



The Use and Functions of Bilingual Education and Linguistic Code-mixing in Pakistani Universities: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

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The present research study sought to identify the functional implications of bilingual code-mixing in a Pakistani university situated in Gujrat. Based on the narrative method of inquiry, the utilization of bilingualism, particularly in the context of classroom settings, is explored. The results revealed that bilingual codes are used by both teachers and students. Teachers accomplish various instructional strategy-related objectives like making concepts clearer by changing and mixing languages. Classrooms are set up in a linguistic order, mood swings are communicated, and the interaction is either formal or rudimentary. In a similar way, students express themselves in the classroom by speaking two languages, and the university frequently serves as a place of re-socialization. Early bilingual socialization, extensive reading, and language support centers in higher education are crucial for linguistic competency and academic success. With everything taken into account, bilingualism and code-mixing play a utilitarian part in the everyday existence of a university. Furthermore, this bilingual environment encourages inclusivity, helping students from diverse linguistic backgrounds to engage more effectively. It fosters a sense of community and belonging, essential for personal and professional growth within the academic sphere. Additionally, these practices help bridge cultural gaps, promote better communication, and support diverse learning styles, enhancing the overall educational experience for all students.

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1.0 Introduction

Owing to various cultural and historical factors the education system in Pakistan is based on two languages, which are Urdu and English. Among other factors this bilingualism is primarily owing to the colonial history, during which time the English language was mandated as an official language of instruction. (Abbas, 1993). Nonetheless, during the post-partition and post-colonial period the nation faced the challenge of consolidating its distinct Muslim. Hence, Urdu was chosen as the national language of Pakistan (Khan et al., 2014). Nevertheless, during the entire post-colonial history English remained the official and the working language used in educational institutes and at the workplace. This is why Pakistan has a bilingual track of communication at its higher educational institutions too.

Apart from the common familiarity and use of the English and Urdu languages, many provincial and native languages are also spoken by people in the country, making the country a multi-linguistic nation. In some cases, provincial languages are taught in primary and secondary years (Syeda and Sajida, 2017) Students in the public schools of Pakistan are mostly taught in Urdu during the primary schooling years, whereas in the private schools, more emphasis is placed on English (Rafique et al. (2018)). Hence creating a linguistic class that augments the existing class gap in the educational system. A series of studies in the past have highlighted the importance of the mother language as a primary tool of cognition during the early adjustment with schooling as a didactic system. (e.g. Thomas and Collier, 1997; 2002; Abbas & Iqbal, 2018)

While the use of English language at educational institutions is important owing to a series of factors such as elite class perception associated with language. Availability of reading materials and official exam conduction in English. Yet it is underexplored as to what functional imperatives are performed in the educational system of the Pakistani society. Hence in light of the significance of English and its demand, it has been found that students possess language skills; however, due to their weak language backgrounds, they do not fit in that environment. If a student has a strong command of the language, they can easily gain admission in a higher institution. Language has been defined in a variety of ways. Each definition emphasizes a different aspect of language. These concepts allude to language's interactive and communicative function in society.

In Pakistan, the linguistic experience is uniquely problematic as children get their elementary education in Urdu, with English only being taught in one subject. The atmosphere at home has an immense effect since family members typically communicate in their mother tongues, whereas in public settings like schools and colleges Urdu is favored. The foundation of the student is not sufficiently firm to enable them to speak English fluently during higher education. The necessity for the English language is growing since more individuals require it to survive in the global economy (Paik, 2009). It is often believed that learning English is the only way to gain sophisticated knowledge throughout the world, particularly in third-world nations with colonial histories.

There has been a recent surge in studies that relate higher education with linguistic diversity, Code-Mixing (CM) and Code-Switching (CS) on campus (e.g Hofweber, Marinis, & Treffers-Daller, 2020). According to Gumperz (1982) code-switching (CS) refers to the use of

different languages at the same time during communication and these languages have a different grammatical system. Similarly, Myers-Scotton (1993; 2002) defined code-mixing (CM) as the use of phrases or words of another language during communication or conversation. The variation between dialects, or CM, may be a common instrument in bilingual settings, permitting nuanced expression and comprehension. Both are basic for successful bilingual learning and communication. CM and CS were considered very important in societies where historically various languages had significance social roles. Usually, people change their language just to stay relaxed during their conversation. Or to talk about a particular topic. An individual usually switches or mixes the language when he/she lacks vocabulary or the exact word that she wants to say, and sometimes elaborate it in her native language or second language.

