

Attitudes of Teachers and Students towards Classroom Code Switching in Literature Classes at Tertiary Level in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT---Classroom code switching in multilingual and multicultural classes is a common phenomenon and has many different attributes in a country like Pakistan where English is taught as a second language (ESL). In Pakistan, students as well as teachers tend to switch between English, Urdu (national language) and Punjabi (regional language of a province) even in literature classes at tertiary level. As a part of the worldwide change in the methods, as well as techniques, styles and strategies associated with English Language Teaching (ELT), switching a code is considered a part of teaching strategies. This paper is an attempt to give careful consideration to the specific purposes behind teachers' code switching along with their attitudes. Attention is also paid to the attitudes of the post graduate students towards classroom code switching. A questionnaire was used to collect data from teachers as well as students of four different universities. The findings of the study highlight the reasons behind teachers' code switching like simple communication, keeping up control in the classroom, explaining abstract things, interpretation, and introducing unfamiliar terms.

Keywords: Attitude, code switching, multilingualism, English language teaching (ELT), English as a second language (ESL), classroom discourse.

1. INTRODUCTION

Researchers are curious about searching for the reasons of code switching at post graduate level. Switching a code is typically a region of classroom discussions. The purpose of this paper is to give an outline about the fact of code switching (CS) and code mixing (CM) in the literature classes at tertiary level in Pakistan, and attitudes of students and teachers towards classroom code switching.

Use of classroom code switching/ code mixing as a certain strategy acquired very much interest since 1980. A number of university students maintain having a positive mind-set pertaining to using this strategy in ESL classrooms, while a number of other students possess negative mind-set pertaining to use of code-switching in ESL classrooms.

Faltis (1989) puts that the processes of code switching, code mixing and obstruction happen when a bilingual substitutes any kind of expression from one language to another language. He supports that code switching is the intra-sentential switching whereas code mixing is the inter-sentential switching.

Vazquez-Faria (1982), Levine (2003), Liping (2004) (as cited in Jingxia, 2010) fight with the positive aspects connected with code switching by ESL teachers in ESL classrooms and advocates the code switching/code mixing to L1 by ESL teachers can make second language uncomplicated and understanding among the students will probably be quicker.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The wonder of code switching (CS) is connected to bilingualism and the very term bilingualism is intriguing in different understandings, mixture of delineations, and Spolsky (1998) depicts a bilingual as 'an individual who has some realistic capacity in the second tongue'(p.45). Wardaugh (2005) proposed that an individual who is bilingual may be said to be one who can pass on, to developing degrees in target language. Code switching (CS) can be depicted as a turn between two or more languages in a discussion. It happens normally during the activity of bilingualism. He investigated that individuals generally do not aware about their switching a code, they can inform after an examination about the code, which was utilized for a specific subject.

Gumperz, (1982) discovered that switching a code is considered a specific talking technique for bilinguals, reviewing that we can use the saying "bilingual" to portray some individual who can bestow, to diverse degrees, in second language (L2). Gumperz (1982) additionally proposes an arrangement of conversational capacities code- exchanging might be identified with.

Guthrie's (1984) result demonstrated that the most of the teachers who were monolingual were less willing to instruct those learners who were at an early stage of improvement and as of right now he set the bilingual teachers at focal point. Guthrie (1984) recognized different informative capacities of code exchanging. As indicated by investigations, Chinese code switching was utilized: i. for interpretation, ii. for techniques and headings iii. for illumination, and iv. for evaluating comprehension.

Saville-Troike (1986) affirms that genuine lexical need is a substitute variable for exchanging a code. In this case bilingual switch with one code then onto the following happens in light of the fact that a speaker can't find the proportionate expressions of one language in the other, as in a segment of the Urdu words like *mullah* (mosque supervisor), *Punchayet* (village gathering to choose question at neighborhood level), *khateeb* (an interchange of a mosque gatekeeper with an insignificantly different part). These thoughts can't be outlined in the English language as these are social elements.

Reyes (2004) composes that people switch codes when they don't have a clue about the statement in the obtained or target dialect. Gumperz, (2004) indicated that one of the main considerations of code switching /code mixing is that components of the other language pass on the significance of the expected thought more precisely. Ayeomoni, M. (2006) referring to a few researchers, indicated that the elements of code exchanging are: intra-group personality, poetic inventiveness and the interpretation of modernization.

Wardhaugh (2005) notes that a couple of breaking points of CS are of convenience, clarification, closeness, solidarity with understudies and decision of subject which fluctuate as indicated by extraordinary circumstances.

