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Analyzing the Role of Code-Switching in Cultivating Foreign Language Learners'  
Listening Skill in Trilingual Situations

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**Abstract**

The main purpose of this research was to investigate the factors of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill in trilingual situations and to explore the outcomes of the factors of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill at BS level in Multan district. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection in which the participants were requested to specify their level of endorsement or disproportion on four-point rating. The results and findings of the study data signposted that L2 learners think without code-switching, they quickly forget what is heard to them. They also affirmed that in ELT classroom code-switching is important factor for understanding the English language lesson as it facilitates and improves listening capabilities of the learners. Learners also think that there is a great need of code switching in learning the meaning of difficult words in ELT classroom. Similarly, they have assertive positive thinking that there is need of code switching in ELT classroom while listening classroom instructions delivered by the teacher.

**Keywords:** Code-switching, Foreign Language, Mother Tongue, Learners

**Introduction**

Pakistan is a multilingual country where English, Urdu and some other regional languages are spoken frequently. Among these regional languages, Saraiki, Sindhi, Punjabi, Pashtu and Balochi are more prominent. The speakers of these languages are in millions. Apart from this,

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Urdu is our national language. It is spoken and comprehended in all over Pakistan. It is considered as the national language in Pakistan. The interaction of regional languages in the relevant regions is very important. Some of the speakers of these regional languages have not fully gripped in Urdu languages so they converse in their regional languages where they consider it necessary. It means the influence and the impact of these regional languages is greater in their relevant regions in Pakistan. But it is an important to note that Urdu is the national language in Pakistan and it possesses central role in all the fields particularly in the field of education. So, in Pakistan is multilingual country where these languages are spoken. Code-Switching is the phenomenon of sociolinguistics which describe the particular scenario of a bilingual and multilingual communities. Majority of the people are bilingual and multilingual in Pakistan. In the most of the regions in Pakistan, the regional people are bilingual whereas the educational people in Pakistan are multilingual. In these regions of Pakistan, people often use of two languages to communicate with one another in their relevant regions. If we make comparison between these regional languages then it comes to know that Saraiki and Sindhi are enumerated among the regional languages in Pakistan but difference between these languages is that Sindhi is spoken and written but the issue of Saraiki language is that it is often spoken than written. In the Saraiki region, Saraiki language is spoken and comprehended in the whole Saraiki region which is consist of 60 million people. Its culture and language is different from other languages of Pakistan. In the classroom of Seraiki region, Urdu is spoken by the teachers and the students. Sometime, teachers and students switch their language from Urdu to Seraiki language. There are several reasons and causes about shifting of Urdu to Seraiki language in the classroom. The whole scenario of shifting from one language to another language is called Code- Switching.

#### **The Students' Function in Code Switching:**

Similarly ,as the teachers perspective "code switching", the learners are unaware about the use of code switching, its purposes and outcomes. Even they are unconsciously using code switching, that it have to serve a few important functions even they are useful or not useful. Eldridge(1996) elucidated these roles in following : uniformity, floor holding, recurrence as well as controlling the conflict .The very first job of code switching is named as equivalence.to justify this case, students have to make utterances of natural equivalence of some special lexical items in a specific language and consequently he/she code switches to their native language. This development can be associated to the shortage of phonological competence in directed language and it makes able the learner to use the local vocabulary items at the time as they don't have the competency of using any specific language and description for a certain vocabulary item. Thus the functions of "equivalence" is a defensive instrument for the learners as it provides them a greater opportunity to endure communication by making a bridge among the gaps subsequent to a foreign language ineffectiveness. So, the next move to introduce is the function of floor-holding. In a conversational process in a particular language, a student can fill the gap with his/her their native language , it can be proposed that this mechanism can be utilized by the learners to avoid the gaps in oral communication, that can result in fluency lacking in any target language. The students are generally unable to find a suitable linguistic structure or vocabulary items. It might be represented that this form of linguistic

