



Teachers' Use of Code Switching to Pashto Language in Classroom Discussion: Experiences of non-Pashto Speaking Students in University of Peshawar

Uzma Dayan ¹  Aaima Jameel ²

Abstract: *The purpose of the study was to explore the learning experiences of non-Pashto speaking students, which ensued due to teachers' code switching to Pashto language at University of Peshawar. Employing qualitative methods, the objectives of the study included: exploring perceptions of students about teachers' use of code switching on non-Pashto speaking students' learning; analyzing the difficulties students' face; and exploring strategies that students use to overcome the barriers of language in learning. Population of the study consisted of students of University of Peshawar. Using snowball sampling technique, 25 participants were selected from three faculties of University of Peshawar. The data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis technique. Findings of the study reveal that some teachers code switch to Pashto, the local language which creates barriers in learning for the non-Pashto speaking students. This code switching affects students' academically, behaviorally and emotionally. Consequently, students face an obstructive classroom climate, which severely influences their level of attention and interest and results in their non-participative role in class. The study recommends considering inclusive education principles in linguistically diverse classrooms, so that all the students are treated and benefited equally. Moreover, it suggests that teachers adhere to the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan (NPSTs) to enhance learning effectiveness.*

Key Words: Code Switching, Pashto Language, Learning Barriers, Linguistically Diverse Classrooms, Pakistan

Introduction

Teaching learning process is a complex mental activity (Borg, 2003). It needs a conducive physical as well as psychological environment. The favorable psychological environment of learning covers the cognitive and emotional domains. The cognitive domain includes the information and skills to be learnt while the emotional domains include motivation (Emelogu, Nwafor, Chigbu & Oluikpe, 2021). Motivation comes from understanding which is linked with language. Research has found a close linked between language and learning (Crawford & Marin, 2021). It is believed that learning accelerates when medium of instruction is understandable for students. Moreover, medium of instruction is a powerful tool through which students can be supported in developing their self-control, building their sense of community, and gaining academic skills and knowledge. Ensuring that students, peers and teachers from diverse backgrounds understand and communicate respectfully with each other is often just as important as helping students understand the material in their textbooks. On the other hand, when language is not understood by students, learning barrier occurs which hampers students' learning. Thus, language barrier gives rise to difficulties in learning. Similarly, teachers' use of code switching that is using two languages by switching simultaneously between them, also creates learning barrier. This is true about a linguistically diverse classroom in a multilingual country (Rehman, Bashir & Rehman, 2020).

¹ Lecturer, Institute of Education and Research, University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

² M.Phil. Scholar, Institute of Education and Research, University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.



Teachers use code switching when they have to explain some complex concept or illustration, express emotions, reflect social status, and sometimes for audience persuasions. Code-switching can be a powerful tool for enhancing comprehension, particularly when discussing complex concepts (Eldin, 2014; Murtaflah, 2017). However, it creates problems for students who do not understand the language to which teachers code switch during explaining a lesson (Nadeem, 2018; Narasuman, Wali, & Sadry, 2019). It also gives rise to linguistic discrimination which occurs when a student is treated differently on the basis of his/her language background that does not belong to the majority language. In such situations, students may feel apprehensive and intimidated about participating in class. Consequently, they may become disconnected or distant from the group (Vanegas et al, 2016). It causes psychological problems such as stress, anxiety, lack of motivation, low self-esteem and isolation from the group. These problems can negatively affect students' motivation and academic performance. It also results in strong feeling of insecurity during presentations, exams and other learning activities (Saroor, 2020). Discrimination in language can cause miscommunication and misconception too. According to Vural and Gomleksiz (2010), the discriminatory attitude is the tendency to look down, devalue or exclude those who are not considered as a part of some predominant group.

When medium of instruction is understandable for all students in a class, learning takes place in a relax environment which is essential for learning. Positive communication between students and teachers causes active learning and better classroom performance (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). The lack of communication between students and teachers leads to limited class participation among students (Vanegas et al., 2016). It has been observed that teachers avoid interaction with students who do not understand their native language. Such attitude of teachers causes a decline in students' motivation for learning. Students consider themselves as language minority in the classroom which negatively affects their academic performance.