Brown (2006) puts that a speaker uses first language to compensate the lack of capability and fluency in the target language to maintain the flow during a conversation. Heredia and Brown (2005) investigate that speaker use code switching as a strategic tool to overcome gaps and flaws in communication.

When we discuss functions of code switching in second language classrooms as indicated above, MA English literature classroom in Pakistan could be seen as a bilingual discourse group and in consistent setting bilinguals are aware of their code switching. Likewise from time to time they do it unwittingly. Same are the circumstances with teachers in the classrooms. Teachers may not generally deliberately utilize code exchanging, however either intentionally or unknowingly it performs grouped breaking points which are important in learning circumstances.

Canagarajah (1995) in one examination which mellowed down code exchanging proclamations up ESL classes in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, arranges the limits of code exchanging as per two general characterizations, i.e., micro and macro limits. Canagarajah's micro limits exhibit how code exchanging happens in a classroom for substance transmission. Obviously, he demonstrates that there is a general classroom association CS that is better cleared up as macro limits on the grounds that it addresses a particular set of exercises, especially, classroom association.

Gulzar (2010) guaranteed on the premise of CS that students as well as teachers are have to be made mindful of the limits of CS on the grounds that unsafe utilization of CS can make the process of target language learning slow. He selected a kind of cross sectional overview to gather data from an example that was drawn from a predetermined population.

Sultana (2010) investigated that code switching is an effective tool of teaching in bilingual classrooms especially when the aim is to transfer the knowledge to students. She collected data by interviewing university teachers under qualitative paradigm.

Rizvi (2011) worked on code-switching in Iranian elementary EFL classrooms, 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" (p.23).

Tariq et al (2013) gathered data from teachers of intermediate colleges and analyzed it by using SPSS software. They investigated that teachers at times, preferred functions of code switching on various conditions as a strategy to eliminate the communication gap. Moreover, they encouraged code switching as a teaching strategy because it provides flexibility in teaching methodologies of teachers.

There is a vast literature on code switching. In this paper reasons of English/ Urdu (national language) or English/ Punjabi (regional language) code switching are highlighted in English literature classes and attention is drawn on various attitudes of learners and teachers on the use of code switching in English literature classes.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOG

3.1. Research Paradigm

This study falls in a number of relevant theories for example, classroom discourse, bilingualism and second language acquisition (SLA) etc. The mixed method approach was used for the present research as it used qualitative as well as quantitative methods of research in the collection and analysis of data. A questionnaire, which comes under the domain of qualitative research method, was used to collect data. The collected data were analyzed in the forms of frequencies, percentages, tables and figures, which fall under the domain of quantitative research method (Cohen et al, 2007).

3.2. Sampling and data collection

The data were collected from classroom discussions and a questionnaire was also used in this regard. The total of 300 participants (12 language teachers and 288 students) from four universities of Pakistan; Govt. College University Faisalabad (GCUF), National University of Modern Languages (NUML), University of Education (UoE), Faisalabad campus and University of Sargodha (UoS), Women campus Faisalabad participated in the survey. 3 teachers from each University who were teaching M.A. English class were selected and responses were received of 36 students from each of the 3rd as well as the 4th semester collected from all the concerned universities. This study was delimited to investigate the attitudes of the students of M.A. English literature classes of these four universities of Faisalabad towards classroom code switching.

3.3. Data Collection Tool

A survey was conducted for data collection, where a model was adopted from the study of Abdullah. A. After developing this questionnaire, it was used as a main tool to collect data from teachers as well as students of four different universities of Pakistan: Govt. College University Faisalabad (GCUF), National University of Modern Languages (NUML), University of Education (UoE), Faisalabad campus and University of Sargodha (UoS), Women campus, Faisalabad. The questionnaire comprised of three separate parts: A, B, C, which are depicted as under:

- A- Short Biographical data of the respondents.
- B- Open ended questions showing learners' preferences for the language of course.
- C- Students' views about the teaching language.

Questionnaire contained open ended as well as close ended questions. Students were asked to give their genuine perspectives in a 4- Likert scale. The scale was included as follows; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (AG), Disagree (DA), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

4. DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS/ FINDINGS

4.1. Open ended questions

First section displays the language background of the participants. All the participants have been taught in both English and Urdu languages in previous schooling. And they all use Urdu (national language), English and Punjabi (regional language) when they communicate with classmates, while they use Urdu and English when they communicate with teachers and other staff members of university. All the participants agree that teachers use code switching in classes. In Section-B the findings show the approach of teachers and students towards classroom code switching, here, 86.95% participants approve code switching for MA English classes while 13% do not approve it.

