MEGA INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Journal of Arts and Linguistics Studies
ISSN Print 2959-0957 ISSN Online 2959-0965
Volume 4 Issue 1 2026
Pages 171-194
Open Access

Code Switching in Multilingual Pakistani Classrooms: A Study of Pedagogical Harms

Publication Details
Paper Received:
November 20, 2025
Paper Accepted:
Janurary 22, 2026
Paper Published:
Janurary 26, 2026

Amal Farooq
MS Scholar, Department of English, University of Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: amalfarooq31@gmail.com
Alveena Bint Waris
MS Scholar, Department of English, University of Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: alveenabintwaris@gmail.com
Muhammad Sabboor Hussain
Professor, Department of English, University of Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan. Email: dr.muhammmadsabboorhussain@uskt.edu.pk

Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.71281/jals.v4i1.602

Abstract
This study reviews how code-switching is practised in higher education English classrooms in Pakistan and explores how it affects the pedagogy of language learning, student agency, and power structures in the classroom through a critical pedagogical lens. The study helps determine patterns of code-switching, assesses whether the intensity of language alternation can influence students' attitudes toward English, and measures potential harms associated with code-switching. A qualitative case study design was employed, using classroom observations and unstructured interviews with a sample of postgraduates. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data to unearth patterns and effects on English exposure, as well as hierarchical structures of authority. The results show that although code switching may be effective in ensuring instant understanding and classroom control, over-reliance on language switching will lead to decreased exposure to English, increased student dependency, and teacher-centred control. The research points out that unregulated routine code-switching may hinder the possibilities of an active use of linguistic activities and critique. The implications of these insights here are that reflective and strategic language management must be applied in multilingual classrooms. Such implications encourage dialogic interaction in English, strike a balance between comprehension support and target-language practice, and establish autonomy through empowerment-oriented pedagogic means. The research contributes to the development of the field by examining the intricate relationships among linguistic practice, pedagogy, and power in higher education.

Keywords: Code-switching; Postgraduate English; Learner Autonomy; English Exposure; Classroom Power; Multilingual Education; Pedagogical Practices

Published by MIARD. Copyright: © the author(s). This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC) license (https:// creativecommons.org/licenses/by/ 4.0/).

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Pakistan is a heterogeneous nation in terms of languages, and multilingualism is central to classroom communication, especially in tertiary education. Freedom of speech is present in English, the formal language of universities, but Urdu and local dialects still prevail in everyday speech. Therefore, English language classrooms are often multilingual environments in which the teacher and students switch between English and their native languages. This movement is often referred to as code-switching and is characterised by the use of two or more languages in a single conversation or interaction (Gumperz, 1982; Myers-Scotton, 1993). In English-language teaching classroom contexts, code-switching is usually justified as facilitative. Teachers habitually translate into Urdu to explain complex issues, control classroom dynamics, or ensure understanding. A number of authors believe that anxiety can be overcome and comprehension achieved by limiting the use of the first language (Cook, 2001; Sert, 2005). Nevertheless, excessive code-switching can reduce significant exposure to English, an ingredient considered vital for acquiring a second language (Macaro, 2009; Turnbull and Arnett, 2002). In the Critical Pedagogy approach, classroom language practices are not neutral; rather, they are embedded in systems of power and authority (Freire, 1970). Freire's critique of the education model, or the banking model, highlights how teacher-centric attitudes can create a learner seen as a passive recipient of knowledge. When teaching multilingual English in classrooms, hierarchical authority, suppression of learners' agency, and dependency can be supported through teacher-controlled code-switching. Although a growing body of research exists on code switching, most research focuses on its roles and advantages rather

than its pedagogical drawbacks (Lin, 2013; Probyn, 2009). In this respect, there is a need to examine code-switching as a strategy and a habit that can influence the association of power, agency, and language exposure.