Kutsyuruba, Klinger & Hussain (2013) claimed that positive teacher students' relationship is where no kind of language bias exists. Studies support that teachers' interest in students' views build confidence in them (Reeve & Jang, 2006). Students' progress can be increased by teachers' positive interpersonal behavior (Den Brok, Brekelmans & Wubbels, 2004). Teachers' biased language attitudes can negatively impact students' academic success and personality development. The study of Klop (2011) explores how teachers tend to favor students whose lifestyle, race, economic status, or spoken language aligns with their own. Educators might form negative expectations about a student's skills and capabilities on language basis (Charity-Hudley & Mallinson, 2014).

The present day learning institutions work on the principle of inclusiveness which advocates treating all students alike irrespective of their academic and social background and abilities (Pitts, 2009; Smith & Tyler 2011) Inclusive classrooms support diversity of all kinds. For example, differences in physical, social, emotional, economical and linguistic abilities (Corbett, 2001). However, studies have found exclusion in classrooms (Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2021). For instance, the findings of a study conducted by Glory Gatwiri (2015) reveal that language barrier is an issue for students undertaking their studies in foreign countries. One such example is that of English language in European countries for the non-native speakers. Similarly, language barrier can be occurred within a country for the citizens of a multilingual country where students from different regions of the same country, face language issues.

Pakistan is a multilingual country with six major and over fifty-nine small languages. Its national language, Urdu, is the mother tongue of only 7.57 per cent of the population. Pakistan's official language is still English as it was when the British ruled the country as part of British India (Rahman, 2008). In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), which is the context of the proposed study, Pashto is the majority language spoken by more than 75% of the population. It is used as the first language. Its secondary languages includes; Hindko, Saraiki, Khowar, Kohistani, Kalasha, and Gojri. Debate over the medium of instruction has been ongoing for over a decade in Pakistan and to date there is no consensus among the federal and provincial government on this subject.

It has been observed that university teachers use code-switching in teaching (Irfan, Butt & Rizwan, 2022) particularly teachers in KP universities code switch to Pashto language. This code switching to Pashto language creates language barrier for non-Pashto speaking students. There are students who belong to other provinces or regions and do not understand Pashto language, hence, do not understand

the contents properly. Although National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan (NPSTs) recommends the use of simple English language along with supportive use of Urdu, the lingua franca in Pakistan for effective learning purpose (GOP, 2009). However, teachers, use local language Pashto mostly. As a result, students lag behind in grasping the concepts. The current study, therefore, is proposed to explore teachers' code switching to Pashto language in classroom discussion and its effects on non-Pashto speaking students' learning.

Research Objectives

1. To explore the perceptions of students regarding teachers' use of code-switching on non-Pashto speaking students' learning.
2. To analyze the difficulties that non-Pashto speaking students encounter in classroom discussion as a result of teachers' use of code-switching to the Pashto language.
3. To explore non-Pashto speaking students' strategies for overcoming the barriers of language in learning.

Research Questions

Major Research Question

How does teachers' use of code-switching to Pashto language in classroom discussion affect undergraduate students' learning?

Subsidiary Research Questions

1. What difficulties do non-Pashto speaking students face as a result of teachers' code-switching to the Pashto language?
2. What are the perceptions of non-Pashto speaking students about their teachers' use of code-switching to the Pashto language?
3. How do non-Pashto-speaking students overcome the language barrier in learning?

Significance of the Study

A number of researchers have conducted studies in the area of language as a barrier in students learning. For example, Gatwiri (2015) explored the influence of language difficulties on the wellbeing of international students. Similarly, Andrade (2006) explored language problems that international students face in English-speaking universities. The information produced from this study can help to discover that how teachers' code switching to Pashto language in classroom discussion affects non-Pashto speaking students' learning progress.

The study may inform policy makers about the use of local language as a barrier in learning for the non-Pashto speaking students. This can help provide insights to teachers about the diverse linguistic backgrounds of learners, which affect their learning. Therefore, teachers must ensure to follow social, cultural, and moral principles. In addition, it may be useful in promoting a language-bias-free and democratic learning environment in the classroom."

