth between two languages, dialects, or styles of speaking, usually within a single conversation. Code-switching can be seen as a form of communicative creativity, as it allows speakers to make linguistic and cultural connections between different language systems and demonstrate an awareness of both languages. Cai and Cook (2015) suggest that code-switching is beneficial for language learners as it allows them to draw on the resources of both languages, and makes conversations more interesting, creative, and dynamic. Blom and Gumperz (2000) also identify the role of code-switching as a social resource, suggesting that it can be used to form and maintain relationships with different speech communities.

Code-switching can be a conscious or unconscious choice and can happen for many reasons, including to show solidarity with another speaker, to emphasize certain words, or even out of habit. It is the deliberate shift between two separate language families or dialects during the same speech or conversation, according to Lightbown and Spada (2021) Code-switching has been identified as a natural and normal part of bilingual interaction, allowing bilinguals to express their thoughts in both languages more fluently. Furthermore, it allows bilinguals to establish and maintain their identity, both in terms of language and culture. Code-switching is a tool used by bilinguals to access the lexicon and stylistic resources of both languages, creating a uniquely distinct code that is not found in either of the two languages. It can therefore be seen as a way to bridge the gap between two distinct language families and dialects, while simultaneously providing bilinguals with a means of self-expression.

Pakistan is a multilingual country having around seventy languages spoken by various ethnic groups living in different regions. English and Urdu are the two official languages of the country widely used in official correspondence, the business sector, media, and higher educational institutions (Rahman, 2003; 2005). The majority of Pakistanis are multilingual and speak two or more languages depending on their cultural context, social background, gender, class, and geographical location Khan

(2014). As English and Urdu are taught in Pakistan, students are usually multilingual or at least bilingual.

The current study was conducted in a small-size general university of the public sector situated in northern Pakistan where Pashto is the dominant ethnic language. The university has a student population of around 8,000, and all students are required to take classes in English – the official language of instruction at the higher education level in Pakistan. Whereas teachers and students of the university are predominantly Pashto speakers, a minority of students are native speakers of Chatrali, Kohistani, Dari, and Khwar who cannot understand or speak the mainstream dominant language of the area but are fluent in Urdu.

1.2 Research Significance

In Pakistan, extensive research has been conducted on code-switching, primarily focusing on the perspective of teachers. However, there is a notable dearth of research concerning the viewpoint of students. This article aims to address this research gap by exploring the experiences and perceptions of students concerning code-switching practices within Pakistani classrooms, particularly investigating how students perceive the role of code-switching in the process of learning English. The principal objective of this study is to gain insights into whether the majority of students derive benefits from the utilization of code-switching as a linguistic tool in the classroom. Notably, the study emphasizes minority language students who are not proficient in Pashto, which serves as the mainstream language among the study participants. By doing so, the research seeks to examine whether code-switching proves advantageous for these students in terms of language acquisition or if their needs differ significantly from those of students who are fluent in the dominant mainstream language of the region. Adopting a social justice perspective, this investigation endeavors to provide a comprehensive understanding of the language dynamics within the classroom, the prevailing power structures that influence language usage, and ultimately how the practice of code-switching can be optimized to benefit all students.

1.3 Research Questions:

1. How do students in multilingual Pakistani classrooms perceive and experience code-switching between languages, especially during English language learning sessions?
2. To what extent does code-switching impact students' comprehension and language acquisition process in the classroom environment?
3. What are the specific linguistic challenges faced by minority language students who do not comprehend the mainstream language (Pashto) used for code-switching in the classroom?

2. Literature Review

In the context of language learning and instruction, researchers and practitioners have debated the utility of code-switching as a tool for language acquisition. Especially, since the 1980s, there has been an increasing amount of research on the effects of code-switching in language learning and instruction, demonstrating that code-switching can be used to facilitate communicative competence, increase student engagement, promote creative language use, and foster cultural understanding. At the center of this debate lies the discussion of whether code-switching is useful or detrimental to language learning (Jingxia 2010). Some researchers are against code-switching in L2 classrooms. For instance, Levine (2003) argues that language learners should focus on one language to maintain a consistent system of grammatical rules, which could be disrupted by code-switching. Similarly, Krashen (1981) argues that code-switching can be confusing for language learners, and they should instead focus on the rules of a single language. Also, Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie (2002) point out that code-switching can distract learners from their primary task of learning the language whereas Macaro (2001) suggests that language learners should be discouraged from switching languages during classroom activities. For supporters of monolingual teaching of English, the above research points to an overwhelming consensus: code-switching should be discouraged among language learners as it can prove to be confusing and hinder the learning process. These studies show that by focusing on the rules of a single language, learners are more likely to successfully acquire the language and apply what they have learned.

