

# Students' Attitudes towards Teachers' Code-Mixing/Code-Switching to L1 and Its Influence on Their L2 Learning: A Case of Business Students in Sargodha

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**Abstract:** *Code-mixing and code-switching of two languages is a common phenomenon in a bilingual community, and whether this is beneficial or not for second language teaching is one of the most controversial issues in bilingual literature. This case study is exploratory in nature and it targets business students' attitudes towards teachers' code-switching/code-mixing to L1 and its influence on their overall L2 learning. Quantitative as well qualitative research design is adopted for the present study. Study has incorporated Close-ended and open-ended questionnaire to collect the data and from the findings of the research, it concludes that, business students have a positive attitude towards teachers' code-switching/code-mixing and this phenomenon has a positive effects on L2 learning of the business students.*

**Keywords:** code-mixing, code-switching, attitude, L2 learning, effects, business students.

## 1. Introduction

In today's globalizing world, it is estimated that more than half of the world's population is bilingual (Grosjean, 2010). Bilingual means a person who can use two or more than two languages for communication. Rene Appel and Pieter Muysken (2006) have discussed two definitions regarding a bilingual speaker. According to them Bloomfield had made highest demands. According to Bloomfield, a bilingual should possess native like control of two or more languages (Rene Appel and Pieter Muysken, 2006). McNamara (1969 cited in Rene Appel and Pieter Muysken, 2006) proposed that somebody should be called bilingual if he has some second language skills in one of the four modalities in addition to his first language skills. McNamara definition of a bilingual speaker is generally accepted one in bilingualism.

Pakistan is a multicultural country having a large number of languages being spoken in it: Urdu is the national language whereas Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto and Blochi are commonly used languages in its four provinces. English language is the lingua franca of elite class in Pakistan and it is used as a second language in most of the official works. When two or more bilingual speakers interact, they do not use only one language for their conversation. They often utilize both languages at different ratio, a phenomenon which is known as code-switching or code-mixing in bilingual literature.

## 1.1 Types of Code-Switching

Many linguists have tried to give a typology of code-switching phenomenon. Popelack (2000) gives three types of code-switching. These are tag, inter-sentential and intra-sentential code-switching.

Tag code-switching is the process where one particular phrase is inserted into another language system. Normally fixed phrases like greetings are found in it and tag code-switching face minimal syntactic restrictions. Inter-sentential code-switching takes place at clause or sentence boundary. Romaine (1989) says that inter-sentential code-switching required more mastery of both languages as compared to tag code-switching. Intra-sentential code-switching is the most complex one of all and it takes place within single sentence. In intra-sentential code-switching syntactic risks is much greater as compared to rest of the two.

Gumperz (1982) gives another typology of code-switching; namely, situational and metaphorical switching. Situational code-switching occurs when participants or strategies of speech event changes, whereas metaphorical code-switching occurs when there is a change in topical emphasis. Auer (1998) gives two types of code-switching; discourse related alternation and participant alternation.

## 1.2 Code-Switching/Code-Mixing by EFL Teachers in Classrooms

Since 1980, code-switching/code-mixing as a specific technique in foreign language classrooms got much

attention. Some scholars hold a positive attitude for using this technique in EFL classrooms, whereas some have negative attitude for using code-switching/code-mixing in EFL classrooms.

Ellis (1984), Wong-Fillmore (1985), Chaudron (1988), Lightbown (2001), (cited in Liu Jingxia, 2010) advocate that teachers should create a pure linguistics environment in EFL classrooms and code-switching/code-mixing to L1 by EFL teachers will have a negative impact on target or foreign language learning. On the contrary, researchers like Vazquez-Faria (1982), Levine (2003), Chen Liping (2004) (cited in Liu Jingxia, 2010) argue for the positive aspects of code-switching by EFL teachers in EFL classrooms and claimed that code-switching/code-mixing to L1 by EFL teachers will make target or foreign language easy and learning among the students will be accelerated. Baker (2006) has discussed twelve functions of code-switching in a social context and out of these some are responsible for EFL teachers' code-mixing/code-switching to L1 in classrooms. Ferguson (2003) discussed the ideological bases for code-switching/code-mixing concluding that, attitudes are not changed easily.

