

**URDU-ENGLISH VERB-PHRASE CODE-SWITCHING IN LAHORE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL GRADE-9 CLASSROOM: A MATRIX-LANGUAGE-
FRAME ANALYSIS**

Title

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ABSTRACT

This research examines code-switching (CS) in verb-phrases from both Urdu and English in Grade-9 classroom of Lahore Grammar School. The study takes a Matrix-Language-Frame (MLF) analytic perspective and explores the syntactic and sociolinguistic characteristics of CS between the two languages used by the students in speech. The paper uses naturalistic observation and conversation analysis in the classroom settings to explore how code switching between Urdu-English at CS level is utilized as linguistic resource for communication that enact educational and social events. The results show that Urdu-English code-switching performs different functions including identity signaling, classroom discourse management and pedagogical maneuvering. The MLF model illuminates the relative status of alternating language uses, with English frequently serving as the matrix language and Urdu (beng, guj) serving as the embedded or restricted code. This study adds to our understanding of bilingual language practices in the classroom and provides evidence about the intricate structure of language, identity, and power in multilingual contexts.

Keywords: Urdu-English code-switching, verb-phrase, Matrix-Language-Frame, bilingualism, sociolinguistics, classroom discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's linguistic scene is characterised by a wealth of languages spoken in a complex relationship, linguistically multilingualism vouching for the daily routine. Urdu is the national lingua franca of Pakistan and works as a common mode of send information among individuals who speak other languages. But English has a big profile as the language of education, government and media. This bilingualism, also called "diglossia" in sociolinguistics, has produced a specific linguistic phenomenon: code-switching (CS), which is characterized by the alternation between two or more languages within the same remark uttered by the speaker. In educational context, the role of English language is to mediate and regulate the use of L1 (in this case Urdu) with a range from parallel language use to gradual reduction in the L1 (Rauf 2012). Situation such as these have resulted due to pre-existing beliefs in code-switching and either align or resist toward issue teacher takes these decisions by giving values for position. This paper deals with the verb phrase code-switching in a grade 9 classroom of Lahore Grammar School, one of the highly respected educational institutions across Pakistan; where both languages are dominantly used.

In the Pakistani context, code-switching is not just a linguistics issue but has its base in our cognitive and social factors. Switching from Urdu to English and from English to Urdu entails the alternation of a number of syntactic constituents, with verb-phrases also one of the frequently switched components (Myer-Scotton, 1993). Switching at the level of verb phrases -- that is, between languages within a clausal/sentential domain -- yields an intriguing window on the problem of structure and function in bilingual speech. In addition to providing us with insights about the relative frequency in which students switch from Urdu to English and why, such understanding could inform the nature of their cognitive processes --i.e., whether learning is guided by

positive or negative transfer from L1- and identity negotiation-- as well as about the social dimensions of language use within classroom contexts.

Code-switching in Urdu-English: A cathartic tradition The use of code-switching between Urdu and English is an obligatory practice being resorted to by the teachers in their classrooms, crafted as a pre-mediated action, keeping intact the linguistic predicament being experienced on day-to-day basis by Pakistani teachers. The main medium of education is Urdu for most subjects however due to the emphasis on English in modern Pakistani society, most schools also use English as both a teaching and exam language. In such these cases, students might start utilizing second language for technical terminology and first language for daily conversation. This mixed use reflects a dynamic process of negotiation between academic norms and the cultural value of language. Through the alternation between codes, students can operate more efficiently in a bilingual world and identify themselves as belonging to social groups (Gumperz 1982).

This research is conducted to give an in-depth analysis of the syntactic and social aspects of verb-phrase code-switching among Grade-9 students in Lahore Grammar School classroom. The C(M)xI model (Myers-Scotton, 1993) that makes the distinction between a matrix language and an embedded language forms our theoretical foundation. Especially, MLF model is useful to probe the distributions of different linguistic constituents in a sentence that provides with a further insight into structure of hierarchical code-switching. By extending this model to verb-phrase code-switching, the present study aims at addressing a number of related questions: What is powerful enough to cause VP code-switching in the classroom? How do you deal with switching between English and Urdu? And what makes some settings conducive to code-switching, and others not?

