Chapter 5

Summary, Findings and Suggestions

5.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the major outcomes of the study and draws conclusions based on the research objectives. It also offers implications and practical suggestions arising from the findings, while reflecting critically on the significance of code-switching as a pedagogical strategy in Indian classrooms. This chapter synthesizes the key findings from the data analysis and interpretation to answer the research questions concerning the situations, perceived advantages, and disadvantages of code-switching as a teaching strategy in Indian classrooms.

Beginning with a concise summary of major results, it then discusses their theoretical and practical implications for multilingual pedagogy, teacher training, and educational policy, particularly in light of NEP 2020's emphasis on mother-tongue instruction. Next, the chapter offers concrete recommendations for classroom practice, teacher-education curricula, and future research avenues to address identified gaps. Finally, it reflects on the study's limitations and highlights how these insights can inform more inclusive, culturally responsive pedagogical frameworks in India and comparable multilingual settings.

In multilingual classroom contexts like those found across India, code-switching has evolved as an intuitive and frequently practiced pedagogical tool. This research focused on exploring the perceived advantages and disadvantages of using code-switching in Indian classrooms, particularly in English-medium secondary schools in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. It examined the situations in which teachers employ code-switching, its perceived impact on student learning, and the broader implications for language development and inclusive pedagogy.

5.2 Statement of the Problem

The research addressed the under-theorized yet common practice of code-switching in Indian classrooms. Despite being widely used, it is often considered informal or unprofessional. The core problem investigated was whether code-switching serves as a helpful instructional strategy or as an obstacle to developing language proficiency, and how both students and teachers perceive its utility and limitations in actual classroom interactions.

5.3 Objectives of the Study

The study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To identify the situations and circumstances in which code-switching is used by teachers in Indian classrooms in addition to its frequency.

2. To explore students' and teachers' opinions on benefits of using code-switching in regards to comprehension, engagement, and classroom participation.

3. To examine the disadvantages and challenges with using code-switching, including concerns like language proficiency.

5.4 Methodology

A qualitative, exploratory approach was adopted to analyze classroom practices and subjective perceptions. Google Form-based questionnaires were administered to 100 students and 80 teachers from English-medium schools in Bhopal. Classroom observations and structured interviews added depth to the data. Purposive sampling ensured diversity in participant profiles, and thematic analysis was used to interpret open-ended responses.

Ethical protocols were observed, including informed consent, anonymity, and voluntary participation. Despite limitations related to regional focus and self-reporting bias, the study provides rich insights into the use and perception of code-switching in secondary classrooms.

5.5 Findings of the Study

The study revealed several noteworthy patterns and insights regarding the use of code-switching as a pedagogical strategy in Indian secondary classrooms. These findings are categorized below for clarity:

Prevalence and Purpose: Code-switching emerged as a prevalent and widely accepted instructional strategy among both teachers and students. It is most commonly used in content-heavy subjects such as Science, Social Science, and English, where abstract or complex concepts often require further clarification. Teachers reported using code-switching intentionally to simplify content, while students confirmed that hearing familiar language helped them grasp difficult topics more easily.

Perceived Advantages: An overwhelming majority of student participants (88%) reported that code-switching significantly improved their understanding of subject matter. Additionally, 40% of students stated that it enhanced their engagement, while 43% noted increased participation in classroom discussions. Teachers echoed these sentiments, affirming that code-switching enabled them to explain difficult ideas more clearly, manage classroom behavior more effectively, and build stronger rapport with their students. Many educators viewed it as an indispensable strategy in linguistically diverse classrooms.

Identified Challenges: Despite its benefits, some concerns surfaced. A small portion of students (17%) expressed that frequent code-switching hindered their ability to develop English language proficiency. Teachers also raised concerns about possible overreliance on code-switching,

disruptions in linguistic consistency, and difficulties in translating subject-specific or technical terminology from English into local languages without losing meaning or precision.