### 1.3 Previous Studies

Whether code-switching/code-mixing is beneficial for students L2 learning or not, is a hot debate among the scholars and linguists since 1980 and many empirical researches have done in this regard. One of early research in this regard was conducted by Guthries (1984, cited in Liu Jingxia, 2010). Investigating the classroom conditions for L2 learning, Guthries checked for use of TL by six French teachers and found that most of the times they use TL while teaching. 5 out of six used TL 83% to 98% while teaching (Liu Jingxia). Kannan R. (2009) advocates that only the TL should be used in EFL classrooms and an English language teacher should encourage the students to use only English for conversation. According to Kannan R. (2009) adopting a bilingual method will slow down the process of learning. Kamal R. Mourtaga investigated the low English proficiency among learners in Ghaza Strip and concluded that less exposure of FL is one of the most contributing factor for low English proficiency among the learners. Erlenawati Sawir (2005) conducted a research on communication problem of international students in Australia. From the research findings, she concluded that, one of factor for international students' lack of fluency in English is the use of L1 by their teachers at their primary and secondary EFL classes. David D. I. Kim & Douglas Margolis (2000) conducted a research on listening and speaking exposure of Korean university students to English language and concluded that students should be given maximum exposure to TL when they are learning it to get maximum learning output.

Contrary to these researches, there are many researchers who has advocated for the positive effects of code-switching/code-mixing to L1. Rolin lanziti & brownlie (2002, cited in Liu Jingxia, 2010) by investigating four high school classes argued for the positive usage of L1 for better understanding of the students when some new input of TL is given to them. Liu Jingxia (2010) conducted a research on

teachers' code-switching in Chinese universities and from research findings concluded that, code-switching to L1 has a positive influence upon the students learning in EFL classrooms. Mingfa Yao (2011) also derived the same opinion from his research and suggests for the usage of code-switching technique in EFL classrooms. Ehsan Rizvi (2011) while investigating code-switching in Iranian elementary EFL classrooms also drew the same results and concluded that "skillful use of CS can lead to better teacher-student classroom communication boosts the quality of teaching, help students' comprehension, and foster a healthier friendlier teacher-student relationship, especially for the lower levels" Ehsan Rizvi (2011, p.23). Most of these researches have focused EFL students and a very little attention is paid to the students of other disciplines where many courses have been taught to them in English. The present study is particularly focused on business students whom Business Communication & Report Writing (BCRW) is being taught in English.

## 2. Research Design

For the present study, quantitative as well as qualitative research design is used in order to adhere the research questions of the study. Close-ended questionnaire is used to get data quantitatively whereas open-ended questionnaire is used to have a qualitative view as well.

### 2.1 Research Questions

The present study focusing on attitudes of business students to teachers' code-switching/code-mixing to L1 and its influence to their L2 learning try to adhere the following Research Questions.

1. What are business students' attitudes towards teachers' code-switching/code-mixing to L1 in classrooms?
2. What is the influence of this phenomenon upon their L2 learning?

### 2.2 Population and Sampling

For the present study, population was all the business students studying in City Sargodha, and EFL teachers teaching BCRW (Business Communication & Report Writing) in public as well as private sector universities. A total 100 students and six teachers participated in the study and they were selected using convenient sampling technique. Out this sample, fifty students and three teachers belong to University Of Sargodha, whereas three teachers and fifty students belongs to Private Sector Universities and Degree Awarding Institutes. In this study gender base grouping is not used and both male/female participants have equal value.

