The Function of Code-Switching in EFL Classroom at Tishk International University

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Abstract: The utilization of code-switching in EFL classrooms among instructors is quite common in the education field as a teaching tool. However, code-switching has been a critical issue for some teachers because they think it decreases students' performance. In contrast, other teachers use code-switching as a teaching tool. Instructors and students of the English language in Kurdistan higher education institutions tend to use two or more languages alternately and fluently for a variety of reasons and functions in bilingual classes. The paper aims to examine the function of code-switching (CS) on EFL students. Moreover, it investigates the instructor's view toward CS in ESL classrooms. The observation and interview were carried out to collect data among three different groups of twenty-five students. The result of the observation was compared to the interview result for better analysis. Finally, the finding of this paper proves that lectures code-switch for different purposes: explaining the topic, asking the question, checking students' understanding, and classroom management. In addition, during the interview, two lecturers claimed that they do not employ code-switching in the classroom, but it was observed that they do when instructing.

1. Introduction

In many societies, it is common for people to speak more than one language. Multilingual situations exist in every country, among people of various ages and social backgrounds (Grosjean, 1982). The Kurdish people are mostly considered a multilingual nation since the Kurdish are part of other countries that speak different languages. For example, Southern Kurdistan refers to the Kurdish-populated part of northern Iraq. It is considered one of the four parts of "Kurdistan" in Western Asia, which also includes parts of southeaster Turkey, northern Syria, and north-western Iran. After collapsing Iraqi government in 2003 a new era dawned many international companies came and worked in Iraq and Kurdistan precisely. Due to rising international companies, the English language was added to the government's education, economic, and commercial systems in the Kurdish (Youssef, 2012). English has become a prestigious language in most universities in the Kurdistan. Increasing the significance of the English language as well as popular opinion toward English as a lingua franca, has led the integrating English in education system. This impulse of the English language encourages students to use English in the classroom while speaking and

using their mother tongue outside the classroom, especially in international universities.

It is common in linguistic phenomena to combine or use two languages. For example, if students cannot process the ability to speak English, they will use mother tongue phrases or words to explain themselves if they speak English in the classroom. Shifting or mixing between one language and another is called code-switching (Muysken, 1995). Many studies on code-switching in the classroom were conducted by researchers (Jones, 1995). (Pennington, 1995; Lin, 1995; Martin, 1999; Canagarajah, 1995; Camille, 1995; Erlys, 2008). Code-switching is quite common in classroom interaction by both teachers and students (Shin, 2000). Teachers' code-switching behavior is unacceptable due to past views that code-switching is a sign of laziness and deficiency (Shin, 2000). Over the last few decades, advocates have attempted to answer the question of whether code-switching can be utilized as a teaching tool or will reduce students' performance in the classroom (Lemon, 2020). The earlier studies on code-switching consist of two significant views. First, teaching can be more effective when code-switching is integrated, allowing a balance between both languages and making it easier to cope with the learning and teaching teacher and students. Cook (2002) explained the importance of L1 by giving some suggestions and techniques for using the mother language while teaching L2. Littlewood and Yu (2011) also supported using L1 while teaching L2, especially when both teacher and learner have the same mother tongue. Michael Yoder, (2017) described the role of L1 in the EFL classroom as "anxiety reduction or simple confirmation of learners' identities in their dominant language." In 2006, Munoz said that "code-switching" is a way to communicate emotions and build both individual and group knowledge by switching between different words. In other words, code-switching increases students' confidence by providing a comfortable environment. Second, code-switching decreases students' performance. It will not allow students to use the target language properly. However, code-switching among teachers is quite common in EFL classrooms. Most of them use it as a teaching tool for a variety of purposes, including instruction, grammatical explanation, solidarity, and explaining a new concept (Said, 2018). The purpose of this study is to better understand teachers' unfavourable attitudes toward code-switching and the role of code-switching in EFL classrooms. This study tries to understand the negative beliefs of teachers toward code-switching and the function of code-switching in EFL classrooms. Also, the second most crucial aspect that the study focuses on is that it attempts to know the teachers' views on the function behind their cod-switching. The study's second most important component is that it seeks to understand the teachers' perspectives on the function of their cod-switching. Furthermore, the study attempts to fill a gap in Tishk University in which lectures and the mentality of the majority of Kurdish lecturers, who refuse to embrace incorporating the Kurdish language into the teaching process based on previous beliefs that lack academic support. Such a study should be conducted in an EFL classroom where teachers use more than one language. Tishk University is a multilingual organization where three languages are used: Kurdish, English, and Turkish. Therefore, it can be a perfect sample for exploring code-switching in the classroom. Students utilize Kurdish as their mother tongue. English is the medium of instruction, which means English is used to teach academic subjects besides English. In comparison, Turkish is the mother tongue of half of the employees and teachers. The variety of languages allows one to communicate in more than one language and switch from one language to another.