On the contrary, many researchers believe that code-switching can be beneficial and should not be discouraged in language classrooms. For these

researchers, code-switching can provide language learners with the opportunity to draw connections between their native language and English, which can be especially useful when students are struggling to learn new concepts or vocabulary (Widdowson, 2003). Furthermore, they believe that code-switching can increase learner engagement and motivation when used in the right way by teachers who understand the potential pedagogical benefits of this practice. According to these researchers, allowing students to code-switch in the classroom can enhance their linguistic and cultural understanding, as well as create an atmosphere of acceptance and respect for different language backgrounds.

Golebiowska (2016) suggests that switching between languages can help bridge the gap between students and their teachers, as students can better express themselves in a language they are comfortable with. Cai and Cook (2015) go on to suggest that it can lead to improved academic performance because code-switching helps students process information more easily. He further explains that it increases self-esteem, as it allows students to make connections between the different languages they use and realize the value of each one. Atkinson (2018) complements Cook's argument by pointing out that code-switching in the classroom can increase empathy, as teachers can learn more about their students by engaging in this kind of dialogue. These studies demonstrate the many potential benefits of code-switching in the classroom and suggest that educators should be more aware of this practice and encourage it among their students. If used judiciously and strategically, code-switching can be a useful tool that can help students learn more effectively, increase their self-esteem, and foster a greater understanding between teacher and student.

Research studies show that teachers also support the use of code-switching to help their students understand the material better, build an effective rapport with them, and create a more inclusive learning environment. Students also appreciate this practice, as they feel that their language and culture are respected and validated by the teacher. For example, Kroll and Dussias (2017) found that students reported feeling more confident and comfortable with their teachers when code-switching was encouraged in the classroom. They felt respected and safe in the classroom, allowing them to take risks and express themselves more openly. Warren and Miller (2015) found similar results in their study, noting that when code-switching was

accepted and appreciated by the teacher, it helped create an atmosphere of respect and understanding. In both studies, the students reported feeling a stronger connection to the teacher and the learning material, as they felt their language and culture was accepted and appreciated. Other researchers such as Poplack (2013) and Santos (2019) have also studied the impact of code-switching on the student experience, and have concluded that when teachers can create a safe learning environment by understanding and appreciating a student's culture, it leads to increased student motivation and engagement. This increased sense of security and connection to the learning material allowed the students to become more open to new experiences, pushing them out of their comfort zones in a positive way.

Research on the phenomenon of code-switching in Pakistani classrooms indicates that code-switching between English and Urdu is a common phenomenon among students and teachers in Pakistani classrooms. A teacher may use English as the medium of instruction but also code-switch to the national lingua franca Urdu or another dominant regional language when explaining certain topics or emphasizing an idea. For example, Akhtar, Khan, and Fareed (2016) found that code-switching was used in Pakistani classrooms for a variety of reasons such as to explain difficult concepts, to create a friendly atmosphere, to emphasize points, or to provide cultural context. Other studies have shown that code-switching is a common feature of Pakistani classrooms and can be beneficial for learning, as it allows students to access cultural knowledge and understand complex concepts more easily (Khan & Bukhari, 2015; Rasul, 2016; Talaat & Anwar, 2010). Sultana & Gulzar (2010) found that students in Pakistani classrooms with more code-switching had higher levels of language proficiency than those in classrooms without as much switching. They found that code-switching in Pakistani classrooms created a sense of mutual understanding between teachers and students, resulting in better learning outcomes, facilitating students' classroom participation, and helping in classroom management.

3. Theoretical Framework

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory places a strong emphasis on the social and cultural facets of language and learning development. It asserts that language is an essential tool for mediating the social learning process, which takes place through interaction with others (García, 2009; Heller,

2010). Sociocultural Theory provides helpful insights into how code-switching functions as a means of communication and expression as well as a tool for constructing and negotiating identity in a multilingual context like Pakistan, where various languages coexist and influence one another. More specifically, the following aspects of the sociocultural theoretical framework are relevant to understand the data gathered in the current research.

