



## FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY IN A BILINGUAL URBAN CONTEXT: EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF TEACHER CODE-SWITCHING IN PAKISTANI ESL CLASSROOMS

<b>Afia Siddiqui</b> <a href="mailto:afia.bseng3188@iiu.edu.pk">afia.bseng3188@iiu.edu.pk</a>	BS Student, Department of English, International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI).
<b>Aliza Dilawar</b> <a href="mailto:aleeza.bseng3176@iiu.edu.pk">aleeza.bseng3176@iiu.edu.pk</a>	BS Student, Department of English, International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI).
<b>Syeda Umama Harim</b> <a href="mailto:umama.bseng3191@iiu.edu.pk">umama.bseng3191@iiu.edu.pk</a>	BS Student, Department of English, International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI).
<b>Kaukab Saba</b> <a href="mailto:Kaukab.saba@iiu.edu.pk">Kaukab.saba@iiu.edu.pk</a>	Lecturer, Department of English, International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI).

### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of teachers' codeswitching on the Foreign Language Anxiety faced by learners in Pakistani ESL classrooms. The widespread use of English in nonnative environments has been a source of causing anxiety among ESL learners, which affects their confidence and participation in the classroom. This study uses a mixed-method approach to design a questionnaire that assesses the effective, behavioral, and cognitive responses to codeswitching of 22 students from different educational levels. The findings of the study reveal that students experience very little anxiety when English is used only as a medium of instruction. Code switching between English and Urdu helped the students to retain concepts better and participate more effectively. This study uses a dual framework combining Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis and Macaro's Pedagogical Code-Switching model to show that the affective filter caused by emotional barriers could be lowered with the help of purposeful code switching. This research redefines the role of codeswitching by claiming that anxiety is not inherently present in English, but rather it is context-dependent and can be reduced through the effective pedagogical tool of codeswitching.

**Keywords:** *Affective Filter, Comprehension, ESL Classrooms, Foreign Language Anxiety, Pedagogical Tool, Student Participation, Teacher Code-Switching*

**Corresponding Author:** Kaukab Saba (Lecturer, Department of English, International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI).) **Email:** [Kaukab.saba@iiu.edu.pk](mailto:Kaukab.saba@iiu.edu.pk)

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

English serves as a medium of instruction and is widely taught as a second language in Pakistani schools. It is not only a status symbol but is also a definite source of career progression and job opportunities (Cook, 2001). It plays a symbolic but important role in education, employment, and social mobility. English has acquired a dominant position in Pakistan. It is not only useful for being professional but is also considered a sign of victory and authority, and is known as the lingua franca worldwide. Many students do not use English in their daily lives, so learning it can be difficult for them. They often feel anxious, nervous, and afraid of making mistakes when speaking English in class. Worry makes learning even harder because it takes up the mental energy they need for tasks like speaking a foreign language (Tobias, 1985). Pakistani classrooms are linguistically diverse, with both teachers and students fluent in multiple languages such as Urdu, English, and various regional tongues. Pakistan is the country in which six major languages are spoken, and over 59 minor languages exist (Rahman, 2002). Indicating a multilingual and multicultural perspective of the country. Within these multilingual settings, teachers often shift between English and Urdu to facilitate better understanding, a practice known as code-switching. Code-switching in itself is perhaps not a linguistic phenomenon, but rather a psychological one, and its causes are obviously extra-linguistic. But bilingualism is of great interest to the linguist because it is the condition of what has been called interference between languages (Vogt, 1954, p. 368). Purposeful code-switching helps explain difficult concepts, connect lessons with familiar cultural contexts, and make communication smoother.

### 1.2. Foreign Language Anxiety and Its Effects on Classroom Behavior

Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is the concern, apprehension, and fear experienced by learners whenever they must use or acquire a foreign language. In Pakistani learning environments, where English is usually a second or a foreign language, Foreign Language Anxiety is particularly evident. This is mainly because people link English skills with achievement and smarts. Most motivated and able students will have a hard time learning a foreign language because of anxiety that messes up their performance. This anxiety is a state of tension and fear that comes from the use of a foreign language in the classroom. It can potentially make learning a new language especially stressful (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Foreign language anxiety influences much of classroom behavior. A distinct effect is on class participation. Anxious students will not speak English because they fear grammatical mistakes or being laughed at by their colleagues. This goes a long way to inhibit practice opportunities, which eventually leads to fluency development. Anxiety lowers self-confidence. The students may view themselves as inadequate or less adequate

compared to others, a feeling that can result in both withdrawal and mumbling in class—therefore lowering the extent of active participation. Foreign language anxiety also impacts school grades. Anxiety causes students to have difficulty focusing or learning new information effectively. Their cognitive energy is divided between managing emotional distress and comprehending course content. This division leads to lower understanding and language growth at a slower rate. As Hui (2012) explains, affective factors like motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety impact the successful processing of input. Low-anxiety and high-motivated learners can accept more input, whereas high-anxiety learners have mental blocks that freeze learning.

