

CODE-SWITCHING PRACTICES AND THEIR IMPACT ON ENGLISH LEARNING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF MALAKAND

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Abstract

The study aims to explore the use of code-switching amongst English teachers and students in the secondary schools of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well as its impact on the process of English language learning. Most learners in Malakand speak Pashto at home, hear Urdu in school, via religion and through the media, and hear English quite exclusively in the setting of school and examinations. The consequence of this is that the teaching and learning in the classwork switches between English, Urdu and Pashto without any predetermined logic. The study uses a qualitative multiple case design with classroom observation and semi-structured interviews to English teachers and students to analyze thematically. The theoretical framework is the sociocultural theory by Vygotsky and the affective filter hypothesis by Krashen. The analysis indicates that code switching serves as a 'scaffold' for grammar, vocabulary and instructions, as a classroom management device, as a device for teacher-student rapport and as an emotional support for learners with low proficiency level. However, the analysis also shows that the constant and unplanned use of Urdu and Pashto also results in reduced exposure of English input and also the opportunities for productive use of English by the learners. The study posits that code-switching is appropriate, controlled and gradually reduced and that this will facilitate the learning of English, while its use when it is too frequent and without justification will make it difficult to learn English. Recommendations are made in teacher training, classroom practice, assessment and LEP policy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The alternating use of more than one language within utterances, within a stretch of discourse, within a conversation is known as code switching; this is one of the best documented aspects of bilingual and multilingual communication (Gumperz, 1982; Hamers & Blanc, 2000; Poplack, 1980). Early sociolinguistic studies saw it as a means by which speakers signal their group affiliation, change their footing and organise talk (Auer 1998, Gumperz 1982), and Myers-Scotton (1993) described it as a rational and socially motivated

choice which speakers make in an interaction to negotiate rights and obligations. Poplack (1980) showed that switching is controlled by grammatical factors and is typical of fluent bilinguals and not of people who are not fluent in any one language.

During much of the twentieth century, the principles of English language teaching were influenced by a monolingual principle which emphasized that the language of the classroom should be the target language (English) and that the language of the learners should not be used in the classroom (Phillipson, 1992). It was based on the reading-based theories of second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982) and from the practical perspective that every minute spent in the L1 is one minute that cannot be spent in the L2. In the last 30 years, however, this position has been undermined by researchers. Atkinson (1987) called the mother tongue a neglected resource; Cook (2001) claimed that the first language is a valid teaching tool and that the learner is not a failed native speaker, but an emerging multi-competent user; and Butzkamm (2003) even stated that the English-only rule is a dogma that needs to be retired. Cummins (2007) challenged the notion of the monolingual teaching model in multilingual classrooms, denouncing the ignoring of the phenomenon of language transfer between languages, and Hall and Cook (2012) in the comprehensive review, reached the conclusion that the teaching of L2 language in the students' own language is very common and, if carefully managed, beneficial.

Pakistan is a linguistically diverse nation, where Urdu is the national language, English is an official language and some large numbers of regional and minority languages are used as the daily language by most of the citizens (Rahman, 1996, 2002). There is a lot of prestige and economy attached to English, as it is the gate-keeper of the higher education, competitive examinations, civil service and higher paid employment (Mansoor, 2005, Shamim, 2011). The language-in-education policies of the country have been known to reproduce social stratification, as the most fluent English speakers are found among the elite and urban groups while the vast majority of children in public schools are taught English in challenging conditions, Rahman (2002) wrote. The National Education Policy 2009 (Ministry of Education) has also recognised the significance and role of English in conjunction with Urdu and the mother tongues, however, very little information is available about the actual balance of these languages in the classroom.

It is a very interesting study area because Malakand, in the north of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is an area where a discussion on this matter is warranted. Most learners' home language is Pashto, while Urdu is learnt in the school, religious context, in the television, and generally in the context of national life and English usually only in the classroom. The teacher in a Malakand secondary school can then read a passage in English, translate it into Urdu and explain a complex concept in Pashto in a single lesson and students can answer the teacher or other students in any of the three languages. While this alternation is commonplace to anyone who has spent any time in these classrooms, it has not been systematically studied by scholars. However, studies from other parts of Pakistan (e.g. Gulzar, 2010) indicate that teachers are conscious of switching and that they switch for a variety of purposes; but the results of a particular study in one region cannot be extrapolated to other regions with different language ecology and education context.