### 2.3 Data Collection

Data is collected using a structured 4-point Likert type Questionnaire to measure business students' attitudes about teachers' code-switching/code-mixing to L1, whereas an open ended questionnaire is used for teachers to analysis its effects on their L2 learning. The response option of questionnaire is from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Business students' attitudes were measured with respect to their preferences, feelings, and L1 effects on their L2 learning. The questionnaire also measured teachers' image due to code-switching/code-mixing. As Zoltan Dornyei (2003) pointed out that questionnaires are best suited in second language research with respect to researcher's time, researcher's efforts and financial resources. "Cost-effectiveness is not the only advantage of questionnaires. They are also very versatile, which means that they can be used successfully with a variety of people in a variety of situations targeting a variety of topics" Zoltan Dornyei (2003, p.10). The participants were requested to give honest answers on a scale, marked as; *strongly agree (SA)*, *agree (A)*, *disagree (D)* and *strongly disagree (SD)*.

**2.4 Questionnaire**

Close-ended questionnaire having a 4-point Likert scale is used to collect attitudes data of the business students towards EFL teachers code-switching/code-mixing. Questionnaire is adapted from three survey instruments used by Mingfa Yao (2011), Kamisah Ariffin & Misyana Susanti Husin (2011) and Abdullah A. Alenezi (2010). Items from them are modified to meet current study requirements and context. A total 10 items are used to measure business students' attitudes (See Appendix 1).

Questionnaire has two sections;

**Section A:** information relating to the participants and general guideline for the correct filling of the questionnaire.

**Section B:** Participants attitudes relating to code-switching/code-mixing consisting of 10 items.

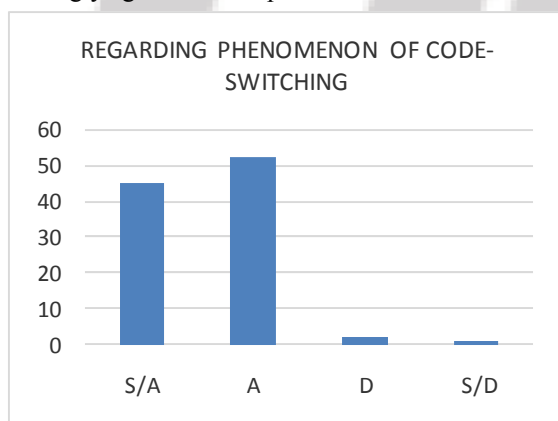
An open ended questionnaire is used for EFL teachers to analysis their views on code-switching/code-mixing to L1 and its influence upon overall L2 learning of business students (See Appendix 2).

**3. Results**

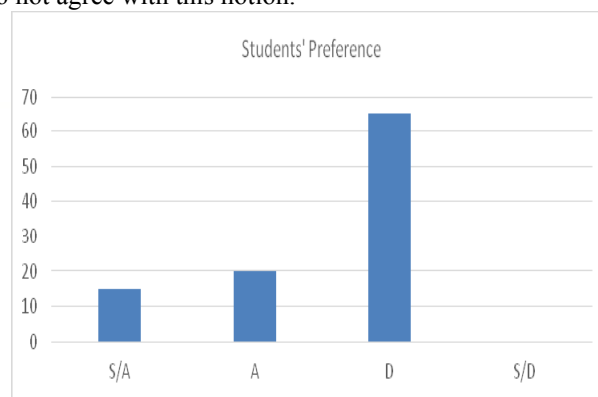
**3.1 Section (A): Students Attitude**

Questionnaire was administered to selected sample, and data was analyzed in SPSS to compute the frequencies. The graphic representation of the data is as under below:

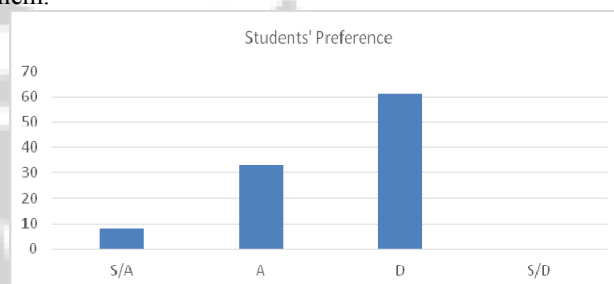
1. 52% participants were agreed that code switching phenomenon exist in BCRW lectures while 45% participants were strongly agree that this phenomenon exist



