

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDE
TOWARDS EFL TEACHERS' CODE-SWITCHING/CODE-
MIXING TO L1: A CASE OF COMMERCE AND ENGLISH
DISCIPLINE STUDENTS

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Abstract

In today's globalizing world, integration of two languages is a frequent experience. In most of the cases English language is being mixed with some other language. This phenomenon of mixing two languages is termed as code-switching/code-mixing in linguistics. The present study is a comparative analysis of students' attitudes towards this particular phenomenon of two disciplines; commerce and English. The present study integrates quantitative research design to assess students' attitude towards code-switching/code-mixing to L1 by their EFL teachers using a close-ended questionnaire. From the findings of the study, the present study concludes that students of commerce hold a positive attitude towards EFL teachers code-switching/code-mixing to L1 but the students of English Department have somewhat negative attitude towards it.

Key words: Attitude, code-switching/ code-mixing, EFL teaching

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1. Introduction

The present study is a comparative analysis of students' attitude belonging to commerce and English discipline towards code-switching/code-mixing to L1 by their EFL teachers in the classrooms. In today's globalizing world, most of the people use more than one language for communication. Grosjean claimed that bilinguals are more than half of the world population (Grosjean, 2010). Bamgbose is the view that English is now a global language in today's world (Bamgbose, 2001). English is almost being used in all over the world for trade purpose and it is learned as a second language in many parts of the world. David Crystal asserts that in today's world, the total numbers of native English speakers are about 330 million, while the nonnative population of English language is nearly 430 million and this does not include those who are learning English (Crystal, 2003). Pakistan is a diverse region with respect to different languages usage and varieties of languages. Pakistan is a bilingual country, having four official provincial languages, a national language (Urdu) and English being utilized as second language in many official works. A bilingual speaker often utilizes both languages during conversation, a phenomenon termed as code-switching/code-mixing in linguistics. English is being taught in Pakistan from the very first stage of child's education. When an EFL teacher teaches English, he often switches to mother tongue which is Urdu in the present study context. The present study is an attempt to analysis students' attitude of two disciplines: commerce and English regarding EFL teachers' code-switching/code-mixing in the classrooms.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Attitude

The term attitude is itself very difficult to comprehend. There are many definitions of attitude proposed by different scholars. Gardner defines attitude as the overall outlook, a person has for a specific thing (Gardner, On the validity of affective variables in second language acquisition: Conceptual and statistical considerations, 1980). Ajzan defines attitude with respect to positive and negative attributes of a person (Ajzan, 1988). Baker says that attitude of a person is his constant way of acting in a same way towards anything (Baker, 1992). Attitude of a person and his/her language usage and language learning has been explored by a number of researchers: (Gardner, 1985), (Benson, 1991), (Baker, 1992), (Al-Kahtany, 1995), (Dalton-Puffer, C and

Kaltenbock, G., 1995), (Gibb, 1999), (Malallah, 2000), (Assaf, 2001), (Balcazar, 2003), (Levine, 2003), (Graham, 2004), (Bernat, E. and Gvozdenko, I, 2005), (Karahana, 2007), (Atef Al-Tamimi & Munir Shuib, 2009), (Mohamad Jafre Zainol Abidin, Majid Pour-Mohammadi, Hanan Alzwari, 2012). For the present study, Ajzan view of attitude (Ajzan, 1988), is asserted.

2.2 Code-switching/ code-mixing

Code-switching/code-mixing is a fascinating happening in a bilingual society. Some linguists like Muysken claimed that there is a difference between two terms: code-switching and code-mixing (Rene appel and Pieter Muysken, 2006). According to Muysken, code-switching occurs when a bilingual speaker switch from one language code to another while code-mixing is the mixing of two language codes (Rene appel and Pieter Muysken, 2006). Contrary to this notion, many linguists do not differentiate between these terms and take them as a single referring to a linguistics phenomenon in a language (Bokomba, 1989). Linguists have given a number of typologies about code-switching/code-mixing. Popelack discussed three types of code-switching: tag, inter-sentential and intra-sentential (Popelack, 2000). Gumperz described code-switching with respect to context dividing it into participants related and topic related code-switching (Gumperz, Discourse Strategies, 1982). According to Auer, code-switching are of two types: participants related and discourse related (Auer, 1998). For the present study, code-switching and code-mixing is taken as a single term referring to every situation where a bilingual speaker shifts from one language code to another language code during a conversation.