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frame work of this study was derived from the work of Gatwiri (2015), Rapp and Corral-Granados (2021) and Narasuman, Wali and Sadry (2019). Gatwiri (2015) worked on the influence of language difficulties on the wellbeing of international students in the context of Melbourne, Australia. The findings of this study revealed that language difficulties influence the level of psychological and academic wellbeing among international students. Rapp and Corral-Granados (2021) explored the understanding of inclusive education through the lens of social system theory developed by Niklas Luhmann. The researchers discussed how aspects such as teaching methods, management practices, student relationships, and all communication-related elements within the educational context can lead to the exclusion of certain students. In the context of the proposed study, non-Pashto speaking students are taken as language minority students who encounter difficulties in learning as a result of teachers' code



switching to Pashto language which they do not understand. This type of learning environment does not foster inclusivity in education. It gives rise to exclusiveness for some students. Narasuman, Wali and Sadry (2019) investigated the functions of code-switching in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. They explored the positive as well as negative role of code switching in learning.

Methodology

The current study is qualitative in nature, as it aligns best with the aim of this research.. Given that the study aimed to investigate how teachers' use of code-switching to Pashto language in classroom discussions affects undergraduate students' learning, employing a qualitative approach aligns with the nature of the phenomenon under study. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), a qualitative research provides the researcher with deep understanding about a phenomenon by interacting in-depth with the respondents of the study.

Qualitative exploratory design was adopted to conduct the present study. This research design was applied because the researcher aimed to explore the phenomenon in-depth (Creswell, 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2008). Brown (2016) stated that exploratory research design does not need any final and concise answers rather a detailed answer is required. Since the proposed study intended to explore teachers' code switching to Pashto language and its effects on non-Pashto speaking undergraduate students learning, qualitative exploratory design best suited the aim of the study.

Data Collection Tool

The researcher selected semi-structured interview as a data collection tool. Semi-structured interview helps giving space to researchers to dig an issue more deeply. It is also considered beneficial as it has a list of predetermined questions (Yeo, Legard, Keegan, Ward & Lewis, 2014). Semi-structured interview is time saving as researchers do not have to develop questions on the spot as compared to unstructured interviews (Cresswell, 2003). Similarly, the nature of semi-structured interview helps the researchers to get deep understanding of the respondents' opinions (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

Research Site

The present study was conducted in district Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan. It's the largest city of KP with a total of 74, 521 km² (28,773 sq. miles). Peshawar is one of the largest cities of Pakistan. People from various parts of the province, and other parts of Pakistan came and settled here, as it provides good opportunities of business, education and employment to people. It makes Peshawar a multilingual, multicultural and multi ethnic city. Its major language is Pashto, while Saraiki, Urdu and Hindko are also spoken here in some areas of this city. The research site chosen by the researcher for the current study were three faculties of University of Peshawar i.e., Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences (FLES), Faculty of Social Sciences (FOSS) and Faculty of Physical and Numerical Sciences (FPNS).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for current study was composed of all the undergraduate students of University of Peshawar. The details of the sample are provided below:

A total of 25 sample units were selected from three faculties of UoP i.e., Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences (FLES), Faculty of Social Sciences (FOSS) and Faculty of Physical and Numerical Sciences (FPNS). Out of 25 respondents, 15 were from Faculty of Social sciences (FOSS) in which six were boys and 11 were girls. Six respondents were from Faculty of Physical and Numerical Sciences (FPNS) in which one male and four female respondents participated while four female respondents were from Faculty of Life and environmental Sciences (FLES).

Keeping in view the nature of the study which was exploring the learning experiences of non-Pashto speaking students in a language biased classroom, snowball sampling technique was used. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where new units are recruited by other units to form part of the sample (Nikolopoulou, 2022). Snowball sampling can be a useful way to conduct research about people with specific traits who might otherwise be difficult to identify (Creswell, 2007; Nikolopoulou,

2022). When the researcher gets the target subject, they ask them to refer respondents with similar characteristics who can take part in the study (Polit & Beck, 2006).