Foreign language anxiety manifests in the classroom in small but evident ways. No eye contact with the teacher, no volunteer answers, and limited answers. Seeming motivation to use the second language (L2) for social engagement is less. They seem less motivated to utilize the second language (L2) to engage socially (Alamer & Almulhim, 2021). Most prefer to remain silent instead of attempting and risking error. Others even revert to their native language (L1) when they are having problems, as a means of being more at ease and conveying themselves more appropriately. Such habits, although noble, generate a communication gap between students and teachers and hinder the spontaneous flow of language contact.

### **1.3. Strategic Code Switching as an Effective Strategy**

Strategic code-switching is an effective strategy that teachers can use. Strategic code-switching means the purposeful switching between English and the students' native language, for example, Urdu. If appropriately timed, code-switching relieves tension by allowing access to meaning without an enormous cognitive struggle. It also enhances understanding by providing linguistic bridges from known concepts to unknown ones. Apart from understanding, code-switching helps in establishing rapport between the teacher and learner so that classroom interaction can reflect empathy and inclusiveness. An emotionally secure environment inspires learners to take risks with the language, develop confidence gradually, and be active participants. (Ahmad & Jusoff, 2009).

Knowing and reducing fear of foreign languages is essential for effective English learning in Pakistan. Understanding the emotional aspects of language learning allows teachers to create supportive environments where students can engage fully with the language. By using smart code-switching as a teaching tool, teachers can remove emotional barriers for students, making language acquisition not only more effective but also more encouraging.

#### **Problem statement:**

Foreign Language Anxiety negatively influences learners in Pakistani ESL Classrooms. FLA affects learners' confidence and participation and hence causes a hindrance in the learning process. Although code switching is a natural tool used by

teachers to fill this gap, its role is considered questionable. Some teachers and schools adopt a strict English medium system, overlooking the academic and instructional value of codeswitching.

This study examines how teacher-led codeswitching can help reduce Foreign Language Anxiety and, in turn, create a more helpful environment for the learners in Pakistani ESL classrooms.

## **2. Objectives**

This study aims to examine the connection between code-switching practices prevalent in English language classrooms and how foreign language anxiety can be reduced in these settings. The primary purpose of this research is to investigate code-switching practices that can enhance student involvement and engagement in the classroom. By the use of the affective filter hypothesis proposed by Krashen, it also evaluates how the use of the first language of students in the classroom can assist and support the input of students. By examining the viewpoint of students regarding code switching in their physical and emotional involvement in language learning, this study aims to provide pedagogical suggestions for the nuanced use of code switching in English language classrooms for an effective and supportive learning environment.

### **2.1. Research questions:**

This current research proposes to address a gap in examining how effective code switching can reduce foreign language anxiety in English language classrooms in Pakistan. The research questions mentioned here are designed to justify the significance and relevance of this study.

1) How does planned code switching impact foreign language anxiety in English language classrooms?

2) Which type of code-switching strategy is more influential in the engagement and participation of students?

3) What is the didactic and linguistic significance of planned code switching for English language teaching in Pakistan?

This study will focus on English language classrooms in Pakistan with both teachers' and students' involvement in classrooms. It will examine how foreign language anxiety hinders students' participation and confidence in the classroom. This study, therefore, provides valuable insight into the context of English language classrooms. By framing these research questions, this study highlights how emotional well-being and instructional effectiveness are affected by the practice of code switching.

### **2.2. Significance of the study**

This study is significant because it shows us how strategic code-switching can make English classrooms more emotionally supportive for students. Many learners in Pakistan feel pressure and anxiety when they are expected to speak only English. As a

result of anxiety, learners often choose to remain silent and are unwilling to participate in speech communication in class. Students get anxiety when they want to speak or answer a question, or just a little speech. Some students feel like they do not make mistakes in front of their friends or teachers. It makes the students never speak in the English language in the teaching learning process. Hurwitz et al. (1986) asserted that foreign language anxiety stands for the unease, worry, nervousness, and apprehension experienced when learning or using a foreign language. They also add that learners may be good at learning other skills, but they may have a ‘mental block’ when they come to learn to speak the foreign language in public. By allowing teachers to switch to the students’ first language when needed, the classroom becomes a safer space where students feel understood and less afraid of making mistakes.

There are also misconceptions about Code Switching, such as those noted by Duran (1994), who maintains that the use of Code Switching and the mixing of languages are considered ill-mannered, show off, ignorant, aggressive, and show pride through the eyes of other speakers. In addition, Duran (1994) argues that Code Switching can cause a speaker to feel demotivated and self-conscious, as he or she will be considered as less Fluent, less intelligent, and less expressive when he or she code switches from the English language to another Language. But this research will help teachers understand that code-switching is not a barrier to learning but a helpful tool that lowers foreign language anxiety and supports better communication. Despite the views given above that code switching is at times used because of both teachers' and learners' Poor language proficiency, it should be noted here that a person who code switches demonstrates more linguistic creativity and sophistication than the one who speaks only one language. When learners feel relaxed and comfortable, their ability to understand lessons and express themselves increases. And then it leads to better learning outcomes and a more positive attitude toward English.

Furthermore, the study also contributes to the field of applied linguistics by connecting emotional well-being with language teaching strategies. Although earlier studies suggest that code-switching helps reduce foreign language anxiety, little is known about how this applies in urban Pakistani contexts where English exposure is high. This study explores whether code-switching affects anxiety among Islamabad learners and whether previous assumptions are held in this environment.