Presently bilingual education and code-mixing are crucial (add ref). Bilingual education, where students learn two languages, offers cognitive and social benefits. It upgrades cognitive adaptability, social understanding, and communication aptitudes. Being bilingual nowadays is necessary to meet the demands of the global economy and the academic world.

While bilingualism is a reality in the Pakistani educational system yet there exists a paucity of literature on the subject from interdisciplinary optics. According to Garcia (2011) bilingual education is widely practiced across the world, but the context in which it is delivered is what matters the most. Similarly, according to Brisk (2011) a bilingual program's effectiveness is dependent on several factors, in the context of the particular university institution which is the research site, the functions of CS and CM are rather idiosyncratic. . The primary goal of this study is to examine students' perceptions of bilingual education with regards to any perceived advantages or disadvantaged on students' learning

This study on bilingual education in the university sector code mixing and code-switching is important from an academic as well as socio-linguistic view point. The findings will be of relevance in understanding human cognition, the effects of colonization and class on the use of language, and the effect on student learning. This research will also help in advising policy for language instruction at higher education level.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Code-Mixing (CM) and Code-Switching (CS) Research

There exists a well-established tradition within socio-linguistics, anthropology and language studies about bilingualism (Goodman, & Tastanbek, 2021; Jose et al, 2020). The accumulated nature of knowledge is demonstrated through a wide range concept such as CS and its functions within the academic environment (Han, Li, & Filippi, 2022). In Pakistan, the research culture on above mentioned issue is sporadic but not non-existent. For instance, Mansoor (2004) conducted research on the issues with language planning in higher education. It was established at that time that extremely restricted involvement of regional languages is problematic: there is a lack of information in Urdu and, most frequently, there is a lack of comprehension of English, which creates issues. This study highlights that code-mixing and bilingualism in the class room has a series of institutional as well as linguistic and cognitive functions. This is why bilingualism is a widely practiced instructional strategy as well as Bialystok (2018) conducted a systematic review

of studies on this topic and discovered that, in the American context, if we take accomplishments and literacy levels into consideration as dependent variables while maintaining socioeconomic status as a constant, bilingual education has no negative effects rather than a positive contribution.

Some researches undertake multilingualism and bilingualism ascases of second language learning. Usually, researchers take a broad view of contemporary developments in language and higher education. Based on these tendencies, the multilingualism is a methodology of choice to examines the link between multilingual cognition and language learner's outcome in education and learning at large. (Cenoz and Gorter ,2011; Khonakdar and Rokni, 2015).

One study investigated the causes of CS in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lesson with 60 Iranian EFL teachers. The study discovered that learners learn more quickly, listen intently, and comprehend better when there is CM. According to the study, CM helps students better grasp the English language, relieves stress, and increases their comfort level in the classroom. CM and switching in the classroom are crucial, especially for English language learners who have little exposure to the language (Saba, 2016). According to the study, teaching pupils in their mother tongue or native speech increases their learning and conceptual comprehension.

Some researches link bilingualism with creativity, according to Jabeen (2010) bilingualism was functional to the opportunity for taking fresh turns and discovering novel ideas. For bilingual students, the employment market provides a wide range of positions, including those as translators and interpreters, which best represents bilingualism in the community. By concentrating on bilingualism, researchers are better able to comprehend the difficulties that second language learners face and offer insightful information about the job market. On the same functionalist reasoning Meyerhoff (2018) explains that bilingual people have the skills to speak more than one language. They can use different variations of languages they want to use. And they are very much aware of the use of this technique. CM can be an indicator of this kind of creative deployment of linguistic abilities that have a cognitive advantage. A code can be defined as the language style that is used during conversation and the mixing of two languages in one single conversation is referred to as code mixing and code-switching refers to the switch from one language to another (Kheder, & Kaan, 2021 Treffers-Daller et al ,2020). Similarly, Pareek and Kumar (2018) gathered data from 111 respondents who were experts in their creative fields and could produce code-mixed taglines for product branding. The bilingual branding was found to be crucial for creativity and conferring a distinctive identity to the brands.

