

## Engineering Students Perceptions about English Language Teachers Code Switching from English to Sindhi Language

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### Abstract

Code-switching is a linguistic phenomenon that occurs in multilingual academic societies around the globe. This study aimed to uncover engineering discipline students' perceptions regarding English Language Teachers' code switching from L2 to L1 in a traditional classroom setting. One hundred fifty (150) students ranging from diverse engineering disciplines participated in this study. Research tool for this study was survey questionnaire comprising 10 items. Five point Likert scale was used quantifying perceptions of engineering students' about English Language teachers' code switching strategy. The research instrument was partially adopted from a study of Fareed, Humayun, Akhtar (2016). Data analysis mode was quantitative and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used drawing percentages for variables included in questionnaire. Findings revealed that 'teachers' code switching helped engineering students understanding lecture easily, it supported students understanding the task better, it generated confidence among students for speaking and participation for other classroom activities, it developed motivation for working hard in other engineering subjects, and it facilitated students learning process. In this perspective, this study concluded that code switching plays paramount role in effective teaching and learning for second language classroom teaching. This classroom practicum shift should be taken positively because it promotes better learning outcomes for the learners in the field of academia.

**Keywords:** Code Switching, Engineering Students, English Language Teachers, Perception

### Introduction

Pakistan is a multiethnic and multicultural state on the globe of earth. English is official language of Pakistan (Rahman, 2010; Khan, 2011; Coleman, 2010) and is taught as compulsory subject in schools, colleges and universities. Sindhi Language is the oldest languages of the world and its history spread on 600 BC to 500 AD (Fida, Nawaz & Nasir, 2019). It is spoken by forty million (40,000,000) people (Ahdi Hassan, 2016) around the world. English is the language of communication (Momen, 2009) and is used in every business of the world such as academics, economics, industry and management sector. English has imminent position in Pakistan because it is language of education, research (Fareed, Akhtar, & Khalid, 2014) management and marketing. It enjoys status of *Lingua Franca* and has substantial worth attaining success in every compass of life. English plays multiple roles in development e.g. it enhances employability opportunities, strengthen collaboration and cooperation, gives easy access to information and research sources, facilitate international students, tourists, and workers, build ease for disaster relief, and act as impartial knowledge in case of disharmony (Coleman, 2010, cited in Fauzia Shamim, 2011).

People switch or mix languages while interacting and communicating (Rukh, 2014; Iqbal, 2011) with each other and it has become a norm of healthy speech societies due to increasing influence of digital communication. Specifically, it has become a growing trend in academic community of Pakistan that they mix languages from English to Sindhi or vice versa during communication. This trend has been seen in Universities of Pakistan because it promotes effective classroom teaching and learning. Not only this, but speakers coming across from diverse academic backgrounds mix languages in online academic broadcasts and Television talk shows and it is considered a healthy norm since it entertains audiences in a befitting manner. English Language Teachers code switching from L2 to L1 or vice versa is based on multiple reasons. For instance, the main objective is clarifying student concepts about topic of discussion, generating student interest in the subject of study, facilitating students in capturing knowledge accurately, maintaining rhythm of lecture speech and motivating students for speaking and asking questions breaking language barriers. Experienced teachers consider code switching as healthy communication strategy whereas; novice teachers do not consider it the best in the context of Pakistan. Professional teachers focus on that students continue the flow of speech in shape of code switching if they face language problem. On the other front, novice teachers consider it students' language deficiency and sometimes it leads to poor award of marking in oral classroom presentations. Unfortunately, practically poor attention has been paid on attributes of code switching in the field of academics in Pakistan except few researches have been conducted on this domain. Language teachers should promote communication strategy techniques in classroom teachings. By this strategy, confident human capital shall be produced and they shall be capable of presenting ideas in multiple diverse situations during study and following graduation in the world of work. This study addresses this research question: What is the perception of engineering students about English Language Teachers code switching from English to Sindhi language in a traditional classroom setting?

