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## FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE USE OF CODE-SWITCHING AMONG TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOMS

Sami Irsheid Suliman Almagableh<sup>1\*</sup>, Kamariah Yunus<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Faculty of Languages and Communication  
Email: magablehsami@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup> Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Faculty of Languages and Communication  
Email: kamariah@unisza.edu.my

\* Corresponding Author

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### Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to investigate how ESL teachers in Jordan's secondary schools use their mother languages (L1). This study addresses the purpose of L1, the proportion of L1 in courses with lower and higher ability levels, and teachers' views on utilizing L1 as a pedagogical tool to facilitate target language (TL) learning. The study discovered that instructors typically employed students' first languages (L1) when instructing at lower competency levels in order to accommodate their limited language skills and to foster a less frightening learning environment. The study also discovered that in the ESL classroom, students' first language is employed for educational, managerial, and interactional objectives. Higher competence levels used it mostly for interaction. The majority, in general, expressed approval for the use of L1 because they believed that it assisted students in learning languages by lowering their emotional filters and making the information more intelligible. The findings imply that using the students' first language (L1) may be a useful strategy to speed up TL acquisition. The research recommends that teachers receive training on the most effective ways to use L1 to maximize language acquisition and it's potential.

### Keywords:

Code Switching, Purpose of L1, Strategy, Language Acquisition, Target Language (TL).

## Introduction

English, in Jordan has “a visible presence” (Karunaratne, 2009) in society as it is the language learnt by many Jordanians as their second language (L2) (Udagama, 1999). It is also considered a lingua franca among the speaker’s languages, (Brann, 1985, as cited in Karunaratne, 2009). Though English is considered a second language, it has always occupied a unique position in the country since it “is typically the language of choice in contemporary governmental policies and practices” (McArthur, 2002, p.329). Confirming this, Thiru Kandiah (2010) too claims that English is widely used in most of the important spheres of society. In Jordan, current information is primarily available in English. Due to this, much importance is attributed to the teaching of English at elementary, secondary and tertiary levels. Although in most government schools students study either in Arabic, English is offered as a language to be learned. In certain urban schools, it is used as the medium of instruction to teach the curriculum. Despite English being taught at school, the proficiency level of students varies from region to region, school to school and from person to person depending on the language spoken in the students’ home, the age at which the learner was exposed to English, socio-economic variables and the opportunities available for them to acquire the language (Karuanratne, 2009).

Having recognized the importance of English, the ministry of education in Jordan offers proficiency courses in the English language that aim at improving students’ language skills which, in turn, help them perform their academic activities well. The current study focuses on secondary schools where the medium of instruction is English and Arabic. Unlike secondary schools in other countries where the medium of instruction is English.

Due to this, much dependency on the teachers is visible especially in the lower proficiency ESL classrooms. Under these circumstances, teacher talk and how teachers modify input to maximize comprehension are of crucial importance in the context of the English classrooms. Teachers use a number of strategies to modify input to optimize uptake in the ESL classrooms. Among these strategies, code-switching (CS) to the learner’s L1, according to observations, is a widely occurring phenomenon. CS is defined as the alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation (Milroy and Muysken, 1995) and “by definition is only available to bilingual teachers” (Macaro, 2005, p.63).

Although this area has been researched extensively using a variety of approaches in other parts of the world, not much research has been focused on CS in the Jordan context. Therefore, it has been felt important to investigate the purpose served by CS in the secondary schools' ESL classrooms. Besides, qualitative and quantitative analyses of the functions of CS would also enable teachers to make informed decisions about whether they should or should not incorporate CS to their language teaching pedagogy.

Consequently, this current study aims at finding out factors contributing to the use of code-switching among teachers and students in their interactions and to investigate whether do teachers in low proficiency classes code-switch to the learners’ L1 more often than teachers teaching in higher proficiency classes in private secondary schools in Jordan.