### **3. Literature Review**

#### **3.1. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA)**

Foreign language anxiety is considered to have a major impact on learners’ performance in second language learning. Horowitz, Horowitz, and Cope (1986) considered foreign language anxiety as a unique form of anxiety that arises from the specific needs of language learning, like participation, listening, and speaking in the target language. They maintain that “because foreign language anxiety concerns performance

evaluation within an academic and social context, it is useful to draw parallels between it and three related performance anxieties: 1) communication, 2) test anxiety, and 3) fear of negative evaluation". Their research finds that anxiety levels negatively influence students' participation, related to the accuracy of pronunciation and fluency in the target language. Further studies related to foreign language anxiety are aligned with this research. Liu and Jackson's study related to anxiety in the foreign language teaching classroom resulted in more than a third of students experiencing anxiety, which resulted in low performance in English because the students were afraid of being negatively assessed. Their article clearly stated foreign language anxiety, "which stems from a variety of causes such as apprehension, low self-esteem, lack of communicative competence, anomie, alienation, and introversion" (2008).

Foreign language anxiety, apart from being studied in foreign and global contexts, is also a major subject matter in the local context. (Khalid, Shehbaz, and Farooqi, 2021) Investigate the relationship between foreign language anxiety and the academic performance of Pakistani students. He found out that foreign language anxiety is related to lower participation level of students, as their anxiety arises from "speaking without preparation in the class, fear of reading English aloud, and unfamiliarity with English culture and ideas". Another study by Khan, Ann, and Akhtar (2022) believes that the origins of English language anxiety are quite extensive and complex, ranging from psychological, social, and educational components. In addition to this, Sarmad Ali and Khan (2021) contributed to this study by stating that "language learners could feel anxiety if they are not given adequate time to answer, they were not competent enough to reply quickly and appropriately; hence they required time" and so "they may feel embarrassed and they could think of that they will be evaluated negatively".

Foreign language anxiety has been a major subject matter in both EFL/ESL studies contexts, exploring similarities and differences in both these contexts. Global studies indicate that learners often feel anxiety when they are asked to speak fluently and accurately. Al Asmari's study of Chinese students in 2015 and Abrar's study of Indonesian EFL students both resulted in the major finding that students' anxiety was an outcome of fear of fluency and accuracy in a foreign language. However, in contrast to this, local studies such as Hasan and Tariq (2020) resulted in anxiety being more closely tied to participation in the classroom. Sarmad Ali and Khan's study (2021), on the other hand, is more inclined towards fear of being negatively evaluated and limited time for answering as a major part and parcel of anxiety. Contrast between both these contexts highlights how global studies stress more on fear of fluent speaking, while the local context emphasizes fear of negative evaluation.

### **3.2. Classroom Codeswitching**

Classroom code-switching is widely studied as a teaching approach in bilingual and multilingual environments. Bilingual and multilingual people generally tend to switch language codes during their conversations. Code switching that occurs in the community is often regarded as a Strategy for use in conversations. Sometimes this strategy is used in terms of stylistic Influence, which relates to its use for reinforcing or weakening speech acts such as Requests, denials, switching topics, elaborations or comments, validations, or Clarifications (Heller, 2007). The use of code has a value of naturalness for particular Speech events within the community of bilingual speakers. Milroy and Gordon (2003) see code switching as a manner or form of communication that is common in a bilingual or multilingual society using several different languages. By contrast, in the process of bilingual education, code switching is more managerial. For instance, in the learning process, switching of code acts more as a tool to manage and facilitate interaction and learning. Heller (2007) plainly says that code switching is the process of using more than one language in one episode of communication. Speakers who switch codes need mastery of at least two languages. In ESL classrooms in Pakistan, using both English and the native language helps students understand lessons, reduces confusion, and increases participation. Students often report feeling more comfortable and confident when their native language is occasionally used, as it lowers the pressure of operating entirely in a foreign language (Macaro, 2001). Many researchers claimed that using code-switching is necessary in the classroom. It plays an important function to give instruction, explaining difficult concepts, and controlling the class atmosphere. Greggio and Gill (2007) believed that code switching can be a useful tool in the language teaching and learning process. Teachers can use code-switching to help students understand the teaching instruction and manage the time. The students can answer or respond to the instructions without consuming much time to analyze the meaning of the instructions. It also implies that using L1 in an EFL classroom is not always an indication of limited language mastery

From a sociolinguistic perspective, language alternation in classrooms not only aids comprehension but also fosters a sense of inclusion and cultural identity. Within the scope of appropriate implementation, it can empower learners, describe bilingual and multilingual speakers' ability to express themselves in two languages, and demonstrate its sociolinguistic impact among people who use it (Auerbach, 2016). In the classroom context, the teacher and student switch their language to find the most effective way of delivering materials. Thus, both parties must have the same linguistic background or language mastery. Otherwise, a listener with a different L1 will fail to get the points of the conversation.

While code-switching is known to aid learning, there is a lack of research on its influence on students' emotional and psychological well-being, such as reducing anxiety and enhancing confidence, in Pakistani English classrooms. Seedhouse (2005) in his study

explored that teachers initiated code alteration to approach curriculum, manage discipline in the classroom, and to develop interpersonal relations with students (Rathert, 2012). Rose and Dulm (2006) carried out research on the diverse functions of the code switching used by English and African students in the classroom interface of a secondary school in the Western Cape. Most studies focus mainly on understanding the lessons and academic performance, so there is not much information about students' emotional health. Also, broad studies examining the emotional impact are limited. Studying this is important to see how code-switching can be used not just as a language tool, but also to create a supportive and caring learning environment.