1.2. Scope and Significance of the Study

In this study, the researchers focus on postgraduate English language classrooms at the University of Sialkot. It studies the tendencies of code-switching and analyses their pedagogical implications in students' eyes. The area is limited to higher education and does not include school-level education. The critical orientation is the basis for the study's importance. Although the available literature in Pakistan has hitherto focused mainly on the facilitative role of bilingual education (Mansoor, 2004; Rashid, 2018), few studies have examined its long-term impact on learners' English proficiency and autonomy. This study aims to contribute to a changing understanding of language practices in the classroom by adopting Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970) as the conceptual framework. It is hoped that the predicted results will be useful to English-language teachers, teacher educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers, as the process will lead to reflective language-management practices and produce autonomous learners who participate equally.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Even though code-switching is common in Pakistani English classrooms, little research has examined its potential pedagogical drawbacks. Most research has focused on the situations and reasons that influence teachers to change languages, but it rarely questions how high-frequency code-switching can hinder exposure to English, create dependency among learners, or promote hierarchical power dynamics. In postgraduate situations, where students are positioned to achieve high levels of proficiency in English, overcode-switching can unerringly impair the chances of genuine communication in English. Further, teacher-regulated

language switching can place students in the role of translation recipients rather than key knowledge builders. From the perspective of Critical Pedagogy, these practices dangerously propagate unequal distribution of power (Freire, 1970). In this regard, the present research fills a gap in the field of unconventional empirical research by investigating the extent to which teachers use code-switching in their postgraduate English learning contexts and how this practice can cause pedagogical harm.

1.4. Aim and Objectives of the Study

Aim

The main purpose of this analysis is both to critically discuss the practices of code-switching in postgraduate English language classes and to examine their pedagogical consequences from the perspective of Critical Pedagogy.

Objectives

- To determine the patterns of switching the English language in postgraduate level classrooms.
- To examine how frequent code-switching affects English exposure and learner control.
- To assess the pedagogical harms that come along with extreme code switching.

1.5. Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1) How does frequent code-switching limit students' exposure to English and affect their autonomy as language learners?
2) In what ways does code-switching reinforce hierarchical power relations in postgraduate English classrooms?
3) What pedagogical harms result from code-switching in multilingual classrooms?

1.6. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Limitations

The research is limited to one progressive institution of higher learning, which can undermine the applicability of the knowledge that was gathered. The sample size is quite small, and only postgraduate students were included, limiting the scope of the perspectives. Additionally, omitting the teacher's perspectives can hinder a holistic understanding of instructional intentions. Moreover, the conclusions, being a qualitative case study, are contextual and cannot be generalised to all Pakistani universities.

Delimitation

The research targets postgraduate English classrooms at the University of Sialkot on a voluntary basis. It focuses on code-switching between English and Urdu, intentionally omitting the translanguaging phenomenon in the broader sociolinguistic context. It is based on Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970) as the theoretical framework, which directs this research, and the other theoretical perspectives are not contemplated.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Background

Code-switching is another concept that has been deeply studied in multilingual and bilingual education, particularly in ESL and EFL instruction. It is usually characterized as the sequential switching of two or more languages during a single discourse event (Gumperz, 1982; Myers Scotton, 1993). Code-switching in classrooms is unusual in the context of the target language (English) and learners' first or dominant language. Communicative, pedagogical, sociolinguistic, and ideological aspects of it have been studied.

At the beginning, the conceptualisation of code-switching mainly focused on discourse strategies used for meaning negotiation and social alignment (Gumperz,

1982). Later structural models of switching behaviour focused on grammatical limitations and social reasons for switching (Myers, Scotton, 1993). In education research, however, the focus was moved to its instructional roles. Conversely, the concept of code-switching has been considered a pedagogical tool that instructors use to elicit meaning, maintain order, and foster understanding (Sert, 2005).

In multilingual communities like those in Pakistan, where English is used as a medium of power and upward social mobility, language practices in the classroom mirror their team's sociopolitical realities. In universities, English is the official language of instruction in most cases, although Urdu and the local language are still used in students' daily communication (Mansoor, 2004). This language confusion creates difficult situations in the classroom, where code-switching is not only a highly important practical need but also a controversial method of influencing the learning process.

Despite many studies demonstrating the enabling role of code switching, recent research has challenged its long-term effectiveness for language learning, learner agency, and power-based relationships in the classroom (Lin, 2013; Macaro, 2009). The given review presents a critical synthesis of extant literature, highlighting the main debates, areas where the research is deficient, and the theory is grounded in the context of the present study.

2.2. Recent Studies

Recent studies on code switching in the instructional context have concluded that there are two dominant theoretical approaches: the functional-support paradigm and the critical-ideology paradigm. The functional-supportive perspective theorises code switching as a scaffold that helps foster understanding and alleviate cognitive load. Cook (2001) continues to assert that a reasonable use of the first language could lead to clarity and support the elucidation of complicated concepts. Similarly, Levine (2011) documents that the strategic use of code-switching

fosters inclusivity and enhances relationships between instructors and learners. In this regard, this view considers that code-switching is not necessarily detrimental of language development provided it is used in moderation.