For the present study, the respondents were selected on the basis of being language minority students in the class. In the context of the current study, non-Pashto speaking students were considered as language minority students which include students from Chitral, Gilgit- Baltistan, Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan. Since Pakistan is a multilingual country, majority teachers of KP know three languages i.e., Urdu, the national language, Pashto/Hindko/Saraiki or any other language as mother tongue and English as an international language and medium of instruction. Teachers seldom use Pashto in teaching. Majority of them use Urdu as a supportive language. However, few teachers can be found code switching to Pashto language in classroom discussion. Therefore, not all students have the same experience of language as a barrier in learning. Keeping in view, the nature and context of the study, snowball sampling technique best suited the study.

Since the sample is large, the study employed exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling technique. In this type of snowball sampling, the first participant provides multiple referrals. In other words, the researcher recruits the first participant, and this participant in turn recruits several others. The researcher includes all referrals in the sample (Nikolopoulou, 2022). This type of snowball sampling is best used for a larger sample. The researcher located the respondents with the help of the initial respondent. The initial respondent was selected from the researcher's circle of friends and acquaintances. Since the initial respondents helped identify further respondents, all departments of the three faculties were included in the sample.

Validation of Tool

For validation, the interview guide was checked and refined by two professors of English in Education at University of Peshawar. The suggestions regarding the interview questions were incorporated.

Data Collection Process

The data were collected personally by the researcher. The respondents were informed a few days prior interviewing. The aim of the study and the interview questions were also shared with them to avoid any discomfort on the day of interview. Respondents were familiar with the topic, so interviews were carried smoothly. The researcher quietly and attentively received the responses from the interviewees, during the interview session to avoid any misconception and ambiguity later. The time range of interviews varied from respondent to respondent, depending on their experience with the issue, comfort level with the interviewer during discussion, and the amount of time the respondent allocated for it. Each interview took approximately 50 to 60 minutes.

All interviews were conducted in Urdu, and noted by the researcher manually. Each interview was translated from Urdu into English.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by thematic analysis. The process was guided by the work of Braun and Clarke (2006). It was preceded in four steps: translation and transcription of data; initial coding; identifying themes and developing explanations (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The detail is given below:

Step 1: Translation and Transcription of Data

All the interviews were first translated into English. The researcher listened to each interview repeatedly before transcribing it. Each interview was translated and transcribed quickly usually on the same day it was conducted in order to avoid any ambiguity later. This step was crucial in gaining the overview of the data. To carefully listen to the data, translating and transcribing it, enables researchers to get familiarized with the data (Braun and Clark, 2006).



Step 2: Initial Coding

After the process of translation and transcription of data, the next step was to make sense out of the data called as initial coding. It requires the data to be read and re-read carefully. The responses of similar nature were classified in one group and given initial codes.

Step 3: Identifying Themes

In this process, thematic maps were developed and coded data were put within the maps. This step highlighted the facts shared by the respondents. These maps helped in identifying the main and the sub themes.

Step 4: Refining Themes and Developing Explanations

The last step is to refine themes and develop explanations. All the coded extracts were read and re-read carefully. Some themes found to be overlapping, were corrected accordingly. Finally a detailed analysis was conducted by writing the story each theme was telling in relation to the research question. Every explanation was supported by relevant quotes from the data.

Findings

The findings were categorized into four main themes: students' perceptions on teachers' code switching, impact on students learning, challenges faced by students, and strategies to overcome language barriers. These themes, along with their respective sub-themes, are presented below:

Students' Perceptions on Teachers' Code Switching

Analysis of the data on students' perceptions on teachers' code switching revealed three important findings: purpose of using Pashto language, teachers' attitude towards translation and male teachers' use of Pashto. A detailed account is presented below:

Purpose of using Pashto

The study's results indicated that most respondents acknowledged that teachers frequently switch to Pashto during classroom discussions, particularly when sharing jokes, idioms, poetry, quotations, explaining complex concepts, or translating terminology. For instance, one of the respondents shared.

Teachers code-switch to Pashto when they have to share any joke poetry using idioms or some quotation (Respondent 11).

Additionally, many students noted that teachers use Pashto throughout the entire lecture almost daily, switching languages at any moment, which they find disruptive. This sudden language switching acts as a distraction and serves to demotivate them. One respondent shared.