#### 4. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two complementary theoretical perspectives: Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982) and Macaro's Pedagogical Code-Switching Theory (1997, 2001, 2005). When combined, they provide an emotionally and cognitively aligned explanation for the tool of strategic code-switching, used by teachers, in SLA classrooms.

In learning a second language, Krashen's Affective filter hypothesis signifies the value of emotional and psychological factors. It considers the students' feelings of anxiety, stress, self-confidence, and motivation while processing the second language through observation and exposure. Krashen states that the affective filter becomes high when learners experience high anxiety or stress, while if the learners feel relaxed, motivated, and less anxious, the affective filter becomes low, allowing better comprehension. This concept fits well in this research in which teachers' code switching is seen as a tool that lowers anxiety and paves the way for better comprehension of a second language.

Macaro's pedagogical code-switching theory resembles this concept, which highlights that teacher code-switching, if meaningful and purposeful, can be effective in making meaning clearer, managing mental pressure, and maintaining the flow of the lesson, etc. Macaro's theory rejects the idea of the first language being a pedagogical weakness and a barrier in language acquisition by promoting the concept that if first language is not used, it may create linguistic hurdles in the way of learning a second language, especially when first language provides useful support to learners.

In this way, code switching aims to provide a cognitive scaffold to learners and assist them in becoming independent second language learners.

Both these theories provide a dual framework for this research; On one hand, Krashen's theory highlights the significance of reducing emotional factors like anxiety for learning a second language, on the other hand, Macaro's theory provides insight on teacher code switching as an effective tool for acquisition of comprehensible input, and making lessons meaningful and clear. This integrated framework positions strategic code-switching as an affective and cognitive facilitator, not as a barrier to L2 acquisition, within real classroom contexts, particularly in multilingual settings such as Pakistan.

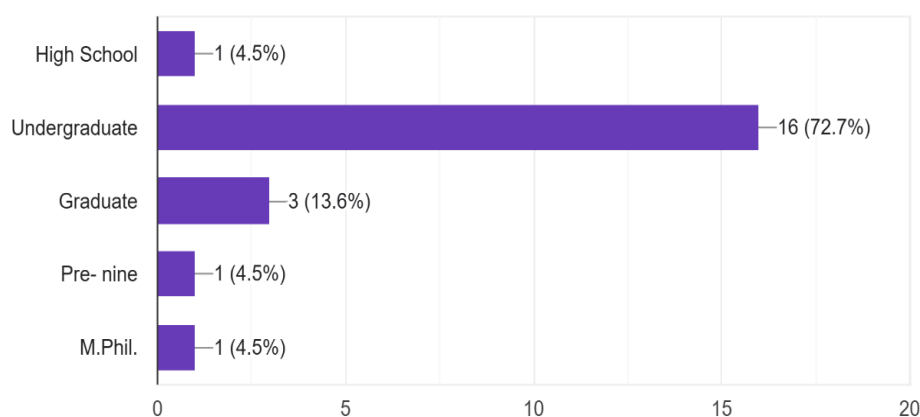
## 5. Methodology

### 5.1. Data

This study includes a total of 22 participants whose responses are assessed through a questionnaire that uses a five-point Likert scale to measure the responses of students regarding anxiety experienced in English language classrooms. These 22 participants belong to different educational levels to explore the diversity of the importance of strategic code switching on foreign language anxiety. These participants include. 1 High school students, 16 Undergraduate students, 1 Graduate student, and 1 pre-ninth and M.Phil. student.

Educational Level

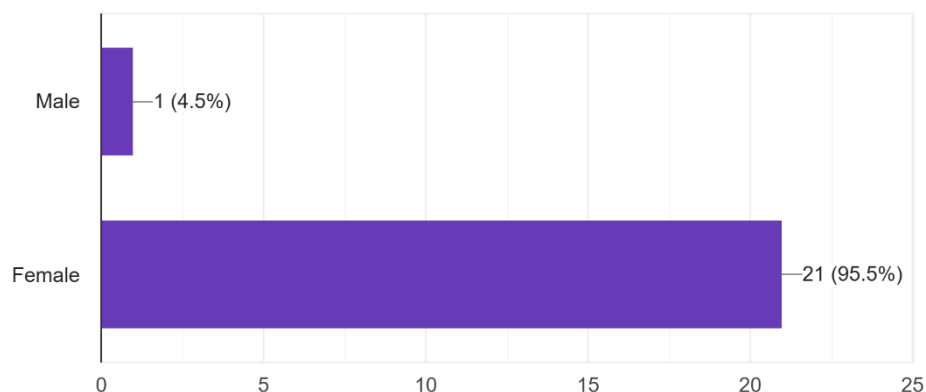
22 responses



These participants belong to different educational institutes, and their educational levels differ from one another, so that diverse experiences of people can be evaluated. Many of these participants included in this research are female, while only one is male.