2.3 Code-switching/code-mixing in EFL teachers' classrooms

Code-switching/code-mixing to mother tongue by EFL teachers in the classrooms is a usual linguistics occurrence, and it is very difficult to have a bilingual classroom fully utilizing a single language code (Flowerdew, J. & Miller, L, 1992), (Mustafa , Z. & Al-Khatib, M, 1994), (Arthur, J. & Martin, P, 2006), (Mahadhir, M., & Then, C. O, 2007).

Whether this linguistics phenomenon is desirable in the classroom or not is a controversial issue among the linguists and scholars. According to Luna and Peracchio attitude towards code-switching/code-mixing means the extent to which speakers think it is a favorable in a context (Luna, D. & Peracchio, L, 2005). People have different attitudes towards code-switching/code-mixing (Grosjean F. , 1982), (Gumperz, 1982).

Code-switching/code-mixing with particular reference to EFL classrooms got much attention after 1980s. There are many empirical studies which are carried out to find out factors responsible for this linguistics phenomenon, its effects on students learning and attitudes people have about code-switching/code-mixing.

There are many researchers who upon the findings of their study, advocate the negative impact of code-switching/code-mixing to L1 by EFL teachers upon students' L2 Learning and recommend that it should not be used by the EFL teachers (Ellis, 1984), (Chaudron, 1988) (David D. I. Kim & Douglas Margolis, 2000), (Cook, 2001), (Sawir, 2005), (Kannan, 2009).

But contrary to this, there are many researchers who have exposed the positivity of code-switching and code-mixing to L1 by EFL teachers (Willis, 1996), (Rollnick, M & Rutherford, M, 1996), (Shamash, 1990), (Christine, 2007), (Jingxia, 2010), (Mingfa, 2011), (Samar Rukh , Nargis Saleem , Hafiz Gulam Mustafa Javeed, Nasir Mehmood, 2014). Liu Jingxia explored Chinese context pertaining to code-switching/code-mixing to L1 by EFL teachers and concluded that code-switching/code-mixing is favorable in the classroom and students have a positive attitude for it (Jingxia, 2010). Mingfa Yao also derived the same opinion for code-switching/code-mixing in EFL classrooms (Mingfa, 2011). Samar Rukh with his co-authors explored the business students' context in Pakistan with respect to their attitude towards code-switching/code-mixing, deriving the conclusion from the research findings that business students have a positive attitude for this linguistics phenomenon in their classrooms (Samar Rukh , Nargis Saleem , Hafiz Gulam Mustafa Javeed, Nasir Mehmood, 2014).

3. Research Design

The present study is a quantitative inquiry to measure English and Commerce students' attitudes about EFL teachers' code-switching/code-mixing to L1. Study incorporates a close-ended questionnaire to collect the data from the respondents of the study. Following quantitative research design, study will provide empirical evidence for the concern issue of the study.

3.1 Research Questions.

The present study will try to address the following research questions:

Q. What is the attitude of Commerce Discipline students regarding EFL teachers' code-switching/code-mixing to L1?

Q. What is the attitude of English Discipline students regarding EFL teachers' code-switching/code-mixing to L1?

3.4 Population.

For the present study, population will be all the Commerce and English discipline students in their final year/semester of post graduate program in District Sargodha region, Pakistan. The rationale for the selecting final year/semester students is that, as they are about to complete their post graduate degree in the relevant field, they will be in a better position to give feedback for the study. M.com, BS English and M.A English students will be the population of the study.

3.4 Sampling.

100 students from each discipline were selected from the population, using convenient sampling technique. Moreover, 50% of sample was selected from public sector and 50% from private sector institutes to have a representation of both sectors. Gender base discrimination is not being employed in the study, and both male/female have equal value in the study.

3.5 Questionnaire.

The questionnaire is 4-point Likert scale, adopted from the survey instrument used by Samar Rukh and his co-authors (Samar Rukh , Nargis Saleem , Hafiz Gulam Mustafa Javeed, Nasir Mehmood, 2014). A total number of 7 items are used to measure participants' responses and items are molded to meet the requirements of the present study. The scale ranges from, *strongly agree (S/A)*, *agree (A)*, *disagree (D)*, *strongly disagree (S/D)*. The questionnaire consists of two parts: part (A) consists of respondents' information and general guideline for filling out the questionnaire whereas section (B) consists of 8 items measuring participants' feedback.

