Teachers' Code-Switching in L2 Classroom: Exploring Instructional and Pedagogical Perspectives

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Abstract: Most language users practice code-switching; this shift from the language of instruction to the language that is accommodating is thought to have specific impacts on teaching and learning. While it has been criticized, it is unclear if code-switching has a beneficial or detrimental impact on teaching and learning English. The impact of code-switching on English instruction and learning was the primary focus of this study. The study was based on these research questions; what is the impact of code-switch technique on teaching-learning process of English language, and what are the perceptions of teachers and students towards code-switching technique in the teaching-learning process? For this study, a qualitative research approach was adopted. Undergraduate students from two departments (Sociology and Political Science) made up the population. Eight students and four teachers were chosen to be interviewed in the study using the Convenient Sample approach. These teachers and students were observed in their respective classes as well. It was discovered that teaching and learning the English language benefit from code-switching. It makes it easier for students to grasp the more challenging parts of the course and enable them to follow directions. Students are more likely to be engaged when the teacher clarifies what was stated in their native tongue, especially those who struggle with learning English. Additionally, code-switching aids in classroom management for educators.

Key Words: Code-Switching, Native Language, ELT, Motivation, Teaching-Learning Process

Introduction

The act of switching between two or more languages, or dialects, during a conversation is known as "code-switching". Additionally, code-switching is the act of a speaker departing from their native tongue, dialect, or speaking style to adapt to the listening environment. Today's schools employ teachers from outside the area, and occasionally these teachers used to lament that their students didn't speak the same language at home as they did because it would have made learning simpler. Code-switching occurs between teachers and students, and it affects how well students learn English. Our student teacher observed that teachers play a significant role in code-switching during her teaching practicum at the case school in June 2021 (Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021). She claimed that when teachers spoke in their native tongue, they felt extremely at ease and that it appeared as though they were imparting knowledge. The principal responded that speaking to his students in their mother tongue was the most effective way to ensure their understanding when our student teacher questioned him about it. One of the main drivers of code-switching is the school principal.

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Statement of the Problem

It is strongly discouraged and criticized when students use Pashto or Urdu in English classes. Teachers still use it in the classroom, though, during instruction. Some students frequently struggle in English because their teachers don't go into enough detail about the material, which has an impact on both the student and the teacher. This frequently leads to students not understanding the material because they are not native English speakers and the teacher is unable to translate into them. Conversely, educators from outside the area attempt, but are unable, to explain things to students in alternative ways; as a result, many teachers often wish they could communicate with their students in the same language. The purpose of this article was to ascertain how code-switching affected the instruction and acquisition of English language in two departments at Abdul Wali Khan University in Mardan.

Research Questions

Research questions of the study were as following:
1. What is the impact of code-switch technique on teaching-learning process of English language?
2. What are the perceptions of teachers and students towards code-switching technique in the teaching-learning process?

Literature Review

The alternative application of more than one language in teaching and learning process is known as code-switching, and it helps learners acquire knowledge more easily. According to Kumar et al. (2021) and Shafi et al. (2020), code-switching benefits both teachers and students. Scholars such as Ibrahim et al. (2013), Promnath and Tayjasanant (2016) have elucidated that while the majority of instructors exhibit favorable attitudes towards code-switching, they maintain that it ought to be employed selectively. A learner's approach to learning English is influenced by the location of the institute. According to Goodman and Tastanbek (2021), learners in rural regions have greater negative effects than those in towns.

Effects of Code-switching on Teaching-learning Process of L2

Code-switching, according to Zainil and Arsyad (2021), gives pupils the chance to interact and improve their comprehension. Additionally, it saves teachers time because they don't have to waste it trying to clarify things or look up basic phrases when a misunderstanding occurs. Siddiq et al. (2020) research revealed that code-switching improved students' comprehension. Code-switching helped pupils learn faster and more comfortably while also boosting their confidence. When code-switching is used instead of just English, pupils with lower performance levels are better able to understand the teachings. Because they could turn to their native language when they were unsure of how to convey anything in English, it relieved pupils of the burden of having to think of what to say.

Ezeh et al. (2022) noted that in addition to being used for classroom management, mother tongue instruction was also used in English-medium classrooms for language analysis, presenting grammatical rules, talking about cross-cultural issues, providing instructions or prompts, clarifying errors, and assessing comprehension. They acknowledged that code-switching is a useful tool that may assist students better absorb and retain their material, which would help them do better on tests.