Research problem

The students of secondary schools of Malakand are expected to attain a level of English that will allow them to read, comprehend and translate the questions given in exams and also to compete for admission in higher educational institutes in English. However, a significant number of students finish secondary school lacking in productive skills, especially in speaking and writing. Consequently, teachers, who have students with

limited proficiency and large and diverse classes, use Urdu and Pashto to communicate with students as they need to in order to make the lesson comprehensible. This is usually an unplanned response, not usually discussed in teacher education programmes, and often uncomfortable for teachers, due to the sense of professional failure or because it is considered to be a violation of the unwritten rule that the teaching of English takes place in English. Little guidance is provided in policy documents on a legitimate role of the use of the local language in English classes, thus allowing teachers to make their switching decisions spontaneously and intuitively. However, given a lack of empirical research on the function of code-switching in these classrooms, it is not clear whether code switching facilitates or impedes language acquisition, or whether it supports English acquisition, or whether it allows the students to acquire English. But, absent empirical data on the function of code switching in these classrooms, it remains unclear whether code switching facilitates or impedes language acquisition, or whether code switching supports English acquisition, and whether code switching allows the students to acquire English. This lack of context specific knowledge about the pedagogical implications of code switching in Malakand is the issue that the present study aims to rectify.

Research Questions

- What are the main functions and patterns of code-switching used by English teachers and students in the secondary schools of Malakand?
- How does code-switching affect students' learning of English in terms of comprehension, participation and confidence?

Research Objectives

- To identify the functions and patterns of code-switching among English teachers and students in the secondary schools of Malakand.
- To examine the impact of code-switching on English language learning in these schools, with particular attention to comprehension, participation and learner confidence.

Significance of the Study

The study is important for a number of reasons. First, it provides evidence based on local context to the existing body of research on classroom code switching, which has been limited to the East Asian context, that of Europe, North America and sub-Saharan Africa and very little work has been conducted in the Pakistani context. Second, it records an aspect of classroom code switching in a part of Pakistan that has received very little attention in the literature. The study provides a detailed description of how switching occurs and its effects, which helps take discussion away from the generalities and into evidence from real classrooms. Secondly, the results might help English teachers in Malakand to reflect on their practices. The more teachers know about what helps students to understand the first language and about what helps them to understand the English language, the more likely they are to make effective decisions about the pedagogical uses of the first language and to refocus more of students' attention on the English language. Third, it provides the teacher educator and curriculum developer with empirical reasons for incorporating advice for principled first language use in pre-service and in-service teacher training courses, a feature lacking in most teacher training programs. Fourth, the study can help the education officials and policymakers in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the context of balancing English, Urdu and the regional languages in education, by recommending an alternative to the polarised position of English only and mother tongue teaching, as a realistic multilingual pedagogy. Finally, the study paves the way for further research in other districts, at other

levels of schooling and on other methods of instruction, including experimental studies to compare the various levels of the use of the first language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The analysis of code switching started in the field of sociolinguistics when Gumperz (1982) identified two types of code switching: situational and metaphorical; he demonstrated that code switching is used by the speakers in order to signal context, stance and identity. Multilingualism does not signal deficits, but rather is a rule-governed behaviour of skilled bilinguals, as demonstrated by Poplack (1980). Other studies have pointed to the need to understand switching as a sequential phenomenon, with each switch given meaning by the sequence it comes from and to, as Auer (1998) stressed, and emphasized the importance of the markedness model of Myers-Scotton (1993), which assumes that the speaker selects a language to signal expected or unexpected social relationships. Switching has been defined as a normal phenomenon of bilingualism that is a reflection of the communicative resources of the individual speaking (Hamers & Blanc 2000).

In the field of applied linguistics and language pedagogy, the monolingual model held for a long time that the best way to learn the target language was to expose the learner to it to the maximum extent. Krashen (1982, 1985) had theorized that acquisition was related to comprehensible input that was just outside the learner's zone of development, which led many people to interpret it as a call for the teaching of only the target language. However Atkinson (1987) argued that the mother tongue is an underutilized resource that when used appropriately can serve as a means for language elicitation, comprehension control, instruction and methodology discussion. Cook took it one step further (2001) and asserted that the first language is always present and that the purpose of the teacher should be to teach the learner to become multicompetent instead of imitating the native speaker. Turnbull (2001) took a more conservative stance, recognizing that the first language could have a place but that teachers may employ it as a "shortcut," thus missing out on important input for the learner. For their part, Nation (2003) found that the first language should be used in activities that involve the explanation of second language concepts, but the majority of the class time should be spent in the second language. However, Butzkamm (2003) claimed that the mother tongue is the basic of the subsequent language learning and the teacher has to use it systematically such as using bilingual methods in which the learner can understand the structure of the new language. In Chinese university EFL classroom, Jingxia (2010) found that there were three reasons for switching: academic, managerial and social.