89% students are of the view that they prefer the course to be taught in both English and Urdu languages. 11% students are of the view that course should be taught in English at MA level. 72% students are of the view that teachers use code switching for their convenience or to make lessons comprehensive. While 28% students hold the opinion that lack of language abilities is the cause of code switching.

Some of the reasons of teachers code switching are: clarification of abstract things, ease of expression and to create a sense of belonging etc. The following statements are some of the teachers' responses:

A: Use of code switching becomes necessary in classroom to get students' concentration and helping students apprehending difficulties.

B: It helps to give a better understanding of abstract ideas to the students.

C: When messages don't seem to be apprehended in one language they're explained in alternative language (mother language).

D: Use of code switch becomes necessary in schoolroom to urge students' concentration and serving to students apprehending difficulties

E: It helps to allow a far better understanding of abstract concepts to the scholars.

Here are some responses by University teachers on the use of code switching in English classrooms:

Teacher A: "No doubt code switching has positive and negative both aspects but I would say that its overall effects on learning are positive".

Teacher B: "It is beneficial for the students as it provides an opportunity for the students as well as for the teacher to make their ideas more clear and elaborative".

Teacher C: "In my view a teacher must utilize code switching as the last option in the class".

4.2. Close ended questions

Fig.1 shows that in the response of first question 35.4% students agree and 16.6% strongly agree that teaching the course in one language is beneficial for them while a total of 47% do not agree with this opinion. 33% students agree and 45.8% strongly agree that teaching the course in English and Urdu is desirable to them. While 14.58% disagrees and 6.2% strongly disagree. (As shown in point.2)

35.4% students agree and 54.8% strongly agree that teaching in English and Urdu languages makes the course easy for them to understand. (As shown in point.3) while 6.2% disagree and 4.1% strongly disagree.

37% students disagree and 35.4% students strongly disagree that teaching in both English and Urdu languages confuses them. (As shown in point.4) 16.6% agree and 10.4% strongly agree that mixing of these two languages in class confuse them.

So, Fig. 1 shows that students disagree that mixing of both languages by teacher confuse them. And more than eighty five percent students agree that the course should be taught by using both languages in classroom, mixing of both languages makes the course easy to understand for them

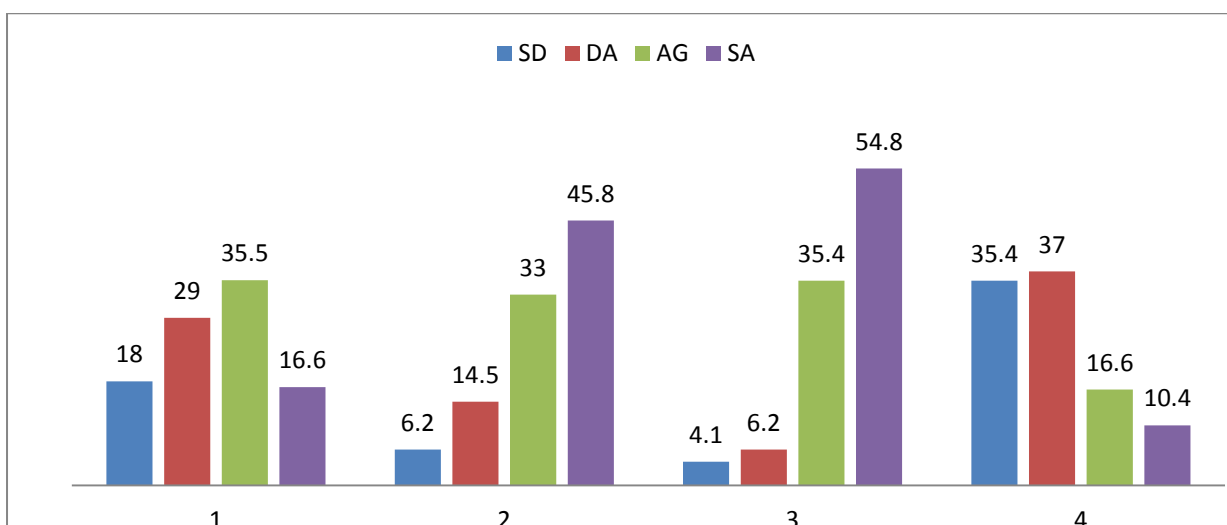


Fig 1. which language is more convenient for students

Fig. 2 shows that 50% students disagree and 29.2% of them strongly disagree that usage of Urdu and English results in the weakness of Urdu. As shown in point.5, while 10% students disagree and 10% strongly disagree.