### **Literature Review**

Code switching history in "sociocultural linguistics" can be traced from Blom and Gumperz's (1972) "social meaning in linguistic structures" (Erica Benson, 2001). Code switching has been animatedly used in second language acquisition and language learning demonstrating "cognitive linguistic abilities" of bilingual language learners and classroom activities (Fotos, 2001; Cenoz & Genesee, 2001). Code-switching occupies a dominant position in ESL/EFL classroom teaching especially in nonnative English speaking countries where language proficiency of teachers and the taught is not up to highest level. Research indicates that students have mixed aptitude (positive negative) about teachers' use of code switching in classroom teaching (Abdolaziz & Shahla, 2015). Krashen (1982) emphasizes that input is very necessary for language learning and on the basis of delivered input students shall form subject knowledge and will provide feedback. It is a communal practice in Pakistan that language teachers consciously or unconsciously practice code switching in order to disseminate appropriate knowledge to the learners. ESL teachers' main objective for using code switching is to expand scope of existing knowledge in feasible way. ESL/EFL teachers use code switching as communication strategy for communicating clear instructions, translating complex words into simple vocabulary form, managing class activities properly, providing contextual knowledge and minimizing student nervousness (Yao, 2011). Selamat (2014) views that ESL teachers code-switching communication strategy expand opportunities for advancement of academic capabilities and understanding of lectures easily. Code-switching in perspective of academic experts is highly beneficial for anxious, nervous, depressed, frightened, reluctant and low confident students

(Fareed et al., 2016). It is established idea in research arena that code-switching increases students' comprehension level, generates interest, promotes understanding of subject knowledge, prepare students for classroom participation readily, and help to overcome all apprehensions that make him a dull boy. It promotes healthy learning environment that increase student teacher relationships (Moghadam, Samad, & Shahraki, 2012). ESL/EFL learners get benefit from teachers' code switching strategy because it helps them in their effective academic learning (Nordin, Ali, Zubir, & Sadjirin, 2013). Research discloses that students give respect to teachers who employ code switching in classroom teaching because, it rises their academic knowledge and help producing rich examination results (Abdullah Alenezi, 2010).

Akynova et. al, (2014) researched attitude of foreign language learners toward Kazakh-English code switching in Business English course. Study mode was quantitative and 467 students responded. Sixty-five (65%) were female and thirty-five (35%) male students. Outcome of this study revealed that students termed code switching positive and highly encouraging. Gulzar & Qadir (2010) explored teachers' perception regarding code switching role and employment of L1 language in an EFL classroom. It was qualitative study and results were that "teachers purpose oriented code switching" is acceptable and plays fundamental role in EFL/ESL classroom teaching. Amina Khalid et.al, (2015) explored undergraduate learners' attitude for Urdu code switching employed by ESL teachers at University of Management & Technology, Lahore. Her findings indicated that students considered Urdu code switching of ESL teachers as an effective teaching tool and an efficient source of support in academic learning. Muhammad Fareed et. al, (2016) conducted an exploratory study investigating Pakistani students' perception towards code switching use in tertiary classes. Data sites were five public and private institutions of Pakistan. Findings revealed that students' attitude vary towards code switching in ESL/EFL classrooms. But majority of students had positive attitudes about use of code switching. On the other hand, some students said that teachers' code switching creates obstacles in getting English language exposure.

## **Methodology**

### ***Instrument***

The mode of data collection tool was survey questionnaire and it contained 10 close ended statements. The instrument was partially adopted from a study "English Language Teachers' Code-switching in Class: ESL Learners' Perceptions" (Muhammad Fareed et al., 2016). Following were questionnaire statements:

- When teacher shifts from English to Sindhi, I comprehend the lecture easily
- Teachers' code switching for the classroom instructions, facilitate me comprehend the task
- Teachers' code switching makes me more confident to articulate and for classroom participation
- Teachers' code switching motivates me to work more in other subjects of engineering
- Teachers' code switching facilitates the students' learning process
- Teachers' code switching from English to Sindhi language gives me an impression that teacher is less proficient in English
- Teachers' code switching get students confused
- Teachers' code switching makes my English weak
- Teachers' code switching reduces my speaking skills
- Teachers' code switching from English to Sindhi makes me unable to concentrate on lecture

**Data Analysis**

The mode of data analysis was computer software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, 23.0 version).