As to the functions of code switching in the classroom, the empirical studies have recorded the specific functions. Macaro (2001) reported that the switching behaviour of student teachers was highly individualistic, that it was employed in the giving of instructions, in the explanation of grammatical rules, and in the management of the classroom, and that the virtual position, where the first language is tolerated, but not perfect, was the most sustainable response. Later, Macaro (2005) stated that code-switching is not only a communication strategy but also a learning strategy since the learners use it in their first language to plan, rehearse and negotiate meaning. Macaro (2009) in a seminal synthesis, made this point that optimal use is dependent on the purpose of the activity and on the needs of learners, and that teachers require a principled rather than prohibitive framework. In a Turkish university English classroom, Sert (2005) found three types of switching which he described as equivalence, floor-holding and reiteration; all switching functions were found to be closely associated with the pedagogical focus of a specific moment and that they could support or impede interaction, depending on how they are used. Üstünel and Seedhouse (2005) with a conversation analysis approach showed that the functions of switching are closely linked to the pedagogical purpose of a

specific moment and that some may help to maintain continuity while others help to break it down. Alike, Mattsson and Burenhult (1999) indicated that teachers switched for explanation, for classroom management and for empathy, meaning that the affective and the organisational functions of switching are as significant as the explanatory ones.

Research of the learner talk point is in the same direction. According to Swain and Lapkin (2000), students used their L1 while collaborating to control the L2 task at hand, to help them understand the meaning of L2 vocabulary, and to learn the meaning of L2 grammar. They believe that the mere ban of students' L1 during collaborative tasks would have been counterproductive, as it would have deprived students of an important cognitive tool. The conclusion ties in with the argument of the interaction hypothesis (Long, 1996) and the output hypothesis (Swain, 1985) which is that meaning negotiation and the pushing of their own language use is a means of promoting learning, a process whereby the use of the first language can sometimes allow meaning negotiation in the target language when such use is not allowed in the target language. Ahmad (2009) found that teachers in Malaysia switched to L1 more frequently when teaching low-proficiency students to explain complex content, to facilitate students' participation and to build up a positive classroom climate. Horasan (2014) studied the attitudes of both teachers and learners in an EFL context and found that teachers and learners felt that the switch was mainly a facilitating tool, but felt that its overuse may be a hindrance to their access to English. Similarly, Bhatti et al. (2018) found positive attitudes towards switching as a teaching aid by the teachers of EFL and noted that they are useful in explaining complex ideas and in rapport-building if used in moderation.

A smaller but significant group of studies has examined the impact of L1 use on the achievement of learners. This study by Tian and Macaro (2012) compared the effect of teacher code-switching with English-only explanations on the acquisition of the Chinese university students' vocabulary acquisition and showed that the teacher code-switched condition had a better immediate effect on all measures of vocabulary acquisition except for one. Their study is significant because they expand beyond the description of functions to comparisons of outcomes, which Ferguson (2009) had requested the researchers to do. Conducting a careful analysis of a large amount of evidence, Hall and Cook (2012) found that own-language use is seen as useful by learners and teachers in many contexts; that OLL has an important function in the interpretation of meaning; that OLL has a role in reducing anxiety and establishing relationships; that evidence of long-term gains in proficiency remains sparse; and that the quantity of OLL use must be monitored carefully. Littlewood and Yu (2011) proposed that optimal balance is dependent on the competence of learners and on the purpose of a lesson; whether it is to develop communicative competence or to promote comprehension of content, and argued that teachers should attempt to use the target language for as much of the lesson as possible, while reserving the first language for tasks that would otherwise fail.

Although Pakistan is an under-resourced and developing context, studies in such contexts are more similar to the situation in Pakistan than those in well-resourced contexts. In postcolonial settings, where the language of education is a colonial legacy and the learners' languages are marginalised, Ferguson (2003) suggested that code switching in the classroom is not a pedagogical decision but a reaction to a sociolinguistic situation, and that code switching functions to provide access to curriculum content, to establish interpersonal relations and to control the classroom. Probyn (2009) has reported on the teachers' efforts to introduce the vernacular into lessons in rural and township schools in South Africa, where learners would otherwise have learned very little, and on the tension that ensued between the official policy and the classroom. Moodley (2007) determined that in multilingual English classrooms, switching helped students participate and helped them to communicate complex ideas, but pointed out that teachers required principled guidance regarding when

they should use switching. Canagarajah (2011) stated that multilingual speakers' language competence is a repertoire of their languages and that classes practices should draw on that repertoire rather than policing the borders of languages. Cenoz and Gorter (2011) who examined the field of trilingual writing also proposed for a multilingual approach with the languages of the learners viewed as interdependent resources. A strong home language contributes to the successful learning of the second language, not at the expense of the first, from a policy perspective (Cummins, 2000). García (2009) and Baker (2011) had similar findings in their surveys of bilingual education.