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interchange might have negative impact on foreign language learning; meanwhile it can be resulted in loss of long span eloquence. Third main aspect in switching code is called as recurrence of communication (Weinreich, 1953). Similarly in a target language the message is repeated greatly by the learner in their native language, although the students try to provide the meanings by using repetition technique (Hudson, 1984). The motive behind the particular language change may have twofold goals : firstly he/she cannot shift the meaning accurately in any target language. Secondly, the learner has ability to contemplate it as it seems more applicable to code switch so that it can be highlighted by the instructors content that are more clear and understandable by his/her. The final motive of learners' code switching is to introduce controlling the conflict. To use a language in effective way of a learner use of code switching that is considered as best a technique to allocate its main or intended meaning. all the fundamental motives for making the inclination of using such sort of code switching could be different according to needs of students, objectives and purposes. Furthermore, lacking cultural the same expressions between the target language and native language –that can lead to make violation of the transferring the intended meaning—might be resulted in code switching as controlling the conflict; thus the probable misunderstandings can be avoided (Cameron, 2014).

### **Background of the Study**

Hudson in 1980 wrote a book on Sociolinguistics. According to Hudson (1980) sociolinguistics is the studying of language in the perspective of society. Then he said that society can be explored in relation to the language. According to Wardhaugh (1996) apparently, the linguists highlight the society to find out all the issues of language. And which type of issues the learner and the speaker face. People are related or belong to a particular gathering of people which is called a group or community. A particular group or community possesses its own specialties and their inter-relation with one another. Bloomfield (1933) presented the fundamental meanings of a discourse community. Bloomfield says that discourse community is the group of people who converse with each other through a discourse.

According to Romaine (1984) the present languages particularly based on the access of societal group. It argues the types of own special gathering of people is called a discourse community.

Voegelin, C. F., & Bloomfield, L. (1933) observed the characteristics discourse community in such words: a group of people who use same type of language with its features is called a discourse community. Another researcher and linguist, Chomsky (1965) defines the discourse community in these words: "Totally homogenous group" means these are the group of people who are familiar with the same language its feature and its structure. That is why Chomsky considers them a discourse community.

Renowned linguist, Labov (1972) presents the definition of a discourse community in such words: It does not mean that discourse group use same component of language but there are same standards of language which should be shared and these standards should be apparently present. In that discourse community there should be no mistake while speaking the same language and its variety should be invariant in the perspective of using the language (Wardhaugh, 1986). A speaker of two languages uses the two language which differentiate in

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syntax, vocabulary and its pronunciation is called bilingual speaker and this whole phenomenon is called bilingualism (Taylor, 1990). According to Misdani, M., Syahniar, S., & Marjohan, M. (2019) it is a term which is used in relation to the variety. So in this sense the code can be a language, a register, an idiolect, a sociolect and a dialect. According to Wardough (1982) the language researchers consider code as a language. It has been studied that when a language or a dialect select to speak on a particular perspective then it is called code or it is a complete system of communication between the two people or a group of people. It is necessary for a speaker that he should have a command on both of the languages. And in this sense he could use the two where it is required.

### **Design of the Current Study**

This study was executed in the context of L2 learning as it focusses on the investigation of all those factors which are considered as facilitating tools in the form of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill in trilingual situations and to explore the outcomes of the factors of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill. The population of this study were male and female English language learners. These students were learning English at BS level at the public and private universities and colleges of the district of Multan.

This research was completed by employing the quantitative data analysis mixed method approach. 250 male and female English language learners returned positively the tool used in this context during the academic calendar of 2022. Structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection in which the participants were invited to postulate their level of ratification or incongruity on four-point rating scale model, including "Yes", "No", "No Idea" and "No Comments". Questionnaire used for learners' data collection was developed from the studies by Mo'inivaziri, M., (2008), Auerbach, E. R. (1993), and Alonso, Rocio Segura (2012).