Gender

22 responses



## 5.2. Settings

This study includes data collected from students who study in classrooms where English is taught as a second language. These classrooms employ the code-switching method for effective teaching, and so both English and Urdu are used for delivering lectures. In this setting, questionnaires related to anxiety level experienced by students were circulated, and mixed educational proficiency levels were taken for the research to understand the diversity of experiences.

## 5.3. Data analysis approach:

This study uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches to understand the anxiety levels experienced in language classrooms that use the code-switching method. A quantitative approach was used by providing questionnaires to students to assess emotional responses to code switching. Qualitative approach, however, includes evaluation through themes like affective responses, behavioral responses, and the perceived learning outcomes. Mixed-method design combines numerical trends with contextual meanings, enabling a deeper interpretation of learner experiences and also strengthening the depth and validity of findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This mixed-method approach helps in evaluating the responses of students to understand the 'level of anxiety experienced and its effects on learning'.

## 6. Findings

### 6.1. Summary of findings

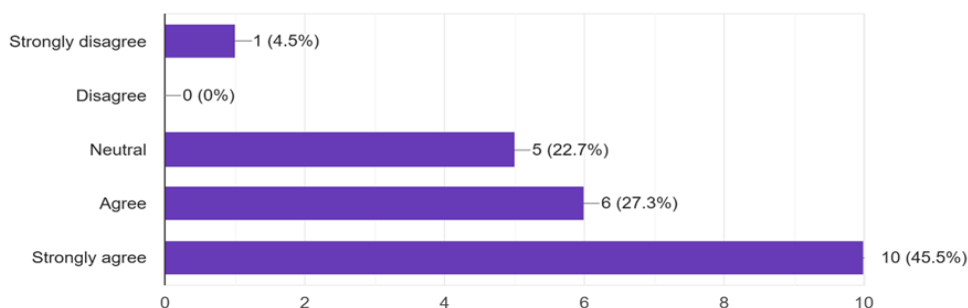
Questionnaires resulted in the following findings. The first one being that Students experienced little or no anxiety when instructions were given in English. Students were comfortable using and understanding both English and the Urdu language. Students' participation increases when the teacher allows them to discuss in Urdu. Further the

findings show that Code switching is effective in the expression of ideas easily. Students show neutral responses to speaking in class because they are afraid of making mistakes. Lastly, the findings reveal that Code switching helps students to understand lessons better, make new vocabulary easier, and improve their understanding of the lesson.

### 6.2. Questionnaire Results

The responses of students are evaluated using descriptive statistics. A five-point Likert scale is used to evaluate students' responses to code switching. These five points range from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA) to assess how students respond to the use of English and Urdu during lessons and their stance on code switching.

I can remember the content more effectively when the teacher uses both Urdu and English  
22 responses



Item no.	Survey statements	SD	D	N	A	SA
1)	I feel nervous when my teacher speaks only in English	28.1%	38.1%	33.3%	4.8%	0%
2)	I feel more comfortable when my teacher switches to Urdu during lessons	0%	13.6%	50%	36.4%	18.2%

3)	I feel more confident when I understand both English and Urdu explanations	4.5%	0%	9.1%	40.9%	46.5%
4)	I feel anxious when I cannot understand something in English	9.1%	36.4%	31.8%	22.7%	4.5%
5)	I can remember the content more effectively when the teacher uses both Urdu and English	4.5%	0%	22.7%	27.3%	46.5%
6)	I feel motivated to participate when the teacher uses both languages	4.5%	4.5%	18.2%	50.0%	31.8%
7)	I participate more when the teacher allows some Urdu discussion	9.1%	9.1%	27.3%	46.4%	9.1%

8)	Code-switching helps me express my ideas more easily.	0%	0%	27.3%	54.5%	18.2%
9)	I hesitate to speak in class when the teacher uses only English.	9.1%	41.9%	18.2%	27.3%	4.5%
10)	I feel less anxious when I can ask questions in Urdu	0%	36.4%	22.7%	36.4%	9.1%
11)	I avoid speaking in class because I am afraid of making mistakes in English	9.1%	31.8%	31.8%	22.7%	9.1%
12)	Code-switching helps me understand difficult lessons better	0%	0%	31.8%	63.6%	13.6%
13)	Learning English through both languages makes the class more interesting	0%	0%	27.3%	63.6%	13.6%

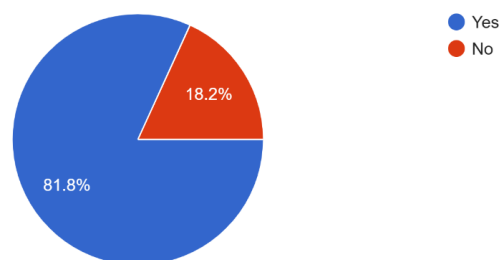
14)	I find it easier to learn new vocabulary when the teacher explains it in Urdu as well	0%	4.5%	9.1%	63.6%	22.7%
15)	Using both English and Urdu improve my overall understanding of the lesson	0%	0%	22.7%	68.2%	22.7%

Further, students were asked if they studied English as a foreign language, which resulted in the following.