## Literature Review

Previous research shows that switching between different languages is common language behavior that occurs in any interaction between speakers who share knowledge of the same language (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015; Lo, 2015; Raschka, Sercombe & Chi-Ling, 2017).

This language behavior is known as code-switching, an area of study that developed more recently into translanguaging, a different perspective that the language user's linguistic repertoire examined holistically. Code-switching conceptualized as a simple shift between codes or languages Zainil, Y. (2019). In the context of this study, code-switching is used as the term to preserve the binaries, as L1 seen as mediating the FL and therefore functioning as an educational tool Hinrichs, L. (2018).

Code-switching requires competence in all languages involved, and therefore it is simplistic to consider it as a simple mixture of two languages Schmidt, A. (2014). In a similar vein, Moghadam, Samas, & Shahraki (2012: 2219) define code-switching as “shifting from one language to another in a conversation. It is a normal everyday practice among people in the world for various reasons and usually an unconscious activity”. This study follows Le, T. N. H. (2022). Definition of code-switching and concludes that code-switching, like the alternation between two languages in the same discourse, is a common phenomenon in the present day bilingual classroom.

Wei, L. (2020) stated that all speakers have the ability to use language varieties in their language repertoire. That means different things depending on the speaker and context. For instance, bilingual speakers often use two languages within the same setting when they code-switch, whereas monolingual speakers code-switch within their language repertoire, which can, for example, be the use of dialects and separate words from other languages (Schendl and Wright). Some scholars like Kachru (1983), Annamali (1989), Bokamba (1988), Sridhar and Sridhar (1980), Hamers and Blanc (1990), Bhatia (1992), Poplack (1980) treat these phenomena as the distinct manifestations. Some other scholars like Eastman (1992), Scotton (1992), however, consider that there is no distinction between them.

### ***Factors for Code-Switching***

Topical knowledge is defined as knowledge structures in long-term memory Purpura, J. E. (2017). In other words, topical knowledge is the speakers' knowledge of relevant topical information. The information that topical knowledge provides enables learners to use language with reference to the world in which they live. Purpura, J. E. (2017) state certain test tasks may be easier for those who possess the relevant topical knowledge and more difficult for those who do not. Purpura, J. E. (2017) believe that topical knowledge has effects on speaking performance.

In order to help students overcome problems in learning speaking, it is necessary for the teachers to figure out factors that affect their speaking performance. Students' speaking performance can be affected by the factors that come from performance conditions (time pressure, planning, standard of performance and amount of support), affective factors such as motivation, confidence and anxiety, listening ability and feedback during speaking activities. Students perform a speaking task under a variety of conditions. Haidara, Y. (2016) believe that performance conditions can affect speaking performance. The four types of performance conditions that Haidara, Y. (2016) suggest include time pressure, planning, the standard of performance and the amount of support.

However, one of the most important influences on language learning success or failure is probably the affective side of the learner (Oxford, 1990). Krashen (1982) states that a variety of affective variables has been confirmed to be related to success in second language

acquisition in research over the last decade but most of those studies examined the three categories: motivation, self-confidence and anxiety.

Speaking skills cannot be developed unless we develop listening skills Liando, N. V., Sahetapi, R. J., & Maru, M. G. (2018). Students must understand what is said to them to have a successful conversation. Shumin (2015) shares the ideas of Doff (2017) by stating that when one person speaks, the other responds through attending by means of the listening process. In fact, every speaker plays the role of both a listener and a speaker. Therefore, one is certainly unable to respond if he/ she cannot understand what is said. It means speaking is closely related to listening.

### ***Code-Switching in Classroom***

Within the foreign/second language classroom, code-switching is considered as distinct from social code-switching (Castellotti & Moore, 2018; Simon, 2017). As pointed out by Simon (2017), the teachers and students in the foreign language classroom can be considered as members of the same speech community to the extent that, as defined by Maynard, D. W., & Turowetz, J. (2013). They may be viewed as speakers who “share knowledge of the communicative constraints and options governing a significant number of social situations” (p. 17). However, as discussed by Simon (2017), the participants in this context differ from those involved in social code-switching contexts in at least three specific ways.