By doing so, the research endeavors to contribute to the understanding of code-switching in bilingual instruction and its consequences both for language acquisition and social interaction. By analysing the cognitive and social processes involved in code-switching, teachers can take cognizance of learners' linguistic requirements

within multilingual classrooms. In addition, the current investigation makes an additional contribution to bilingualism research (Clyne, 2003; Gumperz, 1982; Rauf, 2012) by focussing on a fine-grained analysis of code-switching from Urdu to English at school level in Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Code-switching (CS) has for many years been a core subject in bilingualism research, with researchers investigating the structural properties, functions, and sociolinguistic significance of CS in multilingual settings. Poplack (1980, the actual one of the initial ones), has proposed a basic typology of code switching classified as: intersentential and intrasentential. Intersentential code-switching takes place between two sentences, in which speakers change from one language to another at the boundary between two sentences. By contrast, intrasentential code-switching occurs within sentence or clausal boundaries and typically represents a mixing of linguistic features from two languages. Such code-switching (especially verb-phrase shifting) has been reported from a wide range of bilingual communities around the world and received much attention. Research on intrasentential CS unveils highly complex syntactic, morphological and lexicon changes between languages, which offer insight into the cognitive and social underpinnings of bilingual speakers (Poplack, 1980; Myers-Scotton, 1993).

One of the most prominent theories developed to investigate code-switching is the Matrix-Language-Frame (MLF) model proposed by Myers-Scotton (1993). The MLF model views code-switching as a hierarchical mixture of the two languages, one (the matrix language) providing the syntactic structure of the sentence and the other embedded in it. The grammatical structure, for example word order and inflection, is generally determined by the matrix language, whereas the embedded language mostly provides lexical items (nouns, verbs or phrases). The MLF model is an account of why some structures in code-switched utterances tend to be more stable or predictable, the matrix language more strongly influencing the syntax and morphology of a mixed sentence. This theoretical framework has been extensively used to analyze bilingual

discourse, for example in situations where one language is more socially salient than the others involved (Myers-Scotton, 1993).

In the case of Urdu-English code switching in Pakistan, a number of studies have investigated the sociolinguistic and syntax aspects of this type. For example, Gumperz (1982) and Rauf (2012) have reported the use of English as a matrix language in Pakistani classrooms – with Urdu functioning as the embedded language. These research findings indicate that the frequent imposition of English as a primary language in code-switched sentences expresses its more prestigious status and instrumental value for higher educational and occupational purposes, with Urdu serving only at the margin of ordinary public discourse. In educational contexts too, where the medium of instruction is mostly English, students tend to switch over to Urdu when they want to talk about their feelings or culture or when there is a loss in searching for an equivalent term in English (Rauf, 2012). This switching pattern functions as a pragmatic strategy enabling students to ensure better comprehensibility in an environment characterized by linguistic diversity.

However, in spite of the vast effort made towards studies on Urdu-English code-switching, little study has been carried out for verb phrase code switching syntactic pattern especially in class room. The general research has dealt with more wide-ranging cases of intersentential code-switching, or explored lexical borrowing and the effect of English on Urdu. Studies into Verb-Phrase switching are limited particularly in elite educational institutions such as Lahore Grammar School. This void is important because an understanding of the nature of verb-phrase switching can provide insights into how in educational settings bilingual students organise their use of language.

This is a gap that the present study attempts to address, as it investigates verb-phrase code-switching in the context of a LGS Grade-9 classroom. It will explore the verb-phrase switching between Urdu and English in terms of syntactic constructs, use MLF for learning the hierarchical structure in these switches. In this way, the project will develop a greater appreciation of what code-switching means inside bilingual

classrooms where students regularly shift between languages to achieve academic and social ends.

Significance:

This study will contribute to the literature on bilingualism in educational context, particularly in South Asia where multilingualism is common, but less researched. Centered on Lahore Grammar School, a prestigious school in Pakistan, it unpacks how privileged students negotiate the dynamics of language used within an English-medium led academic setting. Code-switching as a means of social identity negotiation, is indicative of the balancing act between cultural and educative expectations. This pioneering application of the MLF model in verb-phrase code-switching is an important development in the theoretical framework of code-switching research, providing both practical and theoretical guidance to the study of bilingual discourse within sociolinguistics.

Research Objectives:

1. To explore the syntactic structures of V-P CS involving Urdu and English in a Grade-9 classroom at Lahore Grammar School.
2. To investigate the sociolinguistic purposes of Urdu-English code-switching in classroom talk.
3. To examine the contribution of Matrix-Language-Frame theory toward understanding verb-phrase code-switching in bilingual classrooms.