Macaro (2005, 2009) proposed the concept of optimal use of the first language in second language classrooms. He believes that though limited code-switching can facilitate understanding, over-dependence on the mother tongue stifles exposure to the target language and thus restricts opportunities for acquisition. Turnbull and Arnett (2002) concur but add that first-language use should be carefully controlled by the teacher and that this cannot be developed without meaningful exposure to the target language, which later leads to communicative competence.

Empirical studies in South Asia often treat code-switching as a pragmatic mechanism for addressing linguistic heterogeneity. Rashid (2018) noted that Pakistani ESL teachers often switched to Urdu to maintain clear and secure classroom order. According to Mansoor (2004), English-driven policies tend to coexist with strong local language culture practices, resulting in a hybrid classroom discourse. However, such studies are mainly based on teachers' perceptions and are not critically examined in light of students' pedagogical implications.

The emerging scholarship takes a sociocultural perspective. GarcMed and Wei (2014) theorise classroom language practice in terms of translanguaging, stating that multilingual speakers freely utilise the full linguistic range of the language. In this respect, code-switching is not seen as a weakness but as a resource that demonstrates language proficiency. Although the idea of translanguaging presents a challenge of strict monolingual norms, it has been opined by opponents that translanguaging can ignore the institutional demands with regard to the usage of English in higher education (Baker, 2011).

The critical-ideological approach, on the other hand, questions the power dynamics of the code-switching process. Lin (2013) argues that classroom language choices are entrenched in an ideological framework that favours some languages over others. According to Probyn (2009), code-switching may empower learners or disenfranchise them, depending on how it is implemented. Such research shifts the focus from short-term perceptions of the benefits of understanding to broader sociopolitical implications.

Although this body of literature has continued to grow, there is still a dearth of research exploring code-switching as a potentially harmful pedagogical practice in postgraduate English classrooms. Although most studies highlight its advantages, there is a lack of research on its effects on learner autonomy, dependency, and power processes.

2.3. Research Gaps

Although a large body of research exists on classroom code-switching, several gaps remain in the methodology and conceptual framework, especially in the context of Pakistani higher education.

2.3.1. Methodological Gaps

The main methodological weakness in the available literature is its reliance on quantitative surveys and teacher self-reports. Multiple studies examine attitudes toward code-switching, but they rarely analyze its practical educational effects (Rashid, 2018). Based on this, such methods do not capture the latent power relations nor students' lived experiences.

In addition, large-scale descriptive studies typically do not involve in-depth qualitative investigation. Creswell and Poth (2018) stress that qualitative case studies can provide a contextual understanding of complex educational phenomena. However, there are few studies in Pakistan that use classroom observation and student interviews to critically examine the harm to pedagogy.

Moreover, the focus on participants is not a methodological gap; the corpus is predominantly teacher-oriented, and students' voices are underrepresented. Since students are the most important beneficiaries of classroom linguistic practices, their experiences cannot be left out of the understanding of the implications of code-switching.

Lastly, most studies treat code-switching as an unexamined variable, with no connection to theory such as Critical Pedagogy. These theoretical obscurities hinder the critical examination of power and authority in classrooms.

2.3.2. Conceptual Gaps

Typically, in conceptual terms, most research has, in some way, made code-switching seem advantageous or unavoidable in any multilingual environment. Nonetheless, fewer studies question its possible negative effects. The shortage of target-language exposure is recognized by scholars as one of the issues (Macaro, 2009; Turnbull and Arnett, 2002), but the long-term impact of this on learner autonomy and agency is given little consideration.

What is more, the interdependence between code-switching and the power of relationships in a classroom is under-researched. Freire (1970) argues that practice, centred on teachers, can reproduce hierarchical formations. However, the influence of teacher-controlled code-switching is rarely examined empirically, leaving learners at risk of being at the mercy of translation.

There is another conceptual void, related to postgraduate contexts. The available literature will mostly cover primary or secondary education. Academic English is also expected to be among the highest levels in higher education, particularly at the postgraduate level. As a result, the consequences of extensive code-switching in these environments should be examined in particular.

