

## Teachers and Students Code-Switching: The Inevitable Evil in EFL Classrooms

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**Abstract.** Code-switching has been primarily investigated in a variety of sociocultural contexts, especially in foreign and second language settings. The majority of code-switching instances, whether in teacher-initiated activities or teacher-student interaction, seem to suggest that these interactions reflect a sophisticated language use and serve a variety of pedagogical purposes. This study aims to find out the main functions and roles of code-switching among EFL high school teachers and students in Jordan. For this purpose, classroom observation and a questionnaire were used as instruments. Two EFL teachers were regularly observed, and notes of their code-switching behaviour over four weeks were taken, examined, classified, and finally analysed. A questionnaire was used for 330 students from two secondary schools in Jordan. The students were asked to fill in a Likert-type questionnaire. From the classroom observation, the results showed that teachers code-switch for several reasons including affective function, giving instructions and directions, and linguistic incompetence. The questionnaire administered to students showed that students code-switch for non-linguistic purposes such as maintaining rapport and interpersonal relationships as well as keeping the line of communication without interruption to avoid any sort of conflict or misunderstanding. This study concludes by recommending that teachers should improve students' English language skills in non-linguistic domains such as the affective and interpersonal ones.

**Keywords:** Code-switching; English as a Foreign Language (EFL); Arabic-English; Roles and Functions; High-school

## 1. Introduction

Code-switching occurs not only at the interlingual level when bilingual speakers alternate between two or more languages. It may also occur at the intralingual level when monolingual speakers in a diglossic situation use the low (L) variety and the high (H) variety (Ferguson, 1959). The low variety is the language of home, the family, the streets and market places, friendship, and solidarity while the high variety is usually taught in school and used for public speaking, formal lectures and television broadcasts, and writing. In using the high variety, educated people sometimes code-switch to the colloquial or low variety (Ferguson, 1959). People can also code-switch between formal and informal styles depending on several variables such as education, social class, age, gender, setting, and participants. As Aronoff and Rees-Miller (2001) indicate:

*“Many linguists have stressed the point that switching between languages is a communicative option available to a bilingual member of a speech community, just as switching between styles or dialects is an option for the monolingual speaker” (p.523).*

Bilingual speakers code-switch mostly from their native language (L1) to the target language (L2) in multiple social contexts such as restaurants, coffee shops, the office, on the bus, at the market place, and with strangers and opposite sex. In the classroom setting, however, code-switching occurs mostly in a different direction that is from L2 to L1, where students code-switch for many reasons; namely, social, pragmatic, communicative, personal, and affective (Gulzar, 2010; Peregoy, Boyle, & Martinez, 2011; Söderberg Arnfast & Jørgensen, 2003).

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Code-switching is a highly purposeful activity that is no longer viewed as a random phenomenon (Chen, 2004; Enama, 2015; Levine, 2003; Paradowski, 2008). It has become an area of particular interest that receives great attention among linguists, psychologists, and researchers. Code-switching, therefore, has been primarily investigated in multiple socio-cultural contexts, especially in the ESL/EFL contexts. The majority of code-switching instances in settings such as in teacher-initiated activities or teacher-student interaction reflects a sophisticated language use and serves a variety of pedagogical functions (Enama, 2015).

Since the 1980s, there has been a serious conflict between two schools of thought concerning the use of the native language; one advocating the sole use of L2 in an EFL environment, and a more flexible one supporting the use of both L1 and L2 in the classroom. Those who advocate the former position, namely the intralingual teaching strategy, believe that in teaching English, teachers should ban the use of the mother tongue. This is because it interferes with acquiring L2 properly and inevitably hinders or impedes the development of positive second language skills (see Chaudron, 1988; Ellis, 1984; Lightbown, 2001; Wong-Fillmore, 1985). Macaro (2005) who can be taken as an advocate of the elimination of code-switching use among FL learners is not in favour of the use of code-switching on the following grounds. First, code-switching should be

banned because the second/foreign language teaching usually aims at maximizing both the teacher's input and the learner's output which is viewed as crucial for target language acquisition. Second, avoiding code-switching entails the elimination of negative transfer and guarantees the maxims of comprehensible input in addition to meaning negotiation. Third, the avoidance of code-switching entails a rejection of the out-dated methods such as the grammar-translation method. In this approach, the mother tongue is prioritized and the target language is marginalized which result in the learners' lack of proficiency and inability to communicate in their target language. Fourth, code-switching is not politically endorsed as it may allow native speakers of English to dominate the English language teaching scene at the expense of non-native English teachers. However, this claim is, of course, unfounded due to a myriad of economic and social reasons. For example, English native speakers are more highly paid than non-native speakers, and their native accent reflects positively on foreign language learners. Finally, overlooking code-switching is viewed as an index of 'good teaching' because it enforces the use of L2 without reference to L1.