First, participants in language classes possess a dissymmetrical mastery of the codes in touch as opposed to social code-switching. As a result, the language of the school, which is typically the community language in a situation where foreign languages are taught, is shared by both instructors and pupils. In contrast, teachers often have a far stronger command of the language than do pupils. Despite the inherent limitations of the educational contract, which emphasises the necessity to speak the target language, the opportunity to engage in code-switching is increased in situations where participants share the linguistic resources represented by the language of the school and community. The sociocultural gap between the target language and the original language is another factor that could have an impact on how often the native language is utilised.

Second, another difference with respect to the language classroom pertains to the institutionally and socially defined dual roles and statuses of the participants. In terms of the institutionally defined roles, the teacher is viewed as a knowledge-giver and the students as knowledge-acquirers. Thus, as part of the pedagogical contract linking the 19 participants, the obligation of language teachers is to teach the target language whereas in the students' case there is the implicit obligation for them to use and learn the target language. However, both students and teachers, especially language teachers who are non-native speakers of the target language, often share the language code of the community of which they are all members. The teacher's insistence on the use of the target language can on the one hand serve as a boundary maintaining mechanism whereas instances when the teacher allows for a change to the first language may serve a boundary levelling functioning.

Although code-switching research is mostly associated with the field of bilingual environments and communities, code-switching in the foreign language classroom is, according to Sert an extensively observed phenomenon. In their work on code-switching, Adriosh, M., & Razi, Ö. (2019) state that research on code-switching in the classroom has been conducted for almost

two decades. Lee, H. L. J. (2016) claims that there has been a development in the research of code-switching in foreign language learning. The language classroom has become interesting for researchers. According to Heugh, K. (2021) Code-switching in the foreign language classroom is international; there has been research on this in the United States, South America, Canada, Europe and South East Asia.

### **Significance of the Study**

According to Maluleke, M. J. (2019) it is necessary to discover if a study has importance before it started. Although there exists a significant body of research on the influence of code-switching, to date, very few studies have looked at the impact of code-switching on learning English language speaking skill based on secondary schools, but the majority conducted on universities. Also, previous studies have been conducted examining the use of code switching while teaching reading, writing, and grammar skills. This research, therefore, aims to contribute to understanding of this issue. As far as the attitudes towards code-switching in the language classroom are concerned, most existing research has conducted with teachers and researchers have not focused on the influence of this phenomenon on teaching English speaking skill. Therefore, this study will investigate this phenomenon. By exploring the effect of code-switching on teaching the English language, it expected insights will help better understand Arabic learners' views, and the ways in that the code-switching may weakness their second language learning.

Finally, this study is significant for its contribution to the field of teaching English as Second Language learners. It hoped that this study will provide direction to language teachers and can be used to inform language policies more broadly related to the role of code-switching in the English as a Second Language classroom. It also hoped that this study adds essential information and understanding of students' attitudes and motivation. Arabic learners' perspectives on code-switching may also serve as a basis to ensure that classroom language plans are relevant and sensitive to learner needs. It hoped that the study acknowledges as a worthwhile contribution to the effective delivery of educational approaches and instructors in English as a Second Language in the classrooms.

### **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The scope of the research was limited in several ways. First, the focus was narrowed to one district in Jordan. It was conducted in private secondary schools in the Irbid district. Second, it concentrated on the English language's speaking skills and not on other types of language skills like writing, listening, and reading. The dissertation focuses specifically on the influence of code-switching on teaching English language skills in Jordanian private secondary schools. Furthermore, the study focuses on secondary school students rather than university students.

The limitation of the study is the sampling method and small sample size. The sample was chosen through a purposive sampling procedure rather than random assignment. Also, the sample size is small compared with the number of private schools in Jordan; it is only in three schools. On the other hand, private schools are completely confidential in their work, and managers may not allow the researcher to conduct class observations and interviews because they may perceive this as an assessment of the school's and the teachers' performance and because it may negatively affect the school's reputation if the report from the findings is negative.