These similar situations have been noted by educational researchers and analysts in Pakistan, but the number of empirical studies is relatively small. This has been demonstrated by Rahman (1996, 2002) who has outlined how the history of the positions of Urdu, English and the regional languages has resulted in a system in which English is linked with power and opportunity and the mother tongues are marginalised in formal education. Mansoor (2005) discovered that both students and teachers in Pakistan consider English to be a compulsory language for students to access higher education and employment, but simultaneously reported that students and teachers have serious problems in learning English, especially when they had little opportunity to study it in school. The difficulties involved in teaching English in large, under-invested classrooms where materials and teachers are less than optimal was mentioned by Shamim (2011), who added that teachers often resort to using the local language to ensure lesson comprehensibility. Coleman (2010) noted that the quality of English instruction in a large number of developing countries is low and attributed this to the lack of proficiency of the teachers in English and to the discrepancy between the language of instruction and the language understood by the learners. Mahboob (2017) noted that the English-medium policies are formulated in Pakistan without considering the linguistic lived realities of learners and educators, and that the practices on the ground are very different from the language used in policy. Gulzar (2010) reported that the teachers in Pakistan were conscious and purposeful in using code-switching and the students appreciated it and she suggested that teachers need to be sensitised to the use of code-switching in bilingual classrooms.

A further level has been added to the literature on translanguaging, which questions the idea of distinct languages. Both García and Li Wei (2014) and Creese and Blackledge (2010) demonstrated that bilinguals have one integrated repertoire of language, and that teachers and students in community language schools in England had the capacity to move between languages to teach and learn without difficulty, to the benefit of both language and identity. Lewis et al. (2012) identified the concept's evolution from the Welsh bilingual education system and observed that planned and systematic use of two languages, including the receipt of information in one language and the production of items in another language, can produce an enhanced understanding. The following perspectives are relevant to Malakand because they invite researchers to think about how teachers and learners in their real lives use their repertoires, not just to count switches. Concurrently, others have commented that being bilingual in contexts where the target language is not widely used outside of school may contribute to lesser exposure, thereby reinforcing the need for intentional planning as suggested by Turnbull (2001) and Macaro (2009).

This review results in some gaps. First, while there is a wealth of literature on code switching in the international arena, most of it has been written in settings where the first language is a single, dominant language, and the participants in the study are university students or adults, but less has been written about secondary school learners in multilingual setting in rural and semi-urban areas. Second, studies from the context of Pakistan have mostly ignored the trilingual situation of Pashtun areas, where English and Urdu are also spoken. Secondly, the trilingual situation of Pashtun areas, where English and Urdu too are spoken, has not been sufficiently explored in studies conducted in Pakistan. Third, much of the research to date

focuses on the range of activities that can be performed using switching and does not report on how learners' comprehension, participation and confidence are affected by switching, as noted by Ferguson (2009). The present study fills these gaps by exploring functions of code switching and its impact on English learning from the perspective of teachers and students and by direct observation of the classroom in secondary schools of Malakand.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Nature of the Study

This is an interpretative and qualitative study. The qualitative orientation was selected as the study involved exploring the functions, patterns and perceived effects of a situated social practice, which is a type of question that is best answered by examining the meanings and behaviour of the participants in their natural context and not simply by reducing them to a numerical variable (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Contextual considerations, such as who speaks with whom, to whom, about what, and at which point of the lesson are crucial in determining the meaning of a switch, as stated by Auer (1998) and Gumperz (1982). A design that maintains this context is therefore more suitable than a design that counts switches independently. The interpretive perspective further enables the study to consider the perspectives of teachers and students, and their understanding of the reasons behind and consequences of switching and whether it supports or hinders them in answering the second research question.

Research Design

The study is a multiple-case study with each participating school as bounded case and English classes as main analysis units (Yin, 2018). A multiple-case approach was chosen because the themes that are generated are strengthened by the ability to compare patterns across schools that vary in location, student population, and student proficiency levels (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The schools involved are secondary schools in Malakand area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and the focus is on grades 9th and 10th. At this level English language is compulsory and English is a compulsory language for the secondary school board exams. To gather maximum information about the phenomenon, the selection of schools and participants was done by purposive sampling, a typical sampling approach in qualitative research when the researcher is interested in gaining depth rather than representativeness (Patton, 2015). The sample was chosen to be as diverse as possible in terms of gender of teacher, years of experience, and student achievement level in order to include a variety of viewpoints. The data collection continued until further interviews and observations did not provide any significant new insights, which is called information saturation (Guest et al., 2006).