Other less rigid scholars (see Chen, 2004; Levine, 2003) are in support of code-switching and thus argue in favour of the use of the mother tongue. In line with this, Enama (2015) favours the use of L1 because it functions as a catalyst in the second language learning. Paradowski (2008) also views the use of L1 positively arguing that it activates the previous knowledge of the foreign language. Moreover, Peregoy et al. (2011) propose that the mother tongue speeds the teaching-learning process since it boosts emotive variables such as self-esteem.

Advocates of code-switching argue that this may be a catalyst in learning the foreign/second language skills and language components such as structure and lexicon. Skiba (1980) suggests that when learners code-switch due to a lack of adequate proficiency, it can certainly help in sustaining effortless speech and effective communication among speakers. In this manner, code-switching is perceived as enhancing communication and student interactivity. Therefore, the use of code-switching serves as a link between what learners know and do not know and can be consequently viewed as a practical aspect in language teaching, primarily when it is appropriately implemented.

In the sociocultural context of bilingualism and out of the bounds of EFL, code-switching has been viewed as a sign of laziness or sloppiness. It has been given different pejorative epithets such as Chicano Spanish, Tex Mex, Spanglish, Urdlish and others (Hussein, 1999; Iqbal, 2011). Some scholars attribute it to language deficiency. Others view it as a sign of carelessness and the behaviour that some bilingual speakers manifest is characterized as belonging to neither the first nor the second language.

Different studies have investigated the phenomenon of code-switching thoroughly. However, they paid little attention to its functions and roles among students and mainly focused on the reasons that motivated teachers to switch. Therefore, one of the research gaps that this study fills is addressing code-switching functions by both teachers and learners. Moreover, the number of

studies on code-switching in the Jordanian context is limited. Thus, it was imperative to conduct this research on Jordanian teachers and students. This piece of research may also help other researchers better understand the roles of English-Arabic code-switching.

### **1.2. Statement of Problem**

The study of code-switching in EFL settings is frequent among teachers and less frequent among students. In line with this, this research investigates the roles and functions of code-switching among both groups to identify similarities and differences as well as drawing relevant implications and conclusions.

The current study addresses the following two questions:

1. What are the main functions of code-switching among EFL high school teachers in Jordan?
2. What are the main functions of code-switching among EFL high school students in Jordan?

## **2. Functions and reasons of Code-switching in the EFL Classroom**

Under this heading, roles and functions of code-switching by both teachers and students will be reviewed and explained.

### **2.1. Teachers**

The phenomenon of code-switching in the EFL contexts is not restricted to learners as teachers often manifest code-switching behavioural patterns for a variety of reasons.

According to Ferguson (2009), code-switching can fulfil several functions, namely, clarifying unfamiliar concepts, summarizing a certain idea, greeting and interacting with students. Except for “repetition”, all the code-switching functions postulated by Ferguson were confirmed by Adriosh and Razi (2019).

Although Gulzar (2010) is partly in agreement with Ferguson (2009); she listed more functions associated with code-switching, which are clarification, affective instruction, translation, socialization, repetition, and topic shift. Therefore, in reporting on the functions of code-switching, she supplemented those put forward by Ferguson.

A survey conducted by Tariq, Bilal, Abbas, and Mahmood (2013) established some uses of code-mixing and code-switching that include four areas. First, starting a new topic; second, clarification, translation, assessing understanding; third, repetition, grammar explanation, class management, and emphasis; and fourth lack of vocabulary.

Jingxia (2010), who investigated code-switching in Chinese classrooms maintained that it was mostly used to (1) translate unfamiliar words, (2) explain grammar, (3) manage a class, (4) display sympathy and friendship to students, (5) shift topics, (6) get students’ concentration, and (7) assess their understanding.

Guthrie (1984) conducted a comparative study on bilingual and monolingual English teachers in the U.S.A. He identified five common functions of code-switching as (a) translation, (b) identity marking, (c) giving procedures and direction, (d) explanation, especially with the presentation of new lexical items, and finally (e) as a check for understanding.