### **Hypotheses of the Study**

1. Foreign language learners have confirmatory assertiveness and discernments concerning the use of code-switching in L2 classroom to improve their listening skill.
2. L2 learners' code-switching in English language classroom to develop listening comprehension has optimistic influence on L2 learners.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To investigate the factors of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill in trilingual situations.
2. To explore the outcomes of the factors of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill.

### **Questions of the Research**

1. What are the possible factors of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill in trilingual situations?
  2. What are the outcomes of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners'
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listening skill?

### Delimitation of Present Study

This research work is limited to the investigation of the factors regarding code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill in trilingual situations and to explore the outcomes of the factors of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill.

The population of this study were male and female English language learners. These students were learning English at BS level at the public and private universities and colleges of the district of Multan.

### Significance of the Study

The study is significant in the context of L2 learning as it focusses on the investigation of the factors regarding code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill in trilingual situations and to explore the outcomes of the factors of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill.

### Research Sites and Research Respondents

Data to accomplish the research work was attained from the public and private universities and colleges of Multan. The respondents of this research were male and female English language learners and these learners were learning English at BS level at the public and private universities and colleges of the district of Multan.

### Students Responses Analysis (Questionnaire Wise)

**Table-1:** Do you think that without code-switching, you quickly forget what is heard.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	211	84.4	84.4	84.4
No	36	14.4	14.4	98.8
No Comments	3	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In table –1 the reply of the 250 respondents is shown in favor of the account “do you think that without code-switching, you quickly forget what is heard” 84.4% (n=211) are “Yes” with the declaration, 14.4% (n=36) are “No” with the statement, 1.2% (n=3) have “No Comments.”

**Table-2:** Do you think that in the ELT classroom code-switching is important factor for understanding the English language lesson.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	206	82.4	82.7	82.7
No	36	14.4	14.5	97.2
No Idea	8	2.8	2.8	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In table –2 the reply of the 250 respondents is shown in favor of the version “do you think that in the ELT classroom code-switching is important factor for understanding the English

language lesson" 82.4% (n=206) are "Yes" with the declaration, 14.4% (n=36) are "No" with the statement, 2.8% (n=8) have "No Idea."

**Table-3:** Do you think that there is a need of code switching in learning the meaning of difficult words in ELT classroom.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	176	70.4	70.4	70.4
No	39	15.6	15.6	86.0
No Comments	35	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In table -3 the reply of the 250 respondents is shown in favor of the account "do you think that there is a need of code switching in learning the meaning of difficult words in ELT classroom" 70.4% (n=176) are "Yes" with the declaration, 15.6% (n=39) are "No" with the statement, 14.0% (n=35) have "No Comments."

**Table-4:** Do you think that there is need of code switching in ELT classroom while listening classroom instructions delivered by the teacher.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	197	78.8	78.8	78.8
No	51	20.4	20.4	99.2
No Idea	1	.4	.4	99.6
No Comments	1	.4	.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In table -4 the reply of the 250 respondents is shown in favor of the account "do you think that there is need of code switching in ELT classroom while listening classroom instructions delivered by the teacher" 78.8% (n=197) are "Yes" with the declaration, 20.4% (n=51) are "No" with the statement, .4% (n=1) has "No Idea" with the statement. .4% (n=1) has "No Comments".

**Table-5:** Do you think that there is a need of code switching when there is no similar word present in the English language.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	203	81.2	81.2	81.2
No	4	1.6	1.6	82.8
No Comments	43	17.2	17.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In table -5 the reply of the 250 respondents is also shown in favor of the statement "do you think that there is a need of code switching when there is no similar word present in the English language" 81.2% (n=203) are "Yes" with the statement, 1.6% (n=4) are "No" with the

statement, 17.2% (n=43) have “No Comments.”

**Table-6:** Do you think that code-switching can assist you in listening new vocabulary items and idiomatic expressions.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	209	83.6	83.6	83.6
No	32	12.8	12.8	96.4
No Idea	3	1.2	1.2	97.6
No Comments	6	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In table –6 the reply of the 250 respondents is also shown in favor of the statement “do you think that code-switching can assist you in listening new vocabulary items and idiomatic expressions” 83.6% (n=209) are “Yes” with the statement, 12.8% (n=32) are “No” with the statement, 1.2% (n=3) have “No Idea, 2.4% (n=6) have “No Comments.”