81.2% (Yes)

18.2% (No)

Have you ever studied English as a second/foreign language  
22 responses



These results show that students did not experience much anxiety and are comfortable when the medium of instruction is English; however, the method of code switching proves to be really effective in English language classrooms. Questionnaire responses indicate that code switching helps students to understand lessons more efficiently and enhances the participation of students as they can express their ideas easily.

## 7. Analysis

### 7.1. Analysis of Affective Responses

This is the first section of the questionnaire, which was designed to examine emotional reactions like anxiety, comfort, confidence, and motivation of learners. It assesses emotional parameters through the setting of English language classroom that employ teacher code-switching. The responses reveal that the use of only English during lessons does not merely result in anxiety. However, emotional states are shaped more by linguistic support and comprehensibility provided during instruction.

The first item of this section is, “I feel nervous when my teacher speaks only in English. A combined 66.2% of respondents either strongly disagreed (28.1%) or disagreed (38.1%) with the statement. 33.3% of the participants selected a neutral response. Only 4.8% agreed, and none strongly agreed. The primary source of anxiety for most learners is not the use of only English as a medium of instruction, as suggested by this pattern.

The second item states that, “I feel more comfortable when my teacher switches to Urdu during lessons. 50% of participants remained neutral as a response to this question. A combined 54.6% either agreed (36.4%) or strongly agreed (18.2%) that code-switching increased comfort. Very few people (13.6%) disagreed. This shows codeswitching by teacher is not a source of affective resistance among learners but on the contrary creates a supportive environment for learning.

The third statement included in the section, “I feel more confident when I understand both English and Urdu explanations”, reinforces the same pattern. Most participants agreed with this statement, making a total of (87.4%) from which (40.9%) agreed whereas (46.5%) strongly agreed. There was negligible amount of disagreement in the responses which indicates that bilingual explanation positively affects confidence and makes the instruction more understandable.

The next item included in this section was to provide insight into cause of anxiety. The statement of fourth item was, “I feel anxious when I cannot understand something in English”. Although (27.2%) of participants agreed with the statement given, including (22.7%) who agreed and (4.5%) who strongly agreed. Some of the participants (31.8%) remained neutral in response to this statement. Simultaneously (45.5%) of participants disagreed. This shows that a lack of understanding triggers some anxiety. This further backs the idea that anxiety is rather caused by a hindrance in comprehension, not because of its inherent presence in the English language itself.

The fifth item in the survey included the statement, “I can remember the content more effectively when the teacher uses both Urdu and English. (73.8%) of respondents either agreed (27.3%) or strongly agreed (46.5%). This positive trend suggests that bilingual instruction aids in retaining the material, along with better comprehension.

At last, the sixth item included in affective responses states that “I feel motivated to participate when the teacher uses both languages.” To this, (81.8%) of people who voted either agreed (50.0%) or strongly agreed (31.8%) with this statement. The minimal

responses, however, were minimal. This indicates the fostering of an emotionally engaging and encouraging environment through the use of teacher-led codeswitching.

As a result of all the above findings, it is concluded that a strict English environment does not strictly create emotional barriers for learners in Pakistani ESL Classrooms. On the other hand, code-switching reduces anxiety, enhances confidence, and increases motivation. In this way, code switching acts as an affective scaffold, which creates emotionally supportive conditions for language learning.

## 7.2. Analysis of Behavioral Responses

The behavioral response of this study is more inclined towards analyzing the impact of the teacher's code switching on students' participation, anxiety level, and expression of ideas. These responses show how students' participation level either enhances or lessens with the use of only English and code-switching methods.

The first question in the behavioral response part of the questionnaire "I participate more when the teacher allows only Urdu discussion" reveals a majority of students agree with the question, where the response shows that 46.4% of population agreed with the statement and 9.1% strongly agreed with it, while the remaining students either disagreed 9.1% or strongly disagreed with it 9.1%. This response also reveals that almost one-fourth of the population is little or less affected by variation in language, which shows individual uniqueness in relation to behavioral responses of students.

The second statement in this section, "Code-switching helps me express my ideas more easily," is more inclined towards students showing positive responses, with a greater extent of people 54.5% agreeing with it and 18.2% of people strongly agreeing with it. On this statement, 27.3% of people showed a neutral response, but none of them disagreed with it. This response reveals that a great majority of students can express their ideas more effectively when the method of code switching is used.

The third statement in this section, "I hesitate to speak in class when the teacher uses only English" mostly reveals negative responses of students to this statement, with 41.9% either disagreeing or 9.1% strongly disagreeing with the statement. While some students believed that it was true on their part, as 27.3% agreed with it and 4.5% strongly agreed with it. A great majority of people also remained neutral to it, as 18.2% showed a neutral response, revealing that sometimes they may feel hesitant when the medium of instruction was only English, and sometimes the case is otherwise.

Another statement in this questionnaire reveals a divided response of the students towards the statement, with a similar percentage of students agreeing and disagreeing with it. The statement in the questionnaire, "I feel less anxious when I can ask questions in Urdu," shows 36.4% of students both agree and disagree with it. While no one disagreed with it, a great majority of students were little or less affected by it, with its percentage being 22.7%. On the other hand, 9.1% strongly agreed with it, revealing that students'

classroom participation is greatly affected by the use of language. All these responses result in students' anxiety level either being affected largely or not at all with the use of language, presenting individual variation in these situations.