Data Collection Procedure

Two main methods of data collection were used, namely non-participant classroom observation and semi-structured interviews, which were combined to allow the triangulation of what participants do with what they say about what they do. Permission was sought in a formal manner from the appropriate School Heads and Education Authorities and written informed consent was obtained from teachers and written informed consent was obtained from learners and parental consent sought where they were minors prior to the start of data collection. Participants were assured that their identity and that of their schools will be kept confidential using pseudonyms, that they were free to participate or not participate at any time without consequence. The first method of classroom observation was conducted. The researcher ensured that she sat at the back of each class and watched a number of lessons from each teacher that participated for several weeks so as the teacher to be used to an observer and the classroom to get back to normal. An observation guide focused on

the language employed at each step of the lesson, the cues and possibly intent behind each switch, the directionality of switching between English and Urdu (or Pashto), who was initiating the switch, and the immediate reaction of the students, such as whether the switch was followed by a correct response, a moment of silence or a request for further explanation. Lessons were audio-recorded where the school and participants agreed to do so, and the researcher also noted field notes of the classroom context, the materials used and the non-verbal behaviour of the participants in the lessons.

After observation, semi-structured interviews were carried out to allow questions to refer to events that were observed in the classroom. In this regard, interviews were held with teachers to explore the teachers' attitudes and beliefs about the role of Urdu and Pashto in English language teaching, the impact of the change on students' understanding, involvement and confidence, the influence of institutional expectations, and experience of teacher training. Interviews took place in small groups or individually as agreed by the participants and the school context and asked students about their experiences of their teachers' switching, their own switching, its reasons and their emotions when lessons were entirely taught in English, as well as what they thought helped them learn. Applicants were interviewed using an interview guide, which included major topics that were discussed in all cases, but also allowed for the interviewer to pursue any other issues that might have arisen, and to seek clarification from the applicant or explanation about their responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interviews were conducted in the language in which the interviewee felt most comfortable (Pashto, Urdu or English) and using English alone would flag the study's premise and potentially restrict the depth of the responses. These were audio-recorded with permission, transcribed and translated into English (where needed) and the original recording will be kept alongside the translation for checking purposes.

Data Analysis Procedure

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, following the six stages outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The first phase included familiarization with the data through transcription of the tapes, rereading field notes and tapes, and jotting down initial ideas. The second phase involved systematic coding of the data, with sections of the data which related to the research questions having short descriptive labels such as switching to explain vocabulary, switching to manage behaviour, switching to reassure, or switching in response to student silence. Inductive codes (which are derived from the data) and deductive codes (which are informed by literature on the functions of code-switching (Ferguson, 2003; Macaro, 2001; Sert, 2005)) were used to ensure that the analysis would include any possible findings and that it would also be able to include the established categories. In phase three, codes that were related to one another were combined into candidate themes and in phase four, these themes were tested for coherence and distinctiveness with the coded extracts and with the whole data set. Themes were identified and given names during the 5th phase, and during the 6th phase, themes were fleshed out into the written account outlined in the next section.

Analysis was conducted in two phases, from case to case. For each case, the observation records and interview information were analysed together to provide a case description and then the data were subject to cross-case comparison to identify themes that were common to schools and variations that were linked to context. Special effort was made to identify the situations in which what was observed and what was reported by participants diverged, as this difference between beliefs and behavior provides analytical insights into the gap between beliefs and behavior. Furthermore, to ensure the trustworthiness, the study utilised the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and expanded by Nowell et al. (2017) for thematic analysis. Triangulation of observation with interviews, extended

period of time spent in the schools, and member checking (interviews with a summary of the interpretations) supported credibility.

Theoretical framework

The study is supported by two theories of second language learning that are complementary in terms of their perspectives on second language learning, namely, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, as well as Myers-Scotton's theory of the social motivation of code switching, which explains the choice of languages. The first of these is the sociocultural theory which sees learning as a social process in which language itself is both the content of learning and the means of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). At the heart of the theory is the "zone of proximal development (ZPD)," an area of tasks that a child is not able to perform independently but can manage with guidance from a teacher or a more capable peer. Support provided in this zone is termed scaffolding, a temporary and adaptive support that is slowly removed as the learner becomes proficient (Walqui, 2006; Wood et al., 1976). The theory was applied to second language classes where it was proposed that the first language could serve as a mediation mechanism for second language understanding of instructions, new vocabulary, new grammar and participation in tasks that would be too challenging in the target language (Antón & DiCamilla, 1998; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). The theory also provides a criterion for assessing the effectiveness of switching because switching that helps the learner become more independent in English can be considered as scaffolding, and switching that replaces English during the whole lesson is not.