In this regard, the present research will fill these methodological and conceptual gaps by providing a qualitative case study grounded in Critical Pedagogy.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

The current research is based on the theories of Critical Pedagogy developed by Freire (1970). In this context, education is operationalized as a power centre, an ideology, and a change-maker. Freire criticizes the banking model of education, typified by a unidirectional flow of knowledge imposed on the passive by teachers. On the contrary, he promotes a dialogic pedagogical practice model, which develops critical consciousness and underpins learner agency.

In language education, Critical Pedagogy focuses on the multifaceted role of language as a medium of communication and a site of power (Pennycook, 1994). Language practices in classrooms determine identity formation, authority, and access to knowledge. This is why code-switching cannot be studied as a one-dimensional approach to language, but as a wider power formation.

Creswell and Poth (2018) describe the transformative paradigm as one that seeks social justice and challenges oppressive practices. The paradigm aligns with Critical Pedagogy in that it prefigures participants' voices and encourages unfair educational practices. By placing code-switching within this theoretical context, it can be determined that frequent code-switching empowers or continues to promote dependency.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

This theoretical framework of the research study, in the form of a hypothesis, posits that regular code-switching is an independent variable that affects three interrelated dependent variables: exposure to English, learner autonomy, and power relations in the classroom.

To begin with, regular code-switching can reduce temporal exposure to English, thereby limiting the chances of genuine interaction (Macaro, 2009). Secondly, exposure to attenuation may lead to learner dependence, in which students become more reliant on translation rather than negotiating meaning on their own. Third, when language switching is controlled by teachers, it can reinforce a hierarchical control system that positions teachers as arbiters of knowledge.

The framework combines the sociolinguistic theory (Gumperz, 1982), study of language acquisition (Turnbull and Arnett, 2002), and Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970). It provides a systematic analytical prism for considering whether pedagogical code-switching practices have any implications.

2.6. Analytical Framework

The conceptual model is operationalized into three themes by which the data analysis in the analytical framework can be performed:

- **Patterns of Code-Switching**: Determining situations, reasons and the manner in which language switching takes place in classroom interactions (Sert, 2005).
- **Effects on English Exposure and Autonomy:** The effects of switching on students' engagement, participation, and confidence were studied (Macaro, 2009).
- **Power and Authority Relationships:** The study of the hierarchical relationships created when the teacher is in control of switching (Freire, 1970; Pennycook, 1994).

Data interpretation follows a thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), which allows all systematic data to be coded according to the theoretical features. By combining these categories of analysis, the analysis goes beyond description to critically pose a question about pedagogical harm.

3. Research Methodology

The chapter outlines the methodology that will be used to support the current research. It describes research design, research instruments, population, sampling strategy and data-collection process. The research adopts a qualitative case study design within a transformative paradigm and is guided by Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970). The most suitable methodological orientation is qualitative inquiry, as the aim is to critically analyse code-switching as a methodology of teaching practice situated in relations of power (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

3.1. Research Design

The study is a qualitative case study grounded in an interpretive epistemology. The theory of interpretivism holds that reality is shaped by society and that meaning arises from people's interactions (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Within the framework of multilingual classes, linguistic practices are not neutral; they are socially and ideologically situated. It follows that a study of codeswitching requires a deep analysis of participants' experiences, rather than relying on statistical analysis.

The qualitative design is appropriate, as the research aims neither to quantify variables nor to investigate perceptions, experiences, and power relations. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), in qualitative studies, a particular description and clarification of intricate social facts within their natural context is provided. The current research examines how code-switching influences learner autonomy, exposure to English, and hierarchical power in postgraduate classrooms.

The study employs the case-study design and a limited system, i.e., the postgraduate English classes in the University of Sialkot. A case study allows a detailed analysis of a modern phenomenon in its real-world context (Yin, 2018).

The small scale of the setup makes it easier to gain contextualized insight into multilingual interaction patterns and their pedagogical implications.

The research is also situated within a transformative paradigm, which anticipates the problems of power, inequality, and social justice in educational research (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This is a transformative worldview that corresponds to Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970), which condemns hierarchical and teacher-centred educational practices. In this context, code-switching is studied not only as a language strategy but also as a process that supports dependency and power hierarchies.

The research design, therefore, incorporates a qualitative case study with a critical theoretical orientation, offering a sensitive, context-driven study.