The last statement in this part of the questionnaire, "I avoid speaking in class because I am afraid of making mistakes in English," reveals 40.9% of the students disagreeing with it, as 31.8% of the students disagreed with it, and 9.1% strongly disagreed with it. While some students were affected by this situation, and so 22.7% agreed with it, and 9.1% strongly agreed with it, a great majority of the population remained immune to this statement, as 31.8% of the population showed neutral responses.

All these responses in this part of the questionnaire reveal that although on one hand, teachers' code switching plays a positive role in students' participation and anxiety level, on the other hand, Individual uniqueness and variation also affect these things to a greater extent.

### **7.3. Analysis of Perceived Learning Outcomes**

The perceived learning outcomes section of the questionnaire was designed to assess learners' subjective evaluations of how teacher code-switching influences comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, lesson engagement, and overall understanding. The responses uncover strong and consistent patterns indicating that bilingual instructional practices are perceived as academically beneficial by learners.

Item twelve, "Code-switching helps me understand difficult lessons better," shows a highly positive response trend. None of the participants selected strongly disagree or disagree, while 31.8% remained neutral. A considerable 77.2% of respondents either agreed (63.6%) or strongly agreed (13.6%). This distribution suggests that code-switching is widely perceived as an effective strategy for simplifying complex or abstract content. The absence of negative responses indicates that the teacher's alternation between English and Urdu does not obstruct learning, but rather, it supports learners in overcoming conceptual difficulties.

Similarly, the responses to item thirteen, "Learning English through both languages makes the class more interesting," reflect a strong positive evaluation of classroom engagement. None of the participants reported disagreement. Although 27.3% chose a neutral response, 77.2% agreed, including 13.6% who strongly agreed. This suggests that bilingual instruction contributes to increased classroom interest, indicating that students comprehend lessons as more engaging when linguistic flexibility is allowed. Enhanced interest can be interpreted as an indicator of improved attentiveness and sustained cognitive involvement during lessons.

Item fourteen, "I find it easier to learn new vocabulary when the teacher explains it in Urdu as well," reveals one of the strongest positive trends within this section. Most participants (86.3%) agreed or strongly agreed, compared to 4.5% who disagreed and 9.1%

who were neutral, highlighting the important role of bilingual explanations in facilitating vocabulary acquisition. Learners appear to benefit from semantic clarification through the first language, which aids in forming accurate lexical associations and strengthens retention of new vocabulary items.

The final item, “Using both English and Urdu improves my overall understanding of the lesson,” further strengthens these findings. No participants reported disagreement, while the other 22.7% selected a neutral response. With 90.9% of participants either agreeing (68.2%) or strongly agreeing (22.7%), the results suggest that bilingual instruction is widely perceived as improving overall lesson comprehension. The data reveal that learners view code-switching not as a compensatory strategy but a core instructional resource that facilitates holistic understanding.

In short, the analysis of perceived learning outcomes shows that teacher code switching is closely associated with improved comprehension, vocabulary development, classroom engagement, and conceptual clarity. Sustained high agreement across all items illustrates that learners apprehend bilingual instruction as academically advantageous. These findings reveal the role and function of code switching as a cognitive scaffold that validates meaning-making and learning efficiency in ESL classrooms

## **8. Discussion**

This research’s findings contradict the findings of earlier researchers about Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). Previous studies stated FLA as an obstacle to second language acquisition SLA. They found out that FLA hurts the confidence, participation, and linguistic development of the learners. On the other hand, this research does not consider FLA as a major challenge faced by learners in multilingual Pakistani Classrooms. (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Hui, 2012; Khalid, Shehbaz & Farooqi, 2021).

This study reveals that anxiety is felt by the participants only when they observe a hindrance in understanding the foreign language, not due to its being used as a medium of instruction

This research proposes that anxiety is not caused by using English strictly as a medium of instruction, but rather it is due to the difficulty in comprehension faced by the students. (Appendix Part B). These findings challenge earlier claims that anxiety and fear result in limited participation and proficiency of ESL learners (Horwitz et al., 1986; Sarmad Ali & Khan, 2021; Alamer & Almulhim, 2021). As a result, this research is in contrast to the notion that FLA is inevitably present in all ESL classrooms.

The findings of this study argue that FLA and other emotional constraints faced by learners are context-dependent rather than being dependent on language. This agrees with Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis, as the findings further reveal that the affective filter rises not merely because English is present in classroom discourse, but only when learners

cannot construct meaning. It indicates that clarity, comprehensibility, and teacher mediation play an important role in regulating the emotional states of learners, instead of using a strict English policy, which is assumed to improve proficiency (Cook, 2001; Macaro, 2001).

In addition to this, the findings support the notions of earlier scholars as they demonstrate that code-switching used by teachers enhances participation, lowers affective filters, and stabilizes learner confidence, functioning as an effective pedagogic scaffold (Vogt, 1954; Heller, 2007; Greggio & Gill, 2007; Auerbach, 2016). Macaro's (1997, 2001, 2005) assertion that the prohibition of L1 produces an unnecessary cognitive burden is supported by the overwhelmingly positive responses of the participants regarding comfort, clarity, and confidence during instructional code-switching. It is also reinforced by Rehman's categorization of Pakistan as a highly multilingual context, where code switching is not a linguistic deficiency but rather a natural norm of communication. Rehman (2002) further supports this by suggesting that code switching does not act as a linguistic drawback in Pakistan. He argues that codeswitching is a natural norm of communication, considering Pakistan a highly multilingual setting.

