The Use of Code-switching in the EFL Classroom by Iraqi University Students

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Abstract:

Code-switching refers to using multiple languages concurrently or interchangeably within the same conversation. Code-switching may vary somewhat depending on the change in environment and context, just as its functions. To maintain the continuity of conversations, a speaker can substitute individual words, phrases, or even entire sentences. The aim of the current study is finding out the EFL University students' Code-switching. A sample of (70) students are selected from fourth-year students studying in the Department of English at the College of Education Ibn Rushd at the University of Baghdad for the academic year 2022/2023. Code-switching questionnaire is used and prepared by the researcher. It consists of 20 items, and it has Five-Likert scale items. The findings reveal that the students have moderate level in code-switching. Furthermore, Code-switching is a linguistic strategy used by students to effectively communicate their message. Finally, conclusions are put forward in accordance with the results of the study.

Keywords: (Code-switching, EFL classroom, University students).

استخدام التبادل اللغوي في صفوف تعليم اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية من قبل طلبة الجامعة العراقيين

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الملخص:

يشير التبادل اللغوي إلى استخدام لغات متعددة بشكل متزامن أو تبادلي لنفس المحادثة. قد يختلف التبادل اللغوي إلى حد ما اعتمادًا على التغيير في البيئة والسياق، تمامًا كما تختلف وظائف و للحفاظ على استمرارية المحادثات، يمكن للمتحدث استبدال كلمات فردية أو عبارات أو حتى جمل بأكملها. تهدف الدراسة الحالية الى البحث عن التبادل اللغوي لدى طلبةالجامعة دارسي اللغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية. تم اختيار عينة من (٧٠) طالبًا من طلاب السنة الرابعة الدارسين في قسم اللغة الإنكليزية في كلية التربية ابن رشد/ جامعة بغداد للعام الدراسي ٢٠٢٣/٢٠٢٢. تم استخدام استبيان التبادل اللغوي الذي تم إعداده من قبل الباحث، ويتألف الاستبيان من ٢٠ فقرة، ويحتوي على خمسة مستويات بمقياس ليكرت. تظهر النتائج أن الطلبة لديهم مستوى متوسط في التبادل اللغوي. علاوة على ذلك، يعد التبادل اللغوي استراتيجية لغوية يستخدمها الطللبة للتواصل بفعالية . أخيرًا، تم تقديم استنتاجات وفقًا لنتائج الدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: (التبادل اللغوي ، صفوف تعليم اللغة الانكليزية لغة اجنبية، طلبة الجامعة) .

1. Introduction

Code-switching is a linguistic phenomenon that is connected to bilingualism. It requires individuals to be proficient in two languages to switch between them during communication (Üstünel, 2016). An important challenge in the classroom revolves around the language development of students who engage in code-switching. Code-switching refers to the practice of integrating two languages inside a single clause, sentence, or turn. It is a complex and regulated use of language that provides a distinct chance to examine the complicated characteristics of multilingual speech. An important challenge in the Iraqi classroom is the language development of students who engage in code-switching. While many instructors may exhibit flexibility or a lack of interest others strongly encourage students to communicate in the target language within the classroom exclusively. The problem is that a lot of instructors either do not know how to handle situations where students use

their first language to learn a second language, or they have not had enough training to understand and use this process effectively.

The study aims at: Finding out the EFL University students' Code-switching,

The problem of the study is best expressed through the following questions:

1. Do Iraqi EFL students have Code-switching?
2. Do they prefer Code-switching?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Code switching

Code-switching (CS) is a common phenomenon not only inside the United States but also globally. Code-switching refers to the act of shifting between different languages during a communication. Engaging in routine activities is a regular occurrence among individuals globally, often driven by numerous factors and typically done without conscious awareness. To code effectively, students must demonstrate an extensive knowledge of both cultures, along with complete knowledge of the fundamental structures and objectives of two language systems. Code turning is an ongoing phenomenon in current culture, which highlights distinctions between cultural, generational, and technical users (Algarin-Ruiz, 2014).

Code-switching is a common phenomenon in language institutions. The language classroom environment has characteristics similar to that of a multilingual community. It is well acknowledged that regardless of the kind of class, whether it is EFL or ESL, the language used for instruction is frequently supplemented by the first language (L1) or the target language (TL). The phrase "classroom code-switching" refers to using several linguistic codes in the classroom by any of the students, such as the instructor, students, or teacher assistant (Lin,2013).