Qualitative Insights from Teachers: Narratives from teachers further illuminated the nuanced use of code-switching. They described employing it as a bridge between academic content and students' everyday experiences, helping learners relate abstract concepts to real-life contexts. Code-switching was also noted to alleviate students' anxiety, fostering a psychologically safe and inclusive learning environment. However, some teachers acknowledged limitations, such as gaps in regional vocabulary and the occasional loss of instructional flow due to language shifts.

5.6 Implications and Suggestions of the Findings

The findings of this study offer several important implications for pedagogy, teacher education, curriculum development, and language policy. These are outlined below:

Pedagogical Training and Professional Development: Code-switching should be repositioned from an informal practice to a strategic instructional tool. Teacher training programs, both pre-service and in-service, should incorporate modules on the pedagogical application of code-switching. Educators must be equipped with research-informed strategies that clarify when, why, and how to switch codes to support learning outcomes effectively.

Curriculum and Policy Reform: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the importance of multilingual education. This policy momentum creates an opportunity to formally integrate code-switching into curriculum frameworks, especially in states and regions characterized by linguistic diversity. Recognizing code-switching as a valid pedagogical approach would lend legitimacy to existing classroom practices and support equitable education delivery.

Balanced Language Exposure: While the benefits of code-switching are substantial, caution must be taken to avoid excessive reliance. Educators should use code-switching as a scaffolding mechanism, a temporary linguistic support that helps learners move towards full proficiency in the target language, rather than replacing it. Clear instructional guidelines are necessary to help teachers strike a balance between accessibility and language development.

Promoting Inclusive Education: Code-switching contributes to inclusive education by validating students' home languages and creating a bridge between their cultural backgrounds and the formal school environment. This alignment supports linguistic and cognitive inclusion and enhances student participation, particularly for those who may feel marginalized in English-dominant classrooms. Acknowledging and leveraging code-switching as a tool for inclusivity aligns with broader goals of educational equity.

5.7 Conclusion

This study affirms that code-switching, often misunderstood or underestimated in formal pedagogical discourse, is in fact a powerful and contextually appropriate teaching strategy in Indian classrooms. The findings clearly demonstrate that both students and teachers regard code-switching not as a linguistic crutch, but as a vital tool that supports learning, enhances comprehension, and fosters emotional security.

Students, particularly in multilingual settings, experience a sense of relief and connection when familiar linguistic cues are used in teaching. This sense of comfort and recognition enables them to better grasp difficult academic content, participate more confidently in class discussions, and maintain sustained engagement. Teachers, in turn, reported that code-switching helped them simplify complex subject matter, manage classroom behavior, and build stronger rapport with students, especially those from linguistically marginalized backgrounds.

Furthermore, qualitative insights highlighted that code-switching serves not merely as a language tool but as a cultural bridge. It connects the formal academic discourse of the classroom with students' lived experiences, making learning more relevant, inclusive, and accessible. This reinforces the idea that language is not just a medium of instruction but a vehicle of identity and empowerment within educational spaces.

However, the study also brings to light important challenges. Some teachers and students expressed concern about the potential overuse of code-switching, which may inadvertently slow the development of proficiency in the target language, particularly English. There were also difficulties associated with accurately translating technical or subject-specific terminology without diluting meaning. These insights underscore the need for strategic and informed application of code-switching, rather than its instinctive or unstructured use.

Therefore, this study calls for a paradigm shift in how educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers perceive and utilize code-switching. Instead of viewing it as a remedial or compensatory tactic, it should be recognized as a legitimate and valuable pedagogical resource, especially in the linguistically diverse and multilingual landscape of India. Teacher education programs must integrate training on the intentional and effective use of code-switching, while language policies should embrace its role in promoting inclusive and equitable education.

In conclusion, when employed thoughtfully and strategically, code-switching contributes significantly to the development of an inclusive, engaging, and student-centered learning environment. It supports differentiated instruction, affirms students' linguistic identities, and aligns teaching practices with the social realities of Indian classrooms. Acknowledging and systematizing its use can therefore enhance both the quality and accessibility of education, making it a cornerstone of effective multilingual pedagogy in the 21st century.