Garrity and colleagues (2018) accomplished a study in the United States when the number of bilingual speakers rose the country's policy did not allow for bilingual education, and, the educational instruction would be in English alone. The survey method was employed to learn more about how college students felt about bilingualism, bilingual education, and language development. According to the study's findings, the majority of respondents supported bilingualism and bilingual education, although the value of the mother tongue remained constant. Some bilingual education and bilingualism supporters are Latino pupils and those who speak several languages.

More recently though Manan, Dumanig, and David (2017) conducted a study on the crisis

of teaching English in Pakistan. It was conceived that actual practice of English teaching in a classroom environment is a false dilemma and Urdu was taken as a medium of instruction in class while English would have been encouraged by the learners. Mabule (2015) researched African language to explore the CM and CS in that language. Unintentional code mixing and switching was not predicted education, age, or culture. In this paper the types of code switching are also discussed, and the reasons and causes why people code-switch between languages. Being a researcher, the data will be collected and analyzed through discourse analysis and email with friends, colleagues, and students of African universities. The main focus of the study was on code mixing and bilingual education.

Similarly, Mushtaq, & Zahra (2012) studied the use of code-mixing in TV channels of Pakistan. The youth of the society accept code-mixing because according to them code-mixing is important. Iqbal's (2011) work emphasized the idea of code-switching and its advantages for teaching and learning. Intra- and inter-sentential code-switching are both included in code-switching. Both male and female university professors were participating in the code-swapping study during their lectures. The instructor uses a variety of dialectal code-switching features daily in the classroom setting. Sorge, Toplak, and Bialystok (2017) discovered that executive functioning improves in bilingual education by improving attentional capacity.

Ahmad et al. (2015) investigated students' perceptions of code mixing and switching in Urdu EFL classrooms. The findings showed that students display an encouraging attitude towards code mixing and switching. On the same line of reasoning, Fernandez, & Julius, (2017) researched on quality factors in bilingual education at the university level found that students prioritize the encouraging effect of their professors, the basic requirement for language exchange with native speakers, open class speaking, and the presence of a native teacher. Professors, on the other hand, value individual inspiration and commitment to the program. Pakistan's diverse language population has led to the creation of English as a second language (Shamim, 2011). This situation leads to an urgency of investigating the actor's perception about bilingualism and dual linguistic track in Higher Education System of Pakistan.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Qualitative Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design. Because the in-depth interviews tap the lived experiences of the respondents through their narratives our design can be classified as Phenomenological investigation through in-depth interviews. And adhered to the ethics of research outlined by Bryman and Bell (2007). We obtained informed consent, and assured participants of confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary involvement, and that they could leave the interview at any time. Permission was also taken for recording of interviews.

3.2 Research Setting and Purposive Sampling

The present study was conducted at the University of Gujrat. The university is located in the hub of Punjabi civilization of Indus River with its own rich cultural, linguistic and artistic tradition. Gujrat is an affluent yet patriarchic society that has produced folk traditions and folklore of historical kind. The students are from various neighborhoods both rural and urban and speak a

variety of local variations of Punjabi language. In addition to Punjab, several students are from other regions including Baluchistan and Kashmir. In casual conversations, the majority of students prefer to use their native language, yet during lectures, they prefer to speak Urdu. University teachers speak in both English and Urdu mixing and switching the linguistic code.

Purposive sampling was used to interview various students from a range of departments at University of Gujrat Pakistan. The inclusion criteria were students who have spent at least one year at university.

3.3 Data Collection

The final sample consisted of 15 university students. Data were recorded in notes and also in audio. The duration of the 15 interviews ranged from 25 to 30 minutes. In qualitative research, note-taking and audiotaping are essential tools since they provide reminders, quotes, and information for descriptions and interpretations (Eisner, 1991).

