

## Code-switching patterns in Multilingual classrooms

Dr. Malladi Revathi Devi<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1\*</sup> Associate Professor King Khalid University Saudi Arabia.

\* **Correspondence:** Dr. Malladi Revathi Devi

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**ABSTRACT:** Code-switching –the alternation between two or more languages within a single interaction—is a common phenomenon in multilingual classrooms. This paper examines patterns, functions, and pedagogical implications of code-switching among teachers and learners in multilingual educational settings. Using classroom observation and qualitative analysis, the study explores how code-switching facilitates comprehension, classroom management, identity construction, and learner engagement. The findings suggest that strategic code-switching can be an effective instructional resource rather than a linguistic deficiency, especially in contexts where learners share multiple linguistic backgrounds.

**Keywords:** *code-switching, multilingual classrooms, sociolinguistics, language teaching, bilingualism etc.*

### Introduction

Globalization and increased mobility have led to a rise in multilingual classrooms across the world. In such environments, teachers and students often share more than one language, resulting in frequent instances of code-switching. Traditionally, language pedagogy emphasized monolingual instruction, often discouraging the use of learners first languages (L1). However, recent linguistic research views code-switching as a natural and meaningful communicative

practice. It aims to challenge the perception that code-switching hinders language acquisition and instead highlights its functional and pedagogical value.

**Literature Review:** Code-switching has been extensively studied within sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. Gumperz (1982) defined code-switching as the juxtaposition of two linguistic systems within a single discourse. Myers-Scotton (1993) emphasized its social and pragmatic motivations. In educational contexts, studies (eg., Cook, 2001; Canagarajah, 2011) suggest that code-switching aids comprehension, scaffolds learning, and supports learner identity. Classroom based research shows that teachers use code-switching for explanation of complex concepts, discipline, and emotional bonding, while students use it for peer interaction and clarification. Despite these findings, many institutions still promote English only or target language only policies, which may ignore learners' linguistic realities. This study contributes to the growing body of research advocating for a flexible, multilingual approach to education.

**Objectives of the study:** 1. To identify common patterns of code switching in multilingual classrooms. 2. To analyse the functions of code switching used by teachers and students. 3. To examine learners' attitudes toward code switching in classroom interaction 4. To explore the pedagogical implications of code switching in language teaching.

**Methodology and Data collection Tools:** The study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design. Classroom observations are very important. Audio-recorded classroom interactions and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students.

**Types of code-switching:** inter-sentential code-switching: this switching is between languages at sentence boundaries, commonly used by teachers during explanations. Intra-sentential code-switching: this switching within a single sentence, often observed in student interactions. In Tag switching, insertion of discourse markers or tags from one language into another.

**Key functions:** The analysis revealed several key functions like: Teachers use clarification and explanation and code switching helped in giving instructions and maintaining discipline in classroom management. It reduces learner anxiety and

builds rapport in affective support. With peer support, students use code switching to help classmates understand lessons. Finally, learners expressed cultural and linguistic identity through language alternation. Pedagogical implications: Teachers should be trained to use code switching strategically. Language policies should acknowledge multilingual realities. Learner's L1 can be used as a scaffold rather than a barrier.

## **Conclusion**

Code-switching is an integral feature of multilingual classrooms. When used judiciously, it enhances comprehension, participation and learning outcomes. Recognizing code-switching as a resource can lead to more inclusive and effective language pedagogy.

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