Teachers can switch codes anytime during the lecture, which is very annoying (Respondent 8).

A few respondents mentioned that teachers code-switch when delivering important instructions regarding papers, assignments, or presentations. A minority of respondents also noted instances where teachers switch to Pashto when expressing anger, during leisure time, or when in a happy mood, particularly when sharing stories or personal experiences. As one of the respondents shared:

Teachers prefer to use Pashto instead of Urdu to explain some concepts. Also, teachers like to speak Pashto in their leisure time (Respondent 4).

Most of the respondents shared that teachers use Pashto as a medium of instruction during classroom discussions. They find it easy to communicate in their mother tongue, Pashto, instead of using Urdu. According to NPST, Urdu can be used as a supportive language along with English. However, teachers are found using the Pashto language. One of the participants said:

Teachers' Attitude Towards Translation

The majority of the respondents stated that teachers are not cooperative in translating the content into Urdu for non-Pashto-speaking students. Instead, they translate it from English into the Pashto language,

keeping in mind Pashto those who are in the majority. When students request a translation, teachers either ignore it or ask students to learn Pashto. For instance, one participant shared:

If we ask the teachers to translate the material into Urdu for us, they ask us to learn Pashto. According to them, when they use translation, the sense is gone (Respondent 19). Few teachers, however, were found to be cooperative in explaining the content in Urdu.

Male Teachers' Use of Pashto

Some respondents observed that male teachers tend to communicate more, finding it easier to switch to Pashto to convey messages in their mother tongue. They prefer to remain in their comfort zone, using Pashto as the medium of instruction throughout the entire lecture. In contrast, female teachers rarely use Pashto. As one participant expressed:

The tendency to switch to Pashto seems more prevalent among male teachers, possibly indicating difficulty in adhering strictly to Urdu. Some teachers find it challenging to maintain Urdu as the primary language, opting instead for Pashto for their own comfort. Additionally, there are instances where teachers entirely neglect Urdu. Conversely, female teachers typically do not encounter this issue, as their fluency in Urdu surpasses that of male teachers (Respondent 20).

Impact on Students' Learning

The learning process in education encompasses several components, including attention, memory, language, classroom climate, behaviour, emotions, social skills, and learners' family background. The study findings indicate that students' learning is adversely affected by teachers' code-switching to Pashto during classroom discussions. Students consistently strive to overcome this language barrier on a daily basis. Below are the findings illustrating how teachers' code-switching impacts students' learning. Two prominent themes emerged from the study: unfavourable classroom climate and teachers' and fellow students' behaviour, which are detailed below.

Unfavorable Classroom Climate

Findings revealed that when teachers use Pashto as a medium of instruction, almost all respondents get anxious about their examinations. They find it difficult to understand and grasp the important concepts. As one of the participants stated:

The use of Pashto in the classroom can sometimes affect the learning process of non-Pashto-speaking students, as they may not fully understand what is being said. It can make it challenging to follow along and grasp the content. Difficulties due to teachers' use of Pashto can arise during presentations, assignments, projects, and general engagement in class. Non-Pashto-speaking students may struggle to participate fully or express their ideas effectively (Respondent 24).

The classroom climate significantly impacts students' learning. A conducive and friendly atmosphere encourages active participation in class activities and enhances the enjoyment of learning. Conversely, a distressing and unsupportive environment can lead to students feeling depressed. A classroom climate should not induce feelings of exclusion, boredom, passivity, isolation, discomfort, or lack of motivation. One respondent expressed this sentiment:

Teachers' code-switching affects my learning, as when the lecture is going on in Pashto, I feel excluded. This situation makes the classroom climate unwelcoming for me. I feel disturbed every time when teachers don't consider the non-Pashto speaking students sitting in the class (Respondent 14).