3.4 Process of Thematic Analysis

Respondents were allowed to answer in either English or Urdu, based on their comfort and to replicate a natural setting. Transcription was performed by the third author and the second author performed translation of the narratives and did manual coding of these interviews. The themes were discussed and agreed upon by all authors. A six-step model of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was opted. Initial codes on transcription were regrouped under umbrella themes and later on revised for final presentation.

4.0 Findings and Results

This section of the research report is aimed at presenting various themes as reflected in the narratives of respondents in the shape of their In-depth interviews. Very briefly bilingual educational platform offers an opportunity to rediscover themselves as linguistically competent individuals. Bilingualism and linguistic code-mixing are linked with the better educational outcomes due to conceptual clarity and expressive needs. Apart from its use in the class room it was found that Code-mixing is a pervasive peer group norm.

Results of the study are organized under various themes:

4.1 Themes

In aim of understanding students' experiences of bilingual education and their perception of advantages and disadvantaged for academic learning, we discovered the following themes:

- (i) Re-education in English
- (ii) Better understanding of complex concepts in Urdu
- (iii) Preference for Bilingual Education
- (iv) Code Mixing and improved learning outcomes**
- (v) Code mixing supports group work and learning outcomes**

4.2 Re-education into English

One of the persistent themes in the narrative of respondents consisted in the need and lived experience of being re-educated into linguistic frames after joining university. Often learning a new language is a problematic experience. Some is the case of our respondents. Who have to acquire academic competence in English at university their experience seems to be that of

forced socialization? Academic norms required the use of English after matriculation. Universities require all academic content in English, but respondents with Urdu backgrounds struggle with learning concepts due to their Urdu background, however, bilingual education makes understanding easier.

“English language was given significance at international level but due to our exposure to national language or native language in our early days of schooling and education when we reached a higher level the whole education system will be in English and then the students faced problems in learning concepts in English.”

University level education hence starts a process of re-socialization. Students face tension and anxiety during socialization into English due to complex understanding but overcome these challenges as multilingual better understand Urdu and English concepts.

Due to early socialization in Urdu and Punjabi students find it a little challenging to comprehend the English language. Before university education they have to simply memorize English essays or science questions without their academic abilities and outcomes being related to the English language and comprehension per se. Nonetheless, at university students across social and natural sciences are exposed to ideas primarily in English language because most of the prescribed books are in English. The same is true for our respondents; as one of the respondents said.

“Often the books recommended by teachers in English we understand them by translate them into the national language because we do not understand English at a high level. so we go through a process of dual language reasoning all the time”

Pakistani students' Proficiency in English, the official language, is limited due to bilingual education. This results in a limited understanding of both languages, reducing their linguistic compatibility. As a result, they require assistance to comprehend English-language literature.

“English language has given more importance but because of Urdu being our national language we focus on Urdu. But due to our exposure with 2 and 3 languages we did not have that much grip in our national language also and because of this our national language is declining day by day”.

English is increasingly gaining importance as a source of knowledge globally, while Urdu represents individual identity, strength, unity, and the origin of a nation.

4.3 Better understanding of complex concepts in Urdu

When speaking with friends and family, our respondents said they prefer to use Urdu or their home tongue because they find it easier to get their point across to others. In their language, they can effortlessly communicate their emotions. Because they don't have to think or talk eloquently in their language, they feel more at ease and calm. In the classroom, if the lecture is multilingual, the students comprehend it better, because they have to relate the lectures with the published materials.

“Urdu is our national language. We use our national language or mother language during our conversation I do not have that much grip over English. I better

explain my point of view in Urdu or my mother tongue”

Punjabi is the mother tongue of majority of population in Pakistan and the provincial language of the province of Punjab (Manan & David, 2014). Students from different villages and cities preferred their native language for communication because in it they felt comfort and it also showed their strength, unity, and love for their language. They do not want to forget their origins, as they feel proud to speak their language.

4.4 Preference for bilingual education

The majority of students are very supportive of bilingual education because, according to the respondents, they did not develop a strong command of a single language during their primary and secondary education. By combining language and educational content in two languages, they are better able to navigate the challenges they encounter in their post-secondary studies.