2. Code-switching

2.1 Historical Background

To grasp the concept of code-switching and prevent ambiguity regarding elements impacting code-switching, we must first go back to the code-switching division. Code-switching is divided into four types: grammatical, ungrammatical, metaphorical, and situational code-switching approaches. Grammatical and ungrammatical focus on language structure, while metaphorical and situational approaches focus on practical aspects. Grammatical and ungrammatical techniques concentrate on the structure of the language, whereas metaphorical and situational approaches concentrate on the practical elements. The sociolinguist approach to metaphorical code-switching is the basis of this study, which aims to improve conversational behaviors including topic, explanation, and elaboration. There have been many definitions by scholars for code-switching (Bernstein, 1971; Muysken, 1995; Shay, 2015; Wardhaugh, 2010; Cook, 2002; Diaz, 2000; Bullock, 2009; Youssef, 2012). The concept of code was first described by Bernstein (1971) as a system of signals (numbers, words, songs) which carry the concert meaning. On the other hand, Wardhaugh (2010) stated that code, rather than phrases like language, dialect, or style, is a neutral term. He said that a code might be any communication technique used by two or more people. When two people communicate with each other, the system that they use is called "Code." However, when two people communicate, they may require shifting or switching their code from one code to another. This process of shifting is called code-switching (Shay, 2015). Linguistics has paid a lot of attention to the phenomenon of code-switching. Many scholars have defined code-switching as a communicant's employment of more than one language in the performance of a speech act (Muysken, 1995). According to Diaz (2000), it is a process in which at least two languages' lexical and syntactic traits coexist in similar phrases. According to Cook (2002), code-switching is the process of moving from one language to another when both speakers are conversant in that language. Lightburn (2015) defines it as the systematic use of two languages or language varieties within a single discourse or statement. Gardner and Charles (2001) define it as moving. Back and forth between two languages, dialects, or registers of the same language occurs significantly more frequently in conversation than in writing (Gardner & Charles, 2001; Youssef, 2012). Furthermore, code-switching refers to the ability of bilinguals who alternate between the two languages effortlessly (Bullock, 2009). Code-switching has been divided into two categories in terms of grammar; inter-sentential and intra-sentential, or we can consider them as types of code-switching. Inter-sentential code-switching involves sentence boundary where the switch appears after the first language has been uttered, and the second sentence occurs later (Romaine, 1989). The second type, which is intra-sentential, involves when one word or phrase from another language is inserted into the sentence of the first language (Narasuman, 2019). In the study conducted by Koban and Didam in 2013 to explore the frequency of inter-sentential and intra-sentential among Turkish bilinguals in New York City, they found that intra-sentential occurs at a higher rate than inter-sentential.