Teachers and Peers' behaviour

Many respondents encountered differential behaviour from both teachers and peers. Teachers often favour speaking Pashto without considering the impact on students who may not understand. Similarly, some fellow students are reluctant to translate lessons for others. For example, one respondent shared:



At times, our classmates appear unwilling to clarify assignment guidelines, which adversely affects my academic performance. Furthermore, some teachers justify their language use by stating, 'You are living in our culture, so you must learn the language.' Such comments come across as offensive. (Respondent 9)

One of the respondents said that due to teachers' continuous and excessive use of *Pashto*, students lose interest in the lesson, and their attention gets diverted. Teachers do not care about the linguistically diverse classrooms. It was also identified that teachers' way of teaching and students' learning are going in two opposite directions due to the language barrier. As one of the respondents shared:

When students ask the teacher if they are not getting it, the teacher says, "It's ok. All the other students are getting it in Pashto, and you can ask them later".

Challenges Faced by Students

The findings of the study revealed that due to teachers' code-switching to the *Pashto* language, a lot of problems arise for non-*Pashto* speaking students. Respondents addressed some specific obstacles they faced. For example, misconceptions, exam anxiety, obstacles in learning, students' unwillingness to participate and teachers' non-cooperative behaviour.

Development of Misconceptions

The majority of the students shared that teachers' use of *Pashto* in the classroom creates too many hurdles for them. Their concepts remain unclear. A respondent said:

The serious problem arising from teachers frequently using Pashto in class is that it often leaves my concepts misunderstood. Moreover, as teachers discourage class discussions, seeking clarification after class becomes challenging. Often, when I approach them for explanations, they are either in a rush, fatigued, or have forgotten, deferring it to another day. Some teachers suggest seeking assistance from peers instead. (Respondent 18)

Similarly, another respondent shared:

A specific issue faced by non-Pashto speaking students due to teachers' use of Pashto is the difficulty in comprehending important instructions or explanations. This obstacle can significantly impede their performance in assignments or projects. (Respondent 24)

Some of the respondents described their helplessness towards teachers' use of code-switching. They get confused and frustrated in this situation. Their confidence declines. Some of them feel excluded and devalued as teachers do not care for their linguistic needs. For instance, a respondent articulated:

A specific obstacle that arises in this situation is that non-Pashto-speaking students are often left behind. As teachers predominantly use Pashto, these students struggle to understand, resulting in confusion and feelings of exclusion. This impacts their confidence and willingness to participate. Additionally, Pashto-speaking students may dominate the discussion. (Respondent 2)

Exams Anxiety

Some of the respondents were of the view that teacher's code-switching makes them worried about their exams. Some students fear to ask questions in case of misconception, and others become sleepy due to lack of attention, which later affects their performance. A few of the respondents stated that when they do not acquire anything from the lesson, it definitely affects their exam performance. For example, one respondent said:

I always get frustrated about my results because I have attained nothing from the comprehension as it was done in Pashto. (Respondent 6)

Students' Unwillingness to Participate

It was found that non-*Pashto*-speaking students do not participate well in classroom activities. They feel left out of the class when they cannot understand the language being spoken by the teachers and peers. Some students shared that the sudden switch to a different language proved to be a hindrance in classroom participation. As one of the participants articulated:

The worst obstacle for me is that my interest gets lost as a result of teachers' code-switching. I have not wanted to attend class or work on class assignments. (Respondent 23)

Findings also revealed that when students ask teachers to translate the content for them in Urdu, they make excuses or ignore it. Sometimes, teachers told them to take assistance from their peers. It was pointed out by a respondent who said:

The most significant obstacle I face due to teachers' use of Pashto in class is encountering discriminatory behaviour. Some teachers show bias towards those of us who don't speak or understand Pashto. Even when I make an effort to participate by answering questions, they fail to appreciate my contributions. This experience undermines my confidence. (Respondent 17)

Strategies to Overcome Language Barrier

When teachers do code-switching habitually, consciously or unconsciously, it creates hurdles for students to understand the lesson. As a result, students have to use some tactics to cope with that situation. Some students develop their own strategies to overcome this language barrier, and some cannot resist this problem. Findings revealed three different strategies to overcome the language barrier in learning. These include peer assistance and the use of online resources, questioning in class, and self-study.