## Methodology

The instruments were employed in this study to explore teachers' and students' use of code switching in the classroom and investigate the extent to which code-switching improves students' speaking skills. The researcher used interview to attain the study's purpose and answer its questions. Semi-structured interview was used in this study to be able to address the background questions. The researcher used a recorder to record and save students'-teachers' responses to the interview questions in this context. The recorded content was transcribed into a written form. Then, it would be attached to be reported in the study.

The researcher interviewed 6 students and 6 teacher's participants from the entire purposive sample. The rationale for choosing six is stemmed from the fact that the researcher will obtain in-depth and valuable information from participants as they respond to the interview questions. King, N., Horrocks, C., & Brooks, J. (2018) warned the researchers against supposing that "six to twelve interviews will always be sufficient to achieve the desired research objective purposive samples still require to be carefully selected". Nevertheless, the researcher believes that the number of interviewees in the current study is sufficient since the number is enough to achieve the study's objective. The interviews were conducted after the final classes had ended during the final week, according to the teacher's availability. By the time the interviews were conducted, the teacher had been informed that the focus of the study is code-switching.

## Data Transcription and Coding

Interview were transcribed and coded solely by the researcher. This process was guided by the grounded theory transcription and analysis techniques (Charmaz, 2014). The participant was anonymized using a pseudonym. Student images were not allowed to be captured as part of the research permission agreement between the schools directors. The video was filmed by the researcher, 18 September 2022). All audio captured from students on the video was anonymized by S (student).

## Coding

Video and interview transcripts were uploaded into the Atals.ti qualitative research software, where I applied the coding process, staying "close to the ground" and interpreting the data for what it is at the most concrete level Levitt, H. M. (2018). Using this software allowed me to organize and compile codes used repeatedly throughout the analysis process. I coded phrase by phrase, using gerunds and *in vivo* codes to pull out what was being said by the participant's own words as much as possible. This coding was also applied to observation notes, which often were coded together with the spoken words. Moreover, this method of analysis helped me to maintain researcher subjectivity and resist the need to make interpretations upon first glance at the transcript. As the data reached saturation, codes were used repeatedly, providing moments of discourse that could be used in support of triangulation. As data collection continued, my coding moved further away from line by line, providing reusable codes that resulted in the creation of a code book within the Atlas.ti software Levitt, H. M. (2018). This codebook was later applied to the interview transcript analysis. Because of the vast number of codes that were obtained during first layer of analysis, the data was revisited multiple times to condense them by combining codes with similar meaning. This process allowed for the codes to be raised into conceptual categories or families that helped to reveal overall themes (Harry et al., 2017)

## Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of the data analysis performed to address and answer the research questions posed in this current study, which focuses on investigating the phenomenon of code-switching and how teacher-student interactions in Jordanian private secondary schools. The findings for this research study are related to the qualitative findings. The interview aimed to examine and compare the extent of code-switching usage by teachers and students in an English classroom and the usefulness of such use.

There are two main themes in the findings emerging from the interview. These themes are further divided into content-related and non-content-related themes. The code-switching phenomenon of teachers is presented and investigated. Each term is defined before the actual analysis begins. Information that relates to code-switching in the classes through teacher-student interaction is highlighted in grey to differentiate it from non-code-switching (English language). The switches to Arabic are in bold, and their translations are indicated in italics. The study conducted three classroom observations, observing each class three times and videotaping it three times.