3.6 Data Collection and analysis of Data.

Data from the selected sample is being collected by the researcher himself, being present when the students fill out the questionnaire, assisting the participants of the study wherever they needed to complete the questionnaire. After collection of the data, SPSS program is utilized to convert data into numeric. Findings of the study are being represented through graphs. Each graph presents the percentage of the students having a certain attitude.

4. Results

The findings of the study are presented through graphs. Each figure shows a percentage of students' attitude towards a particular item of the questionnaire.

(Figure1)

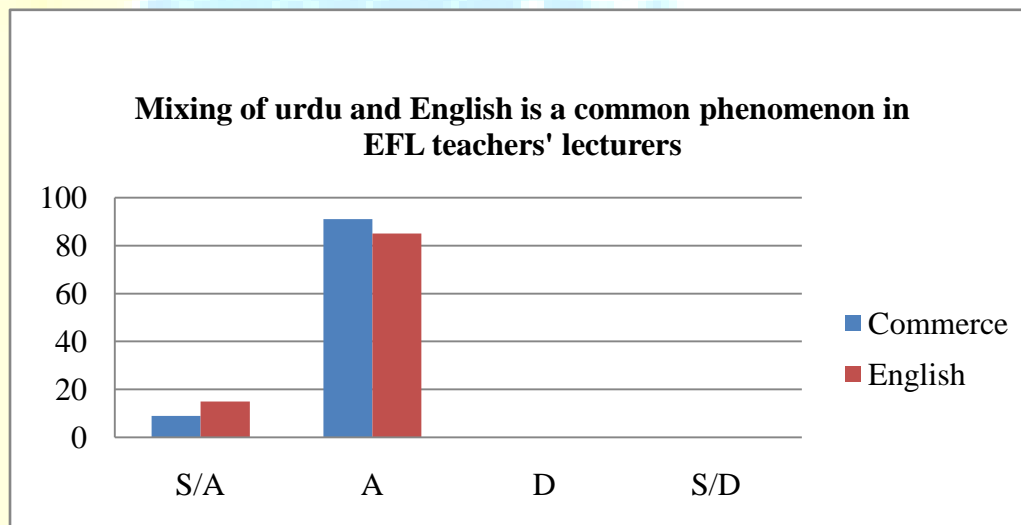


Figure 1 clearly demonstrates that mixing of Urdu and English by EFL teachers in their lectures is a common phenomenon, as Commerce students (9% strongly agree, 91% agree) and English discipline (15% strongly agree, 85% agree) to this notion.

(Figure 2)

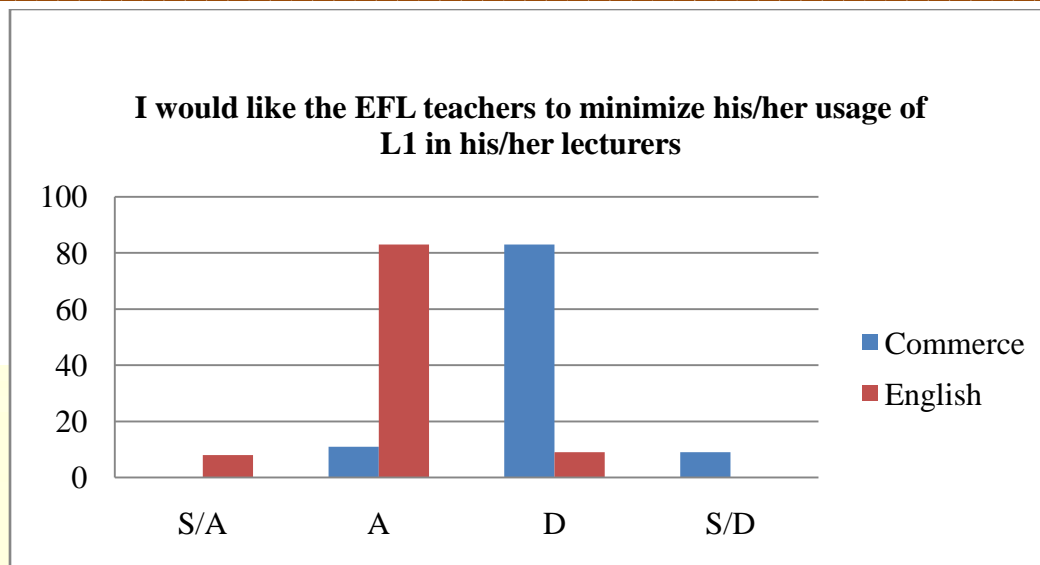


Figure 2 is about students' attitude towards usage of L1 in the lectures. Most of the Commerce students (83%disagree 9% strongly disagree) do not want their EFL teachers to minimize his first language usage in their lectures, but in contrast to this English department students clearly want the minimum usage of L1 by their teachers in the lectures (83% agree , 8% strongly agree).