Peers Assistance and Online Resources

The majority of respondents addressed this issue by seeking help from their peers who are proficient in both languages. Some students opt to capture images of lecture materials or jot down points they didn't understand, then ask their peers for clarification during or after class. They expressed satisfaction with the assistance received from their classmates. One respondent elaborated on their personal strategy:

To overcome this situation, I rely on my peers when I encounter points spoken in Pashto by teachers that I don't understand. I capture images of the lecture and ask them to explain. This approach leaves me content with the understanding I gain. (Respondent 5)

Two of the respondents shared that although they get help from their peers, they are not satisfied with their assistance. For example, a participant said:

When teachers mostly use Pashto, and I am not getting anything, I ask my friends for assistance. But sometimes, I feel my friends cannot answer my questions properly. (Respondent 17)

When students encounter difficulties understanding lessons due to teachers switching to Pashto, they employ various techniques to bridge the learning gap. Some respondents mentioned resorting to online resources when they misunderstood concepts translated into Pashto by their teachers. One participant expressed: *In such cases, I utilize online resources such as language websites or applications. (Respondent 2)*

Questioning in Class

A number of respondents shared that they are confident in asking their teachers to translate the content into Urdu. Some students claimed that if they do not ask teachers to translate the lesson into Urdu for them, teachers do not bother to use Urdu.

If the teacher does code-switching and I find it difficult to grasp, I confidently ask the teacher to repeat the point in Urdu. But if we do not ask, they do not care whether students are getting them or not (Respondent 4).

Few of the participants shared that in the beginning, they hesitated to ask questions, but with the passage of time, they developed confidence. As one respondent stated:

At first, I was shy, but now I can ask my teacher to translate it for me in Urdu (Respondent 19).

Yet another respondent opined that:

I try to remind my teacher during the class that I am a non-Pashto speaker. When it does not work, I ask my classmates to help me understand the concept (Respondent 20).



Self-study

Self-study is recognized as a hallmark of dedicated students. Those who prepare for new lessons in advance actively engage in classroom discussions, fostering a deeper understanding of the material. This approach also aids in overcoming language barriers arising from teachers' code-switching to Pashto during class. One participant elaborated on their coping strategy:

To navigate this challenge, my Urdu-speaking friends and I proactively study the upcoming lesson the day before it's taught in class. We make an effort to grasp the content ourselves, or sometimes, during breaks, we seek assistance from our Pashto-speaking peers to explain the lesson to us. (Respondent 23)

Discussion

The main points that emerged as a result of the study analysis are outlined below:

Medium of Instruction

Teachers use Pashto as a medium of instruction in classroom discussions. This is done for various reasons, such as clarifying difficult concepts, providing entertainment, offering illustrations, and sharing personal experiences. This finding corresponds to the findings of the study conducted by Eldin (2014) which states that mostly teachers do code switching when they have to describe any difficult terminology or examples, expressing emotions and sometimes for audience persuasion. It also works in comprehending of any complex concepts.

Teachers' code switching creates hurdles for those students who do not understand the language. Findings are similar to the study of (Narasuman, Wali and Sadry, 2019) who describes that when a lesson is explained in a language students cannot get creates problems for the students they face misconceptions, disconnectedness with the lesson with emerging emotions of anxiety, stress and lack of motivation along with low self-esteem and isolation. It negatively affects students' academic performance, this result matches with the study conducted by (Sarooj, 2020) who also stated that students feel insecure to participate in class activities, presentations, assignments etc. and this situation cause students' demoralization. The study of (Vanegas et al, 2016) supported the findings of the study that in such a situation, where the medium of instruction is not understood by the students, they feel intimidated to participate in class. It also results in students' aloofness from the group. They feel excluded and inferior among the class.

Moreover, the study exposed that teachers mostly communicate in Pashto language as they want to stay in their comfort zone. Some teachers do not even bother to use Urdu. This excessive code switching to Pashto must be lessened as it will lead to failure in acquisition of target language as said by (Cook, 2001) the more use of code switching by teachers and students will gradually leads to very less or no learning of the target language.