Al-Adnani and Elyas (2016) examined the code-switching functions of teachers and how students felt towards this switching in the foreign language environment. The sample comprised 20 teachers who were observed using an observation technique and a checklist, and 200 students who were required to fill out a questionnaire. In their analysis of teachers' code-switching functions, they found out that teachers code-switched 135 times for evaluating understanding, 126 for translation, 66 times for managing class, and 66 times for grammar explanation. They also code-switched 41 times for shifting topics, 40 times for indicating sympathy and friendship to students, 13 times for getting students' attention, and finally putting stress on important notions received the lowest number of occurrences.

Iqbal (2011) examined the linguistic aspects of Urdu English code-switching at various levels. The sample comprised both male and female university lecturers at Lahore Universities. The finding showed that intra-sentential code-switching (37.15%) was the most frequent, followed by code-switching at the word level and then clause level and finally at the phrase level.

Üstünel and Seedhouse (2005) suggested three types of FL teachers' code-switching at the university level. The first is performed to provide learners with tools and ways for language learning. The second is performed for classroom procedures and processes such as motivating, praising, and disciplining learners. Finally, it is carried out for affective purposes, such as maintaining rapport and interpersonal relationships.

Roxas (2019) conducted a descriptive quantitative study to explore the factors and functions of senior high school students' code-switching behaviours in an academic setting. The results showed that code-switching could be used to facilitate mastery of subject content. The researcher recommended that teachers should know when to use the first and second language effectively to enhance academic achievement. Maluleke (2019) investigated the empowering aspect of code-switching as a means to aid students to enhance their achievement in mathematics. This study was conducted in South African schools on learners whose proficiency in English is limited. The results showed that code-switching could be beneficial in learning and teaching mathematics.

## 2.2. *Students*

Researchers have investigated the roles and uses of code-switching not only by teachers but also by learners in the EFL contexts.

Eldridge (1996) carried out a study on code-switching in a Turkish secondary school. According to him, both teachers and their students do not seem to be aware of the reasons why they code-switch and the functions associated with it.

Despite their unconscious knowledge, code-switching serves some functions in the foreign language classroom including equivalence, floor-holding, reiteration, conflict control, and meta-language. Learners code-switch to L1 when the equivalent of L2 item is unknown. This process can be attributed to incomplete knowledge of the target language lexicon. Second, floor-holding which is the intention to continue interacting with no interruption; this process occurs when the learner uses his native language in an attempt to keep communicating without any hesitation so that communication is maintained and sustained without collapse. Third, reiteration, which is simply repetition for emphasizing. Eldridge (1996) confirmed that “messages are reinforced, emphasized, or clarified where the message has already been transmitted in one code, but not understood” (p. 306). In this context, the learner repeats the message in L1 to make sure that its meaning is conveyed in L2 smoothly and clearly.

Code-switching here may be due to two factors, incorrect translation of the meaning in the target language and students’ supposition that the teacher may not have grasped the intended purpose. The third factor namely, conflict control is used for avoiding any sort of conflict. It occurs when culturally equivalent vocabulary items in the first and second languages are lacking, and this, in turn, may lead to misunderstanding of the intended message. The last two functions of code-switching are group membership where students use code-switching to socialize and establish group membership, and meta-language where the language is used to describe a task.

In code-switching analysis, Eldridge (1996) admits that those functions may trigger some problems; most importantly, “that many switches may be either multi-functional or open to different functional interpretations” (p.305).

Fareed, Humayun, and Akhtar (2016) used a questionnaire to collect data on perceptions of English language teachers’ code-switching in the classroom. Data analysis showed that the majority of the participants do not agree that they get confused due to teacher switching to the target language during the lecture. Besides, some stated that code-switching helps them understand unfamiliar words and concepts. Kumar and Narendra (2012) reported that most of the code-switching instances were evident in the teaching of grammar. This ties in well with what Cook (2001) stated:

*“Explicit grammar teaching could be conveyed more thoroughly in the students’ L1; even students with a high L2 proficiency level absorbed information about grammar better if it was in their L1” (p.414).*

Yao (2011) investigated the attitudes of teachers and students towards code-switching in Chinese EFL classes. For this purpose, both groups were requested to fill out a 20-item questionnaire. Frequencies and percentages were calculated to find out teachers’ and students’ attitudes. The results showed that both teachers and students have similar reactions to code-switching despite some slight differences between the two groups regarding some items. Song and Lee (2019) studied the effects of teachers’ use of L1 and L2 in comparison to only L2 instruction on the vocabulary acquisition of the EFL pre-schoolers. The

findings showed that pre-schoolers preferred the use of L1 in learning English, and reacted negatively towards the use of English-only.