3.2. Research Instruments

The two key qualitative tools involved in the study are:

- Classroom Observation
- Unstructured Interviews

This credibility is achieved by triangulating methods using various instruments (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

3.2.1. Classroom Observation

Classroom observation is one of the data-collection tools considered a primary source for capturing naturally occurring language practices. Through observation, the researcher can study the process of actual interaction rather than relying solely on retrospective accounts (Creswell and Poth, 2018). The researcher takes a participant-observer role and thus does not interfere much in classroom activities. In this way, an objective record of interaction patterns is captured while maintaining the realism of the setting. The process is structured using an observation guide and is concerned with:

- Frequency and distribution of code-switching.

- Context switching (explanation, emphasis, discipline, clarification)
- Student-initiated switching and teacher-initiated switching.
- Patterns of student participation and involvement.
- Cases of translation and repetition.

The field notes are taken systematically, after the session, and immediately after the session. The requirements of language are outlined in detailed descriptive notes and interactional dynamics. Observation provides a contextual background and helps identify patterns used in discussion during interviews. The use of observation is also especially promising, as relying solely on interviews may lead to biased self-reporting; direct classroom observation ensures interpretations are empirical.

3.2.2. Unstructured Interviews

Postgraduate students are interviewed in an unstructured manner and asked about their experience of classroom code-switching. Such interviews are chosen for their ability to provide participants with the freedom to express their perceptions without the restrictive, preset response options (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

Unstructured interviews, on the other hand, are conversational and flexible, unlike structured interviews. General guiding prompts start a discussion, but the conversation progresses naturally. This practice follows the concept of dialogue and the voice of participants in critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970). The interview process stipulates:

- Students perceive code-switching.
- Impact on English exposure
- A sense of independence or self-reliance, or not.
- Domination of contribution and trust.
- Perceived classroom interactive power.

Probe questions are posed throughout the follow-ups as themes emerge. The interviews are made on an individual basis, also with the purpose of offering confidentiality and openness. Informed consent allows tape-recorded interviews that are transcribed word-for-word. The use of unstructured interviews reflects the study's interpretative and critical focus, giving participants the opportunity to create their own meanings rather than react to the researcher's strict structures.

3.3. Population and Sampling

Population

The study sample comprises postgraduate students enrolled in English-related programmes at the University of Sialkot. These pupils are regular students who attend English-based classes where code-switching between English and Urdu is observed.

A strategic sample of postgraduate students was selected based on the assumption that they would have high levels of English proficiency. The code-switching investigation at this level sheds light on what it means to code-switch in the development of language in higher education.

Sampling Technique

It uses purposive sampling, which involves selecting participants based on their substantive interest in the research goals (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The inclusion criteria will be:

- Postgraduate enrolment in English programs.
- The applicant has completed at least one academic semester or is at the end of one.
- Repeat of classroom code-switching.

The sample size is small enough to conduct a thorough qualitative study. Sampling will continue until no new themes emerge from the interviews (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).

Purposive sampling ensures information-intensive, data-rich cases, unlike statistical representativeness.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection is strict and follows a multi-stage approach.

Stage 1: Institutional Acceptance and Approval

The relevant academic authorities are contacted to give them formal consent. They provide participants with detailed information about the study's purpose, methodology, and ethical protections. Informed consent was secured verbally beforehand.

Stage 2:Classroom Observation

The research began with a set of classroom sessions, and observations were based on the number of sessions within a given time. These observations precede these other interviews to provide a sense of context and preliminary patterns of language use. In-depth notes on each session document language-switching episodes, interaction patterns, and classroom dynamics.

Stage 3: The Unstructured Interviews

After the observation, an individual interview (unstructured and conducted in a purposive sample) with students is performed. Interviews take between fifteen and twenty minutes. Interviews are tape-recorded with the consent of the interviewees and given word-for-word. The interview method allows subjects to discuss their experiences in depth.

Stage 4: Analysis of Data and Preparation

The themes are analysed thematically per Braun and Clarke (2006). The sequential analysis consists of:

- Familiarization Simultaneously with the data.
- Generation of initial codes
- Searching for themes

- improving and revising themes.
- Thematic Interpretation of Themes in Critical Pedagogy.
- The analytic model is focused on:
- Patterns of code-switching
- The effect of exposure to and the autonomy of the learner in English.
- Harms in the pedagogy and classroom power relations.

The hierarchy of pedagogy and learners' dependency, as introduced by Freire (1970), drives the deductive aspect of the analysis.