Unfavorable Classroom Climate

The study discovered that teachers use Pashto language in class consciously or unconsciously during daily lessons. For some students who do not understand Pashto language face an unwelcoming, unsupportive and discouraging classroom environment. As a result, they feel disturbed, bored, demotivated, isolated and stressed. They lose their interest in class and feel lack of attention towards the lesson in such a distressing classroom environment. This classroom climate results in very less or no learning opportunities for these students. These findings corresponds to the findings of (Booth & Gerard, 2011) who argued that various factors influence students' learning i.e. physical, psychological, social, personal, intellectual and environmental factors. These factors are crucial for fostering better learning experiences for students. In a distressing classroom environment, however, learning becomes nearly impossible. Likewise, Mudassir and Norsuhaily (2015) suggested a physically and psychologically relaxed classroom environment for successful learning of students whereas the findings of the study showed that teachers' uncooperative behavior of using Pashto in a linguistically diverse classroom creates a disruptive classroom climate which discourage their learning.

Teacher's Uncooperative behavior

The study findings also uncovered instances of discriminatory behavior from teachers towards non-Pashto speaking students. Some teachers exhibit favoritism towards Pashto-speaking students, often prioritizing their involvement in class activities and understanding of the lesson. Conversely, when non-Pashto speaking students attempt to participate, they are either disregarded or given less importance. These findings parallel those of Klop (2011), which suggest that teachers tend to favor students whose lifestyle, race, economic status, or spoken language aligns with their own.

The findings of the study also disclosed that teachers keep giving the lecture in Pashto, without considering the point that some students are unable to get Pashto. They prefer to use Pashto and use it excessively. Their sudden switch from one language to another distracts students' minds badly. Some teachers do not even translate the lesson for them, rather ignore their difficulties. Teachers consider it as a time wastage to translate the lesson in Urdu for the non-Pashto speaking students who haven't got the lesson as it was in Pashto. It was also observed that, teachers make excuses for not translating the lesson for students or sometimes shift it to another day. The study also exposed that teachers argue with students to learn the language or ask them to take peers' assistance to translate the lesson for them. As a result students feel disappointed, offended and sometimes badly lose their interest in that subject or lesson.

Lack of Inclusive Education Principles

At many points, findings of the study indicated that students feel excluded in class. This finding resembles the study of (Rapp & Corral-Granados 2021). Study showed that students' demands an encouraging and inclusive behavior from teachers i.e. to be treated equally irrespective of their physical, social, emotional, economical and linguistic abilities. As educators might form negative expectations about a student's skills and capabilities on a language basis. These findings match the study conducted by (Charity-Hudley & Mallinson, 2017). The findings of the study also pointed out that there is a lack of adaptation and awareness from principles of inclusive education. The non-Pashto speaking students feel discriminatory behavior from their teachers. Students feel devalued and frustrated and sometimes their self-esteem and self-confidence is also affected by the uncooperative behavior of teachers and the unpleasant classroom climate.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to explore the learning difficulties experienced by students when teachers code-switch to Pashto during the teaching-learning process. Utilizing semi-structured, in-depth interviews, the study delved into how students perceive teachers' code-switching to a language not understood by all. It concluded that non-Pashto-speaking students encounter numerous challenges due to language barriers in their daily lessons. The study found that many teachers prefer using Pashto, considering it to be the majority language, without considering the linguistic needs of all students. This unaccommodating behaviour leads to fewer learning opportunities for students, significantly impacting their overall performance, as well as affecting their behaviour and emotions. Additionally, it fosters an unfavourable classroom environment, prompting students to want to avoid class. The study also emphasized the importance of all teachers adhering to inclusive education principles in the classroom. It highlighted the significance of acknowledging the National Professional Standards for Teachers in Pakistan (NPSTs), particularly regarding the use of Urdu as a supportive language for learning during classroom discussions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The implementation of (NPSTs) to use Urdu, the lingua franca of Pakistan, as a supportive language in the classroom will result in relieving the Non-Pashto-speaking students from continuous psychological and academic troubles, i.e. stress, anxiety, isolation, etc. and failure in class.
2. It will assist in providing insights to teachers that learners come from diverse linguistic backgrounds that affect their learning, so they must ensure that they follow social, cultural, and moral principles. Besides this, it will be useful in promoting a language-biased-free and democratic learning environment in the classroom.



3. It will focus on the possibility of giving equal quality education to all students without any discrimination, following the inclusive education principles.

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