2.2 The Function of Code-Switching in the EFL Classroom

Scholars have emphasized the relevance of code-switching in EFL classrooms. According to research on this topic, instructors' code-switching in the classroom serves a variety of purposes. Code-switching in the bilingual classroom has been described by Martin Jones as follows: "While the languages used in a bilingual classroom are bound to be associated with a variety of cultural values, it is oversimplifying to

claim that whenever a bilingual with the same language background as the learners switches to shared codes, he or she is automatically expressing solidarity with the learners." In bilingual classroom communication, code-switching is used in a subtler and varied way. Teachers and students use code contrasts to distinguish between different types of speech, to negotiate and renegotiate shared frames of reference, and to impulsively interchange meaning (Jones, 2000). Mirhasani (2009) based the research on a series of video recordings of classroom interaction between teachers and Swedish students learning French as a second language, which were reinforced by backup audio recordings. He came to the following conclusions: Linguistic insecurity, topic switching, affective function, and socializing function are all examples of linguistic insecurity. Canagarajah (1995) carried out studies in Jaffin, the capital city of the northern province of Sri Lanka, to find out various functions of code-switching, such as giving directions, managing discipline, giving commands, reviewing content, and requesting assistance. He also divided functions into two categories, classroom management and contend transition. Classroom management functions were: opening the class, negotiating directions, requesting help, managing discipline, teacher encouragement, teacher compliments, teacher's commands, teacher admonitions or warnings, mitigation, pleading, and unofficial interactions. Review, definition, explanation, negotiating cultural relevance, parallel translation, and unofficial student collaboration were the functional categories for content transmission. Nzwang, (2000) investigated the use of code-switching in a French course at Ohio State University. According to his findings, teachers employed code-switching to explain, remark on, and practice the target language. On the other hand, the researcher (Gulzar, 2010) attempted to identify the reason behind teacher code-switching and the function of their code-switching in Pakistani EFL classrooms. He noticed that teachers code-switch in the classroom and identified the factors behind teachers' code-switching: instruction, creating a sense of belonging, checking the understanding, translation, socializing, and emphasizing. The result of his study was that code-switching mainly occurred in the classroom to meet the whole file needs of students. Samar (2011) conducted a study on the function of code-switching among advanced and elementary students and teachers. The study data were collected through two questionnaires, one for teachers and one for students. According to the findings, female students code-switch for a variety of reasons, including finding equivalents, commenting on the assignment, participating in group work, taking the floor, and emphasizing the utterance. Code-switching by male students demonstrated commitment to their original language by adding a comedic sense to their utterances, adding color to the speech, and code-switching when the issue under discussion demanded it. While researchers (Mora, 2006) employed videotape to capture the function of code-switching among teachers and students while conducting a study on the function of code-switching in EFL classrooms north of Bogata, they identified two reasons why teachers utilize code-switching in the classroom: interjection and repetitions, with the two primary goals of fostering a relaxed classroom environment and clarifying content. However, they observed that students switch from English to Spanish to express ideas, clarify meaning, avoid communication gaps, and verify teachers' information.

3. Methodology

This study has employed a mixed approach, which is mainly used to answer the research question. For this reason, two methods of data collection were carried out; teacher interviews and an observation checklist. The observation was carried out to discover the function of codeswitching in the classroom. In addition, the interview was conducted to discuss their thoughts about their code-switching. The observation

checklist was prepared based on a previous study by (Gumpers, 1982), which was also studied by (Eldridge, 1996) and (Cook, 2002) to peruse the function of code-switching by teachers. The checklist framework is based on Gumper's study, which provides the following aspects: quotation, addressee, interjection, reiteration, message qualification, personation, and classroom management.

3.1 Data Collection and Participants

The study participants consisted of three EFL lecturers and students from three groups of EFL classrooms, first and second stages. The subjects were Academic Reading (advanced English) and Second Language Acquisition. Total hours will be 24 in one week at the ELT department at TIU (Tishk International University). Recording tape was used to provide a realistic atmosphere; thus, the teacher will not feel pressured to change their behavior due to the researcher's existence in the classroom.

3.2 Data Analysis

The audio recordings of the class session and the teacher interviews were transcribed and analyzed to answer research questions. The analytical framework of the present study was based on two pillars: deductive thematic analysis was used to analyze interview and observation data (Clark, 2006); and the deductive approach involves jumping into your analysis with a set of themes that you already expect to find in your data. The second Gumpers, (1982) framework was used to analyze the function of code-switching. The data analysis has gone through six stages of thematic analysis: familiarization, coding, generating, reviewing, naming, and producing. The thematic analysis framework was used to determine the teachers' perspectives on the function of code-switching because the data were collected using two different instruments.