The second theory was Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, which suggests that emotional factors like anxiety, low self-confidence and low motivation can increase a mental "filter" that hinders the amount of input being processed, making it more difficult for learners with a high filter to learn more from the quality of input they receive (Dulay & Burt, 1977; Krashen, 1982). The hypothesis is supported by later studies on foreign language classroom anxiety, which indicate that anxiety resulting from fear of negative evaluation and from lack of understanding of the teacher can be a hindrance to participation and learning (Horwitz et al., 1986). The hypothesis provides a basis for the study of the emotional function of code switching and the relationship between code switching and learners' confidence, one of the three outcomes listed in the second research question. It has been recognised that the hypothesis has been criticised for being hard to test, and also for its oversimplification of affect as a barrier, and so it is used here as an interpretive tool, rather than as a predictive law. Myers-Scotton's (1993) markedness model takes the picture further by explaining how language choice itself is a social act which signals relationship, such that when the teacher moves from English to Pashto, it creates a sense of solidarity, while a shift from English to Urdu can create a sense of formality or authority.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Thematic analysis of the observation records and transcripts of interviews yielded two clusters of themes that were related to the two research questions. The first cluster refers to the functions of code switching and code switching patterns and the second cluster is the perceived or observed impact of code switching on comprehension, participation and confidence. In the discussion below each theme is discussed in the context of the theoretical framework and previous research. Qualitative analysis means that themes are described in terms of how they were seen repeatedly in the cases and not as a frequency count and it is important to emphasize that the account is an interpretation of the practice rather than a statistical representation of the prevalence of this practice.

As for the first research question, the most salient trend was that the use of code in the classes studied was mostly teacher-driven and was structured around the three languages in a clear division of labour. English was used for the textbook, the formal structure of the lesson, and for a selection of routine phrases; Urdu was primarily used, to give academic explanation, and to translate the text; and Pashto was most frequently used to make personal comments, jokes, reminders, corrections, and to clarify ideas which the learners had not understood even after they had been given an explanation in Urdu. This division is similar to what Ferguson (2003) has described as the functional differentiation in postcolonial classrooms, in which the language of the curriculum plays different roles and the national language and the local vernacular also have distinct roles, and is similar to Myers-Scotton's (1993) claim that the choice of language conveys a social relationship message. The selection of Urdu and Pashto was not a whim; Urdu was considered formal, learned or successful at exams, and Pashto was considered intimate and belonging. A change in the medium of instruction from Urdu to Pashto in the middle of an explanation by the teacher was often used as a cue to indicate a transition from lecture to interaction with the students.

The most common academic purpose of switching was to clarify the meaning. The teachers usually used either Pashto for everyday words, or Urdu for abstract words or words that are idiomatic or grammatical, then translated it back into English or used a further explanation or an everyday example in Pashto. Vocabulary was mostly dealt by giving translation in Urdu or Pashto after the English word; teacher gave the Urdu or Pashto word. The same pattern was used for the grammar instruction, in which grammar rules were explained in the local languages, and then examples were provided in English. According to Sert (2005), this function is the same as the categories of equivalence and reiteration, it is also the same function as reported by Macaro (2001) and Ahmad (2009) in the explanation of grammar and vocabulary. Teachers described their practice in terms of their students' very limited ability to write and speak English, but also to the need to cover a prescribed syllabus in a limited amount of time, with several explaining that they were often left with silence after their explanation, a silence they interpreted as a lack of understanding.

A second set of functions was related to classroom and lesson management. Teachers spoke in Urdu or Pashto for instructions on tasks, to remind students of tasks, to home in on topics, to reprimand and quiet noisy classes, to check for understanding, and to assign homework. The instructions were mostly repeated in the local languages (either soon after or when the students seemed to be unsure of the meaning), similar to the reiterative and floor-holding functions observed in previous studies (Flyman Mattsson & Burenhult, 1999; Sert, 2005). Disciplinary remarks were most likely given in Pashto, indicating that teachers saw it as the language of authority in a personal register and of warmth in a personalized version, through humour. The observations also showed that switching was used to build rapport, for teachers to relax the atmosphere using jokes, proverbs and anecdotes in Pashto, to praise or encourage learners and to relate the lesson to learners' lives.

The observed lessons revealed that student switching was less common than teacher switching and was informative. Learners usually asked questions, if not in Urdu or Pashto, then at least in Urdu; when the teacher asked a question which required a longer answer, learners used to reply in the local language. The students also assisted the one another in Pashto in pair and group work activity during which they translated the instructions of the teacher for those students in class who could not understand and negotiated the meanings of unknown terms. This is similar to what Swain and Lapkin (2000) found, that learners use the first language for task management, vocabulary clarification, focus on grammar, and to mediate collaborative dialogue, and to the arguments of Antón and DiCamilla (1998) that the first language serves to mediate collaborative dialogue. Students' reasons for switching included not knowing the English words they needed,

fear of making mistakes in front of the class, or wanting to be sure that their question was understood, in interviews.