Hence, this study shows that strategic alternating between English and Urdu ensures fluency, stronger conceptual grasping, and better vocabulary retention. Participants' preference for bilingual explanation is in line with Macaro's model that views code-switching as a tool that helps in performing communicative, cognitive, and social functions. It further posits that English-only instruction does not pose a restriction on SLA, reinforcing the affective, motivational, and cognitive filtering mechanism proposed by Krashen (1982).

In conclusion, unlike previous studies that treat anxiety as an inevitable obstruction, the findings claim that anxiety occurs only due to a lack of clarity and comprehension, and it decreases when clarity increases. Moreover, it highlights the meaningful transformation of a classroom based on performance into a comprehension-based environment, by the strategic use of code switching. Considering the above findings, the role of code-switching in Pakistani ESL contexts has been redefined as a fundamental pedagogical tool that improves learners' participation, emotional well-being, and learning outcomes rather than viewing it as an inferior linguistic practice.

## **9. Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the use of code switching proves to be really effective in understanding the lessons and participation of students. However, the majority of participants experienced little or no anxiety even when English was used as the medium of instruction, demonstrating that the level of anxiety is low during English-only lectures. This study challenges the assumption that students fearful of being negatively evaluated or judged experience anxiety, which affects their

participation and performance; however, it claims that students were comfortable even during English lessons, although they reported code switching to be really effective.

For future research, this study claims to understand the impacts of strategic code switching on students' grades and their performance in practical life, based on the instructions that were provided to them through code switching.

### References

- Ahmad, B. H., & Jusoff, K. (2009). Teachers' code-switching in classroom instructions for low English proficient learners. *English Language Teaching*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v2n2p49>
- Alamer, A., & Almulhim, F. (2021). The interrelation between language anxiety and self-determined motivation: a mixed methods approach. *Frontiers in Education*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2021.618655>
- Auerbach, E. R. (2016). Reflection on Auerbach (1993), "Reexamining English only in the ESL classroom." *TESOL Quarterly*, 27(1), 9–32.
- Cook, V. (2001). *Second language learning and language teaching* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Duran, L. (1994). Towards a better understanding of code-switching and interlanguage in bilingualism: Implications for bilingual instruction. *The Journal of Educational Issues of Language Minority Learners*, 14, 69–88.
- Greggio, S., & Gill, G. (2007). Teachers' and learners' use of code-switching in the English as a foreign language classroom: A qualitative study. *Linguagem & Ensino*, 10(2), 371–393.
- Heller, M. (2007). *Bilingualism: A social approach*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125. <https://doi.org/10.2307/327317>
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132.
- Khalid, M., Shahbaz, M., & Farooqi, S. ul H. (2021). Relationship of anxiety and academic success/failure: Standpoint of Pakistani EFL undergraduates. *Pakistan Journal of Language Studies*, 5(1), 109–125. <https://pjls.gcuf.edu.pk/index.php/pjls/article/view/119Khalid>
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
- Liu, M., & Jackson, J. (2008). An exploration of Chinese EFL learners' unwillingness to communicate and foreign language anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92(1), 71–86. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2008.00687.x>

- Macaro, E. (1997). Target language, collaborative learning and autonomy. *Multilingual Matters*.
- Macaro, E. (2001). Analysing student teachers' codeswitching in foreign language classrooms: Theories and decision making. *The Modern Language Journal*, 85(4), 531–548. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0026-7902.00124>
- Macaro, E. (2005). Codeswitching in the L2 classroom: A communication and learning strategy. In E. Llurda (Ed.), *Non-native language teachers: Perceptions, challenges, and contributions to the profession* (pp. 63–84). Springer.
- Milroy, L., & Gordon, M. (2003). *Sociolinguistics: Method and interpretation*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Rahman, T. (2007). The role of English in Pakistan with special reference to tolerance and militancy. In A. B. M. Tsui & J. W. Tollefson (Eds.), *Language policy, culture, and identity in Asian contexts* (pp. 219–239). Routledge.
- Rathert, S. (2012). Functions of teacher and student code-switching in an EFL classroom and pedagogical focus: Observations and implications. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 1(1), 7–18.
- Rose, S., & Dulm, O. V. (2006). Functions of code-switching in multilingual classrooms. *Journal of Language Learning*, 4(1), 15–28.
- Samad, A., Ali, M., & Khan, A. K. (2021). An exploration of classroom-related sources of foreign language speaking anxiety of Pakistani university students. *Sir Syed Journal of Education & Social Research*, 4(1), 211–221. <https://www.sjesr.org.pk/ojs/index.php/ojs/article/view/584>
- Second language confidence, comfort, and ownership. (2022). *Lessons from Exceptional Language Learners Who Have Achieved Nativelike Proficiency*, 142–153. <https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.22679727.16>
- Tobias, S. (1985). Test anxiety: Interference, defective skills, and cognitive capacity. *Educational Psychologist*, 20(3), 135–142.
- Vogt, H. (1954). Language contacts. *Word*, 10(2–3), 365–374.