**Table 4.8: Distinctions Between Code-Switching And Non-Code-Switching Methods While Interacting**

The Interview Question	Main Theme	Sample quotation
Q3- What are the key distinctions between code-switching and non-code-switching methods while interacting with the students?	<b>Positives Effect</b>	P2-helping the student to understand the information P2-helping the weak-level of students in the basic stages. P5-Gaining Time P5-Filling a linguistic gap P3-Motivating student interaction in Classroom P3-Constituting a bridging structure
	<b>Negative Effect</b>	P1-using the code-switching will weaken the student's English speaking skills P1-using the code-switching weakens the student's language abilities and weakens the self-confidence P4-having a negative impact on improving the educational process in secondary schools in Jordan

Two categories emerged and are shown in Table 4.8. To show the difference between using the code-switching and non-code-switching during the teacher's interaction with his students. Through the teachers' answers, two categories were found that explain the difference, and from this point, some teachers see that the use of the code has a negative and positive impact on students. As for the positive effect, it helps to shorten the time, deliver the information to the student faster, help the students interact, and fill the linguistic gaps among the students. As for the negative effect, it weakens students' speaking skills and their self-confidence. It also has a negative impact on the development of education in Jordan.

How code-switching shapes the learning process for students were also investigated during the interview. Table 4.9 displays themes that will explain.

**Table 4.9: Code-Switching Shaping The Learning Process For Students.**

The Interview Question	Main Theme	Sample quotation
Q4 Based on your understanding, how does the use of code-switching shape the learning process of your students?	To overcome the difficulties	P6-in order to overcome the difficulties. in front of the students P6-The use of the code-switching in the educational process constitutes approximately 65% of the class session,
	Clarify new concepts	P5- to explain some meanings and these meanings constitute ambiguity among students P5-constitutes perhaps 90% of the interaction between the teacher and the students using the Arabic language

Thematic analysis was conducted to answer interview question 4. As mentioned above in Table 4.9, most of the teachers answered that the use of the L1 in teaching constitutes a large percentage of the process they shape for their students. P5 said that the use of the L1 in the classroom during teaching constitutes 90% of the educational process for students. Another teacher (P6) said that using the L1 makes up 65% of the educational process. These percentages are consistent with the results of previous studies, which say that the teacher uses the L1 while teaching students.

Contributing factors that lead to code-switching will explain in Table 4.10 in details.



**Table 4.10: Contributing Factors That Lead To Code-Switching**

The Interview Question	Main Theme	Sample quotation
Q5 Most likely, there are contributing factors that lead to code-switching. Can you explain some?	Weak level of students	P3-students' weakness P3-Weakness of students in vocabulary
	Shy students and self-confidence	P2-shyness P2-Students anxiety
	Linguistic abilities	P5-weakness of language abilities P5-Linguistic structures
	Differences in cultures	P6- Some of the terms are difficult to understand so I had to use Arabic culture
	Motivate student interaction in classroom	P1-teacher use the Arabic language to motivate students to interact
	Fear of making mistakes	P1-fear of speaking English ashamed of their fellow students

Many factors contributed to the use of the L1 while the teacher taught his students the English language. Among these factors, as mentioned by the participants, are the students' poor level of English language, fear, embarrassment, and lack of self-confidence, which are the main reasons why the student stays away from using the English language during his interactions with his fellow students and also during his interactions with the teacher for fear of making mistakes and being ridiculed and laughed at by his colleagues. Also, the difference in cultures between the English language and the Arabic language forces the teacher to use the L1. Weakness of students in vocabulary and language abilities.

### Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of the third research question of the study was to reveal the thoughts and beliefs of students about the teacher's L2 use in the classroom. According to the findings, students think that English must be taught using the L2 due to increased exposure and meaningful and effective learning; it also helps learners become more familiar with the language. On the other hand, they also believe that L1 must not be prevented and must be used while teaching grammar. This idea seems similar to that of teachers about L1 and L2 use in the classroom, and it supports the idea of Brook-Lewis (2009). Students also think that their teachers must encourage them to use the L2. Frohm (2009) states that the L2 use of teachers can encourage learners to use L2 in the classroom as well.