Code-switching as described by Ja'afa and Maarof (2016), refers to the act of consistently alternating between two languages in the speech of a bilingual individual. Students may engage in code-switching unconsciously, with a consistent underlying cause for this phenomenon. Code-switching is determined by a combination of linguistic and social factors. Code-switching is a frequently employed linguistic practice in communities that are both multilingual and multicultural. In Asian nations such as Nepal, Pakistan, India, and China, bilingual individuals generally have English as their second language, while their first language is their native tongue and dialect. Similarly, in European multilingual countries like France, Germany, Spain, and Italy, individuals might choose to use the English language as an alternative to their native language for classroom instruction (Bista, 2010; Ja'afar and Maarof, 2016).

Code-switching refers to the practice of combining words, phrases, and sentences from two distinct linguistic systems inside the same conversation or text (Ayeomoni, 2006).Code-switching is the act of incorporating components of speech from two different grammatical systems or subsystems into a present discussion. Code-switching has also been characterized by several linguists. Code-switching refers to the act of alternating between two languages during communication, although both speakers are aware of and understand both languages (Al-Hourani & Afizah, 2013). Code-switching is the systematic practice of using two languages interchangeably within a single discussion. In summary, code-switching refers to the act of transitioning from one language to another throughout a conversation or communication. The term "alternative application" refers to the use of both the first language and the target language for communication purposes by language instructors, when regarded as essential (Parveen & Aslam, 2013).

Alternatively, Abeid Allah (2020)define code-switching as a planned strategy employed by speakers to bridge gaps and address problems in talks.

A language shift is a form of communication strategy, similar to a direct translation. Two Classrooms for the study of a language other than one's native language. Code-switching refers to the practice of switching between several languages or dialects during a conversation. It can serve many purposes, such as seeking help, using non-verbal communication, rephrasing, or avoiding certain topics. In addition, code-switching is considered a "complex strategy" as it allows a bilingual individual to convey their messages beyond what they are saying. Code-switching allows students to have quick and efficient access to many languages.

2.2 Code-switching in the Classroom

Classrooms are formal environments where participants collaboratively construct knowledge. Foreign language instructors guide students' language acquisition via different methods including direct guidance through conversation and indirect support through group and peer discussions, as well as autonomous learning opportunities supported by classroom activities (Alsalami, 2021).

Recently, code-switching has been examined in foreign language classes, shedding light on how students use code-switching as a means of organizing all the activities that create language classrooms. Romylyn (2009) argues that the use of code-switching in teaching and learning environments is justified by its pedagogical and communicative roles. Language contact arises in the EFL classroom when the target language (TL) being studied comes in directly with the learners' native language. According to Hammond (2001), students are simultaneously learning English and communicating in English, indicating that interaction in English in EFL classrooms serves as both input and output.

Interactional exchanges in the classroom do not occur at random, just like in everyday conversation. Each spoken statement has a complicated

relationship to the educational emphasis of the course. Distinct differentiations are made between two kinds of interaction: (a) "exolingual interaction", which refers to interactions between speakers of different languages, and "endolingual interaction", which involves speakers with the same language background; (b) between "unilingual" interactions among monolinguals and "bilingual" interactions among bilinguals. The use of both endolingual and unilingual kinds is relevant to the situation in EFL classes. In this situation, the primary objective of the institution is for the instructor to guide the students in the target language (TL). However, the institution is not explicitly against the use of the student's first language (L1) as a tool in achieving this objective. This has significant implications for the classroom, as the use of L1 can effectively facilitate the learning and teaching of the TL.

Acquiring an extensive detailed and comprehensive understanding of the actual activities that take place in L2 classrooms will enable people to gain knowledge about the practices of foreign language learning and instruction. It is essential that language instructors and instructors of languages educators, in addition to curriculum and materials developers, policymakers, and policymakers, possess this knowledge. This is because the efficacy of developing classroom interactions provides the most accurate evaluation and comprehension of any type of traditional or creative educational practices implemented in the classroom (Ati & Kamil ,2023). In order to gain this comprehension, L2 classroom interactions must be analyzed micro-analytically to reveal intellectual and pedagogical phenomena. This is accomplished by focusing on participants' utterances, non-verbal details of speech, supra-segmental language features, eye movements, gestures, and orientations toward the classroom (Üstünel, 2016).