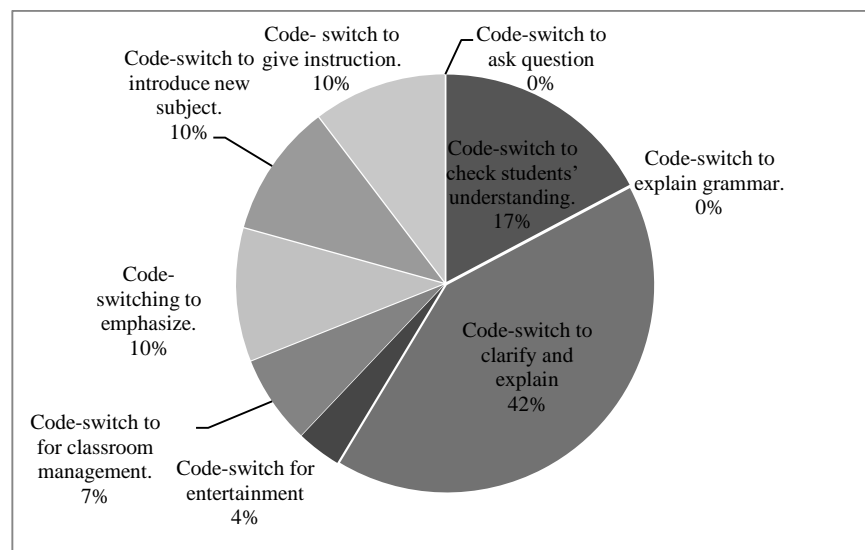### 4. Discussion and Result

Lecturer A:

Figure 1: Pie chart of code-switching keys of lecturer 1

Lecturer A gives a lesson on Second Language acquisition for second year students. The illustrated pie chart showed a dramatic use of code-switching for clarification by lecturer A, which is 12 times, which means approximately 42% among all other functions. While most minor use of code-witching for lecturer A is asking questions and explaining grammar, this is due to the nature of the subject; thus, do not need any grammar explanation. However, in his interview, lecture A mentioned that in grammar lessons, since it is the only rule, he does not find it necessary to switch codes between languages. On the other hand, the second most used function is to check students understanding at 17% percent, while in his interview, he stated that "I prefer use target langue to check students understanding. These two contrasting ideas give us a clue that even if the teacher does not find code-switching necessary, they will switch eventually due to the nature of students and class. As it can be seen in the following utterance:

There are many theories; why? Because if one approach does not succeed, another one will replace the that is why there are many رەخنەی لێدەگیری ئەگەر یەک بیردۆز سەرنەکەوت ئەوا بیردۆزێکی تر جێگەی دەگرێ وfirst one theories.

The transcribed data showed that the lecturer gave a short explanation in the Kurdish Language to explain why new theories occur in this context. The function of code-switching is clarification. He also adds "Raxna ledger" in Kurdish to further clarify the subject, which means the theories will also be criticized. At the same time, lecturer, as stated in his interview after data collection to understand lecturers' views on their code-switching that he uses code-switching continuously for clarification "Yes, mostly I do. Especially when I realize that students cannot follow what you are explaining. You know, as a teacher, we realize whether students understand the topic or not. Thus, it is a good idea to codeswitch for such purposes". In general, lecturer one undoubtedly used code-switching in his teaching style because the subject of language acquisition needs to be explained in Kurdish, and he also used Kurdish to explain complex terms. He repeated many points in Kurdish to ensure students' understanding, and he has a positive view of code-switching.
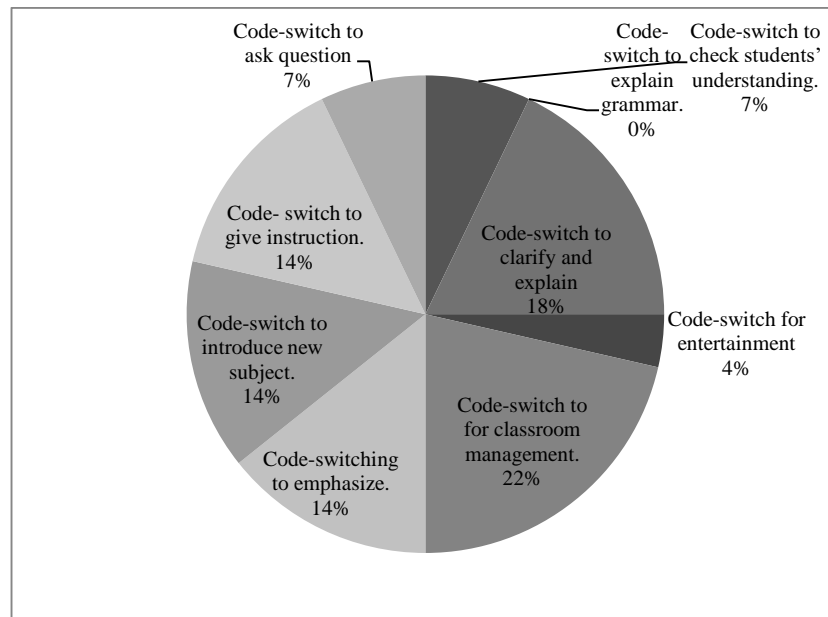
Lecturer B:

Figure 2: pie chart of code-switching lecturer 2

Lecturer B teaches Grammar and Writing to first-grade students. Code-switching, mainly from L2 to L1, was observed to have several functions, but the most used function by lecture B is classroom management, which is 22% percent following this code-switching for clarification and explanation. However, the least one is switching for entertainment and grammar explanation which are 4% and 0%. One of the significant findings in the data is that the subject of the course was Grammar and writing. Still, the lecturer did not switch to Grammar which contradicts the theoretical portion of the study, in which most studies focused on switching for the purpose grammar (Said, 2018). The lecturer B switched less than the lecturer A due to the nature of the subject; when you explain Grammar, you do not need to clarify complicated expressions; only following the rules could assist students. Flowing transcribing is the example of lecturer B.

An entrepreneur is a person who starts a new idea or business. For example, the person who found the Facebook

به کوردی پێیان دەڵێن خاوەن پرۆژه واتا یەک شت هەیه پێش ئەو کەسیتر جێبەجێی نەکردوه

The data for the second transcriptions illustrated that lecturer B code-switch gave an additional explanation for students. The teacher summarized what she said in Kurdish to ensure everyone understood the subject's equality. Comparing the class observation to the interview, she perceives code-switching as a negative phenomenon, while we can see that she uses code-switching for clarification. Furthermore, she switched her code from English to Kurdish in one of the transcribed data. Furthermore, she used Kurdish as the medium language for classroom management during activity time.

چەند کەس ماوه که تەواوی بکات؟ پێویسته پەلەبکەن

After explaining in English, the teacher uses the Kurdish language to inform students about their time for the activity. Later, she switches to English to do the activity. In this example data, the teacher wants to get students' attention by switching from English to Kurdish. Comparing this result to the third question of the interview, do you think code-switching in the classroom can assist you in classroom management? She answered shortly that code-switching has a negative effect on students. It will not allow them to communicate with the target language. As we can see, instructor B has a negative view of utilizing code-switching in her teaching. However, when observing her classes, she uses code-switching. This result display that a code-switching is an essential tool in teaching most teacher to code-switch unconsciously to manage the classroom.
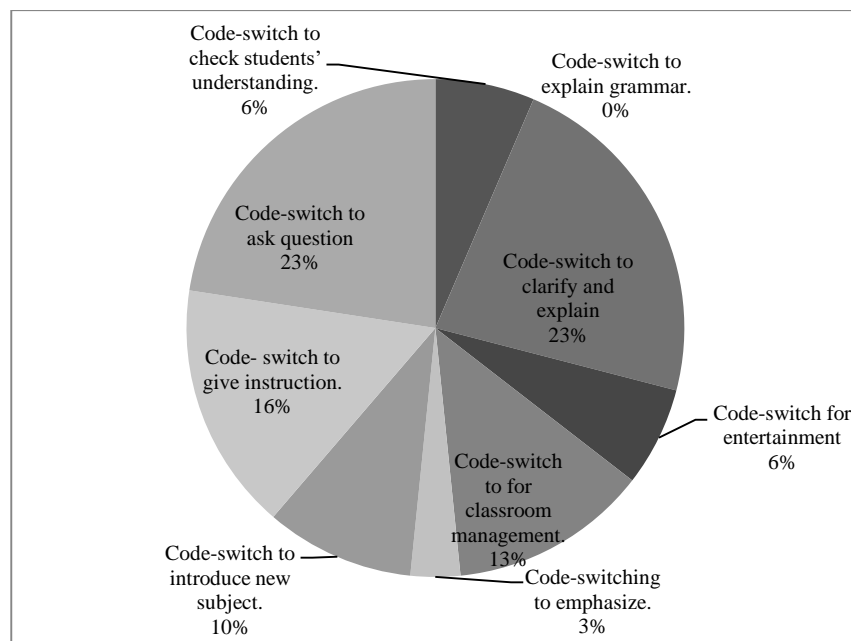
Lecturer C:

Figure 3: pic hart of code-switching key lecturer 3

Lecturer C teaches grammar to second-grade students. Pie-chart 3 displays that lecture B code-switches for a variety of reasons. Nevertheless, it is transparent that most code-switches have been done to clarify and ask the question, which is 23%. In order to avoid misunderstanding, the teacher used code-switching to confirm that the students understood the topic. This is shown in the following example.

People who are living in the street can write well because they experience everything ئهو کهسانهی له شهقامهکان دهژین دهتوانن جوانتر بنوسن چونکه زیاتر تهجروبهی ژیان دهکهن for this reason, they become better writers.

Here the teacher tries to explain why those who are living in the street are better writers. Again, she code-switches to Kurdish to give a clear explanation and make sure that all students understand the topic. On the contrary, the minor function of code-switching was the grammar function. Although she teaches Grammar, she does not code-switch compared to the other teachers. Instead, they switched their language to the mother language for explaining grammar.

Open your books page 45 I will divide you into groups

كتێبهكانتان بكهنهوه لاپهره، ٤٥ دابهشتان دهكهم بۆ سهر ٤ گرووپ، خۆم قوتابییه كان ههڵدهبژێرم

We can see in this transcription that the lecturer employs code-switching to give the pupils instructions, telling them that she would divide them into groups. She spoke it in English at first, but then repeated it in Kurdish to ensure that all students understood to speed up the delivery. During her interview, she also stated that if code-switching is required for instruction, she will do so in order to save time because students comprehend commands better in Kurdish better.

5. Conclusion

This paper looked at English to Kurdish Code-switching in the EFL classroom, to figure out what motivated lectures or what are the functions of code-switching in EFLS context; in addition it will display lectures' attitude toward code-switching. For the purposes of this study, the function categorization was based on Gumper's study and the following aspects for the checklist framework were paid attention to: quotation, addressee, interjection, reiteration, message qualification, personation, and classroom management. The findings tackled the fact that's all instructors switch from English to Kurdish in EFL context depending on the needs of students and the subject of the course. The instructors were code-switching for variety of reasons such as checking students understanding, classroom management and clarification, giving instruction. It also revealed that the most used function of code-switching among three instructors was for the purpose of clarification. Another function category that emerged in the classroom was comprehension, which refers to using code switching to help students comprehend what is said, told, or taught in the target language. Students who need help in L1 were the students form language acquisition classes. The third most frequently function among all teachers was giving instruction to facilitate the delivery save time. Another interesting discovery is that switching code from English to Kurdish by an English language teaching instructor does not show incompetence or inefficiency in the language. They frequently change the coding on purpose to make it easier to explain themselves and to relieve stress in their students. The instructor's first interest is their students, and it is their responsibility to ensure that they understand the principles being taught. Because English is not their first language, many students struggle to grasp courses that are delivered entirely in English. Two lecturers said that they do not engage code-switching since they find it useless for teaching, but while observing the classes, we discovered that they do. This illustrates that code-switching is an unconsciously employed by lecturers to enhance the quality of teaching.

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