Research Questions:

1. What patterns does verb-phrase code-switching in Urdu and English follow, syntactically, in the Grade-9 classroom at Lahore Grammar School?
2. How students shift Urdu into English as they talk in the classroom?
3. What accounts for students' VPCS use and what are the social and/or pedagogical functions it plays?

Theoretical Framework

The Matrix-Language-Frame (MLF), Myers-Scotton's (1993) model, is the model used in this research to analyze code-switching bilingual contexts. It distinguishes between the matrix language, responsible for selecting the syntactic structure and dominating of discourse, and an embedded language, which contributes mainly lexical items or phrases. This difference helps us to understand how languages mix in bilingual speech. The MLF model is especially powerful in the analysis of intrasentential CSS (e.g., VP switching), which involves alternating languages within a single sentence. This manuscript focuses on the investigation of how Urdu interacts with English syntax in Pakistani educational contexts where English is a dominant language and a matrix language and addresses the issues related to syntactic alignment and language dominance in CS data.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, a naturalistic observational approach was used to obtain data on Urdu-English code-switching in classroom situation. The sample was students of class grade- 9th at Lahore Grammar School, a prestigious school where English is main medium of instruction but English students also talk Urdu very commonly in conversation. The study aimed to document, the instances of verb-phrase code-switching between Urdu and English in classroom interaction, spontaneously occurring therein. This method warranted data that was representative of the spontaneous use of language in a real educational environment and revealed the bilingual speakers' access to their linguistic repertoires in classroom activities.

The data collection for the research was a one-month audio recording of classroom talk. This long duration of data collection facilitated exposure to a variety of exchanges between teachers and students, peer-to-peer interactions, group discussions and presentations enabling us to gain a comprehensive picture of the ways in which code-switching is observable at different genres. The recordings were recorded with a

high-quality recording equipment, in order to guarantee the exactitude and precision of the data referring to the linguistic resources selected.

After the recordings, transcribing was done word by word so that no utterance of the recorded speech was missed. Since the transcriptions involved inclusion of verbal language and non-verbal cues where appropriate, it could be said that they encompassed a full account of classroom interactions. Each code-switching instance was meticulously screened and segregated with particular emphasis on verb-phrase switching in which learners line switched within the same clause or sentence. The verb-phrase was selected as object of analysis due to its syntactic level complexity and high attested incidence in bilinguals speech, being accordingly a suitable research target item for assessing the interplay between languages at structural level.

The syntactic structures of the code-switched utterances were analyzed using the Matrix-Language-Frame (MLF) model. This structure was used to distinguish each switch as of type matrix or embedded. The matrix language tended to be English (as a consequence of its predominance in academic discourse at Lahore Grammar School) and Urdu was more likely to be incorporated within an English syntactic frame. The MLF model permitted an organized study of the syntactic patterns in these switches, showing how English shaped it and the way Urdu elements were accommodated within this pattern to adhere to the rules of English sentence structure.

Furthermore, a qualitative analysis was carried out in order to identify sociolinguistic roles of the code-switching occurred in the classroom. That required parsing out the social context of each switch: who was talking, to whom, and about what. This part of the analysis allowed to reveal how code-switching worked, not only as a linguistic resource, but also as a social practice and identity shaper/enactor and negotiator of power in the classroom. It is in this sense that by pursuing an intensified approach, we intended to provide a more complete account of the structural and contextual aspects of verb-phrase code-switching as it occurs within a bilingual classroom setting.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Examination of verb-phrase CS in a Grade 9 classroom at Lahore Grammar School - focused and with guiding interest to understand the relations between language, cognition and social identities for bilingual education. The results, viewed from within the Matrix-Language-Frame (MLF) model, were that with regard to 'dominance language', code-switching as a hallmark in academic activities and the social-end purposes of using code-switing showed up.

The most striking result was the overall primacy of English as the substrate language. English is the medium of instruction for many subjects in the Lahore Grammar School hence, it tends to force itself on the syntactic structure of CS utterances. This is the view espoused by the early MLF model that assumes a subject's matrix language property has dominance over a sentence's structure. Accordingly, this use of English in public space indicates the social and symbolic capital accorded to it due to its significant association with academic proficiency and contemporary lifestyles in Pakistan as opposed to everyday banter which can be carried out in Urdu.