(Figure 3)

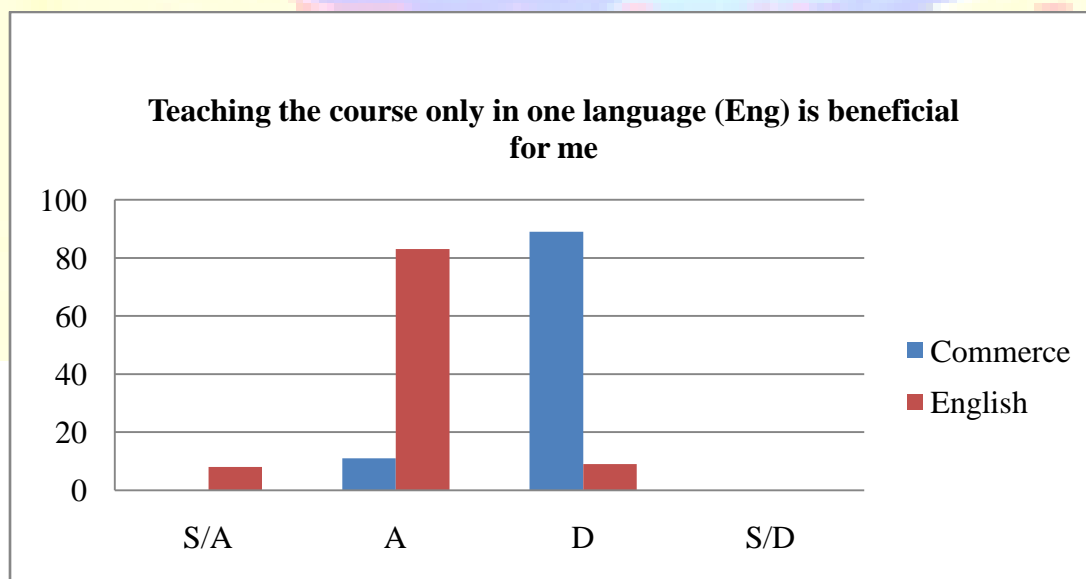


Figure 3 illustrates that most of the Commerce students believe that teaching the course only in English is not beneficial for them (89% disagree, only 11% agree) but English students think that this is beneficial for them if teacher only used English language while teaching (83% agree, 8% strongly agree).

(Figure 4)

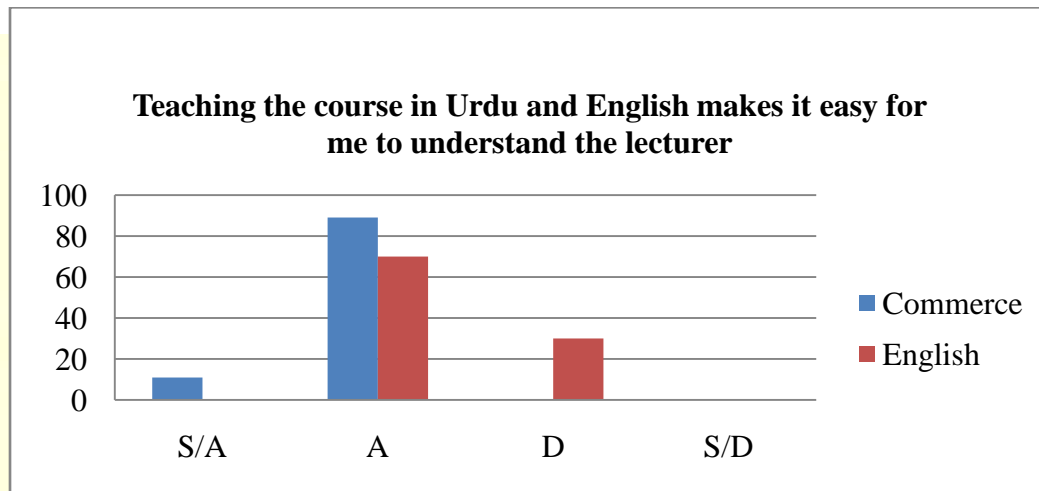


Figure 4 shows that students of both disciplines think that lectures in both languages (Urdu and English) make it easy to understand as Commerce (89% agree, 11% strongly agree) and English department (70% agree). But English discipline students have a negative attitude towards this notion up to some extent as 30% disagree to this.