2.3 Effectiveness of using L1 in Code-switching

Krebt (2022) states that "Mother tongue" means the "first language you learn as a baby instead of a language you learn in school or as an adult." The utilization of the first language (L1) within an educational environment fulfills many purposes. Momenian & Samar (2011) supports the use of L1 in the classroom. they believe that the use of L1 in the classroom is not completely uncooperative, but rather has certain advantageous aspects. According to them, grammar may be clarified through L1 since it allows for a more effective exchange of meaning. Managing the classroom can be facilitated, and the first language (L1) can serve as a tool to utilize. Canagarajah (1999) is another researcher who rejects the elimination of L1 in the classroom. He argues that instructing English without considering student's first language could weaken their abilities in the multilingual environment of the post-modern era. .

2.4 Reasons of Code-switching

Code-switching is a sociolinguistic phenomenon in which people change their language use to demonstrate cooperation, distinguish themselves, participate in social conversations, discuss certain subjects, express emotions, or exercise influence on others. Code-switching may indicate belonging to a particular group and shared cultural background, as well as demonstrate cooperation among persons from identical cultural backgrounds. Distinct languages may also serve to imply a certain social standing or distinguish oneself among different social groups. Those who possess the ability to speak many languages are considered highly educated and may want to produce authority over others who are less proficient in languages. Consequently, it is now possible to use switching codes as a means of demonstrating one's social standing (Sharaf Eldin, 2020) . .

Nordin,et al (2013) have researched the factors that contribute to learners often switching to their native language. It is discovered that code-switching is not a result of inadequate skills, but rather supports many communication

objectives. They highlight the multiple functions of language in foreign language courses, serving as both the medium and content. This enables language instructors to provide L2 information and mold it in a way that is understandable and comprehensible. Utilizing foreign language and interactive tools may enhance student involvement and commitment, both of which are vital for foreign language acquisition. Code-switching has the function of enhancing, highlighting, or clarifying the message content that individuals had attempted to communicate in their second language, but believed that one participant did not understand.

2.5 Functions of Code-Switching in the Language Classroom

Code-switching is an ongoing trend in second language (L2) classroom interactions, used by instructors as well as learners who are learning a foreign language. Using one's native language (L1) often in language learning is commonly seen as a manifestation of carelessness or a lack of proficiency, leading instructors to perceive such learners as performing less than expectations. Students often choose their native language (L1) instead of their second language (L2) while engaging in communication with others. This decision is impacted by the proficiency level of the learners in the classroom. The majority of code-switching happens spontaneously and without conscious effort as a result of this differentiation. When a student shares a similar or dissimilar understanding of the material, the other student inquires and verifies their knowledge, leading to students using code-switching to mutually establish meaning more simply, hence facilitating their learning process (Jingxia, 2010).

3. Methodology
3.1 Population & Sample of the Study

According to Kadhim (2015), a sample is a separate collection of individuals selected to correctly indicate the overall population. The study population consists of fourth-year students studying in the Department of English at the College of Education Ibn Rushd at the University of Baghdad for the academic year 2022/2023. The sample is chosen randomly from that population (Saalh& Kadhim, 2020) . There are overall of **(70)** students in the sample.

3.2 Research Instruments

The present study follows a descriptive quantitative methodology, using a questionnaire as the primary research instrument. Toendan (2013) defines descriptive research as a kind of study that focuses on collecting data to describe current situations. A Likert scale is used as a kind of questionnaire. Cohen (2010) defines a Likert scale as an instrument that presents a series of statements or questions to respondents, who are then asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, as mentioned by Rahmadani (2016).

Code-switching questionnaire is prepared by the researcher   depending on (Obaidullah's questionnaire, 2016) (Simasiku et al, 2015) (Yana & Nugraha,2019) (Shafi et al ,2020). The questionnaire consists of 20 items. It has Five-Likert scale items. The items require students to indicate the level of agreement with each of the (20) items ranging from (strongly disagree = 1) to (strongly agree = 5). The SPSS program is used to calculate the students' responses.