First, the sociocultural theory acknowledges that social and cultural contexts have an impact on language use. Like analogous multilingual context, code-switching in Pakistan's EFL classrooms is influenced by factors such as the students' linguistic backgrounds, the educational institution's language policies, and the teachers' and students' dominant language preferences. This relates to the current study's focus on how social factors affect students' code-switching practices by looking at code-switching through this lens. Secondly, sociocultural Theory holds that language is not only a tool for communication but also a cognitive tool that supports learning and thought. The current study can determine whether code-switching promotes or inhibits learning in a multilingual classroom setting by examining how it impacts students' comprehension and language acquisition. Thirdly, the relationship between language and identity is emphasized by sociocultural theory. Students can express and negotiate their identities through code-switching in a country with a diverse linguistic environment like Pakistan, where students may come from different language communities. To learn more about the effects of code-switching on students' sense of self and belonging in the classroom, this study looks into the experiences of minority language students who are unable to understand the mainstream language used for code-switching. Lastly, sociocultural theory emphasizes how power dynamics in a social setting influence people's language use. Language power imbalances can occur in a multilingual classroom where some languages are more respected or dominant than others. To understand how power structures affect code-switching practices and whether code-switching can be used to empower minority language students, code-switching should be examined from a social justice perspective. In sum, through the theoretical lens of sociocultural theory, the current article aims to develop a thorough understanding of the intricate dynamics of code-switching in multilingual

Pakistani classrooms. It investigates how code-switching affects language, learning, identity, and power in multilingual EFL classrooms in the country.

4. Methodology

The current study was conducted with the help of 173 four-year BS university students (girls: 83, boys: 90) studying in the departments of English and Sociology. The two departments are taken as case studies, especially for the social sciences and humanities departments of the university. Findings from the current study may, however, not be generalizable to physical, biological, and chemical sciences departments where teachers' instructional approach and the use of languages might differ considerably. The university's official medium of instruction is English. However, the de facto medium of instruction is usually a combination of English, Urdu, and Pashto.

Data for the current study was generated using a survey consisting of open-ended and closed questions. The questionnaire comprised demographic data, students' native and second language(s), and students' approach toward the use of more than one language in classroom instruction. The survey results were collected and analyzed to identify patterns, examine differences in native language use, and explore the strategies used by teachers and students when it comes to the integration of multiple languages. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to determine the extent of multilingualism in the classroom and to establish a correlation between attitudes toward language integration and the use of multiple languages. Ethical demands of the study were kept paramount during student recruitment and instrument administration for the study. The students were approached for voluntary participation, full disclosure about the study was shared with them, and they were explicitly informed that they can withdraw from the study even after they have initially agreed to participate. Great care was taken to keep the participants' identities and the university's name and location confidential. The data was fully anonymized and no part of it was shared with a third party without the consent of the participants.

Initially, 205 questionnaires were administered out of which 173 responses were received. Whereas the majority of the participants were ethnic Pashto speakers, 12 non-Pashto speakers came from other areas who spoke various languages, and 18 non-Pashto speakers were from Chatral and Afghanistan

who spoke Chatrali and Dari languages respectively. All non-Pashto speakers had only basic proficiency in Pashto and were not able to comprehend fluent Pashto.

Table 4.1: The number of Pashto- and non-Pashto speakers in the study

	Department of English	Department of Sociology	Pashto speakers	Non- Pashto speakers	Total
Male	43	47	72	18	90
Female	45	38	75	08	83
Total	88	85	147	26	173

5. Findings

5.1 Students' perception of monolingual/multilingual pedagogy

Regarding monolingual/multilingual pedagogy, the respondents showed a greater propensity toward English-only instruction in the classroom. This attitude appears to be rooted in the notion that English-only instruction is the easiest way to facilitate learning. Although empirical studies have shown that multilingual pedagogy fosters greater understanding and mastery of the target language, students in the current study tend to believe that greater immersion in the target language was possible if the teacher used English-only instruction as illustrated in the data in Table 5.1. English-only pedagogy was also considered more conducive to an inclusive classroom environment as a minority of the students did not understand or speak Pashto - the dominant language of the teachers. Proponents of English-only pedagogy, however, did stress that the benefits of English-only pedagogy can only be acquired if the teacher spoke very easy English that they could easily comprehend.

A frequent justification for English-only pedagogy related to the differentiated utility of English and Pashto in terms of prospects for higher education and career opportunities. A majority of students assigned instrumental roles to English that they believed could only be fulfilled if English was used most of the time in the classroom. However, they could not see any utility for Pashto in terms of future academic and career goals. In response to the open-ended question, a typical justification among the Pashto-speaking students was:

English is the key to our future success. If we are prepared at this level for speaking English, when can we learn it? The teacher should strictly prohibit the use of Pashto in the classroom and improve our English.