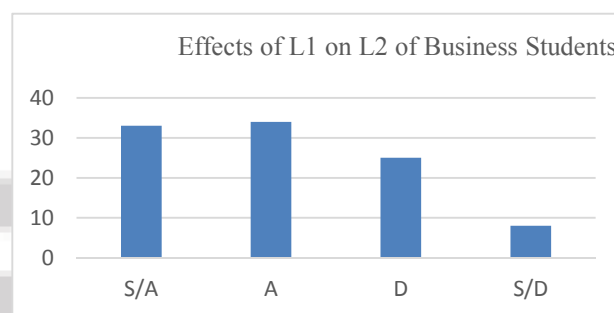
2. Graph 2 demonstrates, that total 35% (15% strongly agree, 20% agree) of the students want that their teachers must utilize Urdu as minimum as it could be, whereas 65% do not agree with this notion.



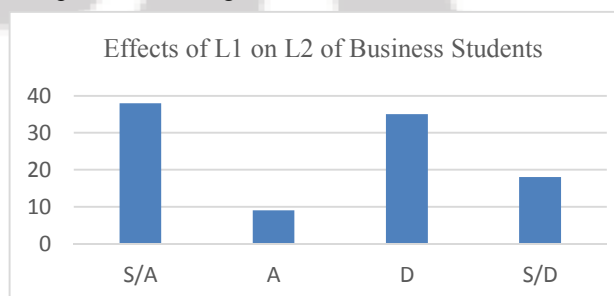
3. Graph 3 indicates that 61% participants were disagree that teaching the course in one language (English) is beneficial for them while 33% were agree and 8% were strongly agree that teaching the course in one language was beneficial for them.



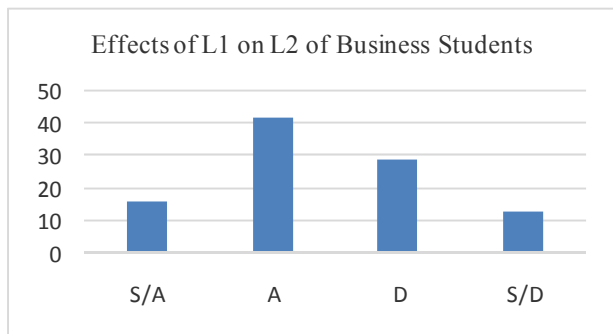
4. Graph 4 indicates that majority of the participants (34% agree, 33% strongly agree) perceives that using both Urdu and English language during the lecturer provided ease to understand.



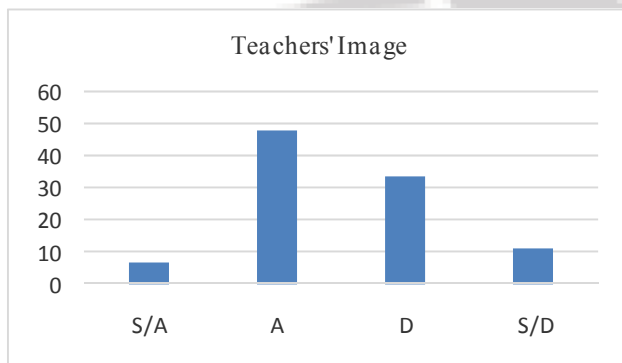
5. Graph 5 indicates that total 47% participants were of the opinion that usage of English and Urdu language during lecture has weakened their English Language. While 53% participants were disagree to this notion.



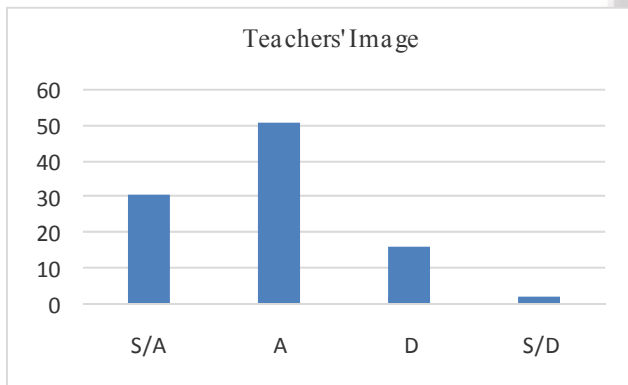
6. Graph 6 indicates that majority of the participants (42% agree, 16% strongly agree) consider that mixing of both languages has strengthened their English language.