### **3. Methodology**

This research is descriptive and made use of students' and teachers' samples. Students were asked to fill in a questionnaire, while a classroom observation technique was used to identify teachers' code-switching behaviours. The student sample consisted of 330 high school students enrolled in the ninth and tenth grade in two secondary schools in Amman, Jordan. 176 male students (55% of the sample) and 144 females (45% of the sample) took part in this study. Concerning the observation technique, two EFL teachers were regularly observed in the classroom.

#### **3.1. Research Instruments**

The researchers developed a questionnaire in Arabic to be filled out by students to elicit their responses on code-switching patterns and functions. The questionnaire consisted of two sections; the first section included four questions and aimed to collect data on age, class, gender, and school. The second section consisted of fifteen items and aimed to collect data on students' perceptions of their code-switching functions, and code-switching as related to classroom procedures and processes. In this section, students were asked to fill out a Likert-type questionnaire and put an x to each item with one of the five typical categories, ranging from 'strongly agree', 'to 'strongly disagree' (see Appendix 1). The data from the questionnaire were calculated to obtain frequencies and percentages.

In the classroom observation, observers were asked to take notes of teachers' code-switching over four weeks. The total number of classes observed was 12 which ran for 40 minutes each. Thus, towards the end of the observation session, about 8 hours of English instruction was available to the researchers which yielded a sufficient amount of data. Teacher's code-switching instances were later categorised and analysed by the researchers according to their functions.

##### *3.1.1. Questionnaire validity*

After reviewing and examining other researchers' schemes and questionnaires in the field of code-switching patterns and functions among EFL students (Al-Adnani & Elyas, 2016; Aqad, 2018; Azlan, Ismail, & Narasuman, 2013), the researchers developed the questionnaire of the current study. Subsequently, the questionnaire was given to a jury of five TEFL and language instructors to obtain their notes and comments on the questionnaire items. Their feedback and responses were considered in developing the final version before administering it.

##### *3.1.2. Questionnaire reliability*

To establish the questionnaire reliability, the researchers administered a test-retest on 30 students who did not take part in this research. When Cronbach

Alpha was computed, the result shown was 0.83. This is a reasonably high coefficient and therefore is suitable for this study.

#### 4. Results and discussion

The results are presented under the following subheadings, functions of teachers' code-switching, functions of students' code-switching, and code-switching functions concerning classroom procedures and processes.

##### 4.1. Functions of teachers' code-switching

As stated above, two EFL teachers were regularly observed by two researchers. They were assigned to check the teachers' performance by using classroom observation and take notes related to code-switching during student-teacher interaction. After the end of the fourth week, instances of code-switching were taken, classified, and finally analysed. Seven functions of code-switching were identified, namely affective function, giving instructions and directions, linguistic incompetence, repetition, translation, topic shift, and class management. It was found that teachers code-switched 61 times for affective purposes, 58 for giving instructions and directions, 37 for language deficiency, 29 times for repeating teaching content, 26 for translation, 19 times for topic shift, and 10 times for class management as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Functions of teachers' code-switching in EFL classes**

Nu.	Function	Frequency	Percentage
1	Affective	61	25.4
2	Giving instructions	58	24.2
3	Linguistic insecurity	37	14.2
4	Repetition	29	12
5	Translation	26	10.8
6	Topic shift	19	7.9
7	Class management	10	5.4
	Total	240	100

The results reported here are in line with Al-Adnani and Elyas (2016), who indicated that teachers code-switched for translating words and concepts, class management, topic shift, and showing sympathy and friendship for students. However, the difference was that code-switching for capturing students' attention and putting stress on essential points were not reported in this study. Tariq et al. (2013) findings have three functions similar to the results reported here, namely code-switching for translation, repetition, and topic shift. The functions of assessing understanding and grammatical explanations were again missing in this study. Ferguson (2009) enumerated three code-switching functions by teachers, namely clarifying unfamiliar concepts, summarizing an idea and exchanging greetings, and all of them have not been confirmed in this study. Jingxia's (2010) findings tie in well with the results reported here. She stated that teachers code-switch for translation, class management, and topic

shift. The same is confirmed here with a reverse ordering of class management and topic shift. Besides, the functions of getting students' attention and assessing their understanding were not found in the present study. It should be mentioned that, contrary to this research, Jingxia's research was not conducted in high school but three Chinese universities and this may explain the difference as to the types and categories of teachers' code-switching functions.