14.58% students agree, 16.6% strongly agree that combining of Urdu and English results in weakness of English. While 43% disagree and 26% students strongly disagree. (point.6)

Point 7 shows 47.95 % students agree, 27% strongly agree that mixing of Urdu and English strengthens their English. While a total of 24.3% students do not agree.

According to above shown results of Fig.2 students do not agree that code mixing by teachers leads to weakness of Urdu and English. Rather they agree on the opinion that code mixing strengthens their English.

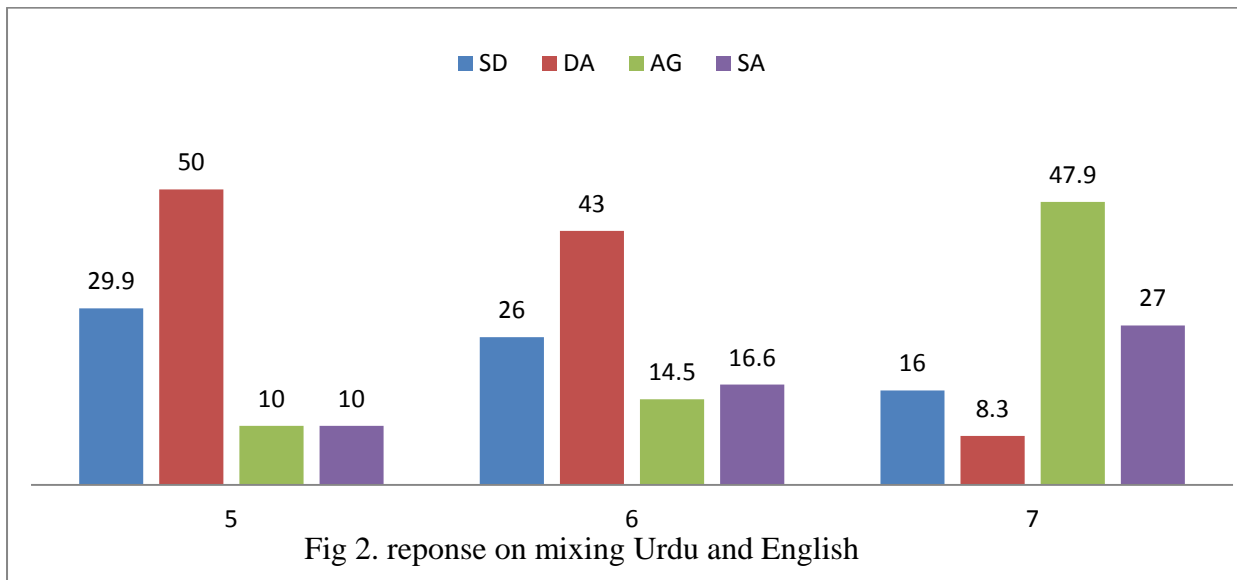


Fig.3. shows that 31% students agree and 39.5% students strongly agree that they respect instructor more when teaches in English and Urdu both languages as shown in point 8. While 22.9% disagree and 6.2% strongly disagree.

Point 9 shows that 45.8% students disagree and 27% students strongly disagree with the view that they respect instructor more when teaching in Urdu. And 18.7% agree while 8.3% disagree with this statement.

Point 10 shows that 45.8% students agree and 12.5 % strongly agree that they respect instructor more when teaching in English. 25% disagree and 17% strongly disagree with this opinion.

So, according to Fig. 3, 72% students do not respect instructors when they teach in Urdu only, and 58.3% students agree that they respect instructor more when he teach in English. But a big percentage (70%) of students agrees that they respect instructor more when he teaches them by mixing both languages.