(Figure 5)

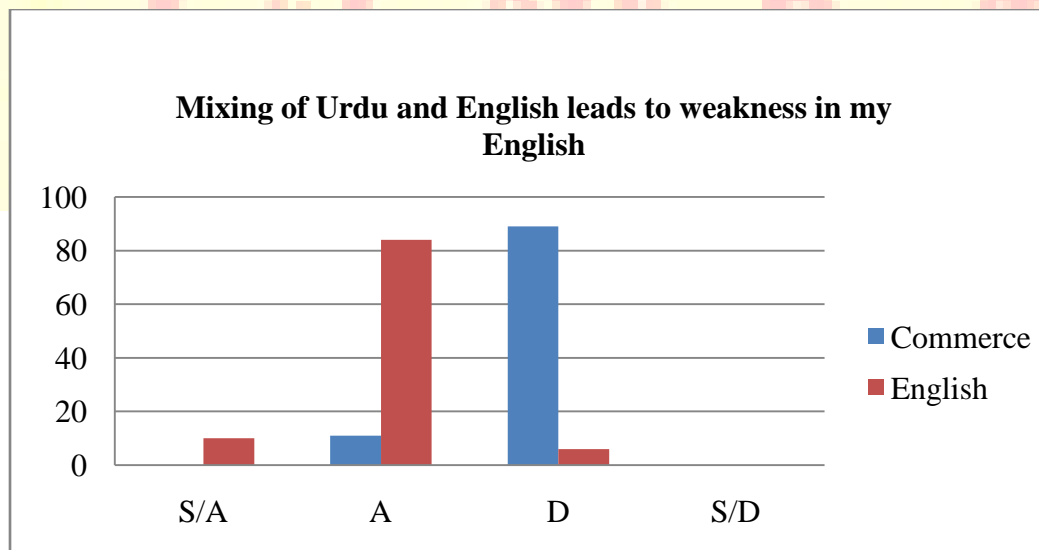


Figure 5 is about mixing of Urdu and English and its effects on English language learning of the students. Commerce students participants do not believe that this phenomenon has weakened their English (89% disagree) but English students think that this is true (84% agree, 10% strongly agree).

(Figure 6)

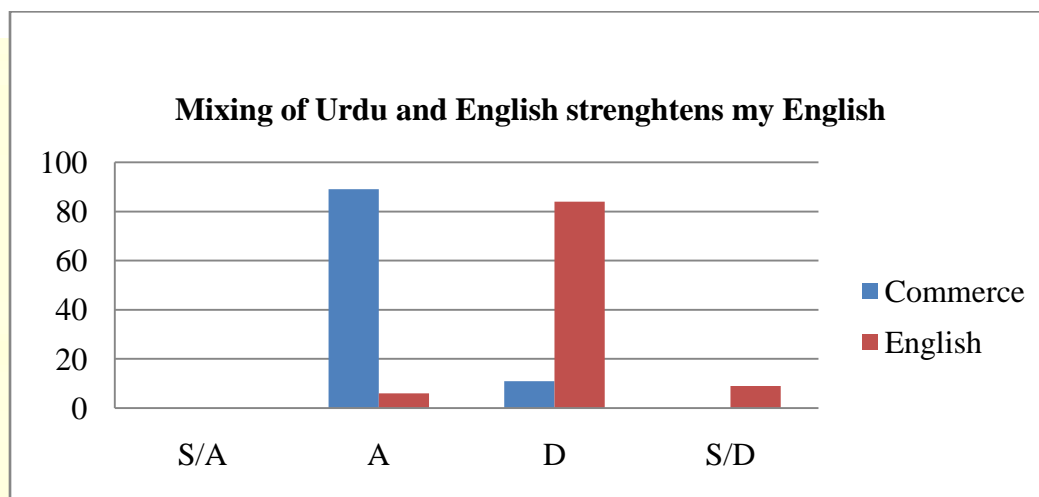


Figure 6 is also about the effects of mixing of Urdu and English and its effects on English language. Most of the Commerce students think that this phenomenon has strengthen their English language learning (89% agree), but English department students do not believe this notion as 84% disagree and 9% strongly disagree to this.