Perceptions of Teachers and Students' About Code-switching

Afifah Ys and Sari (2020) found that teachers use code-switching technique to fix classroom issues or keep quiet disruptive students. The educators shifted to using several languages to emphasize points, draw students' attention to them, and help them comprehend and expand their vocabulary.

Teachers who were interviewed by Abellana and Tarusan (2023) stated that code-switching should occur either intra- or inter-sententially, rather than word-by-word. Both professors agreed that in order for the pupils to grasp, it is best to switch to Thai when there are crucial messages or complex material to emphasize, as word-by-word code-switching might be time-consuming. They went on to say that having a conclusion for each session can assist students remember what they have just learned and identify any material they may have missed. According to one educator

surveyed for this study, code-switching is allowed when utilized to break up the classroom and promote socialization. They claimed that although the kids occasionally did not pay attention when the teacher talked English, they paid attention when the teacher used mother tongue. According to them, mild code-switching is fine as long as it doesn't obstruct the learning process' fundamental functions (Ibrahim, 2013).

According to several educators, students' involvement in class was significantly impacted by the school's location (Jones, 2023). In Vygotsky's view, adults within a community purposefully and systematically encourage children's cognitive growth by immersing them in challenging and rewarding tasks. Social interaction is an essential component of the process of cognitive maturation. Karpov (2014) argued against Jean Piaget's theory of child development, which maintains that learning has to occur before growth, and instead stated the view that social learning occurs before development. Each function in a child's cultural development, according to him, appears twice: once on the social level and once on the individual level; first, intra-psychologically, within the kid, and then, inter-psychologically, between individuals.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The study was theoretically based on Vygotsky's social constructivism theory. It argues that human learning is founded on scientific research and observation (Jones, 2023). According to this view, people build their knowledge and comprehension of the world they live in by reflecting on and experiencing various things. Children's development is greatly influenced by their interactions with their parents and other members of society (Lev Vygotsky, 2014). Creswell (2013) argued that people look for a way to make sense of the world in which they work and live. As a result, people often interpret their experiences in ways that are uniquely their own. As a consequence, the information gathered is more influenced by the ideas and views of the participants on the subject or circumstance. Students can reflect on their experiences and retain information better when teachers alter up the lecture during a code-switching session. Even in schools where students solely communicate in their mother tongue, parents who speak their native speech at home have a detrimental effect on their offspring.

Methodology

Research Paradigm and Research Design

The study was based on interpretive paradigm that is based on the notion that human experiences and social context shape the reality. Researchers believe that social reality is mixed with social reality and it is difficult to decipher it without sense-making process (qualitative) approach rather than hypothesis testing. This study followed a qualitative design. According to Jones (2023), qualitative research methods are founded in entrepreneurial philosophy and are employed to investigate the state of natural objects. The researcher serves as the primary instrument in these methods, and data collection techniques involve triangulation—combining observations, interviews, and documentation—resulting in data that is typically qualitative. Inductive and qualitative data analysis is used to interpret the data, and the study's conclusions are intended to comprehend meaning, comprehend uniqueness, and construct phenomena. The following diagram explains the methodology of the study.

Research Paradigm — Interpretive → **Research Approach** — Qualitative → **Research Methods**
- Convenient Sampling
- Open-ended interview and Classroom Observation
- Coding and Thematic Analysis

Setting and Participants of the Study

This research was carried out at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan and undergraduate students were the population. Both teachers and students participated in the study. Multi-stage sampling strategy was applied. In the first step, convenient sampling technique was applied. Two departments were selected at the Faculty of Social Science; Sociology

and Political Science. In the subsequent phase, two professors and four students were chosen for interviews from each department using the purposive sample approach.

Table 1

Respondents of the Study

Department Name	Number of Teachers	Number of Students	Total
Sociology	02	04	06
Political Science	02	04	06
Total	04	08	12

Research Instruments and Data Collection Process

The researcher sought for the approval of the Department Heads to be observed in the classroom and interviewed. Data was collected by using open-ended interviews and observations. Interview questions and observation checklist were drafted and were validated through two subject experts. Experts' suggestions were incorporated in the data collection tools. Four classes were observed, two from each department.

The researcher observed Undergraduate students in both departments in semester 1 and 3. Two teachers and four students from each department were interviewed. All the interviews were audio-recorded.