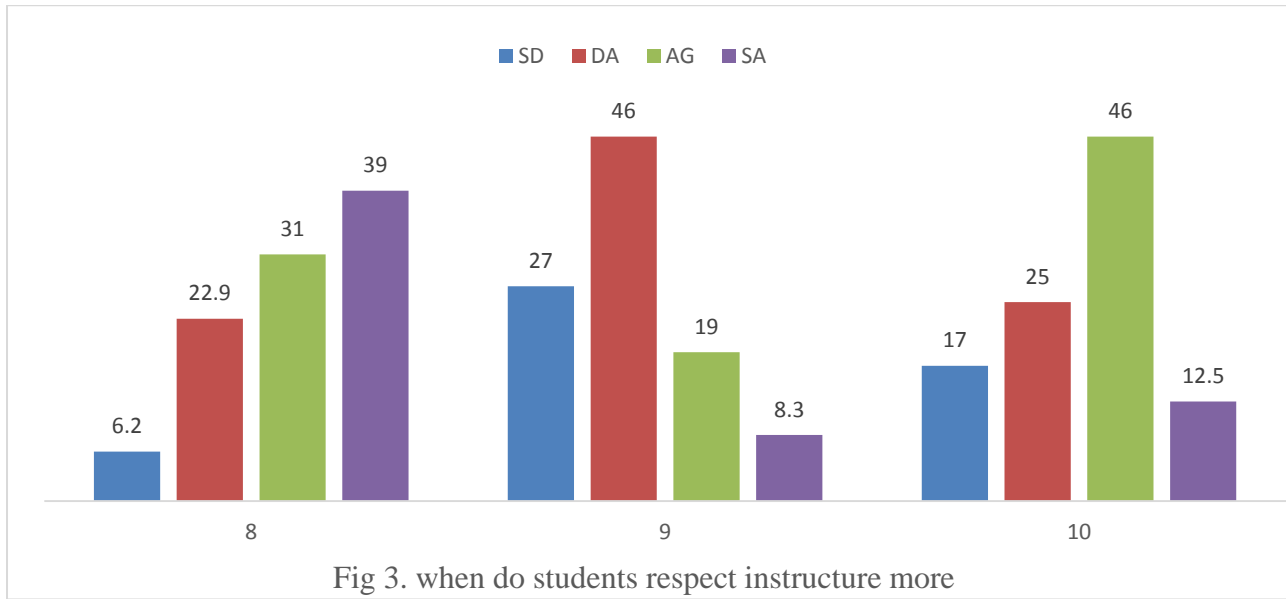


Fig 3. when do students respect instructor more

The results in Fig.4 show that 43.7% students disagree and 18.75% students strongly disagree that teaching the course in Urdu increases the chance of passing the exams. While 27% students agree and 10.4 % are strongly disagree. Point 11 shows the percentages.

Point 12 shows that 41.6% students are agree and 17% strongly agree with the opinion that teaching the course in English language increases the chances of passing the exams. 29.2 % disagree and 12.5% strongly disagree with this opinion.

Point 13 shows that 43.75% students are agree and 29.2%strongly agree with the view that teaching the course in English and Urdu both languages increases the chances of passing the exams. And 18.75% students disagree while 8.3% strongly disagree with this opinion.

So, results of Fig.4 shows that teaching the course in only one language either English or Urdu do not increase the chances of passing the exams for students. While 72% students agree that teaching the course by using both languages increase the chances of passing the exams for them.