According to the findings, it can be said that teachers highly agree with the idea that L2 use can provide language exposure for students and that L2 use has advantages for learners' language learning processes, such as correcting students, providing meaningful learning, motivating students, etc. These ideas seem similar to those of Turnbull and Arnett (2012) because they also claim that the L2 use of teachers provides exposure for students and affects their achievements. Larsen Freeman (2015) also states that students who are exposed to L2 input show the greatest proficiency. Moreover, teachers do not think that L2 use in the

classroom is time-consuming and tiring, contrary to Bateman (2008). They think that it is easier to warm up students with L2, and L2 is an effective tool to correct the errors of the students.

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## Appendix A

### Sample of transcription for students interview

1. What is your view on using code-switching in teaching and learning in Jordanian secondary schools?

### Transcription

P1

I think that the use of the code-switching will have many negative effects, but the weak level of students in the basic stages pushes the teacher to use such a phenomenon as an assistant for the English language

P2

The use of the code-switching in secondary schools is a negative thing, and the best way to learn English is to use the English language only

P3

Whoever directed my attention when it is difficult for me to convey information to the student will resort to using the code-switching in order to simplify this information and remove the confusion that the student had in order to clarify this confusion so that we have achieved all the objectives of the class session. If we do not do this, it will lead to the accumulation of problems on top of each other.

Also, from my point of view, the terms of the English language are in constant development, but the terms of the Arabic language are fixed and do not change, so because of the cultural development and the contemporary development that is taking place in the world, they invite us to use the code-switching to clarify some new concepts

P4

I think that the use of the code-switching has several aspects, some of them are negative and some are positive when some students are scientifically and academically weak, so they need to understand the lesson by learning words and vocabulary and absorbing questions in the Arabic language, not only in the English language, due to their weakness in memorizing words and acquiring basic skills such as reading and writing listening and conversing.

Many language experts agreed that listening is closely related to conversation, so if the learner cannot hear, that means that he will not be able to speak. This applies to students, the more they listen to English, and the more English they speak. Therefore, it is important to pair the English language with the Arabic language so that students can acquire the necessary skill and knowledge.

P5

From my point of view, the use of the code-switching is necessary to simplify some ideas in the English language so that the student can understand the meaning of them in the classroom, especially students who are weak in the English language

P6

I think that using the code-switching to support the teaching process is logical, helps the teacher to communicate the ideas he wants in a smooth and easy way, and also helps the students to interact actively with the teacher.

---

Q 2 Most likely, you are using code-switching in class. Can you explain why you used code-switching while interacting with your students?

### **Transcription**

P1 I use the code in order to consolidate the information with the students and help them not to forget it. I also use the code to motivate the students to interact and participate in the classroom.

P2 It is important to use the Arabic language because of the differences in cultures between Arabic and English, so the teacher must use the Arabic language sometimes, and therefore to make the students understand the English culture

P3 Because I find it difficult to separate the mother tongue from the English language. Also use the code-switching in order to overcome the difficulties in the English language curriculum and make a lot of terms and information easier. Also, the students' weakness in the English language forces me to switch to using the Arabic language so that I can deliver the information correctly to the students.

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**Q3 What are the key distinctions between code-switching and non-code-switching methods while interacting with the students?**

(Transcription)

**Q4 Based on your understanding, how does the use of code-switching shape the learning process of your students?**

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**Q5 Most likely, there are contributing factors that lead to code-switching. Can you explain some?**

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**Q6 To what extent can code-switching improve teaching in Jordanian secondary schools?**

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**Q7 What is your suggestion about using code-switching in interacting with the students?**

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**Q8 What is the acceptability of using code-switching in the Jordanian secondary school curriculum?**

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**Q9 Are there any challenges attached to using code-switching in interacting with students?**

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**Q10 What are the benefits of using code-switching in interacting with students?**

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(Themes)

**To overcome the difficulties**

Also use the code-switching in order to overcome the difficulties in the English language curriculum and make a lot of terms and information easier... P3

in order to overcome the difficulties in front of the students and to deliver the information to them in the form of a family...P2