Three of the functions in this research, namely, translation, repetition, and topic shift, were reported by Gulzar (2010). This, in addition to socialization which can be viewed as equivalent or similar to the affective function in this research where the teacher sympathizes with students and establishes solidarity and rapport with them. The results of this study are in partial agreement with the results reported by Guthrie (1984). Both studies affirmed that code-switching is used for translation and giving procedures and directions.

In the study by Üstünel and Seedhouse (2005), teacher's code-switching is linked to affective functions, instructions and procedures, and class management, all of which have been confirmed by the results of this study. Following is a sample of teachers' code-switching categories along with their functions.

**Affective Function.** This function is defined as the establishment of an intimate relationship between teachers and students, where the teacher establishes solidarity and rapport with them. In this function, the teacher is performing a dual function, encouraging students and guiding them by inserting Arabic words and phrases.

T: Continue ya banat	Go on (vocative) girls
T: Number six ya Hasan	Number six (vocative) Hasan
T: This is a good question <i>shukran</i>	This is a good question <i>Thanks</i>
T: Begin now <i>yalla yalla ya Tala</i>	Begin now ( <i>requesting and encouraging</i> ) Tala to start
T: <i>law samahit tiQra?li hai il second paragraph</i>	<i>Please read (me) this 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph</i>
T: The verb tense is simple past, SafQfulu	The verb tense is simple past, ( <i>big applause for him</i> )
T: <i>?itfadal, why do we use it?</i>	( <i>Polite request</i> ), why do we use it?
T: Any questions so far? <i>?allah ya'tiku el'afieh shabab</i>	Any questions so far? <i>God bless you young people</i>

**Giving procedures and direction.** The teacher here guides students by asking them to do or not to do something in the classroom using imperatives or other words to this effect.

T: <i>La? La? Ma tuktubu on the book</i>	<i>No no don't write on the book</i>
T: <i>?uktub il su?al first</i>	<i>Write the question first</i>
T: <i>?a'Tini iyyaha fil past tense</i>	<i>put it into the past tense</i>
T: <i>mumkin tibda? bil main clause</i>	<i>Possibly, you can begin with the main clause</i>
T: <i>?a'Tini example thani</i>	<i>Give me another example</i>
T: <i>?isma'u lal recordings</i>	<i>Listen carefully to the recording</i>

**Linguistic insecurity.** Here, the teacher either gives an incorrect answer or hesitates to answer a question or comment on students' questions or answers, perhaps due to a lack of language proficiency.

S: what is Halloween?

T: *dawir 'aleiha fid dictionary*

S: what is the meaning of gummy worms?

T: *hatha naw' min aldidan*

S: *ma ma'na kalimat latte?*

T: *it is ?ishi zay el-laban*

S: if I have some money, I can buy a mobile

T: *la? la? use simple future not a modal*

T: Use bigger in a sentence ya Mohammad

S: This building is bigger

T: good ?ahsant ya Mohammad

S: what is Halloween?

T: *Look it up in the dictionary*

S: what is the meaning of gummy worms?

T: *it is a kind of worms*

S: *what is the meaning of latte?*

T: *it is something like yoghurt*

S: if I have some money, I can buy a mobile

T: *no no, use simple future not a modal*

T: Use bigger in a sentence (vocative) Mohammad

S: This building is bigger

T: good (vocative) Mohammad

**Repetition.** In this function, the teacher repeats a word, a sentence or instructions in Arabic for emphasis or drawing students' attention.

T: Are you sure she failed the exam, no way ?*inha rasabat*

T: Hey ?*esma'u ?esma'u*, the exam is next week *mish bukra*

T: *hassa oktob el* sentence now

T: ?*istanu ?istanu* any question

Are you sure she failed the exam, no way *she failed*

Hey *listen listen*, the exam is next week *not tomorrow*

*Now write the sentence now*

*wait wait*, any questions

**Translation.** In translation, the teacher translates a word, a sentence, an utterance or even a task into Arabic

T : *bsur'a* quickly give me another word

T: The structure ?*ili huwa tarkiib al lugha* which is the language structure

T: Have played and have gone ya'ni li'bu wa thahabu

T: Go back to the dialog ?*irja'i lal hiwar assabiq*

*quickly* quickly give me another word

The structure (*this is the language structure*) which is the language structure

Have played and have gone mean they have played and have gone

Go back to the dialog (*go back to the previous dialogue*)

**Topic shift.** Here, the teacher presents a new lesson or moves from one subject to another, reading to writing, for example, or from one goal to another using the mother tongue.