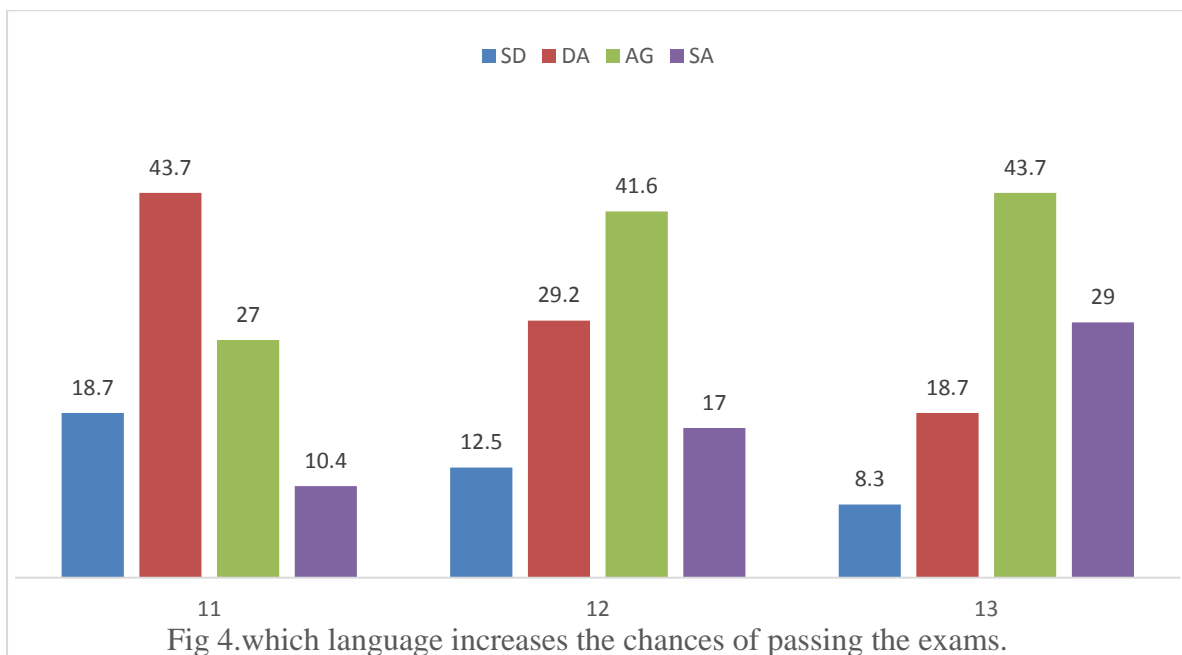


Fig 4. which language increases the chances of passing the exams.

5. CONCLUSION

Code switching had peripheral significance of the narrow custom of investigation on bilingualism; it is presently moved into the general ground of interest for sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, general linguistics and classroom discourse. Drawing upon the on top of discourse we can see that code exchanging may be utilized as a supportive methodology within a classroom by the speakers, it also performs different positive capacities when the purpose is especially to impart knowledge that was also observed by Sultana (2010). Code exchanging may also be utilized as a supportive methodology to exchange the information to students at more elevated amounts. Moreover, the results of the survey lead to investigate the different reasons for switching codes by teachers, which are also identified by Gulzar (2010) like simple communication, keeping up control in the classroom, explaining abstract things, interpretation, and introducing unfamiliar terms. Students pursuing their master level studies were selected as participants with an intention to find out their approach at this level. Overall the participants displayed that code switching has more positive effects on their learning than the negative effects. Results of the questionnaire show that students are supporting the use of code switching in M.A. English classes while they are mature enough to understand lectures in English.

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APPENDIX-1

Students’ language attitude towards using code-switching as a medium of instruction in Universities: An exploratory study

Introduction

This questionnaire is designed to find out your honest views about the language of teaching at your current course. Please respond to all the questions below carefully and honestly. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential, and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

Section A: Biographical information:

Please, answer the following questions.

1. What is your gender? () Female. () Male.
2. In what language(s) have you been mostly taught in your previous schooling?
() Urdu () English () English and Urdu () Other Name the language: _____
3. What language(s) do you use in speaking with your teachers, class fellows, and staff at the institute?

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Section B: Please, answer the following questions.

1. Do you code-switch while teaching or studying new items in class? Y/N
2. Do you approve it? Y/N
3. What can be the reason of code switching?

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4. Why does a teacher shift from one language to other?

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5. You would prefer the course to be taught in (choose one answer):

a) English only b) Urdu only c) both Urdu and English

1. Kindly clarify your answer?

.....
.....

2. Any extra remarks?

.....
.....

Section C: Learners honest views about the teaching language.

Please read each of the following statements very carefully and tick the best answer.

NOTE: SA - Strongly Agree; AG - Agree; DA Disagree; SD -Strongly Disagree; N- Neutral

| Sr. | Item Description | SD | DA | AG | SA |
|-----|--|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | Teaching the course solely in one language is helpful to students. | | | | |
| 2 | Teaching the course in Urdu and English is fascinating to students. | | | | |
| 3 | Teaching the course in both languages makes it convenient for students to understand. | | | | |
| 4 | It confuses me when teacher uses both languages to teach one topic | | | | |
| 5 | Combination of Urdu and English results in the weakness of my Urdu | | | | |
| 6 | Combination of Urdu and English results in the weakness of my English | | | | |
| 7 | Combination of Urdu and English strengthens my English | | | | |
| 8 | I feel more respect for teacher when he teaches in Urdu and English | | | | |
| 9 | I feel more respect for teacher when he teaches in Urdu language. | | | | |
| 10 | I feel more respect for teacher when he teaches in English language | | | | |
| 11 | Teaching the course in Urdu will increase my possibilities of passing the exams. | | | | |
| 12 | Teaching the course in English will increase my possibilities of passing the exams | | | | |
| 13 | Teaching the course in Urdu and English will increase my possibilities of passing the exams. | | | | |

Thank you for your co-operation