The second research question was about the impact of the switch for comprehension, participation and confidence, and the analysis showed a more complicated and in parts even contradictory answer. With respect to comprehension both teachers and students reported overwhelmingly that switching helped students in understanding the lessons, and the observations confirmed this report in terms of explanation given with the help of Urdu or Pashto, which almost always received the correct answers, relevant questions or successful completion of the task, as compared to explanation in English. Students reported that they understood grammar rules and the meaning of texts much better when they were taught in a language that was familiar to them and several students said that they became lost or were reliant on their classmates when grammar was taught in English. This is consistent with the comparative evidence cited by Tian and Macaro (2012) that code switching helps students learn vocabulary, as well as the explanation of meaning provided by the first language, as suggested by Atkinson (1987), Cook (2001) and Butzkamm (2003).

The analysis implies, however, that understanding of the lesson and learning of the English language should not be confused with each other. One of the recurrent situations was that the students never had to read and try to understand the English text because it was translated so fast and so thoroughly that they got to read it in Urdu or Pashto. The teacher would routinely translate each sentence in the English text, and learners would wait for the translation and neglect to pay attention to the English preceding the translation. Occasionally, teachers observed this problem on their own and reported that students depended on translation and did not try to make inferences from context. This is because Turnbull (2001) warned that teachers might use the first language as a short cut and because it shows the difference between a scaffolding that is eventually removed and a scaffolding that remains permanently (Walqui, 2006). If the first language is used to express the meaning of all the utterances, the comprehensible input that Krashen (1982) believes is necessary for the acquisition of the second language is also in the first language, with the result that the learner will understand the lesson but not have a lot of exposure to English.

In terms of participation, there seemed to be a widening scope of pupils who were involved in lessons when they were switched. Students started asking questions, answering and taking part in group discussions, when teachers asked questions in Urdu or Pashto or explained a task in Urdu or Pashto. A number of the students indicated that they felt they could only participate when spoken in the languages which they knew most fluently, and otherwise, they would rather have stayed quiet to avoid making mistakes. This finding agrees with that of Ahmad (2009) who found that switching leads to participation of low-proficiency learners and with Moodley's (2007) finding that switching facilitated students to express complex ideas in multilingual setting. Meanwhile, the encouragement of participation was mostly for Urdu and Pashtun participation rather than participate in English. Learners' interactions that resulted in longer sequences of English were few, and when they did happen, they were frequently highly elicited reactions to teacher questioning. Swain's (1985) output that he considered essential for development (taking learners beyond what they currently know and making them aware of their shortcomings) was thus restricted.

Switching to confidence and emotional comfort was always positive in the students' accounts and it also happened in the relaxed atmosphere of lessons where teachers switched to Pashto for humour and encouragement. Students spoke of being afraid of the teacher and making mistakes if the teacher only spoke English and that it made them feel reassured when the teacher spoke in their own language or when there was no possibility for their mistakes to be ridiculed. This is in line with Krashen's (1982) affective filter theory and with the literature on foreign language classroom anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986), as a familiar language

seems to reduce the affective filter effect which hinders the learners' perception of the input. This was also teachers' opinion and their reasons for changing for the most part were learners' fear and shyness. But the affective good came with a price.

Another theme was teachers' beliefs and the institutional context of switching. Numerous teachers felt ambivalent, seeing changing as almost a mandatory and unprofessional thing to do. They said that they should speak English and a few said something such as "I feel bad to speak Chinese" or "I feel sorry to speak Chinese" when they talked about their practice. This tension is similar to the one identified by Probyn (2009) between teachers who use the vernacular and South Africa's policies that favoured the use of English, and also corroborates Macaro's (2001) assertion that teachers often lack a principled basis for their decisions when to switch and instead rely on intuition. Teachers reported that their training had not told them much or anything about the use of first language and the importance of English as the medium of instruction was mentioned, but not explained how to cater for learners who were unable to follow English. There was also an additional influence from the examination system. Translation into Urdu was viewed as a useful tool to prepare students for board exams which were based on translating passages, answering textbook questions and on memorisation of grammar rules, thus further reinforcing the dependency on translation described above.

