



# Code-Switching by Novice Teachers in EFL Classes and its Effects on Students: Cihan University-Erbil

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# Introduction

- Code-Switching (CS) is the practice of switching to one's native tongue to facilitate dialogue.
- The switching between two or more languages within a single speech, sentence, or element was defined as CS by Poplack in 1980.
- In a lot of communities where many people speak multiple languages, this strategy is highly popular. In Kurdistan region, for example, in public places, people keep switching codes to get them understood by others.
- This strategy is also used in academic places but as a last resort since it does not always imply a positive implication. Therefore, in bilingual classrooms, the idea of bilingualism manifests itself in the form of teachers' negative views toward students who switch languages during class interaction (Bostepe, 2003).

- Some students studying English as a foreign language prefer using English as much as possible to get the utmost benefit.
- Some students, however, cannot grasp what is taught, so they unconsciously force the lecturer to switch to their first language or their colleagues to help them understand what the teacher explained.
- In the 1980s, code-switching as a distinct phenomenon and foreign language teachers' tactic gained notice. Since then, there has been a spirited discussion between opposing viewpoints over whether switching back and forth between the native language and the target language in a foreign language learning classroom is beneficial or detrimental.

# Methodology

## •Participants:

- English language department students at Cihan university -Erbil constitute the sample of this study.
- The age of the learners in the study ranged from 18 to 21 years.
- The majority of the learners speak Kurdish since it is their first language (L1), while a few of them speak Arabic since they are originally Arabs.
- The teacher/observer who took part in the study was Arab.

# Data Collection

- A questionnaire distributed to students of the second stage and third stage at the department of English, Cihan university-Erbil.
- The questionnaire consists of fifteen questions, and the other way of getting the data was direct observation.
- The researcher observed four classes; two for each. The duration of each class is fifty minutes. In order to lessen the chance of being influenced by comprehending CS, CS was not explained during obtaining the data. It was explained to the students that they could occasionally speak in their own dialect. In this instance, the students' engagement in class was unstructured and unplanned.
- At the beginning, the teacher started explaining the lesson related to speech organs. The students were shown slides with some headings, then the teacher started elaborating on these headings. The teacher asked a lot of questions after finishing each slide. Regarding second-stage classes, the teacher started by reminding students of the previous lesson in order to link it with the current one. Then, he displayed some slides to elaborate on.

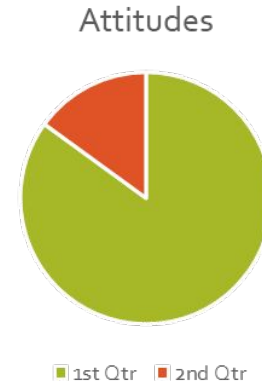
# Findings and Discussion

## 1) **CS and communication**

- A few students use CS in communication. The majority showed that they use only Kurdish since it is their mother tongue.
- Around %23 just use English since they are studying English and they are eager to practice the language as much as possible.
- Whereas around %4.6 use CS, so they use Kurdish and English when communicating with their classmates. The least percentage is dedicated to the CS but including either Kurdish, English, and Arabic or using only Arabic and English. The same percentage expresses those who only use Arabic. It can be concluded that students do not tend to use CS for communication since most of them speak Kurdish or Arabic, so they rarely use English in communication.

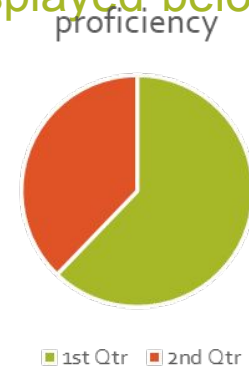
## 2) Students' attitude towards CS

•As displayed in the chart below, the results revealed that although students themselves do not use a lot of CS in their communication, they favor teachers doing so. The majority of students have a positive attitude regarding teachers' use of CS in the class since it is almost used to clarify things and it let them understand well.



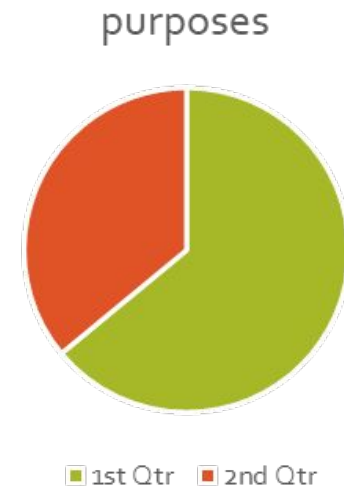
### 3) CS and teachers' language proficiency

•As mentioned in the previous point, students' aim is to understand the material, no matter how so they keep asking lecturers to switch the code. Therefore, they consider that a lecturer who masters the two languages and he can switch easily as a high-proficient lecturer. Regarding students' viewpoint, he is their savior. Because most respondents believed that lecturers' use of CS demonstrates their high level of expertise, it is evident from the findings displayed below in the chart that students are content with it.



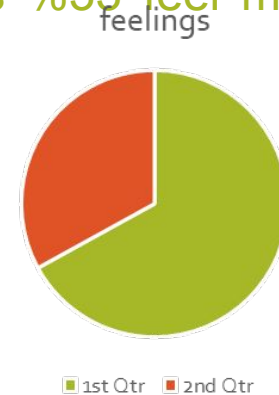
#### 4) Teachers' purpose of CS

•The main function of lecturers' use of the CS is to let students understand since the main concern of students is to pass the exam and get good results. That's why, as seen below in the chart, around %64 of its use was for rendering the material while %36 was for communication.



## 5) Student's feelings

•Generally speaking, when someone speaks the language you speak, this makes you more relaxed. This encourages you to get involved in the atmosphere more. The same is true for students. They feel more relaxed and easygoing when the lecturer uses CS. It urges them to ask more and to perform better. So the results showed that around %67 feel more comfortable whereas %33 feel more dense and bothered as shown below:



# Observations

- It can be concluded that code-switching is usually available since some lecturers fail to get students understood and the students are welcoming such a use.
- On the other hand, some students are not welcoming the excessive use of code-switching and they create a kind of chaotic atmosphere. This, as a result, might distract the attention of the students in general, and the lecturer looks that he lost the control of the class. The researcher noticed the cons are overbeating its pros.

# Conclusions

- 1) Code-switching to Kurdish is a prevalent phenomenon in EFL classrooms at Cihan university-Erbil and that it has a two-face role in the English learning and teaching process.
- 2) The majority of students prefer having a kind of CS to comprehend the material well; however, they innately prefer their teachers not to switch the code a lot to practice more.
- 3) Students who have a good command of English feel bored when the lecturer switches the code. They also may cause a chaotic atmosphere that distracts students' attention. However, this was not the case in all the observed classes.
- 4) CS can be a useful method for emphasizing the importance of a particular piece of information, whether it be a name, a grammar rule, or an order. One section of the discourse is repeated in L1, highlighting its significance in relation to the rest of the speech.
- 5) Code-switching (CS) may be thought of as a useful technique in classroom interaction, even though many teachers are still unsure about the benefits of doing so when teaching a foreign language, especially if the objective is to efficiently clarify and transmit the information to students.