**Results**

The results of the study are produced as under for easy understanding.

**Table 1. Students perceptions towards teachers' code switching from English to Sindhi**

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
When Teacher shifts from English to Sindhi, I understand the lecture more easily	Strongly Agree	49	32.7	32.7
	Agree	54	36.0	36.0
	Neutral	15	10.0	10.0
	Strongly Disagree	24	16.0	16.0
	Disagree	08	5.3	5.3
	Total	158	100.0	100.0

Table 1 exhibits that 68% students agreed that teachers code switching from English to Sindhi facilitate understanding lecture easily and efficiently. On the other hand, 32% students did not support this statement either they answered negatively or showed neutrality with the statement.

**Table 2. Teachers' code switching from English to Sindhi language help to understand the task better**

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Teachers' code switching for the task instructions , help to understand the task better	Strongly Agree	58	41.7%	41.7
	Agree	44	32.3%	32.3
	Neutral	15	12.3%	12.3
	Strongly Disagree	17	10.0%	10.0
	Disagree	15	3.7%	3.7
	Total	150	100.0	100.0

Table 2 shows that 74% students agreed that teachers' code switching facilitate understanding the task in a befitting manner. On the other hand, 26% students responded negatively or remained neutral for this statement.

**Table 3. Teachers' code switching makes me confident to articulate and for classroom participation**

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Teachers' code switching gives confidence to speak and participate in classroom activities	Strongly Agree	53	35.3	38.7
	Agree	39	26.0	26.3
	Neutral	25	16.7	16.7
	Strongly Disagree	20	13.3	13.3
	Disagree	13	8.7	8.7
	Total	150	100.0	100.0

Table 3 speaks that 61.3% students agreed that teacher’s code switching generates confidence to speak and participate in classroom activities. On the other front, 38.7% students either disagreed or remained neutral with the statement.

**Table 4. Teachers’ code switching motivates me to work more in other subjects of engineering**

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Teachers’ code switching motivates to work more in other subjects of engineering	Strongly Agree	52	34.7%	34.7
	Agree	43	28.7%	28.7
	Neutral	24	16.0%	16.0
	Strongly Disagree	19	12.6%	12.6
	Disagree	12	8.0%	8.0
	Total	150	100.0%	100.0

Table 4 states that 63.4% students agreed that teachers code switching motivate to work hard in all engineering subjects. However, 36.6% students either disagreed or remained neutral with this version.

**Table 5. Teachers’ code switching facilitates the students learning process**

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Teachers’ code switching facilitates the learning process of students	Strongly Agree	47	31.3%	31.3
	Agree	56	37.3%	37.3
	Neutral	11	7.3%	7.3
	Strongly Disagree	22	14.7%	14.7
	Disagree	14	9.4%	9.4
	Total	150	100.0%	100.0

Table 5 articulates that 68.6% students’ agreed that teachers’ code switching facilitate learning process. On the other hand, 31.4% either disagreed or recorded neutrality with this statement.

**Table 6. Teachers’ code switching gives impression that teacher is not proficient in English**

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Teachers’ code switching to Sindhi language gives an impression that teacher is not proficient in English	Strongly Agree	47	31.3%	31.3
	Agree	56	37.3%	37.3
	Neutral	11	7.3%	7.3
	Strongly Disagree	22	14.7%	14.7
	Disagree	14	9.4%	9.4
	Total	150	100.0%	100.0

Table 6 displays that 68.6% students negated that code switching from English to Sindhi language never mean that teacher is not proficient in English. On the other hand, 31.4% students agreed or remained neutral with the statement.

**Table 7. Teachers' code switching get students confused**

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Teachers' code switching get students confused	Strongly Agree	23	15.3%	15.3
	Agree	31	20.7%	20.7
	Neutral	32	21.3%	21.3
	Strongly Disagree	36	24.0%	24.0
	Disagree	28	18.7%	18.7
	Total	150	100.0%	100.0

Table 7 demonstrates that 65% students disagreed that teachers' code switching from English to Sindhi language confuse them. On the other hand, 35% students either agreed or showed neutral stance on this statement.