3.5. Trustworthiness of the Study

In order to guarantee rigour, the research uses the criteria that were proposed by the authors Lincoln and Guba (1985):

Credibility: Triangulation (observation and interviews) and long-term involvement were achieved.

Transferability: This is assured by contextual description.

Dependability: It has been ensured through the documentation of methodological decisions.

Confirmability: Backed by reflexive consciousness and grounded interpretations of the data of participants.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The entire research is conducted in accordance with ethical principles. Participation is voluntary. Anonymity is provided by the usage of pseudonyms. Information is safely stored and accessed only with regard to academic purposes. Participants can withdraw at any time.

4. Discussion and Findings

This chapter explains the results from Chapter Four in relation to the literature and the theoretical levels of Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970). The observable site of

code-switching patterns is situated within the frames of larger academic debates and critically interpreted in terms of its educational consequences.

4.1. Code-Switching as Structured Pedagogical Practice

The results show that in postgraduate English classrooms, code-switching is a calculated, not accidental, process. This has been consistent with previous sociolinguistic studies, which have conceptualised code-switching as a discourse practice rather than an occasional alternation (Gumperz, 1982; Scotton, 1993). Nevertheless, unlike strictly descriptive trials, the current research includes a reference to the pedagogical outcomes of such systematic practice.

Past studies typically describe code-switching as a facilitative teaching process that leads to improved understanding (Cook, 2001; Levine, 2011). Although current findings recognise its facilitative role, they go further to broaden the discussion by showing how habitual switching can be institutionalised over time, becoming part of the classroom culture. Instead of being a momentary means of scaffolding, code-switching is a foreseen tool of clarification.

Macaro (2009) recommends optimal use of the first language, but warns that it should never be overly based on. This argument is supported by current findings indicating that sustained English discourse is reduced by frequent explanatory translation. In this way, code-switching shifts from a strategy to a daily necessity, which supports the fears expressed by Turnbaugh and Arnett (2002) about reduced exposure to the target language.

4.2. English Exposure and Student Control

One key conclusion made in this research is the correlation between code-switching and low English exposure. Even though English retains its institutional power, the functional forms of presence in classroom interaction are disorganised. This qualifies and contextualises second-language acquisition studies on the need

for persistent and meaningful exposure in the acquisition of communicative competence (Macaro, 2009).

More importantly, the results indicate that greater exposure is associated with greater learner autonomy. Independent meaning-making and thinking are a part of autonomy. But habitual translation eliminates possible productive struggle, thus restricting the possibility of active linguistic negotiation.

In terms of Critical Pedagogy, what is happening here is a subtle reinforcement of dependency (Freire, 1970). Where teachers act as intermediaries or mediators of meaning through translation, learners have to live at the expense of authoritative clarification rather than the dialogic construction of meaning. The classroom slowly shifts toward a teacher-centred interpretive model.

It builds on Lin's (2013) work, which argues that classroom language choices have an ideological basis. Although it is pedagogically convenient, code-switching can unintentionally reinforce hierarchical control over epistemic authority. Thus, it is not just a linguistic problem but a very serious pedagogical and ideological problem.

4.3. Power Relations and Hierarchical Authority

These findings indicate that code-switching is inextricably linked to the classroom's existing power hierarchies. Teachers decide the time, context, and direction of linguistic alternation accordingly; they gain interpretive control over these aspects.

Freire's (1970) critique of the banking model of education offers a relevant critical perspective. In this model, teachers are viewed as repositories of knowledge, whereas students assume passive roles. This setup is reflected in the dominance of teacher-mediated translation, which further centralises linguistic power.

Pennycook (1994) argues that the language-teaching activities are never impartial; in most occasions, they reproduce larger ideological hierarchies. English in the analyzed classrooms signifies school status, and Urdu can be applied as a practical clarifying language. This binary form of structure reproduces symbolic hierarchies and softens pragmatic participation in English.

In turn, the results suggest that code-switching is a two-sided pedagogical process: it enhances immediate accessibility but, at the same time, promotes a hierarchical approach and reduces dialogue.

4.4. Synthesis of Findings

There is a coherent pedagogical pattern in the findings when incorporated. Code-switching originally acts as cognitive support. Nevertheless, it discourages learners' long-term exposure to the English language, creates a sense of dependency, and strengthens the authority of the instructor. These interrelated processes illustrate how the selection of linguistic choices has broader educational outcomes.