3.3 Face Validity

Validity is how well the test measures what it's meant to measure. This is by far the hardest part of making a positive test (Al-taie, 2009). Abbas & Hindi (2022) state that experts with substantial knowledge of the field of interest should be asked to administer the test to offer constructive feedback and observations that will aid in the advancement of the research effort. The questionnaire items of the present study are evaluated by a group of five experts specializing in methods of teaching English to determine the validity and suitability. Each statement on the questionnaire is valid, according to the jurors whose names are illustrated in Table (1). Regarding the items' clarity, it has been found that the majority of the items are clear and the students encountered no difficulties in responding to the questionnaire items.

Table (1)

The Jury Members' Scientific Qualifications, Names, Specialties, and Places

	Academic Rank	Name	Field	College
1.	Prof.	Shaima Mahdi Salah, Ph.D.	ELT	College of Education for Women/ University of Baghdad.
2.	Prof.	Sabeeha Hamza Dehham, M. A	ELT	College of Basic Education, University of Babylon
3.	Prof.	Zeena Abid Ali ,M.A.		College of Education-University of Al- Mustansiryah
4.	Asst. prof.	Maysaa Rashed, M.A.	ELT	College of Education for Women/ University of Baghdad.
5.	Asst. Prof.	Nuha Amir Kamel, M.A.	ELT	College of Education for Humanities\University of Diyala

3.4 Reliability

A measurement is considered reliable when it produces results that are consistent and have the same values (Blumberg et al., 2005). The Alpha-Cronbach formula is used to calculate the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire, which is (0.80). This value is considered good.

3.5 Final Application

The code-switching questionnaire has been administered to the sample study after verifying their clarity, validity, and reliability. The students' responses are graded based on the alternatives they selected, and the resulting data has been analyzed. Once the students have received the questionnaire, the researcher clarifies and illustrates the questions to avoid any ambiguity. Alsaadi and Hatem (2016) state that Pilot evaluation of the questionnaire is applied to make sure that the statements are clear and to find out the time it will take students to finish and to figure out the reliability ratings of each instrument .The time required to finish the code-switching questionnaire is (30) minutes.

3.6 Internal Consistency Item - Total Correlation

In order to do item analysis on an instrument, Nunnaly (1978) states that it is essential to assess the correlation between the scores given to each item and the total score of the instrument.

The Pearson correlation coefficient is used to compute the item-total correlation of the code-switching questionnaire. All correlation coefficients are statistically significant when compared to the critical value of (0.25) at the level of significance (0.05). This means that the questionnaire can be used to measure the thing it is made to measure (See Table 2).

Table (2)

Pearson - Correlation Coefficient of Code-switching Questionnaire

No.	Pearson Correlation	No	Pearson Correlation
1.	0.252	11.	0.256
2.	0.340	12.	0.275
3.	0.254	13.	0.251
4.	0.255	14.	0.541
5.	0.354	15.	0.447
6.	0.259	16.	0.423
7.	0.274	17.	0.491
8.	0.258	18.	0.259
9.	0.251	19.	0.338
10.	0.250	20.	0.255

4. Results

To achieve the aim of this study which is (**finding out the EFL University students' Code-switching**), the questionnaire is applied to the sample of study consisting of (70) students. The results indicate that the sample mean is (55.0857), the standard deviation is (3.40819) and the theoretical mean is (60). To find out how important the difference between the arithmetic mean and the theoretical mean is, a t-test for one sample is used. The difference is statistically significant it turns out. The t-value that is calculated is (12.064), which is higher than the critical t-value of(1.98) at the 0.05 level of significance and (69)degrees of freedom. This means that EFL students' level is moderate which means that sometimes students code-switching between first language and English language as shown in Table(3).

Table (3)

The Mean Score, Standard Deviation and t-Value of Code-Switching Questionnaire.

Sample	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Theoretical Mean	Degree of freedom	Computed t-test	Critical t-test	Sign. (0.05)
70	55.0857	3.40819	60	69	12.064	1.98	Significant

Accordingly, the question, which is about "do Iraqi EFL students have Code-switching" is answered.