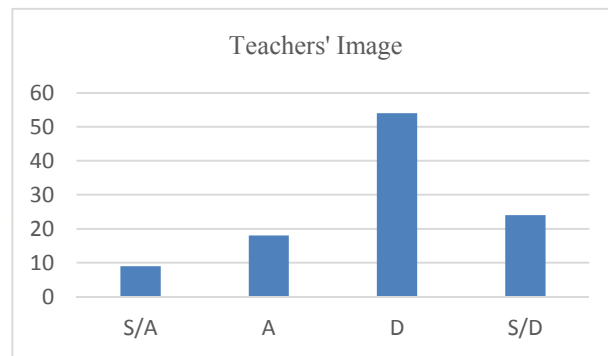
7. Graph 7 indicates that 45% participants disagree that they respect their instructor more when he/she uses code switching. While 48% agree and 7% were strongly agreed that they respect instructor more when he uses code switching.



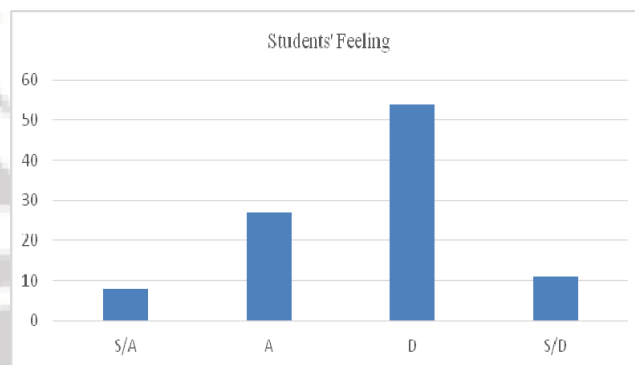
8. Graph 8 indicates that majority of the participants (51% agree, 31% strongly agree) consider that code switching help teachers to express themselves more easily and clearly.



9. Graph 9 indicates that majority of the participants (approx. 73%) do not agree that code switching is used because of deficiency in English language.



10. Graph 10 indicates that 65% participants do not experience any difficulty due to code-switching while 27% participants were agree and 8% were strongly agree that they become frustrated because of code switching.



### 3.2 Section B: Teachers' opinion

An open-ended questionnaire is used for EFL teachers' opinion about code-mixing/code-switching and its overall effects on students L2 learning. A total six teachers participated in the study, out of these; three belongs to Public Sector (University Of Sargodha), whereas three belongs to Private Sector (University Of Central Punjab, Sargodha Campus). Gender base discrimination is not being utilized in the study.

The questionnaire consists of two sections;

A. Biography of the participants

B. Section (B) consists of two questions and one optional comments section. (see appendix 2)

Regarding the first question;

Q. Which language you used while teaching BCRW course

- English
- Urdu
- both English and Urdu

All the participants were of the opinion of third option, that they used both English and Urdu while teaching BCRW (Business Communication and Report Writing) course to business students.

Regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> open ended question:

What is the overall effect of using both Urdu and English upon L2 learning of business students?

The overall effect according to the participants is beneficial for students for their L2 learning as this code-mixing/code-switching phenomenon is inevitable in a bilingual society.

For example one of the responses of the participants was:

*“the overall effect is not very positive, but in our context, where we have Urdu as our first language we cannot get*



rid of its usage ..... we are bound to use both linguistics traditions.”