**Table-7:** Do you think that code switching plays an important role to improve English pronunciation.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	119	47.6	47.6	47.6
No	124	49.6	49.6	97.2
No Comments	7	2.8	2.8	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In table –7 the reply of the 250 respondents is shown against the statement “do you think that code switching plays an important role to improve English pronunciation” 47.6% (n=119) are “Yes” with the statement, 49.6% (n=124) are “No” with the statement, 2.8% (n=7) have “No Comments.”

**Table-8:** Do you think that code-switching can assist you in the listening overall activities during classroom.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	193	77.2	77.2	77.2
No	55	22.0	22.0	99.2
No Comments	2	.8	.8	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In table –8 the reply of the 250 respondents is shown in favor of the statement “do you think that code-switching can assist you in the listening overall activities during classroom” 77.2% (n=193) are “Yes” with the statement, 22.0% (n=55) are “No” with the statement, .8% (n=2) have “No Comments.”

**Table-9:** Do you think that code switching can assist you in listening during group discussions in L2 classroom.

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	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	176	70.4	70.4	70.4
No	22	8.8	8.8	79.2
No Idea	48	19.2	19.2	98.4
No Comments	4	1.6	1.6	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In table -9 the reply of the 250 participants is shown in favor of the statement "do you think that code switching can assist you in listening during group discussions in L2 classroom" 70.4% (n=176) are "Yes" with the statement, 8.8% (n=22) are "No" with the statement, 19.2% (n=48) have "No Idea, 1.6% (n=4) have "No Comments."

**Table-10:** Do you think that code switching can assist you to listen your L2 teachers properly and explain yourself better to your teachers during question/answer session.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	170	68.0	68.0	68.0
No	48	19.2	19.2	87.2
No Idea	24	9.6	9.6	96.8
No Comments	8	3.2	3.2	100.0
Total	250	100.0	100.0	

In table -10 the answer of the 250 participants is shown in favor of the statement "do you think that code switching can assist you to listen your L2 teachers properly and explain yourself better to your teachers during question/answer session" 68.0% (n=170) are "Yes" with the statement, 19.2% (n=48) are "No" with the statement, 9.6% (n=24) have "No Idea, 3.2% (n=8) have "No Comments."

### Findings and discussions of the research questions

#### Research Question# 01

What are the possible factors of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners' listening skill in trilingual situations?

Findings deduced from the information provided by L2 learners' questionnaire have shown nearly all the participant learners were exceedingly determined and single minded about all those feasible aspects and reasons that can assist in promoting English language learners to magnify their listening capabilities while using code-switching in trilingual settings. Mainstream of L2 students were greatly enthused and stirred to use inherent languages such as Urdu, Siraiki, Punjabi and Balochi in their L2 classroom widely in uncountable situations and conditions. The investigated and examined data revealed in the overhead table-1 the answer of the 250 contributors is publicized in favor of the statement "do you think that