**Table 8. Teachers' code switching weakens my English**

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Teachers' code switching weakens my English	Strongly Agree	20	13.3%	13.3
	Agree	34	22.7%	22.7
	Neutral	31	20.7%	20.7
	Strongly Disagree	33	22.6%	22.6
	Disagree	31	20.7%	20.7
	Total	150	100.0%	100.0

Table 8, displayed that 64% students disagreed that code switching of teachers make their English language weak. On the other hand, 36% students either agreed or showed neutral position for this statement.

**Table 9. Teachers' code switching makes students less proficient in Speaking**

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Teachers' code switching makes me less proficient in Speaking	Strongly Agree	26	17.3%	17.3
	Agree	27	18.0%	18.0
	Neutral	25	16.7%	16.7
	Strongly Disagree	40	26.7%	26.7
	Disagree	32	21.3%	21.3
	Total	150	100.0%	100.0

Table 9 displays that 64.7% students disagreed that teachers' code switching make them less proficient in speaking. On the other hand, 35.3% students either agreed or remained neutral with this statement.

**Table 10. Teachers' code switching from English to Sindhi makes students unable to concentrate on lecture**

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Teachers' code switching from English to Sindhi makes students unable to concentrate on lecture	Strongly Agree	23	15.3%	15.3
	Agree	29	19.3%	19.3
	Neutral	34	22.7%	22.7
	Strongly Disagree	32	21.3%	21.3
	Disagree	32	21.4%	21.4
	Total	150	100.0%	100.0

Table 10 displays that 65.4% students disagreed that teachers' code switching from English to Sindhi language divert students' attention concentrating on lecture. On the other front, 34.6% students either agreed or remained neutral with this statement.

### Discussion

The results of the study informed that engineering students shared positive perceptions about English Language Teachers code switching from English to Sindhi Language in traditional classroom teaching. Engineering students keep opinion that teachers' code switching contributes understanding lecture more easily, appropriately, smoothly and effectively and efficiently. They were further of the view that teachers' code switching guides and help them first understanding task instructions and later perform the task in an appropriate way. Results further demonstrated that teacher's code switching develop student confidence for taking part in speaking activity and other oral communication activities such as presentations, conversations and classroom debates with keen interest. Additionally, students admitted that teachers code switching is source of motivation for them and it open the door for toiling hard on English language and other subjects of engineering disciplines. Engineering students further eulogized that teachers' code switching facilitate learning process significantly and it is advantageous for them. They negated this impression that teachers code switching from English to Sindhi language never mean that teacher is poor in English language or he does not have master on his filed of subject teaching. Moreover, they also rejected this notion that teachers' code switching confuses them and it is a barrier for them to be proficient in speaking skills. Engineering students accepted with full magnanimity that teachers' code switching from English to Sindhi is never and obstacle for them in understanding academic lectures appropriately. This study results are consistent with literature review studies of other researchers such as (Alkhudair, Raghad, 2019, Abdolaziz & Shahla, 2015; Amina, Naheed, 2015; Secil Horasan, 2014; Chowdhury, 2012; Moghadam, Samad, & Shahraki, 2012; Iqbal, 2011; Jingxia, 2010; Ahmad & Jusoff, 2009).

### Conclusion

This results of the study indicated that code switching plays a paramount role in English Language teaching and learning. Engineering students of Pakistan have positive attitude about ESL/EFL teachers' code switching in classrooms from English (L2) to Sindhi (L1) language. Engineering students consider teachers' code switching as pedagogical strategy that facilitate their learn-

ing process effectively and efficiently. Findings exhibit that Engineering students never consider code switching of English Language Teachers as mark of their poor English Language Proficiency although English is never mother tongue of these teachers. However, this impression can never be rejected that few students may consider code switching as barrier towards their effective learning. It has been observed that it is will and wish of students that they need to be proficient in English Language like their teachers thus, they communicate in the class in English Language only. Today's classrooms are multilingual and students from across Pakistan or foreign countries get admission in Engineering Universities of Pakistan thus, teachers need to be careful about academic needs of such students who do not understand local language at large.

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