The review, grounded in Critical Pedagogy, concludes that code-switching should not be discussed solely in the short term but also in the context of longer-term empowerment and freedom. Agency or structural dependency is replicated in the classroom as language practices reinforce and may unwind the process.

5. Implications and Conclusion

5.1. Pedagogical Implications

The consequential implications of the empirical findings for the pedagogical discourse of learning English in multilingual tertiary education contexts are outlined in the research.

To start with, educators are encouraged to be reflective and strategically modulated in the approach of code-switching. Rather than resorting to facile

translation practices, language switching should be used strategically and confined to situations where real misunderstanding arises.

Second, teacher-education programs should include clear instruction on language-management tactics that mediate the trade-off between language accessibility and the long-term maintenance of English. The instructors should be able to develop a knowledgeable understanding of how lingual mediation shapes learners' autonomy.

Third, policymakers and curriculum designers need to examine the complexity of the relationship between institutional language policy and classroom practice. Even a mere announcement of English as the medium of instruction is insufficient when classroom communication reverts to translation-focused discourse.

Lastly, dialogic interaction in English should be actively encouraged in the instructional environment. Avenues of productive struggle, peer negotiation and collaboration in the creation of meaning are much more in tune with transformative educational goals (Freire, 1970).

5.2. Conclusion

In this work, the qualitative case study design is grounded in Critical Pedagogy and used to critically analyse code-switching in postgraduate English classrooms. The results demonstrate that code-switching helps one understand everything, but the regularity of such behaviour decreases exposure to English, creates a sense of dependence among learners, and strengthens hierarchical relationships. Code-switching proves to be a pedagogically complicated phenomenon.

It is not always good or bad. It consists of impacts that depend on frequency, intentionality, and related contexts. Nevertheless, it can negatively influence learners' long-term linguistic development and autonomy when unregulated and routine.

By locating classroom language practices within the wider context of discussions of power and ideology, the research is a valuable contribution to the critical scholarship devoted to multilingual education. It demands critical, moderate, and empowering language practices in institutions of higher learning.

5.3. Future Recommendations

The study can be expanded, and the views of more teachers and students can be obtained to further analyse code-switching practices across multiple universities in the future. Comparative research on undergraduate and postgraduate situations can also help clarify differences in the types of pedagogical impact. Also, intervention-related studies that investigate the controlled aspect of code-switching reduction may provide empirical evidence of its long-term impact on learners' mastery of English and sense of autonomy.

References

1. Baker, C. (2011). Foundations of bilingual education and bilingualism (5th ed.). Multilingual Matters.
2. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
3. Cook, V. (2001). Using the first language in the classroom. Canadian Modern Language Review, 57(3), 402–423. https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.57.3.402
4. Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
5. Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Continuum.
6. García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education. Palgrave Macmillan.
7. Gumperz, J. J. (1982). Discourse strategies. Cambridge University Press.

8. Levine, G. S. (2011). Code choice in the language classroom. Multilingual Matters.
9. Lin, A. M. Y. (2013). Classroom code-switching: Three decades of research. Applied Linguistics Review, 4(1), 195–218. https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2013-0009
10. Macaro, E. (2005). Code-switching in the L2 classroom. In E. Llurda (Ed.), Non-native language teachers (pp. xx–xx). Springer.
11. Macaro, E. (2009). Teachers' use of codeswitching in the second language classroom. In M. Turnbull & J. Dailey-O'Cain (Eds.), First language use in second and foreign language learning (pp. 35–49). Multilingual Matters.
12. Mansoor, S. (2004). The status and role of regional languages in higher education in Pakistan. National Language Authority.
13. Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
14. Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). Social motivations for codeswitching: Evidence from Africa. Oxford University Press.
15. Pennycook, A. (1994). The cultural politics of English as an international language. Longman.
16. Probyn, M. (2009). Conflicts and tensions in classroom code-switching. International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 12(2), 123–136. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050802153137
17. Rashid, U. (2018). Code-switching in Pakistani ESL classrooms: Perceptions and practices. Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences, 38(2), 453–466.
18. Sert, O. (2005). The functions of code-switching in ELT classrooms. The Internet TESL Journal, 11(8). http://iteslj.org/Articles/Sert-CodeSwitching.html

19. Turnbull, M., & Arnett, K. (2002). Teachers' use of the target and first languages in second- and foreign-language classrooms. Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 22, 204–218. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190502000119
20. Yin, R. K. (2018). Case study research and applications: Design and methods (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
21. Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. SAGE Publications.