“Since our childhood we speak 2 or 3 languages .at home we speak mother language, at school for interacting we speak Urdu and all the academic content is in English. That’s why we prefer bilingual education because we do not have that much competence over one language so bilingual makes our concept clearer”.

Most respondents support bilingual education because, in their opinion, academic material in two languages will boost students' potential to gain new skills and information. English and Urdu both play an important role in students' learning. They will be able to develop their powers.

4.5 Code Mixing and improved learning outcomes

Respondents shared that bilingual education and code mixing is the most effective tool for communication and student learning, which supports better academic outcomes. Code mixing especially supports students from different backgrounds and households. Respondents also believed that an effective expression of cognitive states of mind during the learning process requires an emphatic pursue of code-mixing in the class room.

“For better communication in the classroom we need both languages to be used and allowed- English and Urdu”.

4.6 Code mixing supports group work and learning outcomes

Students shared that code-mixing in and outside the class helps them to do group work, support each other to complete assignments and raise the morale of peers. Students from diverse backgrounds often code mix in Punjabi, Urdu, and English and this helped in group work, submitting assignments on time, and peer learning.

“It (code mixing) is a normal practice even outside the class room. We keep on mixing languages to complete our classroom assignments”.

Usually, in universities, the medium of instruction and the academic content available are in English. For instance, in the case of Pakistan, being a multilingual country, it is not possible to use a single language. The teachers mix languages while delivering lectures to make the students less likely to miss the point. In this way, students are able to understand complex concepts in their own language and through their own examples and context. As one of the respondents said. Occasional use of Punjabi. Teachers primarily speak Urdu, and English is rarely used.

“At university level the medium of instruction is English but due to the Urdu medium students the teacher uses to code mix between languages to make the concepts clear to every student”

5.0 Discussion and Conclusion

By using qualitative evaluation, this research presents the perspective of the students on how code mixing is employed by them and how bilingual education aids in their understanding of the concept in question. Pakistan is home to many different languages. Punjabi, besides all other languages, is the most spoken language and also used as a tool for interaction. The two languages, English and Urdu, were used by the researcher in the process of conducting the interviews. The reason for using multiple languages is the nature and the mental capabilities of the respondents selected for data collection.

Findings of the study are in line of reasoning with some previous studies. In fact perceived benefits of bilingual education for learning are linked with the cognitive control as expressed by some of the respondents in this study (Kheder & Kaan, 2021)

The study also confirms the cross-cultural validity of findings of Atkinson (1993) , As our respondents are bilingual speakers and neither become monolingual. Since their childhood they had learned two or three languages. The tremendous exposure with languages which are diverse in nature makes them multi lingual and also increase their cognitive capabilities despite the fact that one language is a predominant for cognitive control. The researcher clearly used a mixing technique while recording respondent’s view. Atkinson (1993) studied that the students think that they do not understand the new thing until they translate it into their first language and also use first language for communication.

The current study examines how students perceive multilingual instruction and code mixing at the University of Gujarat. Data analysis reveals that the students agreed on the use of code mixing. Code mixing, in the opinion of students, is extremely beneficial to their language acquisition and comprehension. They may communicate their opinions in a better and more positive way thanks to its assistance in making the dialogue more fruitful. These findings resonate a series of studies in the literature (Jawad, 2021; ÖZŞEN et al., 2020) Students often remain silent during lectures due to barriers in English instruction. However, code mixing in teaching encourages active participation and understanding. Students are comfortable with bilingual education and code mixing, as they are multilingual speakers. Bilingualism promotes positive learning behaviors and communication. Most students believe bilingual education and code mixing are effective, promoting successful learning and conceptual development.

It was evident from their responses that they tended to converse in an amalgamation of their mother tongue, English, and Urdu. It indicates how frequently code mixing takes place in daily life. When speaking with their peers, teachers, and families, students often employ codes. Although English is the language of teaching at the university, students may use it intentionally or accidentally when speaking with professors. They may also use Urdu when they feel their English vocabulary is inadequate or when they are unsure of the particular term they want to use. However, they feel free and comfortable to do this when they are around friends. Code swapping or mixing is now fairly common among students. Whether consciously or

unconsciously, individuals mix languages in their regular conversations. Students have a favorable attitude toward the blending of the two codes since it will make it easier for them to communicate in English.