T: ?*ilyom bidna nihki 'an ?il* comparative adjectives

T: *khalena nhel el* exercises *ba'ed hek*

T: *biddi tuktubu hassa* paragraph 'an *ilmadrasah*

Today we will discuss comparative adjectives

*Let's do the* exercises *next*

*I want you to write a paragraph about school*

**Class management.** It implies an organized and orderly presentation of class tasks and activities without disruption, which is conducive to effective teaching and learning.

T: Ya Murad la tihki ma'ah	(vocative) Murad don't talk to him
T: mamnu' ?alkhuruji mini el class	You are not allowed to leave the class
T: mafish mobail fil ilsaff	Don't use the mobile in the class

#### 4.2. Perception of students' code-switching functions

In this section, students' responses to items 1 through 8 of the questionnaire intended to elicit students' code-switching functions, and items 9 through 15 sought to relate code-switching to classroom procedures and processes.

In Table 2, Item 8 indicates that 77.6% either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement that students code-switch 'to maintain rapport and interpersonal relationships.' Only 15.4% 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed', while 6.9% were uncertain. Results obtained from observing teachers showed that they also use code-switching for establishing rapport and good relations, as shown in the section on teachers' code-switching functions. Muhammad Malek (2015) also confirmed that many teachers' code-switching examples were directly connected to their feelings of comfort or satisfaction. Therefore, through code-switching, teachers can give vent to their emotions and warm feelings and thus build a friendly class atmosphere conducive to learning and positive interaction. In a bilingual context, teachers' code-switching can also be utilized for expressing solidarity with learners as reported by Martin-Jones (1995). Likewise, Gulzar (2010) emphasized the favourable role that the socialization function of code-switching plays in the EFL classroom.

**Table 2: Students' code-switching functions in the classroom**

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1 Code-switching enables me to say what I want to say more easily	21.8	26	33.9	14.2	3.9
2 I switch to repeat what may not have been understood by the teacher or students	29	25.8	23.6	14.8	6.7
3 I code-switch to avoid any sort of conflict or misunderstanding	36.4	32.7	9.4	7.9	13.6
4 I switch to keep the line of communication without interruption	44.2	28.2	14.2	7.8	5.8
5 Code-switching makes it easier for learners to acquire knowledge and master language	13	38.2	30.9	12.7	5.2
6 Code-switching helps me to understand new vocabulary and grammatical rules	28.8	16.7	30	8.5	16
7 I code-switch because of my low proficiency in English	26	34.8	24.8	4.5	9.7

8	I switch to maintain rapport and interpersonal relationships	46.7	30.9	6.9	3.6	11.8
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Item 4 aimed to collect data concerning the statement that, 'students code-switch to keep the line of communication without interruption'. 72.4% either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed', whereas 13.6% 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed'. It is clear, therefore, that the majority are in agreement with this statement due to its value in keeping the conversation flow smooth and uninterrupted. Sustainable communication and proper turn-taking, sometimes referred to as floor-holding, are crucial to student's self-concept. It may consequently reflect positively not only on his self-image but also on academic achievement. This finding is in line with Shanehsazzadeh and Heidari Darani (2017) who reported that floor holding is one of the main functions of code-switching among Iranian EFL learners.

Item 3, which reads, 'I code-switch to avoid any sort of conflict or misunderstanding', reveals that 69.1% either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' and a meagre 21.5% 'disagreed' or strongly 'disagreed'. In contrast, only 9.4% were 'uncertain'. It is clear from this statement that code-switching serves a proper function as it helps students to make their point and not to be misunderstood by either their teacher or fellow students.

Responses to item 7, which reads 'I switch because of my low proficiency in English', tilted towards an agreement as 60.8% either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' in contrast to 14.2% who 'disagreed'. This reflects the lack of learners' proficiency in English, but not many students seem to admit it. In classroom observation, there were many instances where teachers had manifested language insecurity and lack of total command when they gave incorrect answers or hesitated to answer some questions.

In response to item 2, 'I switch to repeat what may not have been understood by the teacher or students', 54.8% either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' while 21.5% were in 'disagreement' or 'strong disagreement'. Again, code-switching here seems to serve the function of making students' answers and intentions known to other students and their teacher.