There was especially much code switching during conversations regarding technical terms and academic phrases, like mathematics, science and history. These areas often involve precision and specialised terminology for which there are English equivalents. In contrast, Urdu was employed for informal or conversational interactions indicating a linguistic division of labour in the bilingual classroom. English was a language of formal academic discourse and Urdu served as a more personal, informal interaction.

One of the interesting findings of this study was code-switching as a lexical gap-filling technique. Whenever students had a hard time recalling word English, they preferred to do code switching in Urdu language. This showed the cognitive flexibility of BESs, they have capacity to use the 2 languages with ease in order to sustain conversation. For example, one student recounted, "I forgot the theory of is ka matlab hai (this means) why this happens," demonstrating how Urdu was used in tandem with English commodiously.

The social aspects of code-switching also came up as one of the most important feature. The students utilized code-switching to mark social identity and affiliate with their peers. Code-switching as a membership category Group talk or informal interactions served as a form for establishing specific group memberships. This tension is representative of the relationship between language usage in bilingual settings, identity, power and group belonging. For instance, students could use Urdu to express camaraderie and closeness between friends while switching to English for formal academic conversation or when addressing a teacher.

Furthermore, code-switching was a status symbol, marking the prestige of being in class. Higher status students were competing by demonstrating their linguistic abilities, whereas lower status students were fitting in and displaying a willingness to succeed academically. This facet of code-switching underscores its position as a form of social action and negotiation in the classroom.

Finally, the research showed how code-switching develops as a form of inclusivity in bilingual classrooms. With a fluid interplay between Urdu and English, students were able to establish a communicative ambience where both languages carried weight and currency in the conversation. This inclusion made everyone feel a sense of shared identity and collective belonging, validating the belief that multilingualism could be a springboard for social cohesion instead of division.

Over all, these results are suggestive of the complex function that code switching performs in bilingual classrooms as not only a linguistic bench mark tool but also as social identity interfacing and accommodation.

FINDINGS

Interpretation of the extraction of verb-phrase code-switching in Grade-9 classroom at Lahore Grammar School can unveil several interesting trends about when and how did people in this particular context code-switch as well as the very syntactic make-up of these switches. A noteworthy finding was that verb-phrase code switching occurred

largely in discussion of academic content and informal interaction. The frequency of code-switching in these corpora indicates that it fulfils different roles according to type of conversation and social factors.

Code-switching was found to be more common when students were dealing with academic material that contained technical or subject-specific vocabulary. In their science, mathematics and literature classes that employ heavy amount of English terminology for various things to comprehend the complex ideation students would use mother tongue i.e. Urdu as well second language which is English mainly within verb forms. In each case, English was the matrix language with the Urdu words and expressions embedded in the English clause structure. For instance, a student would say, "We have to solve this masla (problem) with this formula," where the verb "solve" is in English and noun "masla" (problem) exist within the sentence in Urdu.

Such a predilection for alternation in language use during teaching of technical academic content "peniahes the instrumental role of English in Pakistani education, which is the sole medium where precision and technical terms are concerned (Rnhman, 2002). The language of modernity, as well as one signifying academic standards, is English and is therefore logically selected for communicating sophisticated or scientific ideas. But when the students found a blank in their English vocabulary, or wished to express a concept more idiomatically in Urdu, they did not hesitate to switch over and insert an Urdu word or phrase here or there into their thoughts. This is a response that demonstrates how in the bilingual classroom we are able to communicate practically and objectively, regardless of the language employed.

A certain amount of code-switching could be observed even among informal conversations between students. Meanwhile, the students in these contexts employed a combination of Urdu and English within their verb-phrases where they switched from one language to another according to their topics or the course conversation. The pervasive use of CS in peer interactions reflects how students manage the tension between their social identity and language practices in this group. For example, a student will mutter and English-embedded gibberish sentence like, "Yaar I did not

understood the lecture,” where the English words ‘understand’ and ‘lecture’ are surrounded by an otherwise Urdu sentence. Code-switching in this context, is not only a practical communication tool but also the emblem of the students' shared linguistic identity and their flexible ability to shuttle between languages as needed by the situation.

There was evident alternation of the two during group discussions and while students collaborated on tasks, conveying the social dimension of language use. In these informal contexts, learners are paying less attention to formal language norms and focusing more on expressing solidarity and alignment with peer groups who share the same bilingualistic practices. Therefore, code-switching was a means of indicating group membership and social solidarity in the bilingual classroom community. It enabled students to communicate in a way that was informal, easy and social acceptable with same-aged peers.