Additionally, data were collected from direct observations. According to Nasir and Sukmawati (2023), observation is the practice of obtaining unstructured, first-hand knowledge at a study location by watching people and surroundings. Because the scholar wanted to grasp the natural world without changing or affecting it, they decided to watch the chosen classes twice. The researcher was also able to get more objective information through observation, which was then utilized to confirm the details that individuals had supplied in interviews.

Data Analysis

The procedures described by Creswell (2013) were adhered to by the researchers; first data were prepared and arranged before condensing and categorizing it to identify themes. To gain a deeper understanding of the gathered data, the transcripts were reviewed many times. Notes and memoranda were put in the margins or behind each transcript or image, including brief statements and thoughts. Next, the data was categorized into codes and topics. Creswell (2013) states that coding comprises the following steps: classifying textual or visual data into manageable informational categories; utilizing the data gathered to support the code; and ultimately labeling the code.

Results and Findings

Observations at Department of Sociology (S) and Political Science (P)

How does code-switching affect English language teaching-learning process?

During our observations at the department S, Teacher W decided to teach the difference between Simple Past Tense and Present Perfect Tense. The students were less attentive and were not paying attention towards the PowerPoint presentation. The teacher asked them in the Pashto language *"dekhwa gorye"* which means look here that made the students' attentive and became quite. The teacher uttered the words in a bit harsh manner but it made the students alert and attentive. When she started to explain the slides, the students were taking time to take notes of the points. Again she reverted to mother tongue and asked them *"jaldi karo"* in Urdu that means hurry up. It put pressure on the students and they tried to put the notes in a hurriedly manner on their notebooks. During the lecture, when the teacher asked a student to give two examples of Simple Past Tense sentences and she made a mistake, the teacher uttered the words *'na, na, na'* in Pashto language which shows disagreement. When the teacher was explaining certain verbs and its simple past and past participle forms so the students looked confused and they looked perplexed. Then the teacher explained the terms in Urdu and Pashto language that helped the students to comprehend the concept.

Another English teacher, Teacher X, instructed "Letter Writing" when the researcher observed her in the classroom. The instructor used a code swap to clarify the characteristics of several letters. When he was explaining different

parts of a letter, so he explained the 'salutation' for different letters in Urdu. It helped the students to understand the idea quickly and easily. As the teachers started to talk in Urdu, the students started to participate in the conversation and their responses were correct as well. The teacher dictated the home assignment to the students in the English and later the teacher explained it in Urdu in order to facilitate those students who do not understand the home task completely. After that, the students looked with ease and were happy.

Our third observation was at the Second Department P with Teacher Y, who was teaching Public Speaking. The teacher explained features which are necessary for the public speaking process. He explained the concepts along with the examples in Urdu and Pashto. During the second half of the lecture, students were assigned some topics for speaking in front of the class. The students felt less confident and looked worrisome when they were speaking entirely in English language, when they code-switched to Urdu so they explained their ideas and examples with ease. It also helped them to get the attention of their class fellows.

The researchers had their last observation at the same department with Teacher Z, he was teaching idioms and proverbs. The teacher was explaining the meaning and usage of certain idioms and phrases in different situations to the students. When the teacher realized that students were lost and do not pay attention, then he decided to code switch. He explained what idioms are in Urdu. Moreover, he further gave examples of idioms and proverbs in Pashto and Urdu and told the students that these two are the same as in English andthat was their lesson of the day. After the explanation in Urdu language, the students paid great attention towards the lecture because they understood it now and took part in the class discussion.

Interviews at Department S and P
Research Question: What is the impact of code-switch technique on teaching-learning process of English language?

According to instructors W and X at department S, code-switching is a beneficial teaching strategy since it makes the learning material easier for pupils to comprehend. Teacher W stated that further explanations are necessary for the kind of students she teaches since they struggle with English and need to understand the material. She believed that it has a positive effect on the learning process. The teacher explained that new concepts and ideas are not easily understood by the learners all the time and they seem worrisome during that class. Then she switched to the mother tongue and explained certain concepts and then they easily understand it.

Students in this department agreed that code-switching had a good impact as it broadens their knowledge of the subject and makes challenging vocabulary easier to understand. They said that it makes it easier for them to follow directions for specific assignments and class activities. They can still ask inquiries and express themselves using terms in their home tongue that they are unfamiliar with in English.

Code-switching allows students who struggle to express themselves in English language, use their native language to do so, according to Teacher Z of Department P. Additionally, that neither teachers nor students experience any bad effects from it. In order to enable students who don't grasp the target language better what is being spoken, he provided further explanation of the lesson in mother tongue.