Another female respondent made a comment by saying that:

*“Well in my point of view this code-switching/code-mixing phenomenon has positive as well as negative aspects but if we have to make a judgmental statement about this , than I would say that its overall effects on L2 learning is positive.”*

One of the male participants while answering the second question of the questionnaire has said:

*“if you want to know my opinion about code-switching to L1, than it is beneficial for the L2 learning of the students as it provides an opportunity for the students as well as for the teacher to make things more clear and elaborative”*

Out of six participants, five respondents almost have the same opinion, that, code-switching/code-mixing to L1 is beneficial for overall L2 learning of the business students. Only one female participant says:

*“as far as code-switching/code-mixing is concern, a teacher must utilize it as the last option in the class.”*

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

From the data, it is quite clear that code-mixing/code-switching is a common phenomenon in BCRW lectures of business students as 97% of the participants agreed to it. Graph 2 and 3 clearly indicate that students prefer their teachers to use both English and Urdu during his/her lectures as. Graph 4, 5 and 6 show that majority of the participants (67% graph 4, 53% graph 5, 68% graph 6) consider that using Urdu is beneficial for their L2 (English) learning as it makes it easy for them to understand an idea. Graph 7, 8 and 9 is related to teachers' image who code-switch to L1 in students' mind. Data indicates that students do not consider it bad if the teacher switches to L1. Graph 8 shows that 82% participants that teachers who switch to L1 can be more understandable to them and they feel more easy the classroom. Graph 9 shows that about 73% of the selected students do not consider that a teacher less proficient if he/she switches to L1. Graph 10 is about the students feelings related to code-switching/code-mixing and data of graph 10 demonstrates that 65% participants do not feel any difficulty during lecture due to teacher's code-switching/code-mixing to L1. Overall attitude of the business students towards teachers' code-switching/code-mixing to L1 is a positive one and they consider it beneficial for their L2 learning.

Regarding EFL teachers 'opinion about code-switching/code-mixing, all the participants agreed that they use both English and Urdu during their BCRW lectures. Regarding code-switching/code-mixing overall effects on L2 learning of the business students, five out of six participants consider it beneficial for the students with respect to the context. Only one female teacher suggests that EFL teacher should utilize this as the last option.

From the collected data, this research concludes that business students have a positive attitude towards teachers'

code-switching/ code-mixing to L1 and it has a positive effect on their overall L2 learning. The study recommends for using code-mixing/code-switching to L1 by EFL teachers where ever needed in the classrooms to make students more comfortable and under stable.

#### 5. Delimitation of the Study

The present study only focused on l2 learning of business students with respect to code-switching/code-mixing of their EFL teachers while teaching BCRW course. Their L2 learning can be explored in a variety of different ways as well like their social background, age differences, gender etc. Moreover this study is being conducted in Sargodha region, so findings of this study are only generalize able to this region only.

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Teachers who switch from English to Urdu or from Urdu to English can express themselves clearly during BCRW lectures				
Teachers who switch codes from English to Urdu are deficient in English				
I feel frustrated when the instructor uses both Urdu and English during his/her BCRW lectures				

❖ BCRW (Business Communication & Report Writing)

**Appendix (1)**

**STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

**SECTION (A)**

Personal Information

1. Name: .....
2. Gender: M/F
3. Program: .....
4. Institution: .....

**Guideline;**

During your BCRW (Business Communication & Report Writing) lectures, your teachers often used Urdu in combination with English. This is known as code-mixing or code-switching CM/CW. Please answers the questions in the below honestly, the information you provide will not be disclosed to anyone, not to your teachers as well and will only be used for research purpose.

**SECTION (B)**

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Mixing English and Urdu is a common phenomenon in BCRW lectures I have attended in this institution				
I would like the instructor to minimize His/her use of Urdu in BCRW lectures				
Teaching the course only in one language (Eng) is beneficial to me				
Teaching the course in Urdu and English makes it easy for me to understand				
Mixing of Urdu and English leads to the weakness of my English				
Mixing of Urdu and English strengthens My English				
I respect instructor more when teaching in Urdu and English				

**Appendix (2)**

**TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

**SECTION (A)**

Personal Information

1. Name: .....
2. Gender: M/F
3. Institution: .....

**SECTION (B)**

Please answer the following questions best of yours' knowledge.

Q.No1.Which language you used while teaching BCRW course?

- a. English
- b. Urdu
- c. Both English and Urdu

Q.No.2. what is the overall effect of using both Urdu and English upon L2 learning of business students?

.....  
 .....

Any other comment:

.....  
 .....