Table 5.1: Students' perception of monolingual and multilingual pedagogy

		Pashto Speakers	Non- Pashto Speakers
Use of only English language in class by the teacher is beneficial for me.	Agree	80.0%	79.1%
	Uncertain	6.2%	1%
	Disagree	13.8%	19.9%
Use of only Pashto language in class by the teacher is beneficial for me.	Agree	19.3%	1.9%
	Uncertain	16.3%	6.6%
	Disagree	64.4%	91.5%
I would advise my teacher to use	English	16.6%	78.6%
	Pashto	5.8%	0%
	Pashto-English	77.6%	21.4%

Among the non-Pashto speaking students, a typical justification for English-only instruction was justified based on minority language students not being able to understand Pashto. They agreed that using Pashto motivated the Pashto-speaking students to participate more in the classroom however it also left non-Pashto-speaking students out of the discussion as they could not comprehend what was being said.

Yes, when the teacher uses Pashto frequently in the classroom those students speak more who can speak it but those who cannot are left guessing what was said. In this way, speaking Pashto divides the class and should be prohibited. English is better for everyone.

Although a majority of both Pashto-speaking and non-Pashto-speaking students believed that using English-only pedagogy was useful for a more inclusive classroom environment and for developing their proficiency in the target language, they also stressed the difficulties they had in understanding English-only instruction. A common response was that the teacher should simplify, repeat, and paraphrase what was said in English because many times they could not even comprehend what the teacher said in English.

If the teacher speaks difficult English and without explaining his words, we often cannot follow what was said. We feel that some important point has been missed and we do not know what it was. This is often very frustrating for us. I wish I knew better English and understood everything the teacher said.

The exclusive use of Pashto for classroom instruction was opposed by a majority of both Pashto and non-Pashto speakers. The reason for opposing Pashto among non-Pashto speakers was related to their inability to comprehend input in this language. However, the Pashto speakers also opposed it on the basis that Pashto should only be assigned the role of an auxiliary language in instruction when the teacher needed to explain challenging concepts.

Pashto can only be used very sparingly especially when the teacher is delivering a lecture about a new and difficult topic. Yesterday, we started studying a new topic in sociolinguistics. It was very difficult. The teacher explained it in simple Pashto which was very helpful for all of us.

Analogously, another Pashto-speaking student wrote:

We realize that if things are explained in Pashto they become easier for us to comprehend but we come to the university to learn English. If the teacher speaks in English, it is good for improving our listening skills.

On the other hand, most of the minority language speakers in the study desired that Urdu be used along with English to explain difficult concepts. Urdu is the national lingua franca of Pakistan, so knowing it is necessary for anyone living in the country. As students are taught Urdu throughout the country from elementary school onward, the literate Urdu population in Pakistan can speak the language. A majority of the non-Pashto speakers thus preferred that English be supplemented with Urdu to explain difficult concepts as they had an understanding of the language, making it easier for them to comprehend the material more quickly. They also favored the use of Pashto provided that it was accompanied by Urdu translations, as many non-Pashto speakers had difficulty understanding it.

I prefer that all my teachers speak English and use Urdu for an explanation of difficult ideas. As the teachers are all Pashto speakers, it is natural that they often resort to speaking their native language. However, they should translate it into Urdu whenever they say something in Pashto.

This indicates that the teachers need to be aware of the diverse student population in the classroom and accommodate their needs. This will not only help the students understand the lesson better but also demonstrate a commitment from the teachers to provide an inclusive learning environment. By translating their Pashto into Urdu, the teachers are showing respect for the language and culture of their students, as well as demonstrating that they understand the diverse student population in their classroom.

5.2 Affective aspects regarding language in instruction

Affective aspects of language use play an important role in learners' motivation and their ability to stay engaged in learning activities. For example, when teachers switch to a student's native language, it can positively impact the learners' attitudes toward the language being taught and also make them feel more comfortable in their environment. This sense of comfort may provide learners with a greater sense of security and acceptance, resulting in increased motivation and engagement. Data in the current study showed that the use of native language had a positive impact on learners' motivation, engagement, and participation in the classroom.

As Table 5.2 illustrates, the minority non-Pashto speaking students felt confused and uneasy in the classroom when the teacher used Pashto and English during most of the classroom.

When the teacher uses Pashto most of the time in a lecture, I feel like I am sitting in a foreign country and I do not know the language spoken in that country. It gives me a strange feeling as if I am not present in the classroom. I have to work harder to understand such content later on through self-study.