When the researcher asked the students about the effectiveness of code-switching at department Z, she responded that it assists them in the comprehension of the concepts. It enables the students to express their thoughts freely without thinking too much about the language. They went on to say that because it lets the instructor use terms that the students can grasp, it helps the teacher explain things to the students in greater detail if they don't understand.

Research Question 2: Perception of Teachers and Learners' about Code-switching

When the scholar the teachers at both departments about their perceptions of code-switching, they were of the opinion that it definitely helps us and the students in teaching-learning process. It provides assistance while explaining and application of different concepts to the students. Teacher W explained that;

"Sometimes the students' minds are stuck at a point and they are unable to pick even an easy point. When I try to explain the same point in Urdu or Pashto, then the students start to grasp it and even ask further question for further understanding".

Teacher X further added he uses it mostly when he tries to correct his students' mistakes. He added that it is observed that weak students do not get the point when he explains it in L2 to them and they repeat the same mistakes. He said that whenever he faces problem regarding students attention or disturbance in the class, he applies code-switching strategy that is really affective to get students' attention and maintain classroom in order. The teacher expressed his worries about his students' productive skills development and specially speaking skill. He argued that applying code-switching all the time is not a good sign and it makes the student at ease and they make less efforts to speak in the target language.

When the researcher asked the students about their perception regarding code-switching application, majority of the responded were happy and considered it as a helpful strategy for all generally and specially for L2 weak students. They told that lots of students feel at ease to ask questions when they do not understand something or they participate in class discussion. One of the respondents disagreed and expressed his disapproval of the strategy and said that these are lazy students and they do not bother to learn. The teachers need to compel them to speak only in L2 during the class. The student respondent further added that if the teachers strictly disallow them to use Urdu or Pashto in the class, so those who rely on code-switching will try to learn it. They will commit mistakes and will be unable to express themselves completely but with the practice they may overcome this deficiency. He told that he believes that it hinders the students' ability to speak in target language to some extent.

Teacher Y at department P mentioned that code-switching isn't always a useful tactic for students. He went on to say that a curriculum requiring L2 instruction in schools should be implemented by the government. As a result, it will assist the pupils in building a solid foundation and prevent them from running into issues at a higher level. He voiced his dissatisfaction, stating that since most students are educated in Urdu or Pashto in primary and secondary education, code-switching is used more frequently in colleges and universities. Department S teacher Z reported that;

"Some students in my class dislike it when the teacher or other students use code switching. I have observed that even the average students in my class enjoy learning L2, and they have a mindset that to penalize such students who don't speak English well. Teachers should explain only the more challenging portions of the lesson in Urdu or Pashto rather than the entire lesson, depending on the context and situation".

Many of the student respondents believed that code-switching had a positive impact on their English language acquisition when questioned about their perceptions of it at department S. Nevertheless, an additional student noticed that when the instructor shifts to Pashto, the pupils usually get noisy and ignore the teacher; nevertheless, they pay attention when the teacher begins teaching in English. This, in her opinion, indicates that the students in their class detest code-switching altogether. One of the respondents said that "students and teachers should only use English in the classroom because L2 can be learned with rigorous practice".

Discussions of Findings

The data was transcribed and then analyzed. The analyses of the data shown some themes which are; it facilitates learning process, helps teacher in classroom management, motivates learners and slows down language fluency of the learners. The first two themes summarize the reasons of teachers to code-switch while the third and fourth theme evaluate how code switching has an impact on the learners in learning new lessons and in practicing English language. Themes emerged as a result of the experiences of English language teachers in teaching through code switching as a teaching strategy.