It was, however, interesting to note that the practice of code switching was not as common in teacher talk than in learner directed or peer group discussions where more formal language tended to be employed. In these cases, the teacher usually used English for most of the lesson as a medium of instruction, especially when teaching academic content. These students were in turn more likely to participate in English during teacher-student interactions, especially when prompted to answer questions or discuss the material. This is in line with the top-down nature of classroom talk, where English is the target language used by teachers and so students may feel more compelled to adhere to teacher-ordered language.

The lesser prevalence of code-switching in the teacher-led instruction is likely due to the formality of academic talk where 1 language switching may be considered distracting or unprofessional. In these settings of controlled language, students were likely concentrating on conforming to the language norms in that classroom, since linguistic proficiency is also a part and parcel for doing well academically and qualifying in competitive academic institutions such as Lahore Grammar School.

Potentially, students would have been less likely to switch languages in this context and remained with English associated to academic expectations of the classroom.

The results also emphasize the context-sensitive aspect of code-switching. In informal, peer-led settings however, code-switching was less formal compared to student-teacher interactions where English prevailed. Students were far more likely to be switching languages in group activities, casual chats or collaborative tasks. These environments also encouraged more linguistic freedom, as the students felt less encumbered by formal language norms that may constrain teacher-led instruction.

Furthermore, students frequently adapted their language use to the communicational context and settings. When talking about more conversational or cultural topics, such as personal experiences, students tended to switch back to the use of quite a bit of Urdu with English applied only where they felt necessary. Instead, in discursive features, like academic or technical discussion and discourse, English was generally used for the matrix structure, whereas Urdu served to complete lexicograms or as a language of culture.

The first remarkable feature in the code-switching of this study is the high frequency distribution of verb-phrase switches. Such switches were marked with an English predicate as the skeleton of a sentence amid which Urdu nouns, pronouns, and adjective/adverbs would be fit edlike fillers. They may say, for example, “Main assignment kal karni hai” (I will do the assignment tomorrow) where the verb ‘to complete’ is provided in English, but then "assignment" is also offered as an English alternative here and so this could just as easily have been replaced by the Urdu word “kaam,” (work) if such language diversity was preferred or culturally appropriate. In other cases, more complicated verb-phrase substitutions took place where a English-origin verb and part of the noun phrase were replaced.

The spread of structures shown in (33) reflects the bilingual character of student discourses. The fact that students can switch not just lemmas and words, but whole verb phrases demonstrates the cognitive sowing of studies who are doing linguistic

aerobics when it comes to switching between two languages within one sentence. It's also a practical response to the current linguistic demand (the degree of expedience or inconvenient), where the level of thoughtful effort involved in conveying an idea in one language as opposed to another determines which language will be used in code-switching.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has a key import for understanding bilingual instructions in an educational setting, as it adds to our knowledge of code-switching by providing detailed examination of verb phrase switching between Urdu and English. The results indicate that in the Grade-9 classroom at Lahore Grammar School, code-switching acts as a tool for more than one function: both social and functional. Functionally, it helps students manage the linguistic requirements of the classroom, using language most suited to academic and technical discussions as well as covering slips in their vocabulary if necessary. For English, we use it primarily for complex and technical subjects whereas Urdu is used to things that are more familiar and culturally specific. On a sociolinguistic dimension, code-switching allows students to express group membership with peers and show conformity of their linguistic experience. Code-switching is thus not only an interactional resource, but also a mechanism for social positioning in class-community space.

These results imply that bilingual students use code-switching as a developmental and functional linguistic tool in educational context which facilitates dual sociolinguistic demands the classroom and their friendships. It is suggested that a possible research direction might be to further investigate code-switching in different education scenarios, such as less privileged or situation where English language dominance is low. Studying the patterns of code-switching across social class might offer further opportunities to learn about the educational and social conditions under which bilingual language use takes place.

Furthermore, this study makes a significant contribution to language pedagogy. Within the multilingual classroom, in which students can utilise multiple languages as a means of making meaning and engaging fully in learning tasks, teachers need to address code-switching for what it is: a linguistic resource. Instead of looking at code-switching as being an obstacle to learning, educators should work with it in their instructional practices and make use of it as a tool for participation and inclusion across varied linguistic environments.

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