(Figure 7)

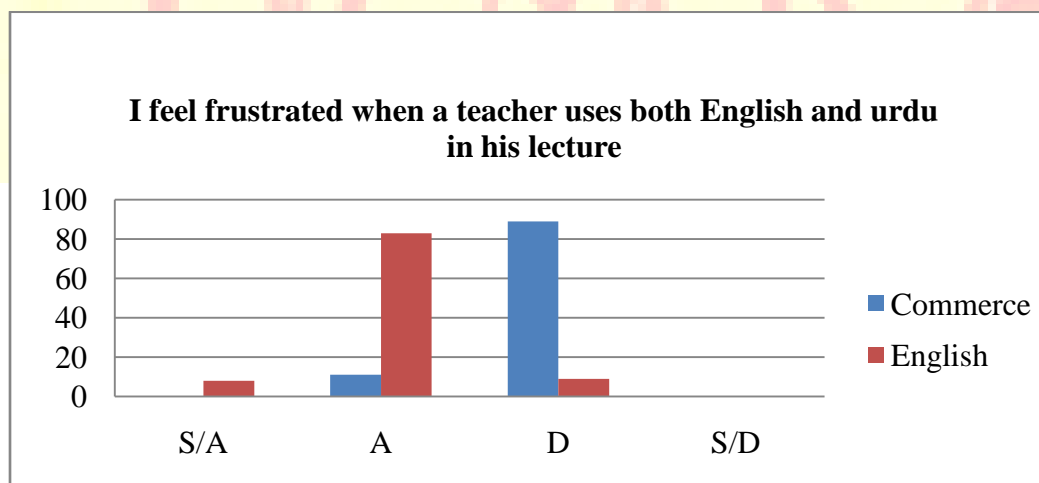


Figure 7 is about students' feelings when an EFL teacher uses both languages (Urdu and English) in his/her lectures. Commerce students do not feel any frustration because of this as 89% disagree, 11% agree. English department students have a negative feeling for this phenomenon as 83% agree, and 8% strongly agree to this statement that they do feel frustrated when their EFL teachers use Urdu and English language together.

4.1 Discussion

As the graphs of the findings of the study clearly illustrate that the overall attitude of Commerce students for using Urdu in the lectures by EFL teachers is positive. Overall 92% of commerce respondents do not want that their EFL teacher minimize the usage of Urdu (L1) in their lectures, 89% of commerce participants disagree that teaching in English only is beneficial for them, all the commerce participants of the present study agreed that usage of L1 (Urdu) makes lecture easier to understand, 89% of commerce participants do not believe that using Urdu(L1) has weaken their English, rather they believe that using Urdu (L1) has strengthen their English and all the participants of commerce department do not feel any frustration because of the code-switching to L1 (Urdu) by their EFL teachers.

Regarding the first research question of the present study about commerce students' attitudes towards EFL teachers' code-switching/code-mixing to L1, it can be asserted from findings of the study that they have a positive attitude towards it.

On the contrary, the English department students have a somewhat negative attitude towards the usage of L1 in the class room by the EFL Teachers. 91% participants of English discipline want that EFL teachers should use minimum L1 (Urdu) in the lectures, overall 91% respondents of English wanted that lecture should be in English only, 70% agree and 30% of the participants from English discipline disagree that code-switching or using L1 (Urdu) make the lecture easy to understand, 94% of English respondents of the study agreed that mixing of Urdu (L1) by the EFL teachers has weaken their English, 93% disagreed that it has strengthen their English and 91% of English discipline participants feel frustrated when their EFL teachers code-switch to L1 (Urdu).

For the second research question of the study, it is quite clear that English Department/Discipline students have a negative attitude towards code-switching to L1 (Urdu) by

EFL teachers in the classroom. It's may be because the of the fact that English students have more fluency in English language as compared to other disciplines , that's why they do not want their EFL teachers to code-switch to L1 .

4.2 Delimitation

Attitude of the students can be investigated in many aspects, like gender, social group, ethnicity etc but this study has studied students' attitudes only with respect to usage of L1 by the EFL teachers in the classroom. Moreover, the study is being conducted in district Sargodha region of Pakistan, so its findings can only be generalizable to this population only

5. Conclusion

From the findings of the study, the present study concludes that, commerce students have a positive, and English discipline students have somewhat a negative attitude towards EFL teachers' code-switching/code-mixing to L1 in the classroom.

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