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                    │  Positives of Code-Switching │
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┌───────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐    ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Facilitates   │      │ Motivates        │    │ Helps teacher in     │
│ learning      │      │ learners         │    │ classroom management │
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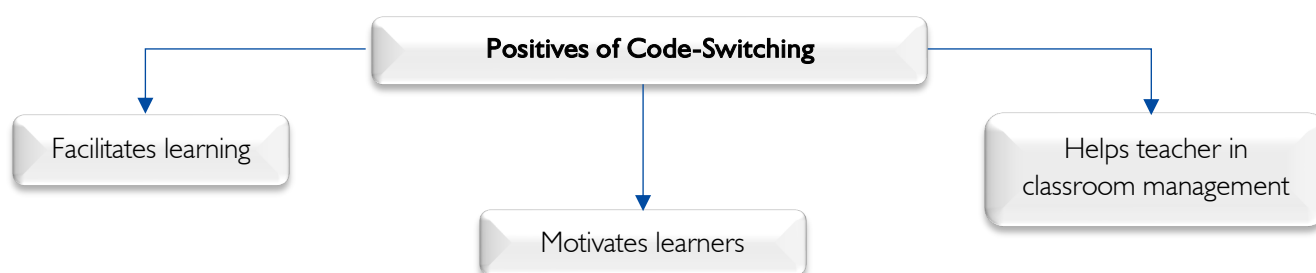
Theme No 1: Facilitates Learning Process

The results of this paper demonstrate that, in fact, code flipping aids in students' comprehension of what is taught. Based on the majority of observations, learners shown awareness, attention, and even claimed participation once specific components were explained in Urdu or Pashto instead of English. This indicates that learners were a little bewildered prior to code-switching, but they began adhering to the instruction afterward. Learning is communicated through some manifestations by students as they respond to their teacher's talk. Comprehension of the lesson is illustrated in various and diverse forms that may be through facial expressions, recitation, and active participation in class by students. When the teachers were asked why they do code-switch in the class so one of them responded as;

"A teacher can see and read from the students' faces whether they understand their teacher when he/she is delivering the lecture. When I speak continuously in English, I feel the uneasiness on their faces and they are not following me then I change to the local language. When they do not understand, they start to look around and start playing, talk with their nearby students and they do not consider themselves to be part of the class environment. (Teacher W at Department S)

According to Ataş and Sağın-Şimşek (2021), code switching made it easier for students who performed poorly to follow the courses compared to using English alone. Teachers and students in this study concurred that during code-switching, students with English language acquisition challenges are accommodated. Code-switching can help them to express their thoughts. Teacher Y explained that she code switches in teaching for two reasons—for better understanding of the students and easy to convey the message. Zainil and Arsyad (2021) study found that a teacher responded that he employs code-switching in teaching because the learners are a bit weak in English language and they face lots of problems in understanding different concepts of grammar and its application. During the classroom observation of this teacher, it was observed that the students were honest with their situation that they do not understand. Some of the students confidently asked the teacher to translate some words in Pashto or Urdu which they did not understand.

During the interview from the students at Department S, one of the student responded that when their teacher delivers the lecture continuously in English language, they find it difficult to understand, she said with a frowning face that, *"mong la bya khob raxy"* (It makes us drowsy). During classroom observation, as the teacher explained the lesson, some students were no longer paying attention. A few students were doing their assignments in other subjects, and others were talking to their seatmates when she started to talk in Urdu, they stopped their writing and started to listen.

Theme No 2: Helps teacher in classroom management

This study's findings further showed that code switching helps in presenting rules that governed grammar, discussing cross-cultural issues, giving instructions or prompts, explaining errors, and checking for comprehension. Therefore the above information collaborates with the first observations done with Teacher W at department S. She code switched to manage the class, as well as when giving instructions. The teacher further explained that;

"A teacher needs to know how to use code switching technique as his tool to control and manage the classroom. When I realize that the students are not grabbing the contents which I am teaching, I start to explain it in Urdu. If I do not switch to Urdu language, then the students start to talk to each other or get themselves busy in some other things and do not pay attention".

When the students were less attentive or they were talking with each other then the teacher instructed them in the local language which made them quite and they listened attentively. When the students found it difficult to follow the instructions, they started to talk to each other about what is being instructed. Students responded that code-switching technique helped them to follow instructions because some words in English were difficult to understand. Another finding on code-switching in this study was on re-voice. A study by Kumar et al. (2021) also found that teachers switched to other languages for re-voice, to calling attention and facilitate learners' understanding and build their vocabulary knowledge. The first observation at department P, in this study, was that the teacher used words such as *"dekhwa gorye",* (which means look here), and this helped him to get learners' attention, and it really worked. She constantly

used these command words. After observations,the researcher asked her why she was using those words then she said some learners can only respond when the teacher talks to them in such a way. This was confirmed by a research conducted by Promnath and Tayjasanant (2016), revealed that speaking English only sometimes could not helpthe teacher get the students' attention, but they showed to pay more attention when the teacherspoke their mother tongue.