In responding to item 5, which reads 'code-switching makes it easier for learners to acquire knowledge and master language', 13% of the sample 'agreed' and 38.2% 'strongly agreed'. Only 17.9% 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed'. Indeed, this function or strategy can be of utmost help in language learning and mastery; it is, of course, a practical one as it eliminates the need for groping for words, idioms clichés or language structures. This goes in line with Roxas (2019) who found that code-switching could be used to facilitate mastery of subject content.

In response to item 1, which reads, 'code-switching enables me to say what I want to say more easily', 47.8% are either in 'agreement' or 'strong agreement' and 18.1% 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed'. In line with this, code-switching to Arabic, though not directly of importance in developing learners' speaking

skills in the target language, nevertheless, it has some value as it enables learners to overcome the psychological barrier when speaking the target language. This may sound controversial, but the fact of the matter is that when a learner is asking about something in his native tongue, this can certainly help him or her to translate it and say it in the target language.

In response to item 6, 45.5% expressed either 'agreement' or 'strong agreement' to the statement that 'code-switching helps me to understand new vocabulary, and grammatical rules' and only 24.5% disagreed with the statement. A small minority believes that code-switching helps them understand new vocabulary items or language structures. Besides, 30% are uncertain about the role of code-switching in language learning in general.

#### **4.3. Code-switching functions concerning classroom procedures and processes**

The data in this section relates to code-switching and its relationship to classroom procedures and processes, as shown in Table 3. When responding to item 12, which reads, 'Code-switching builds a bridge from the known to the unknown,' 73.3% of the sample either 'agreed,' or 'strongly agreed,' while only 13.8% were in disagreement. So students seem to subscribe to the notion that code-switching plays a pivotal role in acquiring foreign language where students can ask about issues related to pronunciation, vocabulary, and other language skills, and this ties in well with the results reported by (Song & Lee, 2019).

**Table 3: Code-switching functions and classroom procedures and processes**

Item		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	It provides tools and ways for structuring questions & comments	17.9	41.8	21.8	14.5	3.9
10	Because code-switching to Arabic is used by everyone in the classroom	39.4	13.9	29.7	11.5	5.4
11	It is a central feature of language learning	39.4	28.2	14.5	13	4.8
12	It builds a bridge from the known to the unknown	44.8	28.5	12.7	9	4.8
13	It enhances social and academic interaction in the classroom	26.7	38.8	18.2	6.7	9.7
14	Because constant use of English makes the class more formal	14.5	31.5	19.4	21	13.3
15	Because constant use of English makes the class monotonous	36	11.5	30.6	5.4	16.4

Item 11 aimed to collect responses to the statement, 'code-switching is a central feature of language learning,' 67.6% were either in 'agreement' or 'strong agreement', whereas 17.8% were in 'disagreement' or 'strong disagreement'. It is clear from students' responses that the majority believe that code-switching is not necessarily a haphazard or aimless but rather a planned and purposeful activity. In responding to item 13, 65.5% expressed either 'agreement' or 'strong agreement' to the statement that 'code-switching enhances social and academic interaction in the classroom' and 16.4% 'disagreed' with the statement. It seems that students give more importance to the role of code-switching as a catalyst in social and academic interaction than a means of acquiring words or mastering language structures. In responding to item 9, which reads 'code-switching provides tools and ways for structuring questions and comments' 59.7% either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' and 21.8 were 'uncertain'. It is clear that although its percentage is relatively high, it ranked fourth in the category of classroom procedures and processes, and students did not seem to attach the same importance as to the items preceding it. In response to item 10, which states 'code-switching is used because everyone switches to Arabic in the classroom', 53.3% either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' and this phenomenon is not necessarily restricted to students as was evident in the data obtained from classroom observation where teachers themselves showed instances of code-switching. In response to item 15, which reads 'code-switching occurs because constant use of English makes the class monotonous', 47.5% showed either 'agreement' or 'strong agreement' to the statement, and this indicates that a minority are in favour of code-switching to diversify, expand, and enrich their language learning experience. In line with this, Maluleke (2019) and Gulzar (2010) maintained that code-switching contributes to effective instruction. Finally, concerning item 14 stating that code-switching occurs 'because constant use of English makes the class more formal,' 46% either agreed' or 'strongly agreed' and 21% were uncertain. This shows that a relationship exists between formality and English use in the classroom which gives rise to the use of Arabic, a less formal medium of education, at least in students' minds.