If the teacher used English during most of the instruction, more than half of the Pashto and non-Pashto speakers disagreed that they felt uneasy in the

classroom. A majority of the student agreed that the more English is spoken during instruction time the better it would be for their education career.

Here, everything is in English so why should the teacher use other languages? Our courses and exams are in English. Less and less Pashto or Urdu should be used and more English otherwise we may lag in competition with students from other universities.

Table 5.2: Students' perception of monolingual and multilingual pedagogy

		Pashto Speakers	Non- Pashto Speakers
I get confused when teacher mixes Pashto and English.	Agree	11.2%	66.1%
	Uncertain	11.5%	6.9%
	Disagree	77.3%	27.0%
Mixing Pashto and English makes me feel comfortable learning.	Agree	79.6%	13.6%
	Uncertain	4.8%	11.7%
	Disagree	15.6%	74.7%
Teaching only in English by the teacher makes me feel tense.	Agree	27.4%	38.5%
	Uncertain	11.0%	0%
	Disagree	61.6%	61.5%
Mixing Pashto and English makes me focused during the lecture.	Agree	68.6%	31.6%
	Uncertain	7.7%	14.9%
	Disagree	23.7%	53.5%

As Table 5.2 illustrates, the majority of the Pashto-speaking students agreed that code-switching helped them focus on the taught content. They saw a positive correlation between their orientation toward their course and the use of code-switching in the classroom. More than half of the non-Pashto speaking students, however, disagreed that the use of Pashto for code-switching had any benefits for their attention in the classroom as they could not comprehend all that was said in Pashto. Nonetheless, even among the non-Pashto speaking students, a significant number agreed that code-switching did help them focus on the taught content provided the language was fully comprehensible to them such as Urdu.

5.3 Correlation between code-switching and academic success

Among the Pashto-speaking students, around two-thirds agreed that the use of code-switching between English and Pashto had a positive impact on their chances of success in the examination as they could comprehend the course content better (Table 5.3). This finding is significant because it supports the notion that code-switching helps learners to understand the language better, which in turn could have a positive effect on their success. However, in contrast to these students, only a quarter of the non-Pashto speakers agreed that code-switching had a positive impact on their chances of success in the exam. This relates to the fact most often teachers would use Pashto as the code-switching language and these students could not comprehend Pashto effectively. This indicates that the ability to use code-switching has a positive impact on the success of language learners, but only if they understand the language used for code-switching. As a respondent said:

Everyone in the class is not a Pashto speaker. If the teachers need to use another language with English, it should be Urdu as everyone understands it. After a lecture, the teacher should give us key points and a summary of the content in Urdu. That will increase our chances of securing good marks in the exam.

Table 5.3: Students' perception of the correlation between code-switching and academic success

		Pashto Speakers	Non- Pashto Speakers
Teaching in Pashto and English at the same time by the teacher increases my chances of passing the exam.	Agree	68.8%	23.7%
	Uncertain	11.5%	10.6%
	Disagree	19.7%	65.7%
Mixing Pashto and English makes me understand difficult concepts.	Agree	78.4%	33.7%
	Uncertain	3.8%	4.2%
	Disagree	17.8%	62.1%
Mixing Pashto and English makes it easier for me to carry out my tasks (assignments) successfully.	Agree	76.5%	18.7%
	Uncertain	5.5%	8.8%
	Disagree	18.0%	72.5%

Analogously, when asked about whether their academic concepts were made clearer when code-switching was used, more than two-thirds of the Pashto speakers responded positively. In the open-ended follow-up question, a typical reason given for this was based on the importance of code-switching for clarifying difficult concepts.

We have some very tough subjects that we have never studied before in our educational career. Subjects like gender and power and anthropological theories are very new to us. When the teacher explains difficult concepts in these subjects, we feel more in control of our learning because then we know what we are supposed to learn.

Expectedly, the non-Pashto-speaking students did not perceive a positive correlation between the clarification of academic concepts and the use of code-switching. More than half of them disagreed that code-switching to Pashto had any useful impact on clarifying concepts and ideas. As shown in the data above, this related to the students having little or no experience with the language, making it difficult for them to understand and learn from their teacher's explanations.

