

Effects of Code-Switching in EFL Classroom

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Abstract:

Current study investigates the role and use of code switching in EFL classes in rural areas at intermediate level because there has always been continuous use of L1 at different levels in different ways in order to get fruitful result. In order to analyze this phenomenon whether code switching has negative or positive effect, a detailed study is carried out. It also revealed the teachers and students behavior towards use of L1 while teaching L2 as a foreign language. This is based on results obtained from responses of students and teachers of that area so that it may reveal the real situation of students and teachers related to second language usage in rural area. Data analysis revealed that code switching has had positive effect on teaching and learning English.

Key words: code-switching (CS), effects and consequences, different behavior (positive and negative)

Introduction

English learning as a foreign language has become difficult both for teachers and students. Code switching is taken as a tool to increase understanding level. During 1980s special attention was paid to code switching and still there are

contradictions over this point that whether it helps teachers and students or not.

The opponents of code switching take it as a restriction in learning process such as Ellis (1984), Wong Fillmore (1985), Chaudron (1988) and Lightbrown (2001). Klintborg (1999.p.6) has given the concept of bilingual person and has quoted/cited about a person who uses two languages one as a mother tongue and other as an adopted one. They are of the view that teachers are model for students and code switching will have negative impression on learners. On the other hand, the supporters of bilingual education favour use of L1 while teaching English as second language. Tikunoff, Vazque-Faria (1982), Levine (2003), and chen Liping (2004) are of the same view. This group shows positive impression of using code switching strategy in second language teaching. They are of the idea that native language works as a bridge for L2 understanding. There are different ways of code- switching. Poplack has discussed about main three types of code switching: tag, intra sentential and inter sentential switching. First type is related to using of tag phrases of L1 while teaching L2. When a teacher uses first language at the boundaries of sentence or clause that is termed as inter-sentential switching. Intra sentential switching discusses switching within the sentence or clause. It may affect the sentence structure of the both language.

Literature Review on Code-switching

Code is a system that is used for communication. The phenomenon of code switching has been defined in different ways. Cook and Baker (2003) believe that a bilingual person uses two languages in which one is always dominant. It also means use of two languages alternatively. He also argues that speaker of two languages uses one language actively while other remains passive in second one. Many researchers are of the view that appropriate use of L1 is in the benefit of students and teachers. Brown (2000) believes that first language is not

always interfering but also a facilitating factor. Schweers (1999) is with idea that a start of lesson with L1 not only facilitates but also motivates the learners to understand and express themselves in their own language. Choong (2006) is with the idea that bilingual teachers can share their own issues related to foreign language because they are enough sensitive. It is Cole (1998) who gave the idea that L1 is very helpful for the understanding of major difference between L1 and L2 and their grammatical difference. Introduction of L2 can be done in L1.

Code switching is a good strategy for affective learning and a movement towards the proficiency of L2 (Bawcom, 2002, Butzcamm, 2003). Gumperz gave the idea of metaphorical and situational switching. Situational switching involves change in participants and metaphorical switching related to only topical emphasis. Code switching is a process of mixing two languages in conversation Hellr (1988). Person is called bilingual when he/she switches between two languages. He mixes clauses, phrases, and words Fallis (1978, p.6). Literature review of code switching declares that it is a matter of contention since a long time.

Paper was designed to find out the expected results that code switching has a positive impact on learning second language. Questionnaire was developed and solved by teachers of intermediate level in rural area. Population was from rural areas of district Vehari. Sample was taken from schools of given area.

Questionnaire

The questions were designed to find out the reasons and benefits of code switching for Pakistani teachers at Graduate Level. They were requested to indicate their viewpoint by putting appropriate number against the question.

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Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	2	3	

No	Questions	Strongly agree	agree	Disagree	strongly
Q.1	Do you think there is need of code switching for proper comprehension of L2 (English) language?	40	22	22	14
Q.2	Has code switching good influence on learners?	26	36	16	22
Q.3	How frequently code switching is being done?	40	18	20	22
Q.4	Is code switching good strategy for EFL classes?	36	30	14	20
Q.5	Do you use bilingual education program in your language class?	30	50	14	6
Q.6	Do you think L1 (Urdu) facilitates the students to learn L2 (English) language?	24	46	6	24
Q.7	Do you use L1 (Urdu) language in your classroom as a tool for conveying meaning as a means of interaction?	28	22	30	20
Q.8	Do student show positive attitude towards code switching?	36	30	20	14
Q.9	Do you use Urdu code in EFL class room?	38	40	16	6
Q.10	Do you think that instructions be given to the students in L1 (Urdu) and after that they should be gradually introduced to English language?	36	26	16	22

Data Analysis

This questionnaire was designed for teachers who are teaching English at graduate level. 100 teachers were selected. Students of same level were also the part of this activity.

Result shows that 40% teachers, who are teaching English at graduate level hold their opinion that code switching

is greatly needed for proper comprehension of L2 (English). 28% teachers say that it is needed to some extent and only 12% teachers say that it should never be applied.

Results of Q. 2 presents very clear picture that 26% teachers say that students require usage of Urdu language while teaching English language which facilitates them to understand second language. 36% teachers say that some students require to use Urdu while teaching English language and 16% teachers say that code switching requires to teach English as foreign language and 22 were strongly disagree.

Responses related to Q .3 give us information that 40 teachers were strongly in favour of CS that how frequently CS may be used at this level, 18 gave a little support towards it, 26 were not in favour while 14 were totally against CS.

The results of question show that CS is a good strategy for EFL classes, while 36 % teachers at graduate level are strongly in favour of this statement, 30% were in favour but not strongly, 14 were against and 20% were strictly against.

Answer of question about the use of bilingual program in EFL classes taken from sample; 30% teachers showed their powerful link with bilingual education system, 50% behaves in favour, 14% opponent and 24% strongly against.

Interpretation

Effects and requirements of code switching can be interpreted easily from data collected from above mentioned sample. Results show that 33.4 % respondents gave full support to this phenomenon, 32% showed positive behavior, 17.6%, according to data, were against and 17% strongly disagree the idea of code switching. The analyses showed that code switching is a healthy activity.

Conclusion

The main aim of the study was to show the attitude of the intermediate teachers towards the phenomenon of code switching in their English classroom. From the analysis of the collected data, it is clear that they show positive behavior and dislike direct method of teaching. They favour use of L1 in explaining grammar, new vocabulary and many other things which become difficult for them to understand in L2. Use of L1 will make students proficient gradually.

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