## 5. Summary and Conclusion

This study contributed to the growing body of literature that examined the functions and roles of code-switching in a foreign language learning context. Many scholars have conducted several research studies about this phenomenon; however, most of these studies thoroughly investigated code-switching functions and roles among teachers to the exclusion of students. Unlike some other studies, this research has made use of two instruments, namely a questionnaire and classroom observation. This study demonstrated one function of teacher's code-switching that has not been reported by other researchers. This function is triggered by the teachers' lack of language proficiency.

One problem with code-switching functional analysis is that switches may have different functions or interpreted differently as argued by Eldridge (1996), and therefore it is not easy to classify a switch within one category or another. Eldridge (1996) maintains that the functions may cause some problems, "the

main problem in analysing code-switching in functional terms is that many switches may be either multi-functional or open to different functional interpretations" (p.305). To overcome this problem, the researchers consulted with some experts and English language teachers to check whether the switches were listed under the right category and provide any necessary modifications.

The findings have shown that teachers and students code-switch for various reasons. Similar to the findings obtained by other researchers, teachers in this research have code-switched for several reasons and in the following order: affective purposes, giving instructions and direction, linguistic insecurity, repetition, translation, topic shift, and class management. One finding peculiar to this study is that teachers code-switched because of inadequate command or mastery of the target language and this has not been reported by other researchers. The relatively high-rank ordering of this function is, therefore, worth considering. Teachers' inadequate command of the target language points to the gravity of the problem. It perhaps requires reconsidering other ways of qualifying and training teachers to attain acceptable standards of language proficiency which enable them to use the target language correctly and effectively.

Concerning students, it was found that they code-switch mainly to maintain rapport and interpersonal relationships, to keep the line of communication without interruption, and to avoid any sort of conflict or misunderstanding. It is evident that code-switching serves non-linguistic functions and focuses on affective issues such as friendship, rapport and social relationships, and classroom communication. One implication of this is that teachers should enhance students' English language skills in aspects related to solidarity, rapport, and interpersonal relationships by providing students with ample English terms and expressions that serve this function and directing students to use them regularly.

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## Appendix 1

### Questionnaire

#### Dear student

This questionnaire aims to investigate an academic issue related to code-switching to Arabic in EFL classes. The researchers assure you that your responses to the questionnaire will be used only for research purposes.

We hope that you will cooperate in filling out this questionnaire by providing accurate answers to the questions which follow.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated

The Researchers

#### Section one

- Age \_\_\_\_\_
- Sex \_\_\_\_\_
- Class \_\_\_\_\_
- School name \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section Two:

Read the following statements 1-thru 18 carefully and then put an (x) in the right place. If you strongly agree to the statement, put an x mark in the first column next to the statement and if you strongly disagree with it, put an x in the fifth column until you are finished.

1. Why do you generally code-switch to Arabic in EFL classes? (see Table 1)

**Table 1: Students' code-switching functions in the classroom**

	Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Code-switching enables me to say what I want to say more easily	21.8	26	33.9	14.2	3.9
2	I switch to repeat what may not have been understood by the teacher or students	29	25.8	23.6	14.8	6.7
3	I code-switch to avoid any sort of conflict or misunderstanding	36.4	32.7	9.4	7.9	13.6
4	I switch to keep the line of communication without interruption	44.2	28.2	14.2	7.8	5.8
5	Code-switching makes it easier for learners to acquire knowledge and master language	13	38.2	30.9	12.7	5.2

6	Code-switching helps me to understand new vocabulary and grammatical rules	28.8	16.7	30	8.5	16
7	I code-switch because of my low proficiency in English	26	34.8	24.8	4.5	9.7
8	I switch to maintain rapport and interpersonal relationships	46.7	30.9	6.9	3.6	11.8

2. Why in your opinion does code-switching occur in the classroom? (see Table 2)

**Table 2. Code-switching functions and classroom procedures and processes**

Item		Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	It provides tools and ways for structuring questions & comments	17.9	41.8	21.8	14.5	3.9
10	Because code-switching to Arabic is used by everyone in the classroom	39.4	13.9	29.7	11.5	5.4
11	It is a central feature of language learning	39.4	28.2	14.5	13	4.8
12	It builds a bridge from the known to the unknown	44.8	28.5	12.7	9	4.8
13	It enhances social and academic interaction in the classroom	26.7	38.8	18.2	6.7	9.7
14	Because constant use of English makes the class more formal	14.5	31.5	19.4	21	13.3
15	Because constant use of English makes the class monotonous	36	11.5	30.6	5.4	16.4

**Thank you so much for your cooperation**