Theme No 3: Motivates Students

It was found during the observation that when students were paying less attention towards their teacher the teacher started to use terms and quotes examples from local language. Findings by Ezeh et al. (2022) that manifestation of medium change made the students alert and they started to pay more attention in classroom, are supported by this study. At department S, when the teacher W was explaining in English the difference between the use of Simple Past and Present Perfect Tense, the students were less motivated and they were not taking part in the discussion when the teacher asked from them about examples. Then the teacher realized their disinterest and explained the concepts in Urdu consequently, students started to listen attentively and paid attention to the teacher. It motivated the students and some of them raised their hands to answer their teacher now.

During the interview at P department, teacher Z elaborated that when he was facing problem to catch students' attention, he starts to speak and explain the lesson in their mother tongue. The teacher further explained as;

Code-switching is a very crucial tool for me whenever the lower aptitude students face problems in understanding the concepts or the practical application of certain grammar rules in writing, they get dishearten and de-motivated. Then, during the class I explain these concepts in Urdu or Pashto that makes the students to take interest and it makes them alert. They feel that it is the time for them to understand it. In my perspective, some students have limited English language understanding and it is essential to use code-switching technique to keep such students involved in the classroom lessons and keep them motivated for learning".

One of the student respondents explained that;

"Code switching is an important technique which is used by the teacher. It helps us to understand easily and thorough what the teacher teaches. When the teacher explains a topic in English, so I do not understand it completely. Therefore, I am less interested and do not pay attention properly. As the teacher starts to explain it in Urdu or Pashto, I fully concentrate on the lecture and it keeps me motivated in the class. Even I and my friends start to take part in discussion as well".

Theme No 4: Slows Down Language Fluency of the Learners

The teachers responded during the interview that along with the positive effects it hinders the learners to groom their speaking skill in English. They noted that learners have weak expressions and they do not develop their skill how to answer properly in English language. However, they noted that code-switching negatively impact their productive skills while their receptive skills are flourished with. They learn grammatical and vocabulary concepts easily. One of the teachers at P department responded as;

"When the teacher use code-switching technique in the class so the students do not bother to speak in English and they do not take the step to speak in English. They feel shy and hesitant.

Another teacher at S department answered as;

"In my observation, the student's previous schooling location and school environment had a greater effect on their participation in the classroom discussion. For instance, those students who were taught in such schools where students were not allowed to use Urdu or Pashto in their conversation, it flourished their speaking skill and they are confident vice-versa".

Teacher X at the department of S responded that;

"Along with many positives, there are some negatives of using code-switching; influence on their proficiency and comprehension level. When we, the teachers, use code-switching in the class, we make them lazy and they do not

bother to try and learn the language because the teachers are complacent. In teachers' perspective, their aim is to make the lesson easy for the learners and make them understand therefore they employ code-switching but for the students, it's acceptable and enough to respond in the classroom in Pashto or Urdu, they feel that it is useless to learn the English language".

These findings are supported by Hussein et al. (2020) in their study. In the current study, one of the students responded during the interview that code-switching helped him to practice and communicate with ease in English language. The student opined that it provides assistance in understanding and picking up meaning with straight English, it helped him to understand new words. Another student responded that code-switching has a positive effect on his practice of English language. She believed that it served as scaffolding and improved her English speaking skills. During the observation activity in the classroom, it was noted that a few students were able to respond or pose question during the discussion whereas majority of the students were clueless what to speak and how to speak.

Conclusion

In conclusion, four major themes emerged in this research article namely; it facilitates learning process, helps teacher in classroom management, motivates learners and slows down language fluency of the learners. It was found that code-switching has positives for both teacher and student. It assists the teacher to clarify various concepts with ease and enable them to take part in the classroom discussion. It is one of the tools to be used for better classroom management and motivate those learners who take less interest in the lessons. However, code-switching technique made the students relaxed and they did not bother to try and speak English language, when they are not compelled to speak in English language so they are not going to try it ever.

Recommendations

It is recommended that curriculum planners take the use of English as the medium of teaching at lower elementary grades into account in light of the findings. The curriculum ought to include ground rules. It will guarantee that educators receive precise instructions on whether or not to use code-switching. Instructors shouldn't cease using code-switching since it gives students a better understanding of the more challenging material, allows them to express themselves, and aids in classroom management. Although code-switching improves English language instruction and acquisition, it shouldn't be excessive or applied improperly. One possible subject of study for future research is whether or if English can be used as a teaching language starting in Grade One.

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