Similarly, relating to a correlation between code-switching and the ease for students to carry out tasks and activities in the classroom, a divergence was observed between Pashto and non-Pashto speaking students. Pashto-speaking students reported better performance when code-switching was present, while the opposite was true for their non-Pashto-speaking counterparts. This suggests that the ability to code-switch may have created a learning environment better suited for Pashto speakers, allowing them to more easily engage with tasks, while at the same time placing non-Pashto-speaking students at a disadvantage. This shows that although code-switching can be useful if used without taking into consideration the linguistic resources of the students it can create an unequal learning environment in the classroom, where some students are placed at an advantage, while others are unable to benefit from the same resources.

5.3 Code-switching and target language acquisition

Teachers' language use in the classroom can be an essential element for students' language proficiency development in a second language. Whether

a teacher's use of code-switching has a positive or negative impact on students' target and native languages, is a contentious issue in second language acquisition research. For example, some research suggests that code-switching can be beneficial to language proficiency and can help support student learning by providing a bridge between their native and target languages, while other research argues that it could interfere with the acquisition of the target language.

Table 5.4: Students' perception of code-switching and target language acquisition

		Pashto Speakers	Non-Pashto Speakers
Mixing the two languages the teacher in the class leads to the weakness of my English.	Agree	30.2%	62.2%
	Uncertain	11.3%	6.2%
	Disagree	58.5%	31.6%
Mixing the two languages by teacher in the class leads to weakness in my Pashto.	Agree	7.6%	22.3%
	Uncertain	4.4%	14.3%
	Disagree	88.0%	63.4%

Findings in the current study however show that at least the Pashto-speaking students perceived a positive correlation between code-switching in the classroom and their L1 and L2 (Table 5.4). These findings indicate that for at least some contexts, code-switching can have a positive impact on language proficiency, and teachers should consider this when developing language instruction.

6. Conclusion

The study's findings provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of code-switching in multilingual Pakistani classrooms, aligned with the four aspects of Sociocultural Theory. Firstly, the social context of code-switching is evident as both Pashto-speaking and non-Pashto-speaking students agree that learning English is crucial for their future careers. However, the language barrier emerges as a significant factor, leading to differing responses between the two groups. Non-Pashto speakers, with limited knowledge of the language, feel alienated when the teacher switches to Pashto, resulting in a perceived loss of important information. Secondly, code-switching is recognized as a powerful tool for learning and communication. The participants' preference for code-switching by the teacher, as it clarifies complex ideas, maintains attention, and aids in job

completion, demonstrates its efficacy as a pedagogical resource in the multilingual classroom setting (Canagarajah, 2011). Furthermore, as Canagarajah argues, translanguaging, or strategic and goal-oriented code-switching, enables multilingual students to grasp rich semantic content and feel confident in the classroom environment, mirroring their normative social linguistic practices. Thirdly, the interplay between identity and language is evident in the students' motivation for code-switching. They draw upon their multilingual repertoire, extending the linguistic options available in the classroom, a benefit not accessible in a monolingual context (Lin, 2008; 2013). This echoes what Lin (2013) emphasizes about translanguaging that it serves as a means for students to assert their cultural identity and sense of belonging within the educational space. Lastly, whereas some researchers claim code-switching that it is indicative of language interference or a lack of language ownership, strategic and intentional code-switching, employed by the teacher, has demonstrated pedagogical and sociocultural benefits for multilingual students. By embracing code-switching as a communicative tool, teachers exhibit their sociocultural competence within their linguistic community. The improvisation of teachers in code-switching between languages demonstrates their creativity in communication and their adoption of a pragmatic multilingual strategy to support pedagogy, aligning with the four aspects of Sociocultural Theory (Lin, 2008). However, the study emphasizes the need for caution when employing code-switching in multilingual classrooms. Teachers should ensure that they switch to a language that all students can understand, or provide translations to facilitate comprehension. This consideration reflects the social context of code-switching, as it recognizes the diverse linguistic backgrounds of students and aims to promote inclusive language practices within the classroom.

In terms of further research, using evidence to explore the needs and context of multilingual EFL teaching, discrepancies between practice and policy can be identified, encompassing the four aspects of Sociocultural Theory. Such investigations can inform policy formulation to safeguard the rights of speakers of minority languages and acknowledge the value of multilingual EFL teaching, contributing to a more effective and equitable learning environment (Khan et al., 2022). Further exploration of the implications of code-switching in multilingual teaching contexts is essential, embracing the

aspects of language as a tool for learning, identity and language, and power and language use. The findings of such studies can increase public and teacher awareness of code-switching's positive effects, dispelling the notion that it acts as a barrier to learning English as a foreign language. Instead, code-switching maximizes learning opportunities, fosters rapport, offers support to students, and reduces student anxiety, affirming its sociocultural significance in the classroom.

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