In summary, the results indicate that code switching is not exclusively beneficial nor is it detrimental in Malakand secondary schools. It is a universal and differentiated practice and effective for understanding, engagement, and emotional regulation, especially in under-resourced classrooms of low proficient students and aligns with the sociocultural perspective of language as a mediating tool and the affective perspective of learning emotionally-conditioned. When it is unplanned, excessive, unaccompanied by a gradual reorientation towards English, it seems to restrict both learners' access to input and opportunities for output and to create the receptive-productive difference that is typical of many secondary school leavers. The dual nature is in line with the findings of Lin (2013), Macaro (2009) and Hall and Cook (2012) that switching quality and switching purpose are more important than switching itself. The Malakand data also indicates that the bilingual, let alone trilingual, nature of the setting poses a specific danger: having two languages available to support makes it easier for teachers to avoid using English and the pressures of exams and lack of training make it easier for teachers to fall back into translation as a default mode.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to discover the functions and pattern of code switching of English teachers and students in Secondary Schools of Malakand and to understand how it affects the comprehension, participation and confidence in learning English. The answer to the first research question suggested that code switching is a frequent and multi-functional phenomenon in the Urdu language dominant English classrooms as Urdu is mainly used for the academic explanation and translation, whereas Pashto is used to establish rapport, discipline and further explanation, and English is used mostly in the textbook and routine formulae. Students take the turn to ask questions, to express understanding, to help each other, to cover up other's English gaps, etc. and teachers take over to explain vocabulary and grammar, to give and repeat instructions, to manage behavior, to create a friendly atmosphere, etc.

To answer the second research question, the study identified that code-switching can be understood as a scaffolding function and an affective function that helps with comprehension, broadens participation and lowers anxiety, but that when code-switching is unplanned and excessive it may not provide enough exposure

to the English input and also limit productive practice, where gains in understanding lessons do not always correspond to gains in capacity to use English. The main thesis is thus that the impact of code switching is dependent of its usage. When used appropriately, it is limited and can be used as a stepping stone to the target language; when it is used to replace English, it can make learners feel at ease and leave them under-challenged. The findings also reveal that teachers make these decisions primarily uninformed, not well trained, and with some unease, and that examination practices promote translation. Due to its qualitative focus, the study is restricted to selected schools within one region and the reliance on a limited number of lessons per teacher, the findings are subject to a transferable approach by reasoned comparison only and not to a statistical generalisation. However, they offer a detailed and contextual account that can be built upon for further research and practice.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, a number of suggestions are offered. First, teacher education programmes and in-service training in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should have explicit provision for principled use of L1, so that teachers will not lose their sense of switching and switching as a scaffolding tool, and will begin to understand the difference between the two and that switching cannot replace L2. Teachers should plan ahead the moments when the L1 will be utilized, for example, when a concept is explained, when a complex grammatical rule is introduced and when directions are clarified, etc., and make sure that the rest of the lesson takes place in English. Practical techniques should be illustrated, such as using gestures, examples, visuals and simple English paraphrases prior to giving the translation, the delay of translation before giving it to the learner to let him or she deduce the meaning, the technique of asking the learner-instead of the teacher-to give the translation, which becomes a comprehension check.

Second, teachers should see this local language support as scaffolding and plan to lessen the scaffolding when students get further along. Lessons could start with more Urdu and Pashto and with time, more and more of the language could be shifted to English as the learner becomes familiar with the topic, with the opportunity to say something in English at the end of the lesson. Pair and group tasks can be organized to allow for planning and clarification to occur in the native language(s) but the final product of the task is to be in English, reflecting the planned two-language use described in the translanguaging literature (Lewis et al., 2012). Teachers should also provide frequent opportunities for extended spoken and written production in English, for example in the form of short presentations, guided dialogues and journal writing, as the study suggests that involvement in lessons doesn't necessarily imply involvement in English.

Third, school administrators and supervisors should acknowledge that the use of the local languages in English classes is not something that can be eradicated by prohibition and should change the approach from judgemental monitoring to supportive monitoring of the quality of language use. Schools could establish "rules of thumb" for when switching is warranted, and teachers could be asked to watch each other, discuss their teaching methods and consider their own switching patterns, including by watching each other teach through a video recording of their own lessons. Fourth, it will be worthwhile to "reflect on the possibility of changing the nature of assessment to encourage the use of English for communication in the classroom, rather than translation and memorised grammar rules" as assessment has a significant impact on classroom language use, particularly through the washback effect. Also included in textbooks and other resources may be bilingual glossaries and short guidelines for teachers on the principle of the use of local languages. Finally, it is necessary on the part of policy makers to recognize the multilingual nature of schools in Pashtun speaking areas and shift towards a pedagogical policy that promotes supporting role of Pashto and Urdu in learning

English rather than using it as barrier (Cummins, 2000; Baker, 2011; Rahman, 2002). Finally, future studies are suggested in other districts, at other educational levels, with larger numbers of subjects, and longitudinal designs and experiments comparing the effects of different levels of first language use on measured proficiency in English.

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