5.1 Conclusion

The study clarifies the accounts of students at the University of Gujrat located in District Gujrat. The advantages of bilingual schooling are manifold. Because many of the students are bilingual and cannot grasp what is being said in English, it is best to use two languages, which will aid in their learning and increase their knowledge

Narratives of the students show that bilingualism is a model for inclusive education, bilingualism and code mixing in the classroom setting are fundamental elements of a dynamic and productive educational environment. The utilization of diverse languages bolsters communication, fosters cultural awareness, and equips students for globalization. The absolute integration of code mixing unclogs productive learning, allowing for more fine expression and a richer educational experience. The integration of languages improves teacher-student communication, resulting in an increasingly active learning environment that facilitates the transmission and interpretation of information. Bilingualism is a way to improve one's understanding of subjects and concepts, which helps them achieve academic success. Their understanding is reinforced by the ability to access materials in various languages. The adoption of a constructive outlook towards language acquisition can help students comprehend the specific advantages that bilingualism offers in terms of academic and career advancement.

Code mixing inside the setting of bilingual instruction disentangles a wealthy embroidered artwork of topics, giving significant experiences into the encounters and recognitions of college students. The journey begins with the method of re-education into English, underlining the cautious adjusting act between phonetic impacts, where inclinations are carefully given to both mother tongue and national language. Students' fulfillment with bilingual instruction rises as a central point, emphasizing the transformative effect of code mixing on their learning encounters.

Digging into the capacities of bilingualism, it reveals its assorted parts in communication and comprehension, tending to the etymological situation experienced in perusing books with shifting dialect structures. The examination of students' opinion and discernments code mixing divulges the cognitive and enthusiastic measurements of this phonetic marvel. From being a communication apparatus to showing within the classroom environment, formal languages at the college, and family interactions, the study captures the multifaceted nature of code mixing.

Bilingualism improves cognitive abilities by significantly improving problem-solving skills, multitasking, and progressive memory retention. It opens the door to different social perspectives, fostering a greater understanding and appreciation of diverse dialects, conventions, and worldviews. Bilingualism promotes flexibility and adaptability because people who can speak multiple dialects can effectively explore different social contexts and levels, thereby promoting communication possible and cooperation.

5.2 Recommendation to improve the Learning on Campus

For students, effective bilingual socialization is essential and should ideally begin early in

their academic careers. Students who are exposed to a variety of languages and cultures from a young age have the linguistic and cultural tools they need to succeed in a variety of educational settings. It promotes adaptation and cross-cultural awareness in addition to linguistic skill. Students need to develop a strong reading habit in order to make sure they easily understand the lectures and course materials. Proficiency in the language is increased with frequent reading since it develops vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking abilities. As a result, students may face fewer difficulties in English language classes, where lecturers frequently call for a high degree of linguistic competency.

Universities have a critical role to play in helping students who are struggling with language in higher education. It would be proactive to establish specialized center's aimed at resolving these challenges. These facilities can offer resources, tutoring, and linguistic support to help students get past language challenges and make an easier adjustment to college life.

When it comes to research, quantitative studies can be useful in recognizing and resolving early language-related difficulties that students face when they enter college. Universities can build customized interventions to help students' academic achievement and acquire useful insights into the specific linguistic issues they confront by gathering and analyzing data.

It is impossible to overestimate the crucial role of early bilingual socialization, the benefits of extensive reading, and the creation of language support centers in higher education for guaranteeing students' linguistic competency and general academic success. In the end, quantitative research improves student learning by offering a data-driven method for comprehending and addressing language-related difficulties.

Future scholars who wish to investigate the roles of code-mixing and code-switching will find this work to be of great assistance. Additionally, the researcher in this study investigated the students' opinions on whether bilingual education enhances educational quality or not. This study is also helpful for language policymakers, who are working on the policy of language for educational institution

Tauqeer Ahmed Lak: Idea Generation, Literature Review

Nasim Ahmad: Data Analysis, Supervision and Drafting

Hala Nasim Arshad: Data Collection, Idea Refinement

Conflict of Interests/Disclosures

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