The analysis of the data using descriptive statistics reveals that item number (4), which states "I think code switching to Arabic is an effective strategy for learning English," has the highest weighting mean and percentage of (3.83) and (76.6) respectively as illustrated in Table (5). According to Brown (2014), code-switching is a language strategy used by students to successfully convey their message. Through the use of L1 and L2, students may successfully participate in conversation and access their past knowledge more easily compared to the target language. Code-switching is seen as a "proficient strategy" that enables bilingual students to communicate their thoughts and ideas more effectively, and it is rarely employed as a corrective strategy. However, students in the early phases of acquisition may code-switch, or use their native language as a supplement for absent information, regardless of whether the listener knows that language.

While item (9) "I might continuously use code - switching in my writings as well as speaking" is the item with the lowest weighted mean and percentage (1.51 and 30.2, respectively) as shown in Table (4).Code-switching is employed by speakers for the loss of their lack of proficiency in the target language (TL) by utilizing their first language (L1) to maintain an effortless process of conversation. The majority of code-switching occurs spontaneously and unconsciously due to this difference. When a student has a similar or different comprehension of the content, the other student asks questions and confirms their knowledge, resulting in students employing code-switching to create meaning more easily, hence facilitating

their learning process (Jingxia, 2010). Students often switch to using their native language (L1) when studying a foreign language when their proficiency in the new language is not equal to their native language or that of their instructors. According to Sert (2005), students switch to employing their home language word when they do not have the necessary skills to explain a certain word in the target language.

Table (4) The Frequency Distributions of the Alternatives, Weighting Means, Percentages of code-switching questionnaire items

Items N0.	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	W. mean	Percentages %
4	I think code switching to Arabic is an effective strategy for learning English.	16	32	16	6	0	3.83	76.6
5	Code switching helps me to explain unfamiliar, difficult and new words, terms or expressions.	12	32	22	4	0	3.74	74.8
1	I switch code from English to Arabic in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) classes.	14	22	30	4	0	3.66	73.2
16	I think when the instructor switches from English to Arabic, he or she makes me feel that I am not sufficient enough to understand English.	4	28	36	2	0	3.49	69.8
14	I see code-switching as a valuable tool in the classroom since it helps me to	6	22	38	4	0	3.43	68.6

	understand the complicated matter in an easy way.						
6	Code switching serves as an effective tool for me to make things more clear.	4	26	34	6	0	3.4	68
18	My English language proficiency is affected when instructors switches from English to Arabic.	10	20	28	8	4	3.34	66.8
11	Code-switching by instructor in English classroom makes me easy to understand new vocabularies in English.	4	20	40	6	0	3.31	66.2
3	I remain conscious while switching to Arabic in the class.	2	22	28	18	0	3.11	62.2
12	I will only understand what is explained when the instructors code switch but won't understand it in English.	0	8	32	22	8	2.57	51.4
20	Code-switching is used by instructors when I am unable to understand L2	0	10	26	26	8	2.54	50.8
10	Code-switching for Arabic language in English classroom makes me understand something faster and it helps my instructor in managing the time in	0	2	32	36	0	2.51	50.2

	explaining thing.							
19	I code-switching only when I feel hesitation or uneasiness in L2.	0	12	20	28	10	2.49	49.8
2	Code switching is helpful for me in maintaining discipline in a large class.	0	2	24	26	18	2.14	42.8
15	I am encouraged by instructors to code-switching in some situations.	0	0	20	30	20	2	40
17	Code-switching enhances my learning of the English language.	2	4	12	26	26	2	40
13	Code switching helps the instructors to make class more lively and enjoyable.	0	2	12	32	24	1.89	37.8
7	Without code switching the class becomes monotonous for me.	0	0	14	32	24	1.86	37.2
8	Code switching from me can be encouraged in the class.	0	0	10	38	22	1.83	1.83
9	I might continuously use code – switching in my writings as well as speaking	0	0	2	32	36	1.51	30.2

The proportions above can answer the second question which is about "do Iraqi EFL students prefer Code-switching".

5. Conclusion

Based on the study's results, aims, and questions, the following conclusions have been reached:

1.   Iraqi EFL university students have a moderate level of code-switching because students commonly switch codes throughout their regular conversations.

2.   Iraqi EFL university students have limited exposure to the target language as a result, they engage in code-switching by incorporating English words, phrases, or sentences into their interactions.

3.   Based on the findings of the study, the data supports that code-switching is an effective strategy that may be used in classrooms when there are significant challenges to communication and/or comprehension in using just the target language.

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