without code-switching, you quickly forget what is heard” 84.4% (n=211). Same sorts of response is delivered from the table –2 in which the reply of the 250 respondents is shown in favor of the version “do you think that in the ELT classroom code-switching is important factor for understanding the English language lesson” 82.4% (n=206). In table –3 the reply of the 250 respondents is again shown in favor of the account “do you think that there is a need of code switching in learning the meaning of difficult words in ELT classroom” 70.4% (n=176). Positive attitude towards L2 Listening skill is further positively proposed in table – 4 in which the reply of the 250 respondents is shown in favor of the account “do you think that there is need of code switching in ELT classroom while listening classroom instructions delivered by the teacher” 78.8% (n=197). Same kind of response is shown in table –5 in which the reply of the 250 respondents is also shown in favor of the statement “do you think that there is a need of code switching when there is no word present in the English language” 81.2% (n=203). In table –6 the reply of the 250 respondents is also shown in favor of the statement “do you think that code-switching can assist you in listening new vocabulary items and idiomatic expressions” 83.6% (n=209). On the contrary to the previous six tables in table –7 the reply of the 250 respondents is shown against the statement “do you think that code switching plays an important role to improve English pronunciation” 47.6% (n=119), while 49.6% (n=124) of the respondents said “Yes” with the above stated statement. In table –8 the reply of the 250 respondents is shown in favor of the statement “do you think that code-switching can assist you in the listening overall activities during classroom” 77.2% (n=193). Similar situation is disclosed from the table –9 in which the reply of the 250 participants is shown in favor of the statement “do you think that code switching can assist you in listening during group discussions in L2 classroom” 70.4% (n=176) and in table –10 the answer of the 250 participants is shown in favor of the statement “do you think that code switching can assist you to listen your L2 teachers properly and explain yourself better to your teachers during question/answer session” 68.0% (n=170). From the aforementioned outcomes and conclusions, it feasible to maintain that the judicious use of code-switching by foreign language learners can support English language learners to develop and magnify their listening and comprehension skills. Currently, in L2 learning listening skill is equally given weightage to the rest of the language skills in communicative activity. The results of the current study disclosed that every L2 learner has to use code switching judiciously as excessive use can mutilate the real face of listening and comprehension.

### **Research Question# 02**

What are the outcomes of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners’ listening skill? It is overbearing to comment that the current study is a considerate exertion to substantiate those factors of code-switching which are responsible in cultivating foreign language learners’ listening skill in trilingual situations and the outcomes of code-switching in cultivating foreign language learners’ listening skill. In this standpoint the discoveries and conclusions of the study strappingly authenticated the proposed research hypotheses of the study which were (i) foreign language learners have confirmatory assertiveness and discernments concerning the use of code-switching in L2 classroom to improve their listening skill and similarly, L2 learners’ code-switching in English language classroom to develop listening comprehension has optimistic influence on L2 learners. The results of the study

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disclosed that majority of L2 learners contemplate that without code-switching, they quickly forget what is heard to them. They also affirmed that in ELT classroom code-switching is important factor for understanding the English language lesson as it facilitates and improves listening capabilities of the learners. Learners also think that there is a great need of code switching in learning the meaning of difficult words in ELT classroom. Similarly, they have assertive positive thinking that there is need of code switching in ELT classroom while listening classroom instructions delivered by the teacher. They are also of the positive view that they think that there is a need of code switching when there is no word similar word present in the English language. They have strong inclination towards code-switching and they think that code-switching can assist them in listening new vocabulary items and idiomatic expressions which are difficult to comprehend in the same language. On the contrary to the previous six questions in question seven the learners are of the opinion that they think that code switching does not play an important role to improve English pronunciation. Answering the next question learners think that code-switching can assist them in the listening overall activities during classroom and that they think that code switching can assist them in listening during group discussions in L2 classroom. Foreign language learners have also clear and strong judgment that they think that code switching can assist them to listen their L2 teachers properly and explain themselves better to their teachers during question/answer session in the classroom.

### Conclusion

This research determines that students of BS English language and literature enrolled in a number of public and private institutions of Multan district are determined to use the mother languages to improve the L2 listening comprehension. Additionally, according to the current research findings, L2 learners think without code-switching, they quickly forget what is heard to them. They also affirmed that in ELT classroom code-switching is important factor for understanding the English language lesson as it facilitates and improves listening capabilities of the learners. Learners also think that there is a great need of code switching in learning the meaning of difficult words in ELT classroom. Similarly, they have assertive positive thinking that there is need of code switching in ELT classroom while listening classroom instructions delivered by the teacher. They are also of the positive view that they think that there is a need of code switching when there is no word similar word present in the English language. They have strong inclination towards code-switching and they think that code-switching can assist them in listening new vocabulary items and idiomatic expressions which are difficult to comprehend in the same language.

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